

VISION & GUIDING VALUES 2

This comprehensive plan starts with a vision that reflects ideas and priorities from community members. The purpose of the plan is to create a clear path to achieving that vision.

This chapter provides the vision, a set of community-based guiding values, and a decision-making framework to keep the principles of this comprehensive plan consistently in front of decision-makers.

We begin by sharing the significant themes that we heard from residents, businesses, and other key stakeholders.

Dear Northfield,

WE ARE LEADERS



LATINE INVENTIONS:
ROBERTO LANDELL DE MOURA
(WIRELESS PHONE 1895)
GUILLERMO GONZÁLES
CAMARENA
(COLOR TV 1940)
(PROJECT PULSO).

AND MANY MORE!

THERE ARE 4 MILLION+
LATINE-OWNED BUSINESSES
IN THE U.S. THAT'S 10% OF
ALL COMPANIES AND
\$2.8 TRILLION IN ECONOMIC
OUTPUT (US CENSUS
BUREAU).

THERE ARE OVER 50 LATINES
SERVING IN THE U.S. CONGRESS,
AND 34 MILLION LATINE VOTERS
(CONGRESS.GOV).

1.8 MILLION LATINE WORKERS (73% OF
ALL U.S. AGRICULTURAL LABOR) HELP
FEED AMERICAN FAMILIES WITHOUT
RECOGNITION (WILSON CENTER).

What We Heard

General

- Small town feel is a gem and a challenge
- Address the needs of the most vulnerable residents
- Become more welcoming and inviting
- Retain unique identity - including charming downtown, historic and natural resources, and colleges

Equity

- Some neighborhoods do not see as much investment as others
- There are food deserts and lack of parks, transit in the north and northwest neighborhoods
- Residents need access to good jobs, food, housing, and recreation to ensure economic stability and a good quality of life
- Equitable access to parks and recreational activities

Climate change

- New jobs must be environmentally sustainable
- Climate and sustainability solutions must be affordable and accessible to residents
- Preservation of trees, wetlands and green spaces is important for the ecosystem and to make the community more welcoming

Economic Sustainability

- Smart, sustainable, balanced growth
- Address the high tax rate for residents
- Create new living wage jobs that also support environmental sustainability
- Collaborate with colleges to support fair taxation and economic development
- Public-private partnerships to attract investment

Human Connections

- Gathering spaces for youth and community
- Support entrepreneurs and small businesses
- Need free and accessible indoor and outdoor recreation spaces
- Improve public amenities to facilitate community connections

Housing

- Affordable housing for all ages is needed
- Workforce housing is needed
- Housing is important for major employers to retain/attract employees
- Not enough affordable housing is located in the most walkable areas of the city
- Build pathways to homeownership and generational wealth

Mobility

- Residents do not feel safe crossing highways
- Distances to destinations (work, shopping, services) are too long to allow for walking or biking safely
- Transit takes too long, is not direct, and does not operate at hours needed
- Challenges for disabled individuals in accessing employment due to transportation limitations
- Improved infrastructure is needed for sidewalks, paths, and safe crossings

For a complete summary of engagement activities and results from the comprehensive planning process, please refer to Appendix X.



Vision

Northfield is a welcoming city, providing equitable access to a high quality of life.

We are a city with a strong identity rooted in history, while growing as a diverse, inclusive, and sustainable place. We maintain our integrity as an independent and distinct city shaped by our historic and natural resources, the Cannon River, rural neighbors, and our colleges.

Guiding Values

Northfield **emphasizes equity** to remedy past disparities and to ensure access to housing, services, mobility options, and open space for all.

Northfield **promotes safe, stable housing** in a wide variety of types, sizes, and ownership models, to support our workforce and accommodate residents in all stages of life.

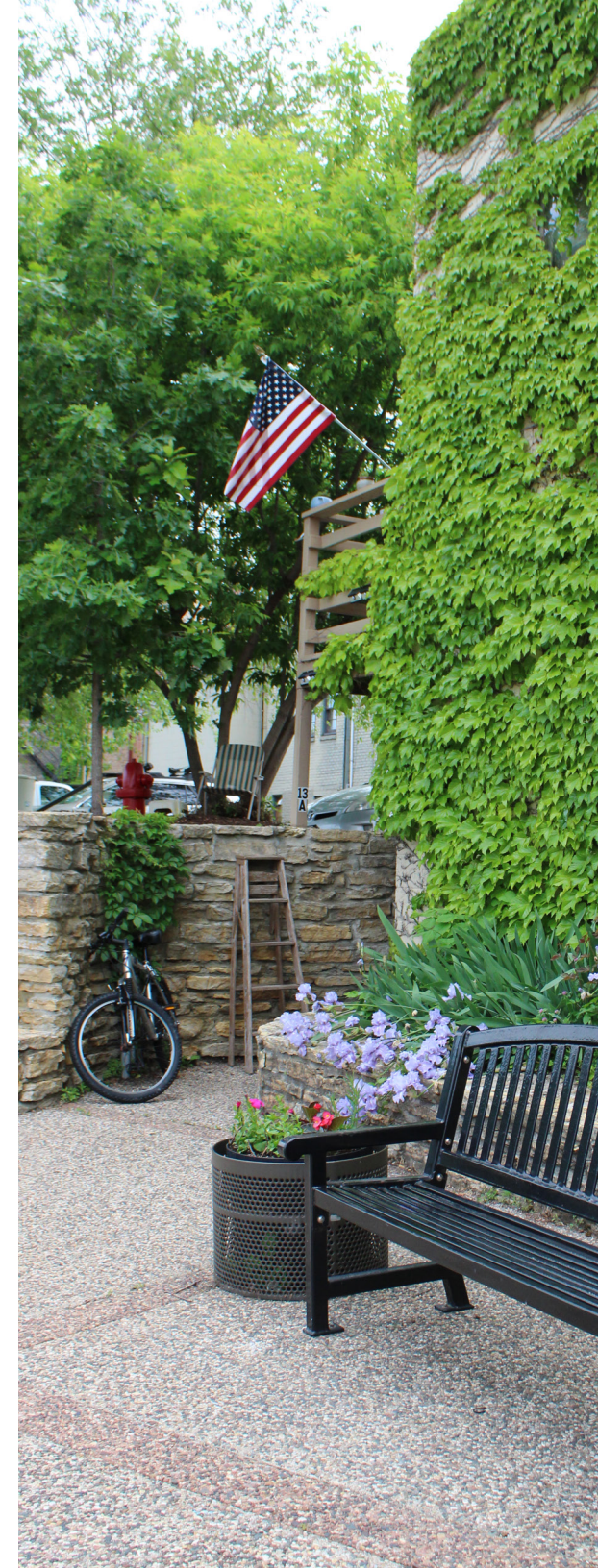
Northfield works to **provide mobility options** so all Northfield residents can get where they need to go with or without a car.

Northfield **fosters human connections** in our increasingly diverse community through well-designed neighborhoods, gathering places, and business districts that are inclusive regardless of age, economic status, mobility, gender, or racial background.

Northfield's capital planning and budgeting will advance the goals of this Comprehensive Plan in an **economically responsible and sustainable way**, ensuring sufficient revenue to support its work for the long term.

Northfield will **find creative solutions to local problems** by working with the community, hiring staff who will seek out the best practices in their field, and ensuring that consultants understand Northfield.

Northfield designs infrastructure, policies, and practices to **foster resilience** and mitigate the effects of climate change.



Decision-Making Framework

When making decisions, including those suggested by the implementation section of this Plan, City of Northfield officials, staff, community organizations, and residents will ask if the option chosen furthers at least one, if not several of the values below, while not damaging the others. The metrics listed “measurables” suggest means of quantifying the outcome of actions and determining whether progress toward each guiding value is being made.



Emphasize Equity

Northfield emphasizes equity to remedy past disparities and to ensure access to housing, services, mobility options, and open space for all.

Questions - Does this Action...

- ... improve access to services (City, healthcare, schools, etc.)?
- ... create parks or recreation opportunities in currently underserved neighborhoods?
- ... provide a service tailored to those who need it most?

Strategies/Outcomes

- Target City infrastructure investments to the north/west neighborhoods first.
- Ensure that all members of the communities have equitable access to destinations regardless of their age or physical capabilities
- Support local businesses in recruiting and retaining their workers through addressing needs for affordable housing, childcare and training.
- Residents east of Highway 3 can safely cross the barriers of the railroad tracks, river, and Highway 3 to reach destinations to the west.

Measurables

- Quarterly meetings with north/west neighborhood residents on needs and priorities.
- Public investment dollars in the north/west neighborhoods.
- New parks, open spaces, or recreation spaces in north/west neighborhoods
- New city programs that serve the north/west neighborhoods.
- Additional linear feet of bike and pedestrian paths within the north/west neighborhoods that connect to shopping, employment, schools and parks.
- New high quality, affordable childcare facilities.



Find Creative Solutions to Local Problems

Northfield will find creative solutions to local problems by working with the community, hiring staff who will seek out the best practices in their field, and ensuring that consultants understand Northfield.

Questions - Does this Action...

- ... consider actions taken by benchmark communities?
- ... try a new approach?
- ... incorporate the needs of historically underserved residents?

Strategies/Outcomes

- Keep (revise, update) the comprehensive plan as a living document.
- Leverage the dynamism of Carleton College and St. Olaf College to build the innovation and creative ecosystems in Northfield.
- Create an interdisciplinary Community Development Department which integrates land use, transportation, project management, economic development, and public engagement

Measurables

- Programs or initiatives that incorporate approaches not tried before
- Adopted ordinances and policies created based on widely accepted best practices
- Best practices review of community development projects.
- Regular updates, including tracking of comprehensive plan metrics to the Planning Commission and City Council.
- New business incubator or innovation space in close proximity to the colleges and downtown.



Foster Resilience

Northfield designs infrastructure, policies, and practices to foster resilience and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Questions - Does this Action...

- ... reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions?
- ... preserve important natural features or habitat?
- ... increase reliance on renewable energy?
- ... contribute to a land use pattern that requires fewer automobile trips?

Strategies/Outcomes

- Compact Development: Grow compactly by directing development within the existing land area first.
- Focus growth in priority growth areas when infill or redevelopment sites are not feasible.
- Pursue methods of improving the sustainability of new and existing housing.
- Reduce the urban heat island effect.

Measurables

- Reduced GHG emissions
- Reduced vehicle trips
- New renewable energy infrastructure
- Acres of farmland and open space preserved in surrounding townships via easement or other legal mechanism.
- Increase in attached and missing middle housing types
- Reduced distance between neighborhoods and basic goods and services
- Fewer underutilized properties
- New mixed-use nodes developed in priority growth areas according to the guidance in the STEP framework and Future Land Use Map.
- Incentives for landlords to reduce their energy costs.
- Encourage high sustainability standards for new housing, particularly in situations where such standards will reduce the cost burden for occupants over the long run.
- Fee waivers/reductions for development that addresses city goals of sustainability, affordability, and compact development.
- Tree planting in vulnerable areas of the city.



Be Economically Responsible and Sustainable

Northfield's capital planning and budgeting will advance the goals of this Comprehensive Plan in an economically responsible and sustainable way, ensuring sufficient revenue to support its work for the long term.

Questions - Does this Action...

- ... create new development that can pay for the services it will require?
- ... help balance the city's tax burden between residents and businesses?

Strategies/Outcomes

- Direct Northfield's future growth in ways that meet local needs while being fiscally responsible over the long term, so that the City can grow in an economically sustainable way.

Measurables

- Integrate the planning and engineering/PW processes to come up with the CIP. Transparent and integrated CIP process.
- Approved developments where adequate infrastructure exists to serve it.
- Non-residential share of overall tax burden (increase)
- New infrastructure is "right sized", so as not to create more roads or parking areas where demand is expected to be low.
- Adequate supply of commercially zoned land to facilitate business growth.



Foster Human Connections

Northfield fosters human connections in our increasingly diverse community through well-designed neighborhoods, gathering places, and business districts that are inclusive regardless of age, economic status, mobility, gender, or racial background.

Questions - Does this Action...

- ... improve the mix of land uses in a neighborhood?
- ... create or improve a gathering space so that it is appropriate for those living within walking distance?
- ... improve accessibility for the disabled?

Strategies/Outcomes

- Build a supportive environment for local businesses to thrive.
- Continue to strengthen the coalitions, activities and investments that build the vibrancy of Northfield's downtown.
- Downtown becomes the river-focused anchor of the small business community and welcoming public space.

Measurables

- Gathering places (indoor and outdoor) within a 10-minute walkshed of city neighborhoods
- New mixed-use developments in STEP Transform areas
- New financial and technical resources for local, small businesses, including mentorship and coaching.
- Conduct a downtown vibrancy assessment.
- City financial support for marketing, programming, events, streetscape, façade, and signage improvements downtown.
- New or rehabilitated housing in or near downtown.



Promote Safe and Stable Housing

Northfield promotes safe, stable housing in a wide variety of types, sizes, and ownership models, to support our workforce and accommodate residents in all stages of life.

Questions - Does this Action...

- ... create or allow for a housing type that is needed?
- ... improve housing conditions in areas of naturally-occurring affordable housing?
- ... provide funding toward affordable housing?

Strategies/Outcomes

- Increase in attached and missing middle housing types
- Reduced distance between neighborhoods and basic goods and services
- Fewer underutilized properties
- New mixed-use nodes developed in priority growth areas according to the guidance in the STEP framework and Future Land Use Map.
- Incentives for landlords to reduce their energy costs.
- Encourage high sustainability standards for new housing, particularly in situations where such standards will reduce the cost burden for occupants over the long run.
- Fee waivers/reductions for development that addresses city goals of sustainability, affordability, and compact development.
- Promote strategies and partnerships for increasing high-quality affordable childcare.

Measurables

- New affordable housing units
- New missing middle housing units within existing neighborhoods
- New starter homes
- Decrease in property maintenance code violations
- Trends in the diversity of housing type/size as compared to the existing housing stock (from the Maxfield study of 2024 – base line)
- Number of existing affordable housing units preserved
- Funding dedicated to the production or preservation of affordable housing (from city, and other sources).
- Adoption of inclusionary housing requirements.
- New cooperatively-owned manufactured home community.
- Redevelopment-ready, city-owned infill sites for affordable housing.
- Establish a rent stabilization program.
- Create a manufactured housing repair training and licensing program.
- Adoption of tenant notification program for sale of properties.
- Develop an eviction prevention program.
- Increase properties that accept Section 8 vouchers.
- Value capture strategies, TIFs, or Housing Trust Fund to foster housing types needed but not being built.
- Increase in high-quality, affordable childcare capacity.



Provide Mobility Options

Northfield has mobility options so that residents can get where they need to go with or without a car.

Questions - Does this Action...

- ... complete or continue the street grid?
- ... improve connections between neighborhoods?
- ... make getting to commercial, service, or employment areas easier?

Strategies/Outcomes

- When making transportation decisions, shift from a “mobility lens” focused on getting cars to and from locations efficiently, to an “access lens” focused on the land use context and building streets which harmoniously fit this context
- Ensure that all members of the communities have equitable access to destinations regardless of their age or physical capabilities

Measurables

- New or updated transit routes
- Additional transit frequency or hours that better align with peak shopping and work trips.
- New pedestrian and bike infrastructure that includes appropriate facilities types so that people feel safe using them.
- New active transportation connections to commercial areas or jobs.
- EV infrastructure installed
- Micro-mobility options
- Reduced gaps in the active transportation network.
- New or updated walking or biking facilities that allow safe crossings of Highways 3 and 19.
- New development with an internal grid system and connected to the existing grid roadways in the city.

