

CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MN
PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION 2026-007

RECOMMENDATION OF TEXT AMENDMENTS TO RELATED TO INDUSTRIAL
BLOCK LENGTH REQUIREMENTS IN THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

WHEREAS, in 2025, the City of Northfield adopted an updated Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, Action 4-3.4 of the Implementation Chapter of the updated Comprehensive Plan charges the Community Development Department to review regulations and policies to reduce or eliminate barriers to new business creation; and

WHEREAS, Action 4-8.6 of the Implementation Chapter of the updated Comprehensive Plan charges the Planning Commission and Community Development Department to revise and regularly update the Land Development Code to remove barriers and reduce costs to housing and economic development; and

WHEREAS, Purpose 1.1.8 of the Land Development Code is to Provide for the expansion and diversification of the economic base to assure a strong economy; and

WHEREAS, Purpose 1.1.10 of the Land Development Code is to Improve and promote connectivity to better serve residents and to improve the function of the overall street network; and

WHEREAS, the Community Development Department staff have identified the maximum block length of 900 feet in industrial districts established by Section 5.2.2 Lot and Block Design, of Article 5.- Subdivision of Land, of Chapter 34 - Land Development Code of the Northfield City Code as a barrier to industrial business creation and economic development; and

WHEREAS, all required notices regarding the public hearing were properly made; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on August 20, 2026, and received public testimony regarding the proposed land development code amendments; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission recommends a rationale for amending the Land Development Code related to industrial block lengths;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission hereby recommends to the Mayor and City Council the following amendments to Chapter 34 of the City Legislative Code.

PASSED by the Planning Commission of the City of Northfield on this 20th day of August 2026.

Chair

Member

VOTE: ___ KUHLMANN ___ BUCKHEIT ___ HOLLERAN
 ___ LAUER ___ MENARD ___ NOWAK ___ SCHMIDT

EXHIBIT A

Planning Commission Findings

Land Development Code Approval Criteria

When reviewing a zoning text amendment, the Planning Commission and City Council is to consider several criteria as established in Article 8 of the Land Development Code (8.5.14.C). The Planning Commission and City Council shall review the necessary submittal requirements, facts, and circumstances of the proposed amendment and make a recommendation and decision on the application based on, but not limited to, consideration of the following criteria:

(1) The specific policies, goals, objectives, and recommendations of the comprehensive plan and other city plans, including public facilities and the capital improvement plans.

The Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2025 includes the following actions:

Action 4-1.1 Identify opportunities and provide support for improved business mix, marketing events, and physical improvements.

Action 4-3.4 Review regulations and policies to reduce or eliminate barriers to new business creation.

Action 4-8.6 Revise and regularly update the Land Development Code to remove barriers and reduce costs to housing and economic development.

It also includes Strategy 5: Diversify Northfield's tax base, stating the intended outcome as Northfield will intentionally build a more sustainable local economy to maintain and expand city services and infrastructure.

The Comprehensive Plan also incorporates elements of other City plans including maps of future transportation connections to provide a minimum level of connectivity, guidance that development should be compact and make efficient use of resources, and that care should be taken to protect the natural environment.

The proposed amendment reflects these values by requiring consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, while allowing necessary flexibility to provide for industrial development that reflects the needs of modern industrial enterprises.

(2) The purpose and intent of this LDC, or in the case of a map amendment, whether it meets the purpose and intent of the individual district.

The purpose of the I1-B: Industrial zoning district is to:

(1) The I1 district should generally apply to those areas designated as "District" on the Framework map of the comprehensive plan.

(2) The purpose of the Industrial (I1) district is to provide an area to accommodate manufacturing uses, general businesses, offices, service and repair businesses, warehousing and office showroom uses in a functional, attractive manner that does not unduly affect the development or use of nearby property. Limited and incidental retailing shall be allowed in this district. The portion of the district that abuts the Cannon River shall be developed in a manner that enhances, restores, augments and maintains the ecology and beauty of this natural corridor.

The intent or purpose of the I1-B: Industrial zoning district is inhibited by the limitation of a maximum 900-foot block size. This standard does not reflect the needs of modern industrial users, nor does it reflect the reality of industrial development within Northfield, where industrial block lengths consistently exceed this limit. Removing the limit while providing the recommended safeguards will enable the I1-B: Industrial zoning district to fulfill its purpose.

(3) The adequacy of infrastructure available to serve the proposed action.

The text amendment proposed requires consistency with the Comprehensive Plan in preserving adequate connectivity while allowing the City Engineer discretion when approving a specific street, road, and/or subdivision configuration.

(4) The adequacy of a buffer or transition provided between potentially incompatible districts.

The proposed text amendment will not impact buffer or transition requirements.