

CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MN
PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION 2023-010
RECOMMENDATION APPROVING A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO CITY COUNCIL
FOR OFF-STREET PARKING IN THE H-O DISTRICT

WHEREAS, the applicant, Manawa LLC (the “applicant”), seeks a Conditional Use Permit, pursuant to Northfield City Code, Ch. 34, Secs. 3.2.3 and 8.5.9, to allow off-street parking at 212 Division St S, which is zoned Downtown (C1-B); and

WHEREAS, Manawa LLC is the owner of the above-referenced property; and

WHEREAS, the above-referenced property is legally described on Exhibit A, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference; and

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

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on October 19, 2023, and received public testimony regarding the proposed Conditional Use Permit; and,

WHEREAS, City policy Climate Action Plan sets a goal of being a 100% carbon-free community by 2040 and included Climate Action as a Strategic Priority in 2021. To achieve these goals, the City has set targets to (a) reduce vehicle miles traveled by seven percent by 2030 and 20 percent by 2040, and (b) increase electric passenger vehicle adoption to 28 percent by 2030 and 56 percent by 2040; and,

WHEREAS, the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP) has identified secure, convenient, and accessible bicycle parking as a significant factor in promoting cycling as well as offering benefits for traffic congestion and businesses; and,

WHEREAS, the US Department of Energy has identified ensuring residential EV charging as a significant factor in EV adoption, and installing charging infrastructure at the time of construction as offering significant cost savings; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission adopts Findings of Fact that the application meets the standards in Northfield City Code, Chapter 34, the Land Development Code, for conditional use subject to the conditions; and

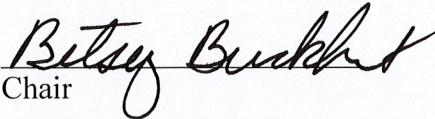
WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has reviewed and recommended approval of the Conditional Use Permit with conditions.


NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION THAT:

1. The Planning Commission hereby recommends approval of a Conditional Use Permit, pursuant to Northfield City Code, Ch. 34, Secs. 3.2.3 and 8.5.9, to allow off-street parking at 212 Division Street S. and adopts the findings from its October 19, 2023 meeting, which are attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference as Exhibit B, subject to the following conditions:
 - a. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 462.3595, following approval by the City Council hereof, and approval of the required certificate of appropriateness pursuant to Northfield City Code, Ch. 34, Secs. 2.5.3 (C) and 8.5.8, a certified copy of this Resolution shall be recorded with the county recorder or registrar of titles for Rice County and the applicant shall be responsible to pay the required filing fees.
 - b. Pursuant to Northfield City Code, Ch. 34, Secs. 2.5.3 (C) and 8.5.8, a certificate of appropriateness (“COA”) is prepared and submitted by the applicant, for the subject project for which this Conditional Use Permit was approved, meeting the requirements of, and approved pursuant to, the Land Development Code. In the event a COA is not approved and issued as required herein, this Conditional Use Permit shall be null and void.
 - c. The applicant shall be required to install electrical panel capacity and raceway with conduit to terminate in a junction box or 240-volt charging outlet (typical clothing dryer outlet) for each parking stall that abuts a wall and install Level Two Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) in at least two parking stalls to meet the requirements of Northfield’s Climate Action Plan and Sustainable Building policy.
 - d. The applicant shall provide secure, convenient, and accessible bicycle parking as follows:
 - i. Long term indoor bicycle storage for residents of 1 space per long-term rental unit and 1 space for every 3 short term rental units. The indoor bicycle storage must be easily accessible from the vehicle parking area and both the interior and exterior of the building. Indoor storage layout must meet Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP) Bicycle Parking Guidelines (2nd edition) recommended dimensions.
 - ii. Long term indoor bicycle storage should include ebike charging facilities and a bicycle pump.
 - iii. Short term outdoor bicycle parking for visitors and residents adjacent to building entrances on both the front (Division Street) and rear of the building of at least 6 spaces in each location. Outdoor bicycle parking will be identified with clear signage.

- iv. Indoor and outdoor bike parking must use LDC 3.6.7 bike rack designs which also meet the APBP Bicycle Parking Guidelines (2nd edition) recommended designs: inverted U or bollard/post and ring. Both indoor and outdoor bike parking areas and racks must be able to accommodate some larger bikes including trailers, cargo bikes, and e-bikes.

PASSED by the Planning Commission of the City of Northfield on this 19th day of October 2023.


Chair


Member

VOTE: Y BUCKHEIT Y HEISLER Y KUHLMANN
 Y MENARD Y NOWAK Y SCHROEER Y STAGER

EXHIBIT A

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

That part of River Lots 10 and 11 and the Northeast 35.5 feet of River Lot 9, (the Southwesterly boundary of said Northeast 35.5 feet is measured at right angles to and parallel with the common boundary line between River Lots 9 and 10); and the Southwest 2.5 feet of River Lot 12 (the Northeasterly boundary of which is measured at right angles to and parallel with the common boundary line between River Lots 11 and 12), all in the ORIGINAL TOWN (NOW CITY) OF NORTHFIELD, Rice County, Minnesota, lying Southeasterly of the following described lines: Commencing at the Southeasterly corner of said Northeast 35.5 feet of River Lot 9; thence North 67 degrees 37 minutes 00 seconds West; along the Southwesterly line of said Northeast 35.5 feet of River Lot 9, a distance of 133.99 feet to the point of beginning of the lines to be described; thence North 20 degrees 27 minutes 36 seconds East a distance of 167.60 feet; thence North 21 degrees 06 minutes 05 seconds East a distance of 2.50 feet to a point on the Northeasterly line of said Southwest 2.5 feet of River Lot 12, distant 139.45 feet Northwesterly from the Northeasterly corner of said Southwest 2.5 feet and there terminating.⁴

EXHIBIT B

PLANNING COMMISSION FINDINGS

Conditional Use Permit Approval Procedure & Approval Criteria:

A CUP follows the Type 4 Review Procedure found in Section 8.4.7 of the LDC. For the Type 4 Review Procedure, the Planning Commission holds a public hearing and makes a recommendation based on these findings to City Council, and City Council makes the final decision.

In the approval of a conditional use permit, the Planning Commission may recommend that City Council impose such conditions as necessary to make the use compatible with other uses allowed in the same district zone or vicinity. Criterion (a) below must be met and criteria (b) through (n) shall be considered in the review of conditional use permit applications:

a) The proposed use is allowed as a conditional use in the district for which it is proposed as shown in Table 2.7-1.

The proposed use of “Parking Lot or Ramp” is a permitted or conditional use in Table 2.7-1 which is modified by Table 3.2-5: Historic District Sub-District standards on parking: “Off-street parking is allowed only by Conditional Use Permit in this sub-district.”

b) The conditional use will be in accordance with the general objectives, or with any specific objective, of the city’s comprehensive plan and this LDC;

The proposed parking ramp with 34 stalls upholds the objectives of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and bicycle parking may meet objectives if the conditions above are met to ensure safety, convenience, and sufficient supply. Requiring vehicle charging infrastructure is required by the Sustainable Building Policy and strongly supported by the Climate Action Plan and Strategic Plan.

Chapter 4: Land Use Principles (LU)

LU 3 “The preference for accommodating future growth is in infill locations, then redevelopment/land intensification opportunities, and then on the edge of existing developed areas.”

- The project is an infill new construction building with a mix of uses and served by existing utilities.

LU 8 “8. A wider range of housing choices will be encouraged – in the community as well as in neighborhoods.”

- The new building will include a mix of long-term and short-term rental units that are a mix of bedrooms.

LU 12 “Opportunities will be created to walk and bike throughout the community.”

- The infill of this location makes it prime for residents and visitors to walk and bike to and from the property. The off-street parking is less than 1:1 ratio of the 42 rental units to the 34 parking stalls. The lower level also includes a 10 ft. by 30 ft. room for bike storage which requires additional specification to ensure it is accessible and convenient and provides sufficient space.

Chapter 7: Transportation (TR)

TR Objective 1: Effectively manage the transportation needs of a vibrant, growing town and the surrounding area for residents, businesses and visitors.

- The off-street parking will allow approximately 80% of the residents of the building to park off-street, which supports the residents, businesses and visitors. Long term indoor bicycle storage supports residents' ability to choose to travel by bicycle and is strongly supported by the Comprehensive Plan and Climate Action Plan.

TR 1.2 – Ensure adequate access into the downtown area for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles to support public activities and events, private business uses and residences.

- The off-street parking creates access for residents of the building to access the lower-level parking garage, pedestrians will have access through the building at grade on Division St. S., through the building with access to the river by stairs or elevator, pedestrians will have access between The Archer and the Nutting Block building to the south by a pedestrian easement, and cyclists can access from the 2nd Street and the pedestrian easement between the buildings.

In addition, the Framework Map of the Northfield Comprehensive Plan delineates the parcels as Core. The Core is the zone of densest development and is located in the center of the original plat of Northfield. The area offers a mix of uses including residential units and employment and commercial areas. The area is highly walkable due to the compactness of development. Future Character: The essential character of the Core (mixed use, compact and highly walkable) should be reinforced with future development. Providing sufficient bicycle parking also supports compact development and a walkable character in the Core.

The proposal will need to meet the Site Development Standards for the C1-B: Downtown as defined in Article 3 of the LDC and the Use Specific Standards found in Article 2. Staff will complete a final review after the CUP process has been completed, and will incorporate any conditions added by City Council.

c) The conditional use will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained so as to be harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity and that such use will not change the essential character of the same area;

The enclosed parking area will be constructed with the overall project and will be maintained as part of the ongoing operation of the building. Entry to the parking area uses the existing drive easement on the west side of the property (that cannot be removed) and minimizes the impact of vehicular traffic to the surrounding area. Providing high quality bicycle parking helps reduce vehicle use which will also limit traffic impact.

d) The conditional use will not be hazardous or reasonably disturbing to existing or future uses;

The existing site currently has surface parking along the riverfront. The project removes all surface parking and encloses it underneath the building in the lower-level. The off-street parking is not expected to be hazardous or disruptive to the existing or future uses. The indoor bicycle storage will be much more secure and protected from weather as recommended by the APBP Parking Guidelines than outdoor bicycle parking; bicycle parking will enable reduced vehicle use in the future.

e) The conditional use will be served adequately by essential public facilities and services such as streets, police and fire protection, drainage structures, refuse disposal, water and sewer;

The existing project area is served by Division St. S. on its east side, and a driveway access easement in between the Riverwalk and the building to the west. Police and fire will have access from both Division St. S. and the driveway access easement. Drainage on site is proposed to include green infrastructure in the landscaped areas of the Riverwalk and pedestrian areas. The waste disposal will be handled through trash collectors on the garage level area and serviced by a waste removal provider. Water and sewer connections are available and adequate to serve the project and site. Based on this information, existing municipal utilities are adequate to meet the requirements of the proposed project. Public facilities details and final design is subject to technical review and will be part of the final site plan and project approval.

f) The benefits of the conditional use outweigh the potential negative effects of the surrounding community;

The benefits of the proposed development likely outweigh the potential negative effects. The proposed project offers approximately 80% of the residential units the ability to park on-site. This will reduce the need for parking on the street creating more availability for those driving to the commercial/retail spaces at the new building and surrounding downtown. By not providing a 1:1 match of parking, the development helps reduce vehicle miles traveled and encourages other modes of transportation. Providing indoor bicycle storage further encourages cycling as transportation and reducing vehicles miles as called for in the Comprehensive Plan and Climate Action Plan.

g) The conditional use will not create excessive additional requirements at public cost for public facilities and services;

The conditional use will not create additional public cost for public facilities or services.

h) The conditional use will not involve uses, activities, processes, materials, equipment and conditions or operations that will be detrimental to any persons, property or the general welfare by reason of excessive traffic, noise, smoke, fumes, glare, or odors;

This development is not expected to result in operations that would be detrimental to any persons, property or general welfare by reason of excessive traffic, noise, smoke, fumes, glare or odors. The previous surface parking lot consisted of 28 parking spaces. The enclosed parking area will have 34 spaces, which is an additional 6 spaces. The enclosed parking will be for use by residents and not for commercial uses. The majority of residents will be daytime workers with minimal activity in and out of the parking level during the nighttime hours.

i) The conditional use will not result in the destruction, loss, or damage of natural, scenic, or historic features of major importance as may be established in the comprehensive plan or other city plans related to natural, scenic, or historic features;

The conditional use is not expected to result in the destruction, loss, or damage of natural, scenic, or historic features of major importance as may be established in the comprehensive plan or other city plans related to natural, scenic, or historic features. Since the proposed

parking will be enclosed it will be more compatible with the historic district by eliminating the view of cars, which will enhance the natural and scenic views of the river. The project will transform the previous surface parking into a pedestrian riverfront with landscaping, spaces for gathering and better access to the river. Removing surface parking behind the building will also enhance safety and access for people walking and biking.

j) The traffic and parking generated by the use will not lower the Levels of Services as described in the comprehensive plan update of intersections within a quarter mile of the site.

The previous surface parking lot consisted of 28 parking spaces. The enclosed parking area will have 34 spaces, which is an additional 6 spaces. Therefore, there are no anticipated changes to vehicular traffic. No change in Levels of Service at the nearby intersections are anticipated as a result of the project.

k) In residential districts, the use is of a similar height, building orientation, massing, setback, and scale as to be compatible with surrounding uses in compliance with Section 3.5 Neighborhood Compatibility Standards;

N/A

l) In the Perimeter Transition Area (PTA) within the college development district (CD-S) that abut residential and commercial districts, height, building orientation, massing, setback and scale shall be considered in building renovation and/or new construction in order to maintain compatibility with surrounding areas as described in Section 3.4, Neighborhood Compatibility Standards. These neighborhood compatibility standards are to be administered in order to maintain a harmonious neighborhood environment and absolute compliance with these standards is not intended.

N/A

m) Impacts such as noise, hours of activity, and outdoor lighting have been addressed to mitigate negative impacts on nearby uses.

The development is not anticipated to have negative impacts caused by noise, hours of activity and outdoor lighting. Noise level and hours of activity will be similar to the previous use. Outdoor lighting will comply with the 2.5 average maximum foot-candle requirement, and a maximum 2.5 when adjacent to lots in the same district. The lighting placement and fixtures selected are intended to provide a safe night atmosphere without creating light pollution, and to use lighting as a design enhancement rather than a distraction. Landscape design and species selection is intended to soften and interrupt lightshed while balancing the need for safety and security especially near bicycle parking areas.

n) Parking is adequately provided for the proposed conditional use.

The proposed parking will adequately provide space for the 42 residential units. The enclosed parking area will have 34 spaces. The enclosed parking will be for use by residents and not for commercial uses. The proposed project offers approximately 80% of the residential units the ability to park on-site.

Providing long term indoor bike parking which meets the conditions stated will substantially advance Northfield Comprehensive Plan, LDC, and Climate Action Plan

policies for increasing biking while reducing vehicle miles traveled. Installing EV charging capacity at the time of construction is needed to meet the City's Sustainable Building Policy requirement to install renewable energy technologies with a payback of less than 15 years and enable the shift to electric vehicles prescribed in the Climate Action Plan.