

Date: October 9, 2020

To: Planning Commission members
Mitzi Baker, Community Development Director
Mikayla Schmidt, City Planner

From: Riverfront Enhancement Action Plan subcommittee (Aaron Svoboda, Will Schroeer, Betsey Buckheit)

Re: Planning Commission comments on Riverfront Enhancement Action Plan

As the three Planning Commission members not involved with the Riverfront Enhancement Advisory Committee (REAC), we were tasked with drafting comments for the Planning Commission as a whole to submit to the REAC by the October 15, 2020 deadline. We ask the balance of the Planning Commission to review our comments to discuss at our upcoming meeting.

We met (by the river, in person!) on October 2, 2020 and established these principles for our draft comments.

1. The Planning Commission is responsible for the Comprehensive Plan. This includes evaluating whether projects comply with its policies and leading long-term planning and development efforts for Northfield. Because additional planning has taken place since the 2008 Comprehensive Plan was adopted, we also read the Strategic Plan, Complete Streets Policy, Climate Action Plan, and Pedestrian, Park and Trail Plan update into our charge. We saw our charge as determining if and how the draft Action Plan complied with these City policies at a high level.
2. Given that, we provide two types of comments.
 - First, we tried to highlight what features of the Draft Action Plan comply with City plans, what does not, and what cannot yet be determined.
 - Next, we considered how this plan 1) should and 2) could be implemented as one piece of Northfield's planning and development.
3. Our review of the draft Riverfront Enhancement Action Plan raised a variety of questions that the draft Plan does not yet answer. For some questions, ensuring that they are answered clearly falls under our responsibilities as Planning Commissioners. The City also asked the Planning Commission for "substantive comments on the overall vision, themes and opportunities." In this memo, we have taken a somewhat limited interpretation of that request. We may also share our particular experience walking and biking in these areas, questions about city budgeting, and other specific thoughts.