



2021 – 2024

# STRATEGIC PLAN



City Of  
*Northfield*  
Minnesota



June 7, 2021

RE: City of Northfield 2021-2024 Strategic Plan

To our Northfield Community,

Yogi Berra said: *"If you don't know where you're going, you won't get there."*

I am pleased to present to you our City of Northfield 2021-2024 Strategic Plan. Thank you to the City Council, City Staff and the many others that thoughtfully contributed to the development of the plan.

This is our second multi-year Strategic Plan as a community. As we worked through the completion of our first, we saw the benefits of having a multi-year roadmap that keeps us focused on where we want to go.

The more that we are aligned as a community, City Council, Boards and Commissions, and City Staff, the greater the likelihood we will arrive at our destination. And ultimately accomplish our purpose as stated in our City Charter, "to promote and protect the health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience, and welfare of the inhabitants of the city...."

I am committed to encouraging civil discourse and civic engagement by and for all. When we bring our community together to build relationships, celebrate our accomplishments, and honor people, we build positive momentum that can help us accomplish our goals.

I hope you'll join me in working together to find common ground to move our community forward. It's one more step in building a better, stronger community for today...and tomorrow.

Sincerely,  
Rhonda Pownell  
Mayor of Northfield

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From January 2021 through May 2021, the City of Northfield engaged in a strategic planning process. The process resulted in a strategic plan covering 2021-2024.

The plan consists of six **strategic priorities** — the issues of greatest importance to the City of Northfield over the next three years. Associated with each priority is a set of **desired outcomes**, **key outcome indicators**, and **performance targets**, describing expected results and how the results will be measured. The plan also includes **strategic initiatives** that will be undertaken to achieve the targeted outcomes.

The planning effort began with an examination of the City’s operating environment, which included surveys of the community, Board and Commission members and City staff and a SWOT analysis. On March 24 and March 30, 2021, the City Council and senior management team held strategic planning sessions. During these sessions, the City Council adopted a set of strategic priorities, identified desired outcomes, set performance targets, and confirmed the organization’s vision, mission and values.

Based upon the priorities, the City’s senior management team met in April 2021 to develop a preliminary set of strategic initiatives, which were considered by the City Council and finalized in May. Detailed action plans are under development for each initiative to ensure follow-through. The strategic priorities, key outcome indicators, performance targets and strategic initiatives are summarized here and on the following page.



strategy

The Plan

## Six Strategic Priorities

- 1 ECONOMIC VITALITY
- 2 HOUSING AVAILABILITY
- 3 QUALITY FACILITIES
- 4 DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION
- 5 SERVICE EXCELLENCE
- 6 CLIMATE ACTION

# STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY 2021–2024

## City of Northfield

Strategic Priority	Desired Outcome	Key Outcome Indicator	Target	Strategic Initiatives
<b>Economic Vitality</b>  <i>A community that's economically thriving</i>	Expansion of commercial-industrial tax base consistent with guide plans	- C/I permit value increase - # of new infill inventory	- C & I permit value increased by \$50M by 2024 - > 50% of new C/I developed on infill sites by 2024	a) Implement economic stabilization, recovery & growth strategy b) Implement infill & redevelopment strategies b) Implement Tourism recovery strategy d) Implement Riverfront Enhancement Plan
	Successful local business recovery	- # new business starts - \$ sales tax growth - Job growth above 2019	- New business starts increased by _TBD_ 2021-24 - Increase in sales tax revenue by 10% 2021-24 - Total jobs above 2019 base increased by _TBD_ by 2024	
	Successful tourism recovery	- Lodging tax growth - Plan completion % - # new events	- > 60% of Riverfront sequence chart actions completed by 2024 - Lodging tax revenue increased by 10% 2019 to 2024 - Recreation/tourism events increased by TBD 2021-24	
<b>Housing Availability</b>  <i>A community where everyone can afford to live</i>	Increased availability of housing at all levels	- # of units added above need	- Vacancy rate for rentals increased to 6% 2021-24 - Meet/exceed 2021 housing study supply needs by 2024	a) Implement rental housing strategy b) Implement housing stabilization program c) Implement a housing expansion strategy
	Increased affordability for cost burdened households	- % decrease in cost burdened HH	- Reduce by 5% renters that are cost burdened 2021-24 - Reduce by 5% of owners that are cost burdened 2021-24	
	Improved housing quality throughout the city	- % of non-compliant rental properties - # properties stabilized	- Est. compliance baseline-all licensed rental properties by 2024 - =>90% compliance of rental properties by 2024 - Assist 12 senior households to facilitate aging in place 2021-24	
<b>Quality Facilities</b>  <i>A community where infrastructure supports its objectives</i>	Park, recreation and trails exceed community expectations	- % facilities satisfactory - % of gaps addressed - condition rating change	- All Park and Rec facilities judged satisfactory or above 2021-24 - 50% of high priority walking & biking system gaps addressed by 2024	a) Implement Park & Recreation Capital Investment Plan b) Implement coordinated major facilities strategy c) Implement integrated high-speed internet program
	Resolution of major facility projects	- # decisions made by deadline	By 2024, Go/No Go decisions: - Ice Arena; NCRC/Fifty North remodel & expansion; Liquor Store	
	High speed internet access available to all	- # w/o provider access - % public places w/o free Wi-Fi	- High-speed fiber provider access – all properties by 2023 - Free high-speed Wi-Fi in public places by 2024	
<b>Diversity, Equity and Inclusion</b>  <i>A community that welcomes everyone</i>	Staff and volunteers reflect the community	- % increase in racial diversity: staff, volunteers	- 50% increase in racial diversity of: City workforce, Boards and Commissions by 2024	a) Implement Board and Commission diversity strategy b) Continue implementation of Racial Equity Action Plan
	Improved access to city services for all demographics	- % improvement in access-target groups	- Meet access goals for two targeted groups by 2024	
	City is a community leader on DEI	- Race equity action plan targets achieved	- DEI Leadership collaboration goals met yearly 2021-24	
<b>Service Excellence</b>  <i>A community with a government that works</i>	Adequate staff to meet demands	- # projects delayed - % service-level staffing ratios not met	- Staffing/resources reconciled to meet staffing & service demands-two services by 2024	a) Conduct annual department analyses b) Deploy Board & Commission Governance effectiveness program c) Implement a service excellence program d) Complete updated comprehensive plan
	Improved Board-Staff effectiveness	- % aligned with strategic plan - % rating good/above	- >75% rate working relations good or excellent by 2024 - 90% of Board activities align w/strategic plan by 2024	
	Improved service delivery	- % improvement in community satisfaction; cycle/response times	- Satisfaction in two targeted services increased by 10% by 2024 - >80% indicate well informed re: City issues by 2024 - 90% of targeted improvements achieved by 2024	
<b>Climate Action</b>  <i>A community that's resilient and sustainable</i>	Climate resilience is a priority in plans and budgets	- # climate actions in City plans - # climate actions funded	- Emerald Ash Borer plan funded & implemented by 2024 - Climate resilience standards incorporated into annual budget process and planning decisions by 2024	a) Implement Climate Action Plan
	Reduced net carbon emissions	- % reduction in CO2 emissions - increase-renewable energy use	- City renewable electricity is 60% of usage by 2024 - City CO2 emissions reduced 20% from 2019 levels by 2024	
	Community participation in Climate Action	- % increase in people implementing actions	- 20% increase in people participating in defined activities by 2024	

## MISSION STATEMENT

The City of Northfield works for the common good of our residents and businesses and the improvement of our community by providing excellent, innovative municipal services that carry out the City's vision for a high-quality of life for all.

## VISION STATEMENT

Northfield will be an open, safe, welcoming community, recognized for its world-class colleges and historic riverfront downtown, and is dedicated to sustainably enhancing and preserving its vibrant culture, celebrated arts, strong economy and an excellent quality of life where all can thrive.

## VALUES

### INTEGRITY

- Provide outstanding customer service
- Be open, honest, respectful, kind and accountable
- Demonstrate fiscal responsibility
- Act and communicate in authentic ways

### EXCELLENCE & INNOVATION

- Serve by leading and lead by serving
- Focus on clearly defined outcomes to achieve best results
- Commit to continuous improvement building on lessons learned
- Seek creative solutions for difficult problem

### CELEBRATION

- Welcome diversity, inclusivity, and welcoming broad perspectives
- Commemorate our unique and rich cultural sense of place
- Recognize others and their contributions
- Celebrate and acknowledge accomplishments

### TEAMWORK

- Actively participate in cooperative and collaborative approaches
- Commit to equitable treatment and the elimination of discrimination
- Build on our shared successes as a means for workplace satisfaction
- Utilize the experience and expertise within our organization and community

### STEWARDSHIP

- Protect our physical environment through ecologically sustainable practices and policies
- Maintain, improve and develop municipal assets
- Invest in others through advancement, mentorships and professional development
- Nurture personal well-being through physical and mental health initiatives

## Assessing the Environment, Identifying Challenges

An important part of the strategic planning process is a review of the current operating environment and an evaluation of the challenges confronting the community. This was done via a SWOT analysis—a process that examines the organization’s internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as the opportunities and threats in the external environment. The SWOT analysis asks the following questions: What are the City’s greatest strengths? What are the City’s greatest weaknesses? What are the greatest opportunities for the City? What are the greatest threats to the City? What are the three greatest challenges for the City over the next 3 years?

### STRENGTHS

**Experienced, Competent Staff:**

Skilled, experienced, thoughtful, tenured, responsive & competent staff

**Great Leadership:** Good, committed, diverse, engaged, smart elected leadership

**Involved Community:** Engaged, educated, vibrant, strong community

### WEAKNESSES

**Staff Capacity:** Limited staff, under-staffed

**Condition of Facilities:** Outdated, underdeveloped, poor condition, lack of upkeep in facilities

**Tax/Tax base:** Reduce tax burden, unequal tax base

**Goals/Plans:** Specific goals, strategic goals, climate goals

## SWOT Analysis

**Development:** Economic, residential, commercial, industrial

**Growth:** Community growth, tax-base growth, housing and job growth

**Plans and Collaboration:** Race equity, climate, Riverfront, other groups and communities

### OPPORTUNITIES

**Lack of Housing:** Available, affordable housing lack

**Pandemic:** Unknown economics as a result of the Pandemic

**Mistrust of Government:** Mistrust, lack of connection and transparency

### THREATS



# STRATEGIC PRIORITY

## Economic Vitality



### OUTCOME

Expansion of commercial-industrial tax base consistent with guide plans

### KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR

Commercial/Industrial permit increase; # of new infill projects

### TARGET

Commercial/Industrial permit value increased by \$50M by 2024; > 50% of new Commercial/Industrial developed on infill sites by 2024

### OUTCOME

Successful local business recovery

### KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR

# new business starts; \$ sales tax growth; job growth above 2019

### TARGET

New businesses increased by \_TBD\_ 2021-24; Increase in sales tax revenue by 10% 2021-24; Total jobs above 2019 base increased by \_TBD\_ by 2024

### OUTCOME

Successful tourism recovery

### KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR

Lodging tax growth; Plan completion %; # new events

### TARGET

> 60% of Riverfront sequence chart actions completed by 2024; Lodging tax revenue increased by 10% 2019 to 2024; Recreation/tourism events increased by \_TBD\_ 2021-24

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- Implement economic stabilization, recovery and growth strategy
- Implement infill and redevelopment strategies

- Implement Tourism recovery strategy
- Implement Riverfront Enhancement Plan



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY

# Housing Availability



### OUTCOME

Increased availability of housing at all levels

### KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR

# of units added above need

### TARGET

Vacancy rate for rentals increased to 6% 2021-24; Meet/exceed 2021 housing study supply needs by 2024

### OUTCOME

Increased affordability for cost burdened households

### KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR

% decrease in cost burdened households

### TARGET

Reduce by 5% renters that are cost burdened 2021-24; Reduce by 5% of owners that are cost burdened 2021-24

### OUTCOME

Improved housing quality throughout the city

### KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR

% of non-compliant rental properties;  
# properties stabilized

### TARGET

Establish compliance baseline for all licensed rental properties by 2024; =>90% compliance of rental properties by 2024; Assist 12 senior households to facilitate aging in place 2021-24

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- a. Implement rental housing strategy
- b. Implement housing stabilization program

- c. Implement a housing expansion strategy

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY

# Quality Facilities



### OUTCOME

Park, recreation and trails exceed community expectations

### KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR

% facilities satisfactory; % of gaps addressed; condition rating change

### TARGET

All Park and Rec facilities judged satisfactory or above 2021-24; 50% of high priority walking and biking system gaps addressed by 2024

### OUTCOME

Resolution of major facility projects

### KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR

# decisions made by deadline

### TARGET

By 2024: Go/No Go Decisions: Ice Arena; NCRC/Fifty North remodel & expansion; Liquor store

### OUTCOME

High speed internet access available to all

### KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR

# without provider access; % public places without free Wi-Fi

### TARGET

High-speed fiber provider access – all properties by 2023; Free high-speed Wi-Fi in public places by 2024

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- a. Implement Park & Recreation Capital Investment Plan
- b. Implement coordinated major facilities strategy

- c. Implement integrated high-speed internet program

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



### OUTCOME

Staff and volunteers reflect the community

### KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR

% increase in racial diversity: staff, volunteers

### TARGET

50% increase in racial diversity of: City workforce; Boards and Commissions by 2024

### OUTCOME

Improved access to city services for all demographics

### KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR

% improvement in access-target groups

### TARGET

Meet access goals for two targeted groups by 2024

### OUTCOME

City is a community leader on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

### KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR

Race equity action plan targets achieved

### TARGET

DEI Leadership collaboration goals met yearly 2021-24

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

a. Implement Board and Commission diversity strategy

b. Continue implementation of Racial Equity Action Plan



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY

# Service Excellence



### OUTCOME

Adequate staff to meet demands

### KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR

# projects delayed; % service-level staffing ratios not met

### TARGET

Staffing/resource reconciled to meet staffing & service demands in two services by 2024

### OUTCOME

Improved Board-Staff effectiveness

### KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR

% aligned with strategic plan; % rating good/above

### TARGET

>75% rate working relations good or excellent by 2024; 90% of Board activities align with strategic plan by 2024

### OUTCOME

Improved service delivery

### KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR

% improvement in community satisfaction; % improvement in cycle; response times

### TARGET

Satisfaction in two targeted services increased by 10% by 2024; >80% indicate well informed re: City issues by 2024; 90% of targeted improvements achieved by 2024

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- Conduct annual department analyses
- Deploy Board & Commission Governance effectiveness program

- Implement a service excellence program
- Complete updated comprehensive plan

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY

# Climate Action



### OUTCOME

Climate resilience is a priority in plans and budgets

### KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR

# climate actions in City plans; # climate actions funded

### TARGET

Emerald Ash Borer plan funded and implemented by 2024; Climate resilience standards incorporated into annual budget process and planning decisions by 2024

### OUTCOME

Reduced net carbon emissions

### KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR

% reduction in CO2 emissions; % increase – renewable energy use

### TARGET

City renewable electricity is 60% usage by 2024; City CO2 emissions reduced 20% from 2019 levels by 2024

### OUTCOME

Community participation in Climate Action

### KEY OUTCOME INDICATOR

% increase in people implementing actions

### TARGET

20% increase in people participating in defined activities by 2024

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

a. Implement Climate Action Plan



## STRATEGIC PLANNING PARTICIPANTS

The strategic plan was developed with the hard work and dedication of the City Council and senior staff. They defined a direction and a set of outcomes that are important to the citizens, businesses and stakeholders with whom they partner and serve.

The City's senior staff supported the City Council and offered challenges to conventional thinking.

### CITY COUNCILORS

Rhonda Pownell, Mayor  
Suzie Nakasian, First Ward  
Jamie Reister, Second Ward  
George Zuccolotto, Third Ward  
Jessica Peterson-White, Fourth Ward  
Brad Ness, At Large  
Clarice Grabau, At Large

### SENIOR STAFF

Ben Martig, City Administrator  
Beth Kallestad, Program Coordinator, Administration  
Michelle Mahowald, Communications & Human Resources Director  
Lynette Peterson, City Clerk  
Brenda Angelstad, Finance Director  
Mark Elliott, Chief of Police  
Mitzi Baker, Community Development Director  
Nate Carlson, Economic Development Coordinator  
Mikayla Schmidt, City Planner  
Melissa Hanson, Housing Coordinator  
David Bennett, Public Works Director/City Engineer  
Sean Simonson, Engineering Manager  
Justin Wagner, Utilities Manager  
Brian Whitt, Liquor Operations Manager  
Natalie Draper, Library Director  
Kurt Wolf, IT Manager