



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 |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| Economic Vitality <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 | |
| Housing Availability <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 | |
| Quality Facilities <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; NCR/C/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 | |
| Diversity, Equity and Inclusion <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 | |
| Service Excellence <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 | |
| Climate Action <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

- 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

OPPORTUNITIES

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

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

- c. Implement Tourism recovery strategy
- d. 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

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

- c. Implement a service excellence program
- d. 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