



## Legislation Text

---

**File #:** Res. 2021-030, **Version:** 1

---

**Date:** April 6, 2021

**To:** Members of the City Council  
City Administrator Ben Martig

**From:** Mikayla Schmidt, City Planner

Consider the Preliminary Plat for Hillcrest Village Addition.

**Action Requested:**

The City Council is requested to provide a motion on the preliminary plat for the Hillcrest Village Addition.

**Summary Report:**

The Community Action Center has applied for a preliminary plat to create Hillcrest Village on property owned by the CAC. The CAC has been before the Planning Commission (PC) for voluntary review of this subdivision on several occasions. The PC held a public hearing and reviewed the preliminary plat request at its March 18, 2021 meeting. The PC voted unanimously to recommend approval of the preliminary plat to City Council (Commissioner Nowak recused himself from the vote and discussion due to his involvement in the project).

The parcel is approximately 2.2 acres, proposed to create seven lots and is zoned N2-B: Neighborhood General 2. The site layout will accommodate an accessible and sustainable housing community with six buildings totaling 17 units (two 4-plexes, one 3-plex, and three 2-plexes) and a solar array to supply energy to the homes creating a net-zero project.

The current proposal will connect with Sheldahl Rd. and create a new public street entering into the neighborhood. It will create a turn-around/cul-de-sac since the CAC does not own the property to the north. Right-of-way will be dedicated to the property line to leave the option open if a potential connection could be created to the north in the future.

**Background:**

The site was historically known as the Hillcrest Motel and then as the Manger Inn in 2001, when several Northfield churches, the Community Action Center, youth groups and businesses were involved in renovating several of the homes when it transitioned from a motel to housing. The project created and continues to supply housing for low cost, transitional and emergency housing.

**Analysis:**

**Sanitary Sewer and Water:**

All necessary utilities are available adjacent to the site from Sheldahl Rd. and will be extended into the public street.

**Stormwater:**

Staff is working with the applicant on the final stormwater detention location. The CAC is working with MnDOT to acquire its right-of-way and the goal is to create the stormwater detention area on that right-of-way. The stormwater detention/infiltration basins proposed for the project are adequate to gain the required infiltration volume and the rate and flow control required under the City of Northfield Code.

**Streets, sidewalks and trails:**

This project provides street and sidewalk connections throughout the site. The street will come off Sheldahl Rd. and create a cul-de-sac with sidewalks on both sides of the street. The sidewalk does not create a complete loop of the cul-de-sac at this time. Right-of-way will be dedicated to the north property line for a potential future connection. A sidewalk connection will be required to be constructed from Street A, along the east side of Sheldahl Rd., to Fremouw Ave. Sidewalk will also be included adjacent to the new public street within the development. Street width and construction will follow Northfield street construction standards. The subdivision plat proposes parking behind the homes and has sidewalks leading up to the fronts of the units from the street. There are no trail connections to connect to as part of this project.

**Park Dedication:**

Park dedication has been calculated and the applicant has been notified of the fee for cash-in-lieu.

**Adjacent Property:**

The property to the south is a vacant lot, Bluebird Auto and Dairy Queen. To the west there is vacant land Industrial zoned land and Viking Terrace. Sheldahl Flexible Technologies is north of this proposed subdivision, along with construction, auto and implement businesses outside of city limits. The east side of the development is adjacent to Highway 3 N, along with Northfield Montessori, another implement dealer and other businesses.

**Conformance with Comprehensive Plan:**

The project is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. The parcels have been rezoned to N2-B: Neighborhood General 2 and the best analysis for the site would be based on the larger parcel (1050 Hwy 3 N) which is denoted on the Conservation and Development map in the Comprehensive Plan as “Corridor Redevelopment”. This parcel has hosted the existing housing for many years, which has essentially reached the end of its life cycle. “Corridor Redevelopment” notes these areas are best suited for redevelopment and land intensification along the corridor with a mix of uses, with increased intensity at major nodes, or intersections, and with a redesign of existing roadways to calm traffic flow, which this project will achieve.

**Approval Criteria & Findings:**

The Planning Commission and City Council shall consider the following criteria in the review of a preliminary plat. Criteria (a) and (g) must be met and (b) through (f) shall be considered:

**(a) The proposed subdivision must be in full compliance with the provisions of this LDC;**

*Staff Response:* The proposed subdivision is still under review, but has been found thus far to be in compliance with the LDC through review by the City Planner and the Development Review Committee. Staff and the applicant have identified the need to apply for variances on some items, which will come forward at a later date.

**(b) The proposed subdivision must be in accordance with the general objectives, or with any specific objective, of the city’s comprehensive plan, capital improvements program, or other city policy or regulation;**

*Staff Response:* This subdivision is in compliance with the Northfield Comprehensive Plan and the intent of the project reflects the spirit and values of many of the 12 land use principles including:

- **The small town character will be enhanced** - The development will replace existing structures that had previously transitioned from a motel to housing. The development will replace existing structures with an intentional residential neighborhood that includes a playground, shared solar arrays and residential street design. Closing the current access to Hwy 3 and redirecting the entrance to the neighborhood from Sheldahl Rd will also present access more conducive to a neighborhood setting. The new street creates homes drawn to the street with pedestrian connectivity.
  - **The natural environment will be protected, enhanced and better integrated in the community** - The development respects the environment by maintaining existing trees where possible, managing stormwater, and creating its own solar array system to allow the neighborhood to be net-zero. Finished landscaping will be representative of a neighborhood.
  - **New and redeveloped residential communities will have strong neighborhood qualities** - The redevelopment of this parcel will create better neighborhood qualities such as appropriate street size, sidewalks and multi-unit homes drawn to the street. Additional comments, as stated above.
  - **Neighborhood serving commercial will be small scale and integrated with the residential context** - NA
  - **A wider range of housing choices will be encourage** - These six buildings totaling 17 units (two 4-plexes, one 3-plex, and three 2-plexes) will help fulfill a need of additional housing and add to the diversity of options in the community.
  - **Streets will create an attractive public realm and be exceptional places for people** - Street A is designed to create space for the units to feel like a neighborhood and allow for connection along the street and to other neighborhoods. This redevelopment will result in an enhanced public realm.
  - **Places will be better connected, opportunities will be created to walk and bike** - The development will incorporate walking and biking opportunities on the street and sidewalk connections in the subdivision and adjacent to the parcel.
- (c) **The physical characteristics of the site, including but not limited to topography, vegetation, susceptibility to erosion and sedimentation, susceptibility to flooding, water storage, and retention, must be such that the site is suitable for the type of development or use contemplated;**

*Staff Response:* The physical characteristics of the site are conducive to redevelopment. Stormwater management practices will be designed to meet current standards.

- (d) **The site must be physically suitable for the intensity or type of development or use contemplated;**

*Staff Response:* The parcel is physically suitable for residential development. This development replaces residential uses that were an adaptive reuse of structures, with an intentional neighborhood.

- (e) **The design of the subdivision or the proposed improvements must not be likely to cause substantial and irreversible environmental damage;**

*Staff Response:* The subdivision design will not cause irreversible environmental damage. Land Development Code regulations, MPCA stormwater management and the employment of best practices will ensure this.

- (f) **The design of the subdivision or the type of improvements must not be detrimental to the health, safety, or general welfare of the public; and**

*Staff Response:* The design and redevelopment of the subdivision should result in improved health,

safety, or general welfare of the public. Closing direct vehicular access to Hwy 3, redirecting access to Sheldahl Rd, incorporating pedestrian and stormwater facilities, solar energy, play space, and new homes contribute to improvements.

- (g) The design of the subdivision or the type of improvement must not conflict with easements on record, unless those easements are vacated, or with easements established by judgment of a court.**

*Staff Response:* The project will call for the vacation of a utility easement on the northeast corner of the site and will realigned through Lot 1 Block 1.

Staff supports the preliminary plat and recommends City Council approval, subject to the following:

1. Sidewalk shall be constructed from the access to this Subdivision to Fremouw Ave. along the east side of Sheldahl Rd.
2. Sidewalk shall be constructed to create a complete loop around the cul-de-sac.
3. If temporary stormwater management facilities will be located within the development and later relocated to land currently owned by MnDOT, the applicant will need to execute appropriate agreements with the City to facilitate temporary easements and arrangements for said facilities. Alternatively, the Plat would need to be modified to provide long-term stormwater management on-site on an Outlot.

**Financial Impacts:**

None.

**Tentative Timelines:**

Future timeline will include the vacation of the utility easement, variance, and final plat application.