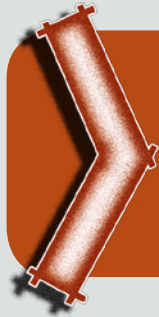


Chapter 1



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Plan Background



Northfield desires to expand their economic base and improve their rate of college graduate retention.

Planning for the Northfield Business and Industrial Parks was the result of recommendations outlined in the 2006 Northfield Comprehensive Economic Development Plan and the 2008 Northfield Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Economic Development Plan assessed community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to Northfield's economic development potential. It notes that while Northfield enjoys a highly educated workforce, an authentic downtown environment, and two world-class colleges, Northfield lacks industrial space and the land resources to accommodate future commercial business development. It also points out a low rate of college graduate retention, linked to the lack of job potential in Northfield. Both policy documents identify the need to diversify and expand Northfield's economic base and make land available for business expansion, particularly for the expansion of existing businesses, but also to make land available for business expansion in the following target industries:

Logistics

Includes firms involved in moving goods from producer to consumer in the most efficient manner. More sophisticated than warehousing and trucking activities in the past.

Specialty Manufacturing

Includes companies requiring IT capacity for manufacturing and paying above average wages for technical skills. Markets are specialized and emphasis is on design over production.

Environmental Technologies

Products and processes which are environmentally beneficial or benign. Includes industries such as renewable energy, sustainable building products, pollution control equipment, waste management, and remediation services.

Healthcare and Medical

Activities range from direct patient care to diagnostic services to medical research.

Professional and Technical

Includes a variety of occupations: attorneys, accountants, marketing and advertising, architects, and engineers, testing and research and development.

Information Technology

Includes firms that produce, transmit, or process data. Examples include publishing, software, broadcasting.

As a result of the recommendations proposed in the Comprehensive Economic Development Plan, the City of Northfield identified the need to annex additional lands into the City for future business and industrial growth along with the need to develop a master plan and guidelines for future commercial growth. In 2009, the City annexed approximately 530 acres of land from Greenvale Township and identified another approximately 450 acres of land in Bridgewater Township for potential annexation to

accommodate future business and industrial growth. Subsequently, the Northfield Economic Development Authority initiated a master planning process and created a Steering Committee to guide the master plan for the candidate sites.

Plan Goals and Objectives

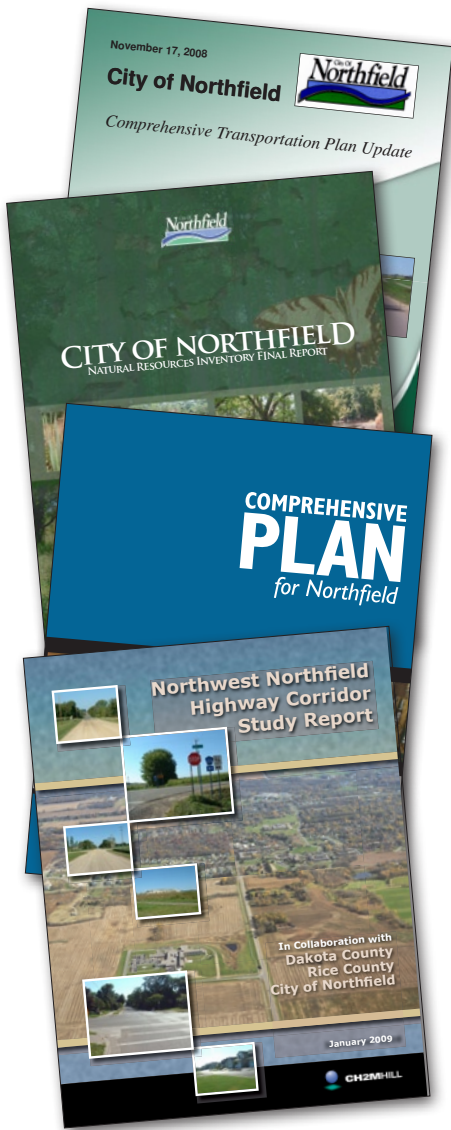
The Northfield Business and Industrial Master Plan provides a vision for future growth on two sites identified for economic development. Together, the Master Plan and Development Guidelines will enable Northfield to create a sustainable, mixed-use business park ready for development and poised to attract development in a competitive market place. To achieve success and insure future growth is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan, the Master Plan incorporates several goals and objectives derived from careful study of adopted City plans and policies. These goals and objectives have been vetted by the Northfield Business and Industrial Park Steering Committee, Economic Development Authority, Planning Commission, City Council, business and industry stakeholders, landowners, and the citizen's of Northfield, Bridgewater and Greenvale Townships through a series of meetings and public open houses. The following goals and objectives helped to shape the Master Plan and Development Guidelines:

- » *Diversify the economic base of Northfield by making land available for business and industrial expansion that will serve to provide opportunities for new investment, tax base expansion, job creation and wage enhancement.*
- » *Create a master plan and design guidelines that will insure that the new development patterns and design character maintain Northfield's distinctive quality of place.*
- » *The development plan(s) should provide a positive gateway identity into the Northfield community.*
- » *Create a plan for successful businesses and industries that will complement rather than compete with the economic vitality of the downtown business community.*
- » *The planning process must include effective methods of engaging the participation of property owners, business and industry stakeholders, campus representatives and the citizens at large.*
- » *Promote a high quality development that incorporates a sensitive approach to design while protecting and enhancing environmental resources.*
- » *Promote energy efficient and sustainable development patterns, land uses and buildings that incorporate LEED standards.*
- » *Develop a plan that provides for and promotes multi-modal transportation for the delivery of goods, services and overall access to the area.*
- » *Create a development strategy that reflects feasibility in the marketplace and provides a realistic potential for business and industrial development adding to the economic vitality of Northfield.*
- » *Develop strategies for successfully marketing the development to potential end users.*
- » *Develop a plan and strategies to successfully attract and retain a talented and educated workforce.*



The new development should complement, not compete, with the economic vitality of downtown Northfield.

Plan Context



The Master Plan guides the planning, public investment, and future development of the two study areas by providing a vision and expectations for future development along with strategies for implementing the plan. This is accomplished by providing a preferred plan layout for each site and specifying the necessary infrastructure to support the anticipated development demands for each site at full build-out. The Master Plan considers existing City utility infrastructure, the City's utility expansion plans and the landowner's future intentions for their lands. Additionally, the Master Plan takes into consideration long-range planning efforts and capital improvements in and around the study area. The long-range plans and policy documents, which can be viewed in summarized memos in the appendix, considered in the planning process for this Master Plan include the following:

- » 2002 Northwest Neighborhood Transportation Task Force Recommendations
- » 2005 Natural Resources Inventory
- » 2006 Comprehensive Economic Development Plan
- » 2007 St. Olaf Non-Core Lands Study
- » 2008 Comprehensive Plan
- » 2008 Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Plan
- » 2008 Northwest Northfield Highway Corridor Study Report
- » 2008 Northfield MN Energy Task Force Report
- » 2009 Northfield Land Development Code (DRAFT)
- » 2010 Northfield Stormwater Ordinance (DRAFT)

Consistent with Northfield's Comprehensive Plan, the Master Plan provides the framework for making land available for commercial and industrial development, creating employment opportunities, enhancing the tax base, and sustaining the overall health and vitality of the Northfield community. Furthermore, the recommendations in the Master Plan are informed by a market study performed as part of the planning process. The planning team examined the potential for industrial park or business park development on the two candidate parcels, over the next 20 years, in order to inform the larger planning effort and assess the potential viability for industrial development within the Northfield area. The market study analyzes current and projected trends for industrial, office and associated uses in the Northfield area in the near and long term and studies comparables to inform the potential for distinct employment centers located in Northfield. The market study estimates demand and absorption of potential industrial and business uses in Northfield over the next twenty years, based upon regional growth trends and offers a viable development program.

As a result of the market analysis, community goals and objectives derived during the pre-design portion of the planning process, and direction provided by the Comprehensive Plan, the Master Plan considers complementary land uses and design strategies that will position the properties for successful and viable employment centers at each candidate site. A diverse mix of land uses is employed to provide these future employment centers with amenities that will distinguish them from other competition in the market place and contribute to a more sustainable development pattern. Furthermore, the development program for each site is tailored to the specific site attributes, including site access, visibility, utility access, topography and other natural features.

Plan Implementation

The Master Plan is structured to provide direction and a framework for future development patterns on each site but flexible enough to allow the City to respond to market conditions and developer interest. The Master Plan has been designed to accommodate and attract a range of land uses and potential target industries to the candidate sites while meeting the needs of existing employers in Northfield ready to expand their businesses. The plan also specifies the necessary infrastructure to support the anticipated development, estimates infrastructure costs, identifies potential phasing strategies, possible funding sources and strategies to finance the various capital expenditures.

The candidate sites for the master planning effort are located in the Economic Development Floating (ED-F) District. The ED-F District is applied to areas of the city appropriate for employment with an urban campus type character with a focus on high quality development that is designed in a way to preserve the city's natural resources while simultaneously promoting economic development. This district will provide opportunities for corporate administrative offices and medium sized research and development firms to locate in the city. Land uses within the district should be designed to minimize impact on any residential uses by appropriate buffering and overall subdivision design. High standards of appearance and design will be required and maintained with restrictions on outdoor storage and activities with undesirable characteristics.

The Northfield Business and Industrial Park Master Plan provides City of Northfield decision makers and staff with the tools and direction to guide future development on the candidate sites. The City should consider appropriate amendments to the Land Development Code and Comprehensive Plan as a result of the recommendations made within the Master Plan to gain compliance between each policy document. Together with the City's Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code, the Northfield Business and Industrial Park Master Plan provide developers and designers with the City's expectations for future development on these sites.

