



MEMO

Date: December 8, 2009
From: Jeff McMenimen, Mark Koegler
To: Jody Gunderson, Northfield EDA Director
Re: Northfield Business Park – Visioning Charrette Summary Notes
CC: Steering Committee Members
EDA members
Technical Committee Members

The following notes summarize the discussion with Steering Committee/EDA/Stakeholders and public input received during the Visioning Charrette conducted on December 1-2, 2009:

VISIONING CHARRETTE

Intent and Expected Outcomes

The intent of the Northfield 3rd Business and Industrial Park Visioning Charrette was to kick off the planning process by exploring context and site issues, opportunities, desired outcomes and potential solutions and strategies for future business and industrial park development on each of the two project study sites. The charrette was a collaborative planning process, in this case, designed to harness the talents and energies of the planning team along with members from the EDA, Steering Committee, stakeholders with input from the community to create and discuss preliminary master plan concepts. Specifically, the purpose of the charrette is to achieve the following:

- Kick start the creative planning process
- Explore and discuss potential master plan alternatives for the business park site(s)
- Capitalize on the history and knowledge of key stakeholders and members of the community
- Build consensus for preliminary master plan concepts
- Develop preliminary land use programs, concept drawings, diagrams, design principles and strategies

DAY ONE

Overview

- Day One began with a bus tour of both sites. Steering Committee/EDA members and stakeholders joined the planning team to tour each site and discuss specific site characteristics.
- Following the tour, the planning team led the Steering Committee/EDA and stakeholders through a discussion of their vision for the planning of each site – discussing planning issues such as land use program, pattern, scale and character of development, sustainability initiatives, and potential planning challenges.
- The planning team explored several concepts for developing the two project sites during the afternoon, preparing plan diagrams and program ideas to review with the general public during the Pin Up session.
- The Pin Up session was conducted from 4-6pm. The planning team presented each concept and general land use program information. Following the presentation, members of the community were invited to provide input on the preliminary concepts.

Discussion with Steering Committee/EDA/Stakeholders

The planning team led the discussion with Steering Committee/EDA members and stakeholders regarding their vision for development of the business/industrial park sites. The following is a summary of comments received:

- Land uses should primarily be employment uses (office/industrial).
- Retail should not be a priority land use on either site but should be considered as a support use.
- Can see a need for fuel station, convenience store, dry cleaners, etc.
- Should civic uses be explored? There had been discussion regarding the inclusion of a hockey rink.
- Given the relatively flat and open nature of the north site, perhaps it is better suited to harder, more industrial uses of the two sites.
- Given the sensitive nature of environmental systems on the south site, maybe lighter office and industrial uses in a campus setting are most appropriate.
- A conference facility should be considered.
- Renewable energy sources should be considered (biogas, wind, solar, geothermal).
- The southern portion of the north site might be better suited to corporate users to portray a better entry image into the city while more industrial users could be sited on the northern portions of the north site.
- Perhaps the south site is a good location for environmental studies programs conducted by the local colleges (arboretum, agricultural research, etc.)
- Look for educational/interpretive opportunities.
- Does access to rail make sense on the south site?
- Explore non-conventional development scenarios.
- The plans must be feasible – supported by market conditions.

- The plans must be compatible with the small town character of Northfield. This can be achieved by developing street-fronted buildings with parking located behind the buildings, maximizing the height of the buildings to preserve open space, using local materials and design patterns.
- Work with the land.
- Plan for a campus-like setting on the south site – buildings on a green campus.
- Is there land swap potential with St. Olaf?
- Perhaps an arboretum (St. Olafs) on the south site⁴ in exchange for the ability to develop the 90 acre St. Olaf property on the north site.
- If housing is considered as an appropriate land use, it should not be designed as detached, low density, single family home lots. It should be non-conventional, higher density, type of housing tied to supporting people who work at the business park.
- Affordable, workforce, live/work housing options should be explored.
- There should be housing choices for all economic groups.
- The planning team should challenge conventional data (market conditions).
- Phasing strategies must be considered for each concept.
- The plans should be flexible to adapt to changing market, social and technology conditions.
- Address all levels of sustainability – community, site, building.

Preliminary Land Use Program

The planning team worked with a preliminary land use program to generate concepts. The preliminary land use program is informed by the market analysis being conducted by the planning team. It takes into consideration current and historical business/industrial park developments in the Twin Cities and adjusts those assumptions based upon unique attributes common to Northfield in the marketplace. The following land use assumptions provided the basis for the planning team to begin work on the two sites:

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>% of Building Program</u>	<u>Avg. Size of Building (SF)</u>
Bulk Warehouse	15%	50,000sf – 150,000sf
Office Warehouse	15%	50,000sf – 150,000sf
Office Showroom	10%	15,000sf – 40,000sf
Manufacturing	40%	25,000sf – 250,000sf
Other	20%	10,000sf – 25,000sf

Note: The market analysis model predicts an annual absorption of approximately 100,000sf of business/industrial park development in Northfield with a total creation of 2.14 million square feet of business/industrial use in Northfield by 2030.

Preliminary Concepts

The planning team developed two preliminary concept plans for each site on Day One. Each concept illustrated a different approach to land use program, theme, and organization of the site. The following is a summary of land use programs explored:

North 'A'

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Area</u>
Agricultural Research (Saint Olaf)	90 ac.
Mixed Office/Industrial	200 ac.
Housing	80 ac.
Retail	10 ac.
<u>Open Space</u>	<u>150 ac.</u>
Total	530 ac.

North 'B'

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Area</u>
Medical Complex	60 ac.
- Office	
- Hospice	
- Wellness Center	
- Clinics	
Energy Campus	30 ac.
- Wind	
- Biogas	
Mixed Office/Industrial	200 ac.
Data Center	20 ac.
Housing	60 ac.
Retail	10 ac.
<u>Open Space</u>	<u>150 ac.</u>
Total	530 ac.

South 'A'

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Area</u>
Corporate Campus	30 ac.
Conference Center	20 ac.
Golf Course (Audubon Sanctuary)	200 ac.
Housing	50 ac.
<u>Open Space</u>	<u>150 ac.</u>
Total	450 ac.

South 'B'

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Area</u>
Arboretum (Saint Olaf)	150 ac.
Conference Center	20 ac.
Corporate Campus	90 ac.
Housing	90 ac.

Education/Environmental Center	10 ac.
Open Space	90 ac.
Total	450 ac.

Public Input

The following is a summary of public comments received during the Day One Pin Up session. These comments were discussed with the Steering Committee on the morning of Day Two and incorporated into work completed on Day Two:

- Housing should not be considered to just fill in the rest of the property with a land use after the business program has been accommodated. There must be a supported need for additional housing on a regional scale.
- If housing is a necessary land use to make the project financially feasible or to reach goals of sustainability, it should be carefully considered in the phasing strategy. Housing should not be an early phased development if included.
- The economics of housing must work.
- If housing is considered, it should not be conventional, single family homes.
- Is the development too big? Should more of this land be considered as greenbelt?
- The north and south sites seem to have different personalities – the north site better suited for more intense land uses due to it’s relatively flat and open landscape, the south site better suited to less intense, site sensitive development due to the creeks and topography.
- Is there an argument to not annex the south site if the business/industrial park program (for 2030) can be accommodated on the north site?
- The plans should balance the cost of the property with the appropriate amount of open space.
- Given the development concepts prepared for the south site, does it make economic sense? Is there enough income generating land use included in the plan to turn any profit?
- What is the long term growth to the west of town? Should these studies consider off-site potential growth scenarios?
- Many liked the idea of a land swap with St. Olaf’s property on the north site in exchange for the ability to develop a St. Olaf’s Arboretum on the south site.
- Concerns regarding the land swap idea with St. Olaf’s – Timing of swap? Decision making process? Is the land contiguous with the campus? Necessary infrastructure?
- The primary concern of the plan should be to prepare a plan to increase the City’s tax base. It should be a regional business center with a variety of jobs.
- Workforce housing should be considered to support new jobs created by the development. (potentially 1,500 new jobs)
- The golf course concept has little support.
- Initially there was some push-back on the use of retail. The concern was that it might compete with downtown retail. Once people understood the amount of retail (approx. 10 ac.) planned here was small and meant to support employees and residents of the development (fuel station, convenience store, dry cleaners, etc.), it became more accepted as an appropriate use.

- Does the land use program mix make economic sense? Is there the appropriate amount of industrial, commercial, residential use?
- What are the costs of “green” solutions to development? Can one of the concepts explore fully sustainable solutions – meaning environmentally sustainable? Eco-industrial park concept?
- How does the phasing of development play out? Is this a 10, 20 or 30 year development?
- Access from Hwy 19 and 23 is critical to the way this development occurs.
- Please provide the opportunity to submit written comments.
- Please provide the opportunity to comment on concepts on the project website.

DAY TWO

Overview

- Day Two began with a discussion between the planning team, Steering Committee and stakeholders regarding public comments received at the Day One Pin Up.
- The planning team worked with City Staff to develop revised concepts that would address the public comments received on Day One.
- The planning team conducted the Day Two Pin Up session with a brief presentation of the things heard the evening before and new concept development achieved throughout the day.
- Public comments were received on several new concepts.

Revised Concepts

The planning team developed revised preliminary concept plans for each site based upon earlier public comment received on Day One. Each concept illustrates a different approach to land use program, theme, and organization of the site. The team prepared 3 concepts for the north site and 1 new concept for the south site. The following is a summary of land use programs explored:

North ‘A’

North site ‘A’ incorporates a mixed use center with office, live/work and neighborhood retail north of highway 19 and west of highway 23. The street system in this area incorporates smaller block sizes within the center – reminiscent of the historic block pattern in Northfield. The St. Olaf property is planned for a health campus with medical office, a potential civic use and hotel accommodations. The northwest portion of the site includes an energy park for renewable energy sources including biogas and wind generation facilities. The northeast portion of the site is planned for medium density housing (townhomes). The open space system is based on large swaths of greenways, trails and smaller, more urban parks and parkways.

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Area</u>
Eco-Industrial	100 ac.
Energy Campus	50 ac.
Medical Office/Health Campus	40 ac.
Mixed Office	70 ac.
Professional Services	20 ac.
Live/Work	15 ac.
Civic	10 ac.
Hotel Accomodations	10 ac.
Housing	70 ac.
Retail	5 ac.
<u>Open Space</u>	<u>140 ac.</u>
Total	530 ac.

North 'B'

The north 'B' concept is intended to address environmental sustainability while expanding the tax base. It includes wind farms, bio-fuel algae production areas to provide fuel for a biogas energy plant, eco-industrial uses and an innovation think tank located on the St. Olaf property. Much of the northern portion of the site is left for agriculture uses until further development is necessary.

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Area</u>
Eco-Industrial	100 ac.
Energy Campus	160 ac.
- Wind	
- Biogas	
Office and Innovation Center	50 ac.
Retail	15 ac.
Education	10 ac.
Open Space	70 ac.
<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>125 ac.</u>
Total	530 ac.

North 'C'

The north 'C' site plan focuses development for the business/industrial program near Hwy 19 and Hwy 23. It also proposes a health campus development on the St. Olaf property in close proximity to the Northfield Hospital. Remaining land along the north side of the property would remain in agriculture near term and future development is "to be determined". The plan incorporates large swaths of open greenways and wind turbines over the agricultural fields.

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Area</u>
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Health Campus	90 ac.
Manufacturing/Warehouse	120 ac.
Flexible Use/Office	20 ac.
Mixed-Office or Housing	50 ac.
Live/Work	5 ac.
Civic	5 ac.
Hotel Accomodations	5 ac.
Neighborhood Retail	3 ac.
Agriculture (TBD – future)	180 ac.
<u>Open Space</u>	<u>52 ac.</u>
Total	530 ac.

South ‘A’

Due to sensitive landscapes along Heath Creek and Spring Brook, the south site has been planned for less intensive uses. The south site has been planned to incorporate an arboretum and an associated environmental learning center, a corporate campus with conference center, and housing for alumni. The remainder of the property would be reserved for agriculture uses until further growth is necessary, in which time the remaining land would be developed for corporate campus, eco-industrial and housing uses.

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Area</u>
Arboretum (Saint Olaf)	160 ac.
Conference Center	20 ac.
Corporate Campus	50 ac.
Alumni Housing	10 ac.
Education/Environmental Center	10 ac.
Agriculture (near term)	200 ac.
- Corporate Campus (future)	(50 ac)
- Eco-Industrial (future)	(100 ac)
- Housing (future)	(50 ac)
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 450 ac.

Public Input

General Comments

- Please pursue ecologically sensitive designs as much as possible. I think the idea of attracting “green” businesses to Northfield is a smart move and these plans should strive for the highest “green” standards available. Water management, energy production, etc. are great ideas. Some other ideas should be weighed carefully as to whether they are in fact ecologically wise (biofuels, eg., though I understand algae has more promise, it takes

up less space). If twice as much square footage is needed, then we should consider building up or down rather than paving over another 100 acres we could be growing food on. Adequate land for food production is a critical piece of sustainable development. I hope whatever plans you develop work to minimize the irreparable loss of arable land. As Northfield grows we will need that land to grow food on.

- I'm very impressed with the leaps of intellectual progress from Tues to Wed.
- In the last 15 years I've lived in Northfield, I have seen various interactions with Hoisington Koegler and been very impressed with their respect for the public component of their process.
- Our City Staff, in my opinion, has not exhibited that same respect for citizen input. Please retain your firm principles, I am confident you will try to do that.

North Site 'A'

- We don't need or want residential on the north site. If not used for (industrial), keep it agricultural.
- How do you ensure that Phase V (residential) doesn't end up as Phase I or Phase II?
- Homes don't seem to be justified if this is for business and industrial use.
- This plan doesn't present the visual gateway we'd like for Northfield – looks like a little city – needs a different face to the gateway.
- I'd prefer to discourage the kind of development that “needs” visibility from the highway(19).
- The woodland is valuable and can be restored – do not destroy! Respect this resource.

North Site 'B'

- The characteristics of this plan make it most promising and fitting for Northfield – compact, focused on energy, green, etc.
- Concern regarding retail and housing.
- It also leaves much land in agriculture which we want to protect.
- This whole concept is the best idea for making Northfield distinctive and attractive.
- Build in some local food production for businesses, hospital or St. Olaf – pigs, vegetables.
- Contact Spartz Medin wind company

North Site 'C'

- I don't understand “showroom” along the highway. Is that what we want as a gateway?

South Site 'A'

- Phasing indicated you are starting on the east. Northfield does not need changes to our annexation agreement to include Sec. 3 for 10 years or more.
- Good idea for green space.

- The only reason, in my opinion, for Northfield to annex this property is to codify the principles Northfield says it has about itself as a special place. Annexing this land to preserve/protect it as a possible heritage eco-educational opportunity using the expertise of adjacent St. Olaf College to “brand” this effort – makes use of our biggest industry – education.
- The annexation agreement with Bridgewater must be dealt with in a timely and cooperative RGU manner. I hope HKGi can help facilitate that process by your firms respect for process.
- This is a vastly improved plan. It respects and takes advantage of the unique resources in the area.
- Hope the housing remains many years out.