

Date: April 9, 2021

To: Planning Commission members
Mitz Baker, Community Development Director
Mikayla Schmidt, City Planner

From: Workplan Subcommittee: Joe Gasior, Betsey Buckheit, and Tracy Davis Heisle

RE: 2021-22 Work Plan

In the attached matrix, the subcommittee organized the items which we identified for our [2019-2020 Work Plan](#). Some of the items are specific LDC amendments while others are broader, multi-year projects requiring a request for budget to be allocated. It does not include uncontroversial text amendments suggested by staff which the Planning Commission delegated to staff to work on as their time permitted. The matrix is organized this way:

- Comprehensive Plan: Updating the Comprehensive Plan is being planned; this section breaks out parts of the update process including goals for the revision.
- Land Development Code: This section includes near term text amendments to improve the LDC and make it more closely track the Comprehensive Plan. These items were identified in earlier discussions as the areas the Planning Commission wanted to have policy-level discussion as well as making text changes to the code.
- Training: We haven't pursued any training or education opportunities, but some of us want to ensure the entire Commission has the tools, knowledge, and skills we need to do our jobs well. This section is still under development with only broad suggestions noted.

At the meeting, the subcommittee asks the Commission to adopt the plan. We anticipate there will be revision suggestions and questions, but we ask the Commission to give preliminary approval along with direction for specific revisions to be made by the subcommittee, in order to have an officially adopted working document.

To meet that goal:

- Review the matrix and be ready with specific suggestions for substantive additions or changes.
- Consider what areas you care about and would like to work on; subcommittees by area are one way we can more quickly refine ideas and move forward.
- What do you want to learn? Please make training and education suggestions.

Thank you.

2021 PC Work Plan

I. Comprehensive Plan¹ The Planning Commission has the duty to prepare and recommend adoption of the Comprehensive Plan; to recommend zoning and subdivision regulations, an official map, and a capital improvements program to implement the plan; and to recommend proposed amendments²

Objective 1: Update 2008 Comprehensive Plan. Typically, Comprehensive Plans are updated about every 10 years to ensure the demographic data and land use information are current, as well as planning for the growth of the community for the next decade. Since 2008, substantial policy development has occurred in Northfield which needs to be reflected in this top level policy as soon as possible. Incorporating policy changes lays the groundwork for much needed updates to the Land Development Code and other regulations to ensure Northfield’s plans for (especially) mobility, sustainability, and equity are carried out.

Strategy/Outcome/Metrics	Responsibility	Priority	Action year			\$	Notes
Revision of 2008 Comprehensive Plan	PC Staff (CD)	1	2021			Y	Budget details: \$55,000 allocated for 2021 [intended use?]
Update population, economic, and land use data	Staff Consultant	1	2021			Y	

¹ Minn.Stat. §462.352: LDC 7.4.4

² Bylaws

<p>Establish further revision scope and priorities; develop budget request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● more inclusive and more equitable public engagement ● Incorporate policy changes with clear direction for future regulation ● Consider reinstating single future land use map ● Work with Council to integrate Strategic Plan priorities ● Plan LDC revisions as part of Comp Plan process 	<p>PC Staff CC</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2021</p>			<p>Consultant expertise needed: demonstrated expertise in inclusive public engagement</p> <p>Policies adopted since 2008: Complete Streets, Climate Action, Bike, Pedestrian & Trail Plan, Equity, Age Friendly Northfield, Riverfront Enhancement.</p>
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II. LDC: PC has a duty to propose official controls to implement the Comp Plan³ and to initiate and recommend proposed amendments, supplements and enactments to LDC map or text.⁴

Objective 1: Near term LDC revisions to address identified issues. In the last few years, we have reviewed applications where the LDC does not help further City policy (especially policy adopted recently), contains needless regulation, (neighborhood compatibility), requires variances to allow desirable development (BAR limits) and lacks tools which could guide better development (PUD for unique or desirable projects such as Hillcrest development). While working toward revising the Comprehensive Plan and a wholesale revision of the LDC to follow, there are some minor revisions to the LDC text which could help sharpen our regulations.

³ Minn.Stat.§462.356(2): Putting the Comp Plan into effect: "study and propose... reasonable and practicable means for putting the plan or section of the plan into effect."

⁴ LDC 7.4.4

Strategy/Outcome/Metrics	Responsibility	Priority	Action year			\$	Notes
<p>Parking regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review parking requirements in light of newer research identifying the cost of providing parking, better ways to measure need, and in light of climate and connectivity goals. ● Evaluate to LDC requirements or likely to limit housing 	PC Transp. Advisory Committee	1	2021				Not in LDC, but strongly related: Rental Code 14.124 - reduce parking required per unit from 2 to 1 plus provide for variances from this requirement Donald Shoup article
<p>PUD Overlay District (LDC 2.5.4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider allowing creation of new PUDs ● Recommend purposes and criteria for new PUDs 	PC Staff	1	2021				Hillcrest project, Paulson property could have benefited from this tool
<p>Inclusion: Review LDC through an equity lens including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revise or eliminate neighborhood compatibility requirements ● Table 2.7.1: Allow small apartments (4-8 units), rowhouses, live/work in all zoning districts by right ● Consider eliminating owner occupied requirement for ADUs ● Delete definitions of “family” [9.2] and any other references limiting the number of “unrelated persons” ● Request permission/direction from City Council to revise rental code provisions which are parallel to LDC requirements or likely to limit housing supply 	PC HRA Staff	2					Rental code provisions: Remove “20% rule,” revise parking required (from 2 to 1 space), and delete dfs of family from rental code

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Table 2.7-1 Principal permitted use table: Add small maker facilities and consider zoning district permissions. 						
<p>Mobility and access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Table 2.7-1: Drive-through businesses: Review drive-through businesses in C1 district and recommend whether they should be allowed as of right west of Highway 3 (staff position) or prohibited (PC request) ● LDC 5.2.3(B)(11) Culs de sac: Review to recommend changes or affirm current regulation prohibiting permanent cul-de-sac streets except where “absolutely necessary” 	PC Staff	2	2021			N Drive-thrus in C-1, the walkable downtown district, do not serve adopted policy for climate action, pedestrian friendliness, and downtown development pattern.
<p>Carry out Bike, Pedestrian & Trail Plan recommendations: Land Development Code provides direction on when a street should include a bicycle lane or sidewalk, but it does not provide any direction on what type of on-street bicycle facility should be provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Table 5.2-3: Street Types and Requirements: develop bicycle facility selection matrix to guide what type of on-street bicycle facility should be used in specific land use contexts ● Develop review process for CIP street projects to select appropriate facilities based on land use. 	PC Staff - PW					Actions related to bike, pedestrian and trail plan update are located in Comp Plan, Transportation Plan, and LDC

Objective 2: Comprehensive review and revision of LDC following Comp Plan update. The City Council has adopted numerous policies since the 2008 Comprehensive Plan was adopted. These include the Climate Action Plan including its Strategic Plan with emphasis on housing, climate, and equity. The current LDC has proven to be overly complex and not well-suited to implementing the 2008 Comp Plan. Upon updating the Comp Plan, a full revision of the LDC will be needed and should be anticipated and planned now.

Strategy/Outcome/Metrics	Responsibility	Priority	Action year			\$	Notes
Explore performance based zoning, form based codes and other more granular regulation models.	PC Consultant Staff	1			2023	Y	
Amend development review process to require assessment of public ROI and incentivize higher productivity development	PC EDA Staff Consultant				2023		Followup to Urban3 presentation December 2018
Carry out climate action, equity planning							

III. Training: The Planning Commission would like to ensure that it has the tools and knowledge it needs to carry out its mission. In recent years, training has been limited to the general Board & Commission orientation video.

Strategy/Outcome/Metrics	Responsibility	Priority	Action year			\$	Notes
Basic training: knowing the law and process							
Planning tools and resources: learning about kinds of codes, regulatory tools, newer planning practices							
Specific issues: learning about parking, community engagement, climate action, etc.							
Speakers: is there anyone you want to hear from? Other boards and commissions, local/regional experts, would Donald Shoup do a zoom Q & A?							

The following LDC items were identified by staff as desirable or needed changes. In late 2019-2020 workplan development, the Planning Commission delegated these items to staff to bring back to the Planning Commission for action as staff was able to work on them. These items were considered relatively uncontroversial and did not require Planning Commission discussion before seeing proposed changes.

- Table 2.3-1: Remove Required Minimum Unit Type column
- 2.6.1 Neighborhood Center Floating District/ LDC 2.8.4(Y) Neighborhood serving commercial: Review and propose changes to regulations to make development of neighborhood commercial areas easier
- 2.6.2: Economic Development Floating Zoning District: Develop regulations for EDF district which was mapped but not completed when the City considered a large business park west of Northfield Hospital Development before development occurs
- Table 3.2-1: Site development standards: Review the Building Area Ratio and recommend increased percentage or consider deleting the requirement.
- 5.1.2(C): Prohibition Related to Building Permits: delete this section as unnecessary.
- 5.2(B)(12) Private streets: Consider whether private streets (other than alleys) should be allowed with qualifications
- 5.2.2(b): Remove section as unenforceable, and consider alternative strategies for distributing affordable housing, housing types across the community
- 8.4.3 Development procedures: Vacating easements. Review and draft administrative process for vacating easements (currently requires adopting an ordinance)
- 8.5.5 Amendments to PUDs: Draft regulations for to permit major amendments to existing PUDs
- 8.5.11: Minor subdivisions: Review and consider recommending administrative review of minor subdivisions and consolidations, rather than Council approval.
- Review and consider allowing multiple buildings on a single lot in commercial and residential zoning districts to allow for multiple configurations and types of ownership.