

VISION FOR FUTURE REUSE OF THE NORTHFIELD FIRE STATION

Please note:

This draft PowerPoint slide deck was shown to the Northfield Select Board at their Feb. 21, 2023 meeting.

This slide deck could be used as part of a public process to gather community input on the potential future reuse of the Fire Station property.



December 2022

Presentation Prepared by
Franklin Regional Council
of Governments

PROJECT PARTNERS



Franklin Regional
Council of Governments

This presentation was prepared by FRCOG, as requested by the Town of Northfield in 2022. Funding for this project was from the FRCOG's Massachusetts District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) award.

PROJECT PURPOSE



Northfield Fire
Department
Station

93 Main Street,
Northfield, MA



- The Town of Northfield is planning for a new Public Safety Complex that would combine fire, police and emergency services in a new facility.
- By the Fire Department moving to a new facility, the current Fire Station property would be vacated.
- The Town would like input from the community about how the property could be used for a new purpose.
- The Town could choose to keep the site or make it available for private acquisition and redevelopment through a public process.
- Considerations when determining future reuse options for the site:
 - The community's vision for the area
 - The feasibility of potential options

93 MAIN STREET SITE



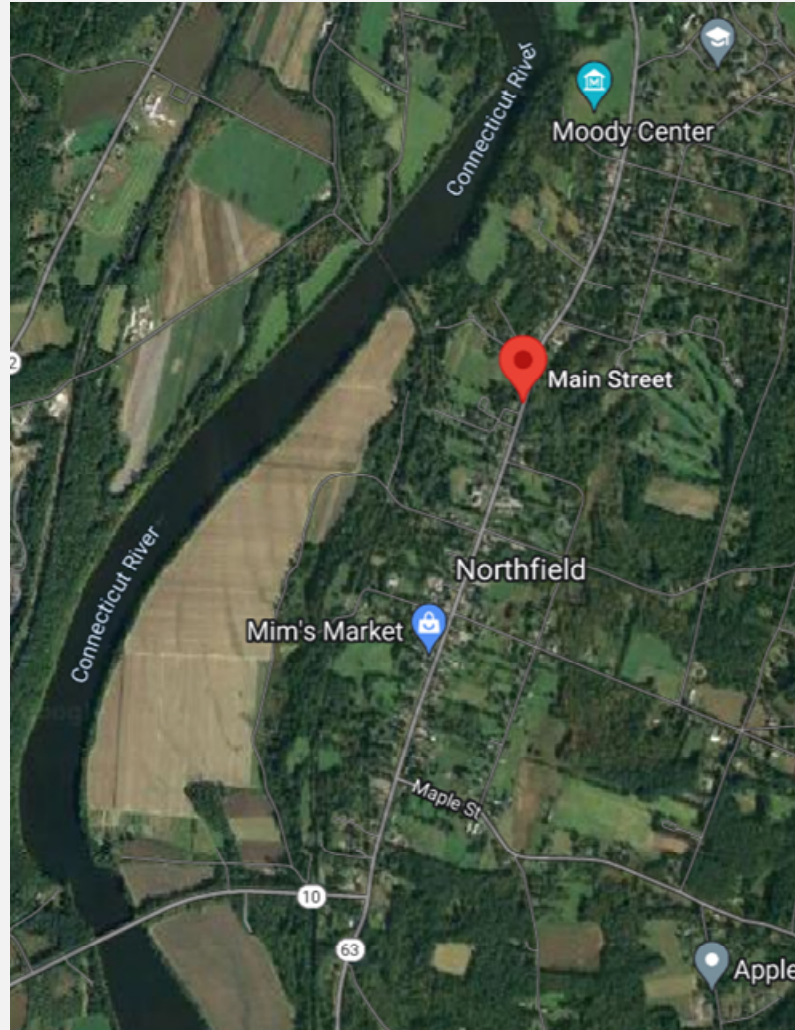
Parcel boundary for 93 Main Street property.
Photo: MassGIS

- Parcel owned by the Town of Northfield
- Located at corner of Main and School Streets
- 2.045 acres
- 5,400 sq. ft., two-floor building
- Constructed in 1953
- Currently serves as Fire Station
- Areas of the building are considered to be in poor condition

RECENT AND PROPOSED PROJECTS IN MAIN STREET CORRIDOR



Proposed Schell Bridge
Pedestrian Walkway



Opening of the
Thomas Aquinas
College campus
in 2019 and plans
for the Moody
Center.



Town's
350th



Website and visitor
guide from
VisitNorthfieldArea.com

DEMOGRAPHICS

Franklin
County

■ Municipal population about 2,899	71,085
■ 19% of population under 18 years	17%
■ 20% of population over age 65	22%
■ 10% population who are people of color	11%
■ 44% has Bachelor's degree or higher educational attainment	39%
■ 1,213 households	34,326
■ \$83,750 median household income	\$64,949
■ \$331,375 Median Single Family Sales Price	\$281,500



MARKET CONDITIONS

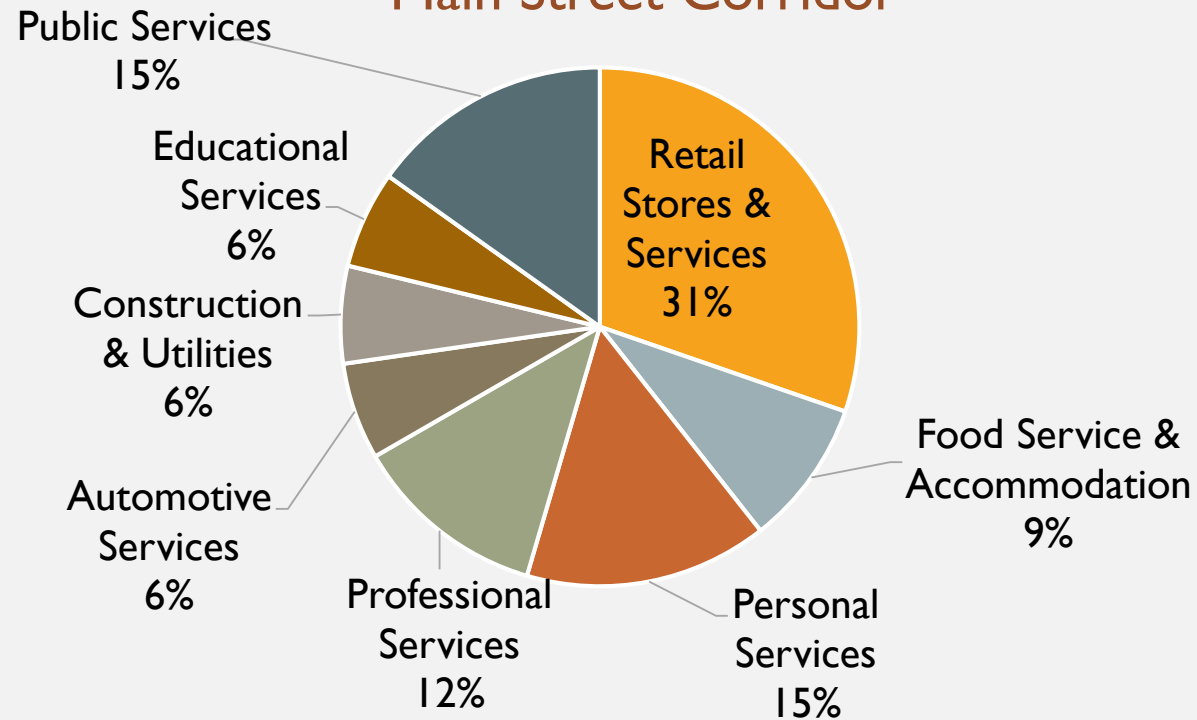


Commercial activity in center of Northfield. Credit: FRCOG

- In 2019, an estimated 1,740 Northfield residents were employed. Of these employed residents, 91% worked outside of Northfield.
- In 2019, an estimated 445 employees worked at jobs located in the Town of Northfield.
 - Of these employees, 35% lived in Northfield and most of the remaining 65% of employees lived in nearby communities.
 - Of these employees, 44% worked in Education Services, 10% in Administration & Support Services, 9% in Manufacturing, 8% in Transportation and Warehousing, 7% in Healthcare and Social Assistance; 7% in Construction, and the remaining worked in a variety of industries.
- Average Annual Daily Traffic Volumes
 - 8,642 vehicles on Main Street, north of Maple Street in 2021, which was an increase from 2020 and close to 2019 volumes.

MARKET CONDITIONS

**% of Business Types in 2-mile
Main Street Corridor ***



* Does not include home-based businesses or other businesses not visible from Main Street.

Source: FRCOG, Inventory conducted November 2022

Large Employers in Northfield

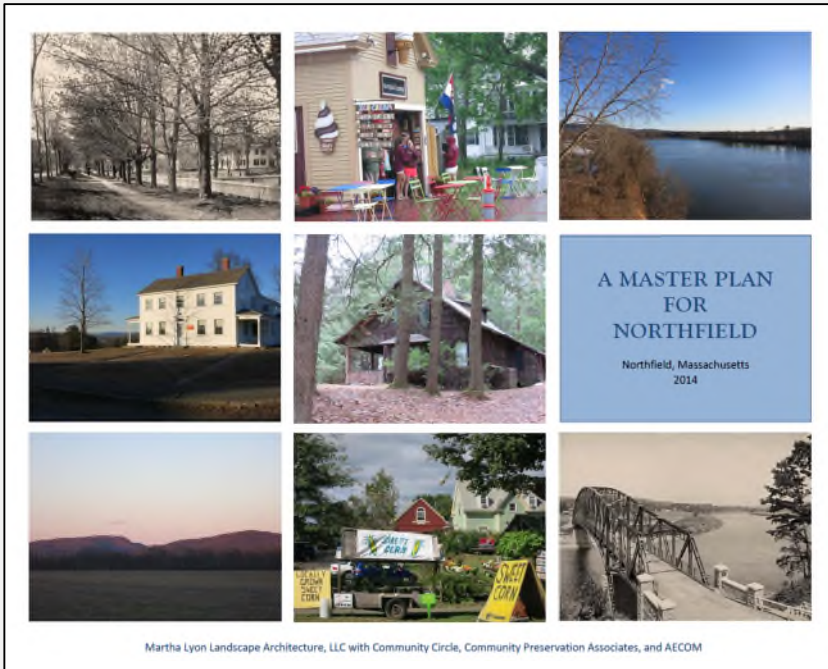
- Pioneer Valley Regional High School
- FirstLight/Northfield Mountain Pumped storage
- Northfield Elementary School
- Whitney Trucking
- Five Acre Farm
- Northfield Fab & Machine
- Thomas Aquinas College

Source: Data Axle, 2022

During November 2022 inventory, five storefronts/retail sites were identified as vacant.

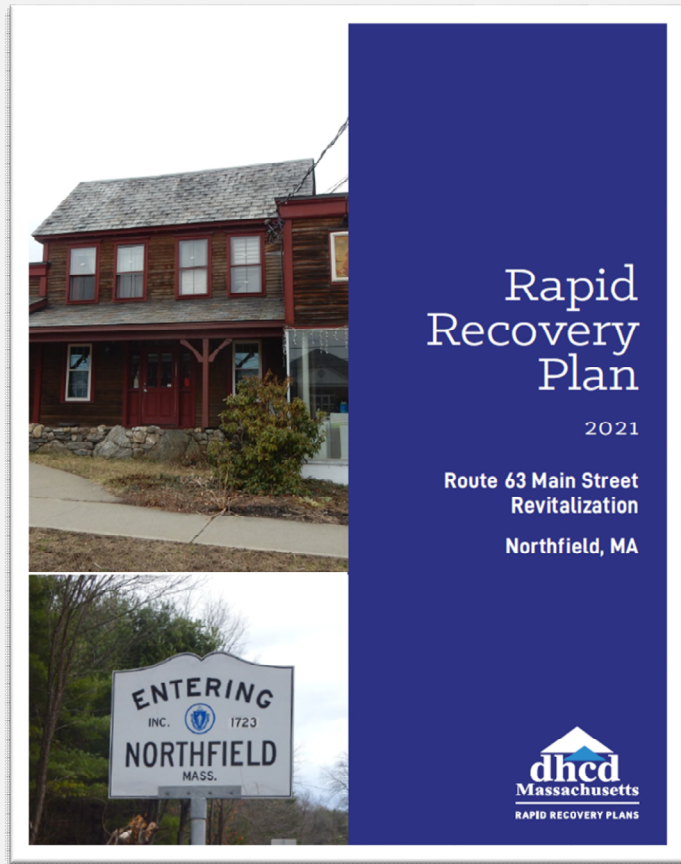
NORTHFIELD MASTER PLAN

The 2014 Master Plan identified eight master goals



- To promote preservation of open space and natural features.
- To promote opportunities for recreation and community gathering
- To promote economic development town wide
- To preserve and revitalize Main Street
- To maintain public facilities, improve public services, and enhance communication
- To expand housing opportunities and support neighborhoods
- To enhance transportation and circulation systems
- To promote Northfield's history and culture

RAPID RECOVERY PLAN (RRP)



Using statewide framework, the RRP was created for the village center's commercial Route 63 corridor in 2021.

RRP's Key Findings

- Town's customer base is older
- Public perceptions about the existing physical environment
- Town would benefit from an updated business environment
- Business have support from local groups

SITE CONDITIONS



Interior Garage



Dispatch Office



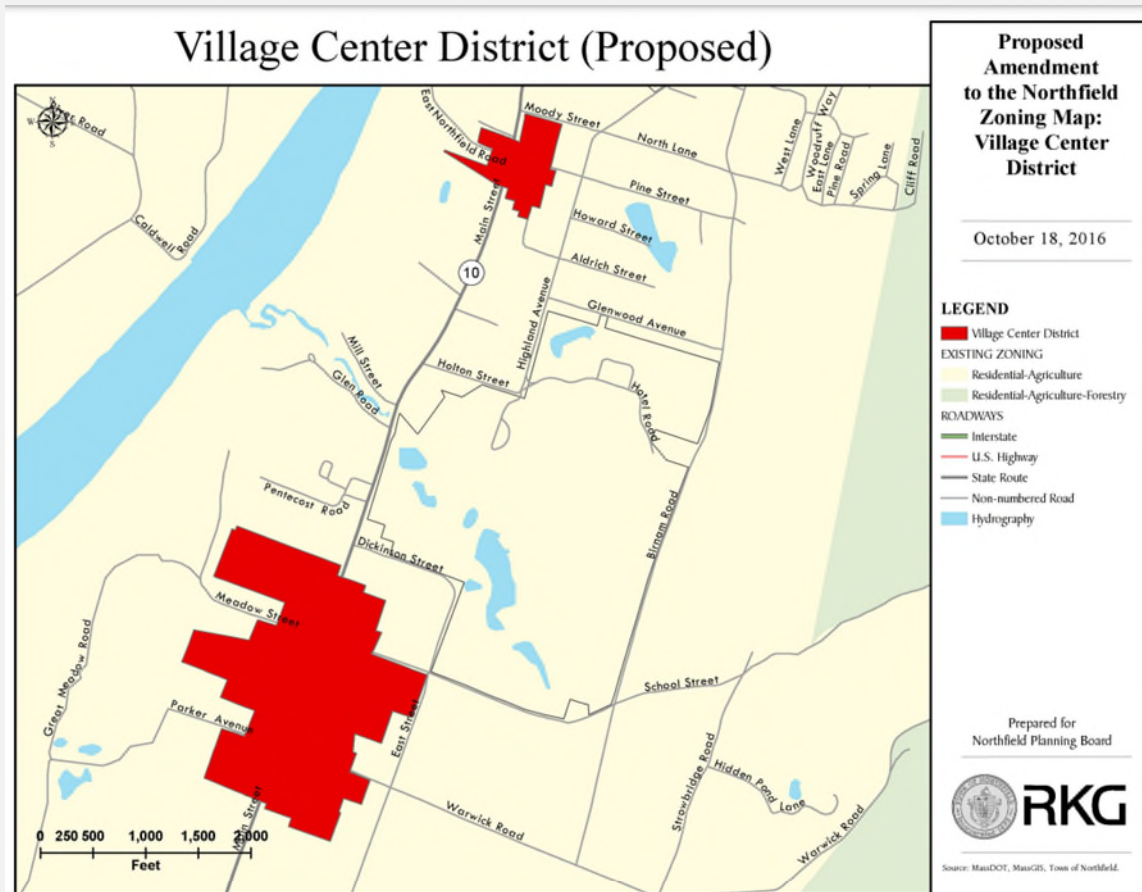
Chief's Office



Interior Garage

- 2.045 acre parcel includes additional garage structure in rear.
- Originally built in 1953 with a dual-use purpose for the Fire Department (front) & Highway Department (rear).
- Northfield Fire Department took over the full use of the building in the 1990's.
- First floor of structure can no longer hold the weight of heavy apparatus.
- A structural evaluation, and a Hazardous Building Materials and Environmental Site Assessment are likely needed before redevelopment.

SITE CONDITIONS



Village Center Zoning District

- Residential uses, such as single, two-family and multi-family up to four units are allowed by right, with multi-family with more than four units allowed by Special Permit from the Planning Board.
- Business uses, such as retail trade up to 1,500 sq. ft., a craft shop, a restaurant, artist studios, personal services (like hair salon or florist), and professional or business offices are allowed by right.
- Other business uses, like retail over 1,500 sq. ft., some cannabis retail, a funeral home, and equipment or vehicle repair shop are allowed by Special Permit from the Planning Board.
- Industrial uses and most uses related to marijuana are not allowed.
- Municipal use is allowed by right.

POTENTIAL SITE USES

Municipal Use

Housing

Artist Studio

Personal
Services

**What could the
Fire Station property
be reused for?**

Financial
Services
Office

Office
Space

Store / Retail

Café /
Restaurant

Visitor
Center

POTENTIAL SITE USES

Some creative reuses
for fire stations across
the country include:



Studio Arts Boulder
Boulder, Colorado



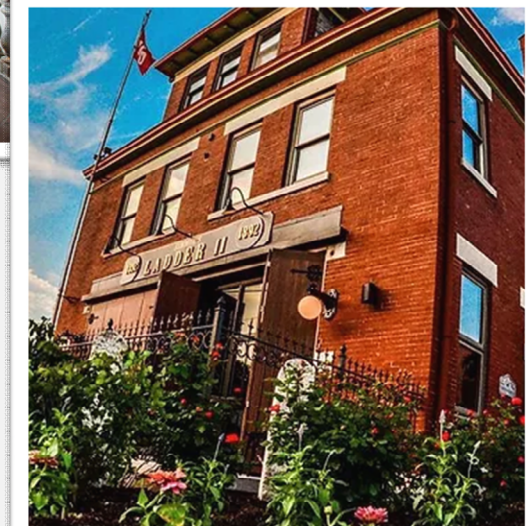
Firehouse Brewing Co.
Rapid City, South Dakota



Engine 24 Hotel
New Orleans,
Louisiana



Plaza Firehouse, Los Angeles CA



Jimmie's Ladder I I
Dayton, Ohio

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Each question
will be posted
in the chat.

Please share
your thoughts
by raising your
hand or typing
in the Zoom
chat.

- Given the parameters of the property, what do you think would be the ideal use for this site?
- Is there something that is missing in Northfield that the reuse of this site could serve to fill?
- What is your biggest concern for the future reuse of this site?

COMMUNITY SURVEY

To gather additional input from the community, an online survey with these questions will also be released.

- Given the parameters of the property, what do you think would be the ideal use for this site?
- Is there something that is missing in Northfield that the reuse of this site could serve to fill?
- What is your biggest concern for the future reuse of this site?

NEXT STEPS

As part of this project with the MassDevelopment Underutilized Properties Program:

- ✓ Post presentation on Town website
- ✓ Conduct survey to gather input from the community on potential reuse of the site
- ✓ Share notes from this meeting and survey responses with consultants to inform reuse scenarios
- ✓ Consultants develop reuse scenarios and present them at another community meeting
- ✓ Consultants prepare final conceptual designs and present them to the Select Board



Northfield Elementary School (2022) – Credit: FRCOG

ADDITIONAL STEPS

Today's meeting is not the last step, but the beginning of a process.

There is more work to be done.

There will be more opportunities to provide input on the future of the site.

Depending on the reuse option(s) preferred, additional tasks may be required:

- Evaluation of structure and systems
- Hazardous Building Materials and Environmental Site Assessment
- If the property is to be leased to private entities, a public process must be followed to select tenant(s).
- If the property is to be sold to a private entity, a public process must be followed for the municipality to sell the property.

CONTACT

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