



NORTH BRANCH

—Minnesota—

Kevin Schieber
Mayor

Robert Canada
Councilmember/Acting Mayor

Jeff Goulet
Councilmember

Jim Ibinger
Councilmember

Patrick Meacham
Councilmember

**CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR AGENDA
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2026 @ 6:00 PM
CITY HALL, 6408 ELM STREET, NORTH
BRANCH, MN 55056**

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. ROLL CALL
4. WORKSESSION ITEMS
 - a. Joint worksession with the Planning Commission members to set goals and provide staff direction on setbacks, density, and design standards VERBAL UPDATE
 - b. Zoning Text Amendment - Residential Interior Side Setbacks VERBAL UPDATE
 - c. Zoning Text Amendment - R-3 Maximum Density VERBAL UPDATE
 - d. Zoning Text Amendment - Design Standards VERBAL UPDATE
5. ADJOURNMENT

Since we do not have time to discuss every point presented, it may seem that decisions are preconceived. However, background information is provided to the City Council on each Agenda item in advance from Staff and appointed Commissions; and decisions are based on this information and past experiences. In addition some items may also have been discussed preliminarily at Council Work Sessions. If you are aware of information that has not been discussed, please raise your hand to be recognized. Comments that are pertinent are appreciated. Items requiring excessive time may be continued to another meeting.

Overview / Background

The proposed amendment to increase minimum residential interior side yard setbacks from six (6) feet to ten (10) feet was considered by the Planning Commission at its June 2, 2026 public hearing. During the discussion, several residents expressed concerns regarding the potential impacts on existing homes and neighborhoods that were developed under the current six-foot setback standard. Residents noted that many existing homes could become legal nonconforming structures if the amendment were applied citywide, raising questions about future home additions, reconstruction following casualty loss, property values, and the long-term implications for established neighborhoods. Residents generally supported maintaining the current standards for existing developments and emphasized that homeowners purchased and constructed their homes in reliance on the regulations in place at the time.

Representatives from the development community also raised concerns regarding the impact of the proposed amendment on future residential development. Discussion focused on existing preliminary plats, concept plans, and master-planned developments that were designed around the current six-foot setback requirement. Developers indicated that increasing setbacks could reduce buildable width on lots, require redesign of approved development plans, reduce overall lot yield, and increase housing costs. Concerns were also expressed regarding the feasibility of applying the amendment to developments that have already received approvals based on the existing standards.

Throughout the discussion, Planning Commission members acknowledged the City Council's stated intent that any increase in side yard setbacks would primarily be directed toward future development on vacant land rather than impacting existing homes or previously approved neighborhoods. As a potential alternative to a citywide amendment, discussion included the possibility of creating a new residential zoning district or applying revised setback standards only to future zoning districts and undeveloped areas. This approach would allow the City to achieve larger setbacks in future residential development while minimizing impacts to existing neighborhoods, platted lots, and developments that were designed under the current six-foot setback standard.

The topic was discussed by the City Council at its June 10, 2026 meeting. During that discussion, Council members acknowledged the concerns raised by residents, builders, and developers regarding potential impacts to existing homes, approved developments, and future residential growth. Rather than taking action on the proposed amendment at that time, the City Council directed staff to bring the matter forward for further discussion at a joint Planning Commission/City Council Work Session scheduled for June 17, 2026. The purpose of the work session is to evaluate potential implementation options, including approaches that would focus increased setback requirements on future development and vacant land while minimizing impacts to existing neighborhoods, previously approved plats, and developments designed under the current six-foot setback standard.

Staff will continue to evaluate the concerns and implementation challenges identified by residents, builders, developers, the Planning Commission, and City Council. Particular attention will be given to issues related to existing structures becoming nonconforming, impacts to previously approved plats and master-planned developments, redevelopment scenarios, housing affordability, and the feasibility of various housing types under increased setback requirements. Staff is currently analyzing potential implementation options, including

alternative zoning district and overlay district approaches, and will develop potential solutions intended to address the concerns raised while still meeting the City's objectives for future residential development. Additional analysis, draft ordinance concepts, and updated discussion materials will be provided in revised agenda packets prior to the June 17, 2026 Joint Planning Commission/City Council Work Session.

Planning Commission Action

Motion to recommend/deny approval to the City Council:

- Text Amendment to City Code Sec. 66-210 Design Standards Chart amending minimum interior side yard setbacks from six (6) feet to ten (10) feet within applicable residential zoning districts.

Overview / Background

City staff has prepared this report to facilitate discussion regarding a potential amendment to the Zoning Code to increase minimum interior side yard setbacks from 6 feet to 10 feet in zoning districts where a 6-foot setback is currently permitted. As shown in the City's Dimensional and Design Standards Table, several residential zoning districts—including portions of R-1, R-2, and R-3 districts currently allow 6-foot interior side setbacks, particularly for single-family and certain attached housing types.

This topic was discussed at the May 5, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting. During the discussion, Planning Commission members reviewed the potential impacts of increasing minimum interior side yard setbacks from 6 feet to 10 feet and provided initial feedback regarding neighborhood character, buildable area, and impacts to existing properties.

Staff is seeking official motion whether to recommend/deny approval of the text amendment.

Issues to Consider

- Text Amendment to City Code Sec. 66-210 - Residential Interior Side Yard Setbacks

Analysis

The potential amendment would increase the minimum interior side yard setback from 6 to 10 feet, aligning these districts more closely with others that already require larger setbacks. The City's current Design Standards Chart establishes varying minimum interior side yard setback requirements depending on zoning district and housing type. Several residential zoning districts currently permit six (6) foot side yard setbacks for single-family and attached residential dwellings.

The proposed text amendment would revise the minimum interior side yard setback requirement from six (6) feet to ten (10) feet within applicable residential zoning districts.

The proposed amendment is intended to:

- Increase spacing between residential structures
- Improve privacy and access between homes
- Enhance consistency between zoning districts
- Support neighborhood character and lower-density development patterns

The following chart is an excerpt from the City's Dimensional and Design Standards Table. The full table is attached to this report. The text amendment proposes to change all residential zoning district interior setbacks from 6 feet to 10 feet.

Use	R-1 Single Family	R-1 Two-Family Dwellings (Per Unit)	R-2 Single Family	R-2 Two-Family Dwellings (Per Unit)	R-2 3-6 Attached Units (Per Townhouse)	R-3 Two-Family Dwellings (Per Unit)	R-3 3-6 Attached Units (Per Townhouse)	R-3 7+ Attached Units & Condominiums	R-3 Detached Single Family
Side Setback – Interior Lot (ft)	6	6', 0' for attached portion of unit	6	6', 0' for attached portion of unit	6', 0' for attached portion of unit	6', 0' for attached portion of unit	6', 0' for attached portion of unit	10	6

The following sections outline key considerations when analyzing impacts to residents, developers/builders, and the city. Cost considerations are also analyzed further.

Impacts to Residents

Potential Benefits:

- Increased Privacy: Additional distance between homes may reduce noise and visual impacts between neighboring properties.
- Improved Access & Maintenance: Larger side yards provide more space for maintenance, drainage, and utility access.
- Enhanced Light and Air: Greater spacing can improve natural light and ventilation between structures.
- Fire Safety: Increased separation may improve fire protection and emergency response access.

Potential Challenges:

- Reduced Buildable Area: Particularly on smaller lots, increased setbacks may limit home size or placement options.
- Existing Development Pattern: Established neighborhoods with narrower spacing may not reflect the proposed standard.
- Nonconformities: Existing homes built under the 6-foot standard would likely become legal nonconforming structures.
- Additions: Future additions or expansions to an existing principal structure may be required to meet the proposed 10-foot setback requirement rather than the existing 6-foot standard, which could limit the ability for some homeowners to expand their homes on narrower lots.

Impacts to Developers & Builders

Potential Benefits:

- Marketability: Wider spacing between homes may appeal to buyers seeking lower-density residential character.
- Consistency: Standardizing setbacks across districts may simplify zoning interpretation and development review.

Potential Challenges:

- Reduced Lot Yield: Larger setbacks may decrease the number of buildable lots or require larger lot sizes.
- Design Limitations: Standard building plans may need modification to fit within narrower building envelopes.
- Plat Revisions: Concept plans or undeveloped subdivisions designed with 6-foot setbacks may require redesign.

Impacts to the City

Potential Benefits

- Community Character: Increased setbacks may support a more open and spacious residential environment.
- Stormwater & Drainage: Additional pervious area between structures may improve drainage conditions.
- Infrastructure Coordination: Greater spacing may reduce conflicts with utilities and easements.

Potential Challenges

- Housing Affordability: Larger setbacks may increase development costs, which could impact housing prices.
- Land Use Efficiency: Reduced density may affect efficient use of land and infrastructure.
- Administrative Considerations: Managing nonconformities and transition standards may require additional staff review.

Cost Considerations

Developers:

- Increased cost per unit due to reduced density
- Potential redesign costs for site layouts and building plans

Homeowners:

- Possible increase in home prices
- Potential long-term value benefits associated with increased spacing

City:

- Possible reduction in tax base efficiency on a per-acre basis
- Limited direct fiscal impact, but potential increase in administrative review complexity

Planning Considerations

- The current zoning table reflects a mix of 6-foot and 10-foot side setbacks, depending on district and housing type .
- The 6-foot standard is most commonly associated with more compact residential development patterns.
- Consideration may be given to:
 - Whether a uniform standard is appropriate across all districts
 - Whether different standards should apply based on lot size or zoning district
 - How to address existing platted lots and nonconformities
 - How existing homes are impacted and limited when looking to expand home

Summary

Increasing side yard setbacks from 6 feet to 10 feet presents a range of potential benefits related to privacy, safety, and neighborhood character, while also introducing considerations related to housing density, cost, and development flexibility. Larger setbacks may contribute to a more open development pattern and improved long-term livability, particularly in lower-density residential areas. However, the change could also reduce buildable area on individual lots, potentially impacting lot layout efficiency and limiting design options on narrower parcels.

Additionally, the amendment may have broader implications on housing affordability by increasing land costs per unit and reducing overall development yield in affected districts. The existing mix of setback standards across zoning districts reflects differing development intensities, and modifying these standards may alter how those districts function over time. Consideration should also be given to how such a change would apply to existing platted lots and whether flexibility or exemptions may be appropriate.

Overall, the potential amendment involves balancing community character objectives with practical development considerations.

Planning Commission Action

1. Motion to recommend approval/denial of the proposed text amendment to City Code Sec. 66-210 amending minimum interior side yard setbacks from six (6) feet to ten (10) feet within applicable residential zoning districts.

Dimensional & Design Standards Table

Use	R-1 single family	R-1, 2 family dwellings, per unit	R-2, single family	R-2, 2 family dwellings, per unit	R-2, 3-6 attached units, per townhouse	R-3, 2 family dwellings, per unit	R-3 3-6 attached units - per townhouse	R-3: 7+ attached units and condominiums (see below for apartment standards) ^H	R -3 detached single family	RR	AG	Public	CBD	B1	BN	I1	I2	Flood plain	Shoreland
Front yard setback- interior in ft - at lot line or ROW	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	40	50	30	0	15, 50 outside USA	15	20, 50 outside of USA	20, 50 outside of USA	See Division 18	See Division 19
Lot Width - corner - in ft at front set-back line	80	50	80	50	150	50	150	150	50	110	300	NA	25	50, 300 outside of USA	50	100, 300 outside of USA	100, 300 outside of USA		
Lot Width - in ft - at front set-back line	80	50	80	50	150	50	150	150	50	110	300	NA	25	50, 300 outside of USA	50	100, 300 outside of USA	100, 300 outside of USA		
Ditch easement - in ft	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45		
Rear yard setback- interior lot - in ft	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	50	30	0	15, 50 outside USA	15	20, 50 outside of USA	20, 50 outside of USA		
Rear-yard setback corner lot - in ft	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	30	15	15	50	15	0	15, 50 outside USA	15	20, 50 outside of USA	20, 50 outside of USA		
Side set-back- interior lot - in ft	6	6', 0' for attached portion of unit	6	6', 0' for attached portion of unit	6', 0' for attached portion of unit	6', 0' for attached portion of unit	6', 0' for attached portion of unit	10	6	10	50	6	0	10, 0 if attached, 50 outside USA	10	20, 50 outside of USA	20, 50 outside of USA		
Side setback- corner - in ft	30	30	30	20	30	30	20	30	30	30	50	30	0	15, 50 outside USA	15	20, 50 outside of USA	20, 50 outside of USA		
Lot Depth - minimum in ft	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	300	500	NA	100	100, 300 outside of USA	100	100, 300 outside of USA	100, 300 outside of USA		
Minimum Lot Size - sq ft	12,000	7,500	12,000	6,500	2,000	6,500	2,000	Not more than 35% of the lot shall be covered by all buildings.	6,500	1 acre buildable	10 acres	NA	2,500	5,000 in USA, 10 acres outside USA	5,000	10,000, 10 acres outside of USA	10,000, 10 acres outside of USA		
Maximum base density	1-4 units per acre	1-4 units per acre	1-6 units per acre	1-6 units per acre	1-6 units per acre	6+ units per acre	6+ units per acre	6+ units per acre	6+ units per acre	1 house per buildable acre	1 SF home	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Minimum Principal building size sq ft - main floor, per dwelling ^C	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	NA	~	~	~	~	~		
Apartment -Minimum sq ft																			
Efficiency/studio	NA	NA	NA	NA	400	NA	400	400	NA	NA	NA	NA	400	400	NA	NA	NA		
1 bedroom	NA	NA	NA	NA	800	NA	800	650	NA	NA	NA	NA	650	650	NA	NA	NA		
2 bedroom	NA	NA	NA	NA	800	NA	800	750	NA	NA	NA	NA	750	750	NA	NA	NA		
3 bedroom	NA	NA	NA	NA	800	NA	800	850	NA	NA	NA	NA	850	850	NA	NA	NA		
Principal Structure - Min Width ^J - in ft	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	NA	NA	NA	~	~	~		

Garage - sq ft	400 ^B	400 ^B	400 ^B	400 ^B	400 ^B	400 ^B	if provided, 200 ^E	~	400	400 ^B	400 ^B	NA	~	~	~	~	~
Wetland natural buffer /structure setback	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Building height - in ft	35 ^A	35 ^A	35 ^A	35 ^A	35 ^A	35 ^A	35 ^A	3 stories or 50' ^A	35 ^A	35 ^A	35 ^A	75 ^A	50 ^A	50 ^A	50 ^A	75 ^A	75 ^A
Impervious surface - maximum	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	70%	75%	70%	50%	50%	NA	na	90%	90%	90%	90%
Floor elevation (lowest)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	NA	3	3	3	3	3
Floor elevation (lowest) - 100 yr flood - in ft	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	NA	2	2	2	2	2
Foundation Requirements	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	NA	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C
Driveway Surfacing	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	NA	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D
Landscape Requirements	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	NA	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E
Sign Requirement	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	NA	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F
Off-Street Parking Requirements	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	NA	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G

All buildings shall comply with State of MN Building Code. Provisions for decks shall be shown on original plans when a sliding glass door, patio door, etc. is installed. Provisions for decks must be shown on original plans when a sliding glass door, patio, door, etc. are to be installed

- A. Height Exceptions - building height limits shall not apply to belfries, cupolas, domes, spires, monuments, airway beacons, radio towers, flag poles, chimneys or flues; nor to elevators, watertanks, poles, towers and other structures for essential services; nor to similar structures extending above the roof of any building and not occupying more than 25 percent of the area of such roof.
- B. Rear or side yard or attached garage required.
- C. Foundation Requirements -Permanent full perimeter footings; with foundation walls of concrete, concrete block, wood or any other approved material or method. Decks and porches are allowed on pier type footings.
- D. Residential - See Section 66-855. All zoning districts: shall be concrete or bituminous, unless stated otherwise.
- E. See Article 10- Landscaping Requirements; except Ag, see Section 66-390.
- F. See Article 6 - Sign requirements
- G. See Article 7 - Off Street Parking Requirements.
- H. Setbacks measured from outside walls or the edge of private condo spaces including ground level decks and yard spaces.

Overview / Background

The proposed amendment to establish a maximum residential density of 18 units per acre within the R-3 High Density Residential zoning district was considered by the Planning Commission at its June 2, 2026 public hearing. The amendment would have modified the City's Dimensional and Design Standards Table by changing the current maximum base density standard from "6+ units per acre" to "6-18 units per acre" for properties zoned R-3. The stated purpose of the amendment was to provide additional predictability regarding residential development intensity while balancing neighborhood compatibility, infrastructure capacity, and long-term growth objectives.

During the public hearing, discussion focused primarily on the potential impact that a maximum density cap could have on future apartment, senior housing, and multi-family residential development within North Branch. Public comments emphasized that residential development economics have become increasingly challenging due to rising land, infrastructure, financing, and construction costs. Several participants noted that many apartment and senior housing projects require higher densities in order to spread fixed development costs across additional units and remain financially feasible. Concerns were expressed that reducing allowable density could discourage future housing investment, limit housing choices, and make it more difficult to attract developers to the community.

Discussion also highlighted broader housing policy considerations, including the City's need for additional housing opportunities for young families, workforce housing, and senior residents. Testimony indicated that North Branch continues to face challenges attracting market-rate senior housing and apartment developments due to lower rental rates relative to development costs. Concerns were raised that reducing density could increase per-unit development costs, reduce housing affordability, and potentially require additional public incentives to make future projects financially viable.

Planning Commission members discussed the role of the R-3 district as the City's primary zoning district intended to accommodate higher-density residential development, including apartments, townhomes, and other multi-family housing types. Commissioners acknowledged that existing zoning standards already regulate development intensity through building height limitations, setbacks, lot area requirements, impervious surface limitations, parking requirements, and landscaping standards. Discussion generally centered on whether an additional density cap was necessary given the existing development controls already contained within City Code.

Following the public hearing, the Planning Commission unanimously voted to deny the proposed text amendment in its entirety. Commissioners expressed concern that the proposed maximum density of 18 units per acre could unnecessarily limit future housing opportunities and reduce the financial feasibility of apartment and multi-family developments within the community. The Commission ultimately determined that maintaining the existing density standards or by raising the proposed max density of 18 would provide greater flexibility for future residential development and better support the City's long-term housing goals.

The topic was subsequently discussed by the City Council at its June 10, 2026 meeting. Council members reviewed the Planning Commission recommendation and discussed concerns related to housing affordability, future apartment development, senior housing opportunities, and maintaining flexibility within the R-3 zoning district. Additional discussion occurred regarding whether alternative density thresholds or housing-type-specific density standards may warrant future consideration.

Staff will continue to evaluate the concerns and policy considerations identified by residents, developers, the Planning Commission, and City Council. Particular attention will be given to housing affordability, senior housing opportunities, apartment feasibility, infrastructure capacity, and the City's long-term housing goals. Staff will also analyze whether alternative approaches, including different density thresholds, housing-type-specific standards, or additional design and site development regulations, may achieve community objectives without limiting future housing opportunities. Additional analysis and potential ordinance concepts will be provided in future agenda materials should the City Council wish to revisit the topic.

Planning Commission Action

Motion to recommend/deny approval to the City Council:

- Zoning Text Amendment to the Design Standards Chart in City Code Section 66-210 to amend the Maximum Base Density for R-3 zoned properties.

Overview / Background

At the May 5, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting, the Planning Commission discussed the potential for a text amendment to the City Code that would establish a maximum base density within the R-3 High Density Residential zoning district.

Currently, the Dimensional and Design Standards Table identifies the R-3 district as allowing “6+ units per acre” with no defined upper limit. The proposed amendment would revise this standard to establish a defined density range of 6 to 18 units per acre.

During the May 5th discussion, concerns were expressed that establishing a maximum density cap of 18 units per acre may significantly impact the financial feasibility of future apartment and multi-family developments within the City. Discussion included how reducing potential unit counts could further tighten development margins due to increasing land costs, construction costs, infrastructure costs, and financing challenges associated with higher-density residential development. It was noted that many multi-family developments rely on increased unit counts to spread development costs across additional units in order to remain financially viable. Overall, the Planning Commission suggested that capping the maximum number at 18 units might be too low but would be open to other max density caps.

The Planning Commission discussed the importance of balancing neighborhood compatibility and infrastructure considerations with the City’s long-term housing supply, housing diversity, and economic development goals.

The R-3 zoning district is intended to accommodate higher-density residential development, including apartments, townhomes, and other multi-family housing types. Existing standards within the zoning district already regulate development intensity through controls such as:

- Maximum building height of up to three (3) stories or 50 feet
- Impervious surface limitations
- Minimum lot area requirements
- Setbacks and building coverage limitations
- Parking requirements
- Landscaping and site design standards

While these standards regulate building form and site layout, the current code does not establish a maximum residential density threshold if all other standards are met.

Proposed Amendment

Current Standard

- Maximum Base Density: 6+ units per acre (No maximum cap)

Proposed Standard

- Maximum Base Density: 6 to 18 units per acre

Analysis

The following chart is an excerpt from the City's Dimensional and Design Standards Table. The full table is attached to this report. The text amendment proposes to change all R-3 Max Base Densities from "6+ units per acre" to "6-18 units per acre".

Use	R-3, 2 family dwellings, per unit	R-3 3-6 attached units - per townhouse	R-3: 7+ attached units and condominiums	R-3 detached single family
Maximum Base Density	6+ units per acre	6+ units per acre	6+ units per acre	6+ units per acre

The following analysis outlines the potential impacts of establishing a maximum density of 18 units per acre within the R-3 zoning district. This amendment would influence how residential developments are designed and how they function within the community. The impacts are evaluated from multiple perspectives, including residents, developers, infrastructure, and overall land use planning, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the potential benefits and challenges associated with implementing a defined density cap.

Impacts to Residents

Potential Benefits:

- Greater predictability in neighborhood character and intensity
- Reduced concerns related to overcrowding, parking demand, and traffic congestion
- Improved compatibility with adjacent lower-density zoning districts

Potential Challenges:

- May limit availability of diverse and more affordable housing types
- Could reduce opportunities for compact, walkable development patterns
- Potential upward pressure on housing costs due to constrained supply

Impacts to Developers

Potential Benefits:

- Provides clear expectations and certainty for project planning
- Aligns density with infrastructure and site design constraints
- May reduce community opposition by limiting perceived overdevelopment

Potential Challenges:

- Reduced flexibility in site design and yield optimization
- Lower overall unit counts may impact project feasibility and return on investment
- Could discourage higher-density or mixed-use style developments

Infrastructure and Service Impacts

Potential Benefits

- Helps ensure density levels remain consistent with available infrastructure capacity
- Reduces strain on utilities, roadways, and public services

- Easier long-term planning for schools, parks, and emergency services

Potential Challenges

- Lower densities may result in less efficient use of existing infrastructure
- Could increase per-unit cost of infrastructure expansion or maintenance

Cost Considerations

Developers:

- Fewer units per acre may increase per-unit land and development costs
- Potential need for higher sale or rental prices to offset reduced density

City:

- Lower densities may reduce tax base potential per acre
- Lower residential density may reduce overall demand on public infrastructure systems; however, it may also decrease cost efficiency as infrastructure serves fewer households

Planning Considerations

- A maximum density aligns R-3 zoning with common planning practices that define both minimum and maximum thresholds
- Helps reinforce transitions between zoning districts
- Supports long-term comprehensive planning goals if density targets are defined

However:

- May limit the City's ability to accommodate future housing demand
- Could reduce flexibility in responding to market conditions

Key Policy Considerations

When evaluating this amendment, decision-makers may wish to consider:

- Whether 18 units per acre appropriately reflects the desired intensity of R-3 zoning
- If different density caps should apply to different housing types (apartments vs. townhomes)
- How this change aligns with the City's Comprehensive Plan and housing goals
- Whether additional design standards could achieve similar outcomes without limiting density

Summary

The proposed text amendment would establish a maximum residential density of 18 units per acre within the R-3 High Density Residential zoning district. The amendment is intended to provide additional predictability and control regarding residential development intensity within the City.

Discussion at the May 5, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting identified concerns from both Planning Commissioners and developers regarding the potential impact the proposed density cap could have on development feasibility, housing supply, and future apartment construction in North Branch. Specifically, concerns were raised that reducing allowable density may further constrain already challenging development economics associated with higher-density residential projects.

While a maximum density cap may assist with neighborhood compatibility and infrastructure planning, it may also reduce development flexibility and limit the City's ability to accommodate future housing demand and housing diversity goals.

Planning Commission Action

Motion to recommend/deny approval to the City Council:

- Zoning Text Amendment to the Design Standards Chart in City Code Section 66-210 to amend the Maximum Base Density from "6+ units per acre" to "6-18 units per acre" for R-3 zoned properties.
- Recommend approval with modifications

Dimensional & Design Standards Table

Use	R-1 single family	R-1, 2 family dwellings, per unit	R-2, single family	R-2, 2 family dwellings, per unit	R-2, 3-6 attached units, per townhouse	R-3, 2 family dwellings, per unit	R-3 3-6 attached units - per townhouse	R-3: 7+ attached units and condominiums (see below for apartment standards) ^H	R -3 detached single family	RR	AG	Public	CBD	B1	BN	I1	I2	Flood plain	Shoreland
Front yard setback- interior in ft - at lot line or ROW	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	40	50	30	0	15, 50 outside USA	15	20, 50 outside of USA	20, 50 outside of USA	See Division 18	See Division 19
Lot Width - corner - in ft at front set-back line	80	50	80	50	150	50	150	150	50	110	300	NA	25	50, 300 outside of USA	50	100, 300 outside of USA	100, 300 outside of USA		
Lot Width - in ft - at front set-back line	80	50	80	50	150	50	150	150	50	110	300	NA	25	50, 300 outside of USA	50	100, 300 outside of USA	100, 300 outside of USA		
Ditch easement - in ft	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45		
Rear yard setback- interior lot - in ft	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	50	30	0	15, 50 outside USA	15	20, 50 outside of USA	20, 50 outside of USA		
Rear-yard setback corner lot - in ft	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	30	15	15	50	15	0	15, 50 outside USA	15	20, 50 outside of USA	20, 50 outside of USA		
Side set-back- interior lot - in ft	6	6', 0' for attached portion of unit	6	6', 0' for attached portion of unit	6', 0' for attached portion of unit	6', 0' for attached portion of unit	6', 0' for attached portion of unit	10	6	10	50	6	0	10, 0 if attached, 50 outside USA	10	20, 50 outside of USA	20, 50 outside of USA		
Side setback- corner - in ft	30	30	30	20	30	30	20	30	30	30	50	30	0	15, 50 outside USA	15	20, 50 outside of USA	20, 50 outside of USA		
Lot Depth - minimum in ft	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	300	500	NA	100	100, 300 outside of USA	100	100, 300 outside of USA	100, 300 outside of USA		
Minimum Lot Size - sq ft	12,000	7,500	12,000	6,500	2,000	6,500	2,000	Not more than 35% of the lot shall be covered by all buildings.	6,500	1 acre buildable	10 acres	NA	2,500	5,000 in USA, 10 acres outside USA	5,000	10,000, 10 acres outside of USA	10,000, 10 acres outside of USA		
Maximum base density	1-4 units per acre	1-4 units per acre	1-6 units per acre	1-6 units per acre	1-6 units per acre	6+ units per acre	6+ units per acre	6+ units per acre	6+ units per acre	1 house per buildable acre	1 SF home	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Minimum Principal building size sq ft - main floor, per dwelling ^C	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	NA	~	~	~	~	~		
Apartment -Minimum sq ft																			
Efficiency/studio	NA	NA	NA	NA	400	NA	400	400	NA	NA	NA	NA	400	400	NA	NA	NA		
1 bedroom	NA	NA	NA	NA	800	NA	800	650	NA	NA	NA	NA	650	650	NA	NA	NA		
2 bedroom	NA	NA	NA	NA	800	NA	800	750	NA	NA	NA	NA	750	750	NA	NA	NA		
3 bedroom	NA	NA	NA	NA	800	NA	800	850	NA	NA	NA	NA	850	850	NA	NA	NA		
Principal Structure - Min Width ^J - in ft	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	NA	NA	NA	~	~	~		

Garage - sq ft	400 ^B	400 ^B	400 ^B	400 ^B	400 ^B	400 ^B	if provided, 200 ^E	~	400	400 ^B	400 ^B	NA	~	~	~	~	~
Wetland natural buffer /structure setback	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Building height - in ft	35 ^A	35 ^A	35 ^A	35 ^A	35 ^A	35 ^A	35 ^A	3 stories or 50' ^A	35 ^A	35 ^A	35 ^A	75 ^A	50 ^A	50 ^A	50 ^A	75 ^A	75 ^A
Impervious surface - maximum	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	70%	75%	70%	50%	50%	NA	na	90%	90%	90%	90%
Floor elevation (lowest)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	NA	3	3	3	3	3
Floor elevation (lowest) - 100 yr flood - in ft	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	NA	2	2	2	2	2
Foundation Requirements	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	NA	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C	Yes ^C
Driveway Surfacing	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	NA	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D	Yes ^D
Landscape Requirements	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	NA	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E	Yes ^E
Sign Requirement	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	NA	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F	Yes ^F
Off-Street Parking Requirements	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	NA	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G	Yes ^G

All buildings shall comply with State of MN Building Code. Provisions for decks shall be shown on original plans when a sliding glass door, patio door, etc. is installed. Provisions for decks must be shown on original plans when a sliding glass door, patio, door, etc. are to be installed

- A. Height Exceptions - building height limits shall not apply to belfries, cupolas, domes, spires, monuments, airway beacons, radio towers, flag poles, chimneys or flues; nor to elevators, watertanks, poles, towers and other structures for essential services; nor to similar structures extending above the roof of any building and not occupying more than 25 percent of the area of such roof.
- B. Rear or side yard or attached garage required.
- C. Foundation Requirements -Permanent full perimeter footings; with foundation walls of concrete, concrete block, wood or any other approved material or method. Decks and porches are allowed on pier type footings.
- D. Residential - See Section 66-855. All zoning districts: shall be concrete or bituminous, unless stated otherwise.
- E. See Article 10- Landscaping Requirements; except Ag, see Section 66-390.
- F. See Article 6 - Sign requirements
- G. See Article 7 - Off Street Parking Requirements.
- H. Setbacks measured from outside walls or the edge of private condo spaces including ground level decks and yard spaces.

Overview / Background

The proposed Design Standards text amendment was considered by the Planning Commission at its June 2, 2026 public hearing. The amendment included potential revisions to Section 66-943 of City Code related to exterior building material requirements, façade treatments, and possible modifications to the Design Standards Map. The discussion stemmed from previous direction provided by the Planning Commission, Economic Development Authority (EDA), and City Council to evaluate whether the City's existing design standards remain appropriate for current development trends and economic development objectives.

The proposal focused on several concepts, including shifting portions of the Flink Avenue and Interstate 35 corridor areas from Design Zone 1 to Design Zone 2, applying higher material standards primarily to street-facing building elevations, requiring enhanced architectural standards for elevations adjacent to residentially zoned properties, and allowing additional flexibility on side and rear building elevations not visible from public roadways. Staff also presented potential ordinance language that would focus design standards on visible building facades while maintaining architectural quality throughout the community.

During the public hearing, discussion generally centered on balancing architectural quality with development flexibility and construction costs. Comments from the public focused primarily on concerns that existing design standards may increase development costs and reduce the feasibility of commercial, industrial, and multi-family projects. It was noted that modern building materials and construction techniques may provide alternatives that achieve similar durability and appearance standards while reducing project costs. Public comments also encouraged the City to continue evaluating opportunities to improve competitiveness for future development and investment.

Planning Commission discussion reflected a desire to maintain the City's overall commitment to quality development while recognizing that certain portions of the existing standards may warrant additional review. Commissioners discussed whether portions of the Design Standards Map should be reevaluated, particularly in areas intended for industrial or employment-oriented development, and whether future amendments should focus architectural requirements on highly visible building elevations rather than applying uniform standards to all sides of a structure. Despite the discussion, the Planning Commission did not support moving forward with the proposed text amendment as presented and ultimately voted to deny the amendment in its entirety.

The Planning Commission's discussion highlighted several broader policy questions that may warrant additional evaluation, including the appropriate balance between architectural standards and development costs, the role of design standards in supporting economic development objectives, and whether alternative approaches could achieve similar design outcomes while providing greater flexibility for businesses and developers. Potential future discussion topics may include reevaluating Design Zone boundaries, refining façade-based standards, expanding permitted building materials, and determining whether different standards should apply based on building visibility, adjacent land uses, or development type.

Staff will continue to evaluate the concerns and policy considerations identified by the Planning Commission, development community, EDA, and City Council. Particular attention will be given to issues related to development feasibility, corridor appearance, industrial development competitiveness, long-term maintenance considerations, and the effectiveness of the current Design Standards Map. Staff may also analyze alternative approaches that focus higher architectural standards on street-facing and residentially adjacent building elevations while providing flexibility elsewhere. Additional analysis and potential ordinance concepts can be developed if directed by the Planning Commission or City Council at the Work Session.

Planning Commission Action

Motion to recommend/deny approval to the City Council:

- Zoning Text Amendment to City Code Section 66-943 relating to development design standards and amendments to the design overlay district map

Overview / Background

City staff has been directed by the Planning Commission, Economic Development Authority (EDA), and City Council to evaluate the City's existing design standards under Section 66-943 of City Code. The intent of this review is to determine whether current regulations are overly restrictive and whether modifications could improve development flexibility, reduce construction costs, and enhance the City's competitiveness for commercial and industrial investment.

The City of North Branch currently utilizes a three-zone design overlay system that establishes varying exterior building material requirements based on visibility and location within the community. These standards are intended to promote architectural quality, ensure cohesive design, and protect long-term property values.

Recently, the City has taken steps to modernize these standards. Most notably, Insulated Metal Panels were added as a permitted Class II material through Ordinance No. 397-25, reflecting a shift toward accommodating newer construction materials while maintaining design intent.

This item was previously discussed by the Planning Commission at the May 5th, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting. Discussion at that meeting generally focused on potential modifications to the Design Standards Map and whether portions of the community currently located within Design Zone 1 should instead be placed within Design Zone 2. Areas specifically discussed included properties located along Flink Avenue and portions of the I-35 corridor where commissioners discussed whether the current Zone 1 standards may be more restrictive than necessary for the type of commercial and industrial development anticipated in those areas.

The Planning Commission also discussed whether additional ordinance language should be considered to focus higher architectural standards on portions of buildings most visible to the public and neighboring residential areas.

Specifically, commissioners discussed:

- Applying enhanced design standards primarily to street-facing building facades
- Requiring building elevations immediately adjacent to residentially zoned or guided properties to meet higher design standards
- Allowing greater flexibility on rear or non-visible building elevations

No formal direction or recommendation was made by the Planning Commission regarding these concepts.

Analysis

Existing Standards

Design standards apply to:

- Commercial, Central Business, and Industrial Zoning Districts

Design standards do not apply to:

- Agricultural (AG)
- Rural Residential (RR)
- Park/Open Space districts

Design Overlay Zones

Zone 1 – Primary Corridors & Gateways

- Minimum 65% Class 1 materials
- Highest Architectural Standards
- Applies to high-visibility corridors such as I-35, Highway 95, and Main Street

Zone 2 – Transitional Areas

- Minimum 50% Class 1 materials
- Moderate flexibility in design
- Serves as a transition between high-visibility and industrial areas

Zone 3 – Industrial / Low Visibility Areas

- No minimum material percentage requirements
- Requires use of at least two materials or colors on visible façades
- Greater flexibility for industrial and rear-facing development

Potential Design Standards Map Modifications

During the May 5th Planning Commission discussion, commissioners reviewed whether portions of the existing Design Standards Map should be adjusted to better reflect current development patterns and future land use expectations. Discussion primarily focused on areas along Flink Avenue and portions of the I-35 corridor that are currently within Design Zone 1.

Potential amendments discussed included:

- Reclassifying select commercially or industrially guided areas from Zone 1 to Zone 2
- Reducing the extent of Zone 1 requirements in areas less visible from primary community gateways
- Maintaining Zone 1 standards within the Highway 95 corridor, downtown core, and highly visible gateway areas.
- Expanding flexibility for industrial style developments while maintaining overall architectural quality

Potential Façade-Based Standards:

The Planning Commission also discussed whether the ordinance should place greater emphasis on specific building elevations rather than applying uniform standards to all sides of a structure.

Examples of potential ordinance language concepts could include:

Street Facing Elevations

- Building elevations facing a public street shall be required to meet the applicable Class 1 material percentage requirements for the applicable design zone.
- Side or rear elevations not visible from a public street may be permitted to have reduced Class 1 material percentages or additional flexibility in material selection

Residential Adjacency Standards

- Building elevations immediately adjacent to residential zoning districts or residentially guided properties shall be required to meet the applicable Class 1 material standards regardless of visibility.
- Additional landscaping, screening, or architectural treatments may be required when commercial or industrial buildings abut residential uses.

Visibility-Based Standards

- Elevations visible from Interstate 35, Highway 95, Main Street, or other designated gateway corridors shall be subject to enhanced architectural standards.
- Rear elevations screened from public view or adjacent industrial properties may be permitted greater material flexibility.

The following analysis evaluates the City's current design standards and the potential impacts of modifying material percentage requirements and zoning structure. This review considers impacts to development feasibility, community character, and long-term planning goals.

Overall Evaluation

North Branch's design standards are generally consistent with surrounding communities in intent; however, the City's material percentage requirements—particularly in Zone 1—are slightly more restrictive than many comparable cities. While these standards support high-quality development, they may also contribute to increased construction costs and reduced development flexibility.

Comparison to Surrounding Cities

A review of neighboring communities indicates several common themes:

- Most cities require high-quality materials on street-facing facades, but allow flexibility elsewhere
- Typical requirements range from 50% to 75% high-quality materials
- Many cities allow modern materials such as metal panels when integrated into the design
- Greater emphasis is placed on architectural articulation and overall appearance, rather than strict percentage requirements

Impacts of Current Standards

Benefits

- Promotes consistent architectural quality throughout the City
- Enhances key corridors and gateway areas
- Supports long-term property values and community aesthetics
- Encourages durable, long-lasting materials

Challenges

- Higher material requirements may increase construction costs
- Limits flexibility for developers, particularly for industrial and commercial projects

- May discourage smaller-scale or cost-sensitive developments
- Requires periodic amendments to accommodate new materials

Potential Amendment Options

Based on the analysis, several potential modifications could be considered:

Material Percentage Adjustments

- Reduce Zone 1 requirement from 65% to approximately 50% Class 1 Materials
- Reduce Zone 2 requirement from 50%
- Maintain flexibility in Zone 3

Façade-Based Standards

- Focus higher-quality material requirements on street-facing facades only
- Allow greater flexibility on side and rear elevations

Expanded Material Allowances

- Continue allowing modern materials such as insulated metal panels
- Shift focus toward design quality rather than strict material classifications

Design Overlay Zone Modifications

- Simplify or reevaluate the current three zone structure

Cost and Development Considerations

Developers

- Reduced material requirements may lower construction costs
- Increased flexibility may improve project feasibility
- Could encourage a broader range of commercial and industrial development

City

- Increased development activity may expand tax base
- More flexible standards may improve competitiveness with neighboring cities
- Lower material standards could result in long-term maintenance concerns if not carefully balanced

Text Amendment Options:

The proposed amendments (underlined below) would revise the City's Design Standards regulations to focus architectural and building material requirements on street-facing building elevations and facades adjacent to residentially zoned properties, while providing greater flexibility for side and rear elevations not visible from public roadways. Additional amendments may include modifying the Design Standards Map by transitioning select properties along Flink Avenue and portions of the I-35 corridor from Zone 1 to Zone 2 to better align design requirements with development patterns and economic development objectives.

(k) Street-Facing Facades

1. For purposes of this section, a street-facing façade shall mean any building elevation visible from and oriented toward a public street, public roadway, Interstate 35, Highway 95, Main Street, or other designated gateway corridors identified by the Design Standards Map.
2. Street-facing facades shall comply with the minimum exterior building material requirements applicable to the Design Standards Zone in which the property is located.
3. Building elevations not visible from a public street may utilize any combination of approved Class I and Class II materials, provided the overall architectural character of the building remains consistent and cohesive.
4. Corner lots shall be considered to have two street-facing facades and both elevations shall comply with the applicable material standards.

(l) Residential Adjacency Standards

1. Any parcel subject to the provisions of this Section that immediately abuts a residential zoning district shall comply with the minimum exterior building material requirements of the applicable Design Standards Zone on all sides of the building, regardless of visibility from a public roadway.

(m) Design Standards Map Adjustments

The City Council may periodically amend the Design Standards Map to reflect changing development patterns, gateway corridors, land use transitions, and economic development objectives. In evaluating amendments to the map, consideration shall be given to roadway visibility, corridor prominence, adjacent land uses, and the overall character of the area.

(n) Visibility-Based Building Materials

Where a building contains facades that are visible from Interstate 35, Highway 95, Main Street, or other designated gateway corridors, the Planning Commission and City Council may require enhanced architectural treatment on those facades regardless of the minimum standards otherwise applicable within the Design Standards Zone.

Summary

The City's current design standards have been effective in promoting quality development but may benefit from targeted updates to improve flexibility and reduce development costs. Recent amendments, including the addition of insulated metal panels, demonstrate a shift toward modernization.

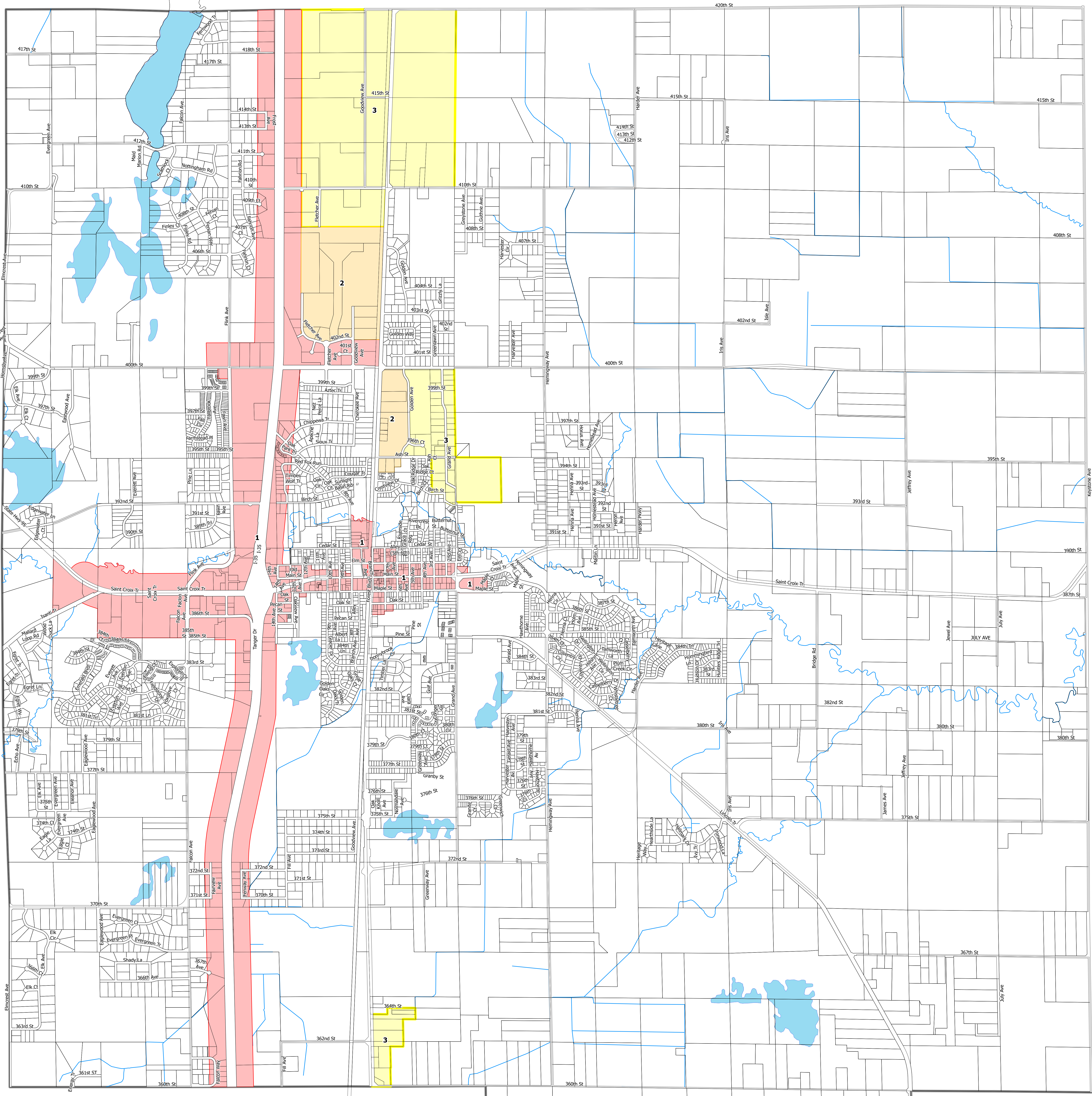
Potential updates discussed by the Planning Commission include reevaluating portions of the Design Standards Map, focusing higher architectural standards on street-facing and residentially adjacent elevations, and providing greater flexibility on non-visible building facades. These concepts could help the City remain competitive while maintaining its desired architectural character.

Planning Commission Action

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review the discussion items presented within this report and provide formal direction regarding potential amendments to Section 66-943 of City Code related to design standards and building material requirements.

Potential motions for consideration may include:

- Motion directing staff to draft ordinance amendments modifying the Design Standards Map, including evaluating portions of Flink Avenue and the I-35 corridor for transition from Zone 1 to Zone 2
- Motion directing staff to prepare façade-based design standards focused on street-facing elevations
- Motion directing staff to prepare additional standards requiring enhanced building materials for elevations adjacent to residentially zoned or guided properties
- Motion directing staff to maintain the existing design standards with no additional amendments
- Motion providing alternative direction as determined appropriate by the Planning Commission



Design Standards Zones

- 1
- 2
- 3

Sec 66-943 Design Standards

a) The zones set forth in this Section are defined in the design overlay [district map](#) on record with the City Clerk.

b) Architectural Standards. The requirements contained within this Division shall not apply to any structure in the Agricultural, Rural Residential or Park/Open Space districts. It shall apply to all structures used for commercial purposes in Single-Family Residential, Medium Density Residential, and High Density Residential, all structures in the Central Business, Commercial, and Industrial Districts.

These standards are intended to ensure coordinated design of new and existing building exteriors, including additions and accessory structures, in order to prevent visual disharmony; minimize adverse impacts on adjacent properties from buildings which detract from the character and appearance of the district; and aid in improving the overall economic viability of the district. These standards are further intended to prevent use of materials that are unsightly, subject to rapid deterioration or which contribute to depreciation of property values or cause urban blight. It is not the intent of this Section to unduly restrict design freedom when reviewing and approving project architecture in relationship to the proposed land use, site characteristics and interior building layout. While the City of North Branch has not established a theme or particular style of architecture that must be adhered to, a general goal of creating a professional appearance with architectural appeal associated with a small city atmosphere is desired within the City of North Branch.

- (1) Architectural plans shall be prepared by an architect or other qualified person (as determined by the Zoning Administrator) and shall show the following:
 - (a) Elevations of all sides of the building.
 - (b) Type and color of exterior building materials.
 - (c) Typical floor plans.
 - (d) Dimensions of all structures.
 - (e) The location of trash containers and of exterior electrical, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning equipment.
 - (f) Utility plans including water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer.
 - (g) Additional plans deemed necessary by the Zoning Administrator.
- (2) Exterior building materials shall be subject to Zoning Administrator approval and the following:
 - (a) Zone 1: Structures must provide a cohesive architectural appearance reflecting its functional purpose and must be composed of at least sixty-five percent (65%) Class I materials; not more than thirty-five percent (35%) percent Class II materials.

- (b) Zone 2: Structures must provide a cohesive architectural appearance reflecting its functional purpose and must be composed of at least fifty percent (50%) Class I materials; not more than thirty-five percent (35%) Class II materials.
- (c) Zone 3: Structures must provide a cohesive architectural appearance reflecting its functional purpose. Structures in this zone are not subject to material composition requirements by Class. All other design standards in this Section apply unless otherwise listed.
- (d) Classes of materials. For the purposes of this subdivision, exterior materials shall be divided into Class I and Class II categories as follows:

1. Class I consisting of:

- i. Brick,
- ii. Natural stone (or similar appearing, high quality manufactured stone),
- iii. Glass curtain wall,
- iv. Copper,
- v. Other comparable or superior materials, or
- vi. New materials that meet the intent of the preamble above.

2. Class II consisting of:

- i. Specialty concrete block such as burnished, textured or rock face,
- ii. Architecturally precast concrete panels having an exposed aggregate, light sandblast, acid etch, form liner, smooth as cast, tooled, natural stone veneer, brick face and/or cast stone type finish,
- iii. Masonry stucco,
- iv. Fiber-cement exterior siding,
- v. Other comparable or superior materials,
- vi. New materials that meet the intent of the preamble above. vii. Exterior finish installation system (EFIS),
- viii. Opaque panels,
- ix. Ornamental metal,

- x. Smooth concrete block,
 - xi. Scored concrete block,
 - xii. Smooth concrete tilt-up panels,
 - xiii. Glazed block,
 - xiv. Glass block,
 - xv. Ceramic,
 - xvi. Other comparable or superior materials, or
 - xvii. New materials that meet the intent of the preamble above.
- (e) A distinctly different color of brick may be considered as a second Class I material, however, minor blended color combinations shall not be considered as a separate material.
 - (f) Buildings may be constructed primarily of one (1) specific Class I material provided that the design fits the purpose of the building and is obviously superior to the general intent of this Division to provide visual interest, variation in detailing, and eliminate long wall sections without windows.
 - (g) Buildings constructed in Zone 3 shall have a minimum of two complementary color tones or two materials incorporated on all sides of the building. This can be completed through wainscoting, columns, pilasters, or other ornamentation as determined by the Zoning Administrator.
 - (h) Garish or bright accent colors for awnings, trim, banding, walls, entries or any portion of the building shall be minimized, but in no case shall such coloring exceed five percent (5%) of each wall area.
 - (i) In Zones 1 and 2 exposed roof materials shall be similar to, or an architectural equivalent of a high quality asphalt shingle (300# or better), wood shingle, standing seam metal roof, or better.
 - (j) In Zone 3, roof materials shall be of a finished material and all fasteners and connectors shall be the same color as the roof material.
- (3) The overall architectural character shall have a consistent architectural expression on all sides of the building and be compatible with its surroundings.
 - (4) Windows or simulated windows shall be used on the ground level of any wall parallel to or nearly parallel to a street.

- (5) All structures, including parking ramps shall be designed to be architecturally integrated into the overall site and be made of comparable materials and decorative elements.
- (6) All façade treatments shall be maintained so as to not be unsightly in appearance or in a state of disrepair, nor shall harmful health or safety conditions be present for the life of the project.
- (7) Prohibited Exterior Materials in Zone 1 and 2:
 - (a) Vinyl Siding.
 - (b) Metal Siding, except as provided above.
 - (c) Formed Metal Panels with exposed fasteners.
 - (d) Pre-engineered post-frame structures with agricultural grade metal wall and roof panels, commonly called “pole barns” are not permitted.
- (8) Prohibited Exterior Materials in Zone 3:
 - (a) Unfinished steel on walls or roofs.
 - (b) Unfinished aluminum on walls or roofs.
 - (c) Reflective materials.
- (9) Exceptions – The following exceptions to the exterior building material requirements may apply:
 - (a) The use is an essential service as defined by this Division; or
 - (b) The applicant shall have the burden of demonstrating that:
 - 1. The proposed building maintains the quality in design and materials intended by this Division,
 - 2. The proposed building design and materials are compatible and in harmony with other structures within the district,
 - 3. The justification for deviation from the requirements of this section shall not be based on economic considerations.
 - (c) Sides of a building which are not visible from any public road may use any combination of Class I or II materials, if approved by the Planning Commission and City Council. The applicant must be able to demonstrate that said side of building is not visible from any public road.

- (d) Garage doors, window trim, flashing, accent items and the like, shall not constitute required materials that make up the exterior finish of a building for the purposes of this section.
- (e) Building Additions. Properties zoned I - Industrial and I2 - Heavy Industrial may be excepted from the minimum exterior building material standards for additions onto existing buildings. This exception only applies to additions of not more than 75 percent of the gross floor area of the initial principal building constructed on the property. The type and percent composition of the material(s) on the new addition(s) must be equal to or greater than the material(s) on the existing principal building. Additions exceeding 75 percent are required to meet the minimum exterior material standards for that Zone. In this case, the property owner may opt to satisfy the minimum standards on both the addition(s) and existing building. This exception does not apply to new secondary buildings and accessory structures on the property, if permitted by zoning.