04. GOALS & POLICIES

The Comprehensive Plan is guided by a set of goals and policies that have their origins in both the 1997 and 2008 Comprehensive Plans. The goals and policies are focused on reflecting historical development patterns in Richfield, while helping position the City for the future. They represent the community's vision for future development, redevelopment and change. The framework for the goals and policies include:

- Committing to equitable opportunities for all.
- Emphasizing sustainability as a measure to ensure the future economic, environmental and social health of the community.
- Strengthening and enhancing the low density residential areas of the community.
- Maintaining a diversity of housing types and price ranges.
- Committing to a balanced multimodal transportation system.
- Providing quality parks and recreation areas that are well connected by trails.

Social Equity

In many communities, including Richfield, there are barriers that prevent all residents from having the same opportunities to thrive. For instance, race, ethnicity, and age continue to be predictors of health, education, income, housing, and recreation. The Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies are committed to advancing equitable opportunities for all. It is important to note that a focus on equity does not mean providing equal access to the same amount of resources. Equity is focused on making sure everyone has the resources they need to lead a healthy, productive life.

This chapter brings forward each of the plan element's goals and policies. The goals are general statements Richfield hopes to accomplish in the future. The policies are specific statements and measurable strategies used to help achieve a goal. Combined, these statements provide the City direction and guidance for making future decisions.

VISION STATEMENT

Richfield has been coined as the "Urban Hometown." This term has a special meaning to its residents and businesses. As part of the plan's public engagement efforts, a series of questions focused on what makes Richfield a great place to live, work and play. The responses helped define what an "Urban Hometown" means to the community. This definition (see sidebar) serves as the Comprehensive Plan's Vision Statement. It reflects the characteristics that make Richfield a great place to live, work and play, and the community's aspirations for the future. The vision statement served as a tool for updating the goals and policies, while providing guidance in developing the overall plan.

Richfield, the "Urban Hometown"

"The Urban Hometown, is a community that reflects the characteristics of living in a close-knit community, while surrounded by the amenities and resources of a broader metropolitan area. The urban hometown feeling is rooted in the personal connections cultivated within our neighborhoods, parks, schools and streets. These connections are reinforced by quality housing, local commercial centers, recreational opportunities, and the cultural diversity found within our city. Our proximity to the Twin Cities only serves to expand the opportunities available to our residents, providing the best of both small town living and urban life. Our goal is to embrace these characteristics, and take steps to maintain and enhance the culture and community that makes us an urban hometown."

Health Equity

Healthy eating, physical activity and tobacco-free living are public health priorities. Chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancers, are among the leading causes of death in Minnesota[1]. Poor nutrition, lack of physical activity and tobacco exposure lead to chronic conditions responsible for illness, suffering and early death. In the U.S. every year there are an estimated 683,000 preventable deaths from tobacco and obesity[2]. Preventing obesity and tobacco exposure saves money. In Minnesota, obesity-related medical costs were estimated at $2.8 billion in 2009[3]. Smoking was responsible for $3.19 billion in excess medical costs in 2014[4].

When people do not have enough money to buy nutritious food for themselves or their family members, they are considered food insecure. Food insecurity negatively affects health. For example, food insecurity in children is associated with increased risks of some birth defects, anemia, lower nutrient intakes, developmental delays, cognitive problems, aggression and anxiety. It is also associated with higher risks of being hospitalized, poorer general health, asthma, behavioral problems, depression, suicide ideation, and worse oral health. These health risks also impact a child's ability to succeed academically.[5] The health of adults is also negatively affected by food insecurity. Food insecure adults are more likely to have poor health, more chronic diseases (heart disease, diabetes), poorer disease management, mental health challenges, and more limitations in daily activity than food secure adults.[6]

In Congressional District 5 (which includes most of Richfield, as well as most of Minneapolis, its western and northwestern first-ring suburbs), 14.2% of residents are estimated to be food insecure overall, and 15.5% of all children are estimated to be food insecure (Map the Meal Gap 2015). In 2017, the Bloomington Public Health Department (which serves Richfield) started tracking food insecurity of families enrolled in its Family Home Visiting program, and found that 21.5% of these higher risk families with children under 5 in the home were food insecure. Richfield students that report receiving free or reduced price lunch (a measure of poverty) are more likely to be overweight or obese (41%), compared to students that do not receive free or reduced price lunch (28%) (Minnesota Student Survey 2016). It is particularly important to address food insecurity in low income children and adults to address poor nutrition and prevent obesity.

Food insecurity is just one example of a health inequity that impacts Richfield. The groups that experience the greatest disparities in health outcomes also have experienced the greatest inequities in social and economic conditions. These conditions are strong predictors of health. These disparities are present in many of the health issues faced by Richfield residents, and are neither random nor unpredictable. For this reason, the Bloomington Public Health Department has started using a health equity lens to assess and plan health interventions that will have the greatest effect on populations with the greatest need.

1. Minnesota Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics Portal.

2. Danaei G, Ding EL, Mozaffarian D, Taylor B, Rehm J, Murray CJL, et al. The Preventable Causes of Death in the United States: Comparative Risk Assessment of Dietary, Lifestyle, and Metabolic Risk Factors. PLoS Med 2009; 6(4).

3. Trogdon JG, Finkelstein EA, Feagan CW, Cohen JW. State and Payer Specific Estimates of Annual Medical Expenditures Attributable to Obesity. Obesity. 2012; 20(1):214-20.

4. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. 2017 Health Care Costs and Smoking in Minnesota: The Bottom Line.

5. Gundersen C, Ziliak JP. Food Insecurity and Health Outcomes. Health Aff. 2015;3(11):1830-1839. doi:10.1377/hlthaff.2015.0645.

6. Current and Prospective Scope of Hunger and Food Security in America: A Review of Current Research. Research Triangle Park, NC; 2014. https://www.rti.org/sites/default/files/resources/full_hunger_report_final_07-24-14.pdf

LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal: Maintain and enhance the "urban hometown" character of Richfield.

Policies:

- Establish a land use pattern and supporting infrastructure that preserves and enhances the ability of residents to make personal connections in their neighborhoods.
- Provide a full range of housing choices that contribute to vital and desirable neighborhoods that welcome diversity of age, race, and physical ability; while maintaining a comfortable small town atmosphere.
- Require site design and architectural characteristics that provide appropriate transitions between lower and higher intensity uses.
- Preserve historical, natural and cultural resources.
- Develop residential standards (scale, density, etc.) for redevelopment areas that create neighborhood character.
- Support and encourage commercial land uses that are diverse and responsive to their context.
- Maintain and provide quality amenities and a safe living environment.
- Establish land use policies that create a healthy, vibrant community of opportunity where low income people, peoples of color, new immigrants, and people with disabilities participate in and benefit from decisions that impact them.

Goal: Develop identifiable nodes, corridors and gateways throughout Richfield.

Policies:

- Facilitate an intense mixed pattern of regional and community-oriented land uses along regional corridor routes, such as I-494 and Cedar Avenue.
- Focus commercial and higher density residential development along major thoroughfares.
- Encourage a mix of uses that serve a market in and around the City in community commercial nodes.
- Encourage a mix of uses that serve surrounding local neighborhoods in neighborhood commercial nodes.
- Create meeting places in multiunit complexes to allow for interaction between its residents, and between its residents and surrounding neighbors.
- Improve gateways to create a visual means of welcoming people to the City.
- Integrate public art into public spaces when feasible.

Goal: Provide an economic climate within Richfield that will encourage the availability of quality goods, services and employment opportunities for residents.

Policies:

- Accommodate business growth.
- Encourage and support the development of strong commercial districts that respect the values and standards of the residents.
- Encourage the development of viable and responsive neighborhood commercial services.
- Promote development that broadens the tax base.
- Create commercial districts that sustain specific types of development and stabilize the economic base.

Goal: Encourage development of areas where vehicle use is minimized.

Policies:

- Encourage shared parking between different developments when appropriate.
- Strongly encourage pedestrian-friendly and transit-friendly building and site design through measures such as higher density development and growth, which is located along major transportation routes.
- Require pedestrian connections between complementary land uses.
- Advocate the location of commercial activity at focused points in the City (downtown areas).
- Require new developments of a certain size to prepare Travel Demand Management Plans.

HOUSING GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal: Maintain and enhance Richfield's commitment to housing maintenance, rehabilitation and redevelopment, resulting in an attractive, desirable and prosperous community.

Policies:

- Support the rehabilitation and upgrading of the existing housing stock.
- Support ongoing maintenance and upkeep of residential properties.
- Develop policies for naturally occurring affordable multi-family housing that encourage the maintenance and upgrading of aging apartment buildings, while maintaining affordability and preventing displacement of residents.
- Limit redevelopment of single-family neighborhoods into other uses except where such neighborhoods are directly adjacent to commercial areas or areas adversely affected by major roadways, the airport, or other major developments.
- Ensure that redevelopment and infill projects maintain the integrity of existing neighborhoods.
- Encourage the use of quality, durable building and landscaping materials to maintain a high-quality standard in residential development.
- Implement housing codes and support programs which lead to a housing stock that reflects the City's commitment to sustainability and healthy living.
- Support initiatives which help connect residents with their neighborhood and foster a sense of community, such as block groups, neighborhood clean-up days, and cultural activities.

Goal: Provide a full range of housing choices that meet residents' needs at every stage of their lives, and ensure a healthy balance of housing types that meet the needs of a diverse population with diverse needs.

Policies:

- Acknowledge and support the City's allocation of the region's need for affordable housing.
- Promote the development of a balanced housing stock that is available to a range of income levels.
- Encourage improvements to the housing stock to better serve families with children and seniors.
- Encourage the creation of "move-up" housing through new construction and home remodeling.
- Maintain an appropriate mix of housing types in each neighborhood based on available amenities, transportation resources and adjacent land uses.
- Promote additional housing diversity to serve families at all stages of their life-cycle through assistance, incentive programs, and the exploration of possible partnerships.
- Give priority to projects that meet the following criteria when considering proposals for market-rate, multi-family housing:
  - Located in transitional areas between single-family neighborhoods and commercial areas.
  - Offers a complementary size and style to the community.
  - Includes a mix of unit sizes and amenities.
  - Includes amenities to build community and encourage active lifestyles.
  - Offers a mix of residential and complementary commercial uses that embody and preserve the feel of the "Urban Hometown" in their design.
  - Offers flexibility in their design to accommodate market changes.

- Give priority to projects that meeting the following criteria when considering proposals for housing that include an affordable component:
  - Located in proximity to public transportation, job centers, schools and other amenities.
  - Dispersed evenly throughout the City.
  - Provides two and three-bedroom units (or larger).
  - Contains a mix of market-rate and affordable units, with a higher proportion of market-rate units.
  - Maintains affordability through the rehabilitation of existing, aging multi-family housing.
  - Includes attributes such as single-level living, low-rise developments, townhome style housing, shared community spaces, accessibility, and energy-efficient building systems.

- Give priority to projects that meet the following criteria when considering proposals for senior housing:
  - Includes lower-density senior housing.
  - Offers a continuum of care.
  - Offers geographic balance throughout the City.
  - Easily converts to serve other populations.
  - Identified as feasible based on a market survey.
  - Incorporates feedback from residents located near the proposed development.
  - Results in updates and upgrades to existing senior developments.

- Regularly review land use and zoning ordinances to ensure maximum opportunities for strengthening housing choices.
- Promote the development, management, and maintenance of affordable housing in the City through assistance programs, alternative funding sources, and the creation of partnerships whose mission is to promote low to moderate income housing.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal: Improve pedestrian and bicycle travel in the City.

Policies:

- » Embrace the City's Complete Streets Policy.
- » Implement projects to improve connections as identified in the pedestrian and bicycle master plans, along with the Safe Routes to School Plan.
- » Construct roadways to reduce vehicle speeding.
- » Construct new sidewalks set back farther from the street for increased safety and accommodate winter maintenance operations.
- » Utilize the existing right-of-way to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.
- » Create safe road crossings in high traffic areas.
- » Bury parallel utility lines to provide safer corridors and accommodate space for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Goal: Explore opportunities to enhance mass transit systems.

Policies:

- » Construct additional bus shelters attractive to users and safely located around intersections.
- » Continue to work with Metro Transit to construct enhanced bus services.
- » Work with existing groups and organizations to adequately meet the specialized transportation needs of seniors, youth, handicapped, and underprivileged citizens in the City.
- » Promote mass transit options, such as bus rapid transit, to reduce dependence on automobiles and provide a diverse, balanced set of public transportation alternatives.
- » Promote telecommuting and flex scheduling to reduce traffic.
- » Identify or develop additional park-and-ride lots throughout the City to encourage transit ridership.

Goal: Improve regional and local mobility and safe access to the City.

Policies:

- » Continue to work with MnDOT and the State Legislature to improve the operations of I-35W, I-494 and TH 62.
- » Construct the extension of International Boulevard under TH 77.
- » Consider roundabouts at major intersections.
- » Preserve pavement condition on local streets.

SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal: Encourage the use of alternative energy sources and sustainable building practices.

Policies:

- Establish long-range energy/greenhouse gas emission reduction goals and commit to conducting an energy Action Plan or Climate Action Plan.
- Continue participating in the GreenStep Cities Programs to develop sustainable best practices.
- Become an innovator in the use of alternative fuels, wind power, and other sustainable energy sources.
- Install solar panels or similar energy sources on public buildings and encourage owners of businesses and private property owners to do the same.
- Encourage sustainable building practices.

Goal: Encourage protection of the environment in the day-to-day conduct of City business.

Policies:

- Reduce pollutants through public transit, car-pooling, traffic control, use of berms and trees, and stronger enforcement of pollution policies.
- Create more ways to monitor pollution and put plans in place to resolve problems.
- Use state-of-the-art methods to protect the environment in public projects and encourage the same in private development.
- Encourage innovative solutions to land use and transportation problems.
- Incorporate landscaping and aesthetics in all transportation improvements.

Goal: Encourage the use of alternative power sources for public vehicles.

Policies:

- Make fuel efficiency and alternative fuels a high priority when purchasing vehicles for use by the City.

Goal: Explore opportunities for policy change related to pollinator habitat protection, local food production and entrepreneurship, the promotion of healthy food retail, and waste reduction.

PARK SYSTEM GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal: Maintain and enhance Richfield's park system for today and tomorrow's residents.

Policies:

- Make facility improvements and lifecycle replacement based on demonstrated need. The City will evaluate recreation facility use prior to improvements or and at the end of a facility's lifecycle, and will determine at that time whether participation or use warrants replacement, conversion to an alternate uses, or removal.
- Preserve crucial public places like parks, recreation areas, open spaces, wetlands, and Wood Lake Nature Center.
- Provide all residents with access to parkland and trails within a walkable distance.
- Include criterion for all new park and facility improvements that improves sustainability of materials, energy use, operating cost and lifecycle replacement, and natural environmental impact.
- Incorporate best practices for stormwater retention in new park development and in the renovation of existing parks.
- Acquire park land on a willing seller basis. Where possible, the City will work to obtain a first right of refusal to purchase lands identified in this document.
- Prohibit tobacco use at all recreational facilities.
- Encourage parks to be naturalized with prairie grasses and pollinator-friendly plants, where suitable, to minimize maintenance costs and to beautify parks.

Goal: Provide recreational opportunities for all members of the community.

Policies:

- Provide all residents with access and the opportunity to be involved in recreation programs, regardless of age, culture and mobility level throughout the City.
- Provide adequate seating, shade, trail lighting and a trail loops of varying lengths in parks to encourage active living for an aging population.
- Provide public safety improvements as needed to ensure park and trail user's well-being. The City will utilize Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies.
- Provide parks and recreation facilities that are handicap accessible consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines for Building and Facilities and universal design principles.

WASTE WATER GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal: Provide residents and businesses with affordable potable water that is safe and of high quality.

Policies:

- Provide adequate water services throughout the community and areas designated for redevelopment.
- Provide a low-maintenance, efficient water system that supplies the long-term needs of residents and businesses.
- Provide a minimal hydrostatic pressure of 50 psi.
- Selectively increase the size of pipes in the distribution system for areas within the City where low water pressures exist.

Goal: Work with surrounding communities to provide an assured source of water in case of emergencies.

Policies:

- Support an appropriate level of state funding for interconnections and other physical water system improvements to ensure water supply reliability, natural resource protection, and/or safety and security, including economic security, of the region and state.
- Investigate interconnection options with neighboring cities.
- Design and construct improvements to the water system that meet demands of redevelopment and for sufficient fire protection for the entire community.

Goal: Protect the groundwater supply from contamination.

Policies:

- Promote water conservation and sustainability by reducing water demand, reducing the waste of water, improving the efficiency of the existing system, and educating the public on water conservation.
- Conduct a water rate study to adopt a conservation rate structure that promotes water conservation.

SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal: Protect surface water quality by reducing the use of pesticides and chemical turf treatments that contribute to water pollution.

Policies:

» Demonstrate chemical treatment of surface waters as an innovative way to improve their quality and minimize their harm to the environment.

Goal: Provide a public education program to alert the public on the importance of protecting storm ponds from harmful pollutants and ensure the proper disposal of solid and liquid wastes.

Policies:

» Educate residents in responsible water quality management and ensure proper disposal of solid and liquid wastes.

Goal: Perform a regular maintenance program of existing storm drainage facilities, including sump, catch basin and retention basin cleaning, to protect private property from flood damage and maintain high water quality.

Policies:

» Design conveyance structures to accommodate a ten-year storm event and storage facilities to accommodate a one-hundred-year event.

» Eliminate illegal connections to the storm water system.

Goal: Explore innovative ways to improve the quality of surface water and evaluate the effectiveness of existing treatment methods at reasonable cost.

Policies:

» Research a variety of treatment methods to assess their effectiveness to improve water quality at a reasonable cost.

» Continue regular maintenance of storm ponds and drainage facilities to reduce damage to property and protect water quality.

SANITARY SEWER GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal: Provide high quality sanitary sewer service to the residents and businesses of Richfield in the most economical manner possible.

- Take all measures necessary to protect the capacity of the interceptor sewers that service the residents and businesses of Richfield.
- Place funding priorities on maintaining the existing municipal sanitary sewer system.
- Consider replacing old sanitary sewer pipe at the time of road reconstruction or redevelopment.
- Prepare a financial analysis prior to the reconstruction of any portion of the sanitary sewer system.
- Fund future sewer facility improvements identified in the Capital Improvements Plan.
- Determine who is responsible for the payment of reconstruction of sewer facilities will be made if insufficient capacity is available to serve the intensity of new development or redevelopment.

Goal: Provide sanitary sewer service that meets the requirements of the 2040 population and employment forecasts of the City.

- Make provisions to ensure sufficient sewer system capacity will serve the intensity of new development and redevelopment before final development approvals are granted by the City.
- Design trunk sewer expansions in relation to the proposed land use intensities outlined in the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Goal: Take all necessary measures to maintain the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services Design Peak Hour to Average Daily Flow (P/A) Ratio of 2.5 to avoid paying an MCES surcharge.

Policies:

- Work with MCES staff to monitor the metered flows from the Richfield system.
- Continually monitor the sanitary sewer system to identify points of Inflow/Infiltration.
- Continue to eliminate points of Inflow/Infiltration to the sanitary sewer system on public property, and require the elimination of Inflow/Infiltration on private property.
- Periodically review and evaluate the sewer collection system, MCES treatment plant capacity, and the accuracy of metered flow data provided by MCES in relation to the confirmed community growth and development.
- Maintain operating efficiency, minimize sewage blockage, and reduce the potential for illness.
- Continue to improve the City's maintenance and inspection program.