Richfield
The Urban Hometown

City of Richfield, Minnesota

# 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## Acknowledgments

### Comprehensive Plan Advisory Commission (CPAC)

- Reed Bornholdt - Community Services Commission
- Crystal Brakke - School Board
- Debbie Goettel - Hennepin Co. Commissioner
- Sara Gumke - Human Rights Commission
- Rick Jabs
- Candace Johnson
- Barry LeBlanc
- Jennifer Lewis
- Michael McGee
- Laurel Nightingale
- Kathryn Quam
- Maria Regan Gonzalez - City Council
- Mary Supple - Housing & Redevelopment Authority
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### Consultant

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## Acknowledgments

### City Council

- Pat Elliott, Mayor
- Michael Howard, At-Large
- Simon Trautmann, Ward 1
- Edwina Garcia, Ward 2
- Maria Regan Gonzalez, Ward 3

### Planning Commission

- Daniel Kitzberger
- Susan Rosenberg
- Allysen Hoberg
- Bryan Pynn
- Sean Hayford Oleary
- Kathryn Quam
- James Rudolph

# RESOLUTION NO. 11568

## RESOLUTION APPROVING A SUBMITTAL OF THE RICHFIELD 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO THE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota Statutes section 473.864 requires each local governmental unit to review and, if necessary, amend its entire comprehensive plan at least once every ten years to ensure its comprehensive plan conforms to metropolitan system plans; and

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota Statutes sections 473.858 and 473.864 require local governmental units to complete their "decennial" reviews by December 31, 2018; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council, Planning Commission, and City Staff have prepared a proposed Comprehensive Plan intended to meet the requirements of the Metropolitan Land Planning Act and Metropolitan Council guidelines and procedures; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 473.858, the proposed Comprehensive Plan was submitted to adjacent governmental units and affected special districts and school districts for review and comment on May 9, 2018, and the statutory six-month review and comment period has elapsed; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission of the City of Richfield held a public hearing at its October 22, 2018 meeting, and recommended approval of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council has reviewed the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and all public comments and comments from adjacent jurisdictions and affected districts; and thereafter submitted

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota Statutes section 473.858 requires a local governmental unit to submit its proposed comprehensive plan to the Metropolitan Council following recommendation by the planning commission and after consideration but before final approval by the governing body of the local governmental unit.

**WHEREAS**, based on its review of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Planning Commission and staff recommendations, the City Council is ready to submit its proposed plan to the Metropolitan Council for review pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 473.864; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the City Council of the City of Richfield, Minnesota, as follows:

1. The Asst. Community Development Director is directed to distribute said Comprehensive Plan to the Metropolitan Council by December 31, 2018 pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 473.864.

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Richfield, Minnesota this 13th day of November, 2018.

Pat Elliott, Mayor

ATTEST:

Elizabeth VanHoose, City Clerk

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# 01. INTRODUCTION

## WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The Comprehensive Plan is a statement of what the City of Richfield wants to become. It is a set of goals and policies designed to achieve a community wide vision. The Comprehensive Plan is based on a composition of concepts, patterns and relationships that deal with integrating the social aspects of a community with its physical development. Unlike the zoning ordinance, the Comprehensive Plan is futuristic in that it guides decisions that have yet to be made. The word "comprehensive" in itself provides meaning to the plan: it deals with the whole community and not just the parts.

In many ways, the 2018 Comprehensive Plan builds on prior planning efforts. It includes directives for maintaining strong residential neighborhoods, it emphasizes the importance of parks and open space, and it seeks to maintain quality infrastructure. It contains new ideas and directions intended to position Richfield for the next 10 to 20 years. Furthermore, the 2018 Comprehensive Plan is written with a focus on meeting local community needs within the regional framework established by the Metropolitan Council. Accordingly, this plan contains all of the required plan elements but presents them

*Historic Photos of Richfield*

in a format and framework that meets Richfield's needs. The plan is organized as follows:

1. Introduction: Defines the comprehensive planning requirements and future socioeconomic forecasts (population, households, and jobs) set by the Metropolitan Council. It also identifies Richfield's history and challenges likely to be faced by Richfield in the next 10 to 20 years.

2. Community Direction: Sets the stage for the plan by providing an overview of the planning process, public engagement activities and past studies.

3. Demographic, Social and Economic Trends: Provides a statistical overview of Richfield's people and households. Past trends are used to help frame future issues.

4. Goals and Policies: Provides a vision statement and serves as the primary chapter for each plan element's goals and policies.

5. Land Use Planning and Community Facilities: Describes Richfield's desired land use and development patterns.

6. Housing: Contains Richfield's housing plan and initiatives designed to strengthen the existing supply of housing and create new housing opportunities in specified redevelopment nodes and corridors.

7. Transportation: Describes the bicycle and pedestrian facilities that provide local and regional mobility, transit services and the network of roads.

8. Parks: Summarizes the key elements of the more detailed Richfield Parks Master Plan and guides future park and recreation investments.

9. Public and Private Utilities: Describes plans and policies for Richfield's water supply system. Also, this chapter identifies the drainage patterns of the community and establishes policies that protect the function of the regional drainage system and describes plans and policies for Richfield's sanitary sewer system.

10. Implementation: Identifies how the plan will be implemented to achieve the identified goals and policies by addressing both public and private actions.

## History

Richfield's origins date back to 1858. Named after the rich farmland that underlies the houses, streets, offices, parks and schools of today, Richfield officially became a City in 1908 by adopting a president/trustee form of government. The original boundaries took in much of what is currently downtown Minneapolis extending west to Lake Minnetonka and south and east to the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers. A series of annexations by Minneapolis and surrounding communities eventually reduced Richfield to its present size. By 1927, the City was seeing significant new growth when the New Ford Town area was developed, the beginning of a trend of suburbanization that would last more than 50 years.

Primary pre-World War II settlement occurred along Lyndale Avenue and 60th Street. Richfield's premier business was Bachman's, located along Lyndale Avenue. The Academy of the Holy Angels was established in the area in 1930 to offer expanded educational opportunities.

Richfield experienced a population boom following World War II. As a first-ring Minneapolis suburb, Richfield quickly became a popular home for returning war veterans in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The City developed as a bedroom community; strictly limiting commercial development. Statistics show that from 1940 to 1960, Richfield's population grew from under 10,000 to over 42,000. The City's population topped out at almost 50,000 in 1970. From 1970 to the present, Richfield's population has declined, primarily due to decreases in average household size, expansion of the Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport and expansion of the regional highway network. Federal Housing Authority (FHA) lending policies and racial covenants meant that Richfield residents were almost exclusively white. As recently as 1990, the community was 93% white.

Today, Richfield has a population over 35,000 living within 7 square miles of neighborhoods, parks and shops. The population has diversified quickly; only 62% of residents identify as white, non-Hispanic/Latino today. In order to remain vital, the community is focusing on commercial redevelopment to strengthen the City's tax base, and residential redevelopment that will provide additional living options.

Despite being fully developed, Richfield retains its small town flavor. Attractive residential neighborhoods, a strong local school system and amenities like Wood Lake Nature Center continue to make Richfield an attractive place to live.

## Comprehensive Planning

In Minnesota, authority for land use planning and regulation is vested primarily in local governments. Comprehensive Plans are one of the primary tools used by local governments to regulate the use of land. The Metropolitan Land Planning Act requires local governments in the Twin Cities to prepare and adopt Comprehensive Plans. In accordance with the Act, communities are required to update their plans every ten years.

Richfield has a history of Comprehensive Planning that pre-dates the legislative requirement. In 1970, the first "real" Comprehensive Plan was prepared using funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's 701 program. That plan established goals for orderly growth by providing a wide range of land uses. It also encouraged diversification of travel modes geared to the needs of all residents. Specific policies were developed that focused on maintaining Richfield's residential quality and character through housing rehabilitation, further defining boundaries of non-residential uses, and planting street trees throughout neighborhoods.

In 1982, Richfield updated its Comprehensive Plan in response to the Planning Act. That plan continued many of the former plan's goals and focused on the rehabilitation of substandard housing. The 1982 plan also contained new land use goals to encourage land use compatibility. The 1997 plan continued many of the goals and directives of the previous planning efforts, but contained more detail on land use types and infrastructure. It defined a series of sub-areas, many of which became the sites of redevelopment projects completed between 1995 and 2005. The 2008 plan continued to refine the 1997 plan and responded to significant growth projections for the region. Since that time, growth has stabilized and the 2018 plan is another update to the plan completed and adopted in 2008.

## Community Designation & Forecasts

Richfield is classified by the Metropolitan Council as an "Urban Center (see Figure 1-1)." According to the Metropolitan Council's 2015 System Statement for the City of Richfield, "Urban Center includes the largest, most centrally located, and most economically diverse cities in the region. Anchored by Minneapolis and St. Paul, the Urban Center also includes adjoining cities that share similar development characteristics such as street grids planned before World War II. Urban Center communities are expected to plan for forecasted population and household growth at average densities of at least 20 units per acre for new development and redevelopment. In addition, Urban Center communities are expected to target opportunities for more intensive development near regional transit investments at densities and in a manner articulated in the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan."

The socioeconomic forecasts (population, households and employment) established for Richfield (see Table 1-1) are reasonable given its community designation. Most, if

Figure 1-1. Metropolitan Council Community Designation

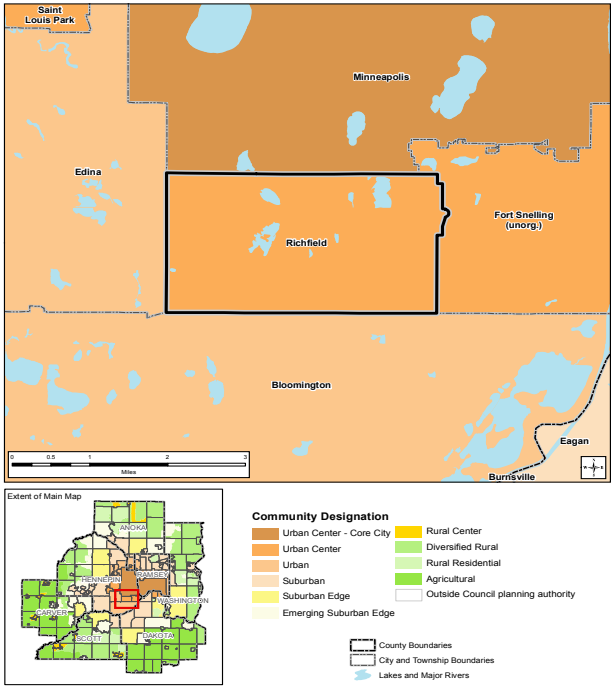



Table 1-1. Metropolitan Council Socioeconomic Forecasts

| Forecast Year | Population | Households | Employment |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2010 | 35,228 | 14,818 | 15,604 |
| 2020 | 37,100 | 15,900 | 16,600 |
| 2030 | 37,300 | 16,300 | 17,100 |
| 2040 | 37,700 | 16,700 | 17,500 |

not all of the forecasts will be met through redevelopment initiatives over the next twenty years. These forecasts have set the foundation for the various plan elements discussed throughout this document.

# COMMUNITY CHALLENGES - THE NEXT 10 TO 20 YEARS

The characteristics (e.g., housing stock, parks and transportation networks) that define Richfield today present challenges that can be interpreted as either assets or liabilities. The chapters in this Comprehensive Plan seek to ensure that Richfield's characteristics continue to be assets and that policies, plans and programs can further enhance the attractiveness of the City. The Comprehensive Plan also recognizes the changing technologies and economies that can influence the community's characteristics. Rather than speculate on how or when these technologies and trends will impact the future of Richfield, this plan highlights a few of these challenges for future consideration in long-range plans. This will allow the City to be adaptive, aware and forward thinking as these trends and technologies evolve. Some of Richfield's characteristics and challenges are described on the following page.

## Redevelopment

Over the next 20+ years, the general challenge facing Richfield is remaining competitive with other communities as a desirable place to live, work and play. The Metropolitan Council has designated Richfield as an "Urban Center." Unlike other communities in the metropolitan area, Richfield will not see the development of new housing and businesses on former agricultural and vacant tracts of land. That opportunity has not been present in Richfield for almost 30 years.

In seeking to maintain a competitive edge, Richfield will need to continue its decade long course of strategic investments that promote redevelopment in selected areas, while broadly promoting policies and programs that improve transportation options, neighborhoods and business areas.

## Convenient Transportation

Richfield is surrounded by freeways. I-35W, I-494, Cedar Avenue and Crosstown 62 make it easy to get to and from Richfield. Richfield residents have great access to jobs in downtown Minneapolis and along the I-494 corridor. This same network of freeways that promotes convenient mobility also poses a threat to the City. The noise and pollution associated with hundreds of thousands of vehicles on these routes daily impacts the quality of life and limits the location of residential uses. Congestion on major roadways can easily spill over onto local routes. People have a propensity to leave the freeway network during peak times and use local routes to access their destinations.

Moving forward, Richfield has placed a stronger emphasis on the pedestrian, transit user, and bicyclist. Past planning efforts have embraced this approach by establishing a long-term vision for better multi-modal options, while placing them as the highest priority for future transportation investments.

Both the transportation and land use sections of this plan address transportation in and around Richfield.

## Expansion of Transportation Options

It is clear that transportation alternatives are on the verge of changing. Over the next thirty years, ride-sharing, autonomous vehicles and increased access to public transportation are anticipated to change how future generations move about the region. The biggest unknown is the advancement of autonomous vehicle and its impact on the built environment. The car industry is predicting

that a large proportion of vehicles in the United States will be autonomous by the year 2040. This plan does not address these anticipated changes given its unknowns. Instead, it continues to emphasize the importance of multimodal options over the personal vehicles. Richfield should continue to monitor the changes in transportation technologies.

## Homogenous Housing Stock

Much of Richfield's housing was built about the same time and in the same configuration. Most of the housing is single-story with attached or detached one and two-car garages. Richfield's current housing stock lacks some of the amenities that buyers look for today. Larger numbers of bedrooms and bathrooms, walk-in closets, and higher ceilings are not characteristics of the housing in most Richfield neighborhoods.

Richfield's single-family housing supply also has a number of things in its favor. Affordability is one. The fact that Richfield's housing tends to be generally more affordable allows young families to purchase homes and over time, expand and improve them to meet their needs. In order for that to occur, people need to want to stay in Richfield rather than moving out to more contemporary housing in other communities. By emphasizing housing maintenance that promotes strong neighborhoods, encouraging strong schools, protecting neighborhoods from unwanted traffic and maintaining a high quality park system, Richfield can establish an environment that helps promote investment and the retention of residents.

Being largely one story structures, housing in Richfield is also conducive to seniors. Smaller homes with one-story living spaces allow seniors to age in place, as long as the necessary network of support services is provided. Richfield's housing issues are discussed in detail in the housing chapter of the plan.

## Convenient Shopping

Richfield residents have unparalleled access to shopping. The Mall of America and Southdale are two of the region's retail giants. While both of these facilities offer a broad mix of retail and commercial services, they have a constraining impact on future retail development in Richfield. The market can only support a certain amount of retail development. Richfield's land use plan is sensitive to this fact and addresses the issue by providing three tiers of commercial use categories that range from regional uses along high-volume roadway corridors to neighborhood retail areas that are intended to serve the needs of local residents.

## Changing Economies

Retailers in general have been impacted by the rise of online commerce, competing markets and behavioral change. In fact, online retail (eCommerce) now constitutes a larger share of shopping in the United States. This impact has played a role in a shrinking market for big-box retailers; resulting in some big-box stores closing or reducing the size of their building's footprint. Many of the big-box retailers in Richfield are still operating strong. In the event that these stores close, the City should be thinking about how to adapt and reuse these buildings. Communities across the nation are beginning to see these types of buildings converted into community centers, churches, museums, ice arenas, and medical space.

Other reuse concepts have included "makerspace." Makerspace is commonly defined as a space where people can gather to create, invent and learn. Types of makerspace may include research or fabrication laboratories, artisan space, libraries, and tech shops. These spaces are typically rented out through memberships or on a month-to-month basis. This provides entrepreneurs a cheaper alternative to leasing or buying office space, while sharing equipment amongst common users.

To ensure the City can adapt to future economies, the City's zoning ordinance should provide some flexibility to allow new uses throughout the community that fit within the context of the neighborhood and land use plan.

## Transit Oriented Development

Recent trends have indicated an increase in the number of households choosing to inhabit higher density housing options. These choices are occurring as the market delivers projects with a higher level of commercial-to-residential integration, increased multimodal design that emphasizes connectivity, and an increase of transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities.

The most relevant information about the future of housing in Richfield can be seen in the Housing and Land Use Chapters of this plan. This plan provides a number of land use categories that support mixed-use formats as a response to the future trends in housing and retail. These mixed-use areas are located along major transportation corridors and will offer the City future flexibility, as housing preferences may demand, in providing more walkability between housing and places of employment, recreation and commerce.

## Changing Demographics/Equity

Like many inner ring suburban communities, Richfield saw a significant shift in its population from 1990 to 2010. Richfield's Black, Hispanic/Latino and Asian populations are growing along with the proportions of these populations that are non-English speaking. This shift in both population and culture is likely to impact everything from housing choices to recreation participation. The City is part of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) and is committed to equitably providing opportunities and services, and to working toward a government staff and policy leadership that is representative of our community. This is one of the most important jobs of the City moving forward.

## Public Health Initiatives

Comprehensive plans influence future land use decisions that can have a significant impact on the built environment. That said, comprehensive plans play a pivotal role in promoting the health of a community. Through a grant from the State Health Improvement Program (SHIP), the Public Health Law Center conducted a scan of existing policies and code language in order to identify barriers and opportunities for active transportation and healthy eating in Richfield. A summary of this policy document is provided as a sidebar and the full report can be found in Appendix A.

## Public Art

Cities are responding to the renewed interest in the desire for quality spaces and community identity. Public art is seen as an important ingredient. Some communities have formal public art programs, mostly utilizing a percent-for-art model (an ordinance mandating a portion of the City's capital budget be used for public art). Many more communities however, engage in public art activities without an ordinance or formal city program. These programs are usually driven by a desire to have art in key public or private locations and are implemented in public-private partnerships between cities, developers and foundations.

Public art can play a role in enhancing Richfield as a destination, a distinct place within the metropolitan area. Expanding access to the arts enhances the quality of life in Richfield. Public art can also acknowledge and celebrate the

### Barriers & Opportunities for Active Transportation & Healthy Eating

This policy brief focuses primarily on Richfield's municipal ordinances and planning documents that impact the local food system and opportunities to walk and bicycle. When appropriate, areas where state law may impact relevant activity at the local level are identified. This analysis can be be found in Appendix A.

City's history through commemorative art, memorials and interpretive projects.

In Richfield, public art has been a part of many recent developments. The City is currently considering a public art policy for the right-of-way and encourages public art as part of landscaping efforts for new development.

## Sustainable Design

Sustainability has recently evolved from a planning term to a way of life for most communities. For the Comprehensive Plan, sustainable is used to reflect a quality that is lasting, enduring and infinite. A common definition for sustainable development is a development pattern that accommodates present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In other words it is a development pattern that lasts, endures and does not have an end life. This is important from a global perspective because of the notion that populations grow exponentially and land and natural resources are finite. Sustainability represents the interdependent relationship between Richfield and the natural ecosystem.

Sustainable development is synonymous with green building and green infrastructure. Recent publications by groups such as the Urban Land Institute (ULI) show expanding support for green building practices despite being more costly upfront because over time, the cost savings (benefits) due to reduced energy consumption, enhanced quality of life, and longer lasting materials outweigh the upfront costs.

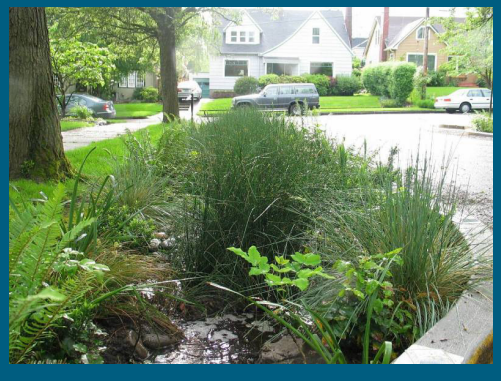
Design character also considers how site and building design will contribute to the sustainability of the community. Sustainable building techniques, energy conservation practices and ecologically-sensitive site design and environmental protection all contribute to sustainable design character. By increasing attention to the sustainable design character of urban development in Richfield, negative impacts to the natural systems and environment can be reduced. The U.S. Green Building Council outlines strategies for increasing sustainability in a community in its document, LEED ND (Leadership for Energy and Environmental Design) for Neighborhood Developments. Strategies focus on ways to promote livability, increase transportation efficiency, increase walkability, conserve land, and reduce stormwater impacts.

Sustainable building design is an important way to reduce environmental impacts and increase overall design character of the community. Sustainable design of buildings focuses on utilizing renewable and local resources, reducing energy consumption and limiting impacts to the surrounding natural environment.

*Green Roof Example*

## Sustainable Design Practices

The public identified stormwater management practices as an important element to sustainable design. The Minnesota Stromwater Manual provides a series of sustainable design practices through Minimal Impact Design Standards (MIDS). MIDS is based on low impact development (LID), an approach to stormwater management that mimics a site's natural hydrology as the landscape is developed. Using the low impact development approach, stormwater is managed on site, and the rate and volume of predevelopment storm water reaching receiving waters is unchanged.



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