

# *REPORT OF THE HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS TEAM*

## **OUR VISION**

In the year 2020, housing in the City of Richfield will provide varied choices, will connect people within neighborhoods, will connect neighborhoods with neighborhoods, and will prove attractive to a diverse population while maintaining the City's small-town feel.

### ***Dateline 2020:***

Richfield is a community of neighborhoods and a neighborhood to the region. Our greatest internal assets are our people and our housing. Our city center at 66<sup>th</sup> Street and Lyndale Avenue South, our "Hub," is a destination neighborhood encompassing two to six blocks every direction. This city center will prove attractive to residents and others as a place to live, work, play, and do business.

Neighborhoods within the city which bring together housing and business are well defined, vibrant, and vital. These combination neighborhoods are located throughout the City and provide distinctive and supportive service retailing. At the same time, they are residential areas linked together by parks, by churches, by community amenities, and by formal and informal citizen organizations. Our neighborhoods are also connected by technology and by multiple and varied means of travel. Our residents express a high level of satisfaction at being connected to the larger community through distinctive neighborhoods.

Richfield's housing stock is marked by value, desirability, livability and affordability. The City's housing meets the needs of our population which is increasingly diverse in its cultural flavor, in its socioeconomic composition, and in its mixture of ages.

Our location is one of our greatest assets. We are next to everything. We are connected to the major business, learning, retailing and entertainment centers of the region in the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Technology and the near-by airport connect Richfield to the world. No community enjoys greater proximity to regional shopping venues like the Mall of America and Southdale.

We are a politically active community, both a neighbor and a leader to the region, providing a sound example of good civic policy. Richfield is known as the Urban Hometown. We showcase the vitality of our community through at least one major destination event each year.

In A. D. 2020, we are celebrating thirty years of new housing, remodeling and neighborhood reinvestment. When people move into the region and desire the benefits of a mature, fully-developed, vital, active, urban community that feels like a small town, they pick Richfield.

## **GOAL NUMBER ONE**

*Fully develop the City Center as the destination neighborhood in the City.*

### **RATIONALE**

The city center, or downtown, surrounds the intersection of 66<sup>th</sup> Street and Lyndale Avenue South but does not intrude into the natural areas on its periphery. This area provides a variety of retail outlets, healthcare facilities, restaurants, and entertainment and art venues. One or more of these venues will be dedicated to community-strengthening activities. Surrounding the commercial areas are high-rise buildings, including life-cycle housing, with a range of affordability. Parking is on the periphery with easy access to the center by public transit or by convenient pedestrian routes. Land use changes gradually as distance from the center increases and one enters a variety of residential neighborhoods.

### **STRATEGIES**

1. Provide the means to calm and/or divert vehicular traffic at the intersection of 66th Street and Lyndale Avenue South to guarantee safety and livability for residents and visitors to the city center( e. g. dropping the intersection below grade and putting a plaza above, diverting some traffic onto 65<sup>th</sup> Street/Rae Drive and onto Lakeshore Drive, or dropping one street below the other).
2. Protect residential neighborhoods directly adjacent to Wood Lake Nature Center and Richfield Lake from high-rise development by enacting protective zoning and height restrictions.
3. Put in place coordinated, well-serviced, circulatory transit services. Explore personal rapid transit (PRT) as the preferred people-moving option between the city center and neighborhoods.
4. Create skyway connections between parts of the city center.
5. Require "public use" space in all commercial and residential developments which exceed a designated square footage (e.g. the Edinborough development in Edina has an indoor public park and community center, Centennial Lakes development in Edina has an outdoor public park and community event facility, the Oaks on Pleasant at Woodlake Center in Richfield has an outdoor sculpture garden).
6. Build a community center that can serve as a social and cultural gathering place for all residents and as a venue for activities designed for the whole community. The community center should be located as close as possible to the city center.
7. Expand the vision of the Lakes at Lyndale proposal to include updates to the original "HUB" and Nicollet shops. These updates, which include mixed housing, commercial development, and parking ramps, will constitute a second generation of redevelopment for this retailing area and should serve to integrate this area with the city center neighborhood.
8. Implement the Lakes at Lyndale Vision (1998) including a special "Lakes at Lyndale" neighborhood district.

## **GOAL NUMBER TWO:**

*Develop identifiable neighborhoods -- residential, commercial, and mixed-use areas -- beyond the City Center.*

### **RATIONALE**

To the extent possible, neighborhoods should be defined and identified by existing boundaries. Each neighborhood has supporting services and amenities which foster the positive interaction of neighbors. Essential social relationships are built and nurtured on both natural and organized levels, creating a sense of neighborhood belonging and mutual assistance. Cultural richness and diversity are encouraged as businesses in all neighborhoods reflect the needs and culture of that neighborhood. Residents are supportive patrons of their neighborhood businesses. Businesses are integral partners in creating a sense of neighborhood.

All neighborhoods are identifiable, safe and pedestrian friendly. Residents in all the neighborhoods have ready access to basic necessities such as food, personal services, and health services; and to recreational, spiritual, and cultural services. Access to services may be by geographic proximity or by an efficient transportation system. City services, facilities, and staff support and enable strong, healthy neighborhoods. Parks, cultural outlets, and recreational facilities should expand, contract and evolve to fit the needs of each neighborhood. As housing and commercial development become more dense in Richfield, the City should be diligent to preserve green spaces, walkways, trails, lakes, ponds, and so on to ensure opportunities for recreation and tranquillity necessary to maintain balance in busy lives.

### **STRATEGIES**

1. Create meeting places in multiunit complexes to allow for interaction between its residents and between its residents and surrounding neighbors.
2. Create or designate a public meeting place in each neighborhood available at convenient times to groups in that neighborhood for community meetings and activities. These spaces should be available free or require only a minimal fee.
3. Develop recreational and social programs sponsored by the City, business, or community organizations which enable residents from various housing options in neighborhoods to interact.
4. Create and support public and private services which assist residents at all income levels and at all stages of life to develop skills and attitudes conducive to quality neighborhood living.
5. Integrate all efforts, whether City-initiated or privately sponsored, towards the development of true neighborhood associations which will, in turn, facilitate the positive growth of neighborhood relationships and which will strive to meet the greater informational and organizational needs of neighborhoods.
6. Create partnerships between businesses (including their employees) and residents in order to encourage vibrant, healthy neighborhoods.

7. Obtain funding through public or private means (e.g. Richfield Foundation; other public, private, and philanthropic funding sources) to provide grants to neighborhood groups who undertake improvement projects for their neighborhoods (e.g. park or boulevard beautification), or who need help organizing.
8. Implement traffic-calming strategies at the neighborhood level for creating safe streets.
9. Increase the number of sidewalks for safety purposes and to facilitate social interaction between neighbors.
10. Remove visual clutter; bury utilities.
11. Develop organized neighborhoods and create a City Staff position to encourage and coordinate neighborhood association activities. Some of these activities could include promoting aesthetics and beauty, care of the environment (e.g., neighborhood-wide clean up day), and social gatherings.
12. Use current technology to bring communication to the neighborhood level.
13. Create visual means of welcoming people to the City and neighborhoods.

### **GOAL NUMBER THREE**

*Sustain, expand, and continuously improve our housing assets.*

### **RATIONALE**

There should be a wide spectrum of quality housing available to meet the needs of residents at all stages of life and at all income levels. All housing is constantly renovated and upgraded. Housing is available to fit the needs of all members of the community, young, old and those with disabilities. City codes and policies are regularly reviewed and revised to maintain quality housing in the City. Elected officials and City Staff must seek to create and work along with new, alternative partners in funding and developing housing.

Policies and programs, public and private, should be put into place which can assist residents with moving from one form of housing to another (renting, single-family home ownership, townhouse living, condominium homes, cooperatives, group and assisted living homes, and nursing homes).

### **STRATEGIES**

1. Use the Comprehensive Plan as the guide for developing new housing choices.
2. Focus redevelopment of single-family neighborhoods into other uses only when directly adjacent to commercial areas or areas adversely affected by major roadways, the airport, and other major developments.
3. Continue the preservation of predominantly single-family residential neighborhoods as an ongoing priority.

4. Continue to support new construction and remodeling incentives in neighborhoods.
5. Support and encourage housing codes which incorporate state-of-the-art technology for all new construction and which promote innovative and sustainable building methods that have application for remodeling homes.
6. Encourage creative land use through zoning or other means in order to further support neighborhood cohesiveness (e.g., front porches, sidewalks, local gathering spots, neighborhood associations, technology linkages, open/green space).
7. Regularly review land use and zoning ordinances to ensure maximum opportunities for development of housing, especially affordable housing.

## **GOAL NUMBER FOUR**

*Support affordable housing as the community grows.*

### **RATIONALE**

Richfield is considered one of the most affordable places to live in the metropolitan area. Richfield needs to retain a reasonable level of affordability. Affordability is recognized as an asset and promoted as such.

### **STRATEGIES**

1. Use recommendations of the Affordable Replacement Housing Policy Advisory Committee (January 2000) as guidelines to sustain affordability and a balance of mixed-income housing in Richfield.
2. Monitor changes in the marketplace and intervene as needed to insure that the stock of affordable, single-family housing in Richfield, currently positioned at about ninety percent of such housing units, does not fall below sixty-five percent.
3. Monitor changes in the marketplace and intervene as needed to insure that the supply of affordable multifamily housing in Richfield, currently positioned at about sixty percent of existing units, does not fall below thirty percent of such housing in the City.
4. Promote the development, management, and maintenance of low and moderate income housing in the City through alternative funding sources such as liquor store revenue, revenue bonds, and the creation of non-profit corporations or partnerships whose mission is to promote low to moderate income housing.
5. Require all housing development projects to include housing for low-income families at no less than twenty percent of total units.
6. Establish a partnership between Richfield businesses (I-494, east side, city center) and the City for the purpose of mounting a cooperative effort for workforce housing in the City.
7. Encourage and exploit new public resources and legislation for the development, improvement, preservation, and maintenance of new and existing housing at all price levels.

8. Emphasize workforce housing for the purpose of attracting businesses to Richfield, thereby adding to economic, neighborhood, and social stability.

### ***TEAM MEMBERS***

Barb Blahoski  
Stephen Cory  
Sunni Marie Cory  
Camillo DeSantis  
Doris Rubenstein  
Julia Sorenson  
Bruce Nordquist, staff liaison  
Julie Urban, staff liaison

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Bruce Nordquist, Housing & Redevelopment Manager, reviewed housing programs in the City of Richfield.