

INTRODUCTION

What will Richfield be like in A. D. 2020? None of us can say for certain, but we can surely say what we would want this community to be like twenty years from now. This report seeks to give guidance to the City Council and City Staff for a vision of what Richfield should be in the year 2020. A shortened version of this report was mailed to every resident as the October 2001 edition of *Your City*, a publication of the City of Richfield serving to apprise citizens of activities in the community.

The remainder of this short introduction provides an outline of the answer to the question: How did we get here? The full report, consisting of a series of sub-reports, follows the introduction.

HOW DID WE GET HERE...?

In January of 2000, the City Council met for a goal-setting workshop. In the course of those deliberations, the idea of a community-wide visioning process was discussed. The project was subsequently approved in July 2000.

Community visioning is initiated by the elected leadership and carried forward by people from all parts of the community. The purpose is to involve the whole community in developing a strategic vision for what the city should look like twenty years in the future.

Community visioning is an activity that informs, educates, clarifies issues, and challenges citizens to think beyond short-term, immediate concerns to the broad canvass of the future good of the City. The process also serves to unite people around common values, and common hopes and dreams for a better tomorrow.

The City retained the services of Carl Neu, a consultant to many Minnesota cities, to advise on the process and to facilitate the early stages. Mr. Neu's expertise proved invaluable.

An Initiating Committee of thirty residents was formed in August 2000. This committee was made up of Richfield citizens representing various groups and interests. Their mission was to organize the project and get it off to a good start. In September 2000, the City Council passed a resolution formally setting the process in motion.

Richfield residents were invited to participate in two forums held on 3 and 4 October 2000 at Richfield High School and Richfield Intermediate School respectively. Some 120 people participated in these forums facilitated by Mr. Neu. Several critical issues emerged from the ideas and insights discussed on those nights which received focused attention in the visioning process. Those issues are: Community Spirit, Recreation, and Environment; Housing and Neighborhoods; Education and Life-Long Learning; Business and Economic Development; and Transportation and Infrastructure. Additionally, students from the schools were included through participation in an art contest in the lower grades and through participation in mini-forums conducted in some classes at Richfield Senior High School

Issue Project Teams were formed for each of these five areas. Community members were invited to participate on the team of their choice. More than sixty residents signed on to take part in the next phase of the project, the concerted work of the Issue Project Teams. Names of team members are found at the end of each report. From the Teams, a Steering Committee was

formed consisting of the chair and vice-chair of each team, City Staff Liaison, the City Manager, and one member of the City Council. Steering Committee members are: John Bjostad, Chair, John Easterwood, Vice-Chair, Rick Jabs, Nelson French, Stephen Cory, Sunni Marie Cory, Camillo DeSantis, Tom Rublein, Bob Shotwell, Larry Wozniczka, David Gepner, Connie McDonald, Pam Dmytrenko, Samantha Orduno, and Sue Sandahl.

From January 2000 to June 2001, the Teams met for many hours listening to experts, gathering information, discussing options and ideas, and formulating a vision of what Richfield will look like in A. D. 2020. They thought big thoughts and argued causes. At the same time they forged friendships and shared a common purpose to make Richfield the best place in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area to live, work, learn, and play.

This report brings the several reports of the Issue Project Teams into one visioning document that will be presented to the City Council in December for adoption as a major basis for City planning and goal setting for the next twenty years. Prior to presentation to the Council, public comment will be taken on the report at forums set up for this purpose on 23 and 24 October 2001. Feedback provided by community members at these forums will become part of the report that is put before the City Council.

Once adopted by the City Council as a guide for the future of Richfield, responsibility for implementation will fall to the various departments of City Government. The Steering Committee will remain active to monitor development of the vision.

Thanks are due to all who gave time, energy, and thought to this important project. The next generation of Richfielders will be the beneficiaries of their good will.