



Stantec

November 13, 2012

John Stark, Community Development Director
City of Richfield
6700 Portland Avenue
Richfield, MN 55423

Reference: Richfield Housing Visioning

Dear John,

PROJECT APPROACH

The Richfield Housing Visioning Task Force will be supported in a process consisting of approximately six workshops, as they fulfill their responsibility to create and recommend a Community Housing Vision for the community. The workshops will be conducted in two hour segments organized and led by John Shardlow, who will serve as the lead facilitator.

Before describing some of the specific recommendations for each of these workshops some general points should be made. First, the process will be organized to provide the task force members with a great deal of relevant information before they will be asked to identify or prioritize issues, or offer their opinions. Second, we are seeking a balance between a process that is substantial enough to be viewed as significant by the participants and the Council, but not so time consuming as to be seen as a burden to the participants, or to lead to member attrition. We are suggesting approximately seven workshops as about the right length for the process. The third point is that the process needs to be grounded in a clear set of expectations and the participants must understand their role and responsibilities and the desired outcomes and deliverables from this process.

Each participant will be provided a three ring binder at the beginning of the process with dividers for each workshop. When they arrive at the workshop they will pick up the materials, which will be three -hole punched and put them in their binders. This may include a variety of materials, memoranda and reports, but it will always include a copy of the presentation for the evening, printed in a format that allows notes to be taken next to each slide. We will decide as a group if information should be distributed via email prior to the workshops.

We will work with City staff to complete some of the research and we will present a significant percentage of the material to the task force, but we also anticipate bringing in 2-3 subject experts to present some of the key content. We also strongly recommend arranging for the task force members to tour 4-6 housing example projects in other parts of the Metropolitan Area. Our experience has been very positive in past projects where similar groups physically left their community and visited other project examples. This is certainly optional, but we would urge you to consider supporting such a tour.

Potential Experts to Support the Process

An important element early in this process is to articulate the relationship of housing and jobs and how housing has a significant impact on community and economic development. Our team will address these questions while also tapping into area experts.

Reference: Richfield Housing Visioning

We contacted Cathy Bennett to ask her if she would be willing to serve as an expert resource to this process. Cathy has been working almost exclusively with ULI Minnesota, leading the Regional Council of Mayors Housing Initiative. They did some pilot community work in Richfield which could be updated and augmented by the work Jay Demma completed and other research completed by City staff. Cathy brings the added benefit of her knowledge and experience working recently in several different Metro cities.

From our discussions it is clear that Richfield has a robust focus on remodeling of single family homes. So there probably isn't a need to discuss organizing a commitment to remodeling, but there is a great deal of new information and resources surrounding the Minnesota Greenstar initiative and green remodeling. Both in terms of new construction and housing retrofits there is excellent work being done locally and internationally on energy conservation and even energy generation, water use, indoor air quality, materials, neighborhood design and many other features. Someone from The Builders Association of the Twin Cities (BATC) who is familiar with the Minnesota Greenstar program and the features of new housing showcased in the Fall Parade might be considered for part of a workshop. Michael Anshel and Marc Sloat are a builder and an architect who could share this expertise and perspective with the task force.

To encourage participants to expand their thinking about housing for the future, it would be positive to bring in an expert about future housing concepts. We would work with Dean Tom Fisher at the University of Minnesota to identify a speaker who could stretch the participants thinking about future housing. There is a lot of work being done at the University regarding "culturally sensitive" design. This might be an area where the task force members could be encouraged to think longer term and more creatively about the design of our housing stock.

Many of the negative stereotypes associated with affordable housing stem from poor design and bad management. Someone like Mark Ulfers or a member of his staff at Dakota County Community Development Agency, or Elizabeth Ryan from the Family Housing Fund could share numerous examples that demonstrate how these problems have been avoided in projects within our region. These could also be great projects for the task force members to visit on a tour.

In summary, there isn't a need to make final decisions about which experts to invite at this time. It is actually a good idea to preserve some flexibility since the process will and should be fluid and dynamic. We will strive to identify and recruit excellent presenters with important and relevant expertise who will contribute their time to this initiative.

RICHFIELD HOUSING VISION PROCESS SUMMARY

1. Workshop Number 1. Kickoff, History, Current Housing Stock, Preliminary Issue Identification

The kickoff will primarily consist of informing the Task Force of the process (schedule, timing, topics, etc.), their roles, and the intended outcome. Other key activities as part of Workshop #1 will include a short presentation on the history of Richfield's development (e.g., when it developed, what was the predominant type of development, what were the factors that influenced development, who were the first residents, where did they work, etc.). There will also be a summary description of Richfield's current housing stock (e.g., number of units, type of units, etc.) and overview of current HRA programs, priorities and funding. This will ground the process in reality right from the beginning.

Reference: Richfield Housing Visioning

Finally, there will be a short exercise to allow the members to identify any housing issues that they consider to be most important as they begin the process.

2. Workshop Number 2. Richfield in Regional Context; Greater MSP, Demographics, Jobs/Housing connection.

The focus of this workshop will be to provide the Task Force with a factual understanding of the forces that exert influence on Richfield's current supply and need for housing. These forces will be analyzed at both a regional and local level in order to provide appropriate context. We will compare Richfield to other market cities including Bloomington, Edina, St. Louis Park, South Minneapolis and others identified by the City. Information from the recent Rental Housing Inventory and ULI Opportunities Cities will be summarized and presented to the Task Force. Any additional information needed to best describe such forces will be collected from readily available sources, such as the City of Richfield, the US Census, the Met Council, etc. This meeting may also provide an opportunity for Metropolitan Council Representative Steve Elkins to share the Council's regional view on housing and how that applies to cities.

3. Workshop Number 3. The Shape of Housing in the Future – Bring in 2-3 housing experts; Family sizes, Innovation, sustainability, retro-fitting, teardowns, multi-generational housing – Tour of regional projects

This workshop will introduce the full range of housing possibilities to the Task Force in order to go beyond what currently exists within Richfield. We believe multiple experts from various backgrounds (e.g., for-profit and non-profit development, academia, public sector, etc.) will be needed to best describe the continuum of possibilities. Furthermore, we believe that many of these possibilities will be best understood through a tour of regional projects in order for the Task Force to see first-hand what these projects look and feel like. This workshop could either be split into two parts, or run 4 hours instead of the normal 2 hour format.

4. Workshop Number 4. Review of innovative strategies being implemented by comparable communities locally, regionally, nationally

Richfield is far from the only fully developed community facing challenges with housing. This session will provide the opportunity to review a variety of programs, initiatives and tools that comparable cities are utilizing to accomplish their community housing objectives.

5. Workshop Number 5. Issues Workshop, SWOT Analysis & Visioning Exercise

This workshop will consist of two parts with the first part focused primarily of identifying key housing issues important to the Task Force through a SWOT analysis and visioning exercise. As appropriate we will revisit and incorporate the findings from Workshop #1.

Reference: Richfield Housing Visioning

Members will be asked to answer a series of questions that are designed to allow them to express their opinions and aspirations in a way that will facilitate their translation in to a vision statement and/or supporting housing objectives.

Once these ideas are generated members will then participate in a priority setting exercise to refine the list and capture the priorities for housing in Richfield.

6. Workshop Number 6. Navigating the New Normal

We understand that the City has chosen to avail itself of the free program provided by ULI Minnesota. John Shardlow serves on the advisory panel for this program and has been a member of four panels so far. This is an excellent opportunity, but it is also important that it occurs at the right point in the overall task force process. Without the right sensitivity it could be viewed by the members as superseding their work. This would be the right place for it to be placed in the process and we will work with the panelists to get answers to any questions the task force members may have after the Navigating the New Normal session. Placing it here allows the task force members to get the benefit of this program before signing off on their recommendations to the Council. This workshop will be conducted by ULI Minnesota therefore Stantec's role will be limited to just attendance.

7. Workshop Number 7. Draft Vision Statement – Discuss and Revise

We will present a draft vision statement to the Task Force and discuss with them how it should be revised to best reflect their positions.

8. Presentation to City Council

Ideally we would want to be able to support the task force members in presenting their work to the City Council. The extent to which this is workable will depend on the participants and how the process unfolds.

DELIVERABLES:

The Consultant Team will be responsible for supporting the entire visioning process, working closely with City staff members. We will strive at every stage of the process to identify the most cost effective way to gather the required information and present it to the task force. We will produce meeting materials and prepare a template to be used for each of the workshop presentations.

The power point presentations prepared for each of the workshops will be provided electronically and in printed form that allows note taking. These presentations and supporting materials will be posted on the city website. We will work with staff to coordinate all materials for use on the City's desired social media outlet.

Reference: Richfield Housing Visioning

The consultants will meet with every expert guest speaker and brief them on the purpose of the process and their role within it, the format and length of presentation. We will preview every presentation before it is given to the task force – without exception.

The final deliverable from the process will be a document with a housing vision statement for the City of Richfield. This over-arching vision will be supported by several housing objectives, each tied to recommendations from the task force regarding their implementation.

COST OF SERVICES:

PROJECT INITIATION

Initial organization, setup, workshop planning, meeting materials, presentation templates, research and coordination.

\$6,620.00

WORKSHOP SESSIONS

Planning meetings and discussions with staff; session specific research, graphics and coordination, prepare presentation and meeting materials; Assume Principal and Senior Planner at all workshops and assuming eight sessions.

\$9,912.00

FINAL DELIVERABLES

Meetings with staff, writing alternative vision statements and housing objectives, review, revise and publish final recommendations, prepare and present to City Council with task force members.

\$6,550.00

TOTAL COST: \$23,085

Schedule

Stantec is flexible to meet the City's desired timing on this effort. With the suggested course of meetings a 4-6 month time period would be reasonable.

Regards,



John Shardlow, FAICP