

# Comprehensive Plan for Richland Center, Wisconsin 2022-2032



PLANNING ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY



SOUTHWESTERN WISCONSIN  
REGIONAL PLANNING  
COMMISSION

# Acknowledgments

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# Table of Contents

<b>Richland Center Vision 2032</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Planning Process .....	6
Project Scope .....	8
<b>Richland Center at a Glance</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Issues and Opportunities .....	11
<b>Economic Development, Housing, and Transportation</b> .....	<b>15</b>
Assets .....	16
Needs .....	18
Economic Development Strategies and Actions .....	21
Housing Strategies and Actions .....	23
Transportation Strategies and Actions .....	24
<b>Community Resources</b> .....	<b>26</b>
Assets .....	26
Needs .....	28
Community Resources Strategies and Actions .....	29
<b>Leadership, Cooperation, and Volunteerism</b> .....	<b>32</b>
Assets .....	32
Needs .....	35
Leadership, Cooperation, and Volunteers Strategies and Actions .....	38
<b>Land Use</b> .....	<b>40</b>
Stormwater Management .....	40
Zoning .....	42
Future Land Use .....	44
Land Use Strategies and Actions .....	46
<b>Implementation</b> .....	<b>49</b>
Implementation Strategies and Actions .....	50

# Richland Center Vision 2032

“Recognition of, and investment in, Richland Center’s many great assets will make us a prosperous place to live and a choice destination for visiting.”

The above vision statement is based upon core values identified by residents and leadership during community open house meetings, the community survey, and meetings with the Steering Committee. The following are the core values we heard the most.



**CORE VALUE:  
Recognizing Opportunities and Creating Success.**

Richland Center has many success stories that can be exemplified in order to foster future growth. Recent successes such as the Family Aquatic Center, the Auditorium, A.D. German Warehouse, and the Symons Center prove Richland Center can be successful when a vision comes into focus. Richland Center's small-town feel, expansive outdoor recreational resources, and beautiful, albeit underutilized, downtown present opportunities to grow, provide an increased quality of life for residents, and attract visitors and new residents. Through a public input survey, residents identified young people, businesses, and local government as the leaders of future change, the creators of success. Local government can provide the tools and opportunities for young people and businesses to recognize opportunity and create success.

**CORE VALUE:  
Resiliency.**

An important aspect of resiliency is the ability to respond by focusing on what can be controlled. Richland Center has experienced a lot of change during the past generation. Many long-term residents have lived through the decreasing vibrancy of downtown, decreasing enrollment in the UW Campus, and a challenge of housing development. Residents and leadership have recently started work to reverse these trends. Through public input, residents expressed their desire for and their willingness to work towards a revitalized downtown, a UW campus with increased enrollment, and an active pursuit of additional housing. Residents expressed the desire to attract tourists and a willingness to invest in this effort. A culture of revitalization and resiliency exists and should be drawn upon to build the future. Residents also recognize the importance of providing support to the downtown in order for the community to be resilient.

**CORE VALUE:  
An Excellent Quality of Life.**

The city's natural beauty and peaceful scenery are great attributes. Residents desire the quaint country feel and slower pace of life to remain intact. Safety, low cost of living, nice parks, a good sense of community, and quick access to nature create a quality of life not found in larger cities. However, lack of vibrancy for young people and affordable housing for all income levels are also opportunities to improve the quality of life in Richland Center. In a post-pandemic world, the City of Richland Center is well-positioned to attract new residents who desire the quality-of-life elements that current residents spoke highly of and wish to protect. The lower cost of living within range of work, remote work opportunities for new residents, a family focused lifestyle, faith options, and pride in its heritage and traditions are qualities of the city to be marketed to new residents. New residents are important to a quality community and local economy.

**CORE VALUE:  
A County Leader.**

Richland Center is the hub of activity and distinct leader for Richland County. The vigor of Richland Center impacts the vitality of surrounding communities. Residents recognize this and believe the city should demonstrate its leadership through efforts of partnership and cooperation, economic and community development, and staying relevant with a changing world. Recent actions by local government to invest in new vital positions, demonstrated proactive leadership through partnerships in the ambulance service, and actions taken to implement projects with long-term value are greatly appreciated by residents.

## Planning Process

The Richland Center Comprehensive Plan process initially began with discussions between the Richland Center City Council and the Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in 2020. With the assistance of an Economic Development Agency (EDA) Grant, the city and SWWRPC developed a timeline of processes and dates to gather public input and develop goals and strategies to help the city develop a 10-year comprehensive plan. Through a public survey and five community meetings, issues and opportunities emerged. They are presented in this Comprehensive Plan along with their recommended solutions. This plan will assist the community to the year 2032 and offers a fresh approach to new and existing trends, but also respectful to the community’s heritage and its traditional values.

## Community Input

A community survey was available for all residents and community stakeholders during the winter of 2020-2021 to provide input into the Comprehensive Plan as to strongly reflect the desires of the community. An online survey was created and paper surveys were also provided as an option. It was promoted through flyers, radio, newspaper, and in the tax bill mailing. A total of 344 surveys were completed by residents in all age groups. The results of the survey helped structure five community input sessions in March and April, 2021. The responses from these input efforts can be found in the appendix of this plan and was vital to the recommendations found here.

**Table 1: Community Input Results**

Richland Center Community Input	
Public Meetings	Attendants
Visioning	18
Economic Development	21
Community Resources	27
Leadership & Cooperation	23
Land Use	17
All Meeting Stats	
Total Attendance	106
Total Unique Attendants	57
Average Per Meeting	21.2
Survey Response	
Total Responses	344

TELL US ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY!

## RICHLAND CENTER OPEN HOUSE MEETINGS

Join us to discuss the plan and vision for Richland Center's next 10 years. Your participation impacts the future!

ANYTIME BETWEEN 10:00 AM - 7:00 PM  
RICHLAND CENTER COMMUNITY BUILDING

MARCH 11TH: COMMUNITY VISIONING  
MARCH 18TH: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
MARCH 25TH: COMMUNITY RESOURCES  
APRIL 1ST: LEADERSHIP AND COOPERATION  
APRIL 15TH: LAND USE AND IMPLEMENTATION

MEETINGS BY ZOOM STARTING AT 5:00 PM DAY OF THE MEETING  
GO TO THE CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER'S WEBSITE:  
[HTTPS://CI.RICHLAND-CENTER.WI.US/](https://ci.richland-center.wi.us/)  
OR ACCESS THE MEETING [HERE](#)

MEETING ID: 940 3124 6540 PASSCODE: 850336



What are Richland Center's greatest attributes?



What Adjectives Best Describe Richland County?



## Public Notice, Hearing, and Adoption

On November 4th, 2021 a Class 1 public notice was published in the Richland Center Observer to inform residents and stakeholders that a Draft of the Comprehensive Plan was available for review for the next 30 days. Following the 30-day notice, the planning commission held a public hearing to hear comments and suggestions related to the draft plan on December 16th, 2021. Following the public hearing, the plan commission took action to recommend the city council adopt the Comprehensive Plan. The city council adopted the Comprehensive Plan on December 21st, 2021.

## Project Scope

The outcomes of this plan cannot be achieved by city government or volunteers alone. It requires coordination by city staff, organizations, individual citizens, and the City Council. When these stakeholders work collaboratively, they can make Richland Center a great place to live, work, and visit. This plan should be used as a guide to implement projects and set policy, and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure goals are on track to be achieved. This plan should also be referenced along with the *Richland Center Market Analysis* and the *Richland County Attraction Marketing Plan 2021* for their analysis, recommendations, and valuable data.

## Resiliency

Resiliency is a quality that helps us both act and react in appropriate and productive ways. It is reactive in that it is the ability to quickly bounce back from trials and tragedies. It is an active quality also, essential to proactive action to face the world head on, take risks, and invest ourselves in an uncertain future. Resiliency was the dominating theme surrounding the discussions at the open house meetings. In a rapidly changing world, Richland Center has to react to change brought on by flooding, decreasing population, a more worldwide economy, and the need for more housing options. This can be overwhelming for small rural communities who are short on resources and capacity. In order for the city to become more resilient to these issues it must prepare to have an organized approach and be ready to invest towards these challenges.

As a proactive response, existing and potential issues and solutions were identified through the public planning process. With clearly defined actions, strategies, and goals this plan will serve as an important tool to becoming a more resilient community as it moves forward towards the next decade. In the long-term resiliency will become actively 'resilient' and a quality reflective of the city.

## Planning Elements

Wis. Statute 66.1001 outlines nine elements required to be included in a community's comprehensive plan. This plan addresses those nine elements in the following six chapters. Each chapter had a dedicated public meeting supported by survey input and data collection. Each chapter identifies corresponding goals, objectives, and actions associated with each chapter's planning elements. The following chapters and their corresponding planning elements are listed here:

- **Economic Development:** Business support, attraction, development, and expansion. Housing. Transportation. Tourism.
- **Community Resources:** Parks and recreation. Facilities and utilities. Stewardship of cultural and natural resources.
- **Leadership and Cooperation:** City Staffing. Transparency and Governance. Shared Services. Civic Capacity, Intergovernmental Cooperation.
- **Land Use:** Future Land Use and Zoning.
- **Implementation:** Plan, Do, Study, Act Cycle.



# Richland Center at a Glance

Photo: Frank Lloyd Wright designed the A.D. German Warehouse located in downtown Richland Center in 1915.

It stands today as an important asset to the city as does the beauty of the rural countryside.

Richland Center was founded in 1851 and influenced both by the water source of the Pine River and its location as the geographical center of Richland County, which was organized in 1850. It has always served as the county seat of Richland County. The city is approximately 4.77 square miles in size with the Pine River running on the western side. The city is flanked by bluffs known locally as the 'Ocooch Mountains.' However, it belongs to the 'Driftless Area' ecoregion or, as defined by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the 'Western Coulee and Ridges' landscape.

The economy of Richland Center is rooted in manufacturing and agriculture, both continue to be the largest economic drivers and industries. Government, retail, and health care also provide diversity and stability to the Richland Center economy.

The city has many historical connections of which it can proudly boast. It is the birthplace of architect Frank Lloyd Wright, was important to the beginnings of the Women's Suffrage movement, home to the GTE Telephone Corporation, and has strong ties to the Wisconsin Dairy Industry. It is utilized by visitors for its many outdoor recreation opportunities.

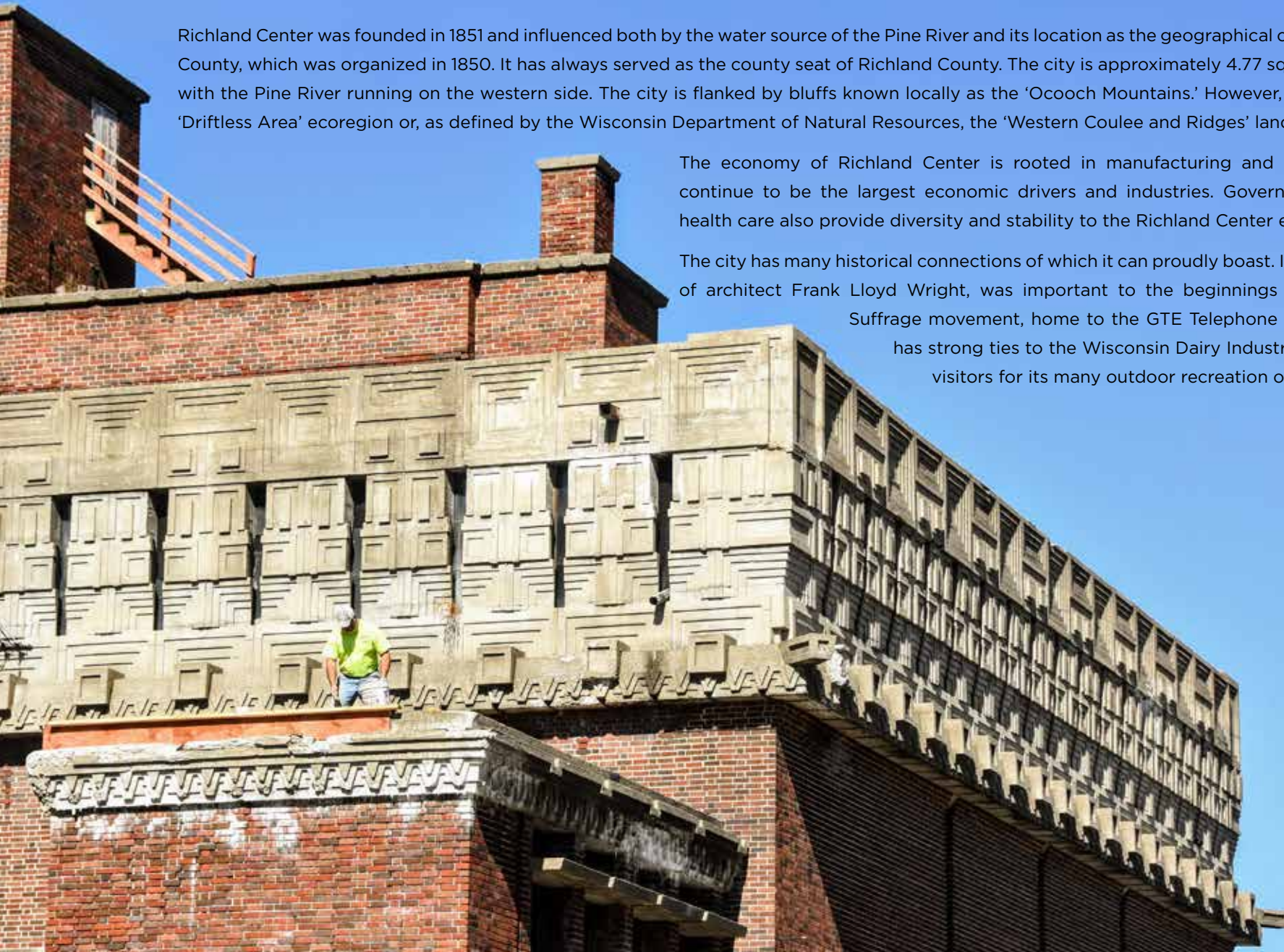
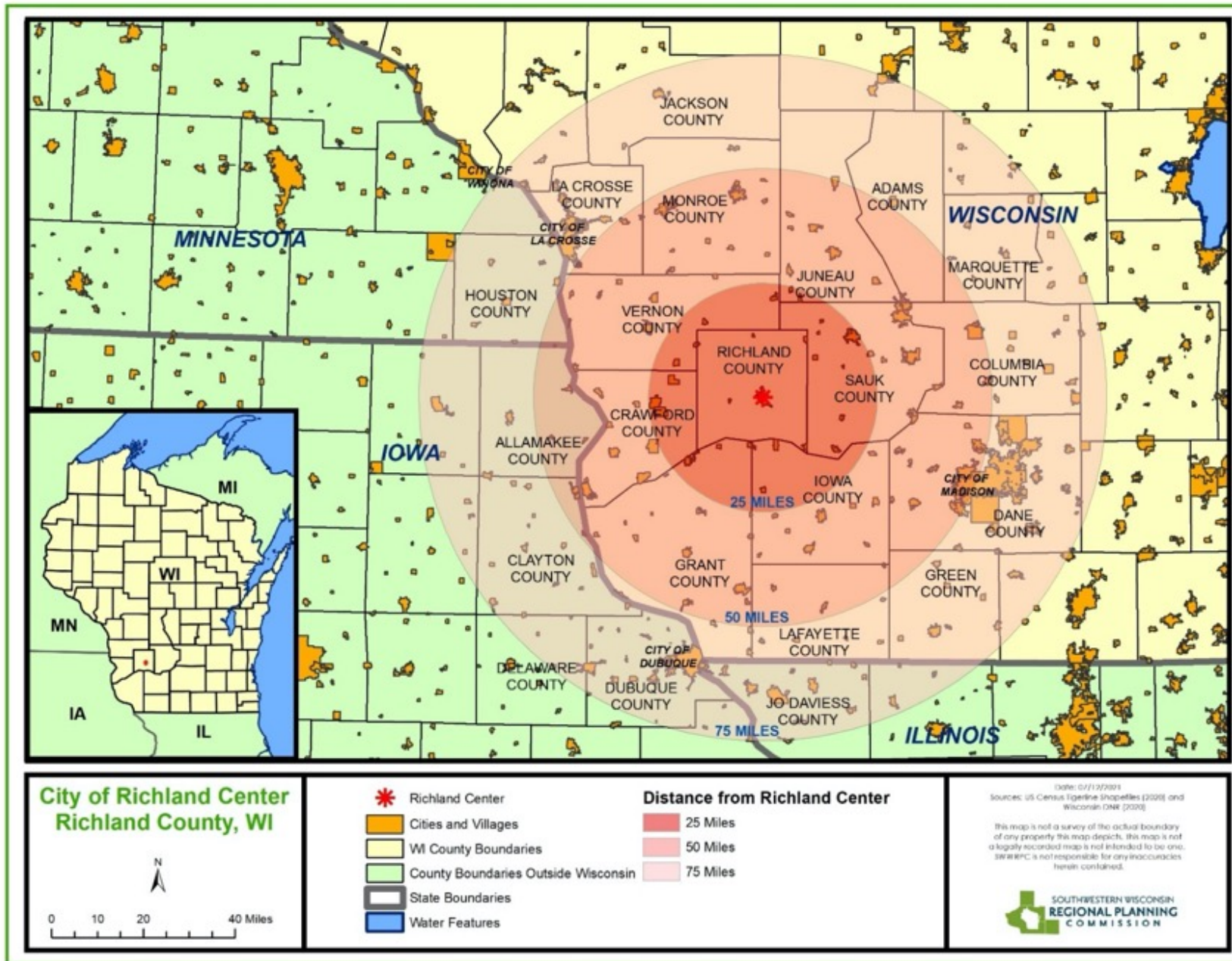


Figure 1: Richland Center Location



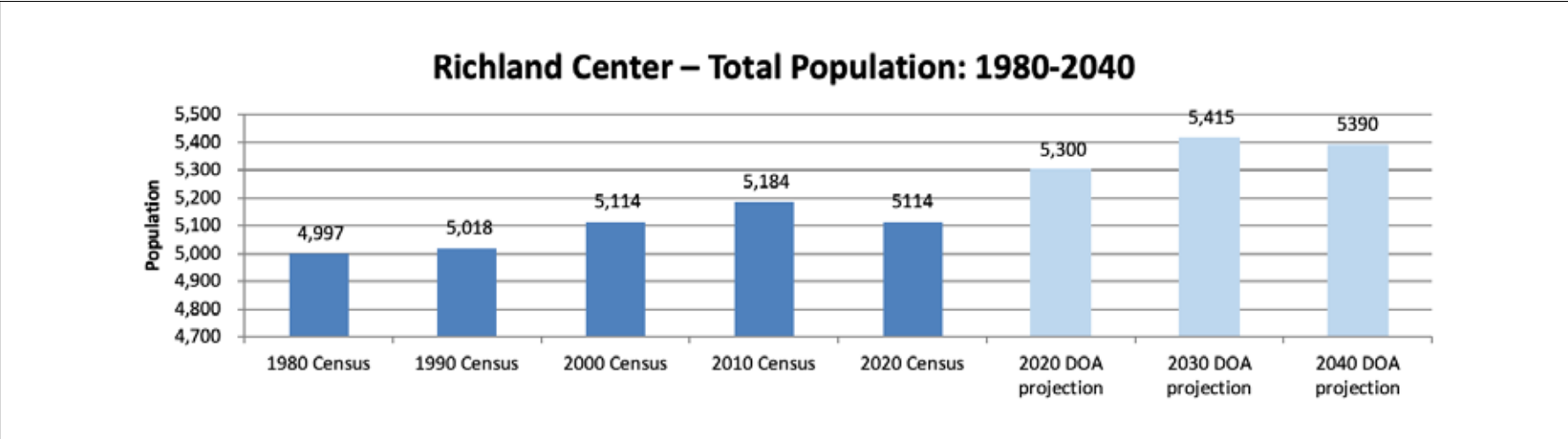
# Issues and Opportunities

Public input was necessary to the integrity of the plan and is an important part of its strategy. Public surveys, in-person discussions, and stakeholder meetings make this plan accurate and in sync with the community’s desires. The opinions of the citizens allowed for trends to be recognized and issues to surface. This section provides an overview of the important topics that exist in the community. Identifying, exploring, and understanding these opportunities and issues is vital for the city in order to address and execute the solutions over the next ten years.

## Demographics

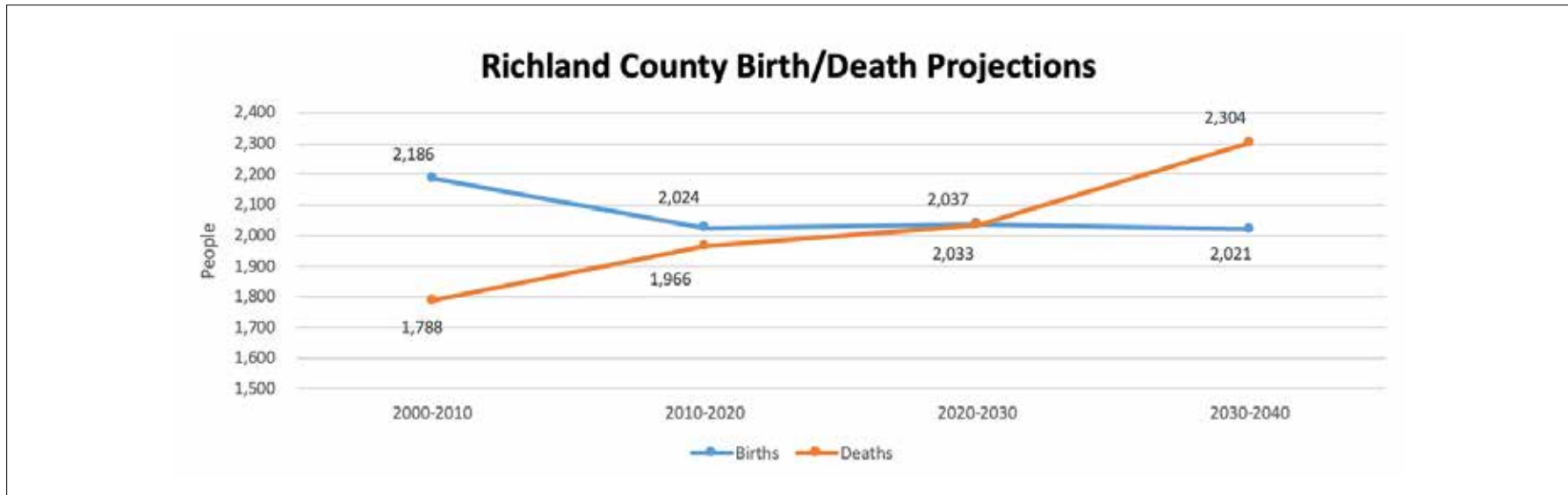
Richland Center’s population in 2020 was 5,114, a loss of 70 residents since 2010. Notable, is that the 2020 projected population was higher than the actual population in the 2020 census. This is worrisome as it indicates that prior projections of growth are inaccurate and that future population decline becomes more likely. Richland Center’s population patterns reflect the trends of similar small rural midwestern cities. Richland Center is also predicted to have an increasing average age. Currently, the average age within the city is 38.9 years old. Richland County is even older at 45.3. Deaths are expected to outpace births through 2040 by 283. The current population trend is declining naturally through an aging population and declining birth rates, requiring an increase of in-migration for the population to remain stable or grow. This data highlights the need to become an attractive location for new residents and provide the required housing, employment, and services needed for a high quality of life.

Figure 2: Richland Center Population, 1980-2040



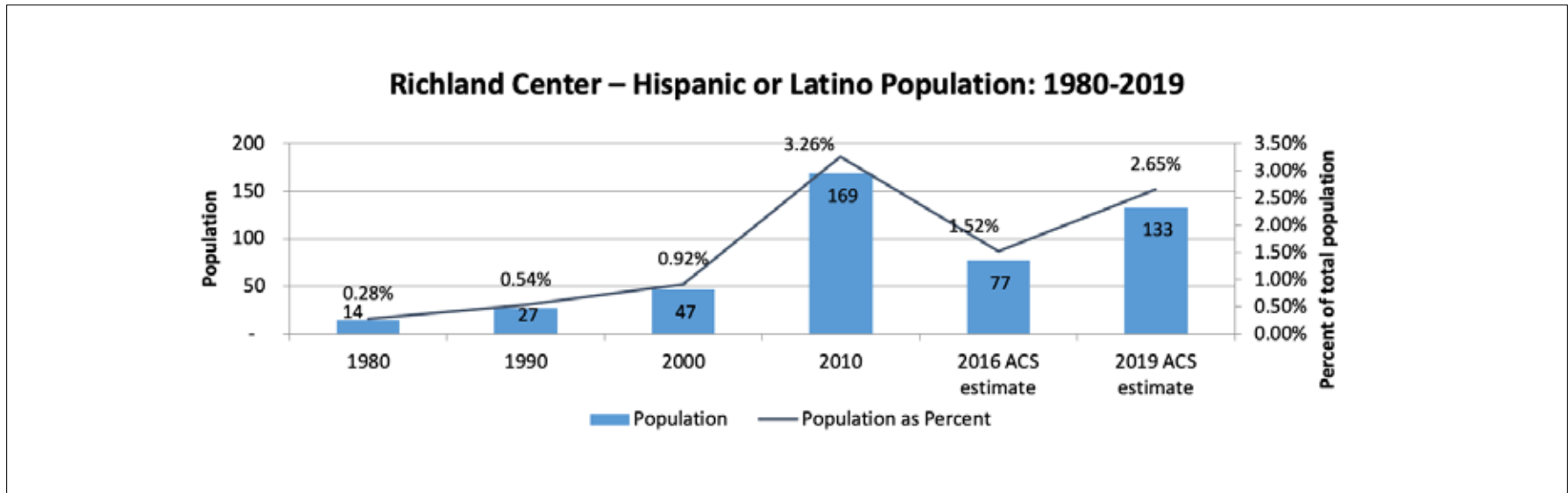
In Richland County as a whole, deaths are expected to outpace births through 2040 by 283. The current population trend is declining naturally through an aging population and declining birth rates, requiring an increase of in-migration for the population to remain stable or grow. This data highlights the need to become an attractive location for new residents and provide the required housing, employment, and services needed for a high quality of life.

Figure 3: Richland County Birth and Death Projections, 2020-2040



The Hispanic population rise should be noted as an important asset to the community. According to the US Census and American Community Survey, the population of Richland Center remained the same between 2000 and 2020, while during the same period the Hispanic population nearly tripled from 43 to 133. The growing Hispanic population is bright spot in the otherwise alarming population future of Richland Center.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 4: Richland Center Population, 1980-2040



## Community Capacity

The Aspen Institute states, “Community capacity is the combined influence of a community’s commitment (will to act), resources, and skills that can be deployed to build on community strengths and address community problems and opportunities.” Both citizens and community leaders expressed the need to retain and attract workforce, new residents, as well as identifying the benefits a new City Administrator could provide. The city also expressed a demand for community volunteers among the many community organizations, and the potential future need for transition planning.

The development of this Comprehensive Plan provides an opportunity to explore these issues and create targets for the next decade. The addition of a City Administrator will be vital for increasing ‘community capacity.’ The city must consider adding capacity in other areas as recommended in this plan. Investing in itself will pay dividends in the long-term future.

<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau (1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2016 ACS Estimate, 2019 ACS Estimate, 2020) and Wisconsin Department of Administration. (2013). Wisconsin Population & Household Projections. Retrieved 1/5/2021 from [https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/Population\\_Projections.aspx](https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/Population_Projections.aspx)

## Marketing

The opportunity for Richland Center to market itself was often repeated during public input sessions. This would include branding all of the city initiatives and departments, and working to create unified messages that reflect the values of Richland Center. Currently, the city hosts a variety of images, slogans, and brandings. The city has the opportunity to create a cohesive and public-facing brand to be implemented across all departments, tourism documents, and on the city's website.

Public meeting discussions around marketing, branding, and tourism also identified the opportunity and desire for Richland Center to be a “choice destination.” This was often regarded as the first step towards bringing in tourists and new residents. The term “choice destination” indicates a visitor’s preferential location among other alternatives. Choice destinations are not places visitors travel through or travel to for obligations such as work or household shopping. Richland Center’s assets indicate targeting outdoor recreation enthusiasts and those seeking to visit the country-side to visit Richland Center as a “choice-destination.” The city will need to build upon these assets and market them to be visitor’s first choice among several competitors in the region.

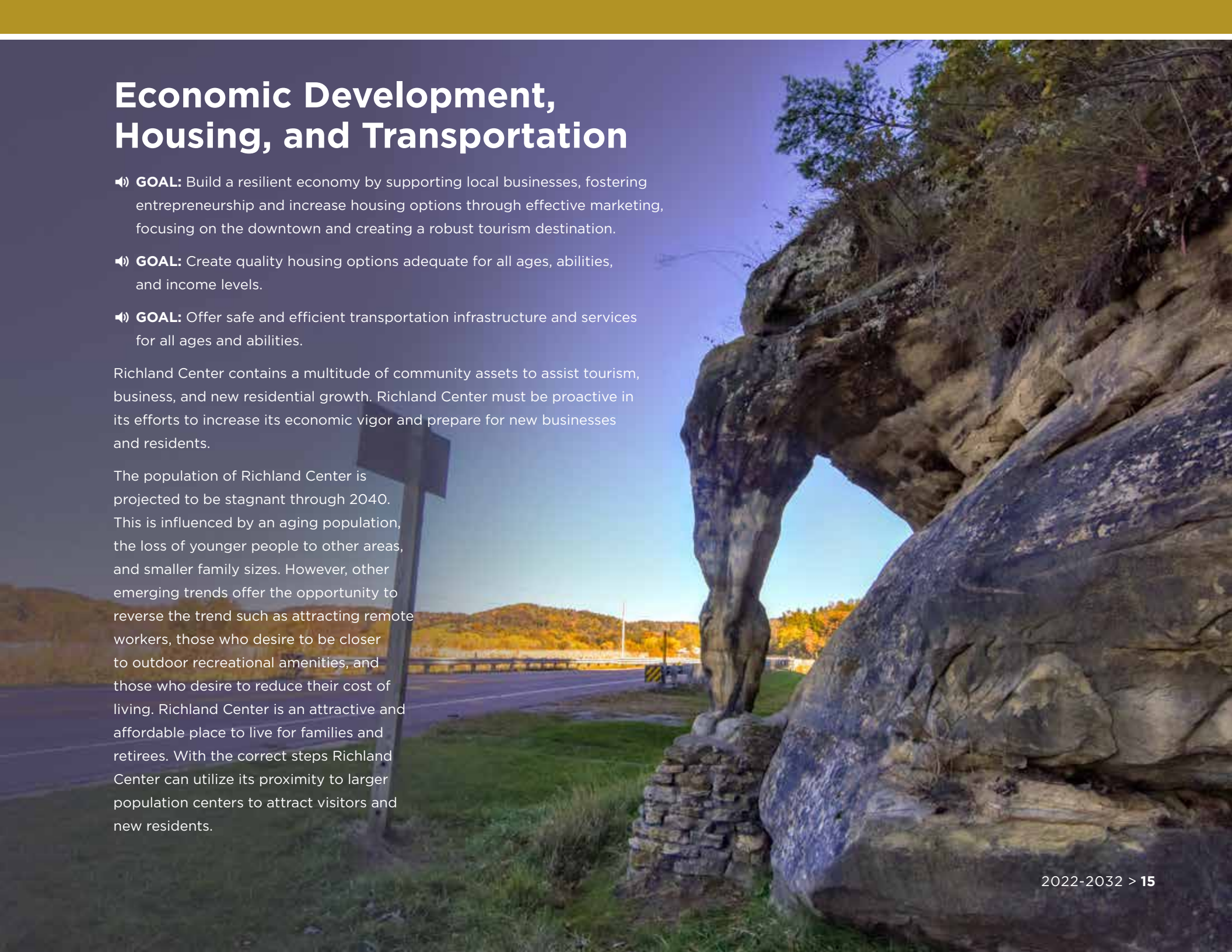


# Economic Development, Housing, and Transportation

- 🔊 **GOAL:** Build a resilient economy by supporting local businesses, fostering entrepreneurship and increase housing options through effective marketing, focusing on the downtown and creating a robust tourism destination.
- 🔊 **GOAL:** Create quality housing options adequate for all ages, abilities, and income levels.
- 🔊 **GOAL:** Offer safe and efficient transportation infrastructure and services for all ages and abilities.

Richland Center contains a multitude of community assets to assist tourism, business, and new residential growth. Richland Center must be proactive in its efforts to increase its economic vigor and prepare for new businesses and residents.

The population of Richland Center is projected to be stagnant through 2040. This is influenced by an aging population, the loss of younger people to other areas, and smaller family sizes. However, other emerging trends offer the opportunity to reverse the trend such as attracting remote workers, those who desire to be closer to outdoor recreational amenities, and those who desire to reduce their cost of living. Richland Center is an attractive and affordable place to live for families and retirees. With the correct steps Richland Center can utilize its proximity to larger population centers to attract visitors and new residents.



## Assets:

### Outdoor Recreation and Natural Beauty

Throughout the public survey, respondents used adjectives to describe life in Richland Center and the overwhelming majority used words to describe the beautiful rolling hills and rural landscapes that surround the city. Residents and visitors alike find the scenery and slower pace of life in Richland Center attractive. Assets such as the Pine River, geological formations, the many trout streams, and sweeping views along ridges make the area appealing to residents and visitors alike. According to Travel Wisconsin, travelers in Wisconsin spent approximately \$13.7 billion in 113.2 million visits in 2019. Approximately 14%, or \$1.9 billion, of that spending was on recreation. Recreational spending by visitors grew by nearly 25% between 2015 – 2019, an increase of \$380 Million.<sup>2</sup> Richland Center has the potential to provide amenities and services for those seeking these outdoor experiences and natural beauty. The city can leverage this tourism draw to also attract workforce and residents.

### UW-Platteville at Richland

Richland Center is one of thirteen cities in Wisconsin to host a college in the University of Wisconsin System. The school attracts students from all over Wisconsin as well as internationally. The university and its campus are assets to Richland Center and regionally. It offers an affordable post-secondary education that is affiliated with a Wisconsin's state public university system as well as associated learning and entertainment events. The campus and buildings of the university have the potential to be shared for multiple purposes and are currently underutilized. The university has seen a dramatic decline in enrollment over the past two decades, for which the city misses the presence of students and faculty. Enrollment is currently so low, there are questions and concerns about the university system's continued presence. The city should be assertive in its relationship with the university to ensure that the university can thrive or find other options to utilize its campus.



<sup>2</sup> Travel Wisconsin. Economic Impact of Tourism in Wisconsin, 2019. Tourism Economics. <http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/research/economic-impact>



## Industrial Hub

Richland Center is the economic engine of Richland County and is home to several long-tenured national employers. Alongside affordable housing options this provides stable job opportunities that other cities in the area do not have. Large industries provide stability to the community by offering investments and good paying jobs. These jobs help draw residents into Richland Center and provide a tax base for continued city operations. Richland Center leaders must work at developing strong partnerships with existing industries to address new and ongoing issues. A current issue is the availability of workforce for these large employers. Employers have stated they struggle attracting workforce at all levels due to a lack of housing at all price points and cultural concerns in the city.

**Table 2: Richland County Change in Employees by Industry, 2010 - 2020.<sup>3</sup>**

Industry	2010 Jobs	2020 Jobs	2010 - 2020 Change	2010 - 2020 % Change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	356	348	(8)	(2%)
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	<10	21	-	-
Utilities	24	23	(1)	(4%)
Construction	356	349	(7)	(2%)
Manufacturing	1,511	1,468	(43)	(3%)
Wholesale Trade	193	193	(0)	(0%)
Retail Trade	920	900	(19)	(2%)
Transportation and Warehousing	132	219	87	65%
Information	81	46	(35)	(43%)
Finance and Insurance	151	170	18	12%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	49	27	(21)	(44%)
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	78	88	10	12%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	<10	0	-	-
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	133	118	(15)	(11%)
Educational Services	44	39	(4)	(10%)
Health Care and Social Assistance	886	1,054	168	19%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	42	38	(3)	(8%)
Accommodation and Food Services	340	333	(8)	(2%)
Other Services (except Public Administration)	264	211	(53)	(20%)
Government	1,152	1,013	(139)	(12%)

<sup>3</sup> Emsi Economic Modeling. *Change in Employees by Industry, Richland County*. Accessed 2/4/2021. [https://a.economicmodeling.com/analyst/?t=3DjTq#h=TDhDJ&page=industry\\_table](https://a.economicmodeling.com/analyst/?t=3DjTq#h=TDhDJ&page=industry_table)

## Needs:

### Housing

Even prior to undertaking public outreach efforts, the issue of housing was apparent to members of Richland Center's City Council and Economic Development. The lack of housing at all cost levels has been a long-term issue for the employers of Richland Center and Richland County. Without housing, Richland Center's employers are unable to attract employees. Since 2010, 39 additional housing units have been constructed within the city, yet the demand for housing continues to outpace the supply. One reason for this, is the lack of available land at a price affordable to the city. In recent years, the city has been more vocal about the need for additional land in order to expand the city's housing stock and has pursued purchasing and annexing additional land. The city will need to continue these efforts to expand as well as explore the availability of land within the city. The city will need to seek out additional density when able to encourage smaller households into moving into smaller housing units and making larger homes available for younger and larger families.

Based on projections, the city requires at least 103 additional housing units to satisfy demographic demands. While this is a good start, it is more likely the city will require far more housing units based on the demand of employers and the desire of residents to see the city grow.

**Table 3: Richland Center 2030 Housing Demand Forecast**

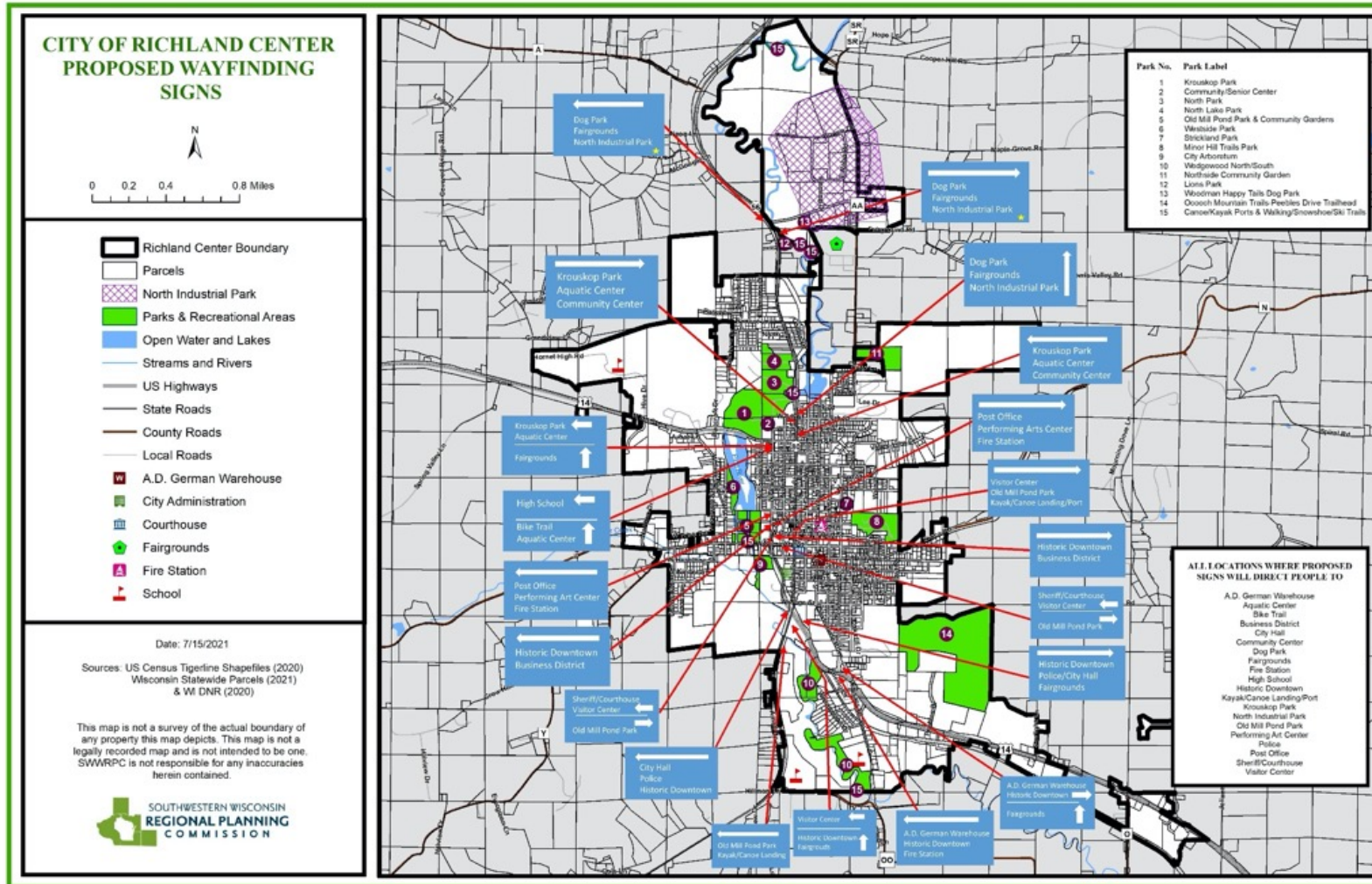
2030 Richland Center Housing Demand Forecast <sup>4</sup>	
<b>2030 projected number of households</b>	2,574
+ desired vacancy rate of 5%	129
+ replacement housing 0.5%	13
<b>= required number of new housing units</b>	2716
- available number of units (2010 census)	2613
- units built 2010-2020	39
<b>= total housing units to be built for 2030</b>	103

<sup>4</sup> Barroilhet, Dan and Egan-Robertson, David. Minor Civil Division and Household Projections, 2010-2040. Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center. 2013. US Census Bureau (1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2016 ACS Estimate, 2019 ACS Estimate, 2020)

# Wayfinding

Richland Center is home to a great host of outdoor recreation, cultural, and commercial assets. Yet, so many of these resources are not being communicated to outsiders or current residents. An important step in communicating these resources is making them accessible. Wayfinding, or directional signage, can help achieve this effort. The following wayfinding map was developed by a committee established by the City and was reviewed during public input sessions. The city should seek to install signage in coordination with a future city-wide branding effort.

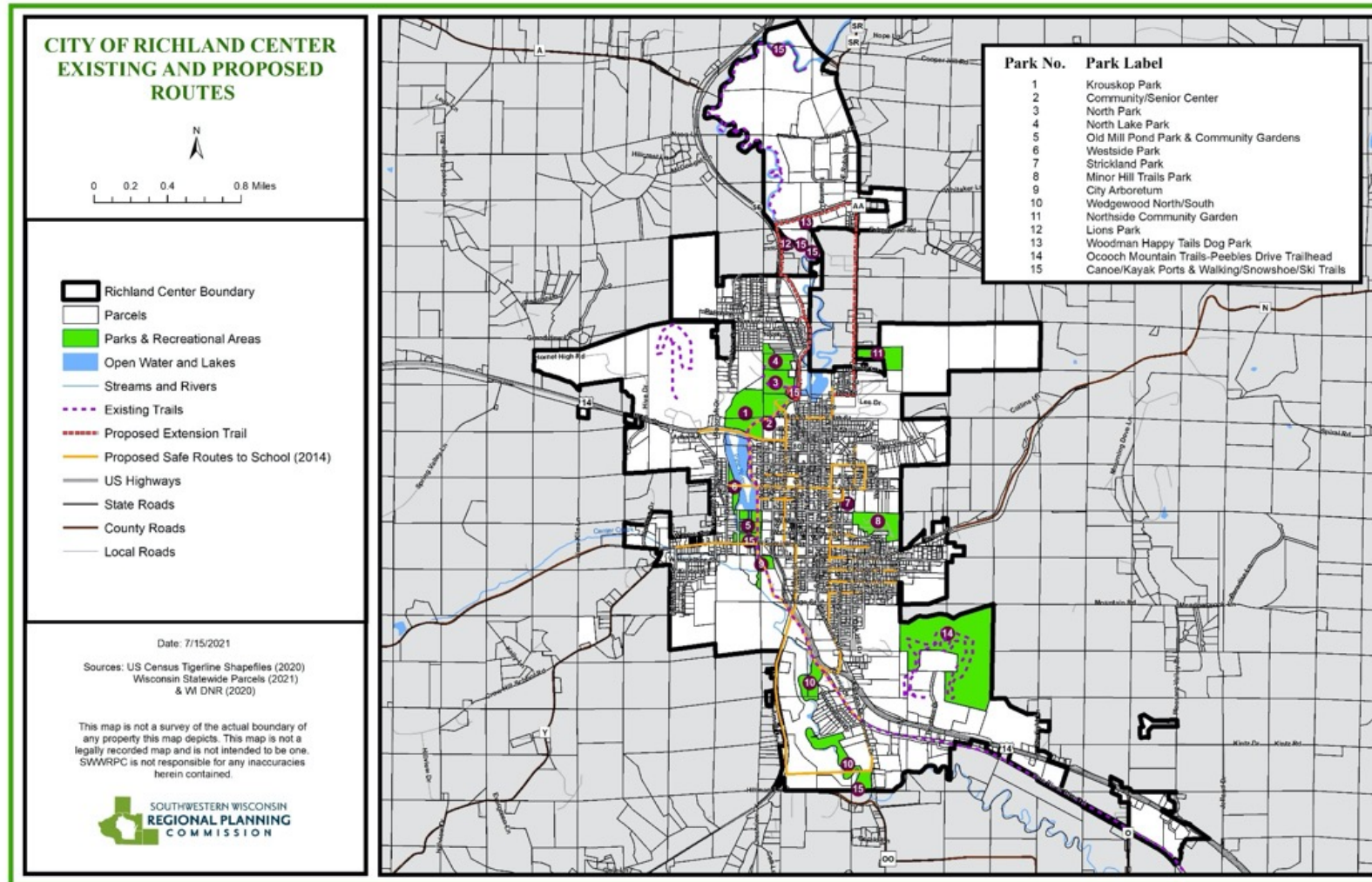
Figure 5: Proposed Wayfinding



## Trail Connections

Similar to wayfinding, the city has a great system of public trails and paths. Yet, the public identified several “broken-links” on the city’s network of trails during public meetings. Examples of these broken links include the lack of a safe walking path to the Richland Center Intermediate School on Highway 80 and no trail or path to access Lions Park, the Richland Center Dog Park, and Bike trails on the north side of the city. The following proposed routes map provides guidance to help prioritize future trail connections.

Figure 6: Existing and Proposed Routes.



## Economic Development Strategies and Actions:

### Strategy 1: Branding and Marketing

Cities and destinations of Richland Center's size are now expected to have sharp communications with the public that are consistent with ever increasing standards. The current branding efforts are inconsistent and lack distinction and focus. Richland Center has strong place identity and offers unique assets not found in other communities, including its natural beauty and history. Rebranding efforts that engage public and private-sector stakeholders should focus on key city assets. All efforts put towards a branding and marketing efforts should include stakeholders in the outcome. Richland Center should be prepared to dedicate resources to this need.

**Action:** Budget for and seek out a contract to develop and administer a new city website as well as a new website for the city/county tourism department. Do this in coordination with branding and other marketing efforts.

**Action:** Increase the capacity of the city to develop a brand and market the city. This includes developing relationships with marketing and branding firms, website development and administration, professional photographers, and regional tourism agencies.

**Action:** Create a new "family" of logos and branding to be used by city departments and in tourism efforts. Ensure these branding is consistent across all platforms including the city's website, internal and public-facing documents, and entry-way signage.

**Action:** Under the leadership of Richland Economic Development, Richland Center Chamber of Commerce, and Richland Tourism develop a 5-year marketing plan that utilizes traditional marketing strategies such as print and radio, as well as new marketing efforts that utilizes google and Facebook directed ads, meta data collection, and the increasing ability of people to work at home.

**Action:** Promote and encourage the promotion of the unique and family friendly experiences available in Richland Center. Ensure the regional population and other target markets are reminded of these closer-to-home experiences that rival those in larger cities. These experiences include Richland Center's semi-pro (home-talent) baseball team, the Drive-In Theatre, and the Galaxie Skate Center Roller-Rink. Consider working with these business owners to develop a packaged deal.

### Strategy 2: Outdoor Recreational Marketing

Richland Center is establishing itself as a center for outdoor recreation. Rooted in the surrounding rural natural beauty. The city can harness this further through targeted and consistent promotion. The city should always take this trend into account and provide more options for the outdoor recreationist. Outdoor Recreation is well positioned to become the areas brand.

**Action:** Build the outdoors into the forefront of the new marketing campaign(s). This includes appealing to sporting interests (trout fishing and hunting), family friendly parks (family aquatic center, remote control car track, and the Symons center), silent sports (cross country skiing, kayaking, and trails), and the increasing popularity of mountain biking and ATV/Snowmobiling.

**Action:** Be aggressive marketers during the fall season to take advantage of the beautiful fall colors, apple orchards, produce stands, and comfortable weather.

**Action:** The Chamber of Commerce and Richland Tourism should promote and educate city and county residents in the use of Airbnb and VRBO.

### Strategy 3: Focus on Downtown

Much of the former vitality of downtown has either left the city or been transferred to other areas within the city. Richland Center has the opportunity to maximize existing infrastructure in a quaint and historic downtown setting to provide residents and visitors a more active and vibrant environment to live, work, and play.

**Action:** Enforce the Downtown Storage Ordinance which prohibits downtown first floors storefronts from being used as storage. Work with the current. Consider requiring downtown businesses to be open for a required number of hours each week.

**Action:** Pursue downtown efforts through the existing downtown group or consider joining Wisconsin Main Street or Connect Community Program through WEDC. This group will take an active leadership role in attracting businesses, improving aesthetics, holding events, and measuring the success of initiatives - including tracking visitors.

**Action:** Establish public spaces in under-utilized areas downtown. This could be general seating, small live music settings, and grass areas for play. This may also include permitting the use of public space for outdoor dining by downtown restaurants.

**Action:** Promote and encourage new events such as: live music, weekly or monthly dances, ethnic celebrations, sidewalk sales, and Friday night promotions. Streamline the permitting of these events and their amenities such as temporary stages and food trucks.

**Action:** Richland Center is an established Certified Local Government through the Wisconsin Historical Society. This group is responsible for the proper historic preservation of buildings and educating the public on cultural and economic benefits of the built environment. This group should become more active in educating and promoting downtown initiatives.

**Action:** Promote increased business hours especially at peak visitor season and days of the week.

**Action:** Focus on “BMO Harris” Building and incentivize its re-use in this premier building.

**Action:** Promote new businesses that are food and outdoor recreation centric.

**Action:** Create pedestrian and bicycle friendly routes and wayfinding signage. Special consideration should be given to allow easy access to unique tourist destinations, restaurants, and places of interest such as the A.D. German Warehouse, downtown restaurants, auditorium, and pine river trail.

**Action:** Prepare for the Route 14 Construction Project in 2024 and use it as an opportunity to establish new consumer habits that utilize downtown.

**Action:** Consider a 'Downtown Richland Center' focus page for use on the new tourism, social media, and city websites.

#### Strategy 4: Facilitate stronger community/industry relations

Several large national and local industries call Richland Center home. These companies offer a variety of opportunities for residents of the city and help bring resources to the city. The city also has a strong educational infrastructure with UW-Platteville Richland, Southwest Technical College, and Richland School District all sharing a presence in the city. The city should engage with both employers and educational institutions to solve workforce problems and increase community prosperity.

**Action:** Engage in regular meetings with both companies and educational institutions. Facilitate conversations that help solve workforce challenges and skills gaps.

**Action:** Present a united front of the city, educational institutions, and industry when advocating for new residents, housing developments, and marketing initiatives.

**Action:** Market the city as a location for career growth and opportunity by showcasing the strong relationships between these entities.

**Action:** Facilitate round table discussions among industry human resource departments to determine their challenges and where the city and schools can help.

### Housing Strategies and Actions:

#### Strategy 1: Aggressively pursue land for new development and redeveloping existing land.

Strategy 1: Aggressively pursue land for new development and redeveloping existing land.

Richland Center's current ability to grow its boundaries are constrained due to both the economics and the adjacent geography. Despite this, the city will need to continue to pursue adjacent land through negotiations with landowners. In the meantime, the city will need to maximize the utilization of its existing land for current and future housing development. In the absence of new annexations, the city will need to focus on increasing density and better utilizing the land within its current boundaries.

**Action:** Create a 'Housing Task Force' to provide continued attention to this important issue. Include large employers such as Foremost, Rockwell Automation, and Richland Hospital the Housing Task Force along with economic development and real estate professions. The task force will continue to pursue new land and land for redevelopment within the city.

**Action:** Maintain an inventory of lots that are currently unused, underutilized, and potentially available for development within the city. The accompanying market analysis and action plan has provided a first step in identifying unused and underutilized parcels.

**Action:** Continue to partner with Richland County to take ownership of tax-delinquent parcels that have the potential for housing development.

## Strategy 2: Incentivize development.

In addition to determining where the city is able to build new housing the city will need to incentivize housing developers to build in Richland Center. This can be done by developing and advertising a suite of incentives meant to encourage development within the city. It can and should also be done through measures that reinforce the developers return on investment.

**Action:** Streamline the permitting process for new developments and have parcels prepared “on-paper” ahead of development. Make available land as “shovel-ready” as possible for developers.

**Action:** Encourage large employers, including those on the ‘Housing Task Force’ to commit to the city’s housing goals through subsidizing housing costs for employees and public statements in support of housing.

**Action:** Recent actions to become active in code-enforcement are a step in the correct direction. The city needs to continue to pursue code enforcement. Code enforcement will encourage greater property values, incentivizing future housing developers.

**Action:** Require annual permitting and regular rental unit inspection for all rental property in the city. Encourage landlords who do not adequately maintain their property to sell. Develop a program that encourages the rehabilitation of deferred maintenance properties within the city. The attractiveness of the city as a place to live includes its housing, including its rental housing.

**Action:** Develop and maintain a listing of financial incentives for developers, new home builders, and new home buyers. Advertise this list.

**Action:** If the city is unable to attract a neighborhood development through a developer, consider funding the development of a neighborhood and selling lots at a low cost to committed builders.

## Transportation Strategies and Actions:

### Strategy 1: Increase transportation options through Investment and Partnerships.

A strong transportation network provides a reliable, safe, and efficient movement of people and goods within the community as well as to and from the city. Within the community is a network of sidewalks, crossings, and trails which provide a short-distanced alternative to a car-based lifestyle as well as a pleasurable activity, these can be expanded. The city can and should continue to invest in bicycle and pedestrian transportation options, and develop strong partnership to ensure that public transportation and the airport are adequately available to the public

**Action:** Construct a bicycle and pedestrian path connecting North Park to the north Industrial Park and other points north. See the Existing and Proposed Routes map for future paths and trails.

**Action:** Complete the construction of the paths identified within the Safe Routes to School Plan and undertake a review and update of this plan.



<p><b>Action:</b> Work with the owner(s) of the local taxi company to ensure they have the capacity to provide reliable service. Assist in marketing this service and funding options for riders.</p>
<p><b>Action:</b> Assist the Richland County ADRC (Aging and Disability Resource Center) and SWCAP’s Lyft program to ensure that residents are aware of their transportation services. Provide suggestions of new routes based on community demands and assist with finding volunteer drivers.</p>
<p><b>Action:</b> A Fixed-Base Operator (FBO) will provide greater expertise in airport operations and free up city resources. Research and pursue a contract with a FBO.</p>
<p><b>Action:</b> Provide adequate signage for bicycle travel clearly showing how Richland Center connects to Lone Rock, the Pine River Trail, and downtown businesses.</p>
<p><b>Action:</b> Pursue grant opportunities through the Department of Natural Resources Recreational Trails Program.</p>
<p><b>Strategy 2: Maintain the existing transportation infrastructure and make necessary safety improvements.</b>  Develop long-range capital improvements plan that identifies all required improvements to the transportation network over the next 25+ years.</p>
<p><b>Action:</b> Take an inventory of all community infrastructure including roads, utilities, pump stations, wastewater treatment, buildings, and existing park facilities, including their location, age, projected end of useful life, and estimated replacement cost. Identify the projected remaining lifespan of each city asset and when maintenance will need to be done and include maintenance and capital improvements in annual budgets. Incorporate the existing Capital Improvements Program, roads and utilities, into a program that focuses on all city facilities.</p>
<p><b>Action:</b> Incorporate sidewalks into all city street plans and develop a plan to address missing or inadequate curb cuts in compliance with ADA accessibility requirements.</p>
<p><b>Action:</b> Pursue funding opportunities for projects on the capital improvements plan through the Department of Natural Resources Recreational Trails Program and coordinate Wisconsin Department of Transportation plans for road projects and integrate local improvements at the same time.</p>
<p><b>Action:</b> Monitor vehicular and pedestrian accidents on an annual basis and evaluate concentrations for potential safety corrections</p>

# Community Resources

- 🔊 **GOAL:** Steward the city's historical, cultural, and recreational assets by creating a sense of community around these resources.
- 🔊 **GOAL:** Encourage new residents to move to Richland Center by being known as a welcoming and inclusive community.
- 🔊 **GOAL:** Increase the overall vibrancy of the city by offering regular events for a variety of interests.
- 🔊 **GOAL:** Provide the opportunity for young people to express themselves in the city.

## Assets:

### Sense of Community

During public surveys, Richland Center residents expressed they are proud of the friendly and safe community that exists. Through long-standing traditions, family values, and helpfulness it is reflective of Midwestern ethics. The local radio station WRCO has a strong presence and is part of the fabric of life in Richland County. Community information through radio and the city's own newspaper, *The Richland Observer*, the community's communication network is strong and exemplary for a city of its size. The city should harness this asset as a tool to openly communicate with residents as it moves forward. Richland Center also maintains a strong presence of community organizations that are focused on the betterment of the community, these organizations help define Richland Center as a place people are happy to live.

### Park System

Richland Center has a strong and robust park system. The network of city owned and maintained facilities includes: an aquatic center, pool, twelve shelter houses, an 18-hole disc golf course, six ball-diamonds, tennis courts, pickle ball courts, seven kayak ports, two community garden areas, a dog park, a campground, a community center as well as miles of all-season trails among other recreational amenities. Richland Center also provides youth and adult programming. The parks are used by city residents, county residents, and visitors. Parks are a general reflection of a community, and Richland Center should maintain its high standard and continue to strengthen the park system in order to maintain a high level of appreciation and usage. This will improve both the visitor experience and also encourage new residential growth.

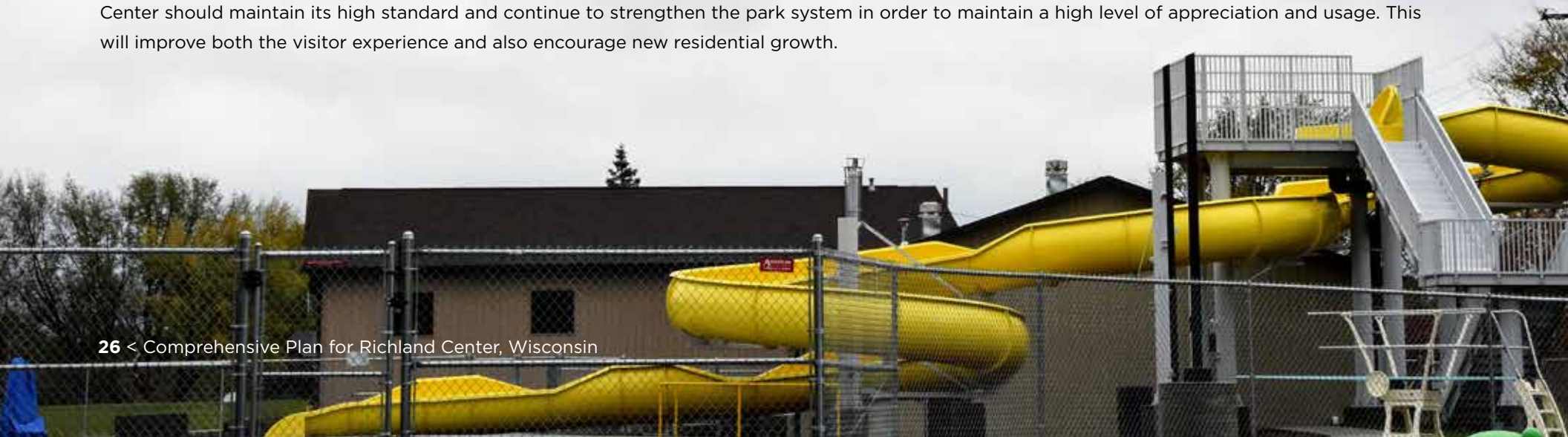
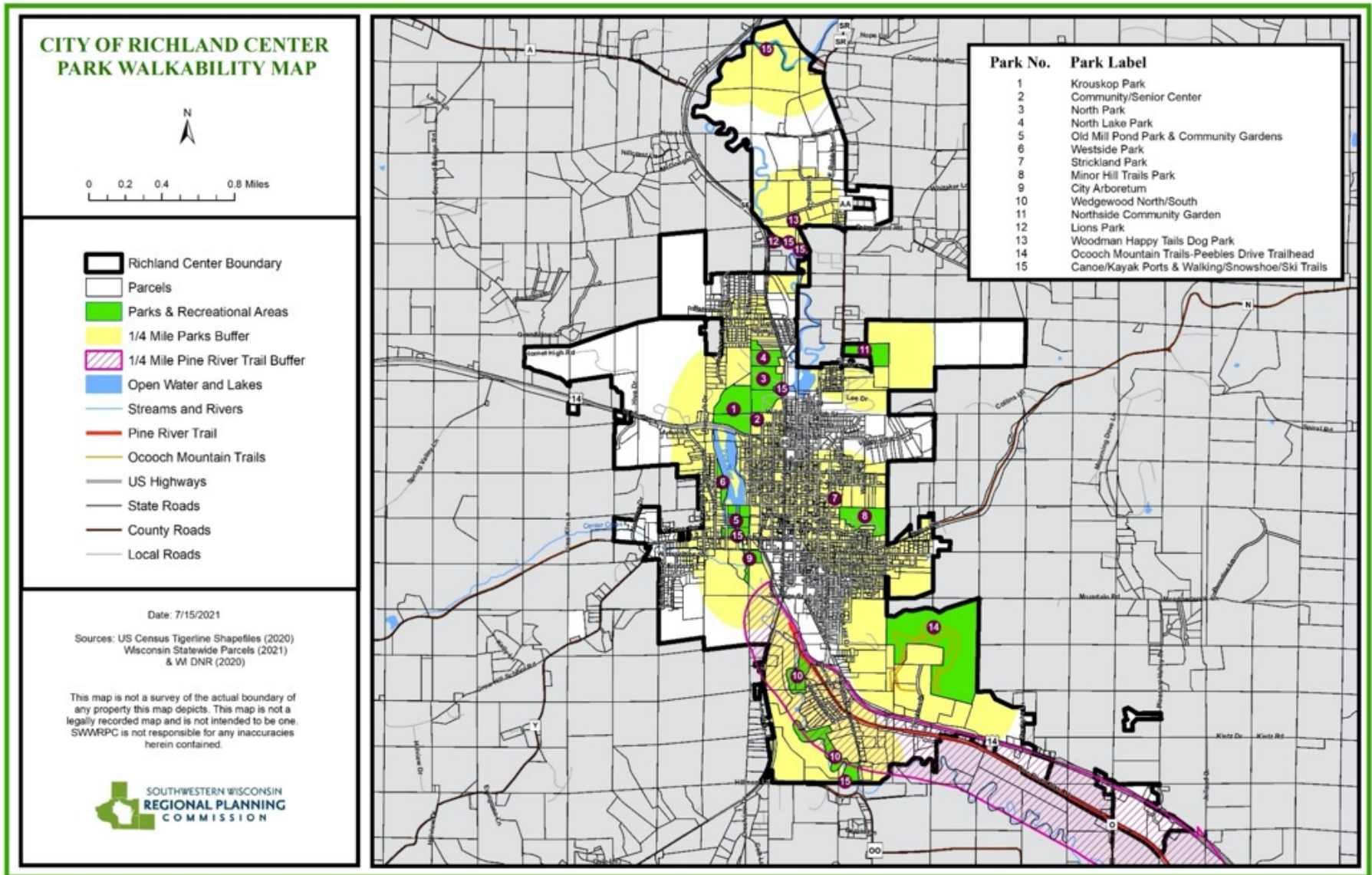


Figure 7: Richland Center Parks Walkability



## Needs:

### Promotion of Regular and Diverse Events

Richland Center currently has several annual events which provide economic boosts to the community. Events lead to return visits and new residents and local business traffic. The event organization, promotion, frequency, and overall experience should be strengthened. Events such as the Thunder Fest, High School Rodeo Finals, Rotary Lights, Color Fest, and Redneck Rally are strong draws to the community. Many events in the city have stopped because they were unable to appeal to enough residents and visitors to grow. A variety of diverse events can encourage residents of diverse backgrounds to take pride in the community and become involved. The city should work with community associations to facilitate regular events in the city.

### Appeal to Young Adults

As mentioned earlier, Richland Center is growing older. These days many young people leave the city to pursue education and careers in the immediate year following high-school graduation. While it should remain a point of community pride for young people to actively pursue education and good jobs, the city should also be encouraging young people to bring their education and skills back to Richland Center. The city can do this by encouraging young adults to have a greater say in decision making in government, community organizations, and public projects, this helps create a sense of ownership. The city should also be pursuing additional young families. One way to do this is to ensure the city has things for young people to do. Diverse events will help make Richland Center a more attractive location for young people to visit and consider moving to.



## Community Resources Strategies and Actions:

### Strategy 1: Parks

Richland Center has a strong park system serving a population that extends beyond the city. The city should invest in maintenance of the parks and recreation opportunities and enhance the user experience. This will strengthen the quality of life for the residents and provide experience for visitors, leaving them with a good impression of the community. The city should also seek out opportunities to accommodate the demand of existing residents and seek out new resident by offering resources that are unavailable regionally.

**Action:** Update the Community Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) every 5 years.

**Action:** Market the underutilized resources of the parks systems in ways that bring in non-residents such as hosting disc golf tournaments, and seeking events that take advantage of the remote-controlled track.

**Action:** Perform a feasibility study on the prospect of an indoor sports facility that would house ice hockey as well as training for other sports. This could have a region-wide appeal and be a significant draw to the community using the Symons Center as an example

**Action:** Track visitors originations and market popular non-traditional park resources such as the remote-controlled racetrack, disc golf course, and mountain biking trails. Seek to attract non-residents who value these resources that are not readily available regionally.

**Action:** Enhance the attractiveness and promote the community gardens for use by residents.

**Action:** Create wayfinding system allowing people from outside the area to also use the park system.

### Strategy 2: Campground

Richland Center's varied park system draws out of town visitors, yet the city lacks the lodging resources to accommodate the extended use of these resources, public comment encouraged the availability of a public campground to allow recreational users to extend their stay.

**Action:** Land is available at the northeast corner of town to accommodate a public campground. This land was a former landfill but appears to be appropriate for a recreational land use that does not disturb the surface. The city should pursue a third-party review of the appropriateness of the site for a modern campground that includes travel trailers and tent camping.

### Strategy 3: Strengthen Events

Richland Center currently has many events but many of them attract and are organized by the same parties. Richland Center has a regional draw which can be leveraged to attract diverse audiences. While much of the work of organizing and facilitating events should be left to community organizations, the city should develop the systems and procedure to facilitate easy access and streamlined permitting for future events.

**Action:** Create processes to ensure successful events.

1. Create a “new event” form that is accessible to be completed by individuals or groups.
2. Utilize city resources such as the parks and public works department to prepare and provide space for these meetings.
3. The city Council should provide a review committee to assess new events based on the logistical requirements.
4. Host an annual event planning meeting to ensure properly timed events and coordination between partners.
5. Budget for an annual fund to assist new events in public spaces.

**Action:** Encourage new “micro-events” that happen on a regular basis with an emphasis on downtown. Potentials include; History Walks, Wine Walks, Food Truck event, pop-up dance parties, celebration of art, etc.

**Action:** Encourage events that accommodate new visitors, young people, and out of town residents such as ethnic festivals.

**Action:** Assist the Auditorium in their efforts to bring in desired acts, that again encourage new visitors, new Americans, young people, and other un-engaged residents.

#### **Strategy 4: Build Community Ownership among young people**

Richland Center’s young residents are an underutilized asset. During public engagement sessions young residents communicated a lack of “things to do” and a general apathy towards the future of their current city. Additionally, community associations expressed a need for future leaders. The city, through partnerships with the high school and engagement of young adults, can help encourage young people to take a more active role in the development of Richland Center. This will encourage the overall retention of residents and the attraction of young people to the city.

**Action:** Work with the School District to create opportunities for young people to engage in civic matters and pursue opportunities for young residents to take a more active role in government and community organizations.

**Action:** Incorporate public art, undertaken by students of the school district, in all future public projects as well as projects that seek to improve existing public projects such as art installations at parks.

**Action:** Work with UW-Extension to develop a “youth-in-government” option for high school students.

**Action:** Seek out the opinions of younger residents and encourage local businesses to extend internships and apprenticeships to students.

#### **Strategy 5: Steward and celebrate community history**

Strategy 5: Steward and celebrate community history

Richland Center can boast many great storylines from its history. From the premier architect of the United States, Frank Lloyd Wright, to state leaders in the women’s suffrage movement, Richland Center has a lot to draw from. The city can tell these stories and create opportunities for them to live and accent the Richland Center experience.

**Action:** Create and promote a more prominent and accessible History Center to focus on all of the themes in an exciting way.

**Action:** Engage a group to host Cemetery Walks or Living History events that tell the rich past of Richland Center. How did GTE start? What led to the 1882 explosion? How did Svetlana Alliluyeva get to Richland Center? Why did the mural at the Post Office get painted? How did the city Auditorium get built? Make these stories come alive.

**Action:** Celebrate Richland Center's role in the Women's Suffrage movement, prohibition, and public utilities through partnerships with local businesses and in coordination with public awareness. Examples including leveraging Women's History month to tell the story of Ada James, or Historic Preservation Month to encourage awareness of the built environment.

**Action:** Re-engage the Historic Preservation Commission and County Historical society. Utilize the architectural tours previously offered by the tourism department.

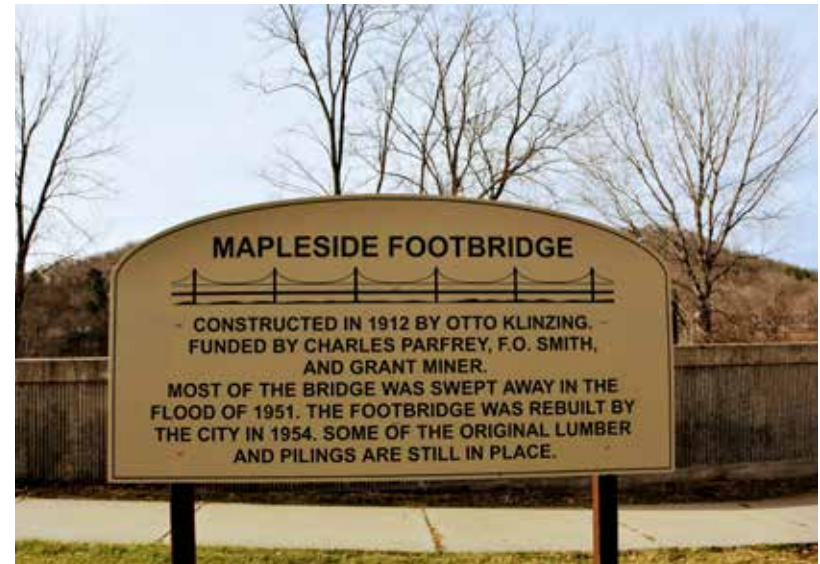
### Strategy 6: Be welcoming and inclusive

New residents are vital to Richland Center's future success. Recent census data has shown the Hispanic community is growing in the community but public input identified that the community may not offer an inviting welcome to residents who offer a different heritage.

**Action:** Re-engage and reinforce a community welcoming committee that welcomes all new residents. Engage landlords and property managers to help make Richland Center a welcoming community.

**Action:** Take advantage of immigration patterns and the area's low cost of living to attract new residents. Seek to offer multi-lingual options at the local level when possible.

**Action:** Engage UW-Extension to educate current residents and engage new residents.



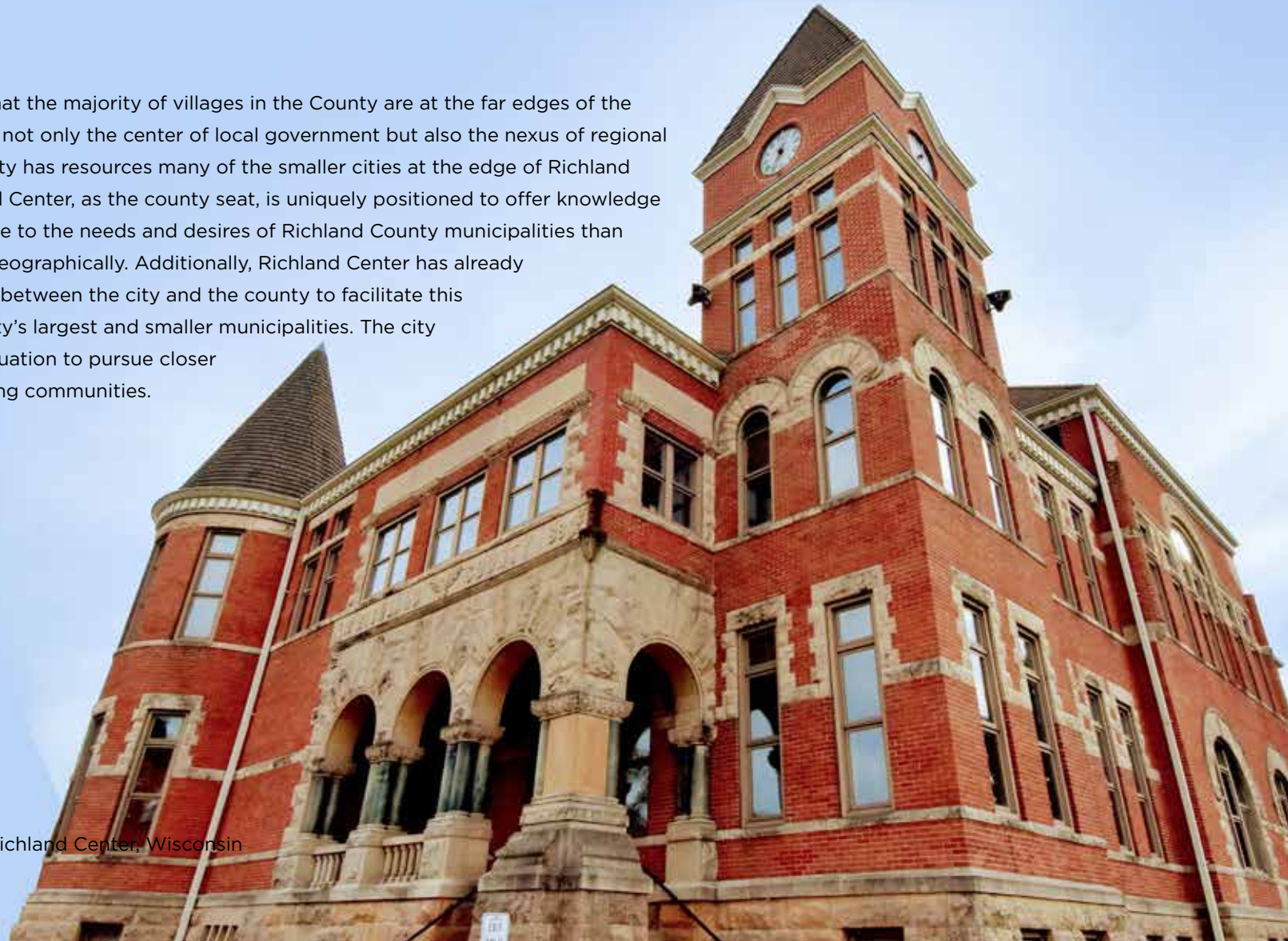
# Leadership, Cooperation, and Volunteerism

- **GOAL:** Increase the city's administrative capacity to allow for greater opportunities and efficiencies.
- **GOAL:** Strengthen Richland Center's relationship with the Richland School District, Richland County, and neighboring municipalities.
- **GOAL:** Organize and strengthen community associations to be a resource for the city's goals.
- **GOAL:** Build trust among regional employers by developing relationship between employers, residents, and workforce training resources.

## Assets:

### County Seat

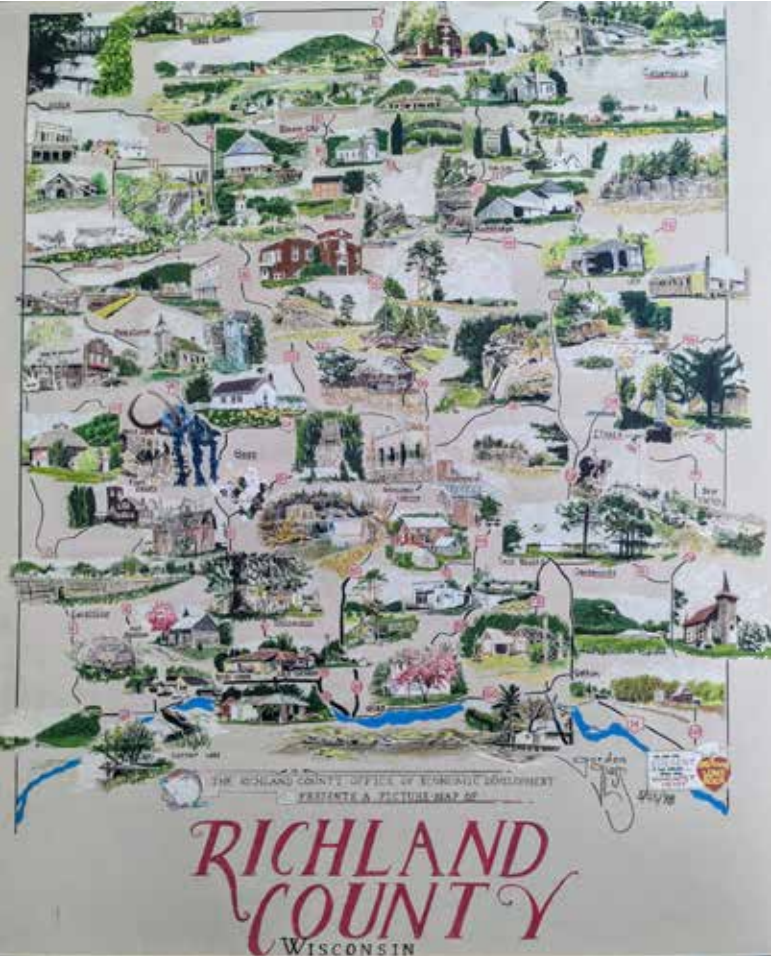
Richland County is unique in that the majority of villages in the County are at the far edges of the County. Richland Center offers not only the center of local government but also the nexus of regional employers in the region. The city has resources many of the smaller cities at the edge of Richland County cannot afford. Richland Center, as the county seat, is uniquely positioned to offer knowledge and resources more appropriate to the needs and desires of Richland County municipalities than municipalities that are closer geographically. Additionally, Richland Center has already developed the shared services between the city and the county to facilitate this relationship between the county's largest and smaller municipalities. The city should embrace the current situation to pursue closer relationships among the outlying communities.





# Community Associations

As the county seat and largest community in Richland County. Richland Center provides needs for both residents and to those living outside the city. Richland Center claims a high amount of community associations and has a long tradition of religious institutions with many denominations represented. These associations play a vital role in the community by providing volunteer labor at events and projects in the city. The city is served by traditional national organizations such as The Rotary, Knights of Columbus, and Kiwanis International as well as many smaller organizations that add to the strength of the community. Despite the site of the organizations, the average age of volunteers within these groups is aging. This is concerning as these groups help to provide the social services and quality of life that make Richland Center a favorable location to live. The city should assist these organization in planning of event and in the attraction of new members.



### Community Associations in Richland Center

Name	What is their Purpose?	What are their Projects?	Contact
Chamber of Commerce	Business Engagement and Promotion	Emphasizing new business, networking and ribbon cutting	
American Legion and Auxiliary, VFW, 40 and 8, and Vietnam Vets	Veterans Association	Scholarships, Community and Veterans Advocacy	
FFA	Educating Future Farmers		
Rotary	Service above self	Rotary lights	Cathy Rooney
G.R.A.C.E.	Patient assistance/ Fight Cancer	Fundraising, Walk with GRACE	Rob Rynes
St. Johns	Faith based institution	Thanksgiving, meals on wheels, youth assistance.	Michelle Elfers
Family Thrift Store	Faith based non-profit		Betty Wastlich
4H	Youth Skills development and leadership		
Farm Women	Dairy Industry support	Dairy Breakfast	Annette Lewis
Rolling Hills Toastmasters	Communication/ Leadership	Speech Contests	
Snowmobile Alliance	Sportsman's Club		
County Gun Club	Sportsman's Club		
RC Lions Club	Recreation, Vision issues	Elementary free screening. Provide glasses to kids	
RC Jaycees	Leadership Training		
Knights of Columbus	Catholic Mission through St. Mary's	Churning Dirt, (4 seasons of fun)	Mark Jelinek
Lighthouse Chapel	Faith based institution		
Kinship of Richland County	Youth Mentorship program	Brat stands, share nights, car wash	John Collins
Community Players of SW WI	Performance Art Non-profit	Plays	Chay Schmitt
Richland County Parks Commission	Maintain and add attractions to bring people to the outdoors.	Pier Park - More campsites, expand trails, RV sites	
DKG (Delta Kappa Gamma)	Support Women Educators	Education Grants and Scholarships	
Hospital Foundation	Health Based Foundation	Provide Supplies/ funds to hospital/ scholarships	Ginny Morre
Right to Life	Advocate for life		Dominic Anderson
Boy Scouts of America	Youth program and character development		Dan Pepage
Hospital Auxiliary	Hospital Volunteer work, Healthcare scholarships, equipment donations.		Bruce Roesler
Joan Woodman Orton McCollum Foundation	Assisting Richland County Non-profits.		Sheila Troxel
Southwest Partners	Community Building		Mike Breininger
AD German Warehouse	Historic Preservation		Derek Kalish

## Needs:

### Leadership

Richland Center has grown into a dynamic city and much of the public input provided through the community survey and public input sessions indicated the need for an administrator. In the past, the city has not maintained the investment in an Administrator to help elected officials ask the correct questions and pursue long-term goals. Additionally, the city is in a position where elected officials have not been able to provide, or provide the time and energy, to address difficult issues, long-term goals, or complex negotiations with new developers or businesses. The city has recently pursued the hiring of a city administrator to accomplish the desired growth and pursuit of goals. Public input during engagement sessions support continuing this effort.



## School District Partnerships

Data indicates the Richland School district is has declining enrollment, due in part to the open-enrollment of students out of the district. Comments during the public engagement sessions expressed a disconnect between the school administration and governing board and the desire of community residents. Public comments also expressed a deeper cultural issue of acceptance and inclusion. The failure of a school district results in a lack of trust in the community and a failure to attract new families. The overall response of the public was that the school and the city require a closer relationship to prioritize addressing these challenges.

Figure 8: Richland School District Enrollment

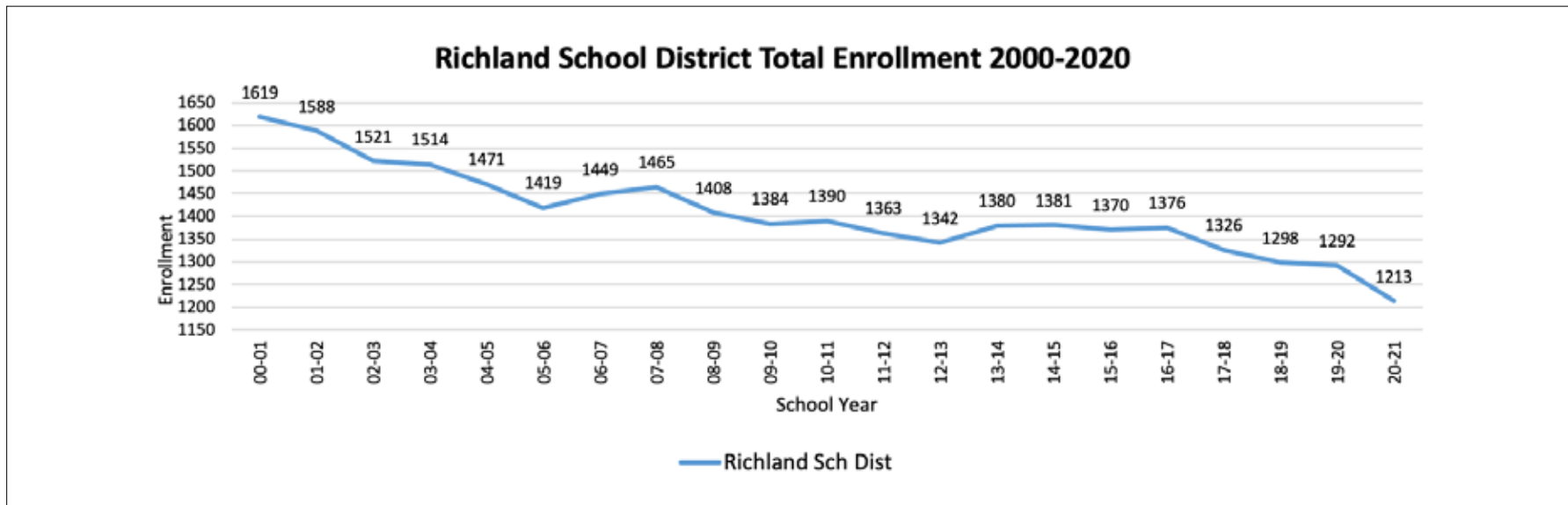


Figure 9: Richland School District Home-Based Education Enrollment

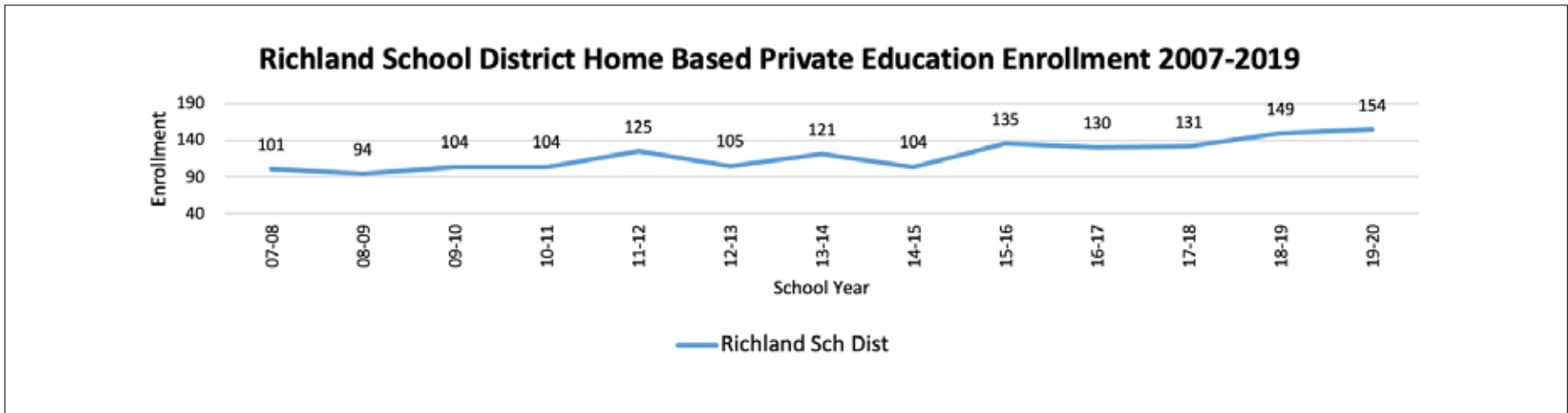
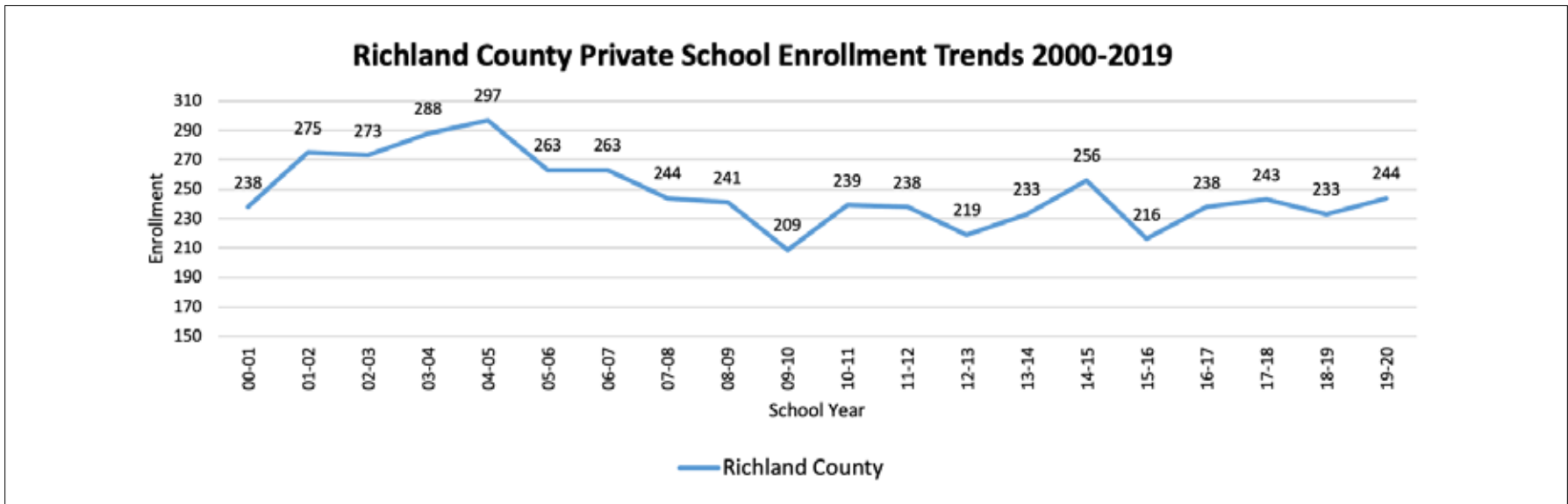


Figure 10: Richland County Private School Enrollment Trends



## Leadership, Cooperation, and Volunteers Strategies and Actions:

### Strategy 1: Hire a City Administrator.

Richland Center has a dynamic economic and administrative landscape with a diverse number of issues. Past examples of City Administrators in the region prove that these positions can and do pay for themselves. This new-hire would serve as a liaison between the City Council, pursue funding opportunities, meet regularly with large employers, focus of financial management, work in coordination with the county, the school district, the business chamber, and be knowledgeable and active in all city happenings.

Action: Form a search committee to create a job description, budget the new salary, and create goals for the new hire.

Action: Advertise the position through a wide range of outlets not limiting to just local and regional career seekers.

Action: Work with all city departments to understand deficiencies in current administration as well as each department's goals. Encourage a new administrator to develop a long-term work plan.

### Strategy 2: Strengthen the City/School District Relationship

Schools are essential to the overall well-being of the community. The city should be an active participant in the school's plans and operations. Due to a variety of issues the school district is experiencing a trend of declining enrollment due to out-migration of students who otherwise would attend Richland Schools. These issues result in problems shared among the school district and the city, such as the city becoming less attractive to new residents and a lack of trust among current residents. The city deserves to play a larger role in helping to solve these issues.

Action: Request monthly updates from the School District to the City Council.

Action: Establish regular meeting between the city, county, and school administrators to address ongoing issues and find opportunities for collaboration.

Action: Embrace the school through student lead projects throughout the city and demonstrations of school pride by the city. Consider the opportunity for a youth-in-government representative.

### Strategy 3: Strengthen city relationships with the county and neighboring municipalities

Continue the tradition of Richland Center providing services to county citizens and serving as the hub for the county. Jobs, healthcare, and schooling must remain strong in Richland Center in order to continue to serve and attract new residents. Richland Center should inspire partnerships and cooperation of surrounding communities by leading by example and increasing trust in local government.

Action: Proactively work with the county communities and understand their citizen's needs and how Richland Center can assist. Seek out opportunities for shared services and staff.

Action: Work to enhance tourism into surrounding townships in the county and incorporate their assets into county-based tourism marketing.

Action: Commit to fund economic development focused on benefitting both the city and county. Establish regular meetings of the county and city administrators.

Action: Create a 'Buy Local' ordinance for Richland Center government to ensure local dollars are spent locally whenever possible.

#### **Strategy 4: Facilitate the coordination and development of the city's community associations**

Engage residents and interested parties in both the development of the city and the stewardship of its resources. Actively seek volunteers and address issues of succession planning for organizations whose primary actors are seeking retirements.

Action: Designate a leader within the city who can coordinate volunteers and match tasks with appropriate skill sets.

Action: Organize an annual or biannual meeting of the city's organizations that serves as both an events calendar workshop, volunteer celebration, and a forum to discuss organizational issues such as training, recruitment, schedules, succession planning, and volunteer incentives.

Action: Facilitate volunteer fairs with community associations and non-profits. Directly target high school students to participate in volunteering. Consider working with the school district to require volunteer hours as a condition of graduation.

Action: Maintain a current list of community associations and contact information on the city's new website.

#### **Strategy 5: Improve public communication**

Residents are mostly happy with communications from city leadership. Yet, the introduction of social media has created the opportunity for misinformation and gossip. The city can address this issue and build community trust by providing clear and regular communications through social media and through traditional media forms.

Action: Create a Richland Center Government social media page to communicate with residents. Include information on road closings, weather delays and cancellations, city meetings, community events, and school district happenings.

Action: Continue to utilize WRCO and the Richland Observer as a forum for elected officials to communicate with residents and for the city to seek input and share information.

Action: Continue to use Zoom to share public meetings and make recordings available to the public.



# Land Use

- **GOAL:** Use intergovernmental partnerships to reduce the amount of storm water entering the city’s infrastructure during heavy rain events.
- **GOAL:** Land use policies and zoning that maximize the available opportunities and encourages residential, commercial, and industrial development.
- **GOAL:** Follow the Future Land Use identified within this chapter to inform any future zoning and land acquisition.
- **GOAL:** Implement continual improvement using the Plan, Do, Study, Act process to ensure the planning work here is implemented and the plan remains a living document.

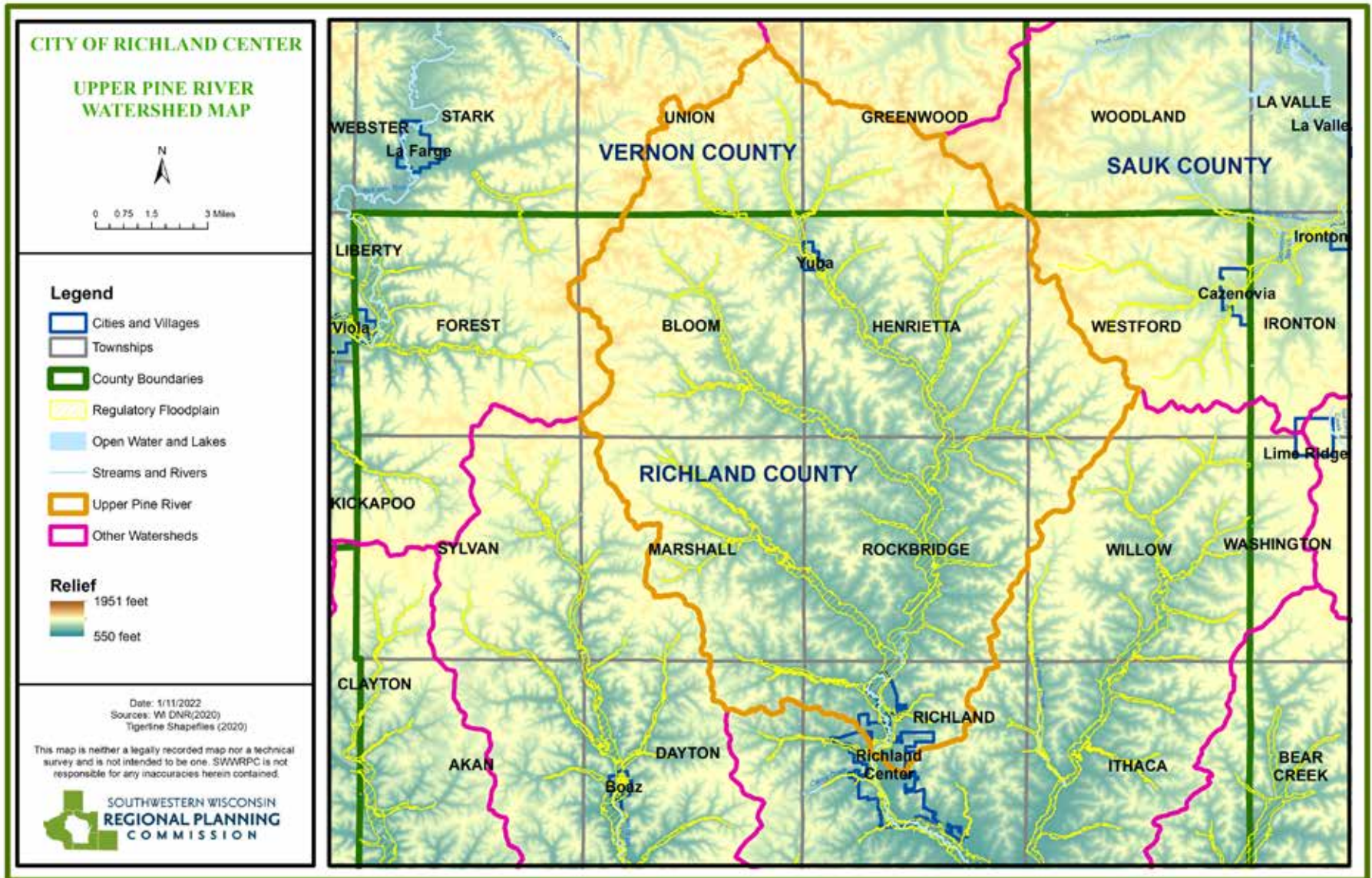
## Stormwater Management

The City of Richland Center has a history of flood events. Due to the surrounding topography and land use changes over time the city is susceptible to flooding during high rainfall events. The city should be proactive and approach the issue on a watershed level, not just at the local level. Approaching this issue comprehensively and in coordination with other municipalities will mitigate future flooding events and help to prevent future property damage. Working on this issue outside of the city will involve slowing the volume and velocity of heavy rainfall events by working to retain water on the landscape. This effort can also be used by the city and other municipalities to achieve the additional benefit of mitigating erosion and reducing phosphorus. Within the city, future developments should address stormwater diversion and infiltration measures such as bio-swales and rain gardens. When possible, previous services are preferred.





Figure 11: Pine River Watershed



## Zoning

Richland Center currently uses a traditional zoning code to promote the orderly development of varying land uses, regulating construction and location of those land uses, and providing for the safety, health, and accessibility of the public. Richland Center's zoning ordinance was recently adopted in 2017. During public engagement sessions several items regarding current zoning were brought up as suggestions to encourage additional development, promote additional residential development, or help to ensure the vibrancy of Richland Center's commercial areas.

While the city has long valued its zoning requirements, it should consider potential changes that allow for greater flexibility of local businesses and the expansion of residential units. Richland Center may consider an increasing density of residential units as adjacent property is difficult for the city to acquire or is not appropriate for residential development, as discussed earlier. Examples of this would be allowing accessory dwelling units by right (as long as they meet building and safety requirements) and "up-zoning" certain neighborhoods. "Upzoning" would remove single family residential requirements and allow more units per parcel (again, as long as all building and safety requirements are met).

In relation to providing opportunities for businesses, the city should consider permitting by-right home-based businesses, food trucks, and backyard chickens as long as those uses conform to all other ordinances related to building and public health. Richland Center should be seen as entrepreneur friendly and encourage residents to make use of their skills and talents, allowing businesses to incubate and develop in garages and basements. In addition, public discussions also highlighted the importance of the city's commercial infrastructure and protecting that infrastructure from incompatible uses such as storage or residential. To this extent, the city should pursue all measures to ensure first floors of commercial buildings, in commercial districts, remain open to in-store shopping for goods and services.



Figure 12: Richland Center Zoning Map, 2022

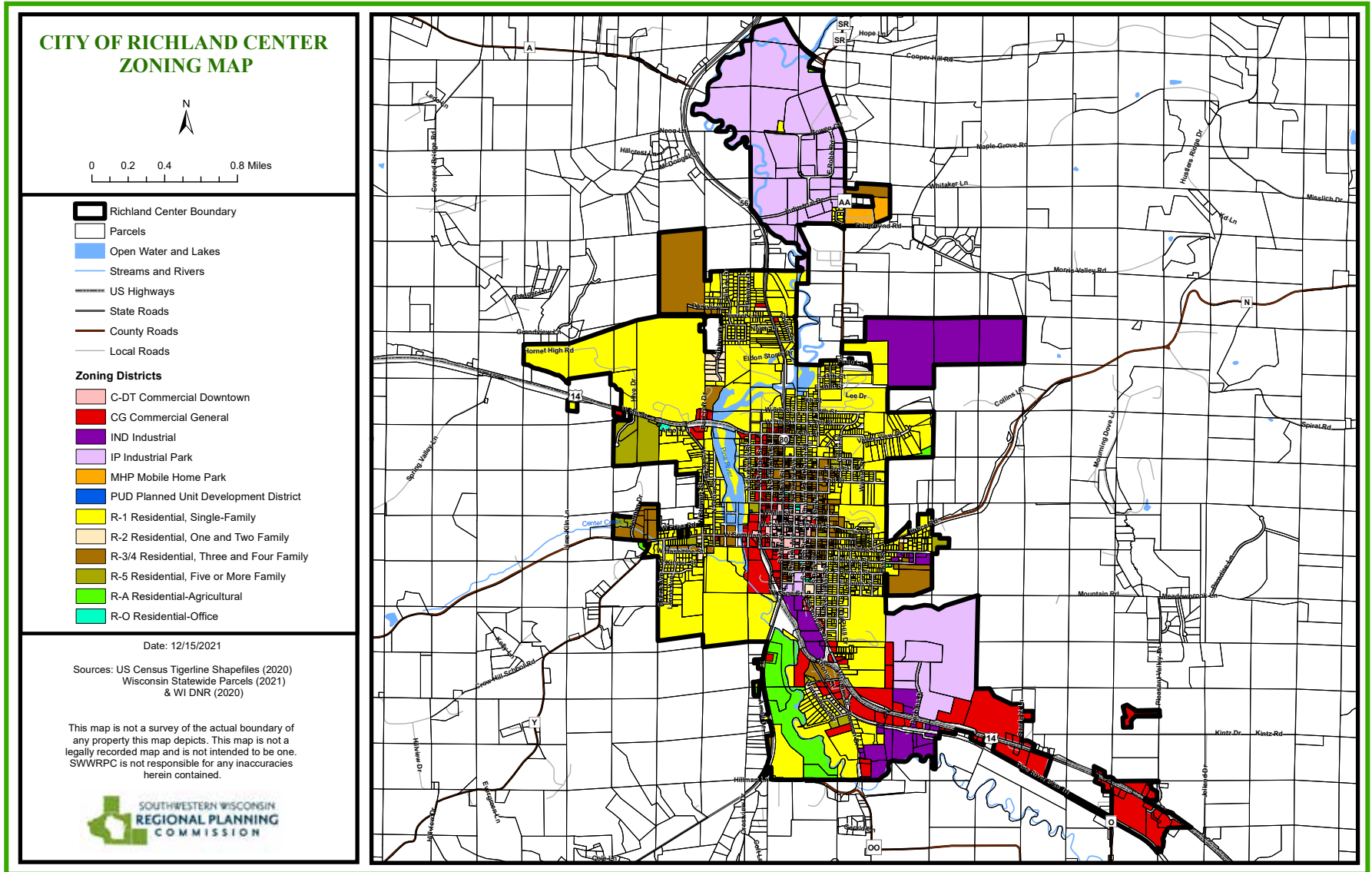
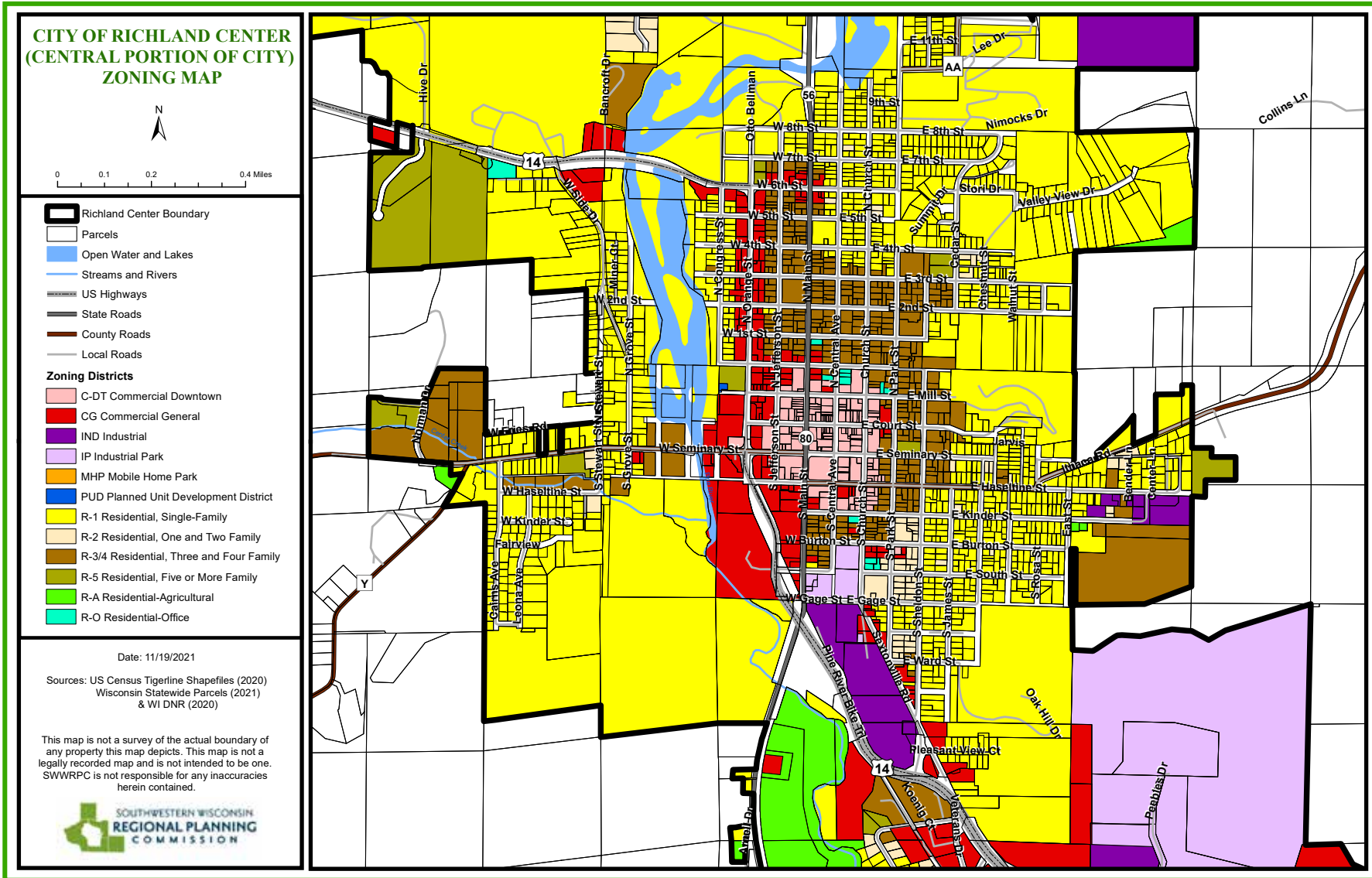


Figure 12: Richland Center Zoning Map, 2022



## Future Land Use

During the final public input session, residents were asked how they would like to see the city grow. Residents were not just asked where the city should grow but where they would like to see specific new developments take place, such as where new parks should go and the best place for new housing. The result of these conversations was the Future Land Use Map. The Future Land Use Map is a primary objective of the planning process and the map is required to be followed in any instances of rezoning. The map is truly a guide to the future land use of the city.

In creating the Future Land Use Map, considerations were given to the high priorities placed on additional residential development, the unique geography of Richland Center, avoiding incompatible land uses, and the projects identified throughout the process that have direct land-use impacts, such as a campground.

The Future land use maps provide a general guidance as to where future residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, institutional, and mixed-use development should take place. Actual zoning should conform to these land uses if any zoning changes take place, but the future land use does not designate the density or specific type of use. For example, future land use is designated as residential but does not specify the number of units that can be build on a parcel.

## Mixed Use Designation

To provide future flexibility for the city, the future land use map identifies a significant amount of land (all dependent on annexation) as mixed use. Mixed use is short for “Residential Mixed Use” and the intention of this designation is to increasing housing, encourage a variety of businesses which offer consumer goods and services in close proximity to residential neighborhoods, and offer the opportunity to prioritize pedestrian access. The districts should allow for a complementary mix of residential, commercial, as well as “light” industrial uses which will reflect in the permitted and condition uses. Richland Center’s current zoning ordinance does not yet set the specifics of this use. It is recommended the zoning ordinance be updated to provide for the flexibility that a Mixed-Use District allows the city.



Figure 13: Richland Center Future Land Use Map, 2022

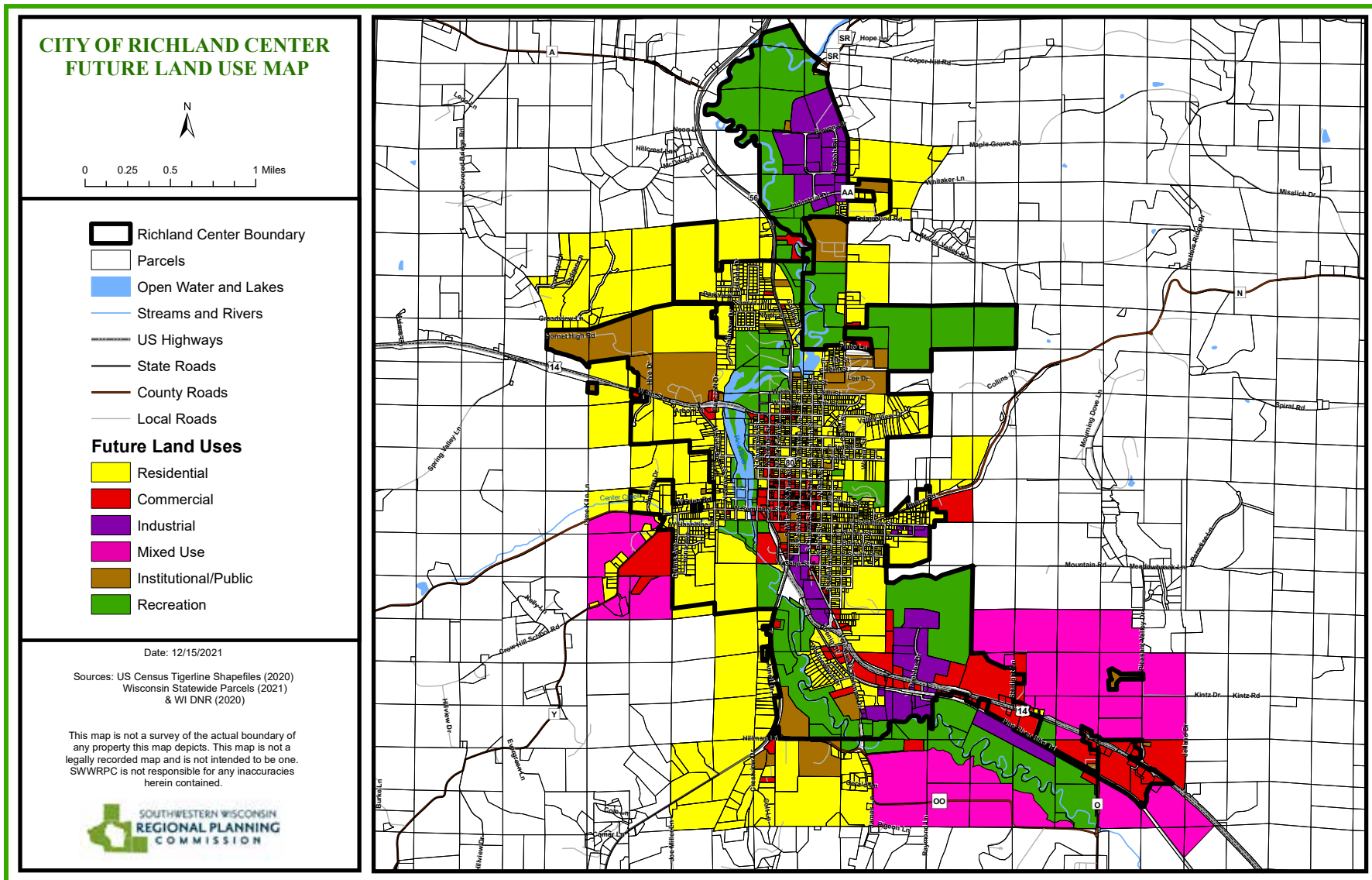
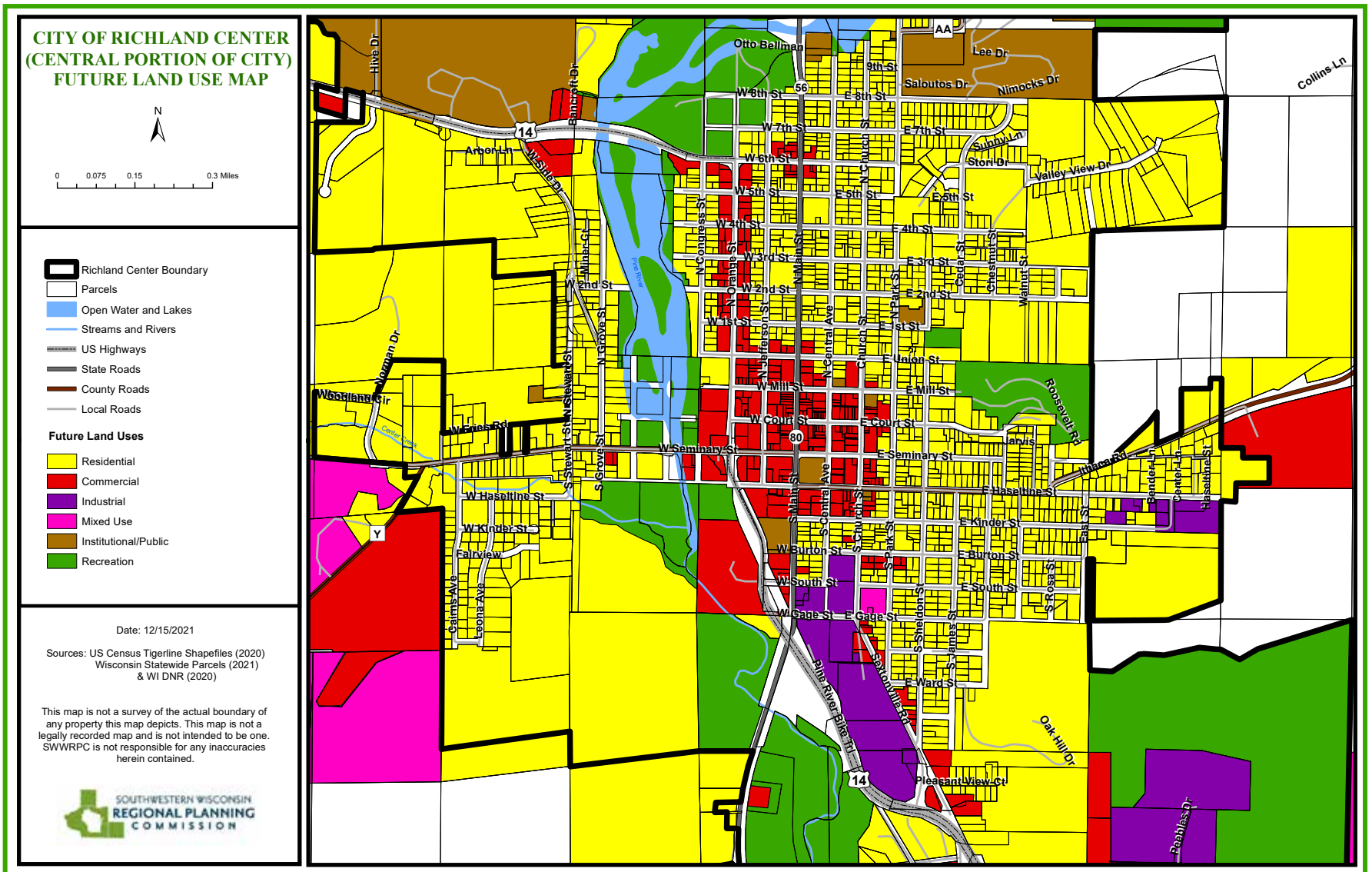


Figure 13: Richland Center Future Land Use Map, 2022



## Land Use and Implementation Strategies and Action:

### Strategy 1: Maximize the current opportunities

As mentioned, Richland Center has constraints to its expansion which requires the city to take advantage of infill lots and consider an increase in residential density. Additionally, the city should empower residents to take advantage of the resources they have and permit by-right land uses that empower entrepreneurship, attract young families, and allow additional housing units.

Action: Utilize the associated Market Analysis and Action Plan to identify unused and underutilized lots. Pursue additional housing by taking advantage of unused or underutilized lots.

Action: Consider “up-zoning” single family neighborhoods. Prioritize those areas that currently have vacant lots to encourage multi-family investment.

Action: Permit by right, accessory dwelling units on all residential parcels, as long as building code standards and setback are met.

Action: Permit by right home-based businesses, backyard chickens, and food trucks

Action: Enforce all zoning ordinances with a priority on those that prohibit non-commercial uses of first floor commercial spaces within the downtown commercial district.

Action: Seek out Historic Preservation planning grants to designate downtown as an historic district, on the National, State, and Local registers of historic places. Work with the Wisconsin Historical Society to develop a Certified Local Government to oversee the design and redevelopment within the Historic District

Action: Richland Center’s assessment level is currently 86.93% of full market value. A community-wide revaluation should be done to better reflect the reality of the market.

Action: Follow the future land use map adopted with this plan.

### Strategy 2: Work with neighboring municipalities to address stormwater issues.

**Action: Identify stakeholders within the watershed that want to work to address the problem.**

Action: Work upstream on streambank erosion control measures and utilize the multi-benefits of phosphorus reduction and conservation planting.

Action: Mitigate stormwater impacts with the city by encouraging the use of bio-swales and rain gardens in all new development and incentivize introducing these into problematic areas of the city.





# Implementation

➤ **GOAL:** Implement continual improvement using the Plan, Do, Study, Act process to ensure the planning work here is implemented and the plan remains a living document.

This plan recommends Richland Center utilize the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) Cycle to implement this plan. Through the adoption of this plan, the city has made the first step in this cycle. The Comprehensive Plan is not passive and does not represent a satisfied goal, rather it is a starting point for the city to implement their desired goals. The PDSA cycle requires this plan to be reviewed regularly and, at times, updated when determined vital to the best interests of the city.



## Plan

This is the work completed through the Comprehensive Planning process, culminating in this document. It included community engagement, review of relevant data and past planning work, and conducting interviews with key personnel. This process should take place again no later than 2032

## Do

This phase includes plan roll-out and executing objectives. Key aspects include:

- Identifying responsible parties – They may be city staff, city council members, or asking community associations to step into a role that uniquely fits their mission.
- Identifying required resources and partners - County-wide initiatives – Implement county-wide initiatives such as updating the HR Personnel Manual, improving the payroll system, developing on-boarding programs for staff and County Board, and improving the budget process.
- Documentation – Develop or finalize the targets and measures the team will use to measure progress towards continual improvement and plan implementation. This includes both the analysis of existing data and collection of new data to be used to measure progress.

## Study

Measuring progress requires a team to monitor and manage implementation, and to record progress. Two major steps should be undertaken.

- Identify the committee or group to monitor progress and ensure there is continued momentum. The team should meet quarterly and be able to connect with city staff, committees, and city council. The team should be inter-disciplinary and include council members, city staff, business owners, and residents with varied interests in the community, all of who have a passion for this work.
- Identify and define barriers to implementation in order to overcome or surmount them when possible. When barriers cannot be overcome, they should be documented to inform future planning work. Common barriers to plan implementation include:
  - Legacy rules or procedures.
  - Lack of staff time to work on initiatives.
  - Choices or trade-offs are not made. Trying to do everything.
  - Choosing to wait for a “better time.”
  - Parochialism / narrow mindedness

## Act

This phase of the process sets the stage for continual improvement. As the city sees progress, documents successes, or meets with barriers on any given initiative, it should look to:

- **Adopt** practices that work and are successful. Formalize them as part of the City's culture.
- **Adapt** good practices that need improvement. This includes surmounting obstacles, finding efficiencies in existing processes, and documenting why things don't work.
- **Abandon** existing practices that don't support progress, and new initiatives that are not the right fit for the City. The management team must document the reason for abandonment so they can learn from this and avoid similar issues in the future.

## Implementation Strategies and Actions

### Strategy 1: Implementation and Continual Improvement.

**Action:** Use this Comprehensive Plan and the Market Analysis and Action Plan, as "living documents" to guide decision-making and measure progress. Utilize the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle to embed the plan into the city operations and develop a culture of continual improvement

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**A RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND AN UPDATE TO  
THE CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, the City of Richland Center, Wisconsin, pursuant to the Sections 60.10(2)(c), 62.23, 61.35, 61.22(3), and 66.1001(4)(b) of the Wisconsin Statutes, adopted a comprehensive plan on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007, and

WHEREAS, the City of Richland Center is hereby updating the City's Comprehensive Plan pursuant to Section 66.1001(2)(i) of Wisconsin Statutes, including updates to all required elements and the Future Land Use Map; and

WHEREAS, the City of Richland Center's Planning Commission finds that the City of Richland Center Comprehensive Plan, 2022-2032 addresses all of the required elements specified in Section 66.1001 (2) of the Statutes and that the Comprehensive Plan is internally consistent; and

WHEREAS, the City has duly noticed and held a public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan, 2022-2032, following procedures in Section 66.1001 (4)(d) of the Statutes and the public participation procedures for comprehensive plan updates adopted by the Village on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that pursuant to Section 66.1001 (4)(d) of the Statutes, the City of Richland Center's Planning Commission hereby adopts this Resolution approving the City of Richland Center Comprehensive Plan 2022-2032.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Commission does hereby recommend the City Council enact an ordinance adopting City of Richland Center Comprehensive Plan, 2022-2032.

Recommended by the City of Richland Center Planning Commission this 16<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2021.

Ayes 4 Nays 0 Absent 3



Todd Coppernoll, Mayor/Planning Commission Chair



Attest:

Aaron Joyce, City Clerk/Treasurer

ORDINANCE NO. 2021-5

**AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2022-2032 FOR THE CITY OF  
RICHLAND CENTER, RICHLAND COUNTY, WISCONSIN**

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER, RICHLAND COUNTY, WISCONSIN, DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Pursuant to Section(s) 62.23 of the Wisconsin Statutes, the City of Richland Center is authorized to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan as defined in Sections 66.1001(1)(a) and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

SECTION 2. The City Council, by the enactment of an ordinance, formally adopted the document titled City of Richland Center Comprehensive Plan as the City's comprehensive plan on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

SECTION 3. The Planning Commission, by a majority vote of the entire Commission at a meeting held on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021, recommended to the City Council the adoption of the City of Richland Center, 2022-2032 as an update to the City's Comprehensive Plan as required under Wis. Stat sec. 66.1001(2)(i).

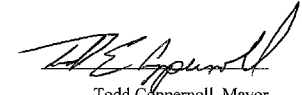
SECTION 4. The City published a Class 1 public notice and held a public hearing regarding the Comprehensive Plan Update.

SECTION 5. The City Council of the City of Richland Center, Richland County, Wisconsin hereby adopts the proposed City of Richland Center Comprehensive Plan, 2022-2032.

SECTION 6. The City Clerk is directed to send a copy of this ordinance and the plan updates and amendments to the parties listed in Section 66.1001(4)(b) of the Wisconsin Statutes.


SECTION 7. This Ordinance shall take effect upon passage by a majority vote of the full membership of the City Council and publication as required by law.

Adopted and approved this 21<sup>st</sup> day of December, 2021.



Todd Coppernoll, Mayor

Attest:

  
Aaron Joyce, City Clerk/Treasurer

Date Adopted: 12/21/2021  
Date Recorded: 12/22/2021  
Date Published: 12/30/2021  
Effective Date: 12/30/2021

# GATHER

## IN THE HILLS

SINCE 1851



# RICHLAND CENTER WISCONSIN



SOUTHWESTERN WISCONSIN  
**REGIONAL PLANNING**  
COMMISSION

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