

MEMORANDUM

RE: Town of Richmond Comprehensive Plan Vision Session Summary

To: Town of Richmond Board of Supervisors, Plan Commission and Town Clerk

From: John Hilgers, St. Croix County Senior Planner

Date: October 26, 2022

Thank you to those who attended the Town of Richmond Comprehensive Plan Vision Session on September 27, 2022. Approximately 15 participants attended the 2-hour session. St. Croix County staff moderated the meeting and facilitated small group discussions at three tables at Town Hall.

The discussion topics covered various comprehensive plan elements (or chapters) including housing, transportation, utilities and community facilities, agricultural, natural & cultural resources, economic development, land use and issues & opportunities.

Under each element or chapter, participants were provided discussion topics to guide the conversation. The notes below will list the discussion topics for participants to consider under each chapter and then the summary of notes that were collected from the participants. Items marked with (2) equals number of times that comment was made. Words that are **bold and underlined** are recurring within that particular plan chapter.

HOUSING:

Topics to consider: condition of existing housing stock, current market, affordability, location, property maintenance, rental vs. ownership, 170-lot inventory for housing, 12 new sanitary permits for 2022

Summary of participant comments for Housing:

- High Residential = High **Cost**
- Too much rental in City causes higher **costs**
- **Cost** of housing has increased – affordability
- Competing with City of New Richmond for affordable housing
- Preserve Ag Community
- Lower taxes are not a draw – move to New Richmond for amenities
- Multi-family housing discouraged
- Water Quality
- Sustained level of growth
- Balance
- Annexation Boundaries
- Homes are well maintained
- Prefer single-family type housing/keep rural character
- Mobile home ordinances must meet standards
- Sanitary sewer district – pipes need improvement – capital project

TRANSPORTATION:

Topics to consider: condition and function of current road networks, maintenance of road network, connectivity, alternative modes of transportation, trucking/railroad

Summary of participant comments for Transportation:

- Traffic on 140th and **County Road A** – congestion (2)

- Highway #64 and **County Road A** traffic volume and safety concern, needs improvements (2)
- **County Road A**/County Road G intersection could use a **round-about**
- **Roundabouts** should be larger for semi-traffic
- Highway #65/County Road G **round-about** works great
- **Funding** challenges with tax levy caps
- Difficult **funding** decisions for road projects (e.g. pavement base vs. landscaping)
- Overall, good quality for rural roads
- County Road E is in need of an update
- 120th St is narrow, trying to keep traffic off of it
- Railroad and Cemstone – noise decibel measurements
- More compensation from railroad auto freight yard
- Impact fee helpful but restricts to new construction and not maintenance
- Need to improve safety at intersections

UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES:

Topics to consider: Town Hall facility, fire/ambulance/sheriff protection, drinking water quality, Richmond (Boardman) Sanitary District, recycling programs, parks, broadband/internet, electric/solar, transit, library, health care

Summary of participant comments for Utilities and Community Facilities:

- Great recycling programs - keeps ditches clean (3)
- High speed internet should be everywhere – being worked on but will they catch up (3)
- Concerned about sanitary district issue in **Boardman** with group septic from the 1970's (2)
- Be aware of funding for utilities, especially **Boardman**
- Partner with City on **parks**, have already done. Parks require maintenance
- **Parks** are adequate, close to New Richmond
- Fees on new housing for **parks**
- Ready for **solar** experiment
- **Solar** farm being installed, will provide town reimbursement \$\$
- **Solar** panels take up agricultural land
- Love **town hall** size and location
- **Town Hall** adequate
- Appreciate County water testing
- Lots of open space available
- Figure out compost with City
- With population increase projected, full-time clerk may be needed
- Contracting out building permits, etc.

AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES:

Topics to consider: Conservation of ag and natural resources, Willow River corridor, historic preservation, parks and open spaces, surface water, wildlife habitat, shoreland/floodplain areas, stream and river corridors, wetlands, forests

Summary of participant comments for Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources:

- **Willow River** Corridor – parks do well at keeping it clean
- Trees down in **Willow River**
- One mile of **Willow River** has low oxygen – sewer discharge issue
- Great DNR land for **wildlife** habitat – easy to access and well maintained

- US Fish and **Wildlife** collaboration to allow access to 10-Mile Creek Parking
- Preserve farm and **agricultural** lands. Hard to do because we also want development, a fine line – once it's gone, it's gone
- Keep **agricultural** character
- Partnered with **County** on kayak/canoe launch 5 to 6 years ago
- Collaborate with **County** on events – tire round-up and appliance recycle
- Seek funding for natural resource projects
- Un-politicize the DNR
- Solar is a nice background
- Wiring safety concerns – solar
- Turkey farm redevelopment for future housing – concern for riverbank conservation

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Topics to consider: Business/industry retention, inventory of acreage for commercial/industrial development, tax base, desired type of commercial/industrial uses, role of town in promoting business, labor force

Summary of participant comments for Economic Development:

- Limited **labor** opportunities here – travel to Minnesota
- Losing **labor** force to Twin Cities
- 67 miles of road to maintain – not sure if new residential development pays for **cost** of maintenance
- Too **costly** to develop road and utility infrastructure
- Keep new **business** towards New Richmond
- Promote agricultural **business**
- Constrained **commercial** development by county zoning. New Richmond has lots for commercial
- More **commercial**
- Plan roads for **commercial** development
- Keep **commercial** and industrial along Highway #65
- No issue with working out of houses
- If opportunity arises for industry, open for discussion
- Annexation
- Tax base 8% to town
- Broadband installation will improve economy – more home based business possible
- Gas station and storage facilities in commercial zoned center
- Existing good businesses (Cemstone)

LAND USE:

Topics to consider: Rate of growth, locations of commercial/industrial uses, enforcement of land use regulations, residential lot size and density, review zoning map by your table

Summary of participant comments for Land Use:

- Rate of growth a concern – but leveling out (2)
- 2 acre lots = good **lot size** for residential development
- **Lot size** adequate, consider conversation design to preserve open space and less road needed
- Larger **lot sizes** harder to maintain
- Question of what is really considered affordable housing
- Growth = more roads
- More commercial
- Don't let County decide land uses, less reluctant to work with County

- Explore options to prevent annexation or limit New Richmond growth
- Current location of commercial/industrial adequate – keep along Highway #65
- Satisfied with County ordinance administration, too costly for town
- Enforcement items – slow to respond

GENERAL STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Topics to consider: List any strengths (sources of pride, things to preserve) and areas for improvement

Strengths:

- DNR spaces, Willow River, Ten-Mike Creek (2)
- Town Board is an asset (functional, authenticity) (2)
- Town Hall
- Town location
- Great place to live – freedom to do what you like
- Friendly residents and neighbors
- Taverns
- Properties are well maintained
- People take care of things and each other
- Great emergency services
- Area is attractive to families
- Proximity to services
- Shout out to Highway Department
- Recycling/Garbage options

Improvements:

- **County A** is really busy
- **County A** should be wider
- Improve **roads**
- For Town **roads** maintain surfaces/control speed
- Taverns
- Uniform garbage pick-up
- City vs. Town end up being on sides and shouldn't be (more consensus building?)