

# 2030 COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN



**Town of Richfield**

*Adopted on  
July 26, 2023*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Board of Commissioners

- Ian Focht, *Mayor*
- Kevin Almond
- Barry Byrd
- David Harding
- Cynthia Heglar
- Christy NeCaise
- Carolyn Capps



## Planning Board

- David Isenhour
- Selina Blalock
- Norma Trump
- Deanette Russell
- Tanya Smith
- Tyler Gordon
- Jeff Balfrey



**CENTRALINA**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

## Centralina Regional Council

- Luke Lowry, *Regional Planner*
- Elisa Neal, *Regional Planner*

*A special thank you to all members of the public who contributed comments, critiques, and insights through the various public engagement opportunities offered throughout the planning process.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 1. Introduction

a. Purpose .....	1
b. Process .....	1
c. Document Structure .....	2
d. Plan Development Schedule .....	2

## 2. Existing Conditions

a. History .....	3
b. Study Area .....	4
c. Contributing Plans .....	5
d. Demographics .....	6
e. Economy .....	7
f. Housing .....	9
g. Transportation .....	10
h. Community Facilities & Services .....	14
i. Land Use .....	20

## 3. Community Vision & Goals

a. Community Engagement Summary .....	25
b. Survey Results .....	27
c. Vision Statement & Guiding Principles .....	27

## 4. Policy Recommendations

a. Citizen Involvement & Regional Cooperation .....	30
b. Economic Development .....	31
c. Infrastructure & Services .....	31
d. Housing .....	33
e. Transportation & Mobility .....	34
f. Land Use & Community Amenities .....	34

## 5. Future Land Use

a. Future Land Use Categories .....	36
b. Future Land Use Map .....	40

## 6. Plan Implementation

a. Plan Implementation .....	41
------------------------------	----

## 7. Appendix

a. Community Engagement Report .....	44
--------------------------------------	----

## PURPOSE

At the start of 2023, the Town of Richfield began the process to create a Comprehensive Land Use Plan. A comprehensive land use plan serves as a guiding document for communities looking to grow in a managed, intentional way as they move toward the future. Land use plans have several audiences and serve a variety of functions within the community they represent. One primary audience of a community's land use plan is the community itself. Land use plans are developed "by and for" the community and reflect the vision and values of the stakeholders present in the Town at the time the plan was put together. Land use plans are also frequently used and referenced by Town Staff, who are primarily responsible for pursuing implementation of the policy recommendations within the plan. Perhaps most importantly, the land use plan also serves as a resource for Town elected and appointed officials, especially those who make decisions related to land use or zoning. Ultimately, a comprehensive land use plan serves to bring various community stakeholders together to approach future development and enact intentional growth from a united perspective.

The Town did not have a land use plan prior to this process, making this the first ever land use plan for the community. The decision to update the plan was necessitated by changes to Chapter 160D (the North Carolina General Statutes which authorize development regulation), which dictated that all towns with zoning ordinances needed an up-to-date comprehensive plan by July 1, 2022 or July 1, 2023 for communities under 1500 population. In addition, however, this plan comes at a pivotal moment. The greater Charlotte region, including Stanly County, has experienced significant growth over the past decades. Many municipalities within Stanly County are currently growing or are expected to face development pressures over the coming years. This plan offered the Town an opportunity to establish a forward-thinking vision and strategy for the future. Going forward, this plan will serve as the primary guiding framework for how Richfield will manage development and continue to provide a high quality-of-life to its citizens.

## PROCESS

The development of the land use plan began in January 2023 and concluded with the Richfield Board of Commissioners' adoption of the plan in June 2023. Planning activities were facilitated by the project consultants (Centralina Regional Council) and were guided by town staff. Community members were involved in the process through several community engagement opportunities, including a survey, open house, and public comment period for the draft plan. Moving forward, the plan will be referenced by the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners as they consider development decisions, as well as by town staff to help guide implementation activities.

## DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

The structure of this plan document allows the reader to learn about the current trends and characteristics of the Town of Richfield before exploring specific options and strategies to achieve desired growth outcomes. Section 2 reviews Existing Conditions in Richfield, including the town’s history, demographic trends, local economy, housing, transportation, facilities & services, and land use. Section 3 provides an overview of the community engagement process and introduces the plan’s vision statement and guiding principles. Section 4 provides policy recommendations, and Section 5 describes the land use types included in the Future Land Use Map.

## PLAN DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

Task	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
<b>Project Initiation / Data Gathering</b>	→					
<b>Mapping &amp; Analysis</b>		→				
<i>Existing Conditions Assessment</i>		→				
<i>Mapping &amp; Analysis</i>		→				
<b>Public Engagement &amp; Visioning</b>			→			
<i>Community Survey</i>			→			
<i>Draft Vision &amp; Guiding Principles</i>				→		
<b>Plan Development</b>			→	→		
<i>Draft Policy Recommendations</i>			→	→		
<i>Draft Future Land Use Map</i>			→	→		
<i>Draft Plan Narrative</i>			→	→		
<i>Community Open House</i>					★	
<b>Plan Review</b>					→	
<i>Draft Plan Public Comment Period</i>					→	
<b>Plan Adoption</b>						★



= Public Engagement Opportunities

## HISTORY

The town of Richfield began as a settlement of German immigrants in the late 1800's known for the Ritchie family that founded it. Members of the Ritchie family established a sawmill, a roller mill, and a cotton gin. The town was chartered in the 1890's as Ritchie's Mill. Cicero Ritchie laid out the streets, which ran one half mile from the square in each direction. On September 30, 1893 Postmaster George Ritchie opened the new post office and the town was renamed Richfield.

The town charter was allowed to lapse in 1920. It was reinstated under the direction of Mayor J. T. Ford in 1941. At that time, the town included grocery stores, churches, gas stations, a train depot, a high school with a gymnasium, a flour mill, a hardware store where "you could buy a good rifle" and a livery stable. Many local buildings were destroyed by fire over the early years, so in 1956 the community purchased it's first fire truck.

The vision for the Richfield Community Park began in March 1971 when Homes by Fisher, Inc. offered a \$10,000 matching gift to the community for the purpose of creating a park. In 1972 one hundred acres of land was purchased and Park Consultant Professor Charles Stott was employed to plan the park. The center piece of the park is an 18 acre lake on Curly Tail Creek stocked with fish. A significant amount of the money, labor and supplies for the park were donated by local citizens and businesses.

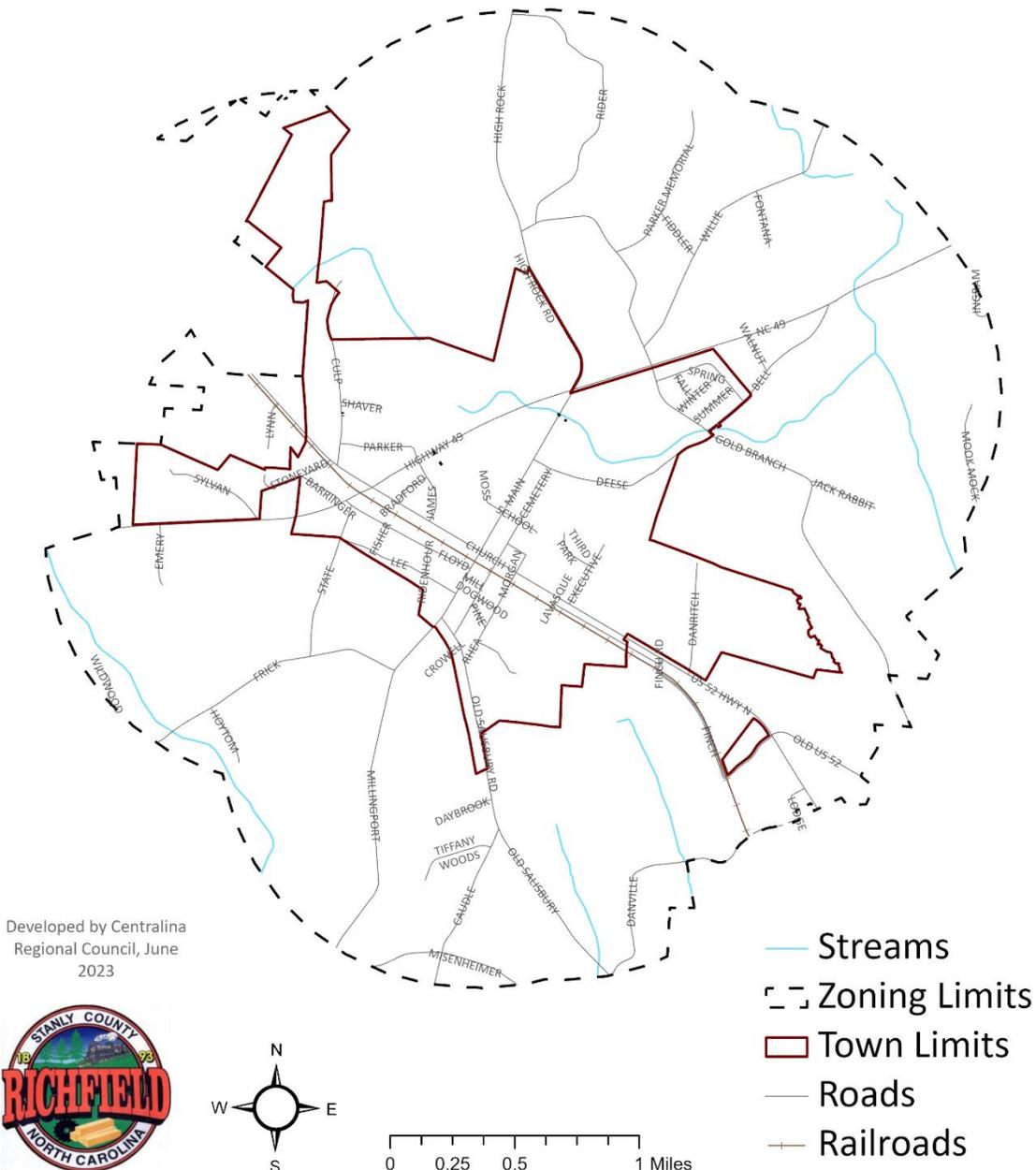
Richfield celebrated it's first centennial in September of 1993. Today, the town has retained much of its small-town charm and rich historical legacy. This plan seeks to honor this history while addressing the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow.



## STUDY AREA

This plan will focus primarily on the town limits and the zoning limits, or the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), of the Town of Richfield. The town limits are the official municipal boundaries where the Town has maximum authority. The ETJ is land outside of the municipal boundaries where the town exercises some land use regulatory powers. The plan will also examine the influences of surrounding municipalities and Stanly County, although these areas are not within the study area.

## Study Area



## CONTRIBUTING PLANS

While this comprehensive plan will be the primary guiding document for the Town of Richfield, several other plans were consulted in the development process and will continue to play an important role for the town moving forward. Those plans are as follows:

### *Town of Richfield*

- Town of Richfield Zoning Ordinance & Zoning Map (current)
- North Stanly, NC Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan (2018)

### *Stanly County*

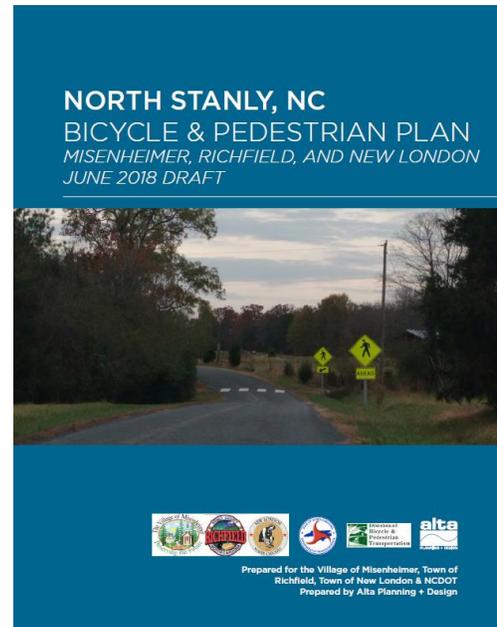
- Stanly County Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2022)
- Master Recreation Plan (2014)
- Pfeiffer-North Stanly Water District (2008)

### *NCDOT & Rocky River RPO*

- Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) for Stanly County

### *Other*

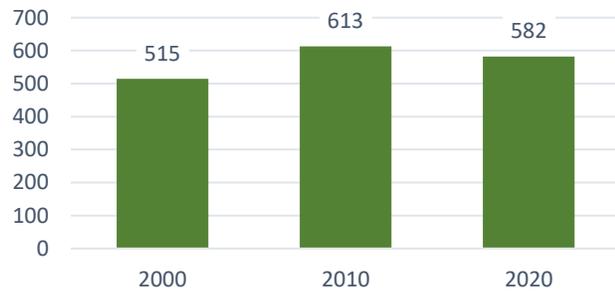
- CONNECT Beyond: A Regional Mobility Initiative



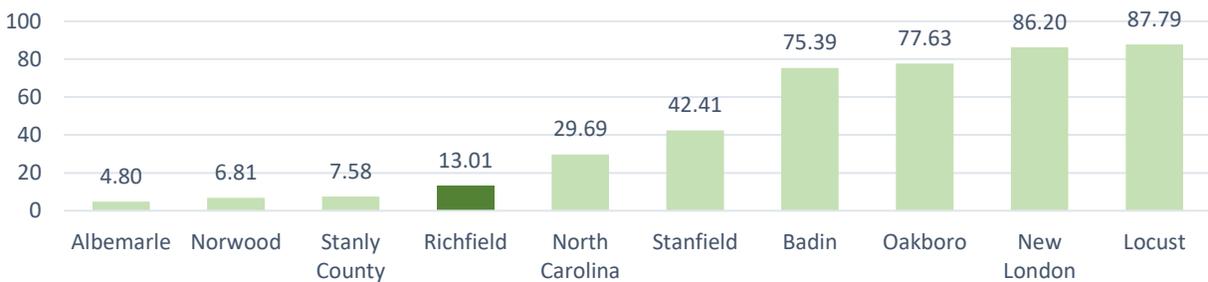
## DEMOGRAPHICS

The Town of Richfield has seen moderate population growth over the last 20 years. Most growth occurred from 2000 to 2010; population slightly decreased from 2010 to 2020. Over this period, Richfield has grown more quickly than Stanly County and more slowly than North Carolina. While the growth has been quicker than some municipalities in Stanly County, it is significantly slower than most.

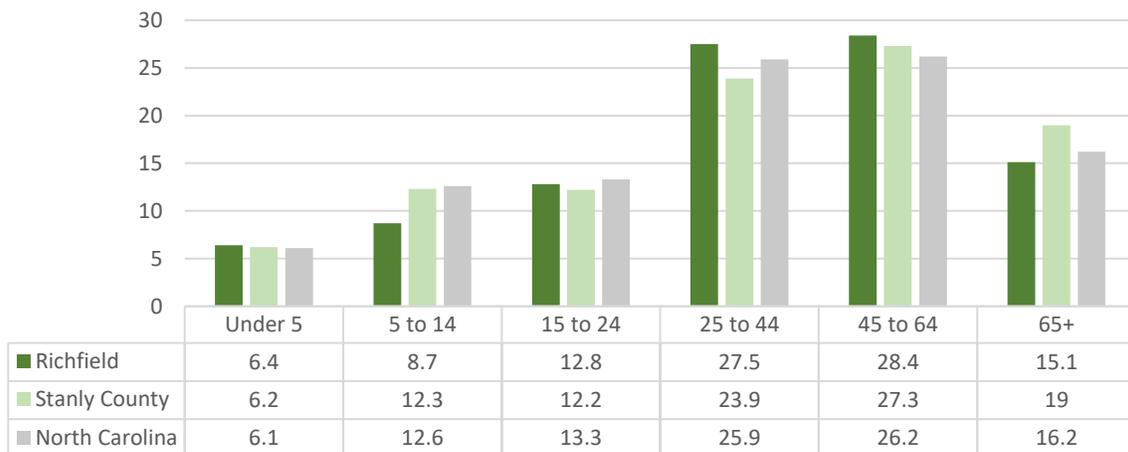
Population Growth



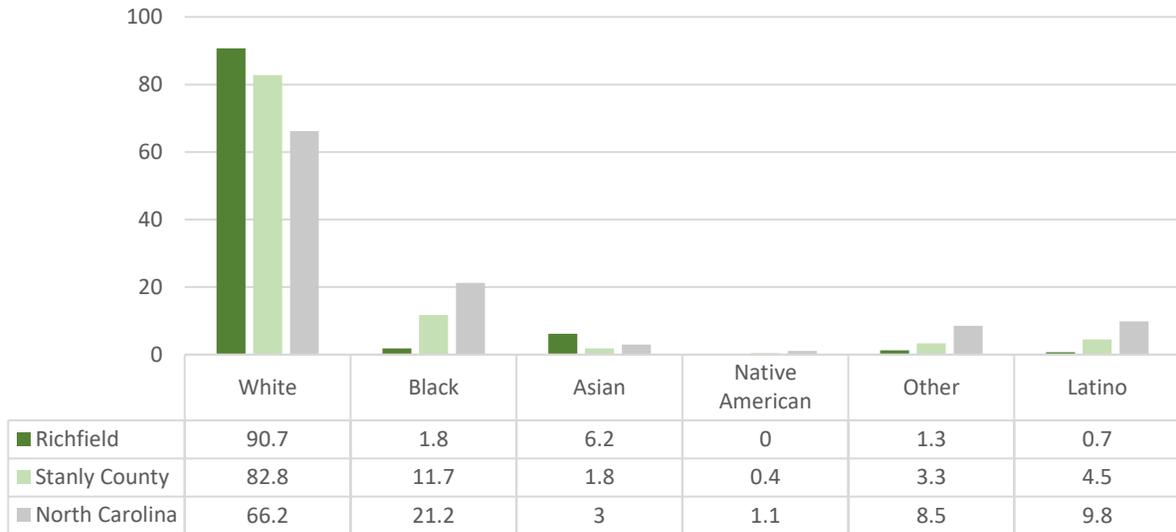
Population change, 2000 - 2020 (%)



The town has a median age of 31.8 years, which is over ten years younger than Stanly County's median age of 41.9 years and over seven years younger than North Carolina's median age of 39 years. In addition, the town has a smaller proportion of older adults (over 65 years) than the county or the state, and the town has a smaller proportion of children (under 18 years) than the county or the state.



Most of Richfield’s population is white (90.7%), which is higher than Stanly County (82.8%) or North Carolina (66.2%). Richfield’s minority population is predominantly Asian (6.2%), followed by Black (1.8%) and other races (1.3%). The town also has a smaller proportion of Latino residents than either the county or the state.



## ECONOMY

The Town of Richfield has a healthy economy which is supported by several larger employers located with the town limits such as Clayton Homes, Schult Manufacturing, BRS Inc., and others. These companies have long been strong sources of employment for residents of Richfield and Stanly County at-large. Many residents also work for employers outside of Richfield, in both Stanly County and the greater Charlotte region.

According to Census Data, the top five industries for residents are as follows:

1. Education, Healthcare (23.4%)
2. Manufacturing (20.1%)
3. Retail trade (19.0%)
4. Finance, Real Estate (11.1%)
5. Public Administration (10.0%)



The economic well-being and stability of the town is also strengthened by the residents who live in Richfield. The unemployment rate of the Town is only 4.0%, which is lower than either Stanly County or the state. Conversely, the labor force participation rate (i.e., the share of people in the workforce), is higher than the county or the state. The share of residents who have a high school degree or more education is higher than both the county and the state. A higher share of residents also have a Bachelor’s degree than in Stanly County, although the share is lower than the state.

These economic strengths are reflected in the higher-than-average median household income in the town -- \$69,268, compared to \$56,462 and \$60,516 for the county and state, respectively. In addition, the poverty rate is also significantly lower in Richfield (5.2%) than in the county (13.3%) or the state (13.7%). Overall, the town and all of its citizens are positioned well economically; future policies, including the recommendations of this plan, will seek to strengthen the town’s economy while also increasing the economic well-being of all citizens.

### ECONOMIC QUICK FACTS

#### Unemployment Rate

Richfield: 4.0%  
*Stanly County: 4.7%*  
*North Carolina: 5.3%*

#### Labor Force Participation

Richfield: 65.3%  
*Stanly County: 59.3%*  
*North Carolina: 62.6%*

#### High School Degree or more

Richfield: 91.9%  
*Stanly County: 86.1%*  
*North Carolina: 89.0%*

#### Bachelors Degree or more

Richfield: 23.6%  
*Stanly County: 17.9%*  
*North Carolina: 33.0%*

#### Median Household Income

Richfield: \$69,268  
*Stanly County: \$56,462*  
*North Carolina: \$60,516*

#### Poverty Rate

Richfield: 5.2%  
*Stanly County: 13.3%*  
*North Carolina: 13.7%*

## HOUSING

### *Occupancy & Tenure*

The Town has 278 total households, and 320 housing units. The occupancy rate (86.9%) is close to that of the county and the state. Housing units in the Town are predominantly owner-occupied, but over one-fifth of residents live in renter-occupied units (21.9%). The renter-occupied rate is lower than the county (25.7%) and significantly lower than the state (34.1%).

### *Household Type & Age*

On average, the household size in Richfield is 3.13 persons, which is significantly higher than the county (2.5 persons) or the state (2.5 persons). One contributing factor may be the types of housing units which are available in the Town. 1-unit housing units (i.e. single-family homes) make up 90.3% percent of all housing in the Town. Only 0.6% of housing has 2 to 20 units, and the rest of the housing is comprised of mobile homes, RV's, or other housing types. The proportion of single-family housing is much higher than in the county or the state, where the share is 80.0% and 69.8%, respectively.

The median year of construction for housing in Richfield (1973) is close to the median age for the county (1974) but lower than the state (1989). Most of the housing (66.0%) was built prior to 1990. Only 2.8% of the available housing was constructed in 2010 through present, which is less than the county (5.7%) and the state (10.7%).

### *Housing Value & Cost*

The median value for a house in Richfield is \$254,700, which is higher than both the county (\$161,900) and the state (\$197,500). However, residents also pay more for their housing; monthly housing costs with a mortgage are around \$1605 and without a mortgage are \$500, which is more than the county or the state. Renters pay

### Housing Quick Facts

Number of households: **278**

Number of housing units: **320**

Occupancy rates

- Occupied: **86.9%**
- Vacant: **13.1%**

Tenure

- Owner-occupied: **78.1%**
- Renter-occupied: **21.9%**

Average household size: **3.13 persons**

Types of units

- 1-unit: **90.3%**
- 2 to 20+ units: **0.6%**
- Mobile home, other: **9.1%**

Median year built: **1973**

Year built:

- 1959 or earlier: **21.0%**
- 1960 – 1989: **45.0 %**
- 1990 – 2009: **31.2 %**
- 2010 – present: **2.8 %**

Median house value: **\$254,700**

Median housing costs

- Mortgage: **\$1605**
- No mortgage: **\$500**

Median rent: **\$931**

Cost burden (30% or more of income on housing)

- Mortgage: **41.6%**
- No mortgage: **17.6%**
- Renter: **46.2%**

significantly more than the county, but less than the state. The median monthly rent is \$931 for Richfield, \$764 for the county, and \$988 for the state. This higher rental cost may be due to the rental options being limited to single-family homes.

Cost burden occurs when someone pays more than 30% of their gross income on housing alone. In Richfield, both homeowners and renters are significantly more cost-burdened than the county or the state. In Richfield, 41.6% of homeowners with mortgages are cost-burdened; 17.6% of homeowners without a mortgage are cost burdened. 46.2% of renters are also cost burdened. For homeowners with mortgages and renters, most of the cost-burdened residents are paying between 30 and 35 percent of their income on housing; so, while a significant amount of residents are cost-burdened, a marginal increase in housing affordability would have a dramatic increase on alleviating cost burden.

## TRANSPORTATION

### *Street Network*

The Town of Richfield has several major roads within its planning area. Highways US-52 and NC-49, state owned and operated highways, are the main thoroughfares through town. The intersection of US-52 and NC-49 is where most commercial and institutional development is located, including Town Hall. Industrial development is located primarily along US-52. These routes are crucial for local and regional connectivity. In addition, these roads have regional and local significance to travel patterns.

Other important state owned and operated roads include: N Main St; S Main St; High Rock Rd; Old Salisbury Rd; and Millingport Rd. N Main St and S Main St are important anchors for development, particularly at the intersection with US-52; major industrial development and other facilities, including Richfield Elementary, are located here.

The rest of the street network is comprised of locally owned and operated streets.

### Transportation Quick Facts

#### Means of transportation to work

- Car, drove alone: **94.3%**
- Car, carpooled: **4.4%**
- Public transportation: **0.0%**
- Walked: **0.4%**
- Other means: **0.9%**
- Worked from home: **0.0%**

#### Commute time: **23.6 minutes**

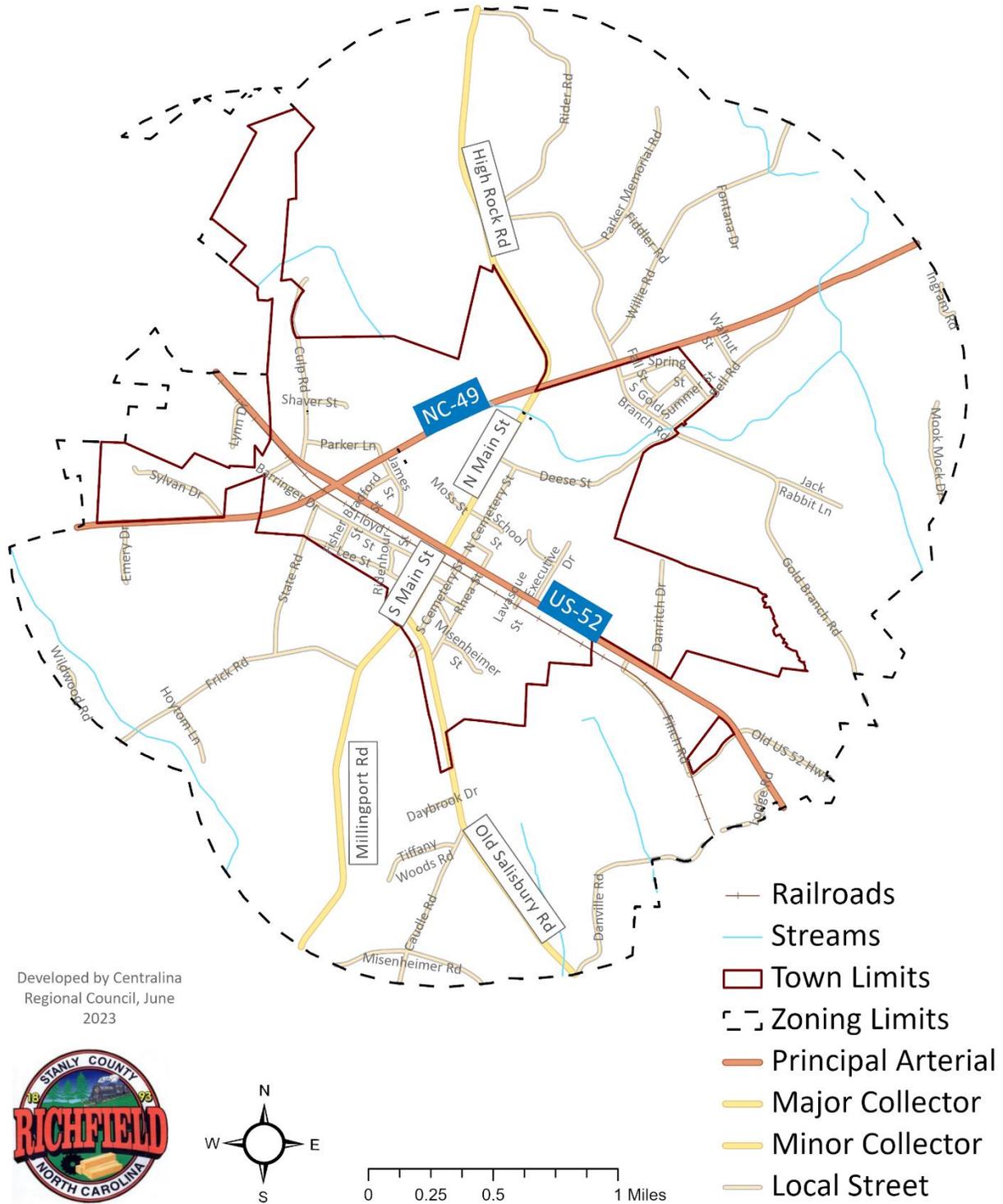
#### Car ownership by household

- Zero cars: **0.0%**
- One car: **7.1%**
- Two or more cars: **92.9%**

#### Transportation costs as a percentage of income<sup>1</sup>: **31%**

<sup>1</sup> H + T Index

# Right Of Way (ROW) Classification





### ***Pedestrian & Bicycle Connections***

Currently, there is limited sidewalk infrastructure in the Town of Richfield. The most extensive section of sidewalk is along US-52, between NC-49 and Rhea St. There are also small segments of sidewalk along S Main St, N Main St, S Cemetery Rd, and Rhea Rd. Finally, there is a small segment along NC-49 on the southeast side of the Food Lion shopping center. All other road segments, both locally owned and state-owned, do not have sidewalk infrastructure. These sidewalk segments provide critical access to important amenities in Richfield, including Richfield Elementary School. However, there are several gaps in the sidewalk network, which means that many key destinations are not safely accessible for pedestrians. In particular, the lack of sidewalks along NC-49 and the section of US-52 towards Misenheimer limits access to Pfeiffer University, Richfield Park, The Falcon Trail, and multiple business and residences within a one-mile radius of the NC-49 / US-52 intersection.

There are several designated bicycle facilities in the Richfield town limits and ETJ. The Falcon Trail is a natural surface trail which extends from Misenheimer to Richfield Park. Several roads – N Main St, S Main St, High Rock Rd, Old Salisbury Rd, Millingport Rd, and Frick Rd—are designated Stanly County Bike Routes. Two roads—Gold Branch Rd and Rider Rd—are also part of the Central Park Bike Route. However, none of these roads have on-street bicycle markings or protected bicycle infrastructure. The 2018 North Stanly Bicycle & Pedestrian plan does note that some lower-volume, lower speed residential streets can be used by bicyclists, but that outside of this “island” of residential streets, bicyclists are exposed to higher speeds and traffic volumes. US-52 and NC-49 in particular are dangerous for bicyclists.

The 2018 North Stanly Pedestrian & Bike Plan identifies The Falcon Trail as a priority project for extension. The next segment of the trail would extend from Richfield Park to New London, and the trailhead would possibly be at New London Memorial Park. The Falcon Trail extension has also been adopted as a priority trail by the Carolina Thread Trail organization, and the Friends of North Stanly Trails and Parks organization is also pursuing this extension. In addition, the Pedestrian & Bike Plan identified other projects, policies, and programs to increase pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity and safety in the Town of Richfield.

### ***Freight & Other Mobility***

With multiple manufacturing businesses located in Richfield, freight is an important component of the town’s transportation system. Norfolk Southern has a rail line which goes through Richfield’s town limits, approximately parallel to U.S. 52; this allows the businesses in town to receive and ship supplies and products. This rail line connects to nearby municipalities including Misenheimer, New London, and Albemarle, and it also connects Richfield to the regional rail network at-large. U.S. 52 and NC-49 are also an important corridors for freight via trucking.

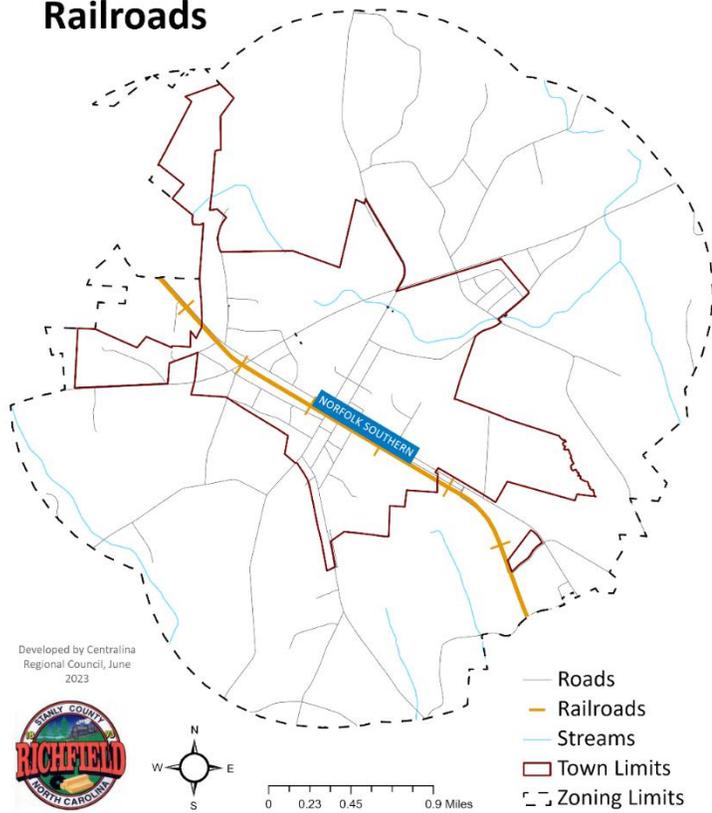
Richfield does not have fixed-route transit services. Stanly County operates a demand-response transit service (SCUSA) which provides community transportation services responsive to the current and changing needs of Stanly County residents. Through SCUSA, residents can request

trips to and from agencies, employment sites, business center, community college, Senior Center, health care, and other locations. Services are provided utilizing vans and buses through subscription and demand response routes. More information can be found on the [Stanly County website](#).

CONNECT Beyond, the Regional Mobility Plan for the greater Charlotte metropolitan region, was adopted in October 2021 and proposed a suite of recommendations for improving mobility through public transportation investments, active transportation infrastructure enhancements and other mobility investments throughout the region. The plan identifies US-52 and NC-49

as two of the twenty-four (24) “Emerging Mobility Corridors”, which are good candidates for investments that improve transportation mobility and expand the surrounding area’s public transportation base. While fixed-route public transportation infrastructure may not be available in Richfield today, increasing population growth and commuting patterns may contribute to increased traffic congestion throughout the community, and future public transportation investments could improve local connectivity, accessibility, and walkability while also reducing traffic congestion in Richfield. To learn more about CONNECT Beyond, visit [the Plan website](#).

## Railroads

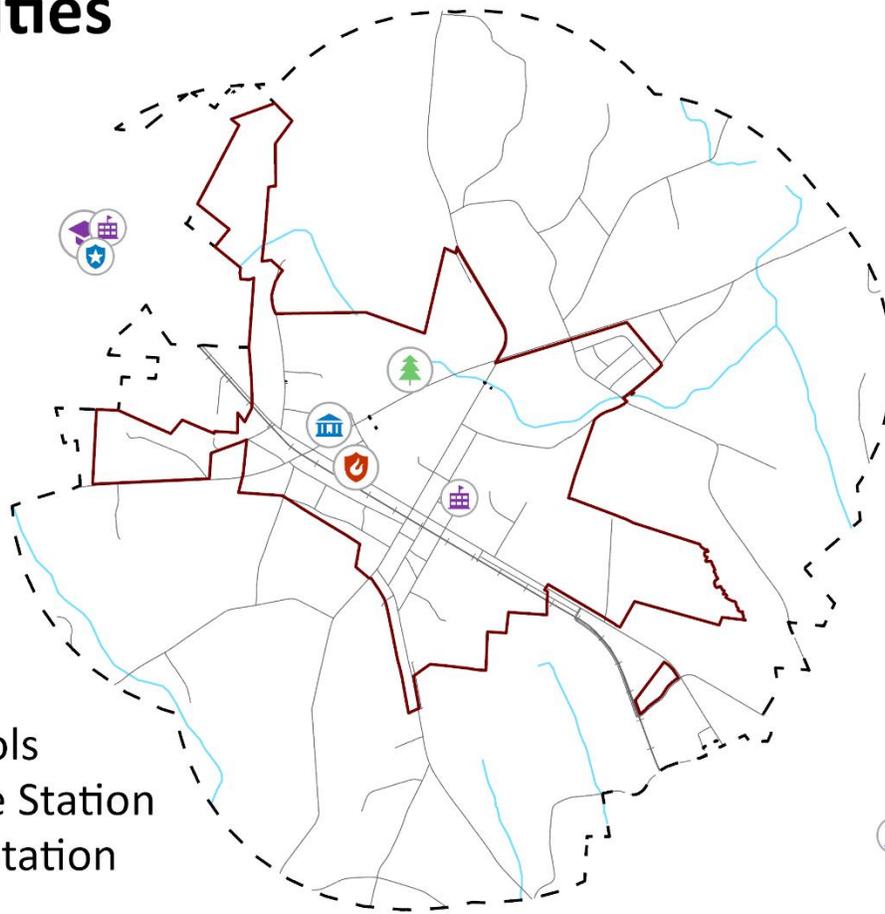


## COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

### *Parks & Recreation*

Richfield Park is the main park in the Town of Richfield. The park is 102 acres and is heavily wooded throughout. The signature feature of the park is the lake which lies in the center, fed by Curl Tail Creek. A swinging bridge connects both sides of the lake to an island in the middle, allowing visitors to traverse the lake. Many visitors also fish in the lake. The park has several

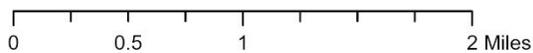
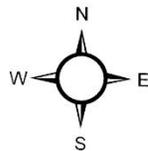
# Community Facilities



-  Schools
-  Police Station
-  Fire Station
-  EMS
-  Park
-  University
-  Town Hall

-  Roads
-  Railroads
-  Streams
-  Town Limits
-  Zoning Limits

Developed by Centralina  
Regional Council, June  
2023



recreational amenities including an eighteen-hole disc golf course, baseball fields, softball fields, and trails (which are used for local cross-country meets). The signature trail is The Falcon Trail, which is a 2.72-mile natural surface trail. It connects to Pfeiffer University in Misenheimer, and the trail land and easement has been secured to extend the trail from Richfield Park towards New London. In addition, the town was gifted 65-acres of land by the Tyson family with the stipulation that the future use be restricted to parks. While there are no immediate plans to turn it into a park, the land is a beautiful property with a pond. There are plans for a future

section of the Carolina Thread Trail to run through this land.



### ***Education***

Currently, there is one school located in the Town of Richfield—Richfield Elementary School. The school is located centrally within the town limits near the intersection of US-52 and N/S Main St. North Stanly Middle School and North Stanly High School are not within the town limits or ETJ but are located nearby. Pfeiffer University, a 4-year university with over one-thousand enrolled students, is located approximately one-mile away in Misenheimer along US-52. The Falcon Trail also connects Pfeiffer University’s campus to Richfield Park.

### ***Town Government***

The Town of Richfield is chartered by the North Carolina General Assembly to operate with a

mayor-council (Board of Commissioners) form of government. The mayor-council form of government is the original form of general-purpose local government in the United States and is widely used among North Carolina small towns with less than 2,500 residents. The Town Board determines service levels, adopts an annual budget, adopts municipal ordinances (local rules), sets policy and is the policy-making body for the Town. The primary advantage of the mayor-council form of government is that it brings government closer to the voters. The people who have the responsibility of not only formulating town policy but also actually operating the

local government are directly elected by the citizens. The responsibility of decision-making is divided among and shared by all members of the town board, making it administration by committee.

The Town of Richfield employs a Town Administrator who is responsible for providing customer service to town residents, maintaining required records, preparing town newsletters, billing and collection of utility accounts, and providing general administrative support to all town boards and committees. Additional boards include the Board of Adjustment, which is an appointed citizen board that primarily considers appeals, variances, and requests for interpretation of the ordinances; and the Planning Board, which is an appointed citizen board which advises the Board of Commissioners on decisions including zoning and development approvals.

### ***Fire & Police***

The Town of Richfield's fire services are currently provided through a contract with the Richfield-Misenheimer Volunteer Fire Department. The Richfield-Misenheimer Fire Department provides emergency services to a primary response district of approximately thirty-three square miles that includes the Town of Richfield, the Village of Misenheimer, and other areas within Stanly, Cabarrus and Rowan Counties. The department was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in Dec. 1955 with the combined efforts of community groups, businesses and individuals that saw the need for a local community fire department.

Over the years the department has strived to provide the best service possible in a proactive way to those within the community. Currently the department operates out of one station located on west Church Street in Richfield with around thirty volunteers and a paid part time staff to help cover incident response during the weekdays while the volunteers are working their full-time jobs. The department has several emergency vehicles in the fleet, including:

- Squad 22: 2011 F-250 Ford pickup, Quick Response Unit, Service/Utility truck, Command unit
- Brush 226: 1999 Ford F-350, Primary First Responder unit, Quick Response unit, Brush unit
- Engine 221: 2013 E-One Pumper
- Engine 222: 2001 Central States Pumper
- Tanker 224: 1991 KME Pumper/Tanker
- Tanker 225: 2008 Peirce, 2000 gallon Tanker



In addition to Emergency and non-emergency response services, the department is also active in fire prevention and general safety programs for area schools, day care facilities and community groups. The department utilizes a fire safety house for community events when possible to provide additional fire safety information to the community as a whole during such events.

The Town of Richfield’s police services are currently provided through a contract with Stanly County Sherriff’s Office. The Sheriff’s Office operates out of a satellite location located in the neighboring Town of New London.

### ***Public Works***

The Town contracts for the maintenance and resurfacing of Town streets. Funds for the maintenance of public streets are appropriated as part of the annual budget; the source of these funds includes General Fund Accounts and funds from the Powell Bill received from the state.

Solid waste services are provided to Town residents through a contract with a waste management service. Garbage can be picked-up weekly by placing garbage at the curbside; recycling can be picked-up every other week by placing recycling bins at the curbside. Specific scheduling information is available on the Town website.

### ***Infrastructure & Services***

The Pfeiffer-North Stanly Water Association (PNSWA) provides water to residents and businesses located in Richfield. The PNSWA purchases all their water from the City of Albemarle. When the Pfeiffer-North Stanly Water Association was created, the supply of water was provided from within Albemarle city limits, but can now be supplied directly from the Tuckertown water plant located northeast of Richfield along the Tuckertown Reservoir. The City of Albemarle has not had any difficulties supplying water to its customers in recent years.

The sewer system in the Town of Richfield is provided by Stanly County Utilities Services department. All residents of Richfield who have access to the sewer system are connected. Sewer system access is limited outside of the town limits and within the ETJ.

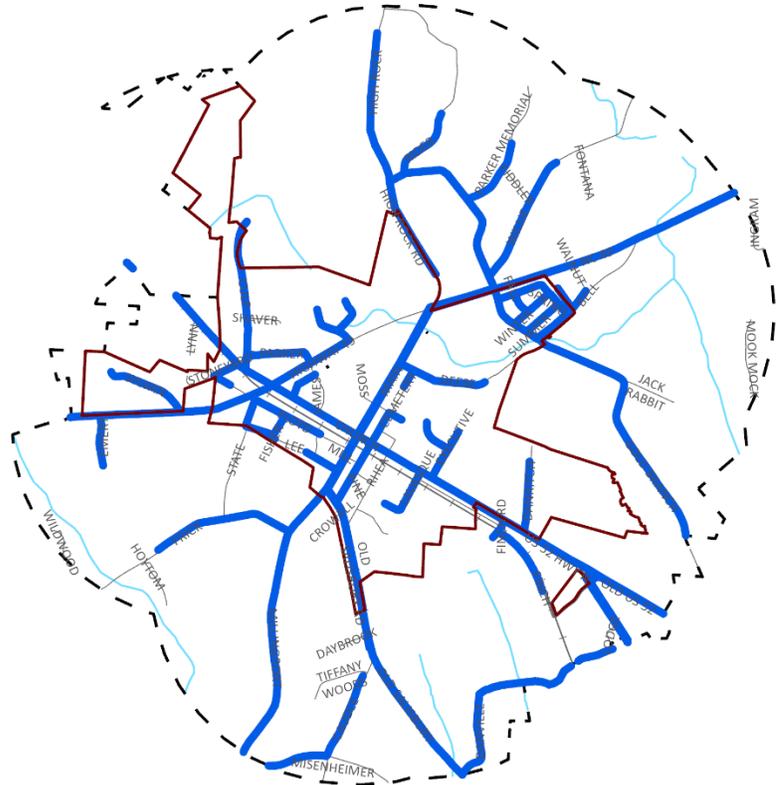
### ***Cultural Resources***

The Town of Richfield’s main civic facility is the Town Hall. In addition, Richfield Park serves as a community gathering space and has been the location of designated community events. The Town has one building—the Richfield Milling Co. facility—which has been added to the National Register of Historic Places.



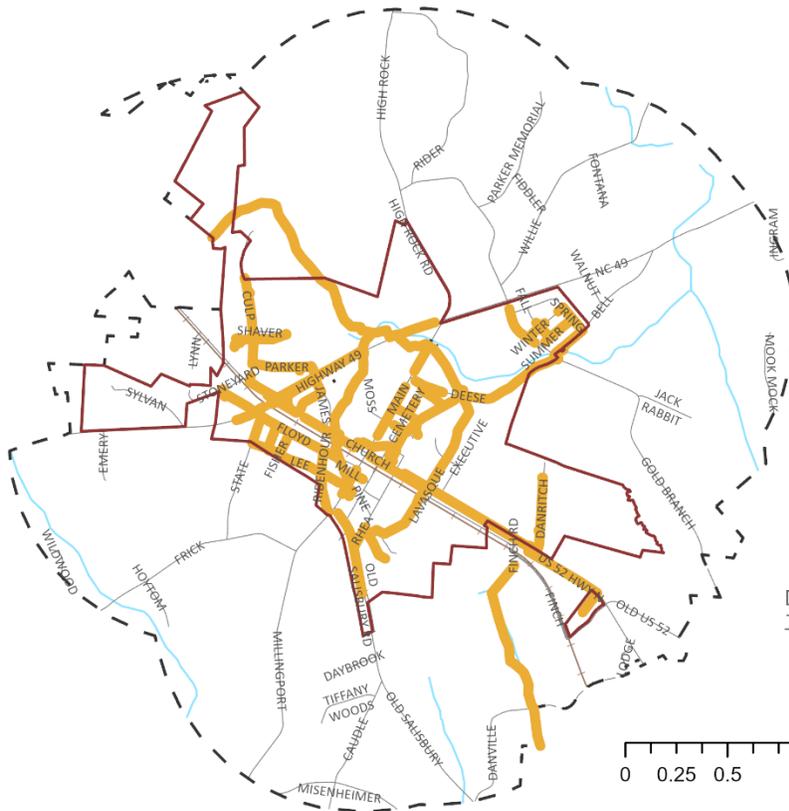
# Water Lines

- Water Lines
- Town Limits
- Zoning Limits
- Railroads
- Roads
- Streams

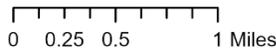
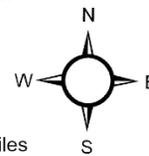


# Sewer Lines

- Sewer Lines
- Town Limits
- Zoning Limits
- Roads
- Railroads
- Streams



Developed by Centralina Regional Council, June 2023



## Land Use

### Zoning

Zoning is essentially a means of insuring that the land uses of a community are properly situated in relation to one another, providing adequate space for each type of development. It allows the control of development density in each area so that property can be adequately serviced by such governmental facilities as the street, school, fire, police, recreation, and utility systems. This directs new growth into appropriate areas and protects existing property by requiring that development afford adequate light, air and privacy for persons living and working within the community. Zoning is probably the single most commonly used legal device available for implementing the land development plan of a community.

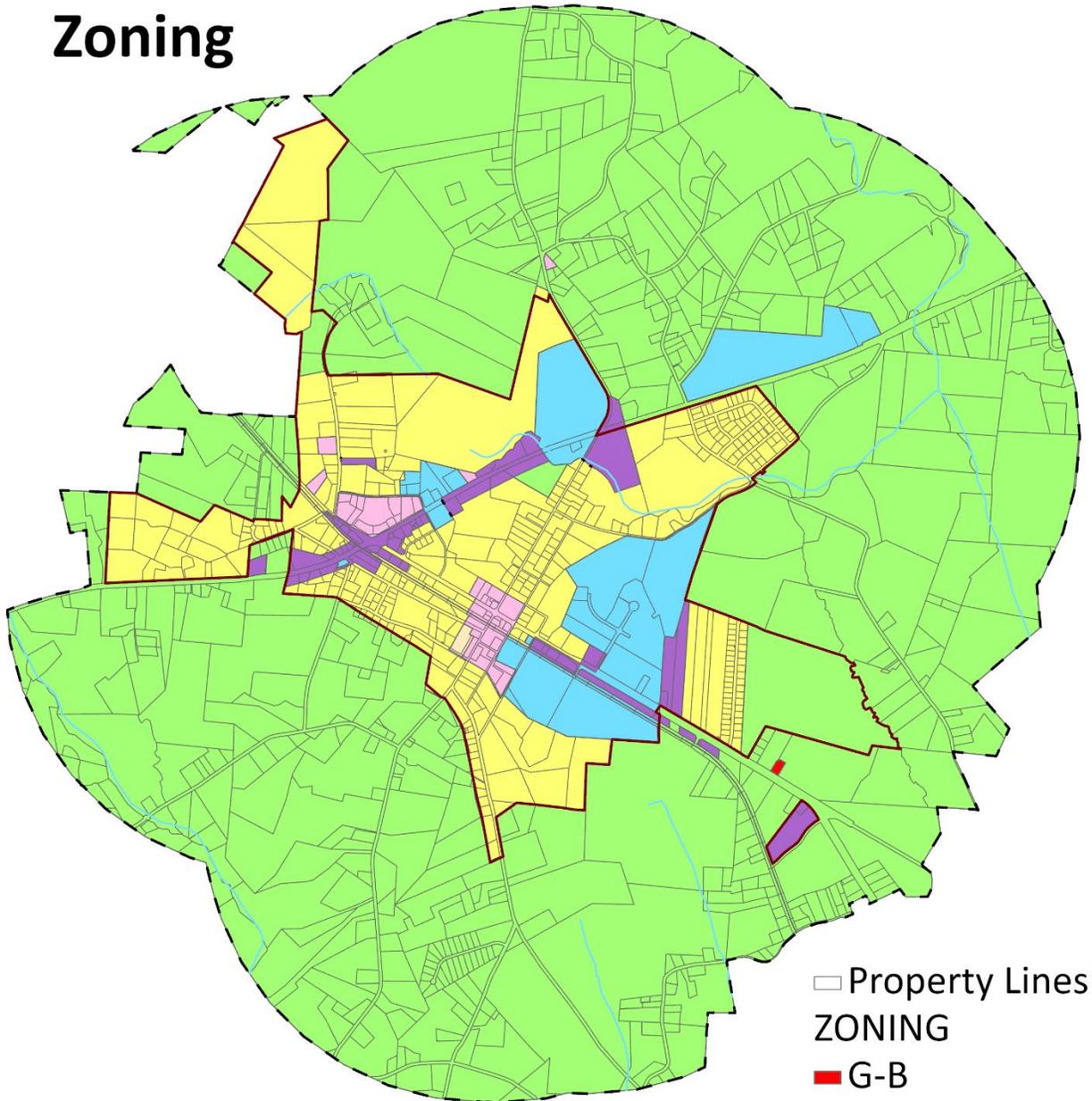
Currently, the Town of Richfield has twelve (12) zoning districts. Currently, seven of the twelve zoning districts are in use.

District	District Name	Description
<b>RA &amp; RA-CD</b>	Residential-Agricultural District	Encourages the continuance of agricultural uses as well as to ensure that residential development not having access to public water supplies and instead dependent upon septic tanks for sewage disposal will occur at a sufficiently low density to provide a healthy environment.
<b>R-20 &amp; R-20-CD</b>	Single-family Residential District	Medium density district intended to ensure opportunity for primarily residential development, protected from disruptive commercial or agricultural influences; and to insure that development not having access to public water supplies or public sewage disposal will occur at sufficiently low densities to provide a healthful environment.
<b>R-10 &amp; R-10-CD</b>	Single-family Residential District	Primarily a medium density district intended to accommodate single-family residences and private and public community uses with access to public water and sewer.
<b>R-8 &amp; R-8-CD</b>	Multi-family Residential District	High density mixed-use district in which the primary use of land is for single-family, two family, and multi-family residences with access to public water and sewer. This district is intended to accommodate persons desiring smaller residences and multi-family structures in relatively high-density neighborhoods.
<b>NB &amp; NB-CD</b>	Neighborhood Business District	Intended to provide for the retailing of goods and services for convenience to nearby residential neighborhoods in such a way as to protect abutting areas from blighting influences.
<b>CB &amp; CB-CD</b>	Central Business District	Encourages the creation of a traditional town center within Richfield. A broad array of uses is expected in a pattern

		which integrates shops, restaurants, services, workplaces, civic uses, educational and religious facilities, and higher density housing in a compact, pedestrian-oriented environment. The district anchors the surrounding residential neighborhoods while also serving the broader community. The district is intended to accommodate a higher overall intensity of development required to support a vital downtown core.
<b>HB &amp; HB-CD</b>	Highway Business District	Commercial district designed to serve the special needs of the traveling public, provide space for indoor and outdoor recreation and other limited commercial activities requiring large lots. This district is located along portions of major highways traversing the town in such a way to prevent spot or strip zones and resultant disruption to traffic patterns and residential areas along the highways.
<b>GB &amp; GB-CD</b>	General Business District	Generally located on the fringe of highways leading out of central business areas. It serves to permit the dispensing of retail goods and services to the community and to provide space for wholesaling and warehousing activities.
<b>M-1 &amp; M-1-CD</b>	Light Manufacturing District	Designed to accommodate industries and warehousing operations which can be operated in a relatively clean and quiet manner and which will not be obnoxious to adjacent residential and business districts.
<b>SEPG</b>	Solar Energy Power Generation Systems	Designed to accommodate various forms and related facilities within the town in order to provide an adequate level of service to its customers while protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the town citizens.
<b>RMH</b>	Residential Manufactured Home	Medium density district intended to ensure opportunity for primarily residential development, protected from disruptive commercial or agricultural influences; and to insure that development not having access to public water supplies or public sewage disposal will occur at sufficiently low densities to provide a healthful environment.
<b>WS</b>	Watershed Overlay	Protects water quality by setting additional standards for development and by incorporating site specific review procedures.

In addition to zoning, the Subdivision Ordinance has a significant impact on development. It provides standards for splitting a piece of property into more pieces and ensures that suitable infrastructure (such as water, waste disposal, and streets) is provided. The current subdivision ordinance was adopted in 1999.

# Zoning

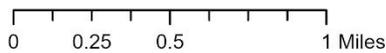
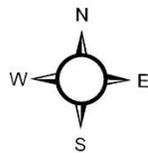


Property Lines  
ZONING

- G-B
- H-B
- M-1
- N-B
- R-10
- R-20
- R-A

- Railroads
- Streams
- Town Limits
- Zoning Limits

Developed by Centralina  
Regional Council, June  
2023



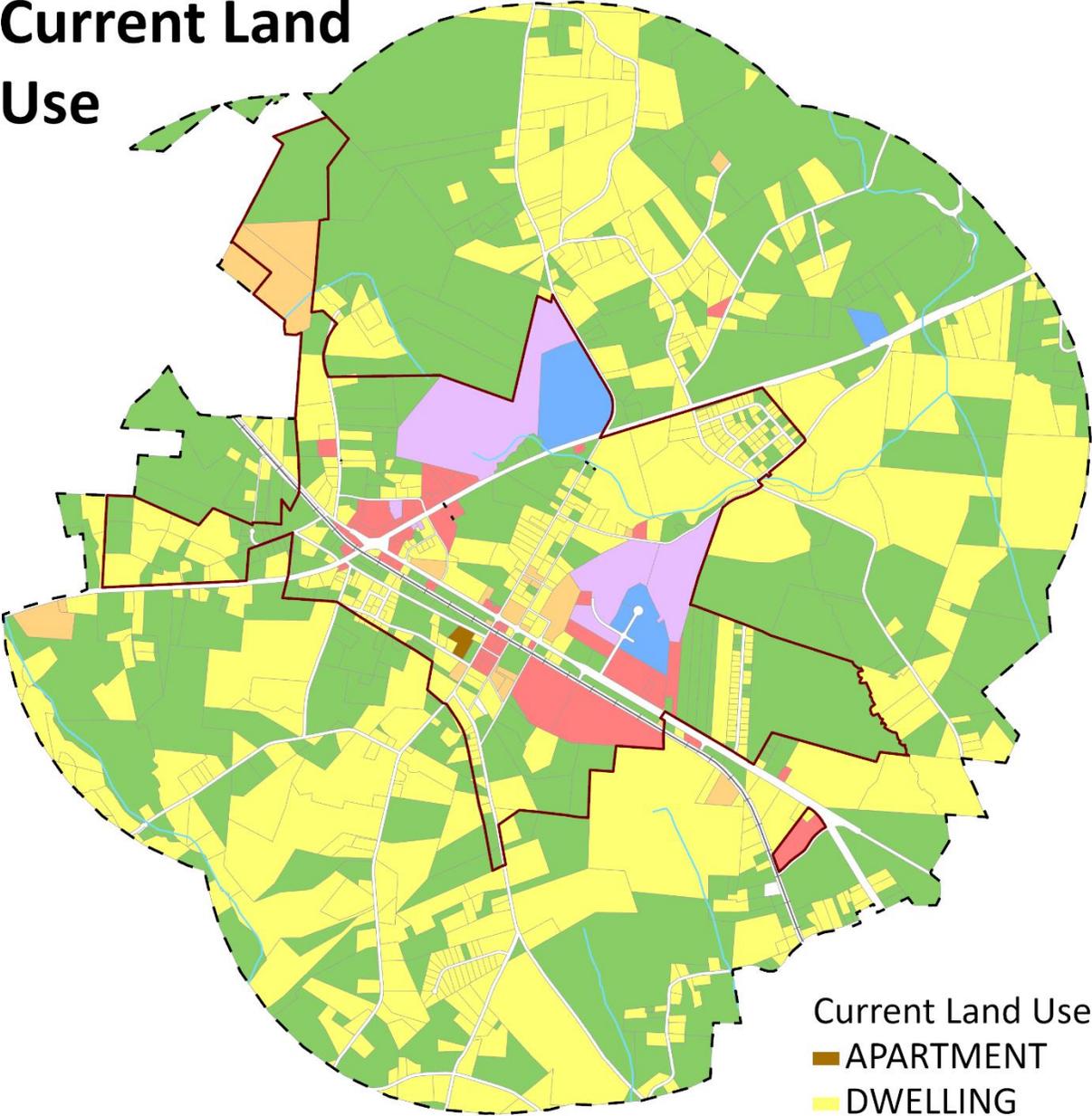
### ***Existing Land Uses***

Zoning and subdivision regulations determine the allowed uses for land within the town, which is distinct from how land is currently being used today. For example, while some land may fall within the R-10 Residential District, it may be undeveloped. Thus, zoning and subdivision regulations are tools which help the town achieve its shared vision for land uses.

Currently, 50 percent of the land in the town’s zoning limits is vacant or undeveloped (this also includes agricultural uses and preserved open space). Of the developed land, the majority is currently used for residential (or dwelling) uses. Under 3 percent of the land is owned by Richfield itself. These current land uses are an important input for the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and Policy Recommendations in Section 4 and Section 5 of this plan. All current land use categorizations are based upon Stanly County’s most current tax parcel data.

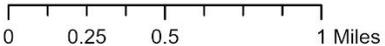
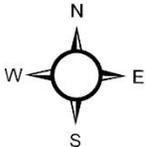
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Percentage of Area</b>
Apartment	0.06
Dwelling	41.64
Industrial	1.26
Commercial	2.48
Town-Owned	2.79
Tax Exempt	1.77
Vacant (includes agricultural uses & preserved open space)	50.00

# Current Land Use



- Current Land Use**
- APARTMENT
  - DWELLING
  - COMMERCIAL
  - INDUSTRIAL
  - TOWN OWNED
  - EXEMPT
  - VACANT
  - Property Lines

Developed by Centralina  
Regional Council, June  
2023



- +— Railroads
- Streams
- Town Limits
- Zoning Limits

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

The ultimate purpose of this plan is to guide the Town of Richfield according to the community's vision. Community engagement opportunities helped ensure that all community members and key stakeholders had an opportunity for their voice to be heard. The issues and insights shared by members of the public were essential in crafting the goals and strategies of this plan. Several different avenues for engagement were offered at different stages of the plan development process.

### Survey

An online public survey was launched on February 24<sup>th</sup> and remained open through March 24<sup>th</sup>, providing community members with an extended opportunity to share more detailed feedback about their vision and priorities for the Town of Richfield. The survey was available in digital and paper format. It was distributed through several methods, including:

- The Town website (digital)
- The Town Facebook page (digital)
- Town Hall
- First Bank
- Richfield Post Office
- Coffee Central coffee shop
- Richfield Food Mart convenience store

The survey generated 69 total responses and the results provided a wealth of information about community character and values, community demographics, and stakeholder preferences on topics such as transportation, economic development, and parks and recreation. Several open-ended comment sections also provided respondents with opportunities to share their direct feedback with town staff and the project consultants, and to raise unique concerns not explicitly mentioned in the survey.

### Open House

An open house event was conducted on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 from 6 pm – 8 pm. The main objective of this open house was to gather final inputs from the public to inform two major elements of the plan: the Future Land Use Map, and the policy recommendations. At the open house, the plan

**The Town of Richfield wants to hear from you!**

The Town of Richfield is creating a Comprehensive Land Use Plan to capture the vision, values, and goals of the community for the next 10 years. Land use plans rely heavily on community input and participation to identify these shared goals and create strategies for achieving the Town's vision. We are asking residents and stakeholders in Richfield to share your feedback and ideas, and we hope you will join us in developing this shared vision through the opportunities below!

**Step 1: Take a 10-minute survey to share your vision for Richfield!**

**How to respond to the survey:**

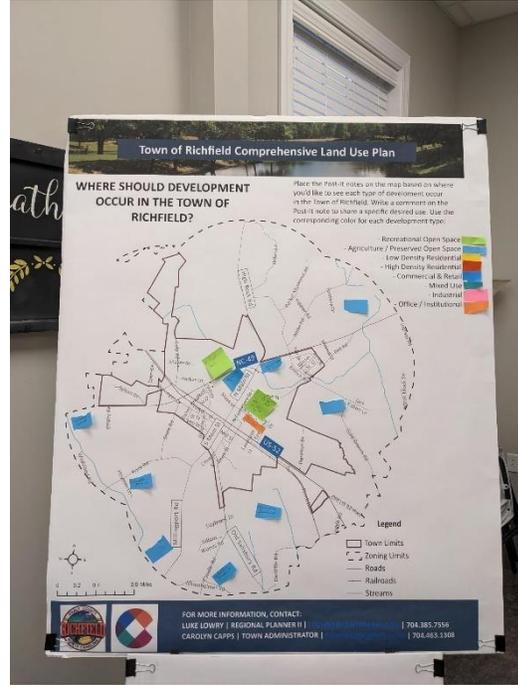
1. Go to this link on your personal device: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6H6YCHC>
2. Scan the QR code on this page with your personal device's camera
3. Pick up a paper copy at Town Hall, located at 137 Highway 49 North PO Box 158 Richfield, NC 28137 (Behind First Bank)

**Responses accepted through Friday, March 24, 2023**

**Step 2: Participate in the next Community Open House**

*Open House Coming **MAY 2023!**  
Stay Tuned!!!*

consultants provided information on the purpose of the land use plan, the existing conditions in the town, and the project timeline. The consultants also facilitated two activities. In the first, participants were asked to share about specific goals and strategies they would like the town to pursue by topic area. These inputs informed the policy recommendations in the plan. In the second, participants were asked to identify different land uses they would like to see in Richfield by placing a colored sticker on a map. These inputs informed the Future Land Use Map. Participants also left comments via a comment box and made verbal recommendations to the consultant team. These inputs were critical in the development of the plan components.



### ***Public Comment Period***

The plan was made available on the Town’s website from May 22<sup>nd</sup> to May 28<sup>th</sup> for public comment. Citizens were able to see the full draft plan and provide comments to the plan consultants.

### ***Town Staff***

The Town staff were heavily involved in the planning process. They shared resources and information with the project consultants, and they contributed key insights derived from their on-the-ground experiences with the community. In addition, they helped facilitate key planning activities such as the survey and the open house.

### ***Town Board & Planning Board***

Ultimately, the Town Board and Planning Board were responsible for reviewing, critiquing, and adopting the plan. The Planning Board recommended the plan for adoption at the June 13<sup>th</sup> Planning Board meeting, and the Town Board voted to adopt the plan at the June 26<sup>th</sup> Town Board meeting. Both boards will continue to play a role in manifesting the vision of the plan by committing to implement its recommendations.

## **SURVEY RESULTS**

All survey results are located on Page 44 of the Appendix.

## **VISION STATEMENT & GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

All the components of the plan development process—public engagement, existing conditions analysis, and conversations with community members—were synthesized into the plan’s vision statement and guiding principles. The vision statement is the overarching, broad description of the community’s values and shared vision. The guiding principles expound upon the vision statement; they provide the specific vision for a particular topic area. The guiding principles are also used to categorize the policy recommendations.

The policy recommendations consist of two components: objectives and strategies. Objectives are the specific goals within a designated guiding principle; strategies are the specified actions or solutions which can be used to achieve the objectives. For example, “Expanding the trail system” is an example an objective, whereas “coordinating with the Carolina Thread Trail organization” is an example of a strategy.

## TOWN OF RICHFIELD VISION STATEMENT

*“The Town of Richfield aims to embody and preserve the best that a small-town community can provide. The town’s natural beauty, thriving manufacturing services and excellent educational institutions provide for a high quality of life while bolstering a quiet small-town atmosphere. As an exemplary gateway community to Stanly County, Richfield provides exceptional natural beauty, access to regional transportation corridors and employment opportunities for lifelong residents and new neighbors alike.”*



# TOWN OF RICHFIELD GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## Community Identity, Involvement & Regional Cooperation



*“Enhanced Town Character and Identity that Supports Citizen Pride and Involvement”*

## Economic Development



*“Diverse Local Economy that Supports Community-scale Businesses”*

## Transportation & Mobility



*“Well-maintained Transportation Infrastructure that Supports a Variety of Mobility Options”*

## Infrastructure & Services



*“Unified Community that Supports a High Quality of Life and Healthy Living”*

## Housing



*“Small-Town Living with a Variety of Housing Options to Support Existing and Future Residents”*

## Land Use & Community Amenities



*“High-Quality Community Amenities and Natural Spaces”*

## 1. Community Identity, Involvement & Regional Cooperation

*“Enhanced Town Character and Identify that Supports Citizen Pride and Involvement”*



### 1.1 – Keep citizens informed and engaged in the operations of local government

- Consider developing a quarterly newsletter with Town updates which could be mailed to Town residents
- Continue to regularly update the Town website with information. Consider updates to the Town website to facilitate information sharing.

### 1.2 -- Pursue opportunities to increase community connection & engagement

- Partner with schools, local churches, and other community organizations to create community events throughout the year for citizens
- Assess how Town-owned facilities, including Richfield Park and Town Hall, can be better leveraged to support community events

### 1.3 – Assess ways to create "sense of place" in Richfield

- Explore opportunities to incorporate way-finding signs and markers for key destinations in Town

### 1.4 – Increase collaboration with local, regional, and state-wide stakeholders

- Explore opportunities to meet regularly with other units of local government in Stanly County and the region to discuss common challenges and opportunities for collaboration.
- Increase engagement with Centralina Regional Council and utilize the data, services, and peer-interaction opportunities which are available to member governments.
- Explore ways to improve Town representation on County and regional boards and committees
- Explore opportunities to partner with Stanly County and neighboring municipalities to undertake regional planning initiatives, which could include joint applications for funding for infrastructure (i.e. trails) or plan documents.

### 1.5 – Consider opportunities to enhance the operation of elected and appointed boards

- Offer individualized trainings to the Town Board, Planning Board, and Board of Adjustment to increase awareness of roles & responsibilities

## 2. Economic Development

*“Diverse Local Economy that Supports Community-scale Businesses”*

### 2.1 -- Manage the location and quality of commercial development

- Continue to locate commercial development along US-52 and NC-49
- Encourage the revitalization and reuse of currently unused or under-utilized structures and sites in appropriately located commercial areas
- Reassess the existing ordinance components including Zoning, Design Standards, and Landscaping/Buffer requirements to determine whether any updates are needed for commercial development



### 2.2 – Create an environment that is conducive to small business development

- Explore implementing an expedited permitting process or other incentives for small businesses including full-service restaurants
- Collaborate with the Stanly County Economic Development Commission on strategies to assist small-business owners in the community

### 2.3 – Balance the negative impacts of industrial development with the positive community benefits

- Ensure that appropriate infrastructure is available for industrial development. Encourage new industries to locate in areas that are already served; continue to plan for water and sewer infrastructure improvements to recruit new industry.
- Reassess the existing ordinance components including Zoning, Design Standards, and Landscaping/Buffer requirements to determine whether any updates are needed for industrial development
- Ensure that industrial developments do not encroach on incompatible land uses, and vice versa

## 3. Transportation & Mobility

*“Well-maintained Transportation Infrastructure that Support a Variety of Mobility Options”*

### 3.1 – Ensure all residents have access to convenient transportation options



- Ensure that the routine maintenance of local streets is a top priority for the annual budgeting process
- 3.2 – Enhance the safety of the transportation system for drivers, pedestrians, and others**
- Assess potential traffic calming strategies for locally owned streets (i.e. reduced speed limits, speed bumps) where appropriate
  - Pursue additional traffic enforcement along major roads (US-52, NC-49, Main St) to ensure safe through-traffic speeds
- 3.3 – Ensure that impacts of new or existing development on the transportation system are adequately addressed and mitigated**
- Strengthen Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) guidelines and review procedures for major development to lesson unwanted impacts on congestion and road safety
  - Consider requiring pedestrian and/or bicyclist accommodations (sidewalks, crosswalks, etc.) during new or redevelopment
  - Consider requiring the dedication, reservation, or development of greenways as a condition of development
- 3.4 – Explore opportunities to maintain, enhance, an expand the Town's infrastructure and amenities for pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorists**
- Coordinate with the Carolina Thread Trail organization on the potential expansion of The Falcon Trail to the Town of New London
  - Pursue opportunities to expand the sidewalk network, particularly where gaps exist between critical facilities. Prioritize routine sidewalk maintenance as part of the annual budgeting process.
  - Assess other opportunities to improve pedestrian safety (ex. Improve crosswalks, pedestrian lighting, etc.)
  - Continue to implement the recommendations of the North Stanly Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan.
- 3.5 – Coordinate with County, State, and local officials to stay informed and have input on transportation programs and projects that impact Town residents.**
- Attend Rocky River Rural Planning Organization (RPO) meetings and NCDOT informational meetings to stay informed on thoroughfare and transportation plans.
  - Assess opportunities to collaborate with NCDOT on road improvement and maintenance plans for state-owned roads in the Town's jurisdiction
  - Work with the Stanly County transportation department on how to improve the demand-response transportation service to increase resident's access to regional destinations

## 4. Infrastructure & Services

*“Unified Community that Supports a High Quality of Life and Healthy Living”*



### 4.1 – Enhance the Town's open space, parks, and trail systems.

- Consider requiring new residential development to provide for adequate open space and recreational areas or provide a payment-in-lieu to the Town for improvements to existing recreational facilities
- Continue to maintain, enhance, and expand Richfield Park. In particular, consider options for adding new equipment and amenities. Explore possible grant funding sources.
- Explore possibilities for how to use the Tyson Family Park land for recreational purposes. Consider initiating a park plan for this land specifically or a parks and recreation master plan for the entire Town.
- Continue to have the newly appointed Parks & Recreation Committee meet regularly.

### 4.2 – Ensure the provision of high-quality water and sewer systems that support existing and new developments

- Reassess existing development regulation to ensure the provision of new water and sewer infrastructure alongside new development.
- Continue to encourage development in areas that are already served by water and sewer infrastructure

### 4.3 – Develop coordinated plans for long-term public service provision and expansion needs.

- Investigate the feasibility of hiring new staff (part-time or full-time) to support current Town needs.
- Continue to plan for the long-term provision of town services including Police, Fire, and Public Works. Consider initiating a Capital Improvements Plan to consolidate and coordinate capital improvement efforts.

## 5. Housing

*“Small-Town Living with a Variety of Housing Options to Support Existing and Future Residents”*



### 5.1 – Maintain the Value and Integrity of Existing Neighborhoods

- Continue to use Code Enforcement as a mechanism to ensure compatibility with Town ordinances
- Explore opportunities to offer support for home revitalization and rehabilitation in existing neighborhoods.

### 5.2 – Ensure new residential development is compatible with existing built environment

- Study and codify development characteristics that are determined to be aligned with the character of Richfield to further define expectations for development review.
- Reassess the existing ordinance components including Zoning, Design Standards, and Landscaping/Buffer requirements to determine whether regulations are still appropriate for the Town. Make modifications to the ordinances if needed.

### 5.3 – Ensure all residents have access to a variety of high-quality housing options

- Encourage the development of senior-friendly housing which would allow Richfield's citizens to remain in the community as they age.
- Explore possible updates to the development regulations which would enable a broader spectrum of single-family housing to be developed while not compromising the desired development intensity for the town.
- Assess the possibility of allowing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's) to be developed in specific zoning districts
- Encourage residential development in areas with adequate supportive infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, sidewalks)
- Increase minimal open space requirements for all residential types

## 6. Land Use & Community Amenities

*“High-Quality Community Amenities and Natural Spaces”*

### 6.1 – Maintain community character and a high quality of development.



- Continue coordination with Stanly County Building Inspections to ensure new and existing structures comply with health, safety, and design quality standards.
- Continue to use Code Enforcement as a mechanism to ensure compatibility with Town ordinances

**6.2 – Maintain the natural features, rural character, and topography of existing land in Town**

- Reassess whether development regulations ensure adequate preservation of the natural features of a development site, including existing topography and significant existing vegetation including mature trees. Residential development standards should, in addition, preserve scenic views and rural character and appearances where appropriate.
- Consider adding incentives for developers to use conservation and open space subdivision

**6.3 – Promote the conservation of agricultural land and open space outside of Town**

- Continue to limit large development within the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)
- Consider working with Stanly County and neighboring municipalities (The Village of Misenheimer, the Town of New London) on an annexation agreement document for land currently outside of the ETJ
- Consider different strategies for annexing land outside of the ETJ to protect agricultural land and create a green "buffer"

**6.4 – Encourage and support the preservation of older homes and buildings**

- Consider applying for listings in the National Register of Historic Places, or consider the creation of a historic preservation commission to designate local historic districts and landmarks
- Pursue grant funding opportunities for the adaptive reuse, repair, or general maintenance of older homes and buildings

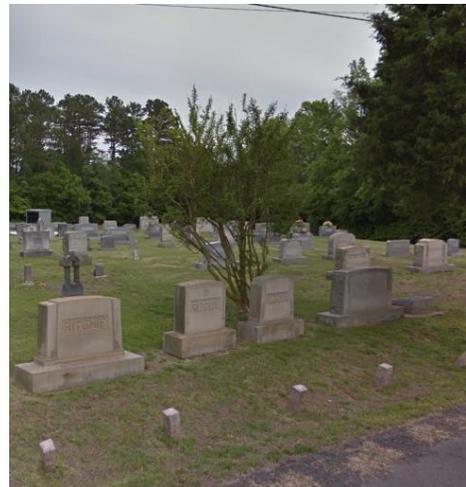
## Future Land Use Community Types

The Future Land Use Map for the Town of Richfield depicts generalized land use patterns for the Town and surrounding areas for the next 15 to 20 years. Like all land use plan maps, it is general in nature and should be used only as a guide by decision-makers in making future land use decisions. No attempt has been made to identify land use patterns on a lot-by-lot basis. Rather, land use decisions should be made using the map as a guide together with the overall goal statement, objectives, and strategies contained in this plan.

The Future Land Use Map is broken up into nine land use classifications. What follows is a description of each of these classifications.

### *Preserved Open Space*

Land dedicated to permanent conservation by legal means. These areas may be preserved because of their outstanding natural beauty, or because they serve environmental stewardship or wildlife management purposes. The areas are typically undisturbed or undeveloped and have been protected from development by federal, state, or local agencies; or by public, private, or non-profit organizations. These areas include state parks, permanent conservation areas, cemeteries, and (at a smaller scale) dedicated open space within residential neighborhoods.



### *Recreational Open Space*

Land dedicated for active and passive recreation uses. These areas are intended to be publicly accessible; they include municipal and community parks, open air sports complexes, and athletic fields. They also include land which is set aside for future recreational purposes.

### ***Rural Living***

Land characterized by large lots, abundant open space, and a high degree of separation between buildings. Large acreage, rural family homes, and “hobby farms” are scattered throughout the countryside and often integrated into the landscape. This may also include land actively used for agriculture or forestry activities, including cultivated farmland, timber harvest, livestock, and woodlands. These areas may also support the primary residence of the property owner and any out-buildings associated with activities on the working farm.



### ***Single-Family Housing***

These areas are primarily located within the town’s corporate limits and public utilities are typically provided. These areas are generally formed as subdivisions, which consist almost entirely of single-family detached homes. This category supports a range of single-family housing types, from large-lot, low density homes to small-lot residential neighborhoods. Buildings are typically buffered from surrounding development by transitional uses, topography, or vegetative areas.

### ***Multi-Unit Housing***

Land supporting moderate to higher density housing options which are located within the town’s corporate limits and where public utilities are typically provided. These neighborhoods are relatively compact and may contain more diverse housing options, including single-family housing, two-family housing (duplexes), multi-family housing, and others.



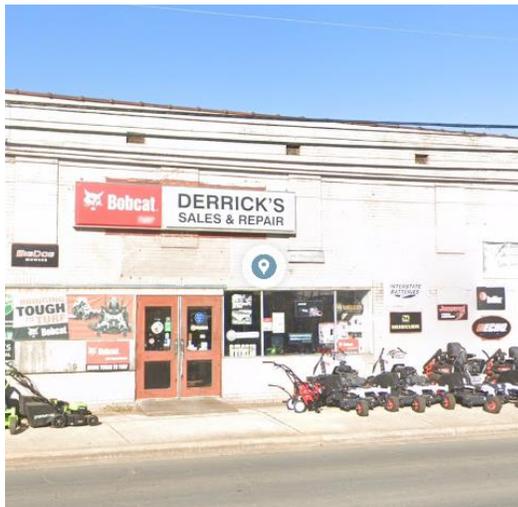
### ***Highway Commercial***

Highway Commercial is intended to support the daily needs of most residential neighborhoods and travelers. These areas are typically located along high-volume roads and key intersections and are designed to be accessible primarily by automobile, but access by walking and biking is also encouraged. Buildings are set back from the road behind large surface parking lots. Common development types include multi-tenant strip centers, small outparcels with a drive-through, and box retail.



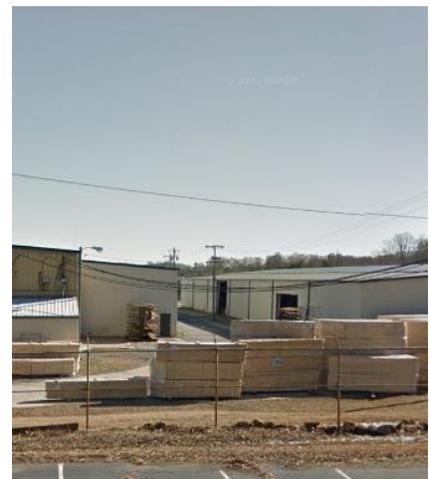
### ***Neighborhood Center***

Neighborhood Center is intended to provide for the retailing of goods and services for nearby residential neighborhoods. Compared to Highway Commercial, local access is a higher priority. These areas are often located along high-volume roads and key intersections and are designed to be accessible primarily by automobile, but some may be located along select local streets and provide greater access to pedestrians, bicyclists, and other transportation modes. Stricter dimensional standards ensure that nearby residential neighborhoods are protected from blighting influences.



### ***Industrial***

Industrial areas are centers intended to support opportunities to concentrate employment in the Town on normal workdays. Each center generally supports manufacturing and production uses, including warehousing, light manufacturing, medical research, and assembly operations. These areas are found in close proximity to major transportation corridors (i.e., highway or rail) and are generally buffered from surrounding development by transitional uses or landscaped areas that shield the view of structures, loading docks, or outdoor storage from adjacent properties.



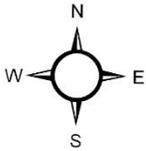
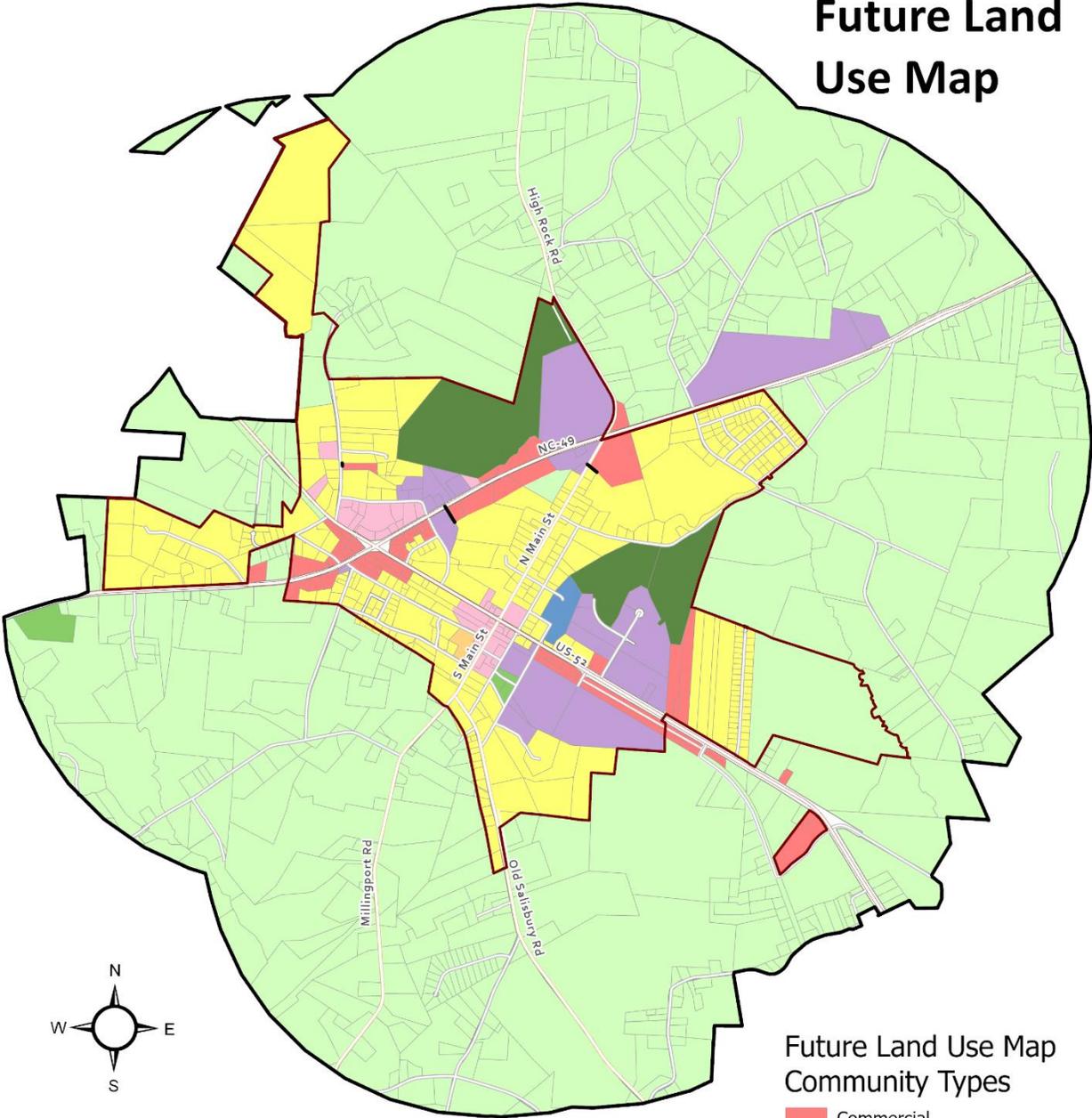
### ***Institutional***

These areas contain facilities such as schools, colleges, recreational facilities, government facilities, and assisted living homes that offer services to the public. Institutional uses can be found throughout the planning area, including predominantly residential areas. Development considerations of public use/institutional areas include the compatibility of the proposed development with existing development as well as the availability of adequate infrastructure to serve the use.

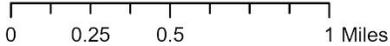


**[Future Land Use Map on next page]**

# Future Land Use Map



Developed by Centralina  
Regional Council, June  
2023



- Town Limits
- Extraterretorial  
Jurisdiction (ETJ)

## Future Land Use Map Community Types

- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Multi-Family Housing
- Neighborhood Center
- Preserved Open Space
- Recreational Open Space
- Rural Living
- Single-Family Housing

## On-going Use of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan

The Town of Richfield Comprehensive Land Use Plan will be an active document which serves as an essential decision making guide for decisions made by the town in the coming years. The two components which will be most heavily utilized moving forward for supporting decision-making are the Future Land Use Map and the Policy Recommendations.

- ***Use of the Future Land Use Map***

The Future Land Use Map should be used as the first step in evaluating development proposals. The Future Land Use Map and the Future Land Use Plan Map’s supporting information outline appropriate locations, types and patterns of land development. When reviewing a proposed development, the developer, staff, citizens, Planning Board and Town Board should determine first if that type of development is desired in the location that is first proposed.

- ***Use of the Plan’s Policy Recommendations***

The Land Use Plan’s Policy Recommendations should be used as the second check in evaluating how well proposed developments are supported by the Richfield Land Use Plan. The Policy Recommendations represent general principles that affect all development within the Town. If a proposed development does not appear to be supported by these Policy Recommendations, it should be returned to the developer for revisions.

The following table illustrates how different stakeholders can employ the Policy Recommendations and the Future Land Use Plan Map to assist in a common development decision-making process—the evaluation of a rezoning request:

Stakeholder	Recommended use of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan
Developer	The developer or property owner can petition for a rezoning request that is consistent with Town policy, thereby increasing the chances for rezoning approval, and minimizing guess work and time wasted.
Planning Board	Prior to their regular meeting, each Planning Board member can make his or her own determination as to the consistency of the proposed rezoning with the Town’s adopted objectives and strategies as well as the Future Land Use Map contained in the Richfield Land Use Plan. As always, the Planning Board should take into account the recommendations of the Plan but may choose to give different weight to the different elements of the Plan.

Town Board	In its legislative authority to rezone property, the Town Board has the final word as to whether the rezoning request is consistent with the various plans and ordinances that affect the property in question. The Board should take into account and weigh the interpretation of policy as employed by the property owner, the Planning Board, staff, and the general public. Over time, a track record of policy interpretation forms a consistent foundation for decision-making.
General Public	Residents of the Town can and should reference specific goals and objectives of the Plan when speaking in favor of or in opposition to a rezoning request.

In addition to supporting the development decision-making process, many of the Policy Recommendations should be implemented independently. Each recommendation will require a unique implementation strategy that will be impacted by several factors including finances, staff capacity, and current Town priorities. Thus, successful implementation will require the Town to prioritize recommendations for short-term, medium-term, and long-term implementation. It will also require collaboration and coordination across multiple stakeholder groups, including: the Planning Board, Town Board, Board of Adjustment, Town staff, neighboring jurisdictions, developers, non-profits, and the citizens of the Town of Richfield

**Plan Maintenance**

This plan is not meant to be a static document. While the plan is a comprehensive synopsis of the Town’s vision and goals, it is a snapshot in time. As the Town experiences growth and change, its priorities may shift. Accordingly, the plan may need to be adjusted year-to-year to account for these changes. It is recommended that the Town hold a meeting of the Town Board, Planning Board, and Board of Adjustment once per year to look at changes that need to be addressed and to provide an opportunity to monitor the Town’s progress in implementing the plan. In addition to an annual review, it is crucial that Town staff, the Planning Board, and the Town Board continue to monitor and revise the plan as needed. For this comprehensive land use plan to continue to effectively serve the Town and its citizens into the future, it is the responsibility of all parties to keep the plan up-to-date.

**Plan Update**

NC General Statutes (Chapter 160D) mandate that local governments must have a *reasonably maintained* comprehensive land use plan. While the statutes do not specifically define the term ‘reasonably maintained’, professional planning best practice is to update the plan every five to

ten years. If the community is experiencing rapid growth, every five years may be more appropriate. Thus, the Town of Richfield should at minimum update the comprehensive land use plan in the year **2033**. If major changes have occurred or expected to occur, the Town should consider updating the plan (partially or wholly) as soon as **2028**.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

\*\*\* The results outlined in this report are the summary responses. Some questions included individual, open-ended responses and are not included in this report directly. The full responses have been made available to the Town of Richfield staff.

### I. Overview of Results

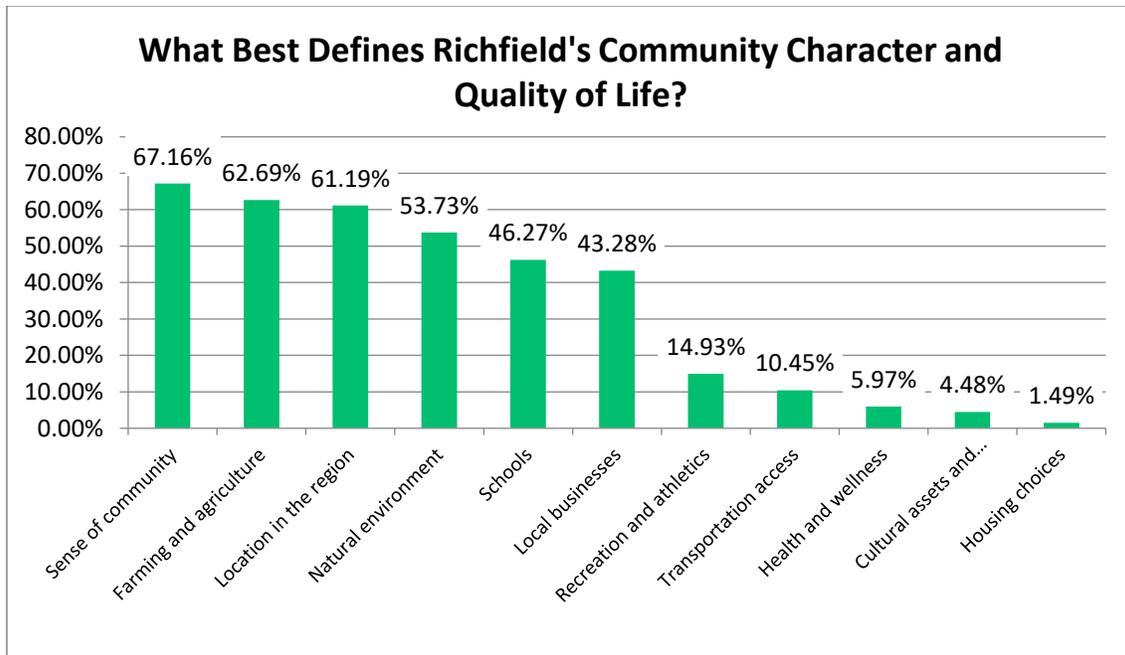
- a. 69 responses
  - i. All responses via online survey
  - ii. After data cleaning, 69 complete and valid responses

### II. Who responded?

- a. How would you describe your connection to Richfield? Check all that apply.
  - I'm a resident → 61.19 %
  - I'm a property owner → 49.25 %
  - I'm a business owner → 14.93 %
  - I live in the ETJ (Extraterritorial Jurisdiction) → 14.93 %
  - I live in Stanly County → 49.25%
  - Other → 13.43 %
- b. Where do respondents work in relation to Richfield?
  - i. Outside of Richfield, within Stanly County → 26.87 %
  - ii. I'm retired or not currently working → 25.37 %
  - iii. Outside of Stanly County → 20.90 %
  - iv. Prefer not to specify → 13.43 %
  - v. Within Richfield → 10.45 %
  - vi. Remotely → 2.99 %
- c. Respondents by Age
  - i. 0 – 18 → 0 %
  - ii. 19 – 24 → 1.49 %
  - iii. 25 – 44 → 25.37 %
  - iv. 45 – 64 → 35.82 %
  - v. 65 – 84 → 31.34 %
  - vi. 85+ → 0 %
  - vii. Prefer not to specify → 5.97 %
- d. Respondents by Gender
  - i. Male → 47.76 %
  - ii. Female → 41.79 %
  - iii. Prefer not to specify → 10.45 %

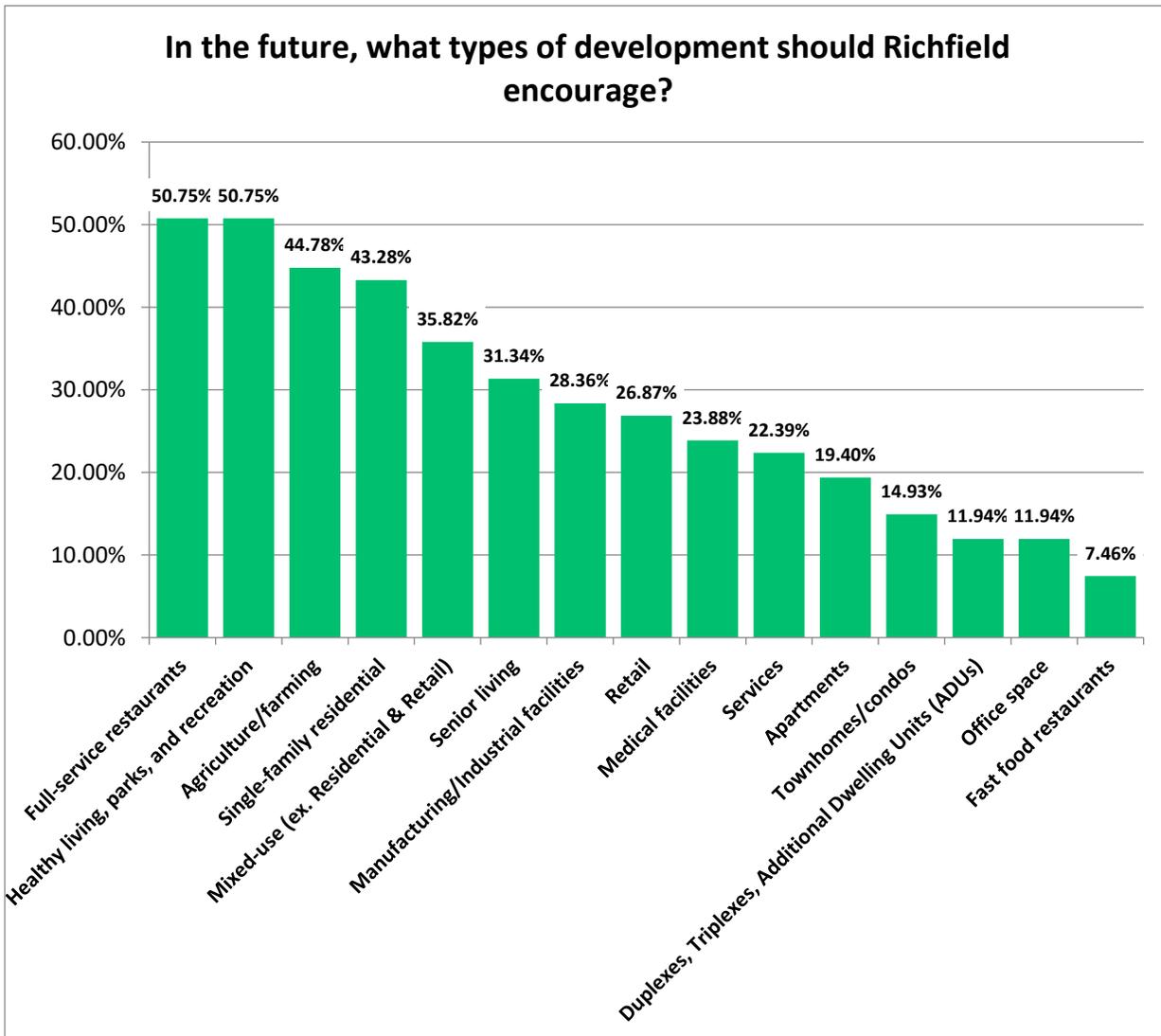
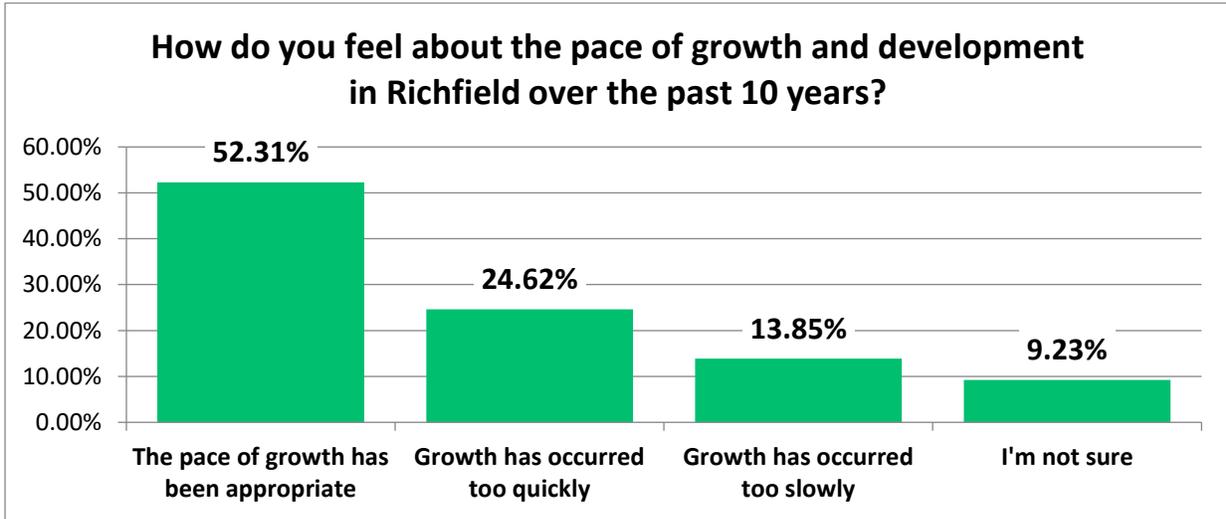
- e. Respondents by Race and Ethnicity
  - i. White (Caucasian) → 85.07 %
  - ii. Black or African American → 2.99 %
  - iii. American Indian → 1.49 %
  - iv. Another race → 1.49 %
  - v. Asian → 0 %
  - vi. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander → 0 %
  - vii. Hispanic or Latino → 0 %
  - viii. Prefer not to specify → 11.94 %
  
- f. Respondents by Children in the Household under 18 Years
  - i. Yes → 33.33 %
  - ii. No → 56.06 %
  - iii. Prefer not to specify → 10.51 %
  
- g. How long have you lived in Richfield?
  - i. Less than 1 year → 0.0 %
  - ii. 1 – 5 years → 10.61 %
  - iii. 6 – 10 years → 6.06 %
  - iv. 10 – 20 years → 10.61 %
  - v. 20+ years → 53.03 %
  - vi. I do not live in Richfield → 16.67 %
  - vii. Prefer not to specify → 3.03 %

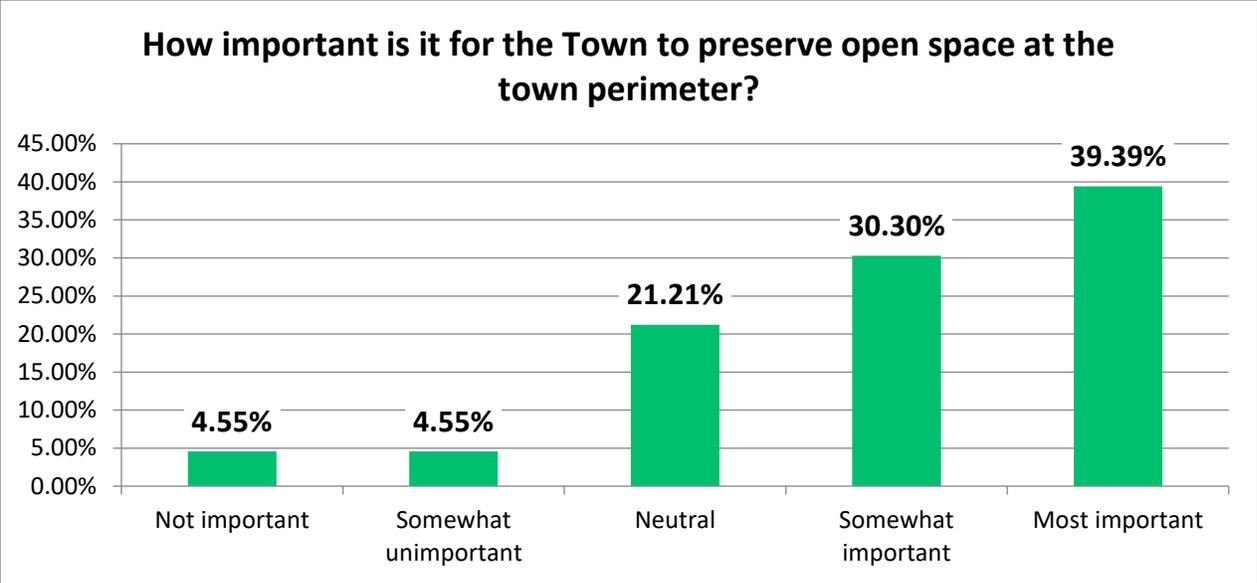
### III. The Richfield of Today



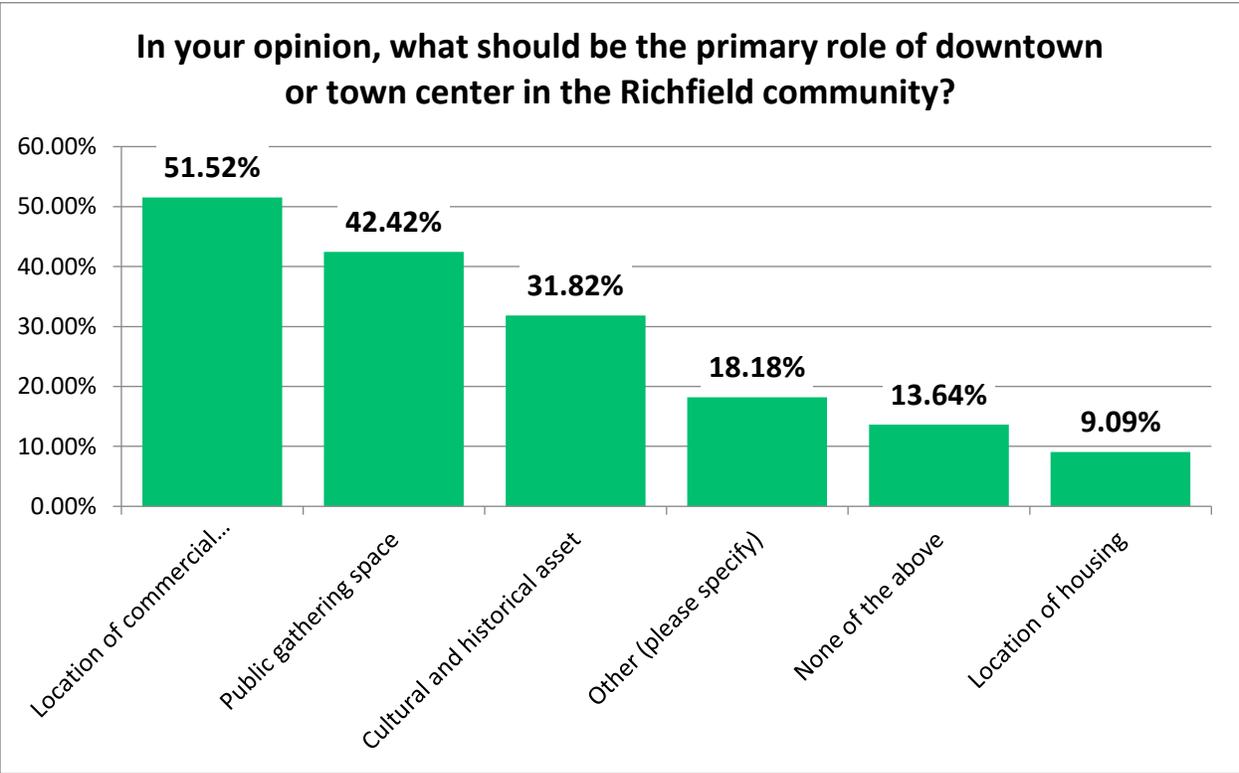


#### IV. The Richfield of Tomorrow

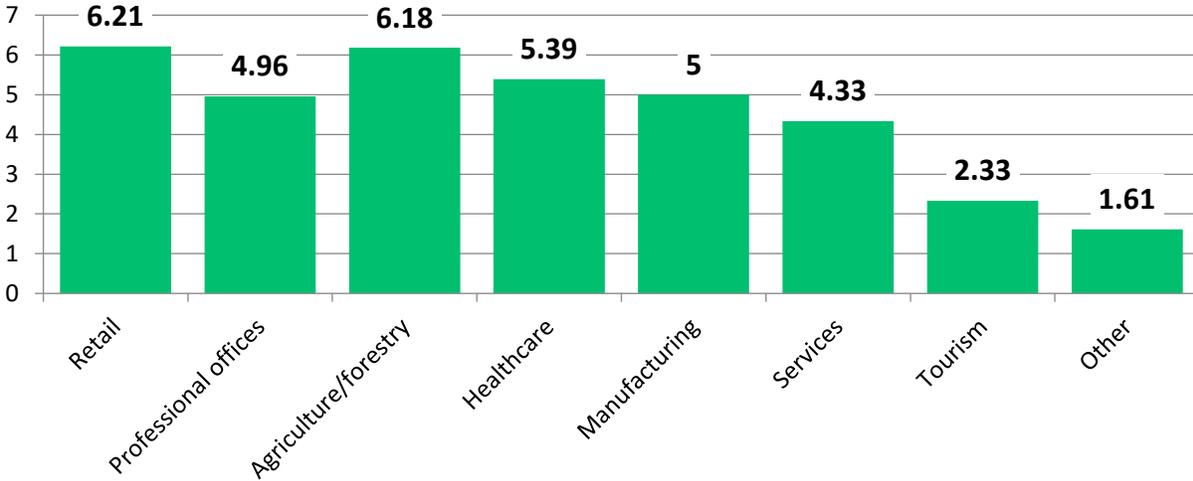




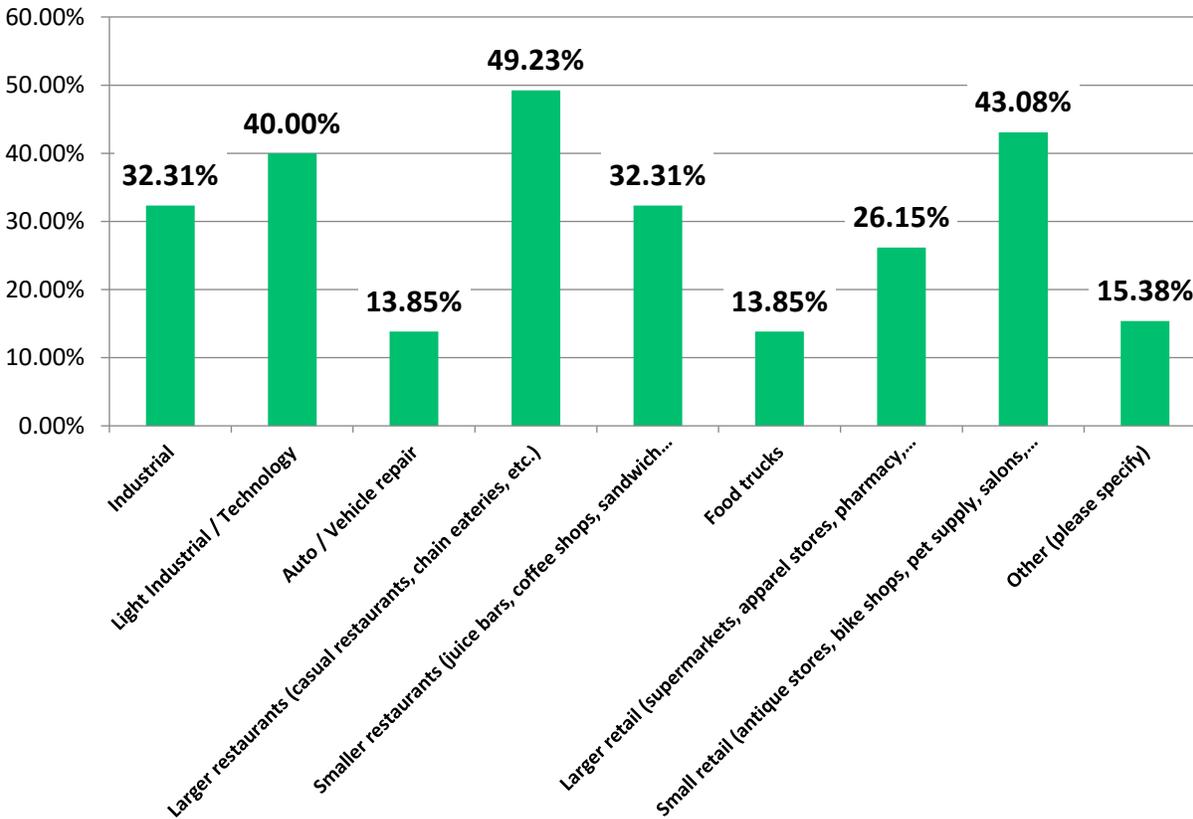
### V. Economic Development



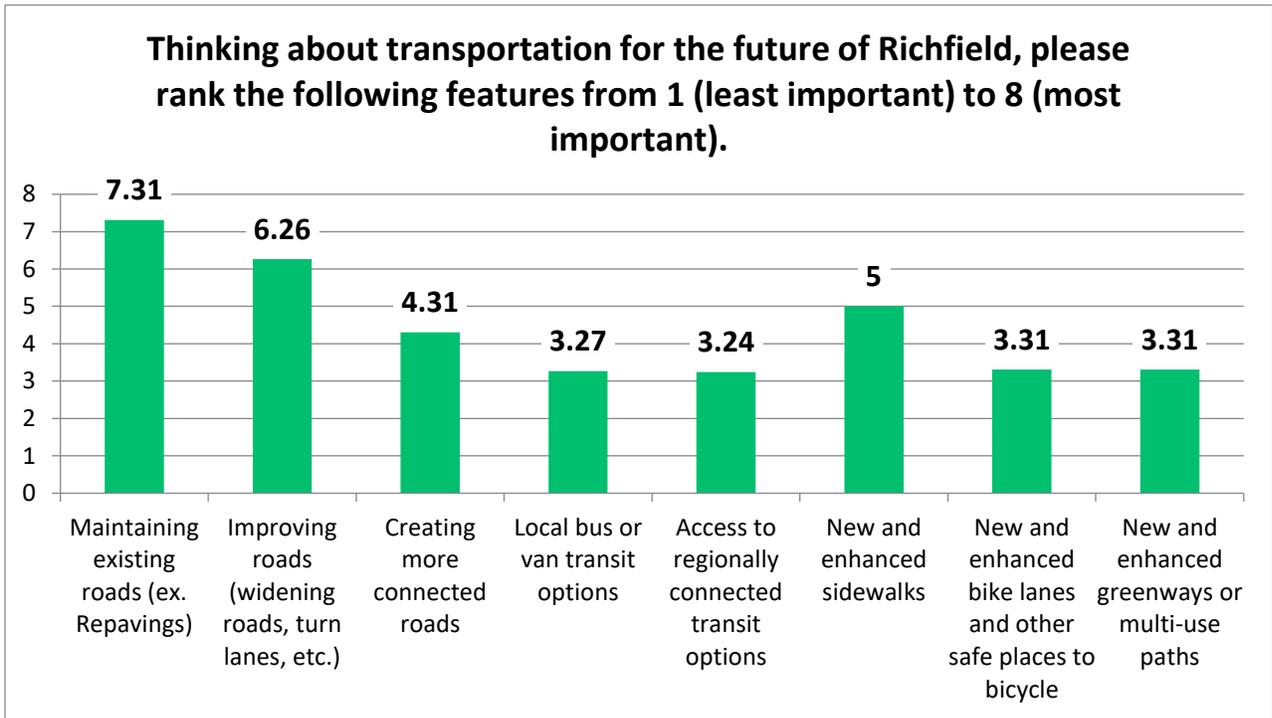
**How important are the following business sectors to Richfield's future economic vitality? 1 (least important) to 8 (most important).**



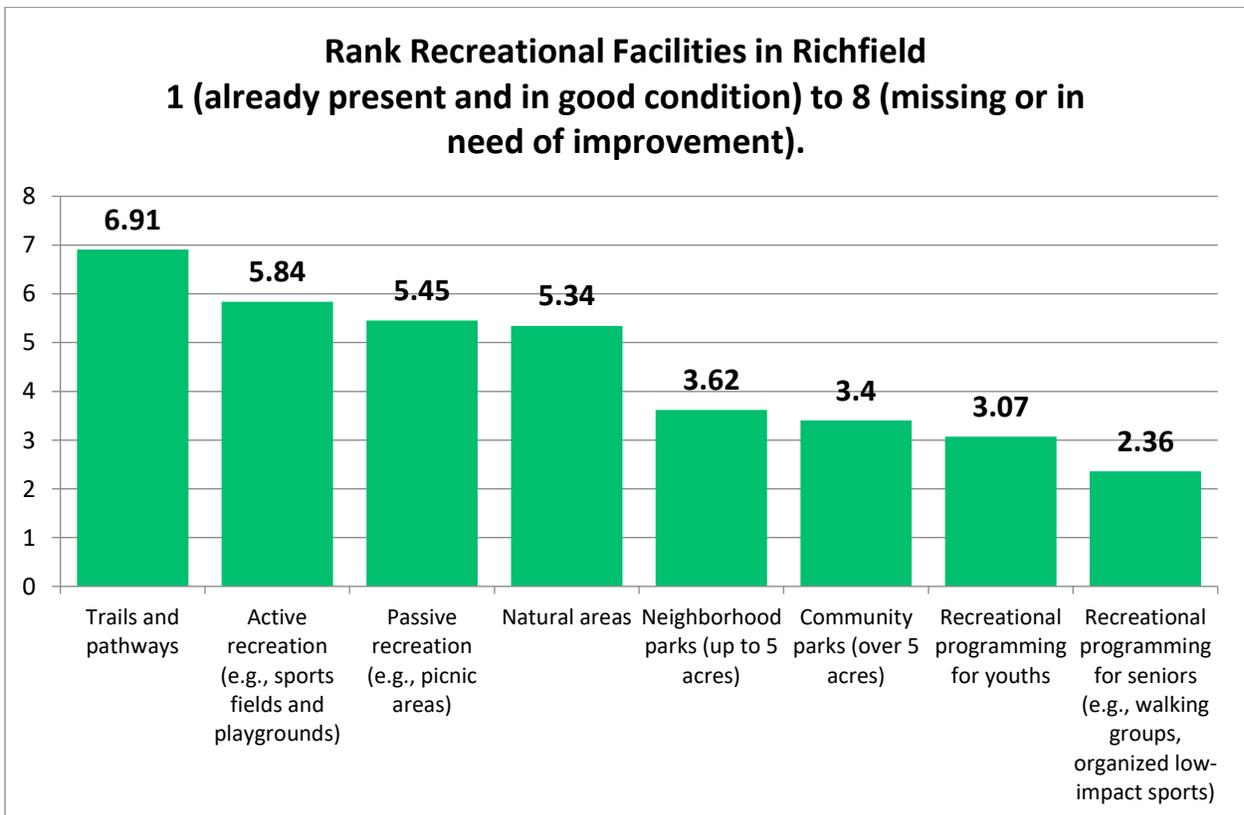
**What types of retail or industry would you like to see more of in Richfield? Please check all that apply.**

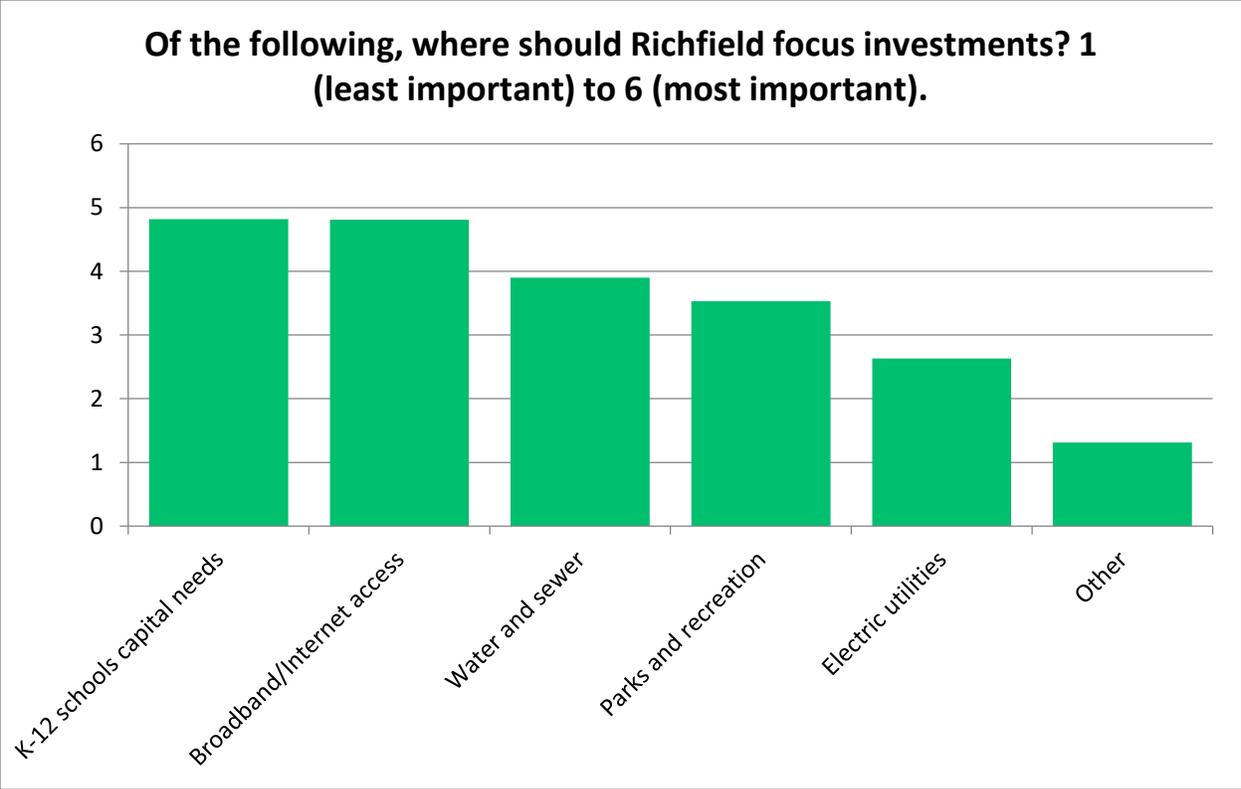


## VI. Transportation



## VII. Community Assets & Investments





**VIII. Other**

For the question “Is there anything else we should know?”, comments addresses the following categories:

