

March 26, 2025

Dear Commissioners,

Following your February 26, 2025, meeting, I would like to address our progress in implementing the City's Comprehensive Plan. I appreciate the opportunity to provide an update on the considerable efforts undertaken by city staff, departments, elected and appointed officials, and community partners since the plan's adoption.

Over the past three years, we have made meaningful progress in many categories of the plan. While not all inclusive, below is a brief summary highlighting some of the initiatives that have been completed, are in progress, or are in ongoing maintenance phases.

Website & Branding:

- Completed: Developed and launched new city and tourism websites.
- Completed: Creating a cohesive "family" of logos for consistent branding across departments and platforms.
- Ongoing: Partnering with marketing firms, photographers, and regional tourism agencies.

Marketing & Tourism:

- Ongoing: Implemented a marketing plan with traditional (print, radio) and digital (Facebook, Google ads) strategies.
- Ongoing: Promoting Richland Center's outdoor attractions (fishing, hunting, parks, trails, ATV/snowmobiling) and fall tourism.
- Ongoing: Educating and promoting the use of Airbnb and VRBO to increase local lodging options.

Public Engagement & Events:

- In Progress: Establish new public spaces downtown with seating and event capacity.
- In progress: Supporting new events (live music, sidewalk sales) with streamlined permitting.
- In Progress: Expanding opportunities for outdoor dining.

Development & Zoning:

- In Progress: Modernizing the city's zoning ordinance.
- Ongoing: Inventorying underutilized lots to attract property developers.
- Ongoing: Partnering with Richland County to acquire tax-delinquent parcels for housing.
- Completed: Hired a full-time Zoning Administrator.
- Ongoing: Addressing zoning violations through compliance efforts.

Transportation & Infrastructure:

- In Progress: Improved bike/pedestrian routes with new signage connecting key destinations.
- Ongoing: Improving communication and collaboration with SRT taxi service to ensure reliable transportation options.
- In Progress: Conducting infrastructure assessments (roads, utilities, parks) for long-term maintenance planning.
- Ongoing: Incorporating ADA-compliant sidewalks and curb cuts into all street plans.

Public Relations & Collaboration:

- Completed: Hired a City Administrator.
- Ongoing: Holding regular joint meetings with city, county, and school.
- Completed: Established a city social media page for real-time public updates.

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- Ongoing: Utilizing WRCO, *Richland Observer*, and Teams for regular communication.

Land Use & Recreation:

- Ongoing: Following the future land use map for strategic growth.
- In Progress: Updating the Community Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP).
- In Progress: Developing a wayfinding system to enhance park accessibility.
- In Progress: Conceptual planning for an inclusive park.

Assessment & Revaluation:

- In Progress: Conduct a city-wide revaluation to better reflect current market values.

As this summary illustrates, the City of Richland Center has made significant strides in implementing the Comprehensive Plan. While not exhaustive, this update demonstrates the city's ongoing dedication to realizing the plan's goals through a coordinated, cross-departmental effort.

We recognize that there is still much to accomplish, and we remain committed to advancing the plan's objectives. Your continued leadership and oversight as members of the Plan Commission are vital to this process.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or if you would like more details on specific initiatives or departmental contributions.

Thank you for your dedication and service to Richland Center's future.

Sincerely,



Ashley Oliphant
City Administrator
Richland Center