

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.

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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.

Land Use

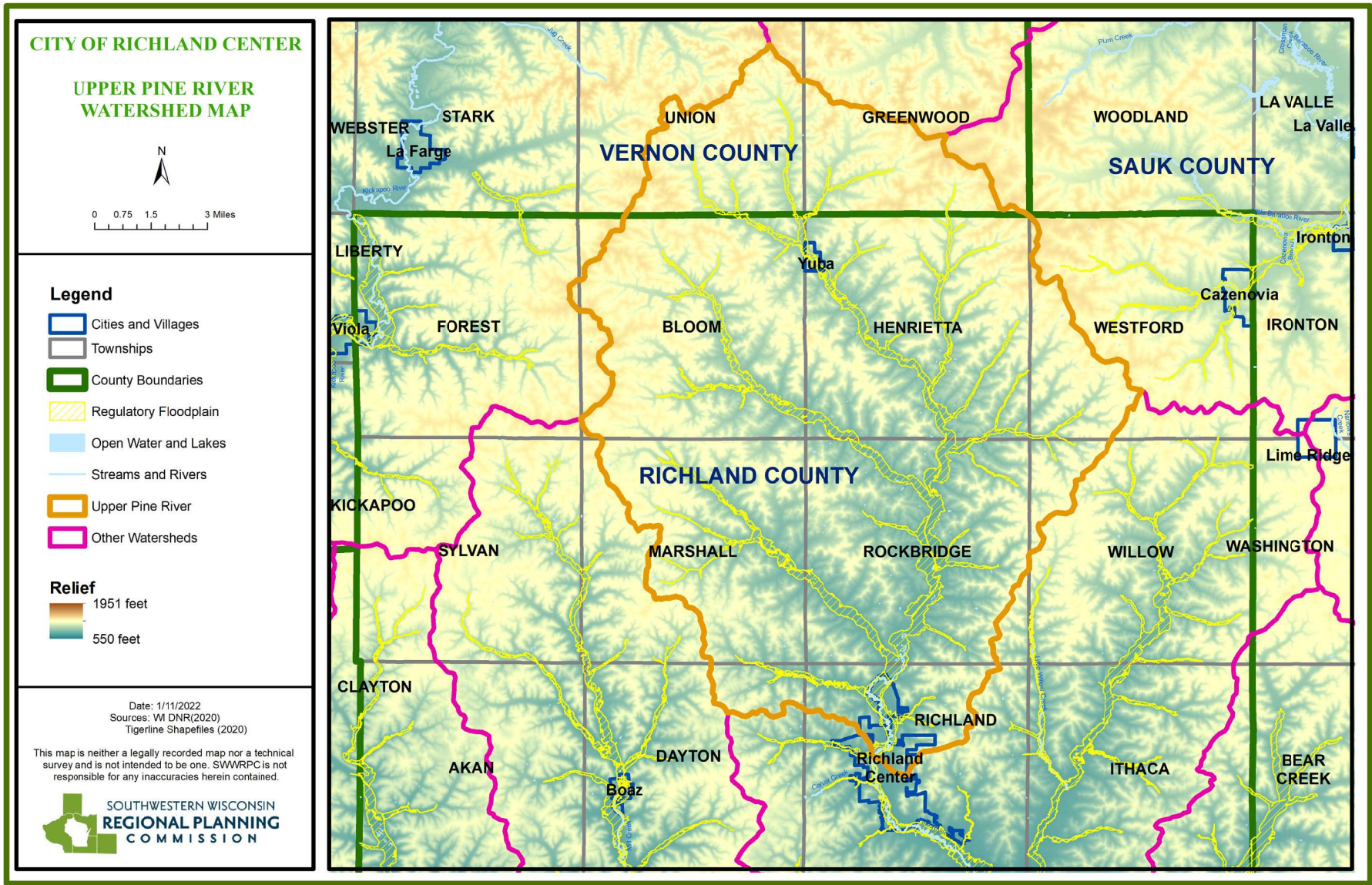
- 🔊 **GOAL:** Use intergovernmental partnerships to reduce the amount of storm water entering the city's infrastructure during heavy rain events.
- 🔊 **GOAL:** Land use policies and zoning that maximize the available opportunities and encourages residential, commercial, and industrial development.
- 🔊 **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

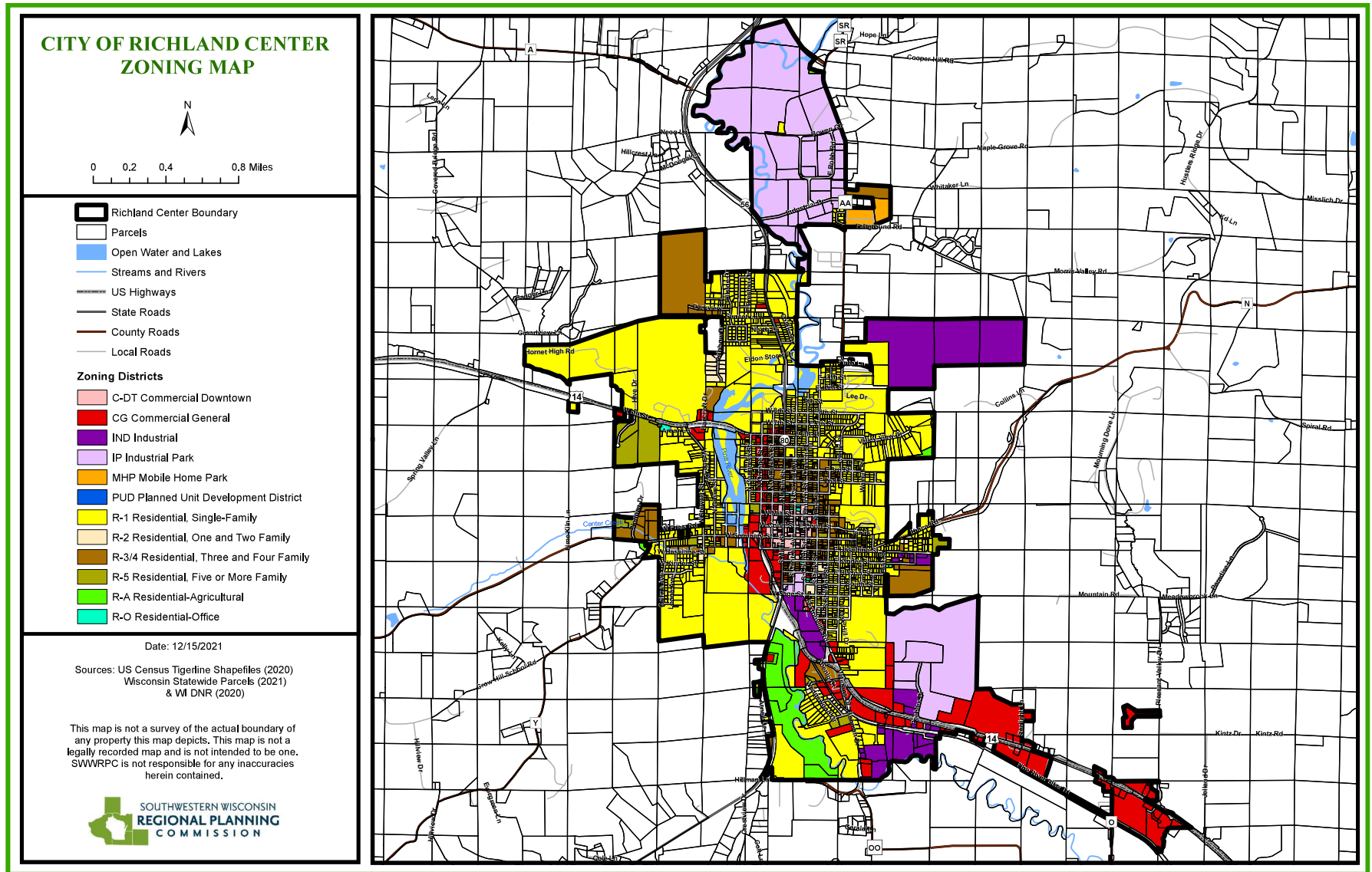
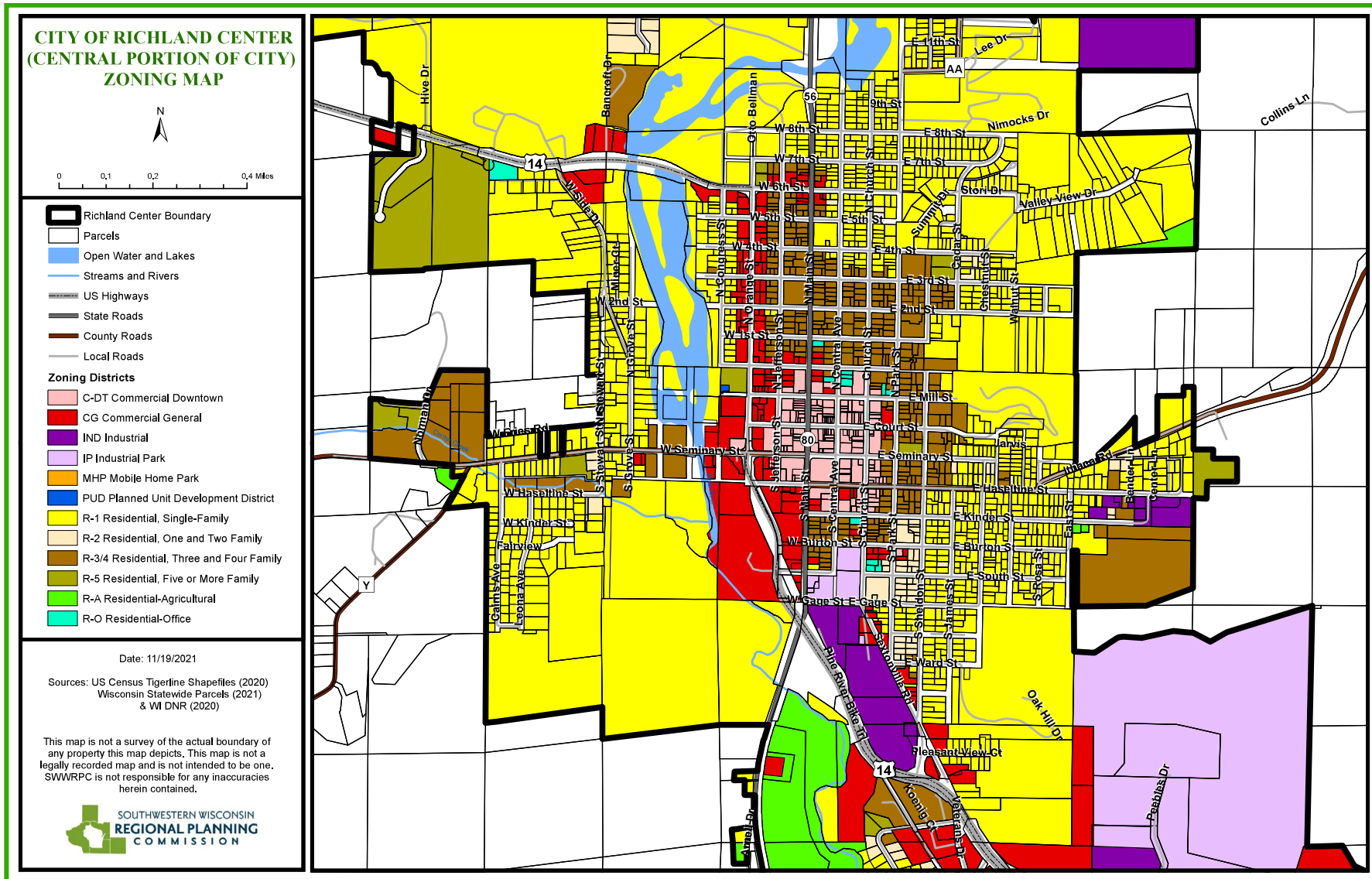


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Future Land Use

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

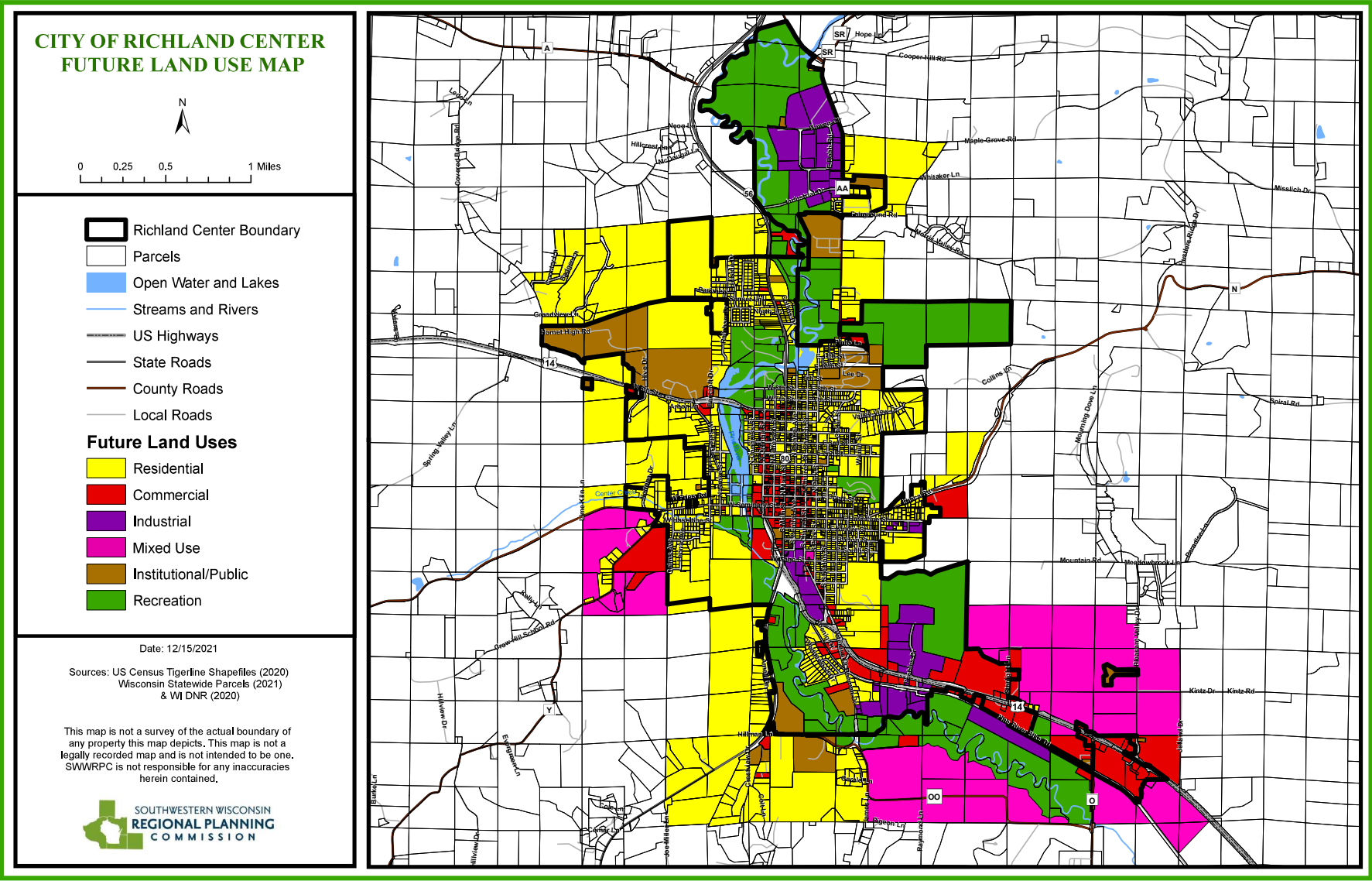
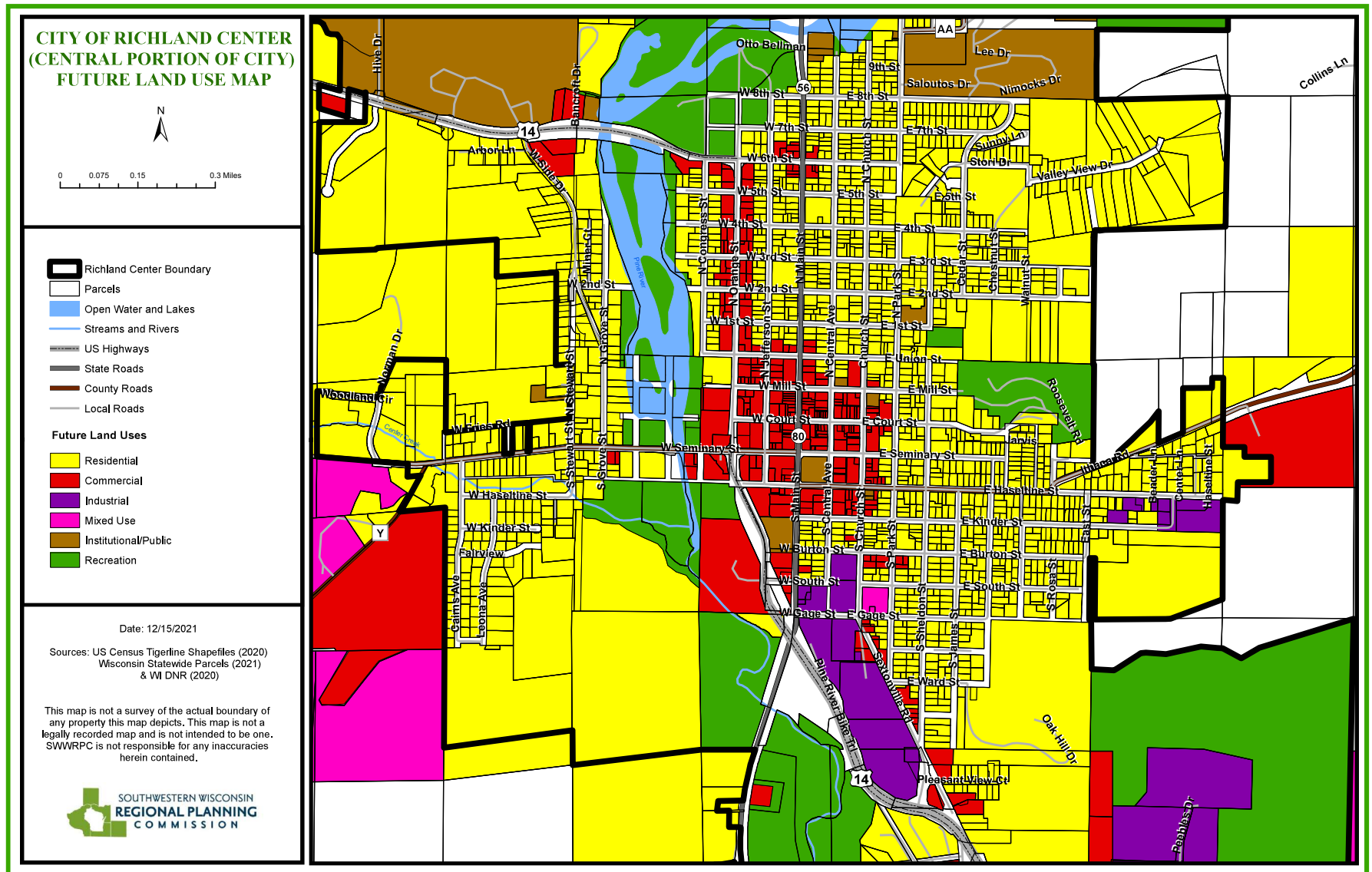


Figure 13: Richland Center Future Land Use Map, 2022



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.