

Needs:

Housing

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

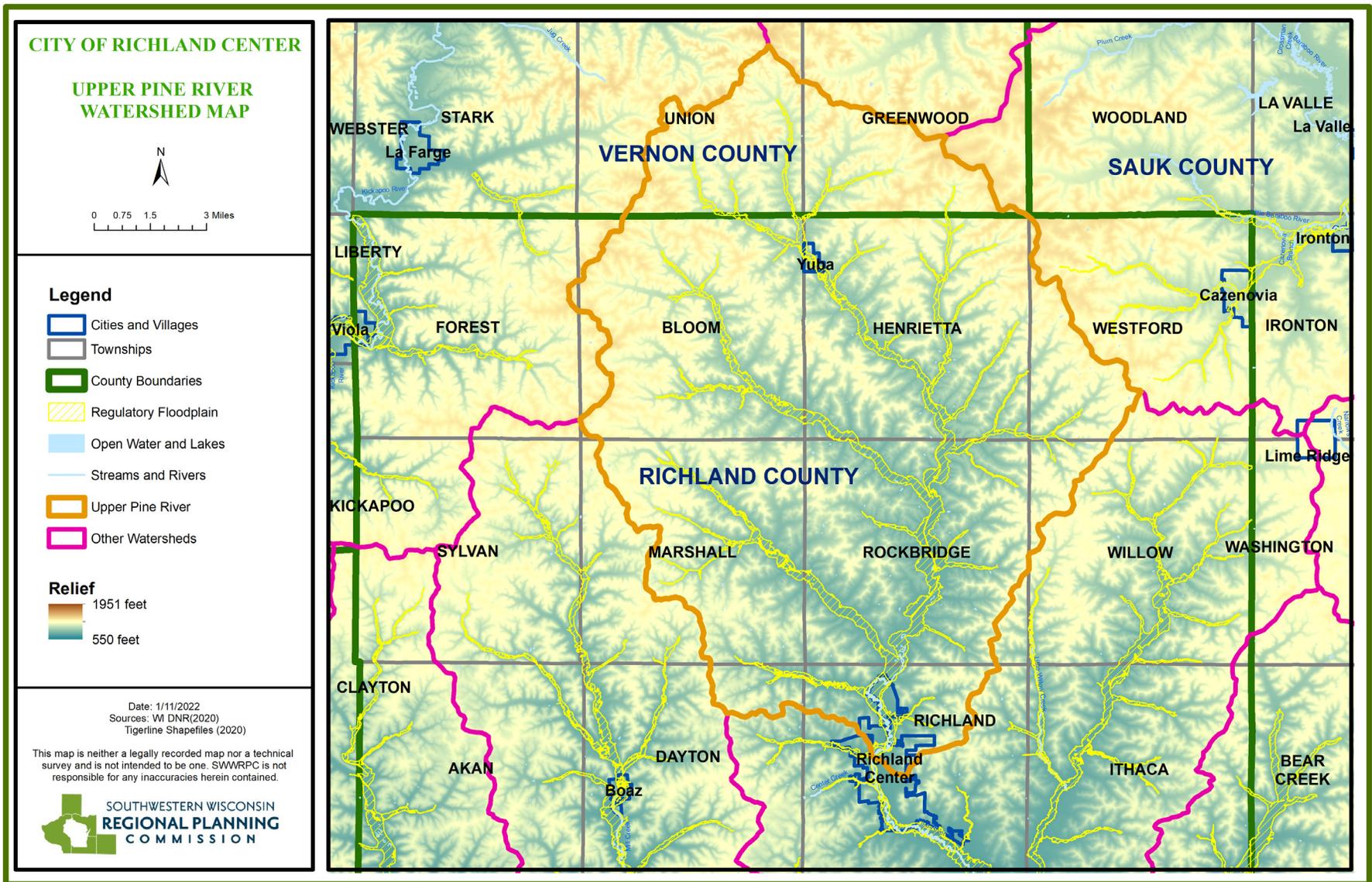
Based on projections, the city requires at least 103 additional housing units to satisfy demographic demands. While this is a good start, it is more likely the city will require far more housing units based on the demand of employers and the desire of residents to see the city grow.

Table 3: Richland Center 2030 Housing Demand Forecast

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

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

Figure 11: Pine River Watershed



Zoning

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

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

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



Figure 12: Richland Center Zoning Map, 2022

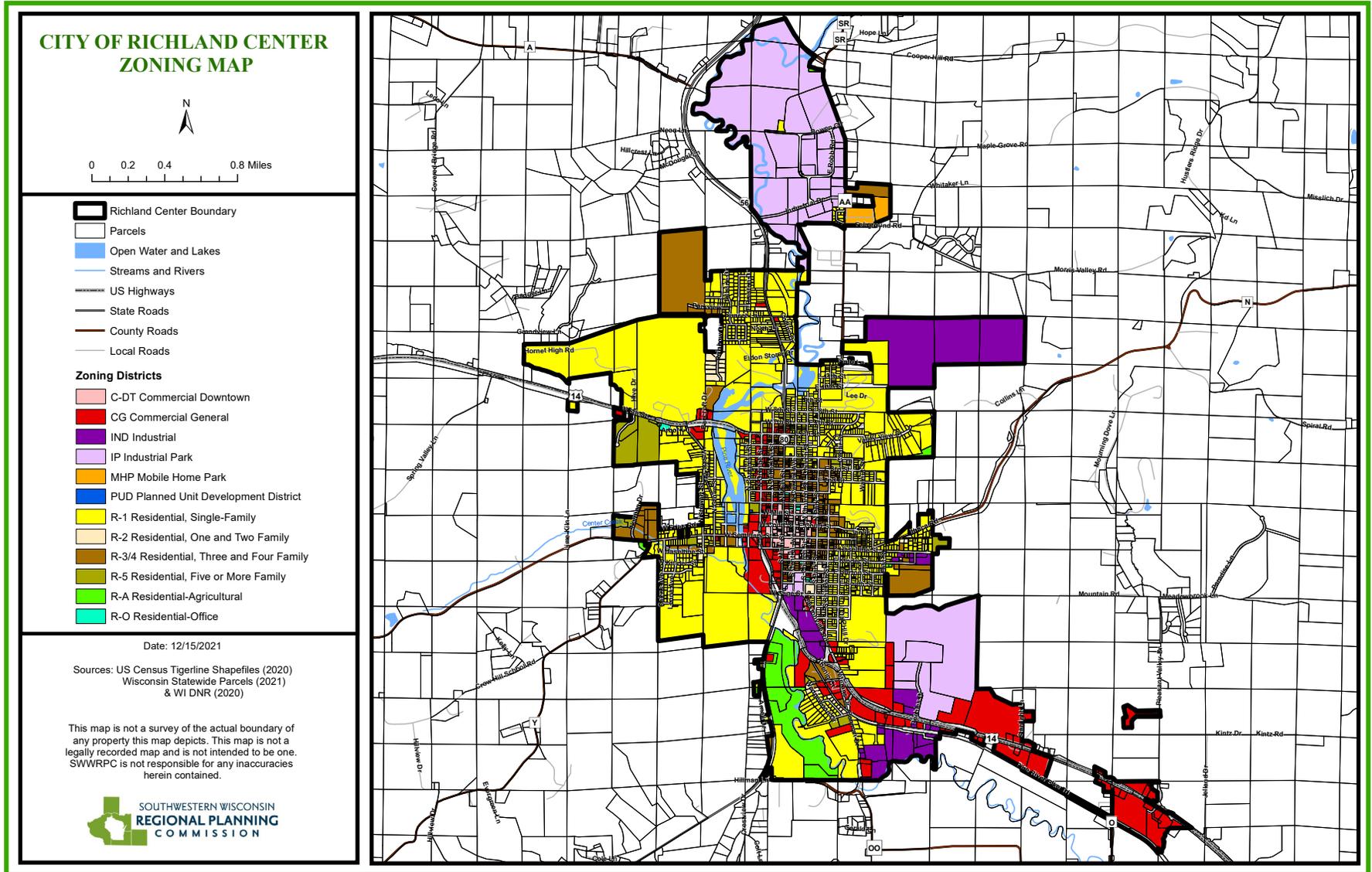
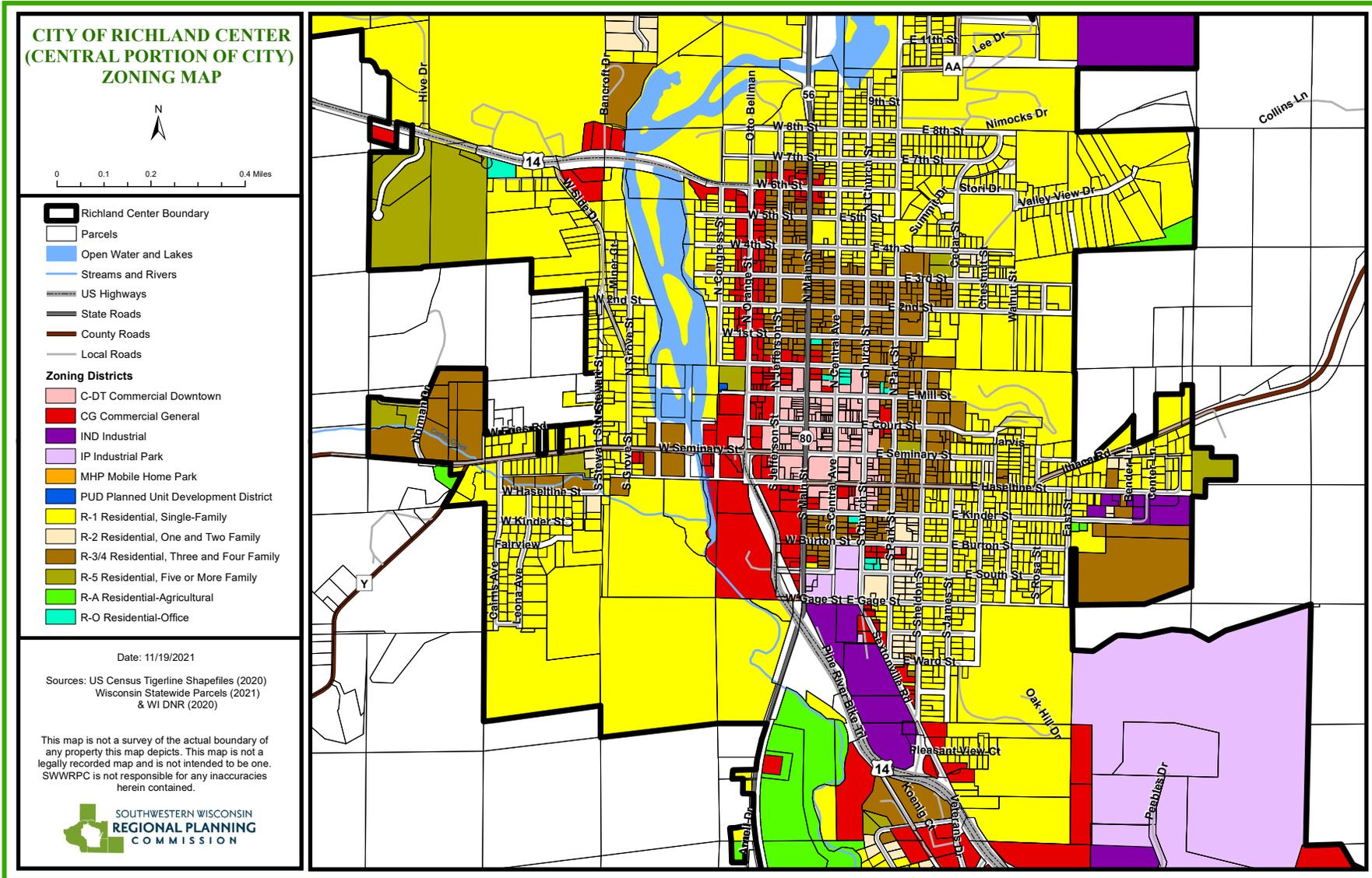


Figure 12: Richland Center Zoning Map, 2022



Future Land Use

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

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

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

Mixed Use Designation

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



Figure 13: Richland Center Future Land Use Map, 2022

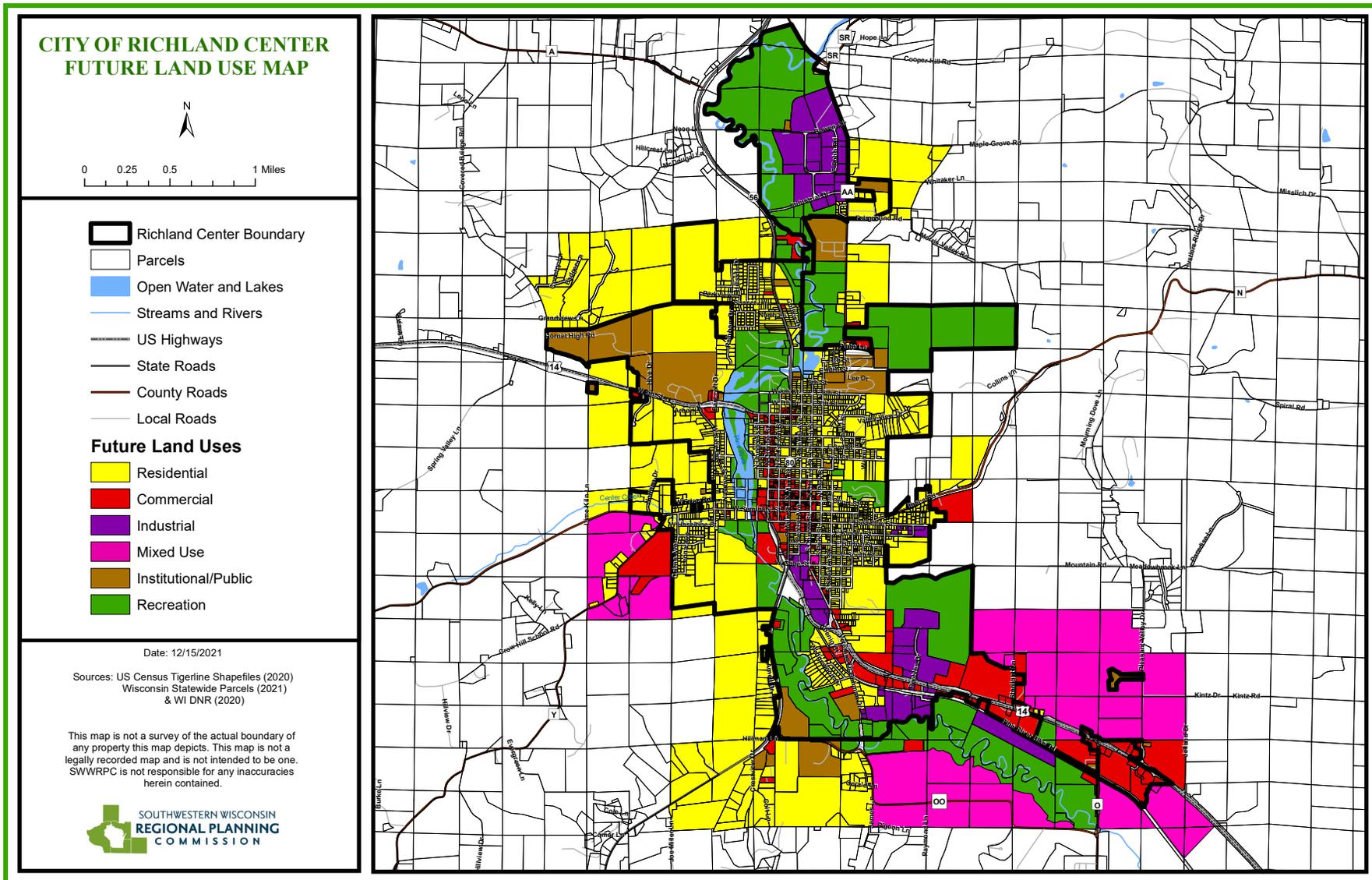
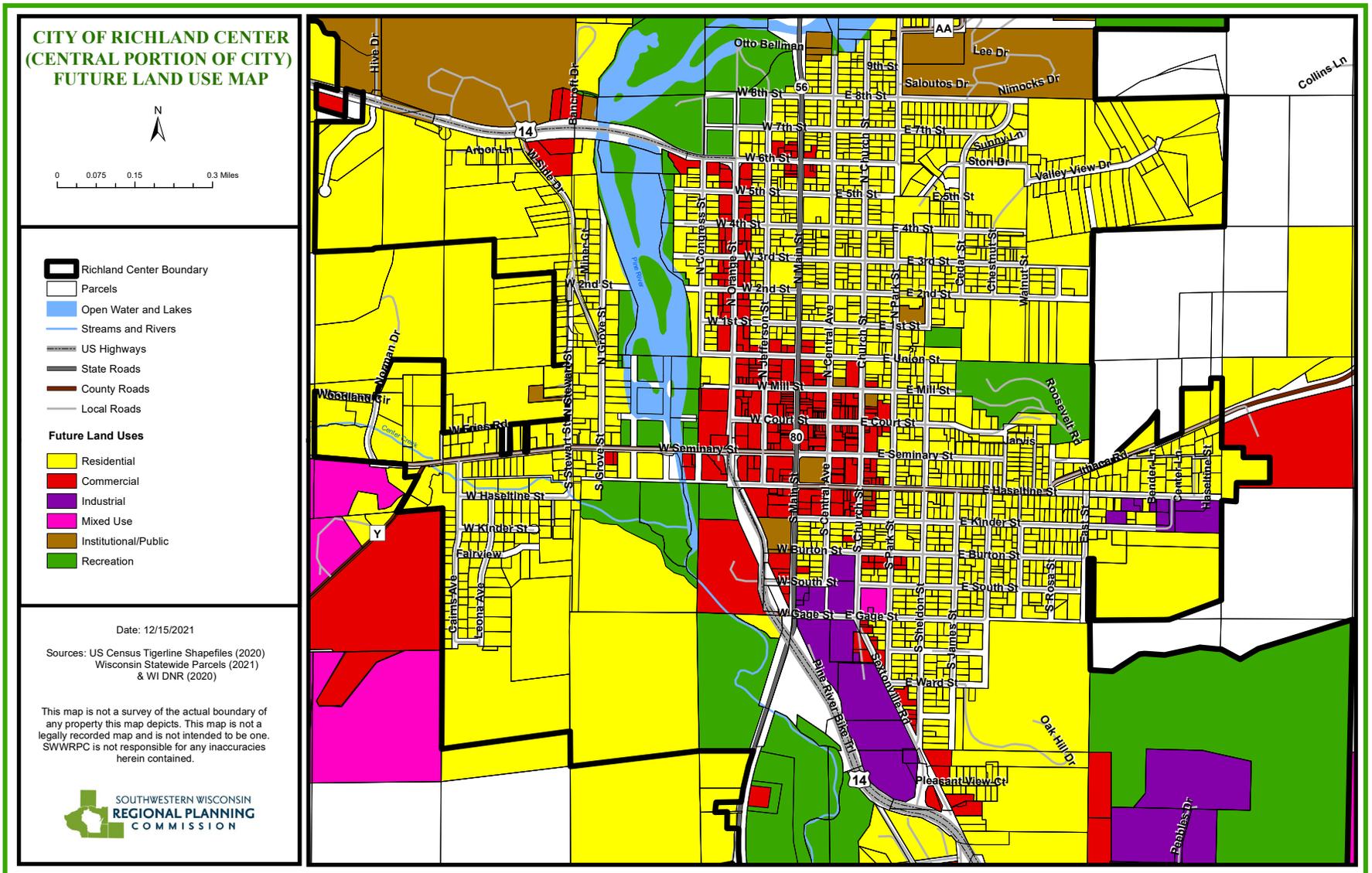


Figure 13: Richland Center Future Land Use Map, 2022



Land Use and Implementation Strategies and Action:

Strategy 1: Maximize the current opportunities

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

