



CITY OF RICHFIELD

2021 LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS



SUPPORT FOR STATEWIDE SOLUTIONS

Maria Regan Gonzalez, Mayor, 612-500-3862, MRegan@richfieldmn.gov

Katie Rodriguez, City Manager, 612-861-9702, KRodriguez@richfieldmn.gov

The COVID-19 pandemic is widening existing economic, racial, health and education gaps for our most vulnerable communities. As a city, we are providing tools and support for residents to withstand the pandemic, but there is a need for more relief and legislation beyond city-level jurisdiction. Therefore, the City of Richfield supports collaborative efforts with its representatives on legislation that expands labor rights, housing affordability/protections, and health access.

RICHFIELD PRIORITIES- *Katie Rodriguez, City Manager, 612-861-9702, KRodriguez@richfieldmn.gov*

- **Support** full funding of Local Government Aid (LGA). Like other cities, Richfield is responding to additional community needs and financial shortfalls due to the pandemic. LGA cuts will severely impact our ability to provide needed services.
- **Support** new funding and resources, as well as greater flexibility with existing tools, to help preserve our existing affordable housing and create new affordable housing, especially for those with the lowest incomes. Specifically, support the use of “pooled” and “excess” TIF funds for less restrictive affordable housing usage.
- **Support** a bonding bill that appropriates \$8,250,000 to deconstruct the existing nature center building at Wood Lake Nature Center and renovate the site, and to predesign, design, construct, furnish, and equip a new nature center building. This beloved and vital regional asset is turning 50 years old this year and is in need of a new building and improved trail system that meets the demands of its high-use, award-winning environmental education program and essential urban green space.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES-*Director/Assistant City Manager, Pam Dmytrenko, 612-861-9778, PDmytrenko@richfieldmn.gov*

- **Support** full reimbursement to cities for the cost of providing continued health insurance coverage for police and firefighters disabled or killed in the line of duty. From 7/1/17 to 7/1/20, the City paid \$163,065 towards continued health insurance benefits, of which only \$54,681 was reimbursed by the State.
- **Support** reimbursement to cities for the cost of covering employees who are out on military leave. While employees are out, cities have to pay for 5 paid military leave days in a calendar year. Additionally, cities are obligated to pay for employee coverage for military leave through overtime expenses. The City of Richfield has seen a number of employees out on military leave for an extended period of time, which leads to increased cost with no reimbursement.
- **Support** a revision of the current Department of Labor language for a presumptive clause for coverage for Police Officers and Firefighters for worker’s compensation costs for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This presumption was added by Senate Bill 542 on October 1, 2019. The presumption added Labor Code Section 3212.15 and applies to injuries on or after January 1, 2020. The League of Minnesota Cities has been working on mental health issues of city employees for several years now and is concerned with cities’ rising costs associated with PTSD and PERA disability claims, as well as issues of general employee wellness and health insurance costs and productivity challenges. The City of Richfield has seen a rise in employee PTSD cases, and would request a revision of the language currently in the Senate Bill and Department of Labor regulations in order to review the presumption in worker’s compensation cases.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – *Community Development Director, John Stark, 612-861-9775, JStark@richfieldmn.gov*

- **Support** the use of “pooled” and “excess” Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds for less restrictive affordable housing usage (such as loans/grants for NOAH Rehabilitation or rent assistance) when placed in an Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
- **Support** new funding for the rehab and preservation of NOAH (naturally occurring affordable housing) apartments, by:
 - Affordable Housing Bonding Authority at the State Legislature;
 - Increase funding to the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MnHousing) for its Rental Rehabilitation Loan Program, and make the funds available statewide.

Richfield staff is available to provide detailed information on any of the items listed on this handout and to provide testimony.



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- **Support** additional resources to financially assist housing for households earning less than 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI), by:
 - Allowing 10% of units at 30% AMI to be a qualification for a Housing TIF District
- **Support** additional resources to financially assist the construction of accessible housing, by:
 - Allowing physically accessible housing at or below 80% of AMI to count as 60% AMI in a Housing TIF District or physically accessible housing at or below 60% of AMI to count as 50% AMI in a Housing TIF District
- **Support** Metro Cities' position on the 4d tax program to first study the impacts and effectiveness.
- **Support** additional Minnesota Management & Budget (MMB) bond resources to significantly expand the number of new construction affordable housing projects funded.

FINANCE – *Finance Director, Chris Regis, 612-861-9723, CRegis@richfieldmn.gov*

- **Support** maintaining and increasing Local Government Aid (LGA).
- **Support** current formula and distribution of Fiscal Disparities and **oppose** shifting to fund transportation projects.
- **Oppose** any imposition of levy limits.

FIRE – *Fire Chief, Mike Dobesh, 612-243-4502, MDobesh@richfieldmn.gov*

- **Support** Fire Protection Districts – Pass legislation to allow for the creation of fire protection districts. This legislation would allow local units of government across the state to collaborate to provide sustainable models of fire service.
- **Support** Local Control of EMS – The current laws regulating Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in Minnesota allow ambulance providers an exclusive operating area, Primary Service Areas (PSAs). They are granted for an indefinite period of time and there is very little oversight or transparency. The Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board (EMSRB) is the State of Minnesota's regulatory agency (Health Licensing Board) that oversees and issues ambulance licenses. Currently, no other Health Licensing Board in Minnesota grants a provider an exclusive operating area as does the EMSRB. We believe that local units of government are best positioned to determine the licensed ambulance service provider, the level of service and should have the authority to ensure transparency. We propose the uncoupling the professional standards overview role of the EMSRB from the service area determination and allow local units of government to decide who provides service within their geographic boundary.
- **Oppose Fireworks Expansion**
- **Oppose limiting Fire Sprinklers** – We oppose efforts to statutorily limit the use of residential fire sprinklers. We support the inclusion of stakeholders including state agency professionals and industry experts in creating and writing rule/code parameters that make Minnesotans safer in their homes.

LIQUOR – *Liquor Operations Director, Bill Fillmore, 612-861-9192, BFillmore@richfieldmn.gov*

- **Oppose** the sale of wine in grocery and convenience stores.

PUBLIC SAFETY – *Public Safety Director, Jay Henthorne, 612-861-9828, JHenthorne@richfieldmn.gov*

- **Support** driver's licenses for all legislation regardless of legal status-Unlicensed drivers present a danger to not only themselves, but to all of us who drive, walk, bike, or take transit to carry out our daily activities. Legislation that ensures individuals who want and need to drive will have to learn the rules of the road and become certified to operate a vehicle contributes to a safer community. Also, since all licensed drivers in Minnesota are required to carry insurance, we can decrease the number of instances of collisions where one or more of the drivers is uninsured.
- **Additional priorities are attached.**

PUBLIC WORKS – *Public Works Director, Kristin Asher, 612-861-9795, KAsher@richfieldmn.gov*

- **Support** a state-wide, comprehensive and stable transportation funding package including a gas tax increase to address Minnesota's transportation needs, including growing transit needs.

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Richfield's high priority regional transportation projects:

- 1) TH 62 Auxiliary Lanes between Portland Ave. to/from Highway 77 (including ramp modifications at TH 62/TH 77 Interchange)
- 2) TH 62 Auxiliary Lanes between Penn Ave. to/from Highway 169

- **Support** improvements on I-494 mainline, specifically the current Corridors of Commerce projects that identify interchange and mainline improvements from the Airport to Hwy 169. Provide the necessary resources to measurably improve safety and mobility along the corridor and support the Policy Advisory Committee's efforts to ensure the projects are delivered with an emphasis on equity.
- **Support** a maximum local contribution to regional projects and long-term maintenance. Cost participation requirements related to trunk highways and county state aid projects place too high of a burden on local units.
- **Support** opportunities to increase safety in work zones.
- **Support** state laws that provide limited liability to commercial salt applicators that are certified through an established voluntary salt applicator certification program.
- **Support** automated enforcement laws for speeding and red light running.
- **Support** legislation requiring proper labeling of disposable wipes as "not flushable" to avoid excessive public dollars being spent on unnecessary maintenance and sewage backups related to the misrepresentation that these wipes are flushable.
- **Support** adoption of an exemption for commercial driver's license (CDL) requirements for municipal employees.
- **Oppose** any legislation or rule change that limits local authority related to use of public rights-of-way.

RECREATION – *Recreation Services Director, Amy Markle, 612-861-9354, AMarkle@richfieldmn.gov*

- **Support** a bonding bill that appropriates \$8,250,000 to deconstruct the existing nature center building at Wood Lake Nature Center and renovate the site, and to predesign, design, construct, furnish, and equip a new nature center building. The project also includes landscaping around the new center and renovation of the trails. This beloved and vital regional asset is turning 50 years old this year and is in need of a new building and improved trail system that meets the demands of its high-use, award-winning environmental education program and essential urban green space.
- **Support** continued funding of the Hennepin County Sports Grant Program that has been an instrumental resource in helping support athletic facilities and athletic programs in Richfield.
- **Support** continued funding of the Outdoor Recreation Grant Program through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources which has aided in the success of recreational facility creation and improvements.
- **Support** continued funding of the Mighty Ducks Grant Program through the State of Minnesota, acting through its agency, the Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission. This program is vital for ice arenas across the state to become for environmentally and financially sustainable through the conversion of R-22 refrigeration systems to modern cooling operations.
- **Support** a legislative effort led by the MN Composting Council, state agencies, and several other cities. The legislation is regarding simplifying and streamlining language and standards for compostable packaging certification, ensuring that all items that claim to be compostable are actually compostable, and not leaching any harmful byproducts into soil and groundwater.
- **Support** legislation that would designate all solid waste taxes generated to the state's SCORE fund to support sustainability efforts.
- **Support** Hennepin County funding that would expand infrastructure at the local level for the creation of compost processing sites and/or anaerobic digesters.

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RICHFIELD

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Richfield Police Department supports the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association 2021 Legislative Agenda

ARBITRATION REVISION ACT

The MCPA supports creating a more objective arbitration process by having the Office of Administrative Hearings handle all police officer termination grievances.

OFFICER INTEGRITY ACT

The MCPA supports legislation allowing for a Minnesota Licensed Peace Officer to be terminated from public employment without opportunity to challenge the remedy of termination should the basis for termination be willful or intentional dishonesty, deception, or similar unethical or illegal conduct that is deemed sufficient to imperil their credibility in court testimony. The MCPA does not support limiting an officer's due process right to arbitration.

LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING REINVESTMENT ACT

The MCPA supports continuing the POST Board training reimbursement allocation to local agencies, which began in 2018, into fiscal year 2022-2023 through the Peace Officer Training Fund for mandated training in the areas of recognizing and valuing diversity and cultural differences, conflict management and mediation, crisis intervention and mental illness crises.

PEACE OFFICER FAMILY SAFETY ACT

The MCPA supports legislation that will help protect peace officers from harassment and threats while off-duty.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

The MCPA supports preventing individuals who are legally able to purchase a gun from doing so without background checks at gun shows, online or in private transactions.

EXTREME RISK PROTECTION ORDERS (ERPO)

The MCPA supports allowing law enforcement who believe an individual's documented dangerous behavior has a substantial likelihood to lead to violence to request an order from a civil court authorizing the temporary removal of any guns in the individual's possession and the prohibition of any new gun purchases during the duration of the temporary order.

K12 THREAT ASSESSMENTS

The MCPA supports legislation requiring school districts to establish a team of subject matter experts to examine and address school safety issues and specific threats to the students, staff and community. This legislation would move our state beyond physical school safety measures, such as infrastructure improvement grants, passed by the Legislature in 2018.

FORFEITURE PRESERVATION ACT

The MCPA supports legislation that preserves a department's ability to utilize the federal forfeiture sharing program, maintains a reasonable cash threshold that protects communities from on-going drug trafficking and keeps habitual drunken drivers off our roads.

PERMIT TO PURCHASE FEES

The MCPA supports allowing local municipal police departments to charge a reasonable fee for processing permit to purchase applications.

CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFT PREVENTION BILL

The MCPA supports legislation preventing the purchase or sale of detached and used catalytic converters by individuals who are not licensed to service motor vehicles.

TOBACCO FREE SCHOOLS

The MCPA supports legislation making school property tobacco-free zones and penalizing minors for possessing tobacco products on school grounds.

MENTAL HEALTH RESPONSE ACT

The MCPA supports legislation to fund multi-jurisdictional co-responder programs and make changes to current policy and practices to better share information amongst first responders, medical professionals and human services representatives. The goal is to improve the response to -and outcomes of - mental health calls for service.

STRENGTHENING SEX TRAFFICKING STATUTES

The MCPA supports legislation that would add sex trafficking offenses to the list of violent crimes under the dangerous offender statute, increase the statutory.

ALLOWING CLEOS ACCESS TO THE NATIONAL CRIMINAL HISTORY DATABASE

The MCPA supports giving chief law enforcement officers the ability to utilize the resources of the National Criminal History database to conduct background investigations for certain business licenses and certain employment background investigations.