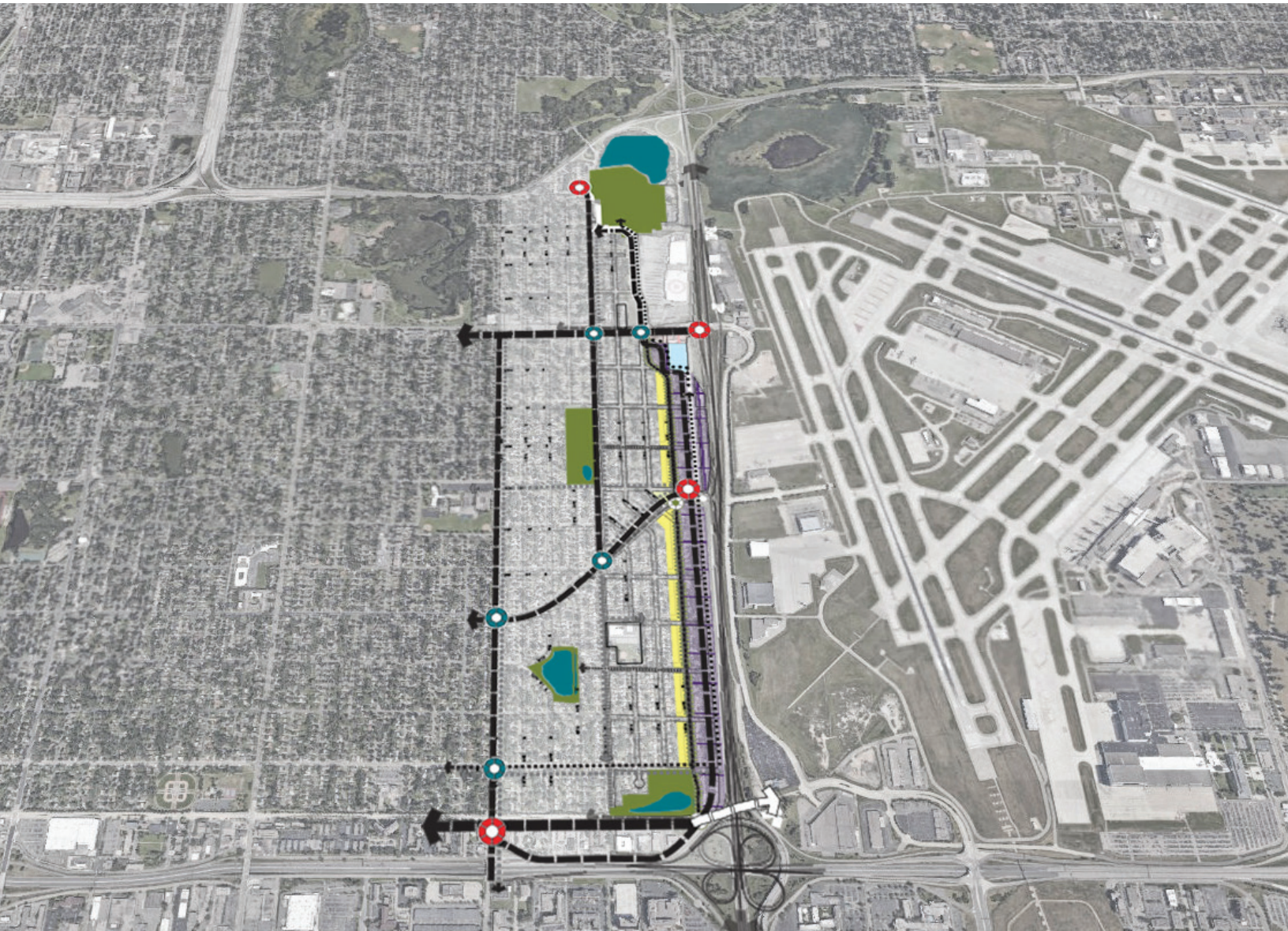


# CITY OF RICHFIELD | CEDAR AVENUE CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT MASTERPLAN UPDATE



RICHFIELD, MINNESOTA | SEPTEMBER 2016





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CEDAR POINT COMM  
WELCOME TO RICHFIELD

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Cedar Avenue defines the eastern boundary of Richfield. Land uses along the roadway corridor include a mix of single-family homes, apartments, and a number of free-standing businesses; the neighborhood continues to be impacted by the proximity to the Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport in a variety of ways.*

In 2016, the City updated the 2004 Redevelopment Master Plan for the Cedar Avenue Corridor. While the initial study had successfully guided the Cedar Point redevelopment in 2007, the national recession that followed stalled initiatives south of 66th Street for the next decade. The plan update responds to a clearer understanding of the noise impacts resulting from the north-south runway addition at the airport – which is less than what was anticipated – and is more reflective of current market conditions, including development pressure that may arise with the construction of the new underpass at 77th Street, which received \$12.5M in funding in 2015. Additionally, the study parameters were adjusted to generally encompass the area from 66th Street on the north to 77th Street on the south, and from the City’s eastern edge at Highway 77 to 17th Avenue on the west.

In 2014, 17th Avenue between 63rd and 65th Streets was reconstructed to become a “complete street” named Richfield Parkway, and a primary focus of the corridor plan update was the continuation and alignment of this parkway south of 66th Street. Calling for medium-density residential and mixed-use along the parkway spine, the proposed alignment and land use recommendations were established to better position the City of Richfield to meet its land-use goals:

- To maintain and enhance the “urban hometown” character of Richfield
- To develop identifiable nodes, corridors and gateways throughout the community
- To provide an economic climate within Richfield that will encourage the availability of quality goods, services and employment opportunities



# INTRODUCTION

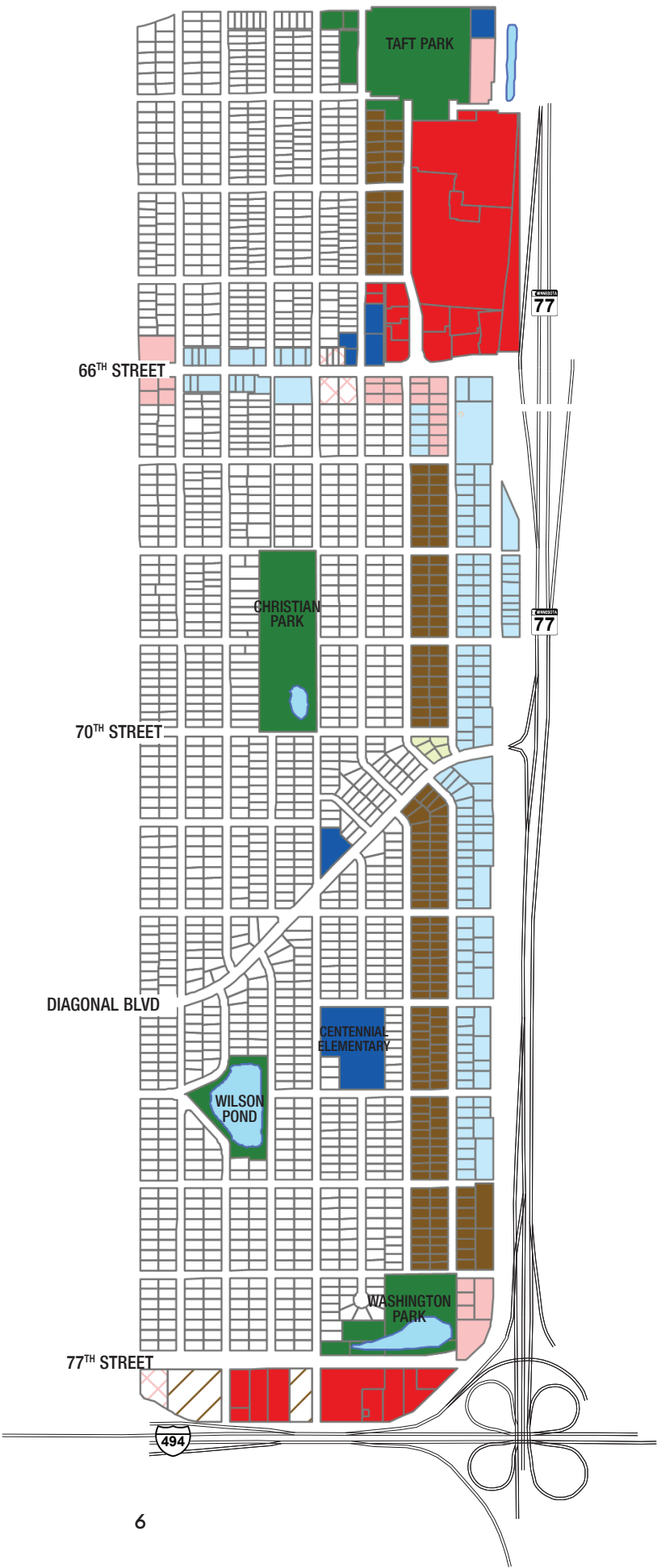
The Cedar Avenue area of Richfield is very reflective of the community as a whole. Predominantly residential, the neighborhood was developed primarily in the 1940's and 1950's around a grid street system containing homes with consistent scales and setbacks. It has a very traditional feel and includes schools, churches, parks and a mature tree canopy; like the city itself, this neighborhood conveys an image of being established.

For the sixty-plus years that have followed, the Cedar Avenue neighborhood has been impacted by the growth of the Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport, expansion of the regional highway network, and birth of second- and third-ring suburbs. As a result, development along the neighborhood's eastern edge has leaned towards a mix of low-rise rental apartment buildings and a sprinkling of small-scale commercial businesses, much of which is deteriorating due to age and environmental impacts.

A fully developed first-ring suburb, Richfield has been cognizant of the opportunity to redevelop and reshape these outdated areas of the city in order to position itself for a strong future, and understands that places like the Cedar Avenue Corridor can – properly planned – help to redefine Richfield for the next generation. Convenient transportation (including proximity to the airport), homogeneous housing stock, access to shopping and transit, and the community's changing demographics are all defining characteristics that are capable of both constraining and inspiring solutions as Richfield seeks to compete with other communities as a desirable place to live, work and play.

# EXISTING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- REGIONAL COMMERCIAL
- COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL
- COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL/OFFICE
- NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL
- OFFICE
- HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MIXED USE
- PARK
- PUBLIC







# PURPOSE

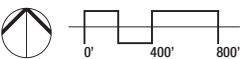
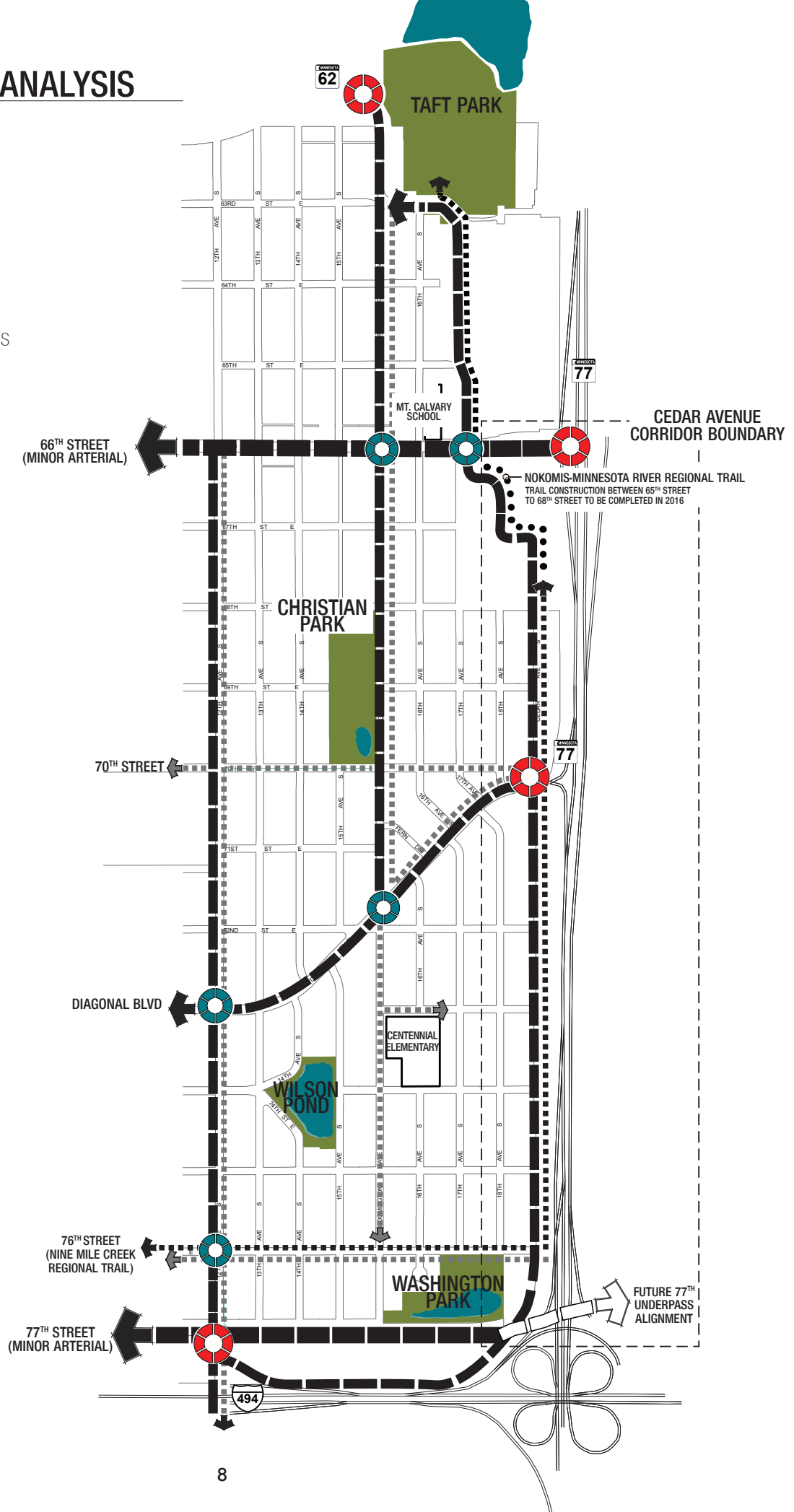
In seeking to maintain a competitive position, Richfield continues its decades-long course of strategic investments that promote redevelopment in selected areas while broadly promoting policies and programs that improve neighborhoods and business areas throughout.

In 2004, the city created a Redevelopment Master Plan for the Cedar Avenue Corridor. While this initial study had successfully guided the Cedar Point redevelopment in 2007, the national recession that followed stalled initiatives south of 66th Street for the next decade. And so this plan update was commissioned in 2016 to assess and respond to current challenges and opportunities. Specifically, the plan update responds to a clearer understanding of the noise impacts resulting from the north-south runway addition at the airport – which is less than what was anticipated – and is more reflective of current market conditions, including development pressure that may arise with the construction of the new underpass at 77th Street, which received \$12.5M in funding in 2015. Additionally, the study parameters were adjusted to generally encompass the area from 66th Street on the north to 77th Street on the south, and from the city's eastern edge at Highway 77 to 17th Avenue on the west.

The purpose of the plan is to help frame regulatory tools and policy, to guide public improvements, and to convey the community's vision for development to prospective developers, architects, planners and property owners.

# EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

-  GATEWAY
-  NODES
-  PARK
-  REGIONAL TRAIL CONNECTIONS
-  PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS
-  VEHICULAR CONNECTIONS (COLLECTOR)
-  VEHICULAR CONNECTIONS (MINOR ARTERIAL)



# VISION

The Cedar Avenue Corridor is envisioned as an area that takes full advantage of the opportunities unique to its location, to the betterment of the neighborhood and to the city as a whole. The defining characteristics of this corridor – visibility, proximity to the airport, access to convenient transportation and transit, adjacency to regional shopping and business, a shifting demographic, and an established neighborhood with quality, albeit aging and homogeneous, housing stock – serve to both define parameters of and inspire the vision for this corridor.

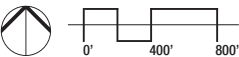
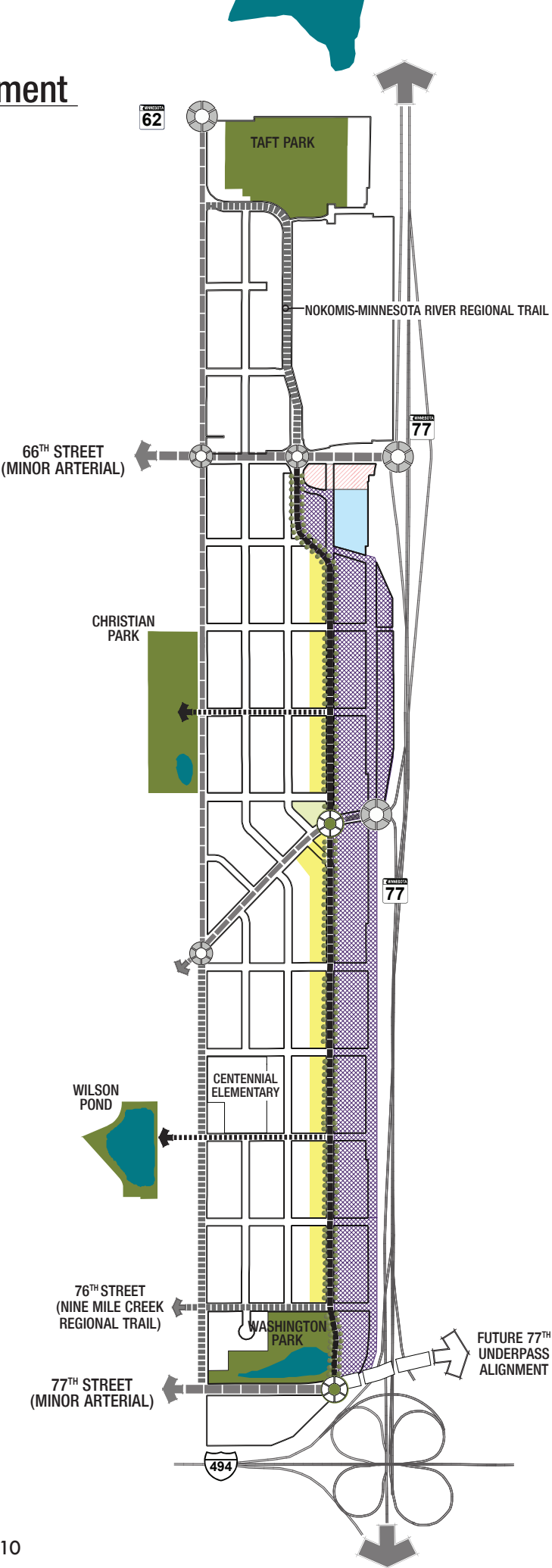
The Master Plan update seeks to align with the over-arching goals of the Richfield Comprehensive plan, including enhanced connectivity, neighborhood stabilization/revitalization, targeted redevelopment and expanded business opportunities. The study assessed, and specifically addresses, gateways and nodes, connections, place-making elements and land-use within the corridor.

The vision for this targeted redevelopment masterplan of the city's eastern edge is:

- To establish a renewed brand at a signature gateway to the city
- To extend Richfield Parkway as an important north-south connector, as a neighborhood amenity, and as a transitional element between new land-uses and the existing single-family neighborhood
- To introduce new commercial uses that capitalize on the site's unique resources, that directly serve the local community, and that provide employment opportunities
- To increase the diversity of housing options
- To encourage the rehabilitation and replacement of the lowest-quality housing stock

# RICHFIELD PARKWAY - 18th Ave Alignment

- COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL/OFFICE  
 OFFICE  
 MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL  
existing single-family homes allowed to remain and improve  
 MIXED USE  
 NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL  
 PARK  
 LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL  
 NODE  
 EXISTING NODE
- 
- VEHICULAR CONNECTIONS  
 (COLLECTOR)  
 VEHICULAR CONNECTIONS  
 (MINOR ARTERIAL)  
 EXISTING PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE  
 CONNECTIONS  
 RICHFIELD PARKWAY  
 (INTERCITY REGIONAL TRAIL ROUTE)  
 PROVIDE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS FROM  
 PARKWAY TO RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD



# PLAN ELEMENTS

The Cedar Avenue Corridor masterplan is intended to help create an economically viable place for residents to live, work, and play at the city's eastern edge. In assessing current conditions and future opportunity, three key plan elements ultimately rose to the top as drivers of the final plan:

- Alignment of Richfield Parkway
- Mixed-use Development Pattern
- Housing Diversity

## RICHFIELD PARKWAY

In 2014, 17th Avenue between 63rd and 65th Streets was reconstructed to become a “complete street” named Richfield Parkway, and a primary focus of the corridor plan update was the continuation and alignment of this parkway south of 66th Street.

This study identifies the alignment of Richfield Parkway to be along 18th Avenue from 66th Street on the north to 77th Street on the south. Two key contributors to that decision were 1.) the design and construction of a new underpass at 77th Street at 77th, and 2.) the ability to assemble property necessary to support appropriate and impactful development.

Richfield Parkway along 18th Avenue will follow the design established at the Cedar Point development north of 66th Street and will ultimately be classified as an ‘A’ Minor Arterial roadway. It is a divided-lane vehicular and greenway corridor that, by design, accommodates the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists in addition to vehicles, and includes enhanced landscaping.

Right-of-way alignment for the parkway will, at a minimum, preserve existing property boundaries to the west of 18th Avenue, and a variety of traffic calming measures such as roadway configuration and roundabouts will be further studied as detailed plans are developed. Important nodes along this extension of Richfield Parkway include a major gateway to the City of Richfield at 66th Street, a neighborhood node at Diagonal Blvd, the intersection at the “complete street” on 76th, and the terminus at 77th Street.

Ultimately, Richfield Parkway will be more than just an improved north-south connector. Enhanced with landscaping and well-designed bike and pedestrian paths, it will become an amenity that successfully seams together new mixed-use development with a revitalized single-family residential neighborhood.

## MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

The intent of the land-use plan for the Cedar Avenue Corridor redevelopment is to stabilize and revitalize the existing low density residential (LDR) by introducing mixed-use development that accommodates the density necessary to support neighborhood-commercial type goods and services. Mixed-use development refers to the integration of residential, commercial, retail, employment, civic, recreation and educational uses in a way that not only supports and enhances each element in the development, but provides residents in the surrounding neighborhood a rich and diverse environment in which to live, work, shop, play and learn.

Generally, the redevelopment area east of the proposed Richfield parkway seeks to support a residential density of 24-50 units per acre, with predominantly ground floor retail and commercial and vertical integration of residential and office functions. The intent is to support mixed-use developments that represent a blend of the functions commonly associated with High Density Residential (HDR and HDRO), Neighborhood Commercial (NC), and Community Commercial (CC and CCO) as defined in the 2008 Richfield Comprehensive Plan and attached in the Appendix section of this report, for an overall mix of approximately 60% commercial and 40% residential.

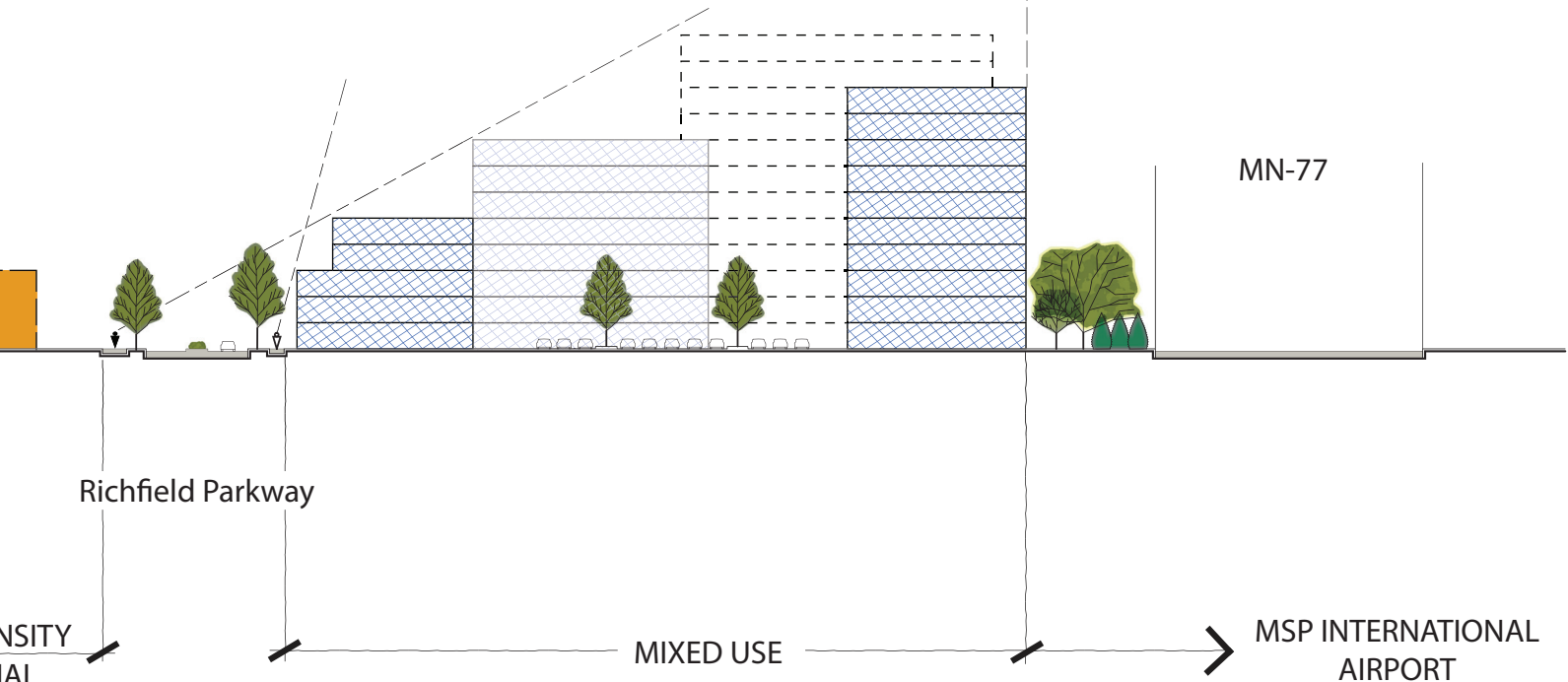
For the half block west of the parkway, Medium Density Residential (MDR) is planned to help transition density from the Mixed-used development area to the existing single-family residential neighborhood (designated "Low Density Residential (LDR)"). This classification accommodates attached housing – predominantly townhomes or condominiums – ranging from seven to twelve units per acre. Overlay language will address the accommodation of and improvements to existing single-family residential units that are currently located in that area.

Detailed direction in terms of form, setbacks and other requirements will be addressed via zoning and an overlay district for this corridor, which will include guidance on such things as setbacks from parkway, height limitations in relation to those setbacks, requirements for entrances/windows/plazas and other semi-public activity space to front the parkway, limitations on service access, parking, open space, landscaping, and screening, to name a few. A conceptual cross-section through the study area has been developed to direct the massing of the mixed-use and commercial projects within the development area, with upper story setbacks to ensure pedestrian-scaled enclosure of the parkway. Development should be promoted in a manner that avoids leaving isolated single-family homes surrounded by new development with incompatible densities.

The overall intent of the mixed-use classification is to encourage a pedestrian-friendly environment that fronts the parkway, provides lifestyle goods and services for the adjacent neighborhood, sensitively incorporates parking and service requirements, increases housing density and diversity, offers employment opportunities, invigorates with its architecture, and ultimately re-energizes the city's eastern edge.



----- CEDAR AVENUE CORRIDOR OVERLAY DISTRICT -----





## HOUSING DIVERSITY

Housing is the largest component of the existing land use in the Cedar Avenue neighborhood. The city understands that to remain competitive in retaining and attracting new residents, it needs to:

- Expand housing choices
- Promote the stabilization, revitalization and modernization of the existing housing stock
- Maintain affordability
- Support attractive neighborhoods

Richfield has a limited amount of diversity in its housing stock. Most of the units are single-family detached structures constructed in the mid-twentieth century and generally reflect the styles popular at that time – one story ramblers and one-and-a-half story expansion bungalows. The homes are also smaller, with most less than 1,200 square feet, and commonly lacking in the lifestyle amenities found in new construction.

Despite the age of the homes, the Hennepin County Assessor's office generally ranks the stock as average or better – though the homes still may not have the features currently sought by homeowners. And so development that encourages reinvestment in the existing single-family structures in the form of renovations and expansions will not only expand housing choices, but will help attract and retain families in the community.

This reinvestment in the existing single-family housing stock, combined with diverse offerings in the medium-density and mixed-use redevelopment projects will ultimately result in housing options for all points in a person's life, also known as "life-cycle housing", which typically includes:

- Rental housing for young adults without the interest or financial capacity for ownership
- Units for first-time home buyers
- "Move-up" housing that allows growing families to move to a larger home
- Maintenance free housing for empty nesters
- Housing with supportive services for the elderly

Richfield is an affordable place to live, as well, and needs to remain affordable. But parts of the neighborhood have also been designated as an Area of Concentrated Poverty where 50% or more of residents are people of color (ACP50). The intent of the updated plan is to support development that offers high-quality affordable housing options as well as desirable market-rate units and a strong employment base, resulting in a revitalized neighborhood that is culturally rich.

The plan specifically addresses redevelopment along the Richfield Parkway in order to enhance the existing neighborhood and protect it from undue encroachments. The parkway serves as a clear delineator between higher-density mixed-used and the existing lower-density residential area. To further ease the transition, the half-block to the west of the parkway is designated Medium-density Residential (MDR) to both step down the physical scale and provide that low-rise attached product that is a key product in "life-cycle housing".

Ultimately, the Redevelopment Master Plan is intended to further the community's goals in regards to housing:

- To maintain and enhance the image as a community with **strong, desirable and livable neighborhoods**, and
- To ensure sufficient **diversity in the housing stock** to provide for a range of household sizes, income levels and needs

# APPENDIX

## LAND USE CATEGORIES AS DEFINED IN THE 2008 RICHFIELD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

### **Low Density Residential (LDR)**

The majority of Richfield's existing housing stock falls within the Low Density Residential land use category. The low density residential category has been derived from the Single-family Residential category that was included in the City's 1999 Comprehensive Plan. The low density residential category allows for the mixture of single-family detached and attached units such as, duplexes and lower density townhomes. Low Density residential development ranges from 1 to 6 units per acre.

### **Medium Density Residential (MDR)**

The Medium Density Residential land use category was derived from the Single-family Residential – High Density category (R-SFH) that was included in the City's 1999 Comprehensive Plan. The medium density residential category replaces the R-SFH category. Naming this category medium density better clarifies the intent of the residential uses within this category. Medium density residential accommodates attached housing, predominantly townhomes or condominiums ranging from 7 to 12 units per acre. Medium density residential also includes manufactured housing.

### **High Density Residential (HDR)**

High Density Residential also includes multi-unit and multi-building developments at a more intense scale. The allowed density range is a minimum of 24 units per acre. High Density Residential uses are primarily located convenient to transportation, utility, security, shopping and social services in order to support higher concentrations of people.

### **High Density Residential/Office (HDRO)**

The High Density Residential/Office category is similar to the High Density Residential category. The HDRO includes multi-unit and multi-building developments with the presence of office uses. Like the HDR category, a minimum density of 24 units per acre is required.

**Neighborhood Commercial (NC)**

The Neighborhood Commercial land use category provides the opportunity for retail goods and services that directly cater to a limited geographic area or neighborhood in Richfield. The intent of this category is to provide space to allow for goods or services that neighborhood residents need on a frequent basis. For example, neighborhood uses may include a convenience store, coffee shop, drug store, hardware store or dry cleaner. Neighborhood commercial uses must fit within the character and scale of a residential neighborhood and should be accessible by foot and bicycle. The size of neighborhood commercial is limited to 5,000 square feet. An example of an existing neighborhood commercial use is the center that is located along Chicago Ave. between E 71st St. and E 72nd St.

**Community Commercial (CC)**

Community Commercial accommodates a wide variety of retail goods and services that are more intense than neighborhood scale commercial but generally not uses that attract customers from throughout the Twin City metropolitan area. Community commercial uses are intended to serve residents of Richfield and the immediate vicinity around Richfield. Community commercial uses are primarily located along major local corridors, such as 66th St., Penn Ave., Nicollet Ave., and Portland Ave. An example of an existing community commercial area is the HUB which is located at East 66th Street and Nicollet Land Use and Community Facilities 4 Richfield Comprehensive Plan 4-21 Avenue. Community commercial uses can contain buildings up to 150,000 square feet in size.

**Mixed Use (MU)**

Mixed Use is a land use category that is being used to better clarify planned land use patterns in specific districts and/or corridors of the City. In general the Mixed Use designation is designed to include a mix of residential, shopping, recreational, and business uses in a manner that responds to the surrounding neighborhood.

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