

Richfield 2040 Comprehensive Plan

Community Brief #1: Phase I Public Engagement Summary

Phase I of the public engagement process for the Comprehensive Plan Update occurred over a three-month period between April 2017 and June 2017. This process included a variety of public engagement activities. Each activity was designed to garner public feedback regarding Richfield as a community. For example, participants were asked what makes Richfield a great place to live, work, and play. Other questions focused on their favorite amenity and biggest concern. These types of questions were asked in person at “pop-up” events and online through an interactive mapping tool. Marketing for this effort was also conducted through regular social media posts via Facebook, a guest column by City Planner Melissa Poehlman in the Sun Current, and through the help of the Comprehensive Planning Advisory Committee.

Input received during the public engagement activities were analyzed and compiled to better understand key themes (e.g., issues, opportunities, needs and assets). A summary of the Phase I public engagement activities and findings are highlighted throughout this Community Brief. Results from the public engagement activities are also documented in Attachment A.

Overall, City Staff and the Advisory Committee were able to reach over 1,250 community members:

- **Online Mapping Tool**
 - 900 unique visitors
 - 100 unique responses to the survey
- **Pop-Up Events**
 - Interaction with over 100 community members
 - 60 participants took the survey
- **Advisory Committee**
 - More than 1,700 surveys and informational flyers (paper copies) distributed
 - Engaged over 15 community groups/events

Pop-up Events

“Pop-up” events are designed to “meet-people-where-they are,” and to be interactive and casual. This approach has proven to be effective compared to traditional open houses that expect “people-to-come-to you.” In that respect, the “pop-up” events selected for Phase I focused on locations with large volumes of foot traffic. More importantly, the locations selected for this effort targeted unrepresented populations. This helped ensure all “voices” were heard during the Phase I public engagement activities.

Staff attending the events distributed \$5 gift cards to residents who participated in the questionnaire. Funds for the gift cards were provided by the Bloomington, Edina and Richfield State Health Improvement Program (SHIP).

The pop-up events occurred at the following locations and times:

1. Transit Stops and Routes: May 9th between 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
2. Loaves and Fishes (Hope Church): May 10th between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
3. City Hall/DMV: May 30th between 2:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Online Engagement Tool

Online engagement tools help reach larger audiences and provide a convenient way for people to participate in the process at home. The online engagement tool selected for the Phase I public engagement activities included an interactive mapping platform (i.e., Wiki Maps) that gave community members the opportunity to provide comments, answer questions, and pinpoint places of interest. All responses were collected anonymously.

City Staff promoted the online engagement tool and “pop-events” via Facebook. Thus, Facebook provided another avenue for community members to participate. Discussions did occur on Facebook regarding the Phase I public engagement activities and comprehensive planning process. City Staff answered any questions that were posted on the City’s Facebook page.

Advisory Committee

A Comprehensive Planning Advisory Committee was appointed by City Council. The committee is comprised of 14 residents with varying backgrounds. Each committee member served as a “champion” of the process by promoting the Phase I public engagement activities. In this capacity, each member attended a community event or went door-to-door to promote the comprehensive planning process. Each member was given 50 informational flyers/surveys to distribute. The flyers provided information about Richfield currently, the purpose of the comprehensive plan, and ways to be involved in the update process. Many Advisory Committee members enthusiastically took to their ambassador/champion role and requested hundreds of additional flyers to distribute.

Translation of Materials

The informational flyer and survey was translated into Spanish. Staff who spoke fluent Spanish also attended the “pop-up” events and participated in some great in-depth conversations with our Spanish-speaking residents.

Key Themes

Some key themes emerged throughout the Phase I public engagement activities. These themes and findings will serve as a foundation for updating the comprehensive plan, including refining the plan’s goals and policies, and guiding future transportation, parks, and trail needs. That said, there were also several topics on which the respondents were split. These topics focused more on the character of Richfield and how residents perceive the community.

A brief summary of findings is provided below.

Urban vs. Suburban

Responses showed a divide between residents who see Richfield as an urban extension to South Minneapolis and those that view the community as more suburban and, in some respects, a bedroom community. Most

respondents valued Richfield's proximity and convenient access to the airport, Mall of American and downtown Minneapolis. Many praised the fact that Richfield feels more suburban but offers the urban benefits of a larger city. Based on these responses, "The Urban Hometown," remains an apt description of Richfield for many.

Higher Density vs. Lower Density

Responses were similarly divided in regard to development intensity. Some participants favored higher density residential and commercial development patterns, leaning more towards an urban footprint for Richfield. Others view Richfield as a primarily single family residential community, and feel that it should remain this way in the future. Most expressed the need to preserve and maintain the existing housing stock.

Affordable Housing Need vs. Too Much Affordable Housing

Affordable housing was noted as one of the community's biggest concerns. The reason for this concern was once again split, with some participants indicating that there is too much affordable housing and others calling for more. Participant's definitions of affordable housing ranged from single-family homes for first time home buyers to poorly maintained apartment buildings. Overall, residents value the affordable options that exist today.

Redevelopment

There is a strong desire to see investments made on the east side of town. Comments focused on redevelopment efforts along 66th Street (east of Nicollet Avenue), including enhancing the aesthetics along the corridor. Responses related to the west-side of the community (west of Lyndale Avenue) focused on the need for beautification efforts along Penn Avenue as well as improved traffic and pedestrian safety in the area.

Larger redevelopment concern focused on the Hub. Many responses focused on the need to redevelop the area and provide better aesthetics. Some responses were directed at the need to attract and provide more diverse shopping options. However, it is important to note that the typically-underrepresented populations (e.g., older residents, transit riders, and non-white residents) value the HUB's existing businesses (e.g., pharmacy and grocery store) and its proximity to transit.

Valued Characteristics

Respondents valued a number of things about Richfield. Common words used to describe the city included "diverse," "friendly," "proximity," "small town," "nice," and "quiet."

Valued Amenities

Responses showed that residents value the parks in the community. In particular, Woodlake Nature Center, Augsburg Park, and Veterans Park. The diversity of Richfield was also noted and highly regarded as a valued amenity for the community.

Desired community amenities included a dog park, bike connections, and the beautification of commercial corridors, such as 66th Street and Penn Avenue.

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Attachment A- Findings

Richfield 2040: Public Engagement Phase 1 Results

Approach

Richfield 2040

INSTRUCTIONS

Utilize the tabs below to answer questions and provide valuable input to inform the city's 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Detailed instructions and map viewing options are available under "About and Help".

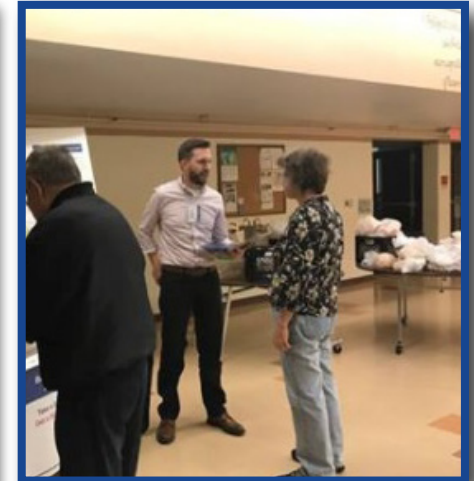
Existing Systems

City Limits

Provide Your Input!

- Identify your favorite place
- Identify the City's Best Characteristic
- Identify your Biggest Concern for the City
- Identify a Needed or Valued City Amenity

Richfield 2040 About & Help Identify a Location/Amenity Anonymous



Pop-Up Events

- Transit Routes - May 9th
- Loaves and Fishes (Hope Church) - May 10th
- City Hall/DM - May 30th
- Neighborhood Meetings (15) Led By the Steering Committee

Online Engagement

- Public Input Mapping Tool - April 20th through June 20th
- Facebook Postings - Ongoing



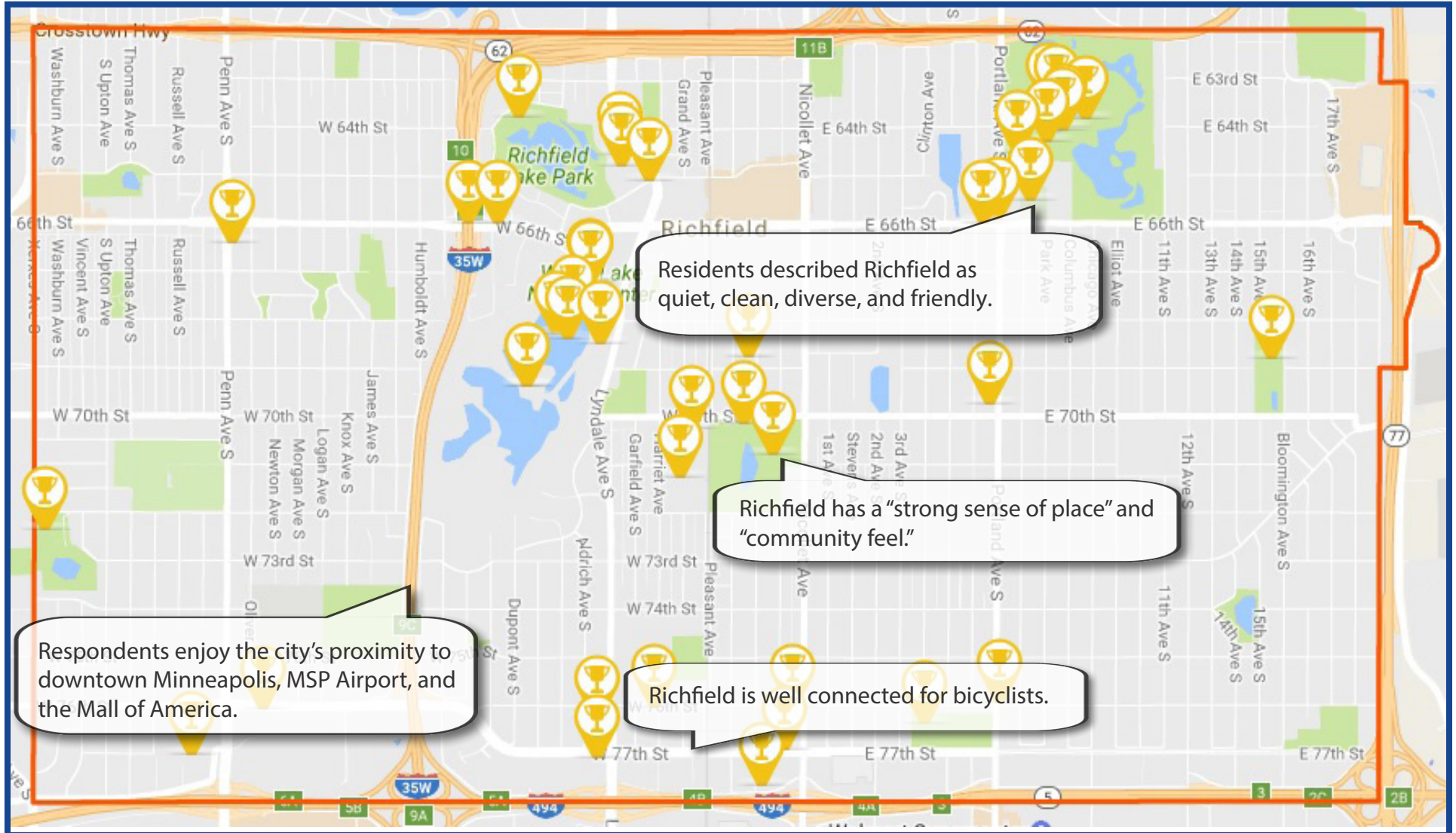
What have we heard?

Identify the City's Best Characteristic



What have we heard?

Identify the City's Best Characteristic

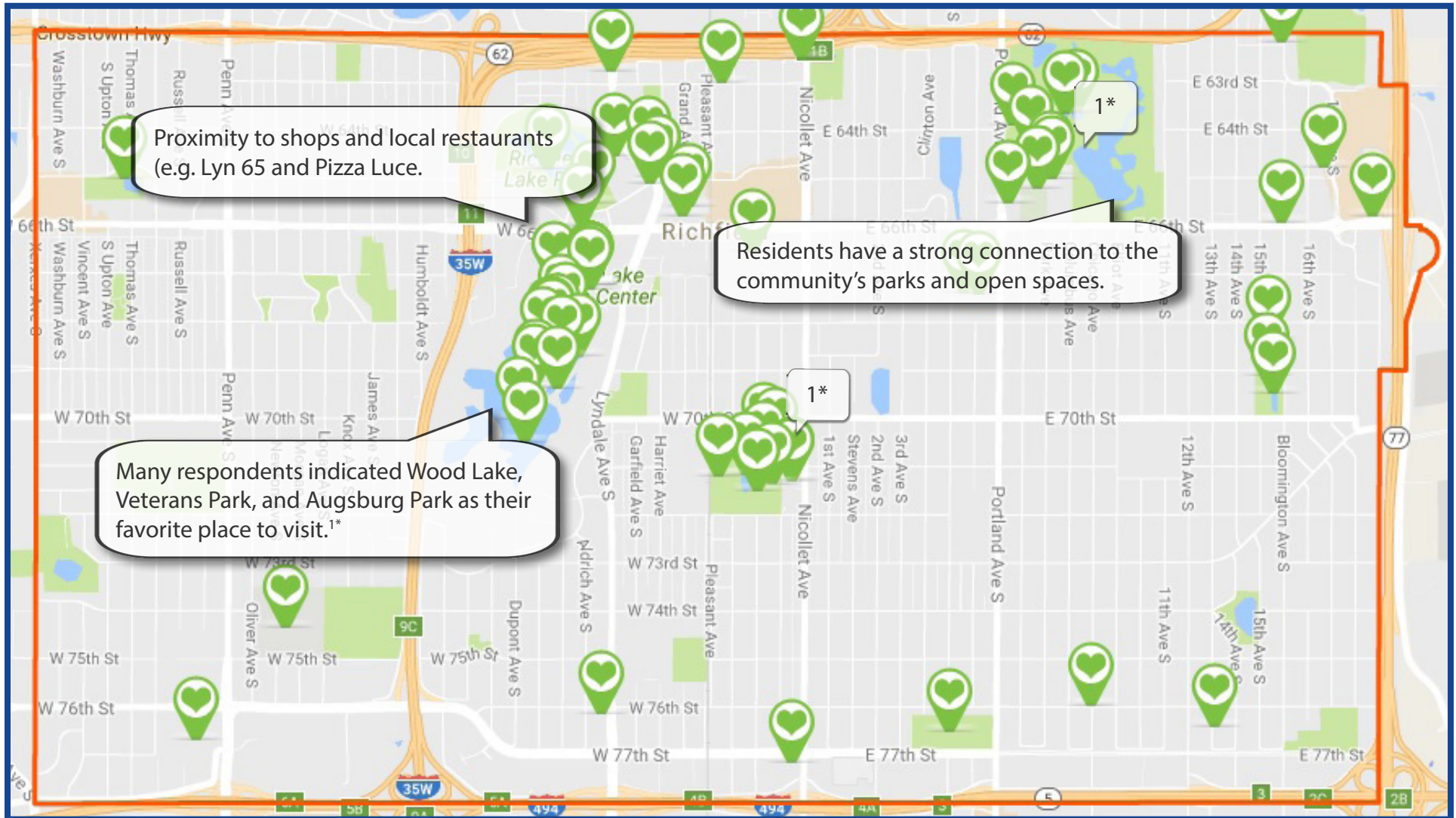


What have we heard?

What is your favorite place in Richfield?



What is your favorite place in Richfield?



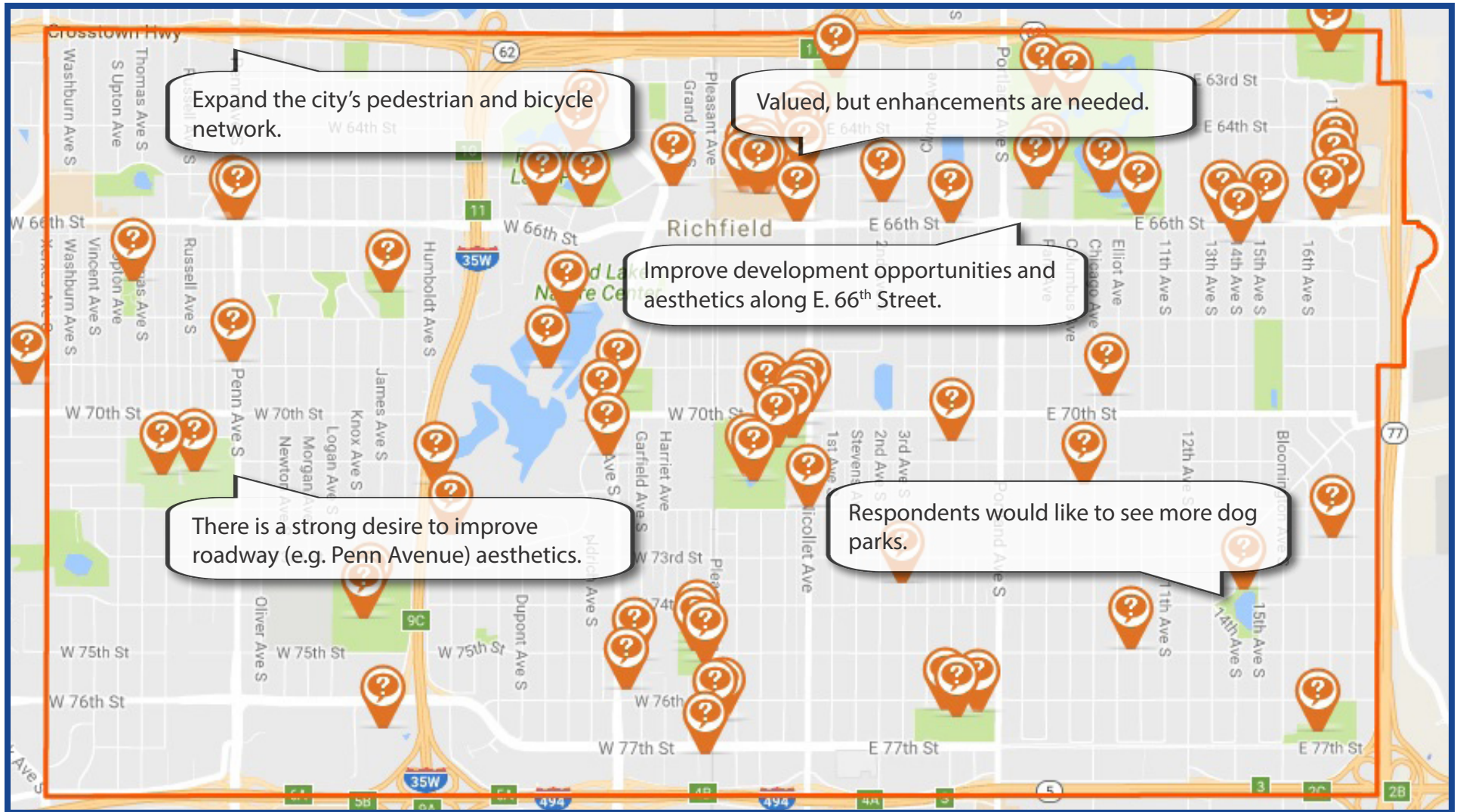
What have we heard?

What is a needed amenity in Richfield?



What have we heard?

What is a needed amenity in Richfield?



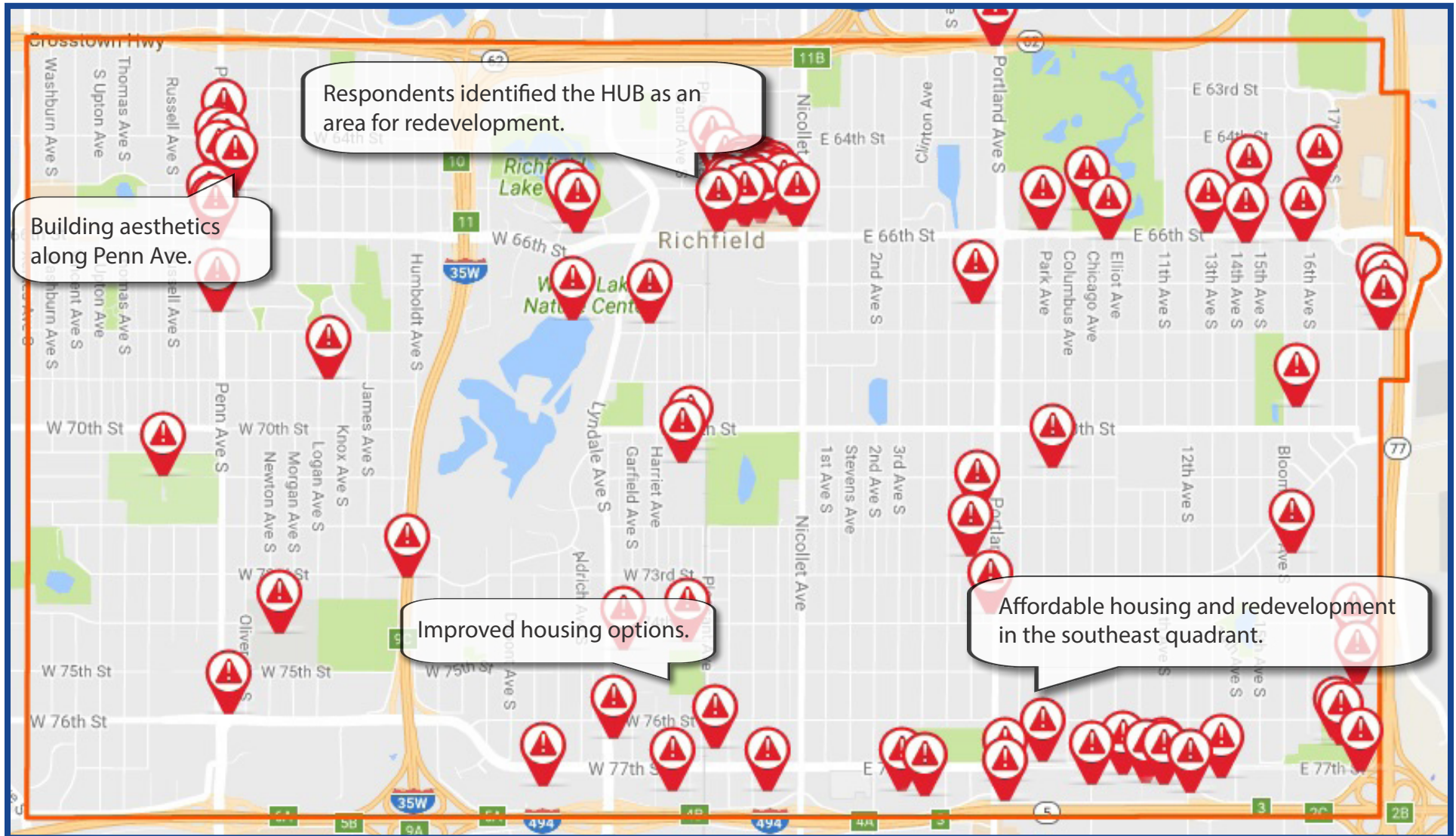
What have we heard?

Identify your biggest concern for the future of Richfield?



What have we heard?

Identify your biggest concern for the future of Richfield?



What have we heard?

How do you typically travel to your favorite place in Richfield?
(Choose all that apply)



Car - 62%



Walking - 47%



Biking - 38%



Transit - 0.05%

What makes Richfield a great place to live, work, and play (key themes)?

- 🏠 Respondents enjoy the city's **proximity** to downtown Minneapolis, MSP Airport, local businesses, and the Mall of America.
- 🏠 Residents have a strong connection and appreciation for the community's **parks and open spaces**.
- 🏠 Respondents recognize the benefits of Richfield's **small town character, inclusive feel, and diverse people**.
- 🏠 Residents value the **affordability** of the community.
- 🏠 Residents appreciate and utilize the **bike and pedestrian trails** throughout the community.

What should Richfield look like in 2040?

- 🏠 Respondents envision more **diverse housing opportunities, people, and local small business opportunities**.
- 🏠 Residents expect **blighted areas** of Richfield to be **redeveloped**.
- 🏠 Respondents anticipate there to be **more opportunities or improved services** for **walking, biking, and transit**.
- 🏠 Residents expect **enhanced education** opportunities and standards along with modernized facilities.
- 🏠 Residents envision **less concerns about crime** through greater enforcement and community engagement.