

Town of Richmond  
Rapid Fire Planning Night  
Topics: Affordability and Cost of Living; Community For All Ages; Social, Cultural and Recreational Offerings  
Joint meeting of the Planning Commission and the Town Plan Steering Committee  
January 6, 2015  
5:30 – 9pm

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Taped by MMCTV (for presentation only)

Present: 37 total

Planning Commission: Lauck Parke, Brain Tellstone, Sean Foley, Bruce LaBounty, Mark Fausel, Joy Reap

Steering Committee: Jeff Forward, Ian Bender, Marshall Paulston, Heidi L. Bormann, Chris Granda, Katie Loesel, Kristen Novotny, Alison Anand

Public: Steve Znamierowski, Anne O'Brien, Mary Houle, Alette Powel, Bob Low, Marie Thomas, Gretchen Paulsen, David Furney, Ian Stokes, John Hamerslough, Mary Ann Barnes, Martha Nye, Pat Burrett, Larry Burrett, Jack Linn, Lauren Esserman, Elizabeth Wright, Robin Rabideau, Amy Powers, Andrew Powers, Steve May, Roger Brown

Staff: Clare Rock, Geoff Urbanik

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Clare Rock, Town Planner, welcomed people and provided an overview of the planning process, project timeline and the expectation of re-writing the zoning following adoption of the new town plan.

Topic Presentations by Clare Rock, Town Planner. Summary of Key Observations from Presentation and Discussion:

Affordability and Cost of Living

- There are 1,298 homeowner households in Richmond and only 288 renter households
- Multifamily units are uncommon
- Median income in Richmond is \$74,011 (Homeowner households \$83,155, Renter households \$34,444)
- Median price of home sold in Richmond is \$283,750, household would need income of \$83,284 to afford (based upon 30% of income going toward housing)
- Fair Market rent of 2-bedroom apartment is approx. \$1,328, household would need income of \$53,120 to afford (based upon 30% of income going toward housing)
- Flood insurance is increasing, from a few hundred dollars a year to a few thousand dollars a year
- Energy efficiency and energy conservation can help decrease heating and cooling costs
- More users on the municipal water and sewer system can help decrease rates, current excess capacity could accommodate approx. 220 new homes
- Based upon survey results, some Richmond residents would like more affordable family restaurants in town
- Most people travel outside of Richmond for work in single occupancy vehicles, transportation costs can cost thousands of dollars a year

Community for All Ages

- Richmond's population is aging
- There are very few 1-bedroom units available, and few rental units available
- 25-35 year olds tend to occupy rentals

- The library is a resource for all ages
- Our Community Cares Camp provides service to youth in the summer time
- The Richmond Teen Center is dormant and is ready to be used by both youth and elders
- Senior Center group is actively looking to become more established and looking for a space to occupy and expand services
- People in Richmond miss the On The Rise Bakery, which provided “that third place” which was not work/school, nor a private residents, it’s a third place where people of all ages gather.

Social, Cultural, and Recreational Offering

- Richmond has a variety of gathering places including: schools, library, places of worship (Congregational Church and Friday Night Food Affair, Catholic Church and the Grange), Historical Society and the Round Church Events, local coffee shop, bars and brewery, summer farmers market, Volunteers Green playground, playing fields and youth sports events.
- People in Richmond miss the On The Rise Bakery, which provided “that third place” which was no work/school, nor a private residents, it’s a third place where people gather. The old Bakery served a local music and arts venue for all ages.
- Based upon survey results people in Richmond feel there is limited opportunities for Art and Music and would like more.
- Richmond has a variety of Recreational Offerings from municipal owned Volunteers Green and Browns Court ball fields, to school playing fields, trails on conserved land, skiing at Cochrans.
- The municipal recreation committee relies on volunteers who are primarily tasked with managing the existing facilities.
- Survey results indicate strong desire to expand recreational offerings to include a pool, basketball courts and tennis courts.

Participants divided into 3 groups (Affordability and Cost of Living; Community For All Ages; Social, Cultural and Recreational Offerings). Each group had the list of key observations, topic poster (including vision statement and what achieving our mission means), map, impact/feasibility chart, color codes post-it notes.

Each group was charged with reviewing the list of topic goals (aka “what achieving our mission means” from topic posters) and each group then brainstormed action items for each goal and posted (with sticky notes) on the topic posters.

Each group then prioritized the ideas by organizing the action items on the Impact/Feasibility Chart. Below is a listing of the action items followed by how they fell on the Impact/Feasibility Chart.

Impact/Feasibility Key:

- HI/HF = High Impact / High Feasibility**
- HI/LF = High Impact / Low Feasibility**
- HF /LI = High Feasibility / Low Impact**
- LF/LI = Low Feasibility / Low Impact**

## Affordability and a Reasonable Cost of Living

- Ensuring that people with a mix of ages, backgrounds, and income levels can afford to live in Richmond (purple)
  - Homeshare as a social service (for young and old) **HI/HF**
  - Co housing **HI/HF**
  - Granny pods (individual but in a community) **HI/HF**
  - Auxillary dwellings **HI/HF**
  - Tiny home community / Tiny homes for seniors that are handicap accessible **HI/HF**
  - How houses are built can determine how affordable they are, life cycle costs, heating **HI/HF**
  - Huge problem of college loans, young people, debt, not being able to afford downpayments and mortgage! Need rentals, want (?) rentals, smaller spaces **HI/LF**
  - Affordable housing in village **HI/LF**
  - Energy code **HF/LI**
  - Energy Star **HF/LI**
  - Enforce building code for new houses **HF/LI**
  - New houses in town, encouraging less than 1,000 sf **LF/LI**
- Providing a range of housing options for people of all ages and income levels (green)
  - Cheese factory added smaller apartments GOOD, but how much will they cost? Will it be affordable or market rate? **HI/HF**
  - Density Bonus for allowing many small homes, make lot size smaller in town (in Village?) **middle of HI/HF and HI/LF**
  - Focus growth in village so folks don't need cars **HI/LF**
  - What about cost of septic even if you are building tiny? **LI/HF**
  - Most affordable now is mobile home but costs a lot to heat and to pay for the lot (in park), grants to reduce energy usage? **LI/HF**
  - What does affordable housing mean? Subsidized? Grants for developers to take costs down and make affordable rents **LI/LF**
  - Bring in affordable housing for seniors and young families **LI/LF**
  - Fix up empty houses that one cares about **LI/LF**
  - Compact, smaller homes – more affordable for young people, tiny houses, zone for it **LI/LF**
- Encouraging local businesses that offer quality, affordable goods and services (orange)
  - Tax breaks for new businesses? **HI/HF**
  - Promotional buy local efforts, we have this now! **HI/HF**
  - Discourage things like Dollar General and preserve the GOOD businesses we don't have. Don't undermine them. **HI/HF**
  - Continue promoting Richmond brand of “the best of VT” good food, good beer, etc **HI/HF**
  - Affordability of businesses we already have – process that everyone can afford without having to go to Williston - \$12 burger is a lot for some **HI/LF**
  - Food trucks in Richmond for affordability **HF/LI**
  - Cannot be all things to all people **HF/LI**
  - i.e. Pharmacy do we have enough people? Past pharmacy didn't make it. Could they survive **LF/LI**
- Managing town spending, local taxes and public service rates (yellow)
  - Local fuel buying group **HI/HF**
  - Share equipment and services with neighboring towns **HI/HF**

- Find towns/ compare best practices for road maintenance, etc **HI/HF**, petition VLCT to create municipal best practices database **HI/LI**
- Grant writer for town **middle of HI/HF and HI/LI**
- Financial planner for town investment recommendation **middle of HI/HF and HI/LI**
- Life cycle costs for buildings/equipment infrastructure (see Jeff Forward) **middle of HI/HF and HI/LI**
- Disaster preparedness, unexpected costs, climate change costs and needs **middle of all**
- Focus on the basics – roads, bridges, sewer system **HI/LI**

### Community for All Ages Goals

- Providing social opportunities, gathering places and resources for youth, teens, young adults and families (purple)
  - Community center (for seniors 50+yo,) (to teach life skills for young, teens and old) (as a hub for seniors and bring in partners such as historical society) **HI/HF**
  - Youth program that connects youth with seniors (after school enrichment) (mentoring) **HI/HF**
  - Use existing facilities for gathering places, promote these facilities, upgrade spaces as needed **HI/HF**
  - A big community event each season, like the 4<sup>th</sup> of July **HI/LF**
  - Mass transit **middle of all**
- Ensuring that youth and elders can meaningfully contribute to the community (green)
  - Mentoring program **HI/HF**
  - Volunteer bank **HI/HF**
  - Clearing house **HI/HF**
  - Create a Richmond (or regional) senior services volunteer program where seniors volunteer to help others **HI/HF**
  - Volunteer coordinator to encourage and support volunteer opportunities for all ages **HI/HF**
  - Provide public transportation to bring together rural and town (village?) folk **HI/LF**
- Providing services and housing to help seniors remain independent and active (orange)
  - Help people connect / volunteer bank **HI/HF**
  - Affordable housing for seniors **HI/HF**
  - Senior housing at different levels of service, need in town (village?) or as close as possible **HI/HF**
  - Shuttle bus / transport – end isolation **HI/HF**
  - Elderly housing in the village **HI/HF**
- Ensuring that all children have access to healthy food and child care (yellow)
  - ½ to 1 cent recreation tax **HI/HF**
  - Increase school gardens **HI/HF**
  - Community gardens for personal use and for job training and giving food to hungry **HI/HF**
  - Advocacy group to educate community on needs **HI/HF**
  - Return cooking classes to school **HI/HF**
  - Sponsor learning kitchen **HI/LF**
- Supporting local schools (blue)
  - Make it easier for people to volunteer in school **HI/HF**
  - Encourage parents of children who have moved thru the system to stay involved **HI/HF**
  - Adult volunteers to teach and supervise school enrichment program **HI/HF**

- Recreation director **HI/HF**

### **Social, Cultural and Recreational Offerings**

- Providing parks and public spaces for people of all ages to meet and play (purple)
  - Expand (and connect) Trail Network and market them (but not too much) **HI/HF**
  - Remove “not in my backyard” **HF /LI**
  - Tennis courts **HF /LI**
  - Use resources we have and enhance them **HF /LI**
  - Maintain support of existing parks, etc **HF /LI**
- Maintaining a wide variety of accessible trails and open spaces (green)
  - Identify ways to promote Richmond as a destination for Social, Cultural and Rec **HI/HF**
  - Safe walking/running/biking path from park and ride (or end of Johnnie Brook Trail) to Village **middle of HI/HF & HI/LF**
  - Safe walking/running/biking path from Round Church to Johnnie Brook Trail **HI/LF**
  - Purchase Development Rights of key properties **HI/LF**
  - Work with local interest groups, such as Fellowship of the Wheel **HF /LI**
  - Become more aware of wildlife implications of people accessing natural areas in the town **HF /LI**
  - More parking at Dugway to access river and land trust properties **HF /LI**
  - Promoting more access to Snipe Ireland Road natural area **LF/LI**
- Providing a variety of recreational programs and facilities (orange)
  - Promoting and funding recreational director **HI/HF**
  - Allow public uses of floodplain areas **HF /LI**
- Supporting arts and cultural programs for all ages (yellow)
  - Cochran’s summer activities **HI/HF**
  - Support school programs, encourage youth and elders to share interests **HI/LF**
  - Multi generational arts and recreation (combined) center, including theater, art studios/gallery, meeting rooms, pool **HI/LF**
  - Music festival at parks or open spaces **LF/LI**
- Attracting diverse and quality restaurants, pubs, cafes and gathering places (blue)
  - Incentives for developers to develop recreation facilities **HI/HF**
  - Stone Corral (micro brewery) filling the gap **HI/HF**
  - Decipher between attainable public/town goals and activities/resources and private business can provide (and invite into town to do so) or existing businesses allowed to do more **HI/HF**
  - We seem to be doing well but maybe more advertizing by the Town of Richmond **HI/LF**

Each group then reported back to whole group on the work of their respective groups. Actions identified by the Community for Ages group were all do-able, but very much relied on building human capital.

Clare Rock thanked everyone for coming and reminded people of the next Planning Night on January 20, 2016. After all the planning nights we will be hosting a mapping workshop which will use information from each planning night and map out a future land use map for Richmond. Parting comments from participants included support and appreciation of the format of the evening, one participant added he would have liked to have been able to participate in all 3 conversations.