



## **Richfield City Council Agenda**

**May 26, 2026 -- 5:45 PM**

**Richfield Municipal Center  
Bartholomew Conference Room  
6700 Portland Avenue South**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Item Discussion**
  - a. Sidewalks and Tree Planting Policies**
- 3. Adjournment**

Auxiliary aids for individuals with disabilities are available upon request. Requests must be made at least 96 hours in advance to the City Clerk at 612-861-9739.

Includes Materials - Materials relating to these agenda items can be found in the Council Chambers Agenda Packet book located by the entrance. The complete Council Agenda Packet is available electronically on the City of Richfield website.



**Report Prepared By:**

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**Department Director:**

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**Item for Consideration:**

**Sidewalks and Tree Planting Policies**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The work session will be a continuation of the discussion started at the April 14, 2026 Policy Proposal Work Session regarding Council Member Hayford Oleary’s proposed updates to the City’s Sidewalk Policy and associated tree planting guidelines. The sidewalk and tree planting policies are complementary and will impact future residential street design, urban tree canopy goals, and winter maintenance operations.

Low volume residential roads and sidewalks have long service lives, and these policies will impact neighborhoods in Richfield for the next 50 to 100 years. This requires a long-term vision and recognition that these policies affect each other. Potential priorities to consider include:

- Pedestrian accessibility
- Neighborhood character
- Sustainability
- Fiscal responsibility
- Physical constraints
  - Limited public right of way
  - Existing and planned tree planting
  - Snow storage
  - Utilities

It will likely not be possible to achieve an ideal version of each of these priorities, and tradeoffs will be necessary. These priorities may also shift depending on the type of project (sidewalk retrofit behind the existing curb vs a full reconstruction).

The upcoming work session is intended to provide Council with an opportunity to discuss these broader policy considerations and help establish guiding principles for future sidewalk and streetscape decisions.

Because these policy decisions have long-term effects, public engagement will be an important component of the discussion. The City’s upcoming Comprehensive Plan update presents an opportunity to gather community input on what priorities the

community values, to ensure that future policies have community support.

Staff are seeking guidance on how to frame this discussion for public input. Should staff draft an updated policy, or would Council prefer to collect input from residents prior to considering an updated policy?

### **Questions for Consideration**

1. What should residential streets prioritize over the next 100 years: pedestrian connectivity, urban tree canopy, vehicle parking and thru space, or a balance of these goals?
2. Should sidewalks be considered a standard feature on all residential streets or vary based on context?
3. Should sidewalks be included on one side or both sides of the street?
4. How should the city consider existing boulevard trees with the placement of future sidewalks?
5. For sidewalk retrofits, should the city be moving curb lines to install sidewalks?
6. Who will be responsible for snow removal and what will be the expected service level of snow removal?
7. Are there specific land use contexts where sidewalks should be prioritized, such as near schools, parks, trails, transit routes, or higher-density housing?
8. How should the City define success for residential streets from a long-term community planning perspective?
9. What tradeoffs are acceptable?

Other/future considerations – stormwater system impacts, parking, and long-term construction/maintenance costs.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

**Continue discussion on potential changes to the city's sidewalk and tree planting policies.**

### **HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Richfield's current sidewalk policy was adopted in 2016. The 2018 Pedestrian Master Plan contained multiple recommendations for updates to that policy.

Currently, there are approximately 44 miles of sidewalks in Richfield, with an additional 2 miles planned for upcoming construction.

### **EQUITABLE OR STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS OR IMPACTS**

### **POLICIES (RESOLUTIONS, ORDINANCES, REGULATIONS, STATUTES, ETC.)**

Current sidewalk inclusion is based on the 2016 Sidewalk Policy

### **CRITICAL TIMING ISSUES**

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

## **LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

## **ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATION(S)**

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. 2016 Sidewalk Policy
2. 260526\_Work Session Tree Location Visual

## CITY OF RICHFIELD

### Sidewalk Standards Policy

August 2016

Sidewalk placement is based on street classifications. Sidewalks requested or approved by City Council will meet the sidewalk standards outlined below.

#### Street Classifications

- Minor Arterial
  - Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of minor arterial streets.
- Collector
  - A sidewalk should be provided on only one side of collector streets.
- School Route
  - A sidewalk may be provided on one side of roadways on major school routes.
- Local Residential
  - Sidewalks are not provided on residential streets.
  - Most residential streets are 36 feet wide from back of curb to back of curb within a 60-foot right of way. This provides adequate width for two lanes of vehicular traffic, parking on both sides, and for pedestrians to walk on the streets.

#### Sidewalk Standards

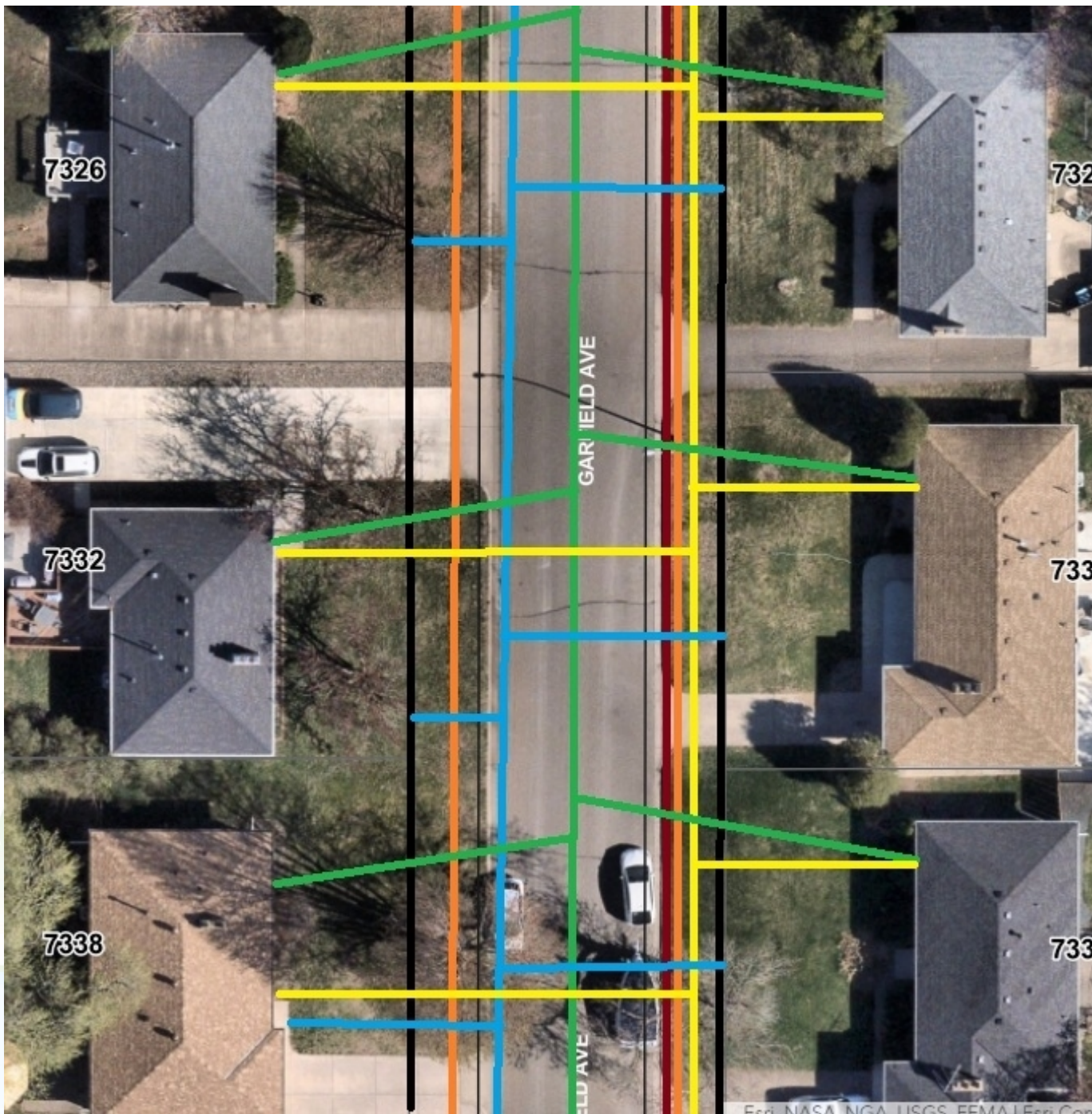
The minimum width for sidewalks should be six (6) feet to accommodate the operation of city sidewalk plows.

The following sidewalk layout options work within a twelve (12) foot right-of-way area:

1. Six (6) foot green space behind curb, six (6) foot sidewalk, zero (0) foot green space between private property. (Collector and Local Residential)
2. Zero (0) foot setback behind curb, 10 foot sidewalk with two (2) foot green space. (Minor Arterial)

Both of these choices offer an acceptable ease of maintenance and snow storage. The minimum green space in order for trees to grow is six (6) feet. City Staff maintains all sidewalks on public right of way.







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