



## City of Richmond

## Report to Council

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**To:** Richmond City Council  
**From:** Councillor Bill McNulty  
Chair, Planning Committee  
**Date:** March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2004  
**File:** 0100-20-RIAD1-01  
**Re:** **Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee**  
**2004 – 2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan and Work Program**

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The Planning Committee, at its meeting held on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2004, considered the attached report, and recommends as follows:

### Committee Recommendation

*That:*

- (1) the 2004 – 2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan (attached to the report dated February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004, from the Manager, Policy Planning), be received;*
- (2) within the 2004 – 2010 Intercultural Strategic Plan, Vision for Intercultural Life in Richmond, Introduction, Promote, that the order of the first two bullets be reversed; and*
- (3) the matter of the proposed staff position be referred to staff for review.*

Councillor Bill McNulty, Chair  
Planning Committee

Attach.

### VARIANCE

Please note that staff recommended the following:

*That:*

- (1) the 2004 – 2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan be approved, and
- (2) the 2004 – 2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan Work Program be approved.

## Staff Report

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the 2004 - 2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan and Work Program.

### Origin

On February 25, 2002 Council approved the 2002 Work Program of the Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee (RIAC), including to:

*"hold public consultations to discuss with the community, a vision, ideas, opportunities, issues and partnerships which need to be addressed to enhance intercultural harmony".*

On April 28, 2003 Council approved the RIAC Intercultural Strategy Focus Group consultation sessions that allowed RIAC to conduct community focus groups and develop the 2004 - 2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan and Work Program.

### Findings Of Fact

The RIAC Community Consultation Process involved three phases:

RIAC Community Consultation Process		
Phases	Participants	Results
1. Stakeholder Consultation, October 2002	26 organizations, 65 attendees	<b>Attachment 1</b>
2. Public Consultation, February 2003	12 presenters, 45 attendees	<b>Attachment 2</b>
3. focus group sessions with residents of Richmond conducted during September and October 2003: - five adult public focus groups - four youth focus groups	48 adult participants, 100+ youth participants	<b>Attachment 3</b>

In addition,

- a focus group was held with RIAC members to ensure that their expertise was incorporated, and
- a RIAC Strategic Planning session based on the results of the Community Consultation Process was conducted.

The Community Consultation Process is now complete, and RIAC is presenting the results of this Consultation in the attached report "2004 - 2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan and Work Program" (**Attachment 4**).

### Analysis

#### 1. Key Themes

Two themes pervade the attached report:

- 'Interculturalism', described as "a culturally interactive and vibrant process" (**Attachment 4**, p.4) compared to the relatively static concept of 'multiculturalism', is a fundamental principle, and
- Partnerships, recognizing that no one partner can achieve interculturalism alone, are critical to implementation.

Founded on these key concepts, RIAC has developed a thorough and far-reaching Strategic Plan and Work Program to help Richmond achieve an Intercultural Vision of becoming the "most welcoming, inclusive and harmonious community in Canada".

## 2. Next Steps

In 2004, the RIAC will:

- distribute the 2004 - 2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan and Work Program widely,
- meet with a wide range of community partners to build awareness, consensus and commitment for partners' participation, and
- encourage a wide range of partners to participate.

If the 2004 – 2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan is approved and Work Program implemented, RIAC will take the lead role in coordinating, implementing and reporting progress annually to Council, or as necessary.

Accomplishment of some strategic initiatives will depend on the willingness of partners to participate and the availability of required resources.

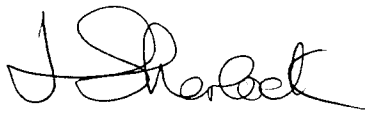
## Financial Impact

- 2004- 2010 Strategy and Work Program Funding
  - Approval of the 2004-2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan and Work Program does not commit Council to fund any specific initiative.
  - Any Council financial contribution to implementing the 2004-2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategy and Work Program will be first reviewed and if acceptable, approved by Council.
- RIAC Committee Funding
  - The RIAC currently has no operational budget.
  - The RIAC has a significant work program to undertake in 2004 and the years to come, including the implementation of the 2004-2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan and Work Program.
  - In a separate report, staff recommend that the City consider providing a \$5,000 operational budget annually to RIAC in the City's base budget, as part of the 2004 budget review process. This \$5,000 is proposed in the 2004 additional level budget.

## **Conclusion**

RIAC has completed an extensive community consultation process in the development of the 2004 – 2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan and Work Program and, because of the emphasis on partnerships and cultural interaction, the community will continue to be involved in its implementation.

The achievement of Richmond's corporate vision, of making Richmond the "most appealing, liveable, and well-managed city in Canada" will be greatly enhanced by City and community partners' endeavours to make Richmond "the most welcoming, inclusive and harmonious community in Canada".

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LSherlock', with a stylized, cursive script.

Lesley Sherlock,  
Social Planner (4220)

LS:cas

## RIAC Stakeholder Consultation: Issues and /or Needs

**PURPOSE: To identify issues and/or needs raised by participants in the RIAC Stakeholder Consultation held October 17, 2002.**

### **YOUTH\***

- violence, including bullying
- drug use
- cultural shock and resulting problems
- lack of opportunities to involve in social programs
- intergenerational issues

### **FAMILY**

- intercultural/intergenerational issues
- parent/teen conflicts
- couple conflict/family breakdown
- unemployment

### **LANGUAGE BARRIERS**

- missed opportunities to help develop English Language skills due to superseding priorities of employment pressures on new immigrants
- language barriers - verbal and written
- need for signage in other languages
- need for multilingual staff
- making material available in peoples mother tongue and in different forms

### **RACISM**

- since September 11 travel and employment for people from specific backgrounds have become a nightmare
- backlash against persons of Muslim faith
- racism manifests itself in many ways in our Community
- discrimination in jobs

### **CULTURAL BARRIERS\***

- cultural awareness and acceptance within the wider community
- how to communicate the cultural and religious values of different groups effectively to positively impact on issues such as racism

### **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT\***

- lack of involvement in community affairs
- lack of knowledge and understanding of Richmond residents of government policy, rules and regulations
- lack of community groups that openly integrate all cultural groups
- lack of trust or familiarity with Canadian Institutions, e.g. RCMP

### **SERVICE FUNDING**

- funding for settlement support (ESL, orientation, conversation, information, etc.)
- how to provide Chinese language classes to people of all heritages without adequate funding
- acknowledgement by federal and provincial government of the role that schools play in the adaptation of immigrants

\*Identified as issues that the City can best address, therefore proposed as priorities in RIAC strategy development

**ACCESS TO SERVICES**

- counselling in the mother tongue
- location; need services in East Richmond where there is a large population of immigrants
- lack of information re: services available to immigrants
- lack of venue to hold regular meetings

**SERVICE PROVISION**

- creating a welcoming environment
- how to strengthen staff and clients to be more inclusive -lack of knowledge about other cultures within "mainstream" organizations; need for staff sensitivity training
- systematic changes required in many "main stream" traditional institutions whose policies must reflect changing community and inclusion of minorities
- lack of staff in many private and public institutions with language skills to deal with minority groups
- how to meet the needs of increasingly more diverse clients
- how to reach out and develop trust with non-participants
- how to adapt and develop programs
- ensuring choice between ethno-specific and "mainstream" services
- greater cultural representation at all decision-making levels

**HIRING POLICIES**

- equity hiring policies
- hiring policies relating to recognition of non-Canadian work experiences and academic/professional qualifications
- certification and accreditation
- provide supports for foreign-trained professionals, e.g. cultural orientation

**STRENGTHS**

- "mainstream groups" working hard at being able to serve diverse cultural groups
- openness among ethno-specific groups to work with others
- willingness to work with the committee and community groups in partnership
- overall, a high level of engagement in and knowledge of the issues

## RIAC Stakeholder Consultation: Priority Issues and Existing Initiatives

**Purpose: To identify issues selected by RIAC as priorities in strategy development and to identify existing initiatives**

Proposed Priority Issues	Existing Initiatives (incomplete)
<b>YOUTH</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• violence, including bullying</li> <li>• drug use</li> <li>• cultural shock and resulting problems</li> <li>• lack of opportunities to involve in social programs</li> <li>• intergenerational issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Advisory Council, Youth Strategy (City)</li> <li>• School District Strategies</li> <li>• Street Racing Working Group</li> <li>• Richmond Substance Abuse Task Force (City)</li> <li>• Family Services</li> <li>• SUCCESS</li> <li>• BC Council for the Family</li> <li>• Richmond Bahai Community</li> </ul>
<b>CULTURAL BARRIERS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cultural awareness and acceptance within the wider community</li> <li>• how to communicate the cultural and religious values of different groups effectively to positively impact on issues such as racism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of organizations have their own committees (e.g., MCFD, Richmond Health Services), many others have done work in the community (e.g., RMCS, Independent Schools, Bahai) and internally (e.g., Broadmoor Baptist Church, Touchstone) – as identified in Stakeholder Consultation Submissions</li> </ul>
<b>COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of involvement in community affairs</li> <li>• lack of knowledge and understanding of Richmond residents of government policy, rules and regulations</li> <li>• lack of community groups that openly integrate all cultural groups</li> <li>• lack of trust or familiarity with Canadian Institutions, e.g. RCMP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic Education Society</li> <li>• Richmond Chinese Community Society</li> <li>• Richmond Filipino and Canadian Baynihan Society</li> <li>• Political parties</li> </ul>

## RIAC Public Consultation, Feb. 20, 2003 Issues/Needs

**PURPOSE: To identify issues and/or needs raised by participants in the RIAC Public Consultation held February 20, 2003**

### **YOUTH\***

- focus on bullying, schools are less safe every day, students are concerned about safety
- need social workers who speak different languages
- racism expressed in schools through lack of understanding of culture
- need more community events and cultural events
- need more youth activities
- intercultural training sessions needed in schools

### **CANADIAN IDENTITY**

- need to give multiculturalism a rest
- need to say "I am a Canadian", identify as a Canadian
- need classes about Canada offered by the Richmond School Board
- give new immigrants guidelines on what it means to be Canadian

### **LANGUAGE BARRIERS**

- language barriers a challenge to integration and mobility within the community
- language a barrier to services - need for multilingual staff

### **RACISM**

- racism is happening
- racism expressed in schools through lack of understanding of culture

### **CULTURAL BARRIERS\***

- seniors concerned about safety (publicity re: gang activity, street racing, grow-ops)
- cultural communities need to be integrated
- cultures need to be recognized
- resources, time, expertise needed to promote integration
- Immigration levels – not too many of a cultural group is healthy
- intercultural training sessions needed in schools and the community
- understanding that integration takes time and that it is not an easy process
- need acceptance and respect, not "tolerance"
- language and communication barriers
- difference of ideas and opinions
- lack of English signage in businesses

### **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT\***

- communication channels in own language need to be open for people to get involved in the community – information is key to involvement
- need to talk at "grassroots" level/neighbourhoods

Policy Planning  
City of Richmond  
February 2003

\*Identified as issues that the City can best address, therefore proposed as priorities in RIAC strategy development



## **RIAC Public Consultation, Feb. 20, 2003: Preliminary Strategies**

**PURPOSE: To identify strategies to address RIAC priority issues proposed by participants in the RIAC Public Consultation**

### **YOUTH**

- need School Board to really meet the needs of residents
- neighbourhood sharing programs – awareness
- youth/parents/seniors social club
- "art of making friendship programs" – social group togetherness
- after school programs
- open communication/support programs
- better disciplinary/recreation system
- monitor high risk behaviour and positive means of improvement

### **CULTURAL BARRIERS**

- need City, Community Centres to really meet the needs of residents
- use a pool of interpreters/translators to get the message to new immigrants
- strata councils – provide welcome letters in different languages
- churches provide new immigrant orientation – faith groups are key (can provide ESL classes, etc.)
- volunteer helpers for immigrants
- share food
- spiritual awareness programs

### **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

- leadership needed from RIAC
- RIAC to mingle freely with cultural groups to understand their needs
- use community centres as a "centre for community", e.g. as a neighbourhood house
- resources, time, expertise needed to promote integration
- elected leaders, city staff should reflect community diversity
- rewards/recognitions/awareness programs
- sharing of programs/educational meetings etc. among other groups

**RICHMOND INTERCULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**PUBLIC FOCUS GROUP CONSULTATION**  
**SUMMARY REPORT**  
**27 OCTOBER, 2003**

Prepared by

Larry Axelrod, Ph.D., Project Consultant  
Senior Director  
The Neutral Zone Coaching and Consulting Services

## **BACKGROUND**

As part of its community consultation process, the Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee (RIAC) sponsored a series of public input focus groups facilitated by the Project Consultant. The primary purpose of these focus groups was to provide an opportunity for residents of Richmond to contribute to the development of the City's Intercultural Strategy. The RIAC was interested in hearing directly from residents their views and experiences related to intercultural life in Richmond in a small group, discussion-oriented, format (15 individuals maximum per group) in order to identify strategies that are relevant to community needs and effective in achieving community goals.

Three core topics were raised for participants to consider and discuss during the focus group sessions. These topics included:

- Intercultural experiences they have had as residents of Richmond and perceptions of intercultural issues affecting life in Richmond
- Views regarding the role that the City should play in shaping intercultural community life
- Ideas on how intercultural life could be enhanced in Richmond

This report provides a comprehensive summary of the perspectives and ideas provided by focus group participants.

## **FOCUS GROUP RECRUITMENT AND METHODOLOGY**

### **Adult Focus Groups**

#### Recruitment

A series of five public focus groups were held with adult residents of Richmond between 30 September and 15 October 2003. All sessions were held in meeting rooms at the Richmond City Hall from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. Participants for these focus groups were recruited by members of the RIAC with the objective of obtaining a diverse representation of the population of Richmond. When recruiting participants RIAC members introduced themselves as a member of the Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee, and informed the participant that the RIAC has been formed by the City to advise the City Council on how to enhance intercultural harmony and strengthen intercultural co-operation in Richmond. Invitees were advised that the RIAC is sponsoring a series of public input focus groups to be held in late September and October of 2003 to hear directly from residents of Richmond about their views and ideas about intercultural issues in Richmond.

RIAC members forwarded the names of, and contact information for, seventy-three individuals who had agreed to participate to Leslie Sherlock, Social Planner for the City of Richmond and support person for the RIAC. In order to ensure a broad representation of Richmond's population, RIAC members also requested demographic information from Invitees including, Age; Ancestry; Employment Status and Occupation; Marital and Family Status; and Religious Affiliation. Invitee information was forwarded to the Project Consultant who contacted all Invitees to schedule them into specific focus group sessions. In all, sixty Invitees were

successfully contacted and scheduled into one of the five focus groups, and forty-eight individuals eventually attended one of the focus groups (approximately 66% of the total number of residents initially recruited). These individuals did include a broad range of cultural and personal characteristics.

### Focus Group Session Process

At the beginning of each focus group participants were provided a nametag, a pen and an agenda form that outlined the three topics to be discussed during the session (see Appendix A). Space was provided on the form for participants to write down their thoughts and they were informed that the Consultant would be collecting the forms at the close of the session. Participants were invited to enjoy a dinner provided by the City and begin to write down thoughts regarding each of the three topics.

The Consultant then introduced himself and outlined the objective for the focus group session. In addition, the Consultant provided an overview of the mandate of the RIAC taken from its Terms of Reference, identified the City Council liaison to the RIAC (i.e., Linda Barnes), and offered some recent demographic information about Richmond to highlight the richness of diversity that exists in the City (i.e., 54% of Richmond residents identify as 'recent immigrant;' 59% identify as 'visible minority;' 44% indicate English as their 'mother tongue' or '1<sup>st</sup> language'). Then, in a roundtable format (i.e., each participant given an opportunity to talk in a sequential manner), participants were asked to introduce themselves and describe a personal experience or observation regarding intercultural life in Richmond. After the roundtable, a group discussion was facilitated that focused on the role of the City in creating intercultural harmony and ideas participants had for the City to consider in its strategic plan. At the close of the session, participants were provided a final opportunity to name a key priority for the City toward achieving intercultural harmony in Richmond, again using a roundtable format.

### **Youth Focus Groups**

The RIAC also wanted to receive input from a representation of the youth of Richmond as part of the focus group consultation process. Youth issues were identified as an important focus for City strategy from the previous RIAC Stakeholder Consultation and Public Consultation processes. The RIAC and the Consultant decided to contact local secondary schools to request assistance in forming a focus group session with youth. The Consultant contacted the School Principal at Cambie Secondary School, Mr. Rob Scar, who expressed enthusiasm for the project, and suggested that the Consultant conduct focus group discussions in the classroom rather than as an extracurricular activity. This approach would ensure a wider diversity of participants to be included in the process. This methodology was approved by the RIAC and the Consultant arranged to visit with four classes (Economics 12 with Mr. Rick Beardsley and English 10, English 8, and CAPP 11/12 with Ms Diane Graves) at Cambie Secondary on 16 October 2003.

At the beginning of each class session the Consultant introduced himself and the mandate of the RIAC, and presented demographic information regarding the diverse population residing in the City of the Richmond. As an active demonstration of this diversity students were asked to stand near the beginning of the discussion. The Consultant then asked all students who were not born in Canada to sit. Between 1/3 and 2/3s of the students sat down in each class. Then he asked

students whose parents were not born in Canada to sit. Another 1/4 to 1/3 of the class sat down. Eventually all the students were sitting other than a couple students from First Nation background. The activity demonstrated how all of us, other than people from First Nations ancestry, are 'immigrants' to Canada from some point in history.

The students were also given a form with three topic areas (see Appendix 2) and were asked to spend some time prior to a class discussion considering each topic and writing down their thoughts. After providing about 10 minutes, the Consultant asked for input from the students regarding the topic areas. To help prompt the discussion with some of the classes the Consultant asked for opinions regarding the following specific topics: (a) experiences of discrimination, (b) school uniforms, and (c) language policies.

## **INPUT FROM FOCUS GROUPS - ADULT**

### Experiences and Observations

In response to this topic most participants described very positive experiences living in Richmond and reported that intercultural life has improved over the past 20 or so years. They described the benefits of living in a very diverse community and how much they enjoy the opportunities that exist to learn about other peoples and celebrate the various cultures that co-exist in Richmond.

However many participants also identified experiences and observations that convey challenges for them and others stemming from intercultural life in Richmond. The key challenges include:

- (a) Perceptions of 'white flight,'
- (b) Ethnic isolationism,
- (c) Exclusionary language practices,
- (d) A lack of accessible information and support from the City for newcomers and community members regarding a variety of Intercultural activities,
- (e) Misrepresentations of certain ethnic groups in the media that foster stereotypes and divisiveness, and
- (f) Racist beliefs and incidents in the schools and community places.

There were many interesting stories told during the sessions that conveyed the importance of building harmony and the challenge of integrating different cultural practices into a unified community. One story involved a participant facilitating an event involving a group of Japanese-speaking people. Prior to the event he made an attempt to learn a couple of Japanese phrases. This 'reaching out' to the Japanese people attending the event resulted in a positive intercultural experience for all. Many participants also talked about the welcome feeling they get when others speak the same language and the feelings of exclusion they get from stores that do not display any signage in English, and individuals who don't speak English in public places.

One woman from the Philippines provided an example of a different cultural practice that can result in misunderstanding, conflict and biased perspectives. She described that in the Philippines when drivers are merging into lanes they flash their lights to indicate that they are going to go first (i.e., the driver who flashed their lights). She commented on how the same

practice in Canada means the opposite (i.e., the other car should go first). She suggested that more information should be provided to newcomers about the normative practices in Canada and Richmond that may be unfamiliar to newcomers or completely different than they know.

Below is a comprehensive sampling of participant comments noted on their agenda forms that relate to intercultural experiences and observations.

- Supporting new immigrants with HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C is a challenge. Finding appropriate written material in some languages other than English is a challenge.
- Learning new things about other cultures allows one to learn more about their own culture. It draws attention to why one's culture is the way it is.
- Had opportunity to see ignorance of other students and youth. Has observed that because of stereotypes people fail to see or understand or get to know some really great people.
- The 'nibs and bites' in the Thomson Community Centre gave chance to talk with others about their hometown cooking.
- Observed positive impact of helping new immigrants and participating in community-wide activities.
- Shop signs in Chinese is a challenge and interferes with harmony.
- Multicultural activities (e.g., Kaleidoscope, Multifest, Turkish-Canadian Society) are positive activities.
- Challenges are faced by newcomers in terms of employment, language, housing, isolation, racism
- Sports events provide opportunities for kids of all backgrounds to join together.
- A challenge involved a situation in which a group of well-informed Caucasian residents met to discuss a project being planned for 'assisted living' in Richmond. They were concerned that one ethnic group does not completely take over the use of the project.
- The treatment of Muslims by others these days is not appropriate.
- Problem of racism is learnt by children mostly from their family. Solution lies in teaching the parents how to accept other cultural groups and live in harmony.
- Immigrants with professional training are not being allowed to work in their profession due to lack of acceptance of their credentials. A paradox was observed in that these people get 'points' for their profession and training from Canada Immigration to support their immigration and then aren't allowed to work in their professional field without a great deal of time, effort and expense.
- Friends and neighbours bring different cultures together.
- Working on issues with a common purpose (e.g., strata issues) brings people from different cultures together for a shared interest.
- Not enough assistance with regards to access of information or help in familiarizing new arrivals to all facilities, amenities, service whether Governmental or Social is available.

- We've become far too 'hyphenated Canadians.' There has to be leadership within our society to criticize our 'concerns' without fear of being labelled a racist.
- The attitude shown to those who are not Chinese - they are treated differently by shopkeepers and salespeople.
- Different pricing for those who are Chinese and those who are not.
- Segregation of people and youth by ethnic/cultural groups impedes developing intercultural relationships and harmony.
- Being in my intercultural neighbourhood and feeling safe, comfortable and happy.
- Signs not in English tells us that they do not want Canadian business - only Chinese customers. Impedes building intercultural harmony.
- Look to importance of Japanese people in understanding history of Richmond, especially Steveston.
- Response to 9/11 and Iraqi War of concern for Muslim residents.
- Some dissension within the 'school family' that monies are being spent on ESL that could be spent elsewhere, resulting in fewer activities, etc for their English-speaking children.
- Frustration when immigrants speak in home language when in presence of English speaking residents.
- Example of a youth Health Council group consisting of girls from many different cultural backgrounds working together to help street kids.
- Example of shopping in Costco when observed 2 Chinese girls speaking to each other in English when she was near them rather than their own language. Immediately felt a friendliness because we understood the language and each other.
- Chinese women's dance group at Cambie Community Centre invited staff to participate in their annual Christmas luncheon. They were very welcoming and we all tried hard to communicate in smiles and gestures. When they all stood up to sing and sang 'Oh Canada' brought tear to her eye.
- Challenges include lack of intercultural understanding, generation gap, conflict within the immigrant family between younger generations and traditional parents.
- Ignorance in newcomers of the 'Canadian' way of doing things (e.g., group home task force).

### Role of the City

In terms of the role of the City related to enhancing intercultural harmony, virtually all participants expressed support for the City to be involved in pursuing this important objective. Most participants expressed that the City should take more of a *facilitative* role, encouraging community activities and events that offer opportunities for intercultural experiences in order to build intercultural comfort and understanding. Most participants supported the idea of the City devoting some resources to this effort, while also expressing concern about spending limited resources wisely. Some participants stated they believe the City should also look at policies and bylaws that might be needed to develop more intercultural harmony and co-operation such as in the area of language and signage.

Below is a listing of various thoughts participants wrote down on their forms related to the role of the City in building intercultural harmony.

- Facilitate cross-cultural understanding.
- Bring community leaders together to support the effort of building intercultural harmony.
- Let Caucasian Canadian people know that they are still welcome in Richmond.
- Spend money to help bridge the gap by providing education for adults and youth.
- Enhance pre-migration service and newcomer orientation service.
- Provide appropriate spaces for youth to get together, such as skateboard parks and basketball courts, in all areas of Richmond
- Implement policies to support intercultural objectives.
- Establish and provide incentives for participation in intercultural events and to support intercultural initiatives.
- Provide a 'backbone' for intercultural event organization.
- Focus on 'Interculturalism,' not 'Multiculturalism' and with adults.
- Provide more information on different cultural groups and events (i.e., establish communication channels that spread the news about groups and events)
- Prepare and distribute more detailed information on community/political involvement in a manner that appreciates that some newcomers may be completely at a loss regarding how to participate in the social and political life of Canada and Richmond.
- Provide intercultural training to newcomers that educates them on the customs, responsibilities and obligations of residents/citizens of Canada and Richmond.
- Provide mechanism to connect all ideas and information from different cultural groups, and play a general role in disseminating information about Canadian culture.
- Ensure that one unifying language (i.e., English) is used throughout the City.
- Refocus festivals and events on concept of 'Unity' or 'Harmony' rather than multiculturalism and celebration of differences.
- Develop and promote longer lasting intercultural events and have events that highlight cultural differences, not just in music, dance, food, etc, to facilitate intercultural learning and acceptance.
- Redevelop idea of block parties to support intercultural experiences at the level of the local neighbourhoods.
- Encourage/support/promote workshops or seminars to deal with social and economic issues that affect youth and seniors that can bring people from different backgrounds together for a common purpose.
- Support schools by arranging talks and presentations in schools on intercultural topics.



- Provide books and informational literature to libraries in schools and the community on intercultural issues.
- Be catalyst for activities and initiatives.
- Be a role model in own hiring and employee practices, and ensure all City staff have the knowledge and skill to be intercultural ambassadors for the City.
- Provide information to community that reconciles misconceptions about others and increases an accurate understanding of other cultures and religions.
- Activate the multicultural community during hot issues or crises to highlight or to reflect the point of view of the person involved in the crisis.
- Provide a permanent and accessible means for concerned members of the community to communicate with the City about intercultural issues and concerns.
- Provide residents with a clear mission of what citizenship is about in Richmond and Canada.
- Encourage more integrated shopping areas.
- Help multicultural societies in Richmond to organize more intercultural programs and workshops to discuss the requirements to improve intercultural life and the atmosphere in Richmond.
- Connect with local media to develop certain times for broadcasting intercultural events and to respond to community questions/concerns about intercultural issues.

#### Strategic Themes and Ideas

The following Strategic Themes (listed in no specific order) have been drawn from the observations and opinions expressed by the participants during the focus group discussions and from their written responses on the agenda forms.

##### ➤ Language

Virtually all participants identified the need to foster the use of a common language (i.e., English) as critical to building intercultural harmony in Richmond. Several participants described feelings of exclusion when they see stores that display signage in languages other than English with no English at all. They consider this signage as a message that their business is not welcome and that they should stay out of the store.

Participants agreed that residents should be supported in speaking and celebrating their 1<sup>st</sup> languages in their home and private gatherings, but that intercultural harmony will only be achieved through communication in a shared language.

Participants suggested that the City take action to (a) encourage or mandate that all businesses and organizations in Richmond display some signage in English, (b) ensure that English training be made more available to all newcomers and current residents in need, and (c) consider other initiatives to support the use of English as the common language for communication.

➤ Intervention Resource

Several participants raised the need for the City to be prepared to respond to intercultural incidents that raise tensions in the community between different cultural/religious groups. They suggest that the current system does not offer a specialized service fully able to respond to these types of situations in a manner that facilitates positive outcomes and mitigates negative repercussions.

➤ Information Resource

Nearly all participants raised the need for the City to be more active in researching, preparing and distributing information to the community about a variety of City related activities. Participants noted the following activities as important for more information to be available and accessible to the public: cultural events and festivals, new bylaws and City initiatives, voting and participating in the political process, vision for the City, expectations of residency and citizenship.

One idea involved the City publishing a website and/or newspaper inserts on a regular basis that could be delivered with local community newspapers. These publications could offer information on community events, profile Richmond residents or groups, provide updates on the activities of the City and City Council, and a range of other information. Participants felt that the current channels of community information are not sufficient and do not take the interests of the City as a whole into consideration when developing their publications.

➤ Facilitator of Intercultural Experiences

Nearly all participants supported the idea of the City taking a more active role in organizing, co-ordinating and facilitating opportunities for residents to participate in intercultural experiences. These opportunities should focus on building understanding and acceptance across different cultures and demonstrate how all residents of Richmond share certain common interests as well. Some specific ideas included:

- Organize and facilitate block parties
- Hire Intercultural Co-ordinator to work with RIAC (it was mentioned that Seattle has this type of role) and support development of intercultural community events, dissemination of relevant information and other activities.
- Organize and facilitate community forums/discussion groups to create better intercultural understanding.
- Provide incentives for volunteering, participation in events and support of intercultural harmony in the form of scholarships, awards or similar opportunities.

➤ Reconcile Intercultural Misconceptions

Several participants raised the need for the City to be more active in dispelling misconceptions about Richmond in general, and about cultural/religious groups for whom stereotyped and prejudicial beliefs remain prevalent. It was suggested that the City could work with the local media outlets to encourage their participation in this effort, as well as possibly engaging in targeted campaigns to address specific misconceptions as they arise.

One specific idea toward this effort involved creating a "Did You Know..." campaign to inform the community about itself and its peoples. This campaign could be displayed at City Hall, in Community Centres, in libraries and schools, and at shopping malls.

➤ Role Model

Several participants noted the need for the City to represent the values consistent with Interculturalism in its own employment and service practices. Participants noted the recent incident involving the Public Works Department and the allegation of discrimination. They stated that this incident reduces their confidence in the City's efforts to promote employment equity and ensure there is no discrimination in the City's own practices.

➤ Advocate

Participants raised the opportunity for the City to be a more visible advocate for the needs of its residents with other levels of government or external agencies that have control over relevant aspects of their life. Specific issues included: (a) processes for recognizing professional credentials of newcomers to Richmond in a more efficient and respectful manner, (b) ensuring immigration procedures involve providing newcomers with adequate information about living in Canada and Richmond, and (c) securing adequate funding for intercultural needs such as ESL and settlement services from Federal and Provincial governments.

➤ Internal City Systems, Policies and Planning

Several participants raised observations related to the opportunity for the City to review its general procedures and policies with a focus on their usefulness in fostering intercultural awareness and harmony. For example, the general City Council review process that involves community presentations on City decisions may inadvertently result in intercultural tension due to cultural differences on certain issues. One participant raised the example of the Group Home Task Force as a more effective means of resolving community differences on City related decisions. Other suggestions included:

- Employ anthropologists in aspects that deal with shaping policies that affect intercultural development in City of Richmond
- Establish a law to reduce 'astronaut' parents who come and leave the country, but 'dump' their kids in Canada with lots of financial resources.

➤ Support for Newcomers and Community Service Agencies

Participants generally understood that immigrant/settlement services were provided by community agencies and are funded by the federal and provincial government. However, in consideration of the high level of immigration to Richmond participants felt that the City should take a more active role in providing resources to community services agencies and supporting the orientation of newcomers to the City.

➤ Youth

Virtually all participants identified the importance of focusing on the youth of Richmond in enhancing intercultural harmony. The common thought was that youth are already significantly more accepting of other cultures and integrated into the multicultural community. However,

most thought additional efforts would be beneficial in fostering the development of the youth as integrated members of Richmond's intercultural community. Specific initiatives raised by participants included:

- Integration of ESL students with regular classes to start off
- PAC groups in schools to organize parents to open up opportunities for cultural exchange
- Presentations/forums/seminars in schools on issues of multiculturalism, immigration and becoming an integrated intercultural community.

## **INPUT FROM FOCUS GROUPS - YOUTH**

### General Overview of Input

Students offered a range of perspectives on the goal of interculturalism and living in a diverse community. Many indicated that they have grown up learning not to be 'racist' and that they and their parents share similar views of acceptance and comfort with people from different cultures. Yet, many students indicated that they are more open to other cultures than their parents who still hold biases about other cultures. As one student wrote, "My parents believe that keeping cultures separate is a good thing because then they can do whatever their culture does. They can practice their own religion, lifestyle, and views in whatever way they want." Another student wrote, "My parents usually only like their own country and not other countries." Yet another student wrote, "My parents aren't fond of other cultures but they try not to show it. But I find other cultures interesting."

Most students indicated experiencing very little racism in Richmond and felt that cultural harmony is good. However, some students did report being the target of racism (e.g., racial slurs, bullying, stereotyping) both in school and in the community. One student reported an incident involving a Richmond RCMP Officer approaching a group of teenagers in a manner that suggested he thought all individuals of his ethnic group are criminals. Many said they feel Richmond is doing a good job in fostering a safe and harmonious diverse community.

### Living in a Multicultural Society

Students expressed a high degree of value regarding living in a multicultural community. They commented that it widens people's 'horizon,' fosters learning about other cultures, opens up people to new experiences, and is more interesting than living in a homogeneous community. Some students raised challenges presented by living in a diverse community. These included that it is harder to communicate at times because of different languages, that some people keep to their own cultures, which creates divisions and reinforces biases, and that you need to be aware of manners because what is acceptable in one culture may be viewed as rude in another.

Below is a sampling of the specific comments offered by students on the topic of living in a diverse community.

- In my elementary school all the kids just play together, but in high school, I've seen that some people only hang out with their own colour, race or culture.

- It allows me to be friends with people from across the world. I can learn about many different cultures by living in Richmond and I don't have to travel to another country to learn about it.
- Living in an ethnically diverse community is quite an experience. There is minimal racism, but the different ethnic groups tend to separate themselves from others (i.e., Asians stick together).
- Racism is present because the new generation does not take insults that may be directed at their traditional style to heart because they themselves are not traditional. I think racism exists but it is being treated as unimportant, however it is very evident, especially through stereotyping.
- It is difficult at times because you may not know other people's culture. If you say something, you don't know if it might offend them. Having an ethnically diverse community also give us an opportunity to learn about different races, cultures and ethnicity.
- It is important to live in an ethnically diverse community in my opinion because this way no one will be physically or emotionally hurt because of his or her race.
- Pushing you forward to learn a second language because you need to communicate with others instead of just isolating yourself.
- We get to understand people more clearly; we get to see life more broadly.
- Makes life more interesting, everyone is different and has their own stories to tell.
- The decisions I make are heavily influenced by the people around me, so my decisions sometimes are a reflection of that. Sometimes I may feel like the "odd man out" if everyone is of one ethnic background and I'm the only different one.
- At work everyone is of a different ethnic background and it is better because we learn a lot from each other and help each other out with language skills.
- I rather want to live in a community which is full of people from my nationality. I have more things to say to people in my culture; people different than my nationality don't understand what we are saying.
- Usually kids I talk to just act like people; not like a culture. They never perpetuate stereotypes displayed in the media or bring much of their culture into daily conversation.

#### Strategic Ideas for Enhancing Intercultural Harmony

Students offered a variety of ideas regarding ways to enhance intercultural harmony in Richmond. Many of these ideas involved some form of education, as one student stated, "If we learn more, we can respect more." A few students commented that the City should leave things the way they are allowing different cultures to stay separate if they want to. As one student wrote, "I think there is no purpose of changing the way we are living now." However, most students supported activities aimed at increasing intercultural interaction, awareness and understanding.

Key strategic ideas raised by students include:

- Seminars in schools on multiculturalism and the practices of cultures and religions

- Social Studies classes teach more about diverse countries, cultures and customs rather than the current focus on European, Chinese, and First Nation's history and cultures.
- Intercultural festivals sponsored by the City or the schools (e.g., have an "Intercultural Day" with a parade, with floats that don't just represent one culture but something that links them together and a party).
- Community barbecues.
- Develop more sports centres and community sport events to bring people together.
- Field trips for students to visit cultural locations and learn about other cultures.
- Have a holiday for each type of religion in the City.
- Signage should be in English as well as in other languages.
- Avoid having a certain area or region devoted to one culture (malls, stores, restaurants, etc.).
- Focus on older people because the youth today already are somewhat integrated.
- Sensitivity training for RCMP Officers.
- Spend less money on RCMP equipment that is designed to target people with "fast" cars.
- Have more intercultural clubs.
- There should be a 'BIGOT rehab' program. People could commit bigots and change them in a way that anti-racism pamphlets never could.
- Most students disagreed with the idea of school uniforms because they said that uniforms do not allow for personal expression, which is important to them. However, many agreed that clothing is a subject of teasing and ridicule in the school and can result in difficulties for certain students.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee Public Focus Group Agenda**



## Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee Public Focus Group Agenda

Wednesday, October 15, 2003; 5:30 – 8:00 p.m.;  
Richmond City Hall  
Facilitator: Larry Axelrod, The Neutral Zone  
Consulting Services

**Topic 1** - Describe a key intercultural experience that involved you or you observed in Richmond that portrays a positive experience or a concern/challenge regarding intercultural life in Richmond.

**Topic 2** - Describe one or two key roles that the City should play in shaping intercultural community life in Richmond.

**Topic 3** - Identify one or two specific ideas for how intercultural life could be enhanced in Richmond.





## **APPENDIX B**

### Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee Youth Focus Group Agenda



## Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee Youth Focus Group Agenda

Thursday, October 16, 2003; Cambie High School  
Facilitator: Larry Axelrod, The Neutral Zone Consulting Services

**Topic 1** - Describe a major difference or a similarity between the way you look at cultural/racial/ethnic differences and the way your parent's do.

**Topic 2** - Describe how living in an ethnically diverse community affects your life.

**Topic 3** - Identify one or two specific ideas for how intercultural life could be enhanced in Richmond.



## Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee

City of Richmond  
6911 No. 3 Road  
Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

January 27, 2004

Richmond City Council  
6911 No. 3 Road  
Richmond, BC  
V6Y 2C1

Dear Mayor and Council:

**Re: 2004-2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan and Work Program**

The Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee (RIAC) is pleased to present you with the 2004 – 2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan and Work Program. The Richmond community was consulted extensively in the course of development of this document. It was an enriching and challenging experience for RIAC and participants. We look forward to engaging the community in its implementation.

Your support throughout this process has been critical to its success, and is greatly appreciated by the RIAC.

RIAC looks forward to discussing the 2004 – 2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan and Work Program with you.

For clarification, please call Lesley Sherlock, Social Planner, at 604-276-4220.

Yours truly,



Balwant Sanghera  
*Chair, Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee*

:ls

pc: Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee  
Terry Crowe, Manager, Policy Planning  
Lesley Sherlock, Social Planner



*Island City, by Nature*

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# **2004 – 2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan and Work Program**

**Prepared by:**  
Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee

**With the support of:**  
Larry Axelrod, Ph.D., Project Consultant  
The Neutral Zone Coaching and Consulting Services  
and  
The City of Richmond

January 2004

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## **Introduction**

### **RIAC Mandate**

The Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee (RIAC) was established by the Richmond City Council in February 2002 to assist the City in working toward its Corporate Vision of making Richmond the "most appealing, liveable, and well-managed city in Canada."

The mandate of the RIAC, as outlined in its terms of reference, is to "enhance intercultural harmony and strengthen intercultural co-operation in Richmond." The RIAC will achieve this mandate through several interrelated functions including providing information, options and recommendations to City Council regarding intercultural issues and opportunities, and responding to intercultural issues referred to it by Council.

The purpose of this initiative is to develop an Intercultural Strategic Vision and Work Program to support the City and the Richmond community in making Richmond more appealing, liveable, and well-managed.

The RIAC recognizes that the successful achievement of the Intercultural Vision necessitates the City working in partnership, especially in a facilitative role, with the numerous stakeholders that make up the Richmond community. The Intercultural Strategy cannot be successfully implemented without the full participation and involvement of the many diverse cultural groups and other community partners in Richmond.

### **Summary of Process**

To prepare the Intercultural Strategic Plan, an initial directive to this Committee from Council was to "hold public consultations to discuss with the community, a vision, ideas, opportunities, issues and partnerships that need to be addressed to enhance intercultural harmony." This consultation process involved three phases:

- Phase 1 involved conducting a Stakeholder Consultation held in October 2002.
- Phase 2 involved a Public Consultation held in February 2003.
- Phase 3 involved the implementation of focus group sessions with residents of Richmond conducted during October and November 2003.

In addition, the RIAC conducted, in conjunction with its Project Consultant, its own focus group in July 2003 and held a full-day strategic planning session in November 2003 to support the development of the Intercultural Strategic Plan and Work Program described in this report.

A summary of themes from the Community Consultation Processes is found in **Appendix A**.

## Summary of Community Intercultural Issues and Challenges

### Richmond's Diverse Multicultural Population

Richmond is one of the most multicultural cities in Canada. The 2001 Census reports that 59% of Richmond residents indicated that they are a 'visible minority,' with 40% of the total population being of Chinese heritage. Fifty-four percent of Richmond residents indicated that they are immigrants to Canada, with over 23,800 newcomers coming to Richmond between 1996 and the first four months of 2001.

Of Richmond's total population, 15% were born in Hong Kong, 10% in the People's Republic of China, 5% in Taiwan and hundreds more have arrived from the Philippines, India, Ukraine, Pakistan, United States, Iran and South Korea since 1996. In terms of language, only 44% of Richmond residents indicated English as their mother tongue.

Over the past six years, Richmond's overall growth rate has slowed while the rate of immigration continues to climb as a percentage of the total population.

This level of diversity and immigration offers Richmond residents a wonderfully eclectic and dynamic multicultural life. Yet, this cultural diversity also presents challenges to promoting and preserving the kind of life and community that Richmond residents' value.

The key intercultural issues and challenges that form the targets of the recommended strategic directions and work program include the following:

### Communication Issues

- Various issues related to English as the common language in Richmond, including exclusionary non-English signage that doesn't express "welcomeness" to persons who don't speak the language, an insufficient level of English language training opportunities, and divisive perceptions sparked by the concept of ESL (English as a second language).
- A lack of meaningful information (i.e., messages prepared in a manner that reflects the needs and communication traditions of diverse peoples) which is readily accessible to City residents on a variety of issues such as community and municipal events, and governance and electoral procedures.
- The use of the term 'multicultural' to refer to immigrant or visible minority groups, rather than its intended inclusive meaning, as well as other messages that perpetuate stereotypes, divisiveness and 'otherness' by the Richmond media, City officials and others.

### Awareness and Attitude Issues

- A lack of recognition of and appreciation for the common values and goals that connect all residents of Richmond.
- The common assumption that newcomers are choosing to come to Canada as their primary motivation rather than choosing to leave their former country which results in unrealistic expectations toward newcomers and prejudicial viewpoints when expectations aren't met.



- Immigrants coming to Richmond for purposes other than permanent residency, such as 'astronaut' parents, contributes to prejudicial views toward certain cultural groups.

### **Administrative and Service Issues**

- The perceived current approach to City planning and decision-making that considers cultural diversity as a peripheral issue rather than a core aspect of City life and processes.
- The perception that City procedures use advocacy-based approaches (e.g., public hearings) to decide issues rather than processes that may be more adept at fostering intercultural understanding and achieving shared outcomes.
- Current cultural services tend to be organized by ethnicity thus unintentionally reinforcing a divisive approach to resident service and community planning.
- The perception that the City has not been a sufficiently positive role model in implementing equitable hiring and service practices and as serving as ambassadors for intercultural respect and harmony.
- A lack of participation by immigrants in the political system and the pursuit of block voting (i.e., pursuing support of voters along ethnic lines).
- Significant populations of underemployed residents due to Canada not accepting foreign credentials even while Canada Immigration actively recruits skilled immigrants and offers immigration points for those skills and credentials.

### **Community Conflict Issues**

- Some level of ghetto-like separation of the community along ethnic lines.
- Tensions existing within certain cultural groups that can create difficult incidents within those groups as well as contribute to misperceptions of those groups in the general population.
- Incidents of racism and discrimination continue to occur in Richmond.

## 2004 - 2010 Intercultural Strategic Plan

### Vision for Intercultural Life In Richmond

#### Introduction

To achieve the overall vision of the City, "to be the most appealing, liveable and well-managed community in Canada," Richmond needs to incorporate a value for an understanding of diversity into all its planning and services. The vision for intercultural life in Richmond should:

#### *Promote:*

- Pride in and respect for diverse heritages and traditions.
- Pride in and acceptance of Canadian values and laws.
- Pride in and participation in community life.

#### *Recognize:*

- That 'culture' is an integrated pattern of thought, speech, action and behaviour which is passed on from one generation to another, through education and learning.
- That 'culture' evolves, and Richmond's culture is shaped by historic patterns and traditions, current practices and trends, and future planning.

#### *Embrace:*

- The concept of 'Interculturalism,' a culturally interactive and vibrant process, as the next step for Canadian multiculturalism.

### The Intercultural Vision

***"For Richmond to be the most  
welcoming, inclusive and harmonious community in Canada"***

## **Guiding Principles for Action**

In pursuing this intercultural vision, the following principles are to guide all City and community partners' planning, decision-making and service delivery.

- Inclusion: Participation by all sectors of the community is to be invited and encouraged in City and community partner activities.
- Co-operation: In pursuing City and community objectives, partnerships should be developed with stakeholders and community groups to foster co-operation rather than competition.
- Collaboration: The interests (e.g., needs, goals, concerns) of all stakeholders should be considered, and if at all possible attended to, in all City and community partner decisions.
- Dynamism: The City and community partners should be flexible and adaptable by staying alert to emerging needs, issues and new opportunities, and being open to new ideas and approaches.
- Integration: The City and community partners should recognize that cultural diversity is a core aspect of City life and that the principles of multiculturalism and the vision of interculturalism should be applied in all City and community pursuits.
- Equity: City and community partner administrative practices, the involvement of partners, and the distribution of resources should be done in a manner that is fair to all groups, communities and individuals in need.

## **City And Community Partner Intercultural Roles**

- It is acknowledged that achieving improved intercultural harmony requires full community participation and that the City or any one partner cannot achieve it alone.
- The City's role emphasizes leadership and facilitation.
- The community partners' role emphasizes participation, mutual support and resource sharing. Community partners include religious and cultural groups, institutions, agencies, educational organizations, the private sector, communities, associations, the media, federal and provincial governments and the general public.

## **Core Services**

To implement this 2004 – 2010 Intercultural Strategic Plan, the following core services are involved:

- Coordination
- Partnership
- Research
- Information
- Education & Training

- Promotion
- Project Management
- Planning

## **Strategic Directions**

To achieve the Vision set forth in this plan, the RIAC recommends that the following strategic directions be established and pursued over the next six years by the City and community partners.

1. Address language barriers that interfere with building a connected and welcoming community, while also encouraging the use of heritage languages.
2. Address the perception and reality of racism and discrimination in the community. Dispel misconceptions related to culture that maintain stereotypes and foster prejudice.
3. Ensure that information about the community in general and specific City and community activities is available for newcomers and residents, and presented in a manner that appreciates the needs and communication skills and traditions of different cultural groups.
4. Address participation gaps observed in Provincial, Federal, City and community partner events and electoral processes to facilitate immigrant involvement.
5. Develop opportunities for community members to participate in positive and educational intercultural experiences.
6. Ensure that City and community partner administrative, employment and service practices are a role model of inclusiveness and equity.
7. Ensure that City and community partner systems, policies and planning processes are aligned with the Intercultural Vision recommended in this plan and utilize 'best practice' methods to make decisions and prevent cross cultural misunderstanding and antipathy.
8. Advocate for community intercultural needs with other levels of government and external agencies.
9. Continue support for newcomers through current City and community partner programs and partnerships with community agencies.
10. Identify programs and partnerships that support the development and integration of Richmond's immigrant youth population, while respecting family and cultural traditions.

## **Strategic Initiatives**

In addition, for each strategic direction, specific initiatives are suggested that should be considered for development and implementation by the City and potential community partners in conjunction with the RIAC.

### **Strategic Direction #1**

**Address language barriers that interfere with building a connected and welcoming community, while also encouraging the use of heritage languages.**

#### *Suggested Specific Initiatives*

- a) Recommend that training initiatives in Richmond currently identified as "ESL" (English as a Second Language) be renamed as English Language Training or "ELT" in recognition that English is the primary and unifying language spoken in Richmond City activities and schools.
- b) Establish a City bylaw that would require all public stores and businesses to have some basic level of signage in English.

### **Strategic Direction #2**

**Address the perception and reality of racism and discrimination in the community.**

**Dispel misconceptions related to culture that maintain stereotypes and foster prejudice.**

#### *Suggested Specific Initiatives*

- a) Develop an intercultural intervention resource package and provide training, within City and community partner structures, to respond to intercultural conflicts and incidents.
- b) Establish a media watch mechanism with partners to monitor the local media, City and community communication and work to redress misperceptions created by inaccurate or insensitive references.
- c) Encourage the City, community partners, property owners and individuals to remove racist graffiti in a timely manner (e.g., City bylaw).

### **Strategic Direction #3**

**Ensure that information about the community in general and specific City and community activities is available for newcomers and residents, and presented in a manner that appreciates the needs and communication skills and traditions of different cultural groups.**

#### *Suggested Specific Initiatives*

- a) Develop an interactive information website network linking the City's and other community partners' websites, that would present information to the public on intercultural life in Richmond. The website could present a complete calendar of City and community events, offer profiles of different community groups and individual residents, provide updates on issues being considered by the City Council and partners, and provide an online dialogue forum to enable more interaction between the City and the community.
- b) Publish a monthly or bi-monthly intercultural newsletter prepared by community partners from the information developed for the website and distributed as an insert with the local community newspapers, as well as through other resources such as businesses and community centres.

### **Strategic Direction #4**

**Address participation gaps observed in Provincial, Federal, City and community partner events and electoral processes to facilitate immigrant involvement.**

#### *Suggested Specific Initiatives*

- a) Analyze available research and information regarding barriers faced by different cultural groups, from their own background and experience concerning participation in governance, elections, and volunteerism in Richmond, and make recommendations.
- b) Develop awareness materials and information campaigns specifically designed for different populations that address their barriers and build efficacy for participating in the rights and responsibilities afforded to residents of Richmond.

### **Strategic Direction #5**

**Develop opportunities for community members to participate in positive and educational intercultural experiences.**

#### *Suggested Specific Initiatives*

- a) Facilitate the development and co-ordination of intercultural events focused on the concepts of learning about, participation in, and celebration of Richmond's diverse multicultural community. Events should emphasize the concepts of unity, contribution and togetherness, rather than the concept of "otherness." Events should be designed in a manner that facilitates opportunities for active learning about the traditions of different cultures rather than the passive observation of cultural activities (e.g., food, dance, music, art).

- b) Research and develop opportunities for community-based dialogues or forums on current issues that face the community as a whole and use opportunities to build intercultural interaction and awareness regarding shared values and goals as residents of Richmond.
- c) Integrate intercultural initiatives with Richmond's 125<sup>th</sup> birthday and with preparations for the 2010 Winter Olympics.
- d) Explore the feasibility of establishing an "Intercultural Place" within Richmond for ethnocultural and intercultural groups that would provide:
  - (i) office space for:
    - planning
    - coordination
    - project management
    - partnership
    - education
    - research and information
    - promotion
  - (ii) a meeting place for intercultural:
    - celebrations
    - lectures and forums
    - education and training
    - demonstrations
    - displays (e.g. arts, culture)

#### **Strategic Direction #6**

**Ensure that City and community partner administrative, employment and service practices are a role model of inclusiveness and equity.**

##### *Suggested Specific Initiatives*

- a) Review policies and procedures to ensure full compliance with obligations under human rights law and employment equity standards are being met.
- b) Develop outreach mechanisms to encourage individuals from City populations with little or no current representation in City government and community partner organizations to apply for available employment opportunities, and consider running for elected positions.
- c) Research the potential of developing an 'apprenticeship' type program for the City and community partners including the business and intercultural sectors, to better utilize immigrants with foreign training and credentials who are currently underemployed because of a lack of opportunities or barriers in getting their credentials accepted in Canada.

#### **Strategic Direction #7**

**Ensure that City and community partner systems, policies and planning processes are aligned with the Intercultural Vision recommended in this plan and utilize 'best practice' methods to make decisions and prevent cross-cultural misunderstanding and antipathy.**

##### *Suggested Specific Initiatives*

- a) Ensure that the Terms of Reference for all City and community partner committees, task groups and the like include a reference to the Intercultural Vision and principles recommended in this plan.

- b) Continue to develop and implement alternative decision-making methods (e.g., consensus-building and community facilitation processes) to help understand and resolve controversial issues in Richmond, and implement these methods in addition to public consultation based on an advocacy model.

#### **Strategic Direction #8**

**Advocate for community intercultural needs with other levels of government and external agencies.**

##### *Suggested Specific Initiative*

Hold City Council and community partner discussions on intercultural issues relevant to the community and prepare Council and partner resolutions to be sent to the authorities responsible for the issue. Current issues could include funding levels and distribution methods for settlement services and English language training, licensing processes for foreign-trained professionals, recruitment campaigns and immigration practices used by Canada Immigration and Citizenship.

#### **Strategic Direction #9**

**Continue support for newcomers through current City and community partner programs and partnerships with community agencies.**

##### *Suggested Specific Initiative*

Consider hosting, by RIAC in partnership with community settlement service agencies, an annual event welcoming newcomers to Richmond.

#### **Strategic Direction #10**

**Identify programs and partnerships that support the development and integration of Richmond's immigrant youth population, while respecting family and cultural traditions.**

##### *Suggested Specific Initiatives*

- a) Focus programs on identifying and supporting disenfranchised youth that may be struggling with adapting to life in Richmond.
- b) Work with the School District and partners to support the development of programs that eliminate culturally based bullying and discrimination from the schools and community, and offer more opportunities for intercultural learning and experiences.
- c) When and where necessary, build recreation facilities for youth to congregate, integrate and participate in recreational activities.

#### **Key Overarching Strategic Recommendations**

- a) Establish a City staff position, funded through partnerships, to develop, co-ordinate, and facilitate initiatives in this strategic plan. Doing so would be seen as consistent with recognizing that attention to cultural issues is a core aspect of City and community partner functioning.



- b) Provide training for all City staff, particularly staff who interact with the community as part of their role, on attitudes, practices and communication skills that are central to achieving the Intercultural Vision and adhering to the principles set out in this plan. Funding contributions from a range of sources are to be sought.

## **Proposed 2004 - 2010 Work Program**

To implement the Intercultural Strategic Plan the following 2004 – 2010 Work Program is proposed.

1. City Council, assisted by RIAC in consultation with community partners, will establish annual intercultural priorities and yearly work programs.
2. The RIAC will coordinate and facilitate the implementation of approved work programs.
3. The purpose of the following management matrix is to guide the implementation of the Strategic Plan. This matrix outlines the suggested actions to be undertaken by RIAC and the City, and identifies community partners for each strategic direction and specific initiative. Additional partners will be identified over time.
4. To implement the 2004 - 2010 Work Program, RIAC will:
  - Assist the Richmond community to build its capacity (e.g. awareness, consensus and commitment) for intercultural harmony.
  - Provide information, options and recommendations.
  - Recommend annual priorities and initiatives.
  - Develop achievable work programs including, as applicable:
    - Identifying existing resources,
    - Establishing partnerships,
    - Applying for funding, and
    - If additional City resources are required, seeking approval through the annual budget review process.
5. In 2004, the RIAC will:
  - Distribute the 2004 - 2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan and Work Program widely.
  - Meet with a wide range of community partners to build awareness, consensus and commitment for partners' participation.
  - Encourage a wide range of partners to participate.
6. The 2004 - 2010 Work Program will be amended as necessary.
7. The RIAC will report progress to Council annually, or as necessary.

## Proposed 2004 - 2010 Work Program

Strategic Areas and Specific Initiatives	Potential Partners*									
	Proposed RIAC Actions**	Proposed City Actions***	School Board	RCMP, Fire & Rescue	Other levels of govt.	NGOs	Local, Ethnic Media	Business	Commun. Assocs.	Religious/ Ethnocult. Groups
<b>Strategic Direction #1 – Address Language Barriers</b>										
a. Recommend renaming ESL as ELT	Prepare draft recommendations	Review recommendations	✓		✓	✓			✓	
b. Establish Signage Bylaw requiring basic level of English	Provide advice	Consider establishing bylaw		✓		✓		✓		✓
<b>Strategic Direction #2 - Address racism &amp; misconceptions</b>										
a. Develop an intercultural intervention resource package and provide training to respond to intercultural conflicts & incidents	Assist in preparing resource package and training program	Assist	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
b. Establish media watch mechanism	Develop model (e.g., RIAC Sub-cte.)	Assist	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
c. Remove racist graffiti in timely manner	Provide advice	Consider establishing bylaw	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Strategic Direction #3 - Available Community Information</b>										
a. Develop an Intercultural Website Network	Coordinate development, contribute articles	Support the network	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
b. Publish an Intercultural Newsletter	Establish newsletter group, contribute articles	Contribute resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Strategic Direction #4 - Address Participation Gaps in Events &amp; Electoral Processes</b>										
a. Analyze available research & information about barriers to participation in governance, etc. and make recommendations	Initiate and advise re: dev't. of research program	Contribute resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
b. Develop awareness materials and information campaign for different populations re: their rights and responsibilities	Oversee preparation of materials	Contribute resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

\* ✓ Means partner involvement will be sought, including providing resources (e.g., support, ideas, facilities, funding, programs).

\*\* RIAC's role will be to facilitate, coordinate, promote, etc. as the case may be.

\*\*\* Resources that the City may contribute include staff time, materials, funding, meeting space, etc., subject to Council approval.

Strategic Areas and Specific Initiatives	Potential Partners*									
	Proposed RIAC Actions**	Proposed City Actions***	School Board	RCMP, Fire & Rescue	Other levels of govt.	NGOs	Local, Ethnic Media	Business	Commun. Assocs.	Religious/ Ethnocult. Groups
<b>Strategic Direction #5 - Develop Opportunities for Intercultural Experiences</b>										
a. Facilitate the development & coordination of intercultural events emphasizing unity, contribution & togetherness	Initiate and advise re: event development and coordination	Assist	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
b. Research opportunities for community forums	Work with partners to develop plan	Contribute resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
c. Integrate intercultural initiatives with Richmond's 125 <sup>th</sup> Birthday and 2010 Winter Olympics	Become integral part of planning Richmond 125 Celebration and 2010 Olympics	Approve participation	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
d. Explore feasibility of establishing an "Intercultural Place"	Explore feasibility and partnerships	Consider ways to accommodate	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
<b>Strategic Direction #6 - Administrative, Employment and Service Inclusiveness</b>										
a. Review policies and practices	Conduct review	Assist		✓	✓				✓	
b. Develop outreach mechanisms to encourage members of under-represented groups to apply for jobs and run for elected positions	Explore ways to achieve initiative	Assist		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
c. Research apprenticeship type program for under-employed immigrants	Explore ways to achieve initiative	Assist	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Strategic Direction #7 - City &amp; Community Partners' Decision Processes</b>										
a. Extend Intercultural Vision and principles to City and partners' decision-making processes	Encourage integration	Assist	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
b. Research alternative decision making models	Oversee project and present recommendations	Assist	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
<b>Strategic Direction #8 - Advocate for Community Intercultural Needs</b>										
a. Develop recommendations pertaining to immigrant selection, settlement and integration.	Draft recommendations	Review recommendations	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Strategic Areas and Specific Initiatives	Potential Partners*									
	Proposed RIAC Actions**	Proposed City Actions***	School Board	RCMP, Fire & Rescue	Other levels of govt.	NGOs	Local, Ethnic Media	Business	Commun. Assocs.	Religious/ Ethnocult. Groups
<b>Strategic Direction #9 - Continue Support for Newcomer Services</b>										
a. Consider hosting annual event to welcome newcomers	Lead planning of the event	Assist	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Strategic Direction #10 - Programs for Integrating Youth</b>										
a. Focus programs on helping disenfranchised youth to adapt	Review programs, prepare recommendations	Assist	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
b. Support the development of anti-bullying and intercultural programs in schools	Work with School District and other educational institutions	Assist	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
c. When and where necessary, build recreation facilities for youth	Consult with partners to determine need	Assist	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
<b>Key Overarching Recommendations</b>										
a. Establish a City Intercultural Coordinator position funded through partnerships	Serve as steering committee for staff resource	Review feasibility	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
b. Train all City staff on appropriate intercultural attitudes, practices and communication skills	Assist in developing objectives, seek funding	Work towards this objective	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓

## **Appendix A**

### **Themes from Community Consultation Processes**

#### **Stakeholder Consultation - 17 October 2002**

At the stakeholder consultation, a total of 26 organizations presented to the RIAC. Concerns were presented on a range of issues related to intercultural harmony and communication including:

- Language barriers and signage that impair communication across cultures.
- Barriers that reduce awareness and acceptance across cultures.
- Ongoing acts of racism and discrimination in Richmond.
- A lack of community involvement and understanding by many Richmond residents regarding government policies and procedures and the electoral process.
- A lack of adequate funding for, and access to, settlement, counselling and language training services for immigrant populations.
- Intergeneration and safety issues affecting youth and families including violence and cultural bullying, drug use, culture shock, cultural disconnection between youth and parents.

From these concerns the RIAC determined that it would focus on addressing issues of:

- Community involvement
- Cultural barriers
- Youth

#### **Public Consultation - 20 February 2003**

At this public consultation meeting held during Multicultural Week, twelve members of the public responded to the opportunity to speak about intercultural harmony and strategies pertaining to the three priority topics identified from the Stakeholder Consultation.

A common theme throughout the presentations was the need of the City to use its resources (e.g., financial, space, areas of influence) and capacity for partnerships more effectively in the effort to improve community involvement, address cultural barriers and support youth.

#### **Focus Group Consultations — 30 September - 16 October 2003**

The purpose of this consultation process was to provide residents of Richmond an opportunity to discuss their views and experiences related to intercultural life in Richmond in a small group, discussion-oriented, format.

In all, five adult focus groups were conducted, involving 48 participants, and four youth sessions, involving over 100 participants, representing a good cross-section of the Richmond population.

During the focus groups, participants discussed intercultural experiences they have had as residents of Richmond, perceptions of intercultural issues affecting life in Richmond, views regarding the role that the City should play in shaping intercultural community life, and ideas on how intercultural life could be enhanced in Richmond. Key themes raised during these discussions included:

- References to intercultural tensions arising from language barriers and signage.
- Lack of structured opportunities for residents to develop intercultural awareness and acceptance.
- A lack of accessible information regarding government processes and community services.

Interestingly, adult participants tended to support the notion of focusing efforts on youth, whereas youth participants indicated they already have a more advanced acceptance of diversity and efforts should focus on adults.

### **Consultation Process Summary**

In summary, an extensive array of input was received from the three consultation processes. This input serves as the basis for the observations, vision and strategic directions proposed in this report.

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