

Richmond Oval Art Plan

memorable for visitors, meaningful for residents

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PRESENTED TO THE
Richmond City Council

SUBMITTED BY THE
Public Art Work Group



CULTURE
PREPARED BY

The art commissioned for the Oval must be grand in scale and compelling in concept to complement the enormous size of the facility, as well as meet the expectations of the City for an international gathering place.

The art must work together with architecture and landscape design to create a celebratory sense of arrival, draw visitors and investors to the new waterfront developments, and establish the Oval as a beloved public place for the City's citizens.



The images of artwork in this plan are intended to inspire, amaze, challenge and delight. Images were chosen to illustrate the range of approaches and solutions offered by artists working today, not to illustrate specific artwork that will be commissioned as part of the Richmond Oval.



In October 2005, 4Culture began working with Richmond city staff, the Richmond Public Art Commission, the Cannon design team, the Musqueam First Nation and citizens appointed to Oval advisory committees to develop recommendations for investing resources in art that will have significant value to the Richmond Oval legacy.

4Culture would like to thank the following individuals for their help in creating the plan recommendations:

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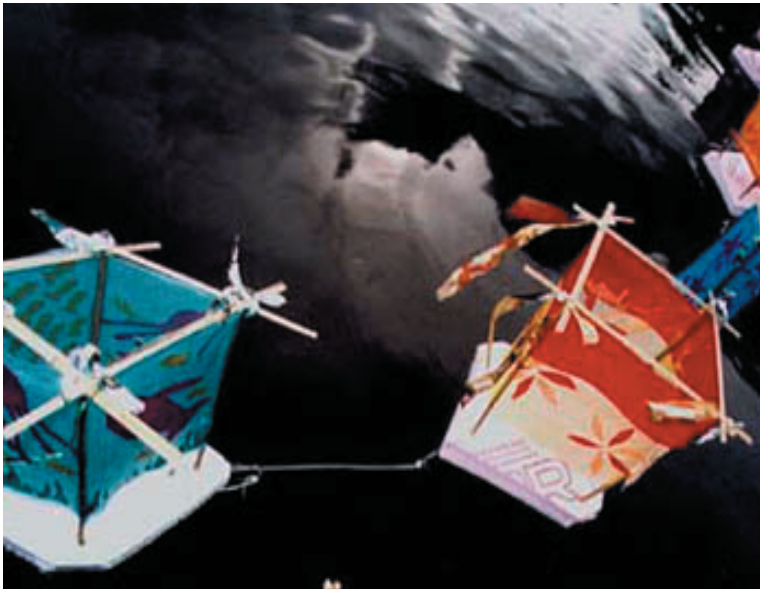


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Olympism is a state of mind. It envisions a world of peace, international brotherhood, and a manifestation of the highest ideals of human achievement. For many around the world, the Olympic Games are seen as a sporting event, but the Olympics are a worldwide cultural festival. Art and athletics are at the cornerstone of the Olympic movement.

Sport. Culture. Sustainability.

These are the “three pillars” of the Olympic Movement.

“Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy found in effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles.”

Olympic Charter, Fundamental Principles





Introduction

Art in everyday life brings a sense of meaning and place to local citizens, gives visitors a lasting memory, and reflects a city's long-term investment in the future and the vitality of its citizens.

Public art in the 21st Century has evolved into its own medium, one that provides emotional meaning to shared public spaces. Public art has joined the professions of architecture, urban design, landscape architecture and engineering in shaping the built environment and expressing our universal human values.

Public art is valued and supported by both the public and private sectors because it increases a sense of place and belonging and provides a layered cultural legacy. Public art validates peoples' need to care about the place where they live, and builds civic pride. Public art serves as a catalyst for other high-quality public and private investments, stimulates economic development initiatives like cultural tourism, and fosters a quality of place that helps attract businesses and a creative work force.

But one of the most often cited reasons for support of art in public places is that the arts inspire us. Inspired citizens are engaged citizens, invested in a future with shared commitment, mutual respect and understanding and a sense of limitless possibilities.

What we build and how we build it speaks volumes about who we are as a people.

We only get one chance to build large civic projects. The kind of projects that have the potential to shape cities in positive ways for generations. All participants must insist that human-focused design of the highest quality is an important measure of success, and that art plays a significant role in creating places where we feel comfortable and inspired, and where we want to return, again and again.

Incorporating public art in the Oval campus through early design and construction will maximize resources, project a character of cultural vitality onto the world stage, and is the best strategy for achieving the City's stated goals for waterfront growth and change.



Executive Summary

Art Plan Overview

Richmond is poised to harness the significant changes on its horizon in a positive way. Art can play an incomparable role in changing perceptions, reflecting different viewpoints and creating a new sense of place.

The art commissioned for the Oval must be grand in scale and compelling in concept to complement the enormous size of the facility, as well as the expectations of the City for an international gathering place. The art must work together with architecture and landscape design to create a celebratory sense of arrival, draw visitors and investors to the new waterfront developments, and establish the Oval as a beloved public place for the City's citizens.

Integrating the Art into the Oval Legacy

This plan recommends a series of integrated artworks that represent a shift in the way that Richmond's art collection has been developed within past projects. Although there are several opportunities for signature individual works of sculpture, the core of the art plan recommendations stress the importance of integrating significant artwork elements into the exterior of the building and the landscape.

Recommended art projects are organized into three zones. Two zones are of primary importance to realize the catalyzing potential of the Oval on surrounding retail and residential development: the southeast zone including a pedestrian crossing, Legacy Plaza and Water Works; and the north/northwest gathering place zone, the area for small gatherings and large festival celebrations near the river. In addition to these two landscape zones, the building façade and lobby comprise the other significant artwork zone.



Funding Recommendation

In order to attract artists capable of addressing the potential of the Oval Legacy, projects have been strategically recommended with sufficient resources and careful consideration of the City's long-term vision.



An art budget of \$5.3 million is commensurate with the City's expectations for the Oval Legacy potential. This funding can be allocated over time and the plan identifies opportunities that can be planned now and implemented later. The plan narrative also suggests ways to develop partnerships to leverage additional funding.

The art consultants recommend a *minimum* allocation of \$1.8 million to implement artwork for the Oval building and grounds. This minimum funding would finance several higher priority projects, but at the lowest budget allocation.

Implementation Strategy

Successful public art projects develop under the watchful eye of committed experts, who have a working knowledge of art and design as well as the communities they represent. Before an artist is ever hired to ultimately give her or his best work to a project, early scrutiny must be given to identifying art opportunities, allocating resources, and artist selection methodologies through the art planning process. After the art plan is approved, and artists are hired, the design review function provided by an informed body of high-level advisers is vital to the evolution of an artist's idea, from concept through refinement and implementation.



The recommended implementation strategy includes: 1) selection of artists according to adopted City policies by art selection panels; 2) creation of an oversight group of City staff, design team members and Public Art Commissioners to guide design review and development; and 3) hiring a

dedicated art project manager to provide administrative and curatorial oversight of the Oval art projects.

Leveraging the Olympic Opportunity

The 2010 Vancouver Olympic Winter Games are an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to capture the attention of the world and accelerate the City of Richmond's visionary planning initiatives. Just as the City has realized the advantages of the Olympic international spotlight, other investors – both public and private – will also use the event as a way to increase awareness about British Columbia's regional culture, recreation and business potential. Active participation with the cities of Vancouver and Whistler on cultural programming and regional initiatives will also reiterate Richmond's role as an Olympic partner.

The last chapter of the plan called *Activate, Educate, Collaborate and Coordinate* offers suggestions to maximize the resources and partnership potential of Olympic pre-game planning to benefit the City and its residents.

In order to ensure that the Oval is a gathering place of international stature, the City must be prepared to stimulate festivals and other cultural events to activate the grounds and draw visitors. Educational curriculum based on Musqueam First Nation culture, as well as other aspects of Richmond's history, ensure that the younger generation understand their City's rich heritage. The VANOC international Visiting Artists program may be utilized to secure high-profile commissions for the Oval building and grounds. Creating a Legacy Program to feature mature artists from British Columbia in Richmond's art collection may be initiated through the Oval development and Olympic opportunities, but will have lasting value and on-going programmatic potential far into the future.



Leveraging Other City Resources

During the development of the art plan, some recommendations came forward that do not affect the proposed budget recommendations for the Oval art program, but do have the opportunity to positively influence the site. The two projects are the vehicular bridge at the Hollybridge Road crossing and the development of exhibition cases for the Oval lobby. These two projects are described in the last section at the end of the *Activate, Educate, Collaborate and Coordinate* chapter.

Conclusion

The Oval will serve as the keystone in Richmond's evolution into a vibrant destination, a significant change from its previous identity within British Columbia as a neighborhood near the airport of "...strip malls, jaw-clenching traffic, and unchecked urban growth."¹

The detailed art plan recommendations described in the following pages are designed to expand the stature of the City of Richmond's civic art collection and realize the potential of the Oval development as a positive change agent for the City's future.

¹ Anne Mullens, *British Columbia Magazine*, pg. 20, Fall 2005





A Vision for the Oval

"To be a unique destination that serves as a dynamic international gathering place and an outstanding centre of excellence for sports and wellness at the heart of an exciting urban waterfront."

Project Vision: Richmond Oval

"Art throughout the Oval precinct will be a catalyst for transforming Richmond's urban waterfront and projecting a character of cultural vitality onto the world stage by creating memorable experiences, a sense of place and celebration, and a deeper understanding of the culture of Richmond and the Pacific Northwest."

Public Art Vision: Richmond Oval

The conception of the Richmond Oval demonstrates great foresight and innovative thinking by Richmond's elected officials, citizens and staff to seize the promise of a wellness center that puts the city on the world stage, improves the lives of its citizens, and catalyzes growth along the urban waterfront.

The transformation of this property will only happen with the investment of substantial resources and the contribution of thoughtful design professionals. Artists, as collaborators who will integrate their work and thinking into the established project goals, will provide a sense of place and celebration, and memorable experiences found nowhere else.



The Context of the Oval Precinct

The City of Richmond is growing toward the water, re-establishing its connection to the Fraser River. The Oval grounds will become its urban waterfront park surrounded by dense housing, increased retail and round-the-clock activities. Utilizing some of the last, under-used riverfront property in greater Vancouver to underwrite the development of the Oval and stimulate adjacent, high-quality developments indicates cutting-edge urban planning and leadership. The design standards established at the Oval will set the bar for adjacent growth and reinforce a sophisticated urban connection to the downtown center towards the east and naturalized waterfront to the west.

The Oval, its grounds and adjacent developments are viewed collectively by the City and design teams as an “Oval precinct.” The standards of the Oval project, including its public artwork, landscaping and fine grain details such as street furnishings and lighting, will be carried throughout subsequent developments in the precinct over many years into the future. For that reason this art plan includes this section on context, and it will be important for selected artists to be mindful of how their works will influence the experience of the Oval building and grounds, as well as the entire precinct area.

History

For thousands of years, this island on the Fraser delta was the home of only the Musqueam people who lived here with little mark on the land. Farmers started arriving in the mid-1800s to grow blueberries and cranberries in the boggy soil, along with fishermen working the coastal waters. These authentic activities are now being steadily nudged aside by a growing body of high-tech workers who commute to Richmond but may not live there.





Today, Pan-Asian immigrants are making Richmond their new home, and bringing with them the resources to recreate versions of the culture they left behind. Dense urban villages are springing up throughout the city, with more planned, which will bring further diversity and vibrancy to the mosaic of cultures that are thriving in Richmond.

Development Initiatives & Linkages



In 2006, the construction of the Canada Line (also known as the RAV line) begins along No. 3 Road. This rapid transit project is a public-private partnership that will have a significant impact on the growth and mobility of Richmond. Designed to link Richmond – Vancouver – and the Airport, the Canada Line is expected to move 10,000 people per day. Operational by 2009, the Canada Line will transport thousands of visitors during the Olympic Winter Games to and from the Richmond Oval. The construction of the Canada Line is catalyzing an ambitious urban master planning strategy along the No. 3 Road corridor to reshape the City and define a vibrant, regional City Centre. The City of Richmond envisions the impact of the Canada Line to support “Richmond’s role as a cosmopolitan city at the crossroads of the world, further connecting people and places in an efficient way.”²



Richmond’s Waterfront Strategy objectives stress the importance of reorienting dense urban development along the Fraser River and reinforcing strong pedestrian and transportation links between the riverfront and City Centre. The Oval development plays a pivotal role in this strategy with the creation of an urban waterfront park as an integral feature of the Oval and the surrounding community.

The lands west of the Oval are providing a major portion of the public financing for the Oval development. In order to ensure that the holistic plans for the Fraser River waterfront are supported, the City has offered the lands for private development but is restricting the developers’ use of the parcels by requiring that each property support the Oval Site West

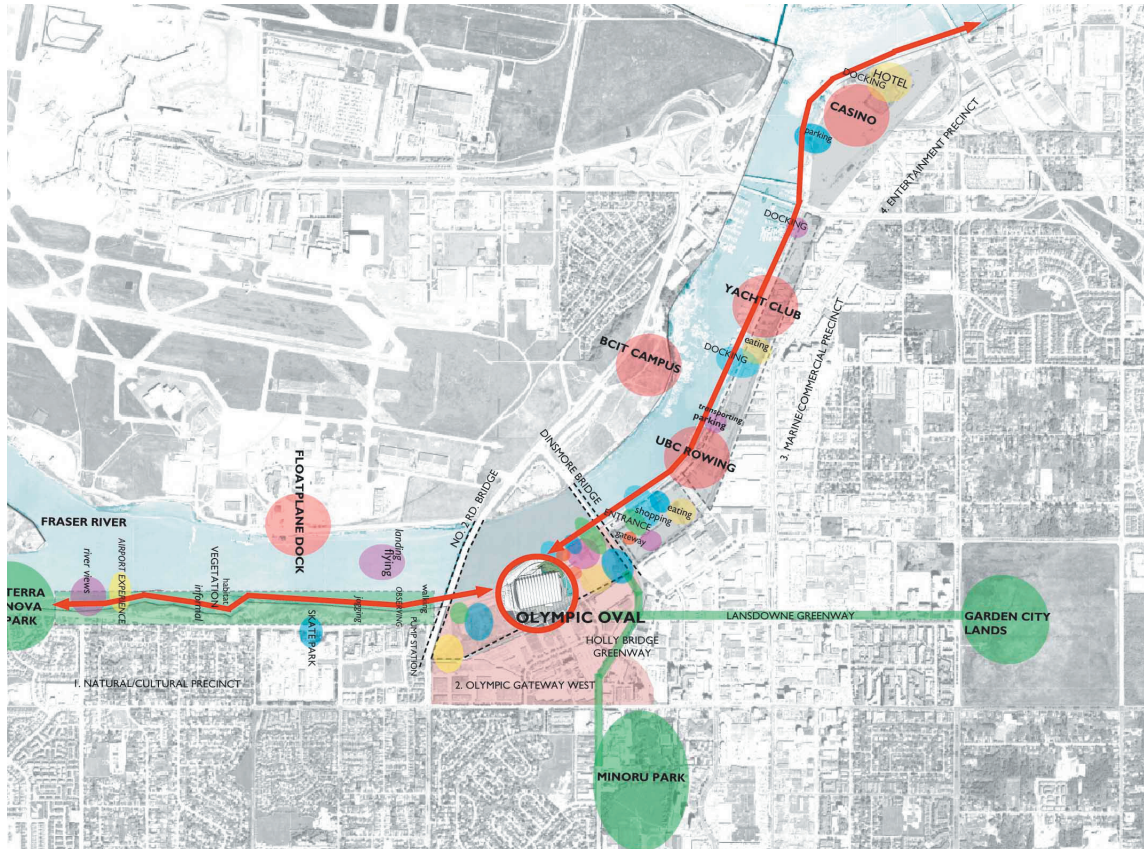
² 2004 Annual Report
City of Richmond,
British Columbia, Canada.
Richmond – Airport-Vancouver
(RAV) Rapid Transit Project.
Page 25.

concepts for public open space. The goal of the Oval Site West Open Space Concepts plan is “to stimulate curiosity and enhance public awareness, appreciation, and enjoyment of the Fraser River and its complex human and natural connections – past, present and future.”³ Each open space along the river becomes progressively more naturalized as you move west away from the formal urban character of the eastern edge at the Oval site.

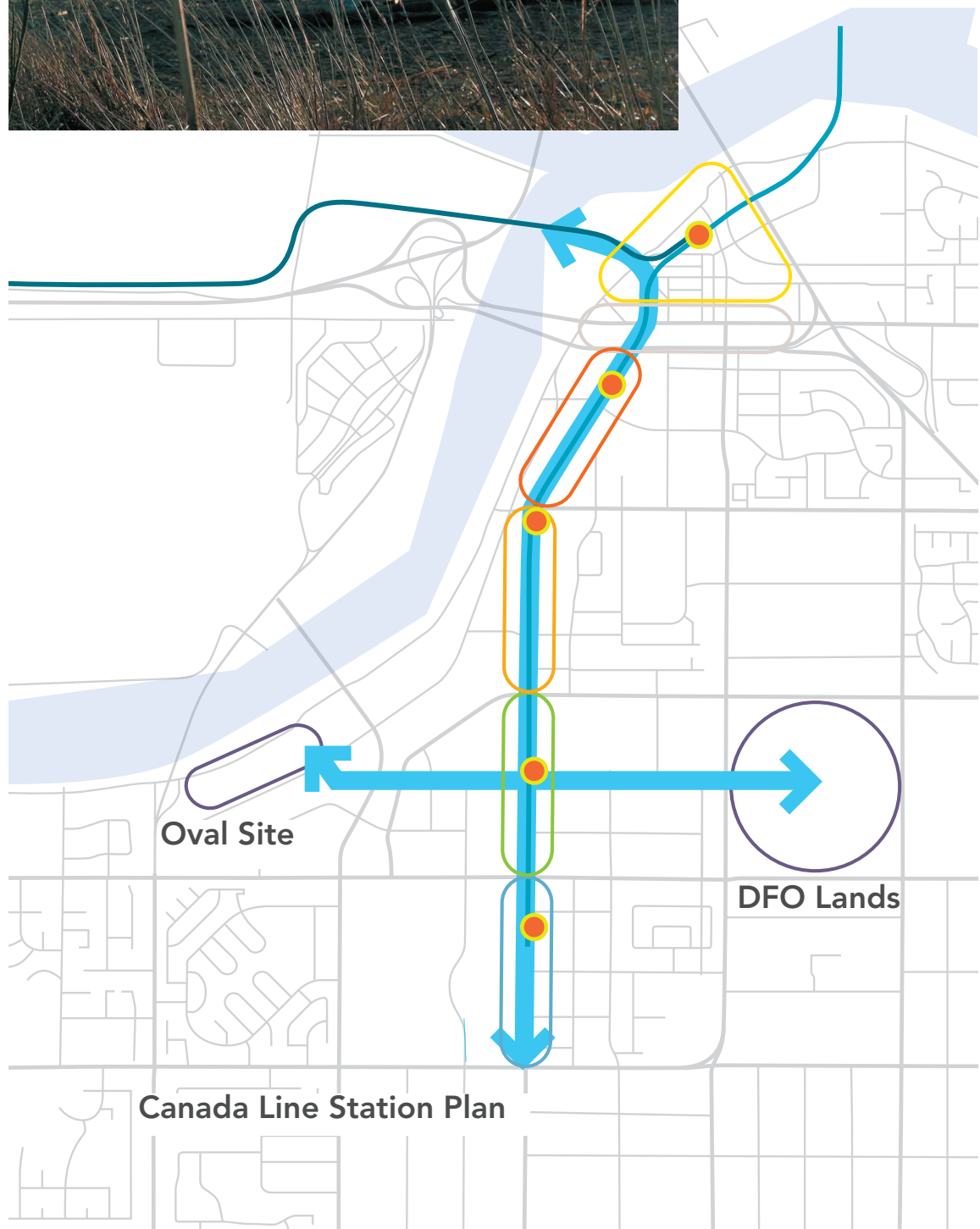


³ *Oval Site West Open Space Concepts*, prepared for the City of Richmond by Phillips Farvaag Smallemberg

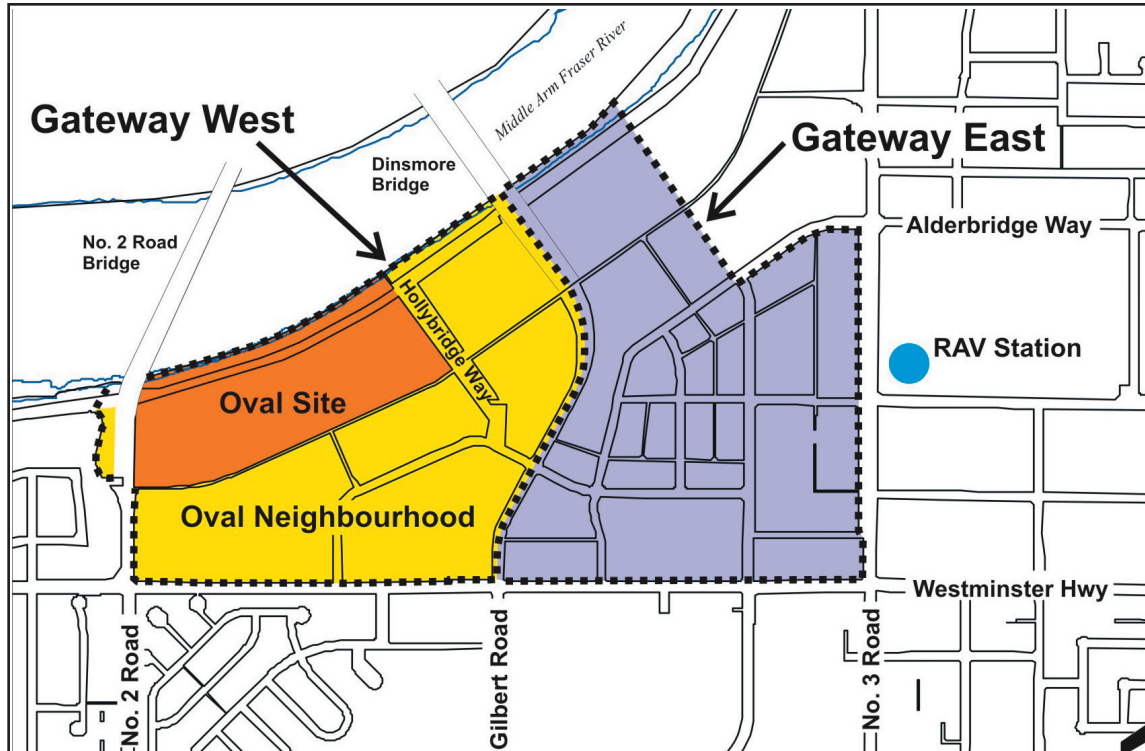
Oval Precinct Context Maps & Illustrations



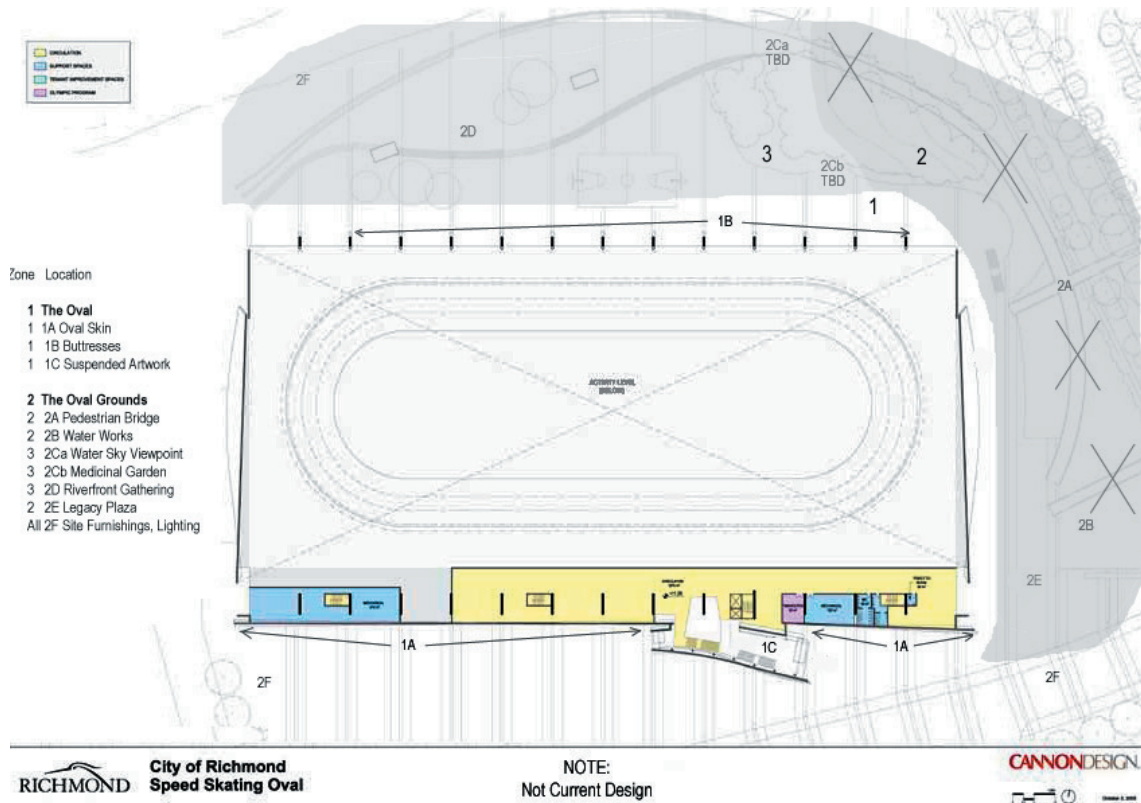
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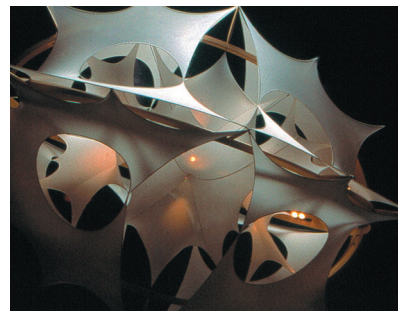
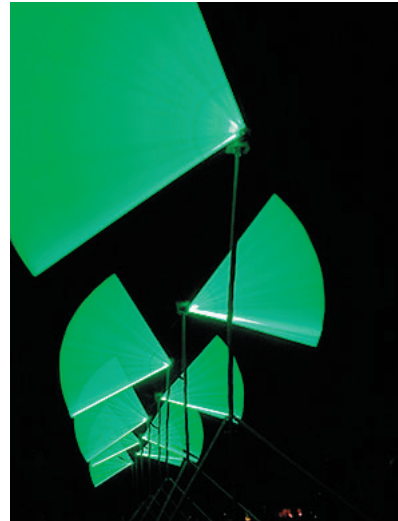
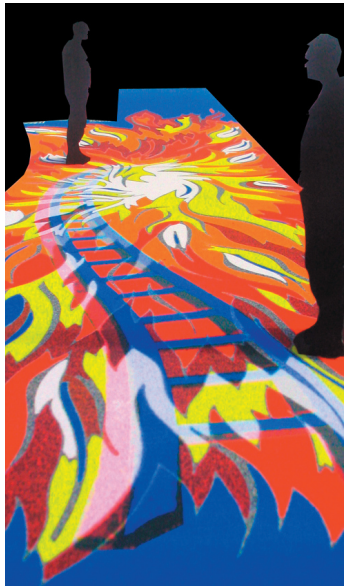
Oval Precinct Context Maps & Illustrations



Oval Art Project Opportunities Locator Map



Recommended art projects are organized into three zones. Two zones are of primary importance to realize the catalyzing potential of the Oval on surrounding retail and residential development: the southeast zone including a pedestrian crossing, Legacy Plaza and Water Works; and the north/northwest gathering place zone, the area for small gatherings and large festival celebrations near the river. In addition to these two landscape zones, the building façade and lobby comprise the other significant artwork zone.



Thematic Framework

Art, landscape design and architecture all working in synergy will result in added layers of interest and meaning at the Oval development as well as ensure a holistic experience and cohesion. A thematic framework — flow, flight, fusion — was established during the Richmond Oval design development to guide the shape and form of the architecture and surrounding landscape. This plan recommends that the artists commissioned for the project also respond to this thematic framework, to heighten the sense of place and articulate an authentic and unique Oval precinct design language.

Thought-provoking and evocative, these themes support design and artwork that encapsulates the spirit of Olympic speed skating, as well as the transition through the Legacy phase towards a community health and wellness center.

Broad enough to stimulate the creative energy and imagination of artists, these concepts are a foundation for revealing the spectacular context of the Oval site as well as Richmond's cultural heritage and history.

Flow

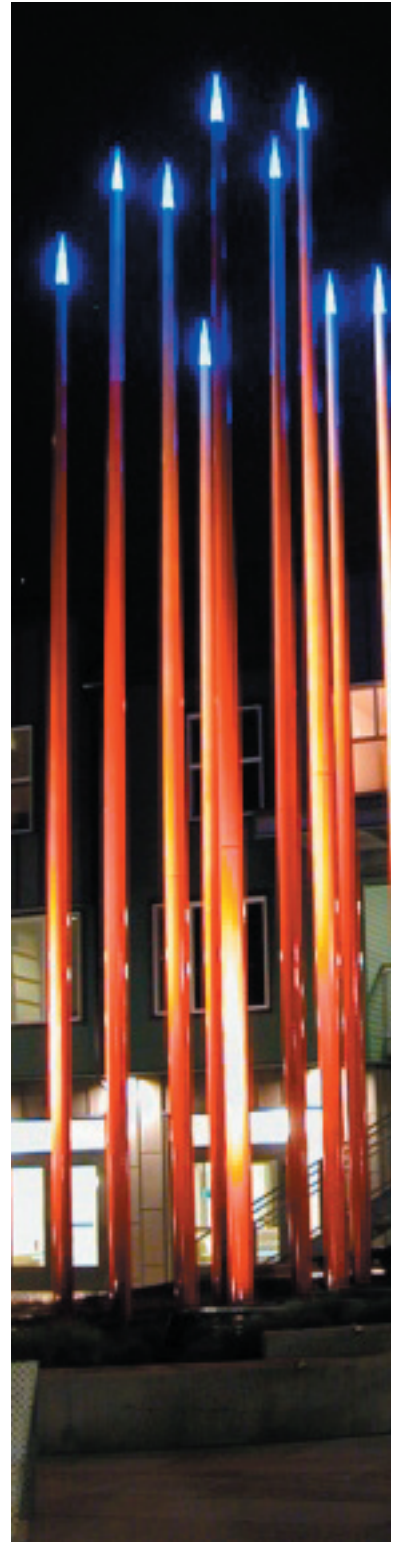
ebb and flow at the water's edge. ice. glacial flows of the pacific northwest. alluvial flow. urban connectors and the flow of people in and out of richmond. energy flow. cycles of the seasons. past — present — future. sports.

Flight

airplane viewing area. great blue heron. flights of fancy. human spirit. wind. motion. imagination. art.

Fusion

a mosaic of cultures. the place where the land meets the river. estuary. union of the natural and man-made environments. high-tech/low-tech. farming fields + urban core. sustainability.



Guiding Principles

The following five Guiding Principles were used to establish priorities during the plan's development. The five principles will be used during the implementation of the plan to guide artist selection and proposal development processes.

1. Leverage the art investment to support Richmond's urban planning and development initiatives along the Fraser River waterfront. Examples in the art plan that support this principle include:



- Concentrate art expenditures on several significant features in the landscape, particularly on the southeastern edge and at the northern plaza to establish the Oval grounds as a significant urban park and animate the space
- Encourage selected artists to reflect the City's broader urban planning initiatives such as the Waterfront Strategy, reinforcing the urban character and connections to the City Centre on the east and the Oval West Public Open Space Concepts, extending the vision along the dyke to the west
- Ensure that the infrastructure is in place and encourage City support for festivals and events that will activate the grounds and make the Oval a destination as well as a much-loved civic gathering place

2. Influence elements of the site design and architecture, integrating artwork through the capital investment and construction. Examples in the art plan that support this principle include:



- Prioritize art investment for opportunities on the building exterior and grounds
- Maximize the potential of the polycarbonate cladding and concrete buttresses through design team collaboration
- Establish priorities based on construction of major elements of the site that must be put in place during the initial phases while other more discreet works can be added over time

3. Use public art and cultural programming to reveal and celebrate the unique qualities of Richmond and the Pacific Northwest region. Examples in the art plan that support this principle include:



- Use the “flow, flight and fusion” themes to build layers of authentic meaning that enhance the unique context of the Oval site
- Offer a variety of commissions to regional artists and ensure cultural diversity in the artwork commissions

4. Reflect Olympic ideals and Richmond’s vision of its community through sustainability, cultural diversity, education, community fraternity, and human individualism. Examples in the art plan that support this principle include:



- Program the Oval grounds with multi-cultural festival activities and events
- Use the VANOC Olympiad planning to direct international Visiting Artists commissions to key areas of the Oval site
- Leverage partnership support for Musqueam curriculum and artwork development, and designs for the Olympic torch and Olympic medals

5. Strive for excellence and long-term value. Examples in the art plan that support this principle include:



- Approve an implementation strategy that reflects the “best practices” in the field
- Establish a thoughtful and consistent design review process that supports and challenges artists to create their best work
- Create a Legacy Program to honor outstanding artists and ensure that their work is featured in public places as part of Richmond’s civic art collection