

**Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee**  
Richmond City Hall  
6911 No. 3 Road  
Richmond, B.C. V6Y 2C1

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0100-20-RIADI-01  
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February 16, 2004

Mayor and Council  
Richmond City Hall  
6911 No. 3 Rd  
Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

Dear: Mayor and Council

**Re: Report on the Inclusiveness of the Election Process**

In response to Council's request of November 25, 2002, the Richmond Intercultural Committee (RIAC) has reviewed the City election process to ensure that the entire community can be involved.

Enclosed please find RIAC's report on the subject.

We would be pleased to meet with you to discuss it further. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions in this regard.

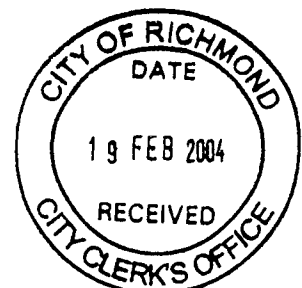
As per its mandate, RIAC has been exploring many issues relating to intercultural awareness and harmony in our community. Election inclusiveness has been one such issue.

Yours truly,



Balwant Sanghera  
Chairperson

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# Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee

## Report on the Inclusiveness of the Election Process

### 1. Municipal Election Process

On November 25, 2002 Council moved that:

*“the Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee be requested to review the election process to ensure that the entire community is involved.”*

As a result, David Weber, the Acting City Clerk, was invited by the Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee to present on the municipal election process.

The Committee was impressed with David Weber’s explanation of the mandate of the Chief Election officer. He clarified the requirement for the Chief Election Officer to ensure that the election process is fair, their need to go to a great length to be neutral and impartial, and not get involved in debates on issues which is the responsibility of the candidates. He also informed the Committee that they do not advertise all candidates’ meetings and remain at arm’s length at all times during the election process. Their role is to get information, regarding the mechanics of voting as opposed to the issues, out to the voters.

Mr. Weber presented and distributed a detailed report of the process that involved translated voting materials as well as signage information in Chinese and Punjabi. The Committee also had the opportunity to look at the Presiding Election Official’s summary results regarding the multicultural aspects of the election process.

The presentation was well received by RIAC. The awareness of the election officials for the need to reach out to the ethnic communities in Richmond and their effort to include them in the election process were greatly appreciated by the members of RIAC.

The Committee made the following suggestions:

- 1) Polling stations should make it a requirement for each polling station to have a person who speaks another language. If there are, for example, five only, they should rotate from one to the other polling station.
- 2) Generally, everyone felt that there should be no changes to the ballots.
- 3) There is no need for multilingual ballots.
- 4) Voters must vote in English or French, the two official languages. However, they can use interpreters who would not impose their own choice on the candidates.
- 5) Recruit voting place staff with diverse language skills.
- 6) Provide orientation for Presiding Election Officers regarding the linguistic make-up of Richmond.
- 7) Information on the candidates should be made available to the voters.
- 8) Use trained volunteers to help the city to educate diverse communities.

## 2. Voter Participation

### i. Civic Education Society Presentation

In the May 15, 2003 meeting, the Committee received a presentation from the Civic Education Society (CES) on this issue. The recommendations of the CES presented by Michael Yu and Philip Fung on enhancing ethnic participation in the municipal affairs focused on the ethnic voters participation during elections and their civic participation between election periods. Some recommended actions were proposed to better serve ethnic groups' information needs around election time. Between election periods, three specific recommendations were submitted by CES to ensure civic participation by various ethnic communities.

- 1) Conduct local research to identify challenges faced by ethnic groups in the civic participation process;
- 2) Multilingual City Government Information Tours; and
- 3) Multilingual Study Circles to better serve civic participation by members of the ethnic communities.

In their discussion, the Committee concluded that these recommendations would require the city's leadership and would be reported to the Council in the Committee's report.

### ii. 2004 – 2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan and Work Program

In order to involve and receive feedback from the Richmond residents, the RIAC held consultations with stakeholders and the public. With the help of the Project Consultant, focus groups were conducted with approximately 150 Richmond residents. These consultations resulted in the development of the 2004 – 2010 Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan and Work Program.

#### **Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan Recommendations**

The following recommendations pertaining to voter participation will be presented in the Richmond Intercultural Strategic Plan and Work Program.

##### **“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) Research the understanding of and barriers faced by different cultural groups, from their own background and experience, regarding the practice of governance, elections and volunteerism in Richmond.
- b) Develop information campaigns specifically designed for different population groups that address their barriers and build efficacy for participating in the rights and responsibilities afforded to residents of Richmond.”

**“Strategic Direction #9**

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

Suggested Specific Initiative

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

Council will be asked to approve all Strategic Plan recommendations together in a separate report.

**3. Conclusion**

RIAC would like to extend its appreciation to City Clerk’s staff for their efforts in making the election process inclusive and election officers’ awareness of the need to reach out to different linguistic groups. It is RIAC’s hope that Council will consider implementing RIAC’s Suggestions to further enhance the inclusiveness of the election process.

To encourage voter participation, RIAC hopes that Council will support its work in achieving the strategic initiatives outlined above, and its future work with partners such as the CES in achieving increased voter participation.

Prepared by:  
Shashi Assanand  
Member, Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee  
January 2004

# Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee

c/o 6911 No. 3 Road  
Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

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May 3, 2004

Mr. Richard McKenna  
City Clerk  
City of Richmond  
6911 No. 3 Road  
Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

Dear Mr. McKenna,

You will recall that on behalf of the Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee (RIAC), I was invited to make a presentation about the Election Inclusiveness report. However, due to some reasons, this presentation was postponed.

Will you please let me know as to when you would like me to appear before Richmond City Council on this report?

Thank you.

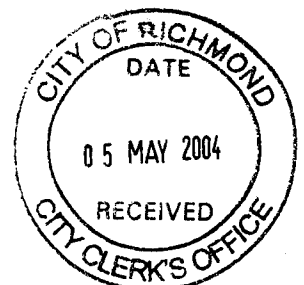
Sincerely



Balwant Sanghera  
Chair  
Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee

pc: Terry Crowe, Manager, Policy Planning  
Lesley Sherlock, Social Planner, Policy Planning

BS:cas





## City of Richmond

6911 No.3 Road, Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1  
Telephone (604) 276-4000  
www.city.richmond.bc.ca

March 3, 2004  
File: 0100-20-R1AD1-01  
XR: 8125-01

**City Clerk's Office**  
Telephone: (604) 276-4007  
Fax: (604) 278-5139

**BY FAX: (604) 660-5828**

Mr. Balwant Sanghera  
Chairperson  
Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee  
Richmond City Hall  
Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

Dear Mr. Sanghera:

**Re: Report on the Inclusiveness of the Election Process**

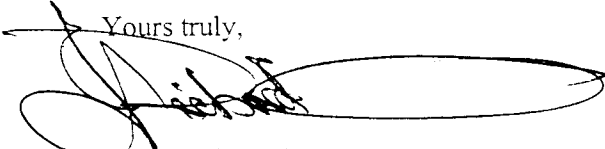
This is to acknowledge and thank you for your letter dated February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004, together with your report on the "Inclusiveness of the Election Process". I would like to suggest that you present this report to the General Purposes Committee of City Council on Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004 at 4:00 pm. If you or other representatives of the RIAC are available at that time, Committee would very much benefit by hearing directly from the RIAC on this matter and to respond directly to any questions which committee may pose.

I understand that this is rather short notice, but other meeting dates in April are already booked and it may be more than a month before another date is available. If on the other hand you wish me to forward your report to Committee without representation from RIAC being present, I am most willing to do so.

I will be away from the office from today until Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, but in my absence please contact Mr. David Weber at (604) 276-4098 and he will accommodate you.

On behalf of City Council I would like to thank you and your committee very much for your work on this project.

Yours truly,



J. Richard McKenna  
City Clerk

JRM:daw

cc: Lesley Sherlock, Staff Liaison

**RICHMOND**  
*Island City, by Nature*