



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** Planning Committee **Date:** April 7, 2026  
**From:** Kim Somerville **File:** 07-3425-01/2025-Vol 01  
 Director, Community Social Development  
**Re:** Youth Well-Being and Celebrate YOUTH Campaign

### Staff Recommendation

That the report titled “Youth Well-Being and Celebrate YOUTH Campaign”, dated April 7, 2026, from the Director, Community Social Development, be received for information.

Kim Somerville  
 Director, Community Social Development  
 (604-247-4671)

Att. 1

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Arts, Culture & Heritage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Corporate Communications & Marketing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Community Safety Administration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Environmental Programs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Parks Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
PRC Planning and Strategic Initiatives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Recreation & Sport Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b>	<b>APPROVED BY CAO</b>

## Staff Report

### Origin

BC Healthy Communities and Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) have released resource guides that highlight ways that local governments play a role in promoting four supportive factors that impact youth mental well-being: participation, play, safety, and social connection and belonging. The City and its partners are committed to supporting youth resilience, which is reflected in the City of Richmond Youth Strategy 2022–2032 vision that “all youth in Richmond are safe, valued, respected and have the supports, opportunities and resources to live rich and fulfilling lives.” The City of Richmond Social Development Strategy (2025–2035) also identifies the importance of facilitating play, participation, safety and social connectedness through policy, planning and service delivery to foster a youth-friendly city.

This report provides an overview of well-being indicators for youth in Richmond and introduces the Celebrate YOUth Campaign, which will provide a cohesive platform to continue raising the profile of the City’s many initiatives that foster positive youth development.

This report supports Council’s Strategic Plan 2022–2026 Focus Area #1 Proactive in Stakeholder and Civic Engagement:

*1.3 Increase the reach of communication and engagement efforts to connect with Richmond’s diverse community.*

This report supports Council’s Strategic Plan 2022–2026 Focus Area #6 A Vibrant, Resilient and Active Community:

*6.3 Foster intercultural harmony, community belonging, and social connections.*

This report supports the following action in the City of Richmond’s Building Our Future Together: Social Development Strategy (2025–2035):

*2.11 Promote a child and youth-friendly community through the continued development of policy, land use planning, and programs and services that enable active transportation, play, participation, safety and social connectedness.*

This report supports the following objective in the City of Richmond Community Wellness Strategy 2018–2023:

*1.3 Increase the number of individuals across all ages reporting a positive state of mental wellness.*

This report also supports the following actions in the City of Richmond Youth Strategy 2022–2032:

*2.3 Increase public awareness and education of the positive contributions youth make in the community.*

*2.4 Continue to provide and enhance formal opportunities for recognition and celebration of youth in Richmond (e.g. through events and communication campaigns) including specific youth identified from equity-deserving groups.*

## Analysis

Positive youth development has been a strategic priority for the City since the adoption of the City's first Youth Strategy in 1995. In 2005, Council adopted an asset-based approach to guide the delivery of youth services and endorsed the vision for "Richmond to be the best place in North America to raise children and youth." Guided by this vision and its long history of prioritizing youth well-being through planning and service delivery, the City and its partners provide a wide array of programs and initiatives that foster youth development and leadership, and engage and support diverse youth. The City's current Youth Strategy 2022–2032 continues to build on prior work and provides a more collaborative and community-integrated approach to planning and program delivery for youth in Richmond.

The societal context in which Richmond youth develop has changed significantly in recent years. A Statistics Canada report, titled *Navigating Socioeconomic Obstacles: Impact on the Well-being of Canadian Youth (2023)*, identified that affordability pressures related to housing, education, everyday necessities such as food and transportation, and leisure activities, mean that youth living in lower income households are less likely to report positive mental health. While youth's access to technology has many advantages, the rise of exposure to online harms such as cyberbullying, hate speech and misinformation present a threat to youth well-being (*Raising Canada, 2025*). The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated youth mental health due to challenges in maintaining social connections (*State of Youth Report, 2021*). Nationally, there has been a consistent trend of youth reporting a sense of loneliness more often than other age groups and a decline in high levels of life satisfaction and community belonging, citing concerns such as climate change and discrimination as additional factors that impact well-being (*Statistics Canada, 2023*).

### City Initiatives that Support Youth Well-Being

Council-adopted strategic plans, including the Youth Strategy 2022–2032, the Community Wellness Strategy (2018–2023) and the Social Development Strategy (2025–2035) along with other City strategies and plans, guide the City's actions for youth development. In alignment with these strategies, the City uses an asset-based approach to youth development, which purposefully focuses on helping youth build on their strengths and develop skills, resources and experiences that further support their own growth. Reinforcing the value of the City's asset-based approach, the BC Healthy Communities and VCH resource guides encourage local governments to orient planning, policies and delivery of programs, services and amenities towards addressing four interconnected supportive factors for greatest impact on youth mental well-being.

Outlined below are the four supportive factors that are recommended by BC Healthy Communities and VCH, together with a few examples of existing City and Community Association and Society initiatives that foster these among Richmond youth.

- 'Participation' refers to youth engagement in community life, including civic engagement, volunteerism and employment, which supports youth competence, social connections and feelings of belonging. The Richmond Green Ambassadors Program engages secondary students interested in environmental sustainability through volunteerism and community outreach. The City's Youth Advisory Committee and youth leadership groups at community centres provide avenues for youth voices to inform

planning and implementation of City and Community Association and Society initiatives. Some City advisory committees and Community Association and Society boards also include a designated seat for youth or intentionally consider representation of youth when welcoming new members.

- ‘Play’ refers to structured and unstructured activities, indoors and outdoors, that enable youth to be active, creative and foster their own interests. This develops social-emotional and prosocial skills, promotes happiness and supports independence. The wide range of parks, recreation and cultural facilities across the city offer registered and drop-in recreational and creative activities that enable youth to develop skills and explore diverse interests in a supportive environment. Opportunities for unstructured activities are available across Richmond, including the neighbourhood parks, trails, natural areas and signature parks, as well as youth-focused amenities such as the City’s two bike parks and skateboard park.
- ‘Safety’ refers to recognizing and reducing the chronic stressors that affect physical, psycho-social and environmental safety at home, in neighbourhoods and the community, and helping youth gain experiences, skills and resources to increase their sense of control. The City’s Building Safer Communities Fund initiatives foster youth and family resilience by enhancing community spaces, providing individual support and educational opportunities. City facilities also provide safe and welcoming spaces for youth, including youth hangouts, 2SLGBTQI+ groups and girls-only programming, such as G.O. Day that welcomes all self-identified girls.
- ‘Social connection and belonging’ refers to social interactions where youth feel valued and have positive relationships with peers and supportive adults fostered through shared experiences, common interests, goals and/or traits. Through programs offered by the City and Community Associations and Societies, such as digital arts, leadership training and various skill development opportunities, youth can explore a range of interests while connecting with peers and supportive adults, such as Youth Development Coordinators at community centres, Youth Outreach Workers and through the Richmond Youth Media Program.

In addition to programs available through the City and Community Associations and Societies, community organizations across Richmond offer programs and resources to youth that directly address mental health needs, support youth with accessing appropriate resources in the community and provide youth with welcoming and inclusive spaces.

The programs and initiatives available in Richmond offer youth opportunities for increased and consistent exposure to positive experiences that promote these factors, helping them to develop skills, resources and connections that improve their resilience as they move into adulthood.

### Feedback from Youth

Feedback from youth participants reinforces that participation in City programs provides a number of benefits related to positive youth development. Youth indicated that many City programs connect them to peers and supportive adults; provide opportunities for them to make a positive impact in the community; and support them with developing leadership, communication and teamwork skills.

Feedback from youth gathered through finalizing the Council-adopted Youth Strategy and from Youth Advisory Committee meetings identified that affordability barriers and lack of awareness of programs and services were contributing factors that limited youth participation. Youth expressed that they were not always aware of where to seek information, nor which programs were the most appropriate to meet their needs. Suggestions arising from both engagements included the need for a central place for youth to begin their search for community resources and using social media to better communicate opportunities with youth. Members of the City's Youth Advisory Committee also shared that, as youth get older, education as well as volunteer and work experience are prioritized over extracurricular activities, which may contribute to a decline in physical activity levels and access to adult mentors and role models in the community.

Based on feedback gathered from Richmond youth and the BC Healthy Communities and VCH guides on youth well-being, there is an opportunity for the City and its partners to further enhance youth development through a focused campaign that raises the profile of youth in Richmond.

### Celebrate YOUth Campaign

The Celebrate YOUth Campaign provides a cohesive platform to increase awareness of programs, services and supports that are available across Richmond that help youth develop assets and experiences that strengthen their resilience. The campaign also provides an additional opportunity for the City and its partners to communicate that youth are valued in Richmond. The campaign's overarching tagline "Celebrate YOUth" intentionally provides an affirmative message aimed at youth, and four unique themes align with factors that support youth well-being. The campaign centres on a series of posters that each display a photo of a Richmond youth (Attachment 1). The poster themes are:

- Youth are connected here;
- Youth are heard here;
- Youth are active here; and
- Youth belong here.

The campaign will promote a new online hub that features information about the wide range of youth initiatives, programs and resources in Richmond. The online hub will provide a foundation for City departments and youth-serving organizations to communicate existing youth-focused opportunities and enable more youth to find and access the available services.

The release of each poster will be accompanied by an activation that supports youth engagement and well-being. For example, the 'Youth are connected here' poster will be promoted during Youth Week in May 2026 and emphasizes connecting youth with the wide range of community resources available in Richmond through the online hub and new youth resource guide. The 'Youth belong here' poster will support an initiative to better understand sense of belonging and social connectedness among Richmond youth. Findings will inform City planning, policy development, and program and service delivery to enhance social and physical environments to help Richmond youth thrive.

The campaign was developed through a Project Team consisting of representatives from the City, Richmond Public Library, Richmond School District, VCH, Touchstone Family

Association and Richmond Addiction Services Society. Campaign materials were designed by a Richmond youth who attends the Richmond Youth Media Program. Richmond youth were photographed to be featured on the posters, provided feedback on the campaign themes and design, and were interviewed about how the community has played a role in their growth and development. The Youth Advisory Committee and representatives from City departments that offer youth programs and services were also consulted during the development of the campaign materials.

### **Next Steps**

The posters will be distributed to all City facilities and community centres as well as shared on the City's social media accounts and featured on digital transit ads. The campaign posters and social media assets will also be shared with key partners such as the Richmond School District and VCH, as well as youth-serving organizations across the city, including the Richmond Public Library, Richmond Addiction Services Society and Richmond RCMP, and provincial ministry offices located in Richmond that provide youth-related services.

Additional poster themes are under development and will be released at a later time to address emerging youth needs and continue to promote supportive factors for youth.

### **Financial Impact**

None.

### **Conclusion**

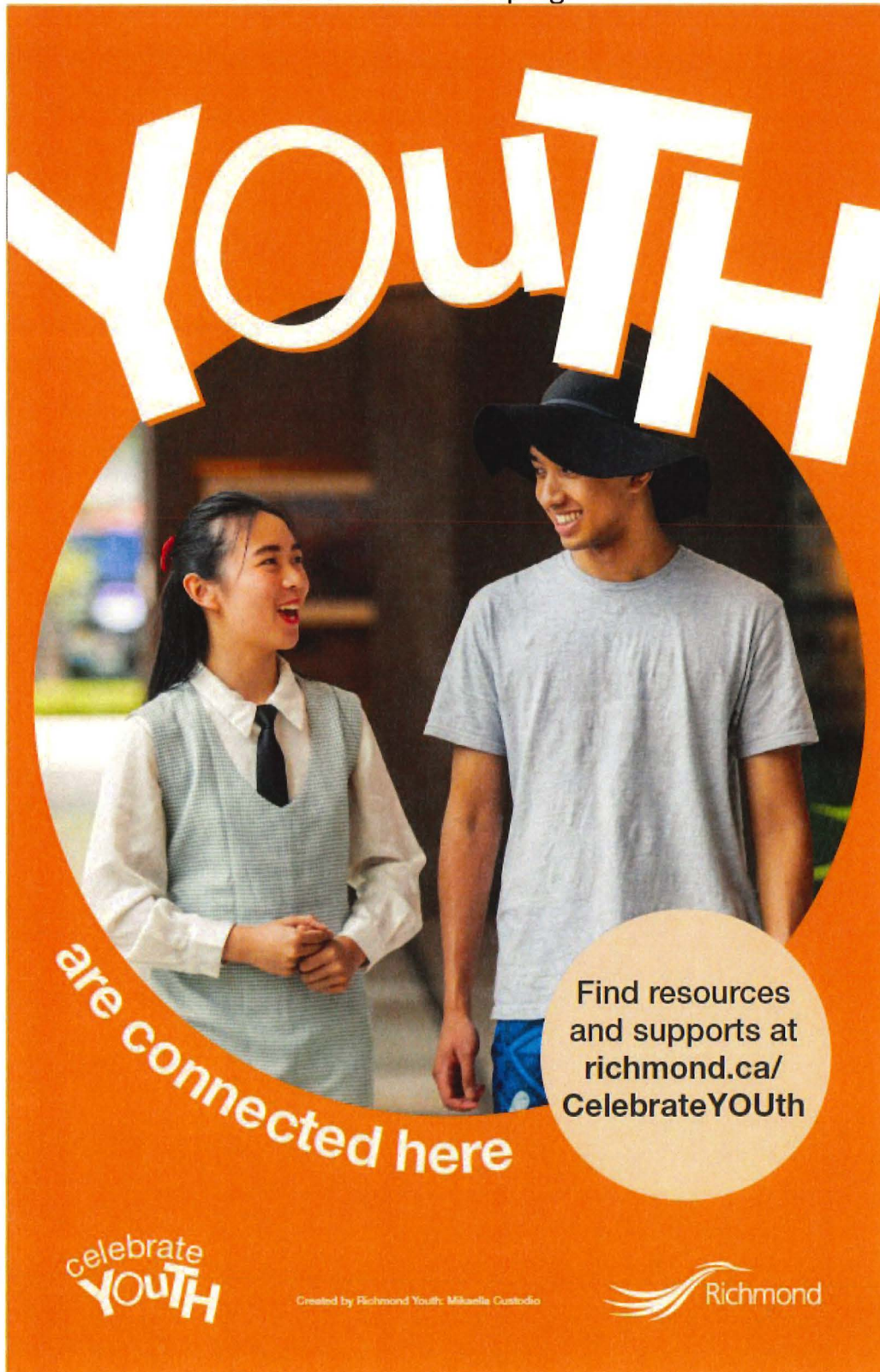
The Celebrate YOUth Campaign raises the profile of youth, amplifies the Council-adopted Youth Strategy's vision and provides a cohesive platform for the City and its partners to support ongoing positive youth development in the community. The campaign's four themes aim to foster social connection and belonging for youth in the community, increase awareness of supports and resources available to youth as well as promote youth engagement and physical activity. It will be used as a mechanism to support ongoing policy development and engagement of youth 13 to 24 years, enabling the City and its partners to gain further understanding to better meet the evolving needs of youth in Richmond while continuing to foster a community where youth can thrive.



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Att. 1: Celebrate YOUth Campaign Posters

Celebrate YOUth Campaign Posters



# YOUTH



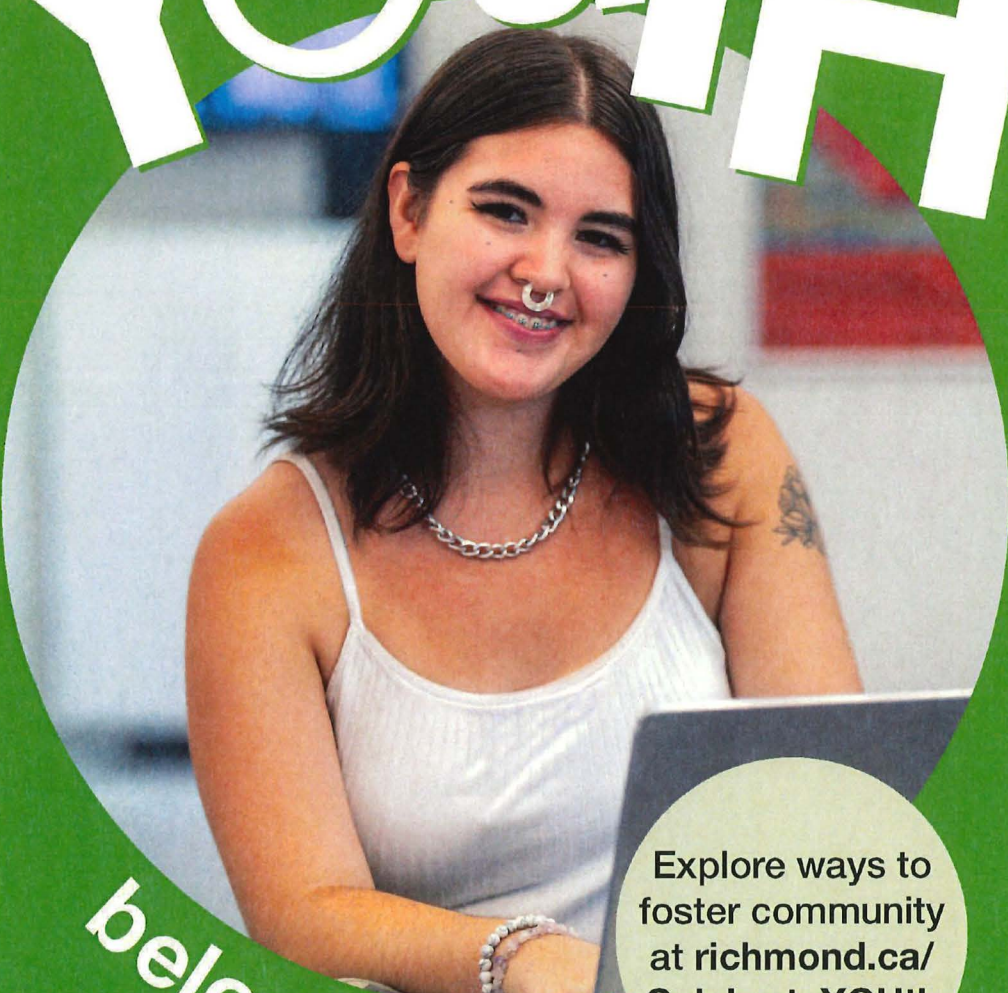
are active here

Discover programs and services at [richmond.ca/CelebrateYOUTH](http://richmond.ca/CelebrateYOUTH)

**celebrate YOUTH**

Created by Richmond Youth: Mikaela Custodio






# YOUTH

belong here

Explore ways to foster community at [richmond.ca/CelebrateYOUTH](http://richmond.ca/CelebrateYOUTH)

celebrate YOUTH

Created by Richmond Youth: Mikaela Gustodio

 Richmond


**YOUTH**

are heard here

Find ways to share your voice at [richmond.ca/CelebrateYOUTH](http://richmond.ca/CelebrateYOUTH)

celebrate **YOUTH**

Created by Richmond Youth: Mikaela Custodio

 Richmond