



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** General Purposes Committee

**Date:** May 5, 2025

**From:** John Hopkins  
Director, Policy Planning

**File:** 08-4045-30-08/Vol 01

**Re:** Official Community Plan Targeted Update – Proposed Strategic Policy Directions

### Staff Recommendations

1. That the Proposed Strategic Policy Directions outlined in the staff report titled “Official Community Plan Targeted Update – Proposed Strategic Policy Directions” dated May 5, 2025, from the Director, Policy Planning, be endorsed for consultation with residents and interested parties as part of the Official Community Plan Targeted Update; and
2. That staff report back on the consultation results on the Proposed Strategic Policy Directions for the Official Community Plan Targeted Update.

John Hopkins  
Director, Policy Planning  
(604-276-4279)

JH:  
Att. 1

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
<b>ROUTED TO:</b>	<b>CONCURRENCE</b>	<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>
Arts, Culture & Heritage Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Climate & Environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Community Social Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Development Applications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Housing Office	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Intergovernmental Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Lulu Island District Energy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Parks Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Recreation & Sports Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b>	<b>APPROVED BY CAO</b>

## **Staff Report**

### **Origin**

This report proposes a series of strategic policy directions as part of Phase 2 of the Official Community Plan (OCP) targeted update and seeks endorsement to proceed with consultation with residents and other interested parties this spring/summer 2025 as part of the OCP targeted update.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Strategy #1 Proactive in Stakeholder and Civic Engagement.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2002-2026 Strategy #2 Strategic and Sustainable Community Growth, in particular:

*2.1 Ensure that Richmond's targeted OCP update shapes the direction and character of the city.*

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Strategy #5 A Leader in Environmental Sustainability.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Strategy #6 A Vibrant, Resilient and Active Community.

### **Background**

A municipality's Official Community Plan (OCP) sets the long-term vision for the community and is the primary tool that guides growth and change. This report summarizes key strategic policy directions for the targeted OCP update. Conditional on Council endorsement, the strategic policy directions summarized in this report, and considered in detail in Attachment 1, will be broadly shared through a consultation process commencing in June 2025. The findings from the consultation along with recommended policies and Land Use Map updates will be brought forward for Council's consideration prior to December 31<sup>st</sup>, as required by the deadline established by the Province of British Columbia (the "Province") for mandatory municipal updates of existing OCPs.

The review of the OCP began in 2022 when Council endorsed undertaking a targeted OCP update with an emphasis on resiliency, equity, adaptation and completeness as it relates to the following target areas:

1. Housing Affordability;
2. Equitable Communities;
3. Climate Mitigation and Adaptation;
4. Environmental Protection and Enhancement;
5. Long-Term Planning for Emerging Trends and Transformational Technologies; and
6. Administrative Updates.

Since the targeted OCP update was initiated, there have been significant changes to Provincial legislation that focus on increasing housing supply and the challenges affecting housing

affordability have steadily increased. In December 2023, the Province made amendments to the *Local Government Act* in association with the Province's "Homes for People Action Plan". New legislation (Bills 16, 44, 46 and 47) fundamentally changed the planning framework in British Columbia. The changes interrupted the OCP update review process and required the project to be revised to incorporate and respond to the new legislation. Project highlights to date include the following:

- June 2024:
  - Richmond Council amended zoning for almost 27,000 single-family and duplex lots throughout the city to permit Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH) in accordance with Bill 44.
  - Richmond Council adopted a Transit-Oriented Areas (TOA) Bylaw to identify TOAs in the city and amended residential parking requirements in accordance with Bill 47.
- July 2024: Public open houses and consultation with interested parties were held to provide information regarding SSMUH development and the introduction of TOAs in the City Centre area. Almost 1,800 residents attended the open houses.
- Fall 2024: As part of Phase 1 of the OCP consultation, members of the public were invited to learn about the OCP review process and provide initial comments on emerging themes related to housing affordability, equitable communities, climate mitigation and adaptation, and environmental protection and enhancement. Consultation included approximately 740 interactions with people through nine pop-up events, four public open houses, five Advisory Committee meetings, public photo submissions and a LetsTalkRichmond survey.
- December 2024: Council adopted the City's Interim Housing Needs Report (IHNR) in response to the legislated requirement that local governments identify their five and 20-year housing needs, which necessarily affects long term land use planning.
- March 2025: Richmond Council approved amendments to the OCP and Zoning Bylaws, which permits SSMUH development based on the outcome of additional public consultation, and supplementary design review to ensure SSMUH development is well suited to the Richmond context.
- April 2025: Richmond Council endorsed the proposed update to the Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) Map for public consultation.

This report presents for Council's consideration, proposed strategic policy directions on the first four target areas related to:

- housing affordability, including planning for Neighbourhood Service Centres;
- equitable communities;
- climate mitigation and adaptation; and
- environmental protection and enhancement.

These targeted areas are meant to work together under a revised growth management framework. It is important that the inter-related target areas are not overlooked due to changes in Provincial legislation that narrowly focus on housing supply. The remaining target areas (e.g., emerging trends and transformational technologies, and administrative updates) are not driven by updated policy and will be addressed later in 2025.

## Analysis

The strategic policy directions outlined in this report achieve the following objectives:

- they reflect and respond to the Province's new legislation that fundamentally changed the land use planning framework in British Columbia and require the City to increase its housing supply in accordance with its IHNR; and
- they strengthen the land use planning response to improve housing affordability, build more equitable communities, enhance climate mitigation and adaptation responses, and strengthen environmental protection and enhancement.

While Richmond's OCP remains relevant, the housing, equity, climate and environmental challenges facing the City are complex.

To address these challenges and ensure that growth contributes to Richmond becoming a more complete, inclusive and resilient community, a Growth Management Roadmap ("Roadmap") is used to organize and actualize the strategic directions discussed in this report (Attachment 1, Board #4). The Roadmap provides a transparent and intentional guide, comprised of land use plans and policy. It acts as a conceptual framework to demonstrate that for each strategic policy area (e.g., housing affordability, environmental protection & enhancement) there are distinct pathways that are interrelated to help achieve long-term planning objectives.

### Bill 44 Requirements: Housing Capacity

Bill 44 requires that, by December 31, 2025, local governments demonstrate their IHNR projections for housing supply are embedded in land use planning. Local governments are required to complete the following:

- update the OCP to include statements, maps and land use designations to demonstrate land use designations meet the housing needs anticipated by their IHNR; and
- demonstrate that sufficient land is zoned to meet the housing needs projected in their IHNR.

Richmond's IHNR projects that the City will require approximately 52,000 new dwelling units, or an average of approximately 2,600 new dwellings annually to meet the needs of new and existing residents over the next 20 years. This represents a 31% increase over the average 1,980 units completed annually during the last ten years. Through the OCP update review process, staff have confirmed that the IHNR projections for housing supply are accommodated in both the existing OCP Land Use Map and zoned lands, which includes SSMUH zoned properties. No change to the OCP Land Use Map or existing zoned lands is required to accommodate the housing supply needs projected by the IHNR.

### Updated OCP Land Use Map: Land Use Designations Accommodate Projected Growth

While the existing OCP Land Use Map accommodates sufficient capacity to meet the needs projected by the IHNR, changes are proposed to guide growth toward areas where development contributes toward Richmond becoming a more complete, inclusive and resilient community. The proposed Land Use Map continues to guide growth towards the City Centre, building upon the success of the City Centre Area Plan (CCAP), which introduced transit-oriented villages alongside services and amenities. The proposed Land Use Map is also in response to Provincial



legislation (Bill 47) which prescribes minimum densities and building height for areas near rapid transit stations. In order for more residents to live in complete, connected communities, the proposed Land Use Map encourages existing suburban areas, outside of the CCAP, to transition to more walkable, mixed-use, transit-oriented neighbourhoods. Specifically, growth is supported along arterial roads by increased opportunities for townhouses and up to four storey apartment buildings, and around existing shopping centres by increasing opportunities for mixed-use and apartment development. Further, the proposed Land Use Map, in conjunction with proposed policy directions, incentivizes construction of purpose-built rental housing across the city, including additional height when purpose-built rental housing includes below-market rental homes. These changes define the City's long term land use planning goals to realize development patterns that support complete, compact communities rather than scattered development, which is incompatible with fundamental principles for good growth. The proposed Land Use Map applies simplified land use categories that are organized into five Neighbourhood Types. Each contributes to housing affordability, equity, climate and environmental objectives, as described in detail in Attachment 1, Boards #5 to #10 and #24. The Neighbourhood Types also include provisions to encourage mixed-use development to support residential uses. The proposed Land Use Map accommodates the residential growth projected by the IHNR without changing land uses for non-residential land and directs growth away from important agricultural, employment and natural areas.

#### OCP Targeted Update Summary

##### *Target Area #1: Addressing Housing Affordability*

The City has implemented policies, programs, and other measures to incentivize the delivery of housing for low and moderate-income households. Despite these efforts, maintaining housing affordability has been challenged by numerous factors including, but not limited to, global trends that have resulted in housing costs rising faster than incomes, insufficient allocation of Provincial and Federal funding to deliver non-market housing, and market factors that have stifled the construction of below-market rental, market rental, and ownership housing. Affordable living is further eroded when housing is in areas with limited transportation options and few shops, services and amenities. At the same time that many residents are facing decreased affordability, costs associated with development are anticipated to continue to increase, which will place greater pressure on local governments to respond in ways that support the financial viability of new development.

The Roadmap intends to guide the City as it responds to the IHNR, which distinguishes between varying components of housing needs. This includes housing to accommodate anticipated population growth, housing for those experiencing homelessness, housing to address latent demand and low levels of rental vacancy, and housing needed to generally realize improved affordability. In addition, the City's Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS), which establishes an action-oriented framework for the delivery of varying forms of housing with a focus on providing housing to priority groups, will continue to support efforts to affect housing affordability and choice. The Roadmap encourages the use of City resources and regulatory tools to secure varying forms of housing through private sector development, and to leverage programs, services and partnerships to build housing for more vulnerable members of the community. These strategies are organized into three priority pathways to affect housing affordability.

**Pathway #1: Build more housing for new and existing residents**

While the Province has prescribed a formula for defining housing needs, which was applied to draft the IHNR, it remains important that the Roadmap guide development to deliver the type and tenure of housing that best fit the Richmond context. Census data indicates that most housing in Richmond is either a single-family home or an apartment unit (30 percent and 42 percent respectively). Over the last 10 years, approximately 70 percent of new housing has been apartments, primarily located in the City Centre. While apartment development generally provides at least 40 percent of units with two or more bedrooms that are suitable for families with children, and this growth pattern is consistent with objectives to maximize housing near the Canada Line, it may not meet the needs/changing needs of all residents. Townhouse development currently represents approximately 10% of new construction and SSMUH development has been proceeding slowly, reflecting that it is a new form of housing for Richmond with a different financing framework compared to single-family development. Increasing the variety of available housing types and development opportunities (e.g., low and mid-rise apartments and new ground-oriented housing) may gradually affect affordability by introducing more options for a greater range of household incomes and housing preferences.

The Roadmap includes provisions to incentivize the development of a greater variety of building types and tenures, particularly in areas where development can occur in tandem with transportation improvements and enhanced services and amenities that support affordability. The proposed Land Use Map increases opportunities for a range of multi-family types particularly outside the City Centre (e.g., expanded townhouse opportunities along arterials, four to six storey mixed-use development in Local Villages, etc.). These housing types are typically constructed using wood, which is less costly and faster to build than concrete construction. Further, buildings can be designed to fit into neighbourhoods characterized by low and mid-rise buildings. In addition to new development, the Roadmap supports GHG emission reduction and climate resilience initiatives by promoting retention and adaptation of older, often more affordable, housing stock to respond to changing housing needs, reduce energy costs and emissions, and reduce unnecessary waste. Additional policy directions to support building more housing for new and existing residents are included in Attachment 1, Board #14.

When Council amended single-family zoning throughout the City to permit SSMUH in accordance with Bill 44, the new Small-Scale Multi-Unit (RSM) zone was drafted to preserve the existing property subdivision pattern. The Richmond context is characterized by its diversity of lot sizes and widths and preserving this diversity is important to neighbourhood identity and will contribute to more variation in the type and size of SSMUH units that are constructed. While the RSM zone simplified zoning regulations (i.e., collapsing almost 50 standard and site-specific zoning districts into four sub-zones), the Provincial timelines for compliance with Bill 44 were insufficient to reflect the impact of the legislation on the 55 existing Single-Family Lot Size Policies that outline rezoning and subdivision intentions for single-family development in localized areas. Simplified and consolidated guidance for subdivision is proposed to be included in the updated OCP and include one consolidated map that includes all RSM zoned properties, which generally does not change the ability to subdivide. Additional policy directions are included in Attachment 1, Board # 11.

**Pathway #2: Build more housing that more people can afford**

The Province's new legislation (Bill 16 and 47) deeply impacts Richmond's successful rental housing programs, which apply a transparent density bonusing framework to secure rental housing through the rezoning process. Bill 47 introduced minimum specified densities in the City Centre area that restrict the City's ability to apply density bonusing due to context specific limitations affecting achievable density (e.g., flight path, high water table, etc.). The majority of new rental units secured through the defined density bonusing framework since 2007, including low-end market rental (LEMR) and market rental homes, are within the City Centre. In addition to rental housing, the defined density bonusing framework for the City Centre area secured important City-owned community amenities (e.g., child care, Early Childhood Development Hubs, community centres, etc.) at no cost to the City, as well as other features that are important to the City Centre (e.g., non-residential uses such as office and grocery stores, minor streets and parks, etc.). These below-market rental homes, market rental homes and community amenities were secured through Council's consideration of development applications that required rezoning and relied on density bonusing.

A future staff report for Council's consideration will introduce a possible new amenity cost charge program for amenities such as child care, community centres, and cultural and recreation facilities, as permitted by Bill 46. As a way to secure affordable housing through pre-zoning, the Province enacted Bill 16 that introduced inclusionary zoning, a new tool that authorizes local governments to require below-market rental homes in new developments without an associated density bonus. These legislative changes mean the City's successful Market Rental Housing Policy and LEMR program must be reconsidered and the changes reflected in the updated OCP.

The Roadmap emphasizes both preserving and expanding initiatives to increase the supply of purpose-built rental housing. In the City Centre, Bill 47 specified high building densities and heights, leaving the City with few tools to incentivize purpose-built rental housing buildings. The updated Land Use Map defines criteria to incentivize purpose-built rental housing buildings in each of the Neighbourhood Types. Purpose-built rental developments are generally permitted to step up in scale with additional allowances supported when below-market rental housing is incorporated in the development as outlined in Attachment 1 Board #15 and summarized in Table 1. The Roadmap also clarifies support for alternative home ownership and rental housing models (e.g., affordable home ownership, community led-housing, etc.). Additional policy directions to increase the supply of rental and more affordable forms of housing are included in Attachment 1, Board #15.

**Table 1: Typical Additional Height for a Purpose-Built Rental Building with Below-Market Rental Dwelling Units by Neighbourhood Type**

Neighbourhood Type	Typical Building Height		
	Sub-Type	Market /Strata Development*	Purpose-Built Rental Building with Below-Market Rental Dwelling Units
Downtown Mixed-Use	Tier 1	Up to 15 storeys	Variable based on opportunity
	Tier 2	Up to 12 storeys	
	Tier 3	Up to 8 storeys	
Downtown Perimeter	Tier 1 (e.g., Oval Village)	Up to 15 storeys	Up to 15 storeys
	Tier 2 (e.g., Alexandra)	up to 4 storeys	Up to 5 to 6 storeys
	Tier 3 (e.g., McLennan South)	up to 2 to 3 storeys	Up to 3 to 4 storeys
Local Villages	Tier 1 (with or without commercial as applicable)	Up to 4 storeys	up to 6 storeys
	Tier 2:	Up to 4 storeys	up to 5 storeys
Arterial Connectors	Tier 1	Up to 3 storeys	Up to 4 storeys
	Tier 2 (limited mixed-use)	n/a	Up to 4 storeys
Neighbourhood Residential	Tier1 (lots ≤ 4,046 m2)	as per Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (RSM) zone.	as per Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (RSM) zone.
	Tier 2 (lots > 4,046 m2)	Up to 3-4 storeys	Up to 6 storeys

\*Market/strata housing is subject to the Mandatory Market Rental Policy and LEMR Program (i.e., development with 60 or more units provides 15% of residential floor area as LEMR dwelling units and 15% of residential floor area as market rental dwelling units inside City Centre and 10% of residential floor area as LEMR dwelling units and 15% of residential floor area as market rental dwelling units outside City Centre).

### Pathway #3: Build more non-market housing through effective partnerships

The delivery of housing for those in more precarious living situations requires the involvement of senior levels of government and support from non-market housing providers. The City has been successful in partnering with senior levels of government and non-profit housing operators to deliver housing for vulnerable Richmond residents. Notable projects include the 129 unit “Storeys” development at 8080 Anderson Road, the 25-unit transitional housing project at 4831 Steveston Highway, and the 80-unit Pathways development at 5491 No. 2 Road. The three projects were built on City-owned lands, received funding from government, and are operated by non-profits. The City has contributed resources, including land and funds from its Affordable Housing Reserve, and entered into agreements with non-profit organizations specializing in delivering non-market housing. The Roadmap builds upon these efforts.

A development ready environment reduces risk, uncertainty and costs associated with development. The Roadmap includes a strategy to proactively create a development ready

environment to facilitate construction of non-market housing, which may include the pre-zoning of lands to enable greater density in exchange for below-market and non-market housing, particularly where lands are owned by senior levels of government, non-profit organizations, and housing co-operatives. Efforts to facilitate partnerships between for-profit developers and non-profit organizations may also enable greater access to funding that will allow for greater depths of housing affordability. The Roadmap also considers redevelopment options and measures to protect existing tenants. Additional policy directions to increase the supply of non-market rental housing through effective partnerships are included in Attachment 1, Board #16.

#### *Target Area #2: Equitable Communities*

Equity, from the perspective of land use planning, means everyone has fair access to resources and opportunities, including housing, transportation, jobs, education, amenities, culture, recreation, a clean, healthy environment, natural areas and parks and climate resilient spaces and places. The targeted OCP update considers equity as an independent theme and a lens that is applied to housing affordability, climate mitigation and adaptation, and environmental protection and enhancement from a land use planning perspective. Land use planning is one approach to support more equitable communities, and is intended to assist implementation of physical elements that build equitable communities.

The first step towards a more equitable community is to understand the geographic distribution of equity in Richmond. Maps that reflect social, economic, environmental and transportation indicators suggest that, while there is variation between neighbourhoods, there is no distinct spatial pattern in overall equity (i.e., areas with low representation of one indicator may be more favorably represented by another indicator). The scattered pattern reflected in the maps highlights the importance of applying an equity lens to better understand where and what types of land uses are needed to deliver complete communities and support equity throughout the city. To improve equitable representation and outcomes, the Roadmap includes equity-focused pathways that outline next steps to deliver more equitable communities from a land use planning perspective, as summarized below:

- Pathway #1: Prepare an equity-based community planning engagement toolkit. The intention of the toolkit is to support all voices having opportunities to be heard and to support open and inclusive engagement related to land use planning.
- Pathway #2: Prepare an equity-based land use and development strategy. The intention is to connect people to their daily needs (e.g., transit, healthy food stores, parks, community centres), facilitate initiatives that advance social development and promote equitable access to resources and opportunities in the community. For example, the strategy may provide a framework for the distribution, acquisition and improvement of existing and future public spaces and places (e.g., parks, trails, open spaces, natural areas, community centres, sports facilities) in response to local and City-wide growth, demographics, climate change and other factors.
- Pathway #3: Prepare an accessibility implementation framework. The intention of the framework is to coordinate and optimize the City's execution, monitoring and updating of its design guidelines and technical specifications that facilitate accessibility in the built environment and support the advancement of the Richmond Accessibility Plan.

Additional policy directions to build equitable communities are included in Attachment 1, Boards #17 and #18.

### *Target Area #3: Climate Mitigation and Adaptation*

In 2019 Council declared the City is facing a climate emergency in response to the United Nation's call to action and approved the Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) 2050, to reduce community greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. CEEP highlights that changing transportation choices and building practices can significantly reduce GHG emissions. To improve climate resiliency, the Roadmap changes land use plans and strengthens policies to emphasize ongoing development of transit-oriented and energy efficient buildings in the City Centre and transition suburban areas into more walkable, mixed-use, transit-oriented communities. The Roadmap outlines opportunities for growth to be more resilient to the effects of climate change as summarized below:

- Pathway #1: Prioritize continual improvement in high-performance development practices. Provisions to reduce energy consumption and GHG emissions include but are not limited to large scale projects (e.g., potential expansion of the City-owned District Energy Utility where financially feasible, improved transportation options) and development specific responses (e.g., Step Code and other high performance building design and construction, renovation and adapt older housing).
- Pathway #2: Build connected climate-resilient transit-oriented urban villages. Car dependency, particularly in suburban areas, contributes not only to carbon emissions, but also affordability, social and environmental issues. The proposed updated Land Use Map introduces a framework to transition suburban areas into more connected (i.e., walkable and bikeable), mixed-use and transit-oriented communities.
- Pathway #3: Future-proof public and private spaces and places. Increasing a community's capacity and preparedness for climate related extreme weather events includes conscientiously designing public spaces (e.g., building public spaces at an elevated grade, strategic tree planting that creates shady public spaces, etc.) and building new homes and businesses and/or retrofitting buildings to be more climate resilient (e.g., support crawl space construction to respond to temporary flooding from intense rainstorms, install home solar panels to improve self resiliency, etc.).

Additional policy directions to build communities that are more resilient to the effects of climate change are included in Attachment 1, Boards #19 and #20.

### *Target Area #4: Environmental Protection and Enhancement*

Natural areas in Richmond are vulnerable to the impacts of urbanization and climate change. Importantly, biodiversity enhances nature's productivity, adaptability, and resilience to hazards and climate change. Land use planning can significantly contribute to natural areas management by balancing development with conservation to ensure that ecological integrity is maintained through land use regulations. The City currently employs a Natural Areas Conservation approach to protect and enhance Richmond's Ecological Network (EN) that relies on a number of strategies and policies to promote ecological connectivity, prioritize biodiversity and maintain ecological health. This includes working to restore habitats, mitigate the environmental impacts of urbanization, and deliver environmental and socio-economic benefits to the community. The City is also continually advancing its understanding of the complex dynamics governing the EN to better inform the development and implementation of short- and long-term policies and strategies. The Roadmap outlines opportunities for land use planning to contribute to these ongoing efforts as summarized below:

- Pathway #1: Protect and Enhance Richmond's Natural Assets. By improving our understanding of Richmond's natural assets, ecosystems and biodiversity assets, existing policies and programs can be enhanced and expanded, and new initiatives introduced to strengthen connections between existing and restored natural areas so that natural assets may be better integrated across all City-building initiatives. This may be supported by preparation of a Green-Blue Ecological Network Connectivity Plan.
- Pathway #2: Foster Environmental Stewardship. Municipalities are at the forefront of complex, environmental protection decision-making; however, federal and provincial governments hold most of the legislative authority and financial resources to safeguard local environmental quality. The Roadmap supports the City optimizing the use of regulatory tools, fostering awareness regarding the social and economic benefits associated with natural areas, and strengthening relationships and partnerships. A Biodiversity Assessment and Urban Design Action Plan may establish a framework to restore and enhance natural systems and improve the performance of green infrastructure networks.
- Pathway #3: Prioritize Green Infrastructure and Innovation. Climate change threatens City infrastructure with increased flooding, heat and sea-level rise, which cause significant economic and social impacts. Retaining, expanding and guiding development of equitably distributed green infrastructure can mitigate these impacts and include, but is not limited to, actions to reduce non-permeable surfaces, increase tree canopy and vegetation, promote green spaces that contribute to biodiversity, protect and enhance shoreline habitats, and prioritize carbon sequestration and capture, which may be supported by preparation of an Urban Forest Action Plan.

Additional policy directions that continue to build and enrich community completeness through natural areas conservation are included in Attachment 1, which includes a proposed updated ESA map, Boards #21 - #23.

### **Next Steps**

A companion report entitled, "Official Community Plan Targeted Update – Proposed Update to the Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) Map" dated March 24, 2025 from the Director, Policy Planning, was endorsed by Council for public consultation on April 14, 2025. Once Council endorses the strategic policy directions, along with Council's endorsement of the draft ESA mapping, staff intend to conduct public consultation with interested parties later in the spring and early summer of 2025 (Phase 2 of the OCP consultation plan).

Phase 2 of the OCP public consultation plan is expected to launch on June 11, 2025 beginning with a press release, a LetsTalkRichmond survey, and the release of promotional materials for a series of public open houses. Dates and times of the public open houses are to be confirmed; however, there will be a series of public open houses throughout the City including Steveston, City Centre, East Cambie and Hamilton. City staff will also be connecting with Community Centre Boards, including the Sea Island Community Association, Council Advisory Committee, and non-profit agencies.

In addition, between June 11<sup>th</sup> and July 18<sup>th</sup>, Open House boards will be displayed at City Hall and during that time, dates and times will be scheduled when staff will be available to discuss the information included in Attachment 1.

Further, staff will be contacting external government agencies such as School District No. 38, Agricultural Land Commission, Vancouver International Airport, Port of Vancouver, Richmond Coastal Health Authority, to name a few, to gather input. Staff are also reaching out to Indigenous Peoples to establish a working relationship related to the OCP.

The results of the consultation will be forwarded to Council in the fall 2025 with proposed policy directions for the OCP targeted update. Following this, a revised OCP and accompanying bylaw amendments will be brought forward for Council's consideration which would include a public hearing prior to bylaw adoption (Phase 3 of the public consultation plan). This will be in keeping with the Provincial deadline of December 31, 2025. The revised OCP will also include a work program on updating associated area plans and related policies that require further review, analysis and consultation.

### **Financial Impact**

None.

### **Conclusion**

This report presents draft strategic policy directions as part of the Official Community Plan (OCP) targeted update. It is centred on a revised growth management Roadmap that would address the Province's legislation pertaining to the Interim Housing Needs Report, and address four key policy areas including housing affordability, equitable communities, climate action and adaptation, and environmental protection and enhancement. The intention is to achieve balanced growth that can address housing affordability through greater housing supply in key areas of the community, and provide opportunities and incentives for more rental and below-market housing. At the same time, community amenities and services must be equitably distributed, new growth must aim to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and enhance and protect key environmental attributes.

It is recommended that Council endorse the proposed strategic policy directions for consultation with residents and interested parties as part of the OCP targeted update, and report back on the results in the fall 2025.



Suzanne Carter-Huffman  
Program Manager, Urban Design  
(604-276-4228)



Diana Nikolic  
Manager, Land Use Policy  
(604-276-4040)

SCH/DN:cas

Att. 1: DRAFT OCP Targeted Update 2050 / Boards







# OCP Update 2050

IN DRAFT  
MAY 9, 2025

## What is the Official Community Plan?

The Official Community Plan (OCP) describes a long-term vision for the community and guides decision-making concerning growth and change.

*The foundation of the OCP is Richmond's vision to become the "most appealing, livable, and well-managed community in Canada".*

The OCP Update process looks out to 2050 (25 years). Future updates will occur every five years to ensure the OCP stays on track and responds to emerging issues, opportunities and community needs.

## What role does housing play?

The Province requires that municipalities update their OCPs by December 31, 2025, to align with the findings of their 2024 Interim Housing Needs Report. Richmond's 2024 Report projects that the city will need to grow by 52,000 new dwellings between 2021 and 2041, which is 31% faster than the previous 10 years (i.e., 2,600 versus 1,980 new units annually). The OCP Update aims to direct growth to deliver increased housing supply, choice and affordability, and support a more inclusive, livable and resilient community.

## What other topic areas are targeted?

In addition to housing, the OCP Update focuses on three inter-related areas: **equitable communities**, **climate mitigation and adaptation**, and **environmental protection and enhancement**. Urgency to address challenges in these areas has grown since the OCP was last updated in 2012, and it is critical they are not overlooked in the face of the Province's housing actions.

## What about other community needs?

What you tell us about the current proposal will help make clear what else needs to be addressed. Those other topics, including parks and community centres, employment, transportation and other topics, will be the subject of future planning and public engagement.

## How will Richmond change?

The OCP Update proposes a **Growth Management Roadmap** to support the right types of growth in the right locations. This means directing residential growth away from important agricultural, employment and natural areas, and promoting the development of more walkable, transit-oriented communities in downtown and along arterial roads.

1

### Public engagement

Raise awareness and invite the public to learn about the OCP process and ways to get involved.

FALL TO WINTER 2024

WE ARE HERE

2

### Draft update options

Draft planning directions that are informed by engagement feedback and research. Check in with community groups on planning directions.

WINTER TO SPRING 2025

3

### Pulling the plan together

Finalize the OCP Update for Public Hearing and consideration by City Council.

SUMMER TO FALL 2025



# Public Consultation: What did we hear?

IN DRAFT  
MAY 9, 2025

In the fall of 2024, the City began its first phase of public awareness and consultation regarding the OCP Update. This included 740 interactions with people through nine pop-up events, four public open houses, five Advisory Committee meetings, public photo submissions, and a survey and Q & A on Let's Talk Richmond.

Based on these public engagement activities, and working with the framework of the OCP Update, the following themes emerged:

740 Interactions with the Community	9 Pop-up Events	4 Public Open Houses	5 Advisory Committee Meetings
Public Photo Submissions & Survey		Q & A on Let's Talk Richmond Site	



## Housing Affordability

Overall, there was support for increasing housing diversity and affordability, a balanced approach to density, infrastructure upgrades, and improved access to services and amenities.

Concerns included housing affordability, traffic challenges, school capacity, and the lack of adequate active transportation options outside downtown.



## Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

A focus emerged regarding protective measures to address extreme weather events and the need to balance this with housing priorities.



## Equitable Communities

Overall, there was a strong sense of community and safety, with an emphasis on wanting to foster equity-supporting policies and improve local community services.

There was a desire for better support for individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness, crime reduction and cultural inclusivity.



## Environmental Protection and Enhancement

Appreciation was voiced for Richmond's extensive park systems, ecologically significant areas, natural spaces, and dike management strategy.

Suggestions were made for stronger environmental protection, urban forestry (e.g., tree planting) and climate adaptation strategies.



# Growth Management Roadmap

IN DRAFT  
MAY 9, 2025

## Guiding Principles

While the OCP remains relevant, today's housing, equity, climate and environmental challenges are complex, and legislation recently enacted by the Province has changed the planning tools available to the City.

To address this, a Growth Management Roadmap is proposed to:

- Direct growth away from lands important for agriculture, jobs, nature and sequestering carbon (i.e., to reduce greenhouse gas emissions);
- Promote growth that supports complete, inclusive, resilient communities; and
- Enhance access to nature and ecological health across the city.

1

### Learn from City Centre Successes

#### Optimize planning outcomes

- Proactively directing density and uses to support the right types of growth in the right locations;
- Maximizing transparency to increase community buy-in, reduce risk and minimize land speculation; and
- Leveraging development to deliver key community needs hand-in-hand with new housing construction.

2

### Rebalance Growth

#### Promote compact urban development that balances growth between inside and outside downtown

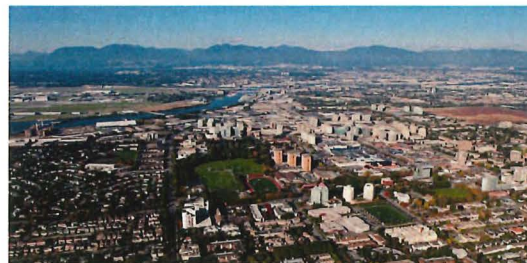
- Discourage sprawl into important ecological, agriculture and employment lands and enhance natural assets and greening in developing areas;
- Support the continued development of Richmond's high density, high amenity City Centre; and
- Support the transition of suburban areas to more walkable, mixed-use, transit-oriented communities with the introduction of more multi-family housing.

3

### Build Complete, Connected Communities

#### Provide for more than 80% of residents to live within a 20-minute walk or roll (1.6 km) of a compact, mixed-use, urban village to:

- Prioritize and enhance connectivity via walking, rolling, biking and transit, linking existing and future residents with their daily needs, including community centres and parks;
- Enhance affordability, resiliency and equitable access to housing, shops (including healthy food stores) and amenities by locating residents near their daily needs; and
- Support City objectives to reduce community-based greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 50% by 2030 (e.g., by reducing car use and construction waste) and reach net zero emissions by 2050.



## What are Richmond's key growth challenges?

### Rapid growth

Richmond's 2024 Interim Housing Needs Report projects that the city will require an average of 2,600 new dwellings annually to meet the needs of new and existing residents. This is 31% faster than the last 10 years, which saw an average of 1,980 new units built annually.

### Unbalanced growth

Since 2013, almost 70% of new housing has been in downtown concrete high-rises. The Province's "Transit-Oriented Areas" (TOA) legislation seeks to intensify downtown growth, while suburban areas remain largely unchanged. This can affect the ability to find the right housing in the right place at the right price, while impacting natural assets in high growth areas.

### Development pressures

Rapid growth and a lack of undeveloped land for housing may increase development pressures on natural areas, older rental housing stock, lands needed for employment, and agriculture, and peat lands needed to sequester carbon (i.e., to prevent the release of greenhouse gas (GHG)).

### Car dependency

Outside downtown, approximately 28% of residents live within a 5- to 10-minute walk (400+ m) of frequent transit service (every 15 minutes or better). Car dependency contributes to environmental, affordability and social issues, including more GHG emissions and less equity, inclusivity, transit service and walkability.



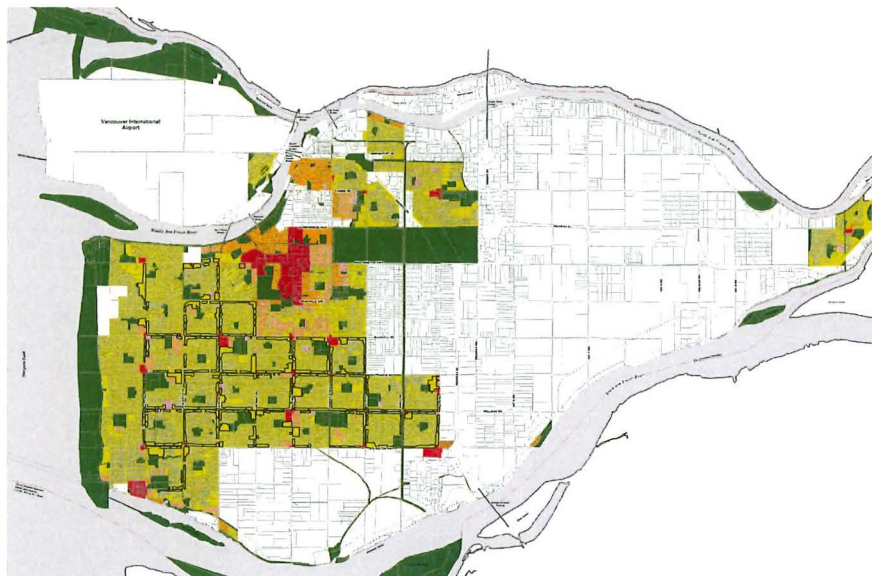
# The Right Growth in the Right Place

IN DRAFT  
MAY 9, 2025

Richmond has enough land zoned to accommodate the 52,000 new dwellings that the City's 2024 Interim Housing Needs Report projects will be needed by 2041. This is largely due to the Province's Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH) legislation (Bill 44), which required the City to rezone almost 27,000 single-family and duplex lots to allow up to 3, 4 or 6 units each (depending on lot size and proximity to frequent transit service). However, SSMUH cannot meet all of Richmond's diverse housing needs.

To address this, the Growth Management Roadmap proposes a **transit-oriented urban village framework** and five associated **Neighbourhood Types** to help direct the right types of growth to the right places.

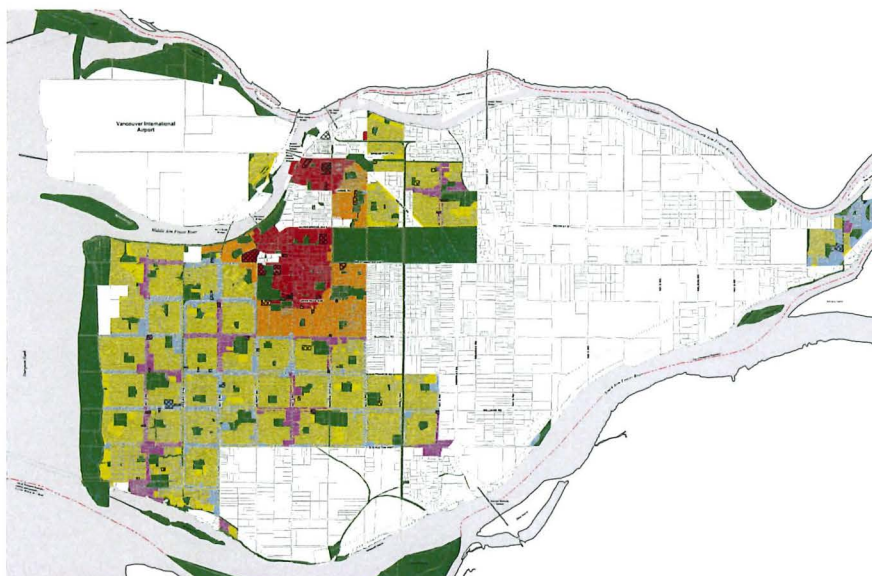
*A network of walkable, mixed-use villages will support compact growth, better transit and more inclusive, resilient communities.*



## Richmond Today

The current OCP promotes the development of transit-oriented, walkable urban villages near the Canada Line and downtown amenities.

Downtown Mixed Use	Neighbourhood Residential
Mixed Use	Commercial
Neighbourhood Service Centre	Community Institutional
Limited Mixes Use	Park, School, and Conservation Area
Apartment Residential	Arterial Road Policy



## Proposed Growth Management Roadmap

The proposed OCP Update aims to build on the success of the City Centre by encouraging smaller, walkable, transit-oriented villages near existing shopping centres and amenities outside downtown.

Downtown Mixed Use	Neighbourhood Residential
Downtown Perimeter	Parks, Schools and Conservation Areas
Local Villages	Community Institutional
Arterial Connectors	



# Neighbourhood Type: Downtown Mixed-Use

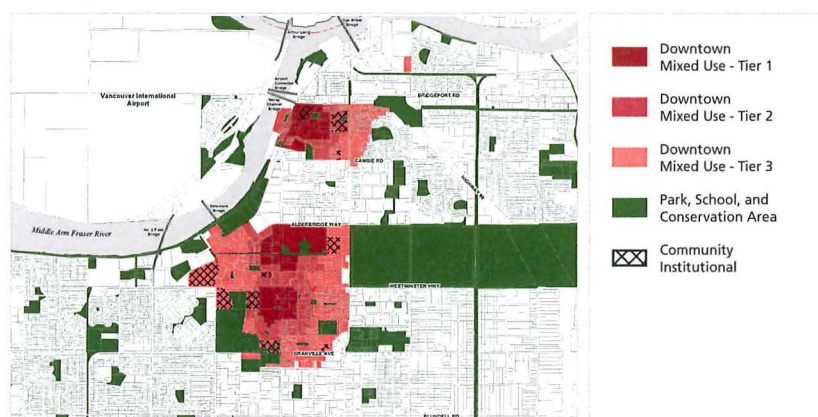
IN DRAFT  
MAY 9, 2025

## What are Downtown Mixed-Use Areas?

Those areas within a 10-minute walk (800 m) of Capstan, Lansdowne and Brighthouse Stations where high-rise, mixed-use development is encouraged to support a walkable, transit-oriented urban centre with a vibrant public realm, jobs, amenities, shopping (including healthy food stores), and attractive housing options for existing and future residents.

## Why?

The Province's Transit-Oriented Areas (TOA) legislation (Bill 47) requires Richmond to locate high density development within 800 m of Canada Line stations. While the Province's scale of development exceeds current City policies, the intent is the same. It is critical that Richmond builds a compact, walkable, high-density downtown to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, enhance accessibility and equity, support arts, culture and public life, encourage job growth, and increase housing supply and affordability options.



Sub-Types	Tier 1 (200 m)	Tier 2 (400 m)	Tier 3 (800 m)
Predominant uses <sup>(2)</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed use</li> <li>Apartment <sup>(1)</sup></li> <li>Commercial <sup>(2)</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed use</li> <li>Apartment <sup>(1)</sup></li> <li>Commercial <sup>(2)</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed use</li> <li>Apartment <sup>(1)</sup></li> <li>Commercial <sup>(2)</sup></li> </ul>
Typical heights	Up to 15 storeys	Up to 12 storeys	Up to 8 storeys
Typical density	5.0 FAR	4.0 FAR	3.0 FAR
Purpose-built rental buildings	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged

(1) Includes below-market and market rental housing.

(2) Along designated "High-Streets", pedestrian-oriented shops and restaurants are encouraged at grade to contribute to a vibrant public realm. (Uses requiring privacy, such as medical offices are discouraged.)



## Downtown Mixed-Use 2050 Vision Highlights

- 50% of the City's new housing, including market and below-market rental, will be downtown.
- Offices, hotels and commercial uses will be concentrated near transit stations (and employment areas with high aircraft noise).
- The downtown will be a hub for equity-supporting service providers, programs and facilities.
- New buildings and infrastructure will be energy efficient and use low carbon district energy for heating and cooling.
- The urban forest will be expanded and enhanced.
- Everyone will be within a 5-minute walk or roll (400 m) of open space, including new parks near the river (15 ha.) and Lansdowne Station (4 ha.).
- Developer-funded amenities will help meet growth-driven demand for new community facilities.
- Priority will be placed on transit, walking, rolling, cycling, enhanced accessibility and other ways to help people adopt car-free lifestyles.

## Future Study: Green-Blue Ecological Network Connectivity Plan

**Purpose:** To increase resiliency, biodiversity, human wellness and related benefits with a strategy for protecting, enhancing and connecting natural assets, ecosystem services and green infrastructure on public and private lands across the city, hand-in-hand with growth.



# Neighbourhood Type: Downtown Perimeter

IN DRAFT  
MAY 9, 2025

## What is the Downtown Perimeter?

Those areas adjacent to the **Downtown Mixed-Use** area where varied uses and built forms are encouraged to provide a transition between the city's higher and lower density areas and deliver attractive housing options in walkable neighbourhoods near existing and planned parks, schools, jobs and amenities for existing and future residents.

## Why?

This area on the edge of downtown comprises a variety of new and established medium-density neighbourhoods, with existing schools and amenities, generally within a 20-minute walk or 10-minute bike ride (1.6 km) of the Canada Line. Encouraging these areas to become more complete, connected and walkable neighbourhoods with a greater range of housing choices will help to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, enhance accessibility and equity, support public life and culture, encourage job growth, and increase housing supply and affordability options.



Sub-Types	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Predominant uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed use</li> <li>Apartment <sup>(1)</sup></li> <li>Commercial <sup>(2)</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apartment <sup>(1)</sup></li> <li>Commercial <sup>(2)</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Townhouse</li> <li>Multiplex</li> </ul>
Typical heights	Up to 15 storeys	Up to 4 storeys	Up to 2-3 storeys
Typical density	3.0 FAR including 1.0 FAR commercial	1.2 FAR	+/-0.6 FAR
Purpose-built rental buildings	Encouraged	Up to 6 storeys with increased affordability	Up to 4 storeys with increased affordability

(1) Includes below-market and market rental housing. Small projects may pay cash in-lieu.

(2) Along designated "High-Streets", pedestrian-oriented shops and restaurants are encouraged at grade to contribute to a vibrant public realm. (Uses requiring privacy, such as medical offices are discouraged.)



## Downtown Perimeter 2050 Vision Highlights

- New housing, including market and below-market rental, typically will be cost-effective 4-6 storey wood construction.
- Walkable neighbourhood nodes will improve access to shops/services and enhance economic viability.
- Enhanced accessibility will be provided throughout.
- New buildings and infrastructure will be energy efficient and use low carbon district energy where financially feasible.
- The urban forest will be expanded and enhanced.
- An expanded network of trails, pedestrian-friendly streets and privately owned/ publicly accessible spaces and natural areas will put everyone in easy reach of parks, schools and amenities.
- Developer-funded amenities will help meet growth-driven demand for new community facilities.
- Priority will be placed on transit, walking, rolling, cycling, accessibility and other ways to help people meet more of their daily needs without a car.

## Future Study: Parks, Trails, Open Space and Amenities Strategy

**Purpose:** To provide a framework for the distribution, acquisition and enhancement of existing and future public spaces and places (e.g., community centres, natural areas, sports facilities), on City and private lands, in response to local and city-wide growth, demographics, climate change and other factors.



# Neighbourhood Type: Local Villages

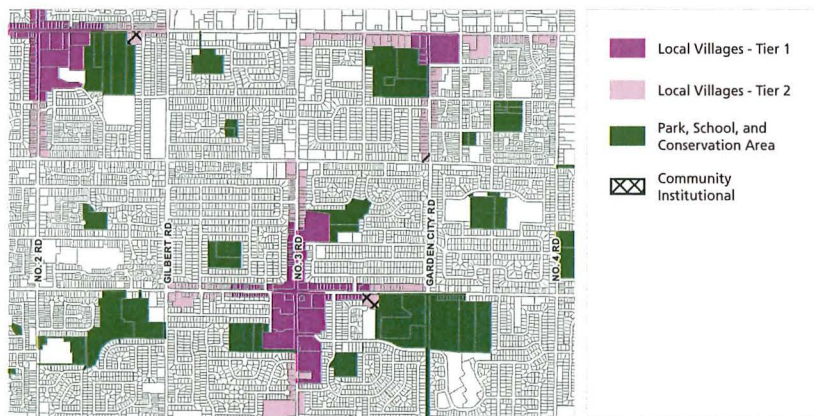
IN DRAFT  
MAY 9, 2025

## What are Local Villages?

Those areas centred on existing shopping precincts where mid-rise, mixed-use and residential development is encouraged to support walkable, transit-oriented community hubs with amenities, shops (including healthy food stores), jobs, and attractive housing options for existing and future residents.

## Why?

Richmond's suburban shopping centres provide important community services, but are car-dependent and largely disconnected from nearby housing. New mixed-use, village-type development in these areas will make it possible for more people to meet their daily needs within a short walk, roll or bike ride from home. And, new multi-family housing will support more lively, economically viable and inclusive communities, and more opportunities for residents to stay in their neighbourhoods as their needs change (e.g., young adults, families with children, seniors).



Sub-Types	Tier 1		Tier 2
	Mixed Tenure	100% Rental	Mixed Tenure
Predominant uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed use</li> <li>Apartment<sup>(1)</sup></li> <li>Commercial<sup>(2)</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apartment<sup>(1)</sup> (not along a "High Street")</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apartment<sup>(1)</sup></li> <li>Limited mixed-use to meet community need</li> </ul>
Typical heights	Up to 4 storeys	Up to 6 storeys with increased affordability	Up to 4 storeys
Typical density	1.5 FAR including 0.3 FAR commercial	Varies	1.2 FAR
Purpose-built rental buildings	Up to 6 storeys with increased affordability	Required	Up to 5 storeys with increased affordability

(1) Includes below-market and market rental housing. Small projects may choose to pay cash in-lieu.

(2) Along designated "High-Streets", pedestrian-oriented shops and restaurants are encouraged at grade to contribute to a vibrant public realm. (Uses requiring privacy, such as medical offices, are discouraged.)



## Local Villages 2050 Vision Highlights

- New housing, including market and below-market rental, typically will be cost-effective 4-6 storey wood construction.
- A pedestrian-friendly "high street" will be the focus for shopping in each village.
- Village-scale community facilities will enhance equitable service access.
- New buildings and infrastructure will be energy efficient and use low carbon district energy where financially feasible.
- The urban forest will be expanded and enhanced.
- An expanded network of trails, pedestrian-friendly streets and privately owned/publicly accessible spaces and natural areas will put everyone in easy reach of parks, schools and amenities.
- Developer-funded amenities will help meet growth-driven demand for new community facilities.
- Priority will be placed on improving transit services through compact growth, improved connectivity (walking, rolling, cycling) and enhanced accessibility.

## Future Study: Downtown, Local Village and Neighbourhood Plans

**Purpose:** To understand how residents envision the future of their local communities, prepare clear frameworks for positive change and development, and guide updates to existing Area Plans.



# Neighbourhood Type: Arterial Connectors

IN DRAFT  
MAY 9, 2025

## What are Arterial Connectors?

Those areas along arterial roads where low-rise multi-family housing and local-serving convenience commercial and mixed-use developments are encouraged to deliver attractive housing options near transit and amenities for existing and future residents.

## Why?

The City has long supported densification along its arterial roads near shopping, amenities, schools and transit. This policy expands on that by:

- Increasing the properties subject to the policy;
- Increasing heights to include 3-storey townhouses and 4-storey rental apartments (i.e., up from current 2-3 storey townhouses); and
- Encouraging existing commercial corner lots to redevelop with rental apartments (including below-market housing) over ground-floor shops.



Sub-Types	Tier 1		Tier 2
	Mixed Tenure	100% Rental	100% Rental
Predominant uses	• Townhouse	• Rental apartment	• Rental apartment over shops
Typical heights	3 storeys	4 storeys	4 storeys
Typical density	0.8 FAR	Varies with affordability	Varies with affordability
Purpose-built rental buildings	N/A	Required	Required

(1) Includes below-market and market rental housing. Small projects may choose to pay cash in-lieu.

(2) Along designated "High-Streets", pedestrian-oriented shops and restaurants are encouraged at grade to contribute to a vibrant public realm. (Uses requiring privacy, such as medical offices, are discouraged.)



## Arterial Connectors 2050 Vision Highlights

- Townhouses and low-rise market and below-market rental apartments will increase housing options.
- Commercial sites will be redeveloped with rental apartments over local-serving retail.
- Housing diversity will enhance community equity and inclusiveness.
- New buildings and infrastructure will be energy efficient and use low carbon district energy where financially feasible.
- The urban forest will be expanded and enhanced.
- An expanded network of trails, pedestrian-friendly streets and privately owned/ publicly accessible spaces and natural areas will put everyone in easy reach of parks, schools and amenities.
- Large developments may provide child care and other local-serving uses.
- Priority will be placed on encouraging walking, rolling, biking and transit use with improved pedestrian and bike facilities along arterial roads and a connected network of paths and trails.

## Future Study: Arterial Road Streetscape & Connectivity Plan

**Purpose:** To guide landscape, active mobility (walking, rolling and biking), infrastructure and ecological enhancements along and connectivity to arterial roads.



# Neighbourhood Type: Neighbourhood Residential

IN DRAFT  
MAY 9, 2025

## What are Neighbourhood Residential Areas?

Those areas characterized by house-scale single-detached and multiplex dwellings, together with pockets of townhouses and low-rise apartments, and dispersed neighbourhood-serving amenities (e.g., child cares and corner stores) for existing and future residents

## Why?

In 2024, as required by the Province's Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH) legislation (Bill 44), almost 27,000 single-family and duplex lots were rezoned to allow up to 3, 4 or 6 units each. In addition to SSMUH, many areas include older townhouses and low-rise apartments that are nearing their end of life and could be redeveloped to add new housing options (including replacement units) in a form that respects local character.



Sub-Types	Tier 1 Lots ≤ 4,046 m <sup>2</sup> (1 ac.)	Tier 2 Lots > 4,046 m <sup>2</sup> (1 ac.)
Predominant uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SSMUH (e.g., houses, duplexes, multiplexes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Townhouse<sup>(1)(2)</sup></li> <li>Rental apartment<sup>(2)</sup></li> </ul>
Typical heights	2 ½ storeys	3-4 storeys <sup>(3)</sup>
Typical density	Up to 3, 4 or 6 units / lot <sup>(4)</sup>	1.2 FAR
Purpose-built rental buildings	Lots with 6 units must include 1 below-market rental unit or pay cash-in-lieu	Up to 6 storeys with increased affordability

- (1) Includes below-market and market rental housing. Small projects may choose to pay cash-in-lieu.  
 (2) Large developments may include small, local-serving commercial uses and/or amenities (e.g., child care).  
 (3) Height may vary based on site size and the ability to provide an attractive transition to lower height neighbours.  
 (4) The permitted number of SSMUH units per lot varies with lot size and proximity to a bus stop with frequent service.



## Neighbourhood Residential 2050 Vision Highlights

- House-scale dwellings, townhouses and complementary housing types will increase housing options.
- Large developments will support new and existing residents with small, local-serving commercial.
- Housing diversity will enhance community equity and inclusiveness.
- New buildings and infrastructure will be energy efficient.
- The urban forest will be expanded and enhanced.
- An expanded network of trails, pedestrian-friendly streets and privately owned/ publicly accessible spaces and natural areas will put everyone in easy reach of parks, schools and amenities.
- Large developments may provide child care and other local-serving uses.
- Priority will be placed on encouraging walking, rolling, biking and transit use with pedestrian- and bike-friendly streets and a connected network of paths and trails.

## Future Study: Form and Character Policies and Guidelines

**Purpose:** To guide parking improvements, small-lot townhouse development options, and site-specific large-lot development.



# Neighbourhood Type: Neighbourhood Residential

IN DRAFT  
MAY 9, 2025

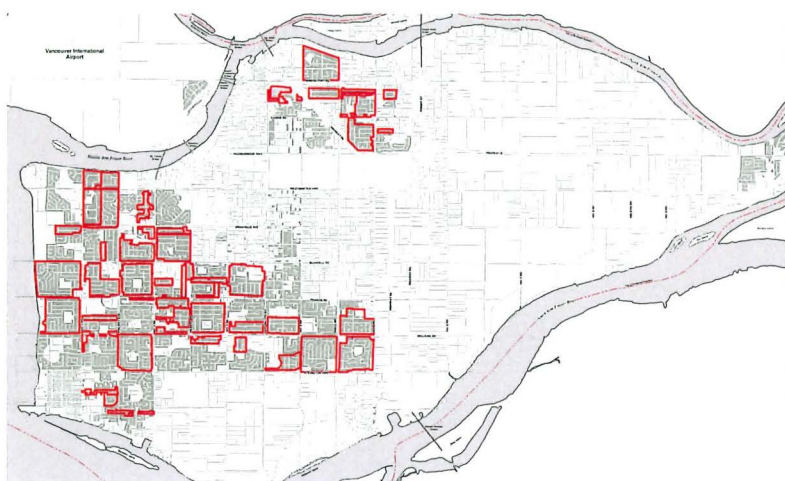
## Subdivision Policy for Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH)

### What is this policy?

In June 2024, Richmond Council rezoned almost 27,000 single-family and duplex lots to permit Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH). As a result, existing policies guiding minimum lot sizes must be updated. In general, the proposal consolidates existing policies without altering the ability to subdivide.



### Why?

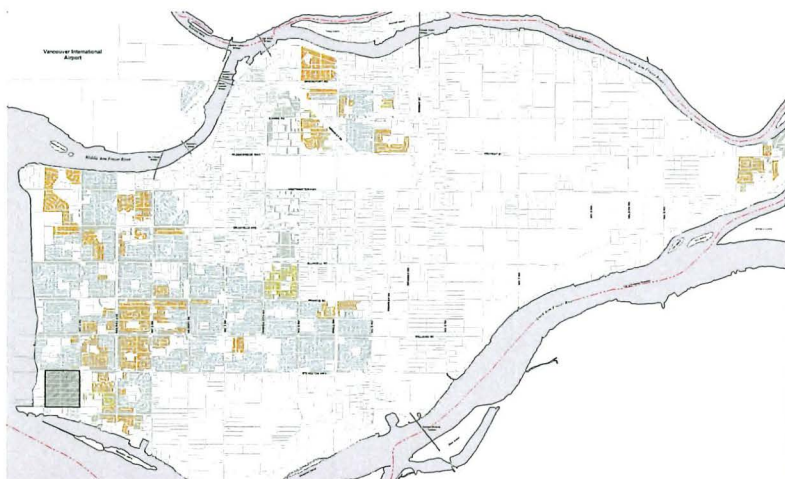
SSMUH applies to lots  $\leq 4,046 \text{ m}^2$  (1 ac.) in size. An owner may subdivide a SSMUH lot if the new lots comply with the property's SSMUH zoning (i.e., RSM/Small, RSM/Medium, RSM/Large, RSM/X-Large). Existing policies guiding subdivision where the resulting lots are smaller than what the zoning permits do not apply to SSMUH lots and are fragmented. A consolidated approach will make the rules more consistent, clear and easy to use.



#### Today






- There is no policy guiding subdivision of SSMUH lots.
- 55 areas have out-of-date single-family lot size policies, while other lots never had a lot size policy.
- Out-of-date lot size policies permit similar lot sizes to those specified in the City's SSMUH zone (RSM).
- Duplex-zoned lots may subdivide regardless of the resulting lot sizes.

 55 out-of-date policies  Lots without policies



#### Proposed

- Small, Medium and Large lot sizes (minimum) are based on the City's SSMUH zone (RSM).
- The proposal generally consolidates out-of-date policies without altering the ability to subdivide.
- Duplex-zoned lots may still subdivide regardless of the resulting lot sizes.

Min. Lot Size	Width	Area	
 Small	9.0 m	270 m <sup>2</sup>	 Other Neighbourhood Types apply (e.g., Downtown Perimeter)
 Medium	12.0 m	360 m <sup>2</sup>	 Steveston Extension Area (lot size policy does not apply at this time)
 Large	18.0 m	550 m <sup>2</sup>	



# Growth Management Roadmap: Pathways to Success

IN DRAFT  
MAY 9, 2025

## What levers can the City use?

The Growth Management Roadmap looks ahead to how the City can accommodate growth, while staying true to its goal of becoming more sustainable, inclusive and complete. Jurisdictions with demonstrated success, especially in the context of an expensive or volatile market, generally rely on clear development parameters

(e.g., use, density, location, built form) that help reduce risk, increase public support and streamline development. The Growth Management Roadmap identifies three levers to encourage the right growth in the right place, encourage investment, and optimize positive community outcomes.



### Leverage Private Development

Facilitate private developers and others to deliver more housing and complete, resilient, equitable communities where new and existing residents need them most via **land use policies** that set clear expectations and reduce risk, time, cost and speculation.



### Leverage City Resources

Incentivize private developers and others to deliver better affordability, equity, accessibility, resiliency and ecological function via **land use policies** that encourage higher development standards and improved outcomes.



### Leverage Partnerships

Remove barriers to government, non-profit and other investment in those people, places and spaces that are most in need via **land use policies** that prioritize enhanced affordability, equity and sustainability outcomes.

1

What is success?

#### We build **MORE** ...

- Housing supply and options
- Walkable, transit-oriented villages
- Appealing ways to move without a car
- Green buildings and infrastructure

2

What is success?

#### We build **BETTER** ...

- Housing that more people can afford
- Communities with housing, healthy food, jobs, amenities and transit for everyone
- Public and private places and spaces that are low-carbon, climate-resilient, connected, and biodiverse

3

What is success?

#### We build **BEST** with ...

- More government and non-profit investment in housing for low-income households
- Engaged residents and others, including diverse and seldom-heard voices
- A culture of climate resiliency and environmental stewardship



# Housing Affordability: Pathways to Success

IN DRAFT  
MAY 9 2025

## How can Richmond affect housing affordability?

Richmond must be a place where new housing delivers innovative, purpose-driven solutions that contribute towards housing affordability, diverse housing choices and equitable, resilient neighbourhoods.

## Why is this important?

### Housing costs have risen faster than incomes.

Between 2006 and 2021, median before tax income for homeowners increased by 22%, while the cost to buy a home rose 116%. For the same period, renter income increased by 41%, while rents rose 77% (source: Census).

### The challenge is greatest for lower income households.

Lower income households have less resources and ability to adapt.

### A lack of federal support for affordable housing has worsened the problem.

Federal investment used to ensure that at least 10% of new housing was for low-income households, but this dropped to 1% in the 1990s and has only just started to turn around.

### Over the last 10 years, almost 70% of new housing has been mid- and high-rise apartments near the Canada Line.

While there remains capacity in the downtown area for additional high-density development (3+ floor area ratio), lands designated for 4-6 storey buildings are generally built-out (e.g., Moffatt, St. Albans, Alexandra, McLennan North).

## What is affordability?

Affordability is different for different households because incomes and needs vary. Affordability considers all housing-related costs, such as home energy costs and the option to rent instead of buy or to NOT own a car.

## What is Affordable Housing?

Housing is "affordable" when its cost does not exceed 30% of gross before-tax household income.

### Market Affordable Housing

Housing that is usually built by private developers for rent or purchase by households earning close to median income (\$79,000), subject to income and rent limits.

### Non-Market Affordable Housing

Housing that is usually funded (subsidized) by senior government for rent by households earning 50% of median income or less and may include support (e.g., for people with disabilities).

What are the challenges?	What does 2050 success look like?	How can we get there?
52,000 new dwellings must be built for new and existing residents between 2021 and 2041. * This is 31% faster than the pace of housing construction over the last 10 years.	New multi-unit housing is built across the city, contributing to a vibrant downtown and transforming suburban shopping precincts into walkable, mixed-use, transit-oriented villages	<b>1</b> Build more housing for new and existing residents
Pressing need for rental housing due to record low rental vacancies, insufficient new purpose-built rental housing, and intensified demand from households that are unable to buy. *	Developer-built market rental and below-market rental housing, affordable ownership and other options are part of walkable transit-oriented villages across the city.	<b>2</b> Build more housing that more people can afford
Senior government investment is urgently needed to deliver non-market (subsidized) housing for Richmond's lowest-income households. *	New government-funded, non-market (subsidized) housing is built across the city, particularly in transit-oriented villages and via the intensification of existing rental housing sites.	<b>3</b> Build more non-market housing through effective partnerships

\* The OCP Update must accommodate the needs identified in Richmond's 2024 Interim Housing Needs Report.



# Housing Affordability: Pathways to Success



## *Pathway #1: Build more housing for new and existing residents*

### What can we do?

Increasing the amount of land designated for low- and mid-rise apartments and townhouses outside downtown is the single most impactful way for Richmond to deliver more dwelling units and diverse housing options, at a lower cost, near important amenities and services.

### What are we doing today?

- The high densities characteristic of Richmond's downtown and the Province's Transit-Oriented Area (TOA) legislation (Bill 47) will contribute to **most downtown housing being expensive concrete towers**.
- Outside downtown, the City rezoned 27,000 lots to permit Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH), but **SSMUH development cannot meet all of Richmond's diverse needs**.
- The **Arterial Road policy has been made redundant by SSMUH**, as it is no longer necessary to rezone to build low-density multi-unit housing.

### How can we do better?

The Growth Management Roadmap proposes significant new opportunities for lower-cost wood construction along the city's arterial roads with more:

- Land for townhouses (up to 3 storeys) along **Arterial Connectors**; and
- Opportunities for apartment buildings (up to 4, 5 or 6 storeys, depending on affordability) in **Local Villages**.



Neighbourhood Residential SSMUH



Townhouses



Local Village Mixed-Use



Local Village Apartments



### What else can we do?

#### Reduce Construction Costs

Maximize opportunities for new 4-6 storey residential and mixed-use buildings suitable for lower cost wood construction and factory-built (prefab) options.

#### Reduce Infrastructure Costs

Encourage compact urban development and prioritize well-served locations to minimize the costs of infrastructure and other improvements that must be borne by the City, developers and residents.

#### Reduce Parking Costs

Reduce or remove parking requirements to lessen land and construction costs and ensure developers build only what is needed.

#### Put Housing Where People Want to Live

Encourage greater growth (e.g., higher densities) close to transit, amenities, shops, services, schools and parks.

#### Retain, Renovate, Adapt

Encourage upgrading of older housing stock to meet changing needs and reduce energy costs, emissions, and unnecessary waste, while increasing climate resilience.

#### Neighbourhoods for All Ages and Stages

All neighbourhoods include a range of housing options to meet diverse needs (e.g., seniors, young families).



# Housing Affordability: Pathways to Success



## Pathway #2: Build more housing that more people can afford

### What can we do?

Increasing purpose-built rental housing, including both market rental and below-market rental units, is the single most impactful way for Richmond to deliver more housing that more people can afford and rely on (i.e., secured in perpetuity for rental only).

### What are we doing today?

- Richmond is the **only municipality in the region** with a city-wide policy that secures **Low-End-Market-Rental (LEMR)** and **Market Rental Housing (MRH)** in all multi-unit developments with over 60 dwellings.
- Richmond's **Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS)** guides the City and other interests with an action-oriented framework for the delivery of housing for current and future residents with a focus on housing priority groups, building the capacity of non-profit housing and service providers, and increasing advocacy and awareness.
- Rental tenure zoning** is used to secure rental housing on 60 sites built pre-2007, including 2,725 market rental units and 1,400 below-market rental units.
- Inclusionary zoning (density bonusing)** is used city-wide to secure below-market (e.g., LEMR) housing in perpetuity in mixed-tenure buildings.
- Rental tenant protection** measures discourage demolition of existing rental housing and require 1:1 replacement of existing rental units.

### How can we do better?

The Growth Management Roadmap proposes to incentivize private developers to construct new purpose-built rental housing by permitting more floor area for 100% rental buildings and reducing barriers (e.g., approval times), where the outcome will be attractive buildings that complement their surroundings.

Neighbourhood Types	Typical Storeys (Max.)	
	Mixed Tenure	100% Rental <sup>(1)</sup>
Downtown Mixed-Use	8, 12 or 15	➡ No change
Downtown Perimeter Low/Medium Density	2 to 4	➡ 4 to 6
Local Villages	4	➡ 5 to 6
Arterial Connectors	3	➡ 4
Neighbourhood Residential Lots > 4,045 m <sup>2</sup> (1 acre)	3 to 4	➡ 6

(1) Height varies with affordability

### What else can we do?

#### Tenant Protection

Strengthen existing City policies and enforcement.

#### Pre-zoning

Consider zoning specific areas to permit new rental housing without rezoning.

#### Permanent Affordable Home Ownership (AHO)

Encourage dwellings for purchase at below market rates for eligible buyers.

#### Rent-to-Own

Streamline approvals for rent-to-own and other options that make it easier for eligible buyers to finance buying a home.

#### Community-Led Housing

Encourage co-ops and other models aimed at maintaining permanent affordability for residents.

#### Student Housing

Support post-secondary institutions with on- and off-campus student housing options.

#### Alternative Housing

Support micro-units and other housing geared to specific resident needs.

#### Housing Equivalencies

Define equivalencies between alternative tenure options (e.g., AHO, LEMR, market rental) to support development flexibility, reduce risk, improve housing outcomes, and streamline approvals.

#### Fast-Track Approvals

Continue to streamline development approvals for rental housing projects.



# Housing Affordability: Pathways to Success



## *Pathway #3: Build more non-market housing through effective partnerships*

### What can we do?

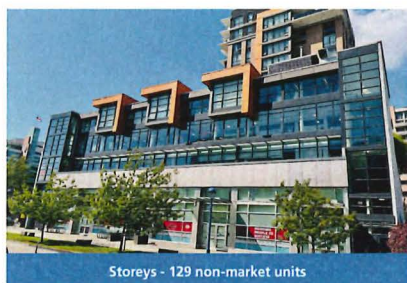
A proactive, development-ready strategy for lands owned by the City, other government entities and non-profit interests, including the alignment of plans and policies, is the single most impactful way for Richmond to support the partnerships necessary to secure increased senior government investment and faster delivery of non-market (subsidized) housing for the city's lowest-income households.

### What are we doing today?

- On a project-by-project basis, **OCP policies support increased density** for 100% rental projects (i.e., higher than nearby non-rental projects).
- On a project-by-project basis, **City-owned land** may be available for lease at nominal cost for 100% rental projects that include subsidized dwellings.
- On a project-by-project basis, **development costs** may be reduced by, for example, waiving amenity charges or reducing parking for 100% rental projects that include subsidized dwellings.

### How can we do better?

The Growth Management Roadmap proposes to help undo decades of senior government underfunding of non-market housing by strengthening intergovernmental partnerships and removing barriers to the intensification of rental housing on existing sites owned by the City, other government entities (e.g., BC Housing), non-profits and other interests.



Storeys - 129 non-market units



Kiwanis - 296 seniors non-market units



Pathways - 80 non-market units



Habitat for Humanity - 6 affordable home ownership units

### What else can we do?

#### City of Richmond Housing Office

The Housing Office guides the City's involvement (e.g., partnerships, funding, land) in the delivery of affordable housing by government, non-profit and others.

#### Pre-zoning

This could be used to reduce uncertainty, while requiring a Development Permit application process to ensure an attractive form and character.

#### Rapid Housing

Continue to support rapid approvals of projects funded through the federal Rapid Housing Initiative and other government funding programs.

#### Housing with Supports

Work with the community to create a framework for the development and management of housing with supports.

#### Grants and Programs

Pursue existing funding programs and launch new funding opportunities (e.g. reduced development fees) in partnership with senior government and others.

#### Homelessness

While there is a need for more emergency shelter spaces in Richmond, **temporary shelters are not housing**. The City's *Homelessness Strategy (2019-2029)* outlines strategic directions and actions for the City, community and government partners to prevent and respond to homelessness, including addressing the need for more housing.



# Equitable Communities: Pathways to Success



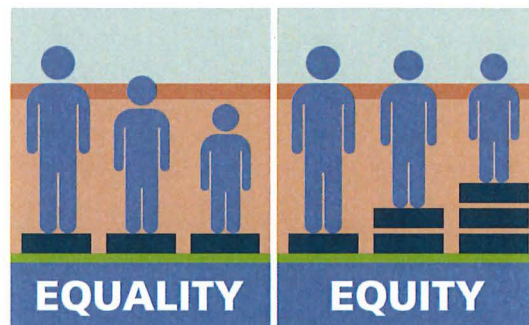
## How can land use planning affect equity?

Equity means everyone has fair access to resources and opportunities, including housing, transportation, jobs, education, amenities, recreation, a clean, healthy environment, natural areas and parks, and climate resilient spaces and places. Applying an “equity lens” to land use planning means supporting awareness, understanding and suitable opportunities for people to participate to help:

- Foster an inclusive community;
- Support equity-deserving groups facing historic or systemic discrimination;
- Make certain no one is left behind and everyone benefits; and
- Ensure everyone has a voice in shaping the community where they live.

## What are we doing today?

- The City is updating its social development strategy with a holistic approach that supports the creation of a more inclusive, thriving community.
- City processes seek to engage community members in civic decision-making (e.g., advisory committees, public meetings, Public Hearings).
- The growing needs of residents are supported by prioritizing public and private (e.g., developer) investment in areas experiencing the greatest change.
- The City adopted *Enhanced Accessibility Design Guidelines* in 2018, to promote accessibility in City facilities, and the *Richmond Accessibility Plan* in 2023, to guide the removal of barriers experienced by people with disabilities in accordance with the Accessible British Columbia Act.



### Equity vs. Equality

#### Equality

Equality gives people the same resources or opportunities regardless of their needs.

#### Equity

Equity recognizes that each person is different and provides them with the right resources and opportunities to be successful.

What are the challenges?	What does 2050 look like?	How can we get there?
It is hard for equity-deserving groups to make their voices heard and participate in shaping where they live.	Richmond is an inclusive community shaped by diverse voices, including equity-deserving groups, who contribute to a strong sense of community and social connections.	<b>1</b> Prepare an equity-based community planning engagement toolkit
In downtown, high rents and redevelopment are displacing non-profit organizations that support members of equity-deserving groups; while, outside downtown, residents and facilities are dispersed, which can make it hard for people to access the services they need.	Across the city, an “equity lens” ensures that growth contributes to inclusive urban villages that connect people with their daily needs (e.g., transit, healthy food stores, parks, community centres), including access to non-profit organizations and services for members of equity-deserving groups.	<b>2</b> Prepare an equity-based land use and development strategy
Dispersed people and places, car-oriented neighbourhoods and accessibility barriers (e.g., missing sidewalk ramps) can stand in the way of people enjoying and thriving in the city's natural and built environments.	A coordinated and comprehensive City approach to accessibility ensures that new public and private buildings, open spaces and infrastructure can be enjoyed by everyone regardless of their abilities.	<b>3</b> Prepare an accessibility implementation framework



# Equitable Communities: Pathways to Success

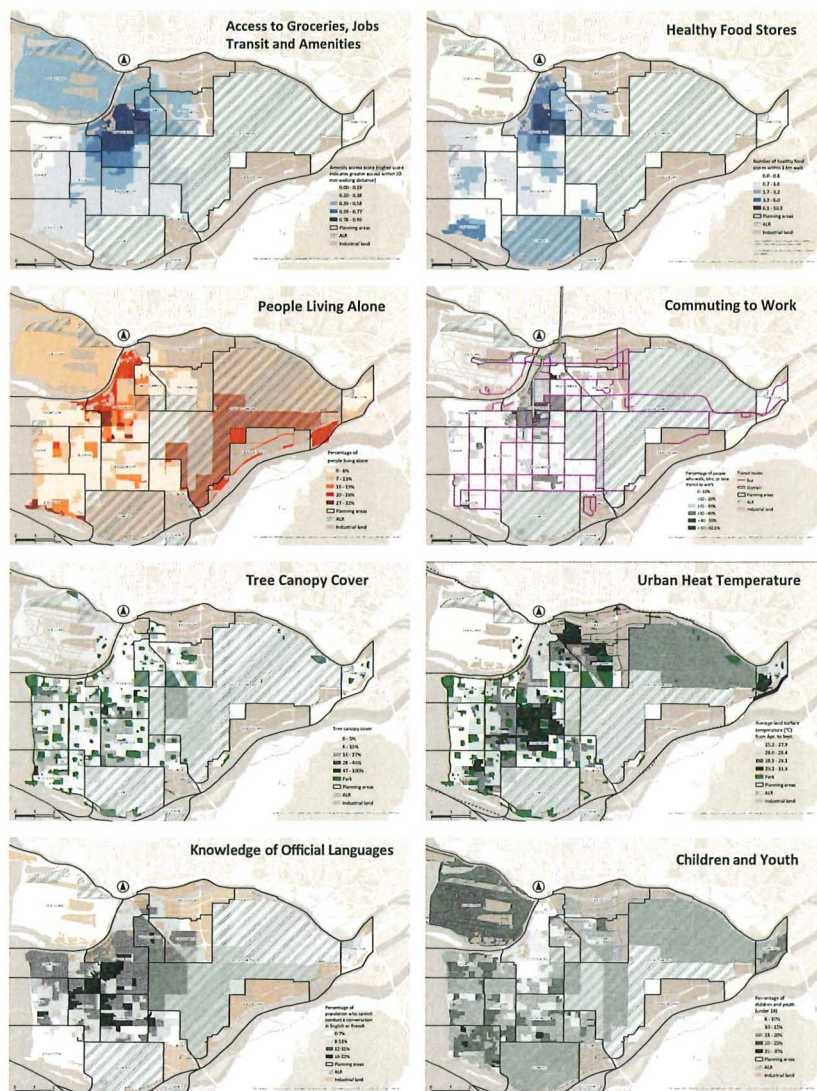


## Equity Mapping

The first step towards a more equitable community is to understand the geographic distribution of equity in Richmond. The City has begun to map various social, economic and other indicators. Below are some examples based on various 2021 data sources (e.g., Canada Census) showing scattered patterns. In general, this indicates that, while some areas may be better served than others, there is no clear imbalance between various areas.

## Next Steps

The City will engage with equity-deserving groups to understand their lived experiences, enrich the City's understanding, support partnerships, and help inform how to move towards a more inclusive Richmond.



## What happens next?

### Prepare an equity-based community planning engagement toolkit

Help partner with and engage equity-deserving groups in civic decision-making.

### Prepare an equity-based land use and development strategy

Apply an equity lens to guide and help champion social, economic, environmental and cultural equity through land use and development decision-making.

### Prepare an accessibility implementation framework

Coordinate and optimize the City's execution of its accessibility guidelines and technical specifications and help to advance the Richmond Accessibility Plan 2023-2033.

## What else can we do?

### Align policies with an Indigenous Relations Strategy

Once adopted by Council to advance reconciliation with local Indigenous Peoples

### Incentivize Developer-Funded Community Spaces

In Local Villages (e.g., through density bonusing), to accommodate the cost-effective delivery of village-oriented services (e.g., neighbourhood house, community kitchen, adult daycare) by the City, non-profits and similar interests.



# Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Pathways to Success



## How can land use planning affect Richmond's climate response?

While climate change poses a significant challenge, responding to it presents opportunities to advance overall sustainability. This is because many of the things that reduce the impacts of climate change can simultaneously contribute to other sustainable land use objectives such as community safety, resilient economies, local food security, live-work-play communities, less car dependency, higher performing buildings, and healthier natural environments.

## Why is this important?

It does not take a major change in temperature to change climatic conditions. Updating Richmond's land use planning, including the protection of natural areas and assets, will make the community more climate-resilient and contribute to equity, affordability and sustainability.

## What are we doing today?

The City is a leader in climate mitigation and adaption action:

- In 2019, Richmond declared a climate emergency in response to the United Nation's call to action.
- Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) 2050 and Circular City Strategy set paths to reduce energy use, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and waste.
- High performance buildings (BC Energy Step Code) and low carbon district energy reduce energy use and GHG emissions from heating and cooling.
- Improved transit, active mobility (e.g., walking, rolling, biking) and electric vehicle (EV) charging are encouraged city-wide.
- Flood protection measures (e.g., dikes) address rising sea levels and the increased frequency and intensity of storms due to climate change.
- Tree canopy and green roofs help reduce heat impacts in urban areas.
- A transit-oriented village framework guides City Centre growth.

## How do climate mitigation and adaptation differ?



### Climate Mitigation

Climate Mitigation is about reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from human activities through means like energy-efficient buildings, low carbon district energy systems, using transit, living in compact walkable communities, and minimizing disturbances to carbon stored in soils (e.g., peatlands in agricultural areas outside Richmond's residential development areas).



### Climate Adaptation

Climate Adaptation is about preparing for the current and future impacts of a changing climate with things like enhanced flood protection, shade, energy efficient in-building cooling systems, drought-resistant planting and emergency response measures.

What are the challenges?	What does 2050 look like?	How do we get there?
High-performance standards apply to all new buildings, but it takes time to improve climate resiliency across neighbourhoods, especially in low density areas that are slow to change.	High performance standards (e.g., BC Energy Step Code) for new buildings and retrofits, district energy and related measures contribute to less energy use and reduced GHG emissions (e.g., net zero by 2050).	<b>1</b> Prioritize continual improvement in high-performance development practices
Downtown is becoming transit-friendly, but elsewhere the shift away from cars to more compact, walkable communities remains a challenge.	Climate-based decision making ("climate lens") has reduced car dependency and supported the development of a network of compact, walkable transit-oriented villages.	<b>2</b> Build connected climate-resilient transit-oriented urban villages
As extreme weather conditions become more common, it is important to future-proof the community by building shelter, shade and other measures into the spaces and places people use every day.	Richmond's public spaces, City facilities and homes and businesses are adaptable and support community resiliency with measures that mitigate climate impacts (e.g., cooling) and speed recovery from weather events.	<b>3</b> Future-proof public spaces and places



# Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Pathways to Success



## *Build connected climate-resilient transit-oriented urban villages*

### What can we do?

Building connected, transit-oriented urban villages is the single-most impactful land use planning response the City can use to address the challenges of climate change. The design and development of new urban villages will be guided by a “climate lens” that will embed climate-based decision-making into community planning and strengthen public resiliency to the impacts and events arising from a changing climate.

### What is a transit-village?

A transit-village is a compact, walkable urban community that clusters shops, services, multi-unit housing (e.g., apartments, townhouses, SSMUH) within easy reach of residents’ daily needs, including parks, schools, jobs, amenities and existing or future frequent transit service.

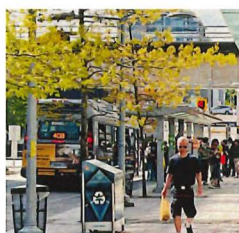
### What are the benefits?

#### Climate Mitigation Benefits

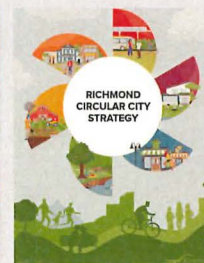
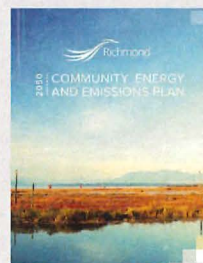
- Residents rely less on cars to get to their daily needs
- New energy efficient buildings, features and infrastructure
- Safe, connected and attractive walking, rolling and cycling networks
- Increased village populations contribute to better transit service
- Compact communities may facilitate low carbon district energy systems that reduce emissions and provide more affordable heating and cooling

#### Climate Adaptation Benefits

- A connected network of climate-responsive public spaces and places enhances livability and equitable access to daily needs throughout villages and neighbouring areas (e.g., shade and weather protection).
- Indoor and outdoor emergency hubs integrated with everyday spaces and uses (e.g., village square, village shops or community facility) support a commonsense approach to dealing with climate-related events and other urgent situations.



### Key City initiatives



#### Richmond's Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) 2050

Sets a path to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 50% by 2030 and net zero by 2050.

#### Richmond's Circular City Strategy

Prioritizes a collaborative approach to responsible consumption and a sustainable, equitable, low-carbon economy.

#### Lulu Island Energy Company (LIEC)

A City-owned district energy utility delivering low cost, low carbon heating and cooling and contributing to GHG reduction goals.

### What else can we do?

#### Support local action

With climate-smart and energy initiatives implementable at the neighbourhood and household scale.

#### Increase community capacity for action

With programs supporting climate-smart knowledge and awareness.

#### Support Continuous Improvement

By measuring and monitoring contributions to climate mitigation and adaptation with standardized criteria for public and private places and spaces.

#### Support future planning of Local Villages

With a climate-smart approach to building design, complete communities and future-proofing public places.



# Environmental Protection and Enhancement: Pathways to Success



## How can land use planning contribute to Richmond's natural areas?

Land use planning can significantly contribute to the management of natural areas and assets by balancing development with conservation to ensure that ecological integrity is maintained through City zoning, policies and plans.

## Why is this important?

As Richmond grows, natural areas are increasingly vulnerable to stress and fragmentation due to population growth, urban development and climate change. Protecting and enhancing natural areas and assets is critical to the long-term health and well-being of Richmond residents and the environment.

## What are we doing today?

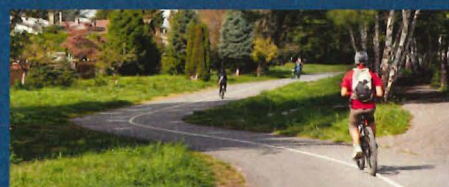
A Natural Areas Conservation approach is employed to protect and enhance Richmond's Ecological Network (EN) by promoting connectivity, prioritizing biodiversity and maintaining ecological health. This includes working to restore habitats, mitigate the environmental impacts of urbanization, and deliver environmental and socio-economic benefits to the community, together with continually advancing the City's understanding of the complex dynamics governing the EN to better inform the development and implementation of short- and long-term policies and strategies.

Natural areas conservation is most effective when it is applied at ALL scales.

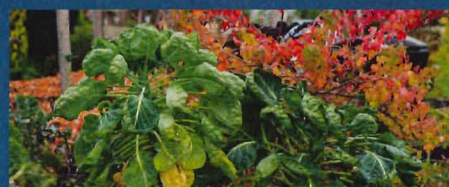
### Large



### Medium



### Small



What are the challenges?	What does 2050 look like?	How do we get there?
Urban growth contributes to habitat fragmentation. If not managed, community impacts from the loss of natural areas can include adverse health impacts, biodiversity loss and resource depletion.	Across the city, connected ecological corridors are a key feature of the landscape, contributing to healthy ecosystems, supporting species movement across habitats, and enhancing a livable, equitable, climate-resilient urban community.	<b>1</b> Protect and enhance Richmond's natural assets
While municipalities are at the forefront of complex, environmental protection decision-making, senior governments hold most of the legislative authority and financial resources to safeguard local environmental quality.	Richmond is a leader in fostering partnerships – with residents, business, senior government and others – to steward the natural environment and minimize waste and pollution.	<b>2</b> Foster environmental stewardship
Climate change threatens City infrastructure with increased flooding, heat and sea-level rise, which can damage buildings and critical infrastructure, disrupt transportation, water systems and energy supply, and potentially cause significant economic and social consequences.	Across Richmond, green infrastructure integrates innovative, sustainable solutions into the built environment with measures that mimic natural processes, tackle urban challenges (e.g., pollution, heat) and support biodiversity.	<b>3</b> Prioritize green infrastructure and innovation



# Environmental Protection and Enhancement: Pathways to Success

IN DRAFT  
MAY 9, 2025

## Pathway 1

**Protect and enhance Richmond's natural assets**



1

Preserve, enhance, steward, and increase the quantity and quality of nature, ecosystems and biodiversity that contribute to community well-being.

### What can we do?

- Improve our understanding of natural assets, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Strengthen protection and enhancement policies
- Strengthen connectivity between natural areas hand-in-hand with City and private development

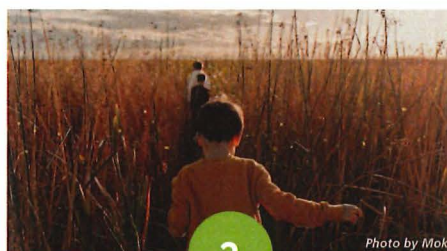
### OCP Update proposal

#### Prepare a Green-Blue Ecological Network Connectivity Plan to:

- Identify corridors and connections
- Enhance the urban forest
- Protect shoreline habitats while balancing flood protection needs
- Integrate ecosystem services and carbon sequestration into streetscapes
- Improve biodiversity city-wide

## Pathway 2

**Foster environmental stewardship**



2

Enact and enforce environmental regulations, promote community stewardship and implement innovative solutions for resource management and waste reduction.

### What can we do?

- Strengthen City regulations and enforcement regarding pollution, water quality, waste and environmental protection
- Foster awareness and sustainable practices with educational programs for residents, business and schools
- Partner with senior government, indigenous communities, academic institutions and others to leverage funding and resources

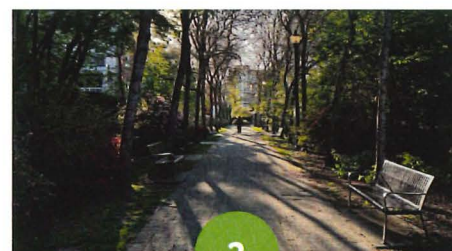
### OCP Update proposal

#### Prepare a Biodiversity Assessment and Urban Design Action Plan to:

- Align urban design and ecological principles
- Deepen ecosystem understanding
- Generate high-quality data to guide planning and monitoring
- Foster collaborative stewardship

## Pathway 3

**Prioritize green infrastructure and innovation**



3

Retain, expand and guide the development of equitably distributed green infrastructure that contributes to Richmond's livability, climate change resilience and community well-being.

### What can we do?

- Reduce non-permeable surfaces that contribute to storm water run-off, pollution and flooding
- Increase tree canopy and vegetation to improve air quality and reduce urban temperatures
- Promote green spaces that support wildlife habitat, pollinators and urban biodiversity
- Provide green spaces and places that support recreation, social interaction and mental health

### OCP Update proposal

#### Prepare an Urban Forest Action Plan to:

- Set measurable targets for tree planting and canopy cover city-wide
- Ensure the equitable distribution of trees and their benefits
- Promote climate-resilient tree species
- Align urban forest initiatives with climate, health and equity goals



# Environmental Protection and Enhancement: Pathways to Success

IN DRAFT  
MAY 9, 2025

## What is an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)?

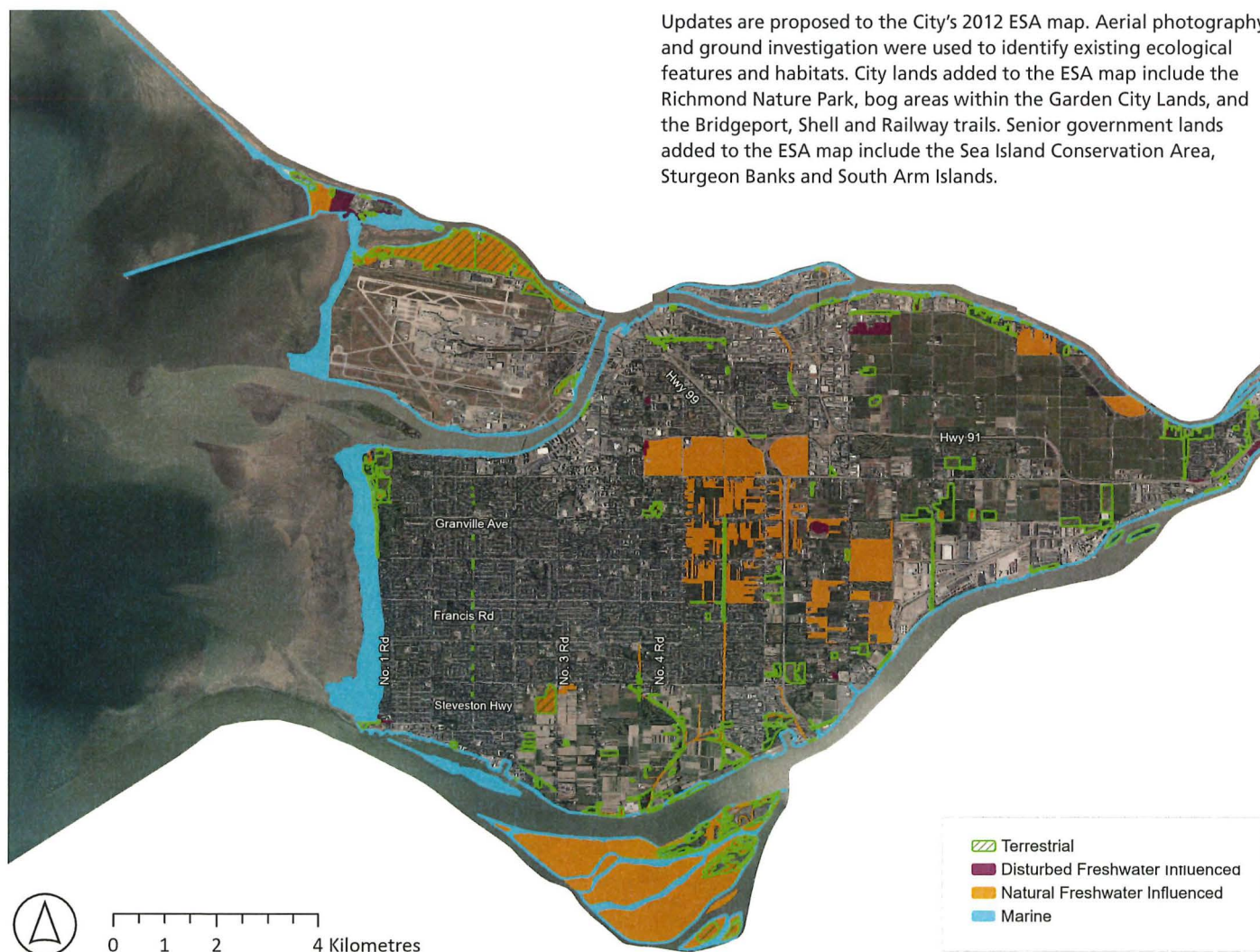
The City's ESA designation is a tool for protecting and enhancing areas of ecological significance and is applied to lands that are identified as having important ecological features and natural assets.

## How are ESA lands managed?

ESA lands are part of the City's Environmental Network (EN) and are designated as a Development Permit (DP) area. Development within an ESA may require ESA DP approval by Council and, where applicable, may require the protection, preservation and/or enhancement of sensitive ecological features (e.g., wildlife habitat, protected species and the foreshore). Some uses are exempt from an ESA DP process, such as development consistent with the City's Farming First Strategy and uses regulated by senior government.

## How does the OCP Update affect the ESA?

Updates are proposed to the City's 2012 ESA map. Aerial photography and ground investigation were used to identify existing ecological features and habitats. City lands added to the ESA map include the Richmond Nature Park, bog areas within the Garden City Lands, and the Bridgeport, Shell and Railway trails. Senior government lands added to the ESA map include the Sea Island Conservation Area, Sturgeon Banks and South Arm Islands.





# OCP Update 2050: DRAFT Land Use Map

