City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To:	General Purposes Committee	**Date:**	September 7, 2023
From:	Katie Ferland Director, Business Services	**File:**	08-4150-04-06/2023-Vol 01
Re:	Community Wayfinding Strategy Guiding Principles		

Staff Recommendation

1. That the Guiding Principles, as detailed in the staff report titled "Community Wayfinding Strategy Guiding Principles," dated September 7, 2023, from the Director, Business Services be endorsed; and

2. That these Guiding Principles be used to inform the strategic direction and actions of the draft Community Wayfinding Strategy.

Katie Ferland
Director, Business Services
(604-247-4923)

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<tr><td colspan="4" align="center">REPORT CONCURRENCE</td></tr>
<tr><td>ROUTED TO:</td><td>CONCURRENCE</td><td colspan="2">CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</td></tr>
<tr><td>Parks Services
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<tr><td>SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW</td><td>INITIALS:</td><td colspan="2">APPROVED BY CAO</td></tr>
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Staff Report

Origin

The Richmond Community Wayfinding Strategy is being undertaken as a tourism destination enhancement initiative using Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) funding, in collaboration with tourism stakeholders. This initiative is aligned with the City's 5-Year Tourism Plan (2022-2027) and has been endorsed by the City's MRDT Program partners, Tourism Richmond and the Richmond Hotel Association, which are each contributing $25,000 toward project costs.

Wayfinding connects people to their surroundings and helps guide them through their physical environment, including through directional signage and visual landmarks. Wayfinding can also be used to promote public attractions, places of special interest, and the best routes for moving through the city. In this context, the focus is on public wayfinding rather than wayfinding on private property or to specific private businesses.

While many people may use digital tools such as online maps to assist with wayfinding, these are not equally accessible to all and can also be enhanced through physical wayfinding to improve the user's overall experience. Those with accessibility concerns may find physical wayfinding particularly helpful in navigating the city, as may international travellers without digital access or those using active transportation. For visitors and residents alike, the integration of physical and digital tools can assist in finding a destination once one has arrived in an area – and exploring previously unknown nearby destinations.

The Community Wayfinding Strategy (the Strategy) will guide and coordinate future public wayfinding and signage investments in Richmond, ensuring that these are designed and implemented in a well-planned and resource efficient manner. Over time, as the Strategy is implemented, the wayfinding approach in Richmond will enhance the experience for both visitors and residents as they move through the city.

The Community Wayfinding Strategy is being informed by a research and needs assessment phase as well as a public and stakeholder engagement process. The outcome of the project will be a Community Wayfinding Strategy that includes a conceptual design framework and an implementation framework with recommendations for phased implementation and priority projects.

In a previous memorandum dated February 1, 2023, Council received notification regarding the launch of the public and stakeholder engagement process on February 21, 2023. That initial engagement phase is now complete.

In addition to the input received through the public and stakeholder engagement, the consultant team has made site visits to various areas of the city, undertaken work on the research and needs assessment phase, and has held follow-up focus groups to expand and confirm initial findings.

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval on the proposed Guiding Principles identified through the public and stakeholder engagement process and other work to date which, if endorsed by Council, will shape the direction and development of the Strategy.

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

> *1.4 Leverage a variety of approaches to make civic engagement and participation easy and accessible.*

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #2 Strategic and Sustainable Community Growth:

> *Strategic and sustainable growth that supports long-term community needs and a well-planned and prosperous city.*

> *2.3 Ensure that both built and natural infrastructure supports sustainable development throughout the city.*

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #3 A Safe and Prepared Community:

> *3.4 Ensure civic infrastructure, assets and resources are effectively maintained and continue to meet the needs of the community as it grows.*

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #4 Responsible Financial Management and Governance:

> *4.2 Seek improvements and efficiencies in all aspects of City business.*

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

> *Vibrant, resilient and active communities supported by a wide variety of opportunities to get involved, build relationships and access resources.*

> *6.1 Advance a variety of program, services, and community amenities to support diverse needs and interests and activate the community.*

Analysis

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

An important aspect of developing the Community Wayfinding Strategy is through the engagement and input of a broad group of residents, businesses, and other key organizations. Between February 22 and April 21, 2023, public and stakeholder engagements were conducted,

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including a Let's Talk Richmond[1] survey, pop-up events in Steveston and at Lansdowne Station, and a series of seven focus groups.

There was strong engagement from the community, which included 160 participants at the pop-up events, 39 participants from 28 organizations at the seven focus groups, 999 visitors to the Let's Talk Richmond page about the initiative, and 203 survey responses from the general public.

Participants were given an opportunity to share input and priorities for Richmond's wayfinding strategy, including identification of key destinations, wayfinding challenges and opportunities, general style and design aesthetics, and guiding principles for the strategy. Their input is captured in the "What We Heard" Report from the consultant team (Attachment 1).

<u>Guiding Principles</u>

Through the expertise and early research undertaken by the consultant team, as well as early engagement with the City's cross-departmental staff working group on the Community Wayfinding Strategy, 20 potential Guiding Principles were created. These Guiding Principles were then presented to participants in the public and stakeholder engagement activities to gain feedback and insights on participants' key priorities for wayfinding in Richmond. Six Guiding Principles have now been identified as most important for a wayfinding system in Richmond.

The Guiding Principles will be key in shaping the direction of this initiative, supporting decision-making and informing the development of the Community Wayfinding Strategy. The following draft Guiding Principles are proposed:

1. Clear and intuitive
    - Easy-to-understand language, legible fonts, and simple graphics should be used.
    - Establish consistent use of terminology, nomenclature and visual cues.
    - Position and locate signs appropriately to ensure good visibility and legibility.

2. Inclusive and accessible for all backgrounds and abilities
    - Employ accessibility best practices regarding contrast, font size, and typeface, to ensure improved legibility.
    - Where appropriate, include braille or other tactile elements for those who are visually impaired.
    - Employ pictograms to support an inclusive and accessible experience, as these display information quickly and universally, transcending language barriers and levels of ability.

3. Encourage discovery and exploration
    - Wayfinding and signage can foster a sense of discovery by highlighting key destinations and making users aware of the wide range of attractions proximate to their current location.

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[1] https://www.letstalkrichmond.ca/wayfindingstrategy

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- Application of unique graphics or other design elements to create an inviting atmosphere and encourage people to explore the area.

4. Consider the role of technology in navigation and placemaking
   - Explore and enhance the interface between physical and digital elements in helping people move through the city.

5. Promote city and neighbourhood character and identity
   - Support city place-making with the development of an overarching "Richmond" character for the family of signs.
   - Explore opportunities that allow individual neighbourhoods to communicate their own identity (i.e. a sub-brand or differentiating feature).

6. Support local business and economy
   - Wayfinding and signage should highlight a range of destinations and attractions, in support of the local economy.

The Guiding Principles will inform the draft Community Wayfinding Strategy and provide direction to the project team and the City staff cross-departmental project working group in the development of the Strategy.

Project Update and Next Steps

There are many components that will help shape the Community Wayfinding Strategy, ensuring that it is informed by global best practices and is also uniquely "made in Richmond" to enhance the experience of the city. The public and stakeholder engagement phase and research and needs assessment work (including site visits to multiple locations) have been foundational in producing and prioritizing the principles on which the Strategy will be based to deliver on its goals.

Following Council's endorsement of the proposed Guiding Principles, work will proceed on the draft Community Wayfinding Strategy, including strategic recommendations and approach and the development of a design framework.

Staff anticipate presenting a draft Community Wayfinding Strategy in Winter 2024 for Council's consideration prior inviting public input on the draft and then proceeding to the development of a final version of the Strategy. An implementation plan framework with recommendations for phased implementation and priority projects will then follow.

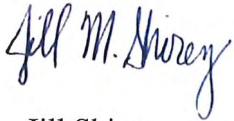**Financial Impact**

None.

Conclusion

The Guiding Principles, based on expert research and prioritized through a public and stakeholder engagement process, will provide a strong foundation for the consultant project team and staff working group to develop the draft Community Wayfinding Strategy. These Guiding

Principles will inform and shape the overall wayfinding approach in the Strategy and the associated design and implementation frameworks.

The final result expected is a Community Wayfinding Strategy that will guide and coordinate future wayfinding investments in Richmond and improve the experience of the city for residents and visitors alike.

Jill Shirey
Manager, Economic Development
(604-247-4682)

Att. 1: "What We Heard" Report

City of Richmond Community Wayfinding Strategy

What we heard report

May 2023

Prepared by Happy Cities

Happy Cities

entro

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Richmond

Contents

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1. Introduction

Project overview

As Richmond grows, both as a place to live and as a place to visit, the City wants to unify and enhance Richmond as a vibrant destination. The new Community Wayfinding Strategy will consider how people move—through all types of transportation—to elevate the experience of Richmond for visitors and residents alike. The Strategy will include recommendations for implementation, such as new signs, digital wayfinding systems, and potential pilot projects.

From Brighouse to Bridgeport, City Centre to Steveston, wherever you need to go!

What is wayfinding?

Wayfinding connects people to their surroundings and helps them find their way—for example, through directional signage and visual landmarks. Wayfinding can also promote attractions, places of special interest, and the best routes for moving through the city.

To inform direction and ensure success, the Strategy requires community input. The public and key stakeholders were invited to share their ideas. Participants' priorities and concerns will help shape the direction of the Community Wayfinding Strategy, for example, in identifying areas around the city that will benefit from improved signage.

Opportunities for engagement were informed by the local context of Richmond, including reaching people with diverse backgrounds and a significant number of Mandarin and Cantonese speakers. While the Community Wayfinding Strategy will be completed in English, an interpreter was available at the public pop-up events to assist with translation of the survey, questions, and comments, enabling participation from a wider range of people.

Timeline

- Spring 2023 | Public engagement to inform the Community Wayfinding Strategy

- Winter 2024 | Draft Community Wayfinding Strategy

- Summer 2024 | Final Community Wayfinding Strategy

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2. What we did

Promotion

We aimed to create an inclusive engagement process to hear from voices across Richmond, including residents and visitors from all different backgrounds. To do so, we:

- Met residents where they are, rather than asking them to come to us
- Offered a variety of easy, accessible, and inclusive ways to give feedback (online and in person)
- Provided translation of the press release and interpretation services at in-person pop-up events

We reached out to share graphics and key messages with Richmond residents and visitors through:

1. **Press release:** A press release in English and Traditional Chinese was published on three media outlets (Richmond News, Richmond Sentinel, Sign Media Canada) and the City's website.
2. **Social media**: The City, and Happy Cities, and Entro shared social media posts to encourage participation in engagement activities (on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn).
3. **Posters:** The City displayed eye-catching posters at community centres and civic facilities and digital posters at select transit shelters across Richmond.
4. **City email:** The City emailed over 6,000 community members registered via Let's Talk to announce the project launch, sharing a link to the project page and online survey.
5. **Email invitations:** Over 45 stakeholders were emailed (including organizations and individual representatives from local business, tourism, sports, arts and culture, and transportation).
6. **Newsprint:** Advertisements were placed in the printed versions of the Richmond News and Richmond Sentinel.

Engagement activities

We offered three primary ways for the Richmond community to share feedback. These avenues of participation ensured that, regardless of technological abilities, people were able to share their ideas and priorities for wayfinding in Richmond.

Survey: Residents and visitors alike were invited to fill out an online survey on the City of Richmond's Let's Talk page (www.letstalkrichmond.ca/). A printed version of the survey was available at each pop-up.

Focus groups: We organized and hosted seven focus groups with key stakeholders. Sessions were 1.5 to two hours long each, and took place between March 5-14 and on April 20, 2023. Four of these sessions were held online and three in person (at City Hall, the City Centre Community Centre, and Tourism Richmond).

Pop-up events: We hosted two public pop-up events in Richmond. Each event was three hours long, with free beverages and healthy snacks.

- Saturday, March 11 in City Centre (by the Lansdowne SkyTrain station)
- Saturday, April 2 in Steveston (by the Gulf of Georgia Cannery)

3. Who we heard from

Participation

Pop-up events	Focus groups	Let's Talk page	Online survey
160 participants	39 participants from 28 organizations	999 visitors	203 responses

Pop-up events

- Participants who shared optional demographics were a mix of residents (42%), visitors from the Lower Mainland (31%), students (19%) and tourists (8%).

- Participants reflected a relatively even balance of genders, ages, and backgrounds.

- Most participants spoke briefly with the engagement team, contributing to two to four of the interactive display boards (see Appendix 2). A smaller number asked questions to the team (e.g., on language, location, and digital wayfinding).

Focus groups

- Across seven sessions, we heard from 39 participants. Many more participants were invited but either declined the invitation or were unable to attend.

- Over 28 community organizations and committees were represented, including:

- City departments
- Vancouver Airport Authority
- Translink
- Tourism Richmond
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University
- Chamber of Commerce
- Public Library
- Metro Vancouver
- HUB Cycling
- Steveston Harbour Authority
- Steveston Heritage Sites
- Sea Island Heritage Society
- Richmond Centre for Disability
- Alzheimer Society of BC
- McArthur Glen Designer Outlet
- Sheraton Airport Hotel
- Lansdowne Centre
- Richmond Arts Coalition

- Richmond Arts Council
- Richmond Art Gallery
- Gateway Theatre
- Richmond Sport Hosting
- The Sharing Farm
- Seniors Advisory Committee
- Rod & Gun Club

Over 100 people participated at the Steveston pop-up event, coinciding with the Richmond Cherry Blossom Festival.
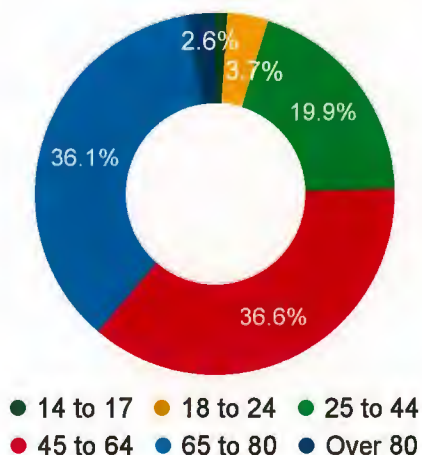
Participation (continued)

Let's Talk page

- The Let's Talk page launched to the public on February 22, 2023, hosted at www.letstalkrichmond.ca/wayfindingstrategy.

- Between February 22 and April 10, the page received 999 visitors.

- Let's Talk categorized 800 visitors as aware, 452 of which were informed, and 203 of which were engaged:

  - Aware participants visited the landing page

  - Informed participants visited multiple pages, downloaded a document, or viewed key dates

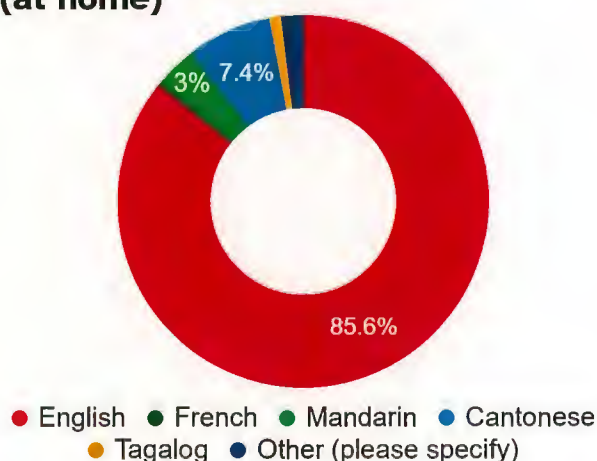 - Engaged participants filled out the survey

Online survey

- A total of 203 responses were submitted to the online survey. Zero responses were received through the printed survey at the pop-ups.

- Just over half of respondents identified as female (55%) compared to male (44%).

- A large majority of respondents were Richmond residents (90%), compared to tourists or international visitors (4%), visitors from the Lower Mainland (4%), and students (2%).

Age

- 14 to 17 ● 18 to 24 ● 25 to 44
- 45 to 64 ● 65 to 80 ● Over 80

Language (at home)

- English ● French ● Mandarin ● Cantonese
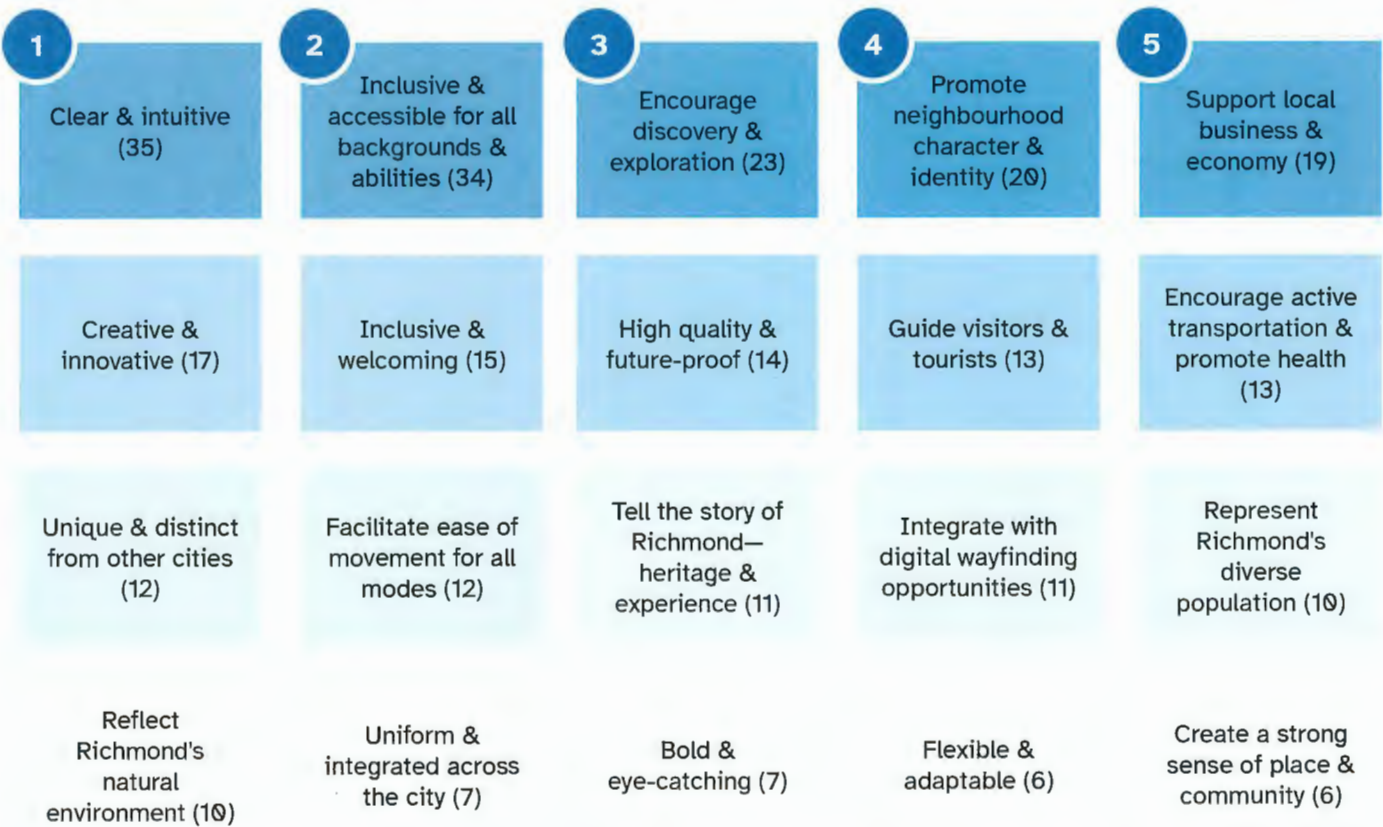- Tagalog ● Other (please specify)

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4. What we heard

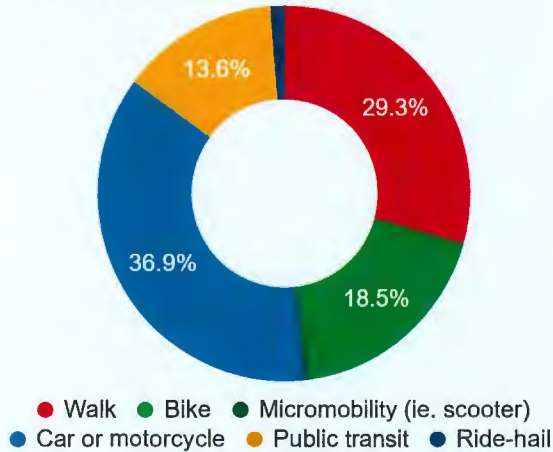## Wayfinding priorities

Guiding principles

Participants at the focus groups and pop-ups identified and voted for the following as top priorities to guide the development of the new wayfinding system.
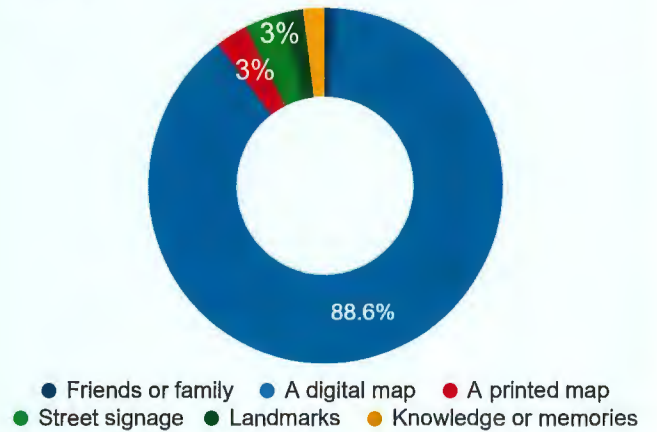
1	2	3	4	5
Clear & intuitive (35)	Inclusive & accessible for all backgrounds & abilities (34)	Encourage discovery & exploration (23)	Promote neighbourhood character & identity (20)	Support local business & economy (19)
Creative & innovative (17)	Inclusive & welcoming (15)	High quality & future-proof (14)	Guide visitors & tourists (13)	Encourage active transportation & promote health (13)
Unique & distinct from other cities (12)	Facilitate ease of movement for all modes (12)	Tell the story of Richmond—heritage & experience (11)	Integrate with digital wayfinding opportunities (11)	Represent Richmond's diverse population (10)
Reflect Richmond's natural environment (10)	Uniform & integrated across the city (7)	Bold & eye-catching (7)	Flexible & adaptable (6)	Create a strong sense of place & community (6)

Getting around

Survey respondents shared how they get around the city, and the navigation tools that they use regularly.

Mode of travel

- Walk 29.3%
- Bike 18.5%
- Micromobility (ie. scooter)
- Car or motorcycle 36.9%
- Public transit 13.6%
- Ride-hail

Method of navigation

- Friends or family 3%
- A digital map 88.6%
- A printed map 3%
- Street signage
- Landmarks
- Knowledge or memories 3%

9/10
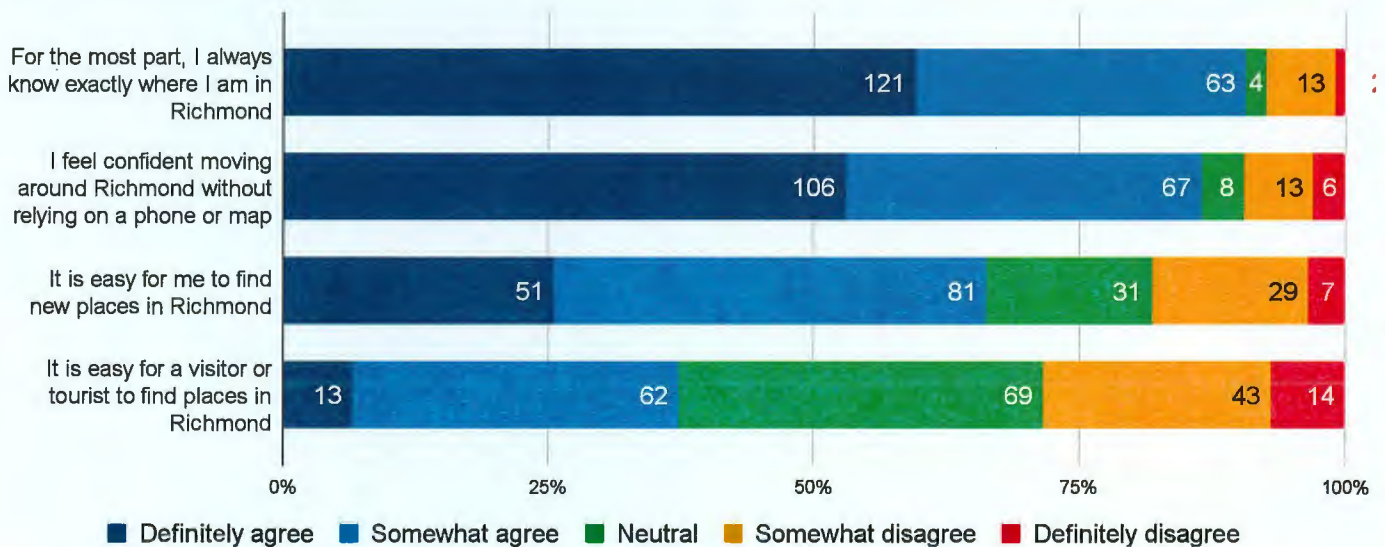Survey respondents use their phone or car map to navigate.

50%
Of survey respondents are active—walking or biking.

2x
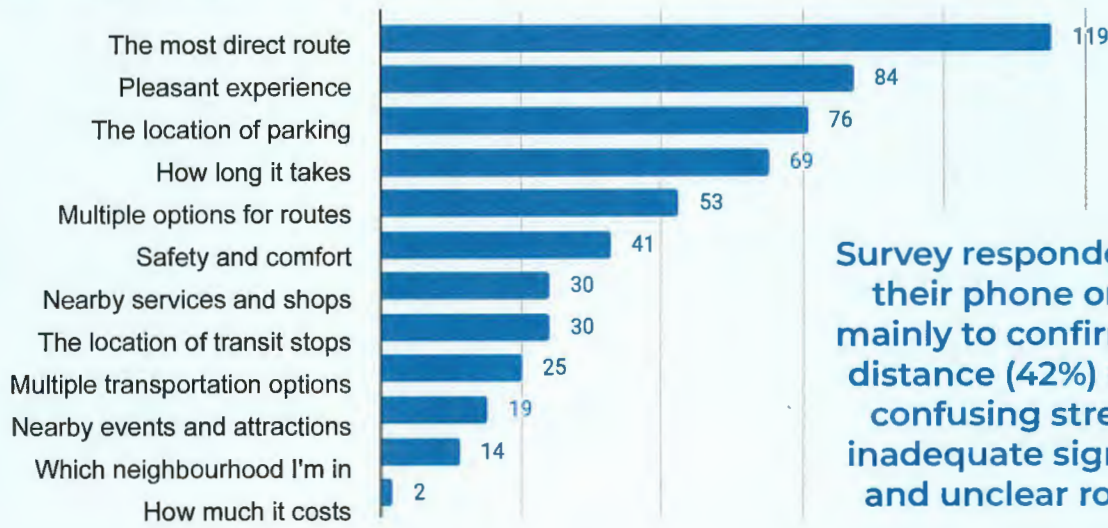Survey respondents are twice as comfortable navigating Richmond than a visiting friend

Survey respondents shared:

Statement	Definitely agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Definitely disagree
For the most part, I always know exactly where I am in Richmond	121	63	4	13	
I feel confident moving around Richmond without relying on a phone or map	106	67	8	13	6
It is easy for me to find new places in Richmond	51	81	31	29	7
It is easy for a visitor or tourist to find places in Richmond	13	62	69	43	14

■ Definitely agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Neutral ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Definitely disagree

Experience of wayfinding

Survey respondents commented on the experience of wayfinding across Richmond, for themselves and for their friends and family.

Wayfinding tools: Survey respondents noted that wayfinding tools should provide information on:

Category	Value
The most direct route	119
Pleasant experience	84
The location of parking	76
How long it takes	69
Multiple options for routes	53
Safety and comfort	41
Nearby services and shops	30
The location of transit stops	30
Multiple transportation options	25
Nearby events and attractions	19
Which neighbourhood I'm in	14
How much it costs	2

Survey respondents rely on their phone or car map mainly to confirm time and distance (42%) and due to confusing streets (16%), inadequate signage (10%), and unclear routes (9%).

Recommended attractions

When asked which attractions or destinations they would recommend to a visiting friend, 84% of respondents mentioned Steveston Village (161 votes). The other top 10 recommendations received between 16-40 votes, and include:

- Historic sites (Steveston Village, Gulf of Georgia Cannery, and Britannia Shipyards)
- Parks (Dyke Trail, Garry Point, Terra Nova, Iona Beach, Minoru Park, and Nature Park)
- Richmond Night Market
- Richmond Olympic Oval
- Richmond Centre

Wayfinding at Steveston

Wayfinding needs are nuanced when it comes to Steveston. People indicated equally the need for improved wayfinding to Steveston (from other parts of the City) as much as improved wayfinding within Steveston to highlight the many local attractions and amenities.

Top destinations for improved wayfinding

1. Steveston Village
2. Richmond Olympic Oval
3. Britannia Shipyards
4. Iona Beach
5. Richmond Night Market
6. Neighbourhoods

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Style & aesthetics

At the pop-ups and focus groups, participants were asked to vote for the wayfinding aesthetic that they thought best represents Richmond.

The "Fun & playful" aesthetic received the most votes in support, as well as the most votes of opposition. With the exception of "heritage & historic," all aesthetic styles scored relatively high.
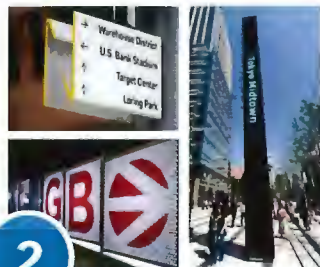
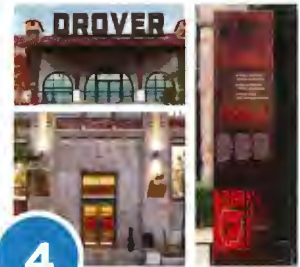|	For	Against
Fun & playful	66	23
Modern & fresh	65	13
Natural & authentic	60	13
Heritage & historic	39	14

Fun & playful
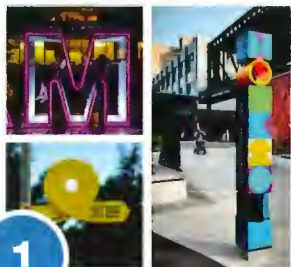
Modern & fresh
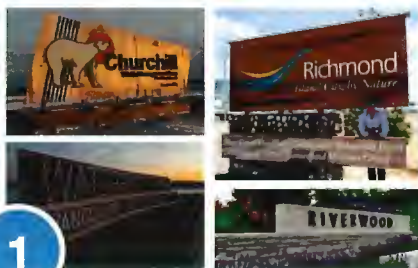

Natural & authentic

Heritage & historic

Similarly, when asked "How do we welcome people to the City of Richmond?" participants voted fairly comparably for monument signs, gateway signs, and big bold letters.

Monument signs	45	12
Gateway signs	39	10
Big bold letters	34	12

Monument signs

Gateway signs

Big bold letters

Style & aesthetics (continued)

Comments on each of the presented aesthetic styles are summarized below. It was noted that several styles could complement each other—especially modern & fresh with natural & authentic.

1

Fun & playful

- Colour can be a strength with strong visibility (and if lit)
- Colour should be used in moderation (not overdone and with care to contrast)
- Is more suitable for certain locations (like City Centre)
- Acts as a strong advertisement for a place
- Playful may be less accessible across backgrounds
- Not compatible with existing streetscape (City and private)

2

Modern & fresh

- Represents the urban feel of Richmond
- Is clear and legible
- Is easy for diverse backgrounds to interpret

3

Natural & authentic

- Natural materials like wood reflect Richmond well, especially the many parks and access to nature
- Consideration needs to be made for lifespan, maintenance, and visibility (contrast) of natural materials
- An opportunity to tell a local story (ecological and historical—including on Indigenous place)

4

Heritage & historic

- Site specific and most suitable in Steveston
- Not representative of the City as a whole (especially as a young and diverse city)
- Consider carefully whose history is being told

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Strengths & opportunities

Focus group discussion

Focus group participants were asked to identify any community interests or priorities that had not yet been discussed. The following themes were noted.

Local business and tourism

- Business owners have expressed interest in improved wayfinding and directions for customers, to highlight local businesses
- Events, conferences, and sports tournaments are a large draw to Richmond from the region and internationally
- Wayfinding could promote events and welcome people more strategically to key conference centres and sports facilities (e.g., a digital sign at the airport showcasing current events)
- Wayfinding should be able to inform people of existing destinations as well as future destinations

Accessibility and inclusivity

- Inclusivity for all—including, but not limited to, different cultures, backgrounds, languages, and physical abilities
- Safety for pedestrians and mobility aid users in car-centric parts of the city (such as City Centre) are a top priority
- Wayfinding and lighting go hand in hand for night time safety
- Wayfinding should help people orient themselves, and account for the needs of people with dementia (simple, clear, icons) or who are blind (tactile elements)
- The location, size, and contrast of new signage will be important
- Walkability and integration with public transit should be a key outcome of the wayfinding system

Neighbourhood character and identity

- Wayfinding can enhance local character and identity (for example, around the names and boundaries of neighbourhoods)
- Wayfinding in Steveston can help create a coherent experience
- Identity should encompass Indigenous history and names

Parks and trails

- Wayfinding will encourage visitors to explore destinations like parks, even spontaneously
- Wayfinding helps large parks feel easier to enter and navigate
- Public washrooms are key amenities and should be featured

Public art as landmarks

- Public art can serve as key landmarks and could improve the experience of wayfinding across the City
- An opportunity to involve local artists in contributing to a sense of place and to create assets that appeal to Richmond

Strengths

The City's grid street system and its many popular destinations were noted as strengths.

Opportunities

Include enhancing key welcome points and a sense of place when entering and visiting Richmond—for residents and visitors alike.

Challenges

Include car-centric traffic and pinch points (with limited access into the City through the bridges and tunnel).

Mapping experiences

We asked participants at the focus groups and pop-up events to map their experience of wayfinding in Richmond.

In total, participants identified 65 pain points, 143 destinations and attractions (for visitors and residents), and 17 general comments (many of which overlap with pain points). Each point is visualized in the digital map. Notably, a number of participants seconded the comments and dots on the map but did not add their own vote to the map. A general summary of the map results is presented below, highlighting the destinations and pain points that received the most votes. Call outs for City Centre, Steveston, and the northern connections are detailed on the following pages.

Top destinations:

- Steveston
- Minoru Park
- Civic facilities in City Centre (library, cultural centre, parks)
- Terra Nova
- The Richmond Olympic Oval and area
- Bridgeport and River Rock Casino area
- Garden City
- Richmond Nature Park
- Iona Beach and MacDonald Beach Park
- Tait Waterfront Park and area
- Finn Slough
- The West Richmond Community Centre

Top pain points located across the City:

- The Massey Tunnel — signage, construction, lack of welcome
- Steveston — limited parking, knowing what's around the area
- City Centre — finding destinations, construction, lack of pedestrian infrastructure
- Northern connections — difficult to navigate (all modes), development, access points and signage
- Knight Street bridge
- Additional Richmond destinations feel cut off — Burkeville, trails north of Grauer, Richmond Nature Park, and more

Main themes of comments:

- Entrances to the City — not knowing when you've entered Richmond
- New development — impacts of construction, new towers, and road changes
- Getting around — wayfinding to better support connectivity to a variety of Richmond destinations that feel cut off (with limited signage or access for different modes of transportation)

Map

Interactive map:

www.tinyurl.com/m6sz3ewy

Mapping experiences: City Centre

City Centre summary

Top City Centre destinations: ♡

- Minoru sports amenities
- Cultural Centre amenities
- Richmond Olympic Oval sports amenities

Top City Centre pain point locations: ✕

- Minoru Boulevard
- No. 3 Road
- Brighouse Station
- Cultural Centre (access and parking)
- Dinsmore Bridge

Mapping experiences: Steveston

Steveston summary

Top Steveston destinations ♡

- Garry Point Park
- Steveston Harbour wharf area
- London Landing area
- Various points of interest along Dyke Rd and Dyke Trail

Summary of additional pain points and comments: ✕ ❞

- Limited parking throughout Steveston

Mapping experiences: Northern connections

Northern connections summary

Top destinations: 🤍

- Dykes along River Rd
- River Rock Casino and area
- Sea Island Centre and parks
- Tait Waterfront Park

Pain point locations: ❌

- Moray Bridge
- The intersection at No. 3 Rd, Bridgeport Rd and Sea Island Way
- The Arthur Laing Bridge and access points
- Parking and access to parks (including MacDonald Beach, Tait Waterfront Park, and Burkeville Neighbourhood Park)
- River Rd at Cambie Rd

Summary of additional comments: 💬

- Difficult access and connections for cyclists

Additional input

Tourism Richmond workshop

Style and aesthetics

- Richmond is diverse—for both people's experiences and types of places—making a representative wayfinding style difficult to identify
- There is a fine line between sterile, and too playful (colour to be used in appropriate ways)
- Consider the pros and cons of incorporating formal municipal branding into wayfinding (preference to move away from formality and regular use of City logo)
- The wayfinding style should speak to the experiences of Richmond, and be simple and versatile
  - Also noted: Elegant, sophisticated, unique, vibrant
- Consideration is needed to best place monument or gateway signs (to be located where it *feels* like you've arrived in Richmond)
  - Big bold letters could make for a strong public art initiative (to complement wayfinding)

Priorities

- Clear and intuitive
- Sense of place
- Discovery and exploration
- Flexible, adaptive, and futureproof
- Welcoming and accessible
- Pivot from existing wayfinding, while complementing Parks' assets

Digital wayfinding

- Richmond identifies proudly as forward thinking, and so digital assets should be considered as appropriate (acknowledging that digital assets can easily become outdated)
- With higher costs for both maintenance and content creation, the City may explore building on existing digital assets (such as digital bus shelter screens) or adaptable options (like QR codes)
- While digital wayfinding is important to consider, static signs remain key (providing confirmation on destinations and remaining accessible)

Pilot projects

- Both Steveston and City Centre could be considered as priority areas for wayfinding
- City Centre is preferred for the pilot project for various reasons, including new development, the cultural precinct, and connectivity to transit
- Pilot project to accommodate a full family of signage (a range of amenities, scale, and routes)

Richmond Accessibility Plan (underway)

Additional wayfinding considerations have been noted by Happy Cities through stakeholder engagement during the development of the Richmond Accessibility Plan. These include:

- Priorities for style and aesthetics:
  - Consistent style
  - Plain language
  - Reduced visual clutter
  - Clear contrast (in font, size, and colour)
  - Visuals (including clear and simple iconography and universal symbols)
  - Clarity of purpose (that a sign is a sign, and not art, for example)
- New wayfinding assets to be accompanied by lighting and auditory features, where possible

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5. Recommendations

Clarity on hierarchy

As a next step, we recommend the City and Entro clarify the outcomes of the Community Wayfinding Strategy in order to understand the direction of the sign family and hierarchy. It will be important to confirm how varied the family of signs might be, versus consistent and uniform. Questions that remain include: Should the Wayfinding Strategy serve to create a cohesive city-wide image, or to celebrate Richmond's distinct neighbourhoods? Should Richmond embrace its heritage or create a modern, future-oriented wayfinding system?

Digital wayfinding

A framework for the potential integration of digital wayfinding will have to be further explored. Clarity is required to understand the City's goals for digital wayfinding, potential scope, maintenance costs, and available budget. The confirmed direction of digital wayfinding (and rationale) should be communicated clearly back to the community in order to answer a commonly asked question.

Pilot project

City Centre was the area most commonly referred to throughout our engagement. The area rose to the top as a priority area for future wayfinding interventions and as an area that faces challenges to wayfinding. Currently, City Centre is impacted by street closures, significant new development, and a new vision for the cultural precinct. Based on what we heard through community engagement, we recommend that City Centre be selected as the site of the pilot project. City Centre will provide a breadth of amenities and routes for the future pilot project to consider—from cycling routes and pathways, to civic amenities, local businesses, and multiple SkyTrain Stations.

Airport connectivity

Further exploration on the connection between YVR and the City of Richmond is recommended, including on how the wayfinding system will integrate with SkyTrain stations—welcoming people from YVR and letting people know they are in Richmond, and sharing what the City has to offer. This may require consideration to the experience of landing at YVR as well as leaving YVR (via car or SkyTrain).

Additional stakeholder engagement

We recommend a second connection with key actors and stakeholders who participated in the March-April 2023 engagement. We also recommend outreach to connect with additional leaders from the Musqueam Nation and across Richmond's accessibility and advocacy scene.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary snapshot

Snapshot of what we did

A range of engagement activities helped inform the direction of the Community Wayfinding Strategy. Activities were promoted through a press release, news ads, social media, digital posters, a newsletter, and emails. Participants included members of the public and key stakeholders representing a variety of related backgrounds.

Engagement activities included:

- Online survey — 203 responses (90% Richmond residents)
- Seven focus groups — 39 participants
- Two pop-up events — 160 participants

Snapshot of what we heard

- The following guiding principles rose to the top:
  - Clear and intuitive
  - Inclusive and accessible for all backgrounds and abilities
  - Encourage discovery and exploration
  - Promote neighbourhood character and identity
  - Support local business and economy
- Survey respondents shared that they:
  - Use their phone or car map to navigate (9/10)
  - Are quite active (50% walking and cycling)
  - Are confident navigating Richmond and know where they are (over 50%)
  - Are most interested in direct routes, a pleasant experience, and the location of parking
  - Recommend Steveston as the top destination to visit in Richmond
- Regarding style and aesthetic:
  - "Fun & playful" was most popular (as well as the least popular)
  - The feel of Richmond was identified as moderate, often falling between two categories (for example, between "fun & playful" and "modern & fresh")
  - Monument signs and gateway signs were supported as ways of welcoming people to the city
- Through discussion and the mapping activity, we heard:
  - Strengths include the grid system and many popular destinations
  - There are opportunities to enhance key welcome points and a sense of place (for residents and visitors)
  - Challenges include car-centric traffic, many pinch points (with limited access into the City on tunnels and bridges), and new development making navigation difficult
  - Pain points were most prominent in City Centre, Steveston, and at entrances to the City (especially the northern connections and bridges)
  - Additional priorities included support for local business and tourism, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity, promoting neighbourhood character and identity, and using public art and landmarks

Snapshot of recommendations

Through engagement, the project team identified a series of themes for further exploration. These include: clarity on hierarchy of signs; potential for digital wayfinding; the location of the pilot project in City Centre area; considerations for connectivity with the airport; and priority stakeholders for a second round of engagement.

Engagement timeline
March-April 2023

What we heard

Please refer to the full What We Heard Report for more information.

Share your thoughts on the City of Richmond's new...
Community Wayfinding Strategy

Brighouse to Bridgeport, City Centre to Steveston, or wherever you need to go!

What is wayfinding?

Wayfinding connects people to their surroundings and helps them find their way—for example, through directional signage and visual landmarks. Wayfinding can also be used to promote public attractions, places of special interest, and the best routes for moving through the city. Improved wayfinding will enhance the City of Richmond as a destination and as a community.

About the new Community Wayfinding Strategy

The City of Richmond is seeking your input on a new Community Wayfinding Strategy. The Strategy seeks to improve people's experience of moving through and navigating the city on all types of transportation. Your priorities and concerns will help shape the direction of the Strategy, for example, by identifying areas around the city that can benefit from improved signage.

The Strategy will include recommendations for implementation, such as new signs, digital wayfinding systems, and potential pilot projects.

Anticipated completion: Spring 2024

The Community Wayfinding Strategy aligns with Richmond's Official Community Plan to be "a place where people live, work, and prosper in a connected and vibrant community."

Learn more & fill out the survey: www.LetsTalkRichmond.ca/wayfindingstrategy

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Community goals & priorities

The City of Richmond is interested in hearing your ideas to help residents and visitors navigate through Richmond with ease—by foot, on wheels, or via public transit.

We invite you to help us create the guiding principles and determine practical considerations—including aesthetics—for future wayfinding in Richmond.

Instructions

Add stickers to the words that resonate most with you for the Wayfinding Strategy. Please add as many dots as you'd like, and add new ideas to the list!

1. How should wayfinding feel in Richmond?

The wayfinding system should feel...

Creative and vibrant	Other:
Clear and intuitive	Other:
Inclusive and welcoming	
Innovative	
Accessible to people of all backgrounds and abilities	
Unique and distinct from other cities	
Future-proof or long lasting	

2. What should the goals be for the wayfinding system?

The wayfinding system should...

Encourage discovery and exploration	Promote health and physical activity
Guide visitors and tourists	Tell the story of Richmond's heritage and traditions
Represent Richmond's physical geography	Integrate with wayfinding across the Lower Mainland
Represent Richmond's diverse population	Be distinct from other wayfinding in the Lower Mainland
Support local business and economy	Other:
Promote neighbourhood character and identity	Other:
Highlight the environment and natural ecosystems	

3. Who are we hearing from today? Select all that apply.

I'm a local resident

I'm a tourist

I'm a visitor from the Lower Mainland

I'm a young person (18-25)

I'm here with my family (parents & kids)

I'm a student

English is my second language

I'm a senior (65+)

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Engagement boards (3/4)

Selecting a wayfinding style

The City wants to unify and enhance Richmond as a vibrant destination and a place to live. The Community Wayfinding Strategy will help to improve people's experience of Richmond, whether they are long-time residents, visitors, or newcomers. From Brighouse to Bridgeport, Steveston to City Centre, or wherever people need to go—enhanced wayfinding will help everyone comfortably navigate and explore the city.

Instructions

For each of the following categories, use **green** dot stickers to identify your favourite options for Richmond and use **red** dot stickers to identify options that do not work well.

1. What style do you like best? *Pick your top two choices.*
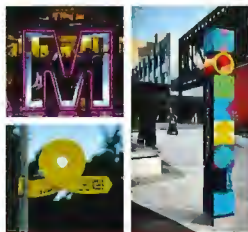
Fun & playful
Vote with stickers here

Modern & fresh

Natural & authentic

Heritage & historic

Share any other ideas here:

2. How can we welcome people (both residents and visitors) to the City of Richmond? *Pick your top choice.*

Monument signs
Vote with stickers here

Gateway signs

Big, bold letters

Share any other ideas here:

Help us map key locations in Richmond!

The Community Wayfinding Strategy must meet the needs of all community members. We invite you to share your ideas on navigating around town, whether as a resident or as a visitor. This map will help us understand the experience of moving around Richmond and identify priorities for the Strategy, including which areas will benefit most from improved signage.

Instructions

- Use **blue** dots to indicate destinations that local residents (from Richmond and the lower Mainland) visit.
- Use **green** dots to indicate destinations that visitors and tourists visit.
- Use **red** dots to indicate challenging locations (such as intersections) or other 'pain points' across Richmond. Place a sticky note if you'd like to add more thoughts about a specific location.
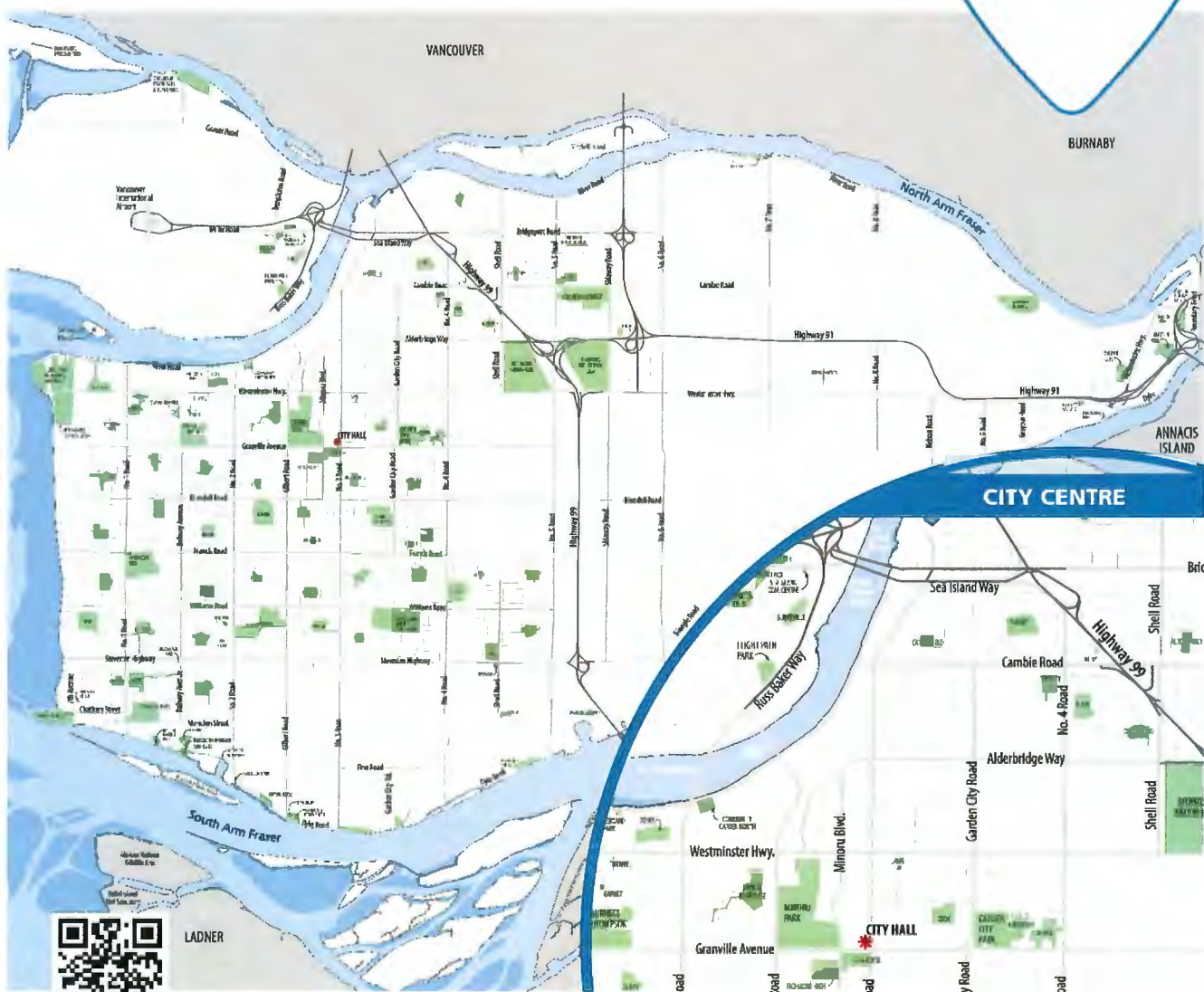
Appendix 3: Survey questions

1. I normally travel across Richmond in the following ways (for example, to do errands or go to work). Select and rank up to three.

- ❏ Walk
- ❏ Bike
- ❏ Scooter or other form of micro-mobility
- ❏ Motor vehicle or motorcycle
- ❏ Public transit
- ❏ Ride-hail (Uber, Lyft, taxi etc)
- ❏ Other

2. The following describes how much I agree or disagree with the following statements:

- ❏ For the most part, I always know exactly where I am in Richmond
- ❏ I feel confident moving around Richmond - such as making my way to a semi-regular destination-without relying on a phone or map for directions
- ❏ It is easy for me to find new places in Richmond
- ❏ It is easy for a visitor or tourist to find places in Richmond

3. When I need to find a destination in Richmond for the first time, I rely mostly on: (select one)

- ❏ A friend or family member
- ❏ A digital map (ie. Google Maps, Apple Maps, in-car)
- ❏ A printed map
- ❏ Street signage
- ❏ Landmarks (visible reference points such as natural features or infrastructure)
- ❏ Knowledge or memories
- ❏ Other

4. The main reasons I rely on my smart/mobile phone, digital map or in-car navigation is (select one)

- ❏ Unclear routes
- ❏ Inadequate signage
- ❏ Confusing street system
- ❏ Digital maps give info such as time and distance
- ❏ I always use a digital mapping app

5. I would recommend the following top three attractions or destinations in Richmond to a visiting friend or family member. (open answer)

6. Of these attractions or destinations which might be particularly difficult for my visitors to get to? (open answer)

7. The top three confusing locations in Richmond that would most benefit from improved wayfinding are: (open answer)

8. I've been lost or disoriented in Richmond this many times. (open answer)

9. The top priorities for me, when using wayfinding tools are to know: (select three)

- ❏ The most direct route
- ❏ Multiple options for routes
- ❏ Multiple options for transportation
- ❏ How long it takes to get somewhere
- ❏ How much it costs to get somewhere
- ❏ The safest or most comfortable routes
- ❏ The most pleasant routes as a pedestrian or cyclist
- ❏ The location of parking
- ❏ The location of transit stops
- ❏ Nearby services and shops
- ❏ Nearby events and attractions
- ❏ Which neighbourhood I'm in
- ❏ Other (please specify)

10. In Richmond, I am a (select all that apply):

- ❏ A resident
- ❏ A visitor from the Lower Mainland
- ❏ A student
- ❏ A tourist or international visitor
- ❏ Other (please specify)

11. I fall within the following age group (optional):

- ❏ 14 to 17
- ❏ 18 to 24
- ❏ 25 to 44
- ❏ 45 to 64
- ❏ 65 to 80
- ❏ Over 80

12. At home, I most often speak (select a language):

13. I identify as (optional):

- ❏ Girl / Woman
- ❏ Boy / Man
- ❏ Non-binary
- ❏ Two-Spirit
- ❏ Gender non-conforming
- ❏ Another gender not listed

14. I heard about this engagement opportunity via (select all that apply)

GP - 4415. My final comments are (open answer)   25