



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee

**Date:** April 4, 2016

**From:** Cathryn Volkering Carlile  
General Manager, Community Services

**File:** 07-3000-01/2016-Vol 01

**Re:** Recreation Fee Subsidy Program Review

### Staff Recommendation

1. That the proposed Guiding Principles for the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program as described in the staff report titled, "Recreation Fee Subsidy Program Review," dated April 4, 2016 from the General Manager, Community Services be approved;
2. That staff be authorized to consult with the City's Community Partners on the findings and proposed options developed from the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program Review; and
3. That following consultation with Community Partners, a Draft Recreation Fee Subsidy Program Update including a proposed funding strategy be brought back to Council for consideration.

Cathryn Volkering Carlile  
General Manager, Community Services  
(604-276-4068)

Att. 3

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Finance Department	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Information Technology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Arts, Culture & Heritage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Parks Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Recreation Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO 

## Staff Report

### Origin

The City of Richmond Recreation Fee Subsidy Program (RFSP), supported by the City and Community Associations/Societies (Community Partners) (Attachment 1), provides subsidized access to parks, recreation and cultural services primarily for children and youth from low-income families living in Richmond.

The original RFSP, previously called the Leisure Services Fee Subsidy Program, was approved by Council as a pilot project in 1998, implemented by staff and Community Partners in 1999 and endorsed for continuation by Council on July 10, 2000 through the following resolution:

*“That the continuation of the Leisure Services Fee Subsidy Program be endorsed.”*

The purpose of this report is to present the RFSP Review (Attachment 2) and seek Council’s approval to consult with Community Partners on the findings and proposed options.

This report supports Council’s 2014-2018 Term Goal #2 A Vibrant, Active and Connected City:

*Continue the development and implementation of an excellent and accessible system of programs, services, and public spaces that reflect Richmond’s demographics, rich heritage, diverse needs, and unique opportunities, and that facilitate active, caring, and connected communities.*

*2.3. Outstanding places, programs and services that support active living, wellness and a sense of belonging.*

This report also supports the Council-Adopted Social Development Strategy Goal #1: Enhance Social Equity and Inclusion,

*Action 4 – Conduct a comprehensive review of the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program to ensure it continues to address priority needs, within the City’s means, with consideration being given to:*

*4.1 – Exploring program expansion to assist more low-income residents (e.g. adults, older adults, people with disabilities);*

*4.2 – Using technological improvements to enhance customer service and program administration;*

*4.3 – Increasing available opportunities for resident participation in community recreation, arts, and cultural activities;*

*4.4 – Developing enhanced communication and marketing approaches to facilitate maximum uptake of the RFSP by eligible recipients; and*

*4.5 – Alternative mechanisms for administration of the program (e.g. through a non-profit agency, funded by the City and in accordance with City guidelines).*

## **Analysis**

### Program Background

The RFSP provides low-income families with access to activities provided by the City and Community Partners through subsidized admissions and program registrations. Residents currently receive these discounts on a pay-what-you-can-afford basis. Since inception, the main goal of the program has been to improve access to facilities and a wide range of recreation choices for those in financial need.

The RFSP's original guiding principles were to:

- Improve access to recreation services and facilities for those in financial need
- Partner with community associations, other organizations, and ministries for referrals, supports, implementation and funding
- Treat participants consistently and with dignity
- Maintain confidentiality
- Require participants to pay a portion of the cost
- Limit subsidies based on available funding
- Provide a wide range of recreation choices
- Make it easy to implement
- Provide central screening, tracking and administration

Currently, opportunities are primarily available for children and youth although families can participate in swimming through the use of a 10-visit family swim pass. This is the only subsidized access that adults receive through the current RFSP. Many of the City's Community Partners also provide complementary ways to increase access for low-income residents including free programs, client support initiatives such as the No Cost Subsidy Program and satellite programming for families living in low-income housing.

The costs associated with the RFSP have always been absorbed by individual City facilities and Community Partners.

While there have been modifications to the RFSP to provide additional opportunities for clients, improve customer service and streamline the administrative process, there has not been a comprehensive evaluation of the RFSP since its inception in 1999 nor has it been formally assessed in relation to changing community context or demand.

A review of the City's RFSP program was identified in the City's Social Development Strategy as a short term priority. As a result, a comprehensive review of the RFSP was conducted in 2014 and 2015 to ensure the program is reflective of today's community context and meets the needs of Richmond's current low-income residents.

### Benefits to Participation

Providing opportunities to access Richmond's programs and services for all residents, regardless of financial circumstances, contributes to a healthy, vibrant and livable community. Having the

ability to access and participate in community life improves a person's mental, emotional, and physical health and thereby reduces health care, social service, and police/justice costs.

### Community Context

When the RFSP was originally implemented in 1998, poverty was increasing in Richmond and there were 25,000 people living on low incomes (17% of the population).

While it may appear that Richmond is an affluent municipality and does not have many low-income residents, in 2011 Richmond was home to 42,370 residents (22.4% of the population)<sup>1</sup> who were living below the Low Income Cutoff (LICO)<sup>2</sup>, as determined by Statistics Canada.

**Table 1: Age breakdown for those living with low incomes households in Richmond**

Under 18 Years	8,820 residents	20.8% of LICO population
18–64 Years	28,700 residents	67.7% of LICO population
65+ Years	4,850 residents	11.5% of LICO population
TOTAL	42,370 residents	

(Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey.)

While Statistics Canada (2011) determined 42,370 Richmond residents to be living on low incomes, this may not reflect an accurate number of those who are truly considered low income residents due to Canadian and foreign income tax laws. However, evidence supports that there are a significant number of low income residents in Richmond not currently accessing the RFSP. For example, in 2013 the RFSP served 1,466 low-income children and youth in Richmond. In 2014, the RFSP served 1,081 low-income children and youth in Richmond.

### Review Process

To assess the RFSP, staff created a City and Community Partner working group comprised of two individuals representing Community Partners and five staff from Community Services. A terms of reference and work plan were established, which included program comparisons of 10 Canadian municipalities (Burnaby, Coquitlam, Surrey, Delta, Vancouver, Victoria, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary and Metro Toronto). The work program also involved an evaluation of Richmond's current program, a review of Richmond population statistics, a literature review and consultation involving current users, targeted non-users, community agencies and City staff.

The City and Community Partner working group provided insight and input into the process and tested the considerations and findings. The working group also participated in the development of the guiding principles and the criteria for the proposed options for an updated RFSP.

<sup>1</sup> The way statistics were recorded by Statistics Canada in the past is different than today, which makes it difficult to compare the number of low-income residents who are now living in Richmond. However, the current number of low-income residents makes the RFSP relevant.

<sup>2</sup> A measurement used by Statistics Canada to identify low-income families. LICO is an income threshold based on family size and income where families are required to spend a larger share than the average family on food, shelter and clothing. LICO varies by family size and the size and area of residence. This additional variability is intended to capture differences in the cost of living amongst community sizes.

### Guiding Principles

To aid with the review, the original guiding principles for the RFSP were reviewed and updated with input from City staff and the working group. The most significant change is the shift from providing opportunities for children, youth and families participating together to the inclusion of all ages in the eligibility of the RFSP. The proposed new guiding principles are as follows:

- Provide access to parks, recreation and cultural services and facilities for community residents of all ages in financial need
- A wide range of parks, recreation and cultural choices will be available through the City of Richmond's services and community facilities operated by Community Partners
- The amount of financial support available to provide access through the RFSP will be determined by the financial abilities of the City and Community Partners
- Applicants of the RFSP will be treated with dignity and respect thereby supporting City of Richmond's Customer Service Standards
- There will be a balance between efficient processing of applications and adequate scrutiny of applicants' financial information. The screening, tracking and administration of the RFSP will be centralized
- The program will be available for all eligible Richmond residents
- Confidentiality will be maintained

### Comparison to other Municipalities

When examining the 10 other municipalities, it was found that Richmond's RFSP differs in a number of key ways. These differences help illustrate the priority needs that require addressing through an updated RFSP:

#### *1. Customers Served*

In 2013, Richmond served 1,466 of its low income population (children and youth only), while Burnaby served 8,723; Coquitlam served 3,876; Surrey served 15,698; and Vancouver served 20,780.

#### *2. Age Groups Served*

All 10 municipalities provide access to low-income residents of all ages whereas Richmond only serves children and youth. The RFSP review showed that there are low-income adults and seniors in Richmond who want to participate in parks, recreation and cultural activities but cannot afford to. These customers are not being served through the RFSP based on current age guidelines.

#### *3. Amount of Subsidy*

Richmond absorbs the smallest dollar amount for subsidies for parks, recreation and cultural activities of all Lower Mainland municipalities studied. According to 2013/2014 data, Surrey absorbs the most subsidized parks, recreation and cultural activities (\$2.5M), followed by Burnaby (\$1.5M) and Coquitlam (\$879K). In 2013, the City and Community Partners absorbed approximately \$75K, which may not be enough to adequately serve Richmond's low-income population.

The RFSP review also explored the most effective ways to implement fee subsidies. Examination of other municipalities showed that it is best practice to provide: subsidy to residents of all ages; a range of choices (admissions and program registrations); subsidies to serve a minimum of 15-20% of the total low-income population; a centralized administration system; and to incorporate subsidies into annual budgets.

### Concepts for Consideration

Based on the research findings and the priority needs in Richmond, the following considerations have been developed to improve the current RFSP and influence the proposed options outlined later in this report:

1. *Assistance to low-income residents of all ages*

An updated RFSP should include all ages (children, youth, adults and seniors). Based on the experience of other municipalities who include all ages and the current number of low-income residents in Richmond, it is estimated that 15-20% of the total low-income population would likely apply for subsidy. This calculates to approximately 6,400-8,400 RFSP clients.

Potential Impact: For admissions, it is anticipated that there would be approximately 6,400-8,400 clients. It is estimated that 5-6% of Richmond adults and seniors who apply to the RFSP (approximately 250-500 new clients) are likely to register in programs, based on the experience of Surrey and Calgary. This increase in participants could result in a financial impact for both the City and Community Partners.

2. *Technological improvements and administration*

Recommended updates to the RFSP could have an impact on existing administrative resources. Increased demand on the centralized administration system due to an expansion of the RFSP will need to be anticipated and mitigated to ensure that recipients can access their subsidies in an efficient and respectful manner.

Potential Impact: The City is resourced at peak registration times to handle customer service levels. Staff training will be required prior to implementation of the updated RFSP. New software supports will assist in streamlining administrative processes and storing data for future measurement and evaluation of the RFSP. The City is currently examining new registration and admission software and administration of the RFSP would be included as a software requirement. If a separate system is required, additional costs for software and maintenance will be needed.

3. *Enhanced communications and promotions*

Prior to the launch of an updated RFSP, a communication plan will need to be created to increase awareness of the revisions to the program. Targeted promotions will also need to be designed to reach low-income residents and those agencies that serve them, and to increase uptake of the program. Funding will be required for this purpose.

4. *Increased opportunities for participation*

Recommended updates to the RFSP would increase opportunities available for participation to all clients. In particular, enhanced subsidies for program registration will

allow more choice and access to a diversity of programs offered by the City and Community Partners.

An Arts Centre subsidy could be established to give low-income residents greater access to arts programs, as the arts do not have programs such as Canadian Tire Jumpstart or KidSport, which provide subsidies to sports programs and activities.

Other barriers to participation, such as transportation, would be important to explore as solutions would provide low-income residents increased access to programs and services. Any of these considerations could result in a financial impact for both the City and Community Partners.

5. *Alternative mechanisms for administration*

Staff examined external options to administer the RFSP however these options were rejected due to associated costs and inefficiencies. An external system would result in the involvement of administrative staff from two organizations, which would lead to integration challenges. The City would also lose its ability to use discretion regarding client enrollment, which is valuable for special circumstances.

Maintaining administration of the RFSP within the City system would allow a balance between efficient processing of applications and providing the appropriate scrutiny of applicants' financial information to ensure program criteria is met and the RFSP serves those most in need.

Proposed Options

Four proposed options are presented as a comparison in Table 2 for consideration during consultation between the City and Community Partners.

- Option 1: Status Quo
- Option 2: Partial payment of admissions and registration fees
- Option 3: Free admissions and partial payment of registration fees
- Option 4: Free admissions and partial payment of registration fees for children and youth

Currently, costs associated with the RFSP are absorbed into existing budgets of City operations. Both Option 2 and Option 3 have financial impacts greater than the current RFSP, which are not in the City's current operating budget.

There would also be an impact to Community Partners. Historically, Community Partners have absorbed the costs associated with the RFSP into their existing operating budgets. Whether or not Community Partners have additional capacity to support the proposed options outlined would need to be discussed and further refinements to the RFSP based on their feedback could potentially increase or decrease the total financial impact.

These considerations need to form part of the discussions during the consultation phase between the City and its Community Partners.

**Table 2: Recreation Fee Subsidy Program – Proposed Options**

	<b>Option 1 Status Quo (Current program)</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3 Preferred</b>	<b>Option 4</b>
<b>Admissions</b> (Base level of service. See proposed inclusions and exclusions in Attachment 3)	Limited to children/youth. Participants pay what they can afford	90% discount on admissions for all ages	Free admissions for all ages	Free admissions for all ages
<b>Program Registrations</b> (Base level of service. See proposed inclusions and exclusions in Attachment 3)	Limited to children/youth. Participants pay what they can afford	90% discount on advertised price of program registration fee for all ages	90% discount on advertised price of program registration fee for all ages	Limited to children/youth. Participants pay what they can afford
<b>Children/Youth Subsidy</b>	Restricted to four (4) uses per year	Up to \$225/year subsidy	Up to \$300/year subsidy	Restricted to four (4) uses per year
<b>Adult/Senior Subsidy</b>	No subsidy	Up to \$50/year subsidy	Up to \$100/year subsidy	No subsidy
<b>Opportunities for Participation</b>	Low	Moderate	Excellent	Low-Moderate
<b>Range of Admissions &amp; Program Choice</b>	Low	Moderate	Excellent	Low-Moderate
<b>Individual Facility Use</b>	Limited	Moderate	High	Low-Moderate
<b>Impact on Administration</b>	Moderate	High	High	Moderate
<b>Annual Financial Impact*</b>	\$49K (City) \$26K (Community Partners) Based on costs currently absorbed	\$84K-\$112K (City) \$56K-\$75K (Community Partners)	\$114K-\$153K (City) \$76K-\$102K (Community Partners)	\$49K (City) \$26K (Community Partners)
<b>Net increase cost from current program*</b>	\$0 (City) \$0 (Community Partners)	\$35K-\$63K (City) \$30K-\$49K (Community Partners)	\$65K-\$104K (City) \$50K-\$76K (Community Partners)	\$0 (City) \$0 (Community Partners)
<b>Within City Operating Budget</b>	Yes	No	No	Yes

\*Note: Not inclusive of other potential City costs (e.g. technology software, staff training, promotions, etc.)

Annual financial impact = Admissions + Program Reg. (child/youth) + Program Reg. (adult/senior)

Admissions: Estimated number of participants x 16 uses x \$5

Program Registrations: Estimated child/youth participants x \$150 use minus 10% participant contribution

Program Registrations: Estimated adult/senior participants x \$80 use minus 10% participant contribution



The impact of admissions would be absorbed by the City and Community Partners and should not cause hardship to operations.

Option 3 allows the City and Community Partners to provide Richmond’s low-income residents the most access to parks, recreation and cultural services. Option 3 meets all of the proposed guiding principles (Table 3), contributes to establishing Richmond as a leader amongst other municipalities in the Lower Mainland and is more responsive to current community need by engaging new customers, increasing participation, and removing financial barriers for Richmond’s low-income population.

Option 3 would provide the greatest impact and advance Council Term Goal #2, A Vibrant, Active and Connected City and Council-Adopted Social Development Strategy Goal #1 Enhance Social Equity and Inclusion.

**Table 3: Recreation Fee Subsidy Program Proposed Guiding Principles and Options**

<b>RFSP Proposed Guiding Principles</b>	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3 Preferred</b>	<b>Option 4</b>
Provide access to basic parks, recreation and cultural services and facilities for community residents of all ages in financial need.	No	Yes	Yes	No
A wide range of choices will be available through the City of Richmond’s services and community facilities operated by Community Partners	No	Yes	Yes	No
The amount of financial support available to provide access through the RFSP will be determined by the financial abilities of the City of Richmond and Community Partners	Yes	Negotiated	Negotiated	Negotiated
Applicants of the RFSP will be treated with dignity and respect thereby supporting City of Richmond’s Customer Service Standards	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
There will be a balance between efficient processing of applications and adequate scrutiny of applicants’ financial information. The screening, tracking and administration of the RFSP will be centralized	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
The program will be available for all eligible Richmond residents	No	Yes	Yes	Limited
Confidentiality will be maintained	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

### Consultation

If authorized by Council, staff will consult with Community Partners on the findings and proposed options for an updated RFSP to consider overall viability, service-level implications, impacts to budgets and potential alternative options.

The success of an updated RFSP will require cooperation from both the City and Community Partners in delivering the program. Recognition and support of the challenges faced in service delivery will be important during the consultation phase. Language regarding the RFSP will also need to be included in the material terms for new agreements between the City and Community Partners.

It is anticipated that the following two specific aspects of the RFSP review will be of most concern:

1. *Admissions*

Implementation of 90% off or free admissions to activities offered at City and Community Partner facilities. Admissions are entrances to drop-in base level services (Attachment 3).

Heavily discounted or free admissions are not expected to cause significant additional financial implications based on the premise that a facility is already open and extra customers should not incur additional costs. However, this will only be possible if a facility can accommodate an increase in users. Special consideration will need to be given to program type, use of contractors, and the increase of people who will qualify for subsidy under an updated RFSP.

There would also be an opportunity to review the pricing structure for seniors, which is currently set at 55+ years. This would support Action 7.5 in the Social Development Strategy: *Reviewing the pricing structure for City programs for older adults to ensure it remains equitable and sustainable, while also being affordable to those with limited incomes.*

2. *Program Registrations*

Implementation of a 90% subsidy for base level registered seasonal programs offered by the City and Community Partners (Attachment 3).

Subsidized program registrations may create a greater financial impact for some facilities, particularly ones with larger numbers of low-income residents living in their catchment areas, potentially resulting in more participation at those facilities. Facilities that serve a high number of adults and seniors, which are not served in the current RFSP, could also be significantly impacted.

### Financial Consideration

During the consultation phase, there is no anticipated financial impact to the City or to Community Partners beyond current commitments to the RFSP.

Staff has done some preliminary financial analysis of each option with estimated financial impacts ranging from \$49K to \$153K for the City and \$26K to \$102K for Community Partners. During the consultation process, financial options will need to be further identified and a City and Association funding strategy will need to be developed to support an updated RFSP. Following consultation, staff will provide a Draft Recreation Fee Subsidy Program that will include financial impact estimates for administration of an updated and more robust program which are yet to be determined.

Typically, Community Associations and the City operate in a modest surplus environment due to variables in revenues and expenses. However, if Community Associations' operations are incurring an annual deficit and the City's recreation budget is in a deficit then other options will need to be considered during the City budget process. Since the current arrangement is not based on an equal financial partnership, a fair contribution arrangement will need to be considered.

### **Financial Impact**

There is no financial impact for this phase of consultation with Community Partners.

As noted in the financial considerations above, following consultation with Community Partners, financial impacts will be outlined in a Draft Recreation Fee Subsidy update to be brought back to Council for consideration.

### **Conclusion**

The City of Richmond has a long history of providing its residents with quality and affordable access to parks, recreation and cultural opportunities. The proposed improvements to the RFSP are intended to provide an increased and enhanced level of service to Richmond's low-income residents of all ages. These changes will help to engage new customers and increase participation from a population that may not be currently utilizing the many opportunities offered by the City and Community Partners.

It is recommended that the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program Review be presented to the City's Community Partners to consult on the findings and proposed options. Following consultation, a Draft Recreation Fee Subsidy Program Update and proposed funding strategy will be brought back to Council for consideration.



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- Att. 1: City Facilities and Community Partners
- 2: Recreation Fee Subsidy Program Review
- 3: Proposed Eligible Admissions and Programs

**City Facilities and Community Partners**

<b>City</b>	<b>Community Partners</b>
Minoru Aquatics Centre*	Britannia Heritage Shipyard Society
South Arm Outdoor Pool*	City Centre Community Association
Steveston Outdoor Pool*	East Richmond Community Association
Richmond Arts Centre	Hamilton Community Association
Watermania*	Richmond Arenas Community Association
	Richmond Art Gallery Association
	Richmond Museum Society
	Richmond Nature Park Society
	Sea Island Community Association
	South Arm Community Association
	Steveston Community Society
	Thompson Community Association
	West Richmond Community Association
	<b>Proposed Addition</b>
	Minoru Seniors Society

\*Richmond Aquatics Services Board to be consulted



# Recreation Fee Subsidy Program Review

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## Acknowledgements

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## Executive Summary

The Recreation Fee Subsidy Program (RFSP), supported by the City of Richmond and its Community Partners, provides subsidized admissions and program registrations to children and youth from low-income families. The RFSP ensures that low-income residents have access to the benefits of participating in Richmond's many parks, recreation and cultural opportunities. This subsidized access is available for admission to aquatic/fitness facilities and for program registrations at community centres, arenas, aquatic centres, the Richmond Nature Park, Britannia Shipyard National Historic Site and the Richmond Arts Centre. Providing opportunities to access Richmond's programs and services for all residents, regardless of financial circumstances, contributes to a healthy and vibrant community.

A review of the RFSP was identified as a short-term action in the City's Social Development Strategy (2013–2022). There had not been a comprehensive evaluation of the program since its inception in 1999. This recent review took place in 2014/2015 and included the following:

- Evaluation of current service, application process, and promotion
- Consultation with users, targeted non-users, and community agencies
- An environmental scan of ten municipalities (Appendix 1)
- A review of demographics pertaining to low-income residents in Richmond
- Input from a working group comprised of five Community Services staff and two individuals representing Community Partners
- An analysis and development of principles and options
- Discussion and feedback from senior managers to determine the best proposed option for an updated RFSP

The recommendations within this document were developed based on a number of considerations and guiding principles. These help to ensure the RFSP provides opportunities for the maximum number of eligible residents of Richmond. The key recommendations in this document include:

1. That the eligibility criteria should be expanded to **include all age groups**;
2. That **Admissions (drop-in and passes) should be free** at all facilities including: aquatic centres, arenas, and community centres;
3. That **program registration fees should be discounted by 90%**. There should be an annual limit on the amount of subsidy available to each individual. The maximum annual amount recommended is \$300 for children and youth and \$100 for adults and seniors;
4. That the application process be revamped to provide clear guidelines and eligibility criteria for applicants;
5. That a promotional campaign be developed to increase awareness of the updated RFSP and highlight the new changes;
6. That a training program be developed for Community Services front line staff and their supervisors;



7. That language regarding the RFSP be included in the material terms for new agreements between the City and Community Partners; and
8. That staff prepare an annual report to City Council and Community Partners highlighting the level of service provided to the community.

There are budget implications for both the City and Community Partners with an updated RFSP. Next steps will be to consult with Community Partners about the potential implications as a result of the findings and proposed options for an expanded RFSP.

It is expected that these potential updates to the RFSP will result in increased use of facilities in the community. By removing a financial barrier, the City and Community Partners will be providing more opportunity for low-income residents. These changes will help to engage new customers and see increased participation from a population that may not be currently utilizing the many opportunities offered through Community Services. Ultimately, the updated RFSP will help the City of Richmond live out its vision "to be the most appealing, livable and well-managed community in Canada" by increasing access to admissions and programs at community facilities for all of its diverse residents.

## 1. Introduction

The RFSP is an important contributor to the City of Richmond’s vision “to be the most appealing, livable and well-managed community in Canada.” Having the ability to participate in activities and community life helps to ensure residents are healthy, active and connected. Participation in leisure pursuits improves a person’s mental, emotional, and physical health and thereby reduces health care, social service, and police/justice costs.

Not all of Richmond’s residents have access to parks, recreation and cultural services. Those who cannot afford to pay for them are unable to benefit from the many opportunities that exist in the city. A more inclusive RFSP would help provide low-income residents access to participate in these programs and services offered by the City and Community Partners. This report presents findings and a series of recommendations that the City and Community Partners can consider to improve the RFSP, the well-being of Richmond’s low-income residents and the city as a whole.



## 2. Purpose of the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program

The RFSP provides low-income families with access to activities taking place in community centres, aquatic centres, arenas, the Richmond Nature Park, Britannia Shipyard National Historic Site and the Richmond Arts Centre. The current RFSP primarily subsidizes opportunities for children and youth with some opportunities for families to participate in swimming through the use of a 10-visit family swim pass.

The RFSP complements other supports that help to provide access to leisure opportunities for low-income residents. Examples of these include the Grade 5 Active! Pass, Preschool, Family, Youth, & Parent and Tot drop-in gym times, summer park playground opportunities, free swim/skate passes for elementary school students (three times per year), free admission to the Richmond Art Gallery and Richmond Museum, free admission to Britannia Shipyard National Historic Site, Media Lab activities, Art Truck activities, Night Shift activities and outreach to families living in low-income housing.

Community Partners, in conjunction with City of Richmond staff, sometimes waive fees when individual needs are brought to their attention. In addition, the City of Richmond works with organizations such as Richmond KidSport and Canadian Tire Jumpstart to provide financial support for children to be involved in community sport.

### 2.1 Why a Review?

The review was identified as a short-term (0–3 years) action in the City's Social Development Strategy. Since the RFSP's inception in 1999, there have been modifications to provide additional opportunities to clients, improve customer service and streamline the administration process. However, this was the first time a comprehensive review of the RFSP was undertaken to ensure the program is reflective of today's community context and meets the needs of Richmond's current low-income residents.

### 3. Background of the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program

The original RFSP was approved by Council as a pilot project in fall 1998 and was fully implemented by the City and Community Partners in spring 1999, and endorsed for continuation by Council in 2000. Since that time, both the City and Community Partners have absorbed the cost of subsidy at community facilities as well as committed financial resources to subsidize low-income residents to access parks, recreation, and cultural opportunities in Richmond.

To help develop the original RSFP, the following principles were established and continue to be relevant today:

- A wide range of recreation choices available;
- Central screening, tracking and administration;
- Confidentiality maintained;
- Easy to implement;
- Improve access to recreation services and facilities for those in financial need;
- Participants must pay a portion of the cost;
- Participants treated consistently and with dignity;
- Partnerships with Community Associations, other organizations, and ministries for referrals; support, implementation and funding; and
- Subsidy limits based on available funding.





## 4. Current Recreation Fee Subsidy Program

### 4.1 What is Available

The RFSP provides subsidized access to parks, recreation and cultural services primarily to children and youth whose families qualify. Families must be approved to participate in the RSFP. Once approved, all children in the family 18 years and under are eligible to be registered for one subsidized program every three months for a total of four subsidized programs per year. Some programs are not eligible for subsidy (e.g. private lessons) and some services have a limit on the amount of subsidy that is available.

A family can also choose to request an aquatic 10-visit family swim pass instead of a registered program for one of their eligible children. This is the only way adults currently receive subsidized access through the current RFSP.

### 4.2 Application Process

The RFSP is centrally administered by the City and coordinated by Diversity Services staff.

Families who reside in Richmond can apply in two ways:

- By submitting an application to the City's Diversity Services staff along with proof of low-income from a Provincial or Federal Ministry that provides financial aid, or
- By submitting an application with proof of low-income from other sources. This proof must validate that their gross household income is below the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO), as determined by Statistics Canada. For a family of four, Richmond determines eligibility for the RFSP by using a range of pre-tax household income: \$5,000 to \$43,942. (See RFSP Application Form Appendix 3).

Diversity Services administration staff verify the eligibility of the applicants against a set of criteria. Often staff will have a telephone conversation with the applicant to help determine eligibility and better understand the family's financial situation.

Once a family has been approved for the RFSP, the family declares its program choices to City administration staff. Staff determine what amount of fee the family can afford to pay for their program of choice and issue a credit note, either by mail or in person, indicating the cost that the client is required to pay. Clients can either take their credit note to a community facility to complete their registration for the program or complete their transaction over the phone. This program registration process typically takes place up to four times per year for each child because families are required to submit registration requests for every individual program.

### Application Statistics 2012–2014

Since 2012, the City of Richmond received 668 RFSP paper applications and reassessed 470. The number of paper applications received and existing clients who are reassessed has remained fairly consistent over the past three years.

**Table 1: Number of Applications Received**

Year	Paper Applications Approved	Paper Applications Declined	Total # of Paper Applications	Repeat Telephone Reassessment Approved
2014	118	101	219	154
2013	131	86	217	161
2012	138	94	232	155

The RFSP accepts proof-of-income directly from applicants in the form of income-tax verification as well as documentation from government ministry offices. Table 2 presents how many applicants had their income verified by documents from government ministry offices and how many provided tax information to prove that their family’s income fell below the LICO.

**Table 2: Approved Applications**

Year	Paper Applications – Approved				Repeat Telephone Re-assessment – Approved			
	Income Tax	Income Assistance	Disability Pension	Refugee Resettlement Assistance	Income Tax	Income Assistance	Disability Pension	Refugee Resettlement
2014	90	19	7	2	116	27	11	0
2013	100	27	2	2	138	14	9	0
2012	122	14	2	0	133	13	9	0



### 4.3 Use of Recreation Fee Subsidy for 2012–2014

Both the number of family applications and those families who were approved remained consistent between 2012-2014. Families approved were more active in selecting programs in 2013, which resulted in a greater amount of subsidy being absorbed by the City and Community Partners.

**Table 3: Recreation Fee Subsidy Use**

Year	Number of Family Applications	Number of Families Approved	Number of Uses Issued	Funding Absorbed by City and Community Partners	Funds Contributed by Families
2014	373	272	1,081	\$56,138	\$16,923
2013	378	292	1,466	\$75,190	\$21,158
2012	387	293	1,366	\$68,573	\$20,354

Table 4 shows that in 2012, a significant increase in subsidies were provided for the Arts Centre. In 2013 and 2014 that number returned to a number more comparative with previous years. This could be attributed to changes in the year round structure of dance programs during 2012 and subsequent price changes to some arts programs. Aquatic programs saw a spike in 2013 before returning to a number more comparable with previous years. There is not a single clear indicator as to why aquatics saw such a spike, however the fluctuation in the number of subsidies could be due to the type of activities families choose. In 2014, the number dropped which was likely a result of a decrease in the total number of subsidies that year.

**Table 4: Recreation Fee Subsidy Types of Use**

<b>Subsidies Provided for City Programs and Services</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Aquatic Programs	481	616	463
Aquatic Passes	315	310	186
Arts Centre Programs	115	84	86
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>1,010</b>	<b>735</b>
<b>Subsidies Provided for Community Partner Programs and Services</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Community Partner Programs	318	338	265
Arena Programs	137	118	81
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>346</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,366</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>1,081</b>



#### 4.4 Promotion of the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program

The RFSP is promoted using a variety of communication tools. For example, a description of the RFSP and the application form is available on the City of Richmond's website, information about the RFSP is included in the Parks, Recreation and Culture Guide along with information pertaining to low-cost/no cost opportunities, the Recreation Access Card for people with disabilities, and services for new immigrants.

A single-page information pamphlet promoting the RSFP is also distributed to agencies and institutions such as the Richmond School District, the Ministry of Social Development and Innovation, Richmond Family Place, and Vancouver Coastal Health. The pamphlet is translated into Cantonese and Mandarin by one of the agencies for its own use.


The City also produces a "Low-Cost/No Cost" brochure, which provides information about free or low-cost opportunities. This brochure includes information about the RFSP, Richmond KidSport, and the Grade 5 Active! Pass, and is available online and distributed through local community facilities.

**Low Cost,  
No Cost**  
Parks, Recreation and Culture  
Opportunities



**Winter/Spring  
2015**  
January–June

**Low Cost,  
No Cost**  
Parks, Recreation and Culture  
Opportunities



**Fall 2015**  
September–December

**More Info & Ways to Register**

- Website: [www.richmond.ca/register](http://www.richmond.ca/register)
- Parks, Recreation and Culture Guide: available at recreation facilities and [www.richmond.ca/guide](http://www.richmond.ca/guide)
- Registration Call Centre: 604-276-4300
- Parks Department: 604-244-1208 or [www.richmond.ca/parks](http://www.richmond.ca/parks)



## 4.5 Strengths and Challenges of the Current Program

The current RFSP has a number of strengths and challenges that have been considered in the review:

### Strengths

- Program stability exists due to an effective collaboration between the City and Community Partners.
- Central administration of the program helps to maintain client confidentiality, consistent processing of applications and provides a high level of customer service.
- Administration staff use an empathetic approach to try and ensure customers feel valued and respected through the application process and ongoing subsidy support.
- A variety of program options are available for eligible clients.
- The application process creates opportunities for customers to engage with staff and learn about opportunities within Community Services as well as information about other community-based programs and services.
- RFSP administration staff can quickly link customers to other available funding sources (e.g. Canadian Tire Jumpstart or Richmond KidSport).
- Many community organizations, Richmond School District staff and government agencies are aware of the RFSP and often refer customers to apply for assistance.
- An independent database ensures client confidentiality.
- Approved clients have access to program subsidy up to four times per year.



### Challenges

- There are limited options for adults to participate in parks, recreation and cultural activities and currently no opportunities for supporting seniors to participate in the RFSP.
- There is no means within the RFSP to make subsidized opportunities available for families and/or individuals whose income is just above the LICO but still can't afford to participate.
- The Richmond Arts Centre runs several school year dance programs where programs have a higher cost due to their length (9 months), equipment/costumes and instructor qualifications. The level of subsidy required by some clients to participate in these programs is not financially viable for the facility.
- Current clients must contact administration staff multiple times a year. They need to apply and be accepted into the program on an annual basis. Once approved, clients contact administration staff (up to four times per year) to select the programs/activities they wish to register for.
- Interactions with clients can often involve multiple phone calls and/or emails. Administration staff talk to the clients as part of the application process and also to approve the client's selection of registration choices. Sometimes applications require the clients to follow up by providing additional information. While these interactions are generally positive, they can create delays for clients and can be an inefficient use of staff time



- Currently, online registration begins the night before in-person registration. A subsidy client cannot register online and must wait until the next morning when the Registration Call Centre opens in order to register. This potentially causes them to miss out on spots in popular programs.
- During peak registration times, there is often a higher number of customers seeking approval for participation in the RFSP. When this happens, delays may occur if customers haven't submitted the appropriate paperwork, are unsure of their program choices or are unable to connect with staff in a timely manner.
- There is a system currently utilized to hold a spot for a client to arrange approval for subsidy. If there is a delay in receiving approval for subsidy, it could result in missed out opportunities for the client.
- While administration staff follow guidelines for approval, many customers present unique reasons why they believe they should be eligible. There are also different perspectives on what being 'low-income' means. For example, there are often customers who have no income or income which falls below LICO guideline that apply. However, some of these clients are asset rich, have considerable savings or earn their income on interest from investments. Some of these clients expect to be approved regardless if they have the ability to pay full price. The current guidelines for approval sometimes make it challenging for administration to include or exclude customers who have special circumstances.

#### 4.6 Opportunities for Program Enhancement

A number of opportunities exist for an updated RFSP and would allow the City to improve on providing low-income residents access to programs and services:

- Provide opportunities for adults and seniors to participate in subsidized activities.
- Include an annual approval of eligibility for participation in the program thereby eliminating the need for multiple contacts by the clients to make registration choices.
- Provide opportunities for approved clients to register for activities of their choice without the need for further interactions with administration staff.
- Explore connections with community organizations, government ministries and the Richmond School District to increase participation for low-income Richmond residents.
- Provide customers a wide range of opportunities to choose from.
- Research and develop additional funding opportunities to assist customers interested in Richmond Arts Centre school year programs.
- Expand opportunities to have verification authenticated by government ministry staff to make it easier for customers to gain approval for the program.
- Develop a promotional campaign to increase awareness and uptake in the program.
- Work with local agencies to determine what information could be translated to ensure the message is received and understood for target audiences.

## 5. Richmond Context

It may appear to some people that Richmond is an affluent municipality and does not have residents who live in poverty. However, many low-income individuals and families are currently living in Richmond. In 2011, the percentage of Richmond residents living below LICO as determined by Statistics Canada was 22.4%.

*(Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey.)*

While Statistics Canada’s 2014 population estimate for Richmond is 207,500, figures used for this review are based on the City of Richmond’s population data from Statistics Canada, 2011 Census: 189,305 residents; 42,370 people live below the LICO. The age breakdowns are:

Under 18 Years	8,820 residents	20.8% of LICO population
18–64 Years	28,700 residents	67.7% of LICO population
65+ Years	4,850 residents	11.5% of LICO population
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42,370 residents</b>	<b>100% of LICO population</b>

*(Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey.)*

The 2014 Child Poverty Report Card—First Call found that “the Metro Vancouver area has clusters of areas with high child poverty including North and Central Richmond.” There are four planning study areas in Richmond with the same or higher rates of residents living below LICO than the city’s average of 22.4%. Those areas are:

- City Centre 33%
- Thompson 26.2%
- Blundell 24.7%
- West Cambie 22.4%

*(Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census.)*

Another indicator of poverty is the need to utilize the services of the Richmond Food Bank and other agencies which support those in need. In Richmond, there are currently more than 1,500 food bank users each week. Based on the current available statistics and the experiences of organizations in the community, it is clear that Richmond has many residents living on low income which could benefit from gaining access to parks, recreation and cultural programs and services.

*“Poverty is hidden in Richmond. I have gone to visit a family and pulled up to a large, grand house. It does not look like there would be children in poverty at that address, yet at the back—where I am going to visit—there are 2 or 3 small basement suites where children and families are living.”*

*(Public Health Nurse – “It’s Not Fair” Richmond Children First 2013)*



## 6. Updating the Program

### 6.1 Process

The review of the RFSP was conducted to ensure the highest level of service is provided to the greatest number of eligible residents. The following outlines the scope of the review and the methodology used:

- An evaluation of the current administrative model and ways in which Richmond residents use the program.
- An environmental scan of six municipalities in BC (Vancouver, Delta, Burnaby, Surrey, Coquitlam and Victoria) and four municipalities across Canada (Calgary, Edmonton, Metro Toronto and Winnipeg) to compare results and effectiveness of their subsidy programs and identify best practices.
- Feedback about the RFSP solicited from current users, targeted non-users and community agencies whose customers have low incomes.
- Feedback and input on the update of the RSFP provided by a working group comprised of City staff from a variety of service areas and two Community Partner representatives.
- A review of demographics that provides a snapshot of those who report low incomes in the community.
- An evaluation of how the RFSP is promoted to determine the effectiveness of the communication tools and methods of distribution.
- Consultation and feedback on potential changes with Community Services' senior management team. The financial impacts of different options were assessed to determine which ones provide the best service to community members on low income. A preferred option was determined.

### 6.2 Guiding Principles

The following seven proposed Guiding Principles were developed with input from Community Services senior managers and the working group. The most significant change from the existing principles is the shift from providing opportunities for children, youth and families participating together to inclusion of all ages in the eligibility of the RFSP.

1. Provide access to parks, recreation and cultural services and facilities for community residents of all ages in financial need. This access will allow them to enjoy the physical, emotional, and social benefits of being active and involved;
2. A wide range of parks, recreation and cultural choices will be available through the City of Richmond's services and community facilities operated by Community Partners;
3. The amount of financial support available to provide access through the RFSP will be determined by the financial abilities of the City and Community Partners;
4. Applicants of the RFSP will be treated with dignity and respect as is in keeping with the City of Richmond's Customer Service Standards;

5. There will be a balance between efficient processing of applications and adequate scrutiny of applicants' financial information. The screening, tracking and administration of the RFSP will be centralized;
6. The program will be available for all eligible residents in Richmond; and
7. Confidentiality will be maintained.

### 6.3 Findings from Best Practice Research

The proposed changes are based on current use of Richmond's RFSP and the experiences of ten other municipalities (Burnaby, Coquitlam, Surrey, Delta, Vancouver, Victoria, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary and Metro Toronto).

Findings from the review of other municipalities:

- Ten municipalities provide access to parks, recreation and cultural opportunities for **all ages**. Richmond's RFSP is the exception as the focus has been children and youth with some family opportunities.
- Four municipalities (Edmonton, Richmond, Vancouver and Winnipeg) work with Community Partners or associations to provide subsidized access for people with low incomes.
- In 2013, Richmond served 1,466 of its low income population (children and youth only), while Burnaby served 8,723; Coquitlam served 3,876; Surrey served 15,698; and Vancouver served 20,780.
- The level of financial support and how it is budgeted varies amongst the municipalities. Five of the municipalities (Calgary, Delta, Edmonton, Surrey and Richmond) absorb the impact of their fee subsidy program into existing budgets. For example, Surrey absorbed \$2,486,190 in 2014 whereas Richmond and Community Partners absorbed \$75,190 of subsidy use in 2013.



Key considerations based on best practices:

- It is estimated that the number of Richmond residents who are likely to qualify and will apply to use the expanded RFSP will reflect the projections below. These estimates are based on the number of people in Richmond who are below LICO and the average percentage of people who apply for subsidy in other municipalities;

Children/Youth	1,327–1,747 persons
Adults/Seniors	5,023–6,613 persons
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>	<b>6,350–8,360 persons</b>

(Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census)

- If admissions are discounted or free of charge through the RFSP, it is anticipated that there will be minimal impact to operating costs for most facilities. This is based on the premise that the facility is already open and extra customers shouldn't incur additional costs. However, this will only be possible if a facility can accommodate a possible increase in users.
- Based on Surrey's experience, it is estimated that if admissions are free, each eligible person will utilize 16 admissions/person/year. If admission fees are discounted by 90%, there will be 12 admissions/person/year and if discounted by 75% there will be 10 admissions/person/year.
- Based on the current breakdown between admissions and program registrations for the RFSP, it is anticipated that:
  - 50% of admissions will be to community facilities operated by Community Partners and 50% of admissions will be to aquatics.
  - 60% of program registrations will occur in City programs (aquatics, Richmond Arts Centre and parks programs) and 40% in Community Partner programs (community centres and arena programs).
- Registered programs yield less profit than admissions due to costs associated with instructors and supplies. There is less opportunity for revenue recovery, compared to admissions, as there are a finite number of registrants determined by safety and quality considerations.
- It is likely there will be new revenue if admissions and/or program registrations are discounted, as there will be new users who could previously not afford to participate.
- It is likely that some people approved for the RFSP will not use their fee subsidy. This premise is based on the Burnaby's experience that on average 28% of the funds that are available for free access are not used. Surrey's experience with their discounted program registration is:
  - Unlimited subsidy resulted in \$205 of use/child or youth/year
  - With a limit of \$300 of subsidy, it resulted in \$150 of use/child or youth/year
- Based on Surrey and Calgary's statistical trends of adults and seniors utilizing registered programs, it is estimated that 5–6% of Richmond adults and seniors or 305–400 eligible residents will register for programs. It is anticipated that adults and seniors will be more likely to utilize admissions than programs.

- In 2013, the City and Community Partners absorbed a total of \$75,190. In 2014, that amount dropped to \$56,138 of subsidy support. As \$75,190 was not reported as a financial hardship, it is anticipated that both parties could continue to absorb this amount to support people with low incomes.
- Customers who are verified through government agencies that are providing income assistance often have very little income and may not have sufficient funds to pay a percentage of a fee.
- If the amount of program subsidy is pre-set for all participants for the year rather than individually determined up to four times per year, it will be easier for clients to plan their program choices.
- It is valuable to provide a combination of subsidized access to registered programs and admissions. Providing access to registered programs allows people to learn new skills or add to existing skill sets. As well, free or subsidized admissions provide on-going opportunities for people to enjoy the health benefits of physical activity and engagement. There will need input from staff at each facility regarding any programs that are not eligible for subsidy (e.g. private lessons).



## 7. Proposed Changes to the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program

The proposed options have been formulated based on evaluation of the current RFSP, research of other municipalities' best practices, and feedback from users, targeted non-users and community agencies. The guiding principles were used to shape the various options and were evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Level of service to low-income residents
- Financial impact to the City and Community Partners
- Amount of choice that is provided to the eligible residents
- Degree of use of facilities

The three options were explored based on the variables where admissions and program registration fees would be free or discounted. The other option would be to remain status quo as outlined below.



**Table 5: Proposed Options for Consideration for an Updated RFSP**

	Option 1 (Status Quo)	Option 2	Option 3 (Preferred)	Option 4
<b>Admissions</b> (Base level of service. See proposed inclusions and exclusions in Attachment 3)	Limited to children/youth. Participants pay what they can afford	90% discount on admissions for all ages	Free admissions for all ages	Free admissions for all ages
<b>Program Registrations</b> (Base level of service. See proposed inclusions and exclusions in Attachment 3)	Limited to children/youth. Participants pay what they can afford	90% discount on advertised price of program registration fee for all ages	90% discount on advertised price of program registration fee for all ages	Limited to children/youth. Participants pay what they can afford
<b>Children/Youth Subsidy</b>	Restricted to four (4) uses per year	Up to \$225/year subsidy	Up to \$300/year subsidy	Restricted to four (4) uses per year
<b>Adult/Senior Subsidy</b>	No subsidy	Up to \$50/year subsidy	Up to \$100/year subsidy	No subsidy
<b>Opportunities for Participation</b>	Low	Moderate	Excellent	Low-Moderate
<b>Range of Admissions &amp; Program Choice</b>	Low	Moderate	Excellent	Low-Moderate
<b>Individual Facility Use</b>	Limited	Moderate	High	Low-Moderate
<b>Impact on Administration</b>	Moderate	High	High	Moderate
<b>Annual Financial Impact*</b>	\$49K (City) \$26K (Community Partners)	\$84-\$112 (City) \$56K-\$75K (Community Partners)	\$114K-\$153K (City) \$76K-\$102K (Community Partners)	\$49K (City) \$26K (Community Partners)
<b>Within City Operating Budget</b>	Yes	No	No	Yes

**\*Note:** Not inclusive of other potential City costs (e.g. technology software, staff training, promotions, etc.)  
 Annual financial impact = Admissions + Program Reg. (child/youth) + Program Reg. (adult/senior)  
 Admissions: Estimated number of participants x 16 uses x \$5  
 Program Registrations: Estimated child/youth participants x \$150 use minus 10% participant contribution  
 Program Registrations: Estimated adult/senior participants x \$80 use minus 10% participant contribution

The impact of admissions would be absorbed by the City and Community Partners and should not cause hardship to the operations.

Further recommendations are outlined below with particular attention paid to age groups, admissions, program registrations, the application process, promotion, staff training, the formal agreement and the annual report.

## 7.1 Age Groups

### Rationale

Currently there are limited opportunities for adults and no opportunities for seniors to participate in the RFSP. In an effort to be more inclusive and provide opportunities for all residents living with low income to participate, the age criteria should be expanded.

### Recommendation

That the eligibility criteria for the RFSP be expanded to **include all age groups**. The expanded RFSP will provide opportunities for people of all ages who have low incomes to access parks, recreation and cultural services.

## 7.2 Admissions

### Rationale

It is anticipated that the availability of free admissions for the RFSP would result in increased use by adults and seniors. Regular participation in physical and social activities has great benefit to individual's physical and mental health. Admissions also provide an opportunity for customers to practice skills that they have learned in lessons thus increasing their ability to participate in a particular activity.

Many drop-in activities do not incur significant additional budget implications to the City or Community Partners. For example, one more person in a fitness class drop-in, or one more person at a public swim does not add any significant cost. However, pools have requirements for 1 lifeguard on deck for every 50 participants in the pool.

### Recommendation

That, as part of the RFSP, **admissions (drop-ins and passes) are free** at all facilities including: aquatic centres, arenas, and community centres. It is estimated this provision will support 6,350–8,360 eligible community members and equate to 101,600–133,760 opportunities per year (number of eligible participants x 16 visits (estimated admissions)).

## 7.3 Program Registrations

### Rationale

By providing a defined annual program subsidy amount for each client, clients will be able to determine their level of participation in parks, recreation and cultural activities as well as choose the activities they wish to be involved in throughout the year. Continuing to require clients to contribute a portion of the cost of the registration fee will ensure that a small amount of revenue comes into facilities and increases the commitment of individuals to attend.





By changing the eligibility for the inclusion of adults and seniors, it increases the opportunities for participation in registered program activities. It is estimated that between 1,270–1,670 children/youth and 305–400 adults/seniors will benefit from participating in programs. It is anticipated that a discounted program registration fee will minimize the barrier of cost and increase participation.

#### **Recommendation**

That the levels of subsidy available be changed to:

- **Program registration fees are discounted by 90%;**
- **Children/Youth are subsidized to a maximum of \$300/year for program registration; and**
- **Adults/Seniors are subsidized to a maximum of \$100/year for program registration.**

The following example illustrates the recommended program registration subsidy:

- Children and Youth with a \$300 limit on programs:  
One week long summer day camp, one art program and one swim lesson
- Adults with a \$100 limit on programs:  
One dance, art or yoga program (11 sessions)
- Seniors with a \$100 limit on programs:  
One dance, one art or two fitness programs

*“The families who speak up the least are often the ones who need it the most. The stigma of needing help prevents many families from asking, especially in the newcomer populations. Even with few barriers, it is still too much.”*

*Child and Youth Worker  
 (“It’s Not Fair” Richmond Children First 2013)*



## 7.4 Application Process

### Rationale

It is important that recreation fee subsidies are not misused and that the application process is not too onerous for those who are applying. It is also a challenge to ensure that those who are approved to receive the subsidy are residents who live on low incomes rather than those who reflect low income on paper.

It is anticipated that there will be a significant increase in the number of applications if the expanded RFSP includes opportunities for adults and seniors. Therefore, it is important that the verification process is streamlined.

Over the last three years, approximately 80% of the applications required considerable staff time to gather additional information and review the financial information provided by the applicants. Approximately 42% of all applicants did not qualify. It would be beneficial to develop a self-assessment questionnaire so applicants could determine whether or not they are eligible before they apply.

Information about how to apply, who is eligible, and what support the RFSP provides could be included on an information form and attached to the application form. In order to ensure understanding of the information, language on the application should be targeted at a Grade 4 reading level and translated into other languages.

While the guidelines provided assist staff in evaluating the eligibility of an applicant, occasionally there are extenuating family circumstances that fall outside the guidelines. There should continue to be an opportunity for these applications to be referred to the Diversity Services Coordinator for review.

Currently the income verification process occurs annually and the program subsidy amount for each program request is determined up to four times a year. The subsidy amount is determined through a conversation with the applicant and it can be a time consuming process. The proposed changes to the RFSP include a standard annual rate of subsidy which would allow administration staff more time to focus on the increased number of applications that are expected.

Based on the statistics for application verifications, over the last three years an average 20% of Richmond's applications have been approved with supporting documentation from government ministries. Ministries, such as the Province of British Columbia's Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, are responsible for providing income assistance to residents in need. The process they undertake to understand and validate financial hardship and the person's need for support is very in-depth. It would be beneficial if more RFSP applications used government-verified proof-of-income.

### **Recommendation**

That the application process be revamped to include the following changes:

- Customers will apply on an annual basis, which will eliminate contacting staff each time they make a program selection (up to four times a year).
- An information sheet that clearly explains the guidelines and eligibility criteria will accompany the application form. The information form will be written in simple English and could be translated into other languages.
- Encourage applicants to provide government-verified proof-of-income, eliminating the need for additional paperwork and scrutiny.
- Explore opportunities to partner with government ministries on proof-of-income verification processes.
- A self-assessment questionnaire on the application form will allow customers to determine their eligibility before they choose to apply.
- The Diversity Services Coordinator will review applicants whose circumstances are unique and fall outside of the regular prescribed guidelines.

## **7.5 Promotion of the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program**

### **Rationale**

An expanded RFSP will provide many opportunities for families and individuals to benefit from participating in parks, recreation and cultural activities. It would be beneficial to develop a promotional campaign for the expanded program especially during its first year of implementation to ensure residents who qualify are aware of the updated RFSP. Promotional vehicles that could be used include local newspaper advertising, news releases, poster campaigns, a RFSP brochure, and staff attending special events and community meals at churches.

Currently, information about the RFSP is included on the City website and in the Parks, Recreation and Culture Guide. However, people with low incomes may not look at the Guide if they know they cannot afford to participate. Common tools for promotion such as social media may not be appropriate if the



target population does not have easy access to technology. The promotion of the RFSP needs to be specifically designed to target residents on low income.

It would also be beneficial to distribute an RFSP pamphlet to organizations and agencies that provide services to people on low income such as the Richmond Food Bank. The language used in the pamphlet should be at a Grade 4 reading level and translated into common languages to ensure the maximum number of people know and understand the opportunities available through the RFSP.

#### **Recommendation**

That a promotional campaign be developed to increase awareness of the RSFP and highlight changes to the RFSP.

## **7.6 Staff Training**

#### **Rationale**

It will be important that Community Services staff receive training about the updated RFSP so that they are well versed in all aspects of the program. In particular, front line staff at facilities will require training about the program benefits, eligibility criteria, and to ensure an empathetic understanding of the challenges people on low income face when accessing services.

It is estimated there may be up to four times the number of people on low-income using City facilities due to the proposed changes to the RFSP. The increase in users may impact front counter staff as clients may require assistance deciding how to utilize their subsidy amount. This support was previously provided by the RFSP administration staff. It is anticipated that with more clients registering directly at facilities and through the Registration Call Centre, there will likely be an increase in questions asked to front line staff at facilities.

#### **Recommendation**

That a training program be developed for Community Services front line staff and their supervisors.

## **7.7 Formal Agreement**

#### **Rationale**

Community Partners play a significant role in the provision of recreation and arena services and currently absorb the subsidy portion of program registration fees for services in their facilities into their annual operating budgets. In addition, they provide a variety of low-cost or free programs such as parent and tot play times, free park programs and Night Shift (free youth activities).

The proposed changes to the RFSP were developed with feedback from two representatives from Community Partners who participated as part of the RFSP working group. They provided valuable input into the needs of the community and possible options for the expansion of the current program. The proposed changes for an updated RFSP will need to be discussed with Community Partners. This will include consultation that addresses overall viability, service level implications, impacts to budgets and potential options for an RFSP. A final step will be to establish a formal understanding between the City and Community Partners with regards to the RFSP.

**Recommendation**

That following consultation, language regarding the RFSP be included in the material terms for new agreements between the City and Community Partners.



## 7.8 Annual Report to City Council and Community Partners

**Rationale**

To help gauge the RFSP's success it will be important to track: number of applicants, amount of use, types of use, use by age groups and financial impact. Statements from program users are also a means to gather qualitative data. An annual report to City Council and Community Partners will provide an on-going update of the service that is provided, the needs being met, and associated costs. An annual review would also provide an opportunity to make any revisions necessary to the program.

**Recommendation**

That staff prepare an annual report to City Council and Community Partners highlighting service levels of the updated RFSP.



## 7.9 Summary

The preferred option for the expansion of the RFSP will provide the most access for Richmond’s low-income residents based on the current community context. It will also have the greatest impact on the City of Richmond’s Vision, Council Term Goals and Social Development Strategy outcomes. The following chart provides a comparison between the various aspects of the existing RFSP and the proposed updated RFSP.

**Table 6: Comparison between Current and Preferred Updated RFSP**

Aspect of Program	Current Program	Preferred Program	Impact
<b>Age Group Served</b>	Children and youth  Limited access for families for drop-in swims	All ages	Increase in participants who are eligible
<b>Admissions</b>	Limited access for families for drop-in swims  Youth access to fitness centres and aquatic centres  Families pay a portion of the cost based on what they can afford	Free admissions for drop-in and passes	Increased participation from non-users  Increased use of facilities
<b>Registered programs</b>	Families contribute an amount that they can afford (22% on average)  Maximum of 4 programs/client/year  Amount of subsidy determined up to 4x/year	Users will contribute 10% of the cost of activity  Children/Youth \$300 limit of subsidy/year  Adults/Seniors \$100 limit of subsidy/year	Increased participation from non-users  Increased use of facilities



## 7.10 Budget Implications

There are budget implications for both the City and Community Partners with the proposed new RFSP. The following budget calculations are based on Option 3 (preferred) which is described in table 5, on page 19. Calculating the future financial implication is based on the experiences of other municipalities, 2013 figures from the current Richmond RFSP (children, youth and family only as the current RFSP does not include adults and seniors) and the following statistics as they pertain to Richmond's demographics and potential program use:

- Low-income population of 42,370 (Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census)
- An estimate of 15–20% of Richmond residents with income below LICO are likely to apply for assistance. This would calculate to between 6350 and 8360 people.
- 20% of expected applicants would be children and youth
- 80% of expected applicants would be adults and seniors

### Admissions:

Taking into account the information above, the financial impact for admissions using Option 3 is anticipated to be:

- An estimate of 16 drop-in visits/person/year to facilities (based on Surrey's experience when free admissions were made available to low-income residents). These 16 visits are split as eight (8) drop-in visits to City facilities (Aquatics and Richmond Arts Centre) and eight (8) visits to Community Partners (community centres, arenas, Britannia Shipyard National Historic Site, Richmond Nature Park, Richmond Art Gallery and the Richmond Museum)
- An average drop-in of \$5 (based on the range in price of drop-in admissions in Richmond facilities)

**Table 7: Estimated Impact of Admissions**

	City Admissions			Community Partner Admissions		
	2013 Actual Participation	Estimated Participation	Estimated Impact	2013 Actual Participation	Estimated Participation	Estimated Impact
Persons provided with admission subsidies	309	6,350–8,360	Increase of 6,041 to 8,051 people.	7	6,350–8,360	Increase of 6,343 to 8,353 people

**Table 8: Estimated Impact of Admissions**

	City Admissions			Community Partner Admissions		
	2013 Actual Admission Fees Waived	Future Estimate Admission Fees Waived	Future Estimated Financial Impact	2013 Actual Admission Fees Waived	Future Estimate Admission Fees Waived	Future Estimated Financial Impact
Admissions to City facilities	\$6,500	\$254K–\$334K	Increase of \$247K–\$327K	\$310	\$254K–\$334K	Increase of \$254K–\$334K

**Program Registration:**

Taking into account the information above, the financial impact for program registration using Option 3 is anticipated to be:

- An estimate of \$150 (or 50% of available credit limit) in program registration use by children/youth. Based on the experiences of Surrey (33%) and Burnaby (70%).
- An estimate of \$80 (or 80% of available credit limit) in program registration use by adults/seniors. Due to a lesser amount of credit available in the proposed program for adults and seniors, it is anticipated that those who register for programs will likely use the majority of credit available to them.
- An estimate of 5-6% of Richmond adults and seniors who apply to the program are likely to register in programs. Approximately 254-400 people based on similar experiences of Surrey and Calgary.
- 10% of revenue from RFSP participant participation will go to operational revenue.

**Table 9: Estimated Impact of Program Registration**

	City Programs			Community Partner Programs		
	2013 Actual Use	Future Estimate	Future Estimated Impact	2013 Actual Use	Future Estimate	Future Estimated Impact
People provided with program subsidies	701 people	1,524-2,070 people	Increase of 823 to 1369 people	449 people	1,524-2,070 people	Increase of 1075 to 1621 people
Cost of subsidy for Programs	\$53K	\$126K-\$169K	Increase of \$73K-\$116K	\$34K	\$84K-113K	Increase of \$50K-\$79K
Revenue received	\$11K	\$12.6K-\$16.9K	Increase of \$1.6K-\$5.9K	\$8K	\$8.4K-11.3K	Increase of \$0.4K-\$3.3K

**Overall Financial Impact**

The overall impact of Option 3 to the City and Community Partners needs to include the following considerations:

- In 2013, the City absorbed \$49K and Community Partners absorbed \$26K in programs and admissions without causing any hardship to operations (\$75K combined cost).
- The impact of Admissions should not cause significant additional budget implications. One more person dropping in to a fitness class, weight room or public swim does not incur any significant cost to the City or Community Partner. However, special consideration will have to be given to capacity, program type, utilization of contractors and an increase in customers who qualify.



**Table 10: Estimated Impact of Admissions and Program Registration**

	City	Community Partners
Admissions	\$254K-\$334K	\$254K-\$334K
Programs	\$126K-\$169K	\$84K-\$113K
Sub-total	\$380K-\$503K	\$338K-\$447K
Less Program revenue received	(\$12K-\$16K)	(\$8K-\$11K)
Sub-total	\$368K-\$487K	\$330K-\$436K
Minus Admissions	(\$254K-\$334K)	(\$254K-\$334K)
Grand Total	\$114K-\$153K	\$76K-\$102K
Previous Annual Impact	(\$49K)	(\$26K)
Net Estimated Cost	\$65K-\$103K	\$50K-\$76K

Utilizing the figures shown in Table 10, the estimated new costs to the City for Option 3 is anticipated to be between \$65K and \$103K, while the estimated new cost to Community Partners is anticipated to be between \$50K and \$76K.

The financial impact will require further consultation with Community Partners to identify financial options and to determine a City and Community Partner funding strategy to support an updated RFSP.

## 8. Complementary Considerations

### 8.1 System Support

Currently the Community Services Division utilizes the CLASS computer software for program registration, as is the case with many municipalities. However, the CLASS subsidy module used to track fee subsidies is not used by Richmond. The CLASS software will be defunct in a few years so municipalities are now exploring options to replace it. It would be beneficial to consider the needs of the revised RFSP when new software options are considered.

In the meantime, it will be necessary for RFSP administration staff to work with Information Technology to determine short-term solutions for the provision of the an updated RFSP. A goal will be for recipients of the program to have access to their subsidy in the most efficient and respectful manner. It will be important that the system is able to capture the participation use and financial impacts of an updated RFSP so that this information can be monitored.

### 8.2 Support to Groups

Community Partners provide some support on an informal basis to community groups who provide services to people with low incomes. Currently, this support is in the form of free or low-cost facility rentals for the group's event. It would be beneficial to these groups if the City and Community Partners could agree upon providing complimentary admissions to groups who assist people with low incomes. This type of support is common in other municipalities.

### 8.3 Arts Subsidy

There is a need to establish and fund an Arts Subsidy Program that could provide an appropriate level of subsidy to assist customers in school-year programs such as Pre-Company and Richmond Youth Dance Company. The recommended amounts in the proposed RFSP are not high enough to prevent barriers to participation in this area. While this should be a separate fund from the RFSP, it could be jointly administered between RSFP administration staff and Richmond Arts Centre programming staff.



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## 8.4 Additional Low-Cost/No Cost Opportunities

The revised RFSP will provide support for those residents who live below LICO. However, there are community members who live on income marginally higher than LICO who would benefit from access to parks, recreation, and cultural opportunities as well. The needs of this group are met by some low-cost/no cost opportunities that are currently provided such as the Roving Leader Program (providing opportunities for youth), Art Truck (providing free art activities for children and youth in the community), summer park playground programs and outdoor movie nights. Residents whose incomes are only marginally higher than LICO would benefit from an increase in the number of low-cost/no cost opportunities such as free swims that are funded by corporate sponsors.

It would be advantageous to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the operation of the outdoor pools to determine if that service could be free of charge with minimal financial impact. Surrey, Delta and Winnipeg provide some or all of their outdoor pool admissions for free. It would also be beneficial to undertake a review of the number and type of low-cost/no cost opportunities that are provided by each facility to determine whether or not the needs of the community are being met.

## 8.5 Transportation Barrier

Transportation to a community facility can be a barrier to participation. It is recommended that the barrier of transportation be explored and evaluated based on the location of community facilities compared to location of residents with low incomes. As well, there may be opportunities to expand the Community Leisure Transportation program that is in place to transport Richmond residents to Community Services programs.

## 9. Next Steps

The next steps for the DRAFT RFSP Review include:

- Present a report and RFSP Review to Council for consideration and authorization for staff to consult with Community Partners on the findings and proposed options for an updated RFSP.
- Revise the Draft Review as a result of feedback from Community Partners.
- Present a report and updated RFSP to Council for adoption.
- Provide an RFSP annual report to Council and Community Partners.

A desired outcome would be a revised RFSP where the City and Community Partners provide greater service to low-income Richmond residents. Potential growth in participation and other outcomes associated with an updated RFSP would be presented in the annual report to Council and Community Partners.



## 10. Conclusion

A review of the Richmond's RFSP was conducted in 2014/2015. This was the first comprehensive evaluation of the program since its inception in 1999. Along with many benefits, this program also has limitations due to the current community context. There is a lot of potential for the RFSP to enable the City to advance Council Term Goals and Social Development Strategy outcomes. Key recommendations to improve the RFSP are made in this document. After consultation with Community Partners, an updated RFSP will be presented to Council.

The proposed changes to the RFSP are intended to provide an increased level of service for Richmond's low-income residents of all ages. These changes will help to engage new customers and see increased participation from a population that may not be currently using the many opportunities offered through Community Services. Changes to the RFSP will help reduce financial barriers that prevent participation in community life. An updated RFSP could potentially position Richmond as a leader in the Lower Mainland by providing optimum access to low-income residents in line with other surveyed municipalities.

It is also expected that changes to the RFSP will result in increased use of facilities in the community. Changes to administration of the program will help to provide a customer-friendly process that will be easy for customers to choose how they wish to participate.

Ultimately, an updated RFSP would help the City of Richmond live out its vision "to be the most appealing, livable and well-managed community in Canada" through increasing access to important opportunities for all of its diverse residents.



## Results of Environmental Scan of Other Municipalities

### Background

In-person or telephone interviews were conducted with five municipalities in the Lower Mainland: Burnaby, Coquitlam, Delta, Surrey and Vancouver and five from across Canada: Calgary, Edmonton, Metro Toronto, Victoria and Winnipeg. The results are captured in the Municipal Subsidy Programs Summary Chart (Appendix 2). It provides a comparison of the ten municipalities and Richmond's RFSP. The information should be seen as indicators as it is challenging to compile completely accurate comparisons since organizations have different methods of tracking participation and budget information.

There are many similarities amongst the subsidy programs provided by the municipalities however, none of them are identical. Each municipality has developed its own subsidy program to meet the individual needs of its community and organization.

The provision of a recreation fee subsidy program is a complex process and one that requires review and evaluation on a regular basis. Two municipalities, Surrey and Vancouver, made changes to their subsidy program in 2013 and three others indicated they plan to evaluate their program and adjust it if required in the near future.

### Comparison Factors

#### *Provision for Different Age Groups*

Ten of the municipalities surveyed have subsidy programs that include provision for all age groups. Currently, Richmond is the sole municipality whose focus is on children and youth with limited family opportunities. Nine of the municipalities have different options for various age groups with children and youth receiving the most support and adults and seniors receiving a lesser amount. Metro Toronto and Burnaby provide the same amount of support for all age groups.

#### *Percentage of People Served*

Seven of the municipalities serve on average of 19.3% of eligible residents on low income through their subsidy program. Edmonton and Winnipeg have 10.5% and 10.4% of their low-income population subscribe to their fee subsidy program while Richmond's RFSP currently serves 16.6% of the eligible population of children and youth.

#### *Type of Services*

Burnaby, Delta, Edmonton, Surrey, Metro Toronto, Vancouver, and Victoria provide some type of free admission to activities. Calgary, Richmond, Surrey, Vancouver, and Victoria provide discounted admissions. The type of activities may be specified, or the number of times a person can participate in the activity may have a limit.

Burnaby, Coquitlam, Metro Toronto, Victoria, and Winnipeg provide free program registrations and six municipalities, including Richmond, provide discounted program registration. There is a limit on the number of programs or dollar amount available for the subsidy.



***Funding for the Subsidy Program***

The amount of funding that is targeted to support fee subsidy programs and how it is funded varies greatly. Metro Toronto, with an estimated population of 822,629 persons who are below LICO thresholds, has an annual budget of \$10.5 million to support its subsidy program. Metro Toronto also provides all admissions and programs free of charge to everyone at 39 recreation centres. Surrey's Leisure Access Program has a financial impact of approximately \$2 million of pass use and \$486,190 of program registration use. Surrey's facilities absorb the impact within their own budgets. Burnaby has a line item in every facility's budget that is offset by an administrative budget for donations. The amount budgeted in 2013 was \$1,486,430. In 2013, the City and Community Partners provided subsidized access of \$75,190 through the RFSP. This amount was absorbed by individual facilities.

***Community Associations or Partners***

Calgary, Vancouver, and Winnipeg (as well as Richmond) work with community associations or partners to provide subsidized parks, recreation and cultural opportunities for residents with low incomes.

Vancouver recently reached an agreement with the majority of their Community Associations who oversee the operation of community centres. The agreement states that Community Associations will provide a 50% discount on a minimum of one program/year to approved residents. Some Vancouver Community Associations provide many more discounted programs than the minimum as they recognize the need in their particular neighbourhoods.

Calgary has an operating agreement with the not-for-profit groups who operate some of its recreation facilities. The agreement states that Calgary's fee assistance program is to be honoured by those facilities.

Winnipeg has 64 community centres operated by Community Associations. The centres are coordinated by the General Council of Community Centres. Winnipeg has a fee subsidy program for its services and the General Council provides subsidies for the services in the centres it manages.

***Number of Times/Year Eligibility Assessed***

Delta and Victoria require that a person's need for fee subsidy is assessed more than once per year. The other nine municipalities provide fee subsidy to their approved applicants on an annual basis.

***Support to Community Groups***

Burnaby, Calgary, Coquitlam, Edmonton, Vancouver and Winnipeg provide some type of financial assistance to groups whose purpose is to offer services to people with low incomes. Presently, this support is in the form of admission passes.

***Assessment of Eligibility and Application Process***

Some municipalities assess low income based on gross income and others do it based on net income. All use LICO guidelines. None of the municipalities surveyed deny applicants a subsidy if they own a home. However, some will look up information about home ownership and house taxes and ask follow-up questions based on this information.



Delta, Edmonton, and Victoria do not provide assistance if a person is a post-secondary education student as his/her school fees include access to recreation facilities. All of the municipalities surveyed with the exception of Surrey administer a centralized subsidy application approval process.

***Other Low-cost Opportunities***

All municipalities surveyed support other services that provide parks, recreation and cultural opportunities for residents who have financial barriers. The majority of municipalities support KidSport organizations and Canadian Tire Jumpstart, which provide subsidy for children to be involved with sports. A number of municipalities also provide the Grade 5 pass, which provides children of that grade with free admissions to swim and skate sessions. Burnaby, Calgary, Coquitlam, Surrey and Victoria also provide monthly free swims and/or skate sessions sponsored by financial institutions and Delta, Surrey and Winnipeg provide all or a portion of their outdoor pool service for free during the summer.

APPENDIX 2

## Municipal Subsidy Programs Summary Chart

	Richmond	Burnaby	Coquitlam	Surrey	Delta	Vancouver	Victoria	Winnipeg	Edmonton	Calgary	Metro Toronto
Population	189,305	220,260	125,020	463,335	98,745	590,210	76,025	699,995	1,136,135	1,197,840	5,521,000
# of people below LICO	42,370	46,474	21,628	71,816	10,070	120,995	15,737	116,199	122,740	126,971	822,629
% below LICO	22.4%	21.1%	17.3%	15.5%	10.2%	20.5%	20.7%	16.6%	10.8%	10.6%	14.9%
# of people served	1,466	8,723	3,876	15,698	n/a	20,780	3,032	12,100 City	12,769	25,000 approved (not all used)	170,000
Budget	\$75,190 absorbed by City and partners	\$1.48M	\$879,433	\$2M passes \$486,190 programs absorbed	Absorbed	n/a	\$50,000 used \$137,000 budgeted	\$200,000 Comm. Assoc. \$555,890 City	Absorbed	\$670,000 admissions absorbed	\$10.5M funding cap/season
Free admissions	No	Client's choice	No	Ch, Y, Sr	Yes and some drop-in programs	Swim/skate	52 visits	10 free drop-in 3 times/year	Yes and some drop-in programs	No	Client's choice
Free programs	No	Client's choice	2 free or 4 at 50% discount	No	No	No	Yes	1 <sup>st</sup> program is 100%	No	No	Client's choice
Admission discount	Yes, amount varies - average ~75%	No	No	75% adults	No	Fit. Ctr. 50%	Or 50% off yr pass	No	No	25%	No
Program discount	Yes, amount varies - average ~75%	No	4 programs at 50% (or 2 free)	75%	No	50%	No	2 <sup>nd</sup> - 75% 3 <sup>rd</sup> - 50% 4 <sup>th</sup> - 25% 5+ Full price	75%	90% - 4 prog-Ch 1 prog-Ad	No
\$ limit	4 times/year for children/families	\$176/person	No	For programs only \$300-Ch/Y \$150-Ad	No	Min. 1 prog per year	\$40 under 4 yrs and over 18 yrs \$60 5 yrs to 17 yrs	No	4 prog-Ch/Y 3 prog-Ad/Sr	\$250/Ch \$50/Ad	\$483-Ch/Y \$225-Ad/Sr
Groups	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Ages	Children/family	All	All	All	All	All	All	All	All	All	All
# of times/yr reviewed	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	Pass-can reapply every 4 mos. To receive 10 more visits	1	1	1
Centralized	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Retain docs	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The top three rows – Statistics Canada 2011, Census.

Additional information collected from 2013/14 surveys of municipalities.

# Application Form



**City of  
Richmond**

## Recreation Fee Subsidy Program Application Form

6911 No. 3 Road, Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  Male  Female  
Month/Day/Year

**SPOUSE**

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  Male  Female  
Month/Day/Year

**CHILDREN LIVING IN HOUSEHOLD**

1. Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  Male  Female  
Month/Day/Year

2. Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  Male  Female  
Month/Day/Year

3. Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  Male  Female  
Month/Day/Year

4. Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  Male  Female  
Month/Day/Year

5. Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  Male  Female  
Month/Day/Year

**To qualify for this program you must indicate your household gross income. To qualify, your total household gross income must be in the range for your family size.**

Please check (✓) one:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family of 2 Gross income \$5,000 – \$29,440 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family of 5 Gross income \$5,000 – \$49,839  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family of 3 Gross income \$5,000 – \$36,193 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family of 6 Gross income \$5,000 – \$56,209  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family of 4 Gross income \$5,000 – \$43,942 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family of 7+ Gross income \$5,000 – \$62,581 |

Please indicate: GST/HST amount (each 3 months) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Canada Child Tax Benefit (monthly) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Persons do not qualify if interest earned is \$100 or more per adult per year, or if more than \$1,000 per family in RRSP contributions were made in year of the application.

You must attach proof of total family income for each person in the household over the age of 18. Please provide a copy of:

- T1 General  Income Assistance from MHSD  CPP/Long Term Disability

You must attach proof of residency. Please provide a copy of:

- Most Recent Utility Bill  Telephone Bill  Rental Agreement

I declare that the information provided is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Office Use Only**

All information has been verified by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## City of Richmond

## Recreation Fee Subsidy Program Information Sheet

6911 No. 3 Road, Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

### What is the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program?

The City of Richmond's Parks and Recreation and Community Services Departments provide a Recreation Fee Subsidy Program to Richmond residents who are in financial need. Recreation Fee Subsidy enhances access to recreation and is available for admissions and program registration in Richmond's Community Centres, Cultural Centres, Aquatic Centres and Arenas. *Proof of income is required to determine eligibility for the program.*

### Who is eligible for the program?

To be eligible for assistance, applicants must be:

- residents of Richmond; and
- have a total household income below the Stats Canada Low-Income Cut off's (LICO's). Proof of financial status must be provided.

Currently the program is primarily available for families with children under 18 living in the same household.

### How does the fee subsidy work?

Once a client has been approved for the program, the client will identify the activities that they would like to participate in. Staff will work with the clients to determine the amount that they will pay toward the total cost of their chosen activity. In all cases, participants will pay a portion of the cost of any of the activities that they choose.

Clients are eligible to choose one program or activity per child every 3 months. Programs that run for more than one season are considered and can be approved at staff discretion.

### What can fee subsidy be used for?

- Reduction in cost for programs at community centres, arts and cultural centre, arenas and the Richmond Nature Park.
- Reduction in cost for swimming lessons or family swim tickets at Richmond swimming pools.

### How do I apply?

**Step 1:** Obtain an application form

- The form is attached here and can be printed.
- You can contact our Registration Call Centre at 604-276-4300 or Diversity Services at 604-247-4909 or [diversityservices@richmond.ca](mailto:diversityservices@richmond.ca) and have one mailed or emailed to you.
- Visit any community centre, swimming pool, arena or recreation facility and ask for a Recreation Fee Subsidy Application Form.

**Step 2:** Complete the application form and attach one proof of financial eligibility (see list on the application form).

**Step 3:** Mail or return completed application forms to:

- Richmond City Hall, 6911 No. 3 Road, Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1  
Attn: Diversity Services
- Return the application form to any community centre, pool, arena or City recreation facility.
- Email the application form to [diversityservices@richmond.ca](mailto:diversityservices@richmond.ca)

**Step 4:** City staff will contact you to inform you of your application status. The application will take approximately 10 days to process.

### Is there a deadline for applications?

No, you can apply to the program at any time.

### Will the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program always be the same?

No. City staff are currently developing a process to revamp the program and changes will be considered to ensure the program can continue to have the greatest benefit for Richmond residents.

### Can I get a refund for programs I have already taken?

No. Subsidies are only provided future activities and not for previous registrations for upcoming programs or programs taken in the past.

## APPENDIX 4

## City Facilities and Community Partners

City	Community Partners
Minoru Aquatics Centre*	Britannia Heritage Shipyard Society
South Arm Outdoor Pool*	City Centre Community Association
Steveston Outdoor Pool*	East Richmond Community Association
Richmond Arts Centre	Hamilton Community Association
Watermania*	Richmond Arenas Community Association
	Richmond Art Gallery Association
	Richmond Museum Society
	Richmond Nature Park Society
	Sea Island Community Association
	South Arm Community Association
	Steveston Community Society
	Thompson Community Association
	West Richmond Community Association
	<b>Proposed Addition</b> Minoru Seniors Society

\*Richmond Aquatics Services Board to be consulted



**Proposed Examples of Eligible Admissions and Programs**

	<b>Included</b>	<b>Excluded</b>
<b>Admissions</b>	<p>Drop-in public swim</p> <p>Drop-in fitness centre</p> <p>Drop-in public skate</p> <p>Drop-in fitness classes</p> <p>Drop-in open gym programs (e.g. volleyball, basketball, hockey)</p>	<p>Specialized contracted programs that allow drop-ins (e.g. Zumba, Spin Cycles)</p> <p>Sport rentals (e.g. court rentals and ping pong table rentals)</p>
<b>Program Registrations</b>	<p>Basic swim lessons</p> <p>Registered fitness programs</p> <p>Registered skate programs</p> <p>Registered programs (e.g. arts, music, crafts)</p> <p>Arts Centre school year dance Programs (limited subsidy available)</p>	<p>Private lessons</p> <p>Semi-private lessons</p> <p>Personal training</p> <p>Tennis assessments</p> <p>Birthday parties</p> <p>Memberships</p> <p>Specialized contracted programs (e.g. Zumba, Spin Cycles)</p>