

**MAYOR MALCOLM BRODIE
2007 ANNUAL ADDRESS
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2007 was another year of healthy, sustainable growth in Richmond. Most significantly, it was a year of some outstanding accomplishments, which will positively impact the course of our City for generations to come.

I'd like to begin by thanking our members of Council, our many community partners, volunteers and staff who have worked so hard in the past year to make our community a better place. All have made 2007 such a successful and remarkable time in our history.

This exciting year was capped off by the tremendous honour bestowed upon us just last month at the International Liveable Communities Awards. These awards are supported by the United Nations as a way of encouraging municipalities worldwide to embrace sustainability. Richmond was named first overall among all 39 cities in the Healthy Lifestyles category, an incredible achievement. With a gold level performance, we placed second in our size category for the overall Whole City Award. The criteria used for judging were heritage management, landscape enhancement, environmentally sensitive practises, community sustainability, planning for the future and healthy lifestyles. These awards are a testament to the hard work of all members of our community from our civic leaders to frontline volunteers who go above and beyond to make Richmond such an extraordinary community. This is a City in which we are all proud to live and work.

The photos which you see are from the LivCom presentation.

These awards are also a reminder that your Council must not only consider the needs for today, but also plan for the future. Tonight, in examining the achievements of the past year and our plans for the next, I will focus on six areas:

1. Our Sustainable Path;
2. Planning for the Future;
3. Enhancing our Quality of Life;
4. Innovative and Effective Management;
5. Major Projects; and
6. Our Commitment To Excellence.

1. Our Sustainable Path

Richmond is proud of its commitment to sustainability. Our City has long been on a sustainable path, recognizing our legacy will be determined by what we do today and what we leave for future generations.

Your City is determined to take its sustainability efforts to yet a new level. Earlier this year, Council approved our new sustainability initiative with a commitment to introduce triple bottom line analysis into all our decisions. This means social, environmental and economic considerations are all weighed when making decisions. In the past year, a number of steps were taken that highlight this ongoing commitment.

The increasing impacts of climate change are becoming more evident. We must all take immediate action to individually and collectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions to reverse the current trend. The City has adopted a Climate Change Response Agenda. It acknowledges our collective need for action with a three-pronged approach in which we will work to combat, prevent and address the challenges.

Richmond has many examples of its response to those realities. For instance, the City's Snow and Ice Operational Review was completed to help us better cope with severe weather events which are growing in intensity and frequency. The City also responded to the threat of spring flooding on the Fraser River with an extensive freshet flood response plan. We used the provincial and federal funding for emergency upgrades to sections of dike in southeast Richmond. These improvements enhanced the safety of our community and also provided environmental rehabilitation for an important section of riverfront.

To promote social sustainability, a new Affordable Housing Strategy was approved this year and staff are now in place to support its implementation. A secondary suite legalization policy and a moratorium on demolition of rental properties have been initiated to improve the supply of rental housing. Other measures will ensure affordable housing is available for many groups.

To meet the specific needs of key sectors of the populace, the City has developed a new Volunteer Management Strategy, a Youth Service Plan and an Older Adult Service Plan. As part of the Youth Service Plan, key service providers have rallied around the City's vision, "to be the best place in North America to raise children and youth". The Asset Development program focuses on providing youth with the developmental assets they need to succeed in life.

The Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee, helped the city create our first comprehensive Newcomer's Guide containing important information on City services.

Food security is an important aspect of community sustainability. In partnership with the City, the Fruit Tree Sharing Project established a permanent home in Terra Nova Rural Park. We are grateful to the project's volunteers who in the past six years have harvested close to 90,000 pounds of fruit and vegetables to give to those in need.

The volunteer-run "Edible Schoolyard Program", also hosted at Terra Nova, connects our youth with the earth, the community around them and agriculture. Over 450 students learn to grow, monitor, harvest and eat nutritiously on a weekly basis.

In fact, the entire Terra Nova park plan is a testament to our commitment to community sustainability. I'd now like to show a video segment from our LivCom Awards presentation that illustrates how many different elements are brought together in this award-winning park plan.

****** Video Presentation ******

2. Planning For The Future

The City is once again going through a period of extraordinary growth. In order to promote smart, controlled and managed growth that meets our overall community objectives, a number of planning initiatives are underway.

Council started the year by approving the City Centre Area Plan Concept. The plan is based on transit oriented development. There will be greater residential population, several village centres, as well as a dynamic and liveable streetscape along No. 3 Road. You can also look forward to integration of the Canada Line into the community, and a City Centre Transportation Plan to support future sustainable land use.

The Open Space Concepts adopted this summer for the Fraser River Middle Arm set a new direction. The City Centre riverfront will become a premier urban waterfront, interconnected to other parks and open spaces.

To ensure our balanced growth, Economic Development efforts have been designed to ensure we attract and retain the types of businesses that contribute to liveability. The new strategies support filming in Richmond, community tourism, sport hosting, as well as community branding.

Richmond was also pleased to be selected as the home of the new Microsoft Canada Development Centre. This Centre will employ hundreds of skilled workers from around the world and generate significant economic benefits for our entire community.

3. Enhancing our Quality of Life

The City of Richmond has an enviable array of public parks and trails; cultural, recreational and heritage facilities; public safety services and other civic amenities. We are constantly seeking to improve our services to the public. This will enhance our quality of life. Let's cite as examples the following initiatives:

Council approved funding for the hiring of 12 new police officers and a crime analyst to help address the important safety needs of our growing community. A new troop of Auxiliary Constables doubled the complement. The Auxiliary members dedicate thousands of hours of their time every year.

The City officially opened two new Fire Halls in Burkeville and Hamilton to serve our growing community. The new halls recognize our commitments to the neighbourhoods, as well as to the environment. To our knowledge, these were the first fire halls in Canada built to the exacting Gold LEED standards. Construction should begin in the next two years on the Shellmont and Bridgeport fire halls, respectively.

"Dream, dare, do" is the motto of Safe Communities Richmond, a group of organizations and individuals committed to the elimination of safety concerns in the City. They celebrated the launch of their new name by organizing a very successful Community Safety Day in October, which featured displays and vehicles from local safety providers.

The City then supported a visionary three-year agreement with Touchstone Family Services for the provision of restorative justice. A greater number of young offenders will thus be diverted from the criminal justice system as they participate with the victims of crime in a restorative process, with benefits to all.

Richmond Fire Rescue as well as Arena Services staff developed a trial Automated External Defibrulators (AED) Program in the Minoru Ice arena to provide enhanced safety for arena users.

In April, Community Bylaws established an adjudication system to provide more cost-effective and responsive procedures for hearing of parking infractions.

The important Electrical and Fire Safety Inspection Program was launched in August. To date, dozens of homes with evidence of now-eliminated grow ops have been found, thanks to the help of the many program partners.

The City has implemented a new Scrap Metal Bylaw initiative, to deter costly scrap metal thefts. As a result, these crimes have declined 40% and other regional cities have followed our lead.

As Richmond's park system is second to none, in 2007 we worked with our community partners to build on this standard of excellence. Steveston Water Park officially opened in June 2007. The \$1.2 million project was a partnership between the City and the Society, which raised almost half of the cost in the community.

A broad array of community stakeholders participated on a playground committee to help develop an innovative and creative play environment in Garden City Community Park. Playground planning workshops were held with neighbourhood children of all ages. The vision is to provide families with a rich diversity of creative play opportunities and learning. Now under construction, the playground will open in the Spring 2008.

King George Park is home to a redeveloped area that is Richmond's first accessible playground. Members of the East Richmond community provided very helpful input on the design.

Cultural and social services were also improved this year. The City has been working with its partners to develop and operate a long-awaited childcare facility on the old Hamilton firehall site. This Centre will provide licensed child care for more than 25 children. Construction is expected to commence in 2008.

Our Public Library launched an awareness Campaign for kids in March. Over 6,000 registered for the innovative Ralph card in the first six months. In addition, limited library services began in the Hamilton area, in partnership with the Hamilton Community Centre.

Our City Hall recently played host to the Richgate Project, an innovative art exhibition entitled, "City of Rich Gate". Professors from UBC and Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design collaborated with Richmond residents to create public art about their identity, place and community.

Richmond's Sister City Committee visited four cities in China in hopes of adding to our networks in the Asia-Pacific. Council is now pursuing a Friendship City and Olympic Twin City relationship with two of those cities.

The City has accepted the province's challenge to raise physical activity by 20% by 2010. We launched a number of programs to encourage residents to lead healthier, active lifestyles. For instance, Walk Richmond aims to build community capacity. The Grade 5 Get Active! Pass program was implemented in the fall to encourage youth to be more active.

The City of Richmond also assisted the Parents' Advisory Group at Westwind School Park in their fitness initiative to build a 500-metre walking track around the park to support fitness programs and opportunities for the whole community. The City contributed \$100,000 while the PAC held numerous fundraising events to fulfill the remaining budget.

This year, a number of important improvements to our transportation network were undertaken. For instance, designated bike lanes and road widening occurred along the Westminster Highway corridor. Completion of the Lansdowne Road extension from Alderbridge Way to Gilbert Road is anticipated by the end of this year.

The City then worked with TransLink to augment key public transit improvements, including the introduction of the Fraserport Community Shuttle Service. Service was also improved to key employment sites on Graybar Road and the new BCIT campus.

While Council's attention is often focussed on today and the future, we have not forgotten Richmond's past. The Museum and Heritage Strategy was endorsed by Council. The strategy aims at capitalizing on Richmond's enviable inventory of heritage assets, making Richmond the regional destination of choice for heritage experiences. A feasibility study is currently being undertaken for a new Richmond Museum.

The new Steveston Village Heritage Conservation Program is aimed at preserving the unique historic and maritime character of the Steveston business district. Approved in principle, the Implementation Strategy is now being finalized.

4. Innovative and Effective Management

Another pillar of the City's corporate vision is innovative and effective management. Council, Staff and our community partners are committed to setting the standard for civic administration.

Richmond was an effective regional leader in its collective bargaining with its unionized staff this year. The City concluded collective agreements with both CUPE union locals, setting the pattern for the Lower Mainland. The settlement avoided any disruption to civic services and guarantees labour peace through 2011.

A review of different policing delivery models is underway to determine the best and most affordable model available. Though Council is pleased with the outstanding service provided by our Richmond RCMP detachment and its current leadership, our city is undergoing dynamic change. The review will ensure that whichever model is adopted, it meets the long-run needs of the community.

Richmond Fire Rescue and our Human Resources Division successfully conducted a new fire recruitment campaign aimed at maintaining service excellence, while also introducing greater diversity within the department to better reflect our community make-up. As a result the department welcomed 20 new firefighters, increasing Fire-Rescue's diversity with seven visible minorities and two females. With the hiring of a third deputy fire chief, recruitment to replace former Chief Jim Hancock remains underway.

In 2007, the City effectively pursued alternate sources of revenue in order to reduce the burden on local property taxes. Our successes include –

- \$4.72 million from Federal programs towards the widening of Nelson Road, as well as Westminster Highway;
- over \$2 million through the Federal Gas Tax Fund and another \$1.66 million from TransLink towards the construction of raised bike lanes and pedestrian improvements on No. 3 Road;

- \$426,000 in grant funding to extend our asbestos cement watermain replacement program; and
- \$425,000 from ICBC towards traffic signal upgrades at various intersections.

5. Major Projects

City Council and staff continue their focus on our City's Major Projects. We've all seen the extraordinary progress on both the Canada Line and the Richmond Oval during the past year.

The Canada Line guideway is rapidly nearing its southern terminus. We've also worked hard to complete the design of the new No. 3 Road to integrate the Canada Line into our City Centre Plan.

In 2008, the focus will shift to station construction and the transformation of No. 3 Road. The City will reconstruct the roadway to include new raised bicycle lanes and improved pedestrian access. We should soon see better traffic flow on No. 3 Road. We want to thank the merchants, employees and patrons along the route who've been impacted by the construction for their patience and understanding.

This year's progress on the Richmond Oval has been remarkable. The building superstructure is in place and the roof is almost complete. Inside, workers are constructing the floor slab, where the actual speed skating track will be located during the Olympics. We remain on budget and on schedule to open this fantastic community building in 2008.

To ensure long-term financial viability, last spring, the City completed an agreement for the sale of the 18.6-acre Oval Riverfront Lands to ASPAC Developments Ltd. for \$141 million. This will ensure the creation of a beautiful urban waterfront community surrounding the Oval site. This new neighbourhood will combine with the Oval and its precinct to become a major destination neighbourhood for our local residents, regional neighbours, as well as visitors from around the world.

A portion of the land sale proceeds will support Oval construction, thus completing Council's promise that the Oval would be built without impacting property taxes or requiring external borrowing. More importantly, the sale allowed Council to create the Community Legacy Fund. This valuable community asset will be invested wisely to support Richmond's future aspirations.

This year, the City also secured an early decision on the division of the Games Operating Trust, established to support the ongoing operations of key 2010 venues, including the Richmond Oval. The City has received commitments of almost \$70 million to support the ongoing pre and post-Games operating costs of the Oval. Additional funds, of which Richmond will receive a significant share – are yet to be allocated. To receive early assurances of these funds is an enormous benefit.

Council was also excited to approve two additional public art projects for the Oval precinct by internationally acclaimed artists. These will dramatically add to the vibrancy of the new neighbourhood while celebrating important aspects of community sport and culture.

Internationally acclaimed artist Buster Simpson is creating a unique public art project that will see the bridge near the entrance lined with illuminated pillars that resemble skate blades.

Another renowned artist, Janet Echelman, is creating an interesting combination of cultures and nature's elements as part of the Oval site's waterworks. Two giant red lanterns created from a translucent and durable fabric that respond to the changing wind and sky will be suspended over a large pond. A unique wooden walkway, influenced by Asian gardens, will cross over the water and beneath the giant lanterns.

The Richmond oval site will create an outdoor environment as exciting as the activity inside the Oval. The design includes the Riverside Plaza, capable of hosting up to 8,000 people. The City was grateful to receive \$500,000 from the Province's Spirit Squares program to support this project. Thanks go to our Richmond MLAs for their assistance in securing this funding.

When the City opens the Oval in the Fall of 2008, we want our residents to experience all its offerings. After the opening events, we look forward to the many pre-Games speed skating competitions including national and world championships.

As part of our preparations to host the world in 2010, the City, with generous sponsorship, presented the first Richmond Winter Festival last February. This event was a tremendous success with more than 15,000 people in attendance enjoying fireworks, live entertainment, an outdoor skating rink and much more. This event will continue to grow as we move toward 2010.

Council is also determined to build on the Olympic challenge to leave lasting community legacies. In support of that goal, Council endorsed a 5-year Major Events Plan. Currently, we are anxiously awaiting word on our applications to host the 2009 BC Senior Games and 2010 World Wheelchair Rugby Championships. Many other exciting events are in store for Richmond in the years to come.

In May, we celebrated the re-opening of the new alignment of River Road from No. 2 Road to Hollybridge Way south of the Oval. This restored the use of this section as an important commuter access route. The remainder of the CP Rail corridor between No. 2 Road and Capstan Way will eventually become an important part of our City Centre ring road network.

6. Commitment To Excellence

Our City's vision and organizational culture is based on a commitment to continuous improvement. This constant pursuit of excellence was reflected in the recognition received by the City in 2007, as well as the continued success of many of our community programs. These include:

- (a) The uniqueness of the Terra Nova area was recently recognized by the Canadian Parks & Recreation Association when it presented our City with an Award of Excellence for Innovation for the Terra Nova Rural Park Plan: the Power of Community Engagement. The award recognized the community's mobilization to protect the area from residential development as well as the City's leadership in purchasing the land. The award also recognized how the biodiversity elements of the park were identified and the community was engaged in park development.
- (b) Construction of a new sanitary pump station near the Cook-Buswell intersection was required in order to allow for the increased density in the City Centre area. This project had experienced challenges from concept to completion and earned the Public Works Association "Project of the Year" award.

- (c) Richmond was the proud recipient of the Bell Canada True Sport Community Award at the prestigious Canadian Sport Awards. This award promotes the importance of values-based sport and publicly recognizes communities that are examples of fair and ethical sport initiatives.
- (d) Richmond was pleased to be named the "Healthiest City in Canada" by Canadian Living magazine, thanks to the healthy lifestyles of our residents. After all, on average we live longer than anywhere else in Canada.
- (e) Richmond's Sea Island and Hamilton firehalls received honorable mention at the esteemed Energy Awards.
- (f) BC Hydro has honoured the City of Richmond for its outstanding achievements in energy efficiency and innovation at the 15th Annual Power Smart Excellence Awards.
- (g) Richmond's No. 5 Road, otherwise known as the "Highway to Heaven" was selected as one of the finalists in the Seven Wonders of Canada contest. This was organized by the CBC to choose Canada's most outstanding features. Our unique area represents Canada's multiculturalism and the ability of Canadians to coexist peacefully regardless of religion, race or culture.
- (h) For its 2005 Annual Financial Report, the City of Richmond received the Canadian Award for Financial Reporting for the fourth consecutive year. This report is designed, written, printed and bound exclusively in-house.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge two special community groups. This year the Steveston Community Society celebrated its 50th anniversary. The Society has always made vital contributions to Richmond. From the Steveston Salmon Festival, our city's biggest one-day community celebration, to helping fund the new Steveston Water Park, this Society has made important contributions to our city over the past 50 years. Congratulations to all of the Society's members, past and present, for your hard work and achievements.

I also want to specially note the Emergency Social Services volunteers, a group of selfless individuals who come to the aid of their fellow residents in the times of greatest need. The recent tragic plane crash reminded us of their important contributions. Overall, this year, volunteers attended 13 call outs for 275 evacuees requiring temporary housing, food and clothing. Everyone is truly grateful for the ongoing commitment of these special volunteers.

Conclusion

As we look back, 2007 was truly a milestone year for the City with many historic achievements and accomplishments. These are a few of them. We enthusiastically look forward to 2008 which will be another eventful year.

Richmond remains committed to continuing our pursuit of excellence in the quality of life for our residents. We will accomplish our goals through innovative and effective planning. Our efforts to work with all our partners – the community volunteers, the businesses, senior levels of government, external groups and many, many others – will continue as we strive to fulfill our vision for Richmond.

I'd now like to end with a second video segment which concluded our LivCom Awards presentation. I think you will agree that it's a wonderful tribute to life in Richmond and demonstrates why our City was honoured as one of the world's most liveable communities.

****** Video Presentation ******