



**Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee
Electronic Meeting**

**Anderson Room, City Hall
6911 No. 3 Road**

Wednesday, July 22, 2026

Immediately following Public Works and Transportation Committee

Pg. # ITEM

MINUTES

PRCS-4 *Motion to adopt the **minutes** of the meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee held on June 23, 2026.*



NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING DATE

September 29, 2026, (tentative date) at 4:00 p.m. in the Anderson Room.

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE DIVISION

- 1. RICHMOND ARTS FACILITIES NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT**
(File Ref. No. 11-7000-11-01) (REDMS No. 8401231)

PRCS-60

See Page PRCS-60 for full report

Designated Speakers: Mandeep Bains and Marie Fenwick

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee Agenda
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Pg. # ITEM

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the priority needs as outlined in Attachment 1 of the report titled “Richmond Arts Facilities Needs Assessment Report”, from the General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture, dated June 29, 2026, be approved to guide future arts facility planning and investment in Richmond.

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2. **OPTIONS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SCOTCH POND**

(File Ref. No. 06-2025-20-008) (REDMS No. 8444333)

PRCS-162

See Page **PRCS-162** for full report

Designated Speaker: Rebecca Clarke

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the City undertake a feasibility study to assess potential future program uses for Scotch Pond and that a \$150,000 one-time additional level request be submitted for consideration in the 2027 budget process, as outlined in the report titled “Options on the Management of Scotch Pond”, from the General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture, dated June 29, 2026.

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3. **STREET BANNER REFERRAL RESPONSE UPDATE**

(File Ref. No. 10-6050-01) (REDMS No. 8210398)

PRCS-169

See Page **PRCS-169** for full report

Designated Speakers: Todd Gross and Eric Sparolin

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That Option 1: “Install Welcome Banners on Four Poles – Cost Sharing”, as described in the report titled “Street Banner Referral Response Update”, from the General Managers of Parks, Recreation and Culture, and Engineering and Public Works, dated June 29, 2026, be approved.

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Pg. # ITEM

4. **FUNDING FOR THE PUBLIC ART PROGRAM IN RELATION TO
THE COMMUNITY MURAL PROGRAM**

(File Ref. No. 11-7000-09-01) (REDMS No. 8373096)

PRCS-179

[See Page PRCS-179 for full report](#)

Designated Speaker: Biliana Velkova

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the report titled “Funding for the Public Art Program in relation to the Community Mural Program”, from the General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture, dated June 29, 2026, be received for information.

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5. **RICHMOND NATURE PARK STUDY – FINDINGS AND NEXT
STEPS**

(File Ref. No. 06-2345-20-NPAR1) (REDMS No. 8403354)

PRCS-201

[See Page PRCS-201 for full report](#)

Designated Speakers: Kevin Fraser and Jason Chan

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the report titled “Richmond Nature Park Study – Findings and Next Steps”, from the General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture, dated June 29, 2026, be received for information.

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6. **MANAGER’S REPORT**

ADJOURNMENT

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Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee

Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2026

Place: Anderson Room
Richmond City Hall

Present: Councillor Michael Wolfe, Chair
Councillor Laura Gillanders
Councillor Andy Hobbs
Councillor Bill McNulty

Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

It was moved and seconded

That the minutes of the meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee held on May 26, 2026, be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE DIVISION

1. RICHMOND COMMUNITY WELLNESS STRATEGY PROGRESS UPDATE 2024–2025

(File Ref. No. 11-7375-01) (REDMS No. 8371124)

Staff referenced an updated version of Attachment 1, Richmond Community Wellness Strategy (2018-2023) (attached to and forming part of these minutes as Schedule 1) which was provided on table and will be included in the next Council package.

A video titled, *Richmond Community Wellness Strategy (2018-2023)*, was shared (copy on-file, City Clerk's Office), highlighting achievements from 2024 and 2025, as well as the major accomplishments of the eight-year implementation of the City's vision for an active, caring, connected, healthy and thriving community.

Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee

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It was noted that the City of Richmond was named Canada's Most Active Community in the 2025 ParticipACTION Community Challenge.

Discussion ensued with respect to (i) the need for a list tracking the City's strategies and expiry dates, with those strategies automatically included as an ongoing budget line item, (ii) the timing for reviewing and updating City strategies, and (iii) the interconnectedness and alignment with other City Strategies.

In response to queries from Committee, staff advised that (i) the pandemic extended the timeline for the current Strategy, and the standard approach is to evaluate strategies at the end of their term and seek Council support for renewal as appropriate, (ii) this Strategy was developed in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health and the Richmond School District, and the development of a new strategy led by the City would take place regardless of that three-way partnership, and (iii) a renewed strategy would provide an opportunity to engage with the community and partners, build on the existing foundation, and respond to emerging priorities.

It was moved and seconded

- (1) *That the achievement document, Richmond Community Wellness Strategy (2018–2023) — Progress Update 2024–2025 as outlined in the report titled, “Richmond Community Wellness Strategy Progress Update 2024–2025”, dated June 1, 2026, be distributed to key community partners and organizations, and posted on the City website; and*
- (2) *That a one-time additional level request to develop a renewed Richmond Community Wellness Strategy be considered in the 2027 budget process.*

CARRIED

As a result of discussion, the following **referral motion** was introduced:

It was moved and seconded

That staff prepare a City-wide summary of strategies and their expiry dates for Council's review, and that consideration be given through the budget process to include funding in the base budget for updating City strategies.

The question on the motion was then called and it was **CARRIED**.

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2. MINORU PARK VISION PLAN PHASE ONE ENGAGEMENT UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS

(File Ref. No. 06-2345-20-MINO1) (REDMS No. 8395642)

It was moved and seconded

That the Minoru Park Vision Plan process proceed to Phase Two – development of Minoru Park Vision Plan concept options, as outlined in the staff report titled “Minoru Park Vision Plan Phase One Engagement Update and Next Steps”, dated June 1, 2026, from the General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture.

The question on the motion was not called as clarification was requested with respect to a concern regarding lighting on the trails in Minoru Park.

In response to queries from Committee, staff advised that (i) while some trails are well lit, other areas are not currently illuminated, and (ii) that an analysis of lighting throughout the park could be undertaken.

The question on the motion was then called and it was **CARRIED**.

3. MANAGER’S REPORT

(i) Richmond Celebrates Soccer

Staff noted that (i) *Richmond Celebrates Soccer* kicked off on June 12, 2026, with a well-attended event at the Richmond Oval. Other events included the *Golden Boot Gathering* at Minoru Park on June 18, 2026, (ii) upcoming events include the June 24, 2026, Canada versus Switzerland game viewing at Thompson Community Association’s *Community Soccer Fest*, the Salmon Festival on July 1, 2026, and South Arm Community Association’s *Neighbourhood Block Party – United by Soccer* on July 6, 2026, and (iii) the *Richmond Celebrates Soccer* program has received strong media coverage, with the social media campaign generating 255,000 impressions, the digital ads generating 3.8 million digital impressions, and over 28,000 unique visits to the program website to date.

In response to queries from Committee with respect to promoting community events, staff advised that (i) each community event is unique, and (ii) that promotions are planned for signature community events.

In response to queries with respect to attendance, staff advised that (i) the Richmond Olympic Oval event had an estimated attendance of over 1,000 visitors per day, and (ii) the Minoru Park event attendance ranged between approximately 750 and 1,000 visitors, and *Hamilton’s Soccer Slam* had an estimated attendance of approximately 350 to 400 visitors.

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In response to queries regarding marketing, staff advised that (i) promotion is being undertaken for the overall program and directs residents to the City website, and (ii) that advertising has included a regional approach through 42 media outlets across television, print and radio, with digital and social media promotion also supporting awareness of the events.

(ii) *Pitch and Putt Hours*

In response to queries from Committee regarding pitch and putt operating hours, staff advised that hours have been extended for July and August and that pre-pandemic operating hours are expected to resume the following week. Furthermore, it was noted that a pilot program will be scheduled beginning on July 2, 2026, running to September 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded
That the meeting adjourn 4:27 p.m.

CARRIED

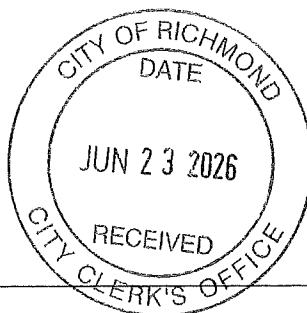
Certified a true and correct copy of the
Minutes of the meeting of the Parks,
Recreation and Cultural Services
Committee of the Council of the City of
Richmond held on Tuesday, June 23, 2026.

Councillor Michael Wolfe
Chair

Christine McLenan,
Recording Secretary



City of
Richmond



Schedule 1 to the Minutes of the
Parks, Recreation & Cultural
Services Committee meeting of
Richmond City Council held on
Tuesday, June 23, 2026.

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee
From: Elizabeth Ayers
General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture
Date: June 1, 2026
File: 11-7375-01/2025-Vol 01
Re: Richmond Community Wellness Strategy Progress Update 2024–2025

Staff Recommendations

1. That the achievement document, *Richmond Community Wellness Strategy (2018–2023) — Progress Update 2024–2025* as outlined in the report titled, “Richmond Community Wellness Strategy Progress Update 2024–2025, dated June 1, 2026, be distributed to key community partners and organizations, and posted on the City website; and
2. That a one-time additional level request to develop a renewed Richmond Community Wellness Strategy be considered in the 2027 budget process.

Executive Summary

The Richmond Community Wellness Strategy 2018–2023 (the Wellness Strategy), adopted by Council in 2018 and developed in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) and Richmond School District No. 38 (SD38), provides a coordinated framework to support improved wellness outcomes for Richmond residents. Extended through the end of 2025, the Wellness Strategy advances a shared vision of an active, caring, connected, healthy and thriving community. This report is the third and final progress update to Council and highlights achievements realized in 2024 and 2025, as well as key accomplishments over the strategy’s eight-year implementation period.

Highlights from 2024 and 2025 include initiatives that increased opportunities for physical activity, reduced barriers to participation, strengthened neighbourhood connection and belonging, and supported welcoming and inclusive community spaces. Cumulative achievements over 2018–2025 include substantial investment in community grants, increased access through recreation fee subsidies, expansion of community gardens, growth in active transportation initiatives, enhanced community-based supports for seniors, youth and newcomers, and recognition of Richmond as Canada’s Most Active Community. Subject to Council approval, the achievement document will be shared with community partners and posted on the City website, and a one-time additional level request to develop a renewed Wellness Strategy will be submitted for consideration through the 2027 budget process.

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& DISTRIBUTED

Staff Report

Origin

On July 23, 2018, Council adopted the Wellness Strategy, a collaborative strategy developed by the City of Richmond in partnership with VCH and SD38. The five-year strategy guides a collaborative and holistic approach to enhancing wellness for Richmond residents and to increasing opportunities and support for active and healthy lifestyles throughout the community. At that meeting, staff received the following referral:

That staff report back at the mid-point and end of the implementation period of the Community Wellness Strategy (2018–2023).

Subsequently, Wellness Strategy progress updates were brought forward to Council on December 15, 2021, highlighting selected achievements during the first half of the strategy period, and on June 10, 2024, highlighting progress made in 2022 and 2023. The June 10, 2024, report also advised Council that, although the Wellness Strategy was originally intended to cover the period from 2018 to 2023, continued implementation through the end of 2025 would be beneficial.

The purpose of this report is to respond to Council's referral by providing highlights of achievements made by the City of Richmond and its Wellness Strategy partners during the final two years of implementation, 2024 and 2025, as well as major achievements over the strategy's eight-year lifespan. The report also seeks support for consideration of an additional level request as part of the 2027 budget process for a renewed five-year strategy.

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

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

Analysis

Background

The Wellness Strategy demonstrates a commitment by the City of Richmond, VCH, and SD38 to work together to improve wellness and strive towards the vision of an active, caring, connected, healthy and thriving Richmond.

In the Wellness Strategy, the concept of wellness is multifaceted and defined as:

... the ability of individuals and communities to reach their fullest potential. At an individual level, wellness means an optimization of and a balance among physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being. At a community level, wellness means living in harmony with others, respecting diversity, feeling safe, supported and included, and having a sense of belonging to one's neighbourhood and broader community.

The Wellness Strategy includes five Focus Areas that aim to improve wellness by realizing the vision of an active, caring, connected, healthy and thriving Richmond:

- Foster healthy, active and involved lifestyles for all Richmond residents with an emphasis on physical activity, healthy eating and mental wellness;
- Enhance physical and social connectedness within and among neighbourhoods and communities;
- Enhance equitable access to amenities, services and programs within and among neighbourhoods;
- Facilitate supportive, safe and healthy natural and built environments; and
- Promote wellness literacy for residents across all ages and stages of their lives.

While this report focuses on achievements specific to actions in the Wellness Strategy, there is synergistic work directed by other strategies that also aim to improve wellness outcomes across the community and exemplify the City's overall approach to promoting community well-being. These include but are not limited to *2041 Official Community Plan; Social Development Strategy; Community Energy and Emissions Plan 2050; Recreation and Sport Strategy; ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy; 2022 Parks and Open Space Strategy; Cultural Harmony Plan; Seniors Strategy; and Youth Strategy*.

Summary of Highlights and Achievements

The *Community Wellness Strategy (2018–2023) — Progress Update 2024–2025* (the Strategy Progress Update), included as Attachment 1, is the third and final progress update for the Wellness Strategy.

The Strategy Progress Update outlines initiatives that advanced the Wellness Strategy in 2024 and 2025, as well as highlights major accomplishments over its eight-year lifespan. The following are selected highlights that demonstrate the breadth of progress made in 2024 and 2025, as well as across the full term of the Wellness Strategy.

2024–2025 Highlights

- The Bike to School Education Program, delivered in partnership with SD38, provided more than 3,000 Grade 6 and 7 students at 38 elementary schools with hands-on cycling skills training and active transportation education, helping build confidence and improve road safety knowledge.
- Getting There, delivered in 2024 and 2025 by the Minoru Seniors Society with support from a VCH Health Promotion Grant, helped seniors facing transportation barriers attend bi-weekly programs at the Seniors Centre at Minoru Centre for Active Living, improving access to services, reducing isolation and strengthening social connection.

- Conversations in the Library, launched by Richmond Public Library in August 2025, created welcoming opportunities for residents and newcomers to practice English, meet others and build social connections, engaging 402 participants through 41 sessions.
- Neighbourhood Play Days, delivered in partnership with community associations and societies, offered free, inclusive recreation activities in five parks during summer 2025, engaging approximately 1,450 residents through games, music and family-friendly activities that promoted physical activity and strengthened neighbourhood connection and belonging.
- Richmond's Mural Program contributed to more vibrant and welcoming public spaces, with 14 new murals installed between January 2024 and December 2025 at civic facilities, private businesses, schools and other buildings.
- Several new parks and park amenities were completed in 2024 and 2025, including Capstan Neighbourhood Park Phase 2, which added basketball courts, seating areas, open lawn space, lighting, bike racks and extensive tree plantings, enhancing opportunities for recreation, social connection and neighbourhood gathering.
- Citywide Wellness Clinics improved access to preventative care for older adults through services such as blood pressure and glucose checks, hearing clinics, foot care, reflexology and massage treatments. In 2025, participation included 2,272 blood pressure checks, 2,678 blood glucose tests and over 1,000 wellness treatments, supporting seniors' health and well-being.

2018–2025 Major Accomplishments

- The City awarded more than \$7.75 million in community grants to non-profit organizations between 2018 and 2025, including almost \$4.9 million for health, social and safety services, approximately \$982,000 for arts and culture, and approximately \$950,000 for parks, recreation and community events, strengthening community well-being and quality of life in Richmond.
- The Recreation Fee Subsidy Program improved equitable access to recreation, arts, culture and parks programs by reducing financial barriers to participation for residents of all ages, supporting 4,854 individuals in 2024–2025, a 15 per cent increase from 2023–2024 and a 53 per cent increase from 2022–2023.
- Safe and active transportation initiatives advanced healthier and more affordable travel options through cycling infrastructure improvements and Richmond's shared e-bike and e-scooter program, which recorded approximately 245,000 trips since 2022, improving low-carbon access to employment, services, recreation and community amenities.
- Richmond's participation in the ParticipACTION Community Challenge resulted in recognition as BC's Most Active Community in 2022 and 2024, and Canada's Most Active Community in 2025. In 2025, with participation from 58 community

organizations, Richmond delivered 1,018 activities, programs and events for 413,044 participants, a 60 per cent increase from 2024.

- Community Gardens in Parks expanded opportunities for residents to connect with nature, engage in light physical activity and build community through sustainable gardening. Between 2018 and 2025, approximately 442 new community garden plots were added in parks across Richmond, including six wheelchair-accessible plots added in 2024 to improve accessibility.
- The 55+ Activate! Wellness Fair remained an important source of health, wellness and safety information for older adults. In 2025, the biennial event welcomed more than 500 attendees to the Seniors Centre at Minoru Centre for Active Living and featured 45 information booths, three educational workshops in English and Cantonese, four physical “try-it” activities and a Wellness Relaxation Room.
- Foundry Richmond, operated by VCH in conjunction with Richmond community partners, expanded low-barrier access to integrated services for youth and young adults ages 12 to 24 and their families. Since opening its permanent site in 2022, it has provided five core services including mental health, substance use, physical health care, work, education and community services, and peer support, helping connect Richmond youth to timely and coordinated care.
- The Library Champions Project strengthened newcomer settlement and community participation by training recent immigrants to share information about library services and community, health and social service resources with other newcomers. By the end of 2025, Richmond had completed 27 cycles of the program, with 335 newcomers participating and reaching 14,859 newcomers, improving access to resources and opportunities to participate more fully in community life.
- The SD38 Community Schools Initiative, launched in the 2020/21 school year, expanded accessible opportunities for elementary students, particularly those in Grades 5 to 7, to build physical literacy beyond the school day. Through age-appropriate, skill-building activities, the initiative helped students develop movement competence, confidence and enjoyment in physical activity, supporting lifelong healthy habits and active lifestyles.

Next Steps

The Strategy Progress Update will be shared with key community partners and involved in the development and implementation of the Wellness Strategy, including, but not limited to, SD38, VCH, Community Associations and Societies, and the Aquatic Advisory Board, and will be made available on the City’s website.

Given the positive impact of the Wellness Strategy, staff recommend that a renewed Wellness Strategy be developed. A renewed strategy would build on the successes of the current strategy and help identify emerging community wellness needs and priorities. Engagement with key community partners and organizations will be important to help inform future directions, identify

appropriate and flexible actions, and support implementation and ongoing collaboration to advance the well-being of Richmond residents.

Key actions identified in the current strategy will continue to be implemented while a renewed Wellness Strategy is being developed.

Budgetary Implications

Upon Council endorsement, staff will develop and submit a one-time additional level request for consideration in the 2027 budget process for the development of a renewed Wellness Strategy.

In the interim, sustained implementation of current Wellness Strategy actions is within existing operating budget allocations.

Conclusion

The Richmond Community Wellness Strategy reflects the shared commitment of the City, VCH and SD38 to support the health and well-being of Richmond residents through coordinated, community-based action. The achievements highlighted, including progress made in 2024 and 2025 and across the full term of the strategy, demonstrate the value of strong partnerships in advancing opportunities for physical activity, social connectedness, healthy living and access to programs, services and supports.

As the current strategy concludes, the accomplishments to date provide a strong foundation for future planning and continued collaboration. The City acknowledges the ongoing contributions of VCH and SD38 and remains committed to collaborating with partners and the community to help Richmond continue to be an active, caring, connected, healthy and thriving community.

Respectfully submitted,

Keith Miller, Director, Recreation and Sport Services

Report Contributors

This report was prepared by Kirsten Close, Manager, Aquatics and Community Wellness, and reviewed by Arts, Culture and Heritage Services, Community Social Development, Finance, Library Services, Parks Services and Transportation.

Endorsed by Serena Lusk, CAO

Att. 1: Richmond Community Wellness Strategy (2018–2023) — Progress Update 2024–2025

Richmond Community Wellness Strategy (2018–2023)



Progress Update 2024 – 2025



RICHMOND
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 38

Vancouver
CoastalHealth

 **Richmond**

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Introduction

Over the past seven years, the Richmond Community Wellness Strategy (2018–2023) (the “Strategy”) has provided a framework for collaborative action to support resident well-being and healthy lifestyles. It has guided the City of Richmond, Vancouver Coastal Health and Richmond School District No. 38 in delivering programs, events, and initiatives that promote active living and wellness. Partnerships with community associations and societies, and with residents, have strengthened community capacity, advanced shared initiatives, and supported residents in taking an active role in their health and well-being.

Endorsed by Richmond City Council on July 23, 2018, the Strategy was developed jointly by the City of Richmond, Vancouver Coastal Health and Richmond School District No. 38. It reflects a shared commitment to improving resident well-being through greater access to supports, opportunities and innovative initiatives that advance the Strategy’s vision of an **active, caring, connected, healthy and thriving Richmond**.

The COVID-19 pandemic created significant challenges that affected the partners’ ability to fully implement the Focus Areas and related actions within the original timeframe. During this time, the partners conducted a comprehensive audit and, in 2024, extended the Strategy through 2025. This extension enabled some initiatives to be adapted to better align with the changed landscape resulting from the pandemic.

In the Strategy, wellness is understood to be multifaceted and is defined as:

“... the ability of individuals and communities to reach their fullest potential. At an individual level, wellness means an optimization of and a balance among physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. At a community level, wellness means living in harmony with others, respecting diversity, feeling safe, supported and included, and having a sense of belonging to one’s neighbourhood and broader community.”

The Strategy is organized around five Focus Areas, each with unique actions, objectives and corresponding outcomes.

Focus Areas	Outcomes
#1 Foster healthy, active, and involved lifestyles for all Richmond residents with an emphasis on physical activity, healthy eating, and mental wellness.	↑ Awareness of benefits ↑ Physical activity opportunities ↑ Physical activity levels ↑ Healthy food outlets ↑ Fruit and vegetable servings ↑ Self-rated mental health
#2 Enhance physical and social connectedness within and among neighbourhoods and communities.	↑ Strong sense of community belonging ↑ Volunteerism
#3 Enhance equitable access to amenities, services, and programs within and among neighbourhoods.	↓ Amenities, programs, and services available by neighbourhood ↓ Reduced barriers to opportunities

Focus Areas	Outcomes
#4 Facilitate supportive, safe, and healthy natural and built environments.	 Walkability of neighbourhoods  Outdoor unstructured play opportunities
#5 Promote wellness literacy for residents across all ages and stages of their lives.	 Awareness of wellness components

Together, these Focus Areas and strategic actions have guided initiatives that support the health and well-being of people who live, work and play in Richmond. Building on the previous progress update provided to Council, which highlighted accomplishments from 2022 to 2023, the sections in this report are organized by Focus Area and include both **2024–2025 Highlights** and **2018–2025 Major Accomplishments**. The 2024–2025 Highlights profile notable activities, outcomes, and developments from the past two years, while the 2018–2025 Major Accomplishments reflect significant achievements over the full life of the current Strategy. Together, they provide a concise overview of recent progress and cumulative impact.

Throughout the Strategy’s lifespan, progress has been monitored and reported through regular updates, supported by assigned responsibilities, funding, data monitoring, timelines, and a communication plan.



Message from the Partners

The City of Richmond, Vancouver Coastal Health and Richmond School District No. 38, remain dedicated to promoting and facilitating holistic health and wellness within the community. Over the past seven years, guided by our shared values, the Community Wellness Strategy has supported coordinated efforts among these partners to advance our vision of Richmond as an active, caring, connected, healthy and thriving community.

We recognize that wellness is shaped by a wide range of personal, social, economic, and environmental factors. Access to programs and services, supportive neighbourhoods, opportunities for physical activity, healthy food, and social connection all play an important role in overall well-being. Community factors—such as programs, employment, transit, school policies, parks, proximity to family and friends, and personal time—influence residents' ability to maintain healthy lifestyles, build resilient neighbourhoods, and engage socially. Together, these factors affect how people live, learn, work, and play in Richmond, and ultimately shape health and well-being across the community.

The two-year interruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic gave partners an opportunity to explore new opportunities, conduct a comprehensive review of the Strategy, reflect on achievements to date, and reassess current initiatives to better respond to the evolving needs of the community. Since that time, Richmond has experienced a steady increase in participation in events, programs and physical activities.

As highlighted in this report, the partners have made significant progress toward the objectives within each of the five Focus Areas. This work has strengthened collaboration across organizations and support more coordinated wellness communications, information sharing and policy development.

Moving forward, the City of Richmond, Vancouver Coastal Health and Richmond School District No. 38 will continue to work together to identify opportunities, align efforts, and build on shared successes. United by our common vision, the Community Wellness Strategy partners remain committed to fostering a community where every resident can thrive and where health and wellness continue to be a shared priority.



In addition to the Community Wellness Strategy, the City of Richmond has several interconnected plans that guide collective actions in promoting overall community well-being, including:

- 2041 Official Community Plan
- Community Wellness Strategy
- Social Development Strategy
- Richmond Arts Strategy
- Recreation and Sport Strategy
- Parks and Open Space Strategy
- Cultural Harmony Plan
- Child Care Strategy
- Seniors Strategy
- Youth Strategy
- Richmond Accessibility Plan

The Community Wellness Strategy (2018–2023)—Progress Update 2024–2025 delineates specific actions in the Community Wellness Strategy, while acknowledging the synergistic work directed by other strategies that also aim to improve wellness outcomes across the community.

Richmond School District No. 38 is guided by the Richmond Board of Education Strategic Plan 2020–2025, including a goal of fostering resilient and healthy lifelong learners.

Vancouver Coastal Health sets its strategic priorities, such as supporting optimal health and well-being, with an overarching vision of “Healthy lives in healthy communities.”

Focus Area #1

Foster healthy, active and involved lifestyles for all Richmond residents with an emphasis on physical activity, healthy eating and mental wellness.

Focus Area #1 supports initiatives that encourage physical activity, healthy eating, access to healthy foods, and positive mental wellness. Through partnerships and community-based programs, these efforts help reduce barriers, increase participation, and support residents in making healthy food choices and leading active, healthy lives.

2024–2025 Highlights

ACTIVE LIVING AND EXPLORING RICHMOND

- **Walk Richmond:** The Richmond Fitness and Wellness Association expanded its free, year-round Walk Richmond program by offering additional guided walks and increasing volunteer walk leader capacity. Between 2021 and 2025, the number of walks increased by 21% and participation grew by 49%, giving more participants regular opportunities to stay active, build social connections, and explore Richmond's green spaces and walking routes.



- **Historical Walking/Cycling Tours:** In addition to guided walking tours of Minoru Park, the Richmond Museum Society offered free self-guided historical walking and cycling tours across the city. These tours provided low-barrier opportunities for residents to stay active and connect with others while learning more about Richmond's history, heritage, neighbourhoods and park amenities.
- **Public Art Walking/Cycling Tours:** Several self-guided Public Art Walking Tours are available online, encouraging residents to stay active while exploring Richmond's public art and neighbourhoods. In 2024 and 2025, public art tours included National Seniors Day Bus tours of City Centre and Steveston, Culture Days walking tours of the Oval Village and Capstan Village neighbourhoods, and a public art cycling tour along the West Dyke Trail. In 2025, from May to September, free monthly walking tours of Capstan Village, led by local arts professionals, engaged residents and visitors while raising awareness of the growing number of public artworks in the City's Arts District.

- **StoryWalk® Library Program:** A StoryWalk® is a fun, educational activity that promotes literacy, learning and outdoor play by displaying individual pages of a storybook on weather-resistant signs in community spaces. Richmond Public Library continued to deliver the StoryWalk program through the permanent outdoor StoryWalk Circuit along the McLean Neighbourhood Park walking trail and introduced 20 StoryWalk kits for use in parks and community spaces. Together, these initiatives supported literacy development and encouraged physical activity for families and children across Richmond.
- **Geocaching and Adventure Labs:** The City's Geocaching and Adventure Lab offer interactive GPS and app-based outdoor experiences that engage participants of all ages in exploring the city. The GeoTour invites participants to search for 50 hidden geocaches by foot or bike, and the Adventure Labs provide three app-based scavenger hunts—Terra Nova Rural Park, Richmond Nature Park, and Garden City & Paulik Park—with unique storylines, challenges, and trivia on wildlife, ecology, and local history. Between January 2024 and November 2025, the GeoTour engaged 1,307 participants from 19 countries, and the Adventure Labs reached 434 participants from 12 countries, offering immersive ways to explore Richmond's parks, culture, and hidden stories while being physically active.



CYCLING FORWARD

- **Bike to School Education Program:** Delivered in partnership with Richmond School District No. 38, the Bike to School Education Program provided more than 3,000 Grade 6 and 7 students at 38 elementary schools with hands-on cycling skills training and active transportation education. The program helped students build confidence, improve road safety knowledge, and consider cycling as an alternative way to travel to and from school.
- **StreetWise Cycling Education:** Delivered in partnership with Lime, StreetWise Cycling Education engaged over 100 residents through beginner and intermediate bike skills courses, basic bike maintenance sessions, and a pilot cycling education program for seniors. The program helped increase confidence and reduce barriers to cycling for residents of different ages and abilities.
- **Go By Bike Week:** Offered in partnership with HUB Cycling, Go By Bike Week encourages residents to explore cycling as both an active form of transportation and a way to support personal health and well-being.



ACTIVE AND HEALTHY AGING

- **Choose To Move and ActivAge™:** Funded by the BC Ministry of Health, Thompson and South Arm Community Associations delivered the Choose to Move and ActivAge™ programs in partnership with the British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association, the University of British Columbia, and the Active Aging Society. Running concurrently, the programs supported 10 seniors through a 10-week, coach-led fitness and wellness experience designed to improve mobility, build confidence, support social well-being, and support long-term healthy habits.
- **Walking Soccer for Seniors:** The Seniors Centre at Minoru Centre for Active Living offered free Walking Soccer sessions for adults 55+ years in partnership with the Richmond United Football Club. Held outdoors on the Minoru Oval Field, the program welcomed 15–20 participants each week and supported active aging through skill-building, social connection, and fun, low-impact play.
- **Outdoor Concerts and Cultural Activations:** The Minoru Seniors Society delivered 14 outdoor concerts and cultural activations at the Minoru Centre for Active Living Plaza, attracting more than 2,000 attendees annually. Programming included musical performances and cultural participatory activities such as painting, dance, and fitness classes, creating inclusive opportunities for older adults and other residents to connect, participate, and celebrate Richmond's cultural diversity.
- **Filipino Folk Dancing Programs:** Delivered in partnership with PhilCAS of BC through Culture Days and a nine-week seasonal program, this initiative engaged more than 40 participants. Free try-it sessions introduced children, youth, and adults to Filipino dance, followed by weekly classes exploring traditional forms such as *tinikling*, *aray*, *chotis* and *sublian*. The program increased access to culturally relevant recreation, supported inclusive participation, and strengthened cultural understanding within Richmond's diverse community.



CHILDREN AND YOUTH PHYSICAL LITERACY

- **After-School “Hangout” Program:** Newly introduced by Thompson Community Association, the Hangout at Blair Elementary School offers instructor-supported, unstructured play and access to the school gymnasium for students in Grades K–7. The program runs twice a week and provides a safe and engaging space for children to stay active and connected outside the classroom while addressing after-school care needs in the community.
- **After-School Art Truck Program:** This after-school art and sport program brought accessible, high-quality arts and recreation programming directly to schools in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health and Richmond School District No. 38. The program supported mental well-being, resilience, social connection, belonging, play, and physical activity through art and active games. In 2024, the Art Truck served 30 Grade 4 to 7 students at McKay Elementary School. In 2025, the program expanded to Blair and Tomsett Elementary Schools, reaching 32 students through a 10-week low-cost, low-barrier after-school program.
- **Physical Literacy Passport & Colour Quest Programs:** Offered in collaboration with Richmond Public Library through the BC Summer Reading Club, these programs engaged children in fun, simple, and low-barrier activities in community centres, pools, arenas, parks and playgrounds throughout the summer. Focused on the 25 Fundamental Movement Skills identified in the City’s Physical Literacy Initiative, the programs supported active play while reinforcing literacy and family participation.
- **Learning Together Sessions:** Richmond Public Library delivered nearly 100 Learning Together sessions across library branches, reaching approximately 970 participants. The sessions combined literacy and active play, helping parents, caregivers, and children build foundational skills while integrating movement and play physical activity into everyday family routines.





FOOD LITERACY, ACCESS TO FRESH PRODUCE, AND HEALTHY EATING EDUCATION

- **Food Skills Programs:** South Arm Community Association delivered a range of food literacy programs in partnership with community organizations. In 2024, in partnership with the BC Centre for Disease Control, a six-week *Food Skills for Families* program was offered, engaging 12 participants in hands-on nutrition and cooking education. In 2025, in partnership with Urban Bounty, a 16-week *Garden Talks* and *Tastings* program was offered, engaging seniors and youth in gardening and food preparation while providing access to fresh produce. The Association also delivered the *Iron Chef* program, supporting youth in developing cooking skills, teamwork, and healthy eating habits.
- **Food Literacy for Seniors:** The Minoru Seniors Society delivered a range of grant-funded food literacy initiatives supporting seniors and intergenerational learning. Funded through New Horizons for Seniors Program grants totalling \$41,500 over 2024 and 2025, programs included Dining through the Decades, and other workshops focused on cooking skills, healthy eating, and food access. The Society also delivered ongoing cooking workshops at the Seniors Centre, supporting seniors in preparing simple, nutritious meals at home.
- **Nature School Garden Programs:** Thompson Community Association's Terra Nova Nature School (TNNS) features 1,200 square feet of garden space where children can plant, grow, and harvest their own vegetables for snacks and meals. Supported by the City's Environmental Enhancement Grant, TNNS created a Food Forest with native plants, fruit trees, spices, and berries, providing hands-on learning and encouraging families to make healthier food choices at home. TNNS also delivered Chefs in the Garden camps, where children harvested produce and prepared meals while developing foundational cooking skills and knowledge of healthy eating.

- **Sunset Snacks:** The City, in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health and Kwantlen Polytechnic University, hosted Sunset Snacks at the KPU Farm, engaging approximately 40 youth of 13 to 24 years. The program combined outdoor activities and hands-on workshops focused on agriculture and sustainability, providing opportunities for youth to connect with peers and mentors while building awareness of local food systems and activating a community space for youth engagement.
- **Kwantlen Street Farmers Market:** The Kwantlen Street Farmers Market at the Richmond Cultural Centre Plaza continued to improve access to locally grown food and community-based vendors in a central, accessible location. Operating weekly from May to November in 2024 and extending to December in 2025 in response to strong demand, the market increased proximity to fresh, affordable food for City Centre residents. Access was further supported through the BC Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program for seniors, low-income families and pregnant individuals, helping reduce barriers to accessing healthy food.
- **Richmond Farm Fest:** In 2025, following a short hiatus, the City of Richmond partnered with Kwantlen Polytechnic University to host the Farm Fest community event at Garden City Lands. The event featured interactive cooking demonstrations and educational programming to promote healthy eating and awareness of local food systems to over 2,500 attendees.



MENTAL WELLNESS AND COMMUNITY BELONGING

- **Vancouver Coastal Health Mental Wellness Initiatives:** In 2025, Vancouver Coastal Health partnered with community organizations to deliver a range of mental wellness initiatives. These included two mental health awareness movie nights, which reached approximately 85 participants, as well as Suicide Prevention Awareness events that engaged more than 40 participants. Together, these initiatives increased awareness, reduced stigma, and connected residents to available support.
- **Richmond Public Library Mental Wellness Programs:** A range of initiatives were hosted by Richmond Public Library to support mental wellness, including six Heartfulness Meditation sessions that engaged more than 20 participants in stress management practices. Richmond Public Library also partnered with FamilySmart to deliver 12 parenting workshops, engaging 60 participants and providing strategies to support children facing mental health and substance use challenges. In addition, teen mental health workshops engaged more than 40 youth and caregivers, increasing awareness of and access to support resources.
- **Integrated Child and Youth Teams:** Serving students in Richmond School District No. 38 as well as private and independent schools, the Integrated Child and Youth teams improve access to mental health and substance use supports for children and youth from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Delivered in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health, Foundry Richmond, the Ministry for Child and Family Development, and FamilySmart, the initiative strengthens early access to coordinated care and supports student well-being, resilience and connection.
- **Richmond Youth Media Program:** The Richmond Youth Media Program (RYMP) offers weekly opportunities for youth to develop media skills while connecting with local mental wellness resources. The Media Lab opened in 2011 and moved into a bigger and brighter space in January 2024 at the Richmond Cultural Centre Annex. In partnership with the Richmond Addiction Services Society and supported by a Vancouver Coastal Health SMART grant, the program provides a safe, low-barrier drop-in space for youth to meet peers, engage with Youth Outreach Workers, and access mental health support through phone, in-person guidance, or connections with local youth-serving organizations.



2018–2025 Major Accomplishments

GLOBAL ACTIVE CITY ACCREDITATION

In September 2018, the City of Richmond became one of the world's first six cities designated a "Global Active City" through the Active Well-being Initiative in Lausanne, Switzerland. This prestigious recognition honors Richmond's leadership in promoting physical activity, its innovative and holistic Community Wellness, and Recreation and Sport Strategies, and its strong partnerships with organizations including Vancouver Coastal Health, Richmond School District No. 38, and local community associations and societies. Achieving the designation required passing an independent audit with a rigorous review of the city's programs, strategies, and operational practices. As part of the Global Active Cities network, Richmond now gains opportunities to learn from like-minded cities, share best practices, and advance inclusive approaches to physical activity and sport for all residents.



PARTICIPACTION COMMUNITY CHALLENGE: CANADA'S MOST ACTIVE COMMUNITY

Since 2019, the City of Richmond has participated in the ParticipACTION Community Challenge, a national initiative encouraging Canadians to get active in June and recognizing the most active communities in each province and across the country. Richmond earned BC's Most Active Community in 2022 and 2024, and in 2025 was named Canada's Most Active Community, receiving a \$100,000 prize to support local physical activity and sport initiatives. That June, in collaboration with community partners, the City offered 1,018 activities, programs, and events for 413,044 participants, 75% more organizations, 80% more activities, and 60% more participants than in 2024.



GROWING PARTICIPATION IN PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE PROGRAMS

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, participation in Parks, Recreation and Culture programs increased steadily, reflecting renewed resident engagement in active living, wellness and community connection. From 2019 to 2025, visits to City drop-in recreation facilities rose from 1.4 million to almost 2.0 million, while participation in registered programs at City facilities increased from 105,512 to 111,426. Residents participated in a wide range of opportunities, including swimming, fitness and wellness programs, sports, arts, dance and other community-based activities. This growth was supported through the City's relationship-based service delivery model with community associations and societies, as well as through collaboration with other community partners. Together, these efforts supported healthier lifestyles and stronger community connectedness for Richmond residents.



VANCOUVER COASTAL HEALTH PROMOTION GRANTS

Vancouver Coastal Health Promotion supported community-based initiatives that promoted healthy lifestyles, mental wellness and social connection among Richmond residents. Since 2018, more than \$3.2M was distributed to local organizations serving newcomers, refugees, seniors, children, youth, and people living with mental health challenges, including Richmond Mental Health Consumer & Friends Society; Pathways Clubhouse Society of Richmond, Richmond Addiction Services Society, Richmond Family Place, Urban Bounty, Family Services of Greater Vancouver, and S.U.C.C.E.S.S. By enabling trusted community organizations to deliver wellness-focused programming, the grants helped address a range of health and social needs while building on the strengths of Richmond's diverse communities.

COMMUNITY GARDENS IN PARKS

Community gardens offer residents opportunities to connect with nature, grow plants and vegetables, and engage with sustainable gardening practices while engaging in light physical activity and enhancing community connections. Between 2018 and 2025, in partnership with Urban Bounty, approximately 442 new community garden plots were added in parks across Richmond, including Garden City Lands, Cook Neighbourhood Park, Hamilton, Hamilton Community Park, Alexandra Neighbourhood Park, Terra Nova Rural Park, Riverport, and three locations along the Railway Greenway. In 2024, six wheelchair-accessible plots were added at Hamilton, Alexandra, and Terra Nova, improving accessibility for residents with mobility disabilities.



SCHOOL-BASED FOOD SECURITY INITIATIVES

Starting in 2023, Richmond School District No. 38 received \$2.73 million in provincial funding through the Feeding Futures School Program to provide breakfast, lunch, and snack programs for students in need and enable the launch of community fridges in every school. In 2024, Kwantlen Polytechnic University donated over \$22,000 in produce from its Garden City Lands farm to support the Richmond School District No. 38's community fridge and student food programs, increasing access to fresh, locally grown food while strengthening community connections. In 2025, additional National School Food Program funding and the Richmond School District No. 38's Feed-U-Cate fund further supported school-based food security initiatives, improving access to nutritious food for students across the city.



CITY OF RICHMOND GRANTS SUPPORTING COMMUNITY WELLNESS

Between 2018 to 2025, The City awarded over \$7.75M to non-profit community organizations through various community grants to support the provision of a diverse array of programs and services that enhance well-being and improve the quality of life of Richmond residents, including:

- Arts and Culture: Approximately \$982,000 was allocated for operating and project grants to cultural non-profit organizations.
- Child Care: Approximately \$447,000 was allocated to non-profit organizations that support or deliver licensed child care in Richmond.
- Environmental Enhancement: Approximately \$180,000 was allocated to non-profit organizations for materials needed to enhance Richmond's natural environment.
- Health, Social and Safety: Almost \$4.9M was allocated to non-profit organizations delivering social services and programs in Richmond.
- Parks, Recreation and Community Events: Approximately \$950,000 was allocated to non-profit organizations delivering programs and services that support health, well-being and community connection.
- Neighbourhood Celebration, Community Celebration and Neighbourhood Block Party: Almost \$296,000 was allocated to support public events that connect and build community in Richmond.

FOUNDRY RICHMOND

Foundry is a network of sites located throughout British Columbia that offers free in-person and online support for young people 12–24 years, and their families. Operated by Vancouver Coastal Health, in conjunction with Richmond-based community partners, Foundry Richmond has offered five core services including: mental health services, substance use services, physical healthcare services, work/education/community services, and peer support since opening the permanent site in 2022. Foundry Richmond provides safe, non-judgmental, and confidential care, aiming to provide low barrier access to services for Richmond youth. Foundry Richmond has been an innovative site, frequently exploring new ways to effectively connect and support Richmond youth.



Focus Area #2

Enhance physical and social connectedness within and among neighbourhoods and communities

Focus Area #2 supports initiatives that strengthen belonging, participation, and connection within Richmond neighbourhoods and communities. Through welcoming built and natural environments, along with inclusive programs and services, these efforts create opportunities for residents to gather, participate and build relationships that strengthen social connectedness and a sense of belonging.

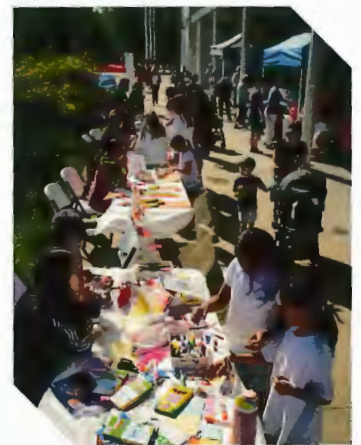
2024–2025 Highlights

CONNECTING THROUGH THE ARTS

- **Engaging Artists in Community Programs:** The Engaging Arts in Community Program partnered artists with three community groups to deliver a range of community-engaged projects including those that support youth in expressing identity and building social connections. One project, *Hidden Stories of the Bioverse* (January–June 2024), engaged over 80 students at Dixon Elementary School in exploring local ecosystems and personal narratives through place-based art, resulting in a multi-authored comic book and public art installations at Francis and No. 1 Road.

CREATING WELCOMING GATHERING SPACES

- **Capstan Neighbourhood Park Phase 2:** Delivered in 2025, Capstan Neighbourhood Park Phase 2 added basketball courts, seating areas, open lawn space, lighting, bike racks, and extensive tree and plantings. Located beside Capstan Train Station in a high-density urban neighbourhood, the park brings natural and built elements together to create an inviting, accessible gathering space that encourages residents to meet, interact, and take part in shared recreational activities close to home.
- **London/Steveston Neighbourhood School Park Dog Off-Leash Area:** Completed in 2024, the new dog off-leash area at London/Steveston Neighbourhood School Park creates a welcoming neighbourhood space for residents to gather, connect and build relationships through regular park use. Identified through the London/Steveston Park Master Plan and informed by community engagement, the amenity provides an active and social space for dogs while supporting social interaction and strengthening belonging within the neighbourhood.





EXPANDING RECREATION THROUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD OUTREACH

- **Neighbourhood Play Days:** In partnership with community associations and societies, Neighbourhood Play Days offered free, inclusive recreation activities in five parks during summer 2025. Held weekly at Garry Point, Thompson, Aberdeen, King George/Cambie, and South Arm parks, the program engaged approximately 1,450 residents through games, music, and family-friendly activities, bringing neighbours together in shared outdoor spaces and strengthening connection, participation and belonging.
- **Children and Family Community Outreach:** South Arm Community Association delivered neighbourhood-based outreach by bringing arts and sports activities directly to Adelaide Court Housing Cooperative. In August 2025, two outreach sessions engaged over 25 children living at the complex, reflecting broader efforts to provide accessible recreation opportunities where children and families live, play and connect, while strengthening community connection and belonging.
- **Seniors Wellness and Monthly Socials:** Funded through the New Horizons for Seniors Program, seniors programs at South Arm Community Centre supported active aging, social connection and community belonging. Monthly socials engaged over 700 residents over 12 months in health, education, and social activities that strengthened community connections and cultural understanding. The *Seniors Stronger Together* program also offered free monthly gatherings that combined instructor-led exercise focused on balance and fall prevention with social engagement, benefiting approximately 60 seniors.
- **Engaging Seniors in Age-Friendly Planning:** Supported by funding from the federal New Horizons for Seniors Program and provincial BC Healthy Communities Age-Friendly Communities grant, five Age-Friendly Neighbourhood Groups that engaged 89 seniors were implemented in the Broadmoor, Cambie/East Richmond, Hamilton, Blundell and Gilmore/Shellmont neighbourhoods. Through facilitated discussions,



built environment tours and guest speakers, participants learned about programs and services for seniors, and built connections with peers and service providers, while informing neighbourhood planning to support aging-in-place, and strengthening participants' sense of belonging and civic engagement.

BUILDING SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS THROUGH RICHMOND PUBLIC LIBRARY PROGRAMS

- **Community Connect Box:** Launched in 2024, the Community Connect Box program supports residents in long-term care homes through activity kits, including puzzles and games, placed on-site for up to six months. Regular staff visits help engage residents, foster social interaction, and connect them with library services, helping reduce social isolation and strengthen relationships for seniors with diverse needs.
- **Conversations in the Library:** Since launching in May 2025, Conversations in Library has created regular opportunities for residents and newcomers to practice English, meet others, and build social connections in a welcoming setting. Through 64 sessions, the program engaged almost 600 participants and supported connection and belonging in the community.
- **Mahjong & Conversation:** Mahjong & Conversation brought seniors together on a weekly basis to play Mahjong, socialize and build connections with others in a welcoming environment. Offered more than 60 times in 2024 and 2025, the program engaged 787 participants and supported ongoing social interaction and belonging.
- **Youth Conversation Circle:** Coordinated by Richmond Public Library in partnership with Settlement Workers in Schools and Richmond School District No. 38, Youth Conversation Circles provided regular opportunities for teens to connect with one another through facilitated conversations and games on everyday topics. Between 2024 and 2025, 70 sessions were hosted, engaging nearly 864 youth and supporting peer connection and belonging.

CREATING CONNECTION THROUGH NATURE-BASED PROGRAMS AND EXHIBITS

Richmond Nature Park Society delivered workshops, exhibits and seasonal events that created opportunities for residents to gather, learn and connect through shared nature-based experiences. These included:

Visions of Biophilia: In 2024, artist Desiree Patterson led eight workshops involving more than 200 participants, resulting in a 52-foot community mural installed at the park entrance. The project fostered connection by bringing residents together to contribute to a shared public artwork inspired by nature.

Halloween Hoot: Featuring a festive trail with over 35 inflatables, nature-themed art, a pumpkin patch, and educational exhibits, this 10-day family-friendly event welcomed 5,000 visitors in 2025. The event created opportunities for families and neighbours to gather and connect through a shared seasonal experience in a natural setting.

Nature Series: Introduced in 2024, the Nature Series promoted free, seasonal programs that connected residents with Richmond's parks, urban wildlife and one another. Through presentations, guided walks and hands-on activities on topics such as hummingbirds, owls,



bats and mushrooms, the series drew 350 to 500 participants per event, encouraging participation and shared outdoor experiences, while strengthening environmental stewardship and community connectedness.

- **Rediscover Richmond Program:** Supported by a \$5,000 PlanH Healthy Communities grant, the Richmond Nature Park Society delivered the Rediscover Richmond Program in 2024. The program offered free, accessible, outdoor experiences through 19 workshops across nine parks and six community facilities. Activities included bird watching, kite flying, and learning about local plants and helped more than 300 participants reduce isolation, build social connections, and strengthen their sense of belonging within Richmond neighbourhoods.



CONNECTING COMMUNITY THROUGH ECO-FRIENDLY PROGRAMS

- **Community Tree Planting:** During Earth Week, 18 youth, four adults, and two staff planted 75 shrubs and five trees, supporting natural pest management and creating valuable bird habitat. This initiative strengthened biodiversity, climate resilience, and community stewardship, and was funded by the Richmond Nature Park Society through the City's Environmental Enhancement Grant. In addition, 17 tree-planting community events were hosted throughout 2024 and 2025, bringing residents together in shared green spaces to help improve the local environment.
- **Invasive Species Removal:** With funding from the City of Richmond's Environmental Enhancement Grant, Thompson Community Association delivered youth-led projects focused on invasive species removal in local parks that promoted environmental stewardship, raised community awareness and created meaningful opportunities for youth and community members to work together, strengthening neighbourhood connections, participation and a sense of belonging.
- **Mini Forests:** In 2024 and 2025, more than 490 community members, volunteers, and students helped plant over 3,000 native trees, shrubs, and perennials through mini forest initiatives at Garden City Park, Garden City



Lands, Spul'u'kwuks Elementary, and Baydala Court near the Bridgeport Trail. These dense native plantings improve air quality, provide shade, and enhance wildlife habitat, while creating more welcoming neighbourhood spaces and strengthening environmental stewardship and community connection.

BUILDING CONNECTEDNESS AMONG YOUTH

- **Friday Night Youth Hangouts:** Richmond's community associations and societies offered Friday Night Youth Hangouts to provide free opportunities for youth to participate in sports and physical activities while connecting with peers. Youth staff and outreach workers from Touchstone Family Association provided resources to support mental wellness, community engagement, and leadership development.
- **Youth Mega Hangouts:** This program created opportunities for youth to connect with one another through shared social and recreational experiences during the summer months. Activities included Drag Queen Karaoke at Cambie Community Centre, the Young and Loud Youth Concert at the Richmond Cultural Centre Annex, and a Youth Cookout and Concert at South Arm Community Centre. In partnership with Kwantlen Polytechnic University Farm, 43 youth also participated in a Long Table event where they harvested produce, took part in flower arranging, and shared a farm-to-table meal, helping to foster social connection, belonging and meaningful community experience.
- **Link-up Program:** This free, drop-in social program for youth of 19–24 years creates opportunities to build connections, develop a sense of belonging, and engage with others through shared activities such as trivia nights, improv, and crafts. Originally launched at Steveston Community Centre, the program has since expanded to City Centre Community Centre, increasing access to social connection opportunities across neighbourhoods and supporting community connectedness for young adults.



2018–2025 Major Accomplishments

VOLUNTEERISM SUPPORTING COMMUNITY WELLNESS

Growth in volunteer participation through the City's "I Can Help" volunteer management system strengthened community wellness by helping residents contribute to sports, arts, culture and recreation opportunities across Richmond. While volunteer activity declined significantly during the pandemic, contributions rebounded strongly as programs, events and community initiatives resumed, increasing from 15,554 volunteer hours in 2020 to 61,467 in 2025. This growth reflects the important role volunteers play in expanding opportunities for participation, social connection, belonging and community engagement. The City's continued ability to attract and support volunteers strengthened community capacity and contributed to a more active, connected and inclusive city.



MINORU LAKES RENEWAL PROJECT

The Minoru Lakes Renewal Project enhanced access to supportive outdoor environments that promote physical activity, mental well-being and social connection. Completed in 2023, the renewed Minoru Lakes District introduced new site furniture, a boardwalk, enhanced viewing areas and a waterfall that also serves as a bio-filter for stormwater, creating a welcoming natural space for residents to gather, walk and connect with nature. Native plantings around the lakes further improved the ecological health of the area and support local wildlife, including waterfowl and insects. In 2025, the project received the BC Recreation and Parks Association Parks Excellence Award.

SIGNATURE EVENTS

Over the life of the Strategy, the City strengthened community connection, belonging and intercultural understanding by partnering with local organizations and community groups to deliver signature events that created inclusive opportunities for residents and visitors to connect, learn and celebrate together. As reflected in the City's Signature and Community Events Plan 2025–2029, annual signature events play an important role in fostering civic pride, sense of place and community belonging. Signature events such as the Children's Arts Festival, Doors Open Richmond, Cherry Blossom Festival, Steveston Salmon Festival, and Richmond Maritime Festival provided large-scale opportunities to celebrate Richmond's diverse cultural traditions. Additionally, on September 7, 2025, Richmond Farm Fest, in partnership with Kwantlen Polytechnic University, returned to Garden City Lands for a free, family-friendly celebration of farming, food and community, attracting over 2,500 visitors. Together, these events strengthened intercultural connections and expanded access to cultural participation across the community by bringing together 144,000 people in 2024 and 158,000 people in 2025.



Photo credit: Grant McMillan

Focus Area #3

Enhance equitable access to amenities, services, and programs within and among neighbourhoods

Focus Area #3 supports initiatives that reduce barriers and improve equitable access to programs, services and community supports across Richmond. These efforts respond to diverse neighbourhood and population needs, help residents participate more fully in community life, and support overall well-being.

2024–2025 Highlights



EQUITY-INFORMED PLANNING AND COMMUNITY VOICE

- **Equity Lens Toolkit for Recreation:** The Equity Lens Toolkit (the Toolkit) was created and piloted in 2024 across the City's community centres to ensure that programs and services are tailored to the diverse needs of the community. The Toolkit includes a reflective guide to identify gaps, set priorities, and integrate equity considerations into program planning and service delivery. A monitoring and reporting plan also ensures ongoing assessment and responsiveness to community needs. Learnings from the pilot will help inform next steps, with the goal of expanding the Toolkit's use across more City programs and services, continuing to drive equity, diversity and inclusion forward. The project was supported by a \$15,000 BC Healthy Communities grant received in 2021.

- **Advisory Committees Advancing Equitable Access:** Council-appointed committees, such as the Seniors Advisory Committee, Accessibility Advisory Committee, Aquatic Advisory Board, Youth Advisory Committee and Intercultural Advisory Committee strengthened inclusive decision-making by bringing community perspectives into City planning, policies, programs and services. For example, Youth Advisory Committee members, including representatives from Aspire Richmond, Foundry Richmond, Richmond Addiction Services Society, Richmond School District No. 38 and Vancouver Coastal Health, helped identify barriers to youth participation and opportunities to improve access. The Intercultural Advisory Committee, composed of representatives from immigrant-serving agencies and residents, applied an intercultural and equity lens to City strategies and engagement, highlighting opportunities to improve language access and culturally responsive communication and programming; in 2025, Chimo Community Services joined the Committee, further strengthening insight into the experiences of newcomers, refugee claimants, and asylum seekers.



ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE RECREATION AND WELLNESS

- **Sensory-friendly Skates and Swims:** Sensory-friendly skating and swimming opportunities were introduced to improve access to recreation for individuals with autism, anxiety, sensory sensitivities, or disabilities. Sensory-friendly skates offered a regular-lighting, music-free environment to support comfortable participation, while sensory-friendly swims featured reduced noise, modified pool conditions such as turning off water features and hand dryers, and additional staff support. Together, these initiatives helped reduce sensory barriers and expand inclusive recreation opportunities in welcoming, low-barrier settings.
- **Get Active Fitness Sampler:** Funded by the ParticipACTION Community Challenge grant and offered in partnership with the Vancouver Coastal Health Richmond Mental Health Team, this program supported select adults with ongoing mental health disabilities through twice-weekly sessions at Minoru Centre for Active Living. Participants engaged in a range of activities, including small group training, Nordic walking, Pilates, and aquafit, improving access to inclusive, supported fitness opportunities. Following the program, several participants continued their fitness journey independently, demonstrating sustained engagement and increased confidence in physical activity.
- **Adaptive Try-it Fitness Sessions:** Thompson Community Association, in partnership with Aspire Richmond, delivered inclusive “try-it” fitness sessions as part of the ParticipACTION Community Challenge, featuring adaptive yoga, Pilates, kickboxing, and Zumba for individuals with disabilities.
- **Specialized Fitness Programs:** The City expanded specialized fitness supports for residents living with Parkinson’s disease and those recovering from knee and hip replacement surgeries. Delivered at Minoru Centre for Active Living and Watermania, these instructor-led programs support improved function, strength, and recovery through targeted land- and pool-based exercise. In 2025, the Exercises for Those with Parkinson’s program increased capacity and reached 180 participants over two years, while the Joint Replacement Recovery Program also expanded and served 63 participants in 2024 and 2025. Additional movement programs are also offered to support individuals with arthritis, osteoporosis and mobility disabilities to better manage daily activities.



CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND NEWCOMER-FOCUSED ACCESS

- **Women and Girls-Only Swim:** Women and girls-only swim sessions at Watermania responded to growing community demand by providing a dedicated, inclusive space for participation. Open to women and girls of all ages, as well as boys under seven, participation increased from approximately 2,000 in 2024 to more than 2,300 in 2025, improving access to recreation and supporting cultural inclusion.
- **Coffee and Chat Program:** 122 individuals living with dementia participated in the free Coffee and Chat program. This program was hosted by Minoru Seniors Society in partnership with the Alzheimer Society of BC and Yukon and offered in Cantonese. The program provided an opportunity for seniors with early symptoms of dementia to have a barrier-free social connection with others who are also living the dementia.
- **Newcomers Bus Tours and Newcomers Guide:** Newcomers Bus Tours were relaunched in 2024, with over 20 tours engaging more than 450 participants in small-group, multilingual sessions introducing City services. The Newcomer's Guide to Richmond was updated in 2025 and made available in eight languages, while additional tours, including a Terra Nova Rural Park visit for 25 newcomers, further supported connection and settlement. Together, these initiatives reduced barriers, improved access to information, and strengthened community integration.
- **New Immigrant Orientation Program:** The New Immigrant Orientation program was delivered in partnership with S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and provided Mandarin and Cantonese sessions to connect newcomers to health and wellness programs in Richmond, including low-cost and free services. Over 30 sessions engaged more than 880 participants, improving access to information and supporting settlement and participation in community programs.
- **Indigenous Success Program:** In April 2025, the Indigenous Success Program was delivered in partnership with Richmond School District No. 38, engaging students in leatherworking workshops led by knowledge keepers Bruce Baptiste and Mae Postel. Across four sessions with 6–10 participants each, students learned to create medicine pouches, strengthening cultural awareness, hands-on skills, and connection to Indigenous knowledge and traditions.
- **Diversity Symposium:** In 2024, the City celebrated the 10th anniversary of its annual Diversity Symposium, a free event for professionals, volunteers and community members interested in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion. Workshops in the 2024 and 2025 Symposiums focused on inclusive-by-design program principles and strategies for centering lived experiences in program planning. These workshops shared best practices for engaging with groups that experience barriers to participation in programs, including 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, newcomers, and people with disabilities.



ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND RESOURCE NAVIGATION

■ Community Services Pop Ups & Community Services Connectors

Program: Through the Community Services Pop Ups and Community Services Connectors program, residents with lower incomes were connected to a wide range of community-based services that helped households meet needs such as employment, housing, recreation, social connection and wellness. Developed in partnership between the City and Richmond Public Library in collaboration with community partners, a total of 137 Community Services Pop Ups and Community Services Connectors programs were held at Richmond libraries between January 2024 and December 2025. Approximately 2,714 residents were able to access critical information about services and support through these programs that contribute to their overall well-being.

- **RPL To Go:** RPL To Go is a mobile outreach initiative launched by Richmond Public Library in 2025 to remove barriers to library resources access and increase engagement with residents of all ages, including underserved and hard to reach individuals. Since July 1, 2025, this service has made over 35 visits, connecting with almost 1500 residents.

- **No or Low-Cost Community Meals and Food Programs Resource:** The City collaborated with the Richmond Food Bank and Richmond Food Coalition to update the No or Low-Cost Community Meals and Food Programs resource. The resource compiles information about free and low-cost meals delivered by community organizations and grocery distribution through the Richmond Food Bank. In 2024, the resource was refined to enhance access to information about community food programs, as well as act as a tool to support community meal providers assessing potential gaps and service duplication. The resource is available on the City's Community Resources webpage.



ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SUPPORTS AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

- **Vaccine Clinics:** Free drop-in COVID-19 and flu vaccine clinics improved access to preventative healthcare by offering services in familiar, community-based locations. Delivered by Vancouver Coastal Health at Richmond Public Library branches, the clinics reached 150 participants. By providing no-cost immunization opportunities in accessible settings, the initiative helped reduce barriers to care and support community health and well-being. Furthermore, clinics were offered at the Seniors Centre at Minoru Centre for Active Living and City Centre Community Centre in partnership with local pharmacies.
- **Citywide Wellness Clinics:** In 2024 and 2025, several community associations and societies including South Arm, East Richmond, Steveston, City Centre and the Minoru Seniors Society, delivered a range of wellness services for seniors. Services included blood pressure and glucose checks, hearing clinics, foot care, reflexology, and massage treatments. In 2025, participation notably increased, including 2,272 blood pressure checks, 2,678 blood glucose tests, and over 1,000 wellness treatments, improving access to preventative care and supporting seniors' health and well-being.
- **Wellness Connections:** Offered by the Minoru Seniors Society, Wellness Connections is an outreach program that is designed to reintegrate frail, at risk and isolated seniors back into the community, and it is offered in Cantonese and English four times a year. The multi-session program includes varied activities, a specialized fitness class, lunch and transportation and utilizes multiple volunteers. Over the two years, the program served 192 participants. The program is partially funded by a Community Gaming Grant and a City of Richmond Health, Social and Safety Grant. Remaining costs are covered by the Society and participant fees.
- **Getting There:** In 2024 and 2025, the Minoru Seniors Society, supported by a Vancouver Coastal Health Promotion Grant and in partnership with the Richmond Mental Health Consumer and Friends Society, delivered the *Getting There* program to support seniors facing transportation barriers. The initiative enabled seniors to attend bi-weekly programs at the Minoru Centre for Active Living, with transportation and participation provided at low or no cost. Continued support in 2025 ensured the program remained fully accessible, improving access to services, reducing isolation, and strengthening social connection among participants.
- **Minds in Motion:** South Arm Community Association, in partnership with Alzheimer Society of BC and Yukon, offered *Minds in Motion 55+*, a free Alzheimer's Society referred program led by a certified fitness instructor and followed by social activities designed for people living with early-stage memory loss.



REDUCING FINANCIAL BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

- **Active Recreation and Sport Fund:** The Richmond Sports Council's Active Recreation and Sport Fund helps to remove financial barriers to recreation and sport programming for children in Richmond. Through funding from the City's Parks, Recreation and Community Events grant, the Fund has supported 50 children since 2024, providing up to \$500 per child to cover fees for active recreation and sport programs that do not have a provincial governing body. Eligible programs included martial arts, floor hockey, swimming, gymnastics and various types of dance.

- **Grade 5 Active! Pass:** Since 2023, the Grade 5 Active! Pass provided free access to recreation programs, including public swimming and skating, helping remove financial barriers for youth at a key stage of development. Participation increased from nearly 900 of 1,900 students in 2023–2024 to 1,088 of 2,059 students in 2024–2025, supporting early engagement in sports and recreation, building confidence in community spaces, and encouraging lifelong healthy habits.
- **\$29 Summer Active Pass:** The City in partnership with community associations and societies, offered the \$29 Summer Active Pass, a low-cost pass for children and youth 5 to 18 years to stay active over the summer break. Valid from mid-June through Labour Day weekend each year, the pass provided unlimited access to drop-in activities including swimming, skating and Pitch 'n' Putt golf, as well as fitness centre access and select sports and fitness drop-in activities at community centres. In 2025, an increase in overall usage by youth, with over 3,000 more visits compared to 2024, was recorded. In 2025 and 2024, 50,739 and 54,005 visits were recorded.



2018–2025 Major Accomplishments

RECREATION FEE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

The Recreation Fee Subsidy Program provides residents of all ages experiencing financial hardship with subsidized access to recreation, culture and parks programs. The program supports participation in both registered and drop-in programs offered by the City and community associations and societies, helping more residents to access the physical, mental wellness and social benefits of participating in recreational activities. Program uptake continued to grow in 2024–2025, with 4,854 participants—a 15 per cent increase from 3,985 participants in 2023–2024 and a 53 per cent increase from 2,984 participants in 2022–2023.



COMMUNITY LINK SERVICE (SOCIAL PRESCRIBING PROGRAM)

Social Prescribing is an innovative approach that addresses social determinants of health and connects individuals with non-clinical community resources to enhance overall health and well-being. Since its launch in October 2022, the Social Prescribing Program within the Richmond Primary Care Network (PCN) has become a vital service, transforming access to holistic supports across the community. The Program enables Family Physicians and Nurse Practitioners to refer patients to a Community Link Worker, who assesses individual needs and connects them to appropriate support and services, including programs in Richmond's community centres, Minoru Seniors Centre and aquatics facilities. The Social Prescribing program has expanded to include public education, outreach, and collaborations with community partners and organizations. Participants experience improvements in physical and emotional well-being, social connections, and overall quality of life. In 2025, the addition of a Community Navigator enhanced service capacity and language accessibility through Cantonese and Mandarin support, improving equity of access and overall program efficiency.



COMMUNITY POVERTY REDUCTION AND PREVENTION TABLE

Since the adoption of the 2021–2031 Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty, the City and its partners have worked together to reduce barriers to community supports for residents experiencing or at risk of poverty. A key mechanism has been the Community Poverty Reduction and Prevention Table, which has strengthened cross-sector coordination, increased awareness of available services, improved referral pathways, and improved equitable access to community supports across Richmond.

LIBRARY CHAMPIONS PROJECT

Through Library Champions Project, recent immigrants have received training about library services and programs as well as other community, health, and social service resources in Richmond, to help other newcomers navigate and access resources, and participate more fully in the community. In 2020, 40 newcomers trained to become Champions and reached out to 1,067 newcomers. By the end of 2025, 27 cycles were completed with 301 newcomers as Champions, reaching 15,485 individuals and connecting them to resources and opportunities to participate in community life.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

The Richmond School District No. 38 Community Schools Initiative was launched in the 2020/21 school year to create programming opportunities for elementary students, particularly those in Grades 5 to 7, to develop and enhance physical literacy. Programs focus on age-appropriate, skill-building activities that build movement competence, confidence and enjoyment in physical activity. Since its launch, partnerships with South Arm, City Centre and East Richmond Community Associations, as well as Steveston Community Society, have expanded sports and physical activity programming and increased access to opportunities for participation beyond the school day. Together, these efforts help foster lifelong healthy habits and active lifestyles.

WATER SAFETY EDUCATION

The Water Safety Education Program expanded access to basic water safety education for children and youth who may not otherwise participate in swimming lessons. Aligned with the BC Physical and Health Education curriculum, school-based sessions reached 975 students in 2024 and 983 students in 2025 across 12 schools each year. Additional outreach at community events extended the program's reach beyond schools. By reducing financial, cultural, and access barriers, the initiative helped address gaps in water safety knowledge, build confidence around water, and support drowning prevention, particularly for newcomer children and youth who may face increased risk.



Focus Area #4

Facilitate supportive, safe, and healthy natural and built environments.

Focus Area #4 supports initiatives that enhance Richmond's built and natural environments to support health, safety and everyday well-being. These efforts improve walkability, access to outdoor spaces, and opportunities for recreation, unstructured play, and active transportation.

2024–2025 Highlights

IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY AND MOBILITY

- **Audible Pedestrian Pushbutton Systems:** 30 Audible Pedestrian Pushbutton (APS) systems were installed at signalized intersections, following consultation with representatives of persons with sight loss. The systems feature verbal wayfinding, audible tones, and braille. Feedback from the Age-Friendly Neighbourhood Group sessions in 2024 and 2025 also informed additional upgrades, including an APS at the Cambie Road crosswalk near East Richmond Community Hall and tactile surface improvements to further support safe and accessible travel.
- **Accessible Bus Stops:** As of 2025, 95 per cent of the City's bus stops are accessible to people with mobility disabilities, with approximately 10 new accessible stops installed each year. These improvements support safe transit access, greater independence and better connectivity for residents with mobility needs.



- **Multi-Use Pathway Expansion:** The City continued to expand its Multi-Use Pathway network to strengthen active transportation infrastructure and improve connectivity and accessibility within and between neighbourhoods. Completed projects in 2024 and 2025 included the off-street pathway on No. 2 Road from Steveston Highway to Williams Road; Phase 3 of the Steveston Highway pathway from No. 2 Road to Railway Avenue; widening and repaving of the Garden City Road pathway from Francis Road to Williams Road; a new pathway on the north side of Lansdowne Road from Gilbert Road to Pearson Way; and safety improvements at No. 2 Road and Westminster Highway, including a bi-directional cycling facility from No. 2 Road to Lynas Lane.

- **Nature House and Kinsmen Pavilion Accessibility Upgrades:** In 2024, the Richmond Nature Park completed accessibility improvements to the Nature House and Kinsmen Pavilion, including accessible doors, enhanced ramps, and paved walkways, helping ensure the park remains welcoming and usable for visitors of all ages and abilities.

ENHANCING SAFETY, COMFORT AND USABILITY IN PUBLIC SPACES

- **Customized Road Safety Programs:** Staff engaged residents, businesses, and schools to develop customized road safety programs in several neighbourhoods. This work led to speed reduction projects on Dyke Road and Springfield Drive, a 30 km/h speed limit in the Princess/ London neighbourhood, and safety upgrades at the intersections of No. 5 Road and Westminster Highway, No. 2 Road and Westminster Highway, Cambie Road and No. 5 Road, and Cambie Road and St. Edwards Drive. These improvements enhance safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers, promote active transportation, and contribute to more livable and connected communities.
- **McLean and Blundell Neighbourhood Parks:** In 2025, new washroom signage, additional benches and tree maintenance, enhanced accessibility, comfort and safety in these public spaces. These improvements support walkability by improving washroom wayfinding, addition rest opportunities, and improving sight lines for park users.
- **No. 3 Road Bark Park:** To improve conditions for cyclists, pedestrians and off-leash dogs, safety upgrades at No. 3 Road Bark Park carried out in 2025 included a new multi-use trail, fencing, and enhanced entrances. These improvements increase safety, encourage active use, and create a more inclusive, enjoyable park experience.
- **Shade and Shelter Program:** In 2024, three new shade and shelter structures were added at Dover Park, Garden City Park, and McLean Park. These structures provide protection from sun and inclement weather, improving comfort and supporting longer, safer use and community engagement in outdoor spaces.



EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTIVE OUTDOOR LIVING AND PLAY

- **Richmond Cycling Map:** In 2025, the Richmond Cycling Map was updated to include route comfort levels and safety information, helping residents plan rides across more than 345 km of bike routes. Available in print and online, the map improves access to cycling information, encourages active transportation, and supports healthier, more connected communities.
- **Minoru Park Outdoor Fitness Area:** Completed in November 2025 and with funding from the Rotary Club of Richmond, the new outdoor fitness area at Minoru Park added accessible, senior-friendly equipment that supports year-round physical activity and community connection.
- **Steveston Community Park Playground:** The renewed Steveston Community Park playground opened in June 2025 following a multi-year design process with community engagement. The \$2.2M upgrade created a cohesive play environment with improved sightlines to enhance safety and included accessible surfacing and play features supporting a wide range of ages and abilities.
- **Cultural Centre Annex Big Blue Blocks:** In 2024, Big Blue Blocks were installed outside the Cultural Centre Annex to support unstructured play. These large, movable foam pieces encouraged children of all ages to build, imagine, and explore through hands-on, active play.
- **Richmond Public Library ExplorePACKs:** Richmond Public Library's ExplorePACK collection provided barrier-free access to outdoor and learning experiences through kits for activities such as fishing, hiking, and birdwatching. Borrowed more than 4,200 times over 2024 and 2025, the collection supported children and families in exploring local environments, building STEAM skills, and increasing participation in outdoor recreation.



VIBRANT AND WELCOMING PUBLIC SPACES

- **Richmond's Street Banner Program:** Since its launch several years ago, the program has added locally designed artwork to neighbourhood streets and public spaces, contributing to a more vibrant and inviting public realm. Through the Banner Sponsorship Program, eligible organizations, including local businesses, non-profits and special event organizers, sponsored banners in select locations. In 2025, the street banners reflected 10 themes, namely Island City, Play, Diversity, Urban Landscape, Wildlife, Sustainability, Sports and Recreation, Community, Nature and Arts, Culture and Heritage. Over 580 entries were submitted to the annual community-wide contest, celebrating the places, activities and experiences that make Richmond unique.
- **Community Mural Program:** Between January 2024 and December 2025, 14 new murals were installed through this program at civic facilities, private businesses, schools and other buildings, enhancing Richmond's built environment and contributing to more welcoming public spaces. These artworks have been well-received by the public and facility users.





2018–2025 Major Accomplishments

SAFE AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION:

Since 2022, the City has advanced safer, healthier travel options through implementation of the Cycling Network Plan, road safety improvements, and Richmond's shared e-bike and e-scooter program, in collaboration with Vancouver Coastal Health Public Health, the Richmond School District and other partners. The updated Cycling Network Plan provides a 15-year framework to improve cycling infrastructure and safety through intersection upgrades, expanded bike parking and other network improvements, while supporting convenient access to jobs, services and recreation. Richmond's shared e-bike and e-scooter program has complemented this work by providing affordable, low-carbon transportation for residents and visitors, with approximately 245,000 trips taken since 2022. In 2024, discounted Lime Access rides were extended to Recreation Fee Subsidy Program participants, helping reduce financial barriers and support more equitable access to community amenities and activities.

PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS AND OPEN SPACE ENHANCEMENTS

Guided by the Parks and Open Space Strategy, the City expanded and enhanced Richmond's network of parks, playgrounds and open spaces between 2018 and 2025. New parks opened during this period, including Aberdeen Park, Alexandra Park, Capstan Neighbourhood Park, Ketcheson Park and Tait Riverfront Park, increasing access to neighbourhood and waterfront open spaces that support physical activity, outdoor play and everyday community use. The City also advanced playground and park amenity renewals to make outdoor spaces safer, more welcoming and more functional for residents of all ages and abilities. This included playground renewals, expanded shade and shelter infrastructure, trail and accessibility improvements and upgrades that support longer and more comfortable use of parks. Recent examples include



the Steveston Park Playground renewal, new shade and shelter structures at Dover Park, Garden City Park and McLean Park and safety and access upgrades at No. 3 Road Bark Park. Together, these investments strengthened Richmond's parks and open space system and enhanced opportunities for active living, social connection and neighbourhood well-being.

PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

Richmond's Public Art Program contributes to more welcoming, vibrant and engaging public spaces. By incorporating art into civic and community settings, the program supports placemaking, reflects community identity, fosters social connection and cultural awareness, and encourages a stronger sense of belonging. Since 2018, completed projects have included *Richmond's Firefighter* at No. 1 Fire Hall (2018), *No. 2 Road Drainage Pump Station* (2018), *Together* at Minoru Centre for Active Living (2019), *Four Seasons of Movement* at Clement Track (2020), *Pergola Garden* at Alexandra Park (2022), *Wake* at Tait Waterfront Park (2022), *Typha* at Middle Arm Waterfront Greenway (2023), *Seasons of Colour* at the Richmond Cultural Centre Annex (2024), *Welcome* at the Bowling Green Community Activity Centre (2025) and *Tales in Current* at the Brighthouse-Terminus Canada Line Station (2025).



Image credit: *Together* by David Jacob Harder

Focus Area #5

Promote wellness literacy for residents across all ages and stages of their lives

Focus Area #5 supports initiatives that strengthen awareness and understanding of health and wellness literacy. These efforts improve access to information and help residents build the knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions about their health and well-being.

2024–2025 Highlights

INCREASING ACCESS TO RELIABLE AND INCLUSIVE HEALTH INFORMATION

■ **Ming Pao Healthy Living Day and Newcomer Health Navigation:**

Through a partnership with Richmond Public Library and community health partners, the annual Ming Pao Healthy Living Day provided Cantonese-language health education sessions led by medical professionals, engaging 165 participants in both 2024 and 2025. In addition, the library partnered with SUCCESS to deliver a series of programs for newcomers on navigating health and wellness services, including access to primary care, benefits and screenings. Together, these initiatives improved access to culturally and linguistically relevant health information, strengthened system navigation and supported informed decision-making among diverse communities.



- **Generation Health Community:** Launched in 2024, Generation Health Community was a collaborative initiative between the Childhood Healthy Living Foundation, East Richmond Community Association, and Mitchell Elementary School. Designed to support children living with obesity and their families, the program strengthened wellness literacy by increasing awareness and understanding of health and physical activity through education and skill-building opportunities led by nutritionists and exercise specialists. Topics such as nutrition, healthy sleep habits, recreation and active living helped equip participants and their families with the knowledge, confidence and practical tools to make informed, sustainable lifestyle changes that support long-term health and well-being.

BUILDING WELLNESS KNOWLEDGE AMONG CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

- **Healthiest Babies Possible Program:** Richmond Public Library, in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health, delivered the Healthiest Babies Possible program through 46 sessions that reached over 600 babies and adults in 2024 and 2025. The program provided nutrition counselling, food access support and health education to promote healthy eating and improve wellness knowledge among priority families.
- **Physical Health Program:** Vancouver Coastal Health Public Health, in partnership with Richmond School District No. 38, delivered the Physical Health Program in Grades 1 to 3 classrooms. Public Health nurses visited 11 schools, reaching over 1,000 students and supporting teachers with tools to integrate physical activity, healthy eating, sleep and mindfulness into daily learning. Take-home resources extended learning to families and reinforced healthy behaviours beyond the classroom.



SUPPORTING HEALTHY AGING THROUGH EDUCATION AND PREVENTION

- **Health Talks:** Richmond Public Library, in partnership with Senior Link Society, delivered educational sessions on health and wellness led by a naturopathic doctor. A total of 21 sessions engaged more than 400 participants in 2024 and 2025, improving access to reliable health information and supporting informed decision-making among older adults.



- **Seniors Wellness Education and Preparedness Programs:** Community associations such as Minoru Seniors Society and South Arm Community Association, partnered with Vancouver Coastal Health to deliver a range of free workshops and information sessions for seniors on topics including falls prevention, extreme weather preparedness, home health supports and access to primary care services. These initiatives reached more than 350 participants and improved seniors' access to practical health and safety information, increased awareness of available supports and strengthened wellness literacy related to healthy aging and service navigation.
- **Self-Management Program for Seniors:** Thompson Community Association partnered with the University of Victoria's Self-Management Program to offer a free six-session education workshop series for seniors. Workshops included Chronic Pain Management and Diabetes Prevention and Education, offered in May and November 2025, respectively. The program strengthened seniors' knowledge, self-management skills and confidence in managing their health.

2018–2025 Major Accomplishments

55+ ACTIVATE! WELLNESS FAIR

The 55+ Activate! Wellness Fair continues to be an important source of health, wellness, safety, and independence information for older adults. After being aligned with Seniors Week in 2019, the event drew approximately 1,000 attendees. In 2021, when the Fair was held online, more than 300 age-friendly bags containing information and resources were distributed through community centres. The Fair returned in person in 2023 with over 40 information booths, five educational workshops, and approximately 500 attendees. On March 27, 2025, the biennial event again welcomed more than 500 attendees at the Seniors Centre at Minoru Centre for Active Living, featuring 45 information booths, three educational workshops in English and Cantonese, four physical “try-it” activities, and a Wellness Relaxation Room. Together, these events improved access to health and wellness information, increased awareness of available programs and services, and supported older adults in making informed decisions about their health and well-being.



GIRLS ONLY DAY (G.O. DAY)

G.O. Day is a joint initiative by the City of Richmond, Richmond School District No. 38, Vancouver Coastal Health, and community associations and societies. Taking place annually, G.O. Day is a free expo for female identifying youth to participate in both health educational and physical activity workshops. Post-pandemic, G.O. Day returned in 2022 and has continued through 2024. In 2024, the wide range of events and activities included a fitness class, a basketball lesson, Snack Attack—a workshop focusing on healthy and accessible snacks, a self-esteem and reflection exercise and a K-pop dance class. To support continued participation after the event, participants were connected with the *Empower Her* group and many other affordable activities to provide ongoing opportunities for girls.



STORIES OF WELLNESS IN RICHMOND

In 2024, the Stories of Wellness in Richmond campaign was launched. This annual initiative supported wellness literacy by increasing awareness and understanding of physical activity, healthy eating, and mental wellness through relatable, community-based examples. By featuring personal experiences and highlighting practical approaches to healthy, active living, the campaign helped residents build knowledge, reflect on their own wellness practices, and explore informed ways to support their own well-being.



Conclusion

The Community Wellness Strategy reflects the City of Richmond's shared commitment to enhancing the health, well-being, and quality of life of all residents. Progress across the five Focus Areas demonstrates the collective impact of community-driven action to reduce barriers and expand opportunities for meaningful participation in community life. Through improved access to recreation, services, learning opportunities, and social connection, these efforts have contributed to greater inclusion, a stronger sense of belonging and community well-being.

The highlights and accomplishments outlined in this report show that strong partnerships and sustained community engagement can produce meaningful results. Enhancements to public spaces, expanded access to programs and services, and increased opportunities for connection and learning have helped strengthen Richmond's capacity to respond to community needs in inclusive and practical ways. This work also underscores the importance of ongoing collaboration, responsiveness, and shared leadership in addressing emerging needs and priorities.

The City of Richmond, Vancouver Coastal Health and Richmond School District No. 38 remain committed to building on this foundation and continuing to work with residents and community partners to advance wellness. Through these shared efforts, Richmond will continue to foster a healthy, connected, and inclusive community where all residents can thrive.





City of Richmond

6911 No. 3 Road, Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1
Telephone: 604-276-4000
richmond.ca



To:	Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee	Date:	June 29, 2026
From:	Elizabeth Ayers General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture	File:	11-7000-11-01/2025- Vol 01
Re:	Richmond Arts Facilities Needs Assessment Report		

Staff Recommendation

That the priority needs as outlined in Attachment 1 of the report titled “Richmond Arts Facilities Needs Assessment Report”, from the General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture, dated June 29, 2026, be approved to guide future arts facility planning and investment in Richmond.

Executive Summary

This report responds to the November 14, 2023, Council resolution to undertake an Arts Facility Needs Assessment. It presents the Richmond Arts Facilities Needs Assessment Report (Needs Assessment) that identifies a set of priority needs to guide future arts facility planning and investment in Richmond.

The Needs Assessment found that Richmond has a valued and well-used foundation of purpose-built arts facilities; however, there are clear gaps in the supply, variety and functionality of arts spaces available to support current and future arts activity.

In response, the Needs Assessment identifies the following four priority needs for purpose-built arts facilities in Richmond: (1) Art Exhibition Spaces and Auditorium; (2) Music Performance and Rehearsal Spaces; (3) Theatre Performance and Rehearsal Spaces; and (4) Pottery Studio Spaces. The priority needs are intended to inform future capital planning and related decision-making over a 10-year horizon.

Staff Report

Origin

On November 14, 2023, at the regular Council meeting, Council passed the following resolutions on consent:

(1) That the proposed scope of work for the Richmond Arts Facilities Needs Assessment as presented in the report titled, “Richmond Arts Facilities Needs Assessment,” dated September 6, 2023, from the Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services, be endorsed; and

(2) That a one-time funding of \$75,000 be taken from Council Contingency Fund to initiate the Richmond Arts Facilities Needs Assessment.

The purpose of this report is to present the results of the Needs Assessment, including a set of priority needs to help guide future arts facility planning and investment in Richmond.

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

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

The Needs Assessment is aligned with several City strategies and plans, including the *Official Community Plan*, the *City Centre Area Plan*, *ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2026–2031*, and the *Community Wellness Strategy*. Together, these documents reinforce the importance of arts and cultural infrastructure in supporting a vibrant, inclusive and connected community, while helping guide long-term planning and investment decisions.

Analysis

Background

Arts and culture facilities play an important role in supporting community identity, cultural expression, social connection and quality of life, and help foster an inclusive, healthy and vibrant community by providing places for participation, learning, creation and presentation. This broader community-building role is an important consideration in planning for Richmond’s future arts and cultural infrastructure.

The City’s purpose-built arts spaces include the Gateway Theatre, the Richmond Cultural Centre, including the Richmond Arts Centre, Richmond Art Gallery and Theatre Under the Stairs, and the Richmond Cultural Centre Annex.

The purpose of the Needs Assessment is to provide the City with a clearer understanding of current and future needs, and strategic opportunities related to arts spaces, and to help inform future planning, capital investment, and amenity discussions. The Needs Assessment provides an evidence-based review of current and future community needs and a forward-looking planning

tool to support capital investment decisions over the next 10 years. This is the first step in facility planning and as such program development, facility costing and siting are not included with the scope of this analysis. See Attachment 1: Richmond Arts Facilities Needs Assessment Report 2026.

Approach

The Needs Assessment was developed using a mixed methods approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of current and emerging needs, and future opportunities for arts facilities in Richmond. The approach included:

- a review of the Richmond context;
- targeted Richmond arts community engagement;
- a review of previous engagement;
- a current state analysis of arts in Richmond;
- arts space and arts discipline trends and leading practices review; and
- a review of comparable municipal practices and plans.

Targeted arts community engagement for the Needs Assessment was conducted through 2024 and 2025, and included:

- a targeted survey of Richmond's arts community and arts facility operators, which received 102 responses;
- 10 individual and group interviews involving 13 participants, including members of Richmond's arts community, arts facility board members and operators, and Richmond School District No. 38 (SD38) staff;
- review and validation of findings from a 2018 online survey of Richmond's performing arts community; and
- input from a nine-member project Steering Committee, including external representatives from key arts and cultural organizations and Tourism Richmond, to help guide the process and support meaningful engagement with Richmond's arts community.

Overall, the engagement process provided input from a range of arts disciplines, organizations, facility operators, and education sector representatives, and helped inform the Needs Assessment findings.

Findings

The findings indicate that Richmond has a strong and valued foundation of arts spaces and facilities that are well used by the arts community and have long supported both arts activity and broader community use. Many of Richmond's purpose-built arts facilities continue to perform well in relation to the functions they were originally designed to serve. At the same time, as Richmond's population grows, Richmond's arts community expands, and arts practice continues to evolve, demand is increasing for more diverse and specialized arts spaces in Richmond.

Engagement findings indicated that the strongest areas of interest and opportunity relate to:

- music and performing arts spaces;
- theatre rehearsal and performance spaces;
- arts exhibition space; and
- pottery studio space.

Engagement also highlighted the importance of spaces that are well-matched to discipline-specific practice, while remaining welcoming, adaptable and supportive of a broad range of users and activities.

Current state and inventory analysis found that Richmond's existing arts facilities include important arts assets and highlights opportunities to broaden the range and functionality of arts spaces and facilities over time. In particular, the analysis identified opportunities to:

- expand the provision of non-amplified music performance spaces;
- expand the provision of performance and rehearsal spaces to better support the range and scale of theatre activity occurring in Richmond; and
- provide more flexible and appropriately scaled arts exhibition spaces.

Utilization and growth analysis points to unmet needs across several disciplines, including music, theatre, visual arts and pottery, and reinforces the importance of planning for spaces that can support both current need and continued evolution in artistic practice.

Research into trends, leading practices and comparable communities reinforced the value of:

- flexible, shared and multi-disciplinary arts spaces that can support a range of users and activities;
- a layered approach to provision that includes city-wide facilities, and community-level spaces;
- adaptable exhibition, gallery and performance environments; and
- technology-enabled environments such as media labs, maker spaces, and spaces that support digital and hybrid arts practices.

Richmond School District No. 38 Engagement Findings

Through the engagement process for this Needs Assessment, staff also consulted with SD38 staff regarding the potential use of school district space for musical arts and performing arts activities. Engagement findings indicated that, while SD38 facilities include some arts-related spaces, these spaces are intended to support school-based needs and have limited suitability and availability for broader community arts use. In addition, school district facilities do not currently include larger dedicated theatre or performance venues.

The engagement also identified that SD38 has its own need for affordable performance venue space in Richmond, particularly for school concerts, festivals, and productions. Richmond Cultural Centre spaces were identified as supporting some arts-related needs, and the consultation process also highlighted an opportunity for continued communication with SD38 regarding City arts and cultural opportunities and greater access to City-supported spaces. Overall, input received through the Needs Assessment indicates that SD38 facilities are unable to provide a viable long-term solution to Richmond's broader music and performing arts space needs; however, continued

dialogue and partnership between the City and SD38 may present future opportunities related to arts space.

Priority Needs

Four priority needs have been identified to address current and future needs over a 10-year planning horizon. The space sizes, square footages, seat counts, and other capacity measures identified in the priority needs are preliminary estimates intended to illustrate the general scale and function of facilities required to meet current and future needs. These figures will be refined through future planning efforts including program development, site-specific planning, and concept design.

The priority needs may be delivered in different ways, depending on opportunity, site availability, and future capital planning. They may be accommodated in one facility or across multiple locations, while still addressing the need for more specialized arts spaces in Richmond.

Art Exhibition Spaces and Auditorium

This responds to identified needs for dedicated, purpose-built *Class A arts exhibition spaces, an auditorium, multipurpose/program rooms, event space, and ancillary spaces to support these functions. The Needs Assessment research independently identified this priority need, which aligns with Council's consideration of the Duck Island redevelopment (RZ 20-915237) which was granted third reading by Council on May 21, 2024, and which included securing approximately 30,000 square feet of art exhibition spaces and auditorium space. The 2024 rezoning contemplates the provision of art gallery exhibition spaces of varying sizes, multipurpose/program rooms, an auditorium for performances, event space, and ancillary spaces such as exhibition support, collection storage, circulation and administrative spaces. Given the current economic uncertainties facing the development industry and large-scale development projects, should that development not proceed, the City could consider development of a comparable facility at another suitable location in Richmond. However, such consideration would also need to account for recent changes to provincial planning legislation (Bill 46 and 47) that have affected the City's ability to secure these types of through redevelopment. As a result, alternative delivery, funding and partnership approaches may need to be explored to support provision of a comparable space elsewhere in Richmond. This priority need would expand exhibition capacity within Richmond and the broader region and contribute to Richmond's Tourism Master Plan.

**A Class A exhibition space is an exhibition space recognized for its ability to preserve and display cultural property or artistic work at the highest standard including ensuring that proper environmental controls and security measures are in place.*

Music Performance and Rehearsal Spaces

This responds to identified needs for dedicated, acoustically appropriate spaces to support music performance, rehearsal, creation, and related production activities in Richmond. Needed spaces include a music performance space with 250 to 500 seats, two non-amplified music rehearsal spaces, and music education space(s) with appropriate storage to support specialized music

instruction, practice, and other learning-related activities. These primary program spaces would also require supportive ancillary spaces to enable their effective functioning.

Theatre Performance and Rehearsal Spaces

This responds to identified needs for dedicated, purpose-built spaces to support theatre performance, rehearsal, creation, and related production activities in Richmond. It also includes space that can support dance use, recognizing that while additional dedicated dance space is not identified as an immediate priority, future provision will be required to maintain service levels as Richmond's population grows. Needed spaces include a performance studio theatre with 100 to 150 seats, a rehearsal studio space, and a fabrication workshop intended to support set production and related production activities. These primary program spaces would also require supportive ancillary spaces to enable their effective functioning.

Pottery Studio Spaces

This supports community-based arts education and programming for residents of all ages and skill levels across the city. It responds to the identified immediate need for additional pottery studio space in Richmond, as the City's two existing pottery studios are heavily used and at capacity. Needed spaces include two pottery studios, each 750 to 1,000 square feet.

Existing City of Richmond Purpose-Built Arts Spaces

In addition to the recommended priority needs outlined above, capital funding requests to adapt or update existing spaces will be brought forward for Council consideration where justified by program needs and a demonstrated business case to support the request.

Capital Budget Process

The capital budget process is conducted utilizing established criteria to evaluate and prioritize capital projects that fulfill the needs of the City and the goals and objectives of Council. The use of objective criteria to prioritize capital projects results in optimal capital decisions that withstand public review. Each division prepares its capital submissions based on its area of expertise, needs assessment, Council priorities and funding availability. A Review Team, approved by the Chief Administrative Officer, is tasked with reviewing and ranking the capital submissions and the recommendation is provided to the Senior Management Team for review and discussion prior to being presented to Council for consideration.

Non-City Operated Arts Spaces

The Needs Assessment also identifies needs among emerging and professional artists and arts organizations for dedicated multidisciplinary arts spaces and visual arts studio spaces to support rehearsal, workshops, creative development, production, storage, and ongoing studio work. In Richmond, these types of spaces are not typically provided as City-delivered, purpose-built facilities for the sole or exclusive use of these users. Rather, this need is best understood within the City's broader enabling and partnership role and is aligned with *ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2026–2031*. Within this context, the City's role is to support the conditions for artists

and arts organizations to secure dedicated arts spaces in Richmond. This role may be advanced through partnerships, facilitation, planning tools, redevelopment opportunities, amenity contributions, and other enabling measures to improve access to dedicated arts spaces over time.

Richmond already has examples of this approach through development-secured spaces. Building on these approaches over time will support the City's role in investing in community capacity and help respond to these needs through improved access to dedicated space for creation, rehearsal, and sustained artistic practice.

Next Steps

The recommendations are based on current data available at the time of undertaking the Needs Assessment. As new information becomes available and/or circumstances change over time, arts facility and infrastructure priorities may also change in response to evolving community needs, service demands, partnership opportunities, and broader civic planning considerations.

The Needs Assessment is an initial step in addressing arts facility needs in Richmond. Should Council endorse the priority needs, the Needs Assessment will be used to inform future major facility planning processes, capital planning, site and redevelopment discussions, partnership opportunities, and other considerations related to the provision of arts and cultural infrastructure. Further planning, analysis, and engagement may be undertaken, as appropriate, to support any specific facility or infrastructure proposal that may be advanced for Council consideration.

Budgetary Implications

There are no immediate budget implications associated with the receipt of this report. Endorsement of the Needs Assessment and its priority needs outlined will provide strategic directions for future planning and capital investment decisions.

Conclusion

Arts facilities play an important role in supporting community identity, cultural expression, social connection and quality of life in Richmond. The Needs Assessment establishes a strategic foundation for future planning and decision-making by identifying where current facility gaps exist, where demand is growing, and where investment could have the greatest benefit over the next 10 years.

The priority needs presented in this report are intended to inform future capital planning, amenity planning, partnership development and related decision-making, while helping ensure that Richmond's arts infrastructure remains practical, inclusive, adaptable and responsive to the needs of residents, artists and arts organizations.

Respectfully submitted,

Mandeep Bains, Director, PRC Planning and Strategic Initiatives
Marie Fenwick, Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services

Report Contributors

This report was prepared by Christine Nesbitt, Research Planner 2, and reviewed by Development Applications and Policy Planning.

Endorsed by Serena Lusk, CAO

Att. 1: Richmond Arts Facilities Needs Assessment Report 2026

City of Richmond

Richmond Arts Facilities Needs Assessment Report



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Executive Summary

The City of Richmond strives to provide outstanding arts and culture facilities and programs that support the educational, artistic, and cultural needs of Richmond residents and artists contributing to a healthy, connected and resilient community.

The Richmond Arts Facilities Needs Assessment Report (Needs Assessment) was undertaken to better understand the current state of City of Richmond purpose-built arts spaces, as well as the future needs and opportunities that will shape the City's arts facility investments over time. The purpose of the Needs Assessment is to provide the City with a clearer understanding of current and future needs related to arts spaces in Richmond, and to identify priority needs for purpose-built arts facilities to help inform future planning, capital investment, and amenity discussions. The Needs Assessment provides an evidence-based review of current and future community needs and a forward-looking planning tool to support capital investment decisions over the next 10 years.

The Needs Assessment is grounded in Richmond's unique local context. The Needs Assessment considers key factors such as population growth, demographic change, evolving community needs, and the role of arts and culture within a growing and diverse municipality. The work was informed by arts community engagement, an inventory analysis of City-owned purpose-built arts facilities, research into Richmond's demographic and policy context, utilization and growth analysis, a review of trends and leading practices, and insights from comparable communities. These inputs provide a comprehensive picture of Richmond's current arts facility ecosystem and help identify both immediate and longer-term opportunities to better address Richmond's arts facility needs.

ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2026–2031 (*ArtWorks*) provides an important strategic context for the Needs Assessment. As the City’s current arts strategy, *ArtWorks* sets out a vision for a thriving, accessible, and connected arts sector in Richmond and affirms the value of arts and culture in supporting community well-being, civic identity, and quality of life. *ArtWorks* emphasizes increasing awareness of and participation in the arts, improving access and affordability, supporting leadership and investment, and activating public spaces through arts and culture. In this context, arts facilities play an important role not only as places for artistic activity, learning, and presentation, but also as part of the broader civic infrastructure that supports a vibrant and inclusive community.

The Needs Assessment supports the directions set out in *ArtWorks* by providing an evidence-based review and understanding of current and future arts facilities needs in the community. In this way, the report helps translate the City’s broader strategic direction into the identification of priority needs for arts spaces by examining how well current spaces serve Richmond’s artists, arts organizations, and residents, and where additional or different types of spaces may be required over time.

The findings indicate that Richmond benefits from a number of valued and well-used purpose-built arts facilities that contribute meaningfully to the city’s cultural life. At the same time, the Needs Assessment identifies gaps in the overall supply, and variety of specialized adaptable arts spaces to meet the needs of artists, arts organizations, and residents.

Based on the analysis undertaken, the report identifies four priority needs for purpose-built arts spaces in Richmond to help guide future consideration and investment over the next 10 years.

The space sizes, square footages, seat counts, and other capacity measures identified in the priority needs are preliminary estimates intended to illustrate the general scale and function of facilities required to meet current and future needs over the 10-year planning horizon. These figures are approximate and would be refined through future planning efforts such as program development, site-specific planning, and concept design.





Art Exhibition Spaces and Auditorium

This responds to identified needs for dedicated, purpose-built Class A arts exhibition spaces, an auditorium, multipurpose/program rooms, event space, and ancillary spaces to support these functions. The Needs Assessment research independently identified this priority need, which aligns with Council's 2024 consideration of the Duck Island redevelopment (RZ 20-915237) included securing approximately 30,000 square feet of art exhibition spaces and auditorium space. Should that development not proceed, the City could consider a comparable facility at another suitable location in Richmond, subject to legislative, funding, delivery, and partnership considerations. This priority need would expand exhibition capacity within Richmond and the broader region and contribute to Richmond's Tourism Master Plan.

Music Performance and Rehearsal Spaces

This responds to identified needs for dedicated, acoustically appropriate spaces to support music performance, rehearsal, creation, and related production activities in Richmond. Needed spaces include a music performance space with 250 to 500 seats, two non-amplified music rehearsal spaces, and music education space(s) with appropriate storage to support specialized music instruction, practice, and other learning-related activities. These primary program spaces would also require supportive ancillary spaces to enable their effective functioning.



Theatre Performance and Rehearsal Spaces

This responds to identified needs for dedicated, purpose-built spaces to support theatre performance, rehearsal, creation, and related production activities in Richmond. It also includes space that can support dance use, recognizing that while additional dedicated dance space is not identified as an immediate priority, future provision will be required to maintain service levels as Richmond's population grows. Needed spaces include a performance studio theatre with 100 to 150 seats, a rehearsal studio space, and a fabrication workshop intended to support set production and related production activities. These primary program spaces would also require supportive ancillary spaces to enable their effective functioning.

Pottery Studio Spaces

This supports community-based arts education and programming for residents of all ages and skill levels across the city. It responds to the identified immediate need for additional pottery studio space in Richmond, as the City's two existing pottery studios are heavily used and at capacity. Needed spaces include two pottery studios, each 750 to 1,000 square feet.

These findings and priority needs provide an important foundation for future planning and investment decisions. Overall, the Needs Assessment provides a strategic basis to support sound capital investment, inform future amenity opportunities, and strengthen the City's ability to respond to both current and emerging community needs. More broadly, the Needs Assessment supports the ongoing development of Richmond's arts and cultural ecosystem and helps inform future facilities and spaces that are responsive to the current and emerging needs of both residents and the local arts community.

1. Introduction

The arts play a central role in building community identity and strengthening social ties. A vibrant arts community is essential to ensure Richmond offers an excellent quality of life for current and future residents and provides opportunities for the Richmond arts community to flourish.

The City of Richmond Arts Facilities Needs Assessment (Needs Assessment) examines the current provision of arts spaces and community needs to identify priority needs for purpose-built arts facilities in Richmond, with a focus on spaces that support emerging and professional artistic practice, as well as Richmond residents. The objectives are to:

- ✦ Understand the current state of the City of Richmond's arts facilities;
- ✦ Gain an understanding of the current and future arts space needs; and
- ✦ Recommend purpose-built arts spaces that address identified gaps and maximize benefit to the community.

1.1 Project Background

The arts are vital to a city's identity, quality of life, economic prosperity, social cohesion, and vitality. As Richmond and its arts community continue to grow, it is important that the provision of City of Richmond arts spaces keeps pace with the needs of arts groups, arts organizations, and Richmond residents.

Artistic practices are continuing to evolve, influencing the tools, approaches, technologies, and specialized spaces that support artistic creation, production, and expression. At the same time, both regionally and globally, arts communities are facing the loss of space to live, work, exhibit, and perform due to accelerated development and rapidly rising land values.





Artists, the arts sector, governments, agencies, and the broader community all play essential roles in supporting arts and culture spaces. Cities have a direct responsibility through the provision of affordable space, the support of local infrastructure projects, land use and zoning, planning and development, and regulatory policies and processes.

Ensuring there are well-designed arts spaces that keep pace with the city's growth and community needs is a driving force behind undertaking the Needs Assessment. The Needs Assessment has also arisen in response to the value the arts bring to the community, evolving arts practices, and the mounting pressures that Richmond's arts community has reportedly been facing with regard to affordable, accessible, and specialized arts spaces.

1.2 Richmond Context

First designated a city in 1990, Richmond has seen a rapid growth in population and has evolved into a vibrant, culturally diverse community with a mix of agricultural, residential, commercial and industrial areas, as well as waterfront and tourism destinations, community amenities, parks and natural environments.

Richmond boasts geographically dynamic, natural boundaries as it is bordered by the North and South arms of the Fraser River, and the Pacific Ocean. While the city's identity is shaped by its natural splendor, it is recognized for its historical and present-day associations to agriculture, aviation, the fishing industry, migration, intercultural exchange, and more.

Richmond is a highly connected city. It is home to the Vancouver International Airport (YVR), the Canada Line rapid transit system, significant waterways, major highways and connector roads, a diversity of multimodal and cycling paths, and an extensive trail system.

1.2.1 A Growing Population

Richmond is home to a population of 241,375 (2025) residents. It is the fourth largest city in Metro Vancouver, and currently represents 7.9 per cent of the Metro Vancouver population. According to Richmond's Official Community Plan, Richmond is expected to grow to a population of 311,236 by 2050, representing a growth rate of 28.9 per cent over 25 years.

As of 2025, Richmond is Canada's most diverse city, and a significant portion of its growth will continue to be attributed to immigration. According to the 2021 Census of Population, 35.4 per cent of Richmond residents were Canadian by birth, 60.3 per cent were immigrants, and 4.3 per cent were non-permanent residents (individuals from other countries with a usual place of residence in Canada, work or study permit holders, or refugees). In 2021, 78 per cent of newcomers to Richmond had immigrated from China, the Philippines, India, Hong Kong, and South Korea.

Between 2016 and 2021, Richmond experienced rapid growth in its senior's population (24.5%), particularly among the 70 to 74 (52.9%) and 90 to 94 (41.1%) cohorts. The next fastest growth was observed in the 30 to 34 (20.1%) and 35 to 39 (21.3%) age groups. As the city continues to grow, it is anticipated that Richmond will continue to be home to a diverse and aging population.

1.2.2 Guiding City Strategies

The Needs Assessment is aligned with several City Council–adopted strategies and plans. The following section outlines key policy and planning documents that are relevant to the planning and provision of arts spaces in Richmond.

Council Strategic Plan 2022–2026

The Council Strategic Plan 2022–2026 identifies Richmond City Council's collective priorities and focus areas for its current term of office. The Council Strategic Plan provides a framework for the City to effectively manage and deliver civic services that are responsive and flexible to the current and future needs of all those who live, work and play in Richmond. The Needs Assessment supports the Council's Strategic Plan 2022–2026 by realizing the following Focus Areas:

- (i) **Focus Area #1:** Proactive in Stakeholder and Civic Engagement.

Proactive stakeholder and civic engagement to foster understanding and involvement and advance Richmond's interests.

- (ii) **Focus Area #6:** A Vibrant, Resilient and Active Community.

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

ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2026-2031

ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2026-2031 (ArtWorks) was developed through engagement with interest holders and the broader community, and identifies opportunities to enhance arts across the City.

The Richmond Arts Strategy's vision is:

Richmond's thriving arts scene animates our city everyday; offers rich arts education and experiences, festivals and events, fosters social connections and wellness; builds arts and culture leadership; and provides creative spaces.

The Five Strategic Directions are:

1. *Increase Awareness, Pride and Participation in the Arts — Arts and culture are valued, celebrated and integrated into community life.*
2. *Provide Affordable and Accessible Arts for All — Everyone feels they can participate in Richmond's arts and culture scene where diversity is embraced.*
3. *Invest in Arts and Culture — Richmond's arts and culture sector is sustainably supported through funding and investment in programs, services, people and infrastructure.*
4. *Build Arts and Cultural Leadership — Richmond's arts and culture sector is supported through building capacity, strengthening networks and enabling community leadership.*
5. *Activate Public Spaces Through (and for!) the Arts — Arts and culture are integrated into the design and everyday experience of Richmond's public spaces to strengthen identity, belonging and vibrant places.*



Official Community Plan

The City of Richmond updated its current Official Community Plan (OCP) in 2026, establishing a long-term planning framework to guide the City's future direction on social, economic, land use, transportation, environmental stewardship, and cultural well-being. The OCP sets out a comprehensive vision supported by goals, objectives, policies, guidelines, and land use designations that reflect the community's priorities. Of particular relevance, Section 4.1—Arts, Culture and Heritage—emphasizes the vital role of arts and cultural expression in building a vibrant, inclusive, and connected community. The OCP calls for proactive planning and investment in cultural infrastructure, including purpose-built arts facilities and public art integration, to ensure cultural accessibility, long-term sustainability, and broad community benefit.

City Centre Area Plan and the Richmond Arts District

The OCP's City Centre Area Plan (CCAP) provides a comprehensive framework for development of the City Centre area. One of the objectives of CCAP is to create an active and connected community by providing vibrant and diverse arts and cultural activities and opportunities for community engagement and connection.

The CCAP proposes the establishment of a Richmond Arts District (RAD) in the Capstan, Aberdeen and Bridgeport Villages to serve as a central magnet for arts services, spaces and opportunities in Richmond. RAD identifies distinct arts and culture hubs for development that would include affordable creation, administrative, live/work and presentation spaces.

City of Richmond Community Wellness Strategy 2018–2023

The City of Richmond developed the Community Wellness Strategy 2018–2023 in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health and Richmond School District No.38 (SD38). This Strategy underscores that arts are integral to advancing wellness outcomes, by enabling creative expression, enhancing social connections, and contributing to a resilient and healthy city ecosystem.

Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035

The Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 provides a 10-year framework to guide sustainable tourism development in Richmond. Of particular relevance to this Needs Assessment, the Plan recognizes arts and culture as important components of Richmond's appeal to leisure visitors seeking authentic and distinctive experiences. It highlights opportunities to expand arts and cultural offerings, advance multicultural storytelling, strengthen Richmond's culinary identity, and create immersive experiences and destination amenities. The Plan also emphasizes leveraging existing infrastructure and investing in gathering spaces to support increased visitation, events, and year-round activity. Collectively, these directions reinforce the importance of arts and cultural spaces as contributors to community identity, destination development, and future infrastructure planning.

These City Council–adopted strategies and plans can be found on the City of Richmond website, richmond.ca.





2. Approach

The Needs Assessment methodology consists of several components that inform the identification of priority needs for arts spaces in Richmond to better meet the current and future needs of Richmond arts groups and residents while maximizing benefit to the community. The methods and data sources supporting the Needs Assessment include:

- ✦ **Steering Committee:** A nine-member Steering Committee played an essential role in supporting a meaningful engagement process, helping to ensure that the arts community was effectively reached and that its input was thoughtfully reflected throughout the Needs Assessment. In addition to City staff, the Steering Committee included four external Richmond arts representatives:

 - Barbara Tomasic, Executive Artistic Director, Gateway Theatre;
 - Jane Fernyhough, Chair, Richmond Arts Coalition and Chair of Gateway Theatre Board of Directors;
 - Sarah Glen, Vice-Chair, Richmond Arts Coalition; and
 - Ceri Chong, Director, Destination and Industry Development, Tourism and Richmond/Richmond Public Art Advisory Committee Member.
- ✦ **Arts Community Engagement:** With support from the project Steering Committee, engagement efforts focused on Richmond's arts community and arts facility operators. Through a survey and interviews, engagement sought to understand the space-related needs and aspirations of Richmond-based amateur, emerging and professional artists, as well as arts organizations.
- ✦ **City of Richmond Arts Facilities Analysis:** Facility operators were interviewed, and usage data was analyzed to profile current arts and culture facility use, and provide insight into how arts spaces serve the needs of the arts community.

- ✦ **Analysis of Trends in the Arts in Richmond and the Region:** Data was collected and analyzed to identify trends in the growth and popularity of arts disciplines and arts-specific spaces. The analysis also considered local context, including population and demographic patterns, relevant City strategies and plans, the current state of the arts in Richmond, and regional trends in arts space development.
- ✦ **Gap Analysis:** A gap analysis was conducted to compare the current types of spaces available to the community with current and future needs of the community.
- ✦ **Comparable Communities:** While recognizing that local conditions shape facility needs and delivery models, inventory, capacity, and utilization information was gathered from the municipalities of Burnaby, Maple Ridge, Victoria, and Surrey to help inform long-range planning.
- ✦ **Recommended Priority Needs:** The recommended priority needs are grounded in the combined findings. Together, these components provide a strong evidence base that reflects community needs, local context, and broader regional practices. As a result, the recommended priority needs are well-supported and responsive to current and future needs, while remaining adaptable to future research, additional community and interest-holder input, and changing circumstances over time.







3. Trends and Leading Practices

Monitoring trends and leading practices in the arts is an important part of evidence-based planning and decision-making. It helps ensure that arts policies, programs, and infrastructure are aligned with broader community objectives and remains responsive to changing needs and conditions. The arts and culture sector in Canada has experienced significant change in recent decades, particularly following the impacts of COVID-19 on in-person programming, organizational capacity, and the sustainability of non-profit arts organizations. At the same time, digital transformation, evolving patterns of participation, and growth and changing interest across arts disciplines have affected how artists and organizations create, present, and share work. This section outlines key trends shaping the arts landscape in British Columbia and Canada, including trends related to both arts spaces and arts disciplines, and provides context for the needs, gaps, and opportunities considered in the sections that follow.

3.1 Evolving Approaches to Arts Space Provision

Municipal cultural planning increasingly emphasizes affordable, flexible, and multi-disciplinary arts spaces that can support a range of users, activities, and organizational needs. Rather than relying primarily on single-purpose or single-tenant facilities, there is growing recognition of the value of shared and adaptable spaces that can accommodate studios, rehearsal, small-scale presentation, administration, shared equipment, and other complementary functions within one location. This approach responds in part to the high cost of space and the challenges that many arts organizations, non-profits, and practitioners face in securing suitable facilities. It can also improve utilization, reduce overhead, support collaboration, and provide a more sustainable model for delivering arts services and strengthening the local arts sector.

Arts and Culture Hubs and Distributed Provision

Cultural hubs and co-located arts facilities continue to be a relevant model for local governments planning cultural infrastructure. Bringing multiple creative uses and disciplines together in one location can improve utilization, support collaboration and innovation, and create operating efficiencies through shared space, staffing, equipment, and services. Recent federal evaluation of the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund reinforces this direction, noting continued support for creative hubs and shared cultural infrastructure in communities of different sizes across Canada. In British Columbia, this direction is also reflected in the BC Arts Council's Arts Infrastructure Program, which supports planning, renovation, acquisition, specialized equipment, and accessibility improvements that help organizations develop and sustain arts and cultural spaces. For municipalities, these sources suggest that shared and multi-tenant cultural space models remain a practical and policy-aligned approach for expanding cultural capacity, improving access, and making efficient use of limited capital and operating resources.

At the same time, distribution also matters. In addition to centralized hubs, leading practice points to the value of arts spaces embedded in civic facilities,

neighbourhood settings, and community-serving buildings. A balanced approach may therefore include both city-wide destination facilities and smaller-scale distributed spaces that increase local access and support participation closer to where people live.

Adaptable Exhibition, Gallery, and Performance Spaces

Leading practices point to growing value in exhibition, gallery, and performance spaces that can accommodate different scales of work, artistic media, program formats, and audience or visitor flow over time. This includes spaces designed with flexible layouts, movable or reconfigurable elements, adaptable lighting, and supporting electrical and data infrastructure. In the case of exhibition and gallery spaces, adaptability supports changing curatorial approaches, installations, and public programming and reflects a shift toward viewing galleries as community hubs and cultural anchors, rather than solely exhibition venues. In the case of performance spaces, adaptability supports multiple types of live programming through flexible seating, staging, room configuration, and technical systems. Together, these approaches broaden programming potential, improve utilization, and help ensure that facilities remain functional and relevant over time.

Digital and Technology-enabled Arts

Digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, have had a profound transformational effect on the arts and culture sector through the development of new platforms. Many artists and arts organizations have also harnessed digital technology to transform the creative process, improve administrative processes, and engage with audiences and co-creators in novel methods. Additionally, technology has expanded access through virtual galleries, online exhibitions, and digital learning opportunities. Growth in digital, media, VR/AR, and immersive practices is also increasing demand for spaces equipped to support new forms of exhibition, production, learning, recording, editing, and hybrid presentation.

Participatory, Studio-based, and Maker-oriented Arts

Alongside changes in how arts are presented and accessed, there has been continued interest in hands-on, community-based, and studio-oriented participation. This includes practices such as ceramics, textiles, photography, creative writing, digital media, and music. These forms of participation typically require access to affordable, practical, and properly equipped space, including studio space, storage, specialized ventilation and equipment, and opportunities for both instruction and independent practice.

Arts Lending Libraries, Makerspaces, and Incubator Models

The start-up costs of learning a new skill or producing visual arts, music, or performance can be prohibitive. Free or low-cost lending libraries help make learning and producing more accessible to a wider audience. Lending libraries, makerspaces, media labs, and incubator-style models demonstrate how shared access to tools, equipment, and adaptable creation space can lower barriers to participation, support experimentation, and expand opportunities for learning and ongoing practice. These models can also help emerging and established artists build skills, test ideas, and access resources that may otherwise be unaffordable.





Cultural Tourism, Place-making, and Community Identity

Cultural tourism is becoming more important in arts and cultural planning. Across Canada, tourism and visitor spending continue to grow, and cultural experiences such as festivals, performances, galleries, and heritage attractions remain an important part of that demand. In British Columbia, tourism revenues reached \$23 billion in 2024, while culture GDP rose to \$10.5 billion in 2023. Together, these trends suggest that arts and cultural spaces can support both local participation and broader place-making and visitor economy objectives. For municipalities, this reinforces the value of arts facilities not only as community-serving infrastructure, but also as contributors to destination development, downtown vitality, and broader civic identity.

3.2 Changing Trends in Arts Disciplines

In addition to broad changes in arts space provision, there are also changing patterns of interest and participation across specific arts disciplines. These shifts have implications for the types of spaces, equipment, and support functions that may be needed over time.

Participatory Arts

There has been notable growth in participatory and creative forms of arts engagement, including woodworking, playing musical instruments, ceramics, textiles, photography, and creative writing. This reflects broader interest in hands-on learning, self-directed practice, and community-based creative activity.

Textile Arts

Textile arts, also known as fabric arts, encompass a wide range of creative practices that use fibres and fabrics to construct both functional and decorative objects and art. The textile arts have experienced steady growth in interest over recent decades. This growth has been attributed to their versatility, accessibility, sustainability, and the increased appreciation for handmade goods.

Media Arts

Media arts encompass film, television, audio, video games, and digital art that is created and produced by artists/directors who maintain complete creative and editorial control over their work. Media arts in Canada have seen a significant rise in popularity and economic impact, particularly in recent years. This growth is fueled by increased investment from global streaming services, the expansion of the digital landscape, increased access and affordability of software and equipment, and a strong domestic industry.

Ceramics and Pottery

Ceramics, which includes pottery, is a highly versatile medium and amateur potters are increasingly attending classes or open studios where they can engage in one-off sessions or for longer periods through membership access. Growth in demand can be attributed to its hands-on nature, which helps to manage stress and anxiety, accessibility for all skill levels, and socializing opportunities.





4. Arts and Culture in Richmond

Richmond has a growing creative community that reflects the city's diversity, history, and geographic setting. Arts and culture play an important role in expressing Richmond's multicultural character and contribute to the broader arts and cultural sector in Metro Vancouver and British Columbia. According to Hill Strategies' analysis of the 2021 Census, Richmond was home to 1,305 professional artists, representing 1.1 per cent of the city's labour force¹, while arts, culture, and heritage occupations accounted for 2.7 per cent of Richmond's labour force overall. At the provincial level, 154,800 British Columbians worked in arts, culture, and heritage occupations in 2021, accounting for 5.4 per cent of the provincial labour force—the highest share among provinces and above the national average of 4.4 per cent². Metro Vancouver is home to 69 per cent of British Columbia's artists, situating Richmond within a strong and dynamic regional arts ecosystem. While Richmond's share of artists and cultural workers is lower than the provincial average, the city nevertheless plays a meaningful role in supporting and contributing to this broader cultural landscape.

¹ Hill Strategies Research Inc., *Professional Artists in Large Canadian Cities in 2021* (Hamilton, ON: Hill Strategies Research Inc., 2024).

² Kelly Hill, *The Local Arts, Culture and Heritage Workforce in Canada, 2021, Statistical Insights on the Arts*, no. 67 (Hamilton, ON: Hill Strategies Research Inc., 2025).

This presence is reflected in Richmond's festivals, venues, and public spaces. Annually, visitors and residents alike enjoy the lively Richmond Children's Arts Festival, and celebrate summer at the Steveston Salmon Festival and Richmond Maritime Festival. Year-round, the Richmond Art Gallery's diverse array of exhibitions, educational programs and events attracts thousands of visitors. Gateway Theatre—Richmond's vibrant professional performing arts hub – allows for storytelling to flourish in Richmond beyond. The mix of urban textures, the splash of colourful murals and heritage buildings are elements that display the city's diversity, rich history, and innovation in arts and culture.

4.1 City of Richmond Purpose-Built Arts Facilities

Richmond's arts and culture scene unfolds across a number of public and private spaces, venues and facilities. The City of Richmond invests in arts and culture in numerous ways, and across several facilities. The City of Richmond's purpose-built and purpose-renovated arts facilities are the Cultural Centre, Cultural Centre Annex, and Gateway Theatre. Each serves as a cornerstone in Richmond's commitment to fostering arts, education, and community connections. These facilities are integral to Richmond's cultural identity, collectively enhancing accessibility, inclusivity, and creativity throughout the community.

Cultural Centre

Co-located with the Brighthouse Branch of the Richmond Public Library, the Cultural Centre (approximately 98,000 sq. ft., including the Library, Museum and Archives) serves as a pivotal hub for arts engagement in Richmond, offering diverse programs that range from visual to performing arts. Equipped with multi-purpose studios, a pottery studio, and the Richmond Art Gallery, and Theatre Under the Stairs, it supports both professional and amateur artists. The Cultural Centre is home to the Richmond Public Library Brighthouse

Branch and the Richmond Museum, and the City Archives, further reinforcing its role as a central destination for visual arts and cultural programming in Richmond. By fostering creativity and collaboration, the Cultural Centre remains an essential part of Richmond's cultural landscape and a catalyst for ongoing community development.

Cultural Centre Annex

The Cultural Centre Annex (approximately 15,145 sq. ft.) serves as an extension of the program space offered at the Cultural Centre. This facility is home to the Media Lab, a second pottery studio, two dance studios and other creation spaces. The Annex Gallery exhibition space is located within a vibrant community lounge that is used for both informal gatherings and pop-up presentations.

Gateway Theatre

Gateway Theatre (approximately 31,600 sq. ft.) is Richmond's premier performance venue. Built in 1984 and located in the north-west corner of Minoru Park, the theatre is managed and operated by the Gateway Theatre Society and serves as a cornerstone of Richmond's cultural life. It presents in-house productions, touring shows, and community rental events, while also hosting local, national, and international acts that contribute to a vibrant arts and culture scene. Through its performances and educational programs, Gateway Theatre fosters appreciation for the arts, supports the development of local talent, and helps make the arts an integral part of community life.

4.2 Additional Arts Initiatives Advanced by the City

The City's support for arts and cultural spaces takes many forms across Richmond's landscape. In addition to civic arts facilities, the City supports the arts through artist residencies, affordable artist live/work opportunities, partnerships with non-profit organizations, and other initiatives that expand access to arts and cultural space.



Branscombe House

Branscombe House is a restored 1908 Edwardian-style residence in Steveston that is home to the Branscombe House Artist Residency program. Each year, the City holds an open call for professional artists with a community-engaged practice to apply for an 11-month artist residency. The successful artist receives free live/work accommodations to further their practice in exchange for providing free programs and events to the public throughout the year. Since its inauguration in 2016, the program has hosted nine artist residencies.

Capstan Village Artist Live/Work Studios

Capstan Village is a rapidly growing waterfront district that is part of the Richmond Arts District. It features mixed-use residential and commercial developments, arts and community facilities, as well as artist live/work studios located near the new Capstan SkyTrain Station.

In furtherance of the City Centre Area Plan and its objective to provide increased arts and cultural opportunities, the City offered a density bonus to encourage developers to provide affordable Artist Residency Tenancy Studios



(ARTS) units for professional artists who demonstrate financial need. To date, the program has resulted in 20 street-level ARTS units and four work-only studios at the Concord Gardens development, 17 ARTS units at the Pinnacle Sorrento development, and two work-only studios at the Polygon/Fiorella development. These units were negotiated on a site-specific basis and are considered affordable based on low-end market rental rates. All units are privately owned and managed in accordance with a housing agreement with the City.

Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver: Capstan Arts Space

The Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver (CCC) was established in Vancouver's Chinatown in 1973, and registered as a non-profit charitable organization in 1974. The CCC now has six campus locations throughout Metro Vancouver.

In 1991, the CCC opened the Richmond School Campus to serve Richmond residents. It offers a wide variety of arts activities and events, including dance classes, Chinese calligraphy, singing, opera, and drama. As part of a redevelopment process, the City secured 13,000 sq. ft. of dedicated arts space for lease to a non-profit tenant at a reduced rate at Concord Galleria in Capstan Village. This facility includes dance and visual arts studios and flexible exhibition spaces.





4.3 Identified and Emerging Opportunities for Arts Space

Previous City planning work and current civic projects identify further opportunities to strengthen Richmond's overall arts space network.

Art Exhibition Space and Auditorium

In May 2024, Council considered the Duck Island redevelopment (RZ 20-915237), which included securing approximately 30,000 square feet of art exhibition spaces and auditorium space. The rezoning contemplates art gallery exhibition spaces of varying sizes, multipurpose/program rooms, an auditorium for performances, event space, and ancillary spaces such as exhibition support, collection storage, circulation, and administrative spaces. This would expand exhibition capacity within Richmond and the broader region and contribute to Richmond's Tourism Master Plan. This facility has been secured through the rezoning of the Duck Island redevelopment; should that opportunity not proceed as anticipated, the City could consider development of a comparable facility at another suitable location in Richmond. However, such consideration would also need to account for recent changes to provincial planning legislation (Bill 46 and 47) that have affected the City's ability to secure these types of facilities through redevelopment. As a result, alternative delivery, funding and partnership approaches may need to be explored to support provision of a comparable space elsewhere in Richmond.

Role of City of Richmond Community Centres in Supporting the Arts

Richmond's network of community centres play an important role in supporting arts participation. These facilities contribute to community-level arts and culture access by accommodating arts education, rehearsal, and creative programming across the city.

Existing community centres already support arts and cultural programming by providing accessible neighbourhood spaces for classes, rehearsals, informal exhibitions, and other community-based activities. In many cases, these spaces include adaptable features such as sprung floors, music rooms, or multi-purpose rooms that can accommodate arts use.

This role complements the function of purpose-built arts facilities elsewhere in the city.

Recent and planned civic facilities reflect a growing emphasis on integrating more arts-focused spaces. In recent years, the City has begun incorporating arts-specific spaces into new facilities, such as the woodworking shop, dance studio, and arts studio at Minoru Centre for Active Living, as well as the two music rooms and arts studio at City Centre Community Centre. This improves the functionality of community facilities for arts programming while maintaining flexibility for broader public use.

The Capstan Community Centre will also support arts and creative programming with an active studio with a sprung wood floor, a wet art studio, a creativity studio, and multi-purpose rooms with features that support flexible arts use. Capstan represents an important example of how community-serving civic projects can expand access to arts education and creative activity at the neighbourhood level.



Similarly, the new Steveston Community Centre and Library will add community, learning, and creative space serving Steveston and surrounding neighbourhoods. A key community space will be delivered through the Library's creativity lab. This space will facilitate "maker" activities for a wide range of uses, including music, to robotics, to kinetic sculptures and quilting. Like Capstan, this space is best understood as part of a broader community-based supply of flexible spaces that can support community arts programming, rather than as a substitute for specialized arts infrastructure.

These facilities indicate a clear municipal direction toward embedding more arts-supportive space within civic and community-serving projects. This is a positive and important pattern, particularly for improving geographic access and supporting incremental delivery of arts education and creative spaces across Richmond.

4.4 Utilization and Growth in Richmond's Purpose-Built Arts Facilities

Participation in the arts has grown steadily in Richmond over the decades. Additionally, Richmond has seen a rapid increase in its population over the last 20 years – a trend which is expected to continue. As a result, it is important to explore how the City's spaces are serving the arts community currently, and with an eye to the future.

This section examines utilization across the City of Richmond's purpose-built arts facilities by art disciplines: dance, music, visual arts, pottery, media arts, and performing arts. An analysis by discipline provides insight into the types of activities driving space utilization, where requests for space are most concentrated, which arts disciplines and facility types are experiencing the greatest pressures, and how participation is changing over time. While this analysis helps identify patterns of demand, it does not define needs on its own; need must also consider broader community benefit, equitable access, and the role of City-supported arts spaces in serving Richmond residents.

4.4.1 Measuring Utilization of Richmond's Arts Facilities

Utilization of Richmond's arts facilities can be complex to interpret. While utilization is often measured by the proportion of available time that a space is booked, this does not fully capture the operating and program requirements of arts facilities. Arts activities such as rehearsals, performances, exhibitions, workshops, and technical preparation may require varying durations, and apparent gaps between bookings may be operationally necessary rather than indicative of underuse. If all operating hours are treated as fully bookable, utilization may appear lower than it is in practice. Demand should therefore be understood to include both recorded requests for space and unmet need that may not be visible in booking data. The following are factors that should be considered when interpreting utilization data.

Operational, Set-up and Changeover Time

Many arts uses require additional time for set-up, technical adjustments, installation, take-down, and restoration, as well as longer booking lead times, and multi-day block bookings for events, performances, exhibits and the like. They may also require protected time for maintenance, technical resets, or production holds, which may not appear as publicly programmed hours but are necessary to support operations and can limit back-to-back bookings.

Specialized Space Requirements

Arts demand is often discipline-specific and not easily interchangeable across users. A space suitable for theatre may not work for music, and rehearsal space may not meet the requirements of performance, recording, or visual arts production. Factors such as acoustics, sound isolation, specialized ventilation, ceiling height, technical infrastructure, and storage all affect suitability.

4.4.2 Arts Facility Utilization (by Arts Discipline)

Utilization was investigated across the City's purpose-built arts space; Gateway Theatre, the Richmond Cultural Centre, and the Richmond Cultural Centre Annex. Utilization draws on: (a) performance, rental, rehearsal waitlist data; (b) set/up, maintenance and arts community and facility operator engagement findings; and (c) data on select Richmond community arts groups, including the number and size of groups by discipline.

For the purposes of this review, utilization of arts spaces was assessed based on several indicators:

- ✦ total hours of use over time, including City programs, Resident Art Group bookings, and rentals;
- ✦ use during peak periods, defined as weekdays after 3:00 p.m. and all day on weekends; and
- ✦ operational signs that space is limited, such as wait times, limited scheduling options, and waitlists.

Together, these measures help show which disciplines have the highest demand, where demand is growing, and where space or scheduling constraints may be limiting the City's ability to meet arts space needs.





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Performing Arts

Richmond's performing arts sector is supported through a mix of rehearsal, production, and presentation spaces used for theatre, musical theatre, and other live performance activities. Current utilization patterns indicate that demand for specialized performing arts space is concentrated during peak periods, with clear evidence of constrained supply in key venues.

Performing Arts Includes

- ✦ Theatre and musical theatre;
- ✦ Opera;
- ✦ Spoken word and slam poetry;
- ✦ Improvisation and comedy; and
- ✦ Non-amplified and amplified music

City of Richmond Facilities with Purpose-Built and Priority Performing Arts Spaces

- ✦ Gateway Theatre;
- ✦ Richmond Cultural Centre; and
- ✦ Richmond Cultural Centre Annex.

Number and Size of Community Groups

Within the performing arts discipline—including theatre, musical theatre, opera, improvisation, and comedy—City data indicates that Richmond may



have fewer groups and participants than some other arts disciplines, with six groups and approximately 240 artists. Membership varies across groups, with sizes ranging from nearly 20 members to more than 80 members.

Utilization of Purpose-built Facilities

The City's purpose-built performing arts spaces show strong utilization, particularly during peak times:

- ✦ Gateway Theatre operates at full capacity through a combination of Gateway Theatre Society programming and rentals, and Gateway Theatre Academy, drawing more than 35,000 audience members annually and hosting more than 150 performances and events in 2025;
- ✦ In 2025, Gateway Theatre's MainStage was in use for 232 days, Studio A was in use for 146 days, and Studio B Theatre was in use for 189 days;
- ✦ Studio B Theatre cannot run performances at the same time as the MainStage, therefore impacting theatre performance space utilization;
- ✦ Theatre Under the Stairs recorded 258 days of use in 2025 and is typically fully booked during peak times (after 3:00 p.m. on weekdays and throughout weekends);
- ✦ Performing Arts Studio 2 and 3 in the Cultural Centre Annex had relatively high utilization rates across all hours, approaching 70 per cent in 2025; and
- ✦ Richmond's arts community has identified ongoing challenges related to the availability and cost of renting performance space, particularly the Gateway Theatre's MainStage, which is the only venue of its type and size in Richmond.

Facility Booking Considerations

A key constraint on the supply of performing arts spaces is the limited availability of specialized venues. At Gateway Theatre, annual planned maintenance periods can total up to approximately six weeks, further reducing the total number of bookable days each year. More broadly, demand is constrained not only by limited space supply, but also by the operating requirements and functionality of existing venues.

Overall, performing arts venue demand in Richmond is strong and concentrated in peak periods. The core issue is limited access to specialized, purpose-built performing arts space, with Gateway Theatre currently operating at full capacity.

Visual Arts

Richmond's visual arts community is supported through studio-based spaces for artistic creation at the Cultural Centre and Cultural Centre Annex, while the Richmond Art Gallery and its off-site exhibitions provide the City's formal curated exhibition spaces. Current utilization patterns indicate that the studio-based spaces are near full during peak periods, with lower take-up during weekday daytime hours, while the Gallery's exhibition program also appears to be operating at or near capacity. Overall, the findings point to strong demand for both studio and exhibition space, particularly for ongoing group access and formal presentation opportunities, alongside interest in other forms of studio access not fully supported by the current model.

Visual Arts Include

- ✦ Traditional fine arts: painting, drawing, sculpture and printmaking;
- ✦ Calligraphy;
- ✦ Photography;
- ✦ Fibre arts; and
- ✦ Lapidary.

City of Richmond Facilities with Purpose-Built and Priority Visual Arts Spaces

- ✦ Richmond Cultural Centre; and
- ✦ Richmond Cultural Centre Annex.

Number and Size of Community Groups

The City regularly engages with 17 visual arts groups, collectively reaching over 450 artists. Membership varies across groups, with sizes ranging from approximately five members to nearly 80 members.

Utilization of Purpose-Built Visual Arts Spaces

Visual arts spaces in City facilities show strong utilization during peak periods, with lower levels of use during weekday daytime hours:

- ✦ For studio spaces, peak times are near fully utilized, with studios typically fully booked during peak times (after 3:00 p.m. on weekdays and throughout weekends);
- ✦ Overall utilization is estimated at approximately 50 per cent of available facility hours, reflecting lower demand during weekday daytime hours between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.;
- ✦ The Art Gallery at the Richmond Cultural Centre sees approximately 22,000 visitors year on year, and hosts six exhibits per year, reflecting that the gallery is at capacity when it comes to arts enthusiasts as well as exhibition opportunities for artists; and
- ✦ The Richmond Art Gallery's off-site exhibition spaces, located in the Richmond Cultural Centre Annex lobby and the City Hall Galleria on the ground floor of Richmond City Hall, are continuously activated and curated throughout the year, supporting an ongoing cycle of installations that indicate these spaces are operating at capacity.



Facility Booking Considerations

Overall, City-operated visual arts spaces in Richmond are heavily used during peak periods, with the primary constraint being the type of space available rather than overall participation demand.

Meanwhile, a key theme emerging from engagement is the demand for non-programmed creation space for visual artists, as well as more exhibition space that is adaptable for different arts disciplines to showcase their work. Artists and arts organizations are also looking for secure, long-term access to dedicated creation and storage space, which differs from the City's current studio model that is primarily oriented toward scheduled programming and group-based rentals.

While the existing model supports strong levels of programming and group access, it is less well-suited to artists seeking dedicated, non-programmed studio and storage space.



Dance

Richmond's dance community accounts for a significant share of demand for arts space, particularly during peak periods. Current utilization patterns indicate strong participation, sustained growth, and consistent use of studio space, especially for sprung-floor studios used during after-school, evening, and weekend hours (peak hours).

Dance Includes

- ✦ Ballet and tap;
- ✦ Modern, contemporary, and lyrical;
- ✦ Jazz;
- ✦ Hip hop;
- ✦ Ballroom and Latin; and
- ✦ Folk and traditional.

City of Richmond Facilities with Purpose-Built and Priority Dance Spaces

- ✦ Richmond Cultural Centre;
- ✦ Richmond Cultural Centre Annex; and
- ✦ Gateway Theatre*.

**Gateway Theatre's MainStage is equipped with a sprung floor and is regularly utilized by dance groups.*

Number and Size of Community Groups

Richmond has consistently high numbers of dance groups and dance group membership. The City regularly engages with 16 dance groups and dance schools. These dance groups tend to have between 10 and 35 members each.

Utilization of Purpose-built Dance Spaces

The City's Dance spaces show very strong utilization, particularly during peak times:

- ✦ Dance participation in both the Cultural Centre and Cultural Centre Annex dance studios is near full-capacity during in peak hours (after 3 p.m. on weekdays and weekend periods), and over 50% during off peak hours, based on a seasonal average; and
- ✦ In 2025, Gateway Theatre's MainStage was in use for 232 days, Studio A was in use for 146 days, and Studio B Theatre was in use for 189 days.

Facility Booking Considerations

While studio-based instruction and rehearsal are generally accommodated through scheduling, performance-related constraints remain. Recital and performance opportunities may be limited by venue availability and functionality. Music, performing arts and dance compete for access to Gateway Theatre's MainStage, which creates further pressure on an already limited supply of specialized performance space. And Studio B Theatre cannot run performances at the same time as the MainStage, which intermittently impacts available recital and performance space. For example, Theatre Under the Stairs has physical limitations for some dance uses, and dates at Gateway Theatre are limited and often require long lead times to secure.

Overall, dance accounts for a significant share of peak-time demand and is expected to remain an in-demand arts discipline in Richmond as the city's population continues to grow.

Music

Richmond's music community demonstrates a distinct utilization pattern shaped by one-on-one lessons, small group instruction, and high overall program hours. Current use patterns indicate strong demand during peak periods, particularly weekday evenings and weekends, alongside additional pressure related to performance and presentation needs that are not fully accommodated through existing venues.

Music Includes

- ✦ Amplified and non-amplified music;
- ✦ Choral;
- ✦ Orchestral;
- ✦ Popular ("Pop"); and
- ✦ Folk.

City of Richmond Facilities with Purpose-Built and Priority Music Spaces

- ✦ Richmond Cultural Centre; and
- ✦ Gateway Theatre*.

**Gateway Theatre's MainStage is a performance space utilized by music groups, however this is not a purpose-built performance hall for music.*





Number and Size of Community Groups

Richmond has consistently high numbers of music groups and music group membership. Across 19 groups that the City regularly engages with, there are nearly 1,200 members. Membership varies across groups, with group sizes ranging from approximately five to more than 370 members.

Utilization of Purpose-Built Music Spaces

Music contributes strongly to overall arts space utilization through a large volume of individual and small-group instruction:

- ✦ Music instruction commonly occurs during peak hours (after 3 p.m. during the week and weekends), when demand for arts space is already concentrated; and
- ✦ Gateway Theatre operates at full capacity through a combination of Gateway Theatre Society programming and rentals, and Gateway Theatre Academy, drawing more than 35,000 audience members annually and hosting more than 150 performances and events in 2025.

Facility Booking Considerations

While music is well accommodated in lesson-based and small group formats, the fit of existing facilities is more limited for performance-oriented music uses. Choral, orchestral, and other non-amplified music presentations are constrained in existing theatre venues, largely due to acoustic limitations. In addition, music and performing arts compete for access to Gateway Theatre's MainStage, which creates further pressure on an already limited supply of specialized performance space.

Overall, music is a significant contributor to utilization across Richmond's arts facilities, particularly through high program volume and recurring lesson-based use. However, current facilities are less well-suited to certain performance and presentation needs, particularly for non-amplified music and larger ensemble-based uses.

Pottery

Richmond's pottery community demonstrates very strong demand, high facility utilization, and significant recent growth. Current use patterns indicate that existing pottery studios are operating near capacity, with sustained waitlists and limited availability. These pressures reflect both growing participation and the specialized spatial and storage requirements associated with ceramics practice.

Pottery Includes

- ✦ Pottery;
- ✦ Ceramics;
- ✦ Wheel throwing;
- ✦ Handbuilding; and
- ✦ Glazing and kiln-based studio practice.

City of Richmond Facilities with Purpose-Built and Priority Pottery Spaces

- ✦ Richmond Cultural Centre; and
- ✦ Richmond Cultural Centre Annex.

Number and Size of Community Groups

The Richmond Potters' Club has experienced substantial growth in recent years. Membership has more than doubled over the last seven years, increasing from approximately 60 members in 2019 to more than 120 members in 2026. This represents a rapid growth rate of roughly 100 per cent.

Utilization of Purpose-Built Pottery Spaces

The City's pottery spaces show very high utilization, with several indicators pointing to constrained supply:

- ✦ The City's two pottery studios have consistently operated at utilization rates above 90 per cent at all times, which is even more remarkable considering the City opened the second of these two pottery studios in 2024;
- ✦ Pottery also experiences consistent waitlists, indicating limited remaining capacity within existing facilities; and
- ✦ Pottery classes are typically full and are widely described as difficult to register for within the City's pottery studios, as the studio time is also needed for pottery artists to create and refine their work.

Facility Booking Considerations

A key constraint for pottery in City facilities is that capacity can be reached not only through scheduled programming, but also when storage space is full. Pottery requires time, equipment, drying, glazing, firing, and multiple stages to complete a project, which means storage and work-in-progress space are critical components of overall studio capacity.

Overall, pottery is a high-demand and high-growth discipline within Richmond's arts facility system. Utilization is extremely strong, demand is consistently evident through full classes and waitlists, and the specialized operational requirements of pottery limit the flexibility of existing space. Demand and utilization are expected to remain strong.





Digital and Media Arts

Richmond's digital and media arts sector represents an emerging area of demand that is supported through specialized and multi-purpose spaces. Recent growth in participation suggests increasing interest in this discipline, particularly following the opening of the Media Lab in the Cultural Centre Annex in the second quarter of 2024. The Media Lab is also a unique City space because, unlike many other City facilities that prioritize registered programs, it is intended in part to provide barrier-free opportunities for youth and support broader youth development objectives. At the same time, utilization patterns indicate that demand remains more moderate than in some other arts disciplines and is shaped by the availability of specialized equipment and room configurations.

Digital and Media Arts Include

- ✦ Digital illustration, vector art, typography and pixel/glitch art;
- ✦ Animation and motion graphics;
- ✦ Cinema and film;
- ✦ Interactive and immersive;
- ✦ Sound and audio;
- ✦ Web, net, and software; and
- ✦ Multimedia and performance.

City of Richmond Facilities with Purpose-Built and Priority Digital and Media Arts Spaces

- ✦ Richmond Cultural Centre Annex.

Number and Size of Community Groups

The number of digital and media arts groups in Richmond has remained relatively stable, with limited recent growth in membership among established groups. At the same time, the Media Lab supports a broader range of users than community group data alone may reflect, including the Richmond Youth Media Program (RYMP) as the City's primary youth group user, as well as other youth-serving partners, including those working with at-risk youth.

Utilization of Purpose Built Digital and Media Arts Spaces

City of Richmond's digital and media arts spaces show growing use, supported by the introduction of new specialized space:

- ✦ As of 2025, Media Lab utilization exceeds 90 per cent, and off-peak use is approximately 45 per cent;
- ✦ About 46 per cent of this peak-hour use supports barrier-free youth opportunities;
- ✦ Participation has grown steadily since the opening of the Media Lab in the Cultural Centre Annex since opening its doors in the second quarter of 2024;
- ✦ In addition to registered programming, the space also supports non-registered program activity. This includes use in support of City-led initiatives and events such as Youth Week, the Children's Arts Festival, and Doors Open; and
- ✦ Demand for digital and media arts space appears to be both time-specific and equipment-specific, as technology-based programs depend on specialized equipment and room configurations that limit flexibility.



Facility Booking Considerations

At present, the addition of the Media Lab appears to have provided sufficient capacity to meet current demand, and there are no major booking constraints identified at this time. However, peak-hour utilization exceeding 90 per cent suggests while overall capacity may appear adequate, access during peak periods is becoming more limited.

This is particularly important given the Media Lab's specialized function and broad range of uses. In addition to registered programming, the space supports barrier-free youth opportunities, partner use, and City-led events. As demand for digital and media arts continues to grow, continued monitoring will be important as participation grows and program needs evolve.

5. Arts Community Engagement Summary: What We Heard

The Needs Assessment was informed by internal and external engagement undertaken through multiple channels, including:

- ✦ the project Steering Committee;
- ✦ a targeted Richmond Arts Community and Arts Facility Operator Survey; and
- ✦ interviews with members of the Richmond arts community, Richmond arts facility board members and operators, City staff, and SD38 staff.

Engagement undertaken in 2024 and 2025 provides important insight into Richmond's arts ecosystem, particularly the space-related challenges, needs, and opportunities identified by professional and community artists. In addition to the 102 survey responses, ten individual and group interviews were conducted involving 13 participants representing a range of arts disciplines and roles within Richmond's arts community. Staff also consulted SD38 staff regarding the potential use of school district space for musical arts and performing arts activities. This input provided additional context on the availability and suitability of non-City spaces in Richmond. Findings from a 2018 online survey of Richmond's performing arts community were also considered in this study.

See Appendix A: Engagement Summary to read the 2024 and 2025 findings in more detail.





5.1 Emerging Themes

Engagement findings pointed to several consistent themes across disciplines related to the availability, suitability, functionality, and accessibility of arts spaces in Richmond. While participants identified needs specific to particular disciplines, they also highlighted several common challenges affecting the arts community more broadly.

5.1.1. Need for Specialized Arts Performance, Exhibition, Creation, and Practice Spaces

- ✦ Participants across disciplines identified a need for spaces designed and equipped for arts use, including spaces for creation, rehearsal, exhibition, presentation, storage, and administration;
- ✦ Existing performing arts venues and spaces currently used for performance are not designed to fully support all theatre, dance, music, and related performing arts functions. In particular, spaces that are currently being used for music do not offer the layout and acoustic qualities suited for choral and orchestral rehearsal and performance, or amplified music;
- ✦ Participants in performing arts and music identified that existing rehearsal spaces are often too small, inadequately equipped, or acoustically unsuitable;
- ✦ Theatre and music groups identified demand for mid-sized performance venues to bridge the gap between smaller community spaces and larger performance theatres, including venues in the 100-150 seat range for theatre and the 250-500 seat range for music;
- ✦ Participants identified a shortage of visual arts and digital and media arts spaces, including exhibition space, studios, wet studios, and maker-oriented space;
- ✦ Participants also identified the absence of a professional cinema or screening venue in Richmond; and
- ✦ Participants identified the absence of fabrication workshop to support theatre set production and related production activities.

5.1.2. Ancillary Spaces and Specialized Features

- ✦ Participants across disciplines identified a need for secure, accessible, and, where appropriate, climate-controlled storage for instruments, props, costumes, equipment, and artwork;
- ✦ Ancillary and support spaces, including dressing rooms, green rooms, dedicated change rooms, backstage areas, and office or administrative spaces were identified as missing or inadequate;
- ✦ Participants emphasized that the functionality of a space depends not only on its size, but also on the support spaces and technical features available within it; and
- ✦ Features identified as important to functionality included acoustic treatment, technical infrastructure, sinks, durable finishes, specialized ventilation, natural light, appropriate room configuration, and accessible storage.

5.1.3. Access and Operational Barriers

- ✦ Rental fees, particularly at Gateway Theatre, were identified as a significant barrier for some community groups and may place professional-quality performance space out of reach for others in a constrained funding environment;
- ✦ Difficulty securing multi-day bookings, limited venue availability, and additional technical or staffing costs were identified as barriers to access;
- ✦ Groups often rely on school gymnasiums or private venues, which may be costly and may not meet their functional needs;
- ✦ Transportation and parking were identified as important considerations, particularly for seniors and groups transporting large instruments or equipment;
- ✦ Access to some spaces may depend on meeting specific operating requirements, such as booking qualified staff or technicians, or satisfying other conditions before access can be granted; and
- ✦ Consultation with SD38 indicated that, while some arts-related spaces exist within school facilities, competing school and childcare priorities, limited availability, rental and custodial costs, and facility constraints limit their suitability and availability for broader community arts use.

5.1.4. Interest in Flexible, Shared Arts Spaces

- ✦ Participants expressed interest in flexible, shared spaces that can support multiple users and disciplines, and that enable collaboration, shared resources, and adaptable programming;
- ✦ Some participants identified a desire for multi-disciplinary, artist-run spaces that could serve as collaborative hubs for arts activity;
- ✦ Participants also identified value in civic spaces, such as plazas and other public gathering areas, that can support informal cultural activity and community interaction; and
- ✦ Some participants expressed support for the adaptive reuse of historic buildings as cultural or arts spaces.

5.1.5. Value of Arts Spaces in Supporting Community Life and Civic Identity

- ✦ Participants emphasized the importance of involving artists in the planning and design of future arts spaces and facilities;
- ✦ Arts and culture were described as important to Richmond's cultural and intellectual development and to the city's broader civic identity; and
- ✦ Participants also described arts and cultural spaces as important to community connection, local identity, and the visibility of arts and culture within the city.

5.2 Arts Discipline-specific Needs

While many themes were shared across disciplines, participants also identified needs specific to particular areas of artistic practice. The following provides a summary of the discipline-specific needs that emerged through the engagement process.





5.2.1 Visual Arts

- ✦ Exhibition space that can be configured for a variety of disciplines and presentation formats;
- ✦ Flexible studio and wet studio space with features such as sinks, specialized ventilation, durable finishes, and natural light; and
- ✦ Maker-oriented spaces that support hands-on creative practice.

5.2.2 Music and Performing Arts

- ✦ Multiple rehearsal rooms with appropriate acoustic design and accessible risers;
- ✦ Performance and rehearsal venues for school music programs;
- ✦ Storage and improved accessibility for transporting instruments and equipment;
- ✦ A professional cinema or screening venue in Richmond, as filmmakers are currently presenting work outside the city; and
- ✦ A fabrication workshop to support theatre arts, space is needed to support set production and related production activities.

5.2.3 Dance

- ✦ The dance groups engaged through the process indicated that dance is generally well served by existing City and private facilities and did not identify significant current gaps in dance space provision, features, or functionality.

5.2.4 Ceramics and Pottery

- ✦ Additional pottery and ceramics space to respond to limited supply and growing interest in the discipline; and
- ✦ Specialized features such as specialized ventilation and accessible storage to support different stages of creation.

5.2.5 Digital and Media Arts

- ✦ Formal exhibition and presentation spaces that can accommodate media-based work and related public programming;
- ✦ Flexible studio, classroom, and maker-oriented space with features and amenities that support digital and media arts programming; and
- ✦ Technical equipment, fixtures, and support features to accommodate evolving media arts practices and technology-based work.

5.2.6 Future Facility Design Considerations

Participants identified a number of features that should be considered in future performing arts facility planning and design, including:

- ✦ multiple performance and rehearsal spaces;
- ✦ box office, concession, and washroom facilities;
- ✦ sound and lighting booths, and collapsible seating;
- ✦ backstage storage and other performer support spaces;
- ✦ appropriate acoustic treatment; and
- ✦ involvement of artists in facility design.

Overall, the engagement findings indicate a need for more affordable, accessible, and appropriately equipped arts spaces in Richmond, including both specialized facilities and flexible multi-disciplinary spaces that can support a range of disciplines and activities over time.





6. Inventory Analysis: City of Richmond's Purpose-Built Arts Spaces

This section reviews the City of Richmond's purpose-built arts facilities and spaces, and their roles in supporting arts activities across the city.

Each purpose-built arts space is then examined through several lenses. These include facility service level within the City's planning framework; primary arts space type; observations informed by leading practices, utilization patterns, and community input; a functional assessment of how well the space supports current arts users and activities; and insights from comparable communities to help contextualize Richmond's current provision. The analysis is intended to provide a clear understanding of how Richmond's existing arts facilities are functioning today and to inform future planning.

Facility Service Level

The City identifies three different service levels for City facilities: community, city-wide and regional. Community facilities primarily serve residents within a PRCS Planning Area and aim to provide equitable access. City-wide facilities draw users from across Richmond, while also serving the needs of the residents of a specific PRCS Service Area. Regional-level facilities are described as destination spaces, attracting users from across and beyond the city.

Type of Arts Space

For the purposes of this inventory analysis, the City's purpose-built arts spaces are grouped into the following categories: (a) Performance Spaces, (b) Exhibition Spaces, (c) Practice and Creation Spaces, and (d) Learning Spaces. While some spaces accommodate multiple uses, each space is categorized according to its primary function.

Insights

Observations have been informed by trends and leading practices in the arts, City of Richmond arts facilities, venues and spaces, utilization and growth of arts in Richmond, and feedback gathered from Richmond's arts community, as identified in previous sections of this Needs Assessment.

Functional Assessment

The functional assessment is a review of how well purpose-built arts spaces function for current arts users. Each functional assessment is informed through site visits, operational experiences, engagement findings, and background documents, and focuses on how well each facility supports performance, program, administrative, circulation, and audience functions.

Insights from Comparable Communities

Setting standards for arts facilities and services is complex because city needs and delivery models reflect local conditions—such as geography, land use and density, transportation links, demographics and cultural interests, and existing civic and partner arts infrastructure. At the same time, a well-designed comparator scan can show whether Richmond's arts facility inventory, capacity, and utilization are broadly aligned with peer communities, and help identify opportunities to expand or diversify Richmond's provision (e.g., purpose-built spaces, rehearsal/production capacity, neighbourhood access). These findings can inform long-range planning and capital prioritization.



The following comparable communities were selected:

- ✦ Burnaby;
- ✦ Maple Ridge;
- ✦ Victoria; and
- ✦ Surrey.

Note: While this Inventory Analysis is conducted solely on the City of Richmond's purpose-built arts facilities, the arts in Richmond also take place in a wide variety of additional City spaces, such as community centres, as well as non-profit and private spaces, schools, parks, green spaces, festivals and events.

(a) Performance Spaces

The following city-wide and regional-level spaces, primarily used for performance, are considered here:

- ✦ Richmond Cultural Centre and the Gateway Theatre provide the City's purpose-built, indoor and year-round performance spaces;
- ✦ The Richmond Cultural Centre's performance space is the Theatre Under the Stairs (TUTS), a city-wide service level; and
- ✦ Gateway Theatre provides a regional service level, with its performance spaces being MainStage, and Studio B Theatre.

Insights

- ✦ Richmond's current inventory does not include a dedicated purpose-built venue optimized for non-amplified music performance.
- ✦ Too few supporting spaces, particularly change rooms and washrooms separate from the public.
- ✦ Black box theatre ceiling height limits the ability to add some types of theatre-specific equipment.
- ✦ Storage space is limited.
- ✦ Large preparation and workshop spaces are important to theatre facilities and are not available in Richmond.
- ✦ Both the Cultural Centre and Gateway Theatre are located within Minoru Park.

Functional Assessment

- ✦ Dressing rooms and performer areas could be enhanced to better support accessibility, separation from public areas, and concurrent events.
- ✦ Back-of-house storage and green room space are constrained relative to current operational needs.
- ✦ Acoustics meet the needs of some groups and not others (non-amplified music).
- ✦ Wayfinding, gathering space, and circulation could be clarified and improved to support a more intuitive user experience.
- ✦ Spaces may benefit from technology upgrades to align with current performance and production needs.

Insights from Comparable Communities

- ✦ As in other communities, rental costs and limited space availability present challenges for a wide range of artists, pointing to the need for affordable performance spaces.



(b) Exhibition Spaces

The following City-wide service level spaces, primarily used as, or related to exhibition spaces, are:

- ✦ The Richmond Cultural Centre is home to the Richmond Art Gallery, a purpose-built gallery that provides a city-wide service level and contributes to the centralized hub of arts activities in Minoru Park;
- ✦ The Richmond Art Gallery includes collection storage, which houses the City's permanent art collection; and
- ✦ The Richmond Art Gallery also oversees off-site exhibition spaces, in the Richmond Cultural Centre Annex lobby, and the City Hall Galleria, located on the ground floor of Richmond City Hall.



Insights

- ✦ Arts exhibition space has not kept pace with population growth.
- ✦ Gallery technology has not kept pace with the evolution in arts disciplines.
- ✦ Climate-controlled art collection storage capacity could be expanded to better conserve the current collection and support future needs.

Functional Assessment

- ✦ Support spaces are undersized.
- ✦ Limited space for programming and events.

Insights from Comparable Communities

- ✦ In comparable communities, growth in exhibition activity has prompted consideration of new art galleries.

(c) Practice, Rehearsal and Creation Spaces

The Richmond Cultural Centre, Richmond Cultural Centre Annex, and Gateway Theatre all provide spaces that serve as practice, rehearsal and creation spaces at the city-wide and regional service level:

- ✦ Richmond Cultural Centre offers the following spaces at a city-wide service level: Arts Studio, Dance Studio, Fabric Arts Studio, Lapidary Studio and Silversmithing Room, Pottery Studio 1, Music Studio 1, Music Studio 2, Performing Arts Studio 1, Painting Studio;
- ✦ Richmond Cultural Centre Annex offers the following spaces at a city-wide service level: Pottery Studio 2, Performing Arts Studio 2, Performing Arts Studio 3, and Creativity Studio; and
- ✦ Gateway Theatre offers Studio A at the regional-wide service level.



Insights

- ✦ Insufficient City spaces for arts organizations to have a home and develop their operation and programming.
- ✦ Rehearsal and studio spaces not always equipped with amenities to meet diverse art needs, such as specialized ventilation, sinks, sprung floors, and acoustic treatments.
- ✦ Storage space is in high demand.

Functional Assessment

- ✦ Dedicated set production and workshop space is missing.
- ✦ Some spaces lack features such as natural light, specialized ventilation, acoustic treatments, and storage.
- ✦ Wayfinding, gathering space, and circulation could be improved.

Insights from Comparable Communities

- ✦ High rental costs, combined with limited access to high-quality rehearsal, production, and fabrication spaces, create affordability and access challenges for professional artists seeking more specialized and better-equipped facilities.
- ✦ Space needs are being explored through innovative use of specialized facilities, programs and grants.
- ✦ Re-use of heritage buildings yields innovative art spaces.
- ✦ Municipalities generally do not provide storage facilities, unless for municipal programs.



(d) Learning Spaces

The following learning spaces are primarily used for arts programming and learning spaces, and are geared towards both the City-wide and community service levels:

- ✦ Richmond Cultural Centre: Pottery Studio 1; and
- ✦ Richmond Cultural Centre Annex: History Lab, Media Lab, Pottery Studio 2, Richmond Art Gallery Classroom.

Insights

- ✦ Current inventory of pottery studios are not keeping pace with growing demand.
- ✦ Opportunities to expand the co-location of dedicated community arts spaces with other civic facilities.
- ✦ These community-level spaces benefit from being located within the hub of arts activity within Minoru Park.

Functional Assessment

- ✦ Some spaces lack features such as natural light, specialized ventilation, acoustic treatments, and storage.
- ✦ Richmond Cultural Centre wayfinding, gathering spaces, and circulation could be refined.
- ✦ The former kitchen space in the Annex presents an opportunity for future adaptive reuse.

Insights from Comparable Communities

- ✦ Pottery studios have been identified as in high demand.
- ✦ Participation studio spaces are being included in new community centres.
- ✦ Youth-driven, digital, and community-based programming is on the rise.
- ✦ Comparable communities are placing increased emphasis on spaces and programming that support multicultural, youth-focused, and Indigenous initiatives.



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7. Priority Needs

The priority needs below respond to findings from the engagement analysis, inventory analysis, trends and leading practices research, and insights from comparable communities. Together, they set out a layered approach to strengthening Richmond's arts infrastructure over the next 10 years, while allowing flexibility to respond to emerging opportunities, partnerships, and evolving arts and community needs. The priority needs are not presented in ranked order and should not be interpreted as representing priority or sequence of implementation.

Each priority need identifies a type of purpose-built arts space and intended service level.

Collectively, these priority needs are intended to improve access to appropriate, purpose-designed spaces for professional and emerging artists, while also strengthening the contribution of existing facilities to community participation, social connection, wellness, and engagement in arts and culture.

The space sizes, square footages, seat counts, and other capacity measures identified in the priority needs are preliminary estimates intended to illustrate the general scale and function of facilities required to meet current and future needs over the 10-year planning horizon. These figures are approximate and would be refined through future planning efforts such as program development, site-specific planning, and concept design.

Art Exhibition Spaces and Auditorium

This responds to identified needs for dedicated, purpose-built Class A* arts exhibition spaces, an auditorium, multipurpose/program rooms, event space, and ancillary spaces to support these functions. The Needs Assessment research independently identified this priority need, which aligns with Council's consideration of the Duck Island redevelopment (RZ 20-915237), and which included securing approximately 30,000 square feet of art exhibition spaces and auditorium space. The 2024 rezoning contemplates the provision of art gallery exhibition spaces of varying sizes, multipurpose/program rooms, an auditorium for performances, event space, and ancillary spaces such as exhibition support, collection storage, circulation and administrative spaces. Given the current economic uncertainties facing the development industry and large-scale development projects, should that development not proceed, the City could consider development of a comparable facility at another suitable location in Richmond. However, such consideration would also need to account for recent changes to provincial planning legislation (Bill 46 and 47) that have affected the City's ability to secure these types of facilities through redevelopment. As a result, alternative delivery, funding and partnership approaches may need to be explored to support provision of a comparable space elsewhere in Richmond. This priority need would expand exhibition capacity within Richmond and the broader region and contribute to Richmond's Tourism Master Plan.



**A Class A exhibition space is an exhibition space recognized for its ability to preserve and display cultural property or artistic work at the highest standard including ensuring that proper environmental controls and security measures are in place.*



Music Performance and Rehearsal Spaces

This responds to needs identified for dedicated, acoustically appropriate spaces that support music performance, rehearsal, creation, and related production activities in Richmond. It also includes specialized music education spaces intended to support music instruction, practice, and other learning-related activities. The needed spaces are:

- ✦ a music performance space with 250 to 500 seats at 4,000 to 8,000 sq. ft.;
- ✦ two non-amplified music rehearsal spaces at 200 sq. ft. each;
- ✦ music education space(s) with adequate storage, intended to support specialized music instruction, practice, and learning-related activities by music organizations, instructors, and other music users; and
- ✦ supportive ancillary spaces needed to enable the effective functioning of the primary program spaces.

This priority need may be delivered in more than one way, depending on site opportunity, available footprint, and future capital planning considerations. If a large site is available, these spaces could be accommodated within a single music performance and rehearsal facility. Alternatively, they could be delivered across multiple locations. This approach provides flexibility while still responding to the need for more specialized and purpose-designed music spaces in Richmond.

Theatre Performance and Rehearsal Spaces

This responds to needs identified for dedicated, purpose-built spaces to support theatre performance, rehearsal, creation and related production activities in Richmond. It also includes spaces that can support dance use, recognizing that while dance is not identified as a priority need at this time, demand is expected to grow alongside the City's growing population. The needed spaces are:

- ✦ a performance studio theatre with 100 to 150 seats at 2,500 sq. ft.;
- ✦ a rehearsal studio space at 600 sq. ft.;
- ✦ a fabrication workshop at 2,800 sq. ft. intended to support set production and related production activities and to help address a regional shortage of dedicated workshop space for set fabrication; and
- ✦ supportive ancillary spaces needed to enable the effective functioning of the primary program spaces.

This priority need may be delivered in more than one way, depending on site opportunity, available footprint, and future capital planning considerations. If a large site is available, these spaces could be accommodated within a single performing arts centre. Alternatively, they could be delivered across multiple locations. This approach provides flexibility while still responding to the need for more specialized and purpose-designed performing arts spaces in Richmond, including space that can accommodate future growth in dance activity and workshop capacity that would help address a broader regional gap in set production space.

Pottery Studio Spaces

This supports community-based arts education and programming for residents of all ages and skill levels across the city. It is focused specifically on addressing the need for additional pottery studio space in Richmond. The City's two existing pottery studios are heavily used and at capacity, indicating a clear, immediate need for additional space. Pottery studios require specialized design, equipment, infrastructure, and operational planning, and therefore require a more clearly defined approach to delivery.

The needed pottery spaces include:

- ✦ two pottery studios, each 750 to 1,000 sq. ft.

The specific programming and operating models for these studios may vary depending on location, partnership opportunities, and community need. Rather than concentrating all pottery studios in one location, these spaces should be considered throughout Richmond, where feasible, so they can provide broader geographic access and participation. This approach would allow pottery studios to be delivered incrementally over time in a manner that is flexible and responsive to local opportunities and community needs.

Existing City of Richmond Purpose-Built Arts Spaces

In addition to the priority needs outlined above, capital funding requests to adapt or update existing spaces will be brought forward for Council consideration where justified by program needs and a demonstrated business case to support the request.

Capital Budget Process

The capital budget submission process is conducted utilizing established criteria to evaluate and prioritize capital projects that fulfill the needs of the City and the goals and objectives of Council. This Needs Assessment is intended to inform that broader process by identifying priority needs; it does not itself establish capital priorities, approve projects, determine sites, or provide costing. Each division prepares its capital submissions based on its area of expertise, needs assessment, Council priorities and funding availability. A Review Team, approved by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), is tasked to review and rank the capital submissions and the recommendation is provided to the SMT for review and discussion prior to being presented to Council for consideration.

Non-City Operated Arts Spaces

The Needs Assessment also identifies that emerging and professional artists and arts organizations require dedicated multidisciplinary arts spaces and visual arts studio spaces to support rehearsal activities, workshops, creative development, production, storage, and ongoing studio work. In Richmond, these types of dedicated spaces are not typically provided as City-delivered, purpose-built facilities intended for the sole or exclusive use of these users. Rather, this need is best understood within the City's broader enabling and partnership role and is aligned with ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2026-2031, specifically:

- ✦ Strategic Direction 3: Invest in the Arts and Objective 3.1: Invest in the community's capacity through targeted investment, collaborations, organizational development and training.



- ✦ Strategic Direction 4: Build Arts and Cultural Leadership and Objective 4.2: Connect creative producers and enable partnerships among organizations.
- ✦ Strategic Direction 5: Activate Spaces Through (and for!) the Arts and Objective 5.1: Work towards meeting the demand for creative spaces and cultural facilities.

Within this context, the City's role is to support the conditions for artists and arts organizations to secure dedicated arts spaces in Richmond. This role may be advanced through partnerships, facilitation, planning tools, redevelopment opportunities, amenity contributions, and other enabling measures to improve access to appropriate dedicated arts spaces over time.

Examples of this approach already exist in Richmond through artist residency and studio-related arrangements, development-secured spaces, and other policy- and partnership-based mechanisms that expand access to arts space beyond the City's core purpose-built arts facilities. Building on these approaches over time would support the City's role in investing in community capacity, and help respond to the needs of emerging and professional artists and arts organizations by improving access to dedicated, appropriate space for creation, rehearsal, and sustained artistic practice.



8. Conclusion

Arts facilities play a vital role in creating an inclusive, healthy and vibrant community, and contribute to community identity, cultural expression, and local economic vitality. This Needs Assessment was undertaken to better understand the current state of Richmond's purpose-built arts facilities and to identify opportunities to address current and future arts space needs through a strategic, evidence-based approach. The work was informed by community engagement, facility and utilization analysis, trends and leading practices research, and insights from comparable communities, providing a comprehensive picture of Richmond's current arts facility ecosystem and the pressures and opportunities shaping it over time.

The Needs Assessment confirms that Richmond has a strong and valued foundation in arts infrastructure. The Richmond Cultural Centre, Richmond Cultural Centre Annex, and Gateway Theatre continue to play a central role in the city's arts ecosystem and provide important community, city, and regional-serving functions. At the same time, the analysis identifies that the current ecosystem has limitations in the supply, variety, and functionality of arts spaces available to the Richmond arts community. The analysis also highlights demand for more specialized spaces that can support evolving use over time.

The four priority needs set out in this report respond to those findings. Together, they provide a framework for strengthening Richmond's arts infrastructure over the next 10 years.

The priority needs are intended to inform access to appropriate, purpose-designed spaces for professional, emerging, and community artists, while also expanding opportunities for residents to participate in arts and culture across Richmond.

The Richmond Arts Facilities Needs Assessment Report provides a strategic foundation for future planning, investment, and partnership development in Richmond's arts ecosystem by highlighting where current gaps are most significant, where demand is likely to grow, and the priority needs that will help inform future City planning and investment decisions related to arts infrastructure for Richmond's artists, arts organizations, and residents.



Appendices

Appendix A: Engagement Summary



Engagement Summary Report

Arts Facilities Needs Assessment

February 2025



Survey

An online survey was conducted to better understand how arts facilities in Richmond are currently used and to identify the needs and priorities of the arts community. The survey was distributed to over 150 artists, program coordinators, educators, art facility operators, and creative organizations. To reflect the different perspectives of respondents, the survey included two streams: one for arts organizations and independent artists, another for facility operators. All results are self-reported.

Part 1: Arts groups

In total, 93 people from arts groups completed the survey, many of whom wear multiple hats in the creative community. The breakdown of respondents included:

- 53 independent artists
- 59 people affiliated with 44 arts groups based in Richmond
- 72 Richmond-based residents
- 32 who showcase art in Richmond individually
- 56 who showcase art in Richmond as part of a group

See page 11 for more information about the artistic disciplines these groups represent, and Appendix A for a list of affiliated groups.

Part 2: Facility operators

There were nine responses received from seven facility operators, including:

- Richmond Cultural Centre (with response from a Community Cultural Development staff member)
- Gateway Theatre
- Defy Gravity Dance Company
- Lipont Gallery
- Steveston Hub
- School District No. 38

Responses from the Richmond Music School were also included, though they rent space from a church, rather than owning and operating their own space.

An additional four respondents answered part two of the survey, even though they do not operate purpose-built arts venues in Richmond. We were able to draw useful insights from their answers; however, they are not included in all of the analysis. These groups include:

- Richmond Delta Youth Orchestra
- Richmond Community Band Society
- Vancouver Circus School (which operates a purpose-built venue in New Westminster)

106

participants
responded to the
survey to share
their needs.



Part 1: Arts groups

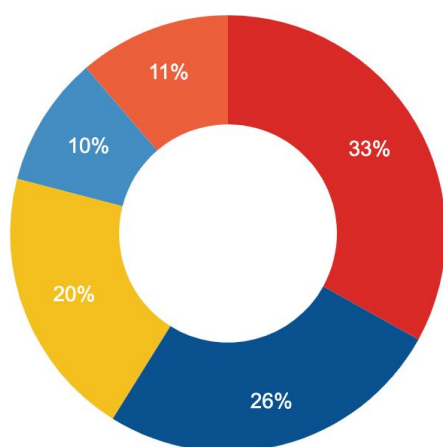
Arts groups profiles

This section summarizes feedback from arts organizations and artists who use arts facilities in Richmond and who responded to Part 1 of the survey. Respondents identified a range of arts disciplines, as summarized in the table below. Most respondents indicated involvement in non-amplified music, such as choir and orchestra, or visual arts. Additional responses provided under "other" included literary arts, ceramics, vocal body work, and education.

Question 4: *I practice the following arts discipline(s):*

	Number of respondents	Percent of respondents
Non-amplified music	42	29%
Visual arts	37	26%
Other	15	10%
Multidisciplinary	13	9%
Textile arts	8	6%
Amplified music	8	6%
Media arts	8	6%
Theatre	7	5%
Dance	5	3%
Circus	2	1%

Around one third of respondents described themselves as recreational artists (33%), closely followed by professional artists (26%)*. Additional "other" responses included educator, producer, conductor, consultant, and event organizer.



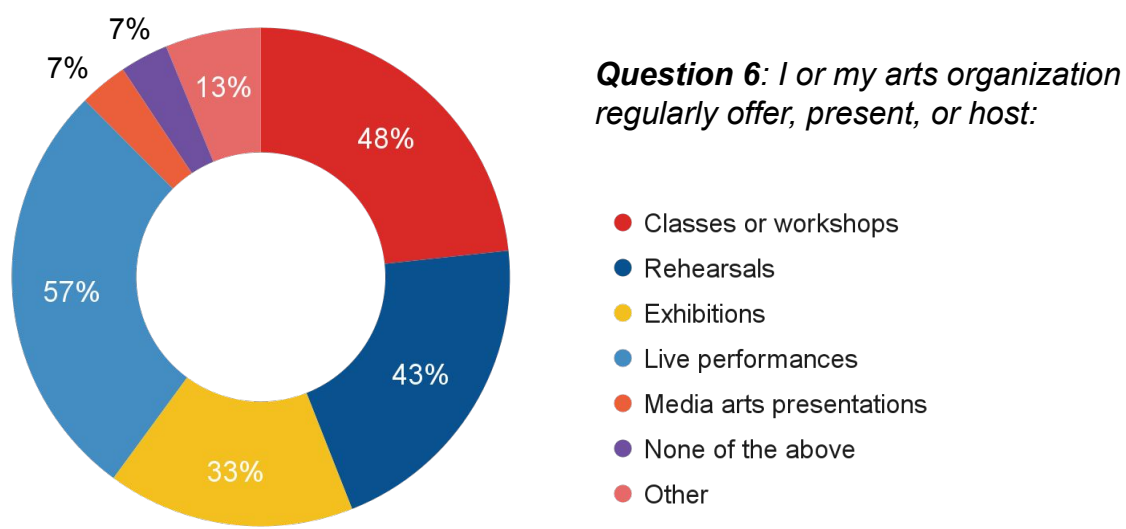
Question 5:
would describe myself as:

- Recreational artist
- Professional artist
- Volunteer or board member
- Arts administrator
- Other

* The [Canada Council for the Arts](#) defines a professional artist as an artist who has specialized training; is recognized as a professional by his or her peers; is committed to devoting time to artistic activity; and has a history of public presentation or publication.

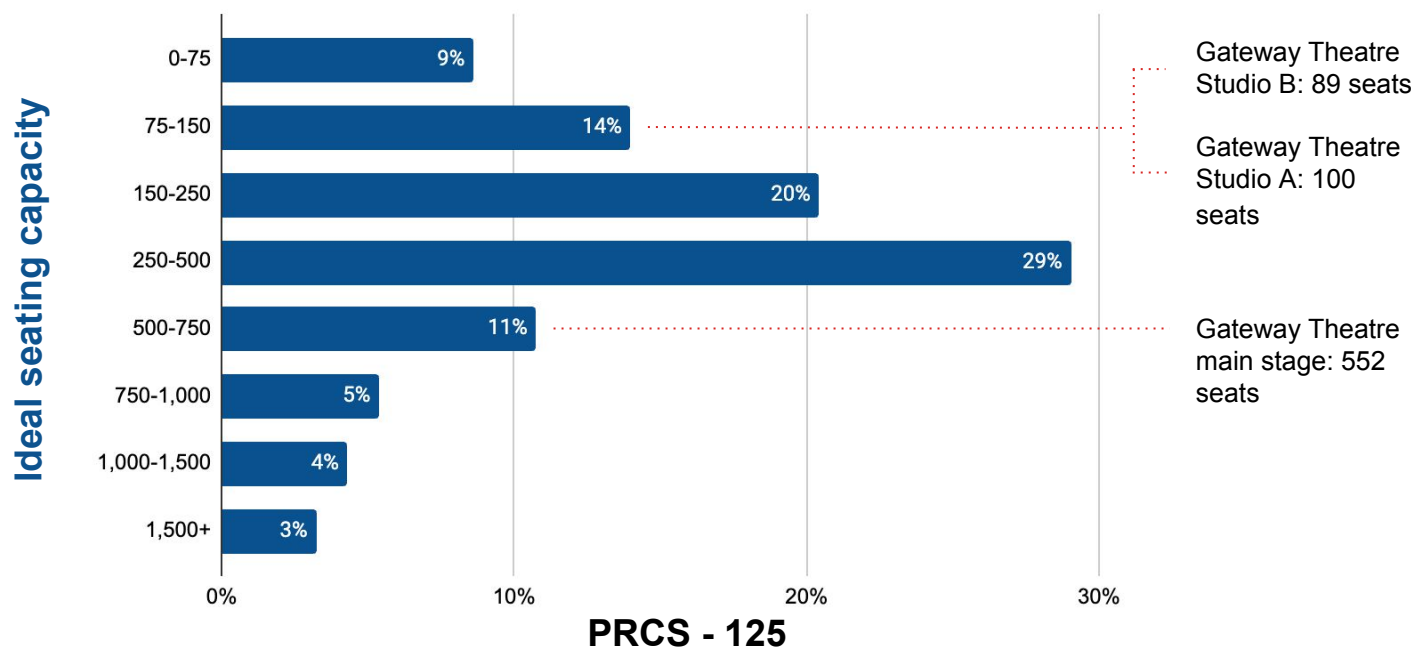
Arts groups profiles (continued)

The survey asked participants what kinds of programs and performances they—or their organization—present. Top responses included live performances (57%) and classes or workshops (48%). Additional “other” responses included community events, fundraisers, sales, film screenings, and presentations.



Performing arts groups and artists (representing dance, theatre, music, and circus) were asked what size venue they would prefer. Roughly half of respondents selected a mid-size venue with a capacity of 150-250 or 250-500 people (49% combined). Similarly, interviewees expressed a preference for venues with a capacity of 200-300 people. For comparison, we indicate the capacity of Richmond’s primary purpose-built performance facilities in the right column below.

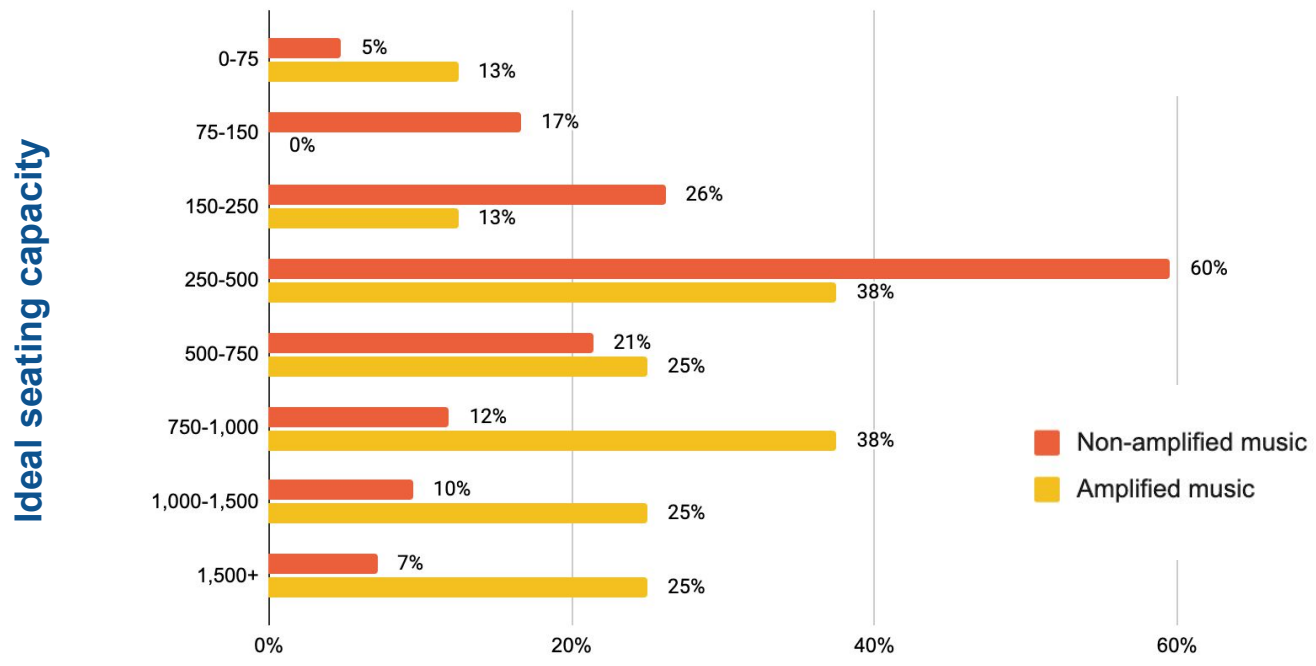
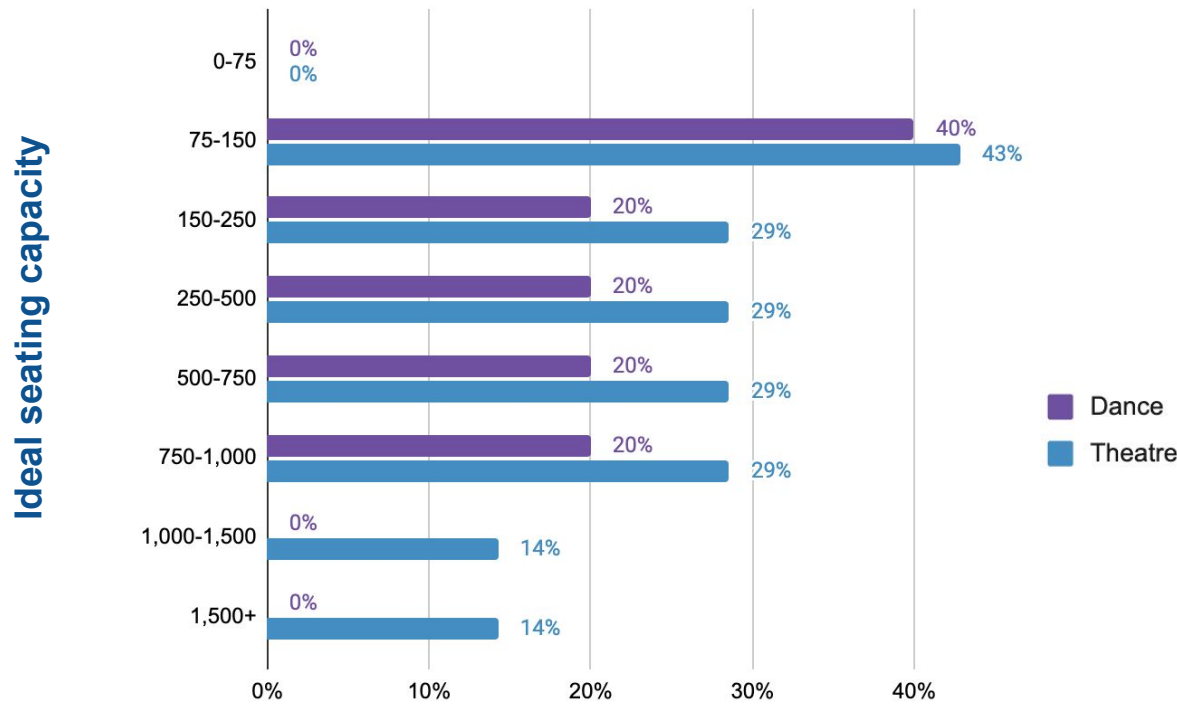
Question 7: *I or my arts organization would ideally perform in a venue with an audience capacity of:*



Arts groups profiles (continued)

The following charts break down the ideal seating capacity of a venue by responses from each performing arts disciplines. Notably the ideal venue size for dance and theatre is 75-150 seats and for music is 250-500 seats.

Question 7: I or my arts organization would ideally perform in a venue with an audience capacity of:

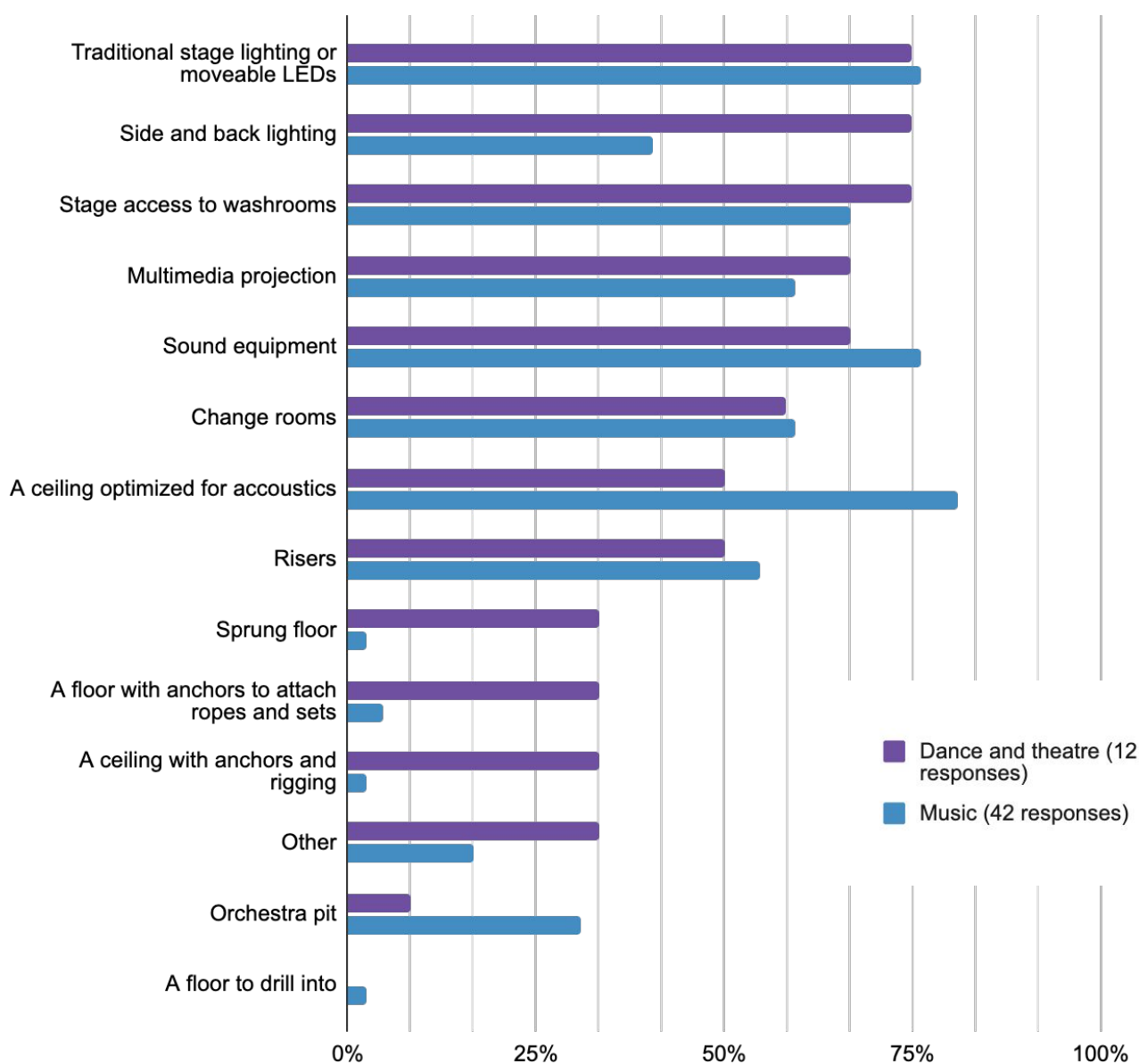


Performance venue amenities

Performing arts participants were asked what types of amenities and equipment they need at arts venues. The graph below shows the percentage of respondents in performance disciplines who selected a given type of amenity or equipment. Responses suggest there is a high need in all disciplines for lighting, access to washrooms, multimedia projection, sound equipment, and change rooms. Theatre and dance groups provided similar responses; therefore, we have grouped them together for simplicity. The chart below also groups amplified and non-amplified music together, due to their similar survey responses.

Additional “Other” responses included storage (including long-term storage), practice rooms for large ensembles, and an acoustic concert hall.

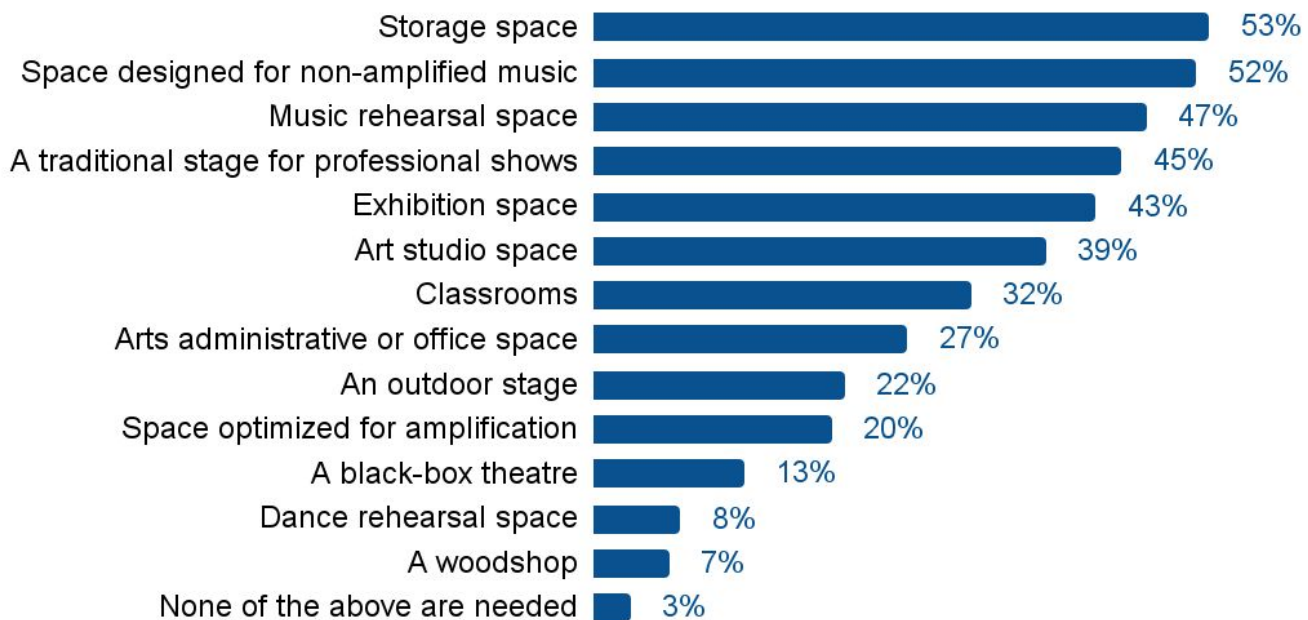
Question 8: *I or my organization require a performance venue with the following features:*



Supportive spaces

The survey asked participants what types of supportive spaces they need to host and prepare for shows and exhibits, and to meet other administrative needs. Storage space was the most common response, followed by rehearsal space for music, specifically for non-amplified music. Additional “other” responses included rehearsal room options, an acoustic concert hall, access to convenient loading space, a professional cinema, presentation space (with equipment), a ceramic studio, and a dance floor (such as a sprung floor).

Question 9: *I or my organization need better access to the following kinds of spaces for hosting, preparation, or administrative purposes:*

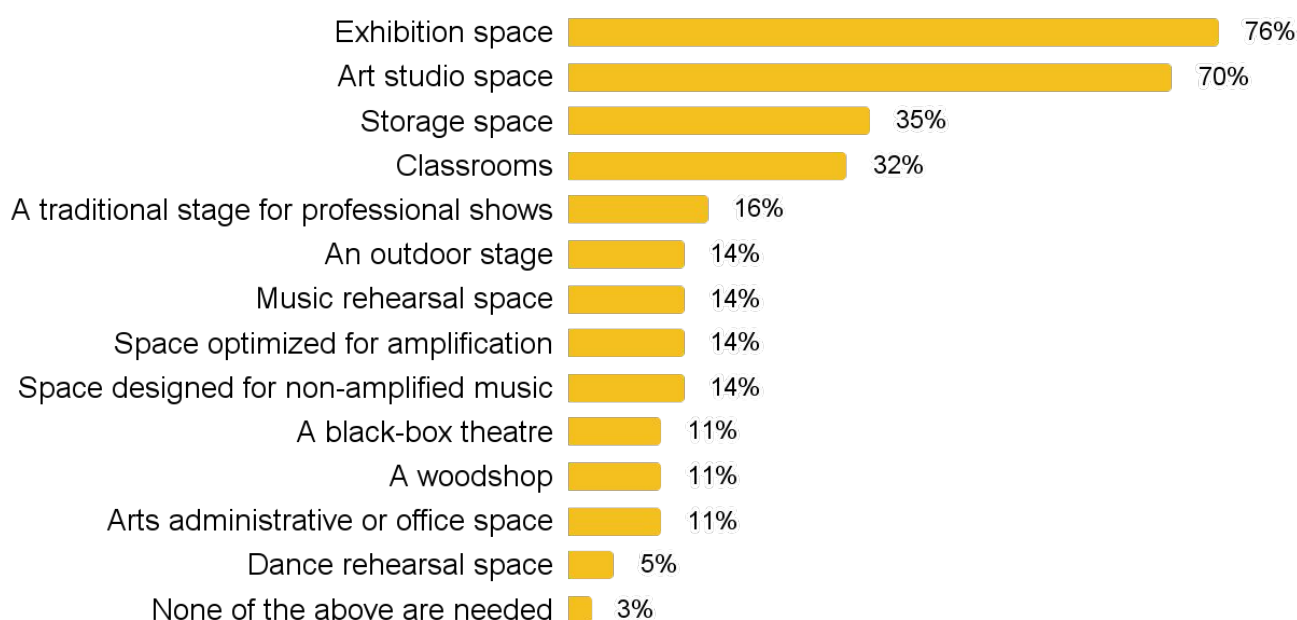


Supportive spaces (continued)

Responses were filtered to this question by visual arts respondents (total 27 responses) to better understand their needs for exhibition and art studio space. The results suggest that:

- Roughly three quarters of artists struggle to find appropriate exhibition and studio space.
- The need for both kinds of spaces is roughly equal.
- The need for these spaces is far greater than any other category of space.

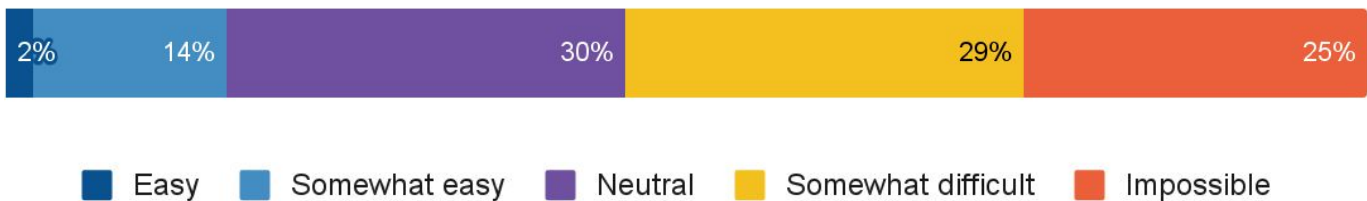
Question 9: *I or my organization need better access to the following kinds of spaces for hosting, preparation, or administrative purposes:*



Difficulty accessing arts spaces

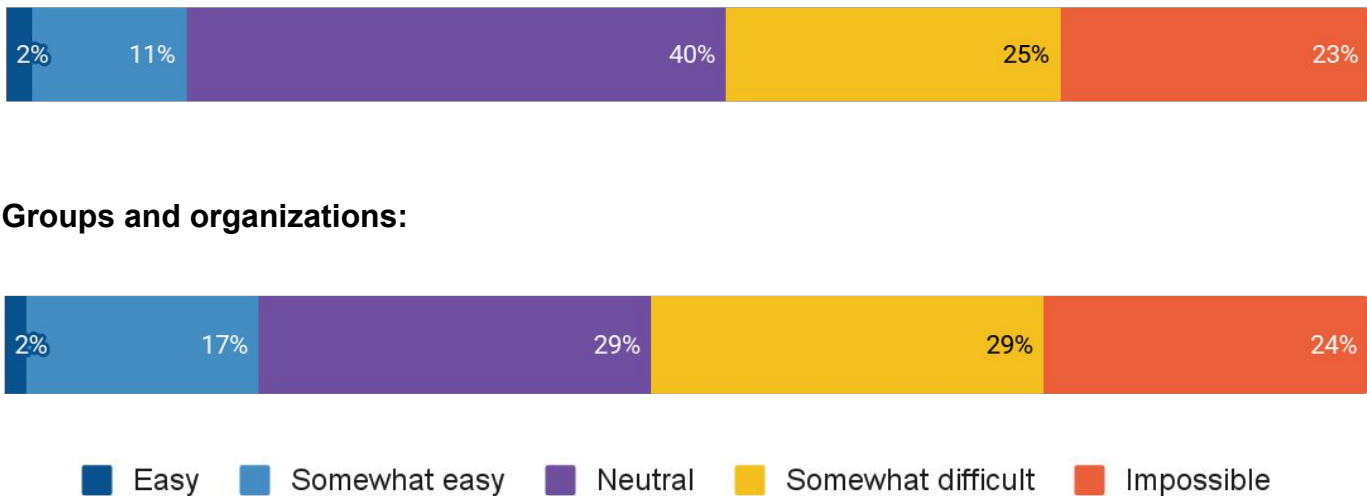
Respondents were asked to rate the level of difficulty in finding spaces that match their needs in Richmond on a scale of one (easy) to five (impossible). Only 2% of respondents expressed that it is easy to find spaces that meet their needs. Over 50% find it somewhat difficult or impossible to find spaces that meet their needs.

Question 10: *How easy it for your organization to find spaces that match you or your organization’s needs in Richmond?*

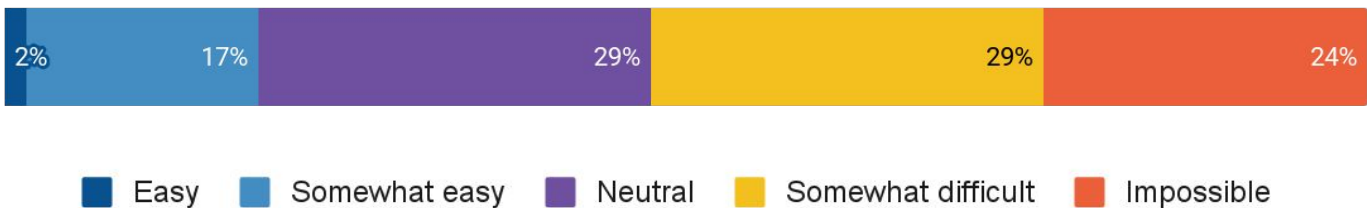


Analysis was conducted on how individual artists answered this same question compared to arts groups, recognizing that their needs may be different. However, there was very little difference in responses. Individual artists and arts groups also shared that they struggled to find space in roughly equal measure.

Individual and independent artists:



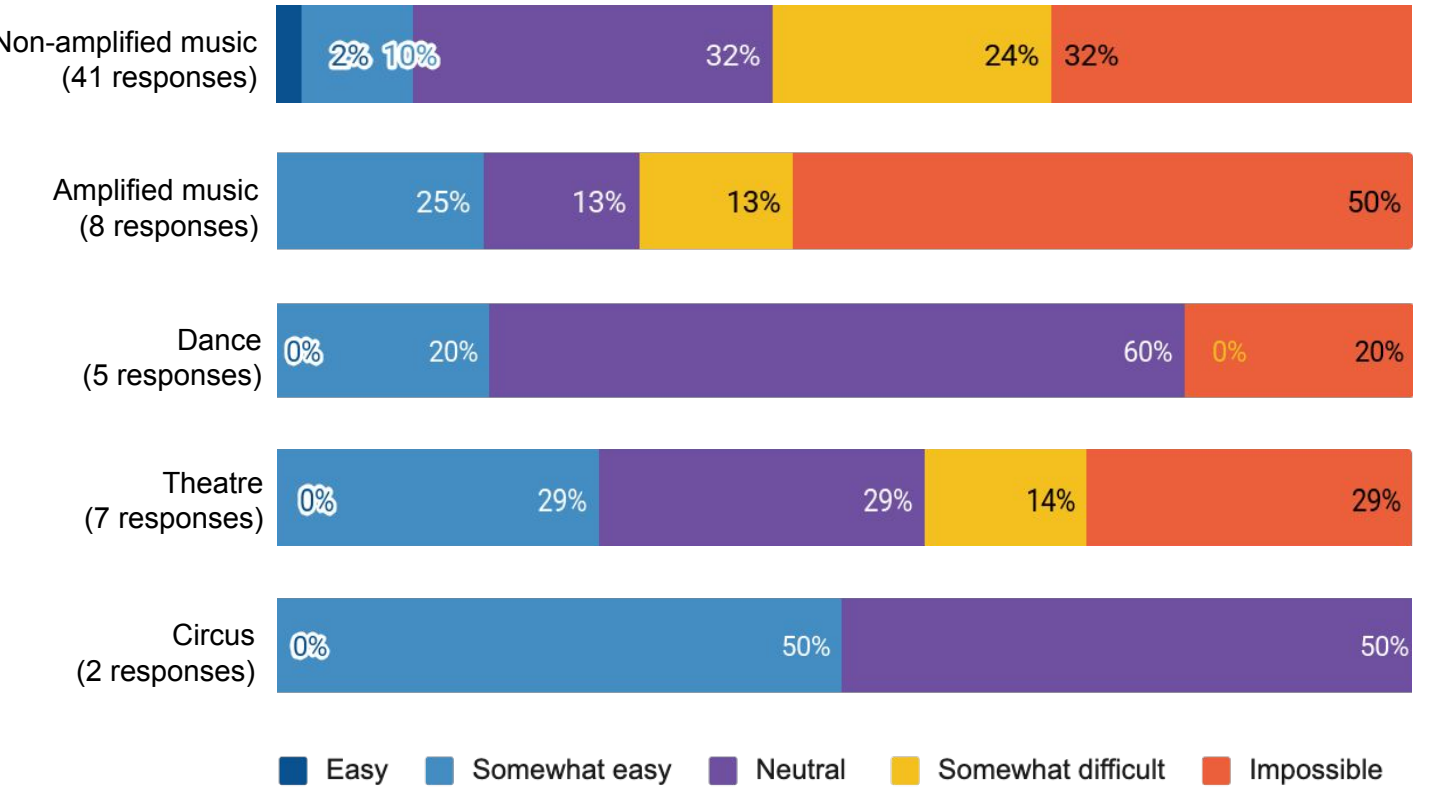
Groups and organizations:



Difficulty accessing arts spaces: Performing arts

The following two pages break down the level of difficulty for accessing spaces by performing arts discipline. Notably, more than 50% of music respondents indicated that it is hard to find spaces that meet their needs (“somewhat difficult” or “impossible”). According to these results, amplified musicians find it hardest to secure adequate spaces in Richmond, compared to all other types of arts groups and artists.

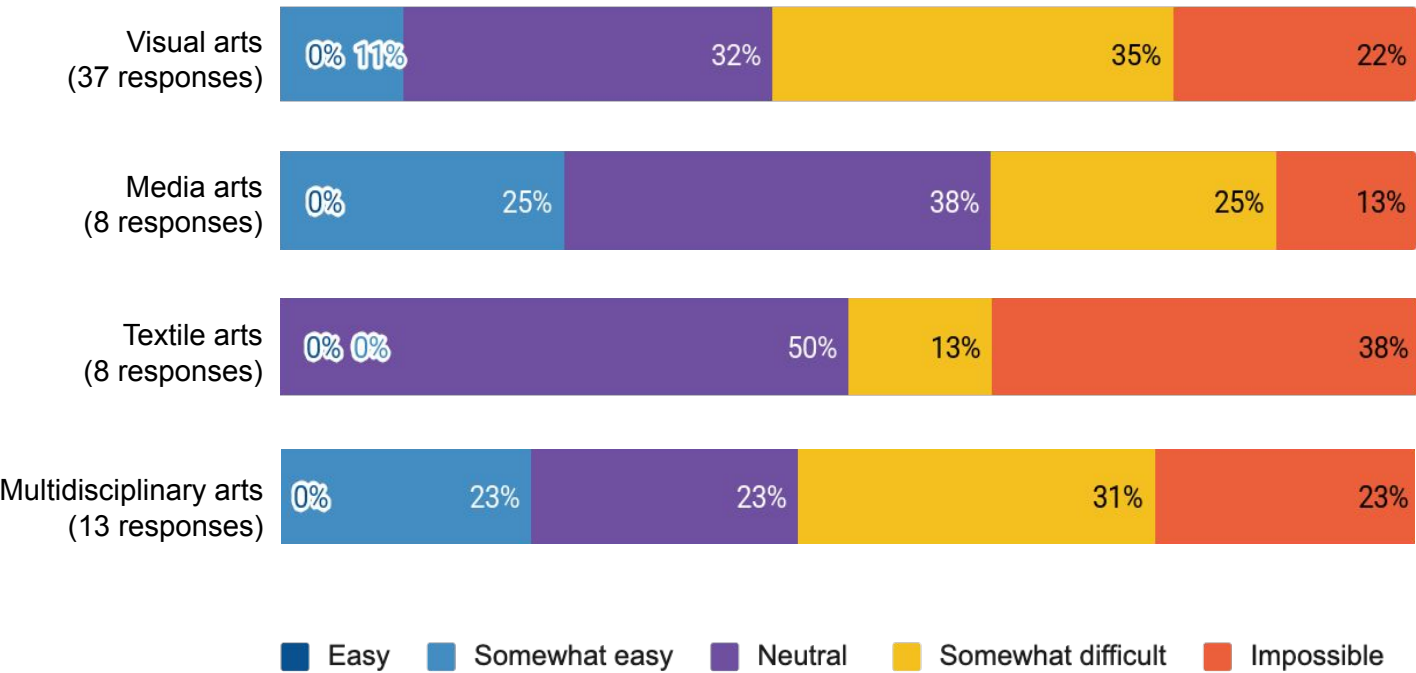
Question 10: *How easy it for your organization to find spaces that match you or your organization’s needs in Richmond?*



Difficulty accessing arts spaces: Visual and multimedia

The following chart shows the level of difficulty non-performing arts groups experience with accessing arts spaces, including visual, media, textile, and multidisciplinary art groups. No respondent selected “easy” and few (25% or less) selected “somewhat easy.” Among non-performing arts groups, these results find that textile groups face the most difficulty in finding adequate space in Richmond.

Question 10: *How easy it for your organization to find spaces that match you or your organization’s needs in Richmond?*

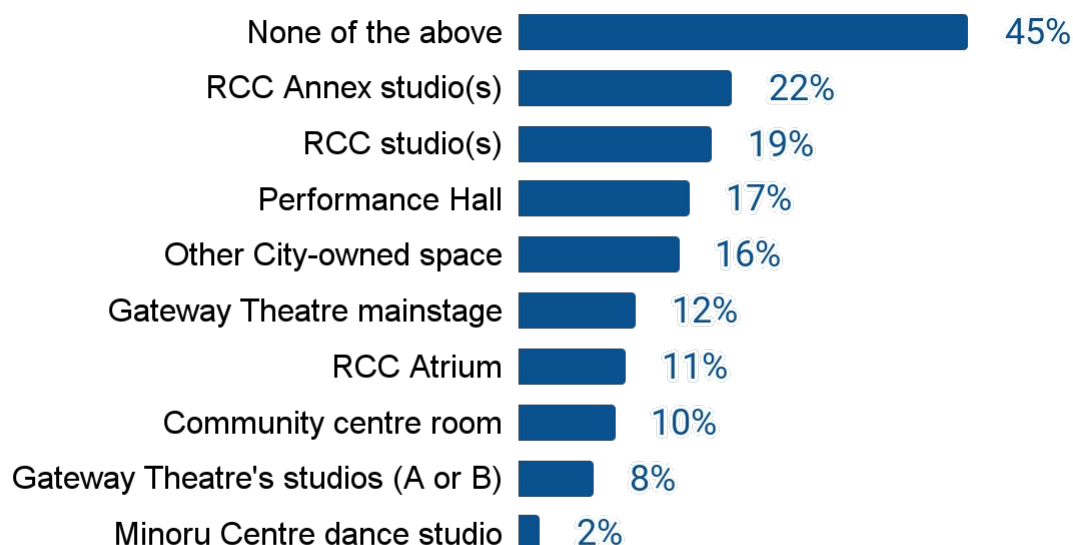


Booking City arts facilities

Respondents were asked which City-owned arts facilities they regularly book. The three most commonly booked spaces identified were RCC Annex art studios (22%), RCC art studios (19%), and the Performance Hall (17%). Almost half of respondents selected “None of the above” (45%), meaning that they do not regularly book City facilities.

Additional “other” responses for City-owned spaces (16%) included the Branscombe House, the Red Barn at Terra Nova Rural Park, the Steveston Museum and Post Office, other spaces at the Minoru Centre (including the gymnasium and front outdoor area), the Sharing Farm, Britannia Shipyards, Steveston Park, and pop-up artist space.

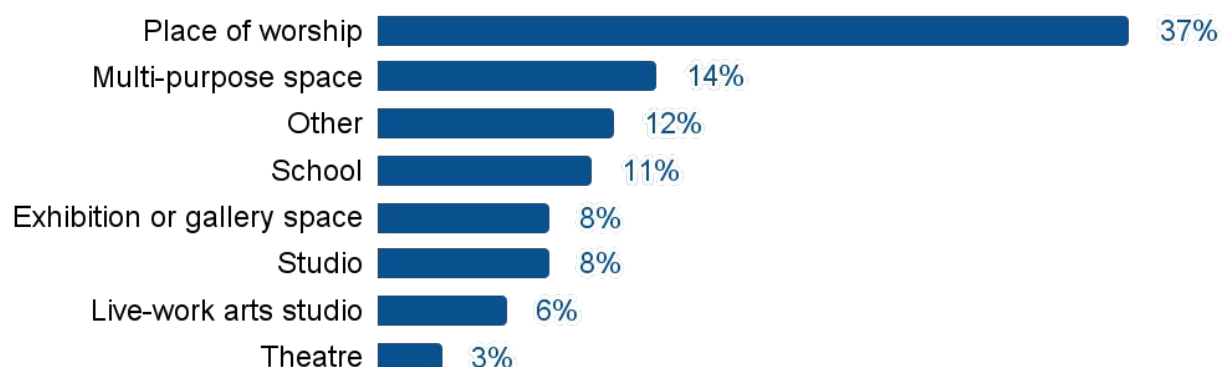
Question 11: *I or my organization regularly book the following City-owned facilities:*



Use of community-based facilities

Respondents were asked what types of non-City-owned facilities they regularly book. The three most common types of venues participants reported booking are places of worship, multipurpose spaces, and schools.

Question 12: *I or my organization regularly book(s) the following non-City owned facilities:*



Respondents shared the names of the venues they use (**Questions 13-19**):

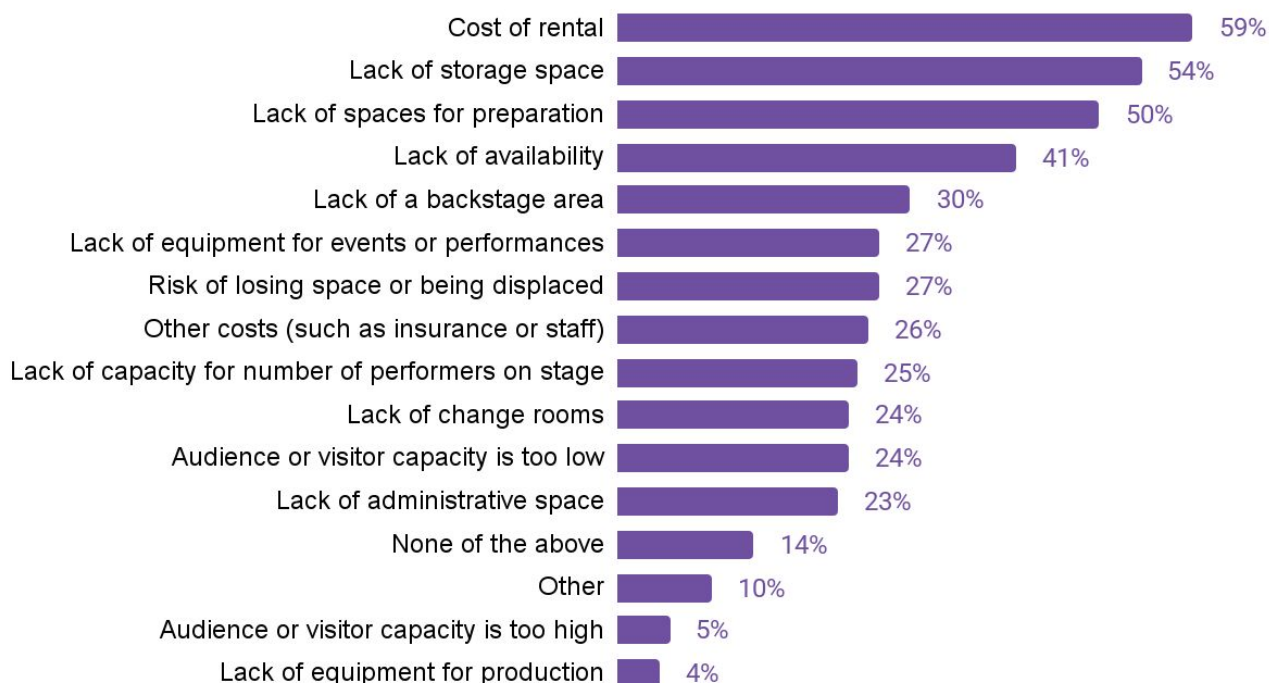
Place of worship	• South Arm United Church • Peace Mennonite Church • Fraserview Mennonite Brethren Church • St. Anne's Steveston Anglican Church • St. Alban's Anglican Church • Richmond Alliance Church • Broadmoor Baptist Church • Gilmore Park United • Canadian Martyrs Parish	School	• J.N. Burnett Secondary School • Richmond Secondary School • Matthew McNair Secondary School • Hugh McRoberts Secondary School • Howard DeBeck Elementary School
Multi-purpose space	• Ukrainian Community Society of Ivan Franko • Amenity rooms in residential buildings • Austria Vancouver Club • Local cafes	Exhibition or gallery	• Lipont Gallery • Steveston Museum and Post Office
Other	• Restaurants and shops • Bank meeting rooms • Lansdowne mall • Outdoor locations • Library and community centre rooms	Studio	• Phoenix Art Workshop • Home studios • gYu Films International • Brown Road Studios
		Theatre	• Genesis Theatre (located in Delta)

Venue challenges

Respondents were asked about the challenges they face at art facilities in Richmond, whether owned and operated by the City or the community. The three most common responses were “costs of rental” (59%), “lack of storage space” (54%), and “lack of spaces for preparation (such as rehearsal or studio space)” (50%). The other top concerns similarly related to difficulty accessing venues or lack of support equipment.

Additional “other” challenges (received from 10% of respondents) included cumbersome processes with the City (e.g., to rent or promote events), limitations in accessing grant money, lack of specialized equipment (e.g., to exhibit fabric art), a lack of collaborative spaces (e.g., a creative hub or space to create music), and the need for more live-work units for artists.

Question 20: *I or my organization face(s) the following challenges at arts facilities in Richmond:*



Over a quarter of participants (27%) expressed concern about losing space or being displaced. Twenty-five respondents elaborated on why they were concerned. The following list offers a summary of the themes they identified.

Question 21: *I am/my organization is worried about losing or being displaced from my/our arts space(s) for the following reason(s):*

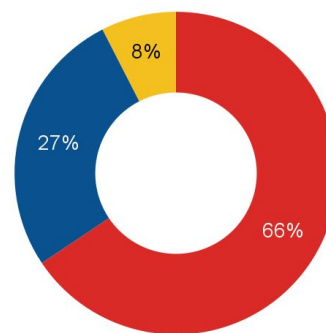
- Rising rental costs and fees for rehearsal and performance spaces.
- A general lack of permanent, dedicated spaces for arts groups in Richmond.
- Limited availability of suitable spaces for groups that have specific needs, such as rehearsal rooms, large ensemble practice spaces, buffered noise features, and storage.
- Dependence on institutions like churches that may change their policies, close, or move.
- Competing priorities of organizations that own multipurpose spaces, such as schools or churches, and that have other tenants.
- Risk that their lease will not be renewed, or sudden changes in lease requirements.
- Generally inadequate infrastructure and support from the City towards the arts.

Venue use

Two thirds (66%) of respondents indicated that they regularly use arts facilities outside of Richmond.

Question 22: *I or my arts organization regularly use(s) arts facilities outside of Richmond:*

● Yes ● No ● No response



In open-ended comments, 24 respondents elaborated on why they use arts facilities outside of Richmond. Below, we summarize the major themes that respondents shared.

Question 23: *Please provide the reason behind using arts facilities outside of Richmond:*

- The options available in Richmond are limited or not adequate.
- The cost of local venues is not reasonable for local groups.
- Stages and venue sizes are not adequate (e.g., needs space suitable for 100-200).
- Facilities lack state-of-the-art equipment (e.g., multimedia, lighting, and dance floors).

Respondents were asked to specifically share which venues they access outside of Richmond. Twenty-three respondents provided comments.

Question 24: *Please provide the name of the facility/ies regularly used outside of Richmond:*

Vancouver	• Arts Umbrella • Basic Inquiry • Carousel Theatre • Celtic Fest stages • Fei and Milton Wong • Experimental Theatre • Green Thumb Theatre • Jericho Arts Centre • Malkin Bowl • Pacific Cinematheque • Pacific Spirit United Church • Pandora Box • Performance Works • PNE Forum • Goldcorp Centre for the Arts • Terasen Cinema • The Dance Centre • The Greenhouse • Unity of Vancouver Church • Vancouver Academy of Music	Delta	• Cedar Park Church • Equinox Theatre • Genesis Theatre • North Delta Centre for the Arts
		New West	• Bully's Rehearsal Studio • Kay Meek • Massey Theatre
		Burnaby	• Capitol Hill Hall • Michael J. Fox Theatre
		White Rock and Surrey	• Peninsula Productions Studio • Surrey Arts Centre • White Rock Players Club
		Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam	• Evergreen Cultural Centre • Terry Fox Theatre

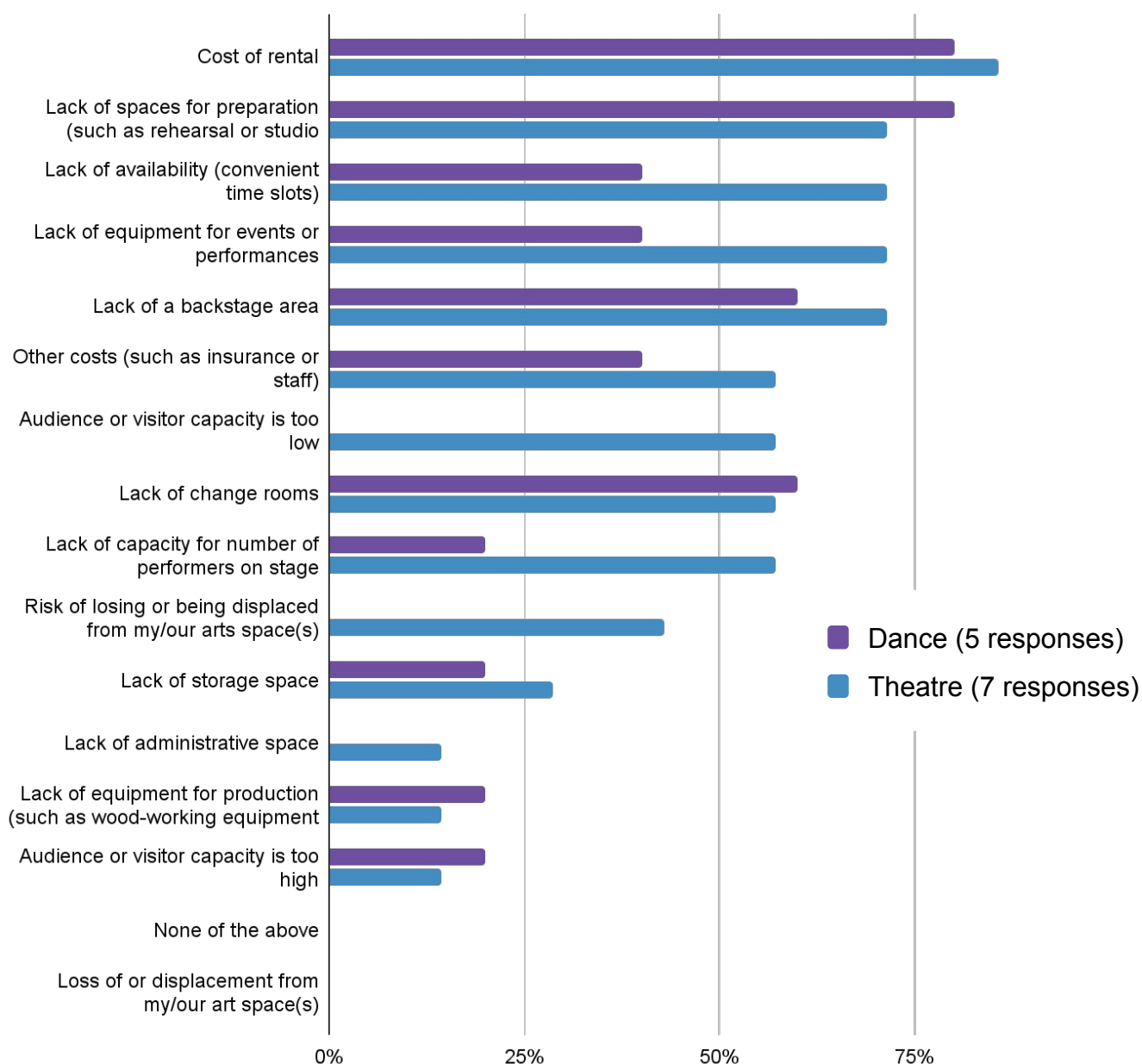
Venue challenges: Dance and theatre

The following chart compares the challenges that dance and theatre groups face when using art facilities in Richmond. These performing arts groups were relatively aligned on most challenges. However, the percentage that reported challenges diverged more significantly on three items:

- Lack of capacity for number of performers on stage: Theatre (57%) and dance (20%).
- Lack of equipment for events or performances: Theatre (71%) and dance (40%).
- Audience or visitor capacity is too low: Theatre (57%) and dance (0%).

These results suggest that generally, theatre groups face greater difficulty finding spaces that meet their needs.

Question 20: *I or my organization face(s) the following challenges at arts facilities in Richmond:*

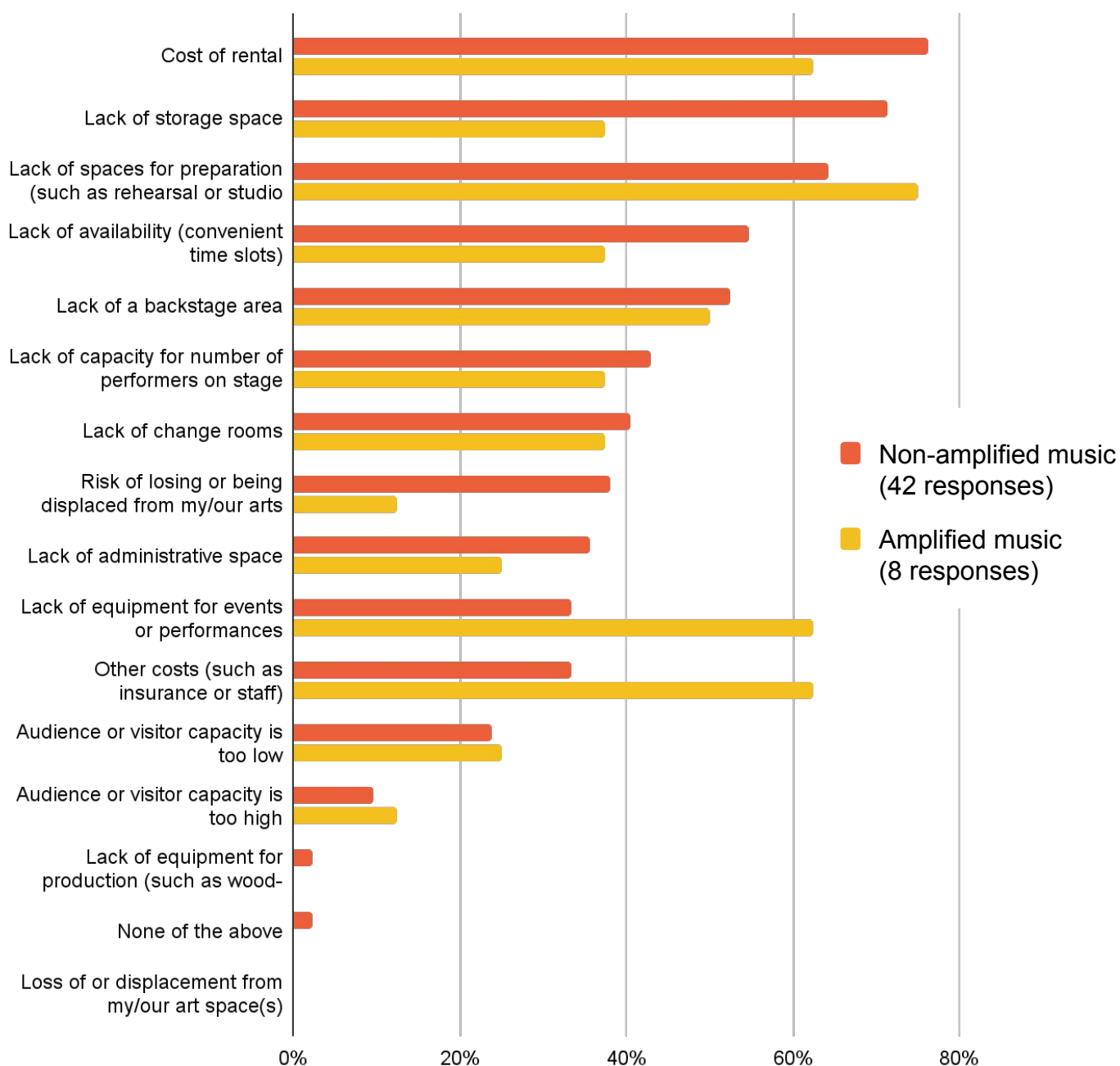


Venue challenges: Music

The following chart compares the challenges that amplified and non-amplified music groups face when using art facilities in Richmond. These music groups were relatively aligned on most challenges. However, the percentage that reported challenges diverged more significantly on three items:

- Lack of storage space: Non-amplified (71%) and amplified music (38%).
- Lack of equipment for events or performances: Non-amplified (33%) and amplified music (63%).
- Other costs (such as insurance or staff): Non-amplified (33%) and amplified music (63%).

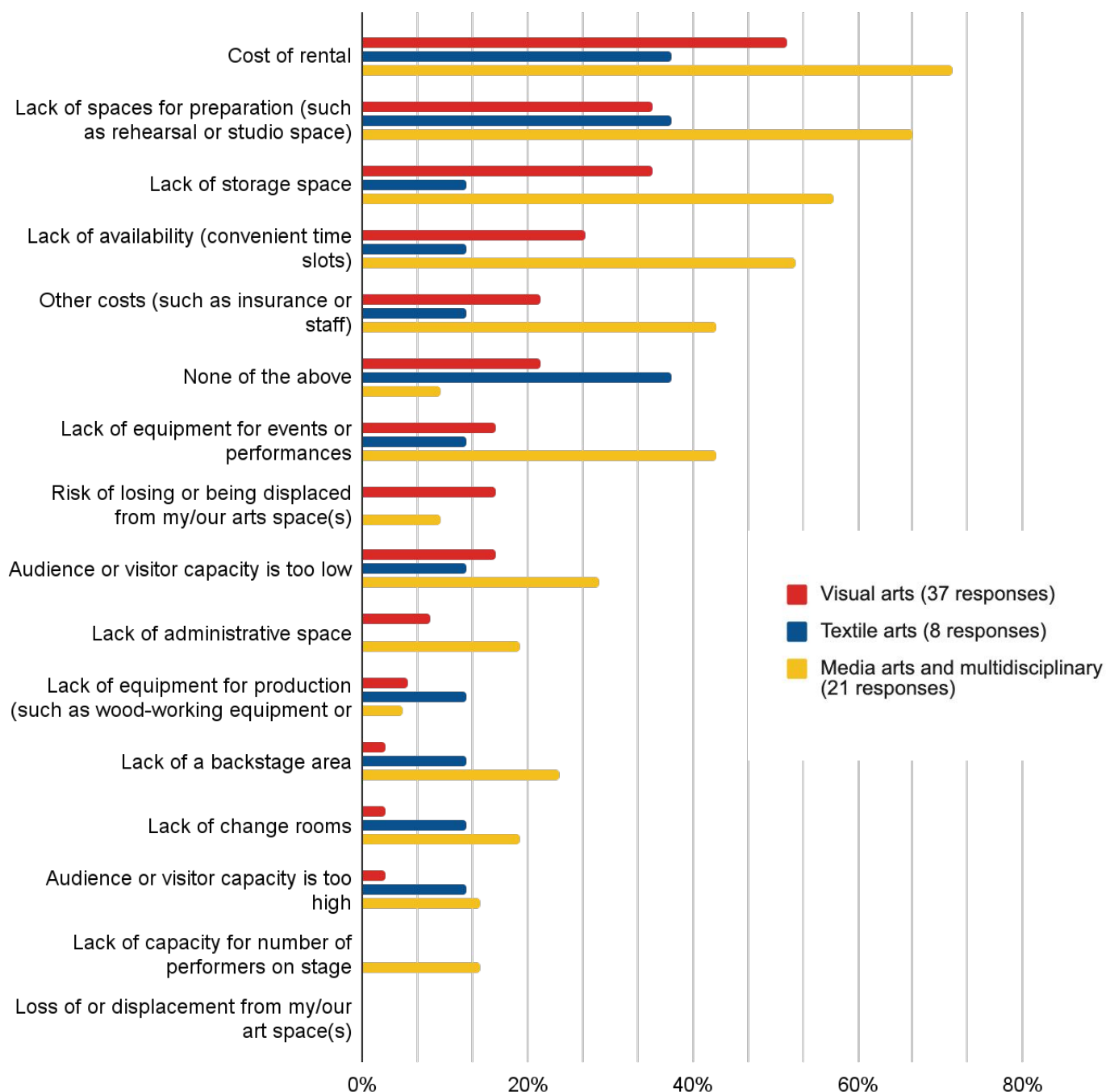
Question 20: *I or my organization face(s) the following challenges at arts facilities in Richmond:*



Venue challenges: Visual and multimedia arts

The following chart compares the challenges that visual, textile, media, and multidisciplinary groups face when using art facilities in Richmond. For almost all issues, a greater proportion of media arts and multidisciplinary respondents reported facing challenges. A similarly high share of media arts groups (75%) and non-amplified music (71%, previous page) selected a lack of storage space as a problem.

Question 20: *I or my organization face(s) the following challenges at arts facilities in Richmond:*



Additional comments from arts groups

At the end of the survey, arts groups were asked to share any additional feedback for the City on their needs and experiences with accessing arts facilities. Fifty-three open-ended comments were received. Overall, the responses reiterated key gaps in existing facility spaces and reflected the concerns heard throughout the survey. In particular, comments emphasized the need for spaces that are purpose-built for arts groups.

Question 25: *I would like to include the following additional feedback on my arts facilities needs in Richmond:*

Purpose-built performance facilities: Thirty-four open-ended comments mentioned the need for new performance spaces of various sizes — to support theatre, dance, cinema, and music — including spaces with high-quality acoustics. Specific ideas for new amenity spaces included a centre for performing arts that could contain multiple venues of various types, or a concert hall that could meet the needs of non-amplified music specifically. Overall, respondents expressed preferences for new amenities to be centrally located and accessible by transit, with adequate parking for visitors and for loading equipment.

Rehearsal and supporting facilities: Respondents expressed a desire for more purpose-built rehearsal spaces for performing arts, specifically music and dance. Participants mentioned that these spaces require specialized acoustics and equipment. Respondents expressed that rehearsal space is limited lack of availability at popular times, and that cost is a barrier. Additional arts spaces that were mentioned included general art studio space, makerspaces, woodworking spaces, and pottery studios.

Storage: Respondents expressed a need for more storage space at existing and new facilities for creative groups to keep instruments, props, sets, and more. They asked that storage be integrated into performance and rehearsal spaces.

Affordability and accessibility: Respondents shared concerns that for non-profits and education programs, rental pricing was out of reach. A number of comments called for subsidized or free spaces, as well as transit-friendly, senior-friendly, and accessible venues.



Part 2: Facility operators

Facility operator profiles

The following pages outline what we heard from part two of the survey, from respondents who indicated that they are involved in operating arts facilities in Richmond. This information is self-reported. It will be verified before it informs the inventory and the needs assessment.

We asked facility operators to identify their ownership model. One quarter reported their facility is City-owned, one quarter reported private ownership, and 42% indicated non-profit or faith-based groups.

Question 26: *The name of the arts facility that I operate, program or represent is:*

Question 27: *The ownership structure of this arts facility is:*

Facility	Ownership
- Richmond Cultural Centre - London Farm - Gateway Theatre	City (25%)
- Defy Gravity Dance Company - Lipont Gallery - Vancouver Circus School	Private (25%)
- Richmond Music School - The Steveston Hub - Richmond Music School (operating out of the Richmond Alliance Church) - Richmond Delta Youth Orchestra (operating out of the Brighthouse United Church) - Richmond Community Concert Band (operating out of the Ukrainian Community Society of Ivan Franko)	Non-profit or faith-based (42%)
Richmond School District	Other (8%)

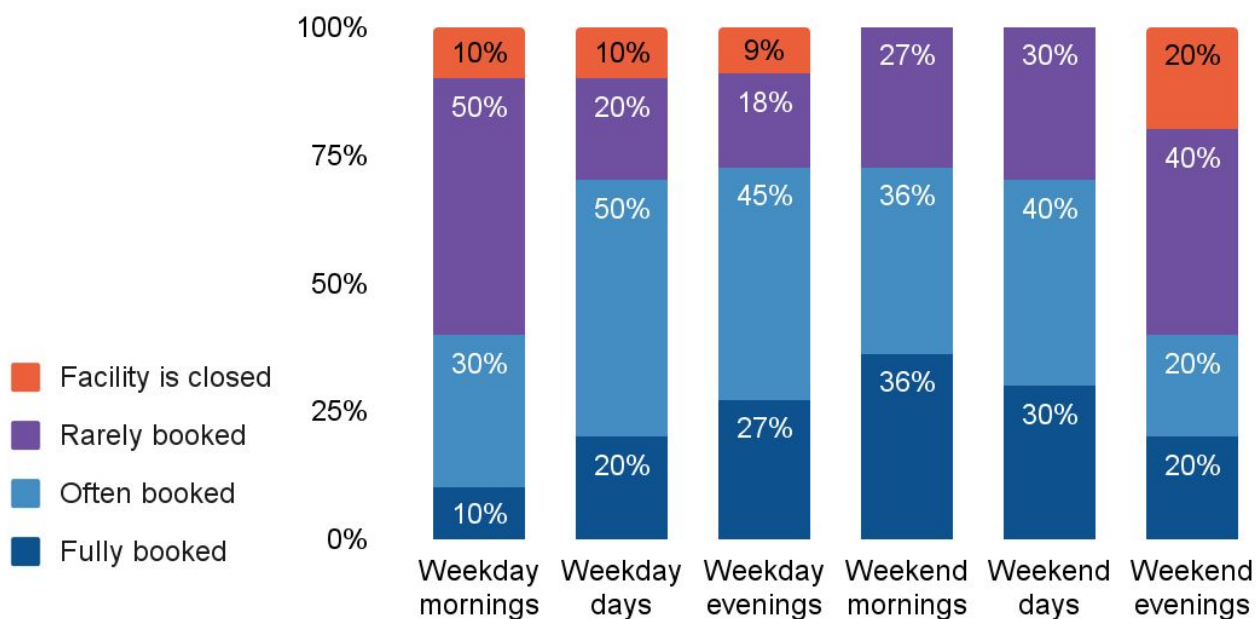
Respondents were asked to provide more detail on the types of spaces, amenities, and equipment available to support performance and visual arts at their facilities. These findings are detailed on the following pages. A number of amenities are not offered at these facilities in Richmond, including:

- Woodshop, makerspace, or other shop production facilities
- Venues with ceilings optimized for acoustic performances (such as orchestra and choir)
- Stage floors to drill into or with anchors to attach ropes and sets

Booking times

The following chart shows how often facilities are booked, according to survey respondents. These responses indicate that the busiest booking times for arts facilities are weekend mornings and weekday evenings. The least busy booking times are weekday mornings and weekend evenings.

Question 28: *The busiest booking times for my arts facility (as a whole) are:*



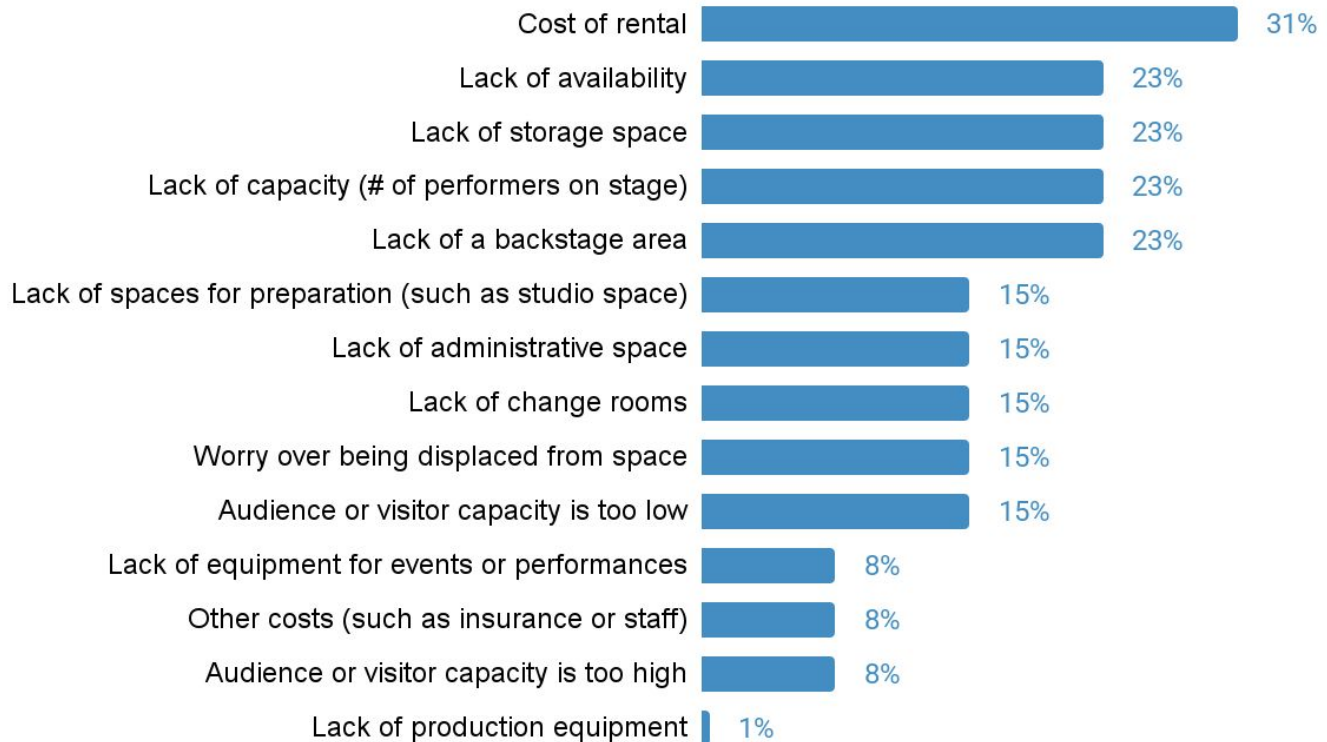
Major concerns at arts venues

Facility operators were asked if they had heard any concerns from the arts groups who access their venue. Half of the respondents (50%) had not heard any concerns and roughly a third (35%) had heard concerns.

Question 36: *I have heard one or more concerns from arts groups who use the facility: [Yes/No]*

The following chart shows the major difficulties that the facility operators indicated are regularly faced by art groups when renting venues. The cost of renting spaces was the most common concern selected by participants (31%), and the lack of availability was also a major concern (23%). Other leading concerns related to the lack of various kinds of spaces at venues, including storage space, backstage areas, administrative space, change rooms, and rehearsal space.

Question 37: *I have received the following concerns from arts groups who use the facility:*



Additional comments from facility operators

At the end of the survey, facility operators were prompted to share any additional feedback on their arts facility and the needs that users have highlighted to them. Eleven open-ended comments were received, which are summarized below by theme. Overall, these responses highlight a strong desire for more accessible, versatile, and affordable arts spaces in Richmond, as well as increased support for the arts community from the City of Richmond.

Question 40: *I would like to include the following additional feedback regarding my arts facility in Richmond:*

Insufficient performance spaces: Respondents expressed that existing venues, such as the RCC and Gateway Theatre, are sometimes unable to accommodate larger audiences, particularly for certain live theatre shows. Respondents also expressed there is a need for more venues that can host small to mid-size school and community performances.

Accessibility concerns: A number of comments mentioned the need to improve accessibility, including both physical access and technological enhancements to ensure all artists and audiences can fully participate. Existing venues have spaces that are difficult for wheelchair users to access. Physical barriers, along with signage and wayfinding gaps, limit full participation for the wider community (including people of all ages, background, and abilities).

Cost barriers: Respondents shared that it is difficult for venues to offer a sufficiently low rental cost that non-profit arts and education groups can afford. These groups struggle to compete with other types of renters for multipurpose spaces at large venues, because they do not have the same funding opportunities to support rental costs.

Need for multi-discipline and purpose-built spaces: Arts facility operators recognized both the need for versatile spaces that can support various art disciplines, as well as spaces that cater to live performances and visual arts exhibitions.

Infrastructure improvements: Respondents suggested improvements including universal washroom upgrades, more parking, technological equipment, and weather protection for audiences (for example, waiting outside the Gateway Theatre).

Dedicated spaces for arts groups: Long-standing community groups (such as the Richmond Community Concert Band and Richmond Delta Youth Orchestra) expressed a need for a dedicated home for rehearsals, performances, and programming.

Daytime availability: Respondents called for incentives to encourage arts facilities to open their spaces for daytime rentals to the arts community.

Lack of arts facilities: Concerns were raised about the lack of state-of-the-art venues and equipment compared to population growth.

Interview highlights

Overall summary

Community groups that regularly rent art space shared several comments. A top concern was that there are limited purpose-built venue options for performing arts in Richmond. The Gateway Theatre is the only large theatre locally available for community groups to rent, while the Theatre Under the Stairs and Gateway Theatre Studio B are the only small theatres locally available. Demand for these spaces is particularly high during busy times of the year, such as winter holidays. Interviewees noted the following specific challenges:

- The Gateway Theatre stages produces its own shows in-house. This leaves limited days available for other renters, and it is difficult to book those remaining days due to high demand.
- The Theatre under the Stairs does not offer the full amenities and equipment of a professional performance venue. It lacks a box office, backstage facilities, acoustic treatment, sprung floor, and comfortable seating. There are also limitations around after-hours access to the building.

Additional concerns interviewees expressed include:

- There is a need for venues to be available for consecutive days to allow a show to run for multiple days, and to enable better setup and teardown.
- There is a need for venues to offer greater flexibility in booking times and duration.
- Existing facilities are not purpose built for non-amplified music performances — such as orchestras — and therefore lack acoustics suited to their needs.
- Many arts facilities lack other supporting amenities, such as storage space, and large loading doors for equipment.

Interview participants did not frequently mention the cost of renting performance spaces. However, they underlined other kinds of costs that create barriers to booking facilities. Unionized venues have staffing requirements that carry additional costs. The cost of specialized technicians often surpasses venue rental fees. A number of venue spaces do not offer storage or production spaces (e.g., for set design), which means that groups need to rent these spaces separately at an additional costs.

The interviews also indicated a need for affordable, regularly available rehearsal spaces in Richmond. There are few purpose-built rehearsal spaces for music and other kinds of performing art, and the spaces that do exist are often overbooked during desirable hours, such as weekday evenings and weekends. Other barriers to access are unique to specific buildings.

The City of Richmond thanks the members of the Richmond arts community who have participated in engagement related to this Needs Assessment, including those who took part in interviews, completed the survey, and contributed to previous engagement and consultation efforts. The input has provided valuable insight into the experiences, needs, and priorities of the arts community, and will help to inform the Arts Facilities Needs Assessment.



List of affiliated groups

Below is a list of groups with whom survey respondents shared they are affiliated. A number of respondents did not share their affiliations. In numerous cases, respondents were affiliated with more than one group.

1. Cambie Secondary School
2. Canada YC Chinese Orchestra
3. Cinevolution Media Arts Society
4. Community Arts Council of Richmond
5. Coupé Dance & Co.
6. Defy Gravity Dance Company
7. Delta Concert Band
8. Gateway Theatre
9. Federation of Canadian Artists
10. Fraser Valley Potters Guild
11. Historical Performance Ensemble
12. Independent Media Art Alliance
13. Johnston School of Highland Dance Society
14. Lipont Gallery
15. London Heritage Farm Society
16. Media Art Alliance of the Pacific
17. Men In Hats Plein Air Group
18. Playwrights Guild of Canada
19. Richmond Artist Guild
20. Richmond Arts Coalition
21. Richmond Chorus
22. Richmond Community Band Society / Richmond Community Concert Band
23. Richmond Cultural Centre
24. Richmond Delta Youth Orchestra
25. Richmond Improv Theatre Society
26. Richmond Music School Society
27. Richmond Music Teachers Association
28. Richmond Orchestra and Chorus Association
29. Richmond Potters Club
30. Richmond Public Art Advisory Committee
31. Richmond Singers Choir
32. Richmond Weavers and Spinners Guild
33. School District No. 38
34. South Delta Plein Air Society
35. St. Anne's Steveston Anglican Church
36. Steveston Historical Society
37. Steveston Hub
38. Textile Arts Guild of Richmond
39. True North Performance
40. Vancouver Dorfmusik
41. Royal City Concert Band
42. World of Music and Arts
43. Writers Guild of Canada
44. Vancouver Circus School



Appendix B: City of Richmond Purpose-Built Arts Spaces

Gateway Theatre



Overview

Richmond's only purpose-built theatre, Gateway Theatre, was built in 1984 and is located in Minoru Park next to Richmond Hospital on Gilbert Road. The facility is operated by the Richmond Gateway Theatre Society, a registered charity and non-profit organization. Supported by the City, the facility is Richmond's live performing arts hub, consistently drawing annual audiences in excess of 35,000 to more than 150 performances.

As "A Stage for Richmond", Gateway provides opportunities for audiences and performers in three key areas:

- ✦ A program of in-house and co-produced productions that share the ideas, stories, values and issues that reflect Richmond.
- ✦ A robust theatre education program where students learn acting, singing, dancing and production skills that enrich their lives both on and off the stage.
- ✦ Community rental events that allow a wide variety of performing arts groups to share their work with the community in a professional performing arts venue.

Office hours are Monday-Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. The box office is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 12:00 pm to 5:00 pm, excluding statutory holidays.

Gateway's public program hours vary depending on productions, activities and rentals.

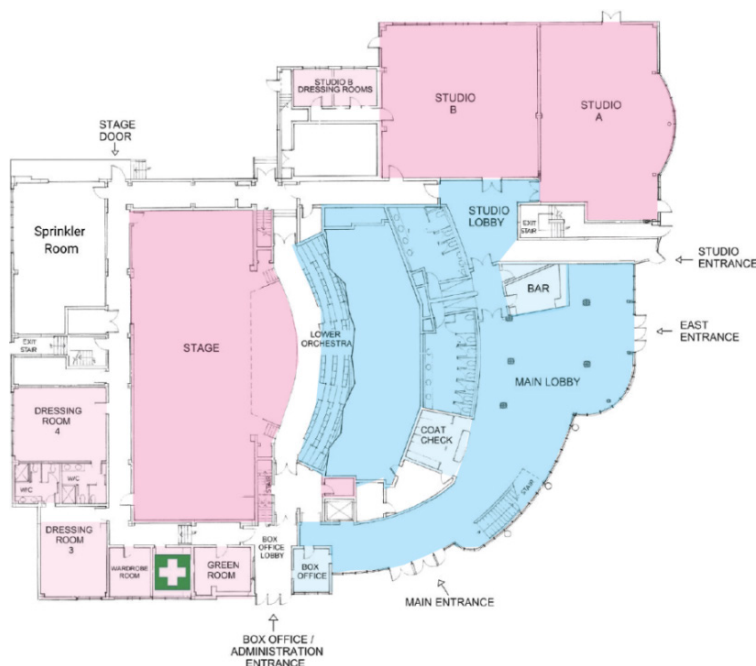
Facility Description

Gateway Theatre's public spaces include one main stage and two studios equipped for rehearsal, instruction and/or presentation of performing arts, as well as a multi-level lobby space with box office, concession, coat check and washrooms.

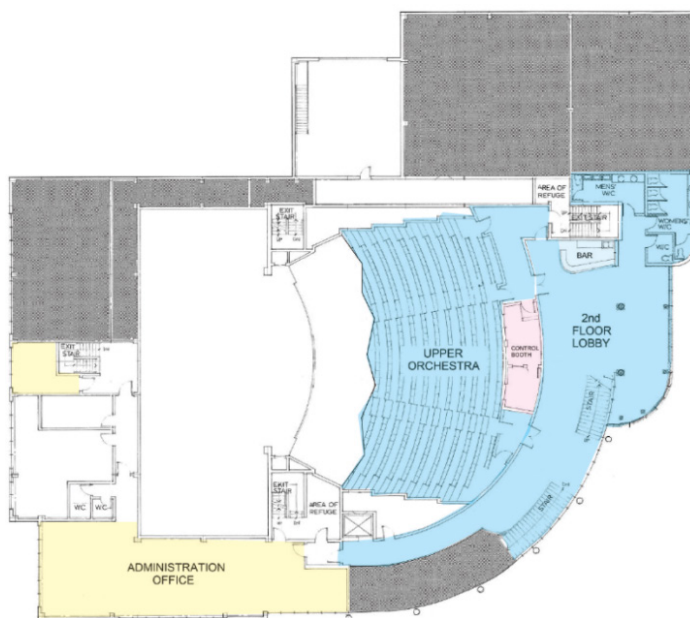
Behind the scenes, the facility includes dressing rooms, storage and administrative spaces.

The following main and second level floorplans show various space usages in Gateway Theatre. Gateway Theatre has a total square footage of 31,600.

Main Floor



Second Floor



Note: Third floor has balcony seats and lobby only.



Arts Spaces

MainStage Theatre

- ✦ 540-seat proscenium theatre
- ✦ 14 rows tiered fixed seating at orchestra level
- ✦ 6 rows tiered fixed seating in balcony
- ✦ 40' x 30' stage
- ✦ orchestra pit with hydraulic lift (accommodates up to 15 musicians)
- ✦ full fly gallery, essential for lighting equipment and hanging set pieces
- ✦ supported by two dressing rooms with washrooms and showers, and one green room (lounge/waiting area for performers)

Studio A

- ✦ 29'x 38' rehearsal/workshop/education space
- ✦ max occupancy: 100
- ✦ high ceilings, natural light and direct exterior access
- ✦ footprint matches MainStage performance area, ideal for rehearsals

Studio B

- ✦ 35'x 25' flexible "black box" theatre
- ✦ seating capacity: 89
- ✦ professional lighting and a sound system
- ✦ seating not retractable, but multiple configurations possible upon request at additional cost
- ✦ supported by two three-person dressing rooms

Lobbies

- ✦ main lobby, connected to orchestra section of MainStage
 - capacity ~ 220 people
 - full bar, coat check, and elevator to second and third floors.
- ✦ second-floor lobby, connected to orchestra section of MainStage
 - capacity ~ 200 people
 - dedicated wall space for art exhibition
 - full bar
- ✦ third-floor lobby, connected to balcony section of MainStage
 - capacity ~ 30 people.

Theatre Under the Stairs Richmond Cultural Centre



Overview

Theatre Under the Stairs (formerly the Performance Hall) is a small performance space on the main floor of the Richmond Cultural Centre. Originally a Lecture Hall when the facility was built in 1993, the space was converted to resemble a black box theatre in 2011. The space is primarily made available for arts, culture and heritage-related uses including, but not limited to, private functions, workshops, craft sales, performances, recitals, concerts and exhibitions.

The Theatre is operated by the City of Richmond, seven days/week.

The Cultural Centre is open 9:00 am to 9:00 pm Monday to Friday, and 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on weekends. The following table outlines the Theatre’s hours of operation which align with the facility operating hours (ending 30 minutes before building closes). These hours can be extended for an additional rental fee.

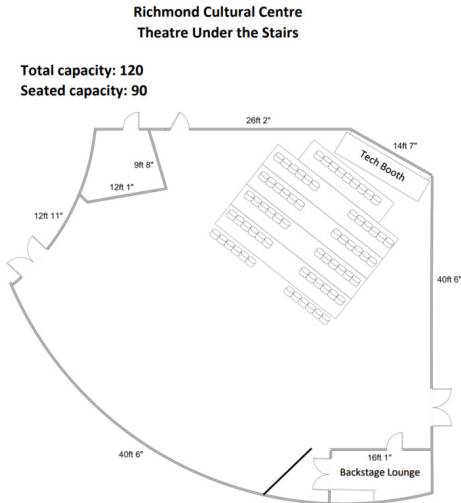
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Hours of Operation	9 am to 8:30 pm	9 am to 8:30 pm	9 am to 8:30 pm	9 am to 8:30 pm	9 am to 8:30 pm	10 am to 4:30 pm	10 am to 4:30 pm

Facility Description

The Theatre consists of 1,000 sq ft of open floor space and features specialized lighting, soundproofed walls, tiered seating and audio-visual (A/V) equipment including a large roll-down video screen, as well as access to a baby grand piano. A small backstage lounge for performers offers seating, a table and mirror.

Total capacity is 120. Maximum seating capacity is 90.

The following floor plan illustrates the Theatre’s configuration.



Arts Program Spaces

Richmond Cultural Centre and Annex



Overview

The City operates 14 arts studios in the Richmond Cultural Centre and Richmond Cultural Centre Annex. Nine are located on the second floor of the Richmond Cultural Centre (built in 1994) and five are in the Richmond Cultural Centre Annex (renovated in 2023).

Seasonal programs (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall) run continuously, except for statutory holidays and maintenance hours. Programs include visual, performing and media arts from a variety of disciplines and cultures.

As a yearly average, the studios host 1,000+ courses, 50+ professional arts instructors, and 8,000+ registered students with 100,000+ visits.

Studios for visual, performing and digital arts host high-quality, artist-led registered programs for all ages each season. These facilities also support eight community arts groups who provide their member artists with regular access to practice their craft and share knowledge. These groups include the Richmond Potters' Club, Textile Arts Guild of Richmond and the Chinese Artists Association of Richmond.

There is some limited availability to rent spaces for rehearsals or personal artistic practice.

The Cultural Centre is open 9:00 am to 9:00 pm Monday to Friday, and 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on weekends. The following table outlines the studios' hours of operation which align with the facility operating hours (ending 30 minutes before building closes). These hours can be extended for an additional rental fee.

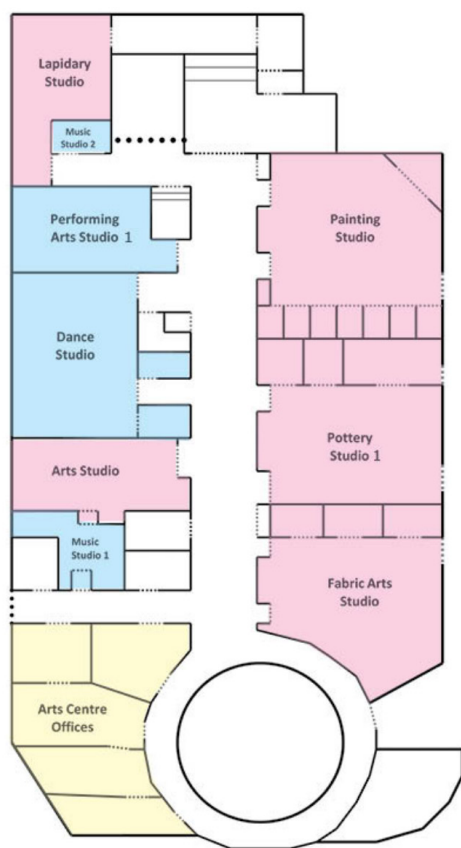
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Hours of Operation	9 am to 8:30 pm	9 am to 8:30 pm	9 am to 8:30 pm	9 am to 8:30 pm	9 am to 8:30 pm	10 am to 4:30 pm	10 am to 4:30 pm

Arts Spaces

The following section describes each of the many kinds of arts studios operated by the City. Where applicable, qualitative factors that impact programming/activities and space utilization are included to present a complete picture of each space and how well it supports the intended functions. Unless indicated, all spaces can be booked for community rental use.

The following floor plans identify these public program spaces. Co-located with the Brighthouse Branch of the Richmond Public Library, the Cultural Centre has a total square footage of approximately 98,000. The Cultural Centre Annex is approximately 15,145 sq. ft. in total.

Cultural Centre (upstairs)



Cultural Centre Annex



VISUAL ARTS

Pottery Studios 1 and 2

Pottery Studio 1 is located on the second floor of the Cultural Centre; it is 780 sq. ft. and has a capacity of 21 people for workshops and 15 people for classes. It is well-equipped with 12 pottery wheels, three firing kilns, and specialized tools, equipment and furniture. The space is currently in Year 3 of a three-year pilot program (2024-2026) that provides the Richmond Potters' Club exclusive use of the space. The club provides adult pottery classes, two annual community sales at the Richmond Cultural Centre, participation in local events such as Culture Days, and donations of pottery to charitable organizations.

Pottery Studio 2 is in the Cultural Centre Annex; it is 764 sq. ft. and has a capacity of 15 people for workshops and 10 people for classes. It is well-equipped with 10 pottery wheels, two firing kilns, and specialized tools, equipment and furniture, including wheelchair-accessible wheel and sink. The space is operated by the City and offers approximately 45 classes per season to children, youth, adults, and seniors. These classes range from introductory instruction to specialized lessons in areas ranging from building sculptures to practical items like casserole dishes.

Both spaces have abundant natural light, limited storage areas and are used exclusively for pottery programs. While these Pottery Studios are appropriately sized and equipped for the number and type of current programs, there is a high demand. Classes are typically full with each attracting a waitlist of 10 or more people.

Fabric Arts Studio

Located on the second floor of the Cultural Centre, the Fabric Arts Studio is 625 sq. ft. and has a capacity of 22 people. Notably, this studio is home to 20 looms that are the property of the Richmond Weavers and Spinners Club who regularly use this space, as do members of the Textile Artists Guild of Richmond (quilters). Both Resident Arts Groups have a lockable dedicated storage room for their supplies and equipment.

The studio is well-equipped with a sink, tables and chairs and is regularly used for a variety of different City-run education programs, including quilting, sewing, music and drawing.

Lapidary Studio and Silversmithing Room

Located on the second floor of the Cultural Centre, the Lapidary Studio is 741 sq. ft. with an adjacent 140 sq. ft. Silversmithing Room. The combined capacity is 24. This specialized space is one of very few in the region, and is equipped with custom-made rock grinders, saws, kilns and tools owned by the Richmond Gem and Mineral Club. Limited, secure storage is used for hazardous and specialized materials.

With safety features, the tables and chairs in the space have limited suitability for multi-purpose use but are sometimes used for City-run drawing and painting classes.

Painting Studio

Located on the second floor of the Cultural Centre, this studio is 918 sq. ft. with a capacity of 24 people. It is well-equipped as a “wet room” with a sink, easels, drying racks, tables and chairs. With abundant natural light, this studio’s intended use is painting and has limited suitability for other purposes. The Richmond Artists Guild, Richmond Chinese Artists Association and Chinese Ink Brush Society have regular bookings in this space and each of these Resident Art Groups has a lockable dedicated storage space for their supplies and equipment.

Creativity Lab

Located in the Cultural Centre Annex, this multi-purpose studio is 969 sq. ft. and can accommodate up to 49 people. The room has exceptional natural light and is well-equipped with a sink, tables, chairs, black-out blinds, white boards, and a video table-top demonstration table with large wall-mounted screen. The Richmond Photo Club has regular bookings in this space, as do the Richmond Artists Guild, Richmond Chinese Artists Association and Chinese Ink Brush Society who also use the Painting Studio in the Cultural Centre.

City-run programs and classes include Digital Animation for pre-teens, youth media programs, adult and tot painting and sculpting, and creative composition for adults.

Arts Studio

Located on the second floor of the Cultural Centre, this 403 sq. ft. studio with sink has capacity for 22 people, or 15 for classes. In keeping with its small size, it is equipped with a chalkboard and children’s furniture, and is used for children’s visual arts activities such as Foundations in Art, drawing and painting. This space has limited storage.

PERFORMING ARTS

Music Studios 1 and 2

Located on the second floor of the Cultural Centre, these music studios are 94 sq. ft. and 50 sq. ft. respectively, each with a capacity of two people. Music Studio 1, a converted dark room, is equipped with a baby grand piano and electronic drum machine. Music Studio 2, a converted storage closet, is equipped with one electronic piano.

These studios accommodate private piano, violin, electronic drums, and voice lessons offered by the City. The studios are occupied by individual students most weekday evenings, and weekend days.

Dance Studio +

Performing Arts Studios 1, 2 and 3

The second floor of the Cultural Centre has two performing arts studios: the largest, Dance Studio, is 1650 sq. ft. with a capacity of 80, and the smaller Performing Arts Studio 1 is 627 sq. ft. with a capacity of 60. These capacity numbers are for standing room only. For practical purposes, a class size permits no more than 20 people.

The Cultural Centre Annex has two medium-sized studios: Performing Arts Studio 2 is 1335 sq. ft. with a capacity of 68, and Performing Arts Studio 3 is 1399 sq. ft. with a capacity of 71.

All of these studios are well-equipped for the current programming that includes City- and community-led programs, such as Magic of Guzheng, hosted by the Fangfei Music Academy, and the Richmond Music School's Tiny Tots Piano program. To accommodate the needs of programs like these, the studios have sprung wood floors, mirrors, dance barres, curtains, electric pianos, and storage space.

MEDIA ARTS

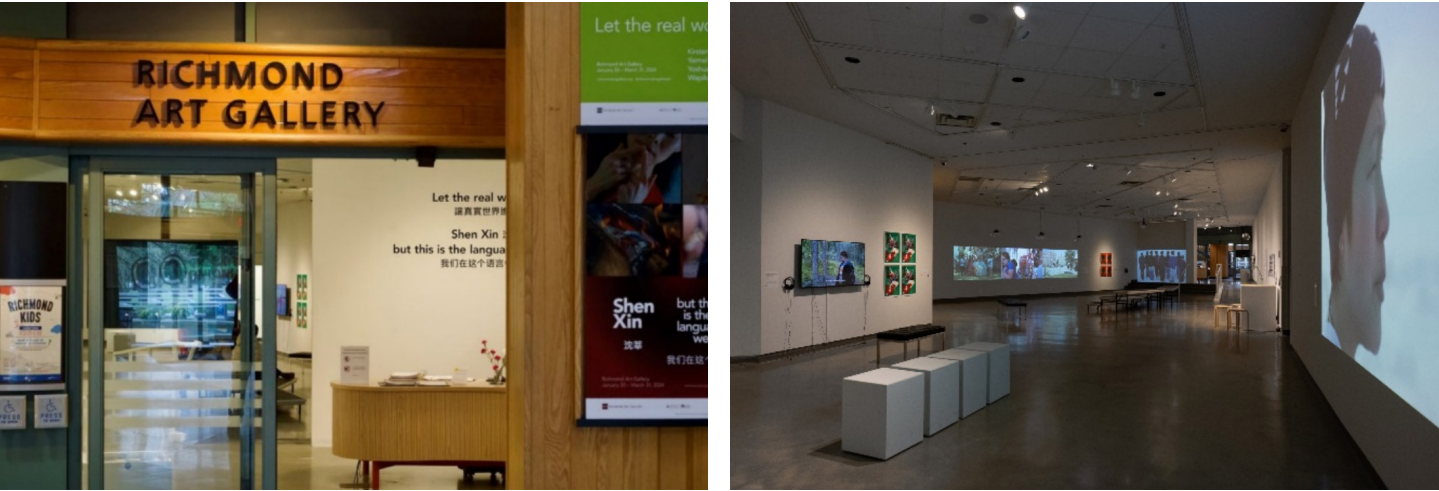
Media Lab

Located in the Cultural Centre Annex, the Media Lab is a specialized studio designed to increase technology literacy, accessibility and creativity in our community, particularly among youth. This 635 sq. ft. space (capacity 33) is for the exclusive use of media arts programs and boasts a sound editing room, and array of media arts equipment including computers, 3D printers, cameras, and music equipment.

The Media Lab is also home the City's signature Richmond Youth Media Program (RYMP), a free, referral-based program for youth ages 13-24. Since its inception, the program has supported approximately 50 youth annually, contributing over 42,000 hours of skill-building and leadership training.

When not in use by RYMP, the space is used for City-led registered media arts classes for adults and youth.

Richmond Art Gallery Richmond Cultural Centre



Overview

Richmond’s only public art gallery, the Richmond Art Gallery (RAG) is located on the main floor of the Richmond Cultural Centre (constructed in 1993) adjacent to the Richmond Museum and the Brighthouse Branch of the Richmond Public Library.

RAG is a nationally recognized contemporary art gallery that contributes to the growth of a vibrant cultural scene in Richmond – and the region -- by promoting dialogue among diverse communities on challenging, topical ideas and issues through local, national and international contemporary art. RAG offers exhibitions, publications, educational programming, events, and significant partnership opportunities that both serve the contemporary arts community in Canada and enrich the quality of life for Richmond and Metro-Vancouver residents. On behalf of the City, RAG also maintains a permanent collection of more than 300 artworks.

RAG is operated in partnership with the Richmond Art Gallery Association (RAGA) an independent non-profit society formed to produce educational and outreach visual arts programming. Proceeds from RAGA’s fundraising efforts contribute to the gallery’s active program of public and school programming described below.

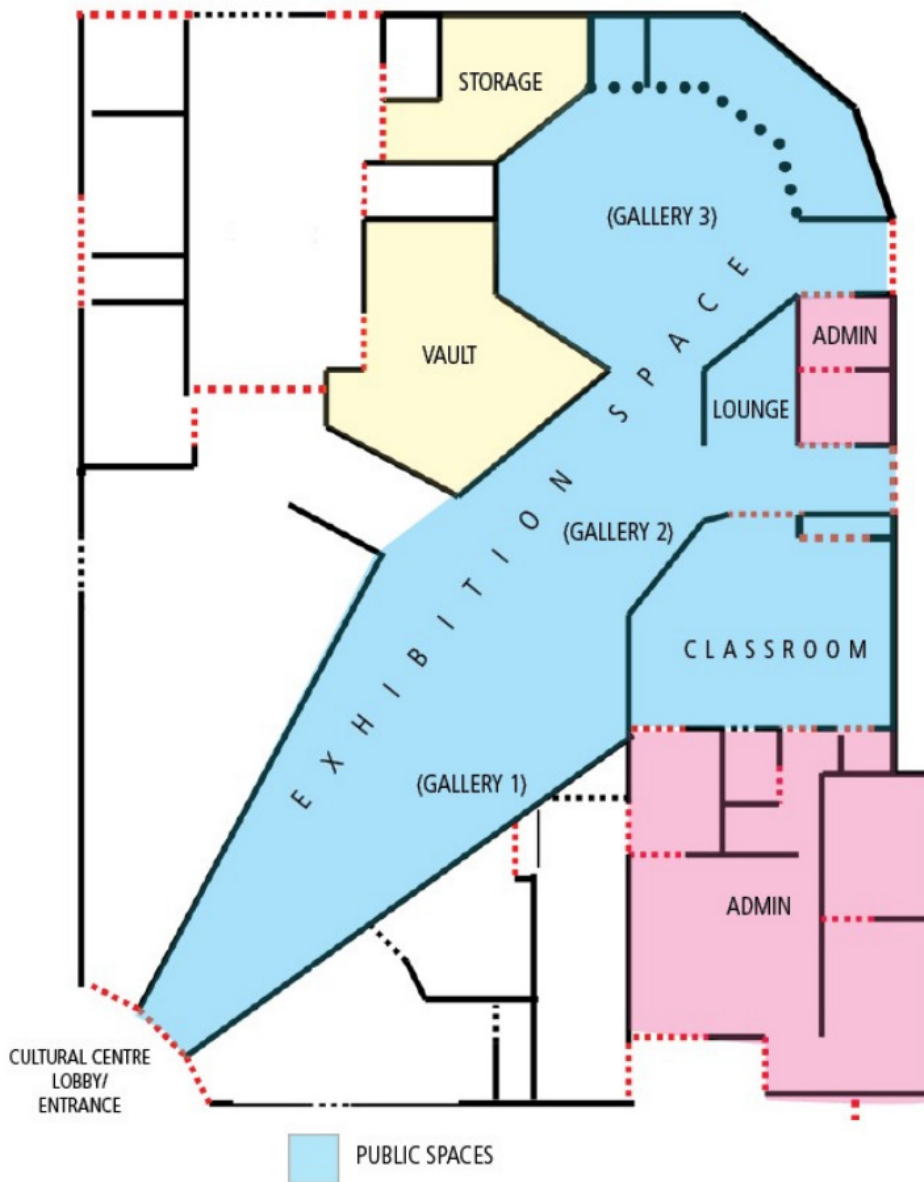
RAG operates seven days/week, except Statutory holidays. The following table outlines the Gallery’s hours of operation.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Hours of Operation	10 am to 6 pm	10 am to 6 pm	10 am to 6 pm	10 am to 6 pm	10 am to 6 pm	12 pm to 5 pm	12 pm to 5 pm

Arts Spaces

RAG consists of 4,400 sq. ft. of exhibition space, a classroom for school programs and other public activities and programs, as well as a small “lounge” that is used for supplementary displays and programs related to the exhibitions.

The following floor plan identifies the public program spaces.



In addition to publicly accessible exhibition and program spaces, RAG also has administrative spaces, storage, collection vault and off-site access to a shared workshop for exhibition preparation (in Richmond Cultural Centre Annex).

Appendix C: Inventory of Arts Organizations with Ongoing Relationships with the City of Richmond

	Organization Name
1	Arisun Yue Opera
2	Ballroom Dance
3	BGM Dance Studios
4	Bright Harmonies
5	Busy Fingers / Knitters and Knatters
6	Canada Chinese Performing Arts Society
7	Canadian YC Chinese Orchestra
8	Cantonese Pop Classics Singing
9	Chinese Artists Association of Richmond
10	Chinese Calligraphy
11	Chinese Drum and Guitar Social
12	Chinese Ink and Brush Society
13	Cinevolution Media Arts Society
14	Classical Chinese Ethnic and Folk Dance
15	Community Arts Council of Richmond
16	Danceability
17	Defy Gravity
18	Direct Theatre Collective
19	Gateway Theatre (Jade Circle)
20	Glee
21	Happy Chorus

	Organization Name
22	Joy Singing and Dancing
23	Kingsland Calligraphy
24	Korean Style Dance Circl
25	Kyryl Dance
26	Lipont Gallery
27	Minoru Community Line Dancers
28	Minoru Waist Drum
29	Model Dance
30	Model Walkers
31	Multicultural Dance
32	NPC College of Art and Design
33	Peking Opera
34	Phoenix Art Gallery
35	Photo Group
36	Platinum Players
37	Richmond Academy of Dance
38	Richmond Art Gallery Association
39	Richmond Artists Guild
40	Richmond Arts Coalition
41	Richmond Ballet CDTA
42	Richmond Community Band Society
43	Richmond Community Orchestra and Chorus Society
44	Richmond Delta Youth Orchestra
45	Richmond Gem and Mineral Society

	Organization Name
46	Richmond Improv Theatre Society
47	Richmond Music School Society
48	Richmond Photo Club
49	Richmond Potters Club
50	Richmond Singers
51	Richmond Weavers and Spinners
52	Richmond Youth Choral Society
53	Richmond Youth Concert Band
54	Seniors Saxophone
55	Silver Singers
56	Starlight Choir
57	Swing Out Richmond
58	Textile Artists Guild of Richmond
59	The Arts Conservatory
60	Ukulele Circle
61	Wood Carving
62	Wood Working
63	Yuanji Dance



City of Richmond

6911 No. 3 Road, Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1
Telephone: 604-276-4000
richmond.ca



To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Committee

Date: June 29, 2026

From: Elizabeth Ayers
General Manager, Parks, Recreation and
Culture

File: 06-2025-20-008/Vol 01

Re: Options on the Management of Scotch Pond

Staff Recommendation

That the City undertake a feasibility study to assess potential future program uses for Scotch Pond and that a \$150,000 one-time additional level request be submitted for consideration in the 2027 budget process, as outlined in the report titled “Options on the Management of Scotch Pond”, from the General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture, dated June 29, 2026.

Executive Summary

Scotch Pond is a designated heritage site located in an environmentally sensitive area in Garry Point Park. The site has significant historical value from its association with Steveston’s Japanese Canadian community and fishing industry. The site is currently operated by the Scotch Pond Heritage Cooperative (Cooperative) as a moorage facility for commercial fishing boats. However, the Cooperative has concerns about the sustainability of moorage operations. The site requires significant maintenance and upgrades, including dredging the pond, to maintain its heritage integrity and support public use. For these reasons, it is recommended to explore alternative options for the future operating program for the site.

Working with the Steveston Historic Sites Building Committee (the Committee), it is recommended to a) complete a feasibility study to assess potential future program uses, operational costs and dredging options, and b) update the facility condition assessment with capital cost estimates. The cost for this work is estimated at \$150,000. Should Council endorse the recommendations in this report, this cost will be brought forward as a one-time additional level request as part of the 2027 budget process and the outcomes of the work will be brought to Council for consideration.

Staff Report

Origin

At the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee meeting held on June 24, 2025, staff received the following referral:

That staff explore options and consult with the Steveston Historic Sites Building Committee on the management of Scotch Pond, and report back.

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

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

The purpose of this report is to respond to this referral.

Analysis

Background

Scotch Pond History

Scotch Pond is an early and rare example of industrial development and a small community built away from the shoreline within an area of tidal flats. The pond was originally constructed by the Scottish Canadian Cannery in 1899. For many years, the pond provided moorage for fishing boats associated with the cannery and was connected to the well-known Atagi Boatworks. In 1925, the land was leased to the Canadian Fishing Company who used the facility as a fishing station. It was then acquired by David Boatworks in the 1940s following internment of the Atagi family, then by a Mr. Takugaki, around 1949. The Canadian Fishing Company dredged the slough in the early 1950s to provide additional moorage and supported returning Japanese Canadian fishermen in constructing a new net storage facility.

Scotch Pond was purchased by the City of Richmond in 1989 and designated a Municipal Heritage Site in 1992. At that time the Cooperative was formed to manage the operation of the facility on behalf of its members for use as a moorage facility for the fishing industry.

The Scotch Pond site represents an important cultural landscape for Richmond and serves as a landmark for the Japanese Canadian history of Richmond. Scotch Pond offers heritage value to the community from its historical and social associations related to the early fish canneries in Steveston, the multicultural nature of the fishing and boat-building industries, and the continuing re-use of the site by the fishing industry after the downsizing of the Pacific salmon fishing fleet.

Scotch Pond Site – Current Condition

The Scotch Pond site includes a dredged pond; a 3,100 square foot net shed built on pilings and approximately 270 metres (886 feet) of moorage floats and additional net racks (Attachment 1 – Scotch Pond Context Map). The net shed building is entirely clad in asbestos panels. The interior of the net shed consists of seven storage compartments and has limited electricity and water service. The site is currently accessible only to members of the Cooperative and is not open to the public.

Scotch Pond was originally a slough and is connected to the Fraser River by a short channel. The pond sits within a City and Provincial waterlot lease and was most recently dredged in 1994 and again in 2003. The pond is currently significantly silted in, making boat access very challenging, restricting it to high tide (Attachment 2 – Image of Scotch Pond). Any ongoing moorage at the site will require dredging. Scotch Pond is outside the scope of the current dredging project which focuses on the main Cannery Channel and adjacent city water lots at Imperial Landing and Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site.

Due to visible deterioration of the site's facilities, in 2021, a building condition assessment was undertaken. At that time, the building was found to be structurally sound, however, the roof was in need of replacement. Since this time, minor upgrades have been made to improve electrical and fire safety. During this assessment, the float pilings were found to be in good condition but the decking is in need of replacement. For the site to be made publicly accessible, significant repairs and upgrades would be required.

The Scotch Pond Heritage Cooperative

The Cooperative was incorporated in 1992, with the purpose of “managing the Scotch Pond as a commercial fishing vessel moorage pond on behalf of its members”. In 1993, the Cooperative entered into a License to Occupy Agreement with the City which rolls over annually in December and is still in place.

The Cooperative has responsibility for the operation and management of Scotch Pond including the leasing of moorage and locker space to its members, site security, maintenance, repair and improvements to the building, floats, dock ramps, net racks, and parking lot.

The Cooperative is represented by a Board of Directors and currently has 21 members; 11 members with vessels requiring moorage, and additional non-active members who do not have moorage but maintain shares in the Cooperative. Membership has been slowly declining and with this, the volunteer help needed to support site upkeep has also declined. Through its membership, the Cooperative generates modest revenue which covers the costs associated with managing the site and undertaking basic maintenance.

Recently, the board has expressed that it is increasingly difficult for the Cooperative to maintain the site and moorage operations due to a decline in memberships. Membership decline is related to the decline in commercial fishing and exacerbated by the silting in of the pond, making it very challenging to enter/exit the pond. In conversations with the City, the Cooperative has expressed

support to explore an alternative future use for Scotch Pond that continues to respect its important heritage.

Steveston Historic Sites Building Committee

On February 10, 2025, Council approved updated Terms of Reference for the Committee. The Committee's purpose is to provide advice and input at key milestones during the planning, program development and restoration/construction process for several projects in Steveston, including Scotch Pond.

As stated in the Committee Terms of Reference, members of the Committee are responsible for advising on the planning, program development and restoration/construction for Scotch Pond while adhering to all approved matters of scope, schedule and budget related to the project, as approved by Council.

Staff will work with the Committee for the duration of this project.

Options for Management of Scotch Pond

To determine the appropriate operating model for Scotch Pond, it is necessary to understand Council's desired future program for the site. Over the past years, there have been a number of program ideas informally discussed, including but not limited to:

- Interpretive centre of the river, the natural environment, and/or Steveston history;
- Water sport centre offering recreational boating or kayaking;
- Artist-in-residence studio;
- Pleasure craft moorage; and
- Storage for City assets.

Because of its unique heritage value and location within an environmentally sensitive area, any future program would need to fit with heritage and environmental bylaws and regulations. It is recommended that the City:

- a) undertake a feasibility study to better understand what types of programs would fit the site's unique heritage and environmental qualities, meet market demand, and match with a suitable operating model, including a review of the options and costs of dredging the pond; and
- b) update the facility condition assessment with order of magnitude costing to restore the current heritage building and floats.

The total cost for this work is \$150,000.

Next Steps

Should Council endorse the recommendations, a one-time additional level request will be brought forward for consideration as part of the 2027 budget process to undertake a feasibility study and update the facility condition assessment to assess potential future program uses and

provide estimated operating and capital costs. Staff will work with the Committee to identify program opportunities suited to the site and provide value to the community.

Following the completion of this study, options for the future program use of Scotch Pond will be brought to Council for consideration.

Budgetary Implications

Should Council endorse the recommendations in this report, a one-time additional level of \$150,000 to support a feasibility study assessing potential future program uses and a facility condition assessment will be submitted for consideration in the 2027 budget process.

Conclusion

Council referred staff to consult with the Committee to explore options for the future management of Scotch Pond. To understand the future management of Scotch Pond, it is recommended the City undertake a feasibility study to better understand what types of programs would fit the site's unique heritage and environmental qualities, review options and costs of dredging the pond, and update the facility condition assessment with costing to restore the current heritage building and floats.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Fenwick, Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services
Todd Gross, Director, Parks Services

Report Contributors

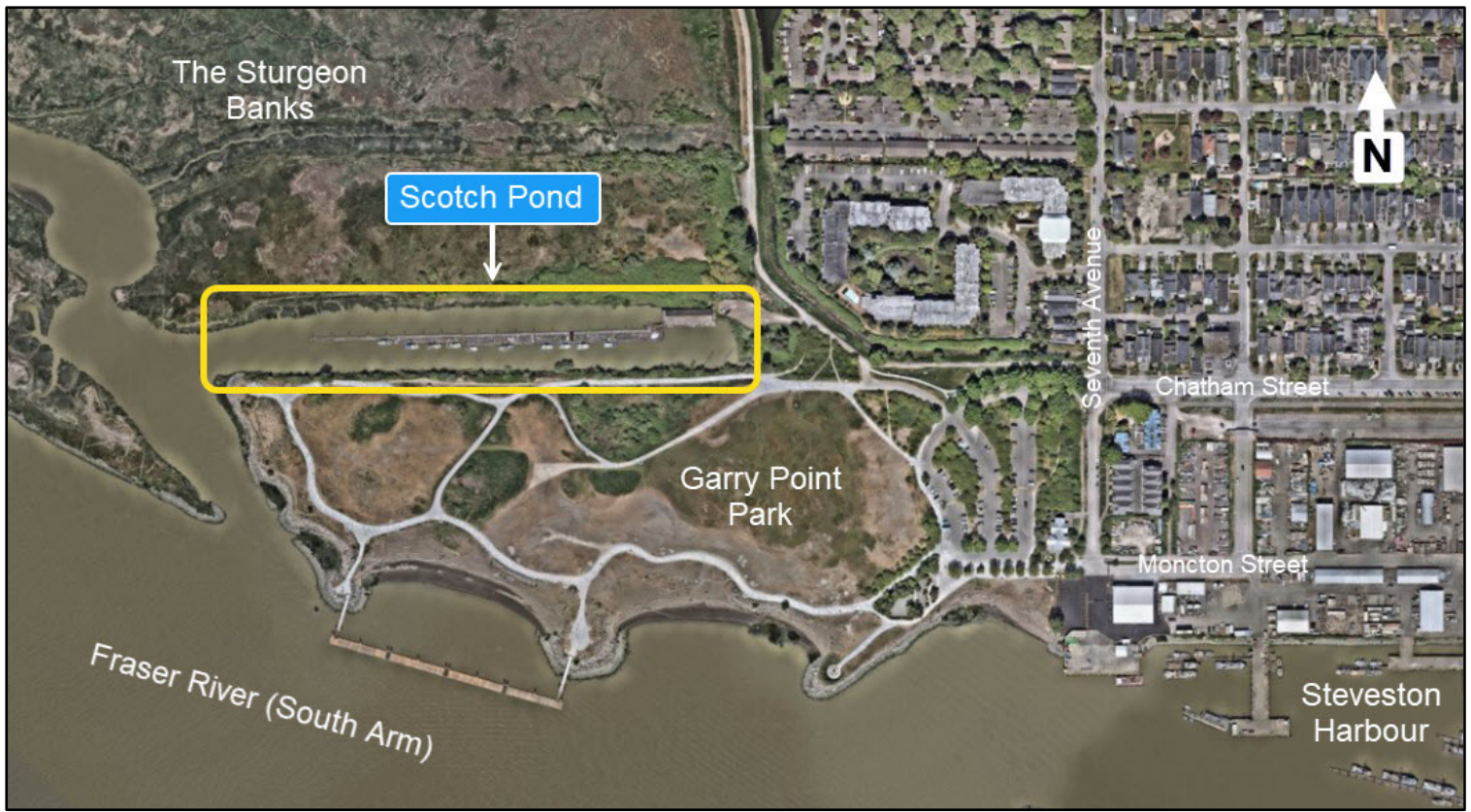
This report was prepared by Rebecca Clarke, Manager, Museum and Heritage Services, and Alex Kurnicki, Manager, Parks Programs, and reviewed by Facility Services and Project Development, Finance, and Climate and Environment.

Endorsed by Serena Lusk, CAO

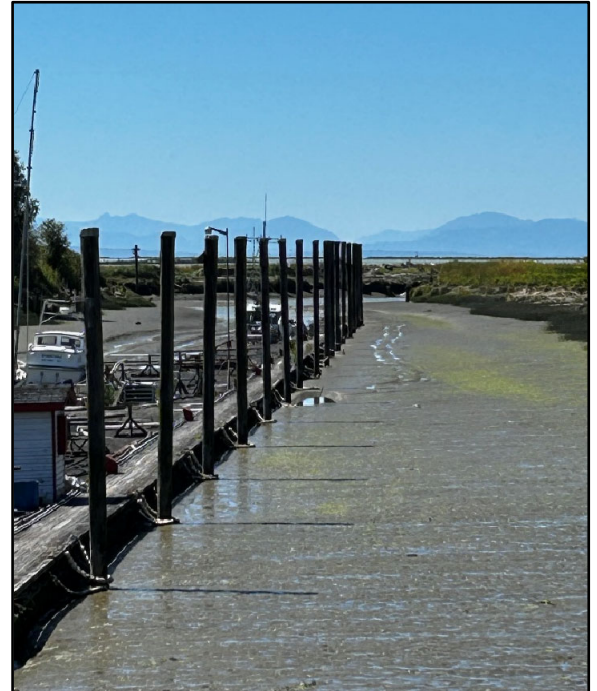
Att.

- 1: Scotch Pond Context Map
- 2: Image of Scotch Pond

Scotch Pond Context Map



Above:
Scotch Pond Net Shed (2020)



Above:
Scotch Pond at low tide (July 2025)

Image of Scotch Pond



Scotch Pond (2020)

Approximate extent
of the Low Tide Line



To:	Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee	Date:	June 29, 2026
From:	Elizabeth Ayers General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture Roeland Zwaag General Manager, Engineering and Public Works	File:	10-6050-01/2025-Vol 01
Re:	Street Banner Referral Response Update		

Staff Recommendation

That Option 1: “Install Welcome Banners on Four Poles – Cost Sharing”, as described in the report titled “Street Banner Referral Response Update”, from the General Managers of Parks, Recreation and Culture, and Engineering and Public Works, dated June 29, 2026, be approved.

Executive Summary

In response to the July 23, 2025, referral from the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee, the installation of banner arms and welcome banners on existing street light poles at key entry points to the “Highway to Heaven” area along No. 5 Road was reviewed.

In line with the City’s Street Banners Sponsorship Policy No. 7707 (the Policy) (Attachment 1), four street light poles were identified that would meet the required criteria. It was confirmed that banner arm retrofits are feasible for installation at four locations: two near Blundell Road and two near Steveston Highway, which act as the north and south gateway locations.

A meeting was held with the Highway to Heaven Association (HTHA) to review the proposed locations and participation requirements. Support for the four proposed gateway locations and acceptance of the participation requirements was confirmed through this process.

It is recommended that the City support and fund the installation of up to eight banner arms on the four identified street light poles and that the HTHA fund the installation of up to eight welcome banners of their own design to highlight this unique cultural location in Richmond.

Staff Report

Origin

This report is in response to the following referral from the July 23, 2025, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee:

That the staff report titled “Street Banner Referral Response”, dated June 30, 2025, be referred back to the staff to meet with the Highway to Heaven Committee on their request for welcome signs on each end of No. 5 Road and that City staff concurrently assess the condition of the existing poles and report back.

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

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

The area commonly known as the “Highway to Heaven” refers to a section of No. 5 Road, generally between Steveston Highway and Blundell Road, where a number of faith-based institutions and schools are located.

Analysis

At the July 23, 2025, Committee Meeting, Committee members discussed the placement of street banners at four potential gateway locations. Furthermore, the referral provided to staff identified two key items for investigation and response:

1. Assess the condition of the existing poles; and
2. Meet with the HTHA on their request for welcome banners on each end of No. 5 Road.

The following information responds to each of the two requests.

Assessing Condition of Existing Poles

There are 76 existing street light poles along No. 5 Road between Blundell Road and Steveston Highway. Four street light poles were identified along No. 5 Road as the proposed gateway locations for creating a welcoming visual identity to the “Highway to Heaven” corridor (Attachment 2).

To evaluate banner suitability, a technical review of the street light poles and bases at the following locations was completed:

- a. Two street light poles near the intersection of No. 5 Road and Blundell Road; and
- b. Two street light poles near the intersection of No. 5 Road and Steveston Highway.

To support the assessment, a structural analysis was undertaken to determine if the existing street light poles and bases could accommodate the installation of banners on the street light poles utilizing one of the following configurations:

- Configuration 1: installation of two banners per pole, mounted on spring-loaded, wind-spilling support arms perpendicular to the direction of traffic flow;
- Configuration 2: installation of two banners per pole, mounted on spring-loaded, wind-spilling support arms parallel to the direction of traffic flow; or
- Configuration 3: installation of one banner per pole on the sidewalk side, mounted on spring-loaded, wind-spilling support arms perpendicular to the direction of traffic (when site conditions do not permit the installation of two banners).

The structural analysis indicated that the existing street light poles and foundations have sufficient capacity to support any of the above banner mounting configurations. The preferred configuration is Configuration 1, but should conditions on site prevent that, one of the other configurations will be selected.

In addition, these street light poles meet the conditions outlined in the Policy for banner displays outside of the locations in use by the existing City of Richmond Street Banner Program (the Banner Program).

Meeting with the HTHA

The various faith-based organizations located along No. 5 Road meet on a semi-regular basis and refer to themselves as the HTHA, though they are not officially a registered association. Staff engaged with the HTHA and discussed the following:

1. Council's support to have the "Highway to Heaven" area recognized with welcome banners;
2. Banner arm installations are being considered at the four proposed gateway locations (at the above-mentioned street light poles);
3. The welcome banners should be designed with the input and consensus of all member organizations of the HTHA; and
4. An overview of the Policy, including the costs the HTHA would be responsible for and the Policy's clause regarding the use of secular language.

Following broader HTHA discussions, they confirmed support for proceeding with the four proposed gateway locations and indicated their desire to explore additional locations along the corridor, though no specific number was determined. Should the HTHA request to have the City consider more than the four proposed gateway locations, additional banner arms would need to be installed on existing street light poles. They also confirmed their understanding that the welcome banner design would be in consultation with the City and secular in nature.

Street Banner Options for Consideration

The HTHA understands the parameters of the Policy and would like to proceed with the installation of banner arms and welcome banners (up to two per pole respectively) on the four proposed gateway locations on No. 5 Road, for a total of up to eight banner arms and welcome banners. There are several installation and funding options for Council consideration:

Option 1: Install Welcome Banners on Four Poles – Cost Sharing (Recommended)

In this option, the City would fund the installation of up to eight banner arms and the HTHA would fund the cost of up to eight welcome banners at the four proposed gateway locations.

The estimated cost to supply and install up to eight banner arms is \$9,000 and could be funded from existing Operating Budgets.

The estimated cost to supply and install up to eight welcome banners is \$1,800. The Policy states that where banner arms are not currently installed, it is the sponsoring organization's responsibility to supply and install them. Sponsorship of the welcome banner installation is consistent with other organizations who have installed banners to promote a specific interest (e.g., The United Way) and community organizations (e.g., West Richmond Community Association). The HTHA has indicated their capacity to support this cost.

Consistent with the Banner Program, banners are replaced annually, and the HTHA would be responsible for this annual cost.

Staff recommend this option as it supports the HTHA's request to highlight their community through a cost-sharing partnership.

Option 2: Install Welcome Banners on Four Poles – Per Policy

In this option, the HTHA would wholly fund both the installation of up to eight banner arms and welcome banners at the four proposed gateway locations in alignment with the Policy.

The total estimated cost to supply and install up to eight banner arms and welcome banners would be approximately \$10,800.

Consistent with the Banner Program, banners are replaced annually, and the HTHA would be responsible for this annual cost.

Staff do not recommend this option because, while it is consistent with past practice, the HTHA has indicated that the estimated cost is in excess of their allotted budget and the banner arms are viewed as a cost which should be borne by the City.

Option 3: Install Welcome Banners on Four Poles – Per Banner Program

In this option, the City would wholly fund both the installation of up to eight banner arms and welcome banners at the four proposed gateway locations and incorporate them into the overall Banner Program. The City could choose to add a new theme to the Banner Program or use one of the existing themes.

The total estimated cost to supply and install up to eight banner arms and welcome banners would be approximately \$10,800 and could be funded from existing Operating Budgets.

Consistent with the Banner Program, banners are replaced annually, and the City would be responsible for this annual cost.

Staff do not recommend this option because it does not respond to the HTHA's request to have HTHA-specific welcome banners erected nor is it consistent with other organizations who have installed banners in support of their organizations through the Policy's process.

Should Council approve one of the above Options, staff would work with the HTHA on next steps related to the initiative and, if necessary, broader public consultation with other stakeholders in the immediate area, with the aim to have banners installed within the first half of 2027.

Budgetary Implications

For the recommended Option 1, the estimated cost to supply and install up to eight banner arms on the four proposed gateway locations is \$9,000 and would be funded from existing Operating Budgets.

For Option 3, the total estimated cost to supply and install up to eight banner arms and welcome banners would be approximately \$10,800 and would be funded from existing Operating Budgets. Annual costs to replace the welcome banners would be covered through the Banner Program.

Conclusion

The condition assessment confirms that the four street light poles at the proposed gateway locations along No. 5 Road have sufficient structural capacity to be retrofitted to support the installation of banner arms. In addition, City staff met with the HTHA and received support for the concept of installing welcome banners at these locations to acknowledge the unique cultural identity of the "Highway to Heaven" corridor.

Should Council approve Option 1 and support the funding of the banner arms, staff will continue to work with the HTHA on next steps related to banner arm installation, welcome banner design, and program requirements.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd Gross, Director, Parks Services
Milton Chan, Director, Engineering

Report Contributors

This report was prepared by Alex Kurnicki, Manager, Parks Programs, and Jessie Rehwald, Project Manager, Design and Construction, and reviewed by Public Works.

Endorsed by Serena Lusk, CAO

Att. 1: City of Richmond Street Banners Sponsorship Policy No. 7707
2: Street Light Pole Location Plan



POLICY 7707:

It is Council policy that the following shall be considered the City's policy on sponsorship of Street Banners, and such policy shall be reviewed on an annual basis:

1. Who May Apply

Any interested party may apply to sponsor street banners although the City reserves the right to refuse any application.

Application for street banner sponsorship must fall into one of four categories:

1. Sponsorship by Corporations (Corporate Sponsorship)
2. Sponsorship by Non-Profit Organizations (Non-Profit Sponsorship)
3. Sponsorship by Special Event Organizers (Event Sponsorship)
4. Other

Non-profit organizations must be registered as not-for-profit societies in British Columbia. Sponsorship by corporations may include an application made by a licensed Richmond business or a business improvement association (B.I.A.). Sponsorship by special event organizers may be by any event organizer of an event approved by the City's REACT (Richmond Events Approval Coordination Team) Committee. Other applications will be considered on an individual basis.

2. Application Process

For all sponsorship categories, applicants must apply to the City with their proposal indicating the locations of the banners they wish to install. This proposal is to include banner designs. Staff will review submissions and approve based on consistency with this street banner policy. Council will receive an annual update on street banner sponsorship applications.

In the event that there are conflicting applications for street banner sponsorship, the City will review the application on a first-come, first-served basis notwithstanding the following:

- The winning entries from the annual City of Richmond Street Banner Contest will have priority over all sponsorship applications
- Sponsorship applications from non-profit organizations will have priority over applications from events and corporations
- Sponsorship applications from events will have priority over applications from corporations



3. Sponsored Banner Restrictions

The City reserves the right to limit the number of banners an applicant may sponsor at one time and the length of time a promotional banner can be displayed.

There will be no sponsored banners by any organization, other than the, “Look of the Games,” as authorized by the City of Richmond, permitted in the period Dec. 1 2009 through March 31 2010 in the City.

The City reserves the right to restrict any other periods of the year to sponsored banners.

4. Sponsor Recognition

Any corporate recognition or commercial content on any banner will not exceed 20% of the total area of the banner. This may be located on the banner itself or on a separate sponsorship flag affixed to the bottom of the street banner.

5. Banner Location

For banner displays outside of the locations in use by the existing City of Richmond Street Banner Program, consideration will be based on:

- a) how banners will contribute to and enhance the distinct character of the area
- b) the structural integrity of the street lighting fixtures in the proposed locations

Corporate sponsorship of street banners will be limited to the immediate proximity of the sponsoring business or business improvement association (B.I.A.).

Non-profit sponsorship of street banners will be limited to the immediate proximity of the not-for-profit society's business office.

Event sponsorship of street banners will be limited to the immediate proximity of the event and will be installed for a period of time agreed upon by the City.

6. Design

The production of street banners must conform to the standards established by the City in regards to colour, content, material, and dimensions. The banner content must be secular, non-partisan, and non-political.



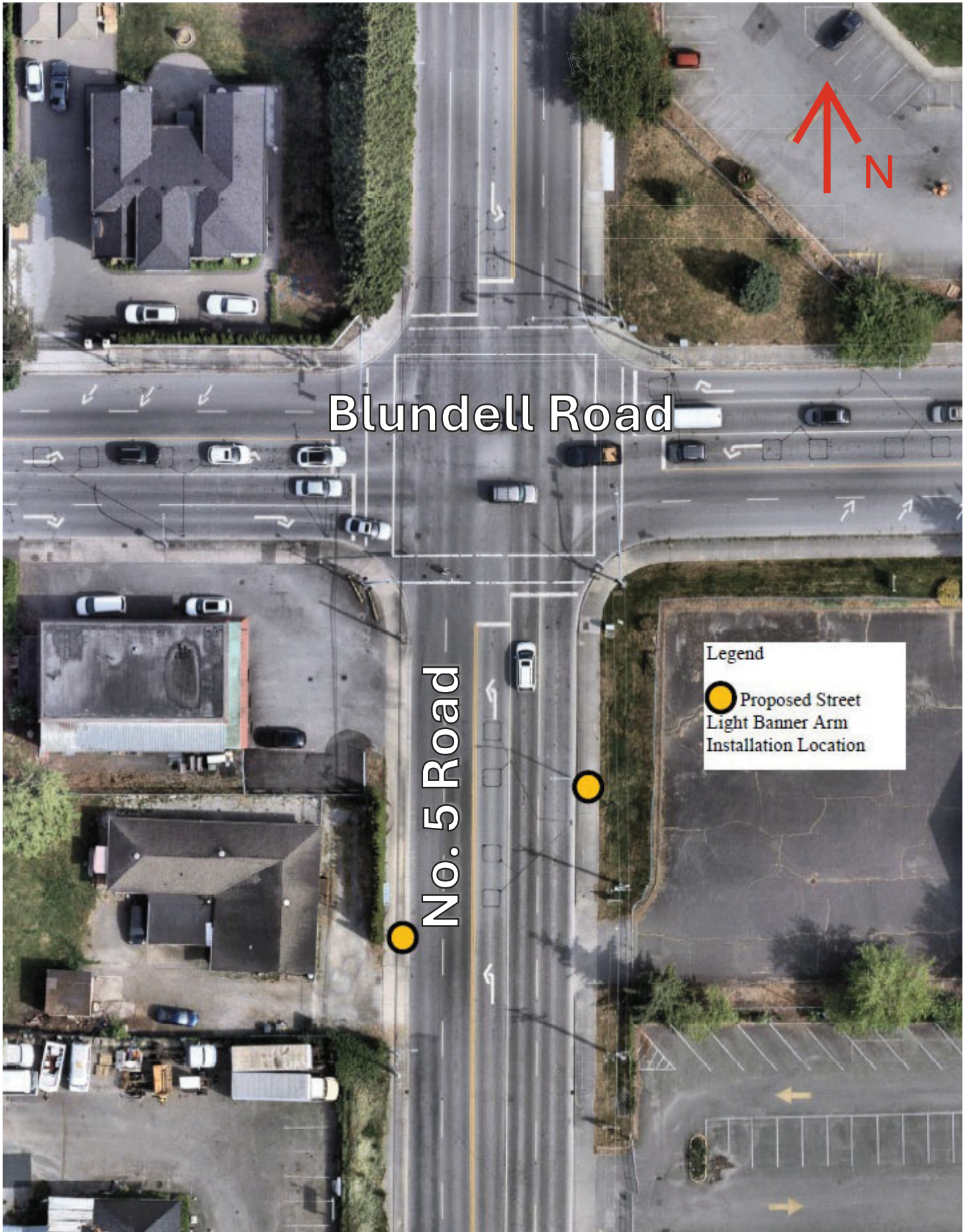
7. Cost to Sponsor

Sponsors are responsible for all costs associated with the manufacturing, installation, and removal of banners, including hardware costs if it is not already in place.

Installation of street banners on City street lighting fixtures may only be performed by City staff. The sponsor is required to provide the City with the total number of banners approved for installation as well as a 10% contingency for replacement due to damage or loss due to winds. The City is not responsible for lost or damaged street banners.

Corporately sponsored banners that contain commercial content and/or logos or slogans will be charged a monthly rental fee of \$20 per banner pole.

Payment for installation and removal must be received 14 days prior to installation.





Legend

 Proposed Street Light Banner Arm Installation Location

Steveston Highway

No. 5 Road



To:	Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee	Date:	June 29, 2026
From:	Elizabeth Ayers General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture	File:	11-7000-09-01/2022-Vol 01
Re:	Funding for the Public Art Program in Relation to the Community Mural Program		

Staff Recommendation

That the report titled “Funding for the Public Art Program in relation to the Community Mural Program”, from the General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture, dated June 29, 2026, be received for information.

Executive Summary

At the February 23, 2026, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services committee meeting, Council requested information on increasing funding for the Public Art Program in relation to the Community Mural Program. This report responds to this referral by providing information about the current Public Art Program and the Community Mural Program and information on four potential options for increasing funding for Council’s consideration:

1. Increase Public Art Program Budget through Developer Contributions;
2. Increase Public Art Program Budget through Tax-Funded Contributions;
3. Adjust allocations within the Public Art Program Budget; and
4. Revise Community Mural Program to make a 25 per cent Community Partner Contribution mandatory.

Staff Report

Origin

On February 23, 2026, at the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee meeting, Council made the following referral:

That staff examine ways in which the City can increase funding for the Public Art Program in relation to the Community Mural Program, including increasing developer contributions to the Public Art Program.

The purpose of this report is to respond to this referral.

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

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

Analysis

Richmond Public Art Program Funding

Guided by Council's Public Art Program Policy 8703 (the Policy) (Attachment 1), Richmond's Public Art Program includes a number of community and educational programs in addition to the installation of permanent artworks, including but not limited to:

- the Community Mural Program;
- the Engaging Artists in Community Program which connects artists with socially engaged practices with local community organizations;
- the Urban Infrastructure Art Program which transforms utility boxes with work by Richmond artists;
- No. 3 Road Art Columns, an annual exhibition under the Canada Line featuring Richmond artists;
- the Art at Work Program which provides professional development opportunities for artists; and
- free, public programming such as public art walking tours and bus tours offered during various City events and festivals.

These programs are funded through voluntary, not mandatory, developer contributions to the Public Art Program Reserve Fund (Public Art Reserve). As per the Policy, the public art contribution rate for private sector public art projects is a minimum of 0.5 per cent of the estimated total project construction cost. For developer contributions that total less than \$40,000, a voluntary cash contribution is to be made to the Public Art Reserve. For contributions more than \$40,000, the developer may provide public art on site, contribute to the Public Art Reserve, or do a combination of the two. Council approves developer contributions to public art at the Rezoning or Development Permit stage.

Funding accrued in the Public Art Reserve is allocated annually at Council's discretion through the budget process. The yearly Public Art Program budget, as recommended to Council, funds community and educational programs, as listed above, as well as upcoming projects that may change from year-to-year. A recent example is the installation of "Tales in Current" by Linfeng Zhou at Brighthouse Canada Line Terminus as part of the temporary Art Plinth Program.

Community Mural Program

The Community Mural Program (Mural Program) provides opportunities to add vibrancy to highly visible public spaces, fosters community dialogue and cross-cultural exchange, and engages diverse and multi-generational communities.

Each year, the City issues a Call for Walls inviting interested property owners and facility operators to apply to participate in the program and have a mural installed on their property. On average, the City receives 12 applications annually and funds approximately half of the proposed murals. Reasons why proposed mural projects are not recommended for funding are varied and include unfit surface conditions, locations that are not sufficiently accessible to the public, and that the applicant has already received a recent mural through the Mural Program. Occasionally, a proposed mural is too large to be accommodated within the Mural Program budget. Typically, these proposals that are too large (and without additional funding sources) are those that far exceed the scale of artwork that the Mural Program is intended to support. Applicants who are not selected in any given year, for any reason, are given feedback on their application and advised to re-apply.

When the Mural Program launched in 2019, the annual budget for the program was \$30,000. In 2024, the annual budget allocation from the Public Art Reserve for the Mural Program was increased to \$35,000 (17 per cent) based on current costs for supplies, artist fees, equipment rentals, etc. In some instances, additional funding from other City budgets or contributions from property owners/operators are applied to support specific mural projects delivered through the program.

The budget for each mural is determined based on the size of the wall and the condition and type of surface. Mural costs generally range from \$3,000 to \$15,000 (\$20 to \$30 per square foot). This budget approach is consistent with mural commissioning practices in municipalities of comparable size in the region.

Whether or not the City provides funding for a mural's hard costs through the Mural Program, staff handle all administration and coordination including, but not limited to, preparing and executing legal agreements with artists and community partners, project management, site coordination, community engagement, and all administration and communications to ensure successful project delivery. Every mural is unique and comes with its own set of circumstances. Currently there is sufficient staff capacity to deliver up to six murals annually given the intensive work required to deliver them during the summer season when weather permits.

By the end of 2026, the Mural Program will have delivered 46 mural installations at schools, community centres, city washroom facilities, Steveston Harbour Authority buildings and private businesses (Attachment 2). Meanwhile, additional murals are installed throughout Richmond

through other programs and activities such as legacy artworks through the Engaging Artists in Community program, private commissions, Tourism Richmond and other community initiatives.

Currently the Mural Program meets the demand for mural projects in Richmond and ensures the pace of murals added to the city's landscape continues to be balanced and sustainable. Murals can make a positive contribution to urban design by enhancing blank walls, animating streetscapes, and creating opportunities for community expression. However, the concentration and placement of murals should be carefully considered to maintain visual balance and avoid creating an overly cluttered public realm. The property owners are required to maintain their murals for minimum of five years.

From time to time, requests are received for mural projects that do not meet the eligibility criteria of the Mural Program, which is intended to fund small, community-engaged murals, not large-scale and/or direct commissioned projects. These special projects can be brought for Council's consideration separately, with an appropriate funding source identified outside the regular Mural Program budget. A recent example of this is the *Arrival of the S.V. Titania* mural that was installed on the south-facing wall of Steveston Hotel in 2025.

Potential Options to increase funding to the Public Art Program in relation to the Mural Program

Four options are available for Council's consideration to increase funding to the Mural Program.

Option 1 – Increase Public Art Program Budget through Developer Contributions

Developer contributions to the Public Art Reserve are voluntary, not mandatory, and dependent on the number of Rezoning and Development Permit applications that are advanced by applicants to Council for bylaw adoption or issuance. In light of the current development and construction industry situation, this option would be contrary to other recent Council decisions to reduce costs to developers, such as freezing Development Costs Charges until March 2027 and not implementing Amenity Cost Charges at this time.

Council could consider increasing developer contributions to Public Art once the development market improves. Further engagement is recommended to better understand the impact of potential increases to the overall development landscape and an update to the Public Art Policy would be required.

Option 2 – Increase Public Art Program Budget through Tax-Funded Contributions

This option would increase the Mural Program budget by making an annual tax-funded contribution to the Public Art Reserve Fund. While this option will provide guaranteed annual funding to the Program, it will have tax implications.

Option 3 – Adjust allocations within the Public Art Program Budget

Funding from other Public Art community and educational programs could be re-allocated to the Mural Program. This option will hinder the delivery of other well-received community programs such as the Engaging Artists in Community Program, Art at Work Program, and the No. 3 Road Art Columns.

Option 4 – Revise Community Mural Program to make a 25 per cent Community Partner Contribution Mandatory

Currently, community partners applying to the Mural Program are not required to contribute financially but some do voluntarily contribute as part of their mural application. This option would make a financial contribution of 25 per cent mandatory, as part of the application to the Community Mural Program. This option will exclude community partners that are not able to contribute financially, reducing accessibility to the program and potentially resulting in fewer murals due to this requirement.

Budgetary Implications

None

Conclusion

The Community Mural Program continues to be an effective tool for enhancing public spaces, supporting community expression, and contributing to Richmond's cultural vibrancy. The current funding model is adequate to meet the current demand and ensure a successful Mural Program for the coming years. There are four options provided for Council's consideration for increasing funding for the Public Art Program in relation to the Community Mural Program.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Fenwick Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services

Report Contributors

This report was prepared by Biliana Velkova, Public Art Planner, and reviewed by Finance and Development Applications.

Endorsed by Serena Lusk, CAO

Att. 1: Public Art Program Policy 8703
 2: Community Mural Program Completed Projects 2019–2025



Adopted by Council: July 27, 2010

Amended by Council: September 28, 2020

POLICY 8703:

RICHMOND PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

1. APPLICATION AND INTENT

- 1.1 **Public art** is defined as artwork in the public realm, which is accessible physically or visually to the public and possesses aesthetic qualities. Public Realm includes the places and spaces, such as building facades, parks, public open spaces and streets, which provide physical or visual access to the general public.
- 1.2 **Public Art Program:** Public art animates the built and natural environment with meaning, contributing to a vibrant city in which to live and visit. By placing artwork in our everyday environment, the Public Art Program sparks community participation in the building of our public spaces, offers public access to ideas generated by contemporary art, celebrates community history, identity, achievements and aspirations, encourages citizens to take pride in community cultural expression and creates a forum to address relevant themes and issues of interest and concern to Richmond's citizens.

2. PROGRAM GOALS

- 2.1 The Public Art Program strives to:
 - a) **Spark community participation** in the building of our public spaces, encouraging citizens to take pride in public cultural expression;
 - b) **Provide leadership in public art planning** through civic, private developer, community and other public interest initiatives to develop the City's cultural uniqueness, profile and support of the arts;
 - c) **Complement and/or develop the character of Richmond's diverse neighbourhoods** to create distinctive public spaces, which enhance the sense of community, place and civic pride;
 - d) **Increase public awareness**, understanding, and enjoyment of the arts in everyday life, and provide equitable and accessible opportunities for Richmond's diverse community to experience public art;
 - e) **Encourage public dialogue** about art and issues of interest and concern to Richmond residents; and
 - f) **Encourage public art projects that work towards achieving a more sustainable community**, environmentally, economically, socially and culturally.



3. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the Public Art Program are:
- a) **Increase opportunities for the community and artists** to participate in the design of the public realm;
 - b) **Develop original site-specific works of art** in order to contribute to cultural vibrancy;
 - c) **Select art through an arms'-length process** incorporating professional advice and community input that ensures the quality of art and its relevance to the community and site;
 - d) **Ensure that a public and transparent** process is maintained to develop and accept public art;
 - e) **Enter into partnerships** with private and public organizations to further public art in the City; and,
 - f) **Ensure that public art, and the environs of that art, are maintained** in a manner that will allow for continued public access to, and enjoyment of, these artworks in appropriate settings.
- 3.2 The Public Art Program will maintain a continuous, consistent and affordable funding mechanism to support the City's commitment to public art.

4. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

- 4.1 Council approval is required for all public art plans and projects on City controlled property.
- 4.2 For public artworks on private property, Council approval is required for Terms of Reference for artworks with budgets over \$250,000 based on the total dollar value for the voluntary public art contribution as determined at the Development Permit Application stage.
- 4.3 The City will develop administrative procedures relating to the management of projects, including: selection processes, developer contributions, donation and de-accession guidelines, site considerations, documentation and maintenance (the "Public Art Program Administrative Procedures Manual").
- 4.4 The City will maintain a Public Art Program Reserve to hold public art allocations from both public and private sources for capital expenses.
- 4.5 The City will maintain a Public Art Program Operating Provision to hold public art allocations from private sources for operating expenses relating to the administration of the Public Art Program.



5. CIVIC PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

5.1 General

- 5.1.1** The City's policy is to provide leadership in public art by incorporating public art, at the planning stages, into the development or renovation of civic infrastructure, buildings, parks and bridges, and to encourage collaboration between the Public Art Advisory Committee, City staff, artists, engineers, design professionals and the community to enrich such projects.
- 5.1.2** The priority for civic public art projects will be to fully integrate the artwork into the planning, design and construction of civic works and to select and commission an artist to work as a member of the project consultant design team, in order to maximize opportunities for artistic expression and minimize material and construction costs.

5.2 Project Identification

- 5.2.1** The City will identify and prioritise specific areas within the City and types of capital projects appropriate for the inclusion of public art. Applicable projects include:
- a) New building construction;
 - b) Major additions or renovations to existing buildings;
 - c) Park development projects;
 - d) Environmental programs; and
 - e) New engineering structures.
- 5.2.2** Projects appropriate for consideration should:
- a) Have a high degree of prominence, public use and/or public realm impact;
 - b) Achieve or enhance project objectives or other City objectives (e.g. beautification, liveability, multiculturalism, sustainability, cultural or environmental interpretations);
 - c) Promote opportunities for meaningful community participation; and/or
 - d) Complement existing public artworks or public amenities in the local area, and/or fulfil a need identified in that community.
- 5.2.3** The City will undertake artist-initiated public art projects from time to time. Artists will be invited to submit proposals for concepts and locations of



their own choosing, and may be asked to respond to a specific topic of community interest or importance.

5.3 Funding

5.3.1 Each year, the City will commit an amount of funds equivalent to a minimum of 1% of each Capital Project Budget, to the planning, design, fabrication and installation of public art, provided that:

- a) Capital projects for equipment and land acquisition are exempt;
- b) Infrastructure utilities projects - water supply and sewerage - which are funded solely from restricted sources, are exempt; and
- c) For eligible projects, allocations are based on the construction costs of capital projects, and exclude soft costs (i.e., administration, professional and legal fees, furnishings, and permit fees).

5.4 Donations and/or Gifts of Artwork(s)

5.4.1 Private donations or gifts of artworks may be accepted into the City's public art collection, provided that:

- a) The artworks are assessed on their artistic, environmental, cultural, historical and social merits before being accepted into the City's public art inventory;
- b) A suitable site can be identified; and
- c) Funds are made available for the ongoing maintenance and conservation of the artwork.

5.5 Purchase Pre-Existing Artwork

5.5.1 The City may add to its public art inventory by purchasing pre-existing works of art from time to time.

5.6 De-accession

5.6.1 De-accession is defined as any actions or set of procedures that result in the cessation by the City of its ownership and possession of works of art installed in public places, through sale, exchange, gift or any other means.

5.6.2 Provided that the de-accession of the artwork is not contrary to the terms on which it was received by the City, the City may de-accession artworks from the City's inventory when necessary:

- a) Through a considered public review and assessment process;
- b) If the de-accession of the artwork is evaluated on a case by case basis; and



- c) If the de-accession of the artwork is endorsed by Council.

6. PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

6.1 General

The City's policy is to encourage the private sector to support the integration of public artworks in the community during the rezoning and development permit processes, and the collaboration of artists, design professionals and the community in the design of that art.

6.2 Project Identification

6.2.1 Applicable projects include new building construction, major additions or renovations to existing buildings, as follows:

- a) For residential uses containing 10 or more units; and
- b) For non-residential uses with a total floor area of 2,000 m² (21,530 ft²) or greater.

6.2.2 The following uses or occupancies of all or part of a development or building are exempt from contributing to the Public Art Program:

- a) Community Amenity Space, Community Care Facility, Congregate Housing, Child Care, Health Services, Education and related uses as defined under the Richmond Zoning Bylaw, as amended from time to time;
- b) Purpose-built non-market rental and subsidized social housing projects and/or units secured through the City's Affordable Housing Strategy; and

6.2.3 Public art should be sited in locations that meet the following criteria:

- a) Visibility and accessibility (as appropriate to the art work) for pedestrians and/or motorists;
- b) Proximity to high pedestrian activity areas, e.g. active retail areas, transit stops (especially those serving high ridership routes), places of public gathering, public open spaces and recognized pedestrian routes;
- c) Opportunities to expand on existing or future public artworks as part of an existing or proposed multi-artwork public art plan; and/or
- d) Places of special heritage or community significance.



6.3 Funding

- 6.3.1** The public art contribution rate for private sector public art projects is an amount equivalent to a minimum value of 0.5% of the estimated total project construction cost:
- a) Contributions are based on construction costs and exclude soft costs (i.e., administration, professional and legal fees, furnishings, development cost charges, and permit fees);
 - b) For the purpose of calculating public art contributions for private development, only floor areas that make up the calculation of density as set out under the Richmond Zoning Bylaw, as amended from time to time, are included;
 - c) Floor areas for uses set-out under 6.2.2, above, are excluded; and
 - d) This contribution funds the planning, design, fabrication and installation of public art.
- 6.3.2** The City will issue guidelines for calculating the public art contribution based on building types and annual Consumer Price Index adjustments.
- 6.3.3** The public art contribution rate will be reviewed periodically by Council.
- 6.3.4** For public art project contributions that are less than \$40,000, a cash contribution is to be made to the City's Public Art Reserve, for city-wide public art programs.
- 6.3.5** For public art contributions over \$40,000, the developer may choose one of the following three options:
- a) A monetary contribution to the City's Public Art Program Reserve; or
 - b) The developer may provide public artwork of a value equal to the public art contribution for the project, provided the artwork complies with this Public Art Program Policy and the Public Art Program Administrative Procedures Manual; or
 - c) The developer may negotiate a split of its contribution between both i) a monetary contribution to the Public Art Program Reserve; and ii) provision of artwork, provided the combined value of the monetary contribution and the artwork is equal to or greater than the project's public art contribution.
- 6.3.6** Where the developer chooses to provide artwork, either on their development site or on a City controlled property:
- a) A minimum of 85% of the public art contribution will be allocated to the creation of the artwork;



- b) Where the City manages the public art selection process, 15% of the developer's public art contribution will be dedicated to the City's Public Art Program Operating Provision to support and sustain the management, administration and promotion of the Public Art Program;
- c) Where the developer engages an independent Public Art Consultant to manage the public art selection process, 5% of the developer's public art contribution will be dedicated to the City's Public Art Program operating budget and Operating Provision to support and sustain the management, administration and promotion of the Public Art Program and a maximum of 10% of the public art budget may be directed towards the consultant fees;
- d) Where located on City controlled land, the artwork will become the property of the City;
- e) Where located on private land, the artwork must remain accessible at no cost to the public and be maintained in good repair for the life of the development, and not be removed or relocated except with the prior written consent of the City; and
- f) In the event the artwork is damaged beyond repair, or becomes ineffective for reasons other than the owner's failure to maintain it, or in the event the work becomes an unreasonable burden to maintain, application to allow its removal or relocation may be made to the City.

6.3.8 The following are ineligible expense items for the private sector public art contributions:

- a) Maintenance costs for artwork(s);
- b) Artwork not provided in accordance with the City's Public Art Program; and
- c) Costs not directly related to selecting, designing, fabricating or installing the artwork(s).

7. COMMUNITY PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

7.1 General

7.1.1 The Richmond Community Public Art Program supports art projects between community groups and artists of all disciplines. Artists and communities working collaboratively can explore issues, ideas and concerns, voice community identity, express historical and cultural spirit and create dialogue through art.



Adopted by Council: July 27, 2010
Amended by Council: September 28, 2020

7.1.2 The end product need not be a permanent work of art but should leave a legacy for the general public. The project could include:

- a. A public event such as an exhibition, performance, play, concert, reading or dance; or
- b. Documentary artworks such as books and videos; or
- c. Electronic media.

7.2 Project Identification

7.2.1 Projects proposed must be publicly accessible and located or performed on public property such as City-owned or controlled parks, boulevards, and buildings. Sites owned or controlled by the Federal or Provincial governments will also be considered.

7.2.2 Projects should demonstrate the support of the local community and document significant community involvement of a sizable number of people.

7.2.3 Projects should demonstrate the capacity to be undertaken and completed within an approved time frame.

7.3 Funding

7.3.1 Community public art projects will be funded in part or in whole from the Public Art Program Reserve.

7.3.2 Community partners should investigate or provide matching funds where possible, or contribute an equivalent amount through time/participation, labour, materials or contributions in-kind.

7.3.3 The final artwork, if any, will become the property of the City, unless the City agrees otherwise

8. PUBLIC ART ADVISORY COMMITTEE

8.1 Mandate

8.1.2 The "Richmond Public Art Advisory Committee" is a Council-appointed volunteer advisory committee that provides input on public art policy, planning, education and promotion.

8.2 Role

8.2.1 The Committee provides informed comment to City Council through staff on the implementation of the Public Art Program through civic, private development and community public art initiatives.



Adopted by Council: July 27, 2010
Amended by Council: September 28, 2020

- 8.2.2** The Committee acts as a resource on public art to City Council, staff, residents and developers of land and projects within the City of Richmond.
- 8.2.3** The Committee's terms of reference are outlined in the *Richmond Public Art Advisory Committee Terms of Reference*.

Community Mural Program Completed Projects 2019–2025

2025

	David Camisa <i>A Meeting of Parliament</i> Trail Washroom at Terra Nova Adventure Play Environment
	Aysha Mcconkey <i>Bats in Richmond</i> Trail Washroom at No. 7 Road Pier Park 15911 River Road
	Amy (Yun Ru) Bao <i>Home of the Ravens</i> MacNeill Secondary School 6611 No. 4 Road
	Ben Evely <i>Life Layers</i> Tait Elementary School 10071 Finlayson Drive
	Ho Lay Hoon <i>United in Play</i> Minoru Park 6820 Gilbert Road

	Carly Bouwman <i>Park Washroom Mural</i> Thomas Kidd Park 10851 Shell Road
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2024

	Jean Bradbury <i>The Elders</i> Cook Elementary School, 8600 Cook Road
	Anaïs Léra <i>Growing</i> Hugh McRoberts Secondary School 8980 Williams Road
	Carolyn Wong <i>Gathering Pond</i> Minoru Arenas, 7551 Minoru Gate
	Mark Anderson <i>Postcards from Steveston</i> Steveston Harbour Authority, 3300 Chatham Street

	Phil Phil Studio <i>Bird Song</i> Trail Washroom at No. 3 Road Pier
	Otilia Spantulescu <i>Summer Joys</i> Trail Washroom at Tait Park, 2002 No. 4 Road
	Ciele Beau <i>In Tandem</i> Trail Washroom at London Landing, 6120 Dyke Road
	Fiona Tang <i>A Walk in the Park</i> Trail Washroom at Terra Nova Park

2023

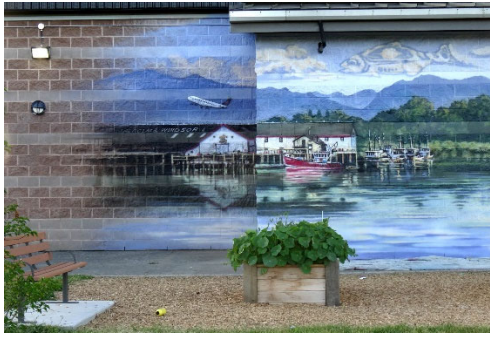
	Mark Anderson <i>Gillnetter at Night</i> Pacific Net and Twine, 3731 Moncton Street
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	Nicole Larsen <i>Journey Home</i> Steveston Outdoor Pool, 4151 Moncton Street
	Rory Doyle <i>Dog Days</i> South Arm Outdoor Pool, 10100 South Arm Place
	Ben Evelyn <i>Movements That Make Us</i> Mitchell Elementary School, 3800 No. 5 Road
	Ho Lay Hoon <i>Patchwork of Unity</i> 22855 McLean Avenue

2022

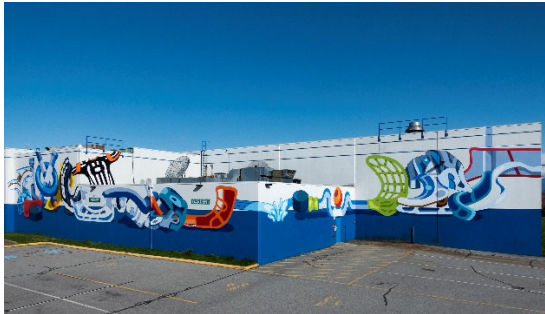
	Carolyn Wong <i>A Fisherman's Dream</i> Steveston Harbour Authority, 3180 Chatham Street
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	Jean Bradbury <i>Our Friends the Trees</i> Maple Lane Elementary School, 7671 Alouette Drive
	Erica and Maddy Phillips <i>Facets of Byng</i> Lord Byng Elementary School, 3711 Georgia Street
	Dolores Altin and Elvira DS Monteforte <i>Cause and Effect</i> Hayer Demolition & Recycling, 12011 Mitchell Road
	Atheana Picha <i>Garden City School Mural</i> Garden City Elementary School, 8311 Garden City Road

	April dela Noche Milne and Dawn Lo <i>Let's Play Let's Go</i> Westwind Elementary School, 11371 Kingfisher Drive
	Atheana Picha <i>Tomekichi Homma Mural</i> Tomekichi Homma Elementary School, 5100 Brunswick Drive
	Fiona Tang <i>Thinking Learning Caring</i> Thompson Elementary School, 6211 Forsyth Crescent
	Dean and Christina Lauzé <i>McMath School Mural</i> McMath Secondary School, 4251 Garry Street

	Karen Yurkovich and Tristesse Seeliger <i>Metamorphosis</i> Lehigh Hanson, 12651 Mitchell Road
	Carmen Chan <i>Stages of Bloom</i> Gateway Theatre, 6500 Gilbert Road

2020

	Andrew Tavukciyan <i>Richmond Ice Centre Community Mural</i> Richmond Ice Centre, 14140 Triangle Road
	Mark Anderson <i>Richmond's home of Curl'ture & Curl'munity</i> Richmond Winter Club, 5540 Hollybridge Way
	Laura Kwok <i>Ladybug and the Sun</i> West Richmond Community Centre, 9180 No. 1 Road

2019

	Richard Tetrault and Jerry Whitehead <i>Continuum</i> Richmond Cultural Centre, 7700 Minoru Gate
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To:	Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee	Date:	June 29, 2026
From:	Elizabeth Ayers General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture	File:	06-2345-20-NPAR1/Vol 01
Re:	Richmond Nature Park Study – Findings and Next Steps		

Staff Recommendation

That the report titled “Richmond Nature Park Study – Findings and Next Steps”, from the General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture, dated June 29, 2026, be received for information.

Executive Summary

The Richmond Nature Park (the Nature Park) represents a unique, threatened bog ecosystem that is significant within the City and region. Remnant bog sites such as the Nature Park play a crucial role in the City achieving its sustainability and climate adaptation goals, including those outlined in the Council-endorsed Community Energy and Emissions Plan 2050.

From 2021 to 2023, a City-led comprehensive hydrogeological and biophysical study (the Study) was initiated in response to longstanding and emergent site challenges that have been compounded by adjacent roadworks and climate change, including those related to hydrology, wildfires, and invasive plant species. It sought to update findings from the 2008 Lulu Island Bog report, improve understanding of the transitional bog ecosystem, provide recommendations to conserve, enhance, and restore the ecosystem in the face of climate change, establish focus areas for potential restoration pilot projects, and identify a path forward to mitigate challenges related to hydrology, wildfire risk, and invasive plant species. The results of the Study indicate that challenges related to anthropogenic and climate change effects and the establishment of invasive plant species are leading to the Nature Park transitioning from open, shrub-dominated bog to conifer forest.

While small-scale bog restoration initiatives have been undertaken at the Nature Park to date, the findings of the Study demonstrate that a coordinated, collaborative approach with a dedicated funding source will be essential to ensure successful long-term outcomes. A capital submission to support bog restoration measures will be prepared and submitted for Council consideration as part of a future budget process. It will include a detailed scope of work, budget, and operating budget impact (OBI). With approval, the budget would be used to implement pilot projects that seek to restore and enhance the bog ecosystem, improve hydrogeological conditions, reduce wildfire risk, and manage invasive plant species.

Staff Report

Origin

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of findings from the Nature Park hydrogeological and biophysical assessment and outline opportunities for bog restoration measures.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022–2026 Focus Area #5 A Leader in Environmental Sustainability:

Leadership in environmental sustainability through innovative, sustainable and proactive solutions that mitigate climate change and other environmental impacts.

Background

Ecological Relevance of Richmond Nature Park and Bog Ecosystems

The 212-acre (86-hectare) Nature Park encompasses a range of habitats, from bog wetland to small patches of open water wetland, and conifer-dominated to mixed-species (deciduous and coniferous) forest. Although all the habitats at the Nature Park are ecologically significant, the bog ecosystem was a primary reason for setting the area aside as a park site. The park supports a remnant of the historic Lulu Island Bog, which has been designated as a red-listed ecosystem by the BC Conservation Data Centre.

Bogs are unique wetlands characterized by deep organic peat soils and vegetation dominated by *Sphagnum* mosses. The Nature Park began as a raised bog, an ecosystem that is wholly dependent upon precipitation for water. Groundwater in a raised peat bog is a result of local precipitation, which percolates through and is contained within the mounded peat. Groundwater also has a mounded surface and maintains a radial flow from the centre to the margin. In an intact bog, the *Sphagnum* peat soils create this unique ecological condition such that groundwater of the perpetually saturated soil is not in contact with mineral soil, which results in nutrient poor, acidic groundwater and soils. These soils support unique plant species that are adapted to survive in this relatively inhospitable ecosystem while excluding species that require upland and/or nutrient-available mineral soils.

Bogs provide a host of invaluable ecosystem services, such as:

- Hydrological functions, including water absorption and flood control;
- Habitat functions, including the provision of habitat for a diversity of native, unique, and potentially rare species; and
- Climate functions, including carbon fixation and sequestration, and fire control.

Bogs and similar peatland ecosystems serve as significant carbon sinks; while they cover only three per cent of the Earth's surface, they store approximately 30 per cent of the Earth's land-based carbon. On a global scale, bog ecosystems are integral to the carbon cycle and climate regulation. On a local scale, remnant bog sites such as the Garden City Lands and the

Nature Park also provide important ecological functions, including habitat support, hydrological regulation, and biodiversity value. In Richmond, these sites contribute to the City's sustainability, climate adaptation, and ecological management objectives, including those outlined in the Council-endorsed Community Energy and Emissions Plan 2050 and the Ecological Network Management Strategy.

Although the Nature Park has been set aside for conservation since 1970, it has not been immune to external pressures, including drainage-related impacts from the development and expansion of adjacent roadways and ditches, climate-related changes such as altered temperatures and precipitation, and the encroachment of invasive plants. These disturbances have led to modified ecological communities that are distinct from those set aside for conservation over 50 years ago.

Historical Peatland Distribution

The Lower Mainland contains several historical peatlands, including preserved sites such as Burns Bog in Delta and Camosun Bog in Vancouver – refer to Figure 1. In Richmond, Lulu Island originally contained two expansive peatland areas: the Greater Lulu Island Bog and Lesser Lulu Island Bog. The Nature Park is situated within the former Greater Lulu Island Bog – refer to Figure 2, with the Nature Park outlined in red. Figure 3 provides an aerial view of the Nature Park with surrounding context, and property lines in red.

Figure 1 – Historical Peatlands of the Lower Mainland (source: Hebda et al. 2000)

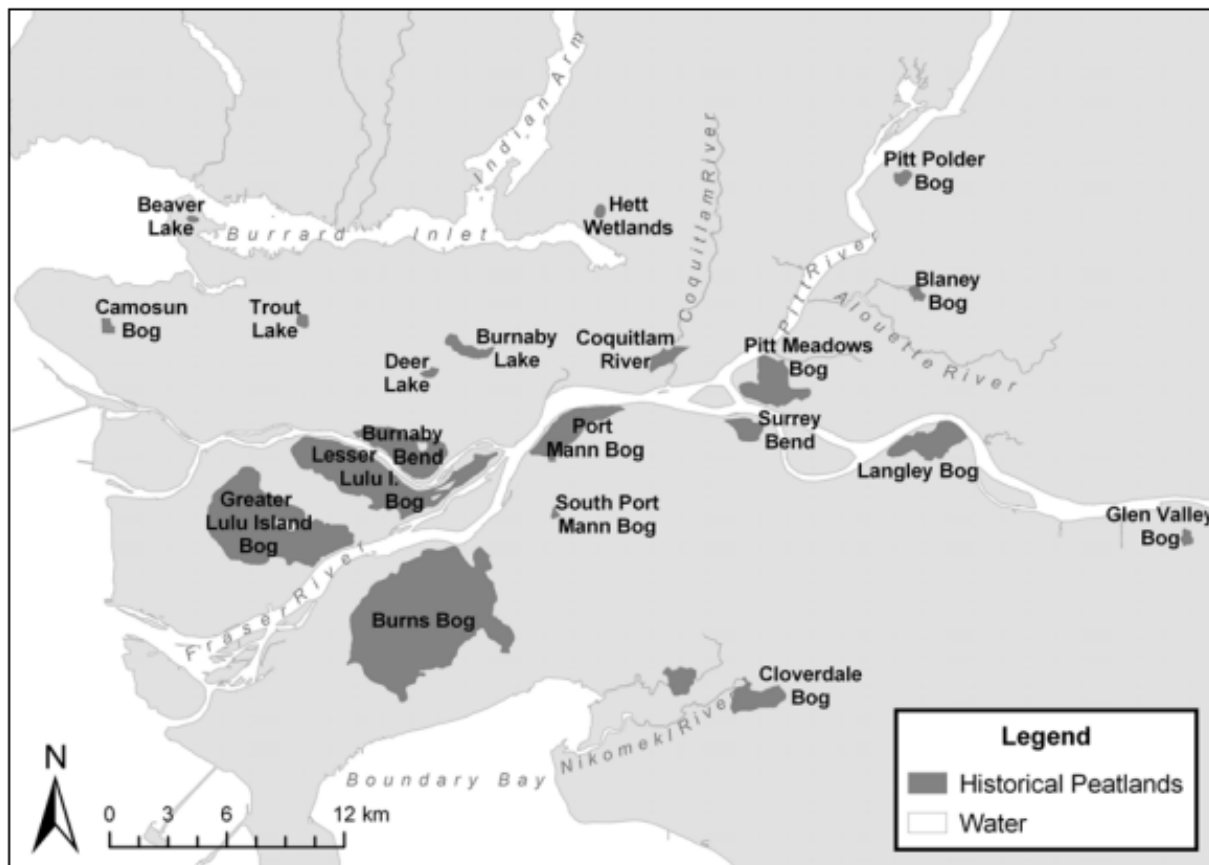


Figure 2 – Historical Vegetation of Lulu Island (source: North 1989)

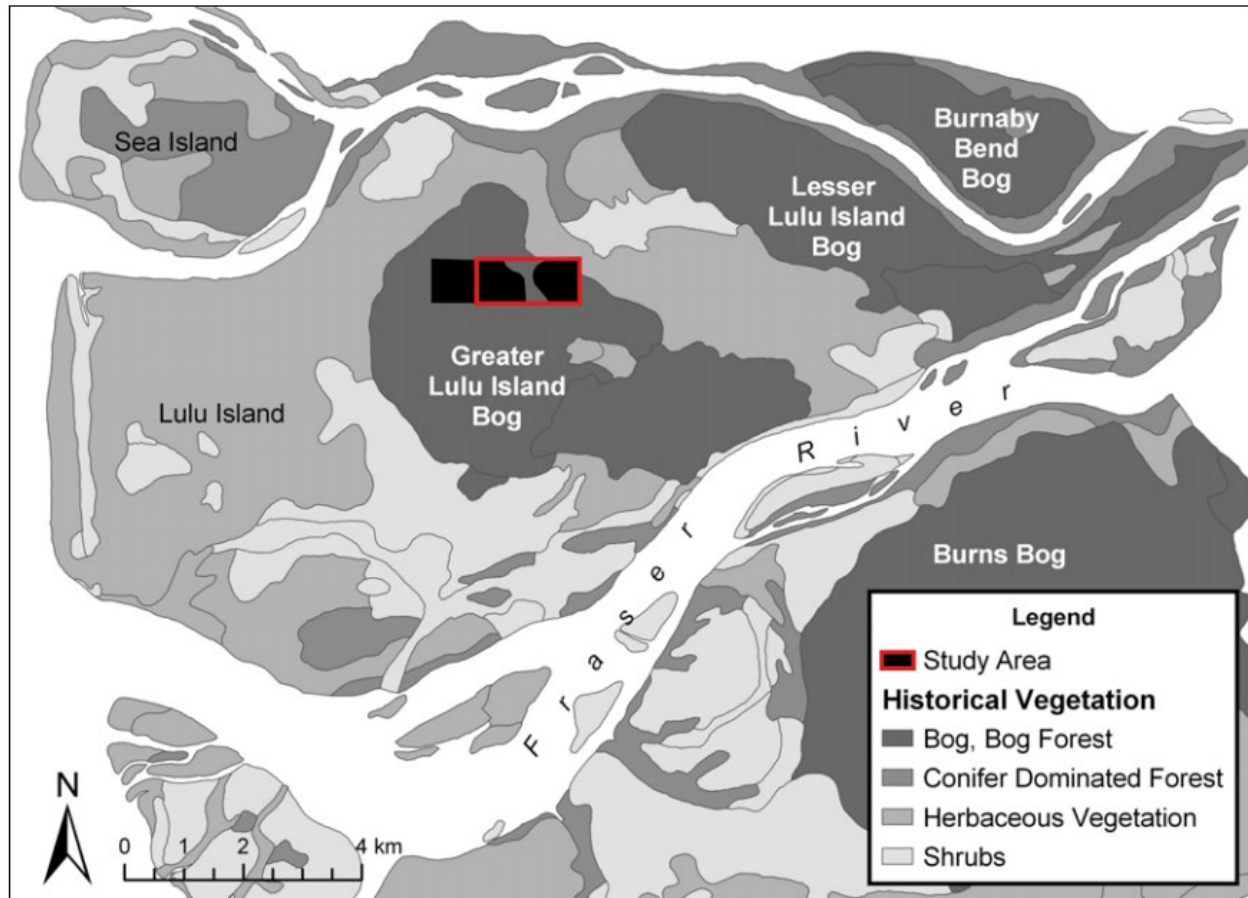


Figure 3 – Aerial Map of the Nature Park



A Biophysical Inventory and Evaluation of the Lulu Island Bog (2008)

In 2008, a comprehensive report titled *A Biophysical Inventory and Evaluation of the Lulu Island Bog* (the Lulu Island Bog report) was produced by editors Neil Davis and Rose Klinkenberg. A project of the Richmond Nature Park Society Ecology Committee, the report summarized findings from a 2001 to 2008 study period that evaluated the Nature Park and Department of National Defence (DND) property to the west. Exploring its significance as a natural area and contributor to regional biodiversity, the intent of this study was to document flora, fauna, and vegetation cover types present in the bog, thus enabling informed comparisons with earlier inventory work, and provide a baseline for monitoring and responding to future changes.

Analysis

Hydrogeological and Biophysical Assessment (2023)

In 2021, the City procured the services of a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) to undertake a comprehensive hydrogeological and biophysical study of the Nature Park. The Study was initiated in response to longstanding and emergent site challenges that have been compounded by Ministry of Transportation and Transit roadworks, including grading and drainage modifications, and climate change. These include issues related to hydrology, wildfire occurrences and heightened risk, and the spread of invasive plants which have reduced sightlines and adversely affected native bog species.

The Study also serves as an update to the 2008 Lulu Island Bog report by documenting the current hydrogeological status, i.e., distribution, movement, and quality of groundwater, and completing a biophysical inventory, i.e., observation and assessment of biological and physical characteristics, including ecosystem and habitat mapping. The Study was conducted between 2021 and 2023 to account for seasonal variability and provide the most complete picture possible. The Nature Park Society was engaged over the course of the Study, with regular updates provided by Parks Programs staff. Refer to Attachment 1 for an executive summary of the Study and its findings.

Project Objectives

The key objectives of the Study were to improve understanding of the transitional bog ecosystem, including how it has changed since the 2008 study was completed, provide recommendations to conserve, enhance, and restore the ecosystem in the face of climate change, establish focus areas for potential restoration pilot projects, and identify a path forward to mitigate challenges related to hydrology, wildfire risk, and invasive plant species.

Project Focus Areas and Methods

The Study identified a range of focus areas including water, vegetation, wildlife, and ecosystem mapping that necessitated deployment of a diverse range of methodologies. The investigation focused on water included the installation of monitoring wells, ground and surface water sampling, and a study of bog chemistry. Vegetation was studied by way of a rare plant survey and invasive species study, and wildlife was documented via desktop and field studies, the latter including environmental DNA (eDNA) sampling, automated recording unit (ARU) surveying,

and bat detector recording. The ecosystem mapping component employed desktop and field reviews as well as drone flights to identify distinct ecological communities, areas of interest, e.g., those determined to warrant further study and/or interventions, and habitat suitability for wildlife species of concern.

Project Findings

The Study's findings were comprehensive and informative. It was determined that water losses are occurring, both through evaporation and the ground layer, and that a significant lowering of the peat aquifer level is occurring during summer months. While it is anticipated that the increasing presence of invasive plant species and effects of climate change will exacerbate the overall drying of the site, areas of intact *Sphagnum* mosses and other bog indicator species provide opportunities for restoration. In terms of water quality, the central portion of the site indicated water chemistry reminiscent of a typical bog environment, while the perimeter reflected non-bog/transitional conditions.

While no rare plants were identified, several bog indicator species, including *Sphagnum* mosses, bog rosemary, western bog laurel, labrador tea, and cloudberry, were present. Fifteen invasive species were identified, with two of the most impactful being highbush blueberry and European birch. Highbush blueberry is a horticultural escapee that forms dense thickets with the capacity to obstruct light from reaching the ground and species of mosses and herbaceous plants. European birch is a fast-growing deciduous tree that opportunistically invades wetlands such as bogs. This species forms extensive root networks that can have a disproportionate impact on bog ecosystems through its effective uptake of water and nutrients, contributing to drying of the bog through high rates of evapotranspiration.

The wildlife community at the Nature Park was determined to be largely unchanged since the 2008 Lulu Island Bog study. Most species of birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and dragonflies reported in 2008 were confirmed to still be present, with much of the data obtained through recorded eBird and iNaturalist observations. Newly detected at-risk species include peregrine falcon, purple martin, black-crowned night-heron, and blue dasher dragonfly.

The ecosystem mapping component of the Study revealed that ecological communities are transitioning from open, shrub-dominated bogs to conifer forest. Eight areas of interest were identified and mapped, including an area where invasive plant management and bog restoration measures are being actively conducted, areas with well-preserved bog ecosystem features, and an area affected by fire in 2021. Maps were prepared to indicate habitat suitability and recovery potential for two species of concern: barn owl and little brown myotis (little brown bat).

Recommendations

The Study affirmed that the bog ecosystem is experiencing synergistic pressures, including those related to anthropogenic and climate change effects and the establishment of invasive plants, that are adversely affecting site hydrogeology. As such, it is anticipated that a sustained, multifaceted approach to restoration will be necessary to conserve and restore areas of bog habitat while addressing challenges related to hydrology, wildfire risk, and invasive plant species. Given the local and regional significance of the Nature Park from educational, ecological, and nature-based

experience standpoints, an approach guided by restoration is essential to ensure it continues to provide these services. A threefold rationale for bog restoration is outlined below:

- To restore an ecologically significant bog habitat that is designated as a threatened ecosystem;
- To reduce fire risk by minimizing fuel load and increasing soil moisture; and
- To improve sightlines and increase accessibility for users, maintenance and fire response activities by removing dense highbush blueberry.

As suggested by the above rationale, bog restoration efforts are anticipated to result in mutually beneficial holistic outcomes. For example, managing invasive plant species and improving site hydrogeology has the potential to improve bog ecosystem health while concurrently reducing wildlife risk. Table 1 provides examples of bog restoration opportunities sorted by category.

Table 1 – Bog Restoration Opportunities

Restoration Category	Example Opportunity
Ecological Restoration	• Establish long-term ecological monitoring to inform restoration planning, assess ecosystem response, measure outcomes, and support adaptive management.
Hydrogeological Restoration	• Identify and seal breaches in the silty clay strata below the peat layer to reduce water loss and improve bog hydrology.
Vegetation Restoration	• Actively increase populations of native, desirable plants in areas where invasive species have been removed and in areas of disturbance.
Wildlife Restoration	• Improve habitat suitability by removing invasive trees, retaining open water habitats, and installing nest/roost boxes.
Fire Management	• Develop a site-specific fire management plan in collaboration with Richmond Fire-Rescue that incorporates best practices for prevention, control, and post-fire recovery.

Ecological monitoring will be a vital component of future work to assess the effectiveness of restoration activities, document successional changes, and assess ecological responses to local conditions. Three forms of monitoring are recommended: survey-based monitoring, drone camera monitoring, and long-term monitoring plots.

Presentation to Advisory Committee on the Environment (ACE)

On April 8, 2026, an overview of the Study, findings and next steps were presented to the Advisory Committee on the Environment (ACE). The presentation was positively received, with

the committee sharing a few comments and questions pertaining to opportunities for collaboration and the importance of fire management over the long term. The committee was advised that they would be kept informed of updates and future initiatives related to bog restoration.

Next Steps

While bog restoration initiatives have been undertaken at the Nature Park, efforts to date have been small in scale. Broader restoration is now warranted given the potential benefits for ecosystem health, hydrogeological function, wildfire risk reduction, and invasive plant species management. Advancing this work will require a coordinated approach and dedicated funding to support both implementation and the long-term viability of the bog ecosystem.

A capital submission to support bog restoration measures will be prepared and submitted for Council consideration as part of a future budget process. The capital submission will include a detailed scope of work, budget figure, and associated OBI. With Council approval, this budget would be used to implement pilot projects that seek to restore and enhance the bog ecosystem, improve hydrogeological conditions, reduce wildfire risk, and manage invasive plants.

Opportunities to develop a fire management plan in collaboration with Richmond Fire-Rescue will also be explored. As potential bog restoration measures will require a holistic, interdisciplinary approach, future planning and implementation will be informed by relevant subject matter expertise and cross-departmental input. The Richmond Nature Park Society will continue to be meaningfully engaged throughout this work.

Budgetary Implications

There are no budgetary implications at this time. As noted in the Next Steps section of this report, a capital submission and associated OBI will be submitted for Council consideration during a future budget process.

Conclusion

For over 50 years, the Nature Park has provided formative nature-based experiences, unique educational and interpretive opportunities, and regionally significant ecosystem services. A remnant of the Greater Lulu Island Bog, the Nature Park has faced challenges related to anthropogenic and climate change effects, as well as the establishment of invasive plant species.

The results of the 2023 hydrogeological and biophysical study offer insight into the effects these factors have had on the Nature Park's bog ecosystem, and affirm these synergistic pressures are adversely affecting site hydrogeology, which in turn undermines the long-term viability of the bog. Given the local and regional significance of the Nature Park from educational, ecological, and nature-based experience standpoints, an approach guided by restoration is essential to ensure it continues to provide these services.

In order to conserve and restore areas of bog habitat while addressing challenges related to hydrology, wildfire risk, and invasive plant species, it is anticipated that a sustained, multifaceted

approach to restoration will be necessary. Next steps will include the preparation of a capital submission to support bog restoration measures, to be submitted as part of a future budget process.

Bog restoration efforts are anticipated to result in mutually beneficial holistic outcomes, including carbon sequestration, invasive plant and fire management, and enhanced ecosystem services, while allowing the Nature Park to continue offering educational and nature-based experiences that are unique within the region.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd Gross, Director, Parks Services

Report Contributors

This report was prepared by Kevin Fraser, Research Planner 2, and reviewed by Climate and Environment, and Fire-Rescue.

Endorsed by Serena Lusk, CAO

Att. 1: Richmond Nature Park Hydrogeological and Biophysical Assessment – Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The Richmond Nature Park (RNP or 'the park') is an 86-hectare (ha) natural area characterized by forested bog and upland forest, located on Lulu Island in central Richmond, B.C. The park is home to a Nature House and has a long tradition of educational nature programming for public and school groups. The park is bordered by roadways, a railway, and is divided into west and east halves by Highway 99 and Number 5 Road.

The RNP encompasses a range of habitats, from bog wetland to small patches of open water wetland, and from conifer-dominated to mixed-species (deciduous and coniferous) forest. Although all the habitats at the RNP are ecologically important, it was initially the bog ecosystem that was the reason for setting the area aside as park.

The RNP began as a raised bog, an ecosystem that is wholly dependent upon precipitation for water. Groundwater in a raised peat bog is a result of local precipitation, which percolates through and is contained within the mounded peat. Groundwater also has a mounded surface and maintains a radial flow from the centre to the margin of the bog. In an intact bog, the Sphagnum peat soils create this unique ecological condition such that groundwater of the perpetually saturated soil is not in contact with mineral soil, which results in nutrient-poor, acidic groundwater and soils. These soils support unique plant species that are adapted to survive in relatively inhospitable ecosystems while excluding species that require upland and/or nutrient-available mineral soils.

As a bog, the RNP provides multiple ecological services, most notably:

- Hydrological function (e.g. water absorption, flood control and slow release of water during dry periods).
- Habitat function (e.g. provide habitat for diversity of native, unique and possibly rare species).
- Climate function (e.g. carbon fixation and sequestration).

Although the park has been set aside for conservation since 1970, it has not been immune to external pressures from disturbances such as roads and ditches, climate-related changes such as altered temperatures and precipitation and the encroachment of invasive plants. These disturbances have led to modified ecological communities from those set aside for protection over fifty years ago.

Overarching goals of this report are threefold:

1. To investigate and document the current biophysical and hydrogeological status of the RNP.
2. To synthesize the hydrogeological status with the above-ground biophysical state.
3. To provide recommendations to preserve and, where possible, restore patches of what remains of the unique bog ecosystem.

Water

This investigation of groundwater and surface water at the park included installation of three multi-level groundwater monitoring well nests and eight shallow wells, as well as four ditch sample locations. Unfortunately, the wells installed at the eastern portion of the park (RNP East) were vandalized before they were able to yield water level or chemistry data. The four ditch sample locations, and shallow wells at the western part of the park (RNP West), were sampled for chemical analysis. Year-long continuous water level monitoring was conducted at seven well locations at RNP West.

Drilling at RNP West revealed approximately 1.7 metres (m) of peat, underlain by 4 m of silty clay, which was underlain by sand.

Water chemistry results indicate that the water type in the central part of RNP West has remained as bog conditions, while near the margins of the bog, the water chemistry indicates variable bog to non-bog conditions and, in the Nature House pond and park ditches the water is considered to be non-bog or transitional.

There is significant lowering of the peat aquifer level during summer months. This drying is corroborated by the hydrogeological flow calculations and water balance model, which yield similar results. The estimated groundwater discharge rates (losses) is 41% of recharge rate estimated by the water balance model. The differences between the calculated groundwater discharge and water balance model are attributed to uncertainty in the constituent variables, the most significant of which are considered to be hydraulic conductivity and evapotranspiration rate.

Groundwater was measured at a depth of 0.4 m in the wet season (April 2022) and 1.1 m in the dry season (October 2022); the peat had a saturated thickness of 1.4 m in the wet season and 0.7 m in the dry season. Groundwater appears to have a mounded shape and flows radially to the margins of RNP West, as is typical of a healthy raised peat bog. Groundwater also flows downward into the aquifer throughout the year. Estimates of aquifer permeability and gradient indicate that downward flow accounts for 98% of the losses of peat aquifer storage as compared to lateral water losses, including losses into perimeter ditches.

The predicted effects of climate change, including longer, hotter, drier summers, are expected to stress the raised bog ecosystem and the thin saturated peat groundwater system that the bog relies on. Drier conditions may also present a fire hazard. The potential risks of low water levels, particularly in the dry season, are anticipated to be:

- Loss of bog soil structure leading to an irreversible collapse of raised bog ecosystem
- Decomposition of peat leading to release of greenhouse gases
- Complete drying of the peat aquifer leading large-scale death of vegetation
- Increased likelihood of fire leading to use of a potentially scarce water resource in the dry season to fight fire, with potential for fire fighting efforts that may be deleterious to bog health
- Altered recreational and educational public use.

Biophysical

RNP is located within the Coastal Douglas-fir moist maritime (CDFmm) biogeoclimatic subzone (Green and Klinka 1994). According to the BC Biogeoclimatic ecosystem classification system ecosystem description that best fits the ecological communities found at the RNP is the *Pinus contorta* – *Sphagnum*, or the Lodgepole Pine (aka shore pine) – Peat Mosses ecological community, which has been designated as a red-listed ecosystem by the Conservation Data Centre (BC CDC 2012).

The RNP forest is a transitional ecological community that ranges from typical bog ecological community that has been invaded by horticultural blueberry to conifer-dominated forest where soils have been mixed due to anthropogenic activities such as road building (Hwy 99 and No. 5 Road). Park-specific ecosystem mapping was completed in 2022 for the RNP following a methodology modified from the standardized provincial ecological mapping method called Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping (TEM) (RIC 1998).

The mapping was further refined to highlight “Areas of Interest”, which are areas that were deemed by the ecologists to be of special ecological interest for various reasons such as higher restoration potential, high risk of invasive plant spread, historical anthropogenic alterations (i.e. fires) and/or candidate locations for long-term ecological monitoring. Two drone flights were conducted to capture imagery to inform the Areas of Interest. Since these areas could have potential management implications, their mapping will help RNP managers prioritize the allocation of resources and efforts.

Rare plant surveys were conducted to try to locate previously-documented populations of the Blue-listed Vancouver Island beggarticks (*Bidens amplissima*) but no populations were re-detected. There was, however, a population of a similar, albeit non-native, plant species, three-parted beggarticks (*Bidens tripartita*), found in a location where *B. amplissima* had previously been documented.

The RNP is home to many non-native plant species, some of which are considered invasive while others are simply introduced plant species which have naturalized in the region but that don’t pose a threat to the local ecology. The most abundant and deleterious invasive plants in the park are highbush blueberry and European birch. Recommendations for managing invasive plants are summarized in in this report and a project-specific, stand-alone Invasive Plant Management Plan is provided as an appendix to the report (see **Appendix F**).

The vegetation in a bog habitat is defined by plant species that are unique to systems with low pH and low nutrients. A list of these bog-related species observed within the RNP is compiled along with guidelines for propagation and translocation into restoration areas and is provided as an appendix to the report (see **Appendix I**).

Wildlife usage at the RNP was documented through a range of methods including targeted surveys, Environmental DNA (eDNA) analysis and reviewing occurrences reported through Citizen Science initiatives. eDNA sampling was conducted in aquatic features of RNP to determine the presence of aquatic species such as fish and amphibians in open water habitats in the park.

Wildlife documented through the review of the citizen science programs eBird and iNaturalist included birds, mammals, amphibians and insects. A lengthy list of wildlife species was generated and cross-referenced with previously-documented species to ascertain whether or not species have been re-detected or are newly detected. This full list of wildlife species is provided as an appendix (see **Appendix G**). Approximately 85% of the bird species detected in 2008 have been redetected. Although some of the butterfly species reported in 2008 have not been re-detected since, there have been many new species of dragonflies, bees and spiders detected in RNP.

Targeted wildlife field surveys consisted of walking bat recording transects using handheld bat detectors as well as through installation of a remote bat detector that was deployed at the canal/ditch on the east side of RNP West on two separate occasions, each for 9 days, one in summer 2021 and the other in spring 2022. Four bat species were confirmed as recorded by the ARU (with many more calls unconfirmed). The four confirmed species were the silver-haired bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*), the big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*), Californian myotis and the federally Endangered and provincially Blue-listed little brown myotis (*Myotis lucifugus*). The walking transects recorded four confirmed species: big brown bat, Californian myotis, little brown myotis and the Blue-listed Yuma myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*).

A remote recorded survey for vocalizing birds, was conducted using an Automatic Recording Unit (ARU), deployed at the Nature House pond in July 2022. Several bird species were recorded (Table 4.14) as well as two amphibians: Pacific treefrog (*Pseudacris regilla*) and the invasive green frog (*Lithobates clamitans*). No American bitterns were documented.

Fire Management

Although we have not conducted site-specific studies pertaining to fire as this is beyond the scope of this project, we do recommend a fire management plan for the RNP that includes measures for prevention, control and monitoring that considers ecological principles. Recommendations for fire management include prevention measures such as reducing fuel load by removing invasive shrub and tree species, and increasing soil moisture through decreased evapotranspiration. We also recommend including in the fire control/response plan the consideration of the fire-retardant types (both water and chemicals) as they will likely have an impact on the water chemistry of the site should they be deployed. As fire is part of a bog's natural disturbance regime, and since multiple fires have occurred recently in the RNP, (2021 and 2023), we recommend monitoring the site of the fire to observe post-fire responses in the ecosystem (e.g. vegetation regrowth, soil moisture, wildlife usage etc.).

Restoration

The RNP as a provincially red-listed ecological community and one of the few remaining remnants of the Lulu Island Bog, is ecologically important both locally and regionally. Although some areas the RNP are transitioning from a bog ecosystem towards a forested ecosystem (particularly where the mineral and organic soil layers have been mixed, near the No. 5 Road and Hwy 99), there still remains large areas within the park which retain both bog soil and water quality features and have potential for restoration. These areas will benefit from restoration activities such as vegetation and water management as well as artificial wildlife habitat structures.

The rationale for seeking to restore portions of the RNP West are threefold.

1. Restore an ecologically important bog habitat that is designated as a Red-listed ecosystem.
2. Reduce fire risk via minimizing fuel load and increasing soil moisture.
3. Improve sight-lines along trails by removing dense highbush blueberry.

Since the bog is experiencing multiple, synergistic pressures such as invasive plants and changes to hydrology due primarily to climatic effects from prolonged dry periods and higher temperatures during summer months, multiple interventions will be necessary to restore areas of the bog habitat. Recommended restoration activities include a combination of hydrological measures to address the soil drying as well as vegetation restoration measures to reduce evapotranspiration and afforestation of the bog. Ideally, the intended outcome for the park would be to reverse the trend of afforestation.

Restoration activities include removing invasive shrubs and trees, replanting native vegetation and enhancing soil and groundwater levels for a longer period of the year.

We recommend initiating restoration efforts in small trial areas and subsequently expanding areas where restoration efforts are deemed successful, while adaptively adjusting the methods where necessary. A good example of a restoration activity with incremental expansion has already been initiated along the Quaking Trail where highbush blueberry shrubs have been cut and covered with landscape textile and native vegetation has been successfully re-colonizing the site. This habitat restoration also benefits birds such as common nighthawk and barn owl and bats such as little brown myotis, who prefer open habitat with low vegetation for foraging, and nesting. Installation of nest boxes and bat roosts will also promote the use of the RNP by desirable wildlife.

Since groundwater flow has been deemed to move slowly across the horizontal plane, it is likely possible to manage groundwater in the peat aquifer to allow for localized restoration efforts involving water levels in priority areas. Considering that most of the water losses occur at the top and bottom of the peat, restoration and monitoring efforts that aim to enhance water levels at the top and bottom of the peat seem likely to have the greatest effect.

In general, water levels may be enhanced through increasing inputs or reducing outputs of water. Some ideas for water level enhancement are suggested in the **Restoration and Monitoring** section of this report.

Some additional future projects to better understand the ecological system at RNP include an elevation survey of the bottom of ponds at Richmond Nature House (near MW21-02) and the linear ponds on the margins of the highway to evaluate if there may be a breach in the silty clay unit that may be a preferential downward flow pathway.

Since restoration efforts can be labour-intensive, we recommend establishing volunteer work parties, led by one or more City of Richmond staff. There may already be precedents for using volunteer labour to perform restoration work in City of Richmond parks, but if not, examples of effective volunteer programs also exist elsewhere in British Columbia, such as invasive plant removals at Saanich Parks on Vancouver Island and native plant propagations at Maplewood Flats native plant nursery as well as other natural area management organizations such as Stream Keepers.

Monitoring

Ecological monitoring allows managers to track the effectiveness of restoration practices as well as tracking the status of stochastic events (such as fires) on habitat features, soil, water etc. while providing a basis from which to compare to other similar areas, such as the DND Richmond Training Facility and Burns Bog in Delta.

Baseline hydrological monitoring was initiated in this project and can be continued by reinstating the transducers in the monitoring wells. We recommend extending the hydrological monitoring program to include measuring evapotranspiration (through lysimeter installations) and surface runoff to improve the conceptual water balance and to evaluate performance of pilot-scale vegetative restoration.

We recommend continued monitoring of hydrological test locations at RNP West to improve the temporal relevance and expand the spatial confidence of inputs to the water balance since water inputs and output change on an annual basis.

Ecological monitoring is useful for several reasons and in various situations:

- To track effectiveness of restoration activities, where possible, starting with baseline/pre-activity.
- To document successional changes in ecological parameters following stochastic natural system re-sets (such as fire) or anthropogenic/planned physical activities that may have indirect effects on an area (such as road building or other disturbance)
- To document ecological responses to local conditions, such as climate, experienced in a reference area (i.e., area that isn't subjected to active restoration efforts).

Types of ecological monitoring utilized for this project included survey-based monitoring, drone camera monitoring and initialization of long-term monitoring plots.

The RNP is easily accessible to naturalists, scientists, students and park visitors, making it an ideal place to collaborate on long-term monitoring projects with academics, citizen scientists and/or volunteers. The RNP could serve as a natural laboratory/training facility where university students and youth from local First Nations communities, can learn invaluable skills and techniques in the field of environmental science, from setting up and managing water monitoring wells/piezometers to calculating carbon capture and respiration, tracking evapotranspiration, and monitoring for vegetation, bats, birds, amphibians, insects and other animals.

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