

At your service

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Think of the City of Richmond like a smart phone. Like to go for a skate? How about a walk along the riverside? Want to catch a great play at the theatre? Toss a ball in the park with the kids? Borrow a library book? There’s an app for that. Take a look below at some of the many services provided by the City of Richmond:

General public services

Community centres, libraries, parks and trails, recreation, arenas, aquatic centres, sports fields, arts, cultural and heritage services, seniors, youth and diversity services, customer service, sustainability services, social services business support services, Gateway Theatre, Richmond Art Gallery, Richmond Museum, Richmond Arts Centre, Richmond Olympic Oval, City of Richmond Archives and the City Clerk’s Office.

Public safety services

Police and fire protection, environmental protection, emergency preparedness, community bylaws, traffic lights, street lights, crosswalks, building approvals and vehicle for hire inspections.

Public works and planning services

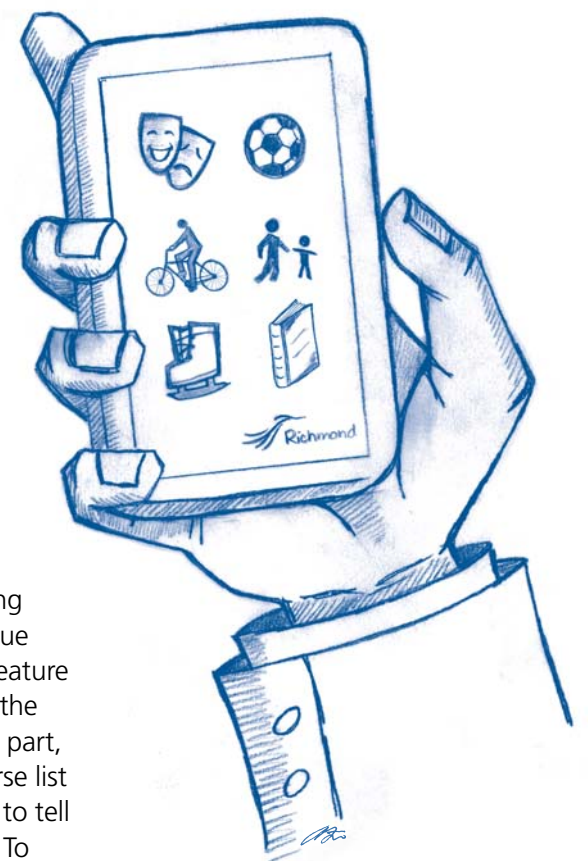
Water, sewer, dikes and drainage services, garbage removal, recycling, litter pick-up, road and bridge construction and maintenance, snow removal, bicycling lanes and paths,

flood protection, engineering, transportation, economic development, major projects, development applications, land use and social planning.

Other services

Administration, sport hosting, film and events office, strategic management, business licensing, corporate services, communications, production centre, human resources, information technology, finance, real estate services, legal services, fleet, warehousing and facilities maintenance.

The City of Richmond is committed to providing an outstanding level of service and significant value for your tax dollars. This special feature provides an overview of some of the many services that are funded, in part, by your property taxes. It’s a diverse list of services and there’s a lot more to tell than we could fit in these pages. To find out more about your City services visit www.richmond.ca or drop by our Customer Service Centre at Richmond City Hall. ■





A day in the life

Local governments are on the front-line providing public services. The City of Richmond provides an incredibly diverse array of services that most residents use on a daily basis, including some services right in your own home.

Imagine an ordinary day in your life . . .

The alarm clock goes off and you wake up ready to face the day. First stop: the bathroom for a quick shower and to use the toilet. You've already used two City services (**water and sewer**) and you aren't even dressed!

After a quick breakfast, you rush out the door, taking the **garbage and recycling** to the curb as the City-hired contractors will be by to pick it up later in the day.

Once that's done, you back the car out of the garage and pull onto a **City street**. You drive down to the end of the block and the **traffic light** is red, so you stop for the school kids at the **crosswalk**.

Keeping up with those New Year's resolutions, you drop by the local **community centre** for an early morning workout in the **fitness centre**.

Back on the road again, you're feeling lucky. The radio is reporting that **Richmond Fire-Rescue** is first on scene responding to an accident

at Gilbert Road and Westminster Highway. Whew, you just passed that intersection five minutes ago.

The weather report is calling for a major storm tonight: unusually high tides and a record rainfall that is expected to cause flooding in some low-lying areas around the region. Fortunately, Richmond has extensive networks of **dikes, pump stations** and **storm water drainage** to prevent any major flooding here.

After a busy day at the office, you head home. But only for a moment. You call the kids in for dinner from the **playground** in the **park** across the street. Over dinner the kids tell you about the personal safety tips they got from the **Richmond RCMP** School Liaison Officer who visited their class today.

After dinner, your second job begins: driving the kids. Your daughter has hockey practise at the City-run **Minoru Arenas** and your son is taking swimming lessons at **Minoru Aquatic Centre**. While they exercise, you whip into the **Richmond Public Library** to borrow a good book—you'll likely be too tired for anything else by the time you get home. Your partner is feeling more energetic, though, and has signed up for a **pottery class** at the **Richmond Arts Centre**.

Finally, you get home. You kick off your shoes, put your feet up and pick up the community newspaper. It seems there's a special deal on family passes at the **Richmond Olympic Oval**. With a membership, you get access to the fitness centre, drop-in fitness classes, free public skating, drop-in basketball on the courts, running on the indoor track and...well, we've lost count.

Okay, so maybe we laid it on a little thick. But was it really that far away from an average day in your life?

Now consider the cost of all those services and more. For a few dollars a day, residents get access to clean drinking water, a safe community, a well-maintained infrastructure of roads, sewers, dikes and drainage, parks, recreation facilities and a whole lot more.

We understand that doesn't make it any easier to pay your bills, including your taxes. We're taxpayers too. That's why we're committed to continue to ensure that we provide you with the best possible value for every dollar we spend. ■



"We don't inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children"

Your 2011 utility bill is a lot more than it seems. On the surface it represents the cost of providing some basic City services: water, sewer, waste removal and disposal, recycling and others. But our civic utilities also play a critical role in protecting our environment and preserving community wellness.

Our drinking water comes from three reservoirs in the North Shore

mountains. The region, including Richmond, is investing billions of dollars in improving the treatment of our drinking water. This will make the water from our taps among the safest drinking water in the world. On top of the regional water network, the City maintains its own network of approximately 620 kilometres of water pipe.

You can help out both the environment and your wallet by participating in City programs designed to help reduce water consumption. This includes purchasing rain water barrels through the City's Recycling Depot, investing in low flow showerheads and similar devices, or purchasing low flush toilets and receiving a City rebate. If you are part of the City's voluntary water metering program, you will also save on your utility bill by reducing your water consumption.

Billions of dollars are also being spent on upgrading our regional sewage disposal system. This investment is critical in reducing the impact of sewage disposal on the environment, particularly within the sensitive Fraser River estuary. This will also ensure regional sewage disposal meets federal environment standards.

You can also help protect our environment by reducing the amount you throw away. Garbage landfills have a huge negative impact on the environment. To reduce its reliance on landfills, Richmond has joined a regional plan that aims to divert 70 per cent of our waste from landfills into recycling and composting programs by 2015 and 80 per cent by 2020. To help residents reduce their waste further, the City introduced the Green Can program to divert kitchen food scraps from garbage. Food scraps represent approximately 30 per cent of household garbage. The City has also added fluorescent lamps, lights and tubes to our range of materials accepted at the Recycling Depot. For a list of materials accepted at the Recycling Depot, visit

www.richmond.ca/recycle. ■





An active, healthy and livable city

With a growing population, Richmond still manages to find balance between urban and rural living. A short distance from the high rises and bustling shops and restaurants, residents can visit farms and purchase locally grown blueberries, corn and other produce. About half of Richmond remains as open space, including farms, parks, green space and other open areas. This balance between city and rural living is what makes Richmond a unique community that hasn't forgotten its roots while expanding for the future.

Adding to the vibrancy of the community is the 1,500 acres of parks/open space and more than 80 kilometres of trails, cycling routes and walkways. The City's park system has over 90 parks, ranging in size from less than an acre to over 100 acres and encompasses all sorts of uses from sports fields and facilities to trails, picnic areas and decorative and community gardens to off-leash dog areas.

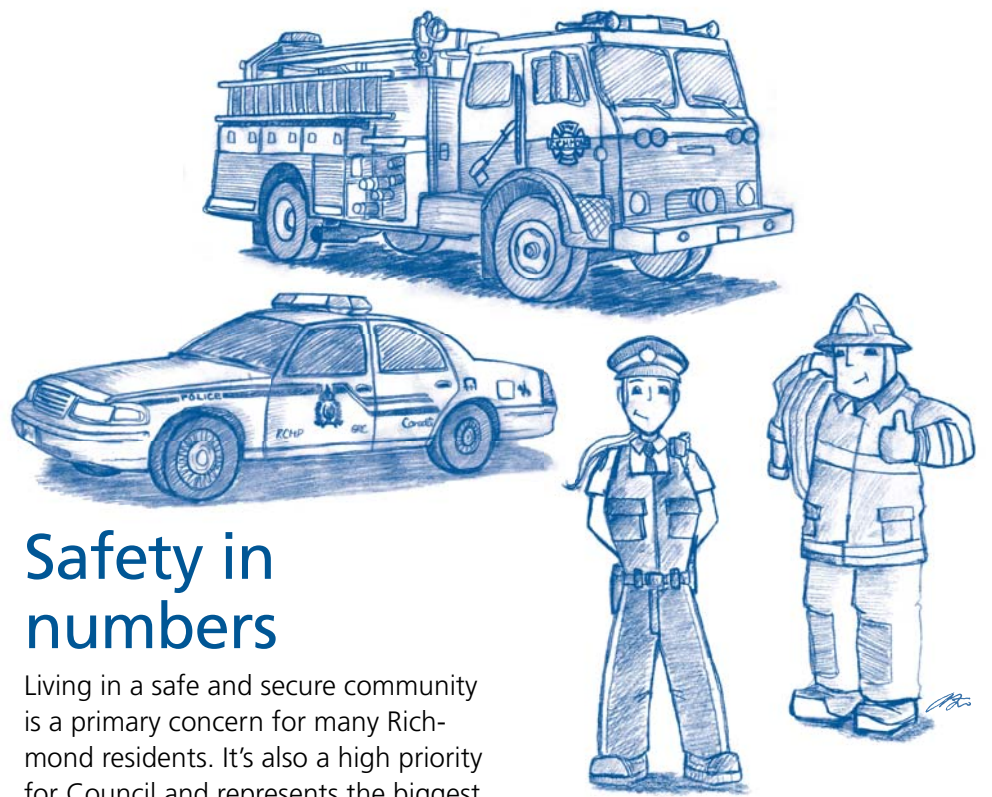
The City's larger parks reflect Richmond's diversity ranging from Richmond Nature Park and Terra Nova Natural Area, which preserve and protect natural habitats, to busy, bustling Minoru Park, home to numerous

indoor and outdoor sport, recreation and cultural facilities and services, to Garden City Park, with its innovative and award-winning children's play area.

In 2009, construction began on the Middle Arm Waterfront Greenway which will be Richmond's newest urban park linking the Fraser River waterfront to Richmond's city centre. As well, Hugh Boyd Park, already home to North America's largest artificial turf playing field surface, was upgraded to include a new accessible play area for children and a unique seniors' outdoor fitness circuit.

Richmond residents also have eight community centres, four aquatic facilities (two indoor and two outdoor seasonal), three arenas (with 10 ice sheets) and a multitude of playgrounds and sports fields to meet with friends and take part in physical fitness activities.

Whether it's practicing your golf swing at West Richmond Pitch and Putt, cooling down in the Steveston Water Park or playing in the dirt at a playground designed by children for children at Garden City Park, there is something for everyone. Throughout the year, Richmond's sports fields, community centres, pools and arenas are well used by local and regional sports teams, recreational leagues and residents looking for opportunities to stay healthy. ■



Safety in numbers

Living in a safe and secure community is a primary concern for many Richmond residents. It's also a high priority for Council and represents the biggest portion of the City's operating budget with 37 cents of every municipal tax dollar going to fund our police and fire services.

Prevention, preparedness and response are the key components of our public safety service delivery. They work on the underlying principle that safety is everyone's responsibility.

The City's primary public safety providers are the RCMP, Richmond Fire-Rescue, Emergency Preparedness and Community Bylaws. These providers work in partnership with other City departments as well as local and provincial agencies to identify needs and provide services in Richmond.

Richmond Fire-Rescue employs over 200 fire personnel who work out of seven fire halls. While fighting fires is important, the bulk of the more than 9,000 incidents responded to by Richmond Fire-Rescue each year are motor vehicle accidents and other medical emergencies.

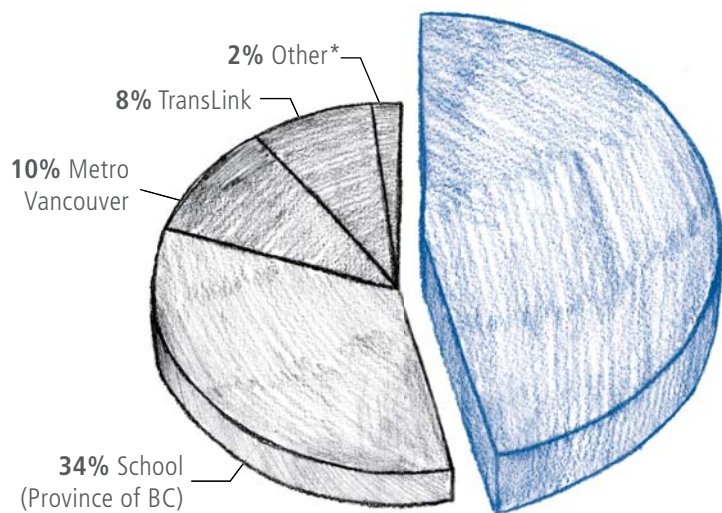
In addition to fire suppression, Richmond Fire-Rescue also delivers a variety of community education and fire prevention programs including

business inspections, home safety inspections, infant car seat checks, protecting your business, carbon monoxide safety and school fire safety education visits. A new Steveston fire hall will open in 2011, complimenting new fire halls in Sea Island and Hamilton and the Crestwood Fire Hall, which went through a major refurbishment last year. The City is continuing to upgrade all of its public safety buildings to ensure they meet the changing needs of the community as well as being capable of surviving a major earthquake.

The Richmond Detachment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is the third largest RCMP detachment in Canada with a complement of 201 regular members. Recognized for its commitments to the concepts of crime prevention and community policing, the detachment has a bicycle squad and two community police stations located in the areas of Steveston and South Arm. Work is now underway on the RCMP's new state of the art headquarters on No. 5 Road, which they will move into in 2012. ■



Breakdown of your property tax bill



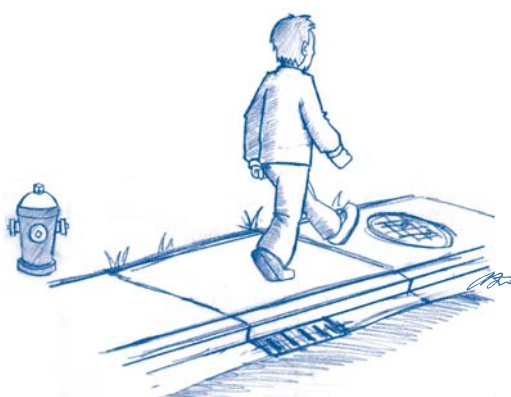
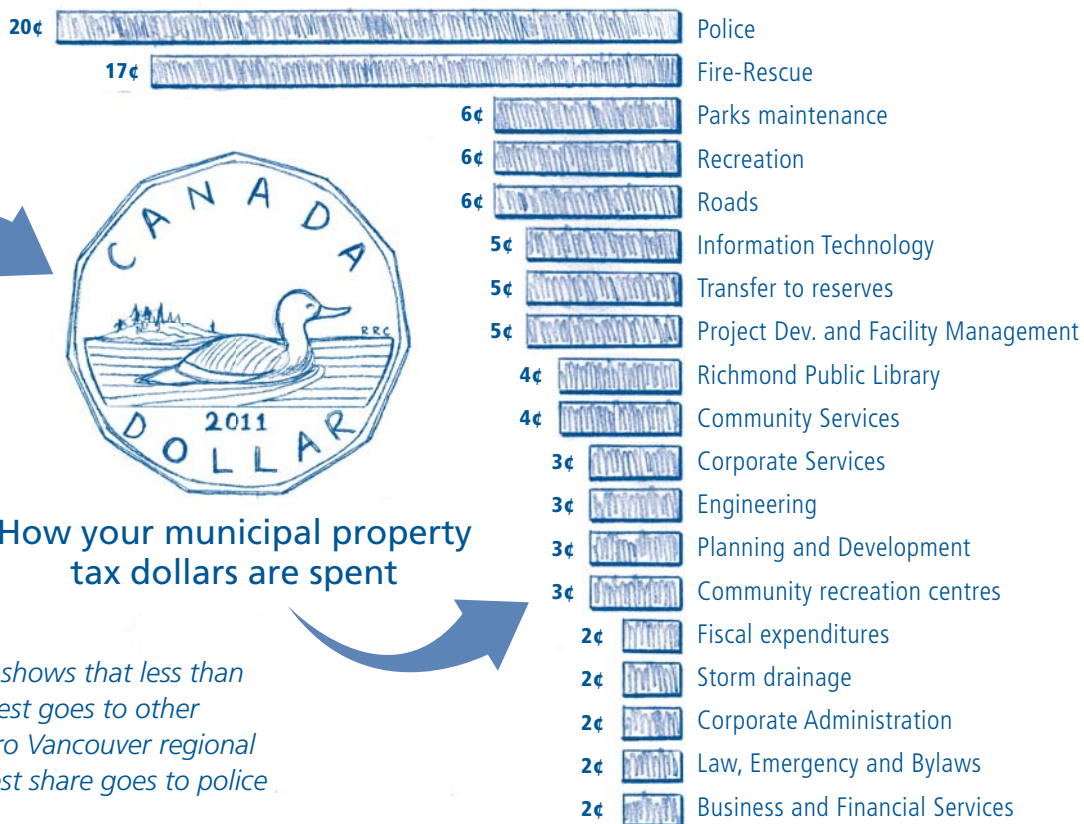
*Other includes BC Assessment, Sewer debt and Municipal Finance Authority (MFA) charges

The graphs above show where your tax dollars go. On the left, the pie chart shows that less than half of the property taxes you pay actually go to the City of Richmond. The rest goes to other agencies such as the School District (Province of BC) TransLink and the Metro Vancouver regional district. The chart on the right shows how each tax dollar is spent. The biggest share goes to police and fire services, on which the City spends 37 cents of every tax dollar.

46%
Municipal



How your municipal property tax dollars are spent



Follow the money trail

The average Canadian household spends 42 per cent of their average income on taxes, of which four per cent goes to property taxes. Of that, less than half goes to your local government.

When your property tax bill arrives this spring, take a close look at where the money goes. You will see the property taxes you pay are split among several organizations. Less than half of your property tax bill goes to the City. The other half goes to organizations like the Province of BC to fund schools, TransLink for public transit and transportation service, the Metro Vancouver regional district and other organizations. These amounts are outside of the City's control. Those organizations determine the amount they need and provide the tax rates to the City to collect on their behalf.

Unlike other governments, which rely on a variety of levies from income to sales taxes, local governments rely primarily on property taxes and utility fees to fund their budgets. And unlike senior governments, Richmond and other municipalities are forbidden from running a deficit. Thus, the portion of property taxes raised by the City each year is based on the amount of revenues it needs to end up with a balanced budget with no deficit. ■



Assessing the impact

Homeowners often wonder how their property assessment impacts their property taxes.

Each year, City Council determines how much money it requires to support the City's programs and services. Then, non-tax revenues, such as the estimated income from building permits, business licences, parking revenues and other sources are subtracted. This determines the overall tax levy to be collected and the property tax increase required to balance the budget.

Changes in property values don't change the overall amount raised by taxes. This means the City won't get extra revenue simply because your property value goes up. Instead, tax rates are adjusted to generate the amount of net revenue needed to run the City's programs and services.

An individual's property tax charge will vary depending on whether that property's assessment, as provided by BC Assessment, was higher or lower than the average overall increase in assessment values for the City. ■

2011 Operating Budget

Richmond City Council has approved its 2011 operating budget with an average property tax increase of 2.95 per cent.

The average overall increase in residential assessments in Richmond for 2011 was 17 per cent. For those properties in line with the average assessment increase, the municipal portion of taxes (less than half the total tax bill) will increase by 2.95 per cent or about \$40. However, if the property assessment increase is higher than the overall average, then the tax increase will be more than \$40. If the property assessment increase is less than that overall average, then the increase will be less than \$40 and in some cases may be less than the previous year's taxes.

The 2011 budget is primarily focused on maintaining civic services at existing levels, while limiting the tax increase as much as possible. ■



5 Year Financial Plan

Each year, City Council adopts a new 5 Year Financial Plan prior to the final adoption of the annual Property Tax Bylaw.

The 5 Year Financial Plan details how the City plans to manage its resources, revenues and expenditures in order to best serve the community.

The proposed 5 Year Financial Plan (2011-2015) Bylaw 8707 is currently available in PDF format on the City website at www.richmond.ca or is available for viewing at Richmond City Hall.

The City is required by the Community Charter to undertake a process of public consultation before the bylaw is adopted by Council and to this end please submit your feedback via email to finance@richmond.ca or deliver to the Finance Division, Richmond City Hall, 6911 No. 3 Road, Richmond, V6Y 2C1, by March 31, 2011

Public delegations at the Council Meeting are also permitted with regard to this bylaw. It is anticipated that the 5 Year Financial Plan will be considered by Council for adoption at the Regular Council Meeting of April 11, 2011 at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers at City Hall. ■