



## 5.2 BUILT FORM & AMENITY

*The City of Richmond as a corporate organization guides its activities using a vision that "Richmond be the most appealing, livable and well-managed community in Canada."*

*Towards this end, the City has initiated measures aimed at beautifying and nurturing its physical attributes in order to help them reach their full potential*



*Celebrating Richmond's Garden City heritage*

### ISSUE:

Over its history, Richmond has evolved from farmland and a hub for the fishing industry, to a suburban bedroom community, and an emerging urban centre. And, with each stage of its growth, the City has shaped its island setting to meet the changing needs of its citizens.

Richmond continues to face the challenge of conserving its farmland while creating a "complete community", offering a more sustainable economy and higher standards of livability. Due to a decreasing supply of developable land, Richmond is reinventing itself through a unique city structure. With one-half of the land base reserved for agriculture, the City is concentrating urban growth to create a downtown in the City Centre, fostering neighbourhoods with a sense of community organized around distinct identities and neighbourhood service centres, and promoting increasingly prestigious business and industry districts. Achieving and maintaining a high-quality built form and amenity within this structure which reflects typical Richmond values requires careful management and guidance.

### OBJECTIVE 1:

**Build on recognizable design elements, features, and themes within the City to reinforce and enhance a shared identity for Richmond and its local areas.**

### POLICIES:

- a) Enhance the sense of Richmond as an island community by providing thematic references to the City's special island experience in public and private development, improving visual and physical access to the water and the dyke, and creating opportunities to celebrate Richmond's physical setting;
- b) Reinforce the City's arterial grid as its main organizing system by strengthening its physical relationship with the areas it defines, and better reflecting the character of those areas through improved urban design and development standards;
- c) Take advantage of Richmond's unique topography, landscape, and recognized industrial images, e.g. farming, fishing, and the airport, in the form and character of its public and private development;



*Special identity and character*

*Richmond's public realm includes:*

- *Streets and lanes;*
- *Parks and other open spaces;*
- *Building facades;*
- *Other features of the City which are accessible to the public either physically and/or visually.*



*Friendly pedestrian areas*

- d) Support Richmond's continued development as a predominantly low-rise, grade-oriented community, set in contrast to its high-rise downtown area and its developing skyline;
- e) Promote the development and maintenance of areas of special identity and urban character to create variety and enhance local identity, such as Steveston Village.

## **OBJECTIVE 2:**

**Promote an expanded and attractive public realm to foster civic pride and interaction.**

## **POLICIES:**

- a) Promote public streets and outdoor open spaces as the City's primary pedestrian areas, and discourage alternatives or features which displace the activity and vitality of these areas;
- b) Encourage development that enhances the quality of publicly accessible open spaces, and contributes to a strongly public and pleasing streetscape; and avoid design or uses which create hostile or unsafe areas, e.g. vast blacktop parking lots;
- c) Promote the extensive "greening" of the public realm through a range of means aimed at reinforcing distinct character areas, creating a variety of experiences, and supporting diverse uses (including the provision of wildlife habitat);
- d) Ensure that all new City projects, including streetscapes, parks, public works, and public buildings, are of a high standard and serve as a model for development;
- e) Encourage the use of materials and a quality of finish which reinforce the sense that the City is built for beauty and to last;
- f) Design a "kit of parts" to achieve well-designed, coordinated improvements to sidewalks, boulevards, streets, and open spaces, including the expanded use of street furniture and related permanent and temporary features which enhance the amenity and safety of the public realm, while also enhancing local character and identity;
- g) Maintain and upgrade City-owned properties to high standards, and encourage the maintenance and upgrading of other buildings, open spaces, and landscape features that are frequented by the public;



- h) Preserve and enhance views to important public buildings and natural features, particularly the waterfront, the river, and the mountains, along City streets and across publicly accessible open spaces;
- i) Ensure that environmental factors, e.g. sun, shade, precipitation, wind, etc., are addressed by new development to enhance people's enjoyment of the public realm.

**OBJECTIVE 3:**

**Integrate public art across the City to enrich the public realm and strengthen civic pride and community identity.**

**POLICIES:**

- a) Support recognized City strategies, processes, and public art advisory bodies which increase the opportunity for artists and the community to shape the public realm;
- b) Incorporate public art, starting at the planning stages, into the development and renovation of civic infrastructure, buildings, parks, and bridges, and promote a collaboration between the City, artists, design professionals, and the community to implement such projects;
- c) Encourage private sector support of the arts through donation, sponsorship, partnership, and funding, and the collaboration of artists, design professionals, and the community in the design of that art;
- d) Promote strategies aimed at increasing public participation in and an understanding, awareness, and enjoyment of the arts in everyday life.



*Public Art fosters civic pride*

**OBJECTIVE 4:**

**Ensure that the City's physical environment supports its shared use and enjoyment by people with varying needs, capabilities, and abilities.**

**POLICIES:**

- a) Consider and integrate the needs of special groups in the planning and development of the City through development guidelines, standards, and design review;
- b) Work with other levels of government and local agencies to improve the regulation and implementation of land use and environmental improvements affecting citizens with special needs.



*Broad tactile strip on the walkway acts as a visual aid*



## **OBJECTIVE 5:**

**Encourage user-friendly planning, design, and development practices and standards to enhance Richmond's special character and create an excellent built environment.**

## **POLICIES:**

- a) Apply urban design principles to uses circulation, focal points, gateways, edges, massing, views, sunlight/shade, attractions, topography, open spaces, and special features of historic or social significance, to guide the City's planning and development;
- b) Define and coordinate planning areas, neighbourhoods, character areas, and individual sites across the City, based on a solid understanding of relevant urban design and universal accessibility principles and their implications for the built environment;
- c) Establish guidelines for design acceptability across the City and, more specifically, for sites/areas expected to experience significant change or demonstrating historic importance, attractive character, and/or special significance to the growth and definition of local areas and neighbourhoods;
- d) Ensure that guidelines for design acceptability and related mechanisms consider both the details of development and the "fit" with the broader community;
- e) Encourage creative and innovative design solutions, recognizing that such solutions may require exceptions to specific guidelines to accommodate designs of greater quality and sensitivity to Richmond's character;
- f) Implement specific zoning requirements that support the standards for design acceptability embodied in established guidelines, urban design principles, and the objectives of this Plan.