

Part IV

5.0 Key Opportunities

Co-ordinating and maximizing our efforts

5.1 Community Involvement and Programs

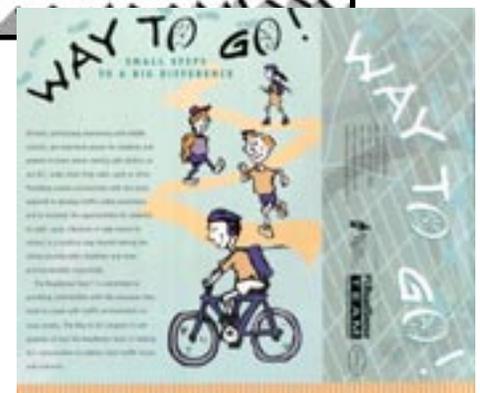
One of Richmond's greatest assets is its citizens and their degree of involvement in many facets of the community. The community has been involved in the planning, implementation and stewardship of trails, as well as educational programs. Examples include the Steveston Greenways Waterfront Community Committee and the Partners for Beautification Program. Numerous initiatives are also underway to create a walkable community and encourage people to walk or cycle as an alternative form of transportation.

Some of the programs or committees involving citizens are sponsored by the City and others have been initiated by outside groups and have the on-going support of the City. Programs include:

Partners for Beautification: Adopt-a-Trail, Walkway or Dyke Program: Initiated by the City in 1998, this program encourages people to maintain and care for Richmond's parks and trail system. Over 22 kilometres of trails have been adopted and over 3,000 people have been involved in the program.

Way to Go! School Program: Sponsored by ICBC and the Autoplan brokers of B.C., the program provides parents, teachers and children with tools to develop traffic safety awareness, and to increase the opportunities for students to walk, cycle, rideshare or take transit to school. The City of Richmond supports the program's annual events, such as iwalk (International Walk to School Day each October) and the "Walking Yellow Wednesday" Challenge (part of Traffic Safety Awareness Week in March) and provides ongoing support of other traffic safety programs/events throughout the year.

Slips, Trips and Falls Committee: This is a partnership between the City of Richmond, Minoru Seniors Society, Richmond Health Services and Richmond Seniors Advisory Council to promote pedestrian safety and, in particular, the health of seniors in the City. The committee has expanded to include representation from the Way to Go! Program and includes staff from a number of departments to ensure co-ordination of the different community programs. A *Slips, Trips and Falls brochure* has been published for the public with contact numbers to inform the City of trip hazards in the community. This feedback channel has been very successful.





Bike Tour 2002



Nature Park group interpretation

Another outcome is the drafting of a *Walkable Richmond Accord* between the City of Richmond, The Richmond School District and the The Richmond Health Services. The purpose is to ensure a coordinated effort between these parties to create a better and safer walking environment in Richmond.

The Richmond Cycling Committee: This committee made up of citizens is an advisory committee to Council that works with City staff to prioritize, plan and design cycling infrastructure projects that have been identified within the 1996 Council-adopted On-Street Cycling Network. These projects are reviewed on an annual basis and then presented to Council for approval. The committee also undertakes various awareness and education initiatives to promote safe cycling such as co-staging with the City an annual bike tour and publishing cycling-related articles in local newspapers.

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Programs: A variety of programs are provided by the Division to ensure that residents and visitors have opportunities to experience and appreciate Richmond's parks and unique environment. The Recreation and Cultural Guide Spring 2003 offered programs for the public such as Steveston Harbour Tour, Stewardship of the Sea Island Conservation Area, Nature Walk in Hamilton, Birding in Richmond-Terra Nova; Island City Bike Tour and South Arm Slough Walking Tour. As the trends indicate, people are increasingly interested in knowing and learning about their community.

Recommendations:

Ongoing

1. Continue to provide opportunities to involve the public in the planning, implementation and stewardship of the trails system.
2. Continue to provide programs that increase the public's awareness of Richmond's unique natural and historical setting.
3. Work closely with other agencies and programs such as the ICBC Way to Go Program to provide educational programs and events that encourage walking and cycling at the neighbourhood and community level.
4. Encourage more community adoptions of local neighbourhood streets, school park sites and walkways as part of the Partners for Beautification Program.

5.2 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Master Plan

The process of developing a Park, Recreation and Cultural Services (PRCS) Master Plan is underway. The Plan is being undertaken in order to provide the City and the PRCS Division with a strategic and operational decision making framework for the next 10 years. The Plan will, amongst other things, review the Division's core services, inventory the assets, and establish priorities and standards for actions. It is intended that the 2010 Trails Strategy be included in this Master Plan. The guidelines and recommendations established for trails, as one type of public open space, will also be relevant for other public spaces.

Recommendations:

Short Term

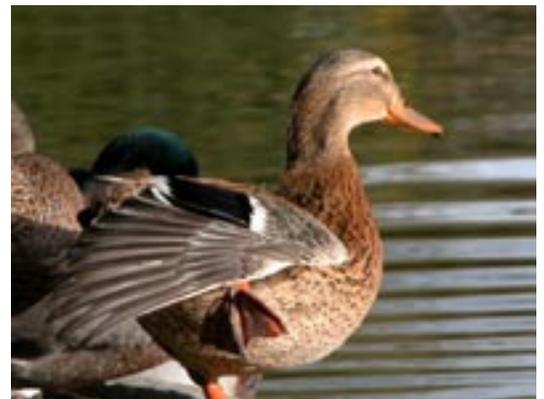
1. Integrate the Trail Strategy into the overall PRCS Master Plan.
2. Identify trails together with natural areas, formal parks, undeveloped rights-of-ways, vacant lands, Privately-owned/ Publicly-Accessible Open Space (POPA) and street boulevards as part of an overall open space network for the City in the PRCS Master Plan.
3. Include in the PRCS Master Plan a new standard for constructing pathways within all City parks to encourage walking in neighbourhoods.

Ongoing

4. Coordinate the implementation and phasing of trail development with the other priorities identified within the PRCS Master Plan for the 10 Year Capital Budget Program.



Construct pathways in parks to connect neighbourhoods



Natural areas



Formal parks

All of these components are part of an overall open space network...



Trails linking historic sites



Interpreting the working Fraser River



Eco-tourism

5.3 Heritage and Natural History Destinations and Interpretation

The trail system is an excellent venue to provide both heritage and natural history interpretation. Eco-tourism and heritage tourism have been identified as trends that will continue to increase in popularity in the future. The popularity of Steveston Village and its surroundings and events such as the Tall Ships are proof of the success of heritage tourism.

As the thread that connects many historical destinations and provides access to the City's natural assets such as the river and foreshore, the trails play an important role in attracting and directing people to these destinations. Ensuring that people can actually find these destinations in an easy manner that encourages visitation is critical to their success. Directional signage, maps on the trails, the City website, walking brochures and the trails brochure are all media which help provide information about key destinations.

Interpretation along the trails is also important. The goal of interpretation is to stimulate and engage the visitor. It can add an educational aspect to the recreational experience of the trails. Heritage and natural interpretation can reveal connections between the past and the present, promote understanding of what we have and the value of preserving it and be a source of community pride.

Recommendations

Short Term

1. Update the City Website with current trail and key destinations information including a 'virtual tour' of the trails and interesting heritage and natural amenities.
2. Consider including interpretation signage as part of the memorial or living Gift Program. This will provide an alternative option for families wishing to buy memorial benches in popular areas.

Medium Term

3. Establish a coordinated City-wide directional/way finding system for heritage sites, trail routes, parks, points of interest and other community facilities that will ensure visitors can find the sites in a easy and efficient manner.
4. Develop a comprehensive outdoor heritage and natural history interpretation and signage plan.
5. Construct information and message kiosks along the popular trails for community messages and listings of events or programs that may be occurring at heritage and other community venues during the year.

Ongoing

6. Consider opportunities for creative interpretation, a marrying of public art and interpretation, as an alternative where appropriate to traditional signage.

5.4 Public Art

Trails act as connectors and meeting places for the community. They provide an opportunity to interact with people of varying backgrounds and experiences. When residents are encouraged to be involved in community projects, like trail making, they feel more connected to the community and have a sense of community ownership.

Public art can help to define City and neighbourhood trails, and community image making (e.g. street signs, banners, murals, road markings, fences, gates, drinking fountains, benches, bulletin boards, etc.).

For instances:

- Public art can define neighbourhood boundaries.
- Public art can identify streets, pedestrian ways and people places.
- Public art can build community identity and character.
- Public art can tell community stories.

The public art projects that involve community residents and businesses in their making, be it to identify a route, a trail, place or destination, are the most successful and in the end tend to be low maintenance and vandal free due to the sense of local pride.

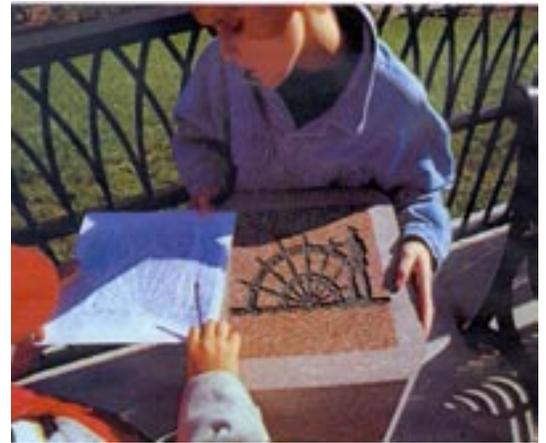
Recommendations:

Short Term

1. Establish a list of potential public art projects for implementation along the trails.

Ongoing

2. Use public art where appropriate to identify City-wide and community trails and routes.
3. Promote collaboration between the City, community and artists to create public art projects that provide community identity to public places and trails.
4. Consider and use effectively public art as a tool to create community themes, image making, symbolism and storytelling along the trail system.



Outdoor classrooms - rubbings from concrete tile



Fishermen's Memorial - The Net Mending Needle



Maritime theme signage posts are functional and playful



The rural landscape experience



Ensuring the viability of agriculture

5.5 Agriculture and Recreation Interface

Agriculture is an important part of Richmond's economy and a major land use in the City, with 38% of the total land base within Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). As trails become a more integral part of city transportation systems and recreation systems, it is inevitable that trails will be travelling through or along the edge of lands in the ALR in Richmond. People appreciate the *rural* experience: large open green spaces, the quieter and slower pace; the seasonal changes in the landscape (e.g. bright orange pumpkins, the red cranberry fields and the opportunity to buy locally grown produce).

Understandably there are numerous concerns in the farming community of bringing people into a 'working landscape'. Issues such as vandalism, dumping, trespassing, uncontrolled animals such as horses and dogs and a lack of understanding of the necessary working aspects of the farm (e.g. spraying of crops, large and expensive equipment are all issues identified by farmers).

The City is working with the farming community to implement an Agricultural Viability Strategy. Within that strategy is a discussion about parks and recreational uses in the ALR with a series of detailed recommendations.

The City is committed to ensuring the viability of agriculture while recognizing the pressures that the farming community is experiencing. A well designed and maintained trail system may be made compatible with farming. The focus should also include opportunities for education and increased public appreciation of the contributions that the agricultural sector make to the community.

Recommendations:

1. Address the recommendations outlined within the final approved Agricultural Viability Strategy, as appropriate, and use as a guide to plan and design trails within the ALR.
2. Consult with the proposed Agricultural Advisory Committee as outlined in the Agricultural Viability Strategy and those impacted when locating and designing the trails in the ALR.

5.6 Surface Water Management / Eco-Corridors

One of the main goals in the Vision is to link people to nature, nature to the city and to link nature to nature. Many of the existing and proposed trails travel through designated environmentally sensitive areas that often provide interesting and attractive scenery for the trail users. These areas are also unique habitats and eco-systems for wildlife and plant colonies.

Trails by their nature are linear corridors and, thereby, provide an unique opportunity to be developed not only as recreational corridors but also as important eco-corridors (corridors that allow for movement of birds and animals) through the City. In addition, trail linkages may be made in the future across the water to other islands such as Don and Lion and Shady Island. Animals already are using these connections (deer swim across from Don Island and Lion Island) therefore, as with other environmentally sensitive areas, a balance needs to be struck between public access and conservation.

One of the key principles of the Environmental Management Strategy is:

❑ *Respecting ecological integrity*

Protect and enhance Richmond's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life.

This principle should also be included in the planning, planting and construction of trails. The role may be to protect an existing eco-system or it may be the creation or enhancement of a degraded or lost habitat.

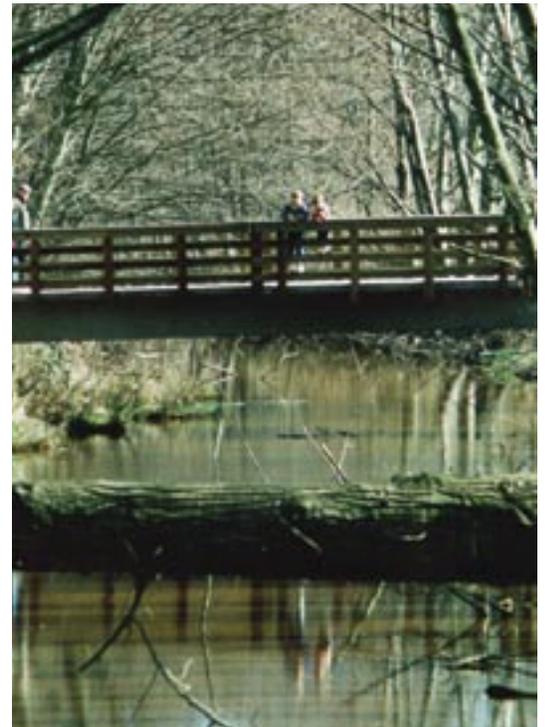
There are a number of interesting opportunities to create new eco-corridors that penetrate into core of the city. These could include utilizing and enhancing:

- undeveloped road right-of-ways
- storm drainage right-of-ways
- utility and transportation right-of-ways, and
- creating wider landscaped boulevards in new subdivisions in addition to the traditional park space

The recent attention from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans on the open ditches and canals in Richmond can also be viewed as an opportunity to re-evaluate the value of keeping open waterways. Not only are these water ways part of the Island's vernacular landscape, they provide an important source of irrigation water for agriculture, environmental benefits, are visually interesting and have the potential to add to the recreational experience.



Waterways and recreational corridors



Horseshoe Slough - eco-corridor and drainage canal

Finding the balance...



Connecting to the Nature Park



"Island of Bridges" concept



Deer in East Richmond

Recognizing fully that the efficient movement of water and the prevention of flooding is a priority for the safety of the island and residents, there may still be opportunities for creative solutions that allow for maintaining an open canal while ensuring safe storm water management and maintenance. One potential corridor for this treatment may be the proposed Shell Road Greenway, a major north-south connector that connects many environmental areas and has an existing open canal.

Recommendations:

(Guiding Principles have been outlined under 3.1.3 Nature Links)

Short Term

1. Work with the Public Works and Engineering Departments and Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to identify key sloughs and open waterways that could potentially be revitalized as Richmond's credit towards Fisheries Habitat Compensation for closure of other ditches in the City. Consider the potential of Shell Road Canal as a waterway to be enhanced.
2. Consider promoting Richmond as the "Island of Bridges". There are the major bridges in and out of Richmond and many small bridges accessing private property as well as public property. These bridges could be designed in a fun architectural manner that would add to Richmond's landscape.

Medium Term

3. Build upon the uniqueness of Richmond's landscape that includes small ditches and larger open canals and promote the aesthetic, recreational and environmental benefits of keeping and enhancing these open waterways while ensuring the proper storm water management.
4. Identify and map undeveloped right-of-ways and their potential links to the trails network. Negotiate with the appropriate agencies or departments to maximize trail and eco-corridor opportunities throughout the City. Examples are Ministry of Transportation and Highways (MoTH) lands east of the Oak Street Bridge, rail right-of-ways and city road right-of-ways.

Ongoing

5. Continue with the Natural Area acquisition plan.
6. Working with the new Environmentally Sensitive Area Inventory, determine the habitat and wildlife sensitivity along the trails system to ensure the right balance between public access and protection.
7. Plan and construct new trails in environmentally sensitive areas that respond appropriately to the habitat features and their ecological function.

5.7 Waterfront Development Strategy / Blueways Program

The development of a Waterfront Development Strategy for the City of Richmond will be a unique opportunity for the City to celebrate its location within the Lower Mainland. As waterfront access has become increasingly sought after around the world and many urban centres are developing strategies to maximize this resource, Richmond is in an enviable position as a series of islands surrounded by water. A well planned and developed waterfront can be the catalyst for economic growth, improved quality of life, community vibrancy, heritage preservation and environmental enhancement.

As the most visible and popular trails are along the waterfront in Richmond, the programming and detailed design of these trails will need to evolve and respond to the guidelines, policies and land use decisions made within the overall Waterfront Development Strategy, the OCP and other potential strategies.

In addition, the programming of the waterways will determine some of the upland infrastructure needed to support these programs or amenities.

Blueways is one component that will be looked at as part of the overall Waterfront Development Strategy. Included in a Blueways Program could be:

- special events on the water
- eco-tours on the river
- recreational activities like rowing and sailing
- water safety programs
- fishing and observation piers/boardwalks/public docks
- interpretation of the working river and marine life
- boat launches
- commercial facilities such as marinas, floating restaurants, floating Bed and Breakfasts
- floating home communities
- water transportation (aqua buses) between destinations along the river and within the City as well as across the river to other municipalities
- visitor centers for water based visitors

The City through the Strategy will need to determine its role in either:

- providing and operating these facilities and amenities
- providing facilities and partnering with the private sector
- and/or facilitating the opportunity for the private sector to build and operate the facilities and programs.

Opportunities abound and it is recognized that the trail system will need to be flexible and able to respond to these opportunities as they arise.



Getting people out and over the water



Integrating water and upland uses



Recreational programs

'Blueways' is a term similar to greenways that often has slightly different meanings attached to it. In some cases, it includes everything on the upland waterfront edge including trails as well as on the water itself e.g. marinas. For purposes of this Trails Strategy blueways will refer predominately to activities and programs that promote people getting out over the water e.g. piers or kayaking.



Opening up new waterfront connections



Access to the water



Water safety programs

Recommendations:

Short Term

1. Coordinate with the Waterfront Development Strategic Committee and the Strategy as it develops.
2. Coordinate trail planning and development along the waterfront with the Master Plans being developed for the 10 Character Zones identified in the Waterfront Strategy.

Ongoing

3. Adopt the Blueways Links principles of:
 - a. maximizing the accessibility to waterfronts
 - b. ensuring an integration of Visions for land and water uses
 - c. respecting the environmental sensitivity of the foreshore and waterways
 - d. promoting water safety.



Responding to different uses along the waterfront



Respecting environmentally sensitive areas

5.8 Promoting and Marketing Trails

The purpose of promoting the trails system is to encourage active living, enjoyment and appreciation of Richmond's unique natural environment and to increase the awareness of Richmond's many assets such as cycling routes, heritage sites, parks and community facilities.

To facilitate this the City produces a Trails Brochure; a map and program section titled 'Nature and Parks' in the Recreation and Cultural Services Guide; the On-Street Cycling Network Plan; and information on the City website.

Both the local community and visitors to the community have been the main target groups for the brochure. Distribution of these brochures has been to community centres, City Hall, the main Library and Cultural Centre and Richmond Centre.

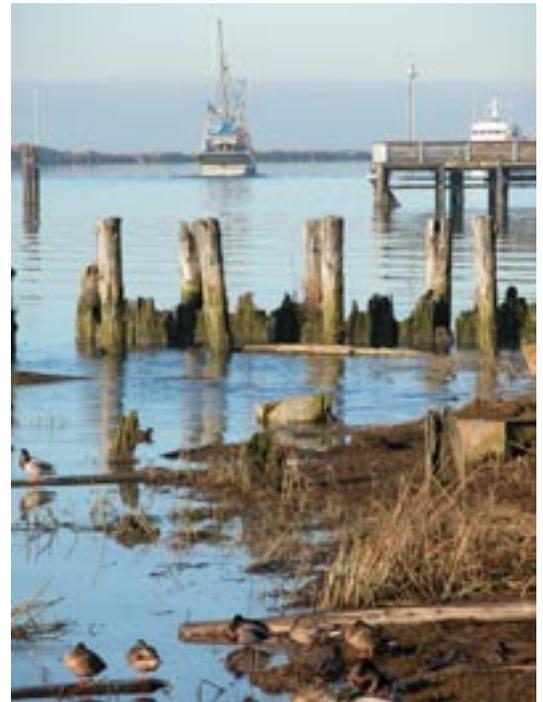
Tourism Richmond carries the City brochures for outside visitors as well as promotes the dyke trails and other recreation and cultural amenities in their website and guide. Visitors can also pick up the brochure in tourist oriented centres such as the Gulf of Georgia and Britannia Heritage Shipyard.

The city-wide dyke trail image is very strong one and is used by the private industry, such as the real estate industry, to market the high quality of life that the City of Richmond provides to its citizens. The City at this time does not actively market the trails with the goal of bringing business or tourist dollars to the City. The Parks, Recreation and Cultural (PRC) Division will be reviewing the whole concept of marketing and promoting of all its services as part of the PRC Master Plan

As mentioned previously, the major leisure trends of eco-tourism and heritage tourism have the potential to generate economic benefits to the local communities. The City will have to determine its role in promoting and/or operating facilities and programs to support these trends. Trails can be a destination in themselves and could be promoted as part of eco-tourism or be promoted as a way to reach other key destinations.

Some of the key assets of the trails system that could be promoted are the:

- panoramic views from the dyke trails and easy access to viewing points
- variety of views to the airport, the mountains, the river, the marsh lands, the commercial fishing port and more
- nature viewing opportunities
- links to interesting historic sites
- longest accessible heritage waterfront in Canada
- flatness of the terrain and the ease of access for all ages and abilities
- easy access from within the Lower Mainland



It's all here: heritage, the working river, and nature



Knowing what the users want



Promoting eco-tourism



Promoting ease of access on Richmond's flat terrain

- quick taxi ride from the airport
- tranquility of the rustic and rural experiences while within easy reach of urban amenities such as shopping and restaurants.

As part of the Richmond Needs Assessment, public input was given about the quality of our trails and parks. However, an on-site survey about customer satisfaction and priorities has not been conducted since the West Dyke Garry Point User Survey in 1991 and the 1995 Steveston Waterfront Greenways Study.

Neighbourhood links are a major factor in creating a more walkable community. Working with neighbourhood residents to identify and develop routes, and then promoting them, is also an important component of the overall strategy.

Recommendations:

Short Term

1. Update the trails information, maps and imagery on the City Web-site including a virtual walking tour of the trails system.
2. Conduct surveys or other feedback measures to determine the priorities and type of information to be included in the Trails brochure and on the City website.
3. Work with the Richmond Committee on Disability to promote the advantages of Richmond's flat topography.
4. Continue to work and coordinate with other agencies and City departments that are also promoting walking and cycling e.g. Slips, Spills, and Falls Committee, Cycling Advisory Committee.

Medium Term

5. Construct community and city message boards along the popular trails to inform and promote special events and programs occurring at different venues during the year.
6. Co-ordinate with other initiatives on the promotion and marketing of the City's services including branding and sponsorship.
7. Review the City's role in promoting eco-tourism and heritage tourism and how the trails can support this growing area.

Long Term

8. Publish local neighbourhood walking and cycling maps once neighbourhood routes have been identified.



90,000 Recreation and Cultural Services Guides are distributed throughout the community.