

1.0 Moving Towards a Sustainable Community



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1.1 A New Plan for the Future—2041

An Official Community Plan (OCP) is a City’s statement of its long-term future community planning vision by describing the kind of community into which the City wishes to evolve. As a legal document under the Local Government Act, the OCP provides the City with one of its most powerful tools for bringing its vision to reality. The City of Richmond adopted its first OCP in 1986, updated it in 1999 and is now updating it to take the City to 2041. Updates follow about every ten years to guide land development and align with the region’s plans and respond to current issues.

Globally, regionally and locally, the next 30 years will be marked by a range of challenges such as the impacts of climate change, environmental quality, energy reduction, food insecurity and an aging population. The City, through adoption of a 2010 Sustainability Framework, began to chart a course to move towards being more resilient and adaptable in the face of these challenges. The Sustainability Framework helps the City imagine and design a better future. This OCP Update is guided by the following Vision of a Sustainable Richmond:

“A sustainable and healthy island city that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is a place where people live, work, and prosper in a welcoming, connected, accessible and vibrant community. In Richmond, the health of the people and the health of the eco-system are sustained through community participation and long-term economic, social and environmental well-being.”

“The community planning decisions which municipalities make have as much or more of an impact on the health of people than the decisions which doctors and hospitals make”. These decisions include providing opportunities for affordable housing, child care, recreation, parks, trails, densification, walkability, access to nature and healthy lifestyles.”

Dr. Patrick O’Connor, Vice President, Medicine, Quality, and Safety, Vancouver Coastal Health, June 2012.



The 2041 OCP provides an opportunity to better address these challenges and work towards becoming a more adaptable and resilient City. The issue is how we can build on the strengths that have shaped Richmond and what we need to change, to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world.

This 2041 OCP establishes a broad 2041 vision, supporting goals, objectives, policies and new directions respecting land use, mobility, infrastructure, an ecological network and parks and open spaces. The City continues to place an emphasis on improving the health of neighbourhoods, building a vibrant downtown, fostering a resilient economy and a healthy business climate, addressing recreational needs, enhancing social development, preserving environmental quality and promoting the arts, culture and heritage.

This new OCP strives to continue to develop the City as a great place, and a greener, more resilient, connected and healthy City.



1.2 The Planning Process

Community Engagement

In June 2009, Council directed that the 1999 Official Community Plan be updated to 2041 and approved a range of OCP background studies (e.g., 2041 population and employment estimates, employment lands, social planning, parks and open space, and environmentally sensitive area management strategies). The OCP Update has been made possible by the extensive participation of residents, business owners, stakeholders (e.g., Richmond School Board, YVR, Port Metro Vancouver, Metro Vancouver, Urban Development Institute) community groups and the City's advisory committees. The process involved three major rounds of community consultation beginning in November 2009 with over 30 public open houses over the 2 ½ year period, City-wide surveys and online discussion forums.



As well, separate community consultation processes were undertaken for the:

- 10 Year Social Development Strategy (twelve meetings with stakeholder and advisory committee groups, one online discussion forum and four study circles (Cantonese, Mandarin, recent immigrants and the general public);
- Parks and Open Space Strategy (seven focus groups).

Several hundred visitors came to the online discussion forum site with over 91,000 site visits and many comments posted.

Recurring Themes and Messages

Certain themes emerged:

- provide more housing choices to facilitate better aging in place, complete neighbourhoods and affordable housing;
- undertake neighbourhood shopping centre densification planning;
- retain industrial lands and encourage office uses in the City Centre;
- improve streets and connectivity in neighbourhoods;
- provide more parks and open space;
- retain agricultural lands;
- improve transportation, transit service, and expand the cycling network across the City;
- have more walkable and accessible neighbourhoods;
- improve the ecological network and its services;
- improve opportunities to access the shoreline.

Also, residents say that they are willing to consume and waste less, use their cars less and make energy and other environment improvements in their homes and offices.



OCP Update Concept

In April 2011, Council endorsed a 2041 OCP Concept based on the above public input, the findings of the OCP studies, City priorities, and sustainability principles. The 2041 OCP is based on the OCP Concept.



Richmond Town Centre, 1907. Credit: City of Richmond Archives Photo 1977 918.

1.3 Context

Richmond Past and Present

The City was incorporated as a municipality in November 1879 and was designated as a City in 1990. Richmond's history is rooted in fishing, agriculture, shipping, and aviation. Composed of 17 islands, the Fraser River has always shaped the City's growth. The Coast Salish bands were known to set up temporary camps and year long dwellings on all of the islands for fishing and hunting.

Richmond was, and is, the centre of aviation in British Columbia. In 1949, the First Comprehensive Town Plan was created by bylaw which divided Richmond into districts to direct development and parkland. Residential, commercial, industrial and rural land use regulations were established.

In 1950, Richmond was still considered a small community until the subdivision of land began. Suburban development in the 1950s is an important component of Richmond's evolution. After the war, people were drawn to Richmond because it offered an abundance of land at lower prices compared to Vancouver, but in close proximity along the interurban tram that ran from Vancouver to Steveston.

Richmond has grown and changed dramatically over the past 50 years, especially now with the Canada Line in the City Centre and 2010 Olympic Winter Speedskating Oval which is now a world class athletic, sports training and community recreation centre. Today, the City Centre is a mixed use community poised to become a major regional hub. The City continues to attract migration from many countries and recent immigration has been most notably from China. The City's cultural diversity has enriched the community and made Richmond an exciting place to live.



A Regional View

The City of Richmond is the fourth largest City in Metro Vancouver (MV) and a member municipality of the wider 22 member Metro Vancouver Region. A new Regional Growth Strategy, *“Metro Vancouver 2040 - Shaping Our Future”*, adopted by the MV Board in July 2011 is a framework to manage future development where the region will grow from 1.2 million to 3.4 million by 2040. It is a shared commitment by Metro Vancouver and member municipalities to work together to create a livable and sustainable region through the achievement of common regional goals.

The City and Metro Vancouver are committed to working in partnership to achieve the following shared goals:

- creating compact communities and directing growth to areas already designated for urban development;
- creating complete communities that are more walkable, mixed use and transit-oriented to reduce automobile use;
- supporting a sustainable economy by protecting and supporting employment lands (e.g., industrial);
- protecting agricultural, recreational and conservation lands that provide valuable ecosystem services;
- encouraging land use and public infrastructure capacity improvements of the built and natural environments to protect the environment and withstand climate change impacts;
- supporting sustainable transportation choices that reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality and promote walkability, bicycling, rolling (wheelchairs, scooters) and transit.

A more detailed description of how the City’s OCP policies support and relate to the Regional Growth Strategy is provided in Chapter 15—Regional Context Statement.



1.4 2041 OCP Vision

In 2041, Richmond has become a more sustainable City—a place of great spaces and experiences, whose greatest assets include its thriving downtown, diversified economy, healthy, distinct and connected neighbourhoods, its island shoreline, open spaces, and protected and productive agricultural lands. Richmond has adaptable and prosperous businesses that enrich people, the community, the natural environment, the world and future generations.



Richmond is a place where people:

- earn a living where they reside and participate in the global economy through an exchange of knowledge, entrepreneurship and trade;
- feel connected to their physical surroundings, the people around them, and their community;
- are active and healthy;
- respect, honour and celebrate the diversity in their community;
- feel connected to the past, celebrate the present and anticipate the future with enthusiasm.

Richmond has become more energy efficient and is responding to the challenges of climate change, in partnership with other levels of government, its citizens and its businesses.



Goals

1. Welcoming and Diverse

The City is inclusive and designed to support the needs of a diverse and changing population.

2. Connected and Accessible

People are connected to and interact with each other. Places, buildings, and activities are connected and easily accessed by everyone. Decisions with respect to housing, business development, parks, recreation, transportation and community access, including street design (the public realm) and repair will be made with public consultation.

3. Valued for its Special Places

The City has a variety of places—big and small—in all neighbourhoods where residents and visitors will be drawn—for their vibrancy and natural beauty.

4. Adaptable

The City, residents and businesses have the ability to respond creatively to change. They build upon what already exists and upon experiences from both within and outside the community. In partnerships, they respond to the challenges of changing demographics, culture, technology and climate.



1.5 Key Issues to Address in Planning for the Future

Below are some of the key issues that the 2041 OCP seeks to address.

Future Population Growth and Housing Demand

The City will grow by 80,000 people by 2041 and approximately 42,000 new housing units will be needed. The additional population will need to be accommodated within a limited land base so as not to impact the City's farmland or employment lands. While the City will be able to accommodate much of the growth through existing plans and policies, (e.g., West Cambie and the City Centre Area Plans), it will need to find ways to increase housing capacity for a portion of this growth. Much of the housing needed will be in the form of townhouses, anticipated apartments in densified shopping centres and to some extent coach houses and granny flats in areas outside the City Centre.

Aging Population and Changing Demographics

The number of people over age 65 will substantially increase by 2041. They will represent 26% of the population in 2041 compared to 14% in 2011. The over 75 age group will represent 15% of the population in 2041 compared to 6% in 2011. Some will be active and healthy and others will be frail and will have health problems associated with advancing age. This will have implications for providing services or special programs to these age groups in the community. Some will want to "age in place"—that is, remain living safely in their own community despite declining abilities and enjoy the familiar social, cultural and spiritual connections that enrich their lives. The challenge will be to find ways to develop suitable housing choices and more accessible services (easy access by walking, rolling, transit) to allow them to "age in place" and meet their shifting mobility needs.

Community Well-Being

Richmond is one of the most multicultural cities in Canada and the change in demographics has taken place quite recently. Richmond has a large and growing diverse population with more than 65% of the City's residents being visible minorities and of different ethnic backgrounds, which makes the City a vibrant and culturally diverse place to be. The City will need to continue to bring these diverse people together in meaningful ways and to better integrate them into all aspects of City recreation and social programs. Immigrants and newcomers will be welcomed.





Placemaking

Richmond has access to nature, open spaces and a quality of life often associated with smaller communities; however, with development, change is occurring perhaps at a faster pace than some residents would like. The challenge will be to create new pleasant, enjoyable and memorable places, while embracing older special character areas through urban design, heritage conservation and animation of the public realm.

Economic Uncertainty and A Levelling Off Of Boom Bust Cycles

To address economic uncertainty and boom bust cycles, Richmond will need to: maintain a diversified economy through a favourable business climate, support global industries that provide high paying jobs, support the financial well being of the City's population by enabling them to work where they live and through careful planning, not re-designating Richmond's needed employment lands for residential development.

Economic uncertainty and "boon-bust" cycle challenges indicate a need to:

- maintain a diversified economy through a favourable regional and city business climate;
- support global business and industries that provide high paying jobs;
- maintain the financial well being of the population and residents who work where they live;
- protect employment lands (e.g., industrial, office, retail, institutional).

Food Security

Like most urban communities, Richmond imports the vast majority of its food, creating concerns for the stability of the food supply in the face of rising energy costs and climate change. As nearly 39% of Richmond's land base is protected agricultural land, the potential exists for this valuable asset to help meet local food security needs. There is also a demand for community garden space for those who lack access to land.

Accessibility

"Accessibility" means the ability to approach, enter, use and/or occupy buildings and spaces by persons with physical or sensory disabilities". Richmond is recognized as leader in accessibility, is one of Canada's most accessible cities and wishes to build on these achievements. The City enjoys its effective working relationship with the Richmond Centre on Disability,



seniors and other community stakeholders. In 2041, the average age of the population will be older and there will be more people with accessibility limitations (e.g., physical, mobility, hearing, seeing, mental challenges). Many want the option of aging in place, rather than having to leave the community as many grew up here. Older residents, visitors and tourists and those with limitations make significant social and economic contributions to the community as they have valuable social, life and job knowledge and skills. They also have a significant positive effect on the local economy and businesses. To address these needs, the OCP aims to make the City even more accessible, for example, by requiring accessibility measures in neighbourhoods as shopping centres densify; in new residential, commercial and institutional buildings; along streets, sidewalks and trails; in parks, parking lots and bus shelters, and through building design. As accessibility needs and solutions evolve, one initiative which the City proposes is to continue working with the Richmond Centre on Disability (RCD), seniors, the community, Urban Development Institute (UDI) and Richmond small home builders group, to increase housing accessibility (e.g., accessible housing, adaptable housing, convertible housing, housing visitability, and aging in place and barrier free housing). The study is to be completed within one year of OCP approval.

Social Issues

There is a range of social issues to address including vulnerable population groups which will place demands on services and programs. The high and rising cost of living which includes significant increases in housing prices will contribute to economic hardship for some. For a large percentage of residents, renting or owning an affordable home is a problem because of employment challenges, fixed income or those whose wages have not kept up with the increase in the cost of living. There are long waitlists for supportive and subsidized rental units for families, seniors, people with disabilities and low-income singles of all ages. The challenge will be to find ways to ensure that the City has adequate and affordable housing to meet the full range of income and needs.

Climate Change and a Large Environmental Footprint

The earth’s climate is changing. Increasing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are causing a rapid rise in global temperatures and the effects will be felt both now and into the future. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC’s) Sixth Assessment Report, published in 2021, states that ‘human-induced climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe.’ The report also states that global warming will exceed the 1.5°C target set in the 2015 Paris Agreement ‘unless deep reductions in carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming decades.’

A fundamental challenge for Richmond and all communities will be to reduce GHG emissions even with a growing population and an expanding economy, while ensuring the City adapts to the anticipated impacts of climate change. Richmond will not only need to mitigate climate change by rapidly reducing GHG emissions from both buildings and in transportation, but also help shift the local consumption of goods and services towards a ‘circular economy’ model, while greatly increasing the extraction of GHGs directly from the atmosphere. At the same time, Richmond will also need to adapt to the local impacts of global warming, including managing the impacts of sea level rise, storm events, and rising temperatures as well as the local repercussions of climate change impacts occurring elsewhere.

Bylaw 10328
2022/03/21



Financial Challenges

With increasing demands for services, social programs, affordable housing, and maintenance costs to the City's infrastructure, more funding options will need to be explored (e.g., with senior governments to develop more funding sources, ideally without raising taxes).



1.6 Planning Directions

In the City Centre:

- direct most growth to high density mixed use urban villages;
- support development and re-development with transit options including biking, rolling and walking above automobiles;
- build a mix of large and small urban parks to provide diverse environments and year round activities;
- evolve an urban landscape that encourages and enables physical activity and social connections in everyday living.

Outside the City Centre:

- in the inner core of neighbourhood centres, encourage a mix of low to medium density uses and a diversity of ground-oriented residential housing choices;
- in the outer core of neighbourhood centres and along arterial roads, encourage new compact, walkable neighbourhoods;
- support intensified employment lands including industrial and commercial employment;
- enhance the existing parks and continue to develop the City-wide trail system;
- improve the transportation network with an emphasis on walking, rolling, cycling and transit;
- work towards agricultural viability with lands (farmland intact and productive);
- protect the City's Ecological Network and environmentally sensitive lands.

The 2041 OCP sets out the broad objectives and policies. Each chapter supports the sustainability theme. The ongoing efforts of many jurisdictions including those of senior government, the region, businesses and the community will be needed to move towards a more sustainable community.



1.7 Richmond Demographics and Changes to 2041

2041 Population Estimates

Since 1967, the City's population growth has averaged 2.7% per year. Currently, there are 200,000 residents in Richmond.

- Richmond will grow by 80,000 people by 2041. More population growth will occur in the City Centre (61%) than in the rest of Richmond. The City Centre will double its population by 2041 and increase its share of the City's population from 25% in 2011 to 36% in 2041.

2011-2041 Richmond Population Growth

Where	Existing 2011	2011-2041 30 Years	Future 2041
City Centre	50,000	+50,000	100,000
Outside City Centre	150,000	+30,000	180,000
Entire City	200,000	+80,000	280,000

Source: Urban Futures

2041 Housing Estimates

Currently, there are estimated to be 73,000 dwelling units in Richmond.

The City Center will add the most housing between 2011 and 2041, approximately 55% of future housing growth; Central Richmond (e.g., Thompson, Seafair, Blundell, Broadmoor, and the residential portion of Shellmont: 25%) and North Richmond: 10%.

- Much of the new housing growth in the area outside of the City Centre will be accommodated primarily by densifying housing options along arterial roads or around neighbourhood shopping centres.



2011-2041 Richmond Housing Projections

Where	Existing 2011	2011-2041 30 Years	Future 2041
City Centre	24,000	+23,000	47,000
Outside City Centre	49,000	+19,000	68,000
Entire City	73,000	+42,000	115,000

Source: *Urban Futures*

2041 Housing Types

- 75% of the City's new apartment development will occur in the City Centre, with 10% in North Richmond (e.g., Alexandra neighbourhood) and 5% in Central Richmond around the neighbourhood shopping centres.
- 50% of the new ground oriented housing (GOH) is projected to occur in the City's predominantly residential area of Central Richmond (e.g., Thompson, Seafair, Blundell, Broadmoor and the residential portion of Shellmont), while 30% will occur in the City Centre, 10% in Hamilton and 8% in North Richmond (Alexandra Neighbourhood).
- Steveston's share of net additional housing units (both apartment and ground oriented) on a City-wide basis is projected to be modest because of the constraints on available and developable land.

2011-2041 Richmond Housing Types

Where	2011 Estimate			Change Between 2011 and 2041			2041 Projection		
	GOH	Apt	Total	GOH	Apt	Total	GOH	Apt	Total
City Centre	7,200	16,800	24,000	+ 4,800	+18,200	+23,000	12,000	35,000	47,000
Outside City Centre	41,000	8,000	49,000	+13,000	+ 6,000	+19,000	54,000	14,000	68,000
TOTAL	48,200	24,800	73,000	+17,800	+24,200	+42,000	66,000	49,000	115,000

Source: *Urban Futures*

Ground Oriented Housing: Includes single detached houses, duplexes, townhouses, row houses and other forms of housing that have their own private entrance and access to a private outdoor area at the ground level (not necessarily on the ground—can use stairs), secondary suites, coach houses and granny flats.

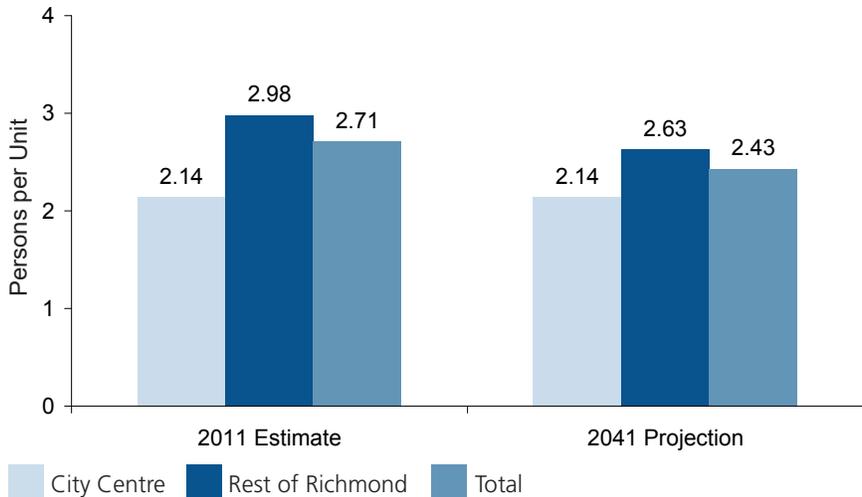
Apartment Housing: Housing which does not have its own private entrance (i.e., is accessed from a common indoor corridor) or access to a private outdoor area at the ground level and includes buildings 4 or less storeys (low-rise), 5 to 8 storeys (mid-rise) and 9 or more storeys (high-rise).



2041 Average Household Size

- The total number of households will increase, which means that more housing units will be needed, but average household size will decrease, which means there will be a demand for smaller housing units.
- Household sizes are decreasing outside of the City Center and in Richmond as a whole because of the aging population, the trend towards more multiple family housing forms and an increase in the prevalence of a secondary suite in most new single family homes.

Average Household Size in Richmond



Source: *Urban Futures*

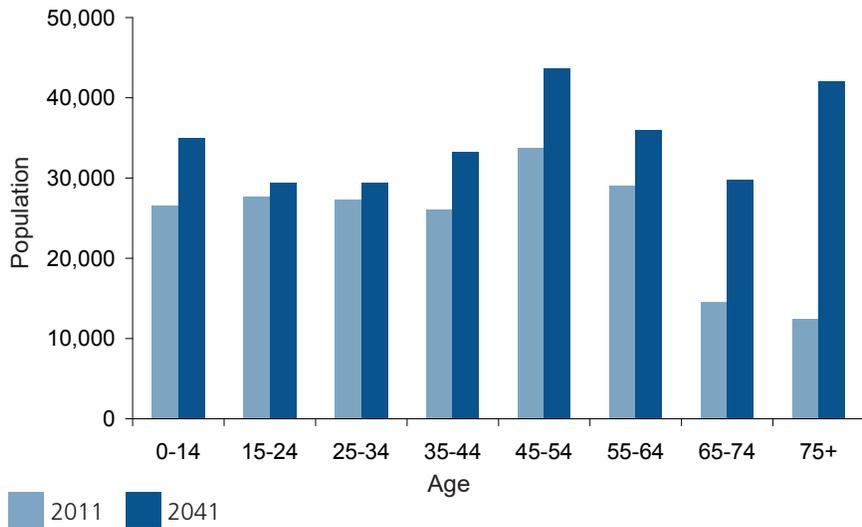
- The average size of households which dropped in the last few decades will drop even more, so that demand for less costly, smaller housing will continue.

2041 Age Distribution

- The +65 age groups are projected to grow faster than average, while all of the under 65 year age groups are projected to grow slower than average. The most significant change in absolute numbers is the growth in the numbers of two age groups:
 - +65-74—15,000 more people in 2041, which represents a 100% change from the 14,500 in 2011;
 - +75—30,000 more people from 12,500 people in 2011, which represents a 240% change;
 - the number of people in the 15-34 age groups will stay relatively the same.
- The increase in those over the age of 65 will bring a growing demand for housing forms that support aging in place. With a growing aging population, the number of persons with special access needs can be expected to increase and the needs for accessible, supportive, and specialized housing will increase accordingly. Proportionally, only older age groups will increase, but the actual number of people in all age groups will increase.



Population by Age in Richmond



Source: Urban Futures

Employment

Currently, 140,000 people are employed in Richmond with one of the highest jobs to labour forces ratios of 1.25 in the region.

- By 2041, there will be approximately 40,000 new jobs in Richmond.
- The main areas of the City where these jobs will locate will be the City Centre, Sea Island (YVR) and North Richmond.
- The City Centre will accommodate the greatest absolute increase in employment between 2011 and 2041, reinforcing its status as the central employment hub in Richmond.

2011-2041 Richmond Employment

Where	Existing 2011	2011-2041 30 Years	Future 2041
City Centre	42,000	+18,000	60,000
Outside City Centre	98,000	+22,000	120,000
Entire City	140,000	+40,000	180,000

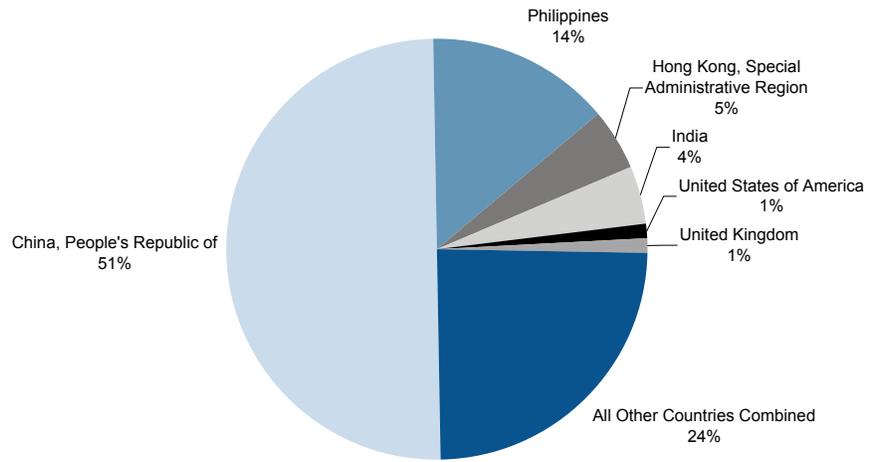
Source: Urban Futures

Cultural Diversity

- Visible minorities are now the majority in Richmond where 65% of the population is a visible minority. This is the highest proportion of any municipality in BC and the second highest in Canada. The predominant minority group is Chinese, at 45% of the total population (the highest proportion in Canada by a wide margin).
- Since 1991, the overall proportion of immigrant residents has been increasing. As of May 2006, 41% of Richmond residents were Canadian by birth, and over 57.4% were immigrants.



Countries of Origin for Recent Immigrants to Richmond 2001-2006 (2006 Census)



Source: Statistics Canada

