

City of Richmond

BUILDING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (2025–2035)

PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

Community Social Development Department





What is the Social Development Strategy

The Social Development Strategy is a 10-year plan that helps Richmond prepare for the future while also meeting the current social needs in the community. The goal of the Plan is to support the social well-being of everyone who lives, works or spends time in Richmond.

The Plan was developed through several steps, including:

- Learning what has worked well in other cities;
- Analyzing the Canadian Census and community demographic data; and
- Engaging with over 1,200 residents, community organizations and public partners.

Together, these steps helped build a shared vision for Richmond's future and guided the creation of this Plan.

Focus Areas and Actions

The Plan has five main focus areas and 73 actions. The five focus areas are:

Focus Area 1: Improve Access to Basic Needs

Help residents get the services and resources they need for daily living, such as food and shelter.

Focus Area 2: Make Everyone Feel Welcome and Accepted

Celebrate Richmond's diversity by helping people from different cultures and age groups learn from and respect one another.

Focus Area 3: Create a Safe, Strong and Accessible Community

Make parks, streets and public spaces more welcoming and easier for everyone to use.

Focus Area 4: Support a Community Where Everyone Can Be Involved

Help people find important information about what is happening in the city and how they can participate and share their ideas.

Focus Area 5: Increase the Community's Ability to Work Together

Encourage governments, organizations and community members to collaborate to make Richmond a better place.

Understanding Social Development

Social development is about helping communities become healthy, safe and supportive places for everyone. It focuses on improving areas such as housing, health care, education, employment and the environment, creating a community where everyone has the chance to succeed and have a better future. Social development is based on the idea that communities are strongest when residents from all backgrounds can meet their basic needs, remain healthy and safe, and feel a sense of belonging and connection. It brings together all levels of government, along with non-profit and community organizations and residents. By working together, they help improve the quality of life for everyone in the community.

Today, we know that some people have faced discrimination and have not been able to fully take part in community life. The City is committed to working with partners and residents to address these barriers and make Richmond a fairer and more inclusive place for everyone.

FOCUS AREA 1: IMPROVE ACCESS TO BASIC NEEDS



Why This Is Important

A community is successful when everyone can meet their basic needs, such as having enough food, a safe place to live and support for their mental and physical health. Lately, this has become harder because prices of food and housing have increased, while many families' incomes have stayed the same. The City wants to ensure Richmond residents can meet their basic needs by supporting programs and services that improve access to food, housing and health care services.

Actions

Reduce hunger

- Develop and carry out a community food plan to help people get the food they need more easily.
- Bring local food organizations together so people can access more affordable and culturally familiar food.
- Explore creating a community space where people can get emergency food, learn to make healthy meals and find helpful resources.
- Support programs that teach food skills and increase access to healthy, nutritious and culturally familiar food options.

Prevent and reduce homelessness

- Work with people who have experienced homelessness, community groups and government partners to use a "Housing First" approach. This means helping people access housing right away and then connecting them to support services, such as health care or life skills training.
- Develop a plan that helps people find safe, long-term homes and supports people who are at risk of losing their homes.
- Work with provincial and federal governments, and community organizations to build more housing.
- Develop plans to prevent homelessness in the community and support people who are already experiencing homelessness by working closely with community groups and governments.

Increase housing options

- Increase housing options by creating new plans, policies, buying land and working with community groups and governments.
- Work with provincial and federal governments, and non-profit housing providers to build more homes that residents can afford.
- Support non-profit housing groups, funders and builders to create more safe and affordable homes that meet people's needs, especially for people who require extra support, such as seniors.
- Use local government tools to protect renters and increase safe and long-term housing options.
- Support more affordable housing for essential workers, such as health care staff and teachers, whose incomes may not match current rental prices.
- Request provincial and federal governments for funding to upgrade old homes ensuring homes use less energy and are safer.
- Use City planning tools to find and support homes that work well for people with disabilities and seniors.

Increase health and well-being

- Support residents to connect to social services that support their health and well-being.
- Support access to medical care, mental health services and addiction services for residents.
- Create neighbourhoods where residents can connect to services, build connections and reduce feelings of loneliness.



**FOCUS AREA 2:
MAKE EVERYONE
FEEL WELCOME
AND ACCEPTED**



Why This Is Important

Richmond is home to people of many different languages, genders, religions, sexual orientations, abilities, ages and income levels. The City aims to build a community where everyone feels safe, welcomed and valued. To support this goal, the City will take actions that helps people from different cultures and age groups understand, respect and connect with each other.

Actions

Increase a sense of belonging among communities

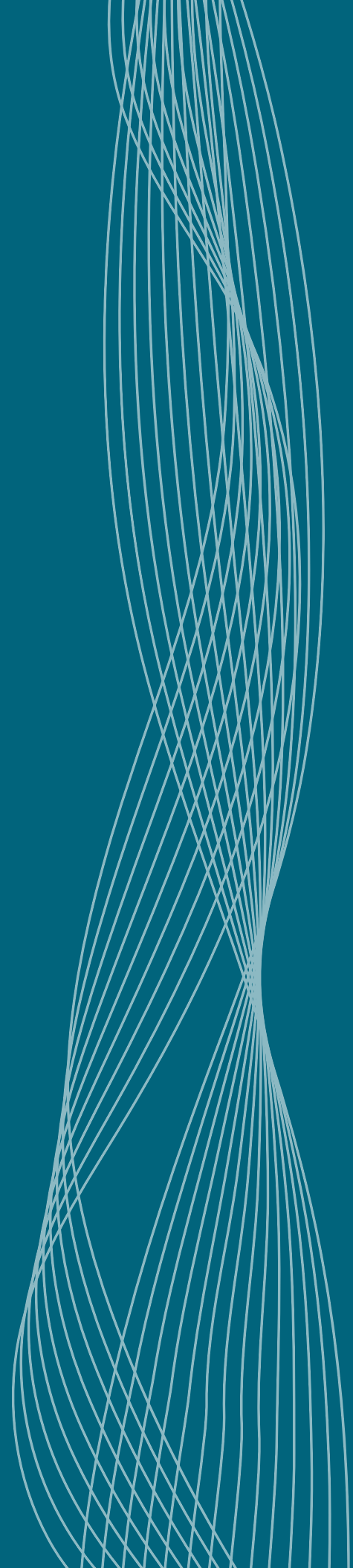
- Create opportunities for community members to talk to one another and build better understanding of each other.
- Offer more ways for people of different age groups and cultural groups to celebrate Richmond's many cultures through partnerships and grants.
- Support greater awareness of mental health and addictions to reduce stigma and discrimination, and help build a community where people feel more included.
- Work with local First Nations and urban Indigenous communities to include Indigenous culture and history in arts and programs across the city.
- Help the community learn about homelessness and the support services available.
- Find ways to reduce hate, bullying and discrimination in the community by increasing public understanding through partnerships and education.
- Support projects that help people connect with each other, including initiatives that bring neighbours together in apartment buildings.
- Encourage and support community-led projects that help people build stronger connections with each other.

Plan for all ages and different stages of life

- Update programs and services to meet the needs of all age groups, including youth, working adults, young families and seniors.
- Support affordable child care services with hours that extend beyond 9am to 5pm by working with private and public partners, non-profit organizations, and provincial and federal governments.
- Create a child- and youth-friendly community with planning, programs and services that support active mobility, play, participation and social connection.
- Include people from different age groups in planning and development projects to better understand and meet their needs.
- Develop and use policies, planning tools and services that support the interests and needs of seniors and help them stay active in the community.
- Plan for both current and future needs by offering programs and services that support people through different stages of life.
- Create plans that give people more opportunity to join community activities, especially young adults aged 19 to 24 years and working families.



**FOCUS AREA 3:
CREATE A SAFE,
STRONG AND
ACCESSIBLE
COMMUNITY**



Why This Is Important

A safe and accessible community is one where everyone can move around easily and connect with others. The City wants public spaces to be easy for people to use, no matter their age or how they get around. This includes having smooth pathways, ramps, clear signs and safe crossings, allowing residents to enjoy these areas and feel a strong sense of belonging in their community.

Actions

Make public areas easier to access

- Explore new tools and technology to support people of all ages, languages and abilities to find their way around the community.
- Improve public spaces by adding quiet areas and places to rest.
- Design City projects so people of all ages and abilities can move around easily and find what they need.
- Increase access to parks, trails and other public areas and make them easier for everyone to use.

Help people of all ages and abilities have more transportation options

- Ensure roads and transportation options are safer and easier to use for people to get to services, work, school and social activities.
- Improve walking and cycling options so they are safe, comfortable and enjoyable for everyone, especially to places that support community connection and overall well-being.

Build connected neighbourhoods

- Celebrate what makes each neighbourhood unique and create ways for neighbours to connect, especially in high-density areas.
- Explore ways to make sure all neighbourhoods have access to more services and community spaces.

Build safer, stronger communities

- Continue to improve public safety by working with partners and offering educational programs that teach safety skills.
- Help people learn about the safety concerns faced by 2SLGBTQI+ communities, Indigenous peoples, religious communities, racial and ethnic groups and people experiencing homelessness.
- Support initiatives that help residents prepare for emergencies.
- Continue to reduce climate change impacts by creating programs that help people adapt, especially those who may struggle during extreme weather or poor air quality events, such as seniors.



**FOCUS AREA 4:
SUPPORT A
COMMUNITY
WHERE EVERYONE
CAN BE INVOLVED**



Why This Is Important

In a strong, connected community, everyone has the chance to participate and help shape decisions that affect their lives. The City aims to support this by making information easy to find and understand, offering technology that is easy to use and creating more opportunities for people to volunteer. These initiatives will help people from all backgrounds take part in community activities and share their ideas to build a stronger future for everyone.

Actions

Increase public participation

- Help people understand what the City is working on and get involved by sharing information in different ways, including through educational programs.
- Identify what prevents people from taking part in local decision-making and remove these barriers, especially for equity-deserving groups.
- Invite and support people from diverse backgrounds and with different skills to participate in City advisory committees.

Encourage involvement in community life

- Offer more free or low-cost community programs to help everyone feel included and connected.
- Use clear and effective communication tools to make it easier for people to get City information and get involved in local decision-making.
- Promote tools, such as MyRichmond, so residents can easily find City information and share feedback.
- Identify and promote ways to help community organizations adapt to changes in their volunteer base, which plays an important role in delivering programs and services to the community.

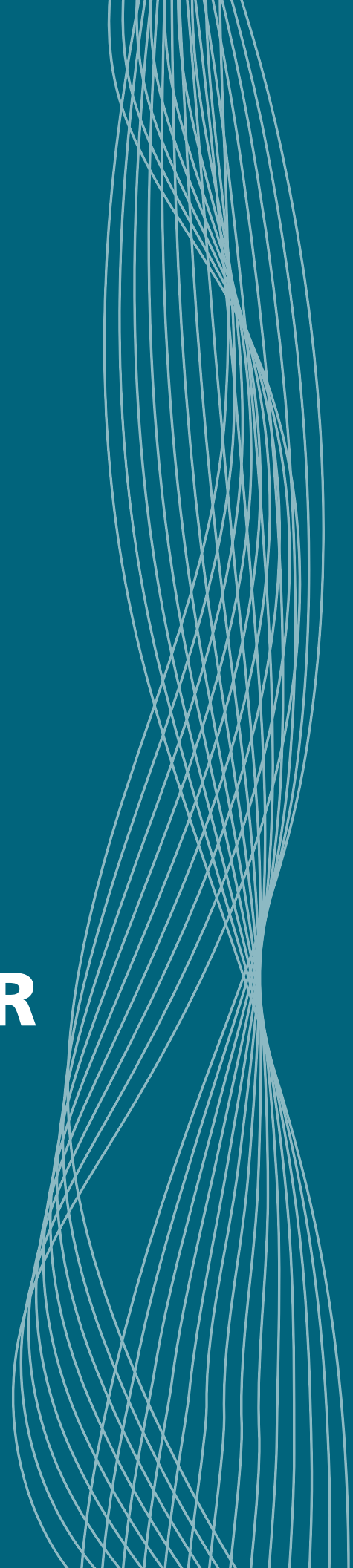
- Work with community members and organizations, including equity-deserving groups, to create solutions to social issues.
- Support programs that remove and prevent barriers for equity-deserving groups, including help with program costs, access to technology, digital skills and financial literacy.
- Support community-led programs that help people feel connected and involved through small projects, grants and partnerships.

Promote economic inclusion

- Support local businesses connect, share ideas and grow.
- Support community programs that help equity-deserving groups, including people in different life stages, gain employment skills, find mentors and secure jobs.



**FOCUS AREA 5:
INCREASE THE
COMMUNITY'S
ABILITY TO
WORK TOGETHER**



Why This Is Important

The City cannot solve today's social challenges on its own. It must work with all levels of government, community groups, residents, local First Nations and urban Indigenous communities. By working together, the City can better understand community needs and create solutions that make a real, positive difference in the community.

Actions

Build and strengthen community capacity

- Work with community partners to address important social issues by joining groups and projects that bring organizations together.
- Strengthen relationships with provincial and federal governments by meeting regularly to develop solutions to social issues in Richmond.
- Work with provincial and federal governments to secure long-term funding for programs and services that meet community needs.
- Regularly review the City Grant program to make sure it supports community needs and uses City resources wisely.
- Support social service agencies in finding space so they can grow and continue helping community members.
- Research and apply practices for acquiring land that support the City's long-term planning and social development goals.

Build relationships with local First Nations and urban Indigenous communities

- Build and strengthen relationships with local First Nations and urban Indigenous communities in Richmond, and develop a City-wide approach to reconciliation.
- Work with urban Indigenous communities in Richmond to better understand their needs and the goals of the communities in which they live.

Increase the City's ability to respond to changing needs

- Apply a social equity approach when creating or updating City plans, policies and practices so the City can find ways to reduce unfairness and increase benefits for the whole community.
- Offer training and learning opportunities for City staff to help advance reconciliation, diversity, equity and inclusion practices in the community.
- Ensure the City has enough staff to plan for and meet the changing social needs of Richmond's population.
- Monitor current data to better understand changes in community needs and support planning.
- Track provincial and federal programs and changes in law to understand their impact on social issues and make use of new opportunities.
- Create and apply tools to measure progress toward social development goals, with a focus on improving community well-being.
- Create a short, plain-language version of the Plan, including translated copies, to help more people understand it.
- Provide a progress update every three years to City Council, community partners and the public.



Helpful Terms to Know

2SLGBTQI+: A term that includes Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and other sexual and gender identities.

Accessibility: A barrier-free experience that ensures everyone is able to equitably access, use and benefit from their community.

Active mobility: Getting around using your own physical movement instead of a motor vehicle, such as walking, biking and rollerblading.

Bullying: Repeated behaviour that hurts, threatens or embarrasses someone.

Climate change: Long-term changes in weather patterns caused mostly by human activity, leading to problems such as rising temperatures and extreme weather.

Discrimination: Unfair treatment of someone because of their race, gender, religion, disability, or other personal characteristics.

Diversity, equity and inclusion: Creating communities and workplaces where different backgrounds are valued, everyone is treated fairly, and all people feel welcome.

Economic inclusion: Making sure that everyone has a fair chance to participate in the economy.

Federal government: The level of government that makes decisions that affect the whole country, such as immigration, defense, banking and Indigenous relations.

First Nations: Indigenous peoples in Canada who have their own cultures, languages, histories and traditional territories. They have rights that are recognized by the Canadian government.

Grant program: A program that gives money to organizations or groups to help them run projects that benefit the community.

Hate: Strong dislike or hostility toward a person or group, often based on identity.

Housing First: A way of helping people who are experiencing homelessness by giving them safe, stable housing right away, without requiring them to meet conditions first. Once they have housing, they receive support services to help them stay housed and improve their well-being.

Indigenous Peoples: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, who are the original peoples of Canada.

Non-profit: An organization that provides services or support to the community and does not make money for owners or shareholders. Any money earned goes back into its programs.

Planning: A process of deciding what needs to happen in the future and how to make it happen. In government, this often includes decisions about land use, transportation, housing and community services.

Policy: A rule or guideline created by a government or organization to help make decisions and set direction. Policies explain what should be done and why.

Private partner: A business or company that works together with a government or community group on a project. They are not part of the government.

Provincial government: The level of government that runs a province, such as British Columbia, and makes decisions about schools, hospitals and natural resources within that province.

Public partner: A government organization—such as a city, province, or federal department—that works with others on a project to benefit the community.

Public safety: Efforts to keep people safe from crime, accidents and other dangers.

Reconciliation: Actions that help repair relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, based on respect, understanding and truth.

Social development: Work that helps improve people’s well-being, opportunities, and quality of life in a community.

Social equity: Making sure everyone has fair access to opportunities, resources, and support, especially people who face barriers.

Social issues: Problems that affect many people in a community, such as poverty, racism, or lack of housing.

Social services: Programs that help people meet basic needs, such as food, housing, counselling, or support for families and youth.

Stigma: Negative attitudes or unfair beliefs about a person or group that make them feel ashamed or judged.

Urban Indigenous communities: Indigenous people who live in cities rather than on reserves or in rural areas.





City of Richmond

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