



CITY OF RICHMOND
2019–2029 Cultural Harmony Plan
Progress Report
2019–2021 Update

CONTENTS

- INTRODUCTION 1
- ABOUT THE PLAN 2
- IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES 3
- UPDATES SINCE 2019 4
 - COVID-19 Pandemic and Cultural Harmony 4
 - Truth and Reconciliation 6
 - Cultural Harmony 6
- PROGRESS 7
 - Strategic Direction #1: Intercultural Connections** 7
 - Strategic Direction #2: Collaboration and Partnerships** 9
 - Strategic Direction #3: Targeted Training and Professional Development** 10
 - Strategic Direction #4: Communication and Community Engagement** 11
 - Strategic Direction #5: Programs and Services** 12
- NEXT STEPS 13
- CONCLUSION 14



INTRODUCTION

The City of Richmond has a strong tradition of addressing social equity issues in its planning practices and service delivery. The *2019–2029 Cultural Harmony Plan* is the first ever plan of its kind in Canada and is intended to guide the City's approach to fostering and enhancing intercultural connections among its diverse population. With over 60% of Richmond residents born outside of Canada, the City is committed to supporting cultural diversity, equity and inclusion in order to ensure that all residents feel valued and accepted in the community. As Richmond's population continues to grow and evolve, the City recognizes that the unique characteristics, interests and needs of various segments of the population need to be addressed in order to build an inclusive community based on mutual respect and belonging.

Since the *2019–2029 Cultural Harmony Plan* was adopted in November 2019, there has been significant progress in addressing the actions outlined in the plan. The following report provides a high-level summary of the accomplishments and endeavours the City, in partnership with the community, has accomplished from 2019 to 2021.

ABOUT THE PLAN

The *2019–2029 Cultural Harmony Plan* was adopted by City Council on November 25, 2019. This ten-year plan for the City outlines innovative and collaborative approaches to strengthen intercultural connections among Richmond residents, provide City programs and services that address the needs of the city's diverse population, and remove barriers to participation for Richmond residents. It also recommends that the City continues to work collaboratively with Community Associations and Societies and key stakeholders to address the needs of vulnerable populations, facilitate intercultural understanding and support community capacity building.

The *2019–2029 Cultural Harmony Plan* is guided by the following vision statement:

That Richmond residents recognize and respect diversity in the community and enable each individual's contributions in all aspects of community life.

The *2019–2029 Cultural Harmony Plan* was developed with participation from the public, Community Associations and Societies, and key stakeholders in the community. This plan demonstrates the City's leadership in building on its social inclusion practices and signifies a commitment to respond to the evolving needs of Richmond's increasingly diverse population and to build a more inclusive future for everyone.

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

The *2019–2029 Cultural Harmony Plan* outlines five strategic directions and 27 recommended actions to enhance cultural harmony in Richmond. The five strategic directions are:

1. Intercultural Connections
2. Collaboration and Partnerships
3. Targeted Training and Professional Development
4. Communication and Community Engagement
5. Programs and Services

Each strategic direction includes items for action that are intended to meet the objectives and intended outcomes of each strategic direction. Each action includes an associated timeline for completion: short term (0-3 years), medium term (4-6 years), long term (7-10 years), and ongoing. These strategic directions have guided the City's priorities since 2019 and will continue to guide the City's approach in the years to come in fostering positive intercultural connections among people of diverse backgrounds in the community.

UPDATES SINCE 2019

COVID-19 Pandemic and Cultural Harmony

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the health, social and economic well-being of people in Canada. While COVID-19 has impacted everyone, these impacts have disproportionately affected some groups, including racialized communities. The policies enacted to effectively contain the spread of the virus have unfortunately resulted in unprecedented disruption in the social and economic lives of Canadians and in some cases exacerbated isolation and loneliness particularly for immigrants and seniors. The pandemic has also laid bare many of the social and economic inequities some segments of the population already experienced pre-pandemic including lower incomes, precarious employment and barriers to accessing health and social services.

Due to restrictions on in-person gatherings brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the City, Community Associations and Societies, and community organizations have had to deliver some programs and services online in order to continue to serve vulnerable residents in the community. In response to the impact of the pandemic and related public health measures, in May 2020 City Council approved flexible uses of the City Grants to respond to the impacts of COVID-19. This included allowing unused operating grant funds to be redirected to expenses incurred by COVID-19 service adaptations as long as they were aligned with the intent of the City Grant awarded. The City continues to support the community through capacity-building and grant funding so that community organizations can address the increased challenges faced by vulnerable residents due to the pandemic.



To respond to the growing incidents of racism, in November 2019 the provincial government launched the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network, which provides a multi-faceted, province-wide approach to identifying and challenging racism. The network connects communities with the information, supports and training required to respond to and prevent future incidents of racism and hate. The Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network replaced the previous Organizing Against Racism and Hate (OARH) program. In response to the increase in racially-motivated incidents in Richmond, City Council issued the following statement against racism and violence related to the COVID-19 pandemic on May 25, 2020:

In Richmond, we are a community that celebrates a rich history of culture, diversity and heritage linked to the arrival and influence of immigrants that began over a century ago. The City of Richmond does not—and never will—condone or tolerate racist behaviour in any form. Such attitudes and actions do not reflect our community’s cultural diversity or the spirit of inclusion that we are all proud of. Events of the past few months have created uncertainty, frustration and fear for some. But that is no excuse to cast blame on others. COVID-19 should not be blamed on any single culture or country and it is certainly not the fault of anyone in our community. Now, more than ever, we must stand together and be true to our shared values of diversity, inclusion and respect. Racial and discriminatory responses and actions have no place in Richmond. They have no place in our society.

The City continues to pursue partnerships to address racism in Richmond. In March 2021, the Richmond RCMP in partnership with the City launched a “Hate Has No Place” poster campaign in Richmond, encouraging those who have experienced hate motivated incidents to report them to the police. On March 31, 2021 Richmond City Council issued another statement against racism:

The City of Richmond does not tolerate hateful nor racially motivated behaviour. We acknowledge such attitudes unfortunately exist and are in direct contradiction to the spirit of inclusion we uphold. We must stand together to address and condemn all forms of discrimination and racism.

The City remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering an inclusive community where everyone feels safe and respected. Guided by the *2019–2029 Cultural Harmony Plan*, the City continues to deliver cultural harmony initiatives that foster meaningful intercultural connections in the community. The social issues that the COVID-19 pandemic have brought to the forefront have demonstrated the important role the Cultural Harmony Plan can play to increase awareness and understanding of different cultures in the community and encourage positive intercultural interactions among Richmond’s diverse population.

Truth and Reconciliation

The City marked the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30, 2021. This day honours the children and survivors of residential schools, their families and communities and commemorates the history and ongoing impacts of residential schools. The City required all full-time staff to take a self-paced online Indigenous awareness course. This mandatory training achieves a key action in the Cultural Harmony Plan related to Truth and Reconciliation, and highlights the City's commitment to meeting one of the 94 Calls to Action outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) report.

Cultural Harmony

The past two years has underscored the need for building the capacity of community organizations to serve the needs of Richmond's diverse population during these challenging times. It has also highlighted the need for meaningful engagement across cultures to bring about increased awareness and understanding. The *2019–2029 Cultural Harmony Plan* will continue to guide the City's approach to fostering cultural harmony among Richmond's diverse residents. Progress made to the actions outlined in the *2019–2029 Cultural Harmony Plan* demonstrates the City's ongoing commitment to ensuring all Richmond residents—Indigenous peoples, newcomers and long-time residents—value their shared history and feel a sense of safety and belonging in the community.



PROGRESS

The *2019–2029 Cultural Harmony Plan* outlines 27 recommended actions to accomplish throughout the ten-year period. The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of accomplishments that have occurred since 2019 when City Council first adopted the plan.

1 Strategic Direction #1: Intercultural Connections

Why is this direction important?

Richmond is a vibrant and multicultural city with over 100 languages spoken by residents from over 150 different ethnic origins. While the diversity of Richmond's population presents plenty of opportunities for community enrichment, it also presents some challenges in terms of cross-cultural communication and understanding. Cultural celebrations, community events and intercultural dialogues can foster positive interactions between newcomers and long-time residents by providing them with opportunities to directly engage with and learn from one another. This can lead to increased intercultural understanding and respect, and also foster a sense of shared community among newcomers and long-term residents alike.

Highlighted Achievements

- The City and Community Associations and Societies continue to celebrate Richmond's diverse cultures and foster intercultural understanding by working with diverse cultural groups to recognize important cultural events including Lunar New Year, Black History Month, Ramadan, Asian Heritage Month, Cherry Blossom Festival, National Indigenous Peoples Day and the Harvest Moon and Mid-Autumn Festivals. Due to public health measures, many of these events were held virtually in 2020 and 2021.
- In October 2020, City Council approved the proposed program plan to guide future planning and capital submission for the First Nations Bunkhouse at Britannia Shipyards. Offering heritage interpretation in the First Nations Bunkhouse honours the spirit of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action by working with Indigenous peoples to present stories of their involvement in the fishing industry in their words and by sharing these stories with the public.
- Doors Open Richmond is an annual event that celebrates cultural diversity and raises civic awareness by offering a look inside places of worship, cultural centres, local businesses, museums and heritage sites. In 2020 and 2021, the Richmond Museum Society, in partnership with the City of Richmond presented the event online and focused on sites that promote intercultural and interfaith understanding. New cultural sites, shops and restaurants joined Doors Open, including the Steveston Buddhist Temple, the Best of British and Lamajoun. Visitors gained knowledge about cultural practices and spiritual traditions by engaging with over 35 participating sites online.

- In 2021, the City's Public Art program partnered with Richmond Multicultural Community Services to capture the stories of Richmond-based newcomers and refugees from Arabic and Farsi-speaking countries through art. *Stories of Home – Past and Present* invited participants to examine what they miss from their past home and what they love about their current life in Richmond while learning new skills in drawing and painting. It culminated in an exhibition of artwork and stories at the Richmond Public Library from November 6, 2021 to January 6, 2022.



Stories of Home – Past and Present by artist Jean Bradbury in collaboration with Arabic and Farsi speaking newcomers, and Richmond Multicultural Community Services, Richmond Care Place, 2021.

2 Strategic Direction #2: Collaboration and Partnerships

Why is this direction important?

Strong collaboration and partnerships are crucial to delivering programs and services that are reflective of the needs of the community. Richmond has a strong network of Community Associations and Societies, community service organizations, and ethno-cultural and faith-based community groups that deliver various services in the community. These collaborative partnerships have been key to maintaining continuity of program and service delivery to the most vulnerable members of the community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The City continues to identify potential opportunities to work with community partners to respond to the evolving needs of Richmond’s diverse population.

Highlighted Achievements

- Through 2020 and 2021, the City pursued and received funding from senior levels of government to implement various cultural harmony initiatives. The Richmond Museum Society received funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage Community Support, Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Initiatives Program for Doors Open. The City received a Department of Canadian Heritage Celebrate Canada grant to support Canada Day celebrations in Richmond in collaboration with the Steveston Salmon Festival. The Richmond Art Gallery received a Canada Council for the Arts Co-production grant for an exhibition by Brendan Fernandes titled “Inaction”, which reflects on the social upheavals of 2020 including the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement. Also, the Minoru Seniors Society received funding from the Canadian Red Cross Community Support Grant to launch an outreach project for Chinese-speaking seniors in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In the last two years the City has joined networks that work towards building inclusive societies, including the national Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Network, which connects municipal staff working in the field of diversity and inclusion across Canada to share best practices, the Social Purpose Real Estate Collaborative, which works to enable not-for-profit agencies and social enterprises to create resilient, inclusive and connected communities, and the Communities Ending Poverty network, which is comprised of 330 municipalities and is represented by 80 regional roundtables that work together to develop and implement plans to reduce poverty in their communities.



3 Strategic Direction #3: Targeted Training and Professional Development

Why is this direction important?

As Richmond is one of the most diverse cities in Canada, it is important to equip staff, volunteers and community partners with the knowledge and skills to foster a welcoming community and offer inclusive programs and services. The increased focus on diversity, equity and inclusion over the past two years has underscored the importance of awareness, education and acceptance between and among different cultures. The City is committed to equipping staff and volunteers with the necessary tools to foster an inclusive community and providing educational opportunities to the public on cultural diversity, equity and inclusion.

Highlighted Achievements

- In 2020 and 2021, the annual Diversity Symposium pivoted from a one-day in-person event to a week-long virtual event, with over 1,800 registrations in 17 workshop sessions. Workshop topics included decolonizing practices, LGBTQ2S+ resiliency, inclusion of the dementia and disability community in decision making, anti-racist organizational change, and utilizing co-design for strategy and program development with diverse communities. In 2021, several accessibility-related enhancements were implemented, such as live closed captioning and a screen-reader compatible program guide, to make the symposium more accessible for participants with visual or hearing impairments.
- The City of Richmond is in the process of developing a city-wide diversity and inclusion training program for City and Association staff to provide them with the knowledge and tools to support community members with diverse perspectives, abilities and needs. This includes skills-based training in intercultural competency, disability awareness and anti-racism.
- In 2021, the City held mandatory Indigenous awareness training for all staff to mark National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This foundational training covers the history and culture of Indigenous communities in Canada, the history of residential schools and treaties around the country.



Harvest Full Moon Festival by artist Marina Szijarto, City Centre Community Centre, 2015.

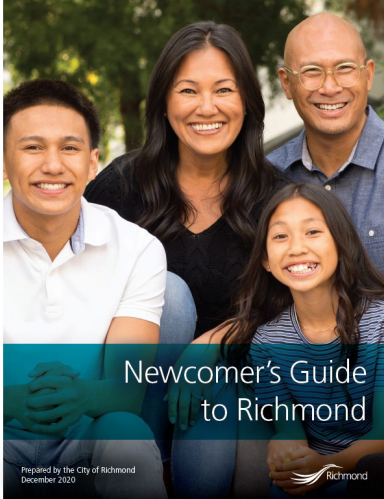
4 Strategic Direction #4: Communication and Community Engagement

Why is this direction important?

Meaningful, inclusive community engagement is critical to community well-being and residents’ sense of belonging. Ensuring that all residents have access to City-related information regardless of cultural backgrounds and language ability allows them to contribute meaningfully and participate fully in decision making that affects their everyday lives. The City continues to explore opportunities to improve its community engagement practices and remove barriers to participation.

Highlighted Achievements

- On March 23, 2020, the City signed the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Cities #WithRefugees pledge. This global initiative seeks to amplify the efforts of cities who are creating inclusive communities where everyone can live in safety and contribute to and participate in their local community. Signing this initiative demonstrates the City’s ongoing commitment to promoting inclusion by raising awareness of the plight of refugees around the world and the value they bring to cities such as Richmond.
- In December 2020, the City published an updated Newcomers Guide to Richmond which provides information and resources on settling in the community. It is available in English, Simplified Chinese and Traditional Chinese. To complement the updated Newcomers Guide, a Newcomer’s Video Series is under development which aims to share the experience of settling in Richmond through telling the stories of those who were once newcomers to the community.
- The City is engaged in ongoing work to develop guidelines to improve the engagement of multilingual groups in the community, including the translation of important materials to languages other than English. In addition, the Parks Department continues to update signage in parks to include graphic images to succinctly communicate wayfinding and park use information to park users in order to enhance accessibility and understanding. The use of graphic images supports all users to safely interact with park spaces regardless of language or literacy level.



5 Strategic Direction #5: Programs and Services



Signs of Pride, Sam McWilliams, Paige Gratland, Phranc, 2021. West Richmond Community Centre. Photo by Four Eyes Portraits.

Why is this direction important?

A welcoming and inclusive society is characterized by a widely shared social experience and the active participation of its residents. The City continues to strengthen relationships with various cultural and ethnic communities to ensure that their arts and cultural practices are integrated into City programs and events. The City also regularly reviews its programs and services to ensure that opportunities are provided for people of diverse backgrounds to have meaningful connections with one another.

Highlighted Achievements

- In October 2020, the Richmond Museum signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the UBC Initiative for Student Teaching and Research in Chinese Canadian Studies (ISTRCCS) allowing the Museum to extend its knowledge of and connection to Richmond's Chinese Canadian heritage. The project will help build new bridges between the Richmond Museum and Richmond's Chinese Canadian community, produce materials that will showcase Chinese Canadians in Richmond, and encourage more participation of Richmond's Chinese Canadian community in the presentation and preservation of their cultural heritage.
- The City updated its Access and Inclusion Policy in December 2020 to create a robust framework for the City to continue to support its efforts to further advance accessibility and inclusion in Richmond. The updated policy acknowledges the diverse needs of Richmond's population and addresses the importance of community engagement, communication, education and awareness and advocacy.
- The City received a \$15,000 grant from BC Healthy Communities in July 2021 towards the development of an equity lens resource to support staff in addressing equity and inclusion through the program planning process. Grant activities included staff engagement, training workshops and a pilot phase to tailor and refine an equity lens tool.
- There is a growing movement towards representing the intersectionality inherent in community members' lived experiences. The Signs of Pride art project is a partnership between Public Art and West Richmond Community Association and engaged artists Sam McWilliams, Paige Gratland and Phranc along with youth leaders to celebrate and remember the history and culture of the LGBTQ2S+ community in Richmond. From May to July 2021, the group connected virtually, each bringing their own cultural lens to contribute to the project highlighting important symbols of the LGBTQ2S+ community.
- Intersectionality was also represented through the public art installation, Self portrait with mended flesh, by two-spirit artist Manuel Axel Strain, a work born out of the artist's internalized struggle to accept their own identity (Indigenous and Two-spirited). The Richmond Art Gallery supported and mentored this local Indigenous artist through the process of producing this piece which was installed at the Aberdeen Canada Line Station through the City's Public Art program.

NEXT STEPS

The City of Richmond’s *2019–2029 Cultural Harmony Plan* outlines short term, medium term, long term and ongoing actions to strengthen intercultural connections among Richmond’s diverse communities. This report provides information on the City’s progress in meeting the short term and ongoing actions since the plan was adopted in November 2019. The City continues to implement actions outlined in the plan and will continue to monitor the advancement of recommended actions and detail the progress made in the next update.

CONCLUSION

The *2019–2029 Cultural Harmony Plan* demonstrates the City of Richmond’s ongoing commitment to working in partnership with Community Associations and Societies and key stakeholders to facilitate intercultural understanding among Richmond’s diverse communities, reduce barriers faced by different segments of the city’s population and develop programs and services that are inclusive and relevant so that all Richmond residents can participate in all aspects of community life.

The rise in anti-Asian racism during the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of fostering intercultural awareness and understanding among the city’s diverse populations. Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, there have been many innovative cultural harmony initiatives that were initiated in the last two years. The COVID-19 pandemic has only underscored the importance of the *2019–2029 Cultural Harmony Plan* in the community more than ever.

Moving forward, the City and its community partners will continue to work collaboratively in an ongoing effort to further the vision “that Richmond residents recognize and respect diversity in the community and enable each individual’s contributions in all aspects of community life.”



City of Richmond

6911 No. 3 Road, Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

Telephone: 604-276-4000

www.richmond.ca