

1.0 Plan Overview

1.1 Purpose

A Concept for Healthy Urban Living

“...the real value of cities lies in their diversity, architectural variety, teeming street life and human scale. It is only when we appreciate such fundamental realities that we can hope to create cities that are safe, interesting and economically viable, as well as places that people want to live.”

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Penguin Books, 1972 (first published 1960)

The City Centre Area Plan sets the stage for future generations to live, work, play and learn, and move towards sustainability in an incremental manner.

The City Centre Area Plan (CCAP) proposes a 2031 management framework for development that prepares for 2031 needs and describes a future City Centre that:

- embodies the concept of healthy urban living;
- provides opportunities for people to live, work, play, and learn in a sustainable, high-amenity environment;
- reduces sprawl and pressure on Richmond’s suburban neighbourhoods, industrial areas, and farmland by directing significant growth away from those areas and towards the City Centre;
- benefits all of Richmond by developing a series of compact and engaging, higher-density, urban villages supportive of a broad range of high-quality amenities, including affordable housing.

The CCAP also lays the groundwork to enable the City to successfully plan and build out beyond 2031, to 2100, thereby meeting its long term needs.

For example, over the next 100 years, Richmond’s City Centre population is expected to triple and its number of jobs will more than double. The CCAP accommodates this growth. It requires a fundamental shift in how the City Centre is developed and how people carry on their daily lives.

The CCAP applies to the area shown on the Plan Area Map as City Centre. The plan sets out an overall vision for the area, together with related goals, objectives and planning principles that pertain to land use, urban design, transportation, servicing, arts, culture, the environment, and community amenities. It also includes policies, design guidelines, and implementation and phasing strategies to assist Council, City staff, land owners, developers, and the community to work towards the plan’s realization over the coming years.

The preparation of this plan relied on consultation with the public, Council, and stakeholders, reference to existing City documents, such as the Official Community Plan (OCP), and the completion of a broad range of related studies including, among others, updating of Richmond’s City Centre Transportation Plan, city-wide flood management practices, City Centre population and employment growth projections, and assessments of City Centre infrastructure, community facility and open space needs.

1.2 Context

History

Blessed with rich soil, salmon, lush vegetation, and wildlife, Richmond and its City Centre first attracted the Coast Salish people, followed by European farmers and fishermen. In 1879, communities scattered across Richmond were united as the Township of Richmond.

By the early 1900s, a small cluster of shops, a new town hall, a racetrack, and the interurban tram provided a focus for the community near the intersection of No. 3 Road and Granville Avenue and attracted businesses to Richmond's growing commercial centre.

In 1955, with the construction of the Oak Street Bridge, West Richmond began to attract significant residential development, altering the community's rural character. And shortly after that, Richmond's Planning Commission approved the conversion of "Brighthouse Estates", land formerly owned by one of Richmond's founders, Samuel Brighthouse, to allow for a modern town centre complex, including the present site of Richmond City Hall together with Board of Education offices, a health unit, library, commercial district, and a large multi-use park, recreation, and cultural complex that was envisioned as the new heart of Richmond.

Since that time, Richmond has grown to emerge as an attractive community that is distinctive for its ability to maintain a large amount of farmland and a viable fishing industry while becoming home to the Vancouver International Airport, over 120,000 jobs, and more than 185,000 residents – 57% of whom were born outside Canada. The City Centre too has grown and today is an important mixed retail-residential centre poised to become a major regional hub with the soon-to-be-completed Canada Line rapid transit system and the Richmond Oval – the long-track speed skating venue for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

The Rate of Growth

The City Centre Area Plan was first adopted in 1995 with the objective that Richmond's downtown should attract roughly 50% of Richmond's residential growth to 2021.

In the 11-year period between January 1997 and January 2008, the City Centre achieved that objective: growing by approximately 14,000 residents or 46% of city-wide growth (with annual fluctuations ranging from less than 20% to more than 70%).



Aerial view of City Centre, 2002.

Physical Setting

The City Centre is approximately 930 ha (2,300 ac.) in size, and includes roughly 5.5 km (3.4 mi.) of shoreline along the Fraser River on its north and west sides. Elsewhere, it abuts a combination of low-density, suburban residential neighbourhoods and lands designated as part of the Province’s Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).

The City Centre is characterized by large blocks, a discontinuous street network, and a commercial spine on No. 3 Road – the alignment of the new Canada Line rapid transit system.

The southeast portion of the City Centre, it’s first to be developed with multiple-family housing, is home to almost 50% of the community’s current population and is now largely built-out. Likewise, the City Centre’s park and school systems are most fully established in or near the southeast, with the riverfront dyke trail and Richmond Oval being the only significant public amenities north of Westminster Highway.

North of this area, Richmond’s OCP Aircraft Noise Sensitive Development Policy restricts the development of airport noise-sensitive uses (e.g., housing, hospital, and childcare) in a large part of the City Centre. In addition, port operations along the North Arm of the Fraser River and the province’s designation of Sea Island Way and Bridgeport Road as highways make residential uses undesirable in those areas. For the most part, these areas are currently developed, zoned, or designated in the 1995 City Centre Area Plan for industrial and commercial uses – and will remain so in the future.

As a result, the development potential of the City Centre can be summed up as follows:

	Potential % of Gross Land Area
A. Non-Residential	24%
B. Mixed-Use	37%
C. Built-Out Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly residential, parks, and schools. 	34%
D. Garden City Lands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use to be determined through future study. 	5%
TOTAL	100%

Regional Context

The City of Richmond is one of 22 member municipalities in the Metro Vancouver Regional District (MV). The MV Board has a regional Growth Management Strategy (GMS) which addresses regional planning matters. The existing GMS which was approved in 1996 is the Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP). Each municipality must respond to the GMS with an Official Community Plan (OCP) Regional Context Statement (RCS) which is acceptable to the MV Board.

The MV is currently updating its GMS (from 2021 to 2031) and is expected to complete its work in 2009. When that occurs, the MV member municipalities will update their OCPs and RCSs to align with the new regional plan.

While this 2031 CCAP enables a 100-year (e.g., to 2100) build out capacity framework for the City Centre with a future population of 120,000, Richmond's subsequent OCP and RCS updates will incorporate the directions embodied in this 2031 CCAP in phases as follows:

- In the short term, it is the intention of Council to manage City Centre growth, so as not to exceed the current City Centre OCP Regional Context Statement (RCS) population target of 62,000 people in 2021 and the City target of 212,000 people by 2021, as per the current OCP Regional Context Statement (RCS) and Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP) policies;
- Later, under the updated regional GMS and complementary RCS with an appropriate increase in the CCAP population estimate (e.g., 90,000 people by 2031 in the City Centre).

The City will convey its long term City Centre population growth capability, needs, and estimates to the MV Board for inclusion as guidelines in the future regional GMS, noting that the City Centre is growing and its development is based on maximizing the benefits of the Canada Line and transit-oriented development, and achieving compact and complete communities.

City Centre Area Vision

To be a “world class” urban centre and the centrepiece of Richmond as it emerges to fulfill its vision of becoming the “most appealing, livable, and well-managed community in Canada.”



1.3 Vision

How do we achieve this vision?

CCAP Goals

The City Centre Area Plan’s goals are not intended to accelerate growth, but rather to direct it to help facilitate Richmond’s vision of becoming the “most appealing, livable, and well-managed community in Canada”.

The CCAP goals enable an approach to urban development that is socially, environmentally, and fiscally responsible, and serves to enhance the quality of life in communities, complement eco-system function, and use tax revenues wisely. The CCAP Goals are to:

1. Build Community

To be an inclusive community designed to empower and support its diverse and changing urban population.

2. Build Green

To be a culture that uniquely supports and celebrates Richmond as an “island city by nature”.

3. Build Economic Vitality

To be a dynamic and innovative business environment that builds on Richmond’s unique combination of economic, cultural and lifestyle opportunities.

4. Build a Legacy

To be a vibrant, urban community built around a diverse array of people, activities, facilities, places, and environments that provide opportunities to take pleasure in public life and celebrate Richmond’s unique heritage and cultures – past, present, and future.

1.4 CCAP Alignment with Corporate Sustainability Initiatives

The City is committed to improving sustainability efforts, which include an evolving Triple Bottom Line (TBL) approach. A Triple Bottom Line approach means considering environmental, economic, and social objectives in every decision – both to identify and mitigate potential negative impacts, as well as to identify opportunities to add value in these areas.

The City is in the early stages of applying TBL decision-making approaches. At this point, there is an understanding that the application of TBL means that decision-making should be:

- broad in scope, inclusive of short and longer-term thinking;
- multi-objective, integrative, and value-added;
- aligned with recognized goals and targets;
- flexible and adaptive;
- inclusive, accountable, and transparent.

This 2031 CCAP advances sustainability by translating the four overarching CCAP Goals: Build Community; Build Green; Build Economic Vitality; Build Legacy, into innovative policies.

The CCAP also incorporates two key principles of sustainable community planning:

- Compact & Complete Communities;
- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD).

Sustainability entails addressing many challenging issues and goals that cannot be achieved in a short time. Development of the City Centre will significantly affect how well Richmond will be able to evolve towards becoming a sustainable community. It is important that development strengthen, not erode, local capacity for enhanced sustainability.

This CCAP establishes a long-term City Centre vision and coordinates a diverse range of community objectives. In this manner, this CCAP provides a foundation to evolve towards higher levels of sustainable performance.

In addition, the CCAP commits to a process of regular review, through which it is anticipated that over time, the City will be able to advance sustainability in the City Centre by:

- addressing issues in more depth;
- strengthening policy integration and sophistication to optimize multiple benefits;
- preparing strategies at rates that will meet community sustainability needs.

1.5 Planning Strategies

A Long-Term Perspective

Conventional planning practices typically consider a 20-year timeframe; a period short enough to be “predictable”, yet long enough to produce results. This timeframe, however, underestimates the impact of today’s decisions on future generations and can undermine the effectiveness of those decisions on long-term challenges such as sprawl, urban sustainability, and climate change.

Unlike such plans, the City Centre Area Plan (CCAP) seeks to envision Richmond’s downtown at the end of the century when it is “built out”. How many people will live here? Where will they live? Where will they work, learn, play, and shop? And, how will they move about?

The benefits of this approach are:

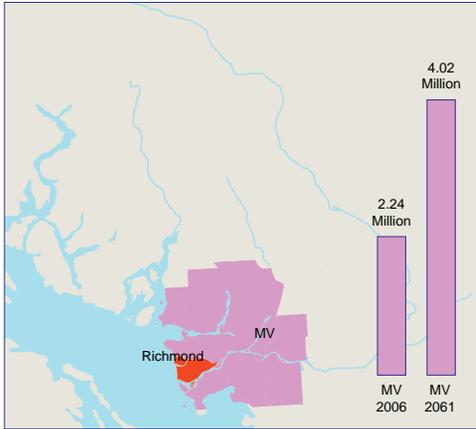
- a better understanding of the City Centre’s total development capacity and how the City can best respond to evolving issues of supply and demand;
- land use and density decisions driven more by long-term objectives and less by short-term market pressures;
- increased confidence on the part of investors, stakeholders, and the community;
- a better understanding of the lifecycle impacts of long-lived infrastructure projects, including parks, the street network, the Canada Line, and major facilities such as the Richmond Oval and other cultural and recreation buildings;
- a greater understanding of how the City Centre may affect city-wide growth and land use, and how to best reflect this in Richmond’s future updating of its city-wide Official Community Plan (OCP, Schedule 1).

Creating a Mixed-Use, Transit-Oriented Village Framework

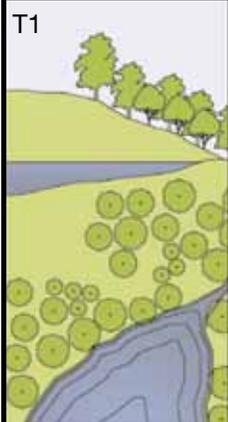
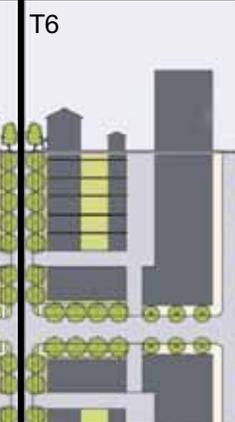
The City Centre Area Plan (CCAP) presents a “framework” for development based on three key planning strategies:

- the Urban Transect;
- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD);
- an Urban Village Network.

Metro Vancouver Map



Anticipated regional growth to 2061.

Planning Strategies	Description					
<p>A. Urban Transect</p>	<p>The Urban Transect is a way to describe a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuum of development from natural areas through to high-density urban areas based on their relative intensities of use and scale of buildings; • “form-based code” that supports sustainable, mixed-use strategies for organizing community development, as opposed to approaches that seek to segregate uses. <p>Across Richmond, the full spectrum of transects is represented. Within the City Centre, Richmond’s most urbanized area, three transects are represented: “T4 – General Urban”, “T5 – Urban Centre”, and “T6 – Urban Core”.</p>					
<p>T1</p> 	<p>T2</p> 	<p>T3</p> 	<p>T4</p> 	<p>T5</p> 	<p>T6</p> 	
						
<p>T1 Natural Predominantly lands in a wilderness condition.</p>	<p>T2 Rural Predominantly open & farmed lands that are sparsely settled.</p>	<p>T3 Suburban Predominantly, low-density, low-rise buildings on large blocks.</p>	<p>T4 General Urban Predominantly ground-oriented buildings of 4 storeys or less.</p>	<p>T5 Urban Centre Predominantly medium-density buildings of 6 storeys or less.</p>	<p>T6 Urban Core Predominantly high-density buildings greater than 6 storeys.</p>	
<p>B. Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)</p>	<p>TOD is a concept for compact, walkable communities centred around high quality transit systems that make it possible for people to enjoy a better quality of life and healthier lifestyles with less dependence on the car, easier access to amenities and services, less sprawl, and less impact on the environment.</p> <p>TOD builds on the concepts introduced by the “Urban Transect” and directs that a community’s highest density, high-quality, mixed-use development should be situated within a 5-minute walk (400 m/1,312 ft.) or less of a transit station.</p> <p>TOD’s effectiveness is influenced by the transit system’s attractiveness, and job and residential densities at both ends of and along the transit system.</p> <p>The City Centre is ideally suited to TOD, as Richmond leads the region in its ratio of jobs to working residents and the City Centre is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the south terminus of the Canada Line, with direct airport and Vancouver links; • a rapidly densifying, high-amenity, multiple-family community; • an international and regional “gateway” and regional retail centre, with significant capacity for job growth and diversification; • the home of the Richmond Oval, the long-track speed skating venue for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. 					
<p>C. Urban Village Network</p>	<p>“Urban village” is another name for the type of compact, walkable, transit-centred community encouraged by TOD.</p> <p>In the City Centre, the five Canada Line stations and riverfront development near the Richmond Oval present the opportunity to establish a network of attractive “urban villages” that will break the City Centre into identifiable, pedestrian-scaled communities and create a network of focal points for the delivery of community services.</p> <p>Features of the City Centre’s urban villages will enable them to support three district levels of need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the day-to-day needs of local village residents, workers, and visitors; • the position of the City Centre as the urban heart of Richmond (by meeting key city-wide needs); • Richmond’s position in the region (by providing special uses not duplicated in other communities, together with uses that reinforce the City’s role as part of a regional service network). 					

Urban Village Features	Preferred Maximum Distance from a Village Centre		
	3-Minute Walk 200 m (656 ft.)	5-Minute Walk 400 m (1,312 ft.)	10-Minute Walk 800 m (2,625 ft.)
<i>Village-Serving Features – Required or Highly Desirable</i>			
Transit Station, Plaza & Related Retail	X		
Transit-Oriented Residential & Office	X	X	X
“Street” - Pedestrian-Oriented Retail & Services	X		
Convenience Commercial & Personal Services (e.g., Grocery Stores)	X	X	
Neighbourhood Park & Children’s Playground	X	X	
Affordable Housing	X	X	X
Child Care Facilities	X	X	X
Library Services	X	X	
Social & Community Services	X	X	
Recreational & Cultural Services	X	X	
Community Policing Facilities	X	X	
<i>City Centre-Serving Features – Required or Highly Desirable</i>			
Public & Private Schools			X
Community Centres	X	X	
Greenways	X	X	X
Health Facilities	X	X	X
Public Safety (Administrative) Facilities	X	X	
Branch Libraries	X	X	
Places of Worship		X	X
<i>City-Wide & Regional Features – Required or Encouraged</i>			
Main Library	X		
Major Cultural Facilities	X		
Major Recreational Facilities	X	X	X
Major Commercial Entertainment Facilities	X	X	
Major Parks	X	X	X
Festival Grounds & Parade Routes		X	X
Hospitals		X	X
Exhibition & Conference Facilities	X	X	
Post-Secondary Education Facilities	X	X	

1.6 An Urban Development Framework

Framework Principles

The City Centre Area Plan (CCAP), based on Urban Transect, Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), and Urban Village strategies, defines a “framework” for Richmond’s downtown growth that embodies seven key urban development principles:



1. Direct Growth Towards Major Catalysts

Focus new, higher density development in areas that achieve community benefit near the Canada Line, Richmond Oval, and the riverfront.



2. Respect Key Established Neighbourhoods and Precincts

Reinforce the City Centre’s No. 3 Road “spine”, and retain and enhance existing residential neighbourhoods in the southeast and viable industrial lands near the North Arm of the Fraser River.



3. Take Advantage of High Aircraft Noise Areas for Business

Where housing is restricted due to Richmond’s policy on residential development in areas of high aircraft noise, maximize opportunities for well-located, cost-effective office, industry, and related development.



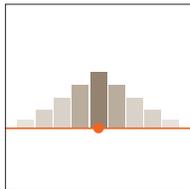
4. Bonus TOD Development at Village Centres

Incentivize growth and the provision of non-residential uses through high-rise development and density bonusing where properties are within 200 m (656 ft.) of a village centre.



5. Match Built Form with Amount of Growth

Beyond 200 m (656 ft.) from a village centre, rely heavily on grade-oriented and low- and mid-rise housing, commercial, and industrial buildings to accommodate anticipated growth and provide diversity and flexibility.



6. Encourage “Peaks & Valleys”

Encourage the creation of a varied skyline, a sunny public realm, enhanced livability and views, and a distinctive urban form by generally having the maximum building height and density at village centres and contrasting this with lower building heights and larger open spaces elsewhere.

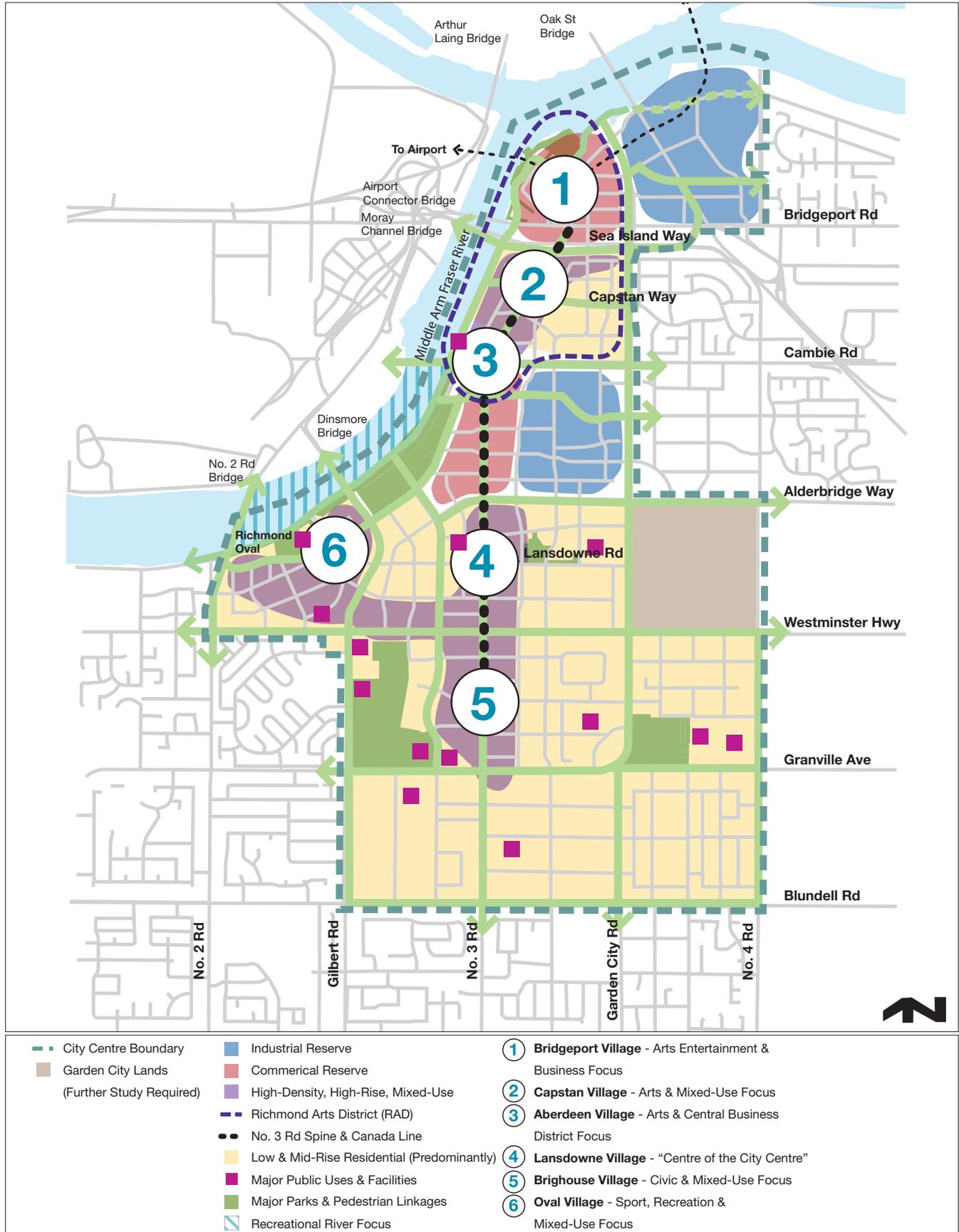


7. Ensure a High Standard of Public Amenity

Build in arts, culture, heritage, recreation, and opportunities for people to make meaningful connections with each other and the natural environment as a fundamental pillar of the Area Plan.

City Centre Framework Map

Bylaw 10154
2023/11/27



Projected City Centre Development at Build-Out

	Land
Net Development Land Area ¹	60%
City Parks	15%
City Streets	20%
Garden City Lands ²	5%
TOTAL	100%

¹ Including public open spaces and civic facilities on private property and other non-park lands.

² Subject to future planning.

Anticipated Development Potential

The framework principles and concept, propose to protect lands already “built out” or zoned for high-density uses, and to supplement them with new medium- and high-density areas, parks, recreation, cultural, and related uses.

In the City Centre’s “built-out” and “pre-planned” residential areas, primarily situated in the community’s southeast corner, the number of residents is projected to grow from 23,400 by 39% to approximately 32,000, while business floor area is expected to be negligible.

Elsewhere, in the City Centre’s six urban villages, residential and business growth is expected to be greater. To support this, it is important to ensure that development parameters are not defined too narrowly, which could discourage innovative, market-driven, or site-specific opportunities. To enable this, the maximum development capacity in these areas exceeds anticipated demand by 20% more.

Anticipated CCAP 2100 Development						
Village	Gross Land Area	Population Potential	Job Potential ²			
			Commercial	Public Sector	Industrial	Total
Bridgeport	116 ha (286 ac.)	Nil ¹	15,500-21,200	0-100	3,400-4,500	18,900-25,800
Capstan	57 ha (140 ac.)	13,000-16,000	2,300-3,300	0-100	0	2,300-3,400
Aberdeen	110 ha (271 ac.)	Nil ¹	19,500-26,800	800-1,100	2,000-2,700	22,300-30,600
Landowne	130 ha (322 ac.)	26,000-31,000	5,900-8,100	1,400-1,700	0	7,300-9,800
Brighthouse	141 ha (348 ac.)	26,000-30,000	6,100-8,400	9,800-11,100	0	15,900-19,500
Oval	57 ha (140 ac.)	12,000-14,000	2,500-3,500	1,900-2,300	0	4,400-5,800
Southeast	320 ha (792 ac.)	32,000-38,000	Negligible			
TOTAL	931 ha (2,300 ac.)	Target ² 120,000	51,800-71,300	13,900-16,400	5,400-7,200	Target ² 80,000

Bylaw 8837
2012/03/12

¹ Residential uses are not permitted in these areas under the Area Plan due to aircraft and highway noise and business objectives.

² Population and job “targets” represent the City’s best information regarding future growth and are intended to help guide planning, service delivery, and related processes. Actual population and number of jobs may vary.