

Part II

3.0 The Strategy

What we want to achieve

3.1 The Vision: Linking People, the Community and Nature

Richmond's trail system will be a vibrant network of interconnected trails, greenways, blueways, and cycling routes that will support the City's commitment to creating a livable, attractive and healthy community. It will provide a variety of exciting opportunities for walking and cycling that will link people to each other, to their community, and to Richmond's unique natural and cultural heritage.

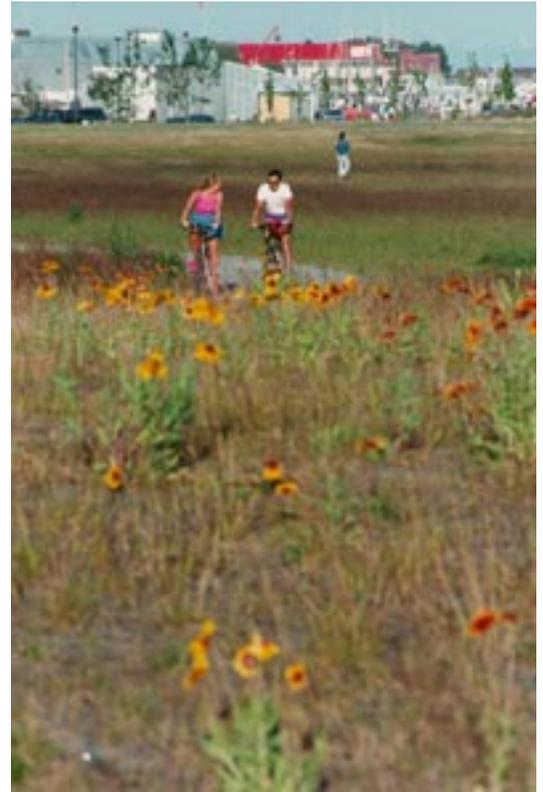
Trends, community goals and existing policies all indicate that a key factor in creating a livable community is the linking of people to each other, to their neighbourhood and community facilities and amenities and to nature. Inherent in the Vision statement is the idea of linking community to community; nature to community (introducing nature into the city), and nature to nature (improving environmental sustainability).

The benefits of creating these links are many and far reaching for the community. As outlined in more detail in Section 2.4 trails can provide the venue to:

- promote healthy lifestyles and communities
- provide a sense of community pride
- increase awareness of Richmond's rich Island heritage
- encourage environmental stewardship and partnerships
- protect the environment
- generate economic benefits

For purposes of this Strategy four types of links and guiding principles within the overall trail system have been identified, each having slightly different goals and functions. These include:

- a. Neighbourhood and Community Links
- b. City-wide Links
- c. Nature Links
- d. Blueway Links



Linking people, the community and nature



Walking to Steveston Village through the park



Walking to school

Neighbourhood and community.

Definitions:

For purposes of this study the neighbourhood is defined by the quarter section layout of the city and a community is defined by a designated planning area. The majority of these neighbourhoods have been designed with at least one park often owned jointly with a school site, a series of walkways and are bordered by arterial roads. A community is made up of a series of neighbourhoods and would likely contain major destinations such as a community park and recreational facilities, shopping districts, or commercial/industrial areas and/or a natural feature such as the waterfront or a slough.

3.1.1 Neighbourhood and Community Links

Recognizing that every journey starts at home.

The neighbourhood and local community is the focus of many people's lives. The heart of the neighbourhood is often the local school and park site or a shopping area. If the vision is to encourage people to walk or cycle as a way of life and to provide opportunities for social interaction then it is critical to begin at the neighbourhood level. People are basically encouraged to walk when the pedestrian environment is comfortable, pleasant and interconnected. Sidewalks, walkways, paths in parks and even neighbourhood streets are all part of the neighbourhood pedestrian and cycling network. Once people become comfortable at the local level then they can move into the larger community and onto the city-wide network of trails around the island.

Overall Goal:

- To provide safe and easy circulation within the neighbourhood and across the arterial roads into adjacent neighbourhoods and communities to visit friends, a school park site, community facility or a shopping area.

Guiding Principles

These help guide decisions on route selection, design criteria, development priorities and further action.

The neighbourhood and community trail system is:

- safe
- accessible to all
- links to places people want to go
- easy to use and understand
- attractive and comfortable
- economical

3.1.2 City-Wide Links

Celebrating Richmond's uniqueness

One of the strongest and most memorable image of Richmond is its waterfront perimeter trail system. People make strong attachments to parts of the city that are easily recognizable. The existing waterfront trails are easy to access and provide the greatest connection for people to the City's natural assets along the foreshore, to heritage sites and to the working river.

Other major trails provide cross town routes for commuters and recreational users along internal corridors, such as Shell Road, and connect to designated cycling lanes on major arterial roads.

These major trails provide many opportunities to increase the community's awareness and appreciation of Richmond's Island City by Nature heritage, to program activities and to build upon the trends in eco-tourism and heritage tourism.

Overall Goal:

- To create a continuous interconnected network of the city-wide trails that provides clear links to key destinations and points of interest in Richmond and allows for maximum water front access.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for the neighbourhood and community links apply here as well. Further principles include:

The city-wide trail system is:

- integrated, continuous and easy to use
- the thread that links different character areas and land uses and key destinations in the city
- integrated with other city initiatives
- sensitive to adjacent land uses and owners
- built upon tourism opportunities
- protecting and enhancing the natural environment
- coordinated with the mandate and objectives of other agencies



South Dyke - views of the marshes and working river



London's Landing - 'Windows on the Waterfront'



North Arm - enjoying the waterfront

3.1.3 Nature Links

Allowing nature to flourish

Much of the existing trail system is adjacent to, or travels through, environmentally sensitive areas such as the Fraser River, Sturgeon Banks foreshore and sloughes. The sights, the smell of the sea water, the sounds of nature all create an indelible image and memorable experience. Access or close proximity to natural areas increases public appreciation and awareness of the value of these greens spaces to the environmental sustainability of a city.

As important as it is to link people to nature, it is also important to link nature to nature. These nature linkages not only encourage people to walk and cycle, and thereby, help the environment but also they facilitate the movement of wildlife from one area to another. Isolated pockets of green space in an urban environment do not function as well as green spaces that are linked to allow for this movement. The appropriate design, maintenance and planting is critical to truly ensure that nature flourishes in the city.

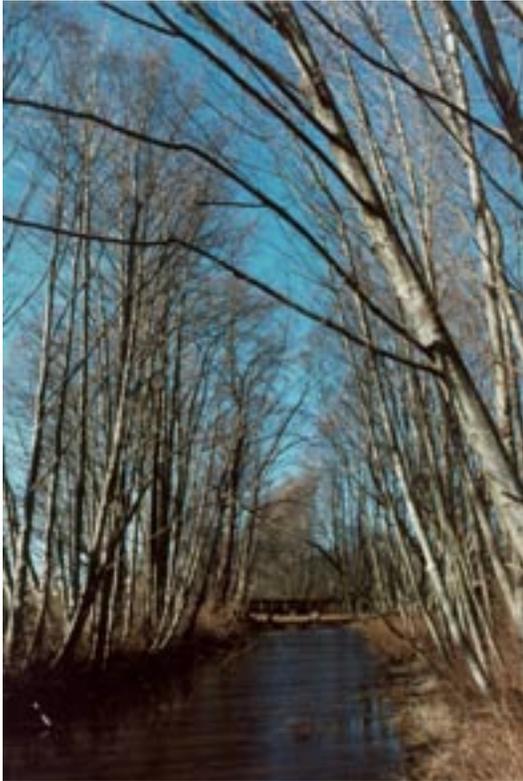
Overall Goal:

- To develop green corridors that link a diversity of open spaces such as formal city parks, natural areas, drainage canals, and agricultural land.

Guiding Principles

The trail system:

- strives to link existing natural areas
- recognizes that some areas may be better served by minimizing or preventing public access to ensure the ecological viability of the area
- provides opportunities to increase public awareness of the value and diversity of natural landscapes in Richmond
- is developed in an environmentally sustainable manner
- protects and enhance the natural environment
- aims to introduce natural features into the city for environmental and aesthetic benefits



Horseshoe Slough



Deer in East Richmond

3.1.4 Blueway Links

Connecting with the water

The vibrancy, the panoramic views and the sights and sounds of Richmond's waterfront keeps bringing people back to the water's edge. Although Richmond is made up of a series of islands, few people actually experience touching water or have an opportunity to be out on the water. The concept of 'blueways' is to take this incredible asset of being an island(s) and complement the land based trail system with water based leisure, marine, commercial and transportation activities and amenities.

Water based amenities, activities and special events (such as Richmond's Tall Ships 2002 Festival), boat launches, marinas, floating restaurants, water taxis, eco-boat tours of the river, sailing, canoeing and other boating activities are all opportunities to link trail users to the water. Even fishing and observation piers and boardwalks provide an opportunity to 'leave' the land and experience a new vantage point of Richmond's *Island City, by Nature* heritage.

Overall Goal:

To ensure that 'blueways' (water based activities and amenities) are an integral component of an interconnected network of trails that truly celebrates Richmond's unique asset of being a series of islands in the Fraser River.

Guiding Principles

As the Waterfront Development Strategy and Blueways Program develops further guiding principles will be applied. Some initial principles are provided below:

The Waterfront Strategy and Blueways Program:

- aims to maximize the accessibility to waterfronts and waterways
- ensures an integration of Visions for land and water use amongst the various stakeholders
- respects the environmental sensitivity of the foreshore and waterways
- promotes water safety and awareness of the water actions in the river



Example of an Aquabus



Access to the water



Water based events

3.2 The Strategy Outline

The Strategy and the rest of this document will focus on identifying the opportunities and recommendations for planning, designing, and constructing of trails to achieve the Vision statement of *Linking People, Community and Nature*. This information is organized in the following sections:

❑ **The Existing Trail System**

What we are starting with

- ***The Challenges and Recommendations***

Identifying the users and the infrastructure that makes up the existing urban trail system and recommendations to improve it.

❑ **Key Issues and Opportunities**

Coordinating and Maximizing our Efforts

Identifying the opportunities to maximize the community benefits of trails and coordinate with existing initiatives.

❑ **The Plan**

Building the Network

- ***Neighbourhoods and Community Links***

Development of a conceptual framework for creating a walkable and cycling friendly neighbourhood and community.

- ***City-wide Trails and Greenways Implementation Plan***

Identifying the major routes, missing links and recommendations to creating a network of interconnected trails.

❑ **Design Ideas**

What it could look like

Providing design ideas that support the concepts.

❑ **Implementation**

Making it happen

Reviewing funding and implementation strategies to building the network and meeting community needs.

Providing a three year (2003-2006) implementation program.