



Richmond Mayor & Councillors  
City of Richmond  
6911 No. 3 Road  
Richmond, BC, V6Y 2C1

**SENT BY EMAIL**

**April 9, 2024**

**Dear Mayor Brodie and Councillors**

**Re: Main 2041 Official Community Plan - 2022-2024 OCP Review**

This is a submission from the Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition (RPRC) regarding the above noted Official Community Plan (OCP) Review.

The RPRC is a *“coalition of Richmond residents and agencies working together to reduce poverty and the impacts of poverty with research, projects, and public education.”*

Our members include 11 local Richmond organizations that provide services and programs to Richmond’s most vulnerable residents. Collectively, the RPRC represents thousands of low-income Richmond residents receiving vital services from Richmond agencies. RPRC members serving these Richmond residents are striving to help them live in dignity in Richmond.

The RPRC believes the City’s OCP should support and nurture Richmond residents of all income levels and provide the infrastructure, environment, and opportunities to enable them to participate fully in civil society.

The City’s OCP review is a comprehensive and detailed document that deals with 12 complex issues ranging from “Connected Neighbourhoods” to “Resilient Economy.” Further, it states that housing affordability, social equity, environmental protection, and climate mitigation are some themes being proposed in a review of Richmond’s OCP.

Accordingly, the RPRC will limit our remarks and recommendations to these four themes of Housing Affordability, Social Equity, Environmental Protection, and Climate Mitigation.

As the City’s website and OCP document notes, “the OCP’s outlook is 30 years, so the review of the plan will include looking at new significant trends including demographic shifts, technological advances, economic shifts and environmental changes.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.richmond.ca/shared/assets/OCP\\_9000\\_consolidation34181.pdf](https://www.richmond.ca/shared/assets/OCP_9000_consolidation34181.pdf)

The priorities and policy pillars of the RPRC align with many of the City’s priorities. We recommend that Richmond City Council direct the incorporation of the following priorities for future action in the City of Richmond’s revised OCP.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

It is encouraging to read that The OCP should be a “comprehensive rethink of traditional approaches to improve housing affordability. This could include seeing how land prices can be controlled, for example, through a housing authority or requiring any additional density added to a development to be used for affordable housing.”<sup>2</sup>

The RPRC also notes that in the City of Richmond’s Housing Needs report Nov 2021,<sup>3</sup> 95 % of Richmond residents couldn’t afford to buy a single-family home in the city if they didn’t already own one.

### The RPRC recommends the City of Richmond include in their OCP:

- The creation of a local **Housing Authority** to bring together the administration of Richmond housing assistance program under one roof. This would include a LEMR (Low End Market Rental) registry and waitlist.
- The use of a **Rental Tenure** <sup>4</sup> policy tool in areas close to transit, jobs, and services.
- A mandate for a percentage of **fully accessible** housing units in all new developments.
- A **Not-for-profit** entity that will provide oversight and administration for housing especially for seniors, and low-income families and individuals.
- A Made-in-Richmond **Homelessness Action Plan** to progress beyond the City’s Homelessness Strategy <sup>5</sup> into the next stage.

## SOCIAL EQUITY

The OCP review states it wants “to look at how all groups – regardless of age, social income and ethnicity – could participate equally in society, so that their basic needs are met, and they have access to community services.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.richmond.ca/\\_shared/assets/housingneeds59652.pdf](https://www.richmond.ca/_shared/assets/housingneeds59652.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/lc/billsprevious/3rd41st.gov23-1>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.richmond.ca/\\_shared/assets/richmond\\_homelessness\\_strategy54624.pdf](https://www.richmond.ca/_shared/assets/richmond_homelessness_strategy54624.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

The review also states social equity should remove systemic barriers that cause the disparities experienced by different groups of people and would include planning of neighbourhood service centres or Hubs.

**The RPRC recommends the City of Richmond become:**

- A **Safe City** by adopting **Vision Zero**<sup>7</sup> principles and processes into the current safe systems approach.
- An **Inclusive City** where people with lived experience of the issue sit at all local decision-making tables.
- A **Connected City** with a comprehensive plan for socially connected and walkable/rollable neighbourhoods for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes with a variety of housing, jobs, and services.
- A **Multi-Modal City** with increased mobility and access for walking, rolling, transiting, and cycling via neighbourhood sidewalks, transit in east/ west directions, and cycling paths for use for everyday travel to jobs and services.
- A **Healthy City** with access to a continuum of health and wellness services including not-for-profit facilities for substance use treatment, recovery, and detox.
- A **Living Wage**<sup>8</sup> **City** where a living wage policy is established for city contracted services, thereby becoming a leader to local businesses to do the same.

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

The OCP review states that Richmond imports most of its food, creating concerns for the stability of the food supply in the face of rising energy costs and climate change.

Since about 39% of Richmond’s land base is in the Agricultural Land Reserve, this asset could help to meet our local food security needs

**The RPRC recommends the City of Richmond:**

- Support farmers and the intended use of the ALR by demanding landowners use back lands for food production and/ or enter **long-term leases** with local farmers.
- Amend current policy on developers’ community amenity contributions by adding the category of “**Commercial Kitchen.**”

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.tac-atc.ca/sites/default/files/site/doc/publications/2023/prm-vzss-e.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.livingwageforfamilies.ca/living\\_wage\\_rates](https://www.livingwageforfamilies.ca/living_wage_rates)

- Create a **Food Hub**<sup>9</sup> to source, manage, and distribute emergency food and become a one-stop-shop for administering emergency food services programs.
- **Sustain and connect** neighbourhood parks and encourage people and nature to abide together by creating wildlife corridors and reservoirs for wild pollinators, increasing tree cover in all areas of the city lacking, and decreasing the amount of non-permeable surfaces in the city.
- **Defend the public realm** by providing free access to all park areas and creating additional Multi-Use Pathways (MUP) trails throughout Richmond.

## CLIMATE MITIGATION

The OCP review states Richmond will need to mitigate climate change by rapidly reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from both buildings and in transportation and 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.

The OCP review's focus on GHG emissions and a circular economy is important. In March 2023, the RPRC submitted a Report and Recommendations on the City of Richmond Circular Economy Draft Strategy.<sup>10</sup>

To date, we have not received a reply from the City to our Circular Economy submission, but we look forward to our recommendations being considered for the finalized OCP.

Turning to the climate issues affecting low-income residents, the RPRC is concerned with the immediate effects of climate change on their daily lives, such as the heat dome we experienced in 2021 and the extreme winter weather in 2022 and 2023.

We are also concerned when residents are experiencing energy poverty and cannot access the levels of energy needed to live decent lives. More Canadians potentially suffer from energy poverty than food insecurity.<sup>11</sup>

### The RPRC recommends the City of Richmond:

- Amend the City **Standards of Maintenance**<sup>12</sup> bylaw for landlords by adding a high temperature allowable limit (26 C) to the low temperature limit already in place.
- Extend the **Extreme Weather Shelter Response** (EWSR) to unlink it from calendar dates and align openings with the actual winter weather.

<sup>9</sup> <https://richmondfoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ConnectingFoodSystemsRFBS2021-1.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.richmondprc.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/RPRC\\_final\\_report\\_march\\_2023\\_city\\_of\\_richmond\\_draft\\_circular\\_economy\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.richmondprc.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/RPRC_final_report_march_2023_city_of_richmond_draft_circular_economy_strategy.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-02-energy-poverty-canada-overlooked-health.html>

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.richmond.ca/\\_\\_\\_shared/assets/bylaw\\_815915844.pdf](https://www.richmond.ca/___shared/assets/bylaw_815915844.pdf)

- Investigate the need for **Energy Poverty policy** <sup>13</sup> by engaging in a study of Richmond residents to ask whether renters and homeowners face barriers in paying for heat and cooling in their homes and the extent to which this barrier exists.

We are pleased that many of the priorities of the City of Richmond align with the priorities and pillars of the RPRC. We trust these recommendations will be seriously considered as the City moves towards becoming a Sustainable Community that welcomes everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Main 2041 Official Community Plan - 2022-2024 OCP Review.

Should you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact the undersigned at [de\\_whalen@hotmail.com](mailto:de_whalen@hotmail.com) or at 604.230.3158.

Sincerely,

-original signed-

Deirdre Whalen  
President, RPRC

cc. RPRC Directors  
RPRC members

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.pembina.org/pub/better-buildings-all>