ATTACHMENT 2

richmond 2050
planning together

What We Heard:
Official Community Plan Targeted Update
Phase One Engagement Summary

February 2025

GP – 17

Richmond

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What do you love about
My favourite place is the fisherman's wharf at Steveston Village. I love going there with my family on the weekends!
Minoru Park is one of my favourite places since I enjoy my walks there and it's so quiet.
Tera Nova Rural Park is one of my favourite places to visit with my family. My kids loved the playground and like to bike around the park.
community centers
CENTRE
dining, parks, friendly neighbours
Landscaping!
I love the Community
Going to Minoru with friends
Your though
Gulf of Georgia

Introduction

Richmond is undertaking a Targeted Update of its Official Community Plan (OCP) in 2024/2025 to address key priorities such as housing affordability, equity from a land-use perspective, and environmental resilience, while meeting new provincial requirements.

Since the adoption of the current OCP in 2012, Richmond's population and economy have grown, and transformations in the above noted areas – particularly on vulnerable populations – have intensified. While the OCP has been amended over the years to remain effective, we are undertaking a targeted update to ensure our OCP aligns with current social, economic and environmental priorities, and community values, as well as new legislative mandates.

The update will take place over three phases. Phase one is now complete. It comprised of raising awareness and gathering feedback on areas for improvement and early ideas for targeted areas.

The community had online and in-person engagement opportunities to get involved from September to December 2024. This report represents the results and findings from community engagements which will help inform the next steps of Phase two and three.

OCP Update Themes and Target Areas

This Targeted OCP Update is guided by the overarching themes of **Resiliency, Equity, Adaptation,** and **Completeness** with six target areas. The first four target areas are the priority for this update:

1. Housing Affordability

4. Climate Mitigation & Adaptation

2. Equity

5. Long-Term Planning for Emerging Trends & Transformational Technologies

3. Environmental Protection & Enhancement

6. Administrative Updates

Engagement timeline

The OCP Targeted Update timeline is divided into three phases and encompasses the following steps:

1. Prepare engagement framework (Summer 2024)
2. OCP launch (September 2024)
3. Pop-up booths (September to October 2024)
4. Open houses and online survey (November 2024)
5. Community engagement analysis (December 2024 to January 2025)
6. Phases two and three (February to October 2025)
7. Seek Council consideration of the OCP bylaw with Public Hearing (October 2025)

Fall to Winter 2024

1 **Public engagement**

Raise awareness and invite the public to learn about the OCP process and ways to get involved.

Winter to Spring 2025

2 **Draft update options**

Draft planning directions that are informed by research and engagement feedback on Early Ideas. Engage with advisory committees and staff on planning directions.

Summer to Fall 2025

3 **Pulling the plan together**

Incorporate and consider feedback from the previous two phases. The new OCP bylaw will be prepared for consideration by Council with a Public Hearing.

Phase 1 of Community Engagement

The first phase of engagement focused on:

- raising awareness
- gathering feedback on the community, identifying areas for improvement
- providing feedback on early ideas for each target area.

We had over over 740 interactions with people – from online project page visits to participating in online and in-person engagements. This input will inform development of updated OCP policies to reflect community priorities and prepare Richmond for future growth.

By incorporating public feedback and addressing provincial requirements, the OCP Targeted Update aims to create a sustainable, equitable, and resilient plan that aligns with Richmond's long-term vision.

Engagement Summary

Various public and stakeholder engagement opportunities took place to discuss and receive feedback on the early ideas for the OCP update. They took place from September to December 2024.

In-person	• 9 Pop-up booths throughout the city • 4 Public open houses • 5 Advisory Committee meetings	• 350 interactions • 128 attendees • 40 members
Online	• Let's Talk Richmond – Ask a Question • Let's Talk Richmond – Survey • Let's Talk Richmond – Get Snapping photo submission campaign	• 20 questions submitted • 42 surveys submitted • 35 photos submitted

Details and feedback summaries follow in the next sections.

Open houses
Richmond 2050
Planning Together

What We Heard – An Overall Summary

Based on all the engagement activities, the following overarching summaries emerged:

- **Housing affordability**
  Overall support for diverse housing options and affordability, with balanced density, infrastructure upgrades, and provision for services and amenities. Concerns include housing affordability, traffic challenges, the capacity of schools, and alternative transportation options outside of the City Centre.
- **Equitable community**
  Overall a strong sense of community and safety, with emphasis on fostering equitable policies and enhancing local services. Better support for unhoused individuals, crime reduction, and cultural inclusivity are desired.
- **Environmental protection & enhancement**
  Appreciation for extensive park network, ecological areas and dike management. Suggestions for stronger environmental protection, urban forestry, and climate adaptation strategies.
- **Climate mitigation & adaptation**
  A focus on protective measures against extreme weather events while balancing housing priorities.

Separate detailed feedback summaries for each of the engagement opportunities is provided later in this report.

What We Did

The following provides detailed information on each of the Phase one engagement opportunities that took place between September and December 2024.

Engagement Events & Activities

Let's Talk Richmond

- Details:
  - The project was created on LetsTalkRichmond.ca to inform the public about the OCP Targeted Update. There is an option to submit questions and receive a response from staff.
    - Date(s): September 2024 to December 2025
    - Location(s): Online
    - Engaged: 137 webpage visits, 20 submitted questions

Pop-up Booths

- Details:
  - Nine pop-up booths were set up at various locations, and on various days, throughout the city to raise awareness about the project and provide opportunities for the public to learn and get involved. The purpose of these booths was to connect with passersby by "meeting people where they are," reaching those who might not have the chance to provide input online or attend scheduled engagement events. The booths featured display boards explaining the OCP Targeted Update and an interactive activity board where passersby were invited to share what they appreciate about Richmond and what they would like to see improved.
    - Date(s): September to October 2024
    - Location(s): Nine pop-ups across the city
    - Engaged: 350 interactions

Public Open Houses

- Details:
  - Four in-person public open houses were held to share early ideas for the target areas and provide additional opportunities for feedback. Display boards showcased information and attendees had the chance to speak with City staff and have their questions answered.
    - Date(s): November 20, 21, 27, 28, 2024
    - Location(s): Steveston Community Centre, Richmond Public Library Brighouse, Thompson Community Centre , East Richmond Community Hall
    - Engaged: 128 attendees

Let's Talk Richmond Survey

- Details:
  - An online survey was hosted on LetsTalkRichmond.ca, allowing participants to provide input. The survey, which took less than 10 minutes to complete, focused on the four prioritized target areas. The intent of the survey was to be accessible and high level so that community members could complete the survey without having to review the open house display boards.
    - Date(s): November 20 to December 22, 2024
    - Location(s): Online
    - Engaged: 42 participants

Advisory Committees

- Details:
  - Five Advisory Committee meetings were held independently with the Community Services Advisory Committee, Economic Development Advisory Committee, Child Care Development Advisory Committee, Youth Advisory Committee, and Advisory Committee on the Environment. Staff liaisons from these committees reached out to Policy staff requesting presentations with the purpose of raising awareness and promoting ways to get involved with the OCP update.
    - Date(s): September to October 2024
    - Location(s): In-person and online
    - Engaged: Approximately 40 members

Get Snapping Photo Opportunity

- Details:
  - This initiative was hosted on LetsTalkRichmond.ca. Local residents were invited to share photos of their favourite places in Richmond and generate interest throughout the engagement phase. All participants' names were entered into a random draw and five participants were selected to receive a nominal prize. Select photos are featured on the LetsTalkRichmond.ca Get Snapping webpage.
    - Date(s): September to December 2024
    - Location(s): Online
    - Engaged: 50 webpage visits, 35 photo submissions

Outreach and Promotion

Advertising and promotion of the community engagement opportunities took place via various e-channels, including:

- News releases
- City of Richmond project webpage
- Let's Talk Richmond engagement page
- Events calendar
- City e-newsletters
- The Richmond Sentinel online newspaper ads
- Social media posts (Facebook, X, Instagram)
- Posters
- Bus shelter ads
- Emails to Let's Talk Richmond subscribers, Advisory Committees, Residents Associations, local community groups and organizations, community centres, libraries, public schools, civic facilities and Richmond Centre.

What We Heard: Summary of Input & Themes

The following is a breakdown of details and feedback themes received for each engagement method.

Pop-up Booths Engagement

During the pop-up booths, display boards highlighted the OCP Targeted Update to raise awareness. Passersby were asked the following two questions:

- "What do you love about Richmond?"
- "What would you like to see happen in the next 25 years in Richmond?"

Key Themes

Community members shared their feedback using sticky notes.

The following themes emerged for **"What do you love about Richmond?"** by order of frequency:

1. **Services and amenities:** Robust provision of services and amenities in the city, in particular, good community centres, facilities, shopping areas, and schools.
2. **Safety and community:** Appreciation for the diversity and sense of community in Richmond. Overall, the city feels safe and is a good place to grow up as a youth.
3. **Greenspace, trees and public space:** Appreciation for Richmond's extensive parks, greenways and landscaping.
4. **Pedestrian infrastructure:** Richmond has a lot of walkability opportunities, especially for seniors.
5. **Housing affordability and density:** The city is relatively affordable, however there is a need to ensure density is balanced with infrastructure upgrades and amenity provision.
6. **Road and street infrastructure:** Appreciation for walkways on and beside raised dikes.
7. **Culture, equity, access:** Appreciation for food, restaurants, and the city's history.
8. **Public transportation and cycling infrastructure:** Public transit in Richmond is reliable.
9. **Traffic and parking:** Generally the city has good traffic.
10. **Environment:** Overall good air quality.

The following themes emerged for **"What would you like to see happen in the next 25 years in Richmond?"** by order of frequency:

1. **Housing affordability and density:** Concerns about housing affordability and the need for more social and co-op housing. Increasing density also puts a strain on services and amenities.
2. **Services and amenities:** Needed in various neighbourhoods. Some facilities such as the aquatic centre and the hospital are too small and senior citizen programs are not affordable. Having more seating and "places to stay" would be appreciated.
3. **Public transportation and cycling infrastructure:** Need for more public transit and cycling infrastructure, including more bike lanes and easy connections across the city.
4. **Road and street infrastructure:** Improve road infrastructure, such as road signs, drainage, and pot holes gradually.
5. **Traffic and parking:** Increase in density and lack of accessible parking spaces cause traffic and parking challenges.
6. **Safety and community:** Richmond should continue helping the unhoused and improve overall community safety.
7. **Greenspace, trees and public space:** Richmond could have more parks and lively public spaces.
8. **Culture, equity, access:** Create more opportunities to share input and have more diverse food choices.
9. **Pedestrian infrastructure:** Need for safer and more pedestrian walkway connectivity.
10. **Environment:** Concern for the loss of productive farmlands over the years.

Open House Engagement

The in-person open house display boards showcased early ideas for each target area. One of the display boards shared what the City is "thinking about for the OCP targeted Update", which includes:

- Increasing housing supply, broadening housing choices and addressing affordability to support Richmond's diverse and growing population
- Extreme weather events and the effects of climate change have intensified
- Improving protection and increasing integration of green spaces, natural areas and trees
- Coordinating where we live and how we move around—land use, walking, cycling, transit
- Responding to cost of living that continues to rise—housing, food, energy, among others
- Creating an environment where the local economy/jobs can grow with an increasing population
- Guiding the design of new residential development to support livability, quality of life and healthy neighbourhoods

Key Themes

Based on what the City is "thinking about for the OCP targeted Update", attendees were asked if there is "**anything we are missing and should consider**". The following themes highlight what we heard by order of frequency:

- **Road and street infrastructure:** Appreciate the overall dike upgrades in Richmond. There is also a need for road upgrades, traffic signal improvements and more walking paths.
- **Housing affordability and density:** Increasing density through infill housing for single-family zones should be encouraged. There is also a need to build density beyond just along arterial roads. More mixed-use zoning would be beneficial and senior homes are much needed in the city.
- **Public transportation, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure:** Bike lanes and pedestrian walkways can be better distinguished to improve safety.
- **Services and amenities:** Build more amenities such as schools, hospitals, public space, and arts and cultural facilities. Services and amenities should be accessible and affordable as well. Existing schools such as those in the City Centre is already over capacity.
- **Process:** The development review process could be sped up for improved efficiency. The City could also better inform owners whose properties are designated under the Environmentally Sensitive Area Development Permit area.
- **Culture, equity, access:** Improve immigration integration and cultural sensitivity. Small businesses also need more affordable commercial spaces.
- **Public transportation and cycling infrastructure:** Bike lane upgrades to encourage active transportation would help support the City's transportation and climate goals. Overall bus service could be improved as well.
- **Safety and community:** Community safety and lowering crime rates should be a priority.

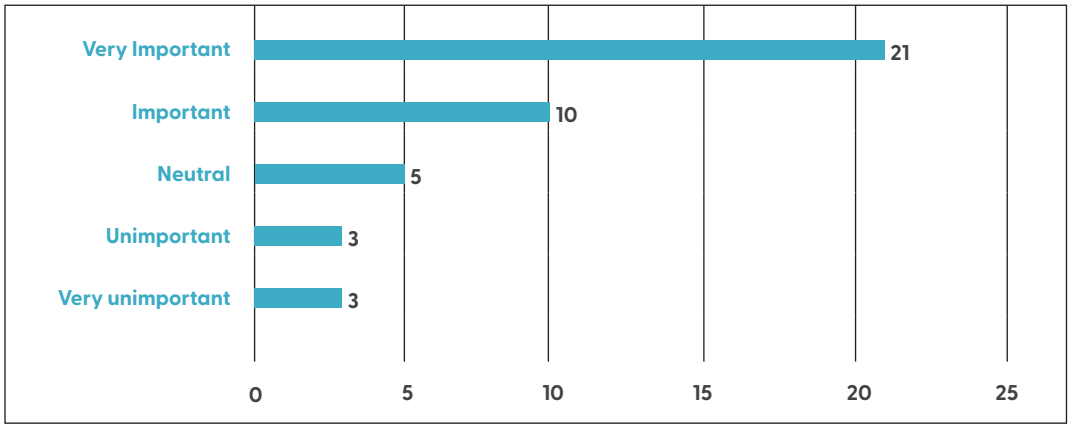
Let's Talk Richmond Survey

An online survey was hosted on LetsTalkRichmond.ca from November 20 to December 22, 2024. It focused on the four prioritized target areas. The survey was developed to be high level and simple so that participants do not need to do a comprehensive review of the open house display boards in order to complete the survey.

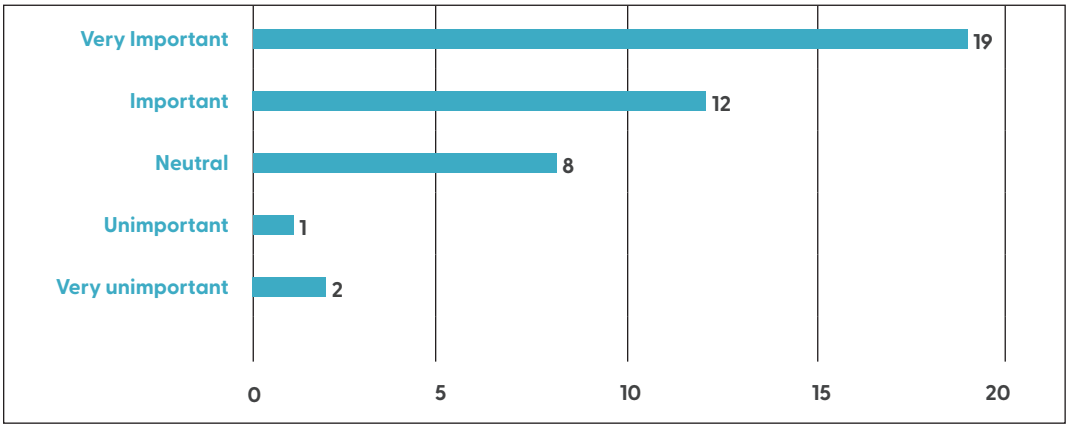
Results

The results of the four questions are shown in the charts below:

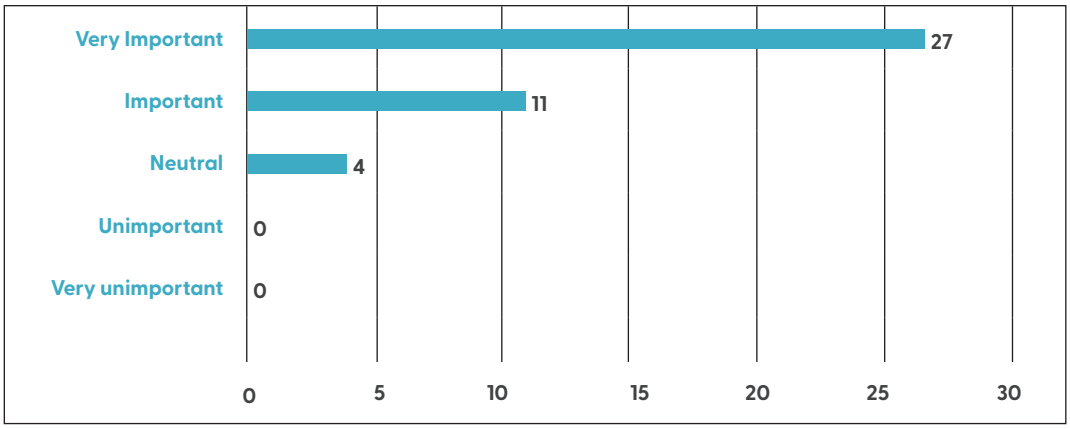
How important is it to build more "affordable housing" and more housing choices outside the City Centre? (42 responses)



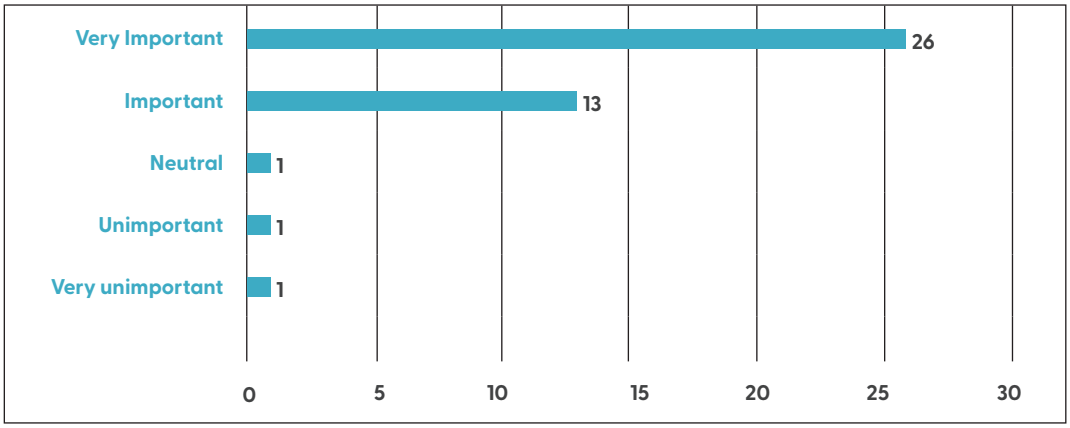
How important is it to strengthen policies to ensure a more equitable and inclusive city? (42 responses)



How important is it to strengthen ecological health, environmentally sensitive areas, and urban forestry? (42 responses)



How important is it to enhance climate change mitigation and adaptation? (42 responses)



Key Themes

Several key themes were heard which are acknowledged below. Concerns related to the target areas will be considered through the OCP Targeted Update.

The following themes highlight what we heard by order of frequency:

Affordable housing

- Prioritize housing and access for those who work minimum wage, service sector workers, young families, people with disabilities, and seniors.
- Increase housing diversity across all affordability levels, including cooperative housing and four-plex rentals.
- Affordable housing should be developed in areas where there are fewer services and amenities, such as outside the City Centre, not just in areas with existing density.
- Affordable housing units in Richmond are not affordable. Tenants struggle to pay rent, purchase groceries, and pay expenses.
- Concern that affordable housing would increase infrastructure cost which would negatively impact tax payers.
- The City should only be mandated to provide affordable housing to Richmond residents, rather than those who are not currently residing in Richmond.

Housing form and density

- More housing density in transit villages outside the City Centre would help distribute the need for affordable housing across the city. Transit villages would support amenities and services and will help minimize traffic issues.
- More market housing should be developed on arterial roads with the highest densities surrounding neighbourhood shopping centres, which would help with housing affordability.
- Support for townhouse developments along arterial roads but not supportive of replacing single-family housing on interior streets.
- Increase density in areas that are only single-family housing would provide more housing choice.
- Increasing density and placing a cap on the rent or sale price of the units would help with housing affordability.
- Current townhouses are not liveable due to the narrow layouts.
- Concern that high rise development would contribute to unstable ground structure.

Environmental protection

- Garden City Lands, environmentally sensitive areas, and agricultural lands should be better protected against development and growth.
- Protect against sea level rise by considering methods such as beach nourishment, coastal tidal marsh construction. Use alternative dike construction methods to encourage growth of native riparian or marine vegetation.
- Reduce the negative affects on wild animals from urbanization such as light pollution and developments.
- Maintain the existing greenery and ecological habitat which makes Richmond unique.
- Concern that environmental protection policies are at odds with development.
- The public should be able to easily access ecological areas for leisure and enjoyment.
- Richmond has the responsibility to plan for and mitigate against environmental risks.
- All areas along the river should have maximum protection for wildlife, including a buffer area.

Climate change

- Efforts to implement climate change mitigation and adaptation are important even though Richmond's efforts are miniscule against global climate change.
- A healthy environment would help mitigate the effects of climate change, considering the past extreme heat events were fatal to the most vulnerable.
- Methods such as energy step codes and heat pump installation would increase housing prices and could contribute to climate change.
- Housing affordability should take priority over climate change. Some issues should be the responsibility of the provincial and federal government.
- Consider expanding District Energy into all neighbourhoods.
- Protection from the effects of extreme weather is important but it takes time for people's behaviour to change.
- Incorporate climate change education into school curriculum.

Parks and greenspace

- Close access to park space is important for people living in high density areas with small living unit sizes.
- Park space would benefit from planting native plant and tree species, with increased efforts to eliminate invasive species.
- Urban forestry, tree canopy, and nature corridors are important for ecological health.
- Encourage the use of public rooftops for solar power or green roofs.

Public and active transportation

- Increase buses on major roads and active transportation options, such as more bike lanes, to encourage alternative methods of transportation and a healthier lifestyle.
- Bike lanes would be safer for cyclists.
- Walkability to essential services would support a healthy lifestyle.

Services and amenities

- Ensure services and amenities are accessible and neighbourhoods such as Hamilton should have more adequate services and amenities as they are more isolated from the city.
- Incorporate more car sharing and EV chargers.

Policy and process

- Improve efficiency by reducing permit approval time and regulations.
- Consider incentives for commercial and residential property developers to adopt energy efficiency measures.
- Consider lifting restrictions on areas that prohibit residential uses, such as areas that are currently designated for industrial. Removing these barriers could allow for more affordable housing developments.
- Tackling land speculation is key to stabilizing housing demand and housing affordability issues.
- Energy guidelines are important but should not burden builders and negatively impact housing cost.
- Review the current bylaws on heat pumps as some residential buildings may struggle to meet these requirements.

Parking

- Adequate parking space and bylaw enforcement should be balanced with increasing affordable housing developments.

Equity

- Equity is important however, there are existing policies that prioritizes some groups over others.

Community connection and belonging

- Ensure all residents feel equally welcomed at all businesses and that English language signage is given equal prominence by ethnically-Asian businesses

Tree bylaw

- Tree bylaws are too restrictive for private properties, especially if a tree poses a danger to the house and its occupants.

City partnerships

- City partnerships with non-profit organizations that deliver services should be well maintained and benefit the community.

Photo credit: Mok, West Dyke Hill Fun

Next Steps

City staff will draft policies and provide further opportunities for feedback in late spring 2025. The new OCP bylaw will be prepared for Council consideration with a Public Hearing at the end of 2025.

Ongoing information is available at **richmond.ca/ocp-update**

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