

Executive Summary

The City of Richmond has evolved and changed as a community over the last 20 years. To guide its future the City has established a Vision of being *the most appealing, livable, and well-managed community in Canada*.

The 2003-2005 Corporate Plan has created a number of strategies to achieve this Vision. Three of the key strategies that this 2010 Trails Strategy directly supports are the:

- Waterfront Development Strategy
- Community Mobility Strategy
- Economic Development Strategy

Much of the work that has been done on the trails has its foundations in the 1979 Trails Plan and more recently the 1996 Steveston Waterfront Greenways Plan. With the increased popularity of the trails, the new Vision and Corporate Plan set out for the City, and the many policies outlined in the 1999 Official Community Plan, it is now time to update and establish a new vision for Richmond's trail system.

The New Focus

The 1979 Trail Plan focussed on developing the physical infrastructure of the city-wide trails. In addition to identifying these important city-wide trails, this Strategy incorporates a new approach to planning a comprehensive network of trails that includes:

It's about People...

The Users and the Individual and Community Benefits of Trails – This is a recognition that a well planned and developed trail system can provide many benefits to individual users and the community at large. These benefits range from individual healthy lifestyles, sense of community, environmental stewardship to economic growth through tourism. These benefits become the goals to strive for and opportunities were sought throughout the Strategy to promote these benefits and to create a memorable experience of the trails.

Leaving the car at home...

Community and Neighbourhoods Links – The Inside Out Approach – This was the recognition that every journey starts at home and if one of the main goals is to encourage people to walk and cycle then where better to start than in their own neighbourhoods? This Strategy introduces a conceptual framework for creating a “walkable community”. Once people become comfortable at the local level they can then move outwards to the larger city-wide network of trails and cycling routes.

Working together...

Coordination of City and External Initiatives – This is the recognition that there are many City departments and external agencies that have a variety of initiatives underway from strategic plans to land use plans to construction projects that may impact upon the development of trails. Initiatives that are occurring at this point of time have been referred to and included throughout the Strategy. Ongoing liaison and co-ordination with other City departments and external agencies is critical to ensuring opportunities are not missed and that there is a cost effective and successful implementation of the trail system.

The Vision

Linking People, the Community and Nature

The Vision was developed after reviewing the trends, relevant documents and studies, the benefits of trails, and the many community goals and policies outlined within the Official Community Plan. Three key themes relating to trails were identified and woven into the Vision statement.

These themes were:

- Strengthen the sense of community in Richmond neighbourhoods
- Encourage walking and the use of alternative travel modes
- Build upon Richmond's Garden City Legacy and celebrate Richmond's Island Heritage

The Vision goal statement is that:

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.

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. Also, 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 (environmental sustainability).

There are four types of links identified in this Strategy each with different goals and functions. These include:

- a. Neighbourhood and Community Links - Recognizing that every journey starts at home
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.
- b. City-wide Links - Celebrating Richmond's uniqueness
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 while remaining sensitive to other uses and the environment.
- c. Nature Links - Allowing Nature to Flourish
Goal: To develop green corridors that link a diversity of open spaces such as formal city parks, natural areas, drainage canals and agricultural land.
- d. Blueway Links - Connecting with water
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.

The Trail Infrastructure

In 1979 the trail system was envisioned as a more traditional off-road recreational system with the focus on city-wide trails such as the Middle Arm and West Dyke trails.

Over the years the concept of a trail system has expanded to include *cycling routes, walkways, park pathways, expanded sidewalks and boulevards, greenways, staging areas, nodes, and special features, blueways and rural roadways*. A designated trail route may, at any one time, include all or some of these different types of public ways. An example is the Steveston Waterfront Greenway.

The new proposed trail network is one that encompasses many different types of walking and cycling opportunities. Although, this strategy is focussed on the trail network it recognizes that people walk on more than just the designated routes. Many of the guidelines and recommendations proposed in this strategy are relevant to the creation of a *walkable community* and lay the foundation for further work in the future.

The Plan

Building the network

The Plan is divided into two sections: The Neighbourhood and Community Links and the City-Wide Links. Interwoven, where appropriate, are Nature and Blueway Links.

a. The Neighbourhood and Community Links

Since there are so many neighbourhoods and each is different in its layout, history, and degree of existing infrastructure, the Strategy contains a conceptual framework that identifies the key components for consideration in creating a safe, comfortable and inviting pedestrian and cycling environment. This can then be applied to different neighbourhoods to determine the best routes. The term ‘Green Links’ will now be applied to designated routes through neighbourhoods.

Key components are *community involvement* in decision making, *wayfinding elements* to reinforce the route and locate key destinations, *route criteria* to select the best route, and *infrastructure and infostructure* improvements to remove barriers and improve accessibility.

b. City-Wide Links Implementation Plan

The focus of this section was to identify the major routes, missing links, and make recommendations to create a continuous and interconnected network of trails. The goal is that ultimately there will be a city-wide trail or designated cycling route within 1 kilometer of every resident. The neighbourhood green links will be designed to tie into the city-wide system. The term ‘Trail’ will refer to rustic trails and ‘Greenway’ will apply to trails that connect multiple key destinations, have unique features, or are significant natural green corridors.

Recommendations

Each section of the Strategy has a set of specific recommendations. These recommendations include planning initiatives, strategies, design and construction projects, guidelines and work program items. Below is a summary of the recommendations and proposed timelines. This summary does not include the specific recommendations outlined for each city-wide trail (see Section 7.0 and 9.2).

Summary of Recommendations in the Strategy

(A recommendation may be repeated in different sections of this Strategy. For purposes of this summary the recommendation is listed only once.)

Timeline Definitions:	
Short Term = Immediate to 3 years / Medium Term = 3 to 5 years Long Term = 5 to 10 years / Ongoing = Immediate to long term	TIMELINE
THE TRAILS SYSTEM	
Trails Users	
1. Conduct a Trails Etiquette information session through the Adopt-A-Trail program for the public once or twice a year at popular areas along the trails e.g. Garry Point Park.	Short
2. Inventory all access points along the dyke and review for ease of accessibility.	Short
3. Consult with Richmond Committee on Disability on issues of accessibility.	Short
4. Include in any new Trails Brochures and on the City website information identifying the best locations for parking for wheelchair access and information about water safety in the Fraser River.	Short
5. Work with other interested parties such as UBC Rowing Club to develop the potential of the Middle Arm as a water based recreational and festival corridor with the appropriate upland support amenities.	Short
6. Conduct surveys to determine public priorities and specific concerns with the existing system and use.	Short
7. Improvements to access points onto the dyke should be made to ensure safe and convenient access.	Medium
8. Design trail surfaces to respond to the specific users needs and character of the area in which it is built.	Medium



9. Consult with the equestrian community and the proposed Agricultural Advisory Committee to locate appropriate routes for equestrian as well as pedestrian use along the edge of or through farming areas.	Medium
10. Consult with the public to determine any changes to existing trail surfaces and uses especially along popular trails such as the West Dyke.	Ongoing
11. Conduct surveys to determine public priorities and specific concerns with existing trail system and use.	Ongoing
Trail Infrastructure	
City-Wide Trails:	
12. Adopt the City-wide Trail/Greenways Plan and recommendations outlined in this strategy (Section 7.0).	Short
13. Develop an Implementation Plan with priorities and budgeting for the next 10 years.	Short
14. Work with other initiatives such as the Waterfront Development and Community Mobility Strategy to identify different character areas within the City and establish design guidelines for these areas.	Short
15. Continue to work with regulatory agencies to protect the environment and seek creative solutions that ensure the City's needs are met as well as those of the various agencies.	Ongoing
Cycling Routes:	
16. Continue to pursue partnerships with other agencies such as ICBC for cost sharing to implement the Richmond Cycling Network as adopted by Council.	Ongoing
17. Design the city-wide trails and neighbourhood routes to connect to the cycling routes. Where appropriate construct shared pedestrian and cycling off-road trails as part of this Cycling Network for cost-savings.	Ongoing
Walkways:	
18. Establish standards that make walkways recognizable as public pathways.	Short
19. Encourage local neighbourhood adoption of walkways through the Partnerships for Beautification Program.	Short
20. Establish new standards to improve the accessibility of all walkways. Develop an implementation and phasing plan to make the changes.	Medium
21. Ensure the appropriate design and buffers to respect the adjacent land owners.	Ongoing
22. Continue working with developers to provide public right-of-ways through new developments.	Ongoing
Expanded Sidewalks:	
23. Prepare a Neighbourhood Trail (Green Links) Master Plan that identifies community and neighbourhood routes.	Medium
22. Once a route has been designated, inventory the sidewalk as well as the walkway infrastructure and establish areas of high priority for improvements.	Medium
23. Develop design standards for sidewalk construction along trail routes that respond and reflect the character of the area.	Medium
24. Continue to coordinate with private development, Transportation Planning and Engineering to ensure that the trail standards are applied when new construction occurs along a route.	Ongoing
Greenways:	
25. Adopt the City-wide/Trail Greenways plan outlined in this Strategy (see Section 7.0)	Short
26. Develop design standards for Greenways that reflect the use and character of the different areas of the City.	Short
27. Continue to work with the development community to ensure that new developments that occur along a designated greenways incorporate special design features and standards.	Ongoing
28. Consider incorporating the cost of constructing priority sections of the greenways, that are not the immediate responsibility of a developer, into the City Capital Budget.	Ongoing
Staging Areas, Nodes and Special Features:	
29. Develop a funding strategy, including partnerships, to construct special amenities along the trail system.	Ongoing



30. Continue to work the appropriate regulatory agencies to protect the environment and seek creative solutions that ensure the City's needs are met as well as those of the various agencies.	Ongoing
31. Review the standards applied to development and maintenance of higher profile areas such as the waterfront and City Centre.	Ongoing
32. Coordinate with Public Works and Engineering construction projects, such as retrofitting pump stations that occur at staging areas to meet both operational, recreational and aesthetic needs.	Ongoing
Rural Roadways:	
33. Seek opportunities to provide separated public access by building up the road shoulder, separating shoulders from traffic with bollards or a raised edge, or cantilevering a boardwalk over the riprap edge.	Medium
34. Continue to monitor the traffic safety of rural roads and work with local communities as appropriate to resolve traffic issues.	Ongoing
35. Ensure coordination with Public Works along rural roads to maximize the opportunities to provide trails when projects such as ditch infills or new flood protection measures occur along the waterfront.	Ongoing
New Trail Classifications and Definitions:	
36. Adopt the names 'Trail' for rustic trails, 'Greenway' for significant city-wide trails, and 'Green Links' for neighbourhood trails.	Short
37. Upon review, and coordination with the Community Mobility Strategy, consider incorporating the new classification system, as appropriate, into the Official Community Plan.	Short
KEY OPPORTUNITIES	
Community Involvement	
38. Continue to provide opportunities to involve the public in the planning, implementation and stewardship of the trails system.	Ongoing
39. Continue to provide programs that increase the public's awareness of Richmond's unique natural and historical setting.	Ongoing
40. Work closely with other agencies and programs such as the ICBC Way to Go Program to provide educational programs and events that encourage walking and cycling at the neighbourhood and community level.	Ongoing
41. Encourage more community adoptions of local neighbourhood streets, school park sites and walkways as part of the Partners for Beautification Program.	Ongoing
Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Master Plan	
42. Integrate the Trail Strategy into the overall PRCS Master Plan.	Short
43. Identify trails together with natural areas, blueways, formal parks, undeveloped rights-of-ways, vacant lands, Privately-Owned/Publicly-Accessible Open Space (POPAS), and street boulevards as part of an overall open space network for the City in the PRCS Master Plan.	Short
44. Include a new standard of constructing continuous pathways within all City parks in the PRCS Plan to encourage walking in neighbourhoods.	Short
45. Coordinate the implementation and phasing of trails with the other priorities identified within the PRCS Master Plan for the 10 Year Capital Budget Program.	Ongoing
Heritage and Natural History Destinations and Interpretation	
46. Update the City Website with current trail and key destinations information including a 'virtual tour' of the trails and interesting heritage and natural amenities.	Short
47. Consider including interpretation signage as part of the memorial or living Gift Program. This will provide an alternative option for families wishing to buy memorial benches in popular areas.	Short
48. Establish a coordinated City-wide directional/way finding system for heritage sites, trail routes, parks, points of interest, and other community facilities that will ensure visitors can find the sites in an easy and efficient manner.	Medium
49. Develop a comprehensive outdoor heritage and natural history interpretation and signage plan.	Medium
50. Consider opportunities for creative interpretation, a marrying of public art and interpretation, as an alternative where appropriate to traditional signage.	Ongoing



Public Art	
51. Establish a list of potential public art projects for implementation along the trails.	Short
52. Use public art where appropriate to identify City-wide and community trails and routes.	Ongoing
53. Promote collaboration between the City, community, and artists to create public art projects that provide community identity to public places and trails.	Ongoing
54. Consider and use effectively public art as a tool to create community themes, image making, symbolism and storytelling along the trail system.	Ongoing
Agriculture and Recreation Interface	
55. Address the recommendations outlined within the final approved Agricultural Viability Strategy, as appropriate, and use as a guide to plan and design trails within or around the ALR.	Ongoing
56. Consult with the proposed Agricultural Advisory Committee as outlined in the Agricultural Viability Strategy and those impacted when locating and designing trails in the ALR.	Ongoing
Surface Water Management / Eco-Corridors	
57. Work with the Public Works and Engineering Departments and Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to identify key sloughs and open waterways that could potentially be revitalized as Richmond's credit towards Fisheries Habitat Compensation for closure of other ditches in the City. Consider the potential of Shell Road canal as a waterway to be enhanced.	Short
58. Consider promoting Richmond as the "Island of Bridges". There are the major bridges in and out of Richmond and many small bridges accessing private property as well as public property. These bridges could be designed in a fun architectural manner that would add to Richmond's landscape.	Short
59. Build upon the uniqueness of Richmond's landscape that includes small ditches and larger open canals and promote the aesthetic, recreational, and environmental benefits of keeping and enhancing these open waterways while ensuring the proper storm water management.	Medium
60. Identify and map undeveloped right-of-ways and their potential links to the trails network. Negotiate with the appropriate agencies or departments to maximize trail and eco-corridor opportunities throughout the City. Examples are Ministry of Transportation and Highways lands east of the Oak Street Bridge, rail right-of-ways, and city road right-of-ways.	Medium
61. Continue with the Natural Area acquisition plan.	Ongoing
62. Working with the new Environmentally Sensitive Area Inventory, determine the habitat and wildlife sensitivity along the trails system to ensure the right balance between public access and protection.	Ongoing
63. Plan and construct new trails in sensitive areas that respond appropriately to the habitat features and their ecological functions.	Ongoing
Waterfront Development Strategy / Blueways Program	
64. Coordinate with the Waterfront Development Strategic Committee and the Strategy as it develops.	Short
65. Coordinate trail planning and development along the waterfront with the Master Plans being developed for the 10 Character Zones identified in the Waterfront Strategy.	Ongoing
66. Adopt the Blueways Links principles of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. maximizing the accessibility to waterfronts b. ensuring an integration of Visions for land and water uses c. respecting the environmental sensitivity of the foreshore and waterways d. promoting water safety. 	Ongoing
Promoting and Marketing Trails	
67. Conduct surveys or other feedback measures to determine the priorities and the type of information to be included in the Trails brochure and the City website.	Short
68. Work with the Richmond Committee on Disability to promote the advantages of Richmond's flat topography.	Short
69. Co-ordinate with other City initiatives on the promotion and marketing of the Division's services including branding and sponsorship.	Medium



70. Review the City's role in promoting eco-tourism and heritage tourism and how the trails can support this growing area.	Medium
71. Publish local neighbourhood walking and cycling maps once neighbourhood routes have been identified.	Long
NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY LINKS - A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	
72. Adopt the wayfinding language of gates, bridges, ground plane, signs, trees, and site furnishings, as appropriate, and incorporate it into new developments and along proposed Green Links in established neighbourhoods as funding allows.	Short
73. Consider allotting 25% of the annual Trails Budget towards Neighbourhood Green Links improvements.	Short
74. Conduct an inventory and analysis of all walkways in neighbourhoods for accessibility and safety.	Short
75. Inventory park pathways and identify the missing links to creating a continuous pathway system within the park.	Short
76. Establish an index or a system to prioritize neighbourhood infrastructure and infrastructure improvements.	Short
77. Work with the Cycling Advisory Committee as well as local residents to determine recreational routes through neighbourhoods.	Medium
78. Construct new paths, as necessary, in school and park sites to connect to the surrounding neighbourhood.	Medium
79. Develop a kit for mapping routes and determining priorities with community groups.	Medium
80. Design and implement a signage program for neighbourhoods that will provide directional information about key destinations and will also help distinguish public vs. private walkways. This would be part of a larger comprehensive signage system for other City facilities and amenities.	Medium
81. Coordinate with Transportation Planning initiatives for traffic calming, crosswalk installations, and sidewalk construction along proposed Neighbourhood Green Links.	Ongoing
82. Work with other initiatives that are occurring in the neighbourhoods such as the Way to Go School Program.	Ongoing
83. Consider preparing a Pedestrian Master Plan that would look at the larger picture of creating a walkable city and that would include but not be exclusive to a classification system for the public realm, development standards, design guidelines and priorities for different types of pedestrian environments.	Ongoing
84. Incorporate wayfinding language into new developments, as appropriate, along proposed Green Links in established neighbourhoods as funding allows.	Ongoing
IMPLEMENTATION / FUNDING	
85. Establish a 10 year Implementation Program with a priority list of projects and associated costs.	Short
86. Continue to work with the development industry to assist in building up the network of trails by negotiating public access through private developments as part of the rezoning process.	Ongoing
87. Continue to partner with private owners to cost share the maintenance of public right-of-ways through private properties.	Ongoing
88. Encourage more Partners for Beautification to assist in the maintenance and the implementation of projects.	Ongoing
89. Review with other City departments their Capital Budget Program on an annual basis to seek potential opportunities for cost savings by coordinating construction projects.	Ongoing
90. Seek grants and partnerships with other agencies.	Ongoing
91. Review the level of maintenance standards and the annual operational budget for the variety of trails and the increased number and quality of amenities that are being developed as the City grows and changes.	Ongoing



