

ArtWorks

RICHMOND ARTS STRATEGY

2026-2031

Richmond Arts, Culture and Heritage Services

October 2025

Reconciliation

The City of Richmond is committed to building and maintaining positive and respectful relationships with xʷməθkʷəy̍əm (Musqueam) and Indigenous Peoples who live in and around Richmond in order to advance reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.



Traditional Musqueam cedar bark weaving workshop with artist Rita Kompst

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Origami displays
at the Richmond
Cherry Blossom
Festival



Highlights

What carries over from the previous plan?

ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2019–2024 set a solid Vision with Guiding Principles for the development of arts and culture. As approved by Council, these remain in place to provide a comprehensive baseline for the City’s ongoing arts and culture service delivery. *ArtWorks* focused on **free programming**, new and **improved spaces**, and **increased awareness**. These priorities carry over to the *Arts Strategy 2026–2031*, along with **investment** in arts and culture, with an increased attention to **building leadership**.

The updated Strategic Directions are as follows:



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1:

Increase Awareness, Pride and Participation in the Arts



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2:

Provide Affordable and Accessible Arts for All



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3:

Invest in Arts and Culture



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4:

Build Arts and Cultural Leadership



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 5:

Activate Public Spaces Through (and for!) the Arts



Capstan Village Public Art Walking
Tour: art professional Jas Lally with
285 Apples by Gathie Falk

What has changed?

A lot! Implementation of the *Arts Strategy 2019–2024* largely occurred over the pandemic years which greatly impacted the cultural sector as a whole and has influenced how people in Canada are participating in arts and culture.

Coupled with the above are major **social and political changes**, **housing affordability challenges**, **inflation**, **health and climate pressures**, along with the **rise of AI and digital-based creation and organizational transformation**. As such, the cultural sector is facing critical challenges, as are our communities overall.

At the same time, there is increased understanding of the inherent value of arts and culture to cities and communities, and most importantly, to people in their everyday lives.

Backed by growing research, there is now widespread awareness of how arts and culture contribute to:

- **Better health and wellbeing**—in fact, the arts are now being prescribed by doctors as a means to helping with a variety of conditions from reducing cognitive decline to improved emotional and mental health.
- **Safer cities**, including reducing acts of racism, accelerating acceptance of others, reducing delinquency, and improving resiliency and skills-building in at-risk youth.
- Understanding that **accessibility** applies not only to the facility infrastructure, or physical accessibility of the space, but also artistic programming, mission and vision. Taking a multi-dimensional approach to advancing accessibility demonstrates to people living with all types of disabilities that they have a place to participate. Meanwhile, ensuring that opportunities to participate in arts and culture remain low-barrier, that people feel welcomed in arts and cultural spaces, and have opportunities to encounter art in their everyday lives has been renewed as an area of focus.
- **Stronger local economies through the arts**—Arts and culture play an important role in promoting economic goals through local regeneration, developing talent, creating jobs, spurring innovation and attracting tourists. They are critical to being a “complete community,” and to vibrant, sustainable and successful local economies both through labour and production.

What’s new?

ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2026–2031 builds off the previous strategy with an increased focus on:

Cultural tourism—Richmond is increasingly seen as a destination for vibrant arts, culture and heritage participation. The Strategy expands on ways to integrate arts and culture at strategic and tactical levels with tourism partners.

Raising Awareness—Knowing what arts and culture offerings are available is an increased focus of the plan. Without marketing and communications, Richmond residents remain unaware of the rich cultural programming already on offer.

Creative Placemaking—Though touched-on in the previous strategy, creative placemaking is a collaborative approach to designing, transforming and enhancing public spaces that focuses on the needs, identity and aspirations of the local community.

Climate and Sustainability—In keeping with the City’s Circular City Strategy, the Arts Strategy weaves in ways the arts are vital to understanding the climate crisis and calls for practices with sustainability in mind.

Community and City Roles and Responsibilities—With strategic investment in capacity building, community organizations can take-on and participate in the implementation of some of the actions found in this plan. By building local arts and culture leadership through a range of supports including training and development, the City and community can collaborate and achieve more—together.

See **OUR PLANNING CONTEXT**, pages 27–37.

Overview on Approach

The City of Richmond recognizes that the arts are integral to vibrant communities. Home to an immense cultural mosaic, Richmond is characterized by growth, changing demographics and a diverse arts landscape (see pages 32–33). The *Arts Strategy 2026–2031* represents this diversity and this momentum by identifying the challenges and needs of both the arts community and Richmond as a whole.

The arts can play a strong role in placemaking, community building, tourism and economic development, providing a new or different lens in finding ways to:

- combat social isolation in the community
- enhance quality of life by encouraging healthy lifestyles and lifelong learning
- celebrate diversity and improve awareness of cultural differences
- develop pride of place through art and design
- contribute to community vitality
- improve the ability to attract skilled workers
- gain a competitive advantage as a tourism destination
- and much more

What do we mean by the “arts”?

If it feels creative, odds are it counts! For the purpose of this strategy, “arts” refers to the broad subdivision of culture, composed of many expressive and creative disciplines. The term commonly encompasses, but is not limited to:

- ▶ Visual and applied arts (e.g. painting, print-making, installations;=, drawing, sculpture, crafts, textile arts, pottery and ceramics, photography, film and video)
- ▶ Performing arts (e.g. theatre, music, song, spoken word, and dance)
- ▶ Culinary arts
- ▶ Environmental and land art (i.e., site-specific, using natural landscape as medium)
- ▶ Interdisciplinary practices
- ▶ Literary arts
- ▶ Media arts
- ▶ Community-engaged arts practices

Our Purpose

Since 2019, *ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy* has acted as a comprehensive guide for residents, the City and its interest holders to develop stronger connections in order to advance the policies, programs and services needed for the arts to thrive in Richmond. For the 2026 update, the City engaged with staff, interest holders in the community, and arts and culture subject-matter experts, to reflect on the existing Strategy and adapt it to significant shifts in Richmond, the arts and society in general.

The intention was not to develop an entirely new document, but rather to reflect on and adapt it to the current context that includes major considerations, such as the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate concerns, rising socio-cultural polarization and innovations in accessibility to arts. At the same time, the updated Strategy considers and incorporates the goals of other recent City plans and strategies, including but not limited to the Richmond Accessibility Plan (2023), Community Wellness Strategy (2018), Community Energy and Emissions Plan (2022) and the Circular City Strategy (2023).

ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2026–2031 reflects the evolving needs of Richmond residents and visitors, all of whom have the right to enjoy arts and culture in their lives.



Homecoming
by Simone Guo, Richmond-
Brighouse Canada Line
Station

The key objectives for engagement were as follows:

- ▶ Gain key informant perspectives on the progress of the Arts Strategy and new ideas/initiatives to be reflected in an updated Strategy.
- ▶ Connect with the public to get general perspectives of arts and culture in Richmond today and desires for the future.
- ▶ Sensemaking and validation of engagement findings.

Vision and Guiding Principles

The Vision

Richmond's thriving arts scene:

- ▶ Animates our city everyday
- ▶ Offers rich arts education and experiences, festivals and events
- ▶ Fosters social connections and wellness
- ▶ Provides creative spaces

Officially adopted in 2019, the community-informed **Vision** and **Guiding Principles** continue to guide *ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2026–2031*.



Guiding Principles

- ▶ Striving for **excellence** among all who participate in and contribute to the artistic life of Richmond, from City services, to community organizations, to individuals of all ages and skill levels.
- ▶ Prioritizing **sustainability** to ‘future-proof’ the arts through funding, education, infrastructure, mentorship and the integration of the arts into the everyday fabric of our city.
- ▶ Expressing **creativity** through experimentation and fostering collaboration among diverse voices.
- ▶ Providing broad **accessibility** to arts experiences and advancing inclusivity to connect people through the arts.
- ▶ **Community-building** through creative engagement and dialogue, and honouring the spirit of Reconciliation.
- ▶ **Celebrating** and showcasing to inspire Richmond’s artistic vibrancy.

Strategic Directions

These five Strategic Directions serve as guideposts for the development, implementation, and sustainability of the arts within Richmond over the next five years:



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1

Increase Awareness, Pride and Participation in the Arts



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2

Provide Affordable and Accessible Arts for All



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3

Invest in Arts and Culture



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4

Build Arts and Cultural Leadership

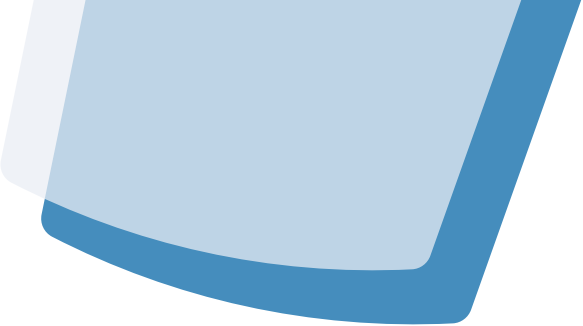


STRATEGIC DIRECTION 5

Activate Public Spaces Through (and for!) the Arts



Art Truck: Interactive mural by
Bea Martin at Burkeville Days



What has changed?

The five Strategic Directions of *ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2019-2024* were:

1. **Ensure affordable and accessible arts for all**
2. **Promote inclusivity and diversity in the arts**
3. **Invest in the arts**
4. **Increase awareness and participation in the arts**
5. **Activate public spaces through (and for!) the arts**

Through thoughtful community engagement, these directions were revised with consideration of current (post-pandemic) conditions as well as social and economic development opportunities.

The previous Strategic Directions 1, 3, 4 and 5 remain with minor edits; however, the updated Strategic Direction 1 (now 2) includes many of the actions previously under Strategic Direction 2: “Promote inclusivity and diversity in the arts”.

Strategic Direction 4 is new, reflecting an increased interest around building arts and cultural leadership.

- **Strategic directions** are key themes and desired outcomes that reflect community needs, gaps in the existing cultural landscape, and specific goals for growth.
- **Goals** set the pathway toward a desired result, creating a future-state we aim to achieve.
- **Objectives** are outcome-driven and present how these goals will be achieved and what we will work to accomplish in the next five years.
- **Supporting actions** are specific activities the City and its interest holders will undertake to achieve each objective.

How do we measure progress?

City staff compile key metrics every year on the City’s investments in arts and culture, and share these publicly through the Arts Services Year in Review report. These measures reflect the various roles the City has in serving as a supporter, presenter, communicator, investor and facilities operator (see page 37). Each of the Goals, Objectives and Supporting Actions will be monitored as part of implementation of this Strategy, along with prioritization and resource considerations on a regular basis.



Hand-woven blanket by
Debra Sparrow at entrance
to Council Chambers



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1:

Increase Awareness, Pride and Participation in the Arts

GOAL:

Arts and culture are valued, celebrated and integrated into community life.

Engagement and continuing trends in the sector reveal a need for improved promotion of arts and culture—an issue not unique to Richmond. Given several factors—including the slow return of audiences post-pandemic, changing participation habits, and a generation that experienced cuts to arts and culture education in the '90s and early 2000s—investing in marketing and low-barrier opportunities for arts participation is an increasingly critical need across Canada, much like the investments seen in sports, recreation and tourism.

OBJECTIVE 1.1:

Build audiences by connecting people to creative events, news and resources.

Supporting Actions:

1. Develop clear, accessible marketing and communications strategies, using preferred languages, plain language, culturally-relevant methods, and multiple channels to build audiences and participation.
2. Increase resources for arts-related marketing and communications, with a view to enhancing needs such as social media presence, audience development tools, and digital-based strategies to support audience growth.

3. Work across City departments (such as Recreation and Sport, Parks, and Community Social Development) and with the Richmond Public Library to cross-promote services and programs, such as through community centre promotional materials.
4. Promote arts and culture beyond city limits to increase awareness of Richmond's cultural offerings.



Tatakizome workshop presented by Richmond Art Gallery

OBJECTIVE 1.2:

Engage the Richmond community with creative experiences and artistic encounters in daily life.

Supporting Actions:

1. Encourage neighbourhood-based arts and cultural activity (e.g. creative neighbourhood actions, gardening, walking tours, food tourism, etc.), through community grants and other civic support for arts experiences.
2. Broaden understanding of what artistic expression can be through education and experimentation.
3. Link to art in public spaces with creative placemaking actions in Strategic Direction 5 (pages 25–26).
4. Link this Strategic Direction to tourism initiatives that bolster Richmond as a cultural destination.

No. 3 Road Art Column:
Faces of Richmond by
Nadia Mahamoor



Ongoing work

The City and its partners will continue to:

- Support and program art-making demonstrations in the public realm including at signature festivals and pop-up events throughout the year.
- Invite the public “behind the scenes” and to create artwork themselves, through programming such as Doors Open Richmond, Culture Days, Children’s Arts Festival, Media Lab activities and Richmond Art Gallery public programs.
- Provide and promote events (such as Culture Days and Doors Open Richmond) to showcase Richmond artists.
- Foster a built environment where one has spontaneous encounters with art, such as through the Public Art program and Richmond Art Gallery off-site exhibitions.
- Provide programs such as the Public Art Engaging Artists in the Community program, Community Mural program, and Branscombe House Artist Residency program that support community-engaged arts practices.
- Increase visual and performing arts opportunities in public spaces to showcase Richmond artists.
- Align with and support the findings of the 2023 Community Needs Assessment by improving awareness of high-quality arts programming.
- Maintain HowArtWorks.ca as a portal for art community to learn about available programs and resources.
- Grow community engagement through the social media accounts of the City, Richmond Art Gallery and HowArtWorks.ca
- Build on existing services in the Richmond Public Library, community centres and other spaces that include creative programming to reach diverse and new audiences.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2:

Provide Affordable and Accessible Arts for All

GOAL:

Everyone feels they can participate in Richmond's arts and culture scene where diversity is embraced.

Serving Richmond's growing and changing population supports the City's reputation for delivering high-level artistic offerings and engaging cultural experiences. Ensuring that arts experiences remain accessible and responsive to our diverse community—and that Richmond stories are shared—is central to the Arts Strategy. This goal also connects to other strategies, such as arts infrastructure planning (Strategic Direction 5), to accommodate future audiences.

OBJECTIVE 2.1:

Offer a diverse range of affordable arts experiences where all feel welcome and represented.

Supporting Actions:

1. Align with Richmond Accessibility Plan, and in keeping with community consultations, evaluate current arts programs, services and facilities from an accessibility perspective to identify opportunities to enhance participation and address barriers.
2. Work towards arts and cultural infrastructure and programming that is equitably available and accessible to under-represented groups.

3. Develop or expand opportunities to directly support individual artists, cultural organizations and venues that provide low and no-cost public program delivery.
4. Invest in diversity and inclusion training for City staff and programming partners to understand the diverse range of barriers experienced by people with disabilities, as well as ways to remove and prevent them.
5. Promote the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program (RFSP) for arts programs.



Hands on Art, Islamic Art of BC event at Richmond Public Library

Understanding IDEA in the Arts

Historically excluded groups face ongoing discrimination and bias in the arts due to power imbalances and inadequate awareness. Building a shared understanding of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) is a vital first step toward creating more respectful and supportive environments.

► Inclusion

Inclusion means creating a safe and respectful environment where everyone feels welcomed, valued and able to fully participate.

► Diversity

Diversity refers to the range of differences in people's identities, backgrounds and experiences that make each person unique.

► Equity

Equity is about fair treatment and removing barriers so everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed and contribute.

► Accessibility

Accessibility means a barrier-free experience that ensures everyone can equitably participate in their community; it includes designing spaces, tools and systems that accommodate diverse needs and enable full participation for all.

OBJECTIVE 2.2:

Ensure Indigenous voices and stories are shared and reflected in planning.

Supporting Actions:

1. Build and strengthen relationships with xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) and other Indigenous communities and support the work of city-wide reconciliation initiatives.
2. Provide opportunities to integrate traditional and contemporary Indigenous culture, identity and language into programming and planning.
3. Identify ways to support Truth and Reconciliation and the shared histories of Indigenous Peoples and all Canadians, through inclusive dialogue, celebration and performance, as well as creative placemaking installations.
4. Seek opportunities to work with xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) and other Indigenous artists, knowledge keepers and communities on initiatives that acknowledge and celebrate local Indigenous cultural heritage practices.



Sea to Sky (detail)
by Thomas Cannell,
winner of Creative
Cities Network of
Canada Award of
Excellence

OBJECTIVE 2.3:

Cultivate belonging and interculturalism to engage the imaginations of all generations and identities.

Supporting Actions:

1. Facilitate intercultural communication with creative environments and arts-based programs.
2. Provide a range of participatory programming for all age groups and inter-age groups at the community or neighbourhood level.
3. Invest in and secure dedicated funding for the Art Truck.
4. Explore newcomer and cross-cultural programs and services that integrate creative and cultural experiences
5. Increase multilingual arts experiences.
6. Develop and/or increase the use of creative tool libraries, musical instrument libraries and/or other creative resource lending programs, especially for youth.
7. Promote multigenerational participation in the arts, with opportunities for youth leadership and collaboration between generations.

8. Identify ways to advance the Prescriptions for Arts movement (where physicians prescribe the arts to patients) by raising awareness of Richmond's wide variety of arts participation opportunities among family practices.
9. Collaborate with people with lived experiences in the early planning phases of arts-related capital projects and program development to ensure they appeal to, and offer a sense of belonging, for under-represented groups.



Engaging Artists in Community program:
Express Yourself by artist Keely O'Brien,
with Aspire Richmond in partnership with
Richmond Public Library

OBJECTIVE 2.4:

Celebrate Richmond's diversity, growth and change as a community.

Supporting Actions:

1. Collaborate with diverse community groups to explore ways for the arts in Richmond to appeal to tourists through culinary arts, as well as natural and cultural heritage.
2. Leverage Richmond's diversity to develop representative programming and events that attract audiences from within and beyond the area.
3. Identify opportunities for interpreting and sharing local history and heritage in all of its forms including:
 - Developing interactive experiences and programming that celebrate Richmond's unique character and natural environment.
 - Enhancing and expanding arts and cultural programming to improve education and awareness of local history.
 - Developing a new signature event that showcases Richmond's cultural and ethnic diversity.

Ongoing work

The City and its partners will continue to:

Accessibility

- Work to identify and address physical accessibility challenges to attending festivals, visiting cultural venues and exploring public art.
- Encourage and promote arts and culture opportunities at locations close to transit, and identify opportunities to reduce transportation barriers, such as shuttle buses to major events.
- Review the City's offerings of free and low-cost arts programming and events, and assess required City resources to prioritize barrier-free access.

Youth

- Work with community associations and others to connect youth to creative opportunities and resources.
- Work with School District No. 38 to link arts education resources to teachers.
- Offer free access to media arts training, professional mentorship opportunities and access to equipment through the Richmond Youth Media Program.

Diversity

- Fund Indigenous artist opportunities at the City.
- Encourage collaboration among under-represented community groups, such as Chinese-speaking, Indigenous and 2SLGBTQI+ youth.
- Encourage and increase programming that involves work by xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) and other Indigenous artists.
- Invite diverse groups, including those under-represented, to participate in the telling of their story in the Richmond context, through creative engagement and art.
- Highlight Richmond's cultural diversity in arts and culture marketing and communication.
- Identify ways to ensure cultural venues and other spaces providing arts experiences are appealing and welcoming to newcomers, people with disabilities, 2SLGBTQI+ residents and other under-represented groups.
- Connect with the diverse cultural communities of Richmond (including faith-based communities) to encourage sharing of art, food and music.

Inclusion and Wellbeing

- Include traditional xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Welcome at cultural events.
- Support and promote programs across the City and with other City partners that support social and emotional well-being through the arts.
- Increase the scope of affordable arts education programs and services available to all age ranges and levels from entry to pre-professional.
- Review current programming to ensure that underrepresented cultural and 2SLGBTQI+ activities are part of festival and arts event programming.
- Promote, encourage and develop initiatives, including festivals, that encourage cultural cross-pollination through the arts.
- Provide opportunities for free, high-calibre arts experiences such as through the Richmond Art Gallery and signature festivals throughout the year.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3:

Invest in the Arts

GOAL:

Community connections and a healthy, sustainable arts ecosystem are strengthened through capacity-building, collaboration and smart investment.

The City continues to invest in arts and cultural organizations that are reflective of the Richmond community today, as well as in keeping with current operating models in the sector. It also welcomes new ways of working in tandem with community organizations to offer arts and cultural activities and services. These new approaches may even include transferring certain City-managed activities to organizations to carry out, in an enhanced capacity.

OBJECTIVE 3.1:

Invest in the community's capacity through targeted investment, collaborations, organizational development and training.

Supporting Actions:

1. Conduct a review of the Arts and Culture Grant program, tying eligibility to organizational capacity to ensure it supports and responds to the needs of the community, and aligns with current working models in the arts and art forms.
2. Increase support for the organizational capacity of local arts and cultural groups, with a focus on sustainability, growth and community development.
3. Review arts and culture portfolio to identify current tasks or functions that could be accomplished in collaboration with, or even by, community groups.
4. Review Arts Awards program in response to community participation interests.
5. Look at opportunities to invest in culture through development processes.

Richmond Potters' Club,
operating partner of
the Richmond Cultural
Centre pottery studio



OBJECTIVE 3.2:

Leverage the arts for economic and tourism potential.

Supporting Actions:

1. Ensure the arts are considered in the City's Economic Development Strategy and that they play a role in the economic sustainability of Richmond.
2. Work with Tourism Richmond to explore opportunities for Richmond's art programs to appeal to a tourism market.
3. Explore new ways to encourage creative industries to locate in Richmond, including social innovation and social enterprise for creative industries.
4. Work with local partners to encourage residents and visitors to participate in and explore Richmond's arts and culture scene, with a focus on hard-to-reach groups such as adults under age 40.
5. Raise awareness of the ways that the arts and creative industries contribute to the economic health of the community.
6. Facilitate and foster opportunities for business to invest in and partner with the arts (such as through sponsorship or provision of space.)

OBJECTIVE 3.3:

Strengthen Richmond's arts sector by fostering sustainable growth through circular practices.

Supporting Actions:

1. Work towards implementing a circular arts economy toolkit with multiple perspectives, including optimizing resource consumption, promoting sharing and reusing models and developing waste diversion strategies within the arts sector, in alignment with Richmond's Circular City Strategy.
2. Build awareness among and support arts organizations and businesses to integrate new circular practices into their operations.
3. Prioritize working with partners with circular practices and/or environmentally responsible products.
4. Support a conservation and maintenance program to ensure the long-term preservation, safety and integrity of the public art and Richmond Art Gallery collections.

Fish-sculpting demo by artist Ralph Heading at the Richmond Maritime Festival



What is a circular economy and why is it important to the arts?

A linear economy follows a “take-make-use-dispose” model, meaning things are made from raw materials, used for a short period of time, and then disposed of. A circular economy emerges as a counterpoint by closing resource loops—in essence, using as few new resources as possible.

“The City of Richmond’s vision for a circular economy is to maximize the value of resources, by design, through responsible consumption, minimizing waste and reimagining how resources flow in a sustainable, equitable and low-carbon economy”

—Richmond Circular City Strategy

The arts sector produces carbon emissions most commonly through the following activities:

- ▶ Food and water consumption
- ▶ Constructing, maintaining, heating and cooling buildings
- ▶ Mobility and transportation (culture and leisure are considered the third most common reason for global mobility)
- ▶ Undiverted waste
- ▶ Digital impacts of consuming online content

Empowering the arts sector to engage with and implement circular economy strategies will help the sector to grow and become more resilient to economic and environmental change.

Ongoing work

The City and its partners will continue to:

- Collaborate with artists and arts organizations (such as through the Engaging Artists in Community program and at signature festivals) to encourage climate change awareness, and encourage the integration of circular strategies in the arts sector.
- Provide sustainability tools to event organizers via RichmondSustainableEvent.ca
- Position and promote Community Cultural Development staff as a go-to resource for the arts community with a focus on Nonprofit Lifecycles training.
- Support and encourage organizations to leverage City funding to attract additional support from other levels of government and other sources.
- Provide professional development, mentorship and networking opportunities for artists and cultural organizations, such as through the Art at Work series and Artist Salon.
- Create favourable conditions for the filming industry in Richmond.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4:

Build Arts and Cultural Leadership

GOAL:

The City and its partners demonstrate arts and culture leadership by supporting and guiding arts and culture initiatives.

Advancing arts and cultural leadership, in addition to investment in organizational development, can be achieved through enhanced partnerships and collaborations with community groups. This requires intentional and strategic fostering of local leadership—nurturing partners so they can achieve aims set out in agreements, grant investments, and certain actions in the implementation of this plan. Advocating for arts and culture with other levels of government is another important role for the City and its community partners as BC municipalities continue to bear most of the costs in cultural development.

There is also an opportunity for growing understanding of a “culture for culture” across the City. This strategic understanding of the opportunity for arts and culture to play a key role across City functions is critical to advancing cultural development in Richmond.



RAGA Board Of Directors 2023–2024

OBJECTIVE 4.1:

Attract, engage and develop prominent leaders to advocate and invest in arts and culture.

Supporting Actions:

1. Invest in training and professional development of arts and cultural organizations that includes board development, philanthropy and donor development.
2. Expand partnerships with local post-secondary institutions.
3. Support advocacy at all levels of government for increased funding and support for arts and culture, including through CoalitionBC.ca.

OBJECTIVE 4.2:

Connect creative producers and enable partnerships among organizations.

Supporting Actions:

1. Encourage collaboration among and across creative industries and broader cultural sector.
2. Establish a Cultural Roundtable for ongoing dialogue and engagement, and convene organization leaders within the local arts community ecosystem on a regular basis.
3. Connect organizations and creative producers to the tools, training and supports that are vital to their work.
4. Increase opportunities for emerging artists and creatives to lead and teach in City spaces.
5. Expand professional development, mentorship and skill-building opportunities for artists, administrators and cultural organizations.
6. Foster partnerships with and among under-represented groups to foster knowledge-sharing as well as individual and organizational development.

OBJECTIVE 4.3:

Ensure 'culture is at the table' by increasing the integration of arts and culture at a strategic level in City planning.

Supporting Actions:

1. Ensure a cultural lens is integrated at a strategic level throughout City departments (such as Community Social Development, Parks, Recreation and Sport, Business Services, Climate and Environment, and Policy Planning).
2. Link the Arts Strategy to other City planning initiatives.
3. Raise organizational awareness of the benefits of arts and culture to achieve goals towards building a resilient community.
4. Leverage data from community engagement processes and connect, where applicable, to arts and culture development.
5. Increase opportunities to encourage a 'creative bureaucracy' in alignment with the City's value of 'Innovation' where creative thinking, innovative solutions and risk-taking are welcomed.

6. Support and encourage intergovernmental coordination.
7. Seek opportunities to hire emerging arts administrators through work placements, internships and mentorships.
8. Provide volunteer opportunities through arts, culture and event programs.



Art at Work Program: Applying for Public Art Calls Writing Workshop

Ongoing work

The City and its partners will continue to:

- Deepen the understanding of the strategic role of the arts in achieving economic and social aims of the City in the community and within City leadership.
- Partner with arts advocates, community leaders, influencers and other levels of government as well as collaborate with Richmond Arts Coalition to achieve common outcomes.
- Encourage and support the capacity-building of Richmond Arts Coalition and similar organizations to be a vital voice for the arts.
- Foster partnerships between the arts, Indigenous communities, business, all levels of government and educational sectors to support arts and cultural initiatives.
- Invest in and provide mentoring support to cultural organizations through the Arts and Culture Grants Program.
- Promote opportunities for artists via online tools and social media.
- Provide funding for community-driven events and foster opportunities for local residents to engage in the arts in their neighborhoods.

- Encourage collaboration of visual, literary and performing arts with the Richmond Public Library and museums regarding programming and resources.
- Include non-traditional creative activities and industries in the development of events, creative programming and educational offerings.

- Strengthen connections with School District No. 38 and community organizations to increase arts opportunities and experiences.
- Offer an array of lecture series, seminars, panels and community dialogues on arts and culture issues (such as the Lulu Series and Richmond Art Gallery programs).
- Support community groups to delegate at Council with annual reports; for example, from Richmond Arts Coalition and Gateway Theatre.
- Foster and create new collaborations and partnerships across the City and with non-arts organizations.



Youth Art Mart,
youth-led craft market



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 5:

Activate Public Spaces Through (and for!) the Arts

GOAL:

People can access affordable spaces for creative participation and production and enjoy arts and culture in their everyday lives.

Richmond is recognized as a leader across Canada in public art. In today's context, art in public spaces extends into creative placemaking, where residents and visitors can enjoy the intentional transformation of spaces through creative strategies. Ensuring there are well-designed cultural amenities that keep pace with the city's growth is also critical. The challenge of cultural spaces in Canadian cities is a growing issue as artists and creative producers get priced-out of city centres.

OBJECTIVE 5.1:

Work towards meeting the demand for creative spaces and cultural facilities.

Supporting Actions:

1. Upon completion of the Richmond Arts Facilities Needs Assessment (RAFNA), conduct feasibility studies as appropriate, and direct resources to address identified needs.
2. Pursue changes to existing City-owned arts facilities in response to changing community demand for cultural programming.
3. Conduct City of Richmond real estate inventory for underused spaces, for potential creative use.
4. Work with developers to provide cultural amenities and creative spaces identified through the RAFNA.
5. Integrate arts and cultural facilities at village scale to enhance equitable service levels.
6. Prioritize the creation and preservation of affordable spaces for arts production/rehearsal space, performance, and exhibition to prevent artists from being priced out of the community.

Key Spaces and Facilities Challenges for the BC Arts Sector:

- ▶ New provincial legislation significantly impacting the City's ability to secure amenities within much of the City Centre
- ▶ Loss of existing spaces due to developments that do not incorporate cultural space use
- ▶ Lack of flexible programming space for creative placemaking
- ▶ Preserving existing spaces
- ▶ Lack of both increased operational funding for cultural facilities, and new arts infrastructure funding, at provincial and federal levels

7. Encourage arts incubator spaces for emerging artists and organizations.
8. Utilize the City's Enhanced Accessibility Design Guidelines when planning new facilities and infrastructure improvements, engaging people with disabilities in the early planning phases.

OBJECTIVE 5.2:
Generate creative spaces and cultural amenities in new developments.

Supporting Actions:

1. Continue to work towards the development of a distinctive arts and entertainment district including the provision of a destination arts facility.
2. Encourage the development of arts spaces and hubs in alignment with complete communities model, circular economy principles and energy and emissions planning.



Richmond Cultural Centre
Annex lounge and gallery



Summer Fun in the Plaza,
Minoru Centre for Active Living

OBJECTIVE 5.3:

Prioritize creative placemaking.

Supporting Actions:

1. Improve awareness across City departments and integrate, where possible, creative placemaking as a way to both enhance communities and achieve City goals such as transportation, community wellness, social development, tourism, economic development and community planning.
2. Facilitate public performance and space activation (eg. busking).
3. Ensure grant programs offer opportunities for community-led creative placemaking projects that support cultural resonance, community wellness, IDEA, environmental sustainability, and economic vitality.
4. Establish parameters and guidelines for cultural amenity opportunities from development.
5. Construct more all-weather public gathering spaces for creative activity, festivals, congregation and networking.
6. Use public art and cultural programming to reimagine public spaces with an eye to creative placemaking.
7. Prioritize initiatives that animate public space in ways that:
 - resonate culturally with under-represented groups;
 - consider/address accessibility needs and barriers for people with disabilities;
 - maintain quality of life, biological diversity and a resilient natural environment; and
 - support local businesses and neighbours.
8. Develop capacity-building programs for local artists and creators to build their skills in creative placemaking and boost civic empowerment.
9. Offer and encourage arts engagement opportunities in spaces beyond the walls of traditional venues including unconventional spaces.
10. Incorporate creative wayfinding elements to improve navigability and visibility to cultural events and venues.

What is creative placemaking?

Creative placemaking is a collaborative approach to designing and enhancing public spaces that focuses on the needs, identity, and aspirations of the local community. It is an evolving field of practice that intentionally leverages the power of the arts, culture and creativity to serve a community's interest while driving a broader agenda for change, growth and transformation in a way that also builds character and quality of place.

Positive outcomes for communities include:

- ▶ Strengthened social connections
- ▶ Improved physical and mental health and wellness
- ▶ Increased sense of belonging and community pride
- ▶ Healthier local economies
- ▶ Enhanced perceptions of safety and comfort
- ▶ Opportunities to support climate action and resilience

Ongoing work

The City and its partners will continue to:

- Support dedicated affordable artist housing and studios, such as through the ARTS units in Capstan Village and artist-in-residence programs.
- Identify partnership opportunities with developers to ensure a creative visual realm.
- Support and encourage activation of the Capstan Arts District as in the City Centre Area Plan, with the provision of affordable creation, administrative, live/work and presentation space.
- Review and, as necessary, revise rental and facility booking processes with an eye to addressing availability needs within the arts community.
- Increase visual and performing arts opportunities in public spaces to showcase Richmond artists such as through the Urban Infrastructure Artist Roster and The Annex Gallery, as well as signature festivals.
- Identify and make creative use of the built environment and civic facilities, such as animating Minoru Plaza with markets, events and pop-up activities.
- Encourage the use of existing spaces within public institutions for other creative uses.
- Offer subsidized creation space to artists and non-profit arts organizations at community facilities.
- Ensure that City-operated arts spaces have technological resources and flexibility to accommodate emerging forms of presentation, exhibition and storage.
- Support the retention and development of high-calibre arts experiences and education in community centres, City-operated facilities and public spaces.
- Work across City departments to provide arts opportunities including art in the public realm and artist-in-residence programs.



The Mic Drop children and youth open mic night at Richmond Cultural Centre Annex lounge

A Distance Transformed
by Raymond Boisjoly,
ARTS units in Capstan Village



Our Planning Context



Artist Vanessa Mercedes Figueroa
leading arts programs for young artists,
Richmond Cultural Centre Annex

What has changed?

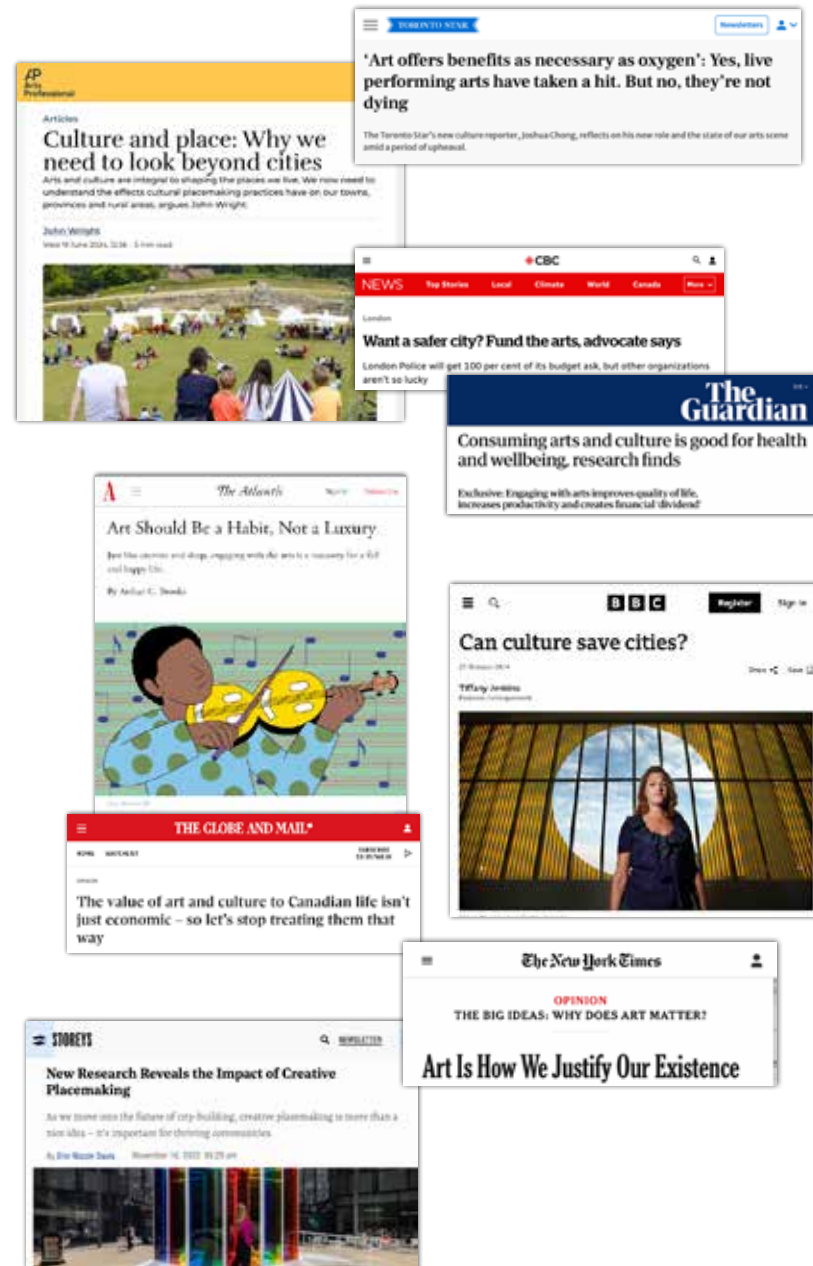
Much of the implementation of the *ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2019–2024* occurred over the pandemic years, impacting the arts sector and society generally.

During this period we developed and grew new online programs, re-launched HowArtWorks.ca as a resource hub, mobilized the arts in response to urgent themes (such as identity, local ecology, and Truth & Reconciliation), and saw a substantial increase in participation with the opening of new creation and exhibition spaces in the Cultural Centre Annex, including an expanded Media Lab. Free festivals continued to spark civic pride as did the community mural program (34 murals and counting), launched in 2020.

Meanwhile, Canada today is facing increasing challenges around affordability (particularly housing), rising socio-political polarization, health and climate urgency, the rise of AI, and other issues. In Richmond, recent provincial legislation has made it more difficult to secure cultural (and other) amenities through density bonusing in the City Centre.

At the same time, there is an increased awareness of the immeasurable value that arts and culture contribute to cities and neighbourhoods, and most importantly to each other in our day-to-day lives.

With expanding research, there is now a prevailing recognition that arts and culture impact our economies and planning, can play a role in climate mitigation, support personal and community wellness and so much more.



Major Sector Shifts and Trends

In the broader context of planning, important trends in Canada's nearly \$60 billion cultural industry will continue to have a significant influence on arts management and programming over the next five years.

Key considerations:



The ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on communities and the arts sector



The role of technology and changing nature of work through artificial intelligence (AI)



The climate crisis and the role arts and culture plays in mitigating climate change



The affordability crisis; cost of living and cost of art-making/creative spaces are too high



The rise of socio-political-cultural polarization



Innovations in the arts by and for those with lived experience of disability



Scaled-back corporate sponsorships and public arts funding



Shifting from passive consumption of arts and culture to more participatory arts experiences



Supporting Actions that advance Truth and Reconciliation



Lifecycle of arts organizations: many arts organizations in BC are having difficulty moving to an established phase and/or shifting into a turnaround mode after a period of gradual decline



Creating safer and more inclusive spaces for community dialogue through the arts (e.g. social-change arts practices)



Generational shifts in arts audiences and increased arts experiences for families



New operating models for arts organizations that are more entrepreneurial in nature



Outdoor arts, creative placemaking and co-activations of spaces



With further capacity-building within community groups, a shift in the City's role to be more of a facilitator and convener than a direct-supplier of services



Changes in provincial legislation that affect land use planning

Art's Role in Addressing Climate Change

In recent years, British Columbia and Richmond have seen significant changes in climate and weather that show that, now more than ever, it is time to act in service of positive environmental practices. Because the arts and culture sector relies on both primary (extraction and agriculture) and secondary (manufacturing and construction) sectors of the economy, (i.e. the burning of fossil fuels) it is implicated in producing carbon emissions that contribute to the climate crisis.¹ Artists and cultural workers in Canada have begun to recognize their own responsibility to reduce their negative impacts on the environment, and act more sustainably through climate mobilization.

The arts and culture sector also holds a unique position in society, in that it can be a voice for change. In the introduction to *The Green Sessions: A Day of Learning*, a series of recorded talks and panels organized by Soulpepper Theatre Company, the organizers write: “We believe that artists have an essential part to play in the climate battle. We know that our role as storytellers and communicators can be instrumental in delivering a societal shift.”² Therefore, the ability to raise awareness and be leaders in climate action is one of the sector’s strongest tools for mitigating environmental impact.

Accessible Arts for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities

In 2021, BC enacted the Accessible British Columbia Act, the first provincial accessibility legislation of its kind in BC. It works to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with all types of disabilities so that they can fully and equally participate in all aspects of community life. One of the requirements of the Act for all municipalities (and other public-sector organizations including, schools, school districts and health authorities) as to develop accessibility plans to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in civic life.

Compliance with accessibility legislation alone, however, does not create truly inclusive spaces. In a cultural space, accessibility for people with disabilities does not just apply to infrastructure, or physical accessibility, but also to artistic programming, and the mission and vision of the institution. Taking a more multi-dimensional approach to accessibility demonstrates to people with disabilities that they are desired in a space. Investing in accessibility, therefore, offers cultural spaces new ways to expand their visitation.³

People with disabilities are not just audiences—they are artists and creators! Too many disabled artists and arts workers are still only included as a way to achieve diversity metrics or to fulfill funding requirements. “Interest in accessibility is surging,” says Eliza Chandler, Artistic Director of the non-profit Tangled Art + Disability, “but there’s still a long way to go.”⁴

- 1 Lesimple, Heloise. “Decarbonizing Culture #1 Understanding the Ecological Impact of Cultural Activities.” LeCAKE: Common Art Knowledge Europe. Available online: <https://www.lecake.eu/understanding-the-ecological-impact-of-cultural-activities>
- 2 Soulpepper Theatre Company. “The Green Sessions: A Day of Learning.” [Video] September 21, 2021. Available online: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCLYxw6-iwZtoa22qExiRwjyR1mg-MA9fi>
- 3 Lazard, Carolyn. “Accessibility in the Arts: A Promise and a Practice.” *Recess New York*. 2019. Available online: <https://promiseandpractice.art>
- 4 Sandals, Leah. “8 Things Everyone Needs to Know About Art and Disability.” *Canadian Art*. March 13, 2016. Available online: <http://canadianart.ca/features/7-things-everyone-needs-to-know-about-art-disability>

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Arts and Culture Sector

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is computer technology that is designed to perform tasks such as solving problems, recognizing patterns, understanding language and making decisions. AI systems use data and rules to learn and improve over time. According to Imagine Canada, only 31% of Canadians “trust AI,” which is 19% lower than the global average.⁵

In the arts and culture sector, concerns over intellectual property, loss of value for human labour and the spreading of misinformation are widely discussed topics.⁶ There are also discussions on how AI can be used within artistic and creative work, and how over-prescriptive policy may stifle the creative and innovative potential of the technology.

The technology is still new and while there are no AI-specific actions indicated the *Arts Strategy 2026–2031*, future Strategies are likely to do so, considering that decision-makers must strike a balance between the risks and opportunities of AI, understanding its effects on economic, social and cultural well-being.⁷



Youth-led skill session,
Richmond Youth Media
Program

5 Emily Jensen. “What trends will impact charities and nonprofits in the third quarter of 2024?” *Imagine Canada*. August 12, 2024. Available online: <https://imaginecanada.ca/en/360/what-trends-will-impact-charities-and-nonprofits-in-the-third-quarter-of-2024>

6 Canadian Heritage. “Government of Canada partners with Mila to guide the development of a cultural data strategy for artificial intelligence.” September 13, 2024. Available online: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/news/2024/09/government-of-canada-partners-with-mila-to-guide-the-development-of-a-cultural-data-strategy-for-artificial-intelligence.htm>

7 Kelly Wilhelm. “Social and cultural impacts of AI: A seat at the policy table.” *Cultural Policy Hub*, OCAD. January 22, 2024. Available online: <https://culturalpolicyhub.ocadu.ca/news/social-cultural-impacts-of-AI>

Richmond Today*

The City of Richmond, located on Canada's west coast, is defined geographically by its dynamic, natural boundaries, the North and South arms of the Fraser River and the Pacific Ocean. The 17-island city's identity is in part shaped by its natural splendor, but is also understood for its historical and present-day associations to agriculture, aviation, the fishing industry, migration, intercultural exchange and more.

An edge city, Richmond is highly accessible, home to the Vancouver International Airport (YVR) and minutes from Vancouver, neighbouring municipalities and the US border. The Canada Line rapid transit system and its five stations located in City Centre and developing neighbourhoods connect residents and visitors to Metro Vancouver and the South Coast region.

First designated a city in 1990, Richmond has seen a rapid growth in population and has evolved into a vibrant, culturally diverse community with a mix of residential, commercial and industrial areas, as well as waterfront and tourism destinations, community amenities, parks and natural environments.

Now the fourth largest city in Metro Vancouver, Richmond currently represents 7.9% of the population in the region. With a reported increase of almost 6% between 2016 and 2021, Richmond's population continues to grow with 60% of residents born outside of Canada. Among newcomers (immigrants who arrived within past five years between 2016-2021) 77% originate from China, the Philippines, India and Hong Kong.

*Source: City of Richmond Hot Facts Series, **Statistics Canada

Known for its cultural diversity, **Richmond has the largest racialized population as a percentage of the total population** (80%) in the region**. Almost half (46%) of all residents, 96,275 individuals, reported English as the language most commonly spoken at home. Following English, Mandarin (with 37,000 speakers or 18% of Richmond's population) and Cantonese (with 36,515 speakers or 17% of Richmond's population) were the second and third most common languages spoken at home. Meanwhile, many residents report not knowing their neighbours and the sense of social connectedness is rated lower in Richmond than in other regions, particularly for those who are new immigrants.

Richmond is known as an active community with engaged citizens and community organizations, and a rich array of amenities and facilities that includes 140 parks totalling 871 hectares of park plans, 136 kms of trails and 87 kms of on-road cycling paths. Agriculture is an important part of the local economy; 39% of the City's land base, approximately 4,993 ha (12,338 ac), is within the Agricultural Land Reserve.

Richmond is also marked by a changing age distribution. There was a 53% increase in 70- to 74-year-olds, and a 16% decrease in 15 to 24-year-olds between 2016 and 2021. The Richmond Seniors Strategy 2022–2032 suggests that ~ 40% of the population will be 55+ years by 2036. This ten-year action-oriented framework guides the City and partners in supporting Richmond's fastest growing age group. Nationally, Millennials (born 1981–1996) are the fastest growing generation, representing 22.5% of Richmond's population.

55+ Facility Pass Dance Group, West Fest at West Richmond Community Centre



Community Profile By The Numbers*



242,000

= Richmond's estimated population in 2025

60%

of Richmond residents were born outside of Canada, representing 140

different ethnicities. This

is the highest proportion of immigrants in Canada (125,600 people).



Richmond was the 4th largest recipient of recent immigrants to BC in 2021, with **13,705** arrivals—following Vancouver, Surrey and Burnaby.

In 2021, **80%** of Richmond's population identified as a member of a racialized community—the highest proportion of any municipality in BC and the second highest in Canada.



46% reported having earned their high school diploma or equivalent, or college, CEGEP or other non-University education.



41%

of residents aged 25 and over reported having

a university certificate, diploma or degree at a bachelor level or higher as their highest level of completed education.



61%

of Richmond's labour force stays in the city to work. Richmond

is an employment magnet, with more people coming here each day to work than leaving to work elsewhere.



\$79,000

= median 2020 household total income.

71%

of residents own a home.



After English, Mandarin and Cantonese are the languages spoken the most often or on a regular basis in **45%** of homes.



Richmond residents are generally healthy, live longer, feel less stressed, have healthier weights, less chronic disease, smoke and drink less than other comparison communities in BC but need improvement in the areas of active living, mental and physical wellness, and a sense of belonging.



*Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census unless otherwise noted

Arts Strategy: Planning Context

Building on the previous Arts Strategy, the development of *ArtWorks: Arts Strategy 2026–2031* took into consideration the goals and vision for Richmond as outlined in the Official Community Plan (OCP) and related City Plans and Strategies. These documents —among many more—were assessed on how they support arts development in Richmond:

- Council Strategic Plan
- Official Community Plan
- City Centre Area Plan
- Youth Strategy
- Social Development Strategy
- Affordable Housing Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty
- Cultural Harmony Plan
- Accessibility Plan
- Community Wellness Strategy

The linkages identified between Richmond’s planning documents form a nested relationship of overlapping goals and outcomes for the City that, together, contribute to the development of excellent and accessible arts programs and spaces that represent the unique needs and opportunities of Richmond.

Key Findings of the Document Scan:

- The City of Richmond supports the arts through the continued development of an Arts District, promoting tourism and creative business opportunities, and through public celebrations such as festivals and public art.
- Arts and culture can be used to raise awareness about and find creative solutions to climate issues.
- Arts and culture are a central to complete communities.
- Arts and culture are integral to social and physical well-being, and have a role to play in education on social issues, inclusion and community wellness.
- There are more opportunities to be explored in order to respond to the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- Partnerships, relationships and collaborations are key to integrating demographic and cultural representation within the arts. Priority relationships include:
 - Youth
 - Seniors/Older Adults
 - Cultural and ethnically-diverse communities
 - People with disabilities
 - Organizations with a mandate to advance accessibility and inclusion
 - 2SLGBTQI+
- Financial accessibility to the arts (affordability) is as important as accessibility of spaces, programs and communications.

The Impacts and Benefits of Arts and Cultural Development

Thriving communities understand that building pride of place, through engaging arts and cultural programs, strengthens both community participation and economic development. The economic and livability benefits of cultural development have led to an understanding that arts amenities and services are not just a “nice to have” or a “frill” in local and regional governments. Increasingly, arts and cultural development is included in the foundational suite of municipal services offered to strengthen a community’s cultural identity and grow its creative economy.

FUN FACT

Arts and culture tourism has triple the economic impact of other types of tourism!

An arts-invested community:



Builds interpersonal ties and promotes volunteering



Improves residents’ sense of belonging and attachment



Increases inclusion and celebrates diversity



Builds community identity, social networks, and local pride



Provides opportunities for dialogue—through art—on challenging topics



Fosters a creative milieu that spurs economic growth in creative industries



Contributes to wellbeing, mental health and emotional health



Attracts tourists, businesses, new residents and investors



Improves quality of life

The following themes, adapted from the Canada Council for the Arts' Impact of the Arts assessment,⁸ capture the impacts of the arts in Canada and beyond.

Art Improves Quality of Life, Health and Wellbeing

Learning new skills when creating a work of art can improve self-control and confidence in one's abilities. These activities maintain neurological function, stimulate growth, and recruit pathways crucial to cognitive function. The World Health Organization⁹ found the arts play a major role in preventing, managing, and treating illnesses, as well as promoting health and wellbeing. Engagement in performance-based arts have been linked to reductions in stress, depression and other forms of pain.¹⁰ Moreover, the arts can provide opportunities to network, bond over new projects and share experiences which further a sense of community.



*Grandparents by
Jean Bradbury, Cook
Elementary School*

Art Builds Communities

Participation in arts and culture is known to boost civic engagement and social cohesion in communities. When we experience culture — a theatre piece, book, concert, etc. — that addresses a social issue or conveys a new perspective, we gain a better understanding of humanity and the diverse groups we live amongst. Dance, music, and visual arts transcend language and offer a public dialogue that bridges differences between cultural, racial and ethnic groups. In a study conducted by Nanos Research,¹¹ nearly two thirds of culture-goers said attending arts and cultural events had a positive or a somewhat positive impact on their sense of belonging to Canada.

Celebrations of cultural diversity promote community pride and provide an opportunity for individuals to engage with new perspectives and traditions.

A Stronger Economy Through Art

Arts and culture play an important role in promoting economic goals through local regeneration, developing talent, creating jobs, spurring innovation and attracting tourists. Statistics Canada estimates that cultural industries (including broadcasting, film and video, interactive media, design, journalism and crafts) contribute an estimated \$60 billion in direct contribution to Canada's GDP and more than 850,000 jobs.¹² According to the Canada Council for the Arts, arts and culture tourism has triple the economic impact of other types of tourism.

⁸ Canada Council for the Arts, Impact of the Arts, n.d.

⁹ World Health Organization, What is the Evidence on the Role of the Arts in Improving Health and Well-being? A Scoping Review, Health and Well-being, 2019.

¹⁰ The Guardian, Consuming arts and culture is good for health and wellbeing, research finds, 2024

¹¹ Nanos Research, Nearly two thirds of culture-goers say attending arts and cultural events has a positive impact or a somewhat positive on their sense of belonging to Canada (Business/Arts, NAC and Nanos Research), 2024

¹² Statistics Canada, Provincial and Territorial Cultural Indicators, 2022

How Richmond Supports and Invests in Arts and Culture*

The City wears many hats, acting as a supporter, presenter, facilitator, communicator, investor and facility operator

Supporter



Community Art Exhibitions

26 exhibitions in **6** locations including Richmond City Hall



Richmond Arts Awards

57 nominations
96 award recipients recognized since 2009



Culture Days

93 registered activities* by **80** local arts groups and individuals

*Ranked Number 1 in BC, Number 3 in Canada for medium-sized cities; in Top 10 overall



Richmond Arts Centre

provided **10+** arts groups **5,586** hours of room rentals at a subsidy of **\$122,800**

Facility Operator



Richmond Cultural Centre

458 hours room rentals by cultural organizations at subsidized rates



Arts Programs in the Richmond Cultural Centre/Annex

985 arts courses
54 professional instructors
8,500+ students registered



Richmond Art Gallery

15 exhibitions in the gallery and offsite presenting **36** artists
2456 school program participants
58 free public programs in-person and online with **2,062** participants
10,335 YouTube video views



Richmond Media Lab

106 media arts courses
69 Richmond Youth Media Lab members spent **4,200** hours at the Media Lab



Community Centres*

2,189 visual arts, dance & music courses
12,096 registered participants

*Delivered by Community Associations Plus: Libraries, Museums and Heritage sites that partner with Arts Services

Communicator



Arts & Culture eblasts

6 special edition eblasts
700+ subscribers

How Art Works Instagram

90 posts
3,455 followers

Art at Work Program

5 free professional development workshops for artists & organizations
282 participants in-person, online and via on-demand Youtube

Investor



Arts & Culture Grants Program

\$127,364 to **21** organizations



Public Art Program

446 artworks to-date
40 new works
17 Richmond artists contracted for civic art commissions
12 community group partners
29,970+ hours of community participation in the Engaging Artists in the Community Program to-date

Presenter

Festivals

5 signature events showcasing **300+** local artists and performers
120+ performances
155,000+ attendees



Artists-in-Residence

11-month Branscombe House Artist-in-Residence
3 Artists-in-Residence as part of Engaging Artists in the Community Program



Gateway Theatre*

57 performances and **41** rental events
119 professional artists
11,437 audience members
554 hours of theatre education
200 students enrolled



*Operated by Richmond Gateway Theatre Society with support of City of Richmond

Facilitator

Film Office

110+ individual filming requests
670 Richmond business supported by the film industry
\$13.7 million+ spent on production-related goods and services such as costumes, catering, automobile rentals and more



*2024 statistics represented unless otherwise noted

What We Heard

Cast of *Oliver!*
Set Design: Ryan Cormack.
Lighting Design: Sophie Tang.
Costume Design: Donnie Tejani.
Photo by David Cooper



Engagement Summary

ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2026–2031 is the culmination of a lengthy and thoughtful engagement process involving internal and external interest holders and the general public.

The project team gathered feedback from the following engagement activities:

- Four **Community Roundtable** Workshops
- Two Inter-departmental Staff Sessions
- Sounding Boards at Richmond Cultural Centre and Annex during Culture Days 2024 (281 participants) and 2025 (149 participants)
- Online Community Questionnaires in 2024 (81 responses) and 2025 (67 responses)

All feedback collected in 2024–2025 built upon the extensive engagement that produced the previous Arts Strategy; that process included an in-depth online survey of more than 470 respondents in both English and Chinese, a series of community dialogue events, and more than 30 pop-up kiosks and sounding boards that attracted ~500 additional pieces of feedback collected at various locations across the city.

This deep-dive engagement was anchored by the meaningful participation of a 25-member multi-generational and multicultural Task Group mirroring various aspects of life in Richmond, including representatives from local arts and cultural organizations, businesses and independent artists.

The **Community Roundtable** is an interest holder working group with representation from across Richmond’s creative ecosystem, including:

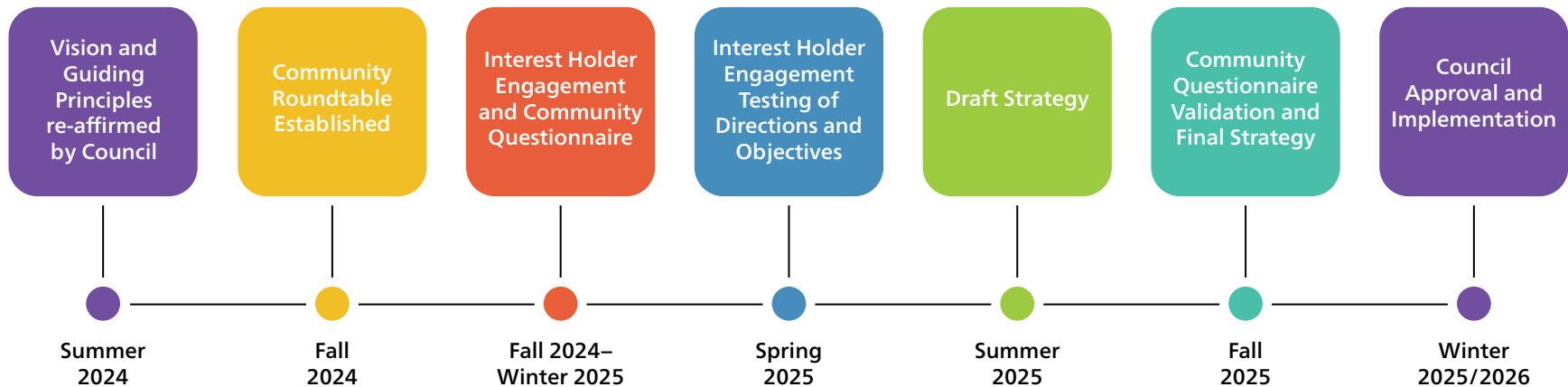
- ▶ Emily DeBoer, Artist
- ▶ Paul Defour, Board member, Richmond Arts Coalition
- ▶ Ceri Chong, Director, Destination and Industry Development, Tourism Richmond; Richmond Public Art Advisory Committee Member
- ▶ Sandra Ciccozzi, Healthcare professional and member of community arts non-profit organization, Richmond Potters’ Club
- ▶ Jonathan Der, Associate Conductor, Chamber Music Director, Richmond Delta Youth Orchestra
- ▶ Catherine Jule, District Administrator, Early Learning & Arts, Richmond School District No. 38
- ▶ Rita Kompst, Musqueam Artist
- ▶ Ian Lai, Manager, Feeding Futures, Richmond School District No. 38; Former Executive Director, Urban Bounty (Richmond Food Security Society)
- ▶ Barbara Tomasic, Executive Artistic Director, Gateway Theatre
- ▶ Toni Zhang McAfee, Director/Curator, Lipont Gallery
- ▶ Debra Zhou, Board member, Richmond Art Gallery Association; Director of Development, Chinese Canadian Museum

Volunteers at the Sounding Boards at Culture Days opening celebration weekend, September 2024



Process and Timeline

Feedback from interest holders and the general public was integral to each stage of the Strategy's development. Robust community engagement was achieved through the enthusiastic and knowledgeable participation of the Community Roundtable.



Ongoing, New and Emerging Themes

In *ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2019–2024*, the following themes emerged from the engagement process; these continue to be relevant:

- **Improving and increasing arts and cultural infrastructure**
- **Expanding public awareness and understanding of the arts**
- **Positioning Richmond as an arts destination**
- **Reflecting diversity, and increasing accessibility and inclusion**
- **Leveraging the impacts of the arts to address social, economic and other goals**

The following additional themes emerged in addition, or in response, to those above:

1. Climate Action

While, as with most sectors, the arts are implicated in the production of carbon emissions, many artists have long worked with natural and/or reclaimed materials, as well as created (often community-engaged) works that help to raise awareness about climate change. *ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2019–2024* was silent on the issue of climate action, so with the enthusiastic agreement of interest holders, the updated Arts Strategy aims to address this omission. Richmond's climate action goals as outlined in the Community Energy and Emissions Plan (2022) are now reflected in Objectives 3.3, 5.2 and 5.3.

2. Accessibility

Although accessibility was a key element of the previous Arts Strategy, the recently adopted Richmond Accessibility Plan has increased the urgency to pay more attention to this multifaceted issue. Interest holders identified the potential to weave accessibility throughout the document among many strategic directions, taking care to consider the needs of a growing seniors population and of people with disabilities. This is reflected in Objectives 1.1, 2.1, 2.3, 5.1 and 5.3.

3. Infrastructure and Resources for Arts

As it was in *ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2019–2024*, the need for additional infrastructure and resources for the arts was perceived as a priority. Interest holders reiterated a desire for more venues for art-making, performance, and showcasing, while raising awareness for the need to protect existing affordable spaces for arts production, performance and exhibition. Additionally, the interest holders were concerned with the equitable distribution of cultural infrastructure and programming, indicating the desire to ensure everyone in Richmond has access, especially underserved and equity-deserving groups. This is reflected in Objectives 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.2, 5.1 and 5.2.



Hidden Stories of the Bioverse
by Andrea Hoff
with students of
Dixon Elementary
in partnership
with Engineering
Sustainability

4. Funding, Capacity-Building and Strategic Partnerships

Interest holders were concerned with funding, capacity-building and partnership opportunities available for arts organizations in Richmond. Suggestions included revitalizing the Arts and Culture Grants Program, with a focus on sustainability, growth and collaboration, as well as fostering partnerships between the arts, business, government, First Nations and educational sectors to support arts and cultural initiatives. This is reflected in Objectives 1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 5.3.

5. Leadership, Advocacy and Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness and literacy could be improved, with interest holders recommending education campaigns to illustrate the importance of municipal arts and culture services and the infrastructure required to support them. Cultural leadership from the City and advocacy on behalf of cultural liaisons, ambassadors, community leaders, influencers and local politicians, were also noted as essential for increasing cultural awareness in Richmond. This is reflected in Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3.

6. Engagement, Marketing and Communications

Building upon the previous strategy, increased awareness of Richmond's cultural offerings was identified as a key priority, but with a specific interest to develop clear, accessible marketing and communications strategies for promotion. Interest holders indicated that engagement should reach under-represented populations in meaningful ways, addressing socio-cultural polarization and exclusion, and ensuring arts are available to all social groups. This is reflected in Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1 and 5.3.

7. Programming

Interest holders indicated a continued desire for a wide range of new or expanded cultural and top artistic programming, catering to various age groups, cultural backgrounds, and levels of experience, and offered at more convenient times. There was also interest in dedicating resources to increase the focus on Indigenous programming, education on Truth and Reconciliation, and support for Elders as culture keepers. This is reflected in Objectives 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 4.3 and 5.3.



Opening ceremony of
Richmond Cultural Centre
Annex, February 9, 2024

Moving Forward



Arts Club at
Richmond Public
Library, partnership
with Art Truck

Implementation, Evaluation and Communication

ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2026–2031 encompasses a broad range of creative and cultural assets and resources that, much like the role of creativity, are integrated into many aspects of everyday life in Richmond including business, tourism, gastronomy, public spaces, well-being and more, all part of a sustainable and healthy creative ecosystem.

Identifying leading and supporting partners will contribute to the implementation of the Arts Strategy, while continued community participation will ensure that it may be assessed, adapted and revised in response to changing needs.

This is a “living document,” and will be supported by an Implementation Framework indicating:

- actions categorized into recommended phases
- lead and partner roles, and opportunities for further collaboration
- measurable outcomes as a means to monitor progress

This Implementation Framework provides a guide for more detailed, tactical actions, and pave the way forward for the City’s decision-making in arts activities and investment over the next five years.

Sharing *ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2026–2031* is essential to building wider awareness, excitement and momentum.

Communications opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- A multilingual communications strategy to local media and the Richmond community, including the use of social media platforms for the City, partner groups and interest holders;
- Widely advertised launch event(s) with community members, City representatives and partners to raise awareness and excitement around the Arts Strategy and its directions;
- Release of Arts Strategy updates through HowArtWorks.ca, City e-newsletters and other distribution networks; and
- Linking the directions of the Strategy with community events and programs throughout the calendar year to carry out supporting actions and plan linkages.



Marlene Yuen, *Peace Together*; Jesse Birch, *Cups for Richmond Art Gallery with Born Broken*, Photo: Michael Love (Foodways)

Acknowledgements

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RICHMOND CITY COUNCIL

- Mayor Malcolm Brodie
- Councillor Chak Au
- Councillor Carol Day
- Councillor Laura Gillanders
- Councillor Kash Heed
- Councillor Andy Hobbs
- Councillor Alexa Loo
- Councillor Bill McNulty
- Councillor Michael Wolfe

*A Walk in the Park by Fiona Tang,
Trail Washroom at Terra Nova Park*



APPENDIX

Where we are now: State of the Arts in Richmond

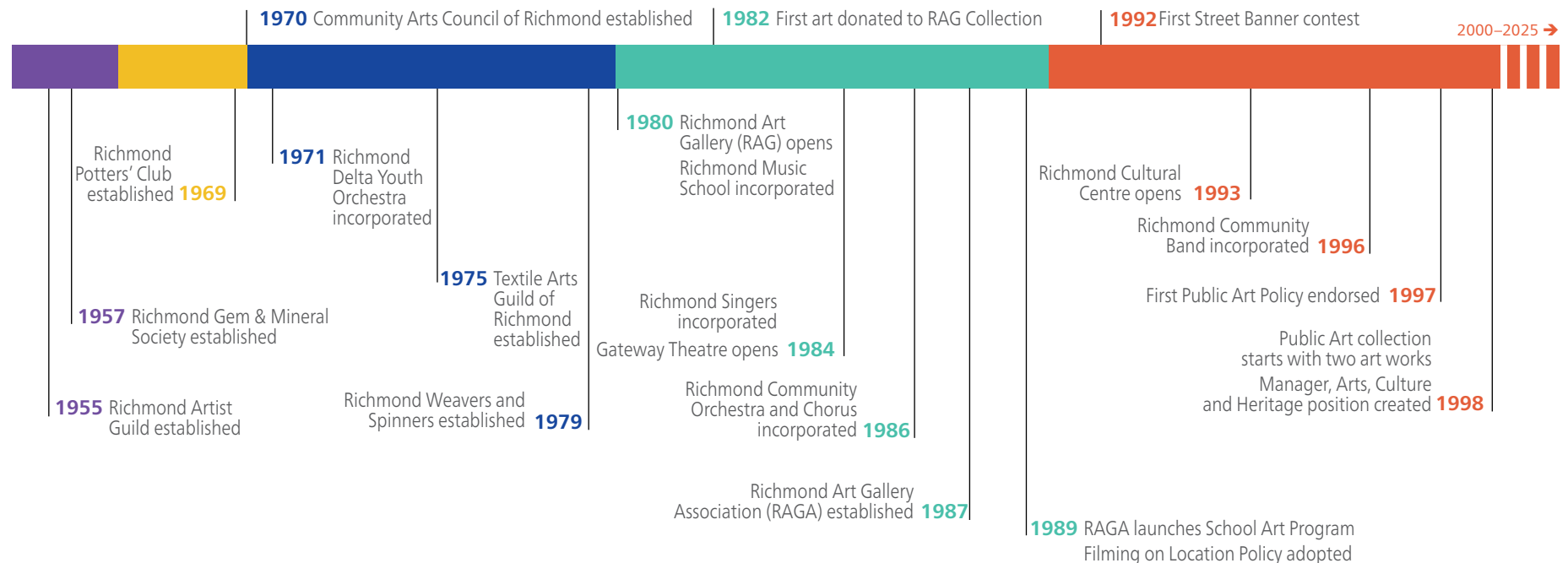
In 2004, the City adopted its first Arts Strategy with the aim to make Richmond a city with a thriving cultural life where opportunities for participation in the arts at all levels are accessible, artists feel they have a place and are seen as contributing to the community, cultural industries are welcomed, and cultural activity is visible and supported.

Since then, there has been significant civic investment to increase the capacity of artists and arts organizations, offer high-quality festivals and arts programs, and showcase Richmond's artistic talent. Whether taking part in an international celebration like the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, or working through unprecedented global pandemic restrictions, local artists have been integral to instilling community connection, pride, identity and spirit.

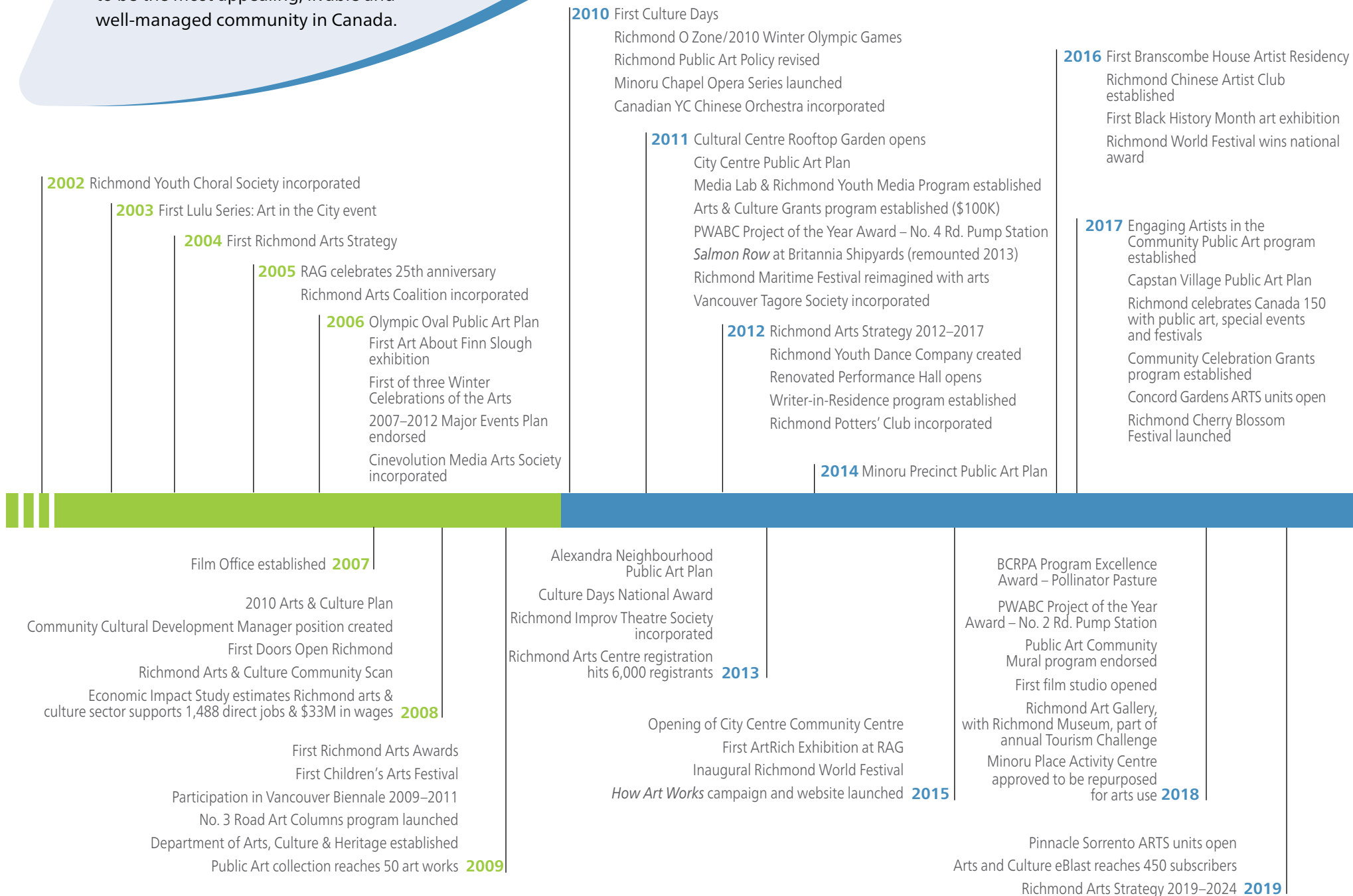
The 2004 Arts Strategy was updated in 2012 and again in 2019 following extensive public engagement to produce *Artworks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2019–2024*. These strategies share an ongoing commitment to:

- Improving and increasing arts and cultural infrastructure
- Expanding public awareness and understanding of the arts
- Positioning Richmond as an arts destination
- Reflecting diversity, and increasing accessibility and inclusion
- Leveraging the arts to address social, economic and other goals

As noted in Strategic Direction 4 (page 20), addressing these will depend on building leadership at grassroots community levels in addition to a continued strong civic commitment.



Richmond's arts development has a critical and increasingly strategic role in the City's aspiration to be the most appealing, livable and well-managed community in Canada.



2020 COVID-19 pandemic announced by World Health Organization
 #RichmondHasHeart launches with projects by Richmond artists including mail art, memorial shrines and face mask designs
 Sexsmith Artist Studios open
 Gateway Theatre presents *Home for the Holidays* online musical revue
 National Indigenous Peoples Day celebrated with week of virtual programs
 40th anniversary of the Richmond Art Gallery

2022 Richmond hosts Arts BC Conference
 Brown Road Artist Studios open
 75th anniversary of Steveston Salmon Festival
 Blue Cabin Floating Artist Residency begins two-year tenure at Imperial Landing
 Hand-woven blanket by Debra Sparrow commissioned by City and installed at Council Chambers entrance
 Community Arts Council of Richmond presents first *Faces of Richmond* exhibition for BC Seniors' Week
 \$92K from Dept of Canadian Heritage funds *Mosaic Firefly* artist-led project promoting inter-generational and intercultural understanding

2023 Richmond added to Netflix in Your Neighbourhood film tourism initiative
 Arts and Culture eBlast hits 700+ subscribers as enews service transferred to Richmond Arts Coalition
Sea to Sky by Thomas Canell wins Creative City Network of Canada Award of Excellence for Public Art
 Children's Arts Festival adds "chill-out zone" for neuro-diverse participants
 Minoru Centre for Active Living launches summer concerts series on plaza
 20th annual Richmond Maritime Festival
 Inaugural Richmond Art Walk organized by Lipont Gallery in partnership with Tourism Richmond

2025 Public art walking tour program launched in Capstan Village
 Richmond Arts Strategy 2026–2031

2021 Arts and Culture eBlast hits 500+ subscribers and @howartworks Instagram reaches 800+ followers
 HowArtWorks.ca relaunched as main arts portal
 Community mural program installs six murals including *Stages of Bloom* at Gateway Theatre
 National Day for Truth & Reconciliation established

Opening of Richmond Cultural Centre Annex
 Operation of pottery studio in Cultural Centre transferred to Richmond Potters' Club
 Richmond Signature and Community Event Plan 2025–2029
 Neighbourhood Block Party Program established
 15th Anniversary of Culture Days
 Gateway Theatre opens 40th anniversary season
 Inaugural exhibition at The Annex Gallery
 @howartworks social media reaches 3,445 followers
 Council unanimously approves Duck Island redevelopment plan as entertainment and tourism district **2024**

Blue Cabin
 Floating
 Artist Residency at
 Imperial Landing





Children's Arts Festival, featuring
Vancouver Chinese Lion and Dragon
Dance Team