

City of Richmond

Seniors Strategy 2022–2032



Executive Summary

Seniors are the fastest growing demographic globally, and are living longer and experiencing better health than previous generations. It is projected that close to 40% of the population in Richmond will be 55+ years by 2036, emphasizing the importance of creating a 10-year strategy to address the needs of seniors. The *City of Richmond Seniors Strategy 2022–2032 (Seniors Strategy)* represents the City's ongoing commitment to addressing the needs of the seniors population in Richmond. The *Seniors Strategy* is an action-oriented framework intended to guide the City and stakeholders in supporting seniors in Richmond over the next decade. The vision for this collaborative strategy is that seniors living in Richmond are safe, respected, healthy and engaged in their communities.

Supporting seniors to age well requires the collaboration and commitment of the City and many organizations and groups, including community associations and societies, community service organizations, health agencies and the private sector. A solid foundation of supports and structures are already in place in Richmond to enable seniors to remain healthy and active in their communities. This is achieved through innovative, accessible and inclusive program and service delivery, collaborative partnerships and shared accountability. Work is guided by the outcomes and actions outlined in City Council endorsed plans and strategies that impact seniors. The *Seniors Strategy* builds upon the achievements of previous City plans, strategies and initiatives, and guides the City's planning and policy development, while continuing to take a collaborative approach to program and service delivery for seniors in Richmond.

The *Seniors Strategy* outlines five strategic directions:

1. Age-friendly neighbourhoods that support seniors to age in place;
2. Diverse, accessible and inclusive programs and services for seniors at all stages;
3. Communication and awareness of programs and services available for seniors;
4. Education and understanding about healthy aging; and
5. Planning for a growing population of seniors.

The *Seniors Strategy* will guide annual work planning for those serving seniors in Richmond and, with the support of a dedicated working group, will be implemented and evaluated for effectiveness in achieving its strategic directions.

Strategic Directions and Actions

The *2022–2032 Richmond Seniors Strategy* consists of five strategic directions and 29 recommended actions to be completed over a ten-year time frame. The strategic directions and accompanying actions were created in response to themes identified through an analysis of community needs, best practices and various stakeholder engagement activities. The strategic directions clarify areas of focus and include actions that build on previous and ongoing work to achieve the described outcomes. Specific targeted activities and initiatives will be established through annual work plans to best support the achievement of the actions outlined in the strategy. The five strategic directions are:

1. Age-friendly neighbourhoods that support seniors to age in place;
2. Diverse, accessible and inclusive programs and services for seniors at all stages;
3. Communication and awareness of programs and services available for seniors;
4. Education and understanding about healthy aging; and
5. Planning for a growing population of seniors.

The *Seniors Strategy* is intended to be delivered in partnership and collaboration with community stakeholders in Richmond that share the vision of keeping Richmond seniors active, healthy and connected to their community. Each action includes:

- **Who's involved:** Those who have an interest and/or the expertise necessary to achieve the action including the City, community associations and societies, community organizations, health agencies and the private sector.
- **City's Role:** Supporting healthy aging is shared with senior levels of government and seniors-serving organizations. The City's role in each action is outlined as follows

Lead: The City is responsible for defining and delivering the short, medium, long term and ongoing direction

Collaborate: The City plays a role as a facilitator, convener and/or partner, and will contribute knowledge, leadership, staff time and relevant resources as an active participant on a team or table

Support: The City contributes knowledge, staff time and relevant resources to support implementation of the direction that is led by others.

- **Timeline/Implementation Period:** The anticipated timeline for delivering on the actions are classified as short-term (0-3 years), medium-term (4-6 years), long-term (7-10 years) or ongoing.



1 Age-Friendly Neighbourhoods that Support Seniors to Age in Place

Age-friendly communities play an important role in building community, keeping people healthy, well connected, resilient and able to participate fully in their neighbourhoods. In practical terms, an age-friendly community adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of seniors with varying needs and capacities. In addition to the necessary physical infrastructure, a community's social infrastructure must also ensure accessibility, inclusivity and safety for seniors with varying needs. Age-friendly neighbourhoods reduce social isolation and loneliness, and ensure all seniors regardless of abilities, live in environments that enable them to actively enjoy a high quality of life.

Key Outcomes

- Seniors have opportunities to connect socially in their neighbourhoods.
- Seniors feel safe and supported.
- Seniors are able to remain active in the neighbourhoods of their choice for as long as possible.
- Seniors utilize the amenities and outdoor spaces in Richmond.
- Seniors have access to affordable, safe and accessible transportation services and housing options.
- Seniors living with dementia, their families and caregivers are supported to be active and engaged in their community.

No.	Action	Who's involved	City's Role	Timeline
1.1	Expand on the development of age-friendly neighbourhoods (e.g. outdoor areas and public buildings, transportation, housing) in Richmond by implementing the framework created from the <i>2019 Engaging Seniors in Age-Friendly Planning</i> project in all neighbourhoods.	City of Richmond; Community Associations and Societies; Community Organizations; Private Sector; Vancouver Coastal Health	Collaboration	Ongoing
1.2	Identify and address barriers for seniors to access open spaces, parks, trails and streets (e.g. crosswalks, benches, lighting, accessible, safe gathering places).	City of Richmond	Lead	Short-term
1.3	Build upon current practices (formal and informal) to activate public spaces in a manner that fosters social connections between seniors and others in their neighbourhoods.	City of Richmond; Community Organizations; Richmond Public Library; Private Sector	Lead	Medium-term

No.	Action	Who's involved	City's Role	Timeline
1.4	Identify ways to support seniors when transitioning through the continuum of housing available in Richmond (e.g. education and awareness, housing repair, one-on-one support, database listing).	City of Richmond; Community Organizations; Housing Providers; Vancouver Coastal Health	Support	Short-term
1.5	Build upon existing best practices that reduce social isolation and loneliness, and facilitate opportunities to strengthen social connections, resilience and mutual support between seniors and their neighbours (e.g. Hey Neighbour, Resilient Streets/ Neighbourhoods programs).	City of Richmond; Community Associations and Societies; Richmond Public Library; Community Organizations; Housing Providers; Vancouver Coastal Health	Collaborate	Ongoing
1.6	Evaluate the implementation of the 2019–2023 Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan and develop initiatives to further support for all Richmond residents living with dementia, their families and caregivers following Action Plan completion.	City of Richmond; Community Associations and Societies; Richmond Public Library; Community Organizations; Vancouver Coastal Health	Lead	Medium-term



2 Diverse, Accessible and Inclusive Programs and Services for Seniors at all Stages

Programs and services for seniors in Richmond are offered through many providers including the City, community associations and societies, community organizations and the private sector. Participation in diverse, high quality programs and services offered in the community can foster social connections and enhance overall health, well-being and quality of life for seniors. Removing barriers and ensuring programs and services are designed to be welcoming and accessible ensures all seniors living in Richmond are able to fully participate regardless of their age, previous experience, physical fitness level and stage in their aging journey. Ensuring a variety of opportunities are available for meaningful and purposeful engagement, celebration, learning, and personal growth and development allows seniors to stay socially engaged, physically and mentally active, and healthier in the community for as long as possible.

Key Outcomes

- Seniors feel welcomed, encouraged and supported to participate in programs and services.
- Programs and services for seniors are accessible by those facing barriers to participation.
- Seniors are supported at all stages in their aging journey to be physically, mentally and socially active.
- Seniors have opportunities available to them that are interesting, engaging and facilitate learning and enhanced skill development.

No.	Action	Who's involved	City's Role	Timeline
2.1	Expand upon activities and events that celebrate the cultural diversity of seniors in Richmond and provide opportunities to learn about and connect with others of varying backgrounds and ethnic origins (e.g. City Arts, Cultural and Heritage programs, Highway to Heaven Bus Tour, holiday celebrations).	City of Richmond; Community Associations and Societies; Richmond Public Library; Community Organizations; Richmond Tourism; Private Sector	Collaborate	Short-term
2.2	Research and explore best practices to better understand and serve the diverse needs and interests of the large seniors age group, 55 to 105 years (e.g. use of the word "senior" and using a needs-based vs. age-based approach to programming).	City of Richmond; Community Associations and Societies; Richmond Oval; Community Organizations; Private Sector	Collaborate	Ongoing

No.	Action	Who's involved	City's Role	Timeline
2.3	Identify, monitor and remove barriers for seniors to enable them to participate fully in programs and services that support healthy aging (e.g. physical and cognitive limitations, income, transportation, language, culture, technology access and use).	City of Richmond; Richmond Public Library; Community Organizations	Collaborate	Ongoing
2.4	Explore new approaches to program design to engage seniors participation at all levels (e.g. introductory/beginner, intermediate and advanced/competitive/mastery).	City of Richmond; Community Associations and Societies; Richmond Oval; Community Organizations; Private Sector	Collaborate	Medium-term
2.5	Promote meaningful volunteer and paid opportunities for seniors to share their experiential wisdom and skills through community-based programs and services that facilitate personal growth and development (e.g. intergenerational opportunities, instructor-led groups, tour guides, project facilitators, etc.).	City of Richmond; Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee; Community Associations and Societies; Richmond Public Library; Community Organizations	Support	Ongoing
2.6	Support seniors as they move through various life stages through the creation of educational opportunities that address a range of healthy aging topics (e.g. loss of driver's license, retirement, caregiving, etc.).	City of Richmond; Richmond Public Library; Community Organizations; Vancouver Coastal Health; Private Sector	Collaborate	Medium-term



3 Communication and Awareness of Programs and Services Available for Seniors

Seniors, their families and caregivers, and those who provide services to seniors are not always aware of the wide variety of programs, services and supports available in Richmond. Having access to the right information at the right time helps everyone stay informed and better navigate the supports seniors require to remain healthy and safe at home. Utilizing existing connections and networks between seniors and service providers to increase the understanding of the benefits of social participation and ensure seniors have access and the skills to stay connected in an increasingly digital world are critical components to aging well and remaining socially connected and engaged.

Key Outcomes

- Seniors and the broader community are aware of the variety of programs and services offered in Richmond to support healthy aging and are able to make referrals to those in need as appropriate.
- Seniors and their families and caregivers report an increased awareness of how to find information about available programs and services to support healthy aging.
- Seniors report that their physical, social and mental needs are met.
- Seniors are socially connected, engaged and informed through accessible and appropriate technology.

No.	Action	Who's involved	City's Role	Timeline
3.1	Explore and implement new, accessible and barrier-free communication and marketing vehicles about programs and services available to seniors of all ages, stages and abilities (e.g. 55+ Citywide Program Guide).	City of Richmond; Community Associations and Societies; Richmond Public Library; Community Organizations; Vancouver Coastal Health	Lead	Short-term
3.2	Identify new opportunities for seniors to access a comprehensive listing of programs, services and supports available to seniors in Richmond in one location.	City of Richmond; Community Associations and Societies; Richmond Public Library; Community Organizations; Vancouver Coastal Health; Private Sector	Support	Long-term

No.	Action	Who's involved	City's Role	Timeline
3.3	Increase awareness in the community about the range and continuum of health-related programs and services available in Richmond to support healthy aging in place for seniors (e.g. mental health, falls prevention, wellness, Adult Day Care).	City of Richmond; Community Associations and Societies; Community Organizations; Vancouver Coastal Health	Collaborate	Medium-term
3.4	Utilize existing connections between seniors, health professionals and community organizations to raise awareness of the benefits of participation of seniors in programs and services in the community (e.g. social prescribing programs).	City of Richmond; Community Associations and Societies; Richmond Public Library; Community Organizations; Vancouver Coastal Health; Richmond Division of Family Practice	Support	Medium-term
3.5	Increase seniors access to technology through accessible initiatives and opportunities to ensure they are informed and aware of online information and resources to support them as they age (e.g. technology lending programs, one-on-one tech support).	City of Richmond; Richmond Public Library; Community Organizations	Support	Short-term
3.6	Evaluate the use of existing City communication methods and platforms (e.g. MyRichmond portal, Perfect Mind, etc.) to formalize ways to connect with and support potentially isolated seniors and their families and caregivers during health or weather emergencies (e.g. COVID-19 Pandemic, Heat Dome).	City of Richmond; Richmond Public Library; Community Organizations; Vancouver Coastal Health; Richmond Division of Family Practice	Lead	Long-term



4 Education and Understanding about Healthy Aging

Awareness and information sharing initiatives about healthy aging can potentially change how a community thinks, feels, and acts towards the seniors population and helps to dispel any negative myths and stereotypes. By broadening a community's understanding of aging and the issues that impact seniors, seniors are treated in a more respectful manner and better supported to fully participate as contributing members of society. All of which positively impacts the health and well-being of seniors. Additionally, providing ongoing, accessible opportunities for seniors to provide feedback on strategies and initiatives that impact them builds trust and ensures programs and services are developed in collaboration with seniors.

Key Outcomes

- Richmond residents of all ages understand the positive impacts of healthy aging and are engaged in supporting initiatives that foster the skills and abilities of seniors in the community.
- Seniors have an increased sense of purpose and feel their voices are heard.
- There are increased opportunities for seniors to contribute their skills, abilities and experiences to the community.
- Seniors are respected, feel welcomed and valued; and are included in the community.

No.	Action	Who's involved	City's Role	Timeline
4.1	Create a series of educational campaigns and activities on a wide variety of topics to inform the public, staff and volunteers about healthy aging.	City of Richmond; Richmond Public Library; Community Organizations; Vancouver Coastal Health	Collaborate	Medium-term
4.2	Expand on creative initiatives to reduce ageism and negative stereotypes around aging (e.g. City's annual Positive Aging Campaign).	City of Richmond; Community Associations and Societies; Community Organizations; Vancouver Coastal Health	Collaborate	Short-term
4.3	Facilitate ongoing dialogue and engagement opportunities with seniors through accessible platforms to provide feedback on issues and opportunities about healthy aging.	City of Richmond; Community Associations and Societies; Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee	Lead	Ongoing

No.	Action	Who's involved	City's Role	Timeline
4.4	Develop training for staff and volunteers working with seniors on trends and best practices related to supporting healthy aging.	City of Richmond; Community Associations and Societies; Community Organizations	Lead	Medium-term
4.5	Explore a variety of opportunities to develop and maintain meaningful connections and increase knowledge exchange between seniors and younger populations (e.g. City Centre's Intergen Youth Leadership Team, Youth/Seniors Week collaborations).	City of Richmond; Community Associations and Societies; Community Organizations	Collaborate	Ongoing



5 Planning for a Growing Population of Seniors

Successfully implementing actions outlined in the *Seniors Strategy* and other seniors-related initiatives is reliant on continuing relationships and collaboration with community partners, ensuring there are dedicated and appropriate resources available, and ongoing information is shared to stay current on issues that impact seniors in the community. There is a particular need to be aware of trends and best practices to successfully serve, support and plan for the growing and wide demographic of seniors that spans over 50 years from age 55 years to 105+ years. The City is committed to reporting out on the progress and achievements made on the *Seniors Strategy's* actions and identifying new opportunities to better support active, healthy and connected seniors in Richmond.

Key Outcomes

- Staff and volunteers in seniors-related roles are aware of current trends, research and best practices related to healthy aging to inform *Seniors Strategy* actions and seniors-related initiatives in Richmond.
- The City is aware of the latest trends and best practices that address the impacts of a growing population of seniors on City planning and service provision from other levels of government.
- Supports and resources are in place and efficiently utilized to adequately meet the current and future needs of the growing population of seniors in Richmond.
- A working group is in place to support implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the *Seniors Strategy*.
- The public is informed on the progress of the *Seniors Strategy* and other seniors-related initiatives in Richmond.

No.	Action	Who's involved	City's Role	Timeline
5.1	Research, monitor and evaluate municipal, provincial, federal and global trends and best practices related to addressing the impacts and opportunities of a growing demographic of seniors in order to plan and act accordingly.	City of Richmond	Lead	Ongoing
5.2	Create a working group to support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Seniors Strategy.	City of Richmond; Community Associations and Societies; Richmond Public Library; Community Organizations	Lead	Short-term

No.	Action	Who's involved	City's Role	Timeline
5.3	Collaborate with other Lower Mainland municipalities and provincial groups to keep up to date on research, trends and best practices related to supporting healthy aging in Richmond.	City of Richmond; Community Associations and Societies; Richmond Public Library; Community Organizations	Lead	Ongoing
5.4	Clarify and align seniors-related roles, programs and services in Richmond to reduce gaps and ensure the best use of community resources.	City of Richmond; Community Associations and Societies; Richmond Public Library; Community Organizations; Vancouver Coastal Health	Collaborate	Short-term
5.5	Dedicate appropriate staff resources to adequately plan for and meet the needs of an increasingly growing population of seniors in Richmond.	City of Richmond	Lead	Ongoing
5.6	Report out every two years on the progress and achievements related to the Seniors Strategy to City Council, Stakeholders and the public.	City of Richmond; Community Associations and Societies; Richmond Public Library; Community Organizations; Vancouver Coastal Health	Lead	Ongoing