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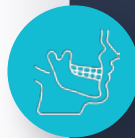
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OUR CITY

Richmond

GOOD TO KNOW

by Florence Gordon

Consolidated 5 Year Financial Plan 2025 - 2029

Section 165 of the *Community Charter* requires that council adopt a 5 Year Financial Plan Bylaw each year prior to the adoption of the annual Property Tax Bylaw. The purpose of the 5 Year Financial Plan is to provide a budgetary framework for the city to plan the management of its resources, revenues and expenditures in order to best serve the community.

- The Consolidated 5 Year Financial Plan combines the Operating Budget, Capital Budget, Utility Budget and One-Time Expenditures for 2025. The plan is based on the city's current year budgets along with estimates developed from economic forecasts and other expected impacts on revenues and spending for the following four years. Each year, the rolling plan is reviewed and updated.
- It provides a 5 year summary of revenue and expenditures, planned capital projects, and projected tax increases.
- It presents a balanced budget for all 5 years of the plan, as required under the *Community Charter*.
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- It provides a 5 year summary of revenue and expenditures, planned capital projects, and projected tax increases.
- It presents a balanced budget for all 5 years of the plan, as required under the *Community Charter*.



Photo via richmond.ca

Planning our financial future to 2029

The city wants to hear from you about the city's proposed Consolidated 5 Year Financial Plan to the year 2029. Please read the information and **complete the comment form by 11:59pm on Sunday, Jan. 19, 2025.**

More information

The proposed Consolidated 5 Year Financial Plan (2025-2029) is also available via:

- City's website at richmond.ca/5YFP.
- Email request to finance@richmond.ca.

Background

Each year, Council approves three budgets to guide municipal spending.

1. The **Operating Budget** funds the provision of general city services based on the level of service as approved by council, and also includes one-time expenditures with no tax impact.

2. The **Capital Budget** funds investment in new or replacement infrastructure and equipment.

3. The **Utility Budget** supports provision of water, sewer, flood protection, garbage and recycling services.

Once Council approves each of its annual three budgets, the city develops a proposed **Consolidated 5 Year Financial Plan** to:

- Meet obligations under the *Community Charter*, which governs local governments in BC, and requires the city to adopt a 5 Year Financial Plan.
- Provide a budget road map for the city to manage its resources, revenues and spending to best serve the community.
- Establish that the city has the ability to meet the needs of the community and maintain civic service levels for the coming five years, while meeting its legal requirement to deliver balanced annual operating budgets.

Timeline

Bylaw reading – Timeline Item 1 Complete

- The proposed Consolidated 5 Year Financial Plan Bylaw No. 10622 received first, second and third readings at the Dec. 9, 2024 Council Meeting

Public comment period open – Timeline Item 2 Active

- Timeline item 2 – active
- Public comment period open until Sunday, Jan. 19, 2025

Timeline item 3 – Final Report to Council

- The proposed Consolidated 5 Year Financial Plan (2025-2029) Bylaw No. 10622 is expected to be on the Jan. 27, 2025 Council Meeting agenda for consideration of final reading and adoption.

Celebrate Lunar New Year at Gateway Theatre

Continuing its 2024 /2025 season, Gateway Theatre presents *Silk Road Music: Lunar New Year Celebration* on Saturday, Feb. 1. Doors open at 1 p.m. and event will begin at 2 p.m. Experience the magic of Lunar New Year with this family friendly show filled with acoustic music and songs that blend the rich traditions of Asian and non-Asian music.

Forever two decades, Silk Road Music's pioneering musical fusions have blended Chinese folk and classical music with jazz, blues, Brazilian, Celtic, Spanish, Arabic, and Aboriginal music to create a unique sound. Two-time winner of Best World Music from the West Coast Music Awards, this popular ensemble has been featured on CBC's Asian Music Compilation, the BBC International Recital, and at many folk and jazz festivals across North America.

Featuring an incredible blend of instruments—the enchanting pipa, vibrant suona, harmonious sheng, soulful hulusi, fiery guitar, exotic oud, and dynamic world percussion (taiko, djembe and more)—this celebration transcends boundaries and unites cultures through the power of sound.

The featured songs include the classic Chinese Pipa solo "Snowflakes in the Early Spring" 陽春古曲, Suona solo "Hundred Birds and Worshipping The Phoenix"



Gateway Theatre presents *Silk Road Music: Lunar New Year Celebration*.

Photo by Roy Hoh

West.

For more information on this event, visit gatewaytheatre.com/events/2025-lunar

and the popular "Kang Ding Love Song" 康定情歌, as well as the Spanish Dance song "Mon pere Rumba", Candle light Blues and many more.

Featured musicians:

- Qiu Xia He on Pipa
- Andre Thibault on Guitar and Oud
- Zhongxi Wu on Suona and Sheng
- Phil Belanger on Percussion
- Jason Overy on Taiko, Djembe and world percussion

"Hosting these celebratory events has been an incredible part of Gateway Theatre's long-standing presence in the Richmond community," said Barbara Tomasic, Gateway Theatre executive artistic director. "We are thrilled to welcome Silk Road Music to share their talent with our audiences and our community. Having these world-class musicians come into our studios and share this celebration is the perfect addition to our season."

Don't miss this unforgettable performance by five amazing musicians that promises to entertain and inspire, showcasing the harmonious fusion of East and

Nominations accepted for Richmond Arts Awards

Do you know an emerging or established artist, arts leader, cultural practitioner, educator, group or arts business that has significantly contributed to the arts in Richmond and is deserving of recognition? Nominate them online at richmond.ca/ArtsAwards until 5 p.m. on Monday, March 10, 2025.

Nominations are being accepted in six categories:

- Arts Education
- Artistic Innovation and Excellence
- Business and the Arts
- Cultural Leadership
- Volunteerism
- Youth Arts

All artistic disciplines are eligible: culinary, literary, performing and visual arts, as well as craft, environ-

mental arts, new media and social practice.

The award winners will be honoured at a gala awards ceremony hosted by Mayor Malcolm Brodie at Richmond City Hall Council Chambers.

The Richmond Arts Coalition will award a \$300.00 cash prize to the winner of the Youth Arts category, which recognizes an artist 24 years of age or younger, whose artistic practice demonstrates outstanding promise and commitment to the Richmond arts community.

The 17th annual Richmond Arts Awards are presented through a partnership between the City of Richmond and Richmond Arts Coalition, and are sponsored by the *Richmond News*. The program has recognized 96 honourees since 2009.

For more information on the Richmond



Photo courtesy City of Richmond
Traditional origami cranes created at the 2024 Richmond Cherry Blossom Festival.

Arts Awards and to submit a nomination, visit richmond.ca/ArtsAwards or email culture@richmond.ca

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In honour of our soldiers: Edgar Joseph Shields

By MATTHEW CHEUNG
Contributing writer

In a series about Richmond's poppy street signs, in memory of our fallen soldiers, we share the story of Shields Avenue.

Edgar Joseph Shields was born on June 30, 1920 in Langley, BC. At the age of 19, he enlisted in the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada and listed his mother, Mrs. Rosemary Brown, as his next of kin. According to his enlistment papers, Shields lived at RR #1, King Road, Lulu Island and worked as a truck driver and fueller.

Upon enlistment, Shields travelled to Toronto for training before embarking on a journey from Halifax for Liverpool. He would arrive on May 13, 1940, spending almost four years in England, with several hospital stays and many episodes of punishment for absences without leave. On Nov. 5, 1942, Shields became married to Elsie Joyce Dawson at Caterham, Surrey, England.

Tragically, after embarking for Italy on March 12, 1945, Shields was killed in action on April 11, 1945. According to a newspaper cutout found online, he died due to the wounds he suffered on April 11.

The City of Richmond made the decision to honour Edgar Joseph Shields, by naming a street sign after him. Shields Avenue can be found near the intersection of General Currie Road and Bridges Street.



A poppy engraved street sign of Shields Avenue.

Screen grab from Google Maps



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Premier's statement on the new year

Office of the Premier, December 31, 2024

Premier David Eby has issued the following statement marking the new year:

"People in British Columbia and around the world will celebrate the year gone by and welcome the year ahead.

"For many of you, 2024 was a time of challenges and uncertainty. Still, we came together to lift each other up in a variety of ways, including volunteering in our communities, opening our homes to evacuees during the wildfire season and generously giving over the holiday season.

"In 2024, we started to see some results on issues you asked our government to work on. While we expanded affordable child care, helped more people get a family doctor and delivered more homes for the middle class, I know there is a lot more to do.

"The new year is a time to reflect on lessons learned and set goals for the future. I have heard that you want our government to work harder to tackle the issues that you and your family are talking about around the kitchen table. That is our focus for 2025 and beyond.

"For families struggling with everyday costs driven by global inflation, we are going to deliver a middle-income tax cut in 2025, and every year after. We will also review health authorities to make

sure your tax dollars are being spent efficiently on strengthening health care in your community. We will continue to connect people to family doctors through our Health Connect Registry so everyone can get the high-quality care they need, when and where they need it.

"For young people who are being priced out of their communities, we will build homes you can afford by cracking down on speculation, breaking down barriers to home construction and helping you buy your first home.

"For workers and small business owners, we will build a stronger, cleaner economy that benefits everyone. We will continue to work with our partners to fight against unfair trade threats as we diversify our economy. And we will work to reduce permitting times to ensure certainty in the years ahead.

"We will do all this work in partnership with Indigenous people, while working toward true and lasting reconciliation.

"Despite all the challenges we face, you—the hardworking people of B.C.—make me more optimistic about our future than ever. Together, we can build a sustainable, prosperous province where everyone can get ahead and no one gets left behind.

"My family and I will share our hopes and dreams



Photo via flickr.com

B.C. Premier David Eby.

for 2025. Baby Gwen isn't speaking in full sentences yet, but I can already tell she's excited to start walking next year. In the same way, step by step—and with the support of one another—we will tackle the big challenges we are all facing and build a province we can all be proud of.

"From my family to yours, happy new year!"

Buy BC helps more local farmers, processors succeed

British Columbians will experience a wider variety of local food and beverage options as more farmers and small businesses get support through Buy BC.

"British Columbians know the Buy BC logo represents local products that are produced and processed by people in their communities, from small family farms to innovative food producers," said Lana Popham, minister of agriculture and food. "Buy BC is supporting the people who make up our province's diverse agriculture and food industry so, together, we can continue to shine a light on many unique and delicious products produced here at home, while strengthening local food systems and economies."

Through the Buy BC Partnership Program, \$2 million is available to support those eligible to participate in provincewide marketing projects to help boost awareness, demand, and sales of B.C. products. The funding will help additional local food and beverage companies and industry associations share their stories with more people around the province.

Examples of B.C. companies that have increased sales through Buy BC include Rad Jamz and Preserves in Kelowna, which uses only B.C. produce with a focus on the Okanagan region for its high-quality jams, jellies and preserves. The company used Buy BC funding to attend a trade show and promote its products through a series of advertising campaigns that included print and digital components. As well, it partnered with former Buy BC chef ambassador Ned Bell for a local TV segment.

"This was the second round of Buy BC funding for Rad Jamz and we were able to change our packaging from glass jars to flexible packaging, a more economical and user-friendly package," said Kyla King, owner, Rad Jamz and Preserves. "We knew it would be an interesting transition for consumers, so with the funding we were able to share why we made the switch. Now we are getting more sales than ever and extremely positive feedback on our products."

In Surrey, Not Too Sweet Craft Sodas received funding to redesign its pack-

aging with the Buy BC logo so consumers could easily identify its products' local roots. The company participated in a trade show with new marketing collateral that helped lead to new retail partnerships and more stores carrying its craft soda beverages.

"With the help of Buy BC, we gave our packaging and marketing materials a much-needed glow-up," said Elaine Van, owner, Not Too Sweet Craft Sodas. "We also used the funding to attend a key trade show and the results have been game-changing. It's opened the door to a whole new channel, connecting us with more customers than ever and fuelling some truly exciting growth for our business."

Since relaunching in 2017, the Buy BC Partnership Program has supported more than 600 B.C. producers, processors and associations with \$13.7 million to support their efforts to increase food sales, product promotion and food security in B.C.

Applications will be open until Jan. 27, 2025.

Quick Facts:

- The Buy BC Partnership Program is supported by several components, including Buy BC logo licensing, cost-shared funding for industry-led Buy BC marketing activities, retail partnerships, promotional activities and events, and a comprehensive marketing campaign.

- More than 1,250 B.C. businesses have registered to use the Buy BC logo to promote more than 9,000 B.C. food and beverage products.

Learn More:

For Buy BC Partnership Program application and eligibility details, visit: <https://buybcpartnershipprogram.ca>

To apply for a free Buy BC logo licence, visit: <https://buybc.gov.bc.ca/join-buy-bc>

For more information about Buy BC, visit: <https://buybc.gov.bc.ca>

Sockeyes success continues

By STEVE ERICKSON
Contributing writer

With the first half of the PJHL season completed the Sockeyes found themselves sitting in first place in the Tom Shaw Conference at times playing leap-frog with the Delta Ice Hawks.

The month of December saw the Sockeyes set up a food hamper which saw the fans drop off non-perishable food items each Thursday home game which was well received by not just the fans but also team personnel as well.

The holidays saw them hosting the PJHL Winter Classic where each team played a home and home series with the one exception being the Coastal Tsunami who played a home game December 30 finishing the Classic playing the last game of the four days.

The Sockeyes continue to bounce between first and second place in the Tom Shaw Conference fending off the Delta Ice Hawks playing a fast-aggressive game to the delight of their solid fan base. Goals for the Sockeyes for the most part is, not overly hard to come by given the talent they have loaded up with that has the team playing as a unit while at times getting "tagged" with the odd penalty infraction.

The first half of the season the PJHL's Top Prospects games that saw five players play as well as Head Coach Cullen Revel from behind the bench and GM and Director of Hockey Operations Will



Team huddle after scoring.

Photo courtesy Sunny Y

Kump who set things in motion from the organizational point of view.

Entering into the second half of the season they are sending Conference top scorer Nicholas Noren along with PJHL 100-gamers Michael McIntyre, Teo Lin and goalie Matthias Hasselmann to the All-Star game.

The game is hosted by the Port Coquitlam Trailblazers playing in their home rink which has the top players from each conference facing off with both

sides looking to pull out the win.

With the trading dead-line looming the Sockeyes managed to acquire Max Fowle who previously played with Mission who was the 2023-24 named PJHL Goaltender of the Year.

The month started off in a battle that saw Po Coq pull off a 6-4 win in a game that went the full sixty minutes that saw, stellar goaltending at each end of the rink that featured a penalty shot. Fowle was tested early and often, but getting used to a new team can take time which was the case in this game, but regardless of his first game he played solidly.

The next test will be tough as they are hosting the Chilliwack Jets who are coming off a five-game winning streak while the Sockeyes are riding a 3 wins and 2 losses so they are looking to rebound in the win column.

The tunnel series continues with the Sockeyes hosting the Ice Hawks January 16 that draws fans from south of the tunnel in a series that everyone welcomes.

With the trading dead-line fast approaching in the next article I'll keep you posted as to any movement the Sockeyes pull off.

The Sockeyes continue to put a winning team on the ice looking to repeat from playing in last year's league championship match-up looking to advance to the Provincial Championship.

The *Richmond Sentinel* encourages everyone to come out and cheer on these amazing young hockey players.

Renter's tax credit, homeowner grant helps with costs



Brenda Bailey, minister of finance of British Columbia.

Whether they rent or own, people in B.C. may be eligible for help with their housing costs in 2025.

Renters may be eligible for support through the renter's tax credit. Starting in 2025, income thresholds are increasing for the credit. Renters can now claim as much as \$400 a year off their taxes if their adjusted income is \$63,000 or less, or a partial credit for an adjusted income as much as \$83,000.

Most homeowners can get a grant to reduce the amount of property tax they pay. To start the new year, B.C. is adjusting the property value threshold for the homeowner grant so it continues to cover 92 per cent of homeowners.

This is an increase of \$25,000 from the previous threshold to reflect moderate and stable market conditions.

People with properties with an assessed value of as much as \$2,175,000 can get \$570 off their property tax bills if they live in certain regional districts, or \$770 for the rest of the province.

Veterans, seniors, and people with a disability could qualify for an additional grant and receive \$1,045.

Another support that homeowners can consider if they need more time to

pay property taxes is applying to defer their property tax for the year.

Families with dependent children, people over 55 and people with disabilities may be eligible. People can continue to defer as long as they qualify.

Quick facts:

- The homeowner grant is adjusted each year, based on BC Assessment's annual property value reporting.
- The grant provides as much as \$770 in relief for eligible homeowners, except in the Capital Region District, the Metro Vancouver Regional District and the Fraser Valley Regional District, where owners can be eligible for as much as \$570.
- Eligibility for the renter's tax credit is based on adjusted income, which is the total of a person's net income and a spouse or common-law partner's net income (if applicable) with certain adjustments.

Learn more:

To apply for the homeowner grant, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/property-taxes/annual-property-tax/home-owner-grant/apply>

For more information on the renter's tax credit, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/income-taxes/personal/credits/renters-tax-credit>

To apply for the property tax deferment program, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/property-taxes/annual-property-tax/property-tax-deferment-program/apply>

To learn more about financial supports for people in B.C., visit the B.C. Benefits Connector: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/home/benefits>

Richmond encouraged to prepare for winter

By FLORENCE GORDON
Contributing writer

When it comes to weather, today the world is turned upside down with severe snow and ice storms in Texas, Georgia and the Carolinas, and across the country on the west coast wind-driven wildfires raging across California and an earthquake hits China, while here in Vancouver, 2024 saw the city's wettest year since 1999. As we watch mother nature through the eyes of media we are once again reminded to provide information on what the City of Richmond are doing to prepare for the upcoming winter and how businesses and residents can help. The following information can be viewed in detail on their website richmond.ca

Get ready for winter — snow removal

The Roads and Construction Department of the Engineering and Public Works Division has the responsibility of maintaining the streets and roads of Richmond in all-weather situations. During the winter months, ice and snow removal requires additional maintenance. During these periods, the department ensures all major roads are cleared and sanded so that emergency vehicles (ambulance, fire trucks and police), public transit and private vehicles are able to travel. The aim is to accomplish this task most cost-effectively while still maintaining a high level of service to the public.

Everything you wanted to know about snow clearing in Richmond

How many trucks does the city of Richmond use?

The city can deploy up to 11 large trucks during a storm event, to clear 316 km of designated routes. During a storm, the crews work around the clock, driving, planning, dispatching and maintaining equipment.

Why is salt used?

Salt is used as the principal de-icer because it is most readily available and most cost effective. The primary type used is rock salt mined from the earth. When salt is applied to ice and snow, it creates a brine solution that has a lower freezing temperature than the temperature of the surrounding ice.



File photo by Jaana Björk

Main routes get plowed first for emergency and public transportation.

Salt alone becomes ineffective after -6°C so sand is added to the mix.

What are the sanding/salting/plowing priorities?

The city's primary responsibility is public safety with the first priority for plowing and sanding all major (or "arterials") roads and bus routes to facilitate the travel of emergency vehicles and public transportation.

What are the hours of work for the sanding/salting/plowing crews?

During a storm event, crews begin working around the clock in two shifts, sometimes up to 14 hours a day. When a snowfall with significant accumulation is forecast, crews head out early to salt the roads, which helps prevent ice from building up. At the end of a snow event, crews will resume their regular winter schedule:

Mon-Fri 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Phone: 604-270-8721

Personnel are on 24-hour standby, 7 days a week.

Get ready for winter — how to prepare your property

- Do you have a good snow shovel by your door? They sell out fast during snow days and Traffic Bylaw 5870 requires residential (single-family and multi-family) owners and occupants, as well as commercial and industrial properties, are to

move snow and ice no later than 10:00am daily.

- Shovel snow onto your lawn or a designated parking stall, not the street. Shoveling snow onto the street is a hazard for vehicles and creates more work for snow plows, slowing down the clearing process — it also increases the chance that snow will be pushed back onto your driveway or sidewalk.

- Locate and clean catch basins or storm drains in the roadway in front of your home of debris such as fallen leaves, branches and snow for proper drainage. Take care not to bury these grates or gutters when shoveling snow.

- Clear leaves from your roof's eaves and ensure appropriate drainage near your house to prevent puddling.

- Trim dead branches and cut down dead trees to reduce the danger of these falling onto your house during a storm.

- Store a de-icer product and spread it on your walkways after ice forms to give traction; organic and ecologically safe de-icers won't corrode concrete and are safer for vegetation, pets and children.

- Do not use salt or de-icers on new concrete (poured within one year), they cause repetitive freeze-thaw cycles that lead to surface spalling (water crystallizing in pores). Follow manufacturer's instructions; which typically advise to use sand instead. Have a snow shovel on hand.

- If you have a fire-hydrant in front of your home, please clear the snow around it for easy emergency access.

- If possible, park your vehicle in your driveway and garage to free up street space for plows.

- Consider alternative safe heating sources in the event of a power outage or heating system failure. Make sure your home is properly insulated and ensure cold air is kept out.

- If you experience a power outage, check the BC Hydro outage map/list to see if they already know about it. If your outage isn't listed, call 1-800-BCHYDRO (1-800-224-9276) to report the outage.

- Downed power lines should be considered



City snowplow.

Photo via richmond.ca



Home owners need to clear sidewalk snow by 10 a.m.

Photo via Freepic.com

energized and dangerous — please stay away (at least 10 metres) and call 911.

- If your home loses power, unplug sensitive electronic equipment to protect them from possible voltage surges/irregularities when power is restored. Do not use outdoor barbecues or heating devices indoors. If you have an emergency gasoline-powered generator, keep it far away from doors and windows to prevent carbon monoxide from entering your home.

- Know how to shut off water valves and be aware of pipes that may freeze.

- Keep heating appliance air intakes or exhaust ports clear of snow and ice.

- Keep space heaters at least three feet away from any combustible materials, do not use with extension cords, and do not leave heaters or candles unattended or with unsupervised children or pets.

- Keep curbs free from debris and bins. Remove any garbage, recycling and organic bins off roadways where snow plowing may take place. Check richmond.ca for notices about delayed collection.

Get ready for winter — what about sidewalks?

The city clears the parking lots and walkways of all civic facilities, such as community centres. It is the responsibility of the owner or occupier of all residential (single and multi-family), industrial and commercial property to remove all snow and ice from the sidewalk, for a distance that coincides with the property line, by 10 a.m. every day (including Sunday) per city's Traffic Control and Regulation Bylaw 5870.

Shovel your sidewalks it's the By-Law

Richmond home owners and occupants play a vital role in keeping sidewalks safe for pedestrians during the winter.

Home owners and occupants are responsible for clearing snow and ice from the front, and if on a corner lot, along the side(s) of their property by 10 a.m., 7 days a week. A fine for not shoveling against owners and occupants who fail to remove snow and ice can be subject to a fine of \$125.00. (Bylaw 5870, section 6.1.)

How the city prepares for ice and snow

The city's winter weather response begins long before any snow begins to fall.

- Richmond stockpiles 400 to 600 metric tonnes of salt and secure access of 1,200 to 1,500 metric tonnes of salt for the calendar year, amounts based

on 2024 and a five-year average usage.

- All equipment is serviced, operating staff are refreshed on procedures, and new staff are trained on operating snow clearing equipment.

- Road hazards are repaired or marked for plow operations.

- Starting Nov. 1, staff receive detailed daily weather reports for the next 48-hour period. If snow is forecasted, crews start working up to 12 hours ahead, laying down anti-icing liquid brine and/or salt on the roads to prevent frost and ice from forming.

What to expect from the city during a storm

Council Policy 7013 Roadways — Ice and Snow Removal governs the city's response to snowfall. The policy outlines the priority routes for salting sanding and plowing and is reviewed by staff and council regularly.

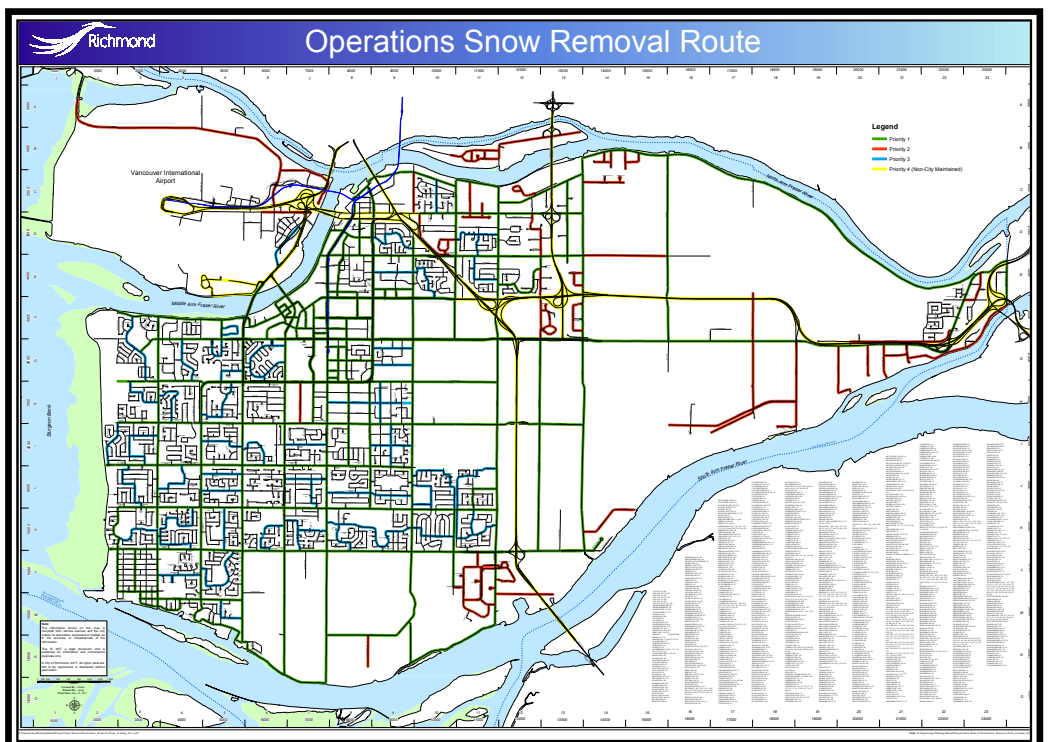
During storms, the city ensures all major roads are cleared and sanded so that emergency vehicles (ambulance, fire trucks and police), public transit and private vehicles are able to travel key routes.

- First priority routes (217 km of road) are salted/sanded or cleared first. First priority routes include all bus routes and section line roads (i.e., No. 1 Road, No. 2 Road, No. 3 Road, etc.)

- Second priority routes (22 km of road) are main collector roads through major subdivisions and industrial roadways as shown on the Snow Response Route Map.

- Third priority routes (77 km of road) are only serviced once the first and second priority routes are cleared and under control. If conditions deteriorate, crews will cease operations on the third priority routes and re-focus resources on the first and second priority routes.

- View a more detailed version of this map at richmond.ca



RCMP's crackdown on retail theft

Richmond RCMP announces significant results in combating retail theft through its 2024 'Boost & Bust' operations, reflecting the success of a comprehensive crime reduction strategy and enhanced enforcement efforts by both frontline officers and the Property Crime Unit (PCU).

In 2024, Richmond RCMP officers responded to 1,704 shoplifting files, a 25 per cent increase compared to 2023. This led to 527 arrests, up 22 per cent, and 266 charges laid, representing a 63 per cent increase from the previous year. Notably, 50 per cent of total arrests resulted in charges in 2024, compared to 38 per cent in 2023, marking a 12 per cent improvement. These numbers highlight the growing challenge of retail theft and Richmond RCMP's strengthened efforts to hold offenders accountable.

Over the course of the year, Richmond RCMP conducted a total of 13 'Boost & Bust' operations, resulting in 118 arrests and the recovery of more than \$57,300 in stolen merchandise. Of these, frontline officers conducted six operations resulting in 47 arrests. Criminal charges were recommended for 28 of these offenders, while five youth were directed to the Youth Intervention Program. The PCU executed seven additional operations, leading to 71 arrests with criminal charges recommended for 44 individuals.

These operations represent one component of a broader strategy developed through the Detachment Crime Reduction Initiative, where retail theft was identified as an enforcement priority by senior leadership. The PCU has established robust partnerships with Loss Prevention Officers (LPOs) and Corporate Security Managers across Richmond's retail sector, facilitating crucial intelligence sharing about repeat offenders and emerging crime patterns.

"Our multi-faceted approach combines targeted enforcement with prevention and education," said Staff Sergeant Gene Hsieh, Major Crime Commander. "By working closely with Loss Prevention Officers and analyzing shared data, we've optimized our operations to ensure a consistent Police presence during peak offending periods. The significant number of arrests and recovered merchandise demonstrates the effectiveness of this collaborative strategy."

Richmond RCMP has also intensified its visible presence through regular bike and foot patrols in high-risk retail areas, particularly during peak periods. This enhanced uniform presence provides both deterrence and rapid intervention capability.

Crime analysis reveals that most offenders travel from outside Richmond, predominantly using the Canada Line. The recovered merchandise typically includes clothing, electronics, and food items, often indicating potential resale operations.

Beyond enforcement, Richmond RCMP continues to work with frequent-



Photo courtesy Richmond RCMP

The Richmond RCMP have seen significant results through its 2024 'Boost & Bust' operations.

ly targeted businesses to enhance their loss prevention strategies, including recommendations for physical security improvements and environmental design modifications to deter theft.

Richmond RCMP encourages businesses and residents to remain vigilant and report suspicious activity to police promptly, as comprehensive data collection remains crucial to our targeted enforcement strategy.

VCDS covers more than 1 million kilometres

For the first time ever, volunteers who drive cancer patients to treatment appointments throughout the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley covered more than one million kilometres in a single year, according to the Volunteer Cancer Drivers Society (VCDS).

The service is complimentary, no matter how frequently the appointments are needed, and are provided by a well-organized group of volunteer drivers using their own vehicles.

"The grand total was 1,000,138 kilometres as the new year arrived, almost four times the distance to the moon. It's an impressive milestone representing the care and compassion of volunteers dedicated to helping others in their com-

munities," says Bob Smith, president of VCDS. "The cancer patients in need of our support for trips to appointments continues to rise. Our volunteers provided a record 38,386 patient trips in 2024, and we're forecasting that number will reach 42,000 this year. As our population ages, the rate of cancer increases and the need for transportation to care will continue to expand."

Recruiting additional drivers is an ongoing undertaking for VCDS, which was first established almost a decade ago, and has grown steadily since. "With the growing need we are constantly seeking more volunteers to help drive these patients who often have no other way to get to their appointments. We provide a small allow-

ance for our drivers' car expenses based on distance driven."

"We are working to fund our program with charitable support this year of just over \$700,000. Donations and grants are a key lifeline for us and we are grateful for the assistance from organizations and individuals alike to help cover costs," Smith adds. "Our annual end of the year fundraising campaign was stalled of course by the postal strike, so we hope people, service clubs, foundations, municipalities and corporate sponsors will step forward to keep our essential service responsive to the ever-increasing needs of the cancer patients in our communities."



Douglas James Scammell

Fashion For Men - Overcoats & Jackets

If you're just starting out choosing a wardrobe for business or casual, Douglas' experience will help with your wardrobe choices.



Photo DJ Scammell

A very big part of a gentlemen's fashion during winter months in Vancouver is finding the right overcoat that is the most versatile for both dressy and casual wear that functions like a jacket that keeps you warm and dry as well as looking great whether it's going to the office, holiday parties, or to the grocery store...

There are many different overcoat styles - single breasted, double breasted and a variety of fabrics to choose from tweed, wool and cashmere. Wheth-

er you are buying off the rack, made to measure, or bespoke. The key is to find the one that fits you just right. Second, pick a color that can go with the majority of your existing wardrobe. Navy, grey, and brown are your most versatile colors.

PEA COAT/JACKET

One of the most versatile of these overcoats is the Peacoat. This jacket was made famous in the movie *The Sand Pebbles* worn by actor Steve McQueen, and worn by Daniel Craig in the James Bond movie *Skyfall*. This jacket goes great with a suit. But also casual everyday wear with a pair of jeans. Men could wear the Pea Jacket almost every day during the fall and winter months.



Photo DJ Scammell

The history of the Peacoat is deeply rooted in military and naval backgrounds. A **Pea coat** or **Pea jacket** is an outer coat, in a navy-colour-heavy wool worn by sailors in the European and American navy.



Pea coats are characterized by short length, broad lapels, double breasted fronts, large wooden, metal or plastic buttons, three or four in two rows, and vertical or slash pockets dating back to 1720s, tailored from "pilot cloth" — a heavy, coarse, kind of twilled blue cloth. This was sometimes

called P-cloth and the garment made from it was called a P-jacket a term that has been used since 1723.

Today, the style is considered a classic. While some of the jackets seen on the street are genuine navy surplus, most are designs inspired by the classic uniform and available from retailers with a variation of designs that reflect current fashion trends, including a variety of fabrics and colours. The standard US Navy-issued Pea coat uses Navy blue wool and sports buttons (brass for officers, black plastic for enlisted) decorated with an anchor motif. The standard fabric for historical Pea coats in the 20th century was a smooth and heavy, dark navy-blue Kersey wool, which was dense enough to repel wind and rain, and able to contain body heat without further insulation. This wool was lightly treated after being sheared to retain much of the natural lanolin oil from sheep, to increase water-repelling and insulating properties.

Kersey wool was gradually replaced in the U.S. Navy through the 1970s by the rougher black Melton cloth (also lightly treated), a lighter wool that requires a quilted lining to match the warmth of the original Kersey. [Wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pea_coat)

TRENCH COAT

The other type of overcoat that is very important for a gentleman especially in Vancouver is the trench coat, otherwise known as the rain coat. This is the perfect jacket to wear when it is raining and when the weather is still mild and warm. This jacket's function is to keep you dry.

It is a timeless piece that every gentleman should have in their closet. There are many different versions of this trench coat worn by cinema icons like Humphrey Bogart in *Casablanca*, to Michael Caine in *Get Carter*. It will never go out of style and will give you an edgy sharp look.



Photo via Wikipedia.org

A **trench coat** is a variety coat made of waterproof, heavy-duty fabric originally developed for British army officers before the First World War and becoming popular while used in the trenches, hence the name *trench coat*.

KPU researchers seek to create the perfect T-shirt

Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) researcher Stephanie Phillips is investigating the future of fabric—starting with a T-shirt.

As the Sherman Jen Research Chair in Next-Generation Design, she studies biodegradable functional materials, exploring how recyclable fabric can be used in the apparel industry.

"Clothes don't actually have a very long functional lifespan," says Phillips, who teaches product and fashion design at the Wilson School of Design at KPU. "I generally give it a maximum of a few decades. Think of the coat that you stole from your grandfather as a teenager. From the time he had it until you finished wearing it, that's about 40 years."

The problem, according to Phillips, is that clothes long outlive their function.

"If you're looking to make something out of nylon, for example, you're going to get a biodegradation of about 500 years. For polyester, it's 1,000 years. We've heard about all the bad things that happen to our old clothes and all the places they end up, so we need to find some solutions."

To avoid the problems associated with existing materials, Phillips and her research partners at the University of British Columbia (UBC) are attempting to build new materials. Their first goal is to make a T-shirt entirely from natural fibres found in B.C.

"We're trying to create a new T-shirt from B.C. softwood. So, what we decided to do is look at what T-shirts exist and how we can make ours as good or better."

Phillips scoured the existing T-shirt market—from the least expensive fast fashion, to luxury designer labels.

"From a previous study, we know that people associate cotton with quality. So, we've taken 11 cotton T-shirts—spanning from \$4 to \$400—and we are looking to understand how they're made and what they're made out of."

Phillips is using advanced technology to put the shirts through rigorous testing—while considering abrasion resistance, material strength, stretch and recovery, yarn count and pilling.

The research is already busting some myths.

"What surprised me is that the fabric is fairly similar across price points. The difference is in the sewing," she explains. "We found that the finer –

nicer – fabric doesn't always hold up. Surprisingly, the heavier, coarser fabric feels the best to our touch. It's reality versus perception."

Data from the materials study will continue to

**Canada has a
high standard of
sustainability and
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Developing an entirely
B.C.-made material can
really take us into the
future.**

– Stephanie Phillips

advance made-in-B.C. sustainability research for the fashion industry.

"Canada has a high standard of sustainability and manufacturing. Developing an entirely B.C.-

made material can really take us into the future," says Phillips.

Students are also involved in research at Wilson School of Design, allowing them to apply practical knowledge and skills while advancing innovation as part of their undergraduate polytechnic university experience.

Klara Joubert, a fourth-year international student in the Bachelor of Product Design program, moved from South Africa for this hands-on, applied learning opportunity.

"The lab is my happy space at school. It's such a supportive and positive environment," says Joubert. "As a research assistant, it's been interesting to see that the \$400 T-shirt is not necessarily the best."

For Phillips, teaching and research go hand-in-hand.

"I hope to show my students that it's possible to do things differently, so that someday they can make better choices inside their design practices. That way, the innovation that happens in the lab doesn't just die inside a research paper."

Phillips' research is possible thanks to a \$3-million donation from the Dr. Sherman Jen Education Foundation. The endowment allows KPU to appoint research chairs for a term of five years, renewable for an additional term.



Photo courtesy Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Stephanie Phillips, a local researcher investigating the future of fabric.



Joe Biz — *by Joe Leary*

From TV to Transit

It seems that Thor Diakow has had a penchant for the communications field ever since childhood.

In fact, as a 'kid' of the 80's, he vividly recalls watching the 6 o'clock news with his parents on any given night. It would instill in him the narrative gene.

"The concept of telling visual stories and informing people about community and world issues while they sat in the comfort of their living rooms; through the medium of television always fascinated me," he says.

"In school, I was naturally comfortable with public speaking and always eager to talk in front of an audience."

Following completion of the acclaimed BCIT Broadcast Journalism program in 2003, a radio career was born as Thor embarked upon the media biz as a producer at *News Talk AM 980 CKNW*.

"Over the next three years at the station I worked on various talk shows with different hosts, while gaining first-hand experience in the radio world".

It wasn't long before he parlayed that broadcast experience into a multi-year career as associate producer and on-air contributor on City-TV's long-running morning news-based information chat show, *Breakfast Television Vancouver*.

"After several years in radio I was interested in making the jump to TV and thanks to some serendipitous timing, an associate producer position opened up at 'Breakfast Television'.

Diakow acknowledges that this foray into live television was equal parts thrilling and terrifying.

"Switching media formats represented a huge learning curve for me; thankfully, I was surrounded by a supportive team and many of my existing



Photo courtesy CityTV

Left to right: Russ Lacate, meteorologist; Kyle Donaldson, anchor; Dawn Chubai, co-host; Thor Diakow, traffic reporter; Riaz Meghji, co-host.

broadcasting skills were easily transferred".

During the next 14 years in that capacity Diakow's role involved entertainment reporting, movie reviews and celebrity gossip items; all dispersed over the course of three hours of daily, live programming each weekday morning.

"My main duties initially were booking interesting and dynamic guests for the morning show, including gathering relevant research and providing talking points.

"I was also responsible for finding newsworthy or quirky topics for our hosts to chat about each day.

"Eventually, my role on the show expanded and I became part of the on-air team.

"By then, my routine also included traffic reporting, interviewing guests, and contributing to different daily interactive segments.

"Everyone in front of and behind the cameras was part of our own little TV family".

Thor's role also involved screening films and periodically attending international press junkets to interview the respective casts.

"As the morning show's resident film critic, I got to see a lot of new movies over the years.

"Through this part of my job I also had opportunities to travel to cities like Los Angeles; New York and New Orleans to interview celebrities—including Margot Robbie, Russell Crowe, and Antonia Banderas.

"Another big highlight was covering Vancouver's nightlife at the many diverse venues around town during the 2010 Winter Olympics.

"It was an unforgettable two weeks for the city and a very special event to experience".

But as with so many things media-related;

Breakfast Television Vancouver was cancelled in November 2020, resulting in layoffs.

"I always like to say, "At least I went down with the ship.

"The economic aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic; the emergence of new technologies and significant shifts in the overall news landscape hit the local broadcasting industry hard.

"Some of these repercussions continue throughout the media world today".

Diakow is now one of TransLink's Senior Media Relations Advisers.

"After over 15 years in the broadcasting biz it was time for a change," he says.

"I sought work in the corporate communications field; an area where I felt I could apply most of my skills acquired over the years.

"This eventually led to my current position at TransLink where I have worked since 2022.

"Today, my many duties include giving media interviews, organizing media-oriented events, writing news releases and managing various issues".

He's also a proud Richmond resident and as such, gets to readily utilize the public transit company he works for.

"I am a frequent rider of the Canada Line and appreciate how public transit connects our growing region.

"Having grown up in West Richmond I'm so grateful to now raise a family here that I still call 'home'.

"And as a nature lover and birdwatcher; I often take my two daughters to Terra Nova, Garry Point and Richmond Nature Park".

X - @reallyjoeleary • instagram@joeleary

OUR CITY *tonight*

SPOTLIGHT ON A COCKTAIL & TWO NEW MOVIES

THE SIP – *Let There Be Gin*

Most of us are tired from the holiday season, and the feeling of being back to “the grind”. But it’s a new year and we’re in the mood for a new cocktail for January. As we do many times each year, we turn to Martin Kovalcik, beverage director for The Glowbal Restaurant Group. From his “home” behind the bar at Glowbal Restaurant, we join him for a cocktail called *Let There Be Gin*. “I’m excited to share this cocktail with you,” Kovalcik says as we watch him create. This cocktail was introduced to Glowbal customers on New Year’s Eve and is available throughout the month of January. “This first month of 2025 is about welcoming in the new year and toasting the future,” he says as we enjoy a first sip, “and what better way than with a cocktail that sparkles!” This is a delicious and elegant cocktail, and we can see a second one being ordered. The *Let There Be Gin* contains Lavender Fog Liqueur, Bombay Sapphire Gin, fresh lemon juice, honey syrup, topped with your choice of champagne, prosecco, or sparkling wine, and is garnished with fresh lemon zest and edible gold flakes. glowbalgroup.com



Photo courtesy Martin Kovalcik



Photo courtesy Roadside Attractions

THE VIEW #1 – *The Last Showgirl*

In the long history of Hollywood, the “comeback” has always been admired and loved. Think Frank Sinatra, whose career was given up for dead in the early 1950’s, until he won a Best Supporting Oscar for *From Here To Eternity*, and became bigger than he ever was for the next 40 years. Think Marlon Brando, whose career was in a similar state, until he too won an Oscar for his performance in *The Godfather*, and in doing so, breathed new life into his career. All this leads us to Pamela Anderson and her new movie, *The Last Showgirl*. There’s very little we don’t know about this Vancouver Island actress who has been known more over the last 3 decades for that sex tape, bad movies choices and wearing that red bathing suit in *Baywatch*. But, like Sinatra, someone saw untapped depth in Anderson as an actress, who just needed the right role. That right role has come in a new movie called *The Last Showgirl*, the poignant story of glamorous Vegas performer trying to come to terms with her stage show closing after a 30-year run. Her future is far from certain, as is the relationship with her estranged daughter. The film is also a wistful and sadly sentimental examination of a Vegas that is no more. Director Gia Coppola has created a film which not only showcases Anderson’s acting talents but also those of David Bautista, Kiernan Shipka (former child actress from *Mad Men*), and an almost unrecognizable Jamie Lee Curtis. *The Last Showgirl* is in theatres now. roadsideattractions.com

THE VIEW #2 – *Disco’s Revenge*

We’ve always believed there are 2 viewpoints when it comes to that genre of music that thrived for about a decade starting in the early 1970’s. That music is called disco, and people love it or hate it. For us, we’ve always been in the love camp! It was everywhere in the 70’s, but by the early 80’s, the music was experiencing a severe backlash, and was banished from the airwaves, clubs, and parties. But something happened: the passage of time. By the late 90’s the music started to re-emerge, becoming as popular, if not more, than it was before. ABBA, The Bee Gees, and a long list of other groups and artists were popular again. Now comes a new documentary called *Disco’s Revenge*, which takes the viewer back to the beginnings of this music, to the Black and LGBTQ underground clubs, long before mainstream radio and Hollywood took notice. The film also features many of artists who were there, creating what is now timeless music, including Nile Rodgers and Chic, Billy Porter, Nona Hendryx and LaBelle, Grandmaster Flash, Fab Five Freddy, Nicky Siano, Earl Young and The Trammps, Kevin Saunderson, and Sylvester. *Disco’s Revenge* is available on all digital platforms starting January 7. elevationpictures.com

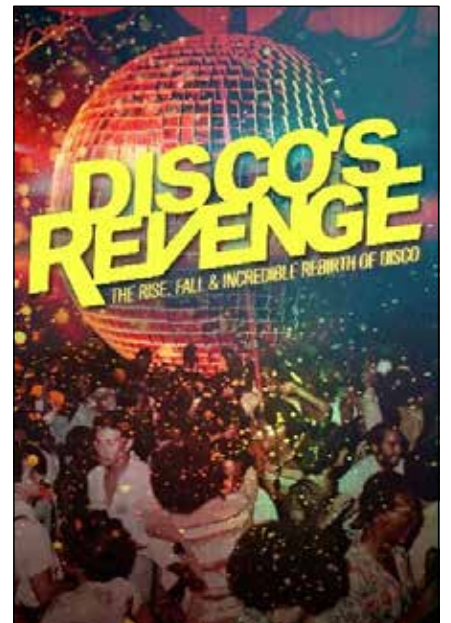


Photo courtesy Elevation Pictures

The incredible versatility of a reverse mortgage

Our City Tonight sat down with senior mortgage broker, Jolene George, who is with the Vine Group Mortgage Brokerage to talk about information for the Senior citizens.

OCT: We see a lot of commercials on television featuring various celebrities talking about something called "Reverse Mortgage". We wanted to sit down with an expert and find out more information and sort of uncover the mystery of this topic on behalf of Seniors. In addition, another topic we want to talk to you about is the change in the bank rates that have recently dropped. As a senior mortgage broker, and being knowledgeable in this field, we wanted to ask you to explain some of these terms and what it means for people who want to buy a home or for people who already own a home.

JG: The Bank of Canada had a recent rate drop and what that really means is it's applicants or clients with a variable rate mortgage or anyone that has a variable term home equity line of credit or a line of credit will have an advantage. So, most banks have brought the prime November 2024 to 5.95 per cent. And what that means for a consumer is that you would see about a decrease of \$40 per month on every hundred thousand dollars borrowed.

OCT: The main topic that we're discussing is reverse mortgages and as we mentioned, we see commercials about this all the time. Can you please explain what this is and how it works.

JG: A reverse mortgage is a product designed specifically for Canadians 55 plus. This is a payment-flexible loan meaning that payments are not required.

OCT: That's an important and key point that payments are not required and because it's a flexible loan you do not need to make payments.

JG: There is the option under the flexible loan program that if you would like to, you certainly can make payments. This product allows homeowners to have that lifestyle that they had and enjoyed before retirement. Most often OAS and CPP are not granting the same livelihood as when they were working.

OCT: It is interesting that you made a point of saying these mortgages are designed exclusively for Canadians because we were talking earlier off camera about the American housing market collapse in 2008 and how regulations here are stricter here.

JG: This mortgage product is available in other countries. In fact, it's very successful in the UK and Australia as well. Our reverse mortgage offered by Home Equity Bank and Equitable Bank is for Canadians so only available for residents.

OCT: Let's talk about that person that comes to you and is over 55 or over 65 and they are looking for advice on a reverse mortgage. What are the downsides of reverse mortgages?



Photo courtesy Jolene George
Mortgage broker, Jolene George, offers options for 55+ demographic.

JG: In my view there really is no downside. I believe there's a lot of hype given to what happened in the USA in 2008. The USA regulations are not quite like what we do here in Canada. We cap the loan out at 57 per cent loan to value so the loan is guaranteed that it would never exceed the value of the home especially here in British Columbia. Here in the lower mainland, the home generally is appreciating even on a more rapid scale than the interest that's occurring.

OCT: Can we discuss some examples of the people that you have helped over the years. You have two very different examples in terms of this scenario.

JG: I just worked with one gentleman, and he was a retiree. He was single and had no children to pass on the generational wealth to. I put a reverse mortgage together for him and his home came in around \$2.5 million. A home that he had purchased in Vancouver many, many years ago at the price of \$300,000. We put together a reverse mortgage that granted him \$600,000 and with this he built a laneway home, and this created passive income for

him. Another example would be parents that are using this product to release equity from their home so that they can give an early inheritance to their children particularly if they are first-time buyers and are finding it difficult to get into the housing market due to the high pricing of homes.

OCT: So, this is a way to help their kids or the grandkids. Give us an example of someone who's just having trouble getting by financially.

JG: I helped a gentleman who purchased a home worth \$1.8 million and it was mortgage free, and he had clear title. He is receiving OAS and CPP and he has no children to pass the estate onto. So, he decided to use the equity in his home as a payment plan. CHIP stands for Canadian Home Income Plan and you can opt to pay yourself monthly. This money would be directed into your account, and you'd be paying yourself from the equity of your home. This helped him maintain his livelihood after retirement.

OCT: If our viewers want to receive more information on this topic and more about the services available, they can go to vinegroup.ca

JG: Or they can speak directly to me and my advice would be to definitely meet with a mortgage professional. The first step really is to sit down with a mortgage professional and the process is quite simple as there basically is no income qualification required for this loan. I just need the postal code and the age of the applicant to start the application. I don't even need an applicant's full name at this point to let you know what you have access to with just those two criteria.

To watch the interview in full go to richmondsentinel.ca/videos



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