

Community Safety & Services

Renfrew-Collingwood has a diverse population with many languages, ethnic backgrounds, income levels, and ages. The population has been growing and becoming more diverse at a faster rate than the city as a whole. These factors create challenges to understanding and meeting people’s safety, recreational, and social service needs.

Out of the broad range of services and service providers within Renfrew-Collingwood, the Vision Directions concentrate on the services which are either provided directly, or partly funded, by the City.

Paying for Services and Facilities

The City pays for many of the services and facilities involved in policing, recreation, libraries, and so forth, mainly through property taxes. Some new sources of funds — user charges and Development Cost Levies — are now used by the City.

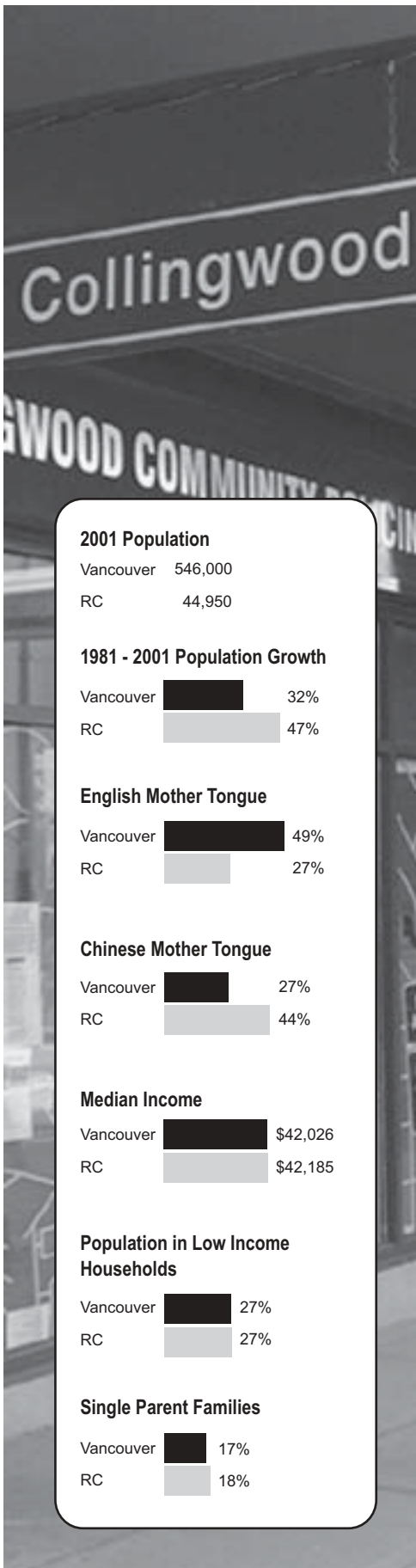
The CityPlan direction on City finances is to continue to be cautious about increasing spending. Generally speaking, new services would need to be paid for by redirecting funds now spent on other items or in other areas. There are also usually more requests for new facilities than can be funded in any one period, so there is often a waiting period of years before a facility is expanded or rebuilt.

Non-City Services

Most health and social services are funded by the province and provided either directly by ministries or through various agencies. The Vancouver Coastal Health Authority is responsible for health and community care services, including many for seniors. Renfrew-Collingwood is served by the Evergreen Community Health Centre, one of five health units in the city. It is located near the Joyce SkyTrain station.

Non-government Community Services

The community is also served by the Collingwood Neighbourhood House (5288 Joyce) which is operated by a non-profit organization. It provides a range of social, educational, and recreational programs for different age and language groups in the community. The City of Vancouver provides some of its funding.



Community Policing Centres

Community Policing Centres (CPCs) are dedicated to helping to reduce crime through crime prevention education, public awareness, and community involvement. Each centre is assigned a neighbourhood police officer who is the main individual responsible for the implementation and coordination of crime prevention activities. Renfrew-Collingwood is served by the Collingwood CPC office located at 5160 Joyce near the SkyTrain station.

7 Community Safety

Renfrew-Collingwood's overall crime rate is slightly higher than that of most other local areas in the city. In 1998, the rate of property crimes in Renfrew-Collingwood was around the middle when compared to the city's other local areas. At 13 per thousand people, Renfrew-Collingwood's rate of crimes against people ('violent crimes') was above the mid-point among the city's local areas.

Vision Directions on community safety are oriented towards the major components of crime prevention: individual actions, community initiatives, and policing approaches. In addition, there are Directions which look at particular issues: youth crime, illegal drugs, and prostitution.

7.1 Individual Actions to Improve Safety

Approved

Individuals should take responsibility for reducing the likelihood they or their property will be affected by crime. Possible actions include making their homes more burglar resistant, getting to know their neighbours, participating in crime prevention programs, and using 'street proof' procedures when outside their home.

Percent agree 82%/86%

People's Ideas...

- join Crime Watch, Block Watch, report suspicious and criminal activity
- make homes more burglar resistant by placing motion sensor lights in yards and lanes, installing better locks, keeping a dog, putting lights on timers, locking doors, trimming bushes which provide cover to crooks, etc.
- reduce risk of theft from cars: add anti-theft devices, keep doors locked, never leave valuables in cars
- learn to make healthy choices (e.g. stay in groups when confronted with a difficult situation, don't carry a lot of money in places people might see it)

7.2 Community Policing Centres and Community Policing

Approved

A Community Policing Centre should be retained in Renfrew-Collingwood with some on-going funding to ensure stability. The Police Department and the City should expand their commitment to community-based policing.

Percent agree 83%/88%



Collingwood Community Policing Centre

7.3 Community Actions to Reduce Crime

Approved

Community Policing Centres, the City, the Police Department, business groups, and the community should strengthen crime prevention efforts, including more citizen patrols, improved lighting in high crime areas, reviews of building design and landscaping to reduce opportunities for crime, and wider use of crime prevention and education programs for English, Chinese, and other 'English as a Second Language' groups. Special attention should be reserved for improving safety at SkyTrain stations.

Percent agree 87%/90%

People's Ideas...

- change lighting and improve look of high crime areas to attract people, especially in the evening
- invite store owners to work together to prevent crime
- help prevent vandalism by having more patrols at night by police and by people in Crime Watch
- install close circuit TV in high crime locations like SkyTrain stations

- add turnstiles to SkyTrain stations to deter transients and prevent easy escape from crime scenes
- increase SkyTrain security patrols by transit police and provide some shops or services at stations for ‘eyes on the station’, provide more bike patrols around SkyTrain stations
- change or keep vegetation adjacent to paths and sidewalks trimmed enough so you can see what is going on
- design places like SkyTrain stations to be visually accessible
- deal with racism by understanding different cultures (e.g. hold cultural evenings, celebrate diversity)
- improve lighting in dark areas (parks, around schools, SkyTrain walkways, etc.), install emergency phones
- make more people aware of how to reduce risks of crime in the home, car, and community
- encourage Chinese speaking residents to participate in programs

7.4 Enhance Policing Services

Approved

Enhance Policing services provided in the community. There should be more patrols by police on foot and bicycle, particularly in areas of the community with high crime rates.

Percent agree 89%/90%

People’s Ideas...

- ask police to have more frequent patrols in areas where drug dealing is common
- try beat and bike patrols to make police more visible, accessible

The final three safety Directions deal with a group of inter-related issues: youth crime, illegal drugs, and prostitution.

Youth Crime

Youth make an important contribution to improving the community and very few young people are engaged in crime. However, youth crime and some youth activities make residents feel unsafe: purse snatching, vandalism, open drug use, bullying, graffiti, feeling threatened by groups of teens, etc. The Direction seeks to reduce youth crime by enhancing youth services.

7.5 Working to Reduce Youth Crime

Approved

Youth crime should be reduced through the co-ordinated efforts of schools, community organizations, and other groups working with youth. Initiatives could include:

- more effective self-esteem, positive choice, and anti-violence programs in schools
- additional facilities and programs in parks, community centres, schools, churches, neighbourhood houses, etc. to provide alternatives for youth
- youth employment programs.

Percent agree 91%/91%

People’s Ideas...

- provide drug education in high school in co-operation with involved groups (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, etc.)
- teach self-esteem, how to make healthy choices (e.g. stay in big groups when confronted with difficult situations), how to choose friends
- ensure kids learn code of conduct (respect) in schools (including modeling in teacher treatment of students)
- provide counseling and support (peer counseling, youth support groups, family support); make it multicultural
- consider stiffer penalties under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, making parents legally responsible for damage
- develop interesting and effective anti-bullying training (role plays, drama, traveling plays, videos)

Special Needs Residential Facilities

The term ‘Special Needs Residential Facilities’ (SNRFs) refers to various types of group housing for people who need some form of support or assistance in their living place. People who benefit from this housing include: the frail elderly, people with severe physical disabilities, battered women, children in care, people who have a mental illness, people with developmental delays, people in need of emergency shelter, people under the supervision of Corrections, and the terminally ill. The City’s zoning permits SNRFs in all residential zones. Within Renfrew-Collingwood there are 13 SNRFs with 263 beds (5% of the SNRF beds in the city). This is lower than Renfrew-Collingwood’s share of the city’s population (8%). All of the beds in Renfrew-Collingwood are in community care facilities.

Neighbourhood Integrated Service Teams

City Council created Neighbourhood Integrated Service Teams (NISTs) in 1994. Each neighbourhood based team is made up of representatives from several departments and agencies (Police, Health, Licenses and Inspections, Fire and Rescue, Planning, etc.). These multi-departmental teams work to help communities solve problems such as: unsafe buildings, garbage, noise, and illegal activity in a more coordinated and collaborative way than departments working individually. NISTs work in and with communities on a wide range of quality-of-life issues from community clean-ups to problem premises.

- provide assertiveness training to repeat victims of bullying and follow-up with bullies (counseling, anger management)
- ensure translation of bullying and crime prevention initiatives to improve chances of success
- provide more youth programs before and after school
- need more free youth programs related to jobs skills, finding jobs, preparing for life, etc.
- expand youth employment programs, particularly for part-time jobs
- promote youth volunteer programs to promote community involvement (e.g. stewardship program/project)
- educate young people about gangs

The City's Drug Prevention Policy

The City has recently adopted a comprehensive approach to the drug problem. Despite enforcement efforts, a large share of crime in the city continues to be related to drug use and the drug trade. The City is now working towards a four pillar approach which supplements **enforcement** with **prevention** programs to reduce the number of new users, **harm reduction** to decrease the damage suffered by drug users, and enhanced **treatment** to help users to address their dependency. The approach recognizes that drug issues are not restricted to one area of the city and recommends community-based facilities for treatment and needle exchange. Full implementation is being pursued with the federal and provincial governments and their agencies, particularly the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. Over time, there should be more prevention programs and treatment facilities in the city.

7.6 Community Consultation on the Location of Treatment Centres

Approved

When the City and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority begin to plan the number and location of local treatment centres, needle exchanges, and other facilities, they should include extensive consultation with the local community.

Percent agree 72%/68%

People's Ideas...

- provide safe houses
- increase opportunities for safe needle disposal (e.g. needle pipes in parks)
- have peers teaching peers about alcohol and drugs
- conduct research to find out why kids turn to drugs and work to prevent it from happening
- use reality based education where kids see rather than just hear about impacts of drugs (e.g. visits to Downtown Eastside)
- start prevention very early, in primary school
- impose stiffer penalties including lots of community service
- implement the four pillars approach including special drug courts, rehab, and detox

Prostitution

Vision participants were concerned about the impacts of prostitution in the community: sex acts in cars and public places, traffic from people looking for prostitutes, loud arguments, and condoms on streets and schoolyards where kids might play with them. Many participants were also concerned about the workers in the sex trade: worried about their safety, recognizing many were forced into prostitution by poverty or addiction, anxious that children are drawn into prostitution by pimps. A Vision Direction was developed to address these concerns.

7.7 Addressing Prostitution

Approved

The City should initiate a city-wide process to examine the complex issues around prostitution, develop workable solutions that are beneficial to prostitutes and communities, and strive to implement those solutions with the cooperation of senior governments and local organizations.

Percent agree 80%/77%

People's Ideas...

- clean-up condoms in parks, school grounds, and on streets
- create safe houses for prostitutes and provide them with pamphlets with safety information
- use the schools to increase awareness of methods used by pimps to attract kids into prostitution
- create a safe red light district in a well lit industrial area
- tax prostitution as a way to enhance harm reduction for workers (e.g. regular medical exams)
- gain understanding for crime motives, e.g. poverty, drug addiction
- provide community services/shelter to deal with prostitution on Kingsway (including drug use and litter)

8 Recreational Facilities and Services

Renfrew Park Community Centre opened in 1963. This facility is operated jointly by the Park Board and its community centre association to provide sport, recreation, art, and social programming for a wide range of residents. In addition to the community centre, residents in Renfrew-Collingwood use Collingwood Neighbourhood House for social and recreation programs.

Although there is a range of outdoor facilities and the community centre is heavily used, Vision participants identified several opportunities to enhance the area's recreation services.

8.1 Provide More Space and Programming for Indoor Recreation

Approved

The Park Board should create more community centre space in Renfrew-Collingwood by adding to existing facilities or creating new satellite facilities.

Percent agree 76%/76%

People's Ideas...

- upgrade and expand workout rooms at the community centre
- provide a prominent entrance to the community centre and more parking space
- need more recreation programs in the Collingwood area, east of Rupert (between Grandview Highway and East 29th) and north of Grandview Highway
- use field house for arts projects and covered areas for Tai Chi in Slocan Park
- use other community facilities in the area (e.g. schools, churches, daycares, halls)



Renfrew Park Community Centre

Aquatic Facilities Review

The Park Board has sought to provide an indoor pool for approximately every 50,000 people. There are nine indoor pools to serve the city's current population of about 545,000 people. Most pools are rapidly reaching the end of their practical service life and a decision is required about their replacement. The Park Board has recently completed a major study of existing pool facilities and future options. It recommended a renewal plan including one large-scale 'city-wide' destination pool; two community pools providing features such as therapy, longer lengths or outdoor swimming; and four neighbourhood pools focusing on swim lessons, fitness, and training.

Renfrew Park Community Centre includes an indoor pool - considered a neighbourhood pool - which is widely used by the community, although it needs refurbishing.

Child Care

The City partners with senior governments, the private sector, the community, and parents to develop and maintain an affordable, high quality, and comprehensive child care system in Vancouver. The City helps support child care by:

- providing grants to non-profit societies such as Neighbourhood Houses and Family Places for services to families with small children
- working with community centres to support child care
- providing grants to support non-profit child care services
- leasing land at reduced rates to non-profit child care societies
- using development cost levies on new development to support daycare
- negotiating for child care in larger projects as part of their rezonings
- managing City-owned child care facilities through the Vancouver Society of Children's Centres

Vision participants did not propose changes in the City's approach to helping provide child care.



More facilities needed for youth

8.2 Upgrade and Expand Renfrew Pool

Approved

The indoor pool at Renfrew Park Community Centre should be upgraded and expanded.

Percent agree 67%/66%

People's Ideas...

- renovate the Renfrew swimming pool — lane expansion and longer laps for the public
- raise another million dollars for pool renovation and do it properly
- provide bigger and cleaner changing rooms
- need a pool in the Collingwood area

8.3 Improve Programming at Renfrew Pool

Approved

Programming should be changed and improved at Renfrew Pool to better meet the needs of the community.

Percent agree 63%/63%

People's Ideas...

- open pool earlier and close later during weekdays
- review statistics on pool use at busy times and adjust pool schedule

8.4 Facilities and Programs for Youth

Approved

More facilities for children and youth should be provided such as a skateboard park, playgrounds, basketball, volleyball, and tennis courts. More programs for youth should be provided.

Percent agree 75%/77%

People's Ideas...

- need more activities for teens or youth in all the parks
- need more places and activities for youth to hang out in the community (e.g. theatres, clubs, events)
- provide more after school care programs and summer camps
- provide youth-only space in the community
- provide water play area in Norquay Park

- provide more free youth programs related to finding jobs, preparing for life, developing job skills, etc.
- provide stewardship programs or projects for youth to promote community involvement

8.5 Facilities and Programs for Seniors

Approved

Facilities for seniors should be improved and expanded in the community centre. Programs should be provided for seniors with a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Percent agree 76%/74%

People's Ideas...

- increase seniors' space at Renfrew Community Centre (not enough space to meet and run programs)
- recruit more volunteers of various ages and with second language
- lengthen seniors' programs and special events
- need a part-time or full-time Cantonese and Mandarin speaking seniors' programmer
- provide more outdoor field trips for seniors



Improve services for seniors

8.6 Programs for Multicultural Diversity

Approved

Broad participation of different people and groups in community life should be encouraged by providing more opportunities to meet with neighbours and celebrate multicultural diversity.

Percent agree 70%/68%

People's Ideas...

- help immigrants to integrate better in the community
- advertise and hold cultural festivals or a Kid's Day
- organize Aboriginal days
- organize multicultural food fairs (raise money and raise awareness of different cultures)

8.7 Accessibility of Programs

Approved

All programs should be more accessible to people of the community regardless of age, language, and income. New ways of raising funds should be considered by the Park Board and service providers to maintain and/or increase the number of programs available to the community, with special attention to low income users.

Percent agree 71%/74%

People's Ideas...

- need to provide subsidies for seniors programs (too many user fees)
- reduce the cost of sports for children or youth
- encourage large businesses to 'adopt' the community centre
- institute a small parking fee
- charge rental to a private snack bar
- organize a mass campaign to community (letter writing campaign through schools) for capital projects
- encourage businesses to donate a percentage of sales once a month toward renovation
- raise funds by organizing garage sales and cultural activities
- encourage corporate sponsorship (space for advertising in return)

9 Library Facilities and Services

The Vancouver Public Library operates the Renfrew and Collingwood Branch Libraries. The Renfrew Branch Library, opened in 1994, is the largest VPL branch after the Central Library. It is also the Area Branch for South Vancouver (includes: Renfrew, Collingwood, Champlain, Fraserview, and South Hill Branch Libraries). The Collingwood Branch Library opened in 1951 and serves the residents of the Collingwood neighbourhood. There are currently no plans by the VPL to move or expand these libraries.

9.1 Collingwood Branch Library

Approved

The Collingwood Branch Library should be expanded to better serve the diverse community.

Percent agree 71%/69%

People's Ideas...

- make Collingwood Library bigger and put a park next to it
- move library closer to facilities or integrate with other services in the area
- need more sitting and study areas in the library
- add café or an area where you can eat and drink in the library



Collingwood Branch Library

Accessibility for People with Disabilities

City Council established the Special Advisory Committee on Disability Issues in 1977. The Committee's objective is to make the city more livable for disabled residents by removing physical and social barriers which impede full participation in city life. The Committee consults extensively with the public and with City staff. In recent years, the Committee has been actively involved in enhancing the accessibility of new apartment-type buildings throughout the City by changes to the Vancouver Building By-law. A set of amendments was approved by Council in May 2002 and the Committee is currently involved in implementation discussions.



Renfrew Branch Library



Collingwood Neighbourhood House

9.2 Improve Library Services

Approved

The services in Renfrew and Collingwood Branch Libraries should be modified to better serve the public based on a review of factors such as opening hours, collections, programming, translation of instructions, and availability of Internet access.

Percent agree 75%/72%

People's Ideas...

- provide a larger collection of magazines, videos, and CDs
- need more computers and faster access to the Internet
- order more Chinese language novels, cookbooks, DVDs, and magazines
- provide Chinese book reviews and organize Cantonese tours and activities in the library
- partner with cultural organizations in providing activities for children and families
- rotate library collection between libraries (more frequently)
- retain copies of current magazines in the library — not to be taken out, but read in the library
- create loan systems between institutions (School Board, public libraries, and hospitals)
- provide or be adjacent to a 'coffee shop'
- provide more sitting area, especially in the teen section

10 Improving Awareness and Accessibility of Services

The City and other service providers in Renfrew-Collingwood provide a range of services. Vision participants felt more effort should be put into making these services more widely known in the community and more easily accessible to residents.

10.1 Information about Services

Approved

The awareness of services provided by City and other service providers should be improved through initiatives to make information on these services more consistently available in locations, forms, and languages which are convenient for residents and businesses.

Percent agree 69%/69%

People's Ideas...

- advertise seniors programs in other languages
- make daycare information more accessible
- compile a list of translators especially for evening and weekend volunteer work
- provide more kiosks or community bulletin boards

10.2 Community Services in or near Neighbourhood Centres

Approved

Whenever community services such as community centres, neighbourhood houses, health centres, etc. are considering new facilities or relocations, locations in or near the Neighbourhood Centres (see Neighbourhood Centres section p.48) should be given strong consideration due to their accessibility and high community profile.

Percent agree 70%/70%

10.3 Welcoming Newcomers

Approved

Newcomers to the community should be provided with information on the community including community facilities, programs and events; parks and sports; shopping areas and commercial services; employment and volunteer opportunities; and cultural and religious organizations.

Percent agree 64%/66%

People's Ideas...

- provide more ESL classes
- advertise volunteer opportunities in community centers