

Photo Credit: Tourism Richmond

City of Richmond COVID-19

ECONOMIC RESPONSE & RECOVERY REPORT

JUNE 2020





INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact on local, national and international economies as orders and recommendations necessary to mitigate risks to public health have forced businesses to close and people to stay at home.

In addition to ensuring public health and community safety, supporting local businesses and economic recovery is a top priority for the City of Richmond.

Proactive economic response measures have been undertaken by the City to address the significant impact on local businesses, residents and workers. This report outlines some of the actions taken, underway or planned by the City to help mitigate the permanent loss of businesses and jobs in Richmond, and to support economic recovery.

This report was prepared by the City's Economic Development Office, recognizing that economic response and recovery in Richmond is a concerted effort involving the entire City organization, partner agencies, key stakeholders, local businesses and the community.



RICHMOND COVID-19 COMMUNITY TASK FORCE

The Richmond COVID-19 Community Task Force was struck on March 23, 2020 and is co-chaired by the City of Richmond Mayor Malcolm Brodie and the Richmond Chamber of Commerce Chair Fan Chun.

It is intended to facilitate information sharing, collaboration and a coordinated community response to the pandemic. Other key stakeholders represented include Vancouver Coastal Health, the RCMP, local elected officials from the Provincial and Federal Governments, local media outlets, educational institutions, Tourism Richmond and the Vancouver International Airport. The Task Force meets virtually on a weekly basis.

While this report outlines City of Richmond actions and initiatives, each organization represented on the Task Force has played an important role in the community's pandemic response and will be integral to continuing to support local businesses and economic recovery.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISPLACED WORKERS

Many local workers lost their jobs either temporarily or permanently due to the sudden economic shock from the pandemic, particularly in the hospitality, aviation and personal service industries. Meanwhile other sectors such as food production, grocery retail and logistics have experiencing a surge in demand. Other businesses in technology and other sectors are also hiring.

A collection of job boards and job opportunities has been developed to help displaced workers find new opportunities. This resource also includes a listing of the various employee support programs that are available.

www.businessinrichmond.ca/jobs



604-276-4114
businesshelp@richmond.ca
www.businessinrichmond.ca



COVID-19 BUSINESS SUPPORT CENTRE

The City of Richmond COVID-19 implemented a Business Support Centre to provide a centralized, virtual source of accurate and timely information and resources for local businesses impacted by the pandemic. The Support Centre helps businesses to:

- Get information about support programs and resources for businesses from all levels of government and other agencies.
- Learn about current City of Richmond initiatives for businesses.
- Find out how to access City services for businesses.

RICHMOND-MADE PPE AND COVID-19 SAFETY SUPPLIES

Canadian governments initiated significant procurement programs for goods and services necessary for the pandemic response including personal protective equipment (PPE). Some local businesses were already suppliers of key medical equipment and supplies and others have been connected to funding and other programs to help them to pivot or retool their operations in order to sell these goods and services to the government and to other businesses.

A list has been compiled of Richmond-made PPE and COVID-19 safety supplies including hand sanitizer, face shields, protective barriers, contact tracing technology, signage, and temperature sensors.



www.businessinrichmond.ca/suppliers





Over
304,000
meals
created

www.businessinrichmond.ca/foodrecovery



RICHMOND FOOD RECOVERY NETWORK PROGRAM

Launched in late 2019 by the City, this program is an online marketplace that safely matches unsold food to an online network of charities and businesses, helping reduce waste and feed more. Due to COVID-19, there has been an increased demand for food from local charities and meal programs, as well as an increased desire from local food businesses to participate. This program has acted as a central distribution hub for businesses and charities and has become a key resource for the City and Vancouver Coastal Health. In just five months, the program has nearly met or exceeded all of the one-year deliverables:

- **206,905 kg food rescued** (target 225,000 kg)
- **304,413 meals created** (target 300,000)
- **42 network partners joined** (target 30)
- **\$1.04 million in savings** to food brands and charities (target \$1.25)

WEARERICHMONDBC.CA SUPPORT LOCAL INITIATIVE

The City of Richmond, Tourism Richmond and the Richmond Chamber of Commerce have partnered to create an online hub to support local businesses and help bring the community together. The website includes an 'Open for Business' marketplace, a compilation of resources for businesses and residents, and a collection of virtual experiences that people can enjoy from the comfort of their home.

As the economy continues to gradually re-open, the site will include additional features including newly launched customizable 'We're Open - Support Local' signage that businesses can download, print and display.



110+
businesses
listed



**SUPPORT LOCAL.
EXPLORE OUR COMMUNITY HUB.**

WEARERICHMONDBC.CA





www.businessinrichmond.ca/resilience

POWERED BY
SPRING

City of Richmond Business Resilience Program



This program provides entrepreneurs with free training to adapt their businesses so they can emerge from the crisis thriving and able to withstand future economic shocks. It includes tools and resources from experts such as videos, templates and worksheets.

Users also have access to an online community of local entrepreneurs sharing their best practices and ideas, as well as one-on-one support from the City's Economic Development Office.

ALTERNATE DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS FOR LOCAL GOODS

Some local businesses are experiencing difficulties accessing their established distribution channels due to the closure of physical retail establishments and the disruption of supply chains. A list of alternative channels have been curated for local businesses including:

- BC Local Root (an online grocery platform for delivery and curbside pick-up of locally made products)
- London Drugs Local Central (free shelf space in center aisles for local products)
- Skipper Otto (a direct-to-consumer community supported fishery model for local seafood)



www.businessinrichmond.ca/distribution



www.businessinrichmond.ca/covid-19

EXPEDITED TEMPORARY PATIO PROGRAM

The City of Richmond has introduced an Expedited Temporary Outdoor Patio program to allow restaurants, cafes and pubs to quickly expand outdoor seating, either by using private property, parking lots or approved space on City sidewalks. There is no cost to apply.

Council also provided a one-time pre-approval to the BC Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch for the temporary expansion of service to outdoor areas for liquor license holders. This will eliminate the need for multi-approvals, further reducing the approval time for businesses.



"Thanks so much for all the team at the City is doing to help businesses to survive and thrive in Richmond during these challenging times."
— Susan Ness, Costco Wholesale Richmond



ECONOMIC RESPONSE & RECOVERY MEASURES

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BUSINESS

- Established a COVID-19 Business Support Centre.
- Introduced an Expedited Temporary Patio Program for restaurants, cafes and pubs to quickly expand their outdoor seating area.
- Expanded the Richmond Food Recovery Network program to connect more surplus food to social agencies and meal programs.
- Undertaking ongoing 'support local' social media campaign.
- Connecting local suppliers and manufacturers with government procurement opportunities.
- Curating a list of alternate distribution channels for local goods.
- Sharing job opportunities with displaced workers.
- Tracking of temporary business closures and streamlining the business licensing process when they are ready to safely re-open.
- Delivering the Richmond Business Resilience Program to help local entrepreneurs adapt and strengthen their businesses, and withstand future economic shocks.
- Implementation of the MyBusiness online business services portal to streamline the business licence process - targeted for fall 2020.

FINANCIAL RELIEF MEASURES

- Reduced the municipal tax increase from 4.98% to 2.97%.
- Extended the property tax penalty due date to after September 30, 2020.
- Extended the payment due dates for flat rate, metered utility and district energy utility payments.
- Allowed delay of business licence renewal fee payment for businesses that temporarily closed.



PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

- Enhanced police patrol throughout the City, in particular on Sea Island, in the City Centre and in business parks, and launched a new mobile app which includes an Online Crime Reporting Tool.
- Acting as a second line of defence against the COVID-19 pandemic as mandated by the Province by monitoring and enforcing health orders, and providing public education on maintaining physical distance in parks and open spaces by a team of roving Community Ambassadors.
- Prioritized fire and life safety inspections for businesses that were expected to open in the near future.
- Reintroduced Tower Crane inspections in May to allow new construction to begin.
- Introduced temporary on-street walking and cycling on the south side of Bayview Street to allow for distancing in the Steveston Village.
- Communicating orders, notices and guidance from the Provincial Health Officer to local businesses.



SUPPORT FOR THE VISITOR ECONOMY

- Working closely with Tourism Richmond and the Richmond Chamber of Commerce to develop and maintain the WeAreRichmondBC microsite, an online hub showcasing local businesses and virtual experiences, and fostering community pride of place.
- Rescheduling of sporting events that have been postponed, notably the 2020 CARHA Hockey World Cup which is expected to generate \$12-\$15 million in economic impact for Richmond.
- Building local capacity in key areas including food tourism i.e. by working with local food producers to inform them of signage options and digital marketing opportunities, and exploring the development of a Richmond Berry Trail.
- Participating on the Metro Vancouver Tourism and Hospitality Industry Response and Recovery Task Force to represent Richmond in regional tourism recovery efforts.



INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPITAL PROJECTS

- Continuing with the Council-endorsed Engineering and Public Works capital program worth \$82.7 million for 2020 including both design and construction related costs.
- Working with agencies including the Province of BC and TransLink to advance key transportation projects including the George Massey Crossing Replacement and the Capstan Canada Line Station.
- Assessing specific City projects that could leverage federal infrastructure stimulus funding opportunities.
- Seeking new funding opportunities that could accelerate the implementation of large infrastructure projects such as the construction of new energy plants and the addition of new low carbon energy sources. Currently, Lulu Island Energy Company has plans to invest \$20 million on infrastructure projects over the next five years estimated to create approximately 50 full-time local construction jobs.



PLANNING, BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Receiving and reviewing plan submissions electronically and working on further enhancements including digital permit issuance.
- Ensuring ongoing dialogue between the City and the development industry including a special liaison committee meeting with the Urban Development Institute.
- Making proactive adjustments to building permit reviews in consultation with industry, professional organizations and other building departments within the region to provide a level of service comparable to pre-pandemic time.
- Continuing to provide building permit inspections by using remote techniques including photographs, real time videos, and professional field reviews as validity for code compliance.
- Restructuring advisory committee meetings to a remote format to ensure applications continue to benefit from independent advice as part of the typical application review process.
- Advancing the Industrial Land Intensification Initiative to recommend policy and bylaw changes that would facilitate increased economic activity on a limited industrial land base.
- Proceeding with the planned upgrade to the City's AMANDA property records, permitting and licensing system to streamline the processing of applications.



COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Since the announcement of COVID-19 as a worldwide pandemic, communications through the Economic Development Office's online channels have been used to keep the local business community informed of key information, resources and initiatives. Below are statistics for three months from March 15 - June 15, 2020.

TWITTER

139K Impressions

1.5K Impressions/Day

1438 Engagements

BUSINESSINRICHMOND.CA

4.7K Unique Visitors

11.3K Page Views

FACEBOOK

205 Posts

149K Reach

187K Impressions

9.9K Engagements

E-NEWSLETTER

11 COVID-19 Business Bulletins

40% Average Open Rate


8% Average Click Rate



@RichmondEDO



@RichmondEDO



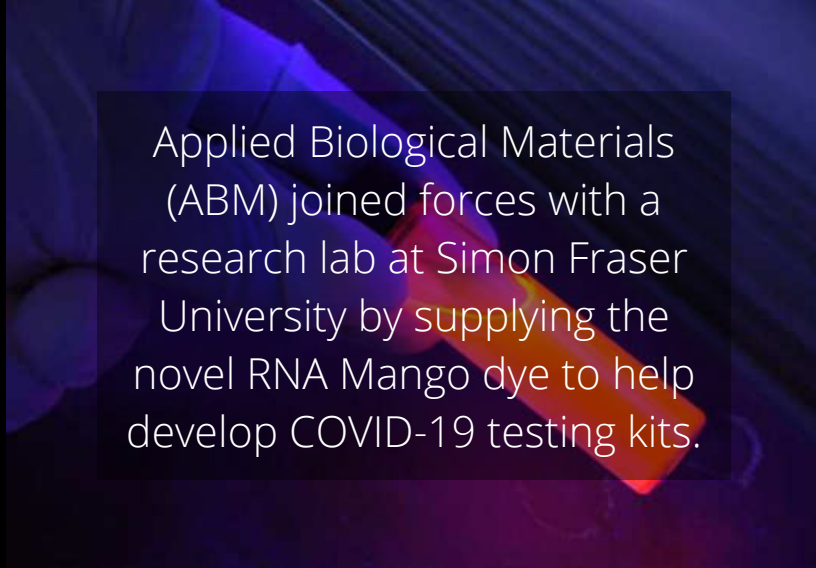
Richmond-based Salt Spring Coffee donated 1,000lbs of coffee to British Columbian hospitals and healthcare facilities.

CELEBRATING LOCAL RESILIENCE AND INNOVATION DURING COVID-19

Richmond's economy was not spared the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the significant difficulties they faced, many businesses were quick to pivot their everyday 'business as usual' to adapt and respond to the challenge. This is a collection of stories highlighting local resiliency and innovation. These and other stories are shared in weekly 'Feel Good Friday' social media posts, and included in the regular COVID-19 Business Bulletins.



Skipper Otto's Community Supported Fishery began offering home delivery for their seafood products caught by local fishing families.



Applied Biological Materials (ABM) joined forces with a research lab at Simon Fraser University by supplying the novel RNA Mango dye to help develop COVID-19 testing kits.



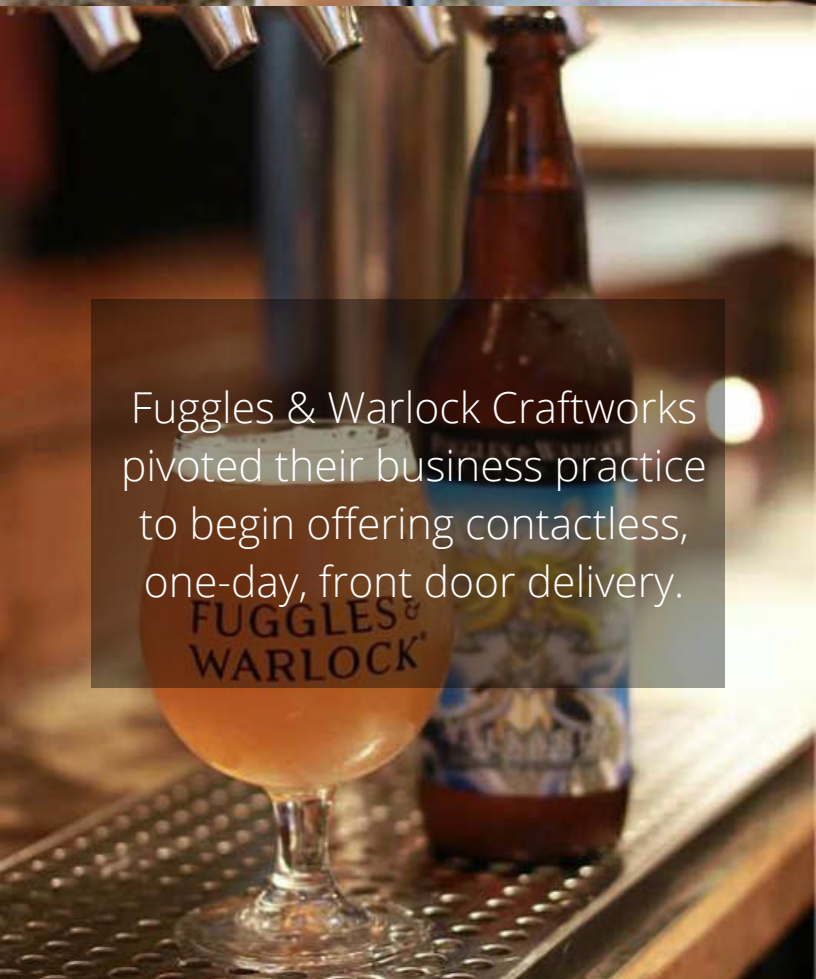
FLIR, a global leader in thermal imaging infrared cameras, launched a smart thermal sensor solution for industrial monitoring and elevated skin temperature.



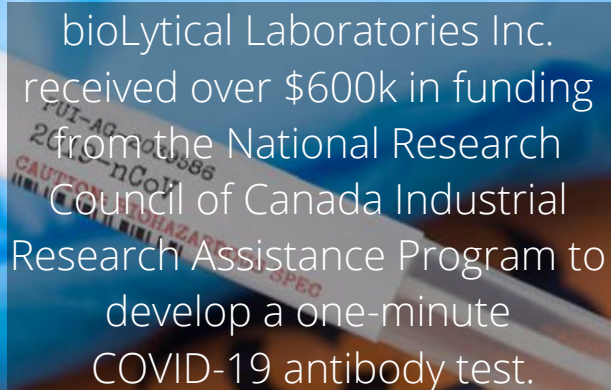
Herbaland, Canada's largest nutritional gummy manufacturer, donated 15,000 bottles of their Immune Plus vitamins to healthcare workers in the Lower Mainland.




Cascades began supplying recycled plastic for medical visors needed in the fight against COVID-19, with the goal of producing a minimum of 1 million pre-cut visors.




Fuggles & Warlock Craftworks pivoted their business practice to begin offering contactless, one-day, front door delivery.




bioLytical Laboratories Inc. received over \$600k in funding from the National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program to develop a one-minute COVID-19 antibody test.




Richmond eatery Goodbowl launched a phone app for consumers to buy food items from restaurant suppliers instead of grocery stores.




Lulu Island Winery has been turning its wine into highly concentrated hand sanitizer for donation and to purchase.




Organic Ocean pivoted from selling to high-end restaurants to refrigerated, contactless, home deliver, at wholesale prices.



The Great Little Box Company teamed up with the University of Saskatchewan to design an innovative sturdy, inexpensive emergency bed made from cardboard that can be used in public health emergencies.



London Drugs has created Local Central, an area within their stores dedicated to selling local small business products.



**"Richmond Economic Development, you guys have been awesome with keeping us posted on all things Richmond. Especially during this time, highlighting local businesses is so important! So thank you."
-Caroline Chiu, Richmond resident**

**"Thanks for the mention Richmond Economic Development. Proud to be among great company in Richmond!"
- Salt Spring Coffee**

**"We are very honoured to be recognized by our local community during this unprecedented time. Remaining innovative and forward thinking is key for our industry. Thank you for all the support over the past few months and always!"
- Levy Show Service Inc.**



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economicdev@richmond.ca



www.businessinrichmond.ca

