

GARDEN CITY

CO-CO-MO is located in the McLennan North (MN) superblock on the outskirts of the Richmond City Centre Official Community Plan (OCP). The goal of the OCP for MN, to “achieve a highly liveable, urban neighbourhood in a park-like setting” by 2021, has largely been realized. Most of the MN block has already been rezoned from Single Family zoning and developed to 3-storey townhomes, and the school and park sites have also been established as a cherished community hub. But the rampant development of the last ten years has fallen short of stated OCP goals in its lack of shops and amenities. Originally envisioned as a “distinct downtown,” MN was intended to be a “complete community” with housing within an easy walk of essential goods and services. Instead it is a primarily residential enclave where even a loaf of bread or quart of milk requires transit to a separate neighbourhood.

Richmond, BC, 1980
Photo: Richmond Archives



ETHNOBURB

Richmond is a classic ethnoburb, as defined by Wei Li in “Anatomy of a New Ethnic Settlement.” Characterized as a largely residential area with a notable cluster of (often wealthy) G1 and G2 Chinese and East Asian populations, Richmond’s globalized demographic differs substantially from classic North American Chinatowns. Due to the high degree of ethnic similarity, the area fosters cultural preservation, including a thriving “shadow economy” of goods and services rendered from private homes and disseminated through personal networks and cash payments.

Richmond, BC, 1992
Photo: Richmond Archives

CO-DESIGN

Haeccity Studio’s team took off their architecture hats and became participants in a co-design workshop facilitated by the Canadian Cohousing Network. Prior to the workshop, a set of stakeholder personas was developed, based on Richmond census data and personal interviews, to represent the cultural and socio-economic diversity of the CO-CO-MO community. Each participant took on the role of a persona and advocated for their specific needs and wants from the CO-CO-MO. The resulting site layout, programming, and housing mix was a result of this process.

Richmond, BC, 2022