



Logo design and drawings courtesy of
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RIVERVIEW HORTICULTURAL CENTRE SOCIETY

Land Use Position Paper (2003)



"We have here a unique and beautiful creation that is the legacy and gift of previous generations. We want to take this botanical creation and use it for education, for therapy, and for the mental health of the people of British Columbia and Canada. This is our vision."

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Over ninety years ago, the Riverview Lands were set aside for two purposes:

- **a sanctuary and residential treatment facility for the mentally ill,**
- **a site for a B.C. Botanical Garden**

The Riverview Horticultural Centre Society (RHCS) has always respected this legacy. The needs of the mentally ill and the protection of the botanical tree collection and heritage landscapes must guide the decisions that determine future land use.

However, if land and buildings surplus to mental health requirements become available, many new and economically viable initiatives could be undertaken on the Riverview lands without altering the *unique character of the space*. Some of these initiatives have the potential to generate revenue towards developing the site into a major attraction for local, national and international visitors.

UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS:

The unique character of the Riverview Lands is defined by its heritage trees, structures, and landscapes, and its streams and wildlife habitat. These features must be protected and enhanced in order for the lands to reach maximum potential. It is also important to establish careful planning guidelines for the *entire property* in order to maintain its existing sanctuary nature. The property belongs to present and future citizens of British Columbia and must remain public. Selling off any part – even with the intent of using the proceeds to finance the development project – would be a mistake. With careful planning and proper management, the project has the potential to eventually require all available space.

It may be possible to obtain Federal Heritage funding in order to restore some of the most important heritage buildings and to rededicate them to appropriate uses. Other buildings may have to be demolished and possibly replaced with complimentary architecture on the existing footprints. Trees and wildlife habitat must be protected during any necessary upgrades to roadways and services. It will be important to plan for sound barriers to block the noise from the Lougheed highway in order to best use the front of the property.

This document suggests potential uses for the Riverview land and buildings. They are organized into eight complimentary fields:

**Horticultural, Health, Tourism, Arts,
Recreation, Education, Housing, and Commercial**

Detailed descriptions of each of the eight visions follow the summary table.

POTENTIAL USES OF LAND AND BUILDINGS

***1 Preferred**

***2 Acceptable**

***3 Not Acceptable**

HORTICULTURAL

Arboretum
Botanical Garden
Naturescape Garden
Heritage seed depository
Heritage Nursery
Garden space for
Horticultural Societies.
Training Facilities
Demonstration Areas
Research Facilities

Garden Shop
Farmer's Market
Indoor Exotic Display
Small Greenhouses

Allotments to individuals

HEALTH

Hospital for the Mentally Ill
Long Term Care
Treatment Facility
Therapeutic Garden
Sanctuary Area

Health Support Services
Alternate Care Services

CONFERENCE AND TOURISM

Exhibit space
Meeting rooms
Lecture theatres
Catering services
Banquet facilities
Space for private functions
Outdoor Festival space

Trade show space
Café
Fine Dining
Chapel for weddings
Tuck shop

Cabaret
Casino

<p>*1 Preferred Uses – best enhance our vision for the lands. They should be encouraged, solicited, and, if necessary, subsidized. They may be self-supporting or revenue positive in the long run.</p>	<p>*2 Acceptable Uses – are cost-effective and have a neutral impact on the lands. These opportunities should be advertised and proposals evaluated on their potential for revenue and their fit with the preferred uses.</p>	<p>*3 Not Acceptable Uses – may be similar in nature to acceptable uses but because of their size or requirement for private ownership, they would have an irreversible negative impact on the lands.</p>
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1 Preferred**2 Acceptable*****3 Not Acceptable****VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

Galleries
Studios
Theatre
Teaching Facilities
Outdoor amphitheatre
Rehearsal space
Performance space

Indoor film locations
Recording studios
Gift shop
Outdoor film location

RECREATION

Walking
Bird watching
Field trips

Picnic area
Playground
Jogging route
Indoor sports facilities

EDUCATION

Museum
Library
In-service training facility

Academic Institution
Vocational Institution
Technical Institute
International School
Innovation display area

HOUSING

Assisted living
Supportive Housing

Transition housing
Shelters
Student dormitories
Conference Housing
Bed and Breakfast

Market Housing
Rental Housing
Hotel
Subsidized Housing

COMMERCIAL

Government office space
Non-profit Soc office
space

Daycare
Professional services

Large Retail Businesses

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THE RIVERVIEW LANDS IN 2013 OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

THE VISION - HORTICULTURAL CENTRE

This collection of mature trees ... should be preserved as a future source of propagation material, taxonomic study, and definitely a gene pool."

– William Snowden, Director Emeritus, the Niagara Parks Commission

The mature trees situated throughout the lands are well maintained for visiting professionals and tourists. There are numerous volunteer and work experience opportunities for local residents.

The site houses education and training facilities for programs in nursery trades, landscape architecture, arboriculture, forestry, and agriculture, (in conjunction with Colony Farm and possibly the Riverview Forest and Mundy Park) A botanical research centre collects, propagates and markets heritage seeds and plants.

Horticultural Societies and Garden Clubs (rose society, alpine garden club, water gardens, rhododendron society etc.) maintain plots for demonstrations and displays. Buildings offer locations for flower shows and other horticultural exhibitions or conferences.

Finnie's garden is the site of an internationally recognized naturescape garden, propagating and marketing indigenous B.C. plants similar to those John Davidson collected a century ago.

An educational display running the length of the property exhibits the Natural History of Canada from coast to coast. There may be indoor exotic displays (butterfly garden, tropical flora and fauna, or an attraction modeled on the Eden Project in the UK).

THE VISION – HEALTH CENTRE

"There is a good argument for a school of therapeutic gardening which would put B.C. in the forefront in this area of growing interest."

– Val Adolph, "The Riverview Lands"

The use of the Lands as a sanctuary and treatment centre for mental health remains a top priority. Other long term treatment and physical rehabilitation programs may be located here.

Geriatric patients suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's requiring daycare or residential care are accommodated.

Health support and alternate care services such as massage, physiotherapy, nutrition, and herbal medicine are offered.

A major horticulture therapy program operates in conjunction with the mental health centre. Clients have opportunities for employment in gardening and working with the public.

THE VISION – CONFERENCE AND TOURISM CENTRE

“This (Botanical Garden) would give visitors from all parts of the world an opportunity of seeing at a glance the enormous variety of beautiful, curious, and useful plants indigenous to British Columbia.”
– John Davidson, Provincial Botanist, 1913

Accommodation, meeting rooms, lecture theatres, and display areas are offered for conferences and retreats. A good number of local jobs are created in catering, management, and communication services.

The site, with its excellent photo locations, is particularly suitable for weddings and a picturesque chapel has been built or relocated there. Banquet space is also available for other private parties and functions. Cultural and leisure opportunities such as small cafes, gift shops and galleries fit with the landscape and enhance the offerings of the conference centre.

Although a large hotel project is not appropriate for the site, some bed and breakfast accommodation and tasteful dining facilities complement the conference centre.

The large buildings and existing parking facilities can accommodate trade shows. Secure space in a permanent facility is leased to local businesses wishing to advertise and demonstrate new products and innovations.

THE VISION - EDUCATION CENTRE

“These trees in this magnificent park like setting are invaluable as teaching tools to all levels and ages of students.”
– David Tarrant

The campus-like setting of the heritage lawn buildings is ideally suited to an academic educational institution – possibly a residential international school or college. This creates well-paid professional employment for local residents.

The space may also offer other types of specialized training such as a film and acting school, music academy, writing and journalism institution, or a private liberal arts college.

Behind the restored façade of the West Lawn building lies the Museum of Psychiatry, depicting the history of mental illness and its treatment. This is a major attraction and employer for Coquitlam.

Buildings at Riverview provide classroom space and possibly housing to complement the Federal organic agriculture-training program at Colony Farm.

THE VISION - ART CENTRE

Existing cottages and heritage buildings are renovated to establish a centre for visual and performing arts that includes teaching and recital space, studios and galleries, and an administration centre.

Small and medium performance space is available as well as an outdoor amphitheatre (on the hill in front of North Lawn) for summer performances.

A permanent market offers local artisans an ongoing opportunity to sell crafts and artwork on consignment.

Existing use of the site as a film location is enhanced with a sound studio and other technical resources available.

THE VISION – RECREATION CENTRE

“It is very important for people, especially children, who live in cities to have an opportunity to experience nature. That is what makes the Riverview Lands so important.”

– Dr. David Suzuki

The Riverview Lands are still well used for passive recreation such as walking, bird & wildlife observation and photography. This is enhanced with the addition of jogging paths, picnic facilities, and playgrounds to attract visitors from farther afield.

With attractive signage and embedded information, the lands are in high demand for school field trips –offering both natural and social history education.

The site offers meeting and activity space for community groups – particularly floor space for fitness, dog obedience, martial arts, dance, and gymnastics. Buildings are remodelled and rented for indoor racquet sports, volleyball, and basketball,

THE VISION – SOCIAL HOUSING

Riverview has always provided housing and care for the mentally ill and it now also provides assisted living and supportive housing for elderly citizens who require some degree of care.

The site also fills a need for temporary emergency shelter and transition housing.

THE VISION – COMMERCIAL SERVICES

Depending on what activities and initiatives exist on the lands, there is a need for support services. Office space for administration, small retail outlets and possibly professional and communication services compliment other uses.

Submitted by the RHCS Land Use Revision sub-committee: March 2003
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