



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Council Agenda

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**Meeting #:** R3/2025  
**Date:** February 12, 2025  
**Time:** 4:00 p.m.  
**Location:** CVRD Civic Room, 770 Harmston Ave, Courtenay

We respectfully acknowledge that the land we gather on is Unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

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**9. COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS**

9.1	Public Substance Use Education and Awareness Event (Councillor Morin)	293
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**WHEREAS** there is a pressing need to address the significant impacts of substance use-related harms on our community’s health and wellbeing, exacerbated by the unregulated toxic drug crisis; and

**WHEREAS** the City of Courtenay prioritizes fostering social infrastructure in alignment with the Official Community Plan's objective of promoting coordinated and evidence-based responses to complex social issues and collaborating with regional partners to address homelessness, mental health, and addiction; and

**WHEREAS** a community event is consistent with the recommendations outlined in the Comox Valley Substance Use Strategy, which emphasizes the importance of decreasing stigma associated with addiction, reducing the harms of substance use through community education that frames substance use as a health issue, promotes understanding of brain development and addiction science, encourages collaboration across all levels of government, and strives to eliminate stigma within various systems.

**WHEREAS** the Community Action Initiative has committed \$10,000 in funding from the Community Action Team Funding Stream towards a public substance use education and awareness event.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Council direct staff to work in partnership with the Indigenous Women’s Sharing Society, Comox Valley Substance Use Collaborative, Comox Valley Community Action Team and the Community Action Initiative to provide support for the coordination of a public Substance Use Education and Awareness event, proposed for Spring 2025; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** Council provide up to \$7,500 from the Council Initiatives Fund to the Indigenous Women’s Sharing Society as fiscal host, to support event related costs including costs associated with the use of City facilities; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Mayor write letters to the Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, and Comox Valley Regional District requesting that they consider a financial contribution to the event in the amount of \$2500.

**10. BYLAWS**

10.1	For First, Second and Third Reading:	
10.1.1	Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3171 (solid waste)	294
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**11. COUNCIL REPORTS**

- 11.1 Councillor Cole-Hamilton
- 11.2 Councillor Frisch
- 11.3 Councillor Hillian
- 11.4 Councillor Jolicoeur
- 11.5 Councillor McCollum
- 11.6 Councillor Morin
- 11.7 Mayor Wells

**12. ADJOURNMENT**



# Council Minutes

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**Meeting #:** R2/2025

**Date:** January 29, 2025, 4:00 pm  
February 5, 2025, 4:00 pm

**Location:** CVRD Civic Room, 770 Harmston Ave, Courtenay

**Council Present:** B. Wells (Mayor)  
W. Cole-Hamilton  
D. Frisch (joined the Feb 5, 2025 meeting at 4:19 pm.)  
D. Hillian (left the Feb 5, 2025 meeting at 7:15 pm. and did not return)  
E. Jolicoeur  
M. McCollum  
W. Morin

**Staff Present:** G. Garbutt, City Manager (CAO)  
C. Davidson, Director of Infrastructure & Environmental Engineering  
A. Langenmaier, Director of Financial Services (CFO)  
K. Macdonald, Fire Chief  
K. O'Connell, Director of Corporate Services  
S. Saunders, Director of Recreation, Culture & Community Services  
K. Shaw, Director of Public Works Services  
M. Wade, Director of Development Services  
E. Chow, Manager of Legislative Services  
S. Hainsworth, Manager of Procurement, Risk & Real Estate (joined at 4:00 pm on Feb 5, 2025, left at 4:45pm and did not return.)  
J. Tazzioli, Manager of Environmental Engineering (left the Jan 29, 2025 meeting at 5:45 pm. and did not return.)  
L. Bourgeois, Deputy Corporate Officer

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Wells called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm and respectfully acknowledged that the meeting was conducted on the Unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

## 2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

**Moved By** Hillian

**Seconded By** Cole-Hamilton

THAT the following late items be added to the January 29, 2025 Council Meeting Agenda:

- “Rise and Report - 2025 Council Appointments”, numbered 6.1, under COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS,
- “Letter from CVRD - 2025 Comox Valley Water Committee Voting Structure”, numbered 5.2, under EXTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE; and

THAT the agenda be reordered accordingly.

**CARRIED**

### **3. MINUTES**

#### **3.1 Regular Council Minutes - January 15, 2025**

**Moved By** Cole-Hamilton

**Seconded By** McCollum

THAT Council adopt the January 15, 2025 Regular Council minutes.

**CARRIED**

#### **3.2 Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) Minutes - September 5, 2024**

**Moved By** Frisch

**Seconded By** McCollum

THAT Council receive the *September 5, 2024 Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) Meeting Minutes*, as approved by the Commission.

**CARRIED**

#### **3.3 Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) Minutes - November 21, 2024 (Draft)**

**Moved By** Hillian

**Seconded By** Cole-Hamilton

THAT Council receive the draft November 21, 2024 Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) Meeting Minutes for information.

**CARRIED**

**4. STAFF REPORTS**

**4.1 Recreation, Culture, and Community Services**

**4.1.1 Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) Recommendation - Continuation of Free Public Swim**

**Moved By** McCollum

**Seconded By** Hillian

THAT upon consideration of a recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, Council approve free swim admissions at the Courtenay and District Memorial Pool for the 2025 season (as implemented in 2024) and allocate \$30,000 from gaming funds to offset projected revenue impacts.

**CARRIED**

**Opposed: Councillor Jolicoeur**

**4.2 Infrastructure and Environmental Engineering**

**4.2.1 Anderton Dike Remediation – Disaster Resilience and Innovation Funding (DRIF) Grant Funding**

**Moved By** Frisch

**Seconded By** Morin

THAT staff submit a full proposal for a funding application for Anderton Dike Remediation through the Disaster Resilience and Innovation Funding (DRIF) program; and

THAT Council supports the project and commits to cost overruns.

**CARRIED**

**5. EXTERNAL REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

**5.1 2025 Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) AGM & Convention - 1st call for Resolutions and Convention Information**

**Moved By** Frisch

**Seconded By** McCollum

THAT Council receive the letter from the AVICC “AGM & Convention – 1st Call for Resolutions and Convention Information”.

**CARRIED**

**5.2 Letter from CVRD - 2025 Comox Valley Water Committee Voting Structure**

**Moved By** McCollum

**Seconded By** Frisch

THAT Council receive the letter from the CVRD “Letter from CVRD - 2025 Comox Valley Water Committee Voting Structure”.

**CARRIED**

**6. COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS**

**6.1 RISE AND REPORT– 2025 Council Appointments**

From the January 15, 2024 in camera portion of the Council meeting, Council rises and reports as follows:

*THAT Council approve the following appointments:*

***CVRD Board of Directors***

- *Cole-Hamilton, Hillian, McCollum, Morin*
- *Jolicoeur, Wells (alternates)*

***Comox Valley Sewage Commission***

- *Cole-Hamilton, Hillian, McCollum*
- *Jolicoeur, Morin, Wells (alternates)*

***Comox Valley Water Committee***

- *Cole-Hamilton, Hillian, Morin, Wells*

- *Jolicoeur, McCollum (alternates)*

**Comox Valley Recreation Commission**

- *Hillian, Jolicoeur, McCollum, Morin*
- *Cole-Hamilton, Wells (alternates)*

**Regional Parks and Trails Committee**

- *Cole-Hamilton, McCollum, Morin*
- *Hillian, Jolicoeur, Wells (alternates)*

**Comox Strathcona Regional Hospital District Board**

- *Cole-Hamilton, Hillian, Jolicoeur, Morin*
- *McCollum, Wells (alternates)*

**Comox Strathcona Solid Waste Management Board**

- *Cole-Hamilton, McCollum, Morin, Wells*
- *Hillian, Jolicoeur (alternates)*

**Heritage Commission**

- *Mayor*
- *Hillian (alternate)*

**Court of Revision (Parcel Tax Review Panel)**

- *Jolicoeur, Wells*
- *Cole-Hamilton, Hillian, McCollum, Morin (alternates)*

**Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee**

- *McCollum*
- *Morin (alternate)*

**Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness**

- *Jolicoeur*
- *Wells (alternate)*

**Comox Valley Community Justice Society**



- *Hillian*
- *Cole-Hamilton (alternate)*

***Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Association (DCBIA) Board***

- *Mayor and Acting Mayor*
- *Cole-Hamilton (alternate)*

***Comox Valley Substance Use Collaborative***

- *Morin*
- *Cole-Hamilton (alternate)*

***Comox Valley Community Action Team***

- *Morin*
- *Jolicoeur (alternate)*

***Comox Valley Social Planning Society***

- *Morin*
- *Jolicoeur (alternate)*

***Physician Recruitment Committee***

- *Hillian*
- *Jolicoeur*

***Vancouver Island Regional Library Board***

- *Morin*
- *McCollum (alternate)*

***Kus-kus-sum Restoration Project Watershed***

- *Hillian*
- *Jolicoeur (alternate)*

***Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative***

- *McCollum*
- *Cole-Hamilton*

***Junction Community Advisory Committee***

- *Mayor*
- *McCollum (alternate)*

***Comox Valley Food Policy Council***

- *Jolicoeur*
- *Morin (alternate)*

***Chambers of Commerce***

- *Mayor*
- *Acting Mayor (alternate)*

**7. NOTICE OF MOTION**

**7.1 Public Substance Use Education and Awareness Event (Councillor Morin)**

**WHEREAS** there is a pressing need to address the significant impacts of substance use-related harms on our community's health and wellbeing, exacerbated by the unregulated toxic drug crisis; and

**WHEREAS** the City of Courtenay prioritizes fostering social infrastructure in alignment with the Official Community Plan's objective of promoting coordinated and evidence-based responses to complex social issues and collaborating with regional partners to address homelessness, mental health, and addiction; and

**WHEREAS** a community event is consistent with the recommendations outlined in the Comox Valley Substance Use Strategy, which emphasizes the importance of decreasing stigma associated with addiction, reducing the harms of substance use through community education that frames substance use as a health issue, promotes understanding of brain development and addiction science, encourages collaboration across all levels of government, and strives to eliminate stigma within various systems.

**WHEREAS** the Community Action Initiative has committed \$10,000 in funding from the Community Action Team Funding Stream towards a public substance use education and awareness event.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Council direct staff to work in partnership with the Indigenous Women's Sharing Society, Comox Valley Substance Use

Collaborative, Comox Valley Community Action Team and the Community Action Initiative to provide support for the coordination of a public Substance Use Education and Awareness event, proposed for Spring 2025; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** Council provide up to \$7,500 from the Council Initiatives Fund to the Indigenous Women’s Sharing Society as fiscal host, to support event related costs including costs associated with the use of City facilities; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Mayor write letters to the Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, and Comox Valley Regional District requesting that they consider a financial contribution to the event in the amount of \$2500.

**8. 2025-2029 FINANCIAL PLAN**

**8.1 Budget Engagement 2025**

**Moved By** Frisch

**Seconded By** McCollum

THAT Council receive the Budget Engagement 2025 briefing note.

**CARRIED**

**8.2 2025-2029 Financial Plan**

The following departments presented information on the 2025-2029 Financial Plan prior to the meal break: Financial Services, Fire Services, City Manager’s Office, RCMP, and Development Services.

**Without objection, the meeting recessed at 6:26 pm. The Council meeting resumed at 6:47 pm.**

**Moved By** Jolicoeur

**Seconded By** Frisch

THAT Council extend the meeting beyond 9:00 pm, until 9:30 pm, in accordance with Section 17.2 of the *Council Procedure Bylaw No. 2730*.

**CARRIED**

Staff proceeded to present the 2025-2029 Financial Plan, and the presentation continued as follows: Recreation, Culture and Community Services, Corporate Services, and Infrastructure and Environmental Engineering.

**Moved By** Jolicoeur

**Seconded By** Cole-Hamilton

THAT Council adjourn the January 29, 2025 Council meeting and reconvene on Wednesday, February 5th at 4:00 pm.

**CARRIED**

**The January 29th, 2025 Council meeting adjourned at 9:22 pm**

In accordance with the notice provisions under *Section 127* of the *Community Charter* and the *City of Courtenay Council Procedure Bylaw No. 2730*, the City of Courtenay Regular Council Meeting scheduled for January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025, resumed on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 4:00 pm.

**Mayor Wells reconvened the January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Council meeting at 4:00 pm. on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025.**

Staff requested Council's consideration of a late item relevant to the 2025-2029 financial planning discussions.

**Moved By** Hillian

**Seconded By** Cole-Hamilton

THAT agenda item "8.2, 2025-2029 Financial Plan", be TABLED in order to consider the addition of a late item.

**CARRIED**

**Councillor Frisch was absent for the vote.**

**Moved By** Hillian

**Seconded By** Morin

THAT the staff report titled "6<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge – Request for Direction" be added to the agenda as item 8.2.1 and immediately considered.

**CARRIED**

**Councillor Frisch was absent for the vote.**

**Councillor Frisch joined the meeting at 4:19 pm.**

### **8.2.1 6th Street Bridge – Request for Direction**

**Moved By** McCollum

**Seconded By** Frisch

THAT Council direct staff to proceed with the evaluation of proposals for the 6th St Bridge project, and report back to Council with the recommended proposal and strategies to fund the project

**CARRIED**

**Moved By** Cole-Hamilton

**Seconded By** Hillian

THAT agenda item 8.2, 2025-2029 Financial Plan be lifted from the table and now considered.

**CARRIED**

Staff proceeded to present the remainder of the 2025-2029 Financial Plan (continued from January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025) as follows: Operational Services, Capital, Special Projects and summary.

**Mayor Wells called a recess at 6:14 pm. The Council meeting resumed at 6:34 pm.**

**Councillor Hillian left the meeting at 7:15 pm., and did not return.**

**Moved By** McCollum

**Seconded By** Morin

THAT Council direct that the Bridge Building Demolition be funded through the Gaming Reserve Funds.

**Moved By** Frisch

**Seconded By** Jolicoeur

THAT the motion be amended to add "that the demolition costs not exceed \$500,000."

**CARRIED**

**Council voted on the motion, as amended:**

THAT Council direct that the Bridge Building Demolition be funded through the Gaming Reserve fund to a maximum of \$500,000.

**CARRIED**

**Moved By** Jolicoeur

**Seconded By** McCollum

THAT Council direct staff to remove the proposed "Engagement Specialist" staff position from the 2025-2029 Financial Plan.

**CARRIED**

**Moved By** Jolicoeur

**Seconded By** Frisch

THAT Council direct staff to remove the proposed "Records and Privacy" staff position from the 2025-2029 Financial Plan.

**DEFEATED**

**Opposed: Councillor Cole Hamilton, Councillor McCollum, Councillor Morin, and Mayor Wells.**

**Moved By** McCollum

**Seconded By** Cole-Hamilton

THAT Council direct staff to report back on the implications of setting the 2025 tax rate at 6%, 6.5%, and 7%, and the impact of each rate on the 2025-2029 Financial Plan.

**CARRIED**

**Moved By** Cole-Hamilton

**Seconded By** McCollum

THAT Council direct staff to report back on sewer tax rate options which distribute the proposed 2025 increase over the duration of the 2025-2029 Financial Plan.

**CARRIED**

**Without objection, Mayor Wells called a recess at 8:18 pm. The Council Meeting resumed at 8:23 pm.**

**Moved By** McCollum

**Seconded By** Morin

WHEREAS, Council is committed to exploring options to lower annual tax change; and

WHEREAS, Council desires to explore various strategies to achieve this objective, including revenue diversification, capital project prioritization, operational efficiency, and reserve fund management; and

WHEREAS, Council commits to reviewing its own strategic priorities to ensure alignment with community needs and fiscal responsibility;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT staff be directed to undertake the following actions, in developing the 2026-2030 Financial Plan with the objective of lowering annual tax rates:

- Explore all revenue options.
- Review and prioritize the capital plan.
- Identify operational efficiencies.
- Develop a financial reserves and surplus policy.
- Explore other options.

**CARRIED**

### **8.3 Financial Plan Bylaws - For First, Second and Third Reading:**

#### **8.3.1 2025-2029 Financial Plan Bylaw No. 3165, 2025**

**Moved By** Frisch

**Seconded By** McCollum

THAT Council direct staff to update the *2025-2029 Financial Plan Bylaw No. 3165, 2025* and the *Sewer Service Frontage Tax Amendment Bylaw No. 3170, 2025* to reflect Council's directed changes to the 2025-2029 Financial Plan, and bring the updated financial plan and bylaws forward for Council's consideration at a future meeting.

**CARRIED**

**8.3.2 Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3167, 2025 (water)**

**Moved By** McCollum

**Seconded By** Frisch

THAT Council give first, second and third reading to *Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw (Water) Bylaw No. 3167*.

**CARRIED**

**8.3.3 Water Service Frontage Tax Amendment Bylaw No. 3168, 2025**

**Moved By** McCollum

**Seconded By** Frisch

THAT Council give first, second and third reading to *Water Service Frontage Tax Amendment Bylaw No. 3168*.

**CARRIED**

**8.3.4 Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3169, 2025 (sewer)**

**Moved By** McCollum

**Seconded By** Cole-Hamilton

THAT Council give first, second and third reading to *Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3169, 2025 (sewer)*.

**CARRIED**

**8.3.5 Sewer Service Frontage Tax Amendment Bylaw No. 3170, 2025**

See Council direction under item 8.3.1.

**9. COUNCIL REPORTS**

**9.1 Councillor Cole-Hamilton**

No report provided.



**9.2 Councillor Frisch**

No report provided.

**9.3 Councillor Hillian**

No report provided.

**9.4 Councillor Jolicoeur**

No report provided.

**9.5 Councillor Morin**

No report provided.

**9.6 Councillor McCollum**

No report provided.

**9.7 Mayor Wells**

No report provided.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Wells terminated the January 29, 2025 Council meeting, having reconvened on February 5, 2025 at 4:00 pm., on February 5, 2025 at 8:50 pm.

**CERTIFIED CORRECT**

Adopted by Council [MONTH] [DAY], 2025

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Mayor Bob Wells

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Corporate Officer



# Regional Parks and Trails STRATEGIC PLAN

City of Courtenay  
February 12, 2025

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Comox Valley  
REGIONAL DISTRICT

# AGENDA

1. Service History Overview
2. What are Regional Parks?
3. Strategic Plan Highlights
4. Next Steps

# Service History Overview



# Overview

**FORMER  
SERVICE (CSRD)**

1971 - 1998

**BACKGROUND  
STUDY**

DEC 2020 - FEB 2022

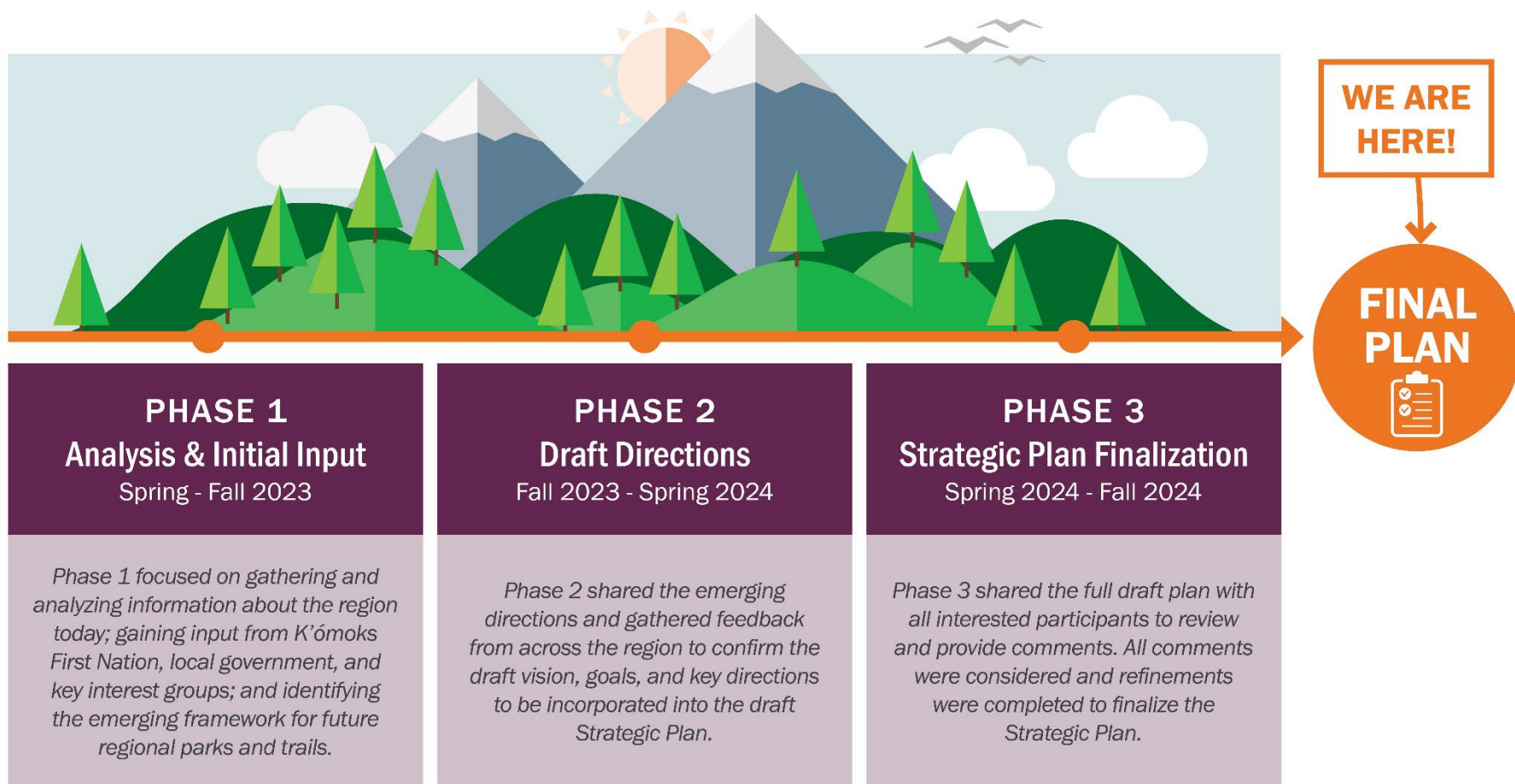
**SERVICE  
ESTABLISHMENT**

SEPTEMBER 2022

**STRATEGIC  
PLAN**

JAN 2023 - NOV 2024

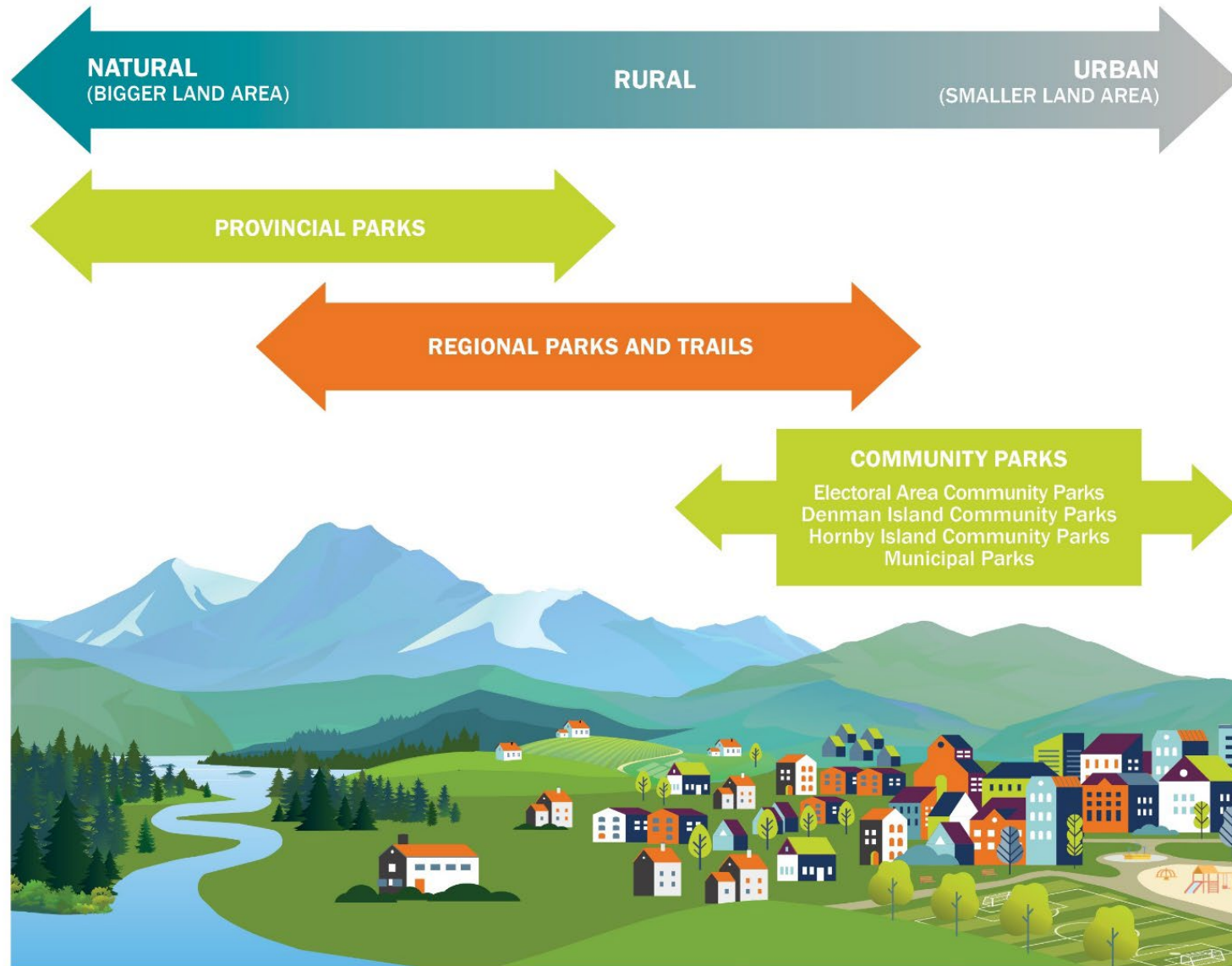
# Strategic Planning Process Diagram



# What are Regional Parks?



# PARKLAND SPECTRUM IN THE COMOX VALLEY





# Strategic Plan Highlights

1. Goals
2. Objectives
3. Actions



# GOALS



**6** Goals

# 6 GOALS



**Work Together with K'ómoks First Nation to Plan and Manage**



**Protect Regionally Significant Natural Areas**



**Increase Environmental and Community Connectivity**



**Provide Opportunities for Nature-based Recreation**



**Strengthen Stewardship and Community Partnerships**



**Manage in a Proactive and Sustainable Manner**

# OBJECTIVES



**12**  
Objectives

# 12 OBJECTIVES

## PLANNING

1. Work Together with K'ómoks First Nation
2. Secure Land for Regional Parks and Trails
3. Balance Conservation and Recreation Interests
4. Enhance Regional Connectivity
5. Support the Region's Resilience and Ecosystem Services
6. Provide High Value Visitor Experience

## MANAGING

7. Develop a Sustainable Funding Model
8. Manage Staffing, Operations, and Assets Proactively
9. Foster and Strengthen Partnerships
10. Develop Policy and Procedure Documents
11. Build Communications and Awareness
12. Monitor and Update the Plan

# ACTIONS



**64**  
**Actions**



# NEXT STEPS

- **Work on implementing the Strategic Plan**
- **Land Acquisition Strategy**



# Questions & Discussion



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue tank top and jeans, is walking away from the camera on a dirt path in a lush forest. She is carrying a baby in a black backpack. The forest is filled with tall trees, ferns, and moss-covered tree trunks. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating a dappled light effect on the path. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

# Thank you!

# Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce Municipal Business Initiative



The Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program supports long-term business growth in the Comox Valley by identifying key challenges and opportunities for innovation.

Through extensive engagement with businesses in Courtenay and Comox (late 2024), we identified critical concerns and identified research-based, innovative solutions that will be implemented by the Chamber of Commerce over the next two years.

### Streamlining process & reducing bureaucracy

Businesses highlighted the need for simplified and faster processes, including permitting, licensing, and zoning, to reduce red tape and promote smoother development and expansion. Many stressed the importance of cutting unnecessary government oversight to facilitate quicker decision-making.

### Financial support & tax relief

Respondents requested increased financial assistance for small businesses, including more accessible grants, tax incentives, and lower property and commercial taxes. There was a strong call for targeted support, especially for startups, to improve business profitability and sustainability.

### Improved infrastructure and safety

Several businesses expressed concern about safety and cleanliness in the downtown core. There is a strong desire for better public infrastructure, including improved parking, more accessible transit, and better security measures, such as lighting and patrols, to create a safer environment for customers and employees.

### Addressing housing and social issues

There is a need for solutions to the homelessness crisis and its impact on businesses, particularly with respect to safety concerns and property damage. Businesses also highlighted the demand for affordable housing and support for vulnerable populations, such as the unhoused and those struggling with mental health or addiction issues.

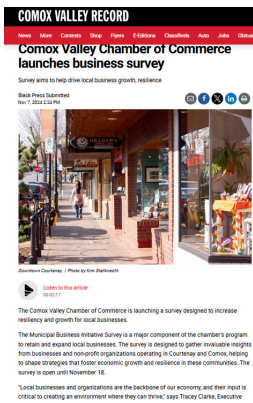
### Workforce development & attraction

Many businesses emphasized the importance of addressing workforce challenges, including the need for skilled workers, foreign worker programs, and workforce training. There was a strong desire for more resources focused on recruitment, employee benefits, and workforce skills development.

### Promoting growth & tourism

Businesses sought a more pro-business culture within local governments and called for more efforts in promoting local tourism, improving signage, and developing downtown areas to attract both locals and tourists. There was a call for community engagement, public space enhancements, and greater collaboration to boost the local economy.

Map data ©2025 Google



*Our strategic recommendations focus on addressing these challenges through advocacy, education, relationship building, and a unified regional economic strategy to create a more supportive business environment.*

**Bites and Insights**

Breakfast with purpose: fuel your business at our monthly speaker series

THIRD THURSDAY MONTHLY  
7:30-9:00 AM

February 20 with Original Ginger  
Generate Business from your Website - Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) basics  
CHAMBER BUSINESS HUB, #103 576 ENGLAND AVE

**ECONOMIC OUTLOOK BREAKFAST**

THURSDAY MARCH 6 | 2025 | CROWN ISLE RESORT

COMOX VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

MNP LLP

TOWN OF COMOX

*"Cut red tape, streamline permitting procedures. Attract new skills to the Valley."*

*"More grants, networking opportunities, education opportunities"*





# Business Retention and Expansion Project Update

## Polling Summary Report

# Executive summary

The Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program supports long-term business growth in the Comox Valley by identifying key challenges and opportunities for innovation.

Through extensive engagement with businesses in Courtenay and Comox, we identified critical concerns and identified research-based, innovative solutions that will be implemented over the next two years.

Our strategic recommendations focus on addressing these challenges through advocacy, education, relationship building, and a unified regional economic strategy to create a more supportive business environment.



Develop and implement a comprehensive Business Retention and Expansion program in collaboration with Courtenay and Comox municipalities.

Gather insights through consultations, community polls, and engagement with business leaders.

## 2024-2026

Foster economic growth by addressing current business community needs, and positioning The Comox Valley as a desirable place to bring business.

Implement an action plan based on data analysis, responding to business community needs, with regular reporting to funding partners until 2026.

# Reaching participants



## Website

We created and launched a project landing page.



## Social media

We developed and distributed a month-long social media campaign to promote the survey.



## Email

We invited businesses and individuals to participate in the workshop and online survey.



## Postcards

We created printed a postcard that we distributed to local businesses.



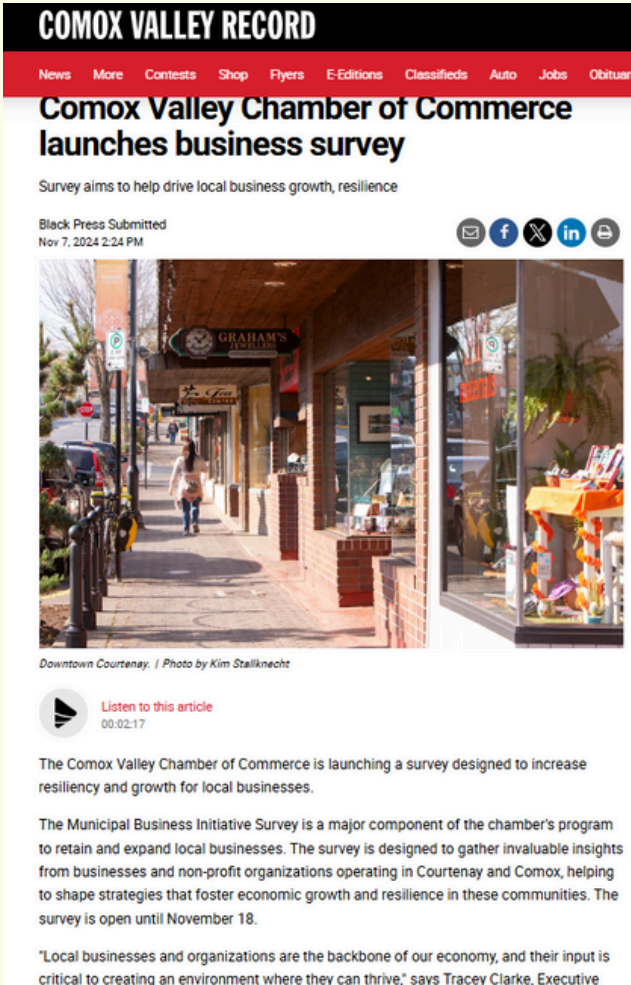
## Media relations

Press releases about the project were shared through print and radio media.

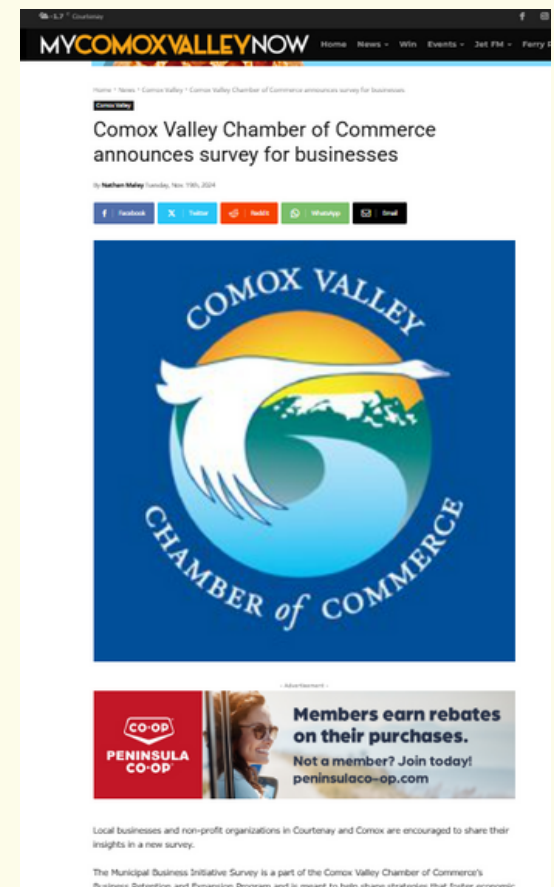


## Business walks

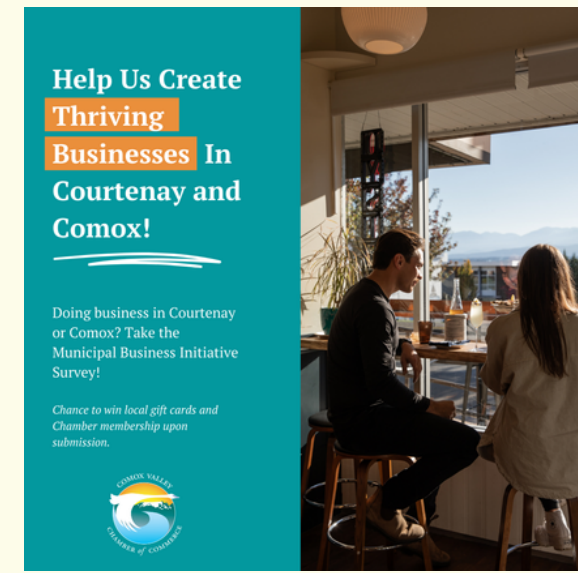
The CVCC Executive Director went on walks with elected officials to promote the survey with businesses directly and garner feedback firsthand.



Print media project marketing



Postcards widely distributed



Social media and newsletter graphics



Business walks to promote the survey





# Participants



We hosted a workshop with 13 key business, government and non-profit leaders across the Comox Valley and heard from 318 local businesses through the Municipal Business Initiative Survey.



# Workshop feedback



## Market challenges

- finding suitable spaces for expansion
- high real estate costs
- zoning regulations
- accessibility issues
- safety concerns
- high staff turnover rates
- rising living costs
- lack of affordable housing
- difficulties in offering competitive benefits
- succession planning



## Opportunities for growth and innovation

- Adopting AI for optimization and efficiency
- Grant writing support
- Point-of-sale updates

### Marketing strategies focused on:

- Collaboration and cross-promotion
- Social media
- Market research

### Financial opportunities including:

- Exploring funding models
- Building partnerships
- Procurement strategies



## Economic development

- Streamline government regulations
- Improve collaboration between levels of government
- Simplify zoning and permit processes

### Develop a unified regional economic strategy focused on:

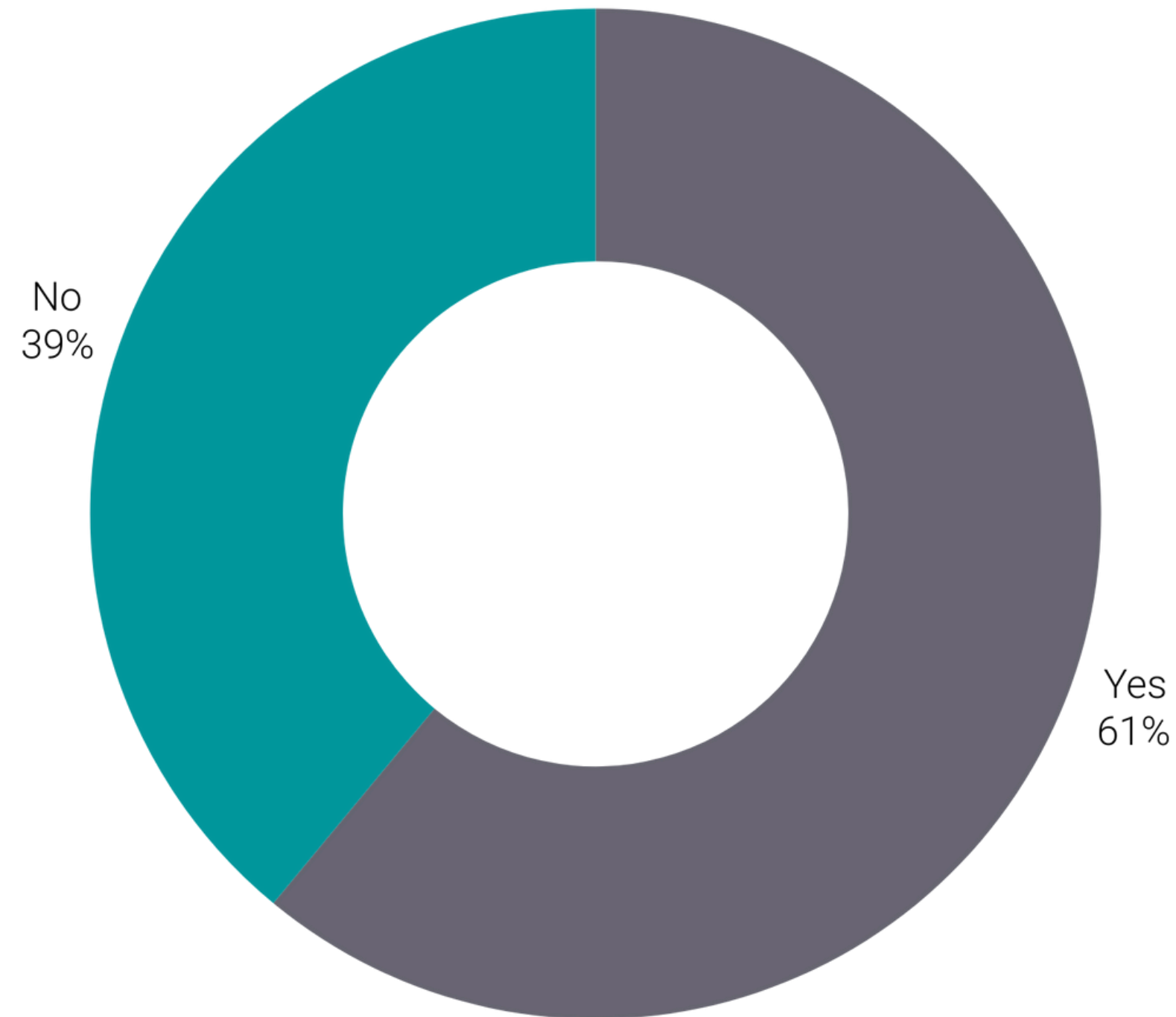
- Market research
- Identifying gaps
- Leveraging local demographics for business development



## Advice for new businesses

- Maintain cash reserves
- Understand local costs
- Engage early in local events and collaborations
- Leverage community strengths
- Collaborate with surrounding regions

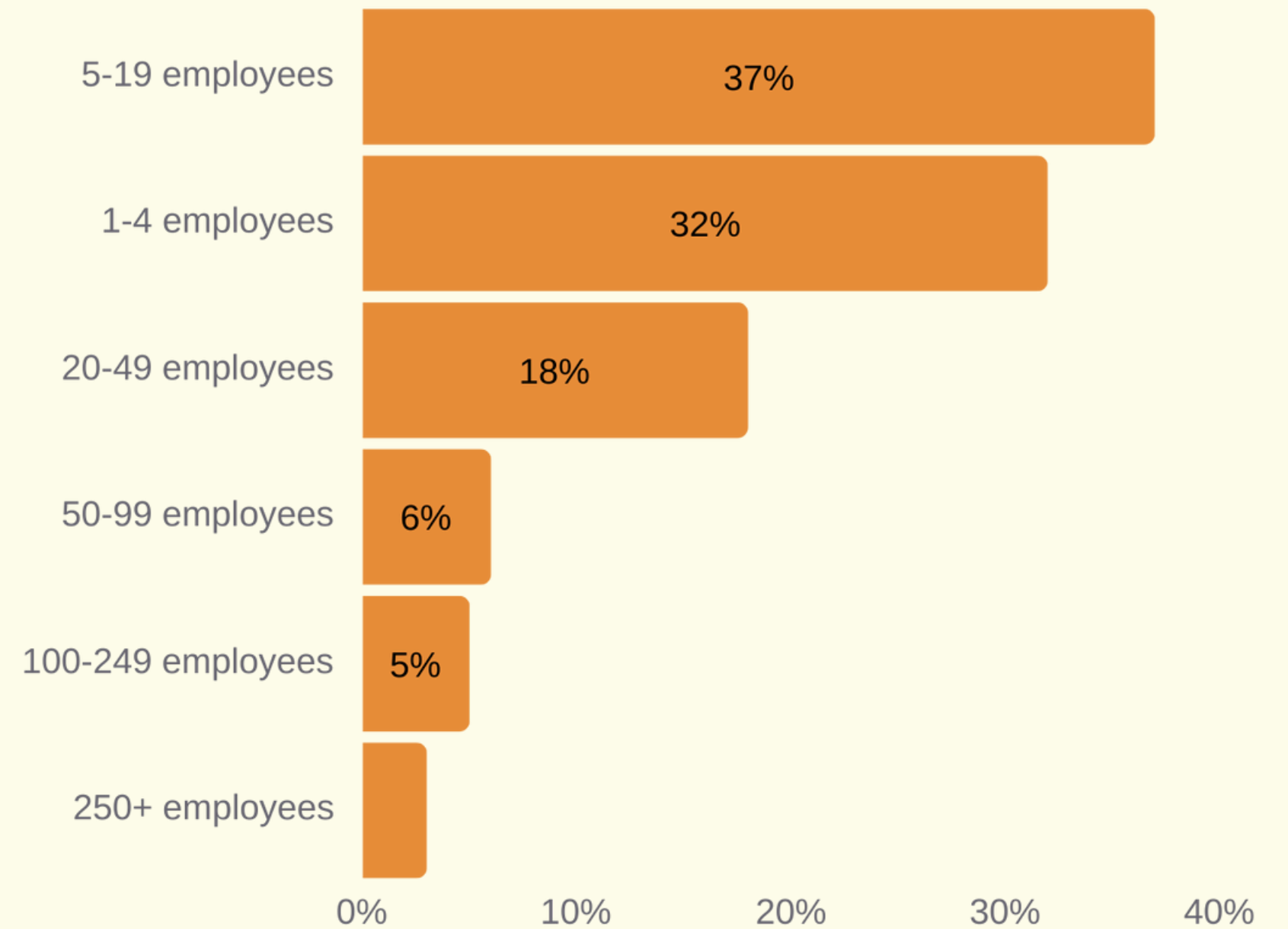
# Are you a member of the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce?



This highlights a relatively strong engagement with the Chamber, with more than half of the respondents being part of this local business network.

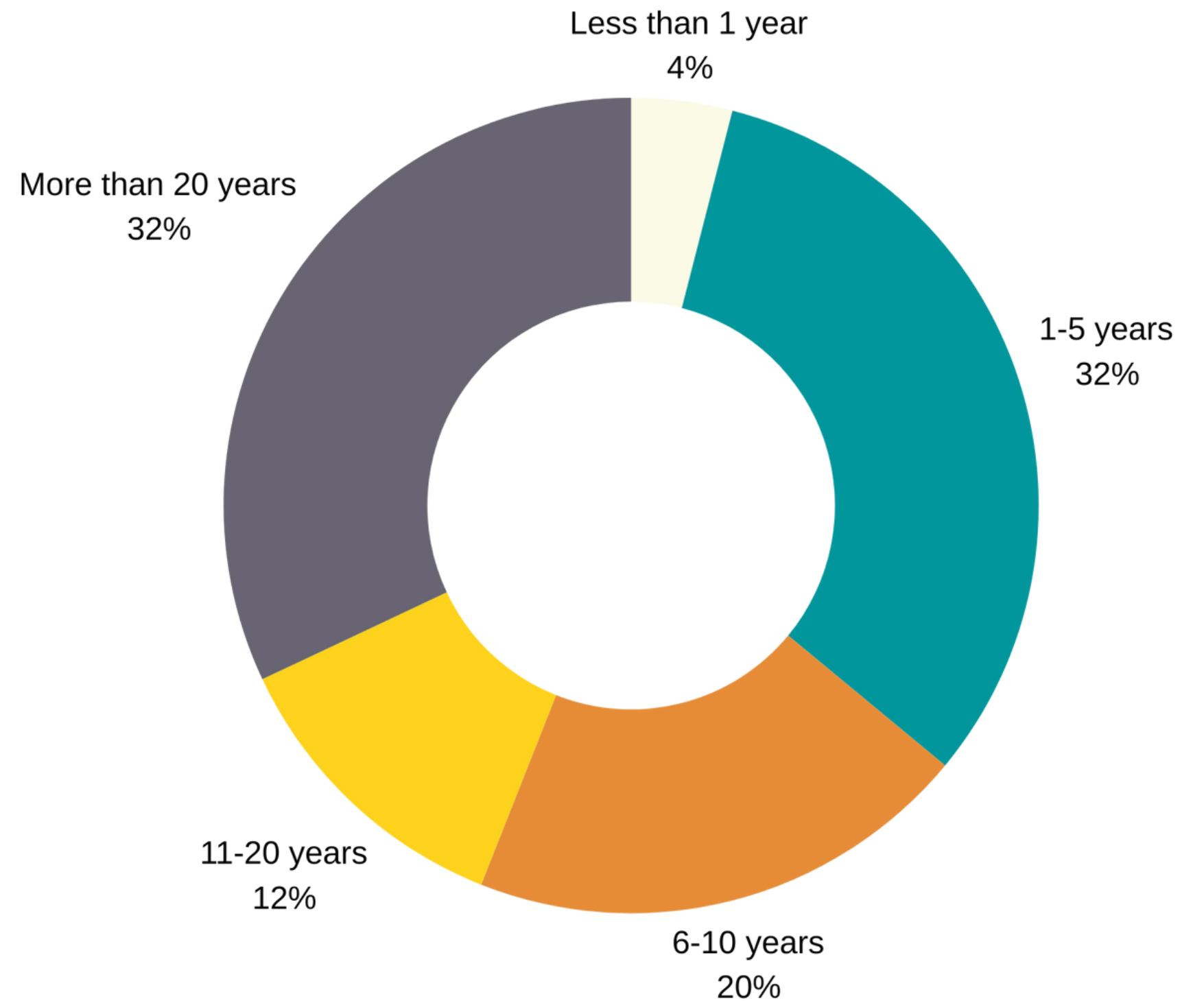
# How many employees does your business currently have?

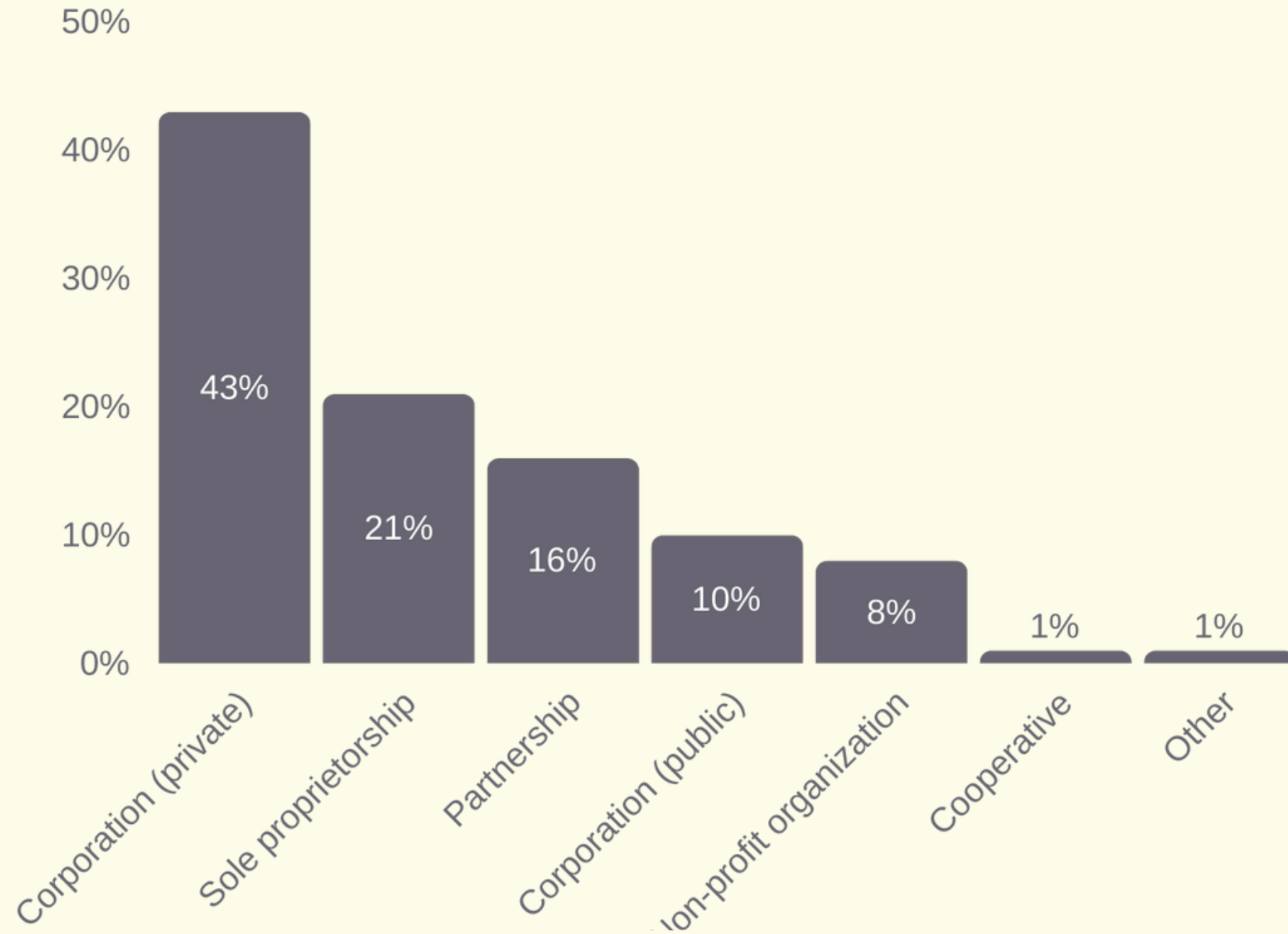
These figures underscore the importance of scalable support programs tailored to smaller teams. Workforce development initiatives, such as recruitment support and skills training, will be critical in addressing the challenges faced by these businesses.



# How long has your business been in operation?

This mix highlights the dual need to support emerging businesses with resources for growth, while ensuring long-term sustainability for established enterprises. Strategies must balance startup-focused initiatives with programs designed to address legacy challenges.



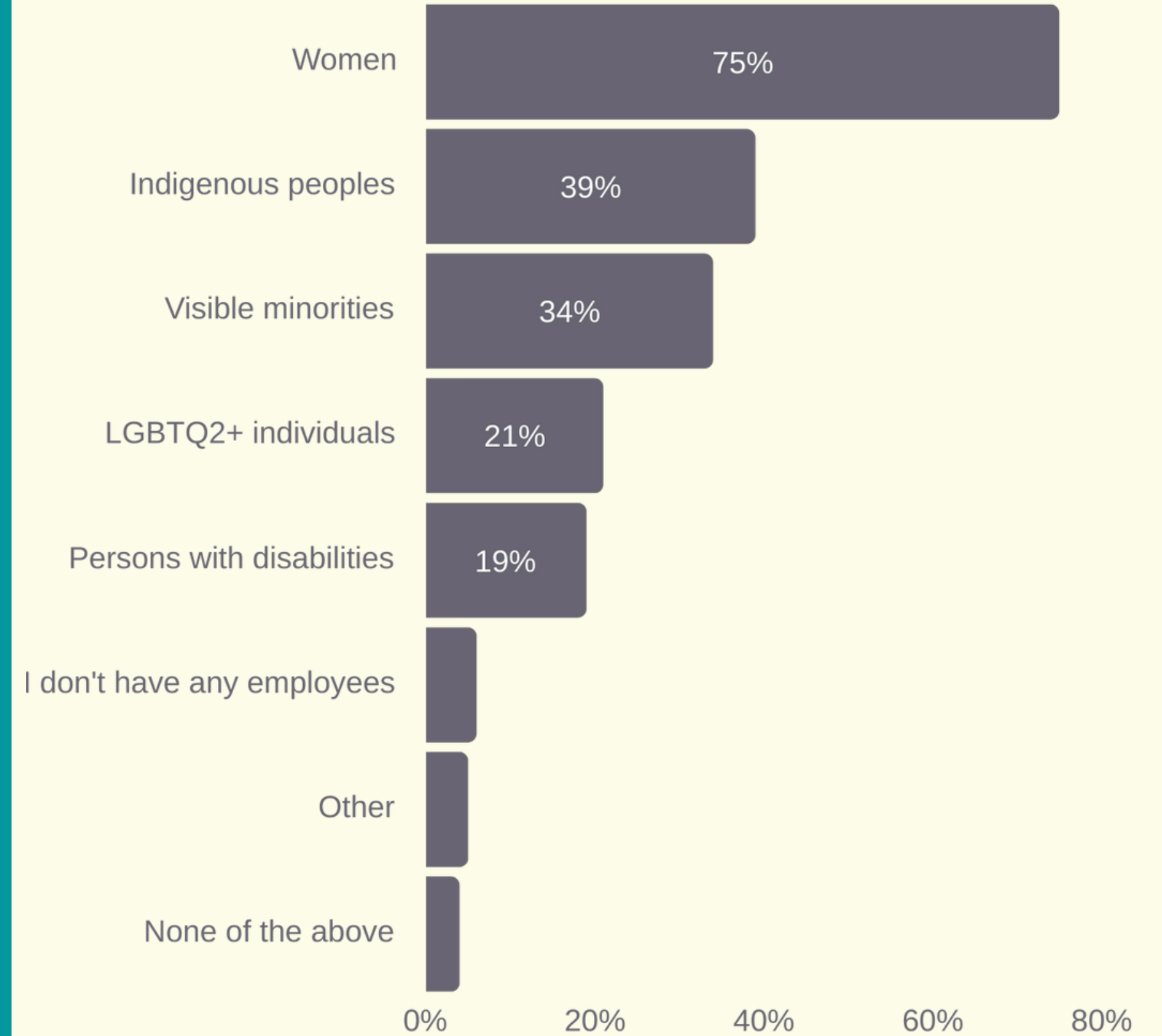


# What is the ownership structure of your business?

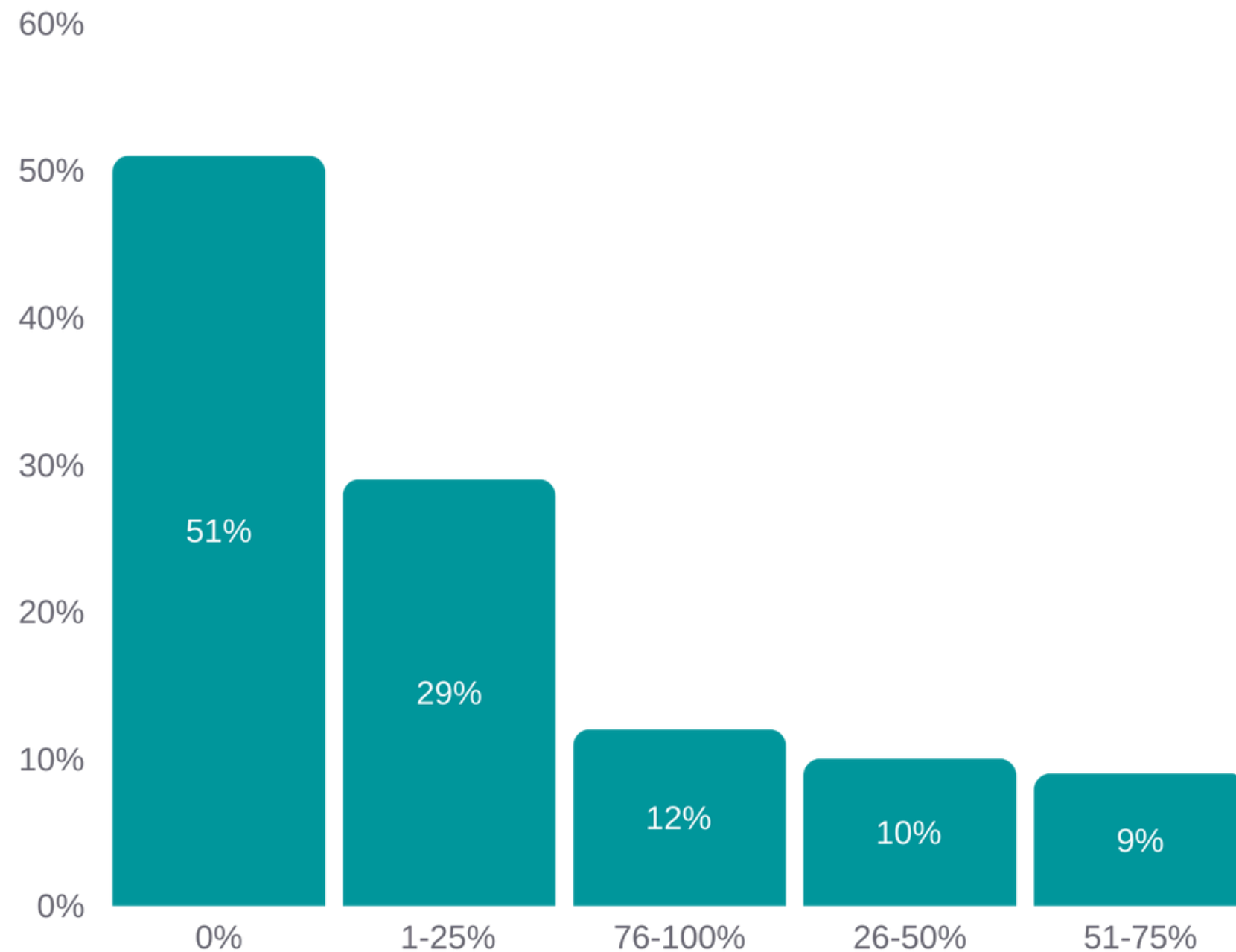
This diversity reflects varying levels of organizational resources and capacity, suggesting a need for tailored programs that address the specific requirements of each ownership type.

# Do you or any of your employees identify as the following? (Select all that apply)

These results demonstrate notable diversity within the surveyed businesses, but also highlight opportunities to enhance equity and inclusion initiatives. The BRE program could play a role in promoting diversity by offering resources and workshops that support inclusive hiring practices, accessibility improvements, and cultural competency in the workplace.



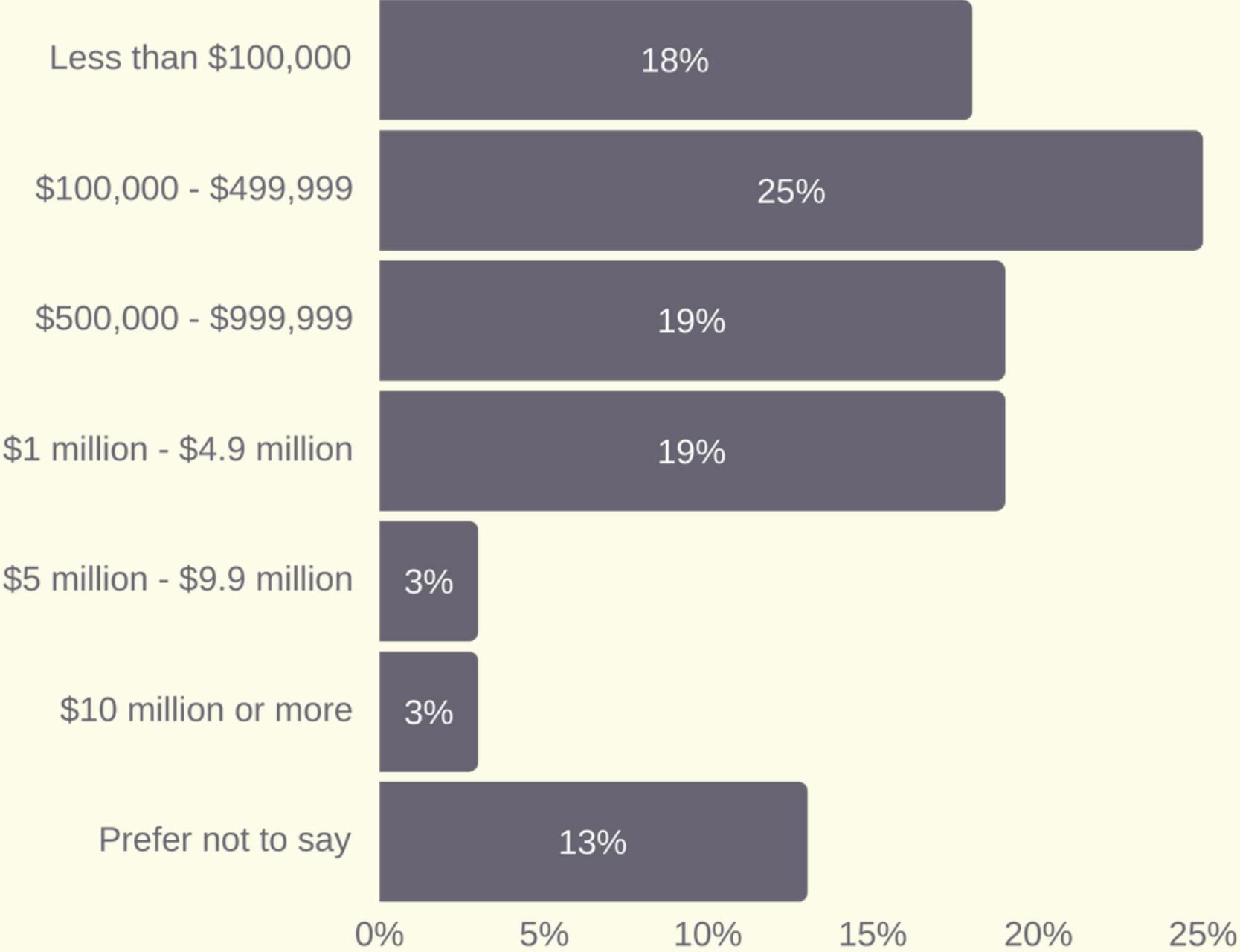
# What percentage of your workforce is part-time or temporary?



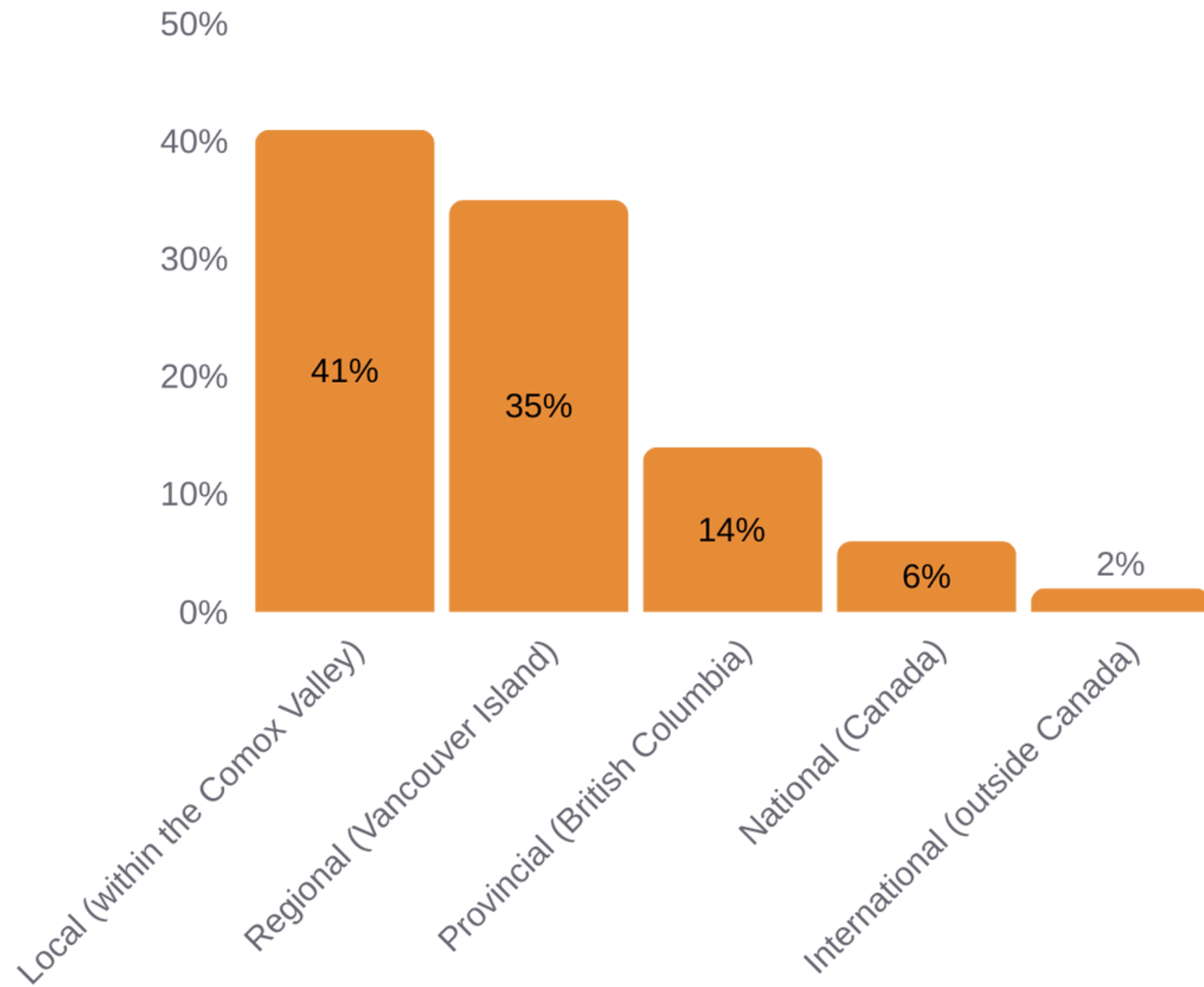
This reliance on full-time employees indicates workforce stability, but may limit flexibility. Strategies to support workforce flexibility, such as resources for managing part-time roles, could enhance operational efficiency.

# What was your business' approximate annual revenue in the most recent fiscal year?

This distribution highlights a wide range of financial capacities across the business community, with a significant portion demonstrating mid-to-high revenue levels. Tailored financial programs, such as grants and funding opportunities, should cater to both scaling mid-level businesses and supporting high-revenue businesses in further expansion and innovation.







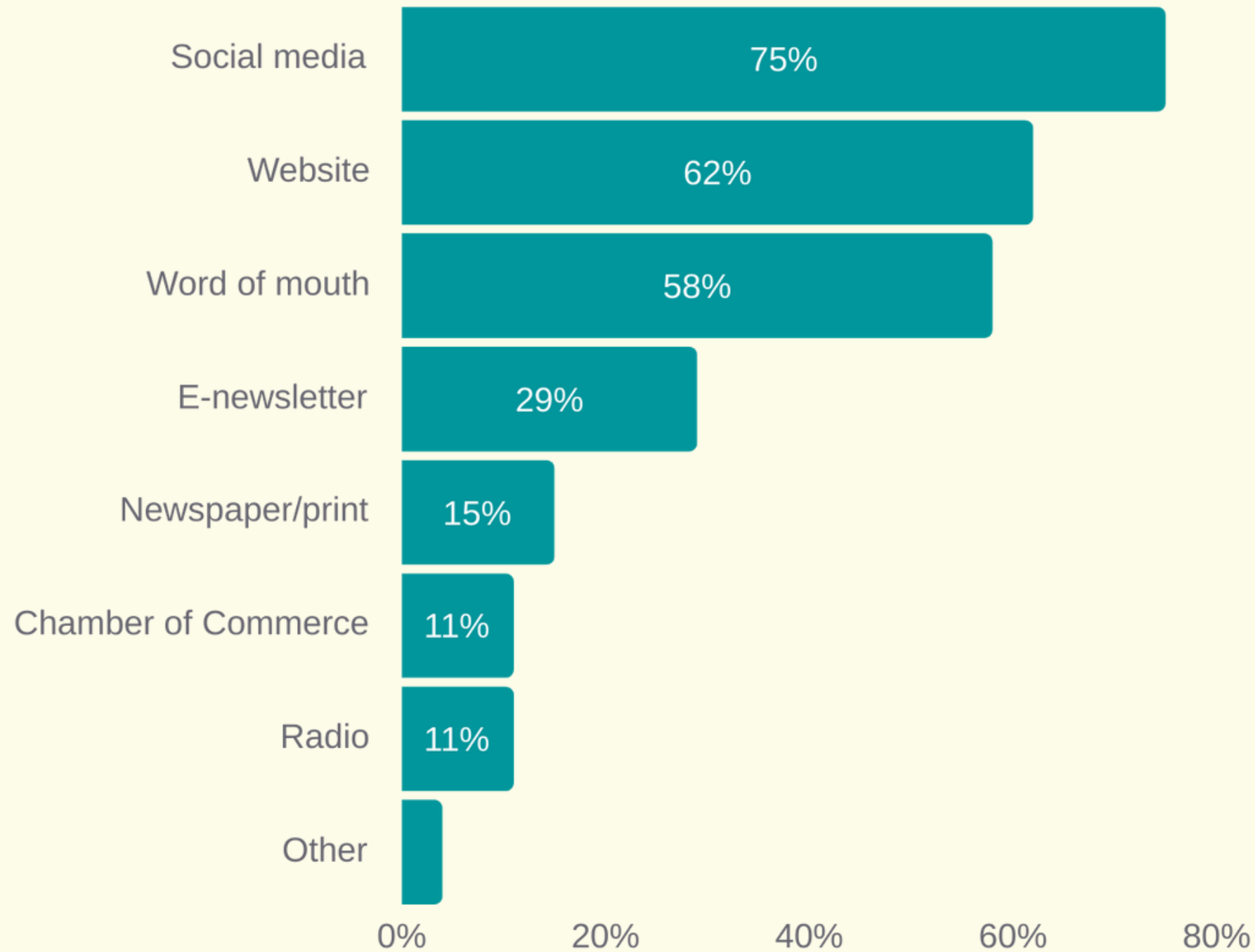
## What is the primary market for your business?

This distribution underscores the importance of focusing on local and regional strategies, while supporting businesses seeking to expand beyond these boundaries. The BRE program can help businesses maximize their local and regional presence while offering resources for those looking to scale to broader markets.

# Which marketing tools do you find most effective for your business? (select all that apply)

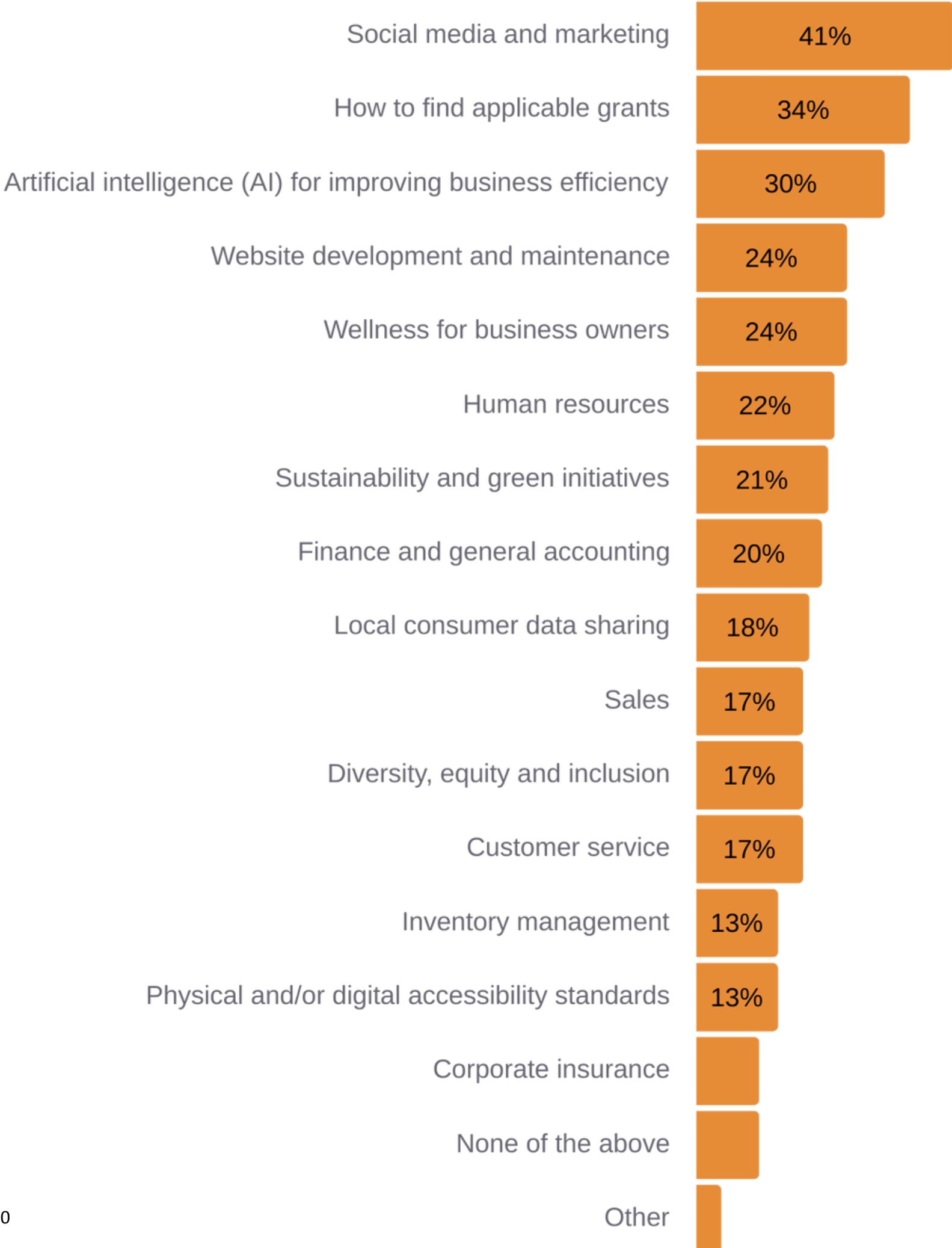
This emphasizes the importance of digital marketing in today's business landscape, while also recognizing the enduring value of personal connections.

Providing training on digital platforms and strategies to maximize word-of-mouth promotion can empower businesses to improve visibility and engagement.



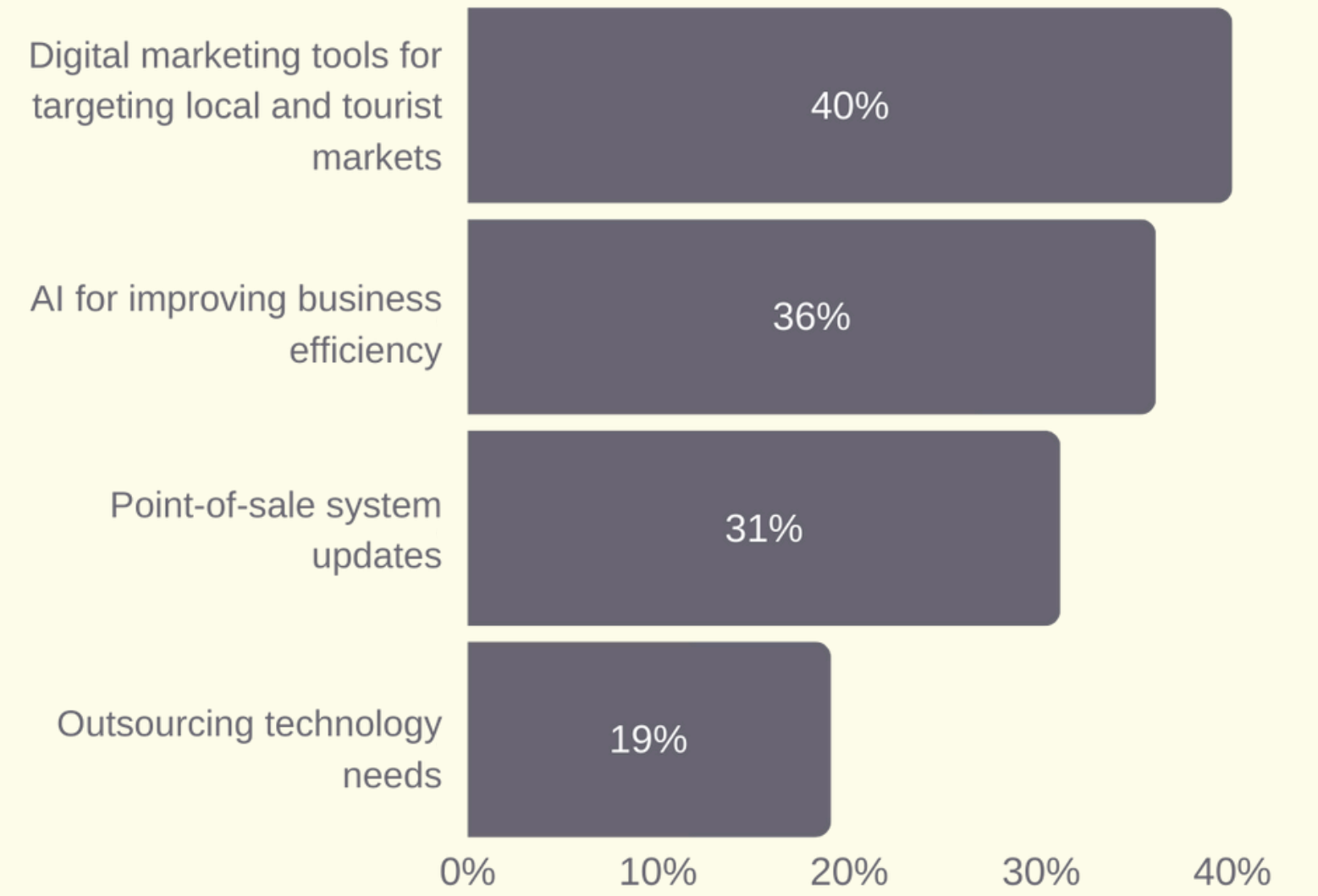
# What topics would you like training, resources and/or support for? (Select all that apply)

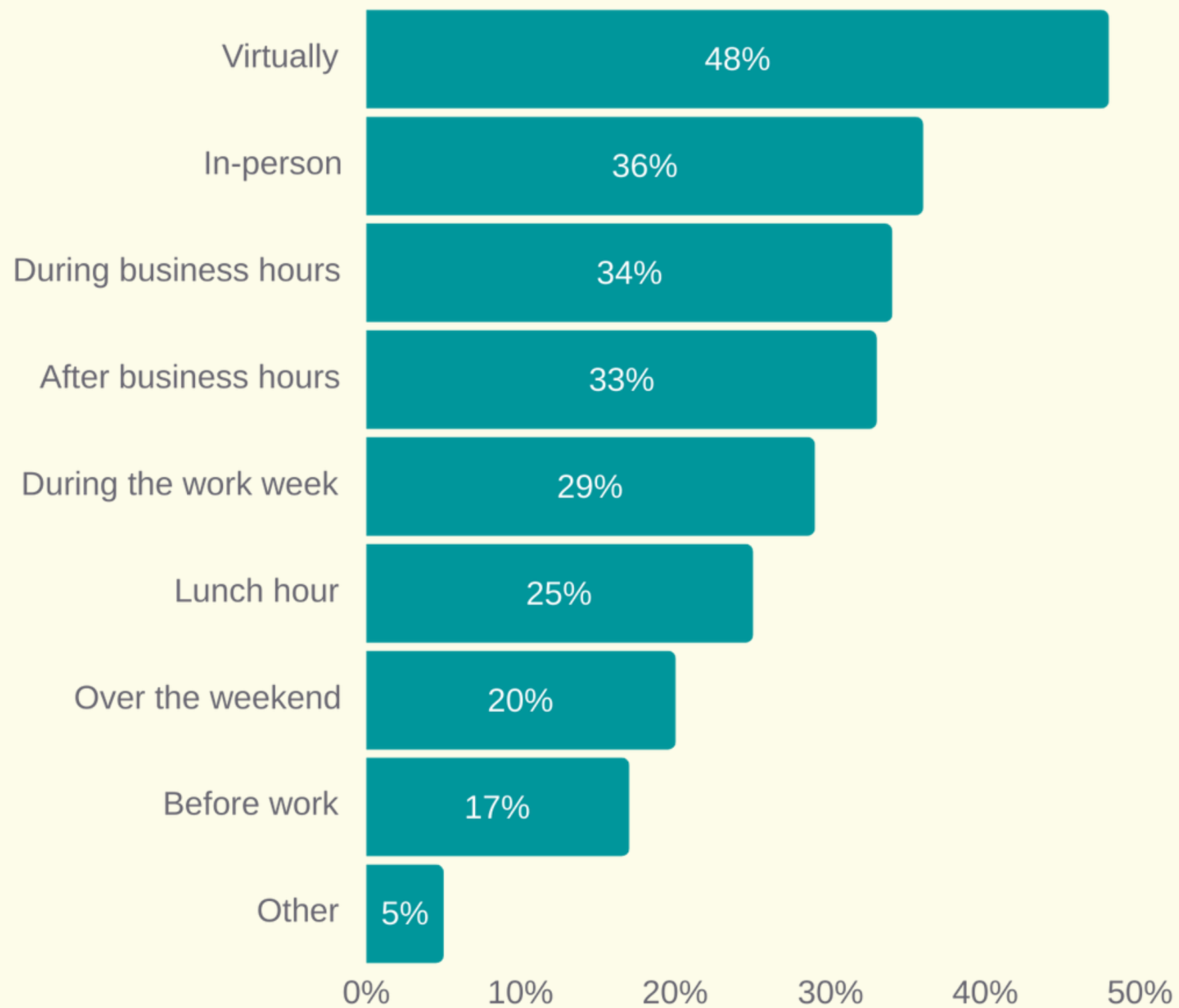
There is a strong interest in social media marketing (41%), grant opportunities (34%), and AI for business efficiency (30%). These priorities reflect a desire to adopt modern tools and secure funding to enhance operations. Offering targeted workshops and resources in these areas will equip businesses with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive.



# If you haven't already, which of the following technologies are you interested in implementing? (Select all that apply)

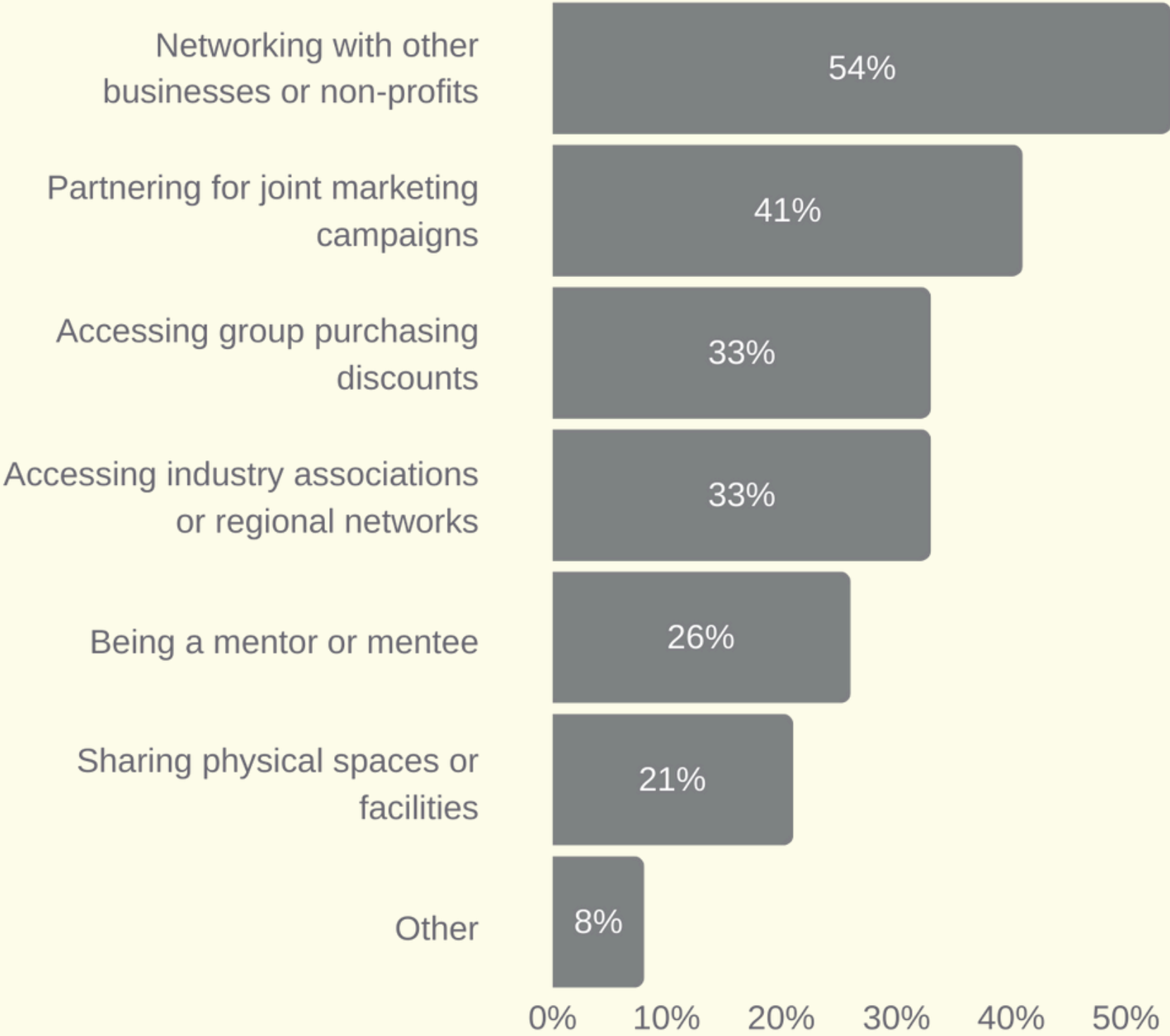
This shows a significant interest in leveraging digital marketing and AI tools to improve business efficiency and reach.





**If CVCC were to offer training, mentorship or programs, when would you be most likely to attend? (Select all that apply)**

**This insight suggests the need for adaptable program delivery models that accommodate diverse schedules and ensure maximum participation.**



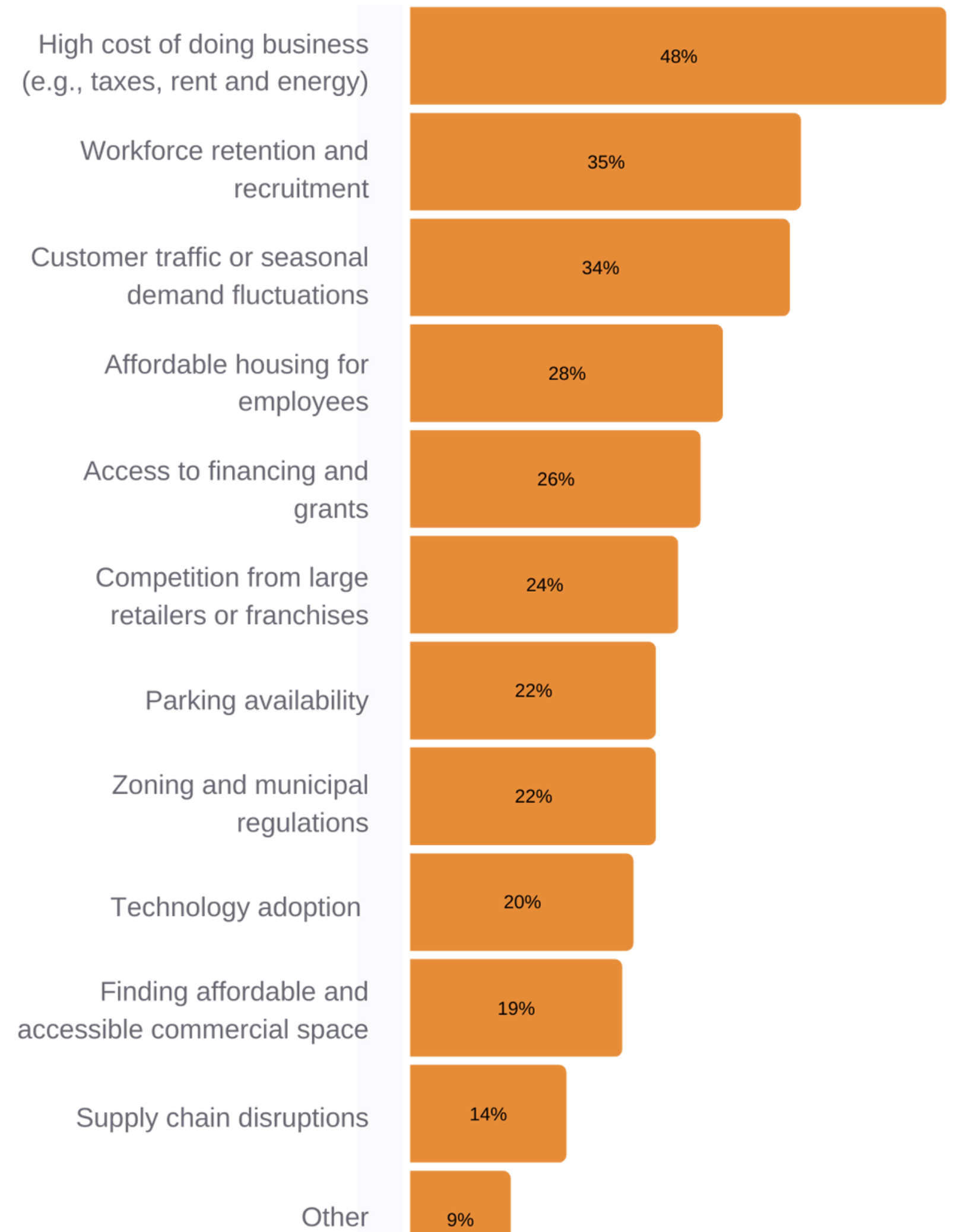
# What types of collaboration with other businesses and organizations would benefit you? (Select all that apply)

The feedback for this question reveals a strong interest in networking and shared resources best leveraged through a regional network.

# What are the biggest challenges your business currently faces? (Select all that apply)

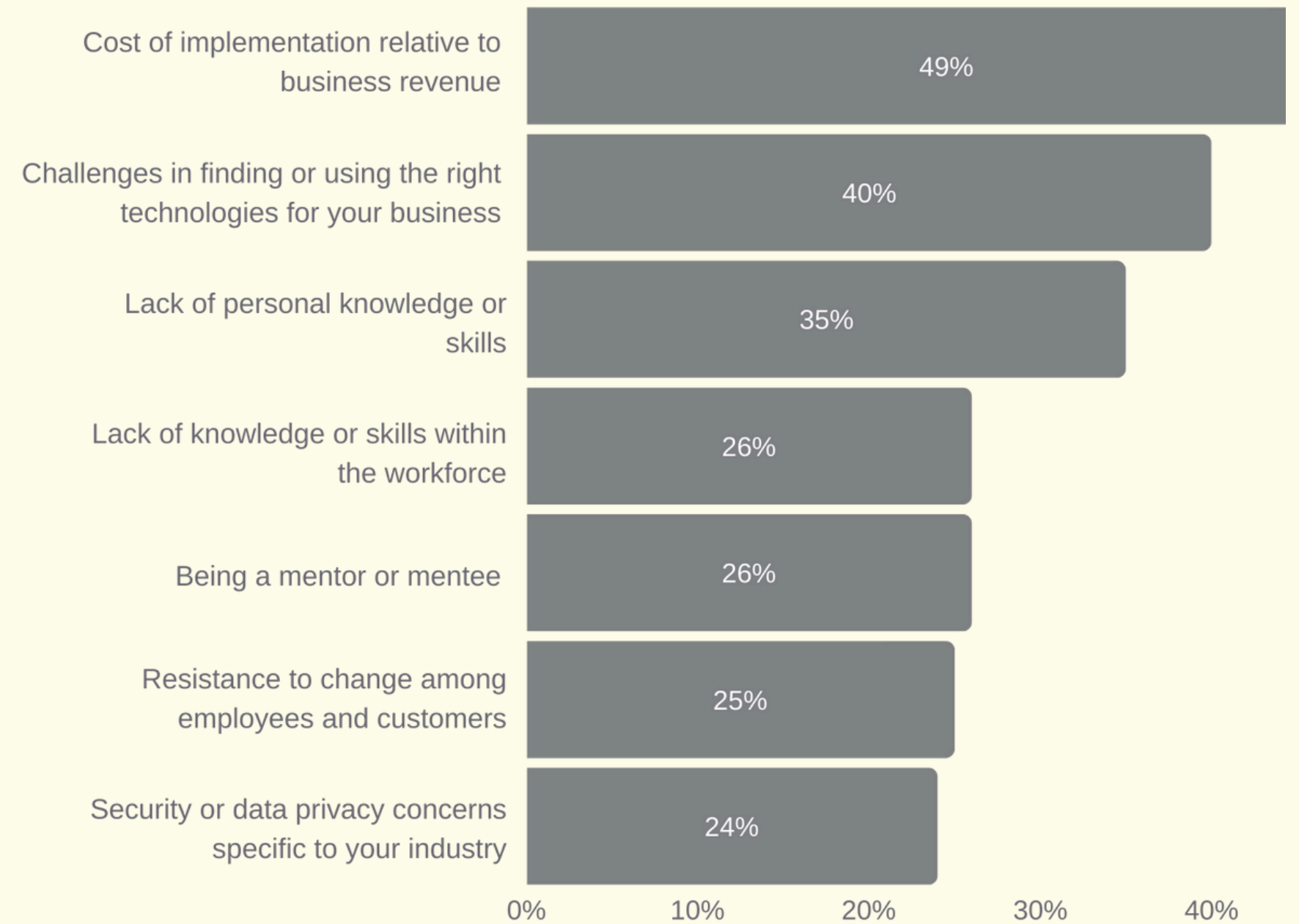
These issues are deeply interconnected, with housing affordability directly affecting workforce stability. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-pronged approach, including advocacy for affordable housing, workforce development programs, and measures to reduce the cost of doing business.

*The Chamber has strong relationships with all levels of Government and acts as the trusted voice of business in regular advocacy work.*

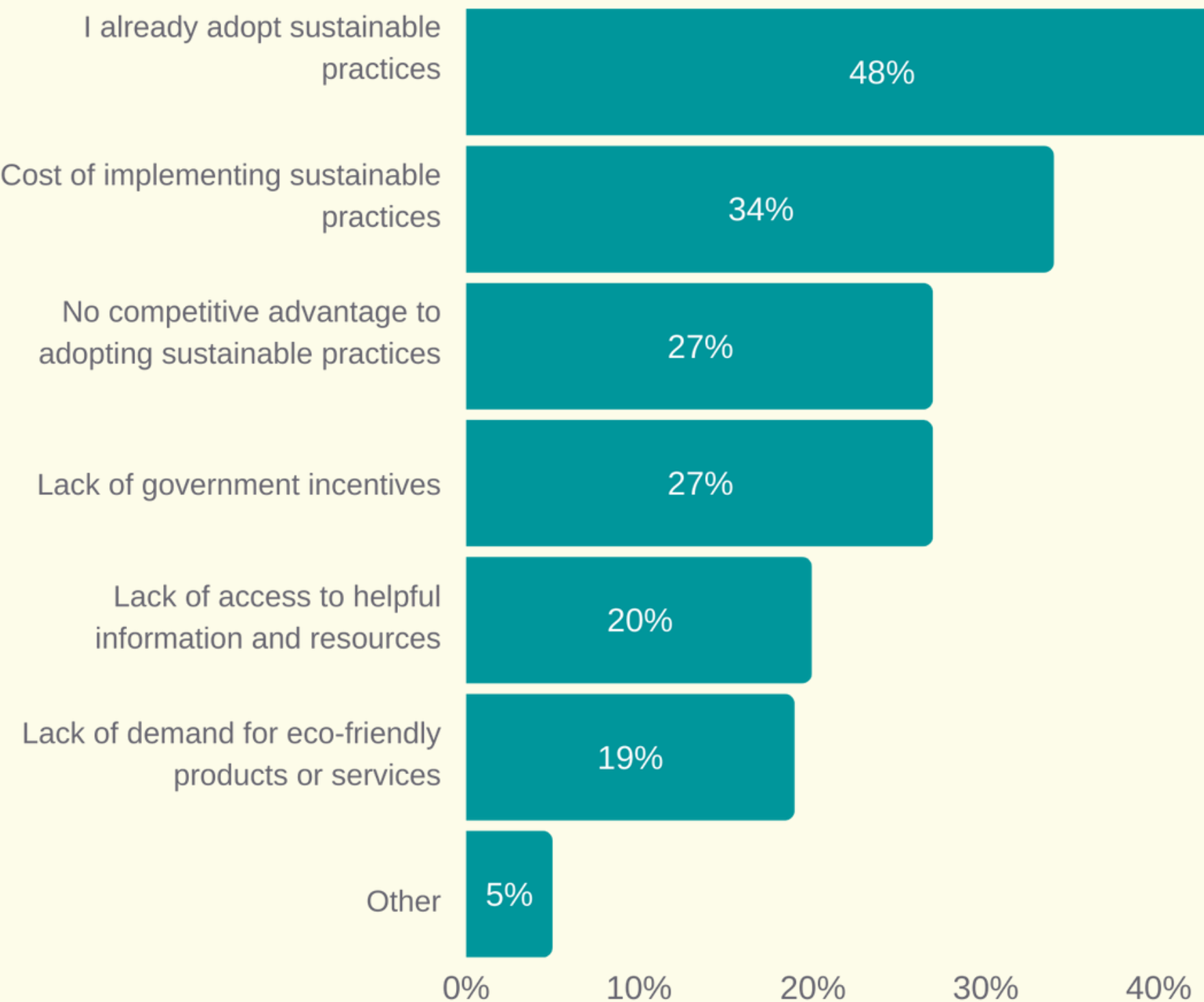


# Which of the following factors are barriers to you adopting new technology? (Select all that apply)

This highlights the need for accessible funding mechanisms and educational resources to help businesses adopt technology effectively. The BRE program can address this by sharing resources for financial support and providing targeted training programs.

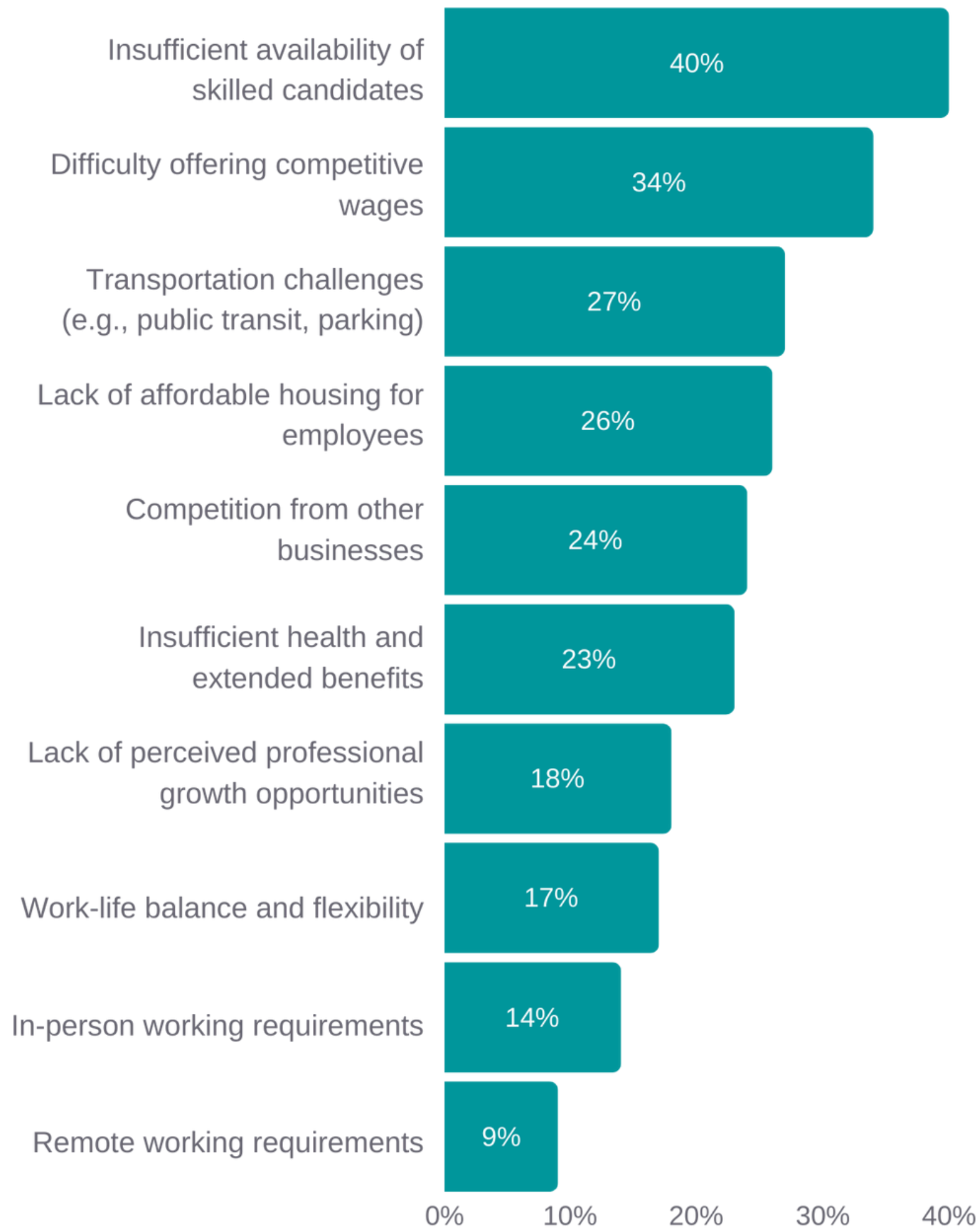






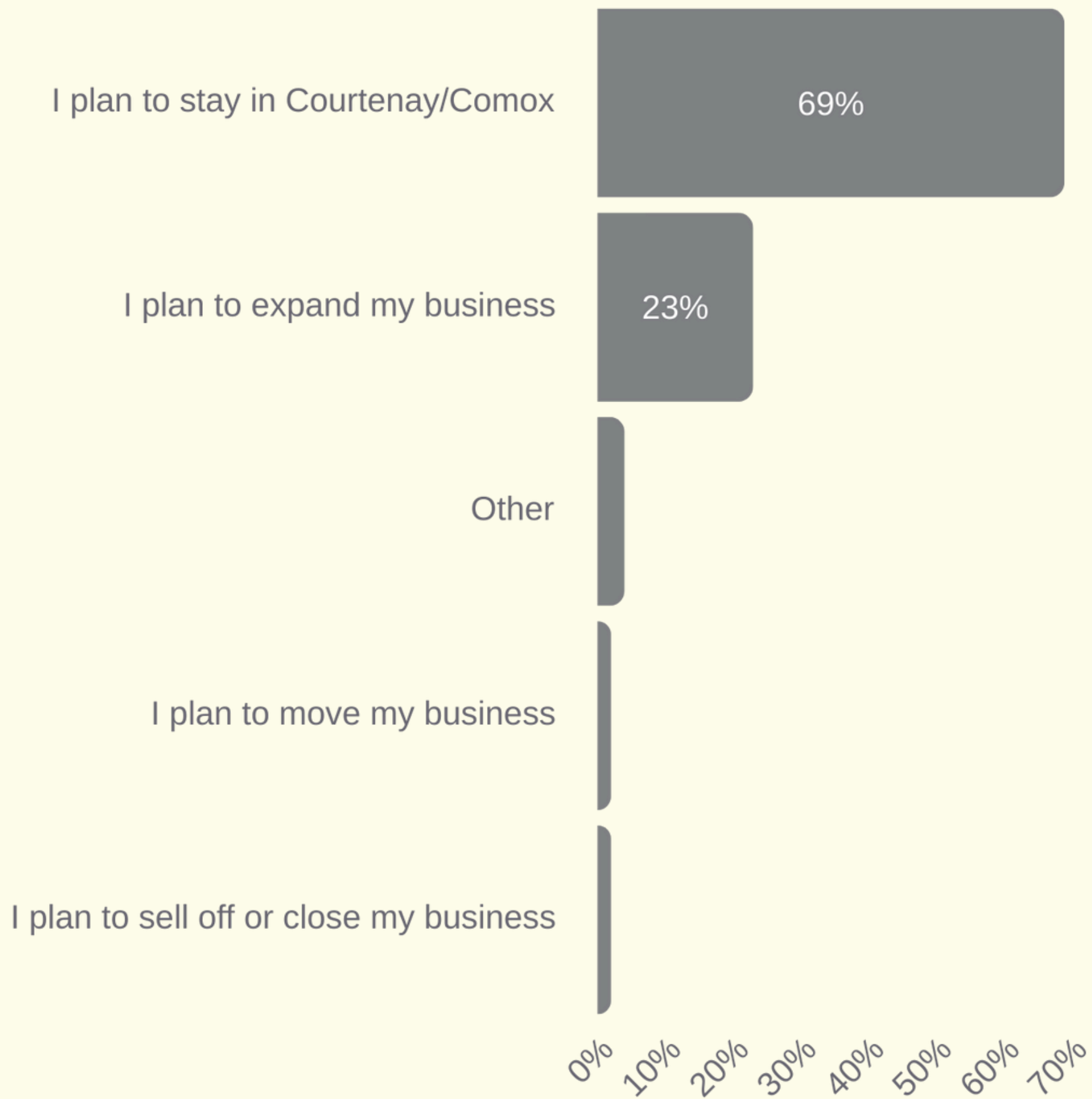
# Which of the following factors are barriers to you adopting sustainable practices? (Select all that apply)

Many businesses prioritize sustainability, but financial and structural challenges hinder others. The BRE program can highlight its benefits and advocate for stronger government incentives to make sustainability a viable option for all businesses.



# What challenges are you experiencing with recruiting and retaining employees? (Select all that apply)

While transportation emerged as a significant barrier, it highlights broader accessibility and commuting issues that affect workforce availability. Addressing these challenges will require a coordinated approach, including improving transportation infrastructure, offering wage subsidies, and implementing training programs to develop the local talent pool.

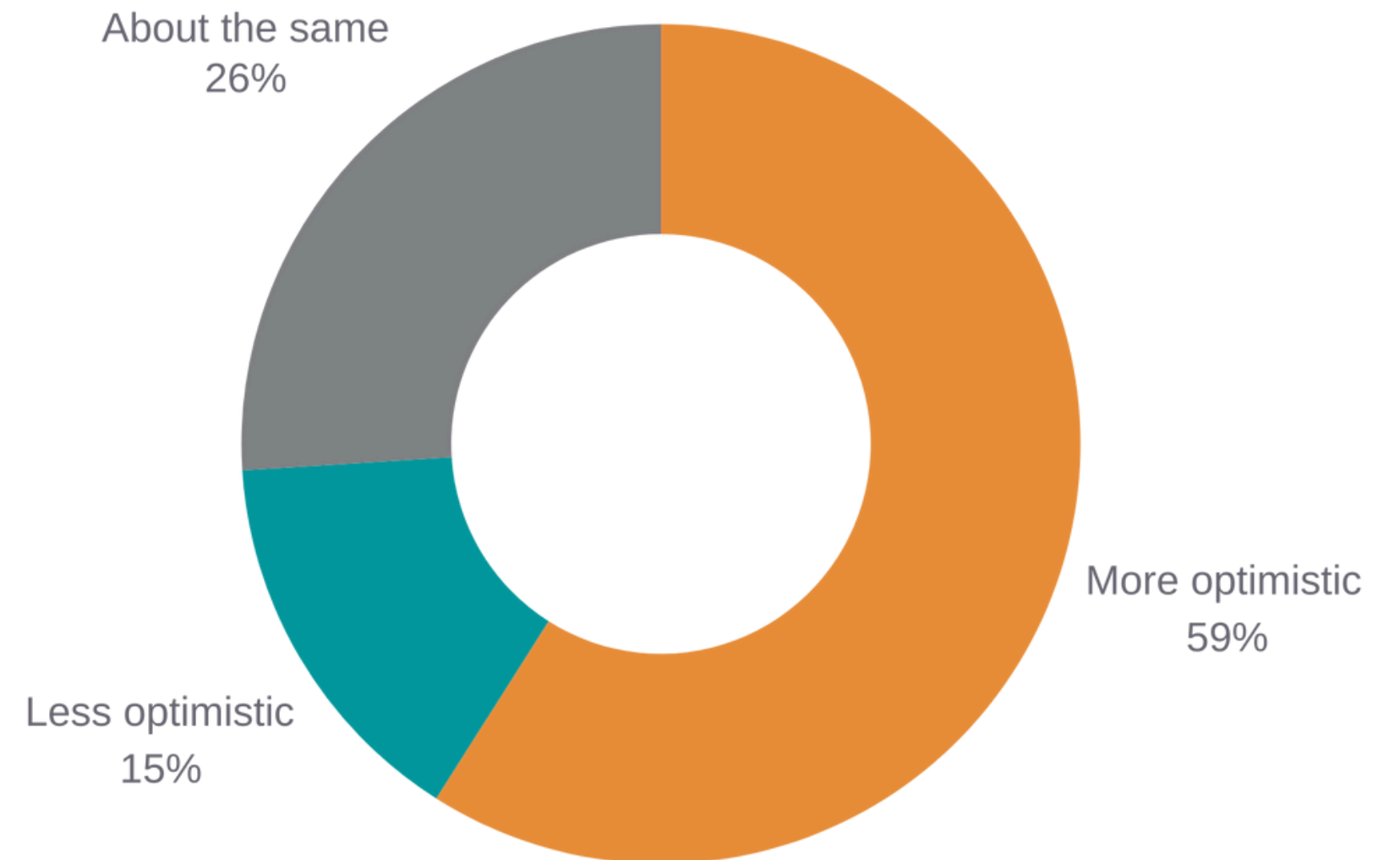


# What are your future plans for your business?

This optimism reflects a commitment to the local economy but also highlights the need for support systems to facilitate growth. The BRE program can play a key role by providing resources for business expansion and addressing barriers to scalability.

# Are you more or less optimistic for your business this year than last year?

While these numbers differ from the provincial optimism level of 43.6% (National 49.2%), we cannot ignore those who are less optimistic. Targeted support for struggling businesses, alongside programs that sustain optimism, will be essential for fostering a thriving business environment.



# What specific changes or improvements would you like to see from local governments or business support organizations to help your business succeed? Open-ended question.



## Streamlining process & reducing bureaucracy

Businesses highlighted the need for simplified and faster processes, including permitting, licensing, and zoning, to reduce red tape and promote smoother development and expansion. Many stressed the importance of cutting unnecessary government oversight to facilitate quicker decision-making.



## Financial support & tax relief

Respondents requested increased financial assistance for small businesses, including more accessible grants, tax incentives, and lower property and commercial taxes. There was a strong call for targeted support, especially for startups, to improve business profitability and sustainability.



## Improved infrastructure and safety

Several businesses expressed concern about safety and cleanliness in the downtown core. There is a strong desire for better public infrastructure, including improved parking, more accessible transit, and better security measures, such as lighting and patrols, to create a safer environment for customers and employees.



## Addressing housing and social issues

There is a need for solutions to the homelessness crisis and its impact on businesses, particularly with respect to safety concerns and property damage. Businesses also highlighted the demand for affordable housing and support for vulnerable populations, such as the unhoused and those struggling with mental health or addiction issues.



## Workforce development & attraction

Many businesses emphasized the importance of addressing workforce challenges, including the need for skilled workers, foreign worker programs, and workforce training. There was a strong desire for more resources focused on recruitment, employee benefits, and workforce skills development.



## Promoting growth & tourism

Businesses sought a more pro-business culture within local governments and called for more efforts in promoting local tourism, improving signage, and developing downtown areas to attract both locals and tourists. There was a call for community engagement, public space enhancements, and greater collaboration to boost the local economy.

*We operate in BC and Alberta but our head office is based in Comox... Vancouver Island municipalities and regional districts have some of the strongest anti-business cultures. This is partly why our organization has invested approximately \$100 million in Alberta over the last 3 years and none in BC. Our real estate portfolio assets are approximately \$260 million but we have not invested in Vancouver Island municipalities for over 5 years. A pro-business culture needs to be established within local governments in the Comox Valley and Vancouver Island to attract our investment in those communities.*

*Clean up the downtown core  
Improve safety for downtown  
business*

*Continue to encourage  
locals to "shop local"  
and support local  
business.*

*Less bureaucracy and  
red tape in initial  
stages of opening  
business.*

*"More grants,  
networking  
opportunities,  
education  
opportunities"*

*"Cut red tape, streamline  
permitting procedures. Attract  
new skills to the Valley."*

*We are challenged downtown with the current  
social conditions which I feel will undo the  
downtown as we know it*

# Recommendations

01

## Host shop and eat local events

Organize events focused on promoting businesses in areas like Comox Avenue and 5th Street and throughout the region, encouraging community engagement and driving foot traffic to these districts through seasonally sensitive targeted local campaigns and business-to-business networking opportunities.

02

## Organize learning and training sessions on workforce development

Provide businesses with resources and training on how to attract and retain talent, focusing on workforce development strategies, succession planning, and offering competitive benefits to help improve employee retention.

03

## Work with local governments to streamline regulatory processes

Work closely with municipalities, the regional district, and the province to simplify zoning, permitting, and licensing processes, advocating for faster approval times and a more transparent and efficient regulatory environment.

04

## Facilitate innovative regional collaboration and resource-sharing initiatives

Create opportunities for local businesses to collaborate on joint marketing campaigns, accessibility audits, bulk purchasing, and sharing resources such as employee pools, helping to increase cost-efficiency and build stronger local networks.

05

## Provide educational resources and workshops on technology adoption

Offer workshops and seminars focused on technology, including digital marketing tools, AI for business optimization, and point-of-sale systems, to help businesses stay competitive and improve operational efficiency.

# Expert Education

Coming March 6, "Economic Outlook 2025: Strategies for a Changing Landscape".

Our keynote speaker, Susan Mowbray, Chief Economist for MNP, will provide an analysis of international trade policies and political changes on local economics.

## Panel discussion experts:

- Tara Clowes, FCPA, CA, MBA, DBA (ABD) Faculty, Accounting, North Island College
- Nico Prins, Executive Director, BC Shellfish Growers Association of BC
- Brady Calancie, Export Advisor-Vancouver Island, Export Navigator



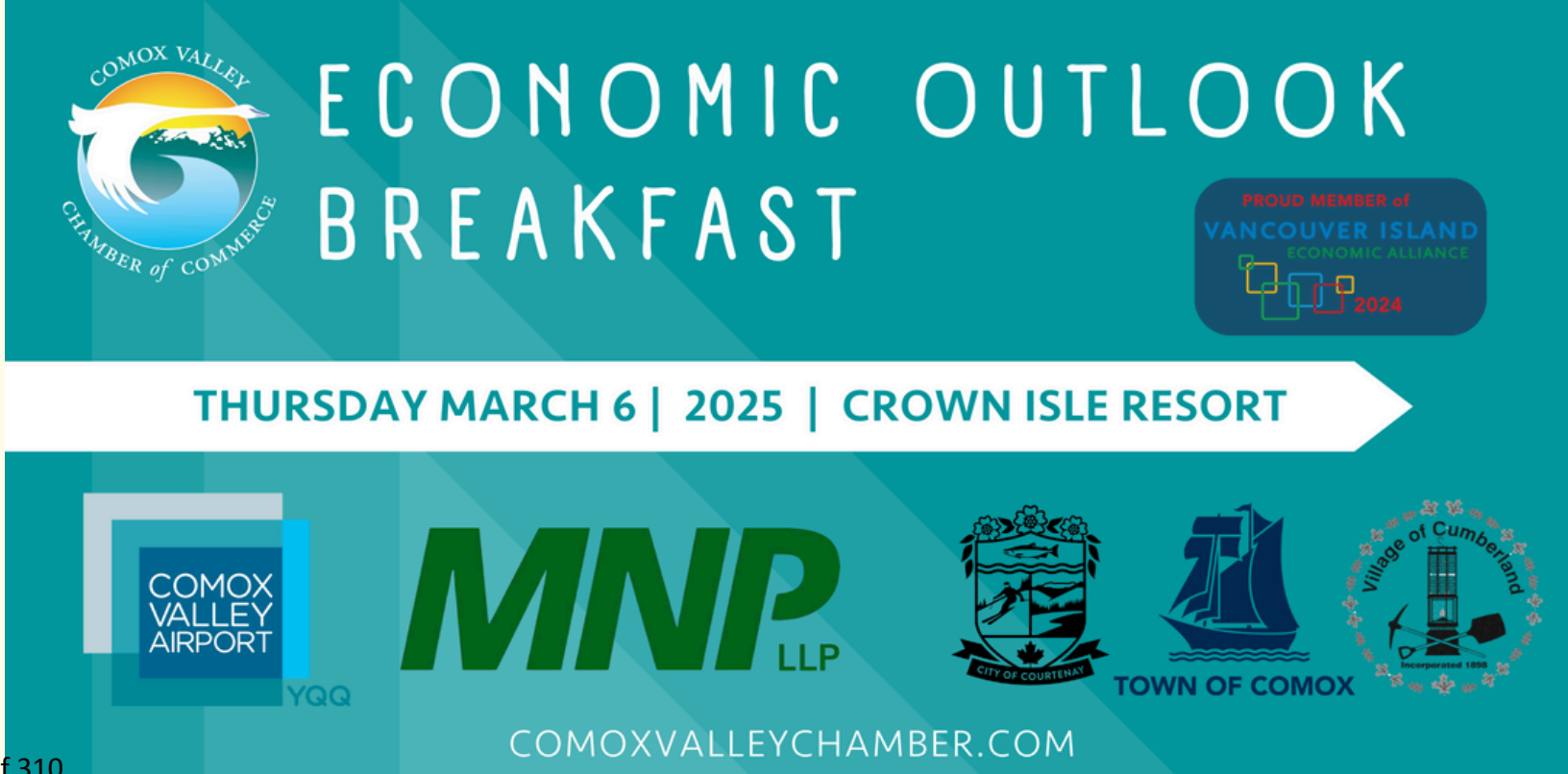
Breakfast with purpose:  
fuel your business at our  
monthly speaker series

THIRD THURSDAY MONTHLY  
7:30-9:00 AM

February 20 with Original Ginger  
Generate Business from your Website –  
Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) basics  
CHAMBER BUSINESS HUB, #103 576 ENGLAND AVE



We soon launch Bites and Insights, a monthly breakfast speaker series designed to help local businesses grow through skill development, networking, and expert-led discussions.








COMOX VALLEY CHAMBER of COMMERCE

# ECONOMIC OUTLOOK BREAKFAST

PROUD MEMBER of VANCOUVER ISLAND ECONOMIC ALLIANCE 2024

THURSDAY MARCH 6 | 2025 | CROWN ISLE RESORT



COMOXVALLEYCHAMBER.COM



# Accessible Resources

Developing an online resource library populated with startup checklists, resource links and webinar recordings will support and strengthen the region's businesses.

The banner features the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce logo in the top left and the Stream Grants & Consulting logo in the top right. The main title is "INTRODUCTION TO GRANT WRITING" in large white letters on a teal background. Below the title, it says "12:00 PM - 1:00 PM | WED. MAY 22, 2024" and includes the Zoom logo. At the bottom, a laptop screen displays a video of Dana Starritt, a woman with short dark hair, smiling.

The banner features the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce logo on the left. The main text reads "INTRODUCTION TO STRATEGIC PLANNING WEBINAR" in orange and blue. It lists two dates: "WED | OCT 30 | 2024" and "WED | NOV 13 | 2024", both at "12:00 PM - 1:00 PM". A circular portrait of David Leverton is shown, with his name "Leverton & Associates Ltd." below it. The website "COMOXVALLEYCHAMBER.COM" is at the bottom.

The banner features the HR Covered logo and the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce logo in the top left. The main text reads "Informative Webinar with HR Covered. Exploring Your Membership Benefits with Brett Rogers." It lists the date "Tuesday, March 12, 2024" and time "1:00 PM PST". A circular portrait of Brett Rogers is shown, with his name and title "Brett Rogers, Vice President of Partnerships, HR Covered Inc." below it.

# Responsive support

Innovating new ways to support the business community in 2024 and beyond.



# Advocacy

Bridging business and elected officials as the non-partisan voice for local business.



**CONVERSATION WITH GEORGE CHOW**  
Honorable Minister of Citizen Services

Join us for a Roundtable Discussion on the 2025 Provincial Budget

Monday | April 15 | 2024  
3:00 - 4:00 PM  
#103 576 England Ave




**CONVERSATION WITH GORD JOHNS**  
MEMBER OF PARLIMENT FOR COURTENAY-ALBERNI

Join us for a Roundtable Discussion at Crown Isle Resort

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17 | 2023**

COMOXVALLEYCHAMBER.COM




**CONVERSATION WITH BOB WELLS**  
MAYOR CITY OF COURTENAY

Join us for a Roundtable Discussion For the business community

Crown Isle Resort  
1:00 - 3:00 pm

**THURSDAY, MARCH 14 | 2024**

COMOXVALLEYCHAMBER.COM




**CONVERSATION with NICOLE MINIONS**  
Mayor of Comox

Join us for a Roundtable Discussion

Wednesday | September 25  
1:00 - 3:00 PM  
#103 - 576 England Ave, Courtenay




**CONVERSATION WITH RONNA-RAE LEONARD**  
MLA for Courtenay - Comox

Join us for a Roundtable Discussion

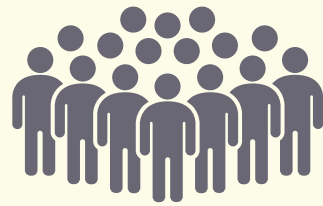
CV Chamber Business Hub  
#103 - 576 England Ave  
1:00 - 3:00 pm

**THURSDAY | JUNE 13 | 2024**

COMOXVALLEYCHAMBER.COM




# Chamber Strengths



The Chamber's events are useful and well-attended. With an 80% average capacity rate, we hosted 29 events in 2024, welcoming 1200 people in the business community to educational and networking events.



The Chamber is the trusted voice of business in the Comox Valley, speaking to and for local businesses. Our survey response rate of nearly 20% shows engagement and a desire for us to lead responsive supportive actions.



The Chamber does advocacy well, locally, provincially and nationally. We serve as a bridge between business and their elected officials, providing regular opportunities for dialogue, advocacy, and collaboration.



The Chamber is a community collaborator, participating in regional strategy development with non-profits, business and government groups.



Registered under the Boards of Trade Act, The Chamber must represent the interests of all businesses operating within its region, ensuring we support the entire Comox Valley, rather than being limited to specific sectors or areas.



We have been a trusted part of the Comox Valley community for over 106 years, and our longevity is a testament to our deep-rooted commitment to supporting local businesses

# Regional Strengths



- **Benefits of a regional strategy:**
  - **Greater collaboration and resource sharing.**
  - **Access to broader markets.**
  - **Unified voice for advocacy and investment attraction.**
  - **Infrastructure and services for diverse sectors.**
- **Micro-local approach limits opportunities and creates fragmentation.**
- **A regional approach strengthens economic resilience and supports inclusive growth.**

*“An increase in business collaboration with spaces, marketing, and labor - less overlap and more sharing of resources. Grassroots collaboration through organizations such as Chamber of Commerce, BIA and municipalities.”*

# PROJECT BUDGET

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>
Phase 1 consulting	1000		500
Data Collection, analysis and reporting	25,000		
Online Resources Library	2500	1500	1500
Mentor Relationship Building	2000	5600	5600
Workshops	7500	7500	7500
Networking Events	1000	2500	2500
Recruitment Awareness Campaign	10,000	2,500	2,500
Wellness Events	3000	3500	3500
Workforce Support	900	1500	1500
Communication expenses	1000	2500	2500
Administration	5000	9000	9000
	<b>58900</b>	<b>36100</b>	<b>36600</b>

# Leading Regional Economic Resilience

The Chamber's role as a regional economic developer is clearly demonstrated by our active involvement in addressing the trade dispute. Recognized as the trusted voice of and for business by all levels of local government, we have been invited to the response table to contribute to decision-making and strategic planning.

In response, we have swiftly developed a comprehensive plan to support the success of local businesses, showcasing our ability to adapt to challenges and drive regional economic resilience.

## General Public: Mobilize Consumers

Love Local  
Campaign

Video  
series:  
effects of  
tariffs

Take action  
toolkit:  
templates  
for letters

## Businesses: Outreach and Story Collection



## Municipal Councils: Local Government Engagement





# Provincial and Federal: Direct Advocacy for Policy Change



# Chambers in Other Provinces: Coordinated National Response





## Comox Valley RCMP Detachment

### QUARTERLY REPORT

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### CITY OF COURTENAY

*October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024*

# Comox Valley RCMP Detachment Quarterly Report

October 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024

The Comox Valley Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) provides quarterly updates on policing in the community. The quarterly reports coincide with the Comox Valley RCMP Annual Performance reporting time lines in conjunction with Community Priorities.

First Quarter: April 1 to June 30

Second Quarter: July 1 to September 30

Third Quarter: October 1 to December 31

Fourth Quarter: January 1 to March 31

## Calls for Service

In 2024, the number of Calls for Service in Courtenay was the lower than in the previous four years.

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2020	1332	1160	1143	1088	1215	1265	1471	1357	1245	1322	1189	1064	14851
2021	1195	1159	1308	1309	1279	1452	1410	1452	1405	1254	1276	1207	15706
2022	1059	1016	1241	1243	1253	1330	1403	1402	1488	1331	1101	1085	14952
2023	1248	1133	1232	1235	1392	1345	1411	1373	1177	1088	1099	1246	14979
2024	1120	1120	1174	1310	1306	1177	1351	1294	1206	1099	1043	964	14164

## Most Common Call Types

In 2024, the most common types of Call for Service in Courtenay were Unwanted Person, Check Wellbeing, and Traffic Incident.

	Final File Type	Year					% Change from 2023	Difference from 2023
		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024		
1	UNWANTED PERSON	762	1019	1116	1369	1305	-5%	-64
2	CHECK WELLBEING	931	1317	1296	1413	1239	-12%	-174
3	TRAFFIC INCIDENT	1192	1331	1087	1094	1040	-5%	-54
4	DISTURBANCE	919	939	898	982	822	-16%	-160
5	THEFT	996	850	834	703	729	4%	26
6	SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES	569	647	629	679	712	5%	33
7	PROPERTY	841	870	720	695	679	-2%	-16
8	ALARM	309	310	394	362	546	51%	184
9	ASSIST POLICE / FIRE / AMBULANCE	422	517	497	638	513	-20%	-125

10	ASSIST OTHER AGENCY	547	733	653	553	467	-16%	-86
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The types of Calls for Service that increased by over 50 files in 2024 relative to 2023 were Alarm and Missing Person.

Final File Type	Year					% Change from 2023	Difference from 2023
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024		
ALARM	309	310	394	362	546	51%	184
MISSING PERSON	140	186	185	189	245	30%	56

### Most Common Call Locations (Excluding RCMP Detachment)

Of the top ten locations in Courtenay for Calls for Service (excluding the RCMP Detachment), the location with the biggest increase in Calls in 2024 relative to 2023 was the Crown Isle Shopping Plaza. At the Crown Isle Shopping Plaza in 2024, 42% of Calls for Service pertained to Theft, Unwanted Person, Disturbance, and Alarm. In 2024 and 2023, the location with the most Calls for Service (excluding the RCMP Detachment) was the Connect Warming Centre and there was no significant change in the number of Calls for Service between those years. Relative to 2023, there were fewer Calls for Service regarding Unwanted Person, Disturbance, and Suspicious Circumstances at the Connect Warming Centre in 2024, but more calls regarding Assault, Breach, Theft, Other Criminal Code, Abandoned 911, Traffic Incident, and Warrant.

	Location	Year					% Change from 2023	Difference from 2023
		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024		
1	685 CLIFFE AVE (Connect Warming Centre)	33	145	131	467	469	0%	2
2	757 RYAN RD (Superstore)	195	205	295	270	281	4%	11
3	101 LERWICK RD (Hospital)	257	331	254	224	201	-10%	-23
4	420 CUMBERLAND RD (Provincial Court)	136	134	214	148	180	22%	32
5	444 LERWICK RD (Crown Isle Shopping Plaza)	107	87	81	86	130	51%	44
6	3199 CLIFFE AVE (SmartCentres Mall / Walmart)	118	165	202	121	119	-2%	-2
7	2751 CLIFFE AVE (Driftwood Mall)	200	206	190	133	119	-11%	-14
8	0 COURTENAY	47	81	82	121	118	-2%	-3
9	300 6TH ST (Courtenay Library)	67	59	58	127	112	-12%	-15
10	1029 RYAN RD (Washington Inn Apartments)	76	30	115	143	111	-22%	-32

## Most Common Downtown Calls for Service

In Downtown Courtenay, the number of Calls for Service in 2024 (3360) decreased by 5 percent from the number of Calls for Service in 2023 (3552). The types of Calls for Service in which the decrease was most notable included Check Wellbeing, Disturbance, Suspicious Circumstances, and Mischief. Relative to 2023, there were notable increases in Calls for Service to Downtown Courtenay for Breach, Alarm, Assault, and Drugs in 2024.

	Final File Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% Change from 2023	Difference from 2023
1	UNWANTED PERSON	200	340	333	628	609	-3%	-19
2	CHECK WELLBEING	130	258	275	366	287	-22%	-79
3	DISTURBANCE	141	163	176	268	218	-19%	-50
4	THEFT	149	126	127	187	202	8%	15
5	TRAFFIC INCIDENT	248	238	180	203	184	-9%	-19
6	BREACH	90	101	177	136	167	23%	31
7	ALARM	78	83	82	105	135	29%	30
8	ASSIST POLICE / FIRE / AMBULANCE	55	106	95	131	130	-1%	-1
9	SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES	69	94	103	160	121	-24%	-39
10	MISCHIEF	120	104	95	138	114	-17%	-24
11	ASSAULT	27	39	40	80	101	26%	21
12	PROPERTY	98	114	88	102	91	-11%	-11
13	DRUGS	34	41	58	46	76	65%	30
14	SUSPICIOUS PERSON	91	88	84	101	68	-33%	-33
15	ASSIST OTHER AGENCY	16	40	50	52	63	21%	11

UNCLASSIFIED

## Violent Crime

In 2024, there were 963 Violent Crime files in Courtenay. This was 2 files fewer than the 965 Violent Crime Files in Courtenay in 2023.

## Types of Violent Crime

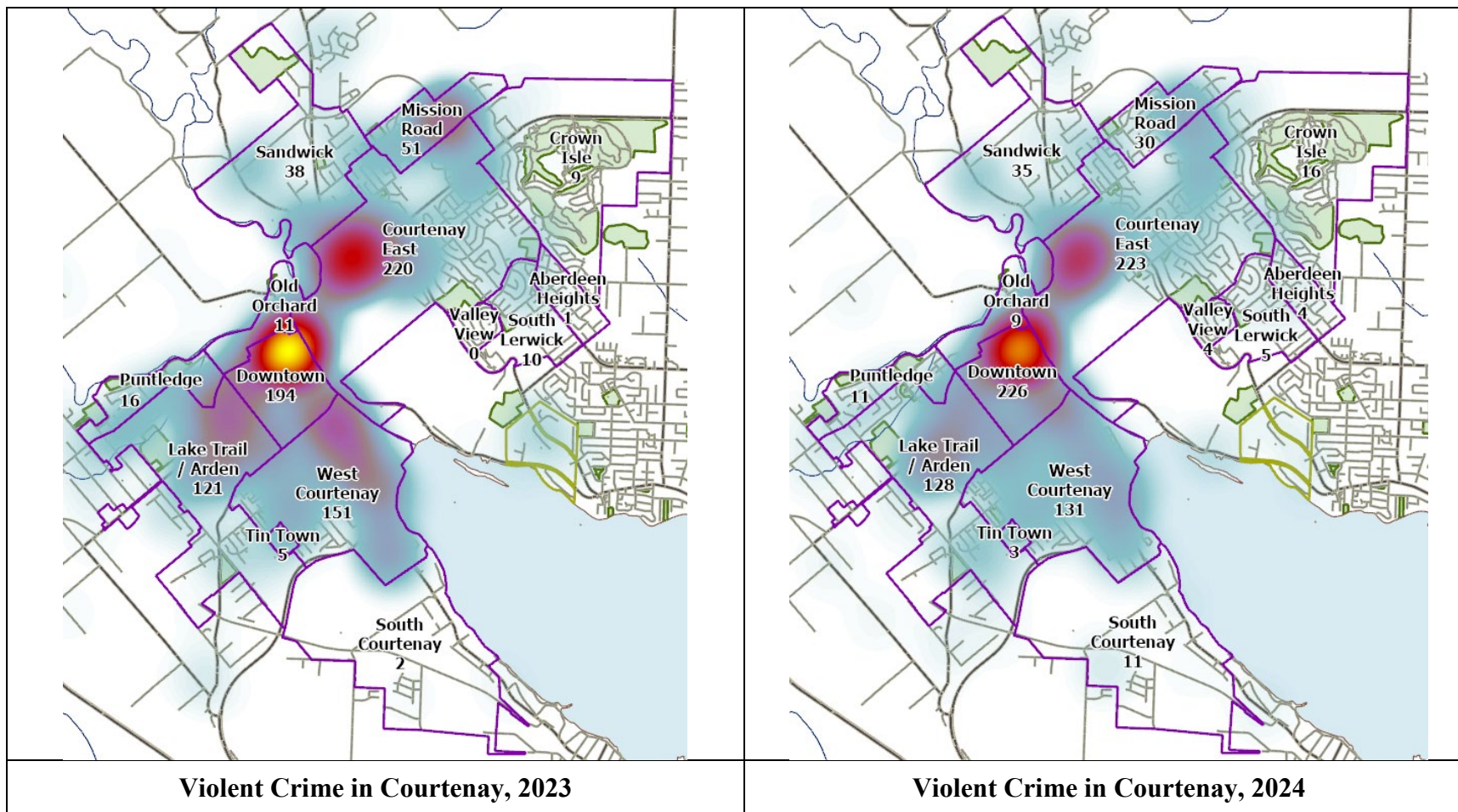
In 2024, the most common types of Violent Crime in Courtenay were Assaults, Utter Threats, and Harassment. Relative to 2023, there were notable increases in Sex Offences and Robbery in Courtenay in 2024.

File Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% Change from 2023	Difference from 2023
ASSAULTS	365	409	402	473	449	-5%	-24
UTTER THREATS	207	256	212	201	212	5%	11
HARASSMENT	209	199	162	178	173	-3%	-5
SEX OFFENCES	63	83	85	64	79	23%	15
EXTORTION	7	12	11	26	23	-12%	-3
ROBBERY	14	29	13	16	21	31%	5
WEAPONS OFFENCES	2	1	3	2	2	0%	0
HOMICIDE	0	0	2	1	2	100%	1
ARSON	1	0	0	0	1		1
KIDNAPPING	4	2	4	3	1	-67%	-2
INTIMIDATION	0	0	0	1	0	-100%	-1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>991</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>965</b>	<b>963</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>-2</b>

### Map of Violent Crime by Area of Courtenay

In 2024, the areas of Courtenay in which there were the highest number of Violent Crime files were Downtown and Courtenay East. Relative to 2023, there was a notable decrease of Violent Crime files in the Mission Road area and a notable increase of Violent Crime files in the Crown Isle area in 2024.

Please note that these maps only show the files that fit into the neighbourhood boundaries pictured. There are more files attached to Courtenay than are shown in this map.



**Violent Crime in Courtenay, 2023**

**Violent Crime in Courtenay, 2024**

## Property Crime

In 2024, there were 2345 Property Crime files in Courtenay. This was a 1 percent (22 file) decrease from the 2367 Property Crime Files in Courtenay in 2023.

### Types of Property Crime

In 2024, the most common types of Property Crime in Courtenay were Mischief to Property, Shoplifting, Other Theft Under \$5000, Frauds, and Theft from Vehicle. Relative to 2023, there were notable increases in Shoplifting and Arson in Courtenay in 2024. The increase in Arson was predominantly related to a series of dumpster fires for which the suspect was arrested.

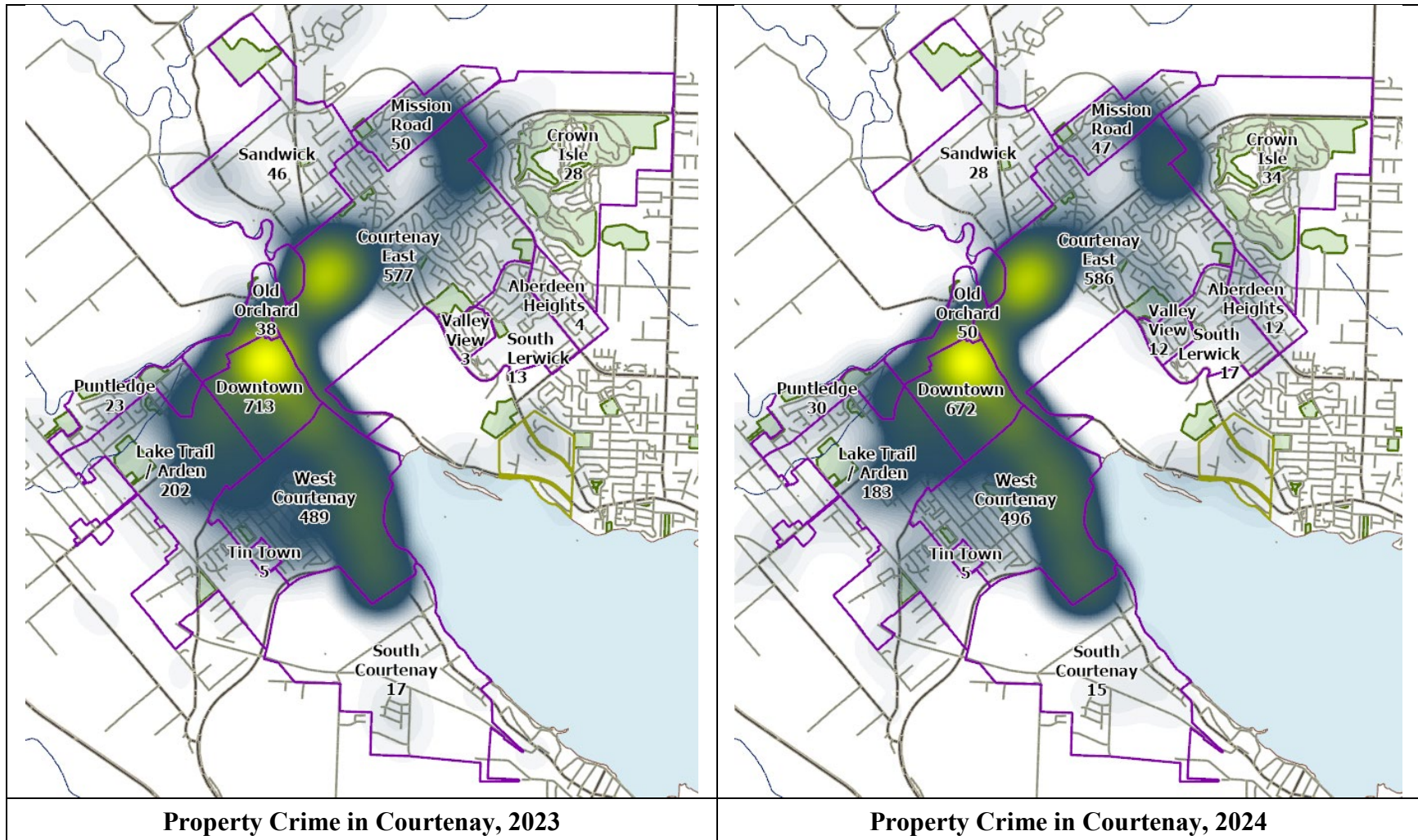
File Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% Change from 2023	Difference from 2023
MISCHIEF TO PROPERTY	675	915	1000	962	986	2%	24
SHOPLIFTING	282	266	320	296	365	23%	69
OTHER THEFT U/5000	314	294	283	281	252	-10%	-29
FRAUDS	295	256	282	227	232	2%	5
THEFT FROM VEHICLE	400	377	302	162	174	7%	12
AUTO THEFT	79	89	78	65	61	-6%	-4
BREAK & ENTER - RES	71	84	47	58	55	-5%	-3
BIKE THEFT	111	92	64	71	52	-27%	-19
BREAK & ENTER - BUS	85	71	74	69	47	-32%	-22
BREAK & ENTER - OTH	56	58	49	26	32	23%	6
POSSESS STOLEN PROPERTY	43	33	24	27	30	11%	3
ARSON	10	22	8	3	23	667%	20
OTHER GO	33	19	45	95	19	-80%	-76
OTHER THEFT O/5000	6	11	11	12	10	-17%	-2
THEFT UTILITIES	5	10	6	4	5	25%	1
THEFT FROM MAIL	30	15	15	9	2	-78%	-7
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2495</b>	<b>2612</b>	<b>2608</b>	<b>2367</b>	<b>2345</b>	<b>-1%</b>	<b>-22</b>

### Map of Property Crime by Area of Courtenay

In 2024, the areas of Courtenay in which there were the highest number of Property Crime files were Downtown, Courtenay East and West Courtenay. Relative to 2023, there were notable increases of Property Crime files in Valley View, South Lerwick, and Aberdeen Heights.



Please note that these maps only show the files that fit into the neighbourhood boundaries pictured. There are more files attached to Courtenay than are shown in this map.



## Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA) Offences

In 2024, there were 122 CDSA Offences in Courtenay. This was a 65 percent (48 file) increase over the 74 CDSA offences in 2023 and was predominantly attributable to an increase in Drug Possession files. The number of Drug Possession files rose in April of 2024 when the Province of British Columbia banned illicit drug use in public spaces.

File Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% Change from 2023	Difference from 2023
DRUG POSSESSION	84	113	111	40	96	140%	56
DRUG TRAFFICKING	57	26	27	30	24	-20%	-6
DRUGS OTHER	14	3	3	2	2	0%	0
DRUG IMPORT EXPORT	0	0	0	1	0	-100%	-1
DRUG PRODUCTION	3	3	1	1	0	-100%	-1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>48</b>

## Traffic Offences

In 2024, there were 187 Traffic Offence files in Courtenay. This was a 31 percent (84 file) decrease from the 271 Traffic Offence files in 2023 and was predominantly attributable to a reduction in Impaired Operation of Motor Vehicle files.

File Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% Change from 2023	Difference from 2023
IMPAIRED OP MOTOR VEHICLE	184	228	215	245	172	-30%	-73
MOTOR VEHICLE INCIDENTS	5	5	2	7	6	-14%	-1
PROHIBITED DRIVING	10	3	8	6	5	-17%	-1
DANGEROUS OP MOTOR VEHICLE	8	11	5	12	4	-67%	-8
IMPAIRED OP BOAT/VESS/AIR	0	0	0	1	0	-100%	-1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>-31%</b>	<b>-84</b>



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Staff Report

**To:** Council

**File No.:** 4530-20-2404/LL000022

**From:** Director of Development Services

**Date:** February 12, 2025

**Subject:** Liquor Licence Application No. 2404 – 975 Comox Road

## PURPOSE:

For Council to consider a resolution to the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) in response to Liquor Licence Application No. 2404.

## BACKGROUND:

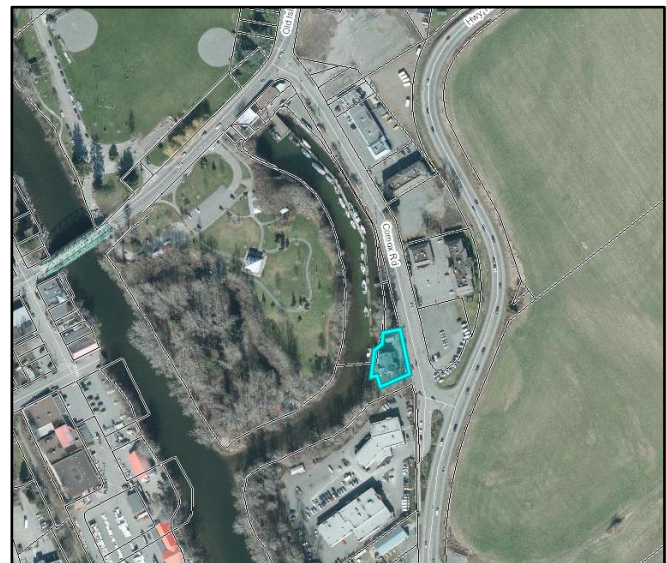
The owners of 975 Comox Road (LOT 1 SECTION 14 AND DISTRICT LOTS 252 AND 2028 COMOX DISTRICT PLAN VIP73036) submitted a liquor licence application for a new liquor primary licence to the LCRB and the City of Courtenay.

The applicant requests liquor service for a 172-person capacity pub (the Heritage House Pub) with 136-person capacity inside the pub and a 36-person capacity patio. The patio is intended to be seasonal from April through October.

The hours of sale in the liquor licence application are from 9 am to 2 am Sunday through Monday, however the business's intended hours of operation are fewer, from Sunday to Wednesday 11 am to 9 pm and Thursday to Saturday 11 am to 11 pm.

This location has served as a licenced restaurant/pub in the past, most recently The White Whale, which operated from 2014 until it's closure in 2020.

Figure 1: Site location and context



A building permit was issued by the City of Courtenay Building Division on October 17, 2024, to permit interior renovations to the building. These works are on-going at the time of drafting this report.

A License of Occupation between the City and the property owner is anticipated to be executed to formalize the historic use of City land for required on-site parking and a new Business License will be issued in due course.

**DISCUSSION:**

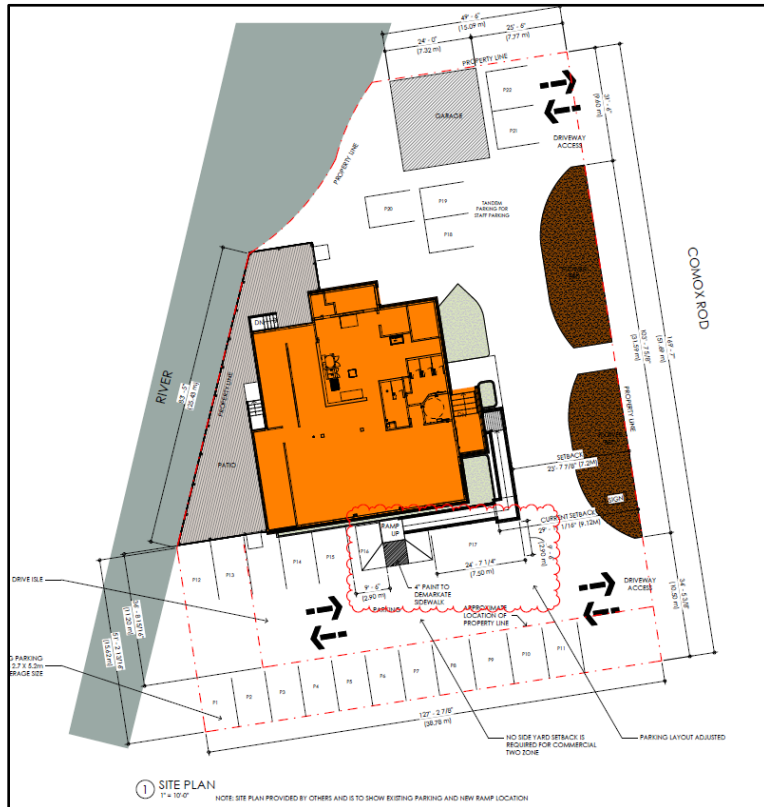
The subject location is zoned Commercial Two (C-2) which permits the intended *licensed premises* and *restaurant* uses and the site and surrounding area are designated as Service Commercial in Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 3070.

To the north of the site is an undeveloped City owned lot (771 Comox Road) and the property to the south is a car dealership (1025 Comox Road). Comox Road borders the property to the east with additional commercially zoned lots on the other side of the road and to the west is a slough of the Courtenay River with Simms Millennium Park on the other side of the bank.

The location means that any increase in noise as a result of the licence is not anticipated to have much, if any, impact on the community within the immediate vicinity of the establishment. Management from the Kia car dealership at 1025 Comox Road, the closest neighbouring business, provided a comment in support of the application.

Based on the location, hours of service and capacity, referral comments (Building Division, Bylaw, Fire Department, RCMP, K’omoks First Nation) and input gathered from the community through the application’s engagement process, if the licence is granted it is not anticipated to negatively impact the broader community. More details on the engagement results can be found later in the report.

Figure 2: Site Plan –Interior licenced area in orange, licenced patio in hatched grey



**POLICY ANALYSIS:**

The City of Courtenay does not currently have a liquor licence policy guiding liquor licence applications. However, the development of an administrative policy to clarify roles and provide staff with directions for processing various type of liquor license application is identified in the 2025 Planning Divisions work Plan. It is anticipated this work will commence in Quarter 1 and then brought forward for Council’s consideration before the end of Q2 2025.

The development of the proposed liquor license policy has no implications for this liquor license application and is only mentioned for information.

Official Community Plan (OCP)

Courtenay’s OCP Social Infrastructure Policy #12 (SI 12) directs the City and its staff to:

*“Work regionally to further recommendations of the Comox Valley Substance Use Strategy Phase 1 Report (2021) including identifying an appropriate role for the City.”*

To support this work, Planning Staff attend the recently created Comox Valley Substance Use Strategy Collaborative – Action Table #1, stemming from the Phase Three Report of the Community Substance Use Strategy. One of the recommendations in the report that Action Table #1 is responsible for is, “Develop or review existing municipal bylaws and policies related to alcohol and cannabis sales and selling establishments to reduce negative impacts to community health, safety and liveability.”

The creation of the liquor licence policy will be a component of the City implementing this recommendation and in the shorter term will enable Staff to more effectively process applications and provide applicants greater clarity about their application’s process. A more comprehensive implementation will take longer and may impact additional bylaws and policies, including but not limited to zoning, signage, business licensing, procedures, fees and charges, parks, and noise and nuisance regulations.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Processing and proceeding with this liquor licence application has no financial implications to the City’s Financial Plan 2024 – 2029. The application fee for all types of liquor licence applications is \$1,500 plus GST.

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:**

Processing Liquor Licence applications is the current responsibility of the Development Services Department. Work to date has primarily been carried out by Development Services staff, although other departments have provided referral comments.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:**

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Local Economy - Review City processes that may be barriers to economic development
- Local Economy - Identify appropriate roles and responsibilities for the City in the delivery of economic development services in the region

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

As per section 38 (c) of the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, the City was required to gather the views of residents before providing a resolution and comments to the LCRB. A two-week comment period was provided from January 20 to February 3, 2025. The City sent mailout notifications to all property owners and

occupants within a 30-metre radius of the subject property (17 mailouts) and posted notice of the application on the City's website for two consecutive weeks inviting public comments.

At the time of writing of this report, the City received 17 comments in response to the engagement. Of those comments, 16 were in favour of supporting the application citing a mixture of support due to the location, business/economic development potential and the increase in a social space for community members to gather. One comment received was in opposition to supporting the application citing concerns with the location's traffic congestion, poor lighting and high volume of pedestrians. The engagement closes February 3, 2025 and if there are any further comments staff will inform Council.

**OPTIONS:**

1. THAT Council recommend the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) approve the application from Heritage House Pub, located at 975 Comox Road (LOT 1 SECTION 14 AND DISTRICT LOTS 252 AND 2028 COMOX DISTRICT PLAN VIP73036) for a new liquor primary licence and Council's comments on LCRB prescribed considerations are as follows:
  - a. If the application is approved, any increase in noise as a result of the licence is not anticipated to have much, if any, impact on the community within the immediate vicinity and;
  - b. Based on the majority of views submitted by members of the public and the agencies contacted for comment, including the RCMP, if the application is approved the general impact on the community is not anticipated to be negative.
2. THAT Council requests additional information or alternative conditions before responding to the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch.
3. THAT Council not recommend support to the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch for the application from Heritage House Pub, located at 975 Comox Road (LOT 1 SECTION 14 AND DISTRICT LOTS 252 AND 2028 COMOX DISTRICT PLAN VIP73036) for a new liquor primary licence.

**ATTACHMENT:**

Attachment 1 - Applicant's Letter of Intent

Prepared by: Jacob Cramer, Planner II  
Reviewed by: Jamai Schile, Manager of Development Planning  
Marianne Wade, RPP, MCIP, Director of Development Services  
Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.PI., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)



Heritage House Pub  
1491173 B.C LTD.  
975 Comox Road  
Courtenay, BC V9N 3P7  
250-871-9059 (Bus)  
289-241-0022 (Cell)

### **Letter of Intent for the City of Courtenay**

Describe the primary focus of your business including any functions and services your establishment will provide if liquor service is not the primary business focus.

- The primary focus of the business is food and entertainment

If liquor service is not the primary business focus (e.g. retail store or spa): identify the operating hours of your primary business and whether or not the business focus will shift to liquor service at a set time of day.

- Sunday – Wednesday: 11:00am – 9:00pm
- Thursday – Saturday: 11:00am – 11:00pm
- Food service will be available during hours listed above

Identify all types of entertainment that may be offered in your establishment (e.g. films, darts, DJ booth, dance floor, exotic dancing, gambling, karaoke, live music, pool)

- Live Music
- Comedy
- Karaoke
- Yoga
- Paint Night

Describe the type of food service your establishment will offer. Liquor primary establishments must provide, at a minimum, a variety of hot or cold snacks and non-alcoholic beverages during all hours of operation.

- See attached menu; non-alcoholic drinks will be provided (Pop, Juice, Mocktails)

Describe the composition of the neighbourhood (e.g. commercial, residential, industrial).

- Location is within a Commercial Neighbourhood

Describe the potential for noise and other types of disturbance.

- Live Music will be finished before the noise bylaws are in effect.
- Music will be scheduled up until 10:00pm

Describe the measures you will implement to ensure nearby residents are not disturbed by your establishment or patrons of your establishment.

- Location in a commercial area and we will be abiding by the noise bylaws

Identify any requests for licensing options and/or endorsements.

- Minors will be allowed to enter until 9PM and must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian

Include any other information that may be relevant to your application

Business Hours

- o Sunday - Wednesday 11am-9pm
- o Thursday - Saturday 11am-11pm

We will be working with local charities.

- Meal in Need (Customers can purchase a meal to donate, Pub will donate as well)
- If a Charity wants to host a fundraiser within bylaws, we will host it
- We will be involved in donating to families at Christmas time

Thanks,

Carole Bolger

Heritage House Pub

Manager/Owner

250-871-9059 (Bus)

289-241-0022 (Cell)





The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Staff Report

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**To:** Council

**File No.:** 0720-01

**From:** Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services

**Date:** February 12, 2025

**Subject:** Improving Gender and Menstrual Equity in City Operated Washrooms

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**PURPOSE:** To seek direction from Council for staff to proceed with expansion of the provision of free menstrual products, and updates to equipment and signage in order to improve menstrual and gender equity in City operated washrooms.

**BACKGROUND:**

On April 12, 2023, representatives from the North Island College Students' Union (NICSU) made a presentation to Council on the significance of menstrual equity in promoting health, education, and societal participation. The presentation was grounded in research conducted by the United Way involving a public survey of more than 1,600 people in B.C., plus focussed research with 12 community organizations across B.C.<sup>1</sup>

The delegation from NICSU highlighted that the inability to access menstrual products is both a gender equity issue and a community issue - affecting women and girls, non-binary and trans individuals, as well as caregivers, family, and friends. Importantly, they shone a light on the fact that the people who struggle the most to purchase menstrual products include those living with incomes below \$40,000, people who identify as Indigenous, and people who have an intellectual or physical disability. The stigma attached to asking for help when an unexpected period occurs is a contributing factor to early departure or missed days at work, school, and community and family gatherings.

As a result of the delegation, Council made the following resolution on May 20, 2023:

*THAT Council direct staff to return with a report on options, costs and implications of providing free menstrual products in City-operated facilities, and of joining the Period Promise campaign.*

On April 10, 2024 following a staff report illuminating the options, costs and implications of the provision of menstrual products and of joining the Period Promise campaign, Council made the following resolutions:

*THAT the City of Courtenay proceed with making menstrual products free in the eleven (11) identified bathrooms at the Lewis Centre and LINC Youth Centre*

*THAT the City of Courtenay join the United Way Period Promise Campaign by signing the Period Promise Policy Agreement, making public their commitment to provide for their staff, clients and or community diverse types of free menstrual products in a stigma free way.*

*THAT Council direct staff to proceed with a review of City-operated staff and public washrooms with a gender equity and inclusion lens that would include the following:*

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<sup>1</sup> [Period Promise: Free Menstrual Products for People in Need, January 2021](#)

- *Inventory of current amenities available in City-operated washrooms (including menstrual product dispensers, disposal units, baby change tables, and needle disposal boxes)*
- *Washroom signage review*
- *Report back to Council with recommendations to improve gender equity in City-operated washrooms including associated impacts and costs in time for the 2025 Financial Plan*

#### **DISCUSSION:**

Since the last update to Council, there has been continued momentum at local, provincial and federal levels in Canada towards menstrual equity, an important milestone in progress towards gender equity.

Menstrual equity refers to the idea that all people who menstruate should have equal access to the resources and support they need to manage their menstruation with dignity, regardless of their socioeconomic status, race, gender identity, or geographical location. It seeks to eliminate barriers to menstrual health, including access to affordable period products, education, sanitation facilities, and supportive policies. Menstrual equity is strongly tied to gender equity, but it also intersects with other issues, such as poverty, disability, race, and geography.

Menstrual equity is a critical aspect of gender equity because it addresses the unique barriers that menstruators face in many aspects of life due to their gender. However, it is important to recognize that menstrual equity is not just a "women's issue"—it is a gender equity issue that affects anyone who menstruates, regardless of their gender identity. Promoting menstrual equity helps create a more just and equal society where menstruation is not a source of shame, economic strain, or social exclusion, but a normal and manageable part of life for all people.

At the federal level, the Government of Canada is tracking the impact of their Menstrual Equity Fund Pilot – launched in 2023.<sup>2</sup> Twenty-five million had been earmarked and disseminated to community organizations to address barriers related to affordability and stigma. Food banks Canada is implementing one of the largest pilots, utilizing \$17.9 million to distribute products and to advance education and awareness. The government of Canada is also moving forward to ensure adherence to changes to the Canada Labour Code. As of December 15, 2023, all federally regulated workplaces must provide free menstrual products and disposal containers.<sup>3</sup>

At the provincial level, British Columbia and six (6) other provinces have enacted legislation to ensure menstrual products be made available in schools. More locally in B.C., 60 organizations have signed onto the *Period Promise Policy Agreement* – a commitment to offer free menstrual products in their facilities.<sup>4</sup> Seven of the signatories on that campaign are municipalities – including the City of Courtenay. An interactive *Period Pin Map* is available so that the public can easily locate washrooms with free period products.<sup>5</sup>

#### ***Piloting Free Menstrual Products in the Washrooms in the Lewis Centre and the LINC Youth Centre.***

In July 2024, 12 menstrual product dispensers were ordered for washrooms in the Lewis Centre and the LINC Youth Centre. By the end of the month, all fee-for-product dispensers were removed, and dispensers providing free menstrual products were installed in each of the nine (9) washrooms in the Lewis Centre and the three (3) washrooms in the LINC Youth Centre. These units were stocked in phases, as machines were received and installed, with all machines fully stocked by mid-August. Custodial staff regularly restocked the

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<sup>2</sup> [Menstrual Equity Fund Pilot](#), Government of Canada Website (2024)

<sup>3</sup> [Canada labour Code to ensure access to menstrual products at work starting December 15](#), 2023. Gov of Canada Website (2024)

<sup>4</sup> [Period Promise Policy Agreement](#), United Way of BC website (2024)

<sup>5</sup> [Period Pin Map](#), Period Pin Project (2024)

units and monitored their use, collecting data for this report from the first months of implementation. To increase awareness, messaging for both Council and staff was developed to address inquiries, and signage was created for the bathrooms to support usage of the products.

#### *Pilot Project Cost*

Twelve closed<sup>6</sup> machines without timers were ordered from the City's current supplier who provided nine (9) machines, plus three (3) free machines. Total cost for all 12 units was \$3,084 (including taxes). The total labour cost to install the machines was approximately \$275.00.

#### *Realizing Cost Savings*

Compact open menstrual product dispensers are quite a bit cheaper than the closed units. Options for a durable compact open product are approximately \$90 each (including taxes). Given their small size, the open compact units are well suited in men's washrooms (as they are less visible and can be mounted in a stall offering privacy), and they are well suited in washrooms with a single toilet. The large closed machines are most suitable for women's washrooms with many toilets – especially those in our parks. In these settings, large timed dispensers that have a 30 second interval between dispensing, are recommended, noting that these units are more expensive.

#### *Response from staff and public*

For the most part, the response has been positive, with notes of appreciation arriving in email and even taped on washroom walls. However, there were some initial hiccups - particularly during the equipment installation phase when not all machines were stocked. Some patrons expressed concern that they were unable to access products. Two inquiries were received about the placement of machines in the men's washrooms – one person wondered if the machines were mistakenly placed there, while another wondered why they were not in a more discrete spot in the washroom. There was also a single incident, where an entire basket of products in a men's room was thrown in the trash. Custodial staff noted a surge in the use of products when the machines were initially installed, however the amount has now leveled. Custodial staff also responded to a couple of incidents of plugged toilets.

The placement of signs, and clear consistent messaging about the intent and the policy has mitigated most issues.

#### ***Inventory of Menstrual Equipment, Baby Change Tables, Needle Disposal Units, and Signage in all City Operated Washrooms***

The City currently operates 83 washrooms located in 26 separate facilities (both public and staff oriented). Seventy-nine washrooms were included in the assessment, as four (4) were not accessible at the time of the assessment. Of the 79 washrooms assessed:

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<sup>6</sup> Closed machines require keys to open. Users may access one item per turn of the dispenser handle. They can repeat turning the handle to collect as many products they need. They are however, unable to return products to the machine if the item dispensed is not what they thought it might be. Open machines do not require a key to access products. Users can open the container, see what is inside, and take exactly what they need. Timed machines dispense products in 30 second intervals, dissuading patrons from taking excessive amounts. Timed machines can cost twice as much as machines without timers.

- 20 had menstrual product dispensers and disposal units (12 of the menstrual product dispensers were recently installed in Lewis Centre and the LINC Youth Centre as part of the pilot project).
- Baby change tables were available in only four (4) washrooms within two (2) of the 26 facilities assessed. Two (2) baby change tables were provided in washrooms in the Lewis Centre, and two (2) baby change tables were provided in the indoor washrooms at the Memorial Pool.
- Needle disposal units were available in 15 washrooms (primarily male washrooms).
- Signage repair and /or updating is required at the entrance of all washrooms not only to ensure clarity of the amenities within, but also to meet industry standards in terms of language and images that support gender inclusivity.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Cost and Impact to Expand Menstrual and Gender Equity in Washrooms***

The estimated one-time cost of expanding this initiative to all city operated washrooms is approximately \$50,000, including equipment and labour costs. This amount of funding will cover the purchase and installation of the following (further details can be found in Attachment 1):

- 71 new menstrual product dispensers, (47 compact open dispensers suitable for single stall bathrooms and for men's washrooms, plus 24 full-sized closed dispensers with timers, most suitable for women's washrooms with multiple stalls in public parks).
- 66 needle disposal units.
- 32 baby change tables, a significant improvement to the current situation of four (4) baby change tables. The aim will be to ensure there is at least one baby change table in each of the 26 facilities. Space permitting, that baby change table would be located in a gender-neutral bathroom. Where gender neutral bathrooms are not available, baby change tables would be provided with a gender equity lens - one change table in each of the men's and women's washrooms.
- Repair and updating of signage in all washrooms to ensure clarity, consistency and inclusivity.

Based on product usage in the Lewis Centre and LINC Youth Centre over late summer and early fall, the estimated annual cost to supply menstrual products in all city operated washrooms was approximately \$4,500 per year. However, given usage is likely higher in City operated facilities within parks as well as staff washrooms, as compared to the Lewis Centre and the LINC Youth Centre, an upward adjustment of \$3,000 per year is both reasonable and realistic. This brings the total estimate to provide free menstrual products in all City operated facilities for both public and staff to \$7,500 per year. Finally, the annual estimated cost to repair and maintain the equipment is \$7,500 per year bringing the annual cost to provide free menstrual products in all City operated facilities to \$15,000 per year.

As part of this work, all washroom and changeroom signage across public and staff facilities will be updated to reflect best practices as well as ensure inclusive and informative signage for patrons and staff. The following approach is recommended to guide the updating of signage:

- Consistent use of functional icons to appropriately represent the amenities contained within each washroom or changeroom.
- Cessation of the use of gendered icons to represent men's or women's washrooms.

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<sup>7</sup> In some cases, the signage was missing or broken, in other cases the signage did not clearly indicate which amenities may be found in the washroom. In some cases, the signage included men and/or women, baby, wheelchair images, and in other cases no images. Language on signs was inconsistent.

- Consistent use of “Men,” “Women,” or “Universal” to describe the washroom or changeroom space.
- Addition of language that reaffirms that gender diverse individuals are welcome in the washroom or changeroom that aligns with their gender identity, as per the BC Human Rights Code.

The City of Courtenay has the potential to create a more inclusive, equitable environment by actively addressing the gendered nature of menstruation and washrooms. By ensuring that all individuals—regardless of gender identity or income—can access menstrual products, baby change tables, and needle disposal units in washrooms in all City Operated facilities and that signage is inclusive and informative, the City can play a critical role in advancing gender equity and washroom inclusivity at the local level. These efforts, though modest in cost, can have significant long-term benefits for fostering a more equitable and just society.

### **Conclusion**

Staff recommend that the City take a phased approach to the implementation of gender and menstrual equity initiatives in City washrooms. The first phase would involve installation of the items describe below in all indoor City operated washrooms. Phase Two would involve installation and piloting of the equipment in approximately three City operated washrooms in parks, in order to gather data about best types of equipment and usage in those settings. The final phase would involve the expansion of equipment installation and free menstrual products in all or some of the remaining park washrooms pending the outcomes of phase two.

The recommended expansion would see phases one and two proceed in 2025 and phase three in 2026, resulting in:

- the purchase and installation of recommended menstrual equipment as specified in Attachment 1.
- the provision of free menstrual products (tampons and pads) in all public and staff City operated washrooms,
- the provision of at least one baby change table in at least one washroom in each City operated public facility, and located, space permitting, in a gender-neutral washroom. In sites that lack a single universal washroom, a baby change table to be provided in each of the men and women designated washrooms.
- the provision of needle disposal boxes in all public and staff City operated washrooms, and
- the review and updating of signage for all public and staff City operated washrooms to enhance clarity, and to ensure consistency in language and icons to meet industry standards with respect to gender equity. Minimally, the signage review will involve researching various signage designs that meet industry standards, and consulting community organizations that have as a focus accessibility, and/or gender equity in the selection of the most appropriate signage.

### **POLICY ANALYSIS:**

Providing access to free menstrual products in City-operated washrooms and amenities to enhance gender equity is in alignment with two (2) of the four (4) cardinal directions in the City of Courtenay’s OCP – Equity and Community Well-Being.

- Many of the equity-priority groups outlined in the OCP intersect with those who will benefit from access to free menstrual products, baby change tables, needle disposal units and updated inclusive signage.

- Equity-priority groups are people who often face discrimination or other forms of systemic disadvantage. They include but are not necessarily limited to persons of colour, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, and women.
- Providing free menstrual products and amenities to enhance gender equity in public washrooms aligns with the city's goals to increase opportunities for all community members to "participate, prosper, and reach their full potential" (City of Courtenay OCP, 2022, p. 21).

Taking this course of action is also in alignment with one (1) social Infrastructure objective within the OCP:

- All Courtenay residents experience equitable access to services.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

##### *One-Time Costs*

The estimated one-time costs associated with the implementation of gender and menstrual equity initiatives in washrooms is estimated at \$50,000 to cover the installation and purchasing of all necessary equipment. \$50,000 has been included in the 2025 financial plan as a special project for Council's consideration.

##### *Ongoing Costs*

Ongoing operating costs for the provision of free menstrual products for staff and the public is estimated at \$15,000 annually:

- \$7,500 is required for the provision of free menstrual products
- \$7,500 is required for the maintenance and repair of equipment

The financial implications will impact both Recreation Operations and Civic Properties operating budgets and have been included in the 2025 financial plan and operating budgets for both divisions for Council's consideration.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:**

This project is being led by Recreation, Culture, and Community Services in coordination with Operational Services - Civic Properties. The departments will work together to phase in this project over the course of 2025 and into 2026.

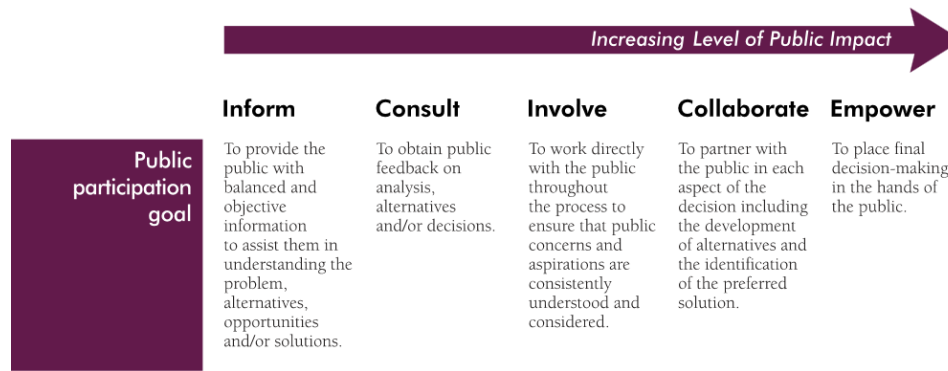
#### **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:**

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Social Infrastructure - Review City operations with a social equity, reconciliation and anti-racism lens and develop corporate policy

#### **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

Staff would inform the public based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation:



© International Association for Public Participation [www.iap2.org](http://www.iap2.org)

**OPTIONS:**

1. THAT Council direct staff to expand the provision of free menstrual products, baby change tables, and needle disposal units and to update signage in all City operated washrooms as outlined in the staff report, "Improving Gender and Menstrual Equity in City Operated Washrooms."
2. THAT Council direct staff to continue with the provision of free menstrual products at the Lewis Centre and LINC Youth Centre but to not proceed with further expansion of free menstrual products in City washrooms.
3. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Attachment 1: Menstrual and Gender Equity Equipment and Budget Projections

Prepared by: Joanne Bays, Community Development Coordinator  
Reviewed by: Eric Jernslet, Manager of Civic Properties, Operation Services  
Carol Millar, Manager of Recreation Operations, Recreation, Culture, and Community Services  
Susie Saunders, Director Recreation, Culture, and Community Services  
Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.PI., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)

**Attachment 1: Menstrual and Gender Equity Equipment and Budget Projections**

*Estimated cost to expand the initiative to all city operated public and staff washrooms*

- One Time Equipment Costs: \$46,009.00
- One Time Labour Costs: \$4,448.42
- 

**Table 1: Menstrual and Gender Equity Equipment Projected Needs**

	Wash-rooms	<sup>1</sup> Menstrual Product Dispenser - compact -open	<sup>2</sup> Menstrual Product Dispenser -large -closed -timed	Menstrual Product Disposal Units	Baby Change Tables	Needle Disposal Units	Door Signs	Comments
Café Airpark	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	Move paper towel dispensers to install change tables
Riverside Park	2	2	0	1	2	2	2	Normally locked. Open when park space rented by groups
City Hall	6	6	0	5	2	5	6	Baby change tables recommended for 2 public washrooms
Martin Park	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	
Puntledge Park	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	
Florence Filberg	6	4	2	3	3	5	5	
Lewis Park	2	1	1	1	0	0	2	

<sup>1</sup> Compact menstrual product dispensers are recommended in each washroom currently labeled as “Men”. Where there are multiple stalls in these washrooms, a compact menstrual product dispenser and a single disposal unit is to be placed in the largest stall.

<sup>2</sup> Larger timed menstrual product dispensers indicated for all outdoor washrooms in parks and in all washrooms that currently have needle disposal units. (with the exception of washrooms currently labeled as “Men”. Compact menstrual product dispensers are recommended for all washrooms currently labelled as “Men”)



Salish	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	Normally locked. Open when facility rented by groups
Tsolum	2	2	0	2	0	2	2	Normally locked. Open when space rented by groups.
Valleyview Clubhouse	6	0	5	5	2	5	5	5 of 6 washrooms assessed.
Operations Yard	4	4	0	4	0	4	4	
IT	2	2	0	2	0	2	2	
HR	2	2	0	2	0	2	2	
Firehall	4	4	0	4	4	4	4	
Bill More Moore Lawn Bowling	3	3	0	1	1	3	3	
Bill Moore Fieldhouse	5	4	1	8	2	5	5	2 baby change tables recommended in public washrooms.
Standard Park	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	
Woodcote Park	4	1	1	3	2	2	2	2 of 4 washrooms assessed
Randy Wiwchar Plaza	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	
Simms Park	2	0	2	1	2	0	2	
Outdoor Memorial Pool	4	0	3	2	0	3	3	3 of 4 washrooms assessed. 2 Change tables already available in public changerooms.
Native Son's Hall	5	2	3	2	1	5	5	
Cemetery	2	2	0	2	0	2	2	
Lewis Centre	9	4	0	0	2	4	9	9 Menstrual dispensers recently

								added, but 4 units in men's washrooms to be exchanged for smaller JONI units
LINC Youth Centre	3	0	0	0	1	3	3	3 menstrual product dispensers recently added
Urbaloo	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>83</b>	

**Table 2: Estimated Cost of Equipment**

	Menstrual Product Dispenser -compact, -open	Menstrual Product Dispenser -large, -timed, -closed.	Menstrual Product Disposal Unit	Baby Change Table	Needle Disposal Units	Door Signs	Total
Number of units required	47	24	58	32	66	83	
Cost per unit	\$90.00	\$410.00	\$43.00	\$540.00	\$90.00	\$75.00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,230.00</b>	<b>\$9,840.00</b>	<b>\$2,494.00</b>	<b>\$17,280.00</b>	<b>\$5,940.00</b>	<b>\$6,225.00</b>	<b>\$46,009.00</b>

**Table 3: Estimated Labour Cost to Install Equipment**

	<b>Menstrual Product Dispenser -compact, -open</b>	<b>Menstrual Product Dispenser -large, -timed, -closed.</b>	<b>Menstrual Product Disposal Unit</b>	<b>Baby Change Table</b>	<b>Needle Disposal Units</b>	<b>Door Signs</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of units required	47	24	58	32	66	83	
Labour Hours/Unit	.5 hrs/unit	.75 hrs/unit	.25 hrs/unit	.5 hrs/unit	.25 hrs/unit	.25 hrs/unit	
Labour Cost/Unit	\$20.36/unit	\$30.53/unit	\$10.18/unit	\$20.36/unit	\$10.18/unit	\$10.18/unit	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$956.92</b>	<b>\$732.72</b>	<b>\$590.44</b>	<b>\$651.52</b>	<b>\$671.88</b>	<b>\$844.94</b>	<b>\$4,448.42</b>

File: 1700-02

February 3, 2025

**Sent via email only:** [lbougeois@courtenay.ca](mailto:lbougeois@courtenay.ca)

Mayor and Council  
City of Courtenay

Dear Mayor and Council:

**Re: Draft Amenity Cost Contributions Program**

The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Recreation Commission is working to develop an Amenity Cost Contributions (ACC) program for recreation-specific infrastructure. The commission approved a motion at their November 26, 2024 meeting directing staff to create a draft ACC program based on an outlined methodology and project list included in the staff report dated November 19, 2024 (attached). CVRD staff will undertake background work for a draft ACC program for consideration by the Recreation Commission based on Appendix B of the staff report.

CVRD staff are seeking regional collaboration and support from municipal councils, as well as the CVRD's Electoral Areas Services Committee (EASC) to have their staff participate in this initiative.

Staff participation will likely involve:

- Up to four meetings before October 2025.
- Assisting with gathering and organizing Development Cost Charge (DCC) data and potential ACC calculations.
- Possible interviews with a consultant.

The goal is to ensure equitable contributions across the region while balancing the need to avoid overburdening development opportunities. Councils and the EASC are asked to confirm if their staff may participate in this analysis and program development.

Questions or presentation requests may be directed to Doug DeMarzo, General Manager of Community Services at [ddemarzo@comoxvalleyrd.ca](mailto:ddemarzo@comoxvalleyrd.ca).

We look forward to hearing from you by February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Sincerely,

***M. McCollum***

Melanie McCollum  
Chair, Comox Valley Recreation Commission

Enclosure: Staff report dated November 19, 2024.

cc: J. Warren, Chief Administrative Officer, CVRD  
G. Garbutt, City Manager, City of Courtenay

**DATE:** November 19, 2024**FILE:** 1700-02**TO:** Chair and Members  
Comox Valley Recreation Commission**FROM:** James Warren  
Chief Administrative OfficerSupported by James Warren  
Chief Administrative Officer***J. Warren*****RE:** **Amenity Cost Charges – Recreation Infrastructure****Purpose**

This report provides information regarding the new development finance tool, Amenity Cost Charges (ACC).

**Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:**

THAT staff be directed to undertake the background work for a draft Amenity Cost Charges Program for consideration by the Comox Valley Recreation Commission based on Appendix B to the staff report dated November 19, 2024 Amenity Cost Charge methodology and project list;

AND FINALLY THAT municipal Council support be requested to have their staff participate in coordinating an equitable approach to an ACC program.

**Executive Summary**

As local governments shift to more upfront planning and zoning through Bills 44 and 47, changes under Bill 46 provide local governments with new and improved development finance tools to help fund infrastructure and amenities to support increased housing supply and growth. One such tool is ACCs which allow local governments to collect funds for amenities like community centres, recreation centres, daycares, and libraries from new development that results in increased population. One such tool is the ACC which allows local governments to collect funds for amenities like community centres, recreation centres, daycares, and libraries from new development that results in increased population.

Collection of ACCs from development can help:

- Provide long-term funding for the Recreation Strategic Plan;
- Provide a source of regional funding, in addition to property taxes and user fees and grants, which are not readily available for regional recreation infrastructure;

- Ensure recreational facilities and amenities grow with the community and are accessible to support new growth;
- Support livable and complete communities in areas of growth;
- Keep the development of major recreation infrastructure more affordable by ensuring that development throughout the region contributes funds towards the growth of this key infrastructure;
- Enable developers and newcomers to the community to contribute to growth costs alongside existing taxpayers.

The foundation of ACCs lies in its calculations based on future growth, which could fundamentally support the principle that growth should help pay for growth. Especially related to recreation infrastructure as the population increases the desire for amenities increases hence the connection between the population projection used in the calculations and the ACC rate estimates. The balance of not discouraging growth and ensuring equity between Development Cost Charges (DCCs) across the region requires consideration to help ensure the cumulative impacts of all such charges do not overburden development when finalizing the ACC amounts.

Prepared by:

***D. DeMarzo***

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Doug DeMarzo  
General Manager of  
Community Services

### **Background/Current Situation**

Division 19.1 of the Local Government Act (LGA) authorizes local governments to impose ACCs and outlines the legislated requirements.

Local governments can collect ACCs on subdivision approval or before the issuance of a building permit from any new development that increases the population of residents or workers (i.e., if a development adds new residential units or new workplaces to the community) in areas where a local government is planning for growth. Similar to DCCs, ACCs must be enacted by bylaw and in accordance with the process and requirements set out in the legislation.

Local governments can choose whether to use the new ACC tool and can adopt an ACC bylaw at any time. Unlike DCCs, ACC bylaws do not require approval from the Inspector of Municipalities. They do need to assess the impact of charges on development viability, be transparent and undertake public consultation.

Developments of any size can contribute to these community assets to help finance their growth. In this way, development helps to fund the impact of development on regional recreational infrastructure. Each year of delaying program development represents a missed opportunity to help fund much-needed community amenities.

### **Demographics and Projected Growth**

Population and Household Growth projections from the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Housing Needs Assessment.

- The estimated regional population in 2023 (excluding Island Trust Areas) is 74,540, reflecting a five percent increase from 2021
- The City of Courtenay and the Village of Cumberland historically experienced the highest growth rates between 2016 and 2021 at 10 per cent and 20 percent, respectively, and are expected to lead regional growth (in percentage terms) over the next two decades
- The total population may grow 36 per cent from 2023 to 2043, reaching about 101,460, meaning about 26,920 more people potentially residing in the CVRD by 2043 The total population may grow 36 per cent from 2023 to 2043, reaching about 101,460, meaning about 26,920 more people potentially residing in the CVRD by 2043
- There were an estimated 32,065 households in 2023, a five per cent increase from 2021 • Greatest population growth was among senior age cohorts, which is expected to continue

The housing landscape in the CVRD is evolving, driven by a surge in both population and households from 2016 to 2021 across all municipalities and electoral areas. This growth trend is expected to continue through the next two decades to 2043, indicating a sustained rise in housing demand.

The CVRD and Islands Trust have undertaken comprehensive Housing Needs Assessments that can be used as foundational documents for ACC calculations. Appendix B outlines the methodology to determine that 13,701 new units may be needed to meet demand in the next 20 years.

### **Project Eligibility**

Legislation under section 570.1 of the LGA, an “amenity” is broadly defined as a facility or feature that provides social, cultural, heritage, recreational or environmental benefits to a community. Amenities need to directly or indirectly benefit the new development itself and the increased population of residents or workers that result from the development. Currently, staff are of the opinion that growth throughout the CVRD would benefit from major recreation facilities.



Local government revenue collected through ACCs can only be used to help fund the capital costs of amenities. ACCs can be used to fund the capital costs of constructing new amenities or to alter or expand existing amenities, such as an addition to a recreation centre.

Staff will work with a consultant to develop a background document based on the following framework outlined below.

1) Background Research:

- i. Coordination in the region to understand growth projections relative to anticipated recreational facility use/demand;
- ii. Coordination in the region to understand other development cost charges and amenity cost charges already in place relative to the potential impact of a CVRD ACC.
- iii. Communications Plan with developers to help ascertain the viability of ACCs.

2) Imposing ACCs bylaw process: A local government must pass a bylaw that identifies:

- i. Area or areas in which the charge(s) apply;
- ii. Amenity projects for which a charge will be imposed; and,
- iii. Amount of the charges that will be imposed, which must be set as a flat rate per unit and/or per square metre of floor space.

3) ACCs key factors calculations:

- i. Capital cost of project.
- ii. Statutory exemptions.

## Options

1. Staff report back with an ACC program background document to support a new draft ACC bylaw based on Appendix B methodology and project list with consultant expertise.
2. Cost of future growth would be applied to existing residents
3. Staff report back with an ACC program document, reevaluate the project list, and report back to the recreation commission if additional projects are to be included based on known community growth demands based on consultant expertise.

Given the significant realized and projected growth of the community increasing demand for recreational facility capacity; and significant costs of new and

upgraded recreational facilities, collecting ACC from development will be a crucial funding source for capital projects moving forward. Staff are recommending option 1.

**Financial Factors**

The backgrounder study will address financial objectives. Any future additional funding source will assist with the successful implementation of recreational community amenities associated with new growth.

A key component of the ACC is to consider all other municipal and regional development cost charges when setting the final rate. The backgrounder will explore this in-depth and if potential changes are being explored with the recent change in legislation that limits the ability to obtain community amenities at the rezoning stage. Through internal staff relations, staff are aware many DCCs are undergoing review both in the CVRD and municipalities. Below is the table of known DCCs for sample only as charges can change depending on land use type exemptions, and buildings within specific bylaws but the table is generally in line with single residential.

**Table 1- Sampling of current DCCs**

Jurisdiction	Current DCCs	Amount
<b>CVRD</b>	Water	3,389
	Sewer	6,941
	Electoral Area only Parks	1,417
<b>City of Courtenay</b>	Water	456
	Sewer	1,427
	Transportation	2,744
	Drainage	1,439
	Park Acquisition and Development	875
<b>Town of Comox</b>	Comox highway	2,748
	Sanitary	1,072
	Parkland	2,171
<b>Village of Cumberland</b>	Transport	8,007
	Water	3,725
	Sanitary Sewer	1,075
	Sanitary Sewer (area specific)	4,263
	Storm drainage	2,178
	Parks	1,032

Appendix B outlines an example of a methodology that could be used to determine a recreation ACC.

Strategic Considerations - Strategic Drivers							
Fiscal Responsibility	✓	Climate Crisis and Environmental Stewardship and Protection		Community Partnerships		Indigenous Relations	Accessibility, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Board’s four key drivers are as follows:

- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Careful management of services and assets is essential to providing affordable and reliable services to citizens and businesses in the CVRD. With continued growth projections in the region, it is prudent that new growth should help support the amenities needed to serve the community.

Strategic Considerations - Regional Growth Strategy Goals						
Housing	✓	Ecosystems, Natural Areas and Parks		Local economic development	✓	Transportation
Infrastructure		Food Systems		Public Health and Safety	✓	Climate Change

The strategy identifies eight policy areas:

- **Housing:** Adding ACCs to new units will increase the capital cost of housing however in the long term may reduce the ongoing tax impact on existing housing stock.
- **Local economic development:** Achieve a sustainable, resilient and dynamic economy that supports businesses and entrepreneurship; Adequate facilities to accommodate the population are essential and supporting local businesses that supply the operations of the facility as well as the needs of participants promotes economic development. This can range from skate-sharpening to hosting major events.
- **Public health and safety:** Support a high quality of life through the protection and enhancement of community health, safety and well-being by offering facilities that support a healthy lifestyle and align with the population's needs.

**Intergovernmental Factors**

The background study for ACCs will be conducted through a review of other DCC charges in the region. The review will confirm population projections, discuss any potential changes to partners DCC or ACC creation, and determining the collection method of ACCs on the CVRD’s behalf.

Preparation of this report included a preliminary discussion with neighbouring recreation municipal staff to discuss the CVRD intentions of ACCs and understand

municipal plans for their current ACCs. To date no municipality in the CVRD has completed ACCs bylaws.

**Citizen/Public Relations**

The background study and bylaw preparation will inform the next steps of the public process. Helping developers understand the benefits of recreation facilities to provide the new residents with a high quality of life will ultimately lead to more edge in competition compared to surrounding communities to attract more residents. Broad consultation will also need to be defined and implemented during the process.

Attachments:           Appendix A – Interim Guidance Development Finance Tools  
  Update - DCCs and Amenity Cost Charges  
  Appendix B – Calculation of Potential ACCs



# Interim Guidance

## Development Finance Tools Update: Development Cost Charges/Levies and Amenity Cost Charges

Ministry of Housing  
Published: March 2024  
Updated: June 2024

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*Contents of this document are not intended to be provided as legal advice and should not be relied upon as legal advice.*

## Introduction

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Local governments have a range of development financing tools that can be used to help fund the costs of infrastructure and amenities that are needed to support new development, including Development Cost Charges (DCCs)/Development Cost Levies (DCLs), subdivision servicing bylaws, excess or extended services, latecomer agreements, development works agreements, and density bonusing.

In the fall of 2023 [Bill 46 – 2023: Housing Statutes \(Development Financing\) Amendment Act](#) (Bill 46) made amendments to the *Local Government Act* (LGA) and the *Vancouver Charter* to provide local governments (municipalities and regional districts) with new and expanded development finance tools.<sup>1</sup>

These changes include:

- Updating the scope of infrastructure eligible to be funded through DCCs and DCLs to include new categories of infrastructure - fire protection, police, and solid waste and recycling facilities.
- Introducing Amenity Cost Charges (ACCs), a new development finance tool that allows local governments to collect funds for amenities, such as community centres, recreation centres, daycares, and libraries from new development that results in increased population.

In addition, Bill 46 made amendments to enable municipalities to collect and use DCCs/DCLs to finance their portion of highway facilities that are cost-shared between the province and the municipality, like interchanges and highway exits. Any questions on this topic should be directed to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs at [LGIF@gov.bc.ca](mailto:LGIF@gov.bc.ca).

This interim guidance will help local governments update or adopt DCC/DCL bylaws to begin collecting for the new categories of eligible infrastructure and to implement an ACC bylaw, if they choose to use the new tools.

The Province will develop more comprehensive guidance in consultation with the Development Finance Review Committee (DFRC)<sup>2</sup>, local governments, and the development industry, for release in late 2024.

## Background

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The Province of BC passed legislation in the fall of 2023 to facilitate increased housing supply as part of the Province's *Homes for People Action Plan*. Through [Bill 44 – 2023: Housing Statutes \(Residential Development\) Amendment Act](#) and [Bill 47 – Housing Statutes \(Transit-Oriented Areas\) Amendment Act](#)

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<sup>1</sup> The amendments came into effect on November 30, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> The DFRC was formed as an advisory committee in 1995 to advise the Ministry of Municipal Affairs about the development of best practices, policy, and potential legislative changes in relation to development finance. The DFRC includes representation from the Union of BC Municipalities, Planning Institute of BC, local governments, and the development industry.

the Province made changes to the land use planning frameworks under the LGA and the *Vancouver Charter*, including:

- Requiring local governments to update zoning bylaws to allow for small-scale, multi-unit housing (e.g., secondary suites/accessory dwelling units, triplexes, townhomes, and houseplexes) in land use zones that are otherwise restricted to single-family dwellings or duplexes.
- Requiring local governments to shift to a more pro-active, long-term approach to planning where they must identify their housing needs and then zone for what housing is needed.
- Removing public hearings on rezonings for housing projects that are consistent with a local government’s official community plan (OCP).
- Requiring some municipalities to designate Transit-Oriented Areas (TOAs) near transit hubs. In TOAs, municipalities may not use zoning powers to prohibit or restrict prescribed minimum levels of density, size, and may not impose off-street parking requirements other than for disabled persons, and must consider a provincial policy manual when planning or amending zoning bylaws.

As local governments shift to more upfront planning and zoning through Bills 44 and 47, changes under Bill 46 provide local governments with new and improved development finance tools to help fund infrastructure and amenities to support increased housing supply and growth.

More information on local government housing initiatives is available on the Ministry of Housing website located at: <https://www.gov.bc.ca/housingInitiatives>

## Legislation Overview

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### Development Cost Charges/Development Cost Levies<sup>3</sup>

#### Overview

Under section 559 of the LGA, municipalities and regional districts can choose to collect DCCs from new development to help pay for the capital costs of off-site infrastructure services that are needed to accommodate growth.

DCCs can be collected for defined categories of infrastructure as specified in legislation: sewage, water, drainage, highway facilities, and the acquisition and improvement of parkland.<sup>4</sup> Per amendments under Bill 46, local governments can collect DCCs for the following new categories: fire protection, police, and solid waste and recycling facilities.

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<sup>3</sup> DCCs are known as DCLs in the City of Vancouver, where they are authorized under the *Vancouver Charter*. For the purposes of this interim guidance, any reference to DCCs include DCLs. While there are differences between the DCC and DCL frameworks (e.g., the Inspector of Municipalities approves DCC bylaws but not DCL bylaws), the recent amendments to expand the scope of eligible infrastructure are the same under both frameworks. Thus, the information provided in this interim guidance can apply to both.

<sup>4</sup> Additionally, the City of Vancouver can collect DCLs for day care facilities and replacement housing.

The [Development Cost Charges Best Practices Guide](#) (Best Practices Guide) provides general DCC policy direction that also applies to the new DCC categories. For guidance on existing DCC policies when establishing or amending a DCC bylaw, please refer to the Best Practices Guide. Project Eligibility for New DCC Categories

Consistent with existing DCC categories, capital projects under the new DCC categories must directly or indirectly service new development (LGA section 559(2)). Provincial policy establishes that charges are only eligible for capital assets owned or controlled by the local government. Project cost estimates under the new DCC categories that are included in a new or amended DCC bylaw must be consistent with the local government's OCP, financial plan, service plans, and long-term capital plans. Under section 560 of the LGA the Inspector of Municipalities (Inspector) may refuse to grant approval of a DCC bylaw if the Inspector determines that the DCCs are not related to capital costs attributable to projects included in a local government's financial plan.

The definition of capital costs under section 558 of the LGA includes planning, engineering and legal costs directly related to the work for which a capital cost may be incurred. Costs that are not eligible under existing and new DCC categories include:

- Operating and staffing costs, personal equipment, and mobile equipment, including vehicles and other rolling stock such as fire and garbage trucks.
- Leased facilities, except for the costs of construction or leasing an asset that will be controlled by the local government under a capital lease.
- Projects related to maintenance or replacement of existing assets.

### ***Fire Protection Facilities***

A fire protection DCC program should be based on the long-term strategy and priorities provided in a fire protection/department master plan (or equivalent).

For DCC programs, infrastructure considered "fire protection facilities" includes projects such as:

- firehalls;
- training facilities;
- staff quarters;
- apparatus bays;
- maintenance facilities
- dispatches; and,
- fire department administration buildings.

Fire service costs that are not considered "facilities" include:

- all vehicles related to the service; and,
- any gear or equipment that is conveyed to the site of a fire or other service activity.



### ***Police Facilities***

A police facilities DCC program should support a municipality with a facility for a police force of sufficient size. For DCC calculations, a key consideration is ownership or control of the capital infrastructure located within a municipality. A single facility may accommodate multiple detachments that provide services to more than one jurisdiction. Only the portion of a facility that serves a municipality should be used in DCC calculations for that municipality.

For DCC programs, infrastructure considered “police facilities” includes projects such as:

- detachment buildings;
- municipal jails, cells, and holding facilities;
- training facilities;
- community policing centres;
- dispatches; and,
- police administration buildings.

Policing costs that are not considered “facilities” include:

- all vehicles related to the service; and,
- any gear or equipment related to the service.

### ***Solid Waste and Recycling Facilities***

A solid waste and recycling DCC program should be based on an approved solid waste management plan and align with the financial and long-term capital plan.

Solid waste and recycling facilities may be included in a municipal DCC program if they are not part of the separate service of a regional district. Where the authority for a solid waste service lies outside a municipality (e.g., within a regional district), a separate DCC can be imposed by that jurisdiction. In that case, the municipality will be governed by the regional DCC bylaw and the municipality will collect and remit solid waste and recycling DCCs to the regional district.

For DCC programs, infrastructure considered “solid waste and recycling facilities” includes projects such as:

- solid waste master planning;
- landfills;
- transfer stations;
- recycling depots and processing facilities; and,
- compost facilities.

Solid waste and recycling costs that are not considered “facilities” include:

- curbside collection costs including garbage trucks;
- vehicles that are on-site at a landfill or other facility;

- asset management; and,
- environmental monitoring.

### Bylaw Process for New Categories

During the development of a DCC bylaw, local governments must ensure that all bylaws and processes conform to all legal requirements. Local governments must properly consider whether the proposed DCCs will:

- be excessive in relation to the capital cost of prevailing standards of service;
- deter development; or,
- discourage the development of reasonably priced housing or reasonably priced serviced land.

When incorporating a new category into a DCC program, local governments are advised to follow the existing methodologies in the [Best Practices Guide](#). Each new DCC category (fire protection facilities, police facilities, solid waste and recycling facilities) will need to be calculated individually and included as a separate charge in the bylaw. The addition of a new category in a DCC bylaw is considered a major update to the bylaw and will require a local government to conduct a full review of the DCC methodologies and underlying assumptions used.

Bylaws establishing or amending a DCC bylaw require approval by the Inspector of Municipalities before adoption. To assist in the approval review of a proposed DCC Bylaw, a copy of the [Development Cost Charge Submission Summary Checklist](#) (updated March 2024) should be completed by the local government and attached to the bylaw approval package being sent to the Inspector of Municipalities.

Please contact the Financial Analyst for your local government at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to discuss or review the addition of new categories to a DCC program. This is particularly important if the local government intends to request the inclusion of interest in charges for the new categories. Discussing this well in advance may save a local government significant time. Staff contacts can be found on the [Local Government Division Staff Finder](#).

Once levied and collected, the DCCs must be deposited into separate fire protection, police, and solid waste and recycling DCC reserve funds, as established by bylaw. One bylaw may be used to establish all the reserve funds. A reserve fund should be established by bylaw for each of the current DCC categories (water, sewer, etc.). These reserve funds may only be used for capital costs relating to the projects used in the calculations of an approved DCC bylaw. Any interest earned from investments in these reserve funds must be used for eligible DCC projects.

### Allocating Benefits

Fairness and equitable distribution of capital costs among those parties receiving a benefit is a guiding principle of DCCs and suggests that certain DCC projects may benefit the existing population as well as new development. For example, existing users may receive some benefit from the construction of a new fire hall, if the facilities are upgraded in response to the need for replacement or pent-up demand, as well as new development. In turn, the allocation of capital costs that benefit existing users should be deducted from the difference between the total capital cost estimate and funds from other sources.

If a grant for a project in a DCC program has been received, that grant should be deducted from the capital cost of the project and the remainder allocated between the existing population and new development. This approach enables both existing and new contributors to the capital cost to benefit from the grant.

### ***Fire Protection and Police Facilities***

Fire protection and policing services benefit the entire community, as emergency services are not fixed or limited to a specific geographic region. Because the services benefit the population at large, capital costs related to fire protection and police facilities should be apportioned to existing users as well as the new development. In addition, any aspect of a fire protection or police facilities DCC program that involves replacing existing facilities has a higher benefit to existing users and should be allocated accordingly. Only the portion of the project that services growth should be allocated to new development.

### ***Solid Waste and Recycling Facilities***

As part of a solid waste management plan, a local government should assess the current solid waste management system and determine any existing deficiencies and areas for improvement. Any projects that are required to address existing deficiencies or to improve solid waste processes should be assigned higher benefit to existing users.

### ***Assigning Costs to Land Use Types***

Each type of development creates different demands on off-site infrastructure services. The impact of each type, relative to that of others, needs to be considered when assigning the portion of total infrastructure costs attributable to growth. Local governments usually express relative impacts in terms of “equivalent units,” which express the impact of each type of development on a service relative to that of a single-family house. The relative impacts of the different development types will vary by type of service.

Police facilities DCCs, for example, may be based on the premise that expansion of and/or building police facilities is required due to population growth and can therefore be based on occupancy rates for residential land use and equivalent population density for non-residential land use. The calculation involved would be similar to the sanitary DCC method in the [Best Practices Guide](#). Local governments are encouraged to work with professional planners and engineers to determine appropriate equivalent units for the new categories so that the best possible method of assigning cost to types of development is used.

## Considerations with Other Housing Legislation

In addition to establishing whether to collect DCCs to help pay capital costs of fire protection, police, or solid waste and recycling facilities, local governments will also need to determine how their DCC program is affected by other new housing legislation amendments, particularly small-scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH) requirements (as established in Bill 44).

For example, the LGA establishes that DCCs are not payable on building permits authorizing the construction, alteration or extension of fewer than four self-contained dwelling units unless the DCC bylaw specifies that DCCs are payable. In light of amendments under Bill 44, which enables multiple dwelling units on a single-family lot, if a local government wishes to impose DCCs on fewer than four dwelling units and does not have this authority provided for within the current DCC bylaw, an amendment to the DCC bylaw would be required.

To provide an incentive for affordable housing, a local government may define affordable rental housing and then provide waivers and reductions of DCCs to developments that are eligible under these definitions. Local governments should consider waivers and exemptions for affordable rental housing so that there is an incentive for this much needed type of development.

Amendments to a DCC bylaw may also be required if assumptions used to calculate DCCs, such as the number of residential units, housing stock mix, or occupancy rates, are affected by SSMUH requirements. Please refer to the SSMUH [Provincial Policy Manual & Site Standards](#) for more information.

Another consideration is regarding the timing of collecting DCCs. Typically, single family DCCs are charged at subdivision approval, but with the new legislation allowing additional dwelling units on one lot, a local government may want to provide that single family dwelling DCCs may, in the alternative, also be charged prior to issuing a building permit.

## Amenity Cost Charges

Amenity Cost Charges (ACC) is a new development finance tool that allows local governments to collect funds for amenities, such as community centres, libraries, daycares from new development that results in increased demand for services. These amenities support liveable and complete communities in areas of growth.

The new Division 19.1 of the LGA authorizes local governments to impose ACCs and outlines the legislated requirements. The equivalent authority is provided to the City of Vancouver through Part XXIV-B of the *Vancouver Charter*.

This interim guidance provides local governments with an introduction to ACCs and the legislative requirements and key considerations for developing an ACC program and bylaw.

While the ACC tool is distinct, local governments are encouraged to borrow many of the principles and practices that apply to DCCs as outlined in the [Development Cost Charges Best Practices Guide](#) and use those practices when developing an ACC program. These well-established DCC practices will help stakeholders understand the rationale for ACCs and can help guide the process of developing an ACC program. The design approach to the ACC framework was also based on the foundational principles set out in the DCC Best Practices Guide.

## Overview

Local governments can collect ACCs on subdivision approval or prior to the issuance of a building permit from any new development that results in an increase in the population of residents or workers (i.e., if a development adds new residential units or new workplaces to the community) in areas where a local government is planning for growth. Similar to DCCs, ACCs must be imposed by bylaw and in accordance with the process and requirements set out in the legislation. Local governments can choose whether or not to use the new ACC tool and can adopt an ACC bylaw at any time. Unlike DCCs, ACC bylaws do not require approval from the Inspector of Municipalities.

### **Project Eligibility**

Under section 570.1 of the LGA and section 523E of the *Vancouver Charter*, an “amenity” is broadly defined as a facility or feature that provides social, cultural, heritage, recreational or environmental benefits to a community. Amenities need to directly or indirectly benefit the new development itself and the increased population of residents or workers that result from the development.

While the legislation sets out a list of the types of amenities that a local government can fund with ACCs, the list is not exhaustive. Examples of amenities include (but are not limited to), a:

- community, youth, or seniors’ centre;
- recreational or athletic facility;
- library; and,
- public square.

ACCs can only help fund the capital costs of amenities. ACCs can be used to fund the capital costs of constructing new amenities or to alter or expand existing amenities, such as creating a new day care space within an existing community centre or adding a new wing to a community centre. Under s. 570.2(3) of the LGA and s. 523G(3) of the *Vancouver Charter*, local governments can also use ACCs for amenities where a local government has a partnering agreement with a person (e.g. not-for-profit organization, corporation, etc.) or public authority (e.g., another local government).

### **Exemptions**

Sections 570.4 of the LGA and 523I of the *Vancouver Charter* establish the following circumstances when development is exempt from ACCs:

- Developments where a building permit authorizes the construction, alteration, or extension of a building, or part of a building which is solely used for public worship, such as a church.
- Developments that do not result in an increase in population of residents or workers.
  - For example, an ACC cannot be imposed on a triplex if it replaces another triplex because no additional units were added to the community. If a triplex replaces a single-family home, then an ACC can be imposed on the two additional units.

- Developments that have already been charged for a particular amenity, unless further development results in an increase in population of residents or workers (i.e., adds additional units).
  - For example, if a development has already paid an ACC for amenities included in an ACC bylaw but then adds additional units through a renovation, an additional ACC can be imposed on that development to help pay for the amenities in the ACC bylaw.
- Affordable and special needs housing units that are required under an affordable special needs housing zoning bylaw, as defined in section 478.1 in the LGA or 564B of the *Vancouver Charter*.<sup>5</sup>
- Developments that fall under a class of affordable housing prescribed by regulation.

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the [Prescribed Classes of Affordable Housing \(Local Government Act\)](#) and [Prescribed Classes of Affordable Housing \(Vancouver Charter\)](#) regulations came into effect. The regulations exempt the following types of affordable housing from paying ACCs:

- Rental units that will be owned or leased and operated by:
  - government entities, including the Federal and Provincial governments, local governments, local government-owned non-profit housing corporations, and First Nations; and/or,
  - non-profit housing providers, including societies incorporated under the *Societies Act*, regional health authorities under the *Health Authorities Act*, registered charities under the *Income Tax Act (Canada)*, and not-for-profit corporations under the *Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act*, that have received funding from a government entity, entered into a housing agreement with a local government, or have a section 219 covenant securing affordability conditions with a local government.
- Supportive housing rental units that will be owned or leased and operated by government entities or non-profit housing providers, which are units provided to seniors, persons with disabilities, persons experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, or other individuals who, based on criteria set by the operator, will benefit from on-site supports and services.
- Non-profit cooperative housing under the *Cooperative Association Act*<sup>6</sup>, as well as federal non-profit cooperatives as defined in the *Canada Cooperatives Act*.
- Transitional housing, which is publicly funded living accommodation provided on a temporary basis to people as part of a program intended to assist them to become better able to live

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<sup>5</sup> In spring of 2024, the Province passed *Bill 16 – Housing Statutes Amendment Act, 2024* (Bill 16), which provides a new tool to allow local governments to secure affordable housing through the adoption of an affordable and special needs housing zoning bylaw (i.e., inclusionary zoning). Bill 16 amended the ACC legislation to establish an exemption for affordable and special needs housing units from ACCs.

<sup>6</sup> While “non-profit housing cooperative housing” is not specifically defined in the *Cooperative Association Act*, it is understood to be a housing cooperative to which section 173 of that Act applies. This section requires that the property of a non-profit housing cooperative is given to another non-profit housing cooperative or a charitable organization if it dissolves, they cannot sell any part of its property to its members, and shares in the co-op must be at par value. They also cannot issue investment shares.

independently.

- Emergency shelters, which are publicly funded temporary living accommodations that are provided without charge to people who need them.

To the best of their ability, local governments should consider projected exempted affordable housing units when determining the amenities needed to support projected increases of population in the area/areas in which ACCs will be imposed. However, local governments will need to use other revenue sources to make up for the loss of ACC revenue from exempted units. Charges cannot be increased on other forms of development to offset the exemptions. Exempted units can be considered when setting charge amounts and estimating projected revenue from ACCs to predict how much the local government will need to cover through their other revenue sources.

### **Considerations with Other Tools**

The legislation includes rules to prevent “double-charging” for amenities. For example, there is a general rule that a charge for an amenity can only be recovered once (see s. 570.95 of the LGA and s. 523R of the *Vancouver Charter*). This clarifies the relationship between the ACC bylaw and other authorities that local governments can use to obtain amenities (e.g., through phased development agreements, density bonus), and ensures that a development will not be double charged for an amenity under an ACC bylaw through other authorities.

The legislation also clarifies the relationship between the ACC and other tools, specifically in relation to DCCs and density bonus authorities. For example:

- **DCCs:** ACCs cannot be used to pay for the capital costs of infrastructure for which DCCs can be imposed. For example, ACCs cannot be used to fund sewer or water infrastructure (section 570.4(4) of the LGA and section 523I(2) of the *Vancouver Charter*).
- **Density bonus authorities:** Under density bonus provisions, local governments can establish different density rules for a zone – one that is generally applicable for the zone (i.e., a “base density”), and other(s) that will entitle a developer to higher density (“bonus density”), if certain conditions are met either in relation to the conservation or provision of amenities or the provision of affordable and special needs housing. Local governments can continue to use density bonus to collect for amenities and can apply both density bonus conditions and ACCs on the same development (or use the tools separately on different developments or in different areas). However, local governments cannot use density bonusing to collect for an amenity for which an ACC is being collected. For example, if an amenity project is included in the local government’s ACC bylaw, the local government cannot use density bonusing to secure that amenity (section 482(2.1) of the LGA and section 565.1(2.1) of the *Vancouver Charter*).
  - By virtue of the requirements detailed below around how a local government determines the areas ACCs will be imposed, the amenities that will receive funding, and the charge amounts, it is intended that local governments take only the base density into consideration when developing their ACC program.

## Developing an ACC Program and Bylaw

To impose ACCs, a local government must pass a bylaw that identifies the:

- area or areas in which the charge(s) apply;
- amenity projects for which a charge will be imposed; and,
- amount of the charges that will be imposed, which must be set as a flat rate per unit and/or per square metre of floorspace.

The ACC rates for the various areas are presented in a series of schedules that accompany the bylaw, which should summarize the charges for the applicable land uses, based on the representative unit of development.

Local governments may consider compiling supporting documents for the ACC bylaw, which include information that captures the data, assumptions, and rationale used to develop the bylaw, to help fulfill the requirements around developing an ACC program. These supporting documents may contribute to overall transparency and allow for local governments to monitor the assumptions made in formulating the proposed ACCs over time. These may also make it easier to later update the ACC program. Information in these documents should include a summary of capital cost and revenue assumptions, as well as an outline of the various methodologies used to derive the charges.

Under section 570.7(7) of the LGA and section 523K(7) of *the Vancouver Charter*, local governments must make available to the public on request, the considerations, information, and calculations used to determine the ACCs. Information respecting the contemplated acquisition costs of specific properties is not required to be provided to the public.

### ***Determine an Appropriate ACC Program Timeframe***

The ACC legislation requires a close connection between projected population growth and the planning of amenities to support that new population. A defined time period for the ACC program is needed for estimating new development and the amenities required to support that new development.

#### *Timeframes for an initial ACC program:*

ACCs can be used to help fund amenities needed to support the growth that is anticipated to result from the small-scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH) and transit-oriented (TOA) requirements. Local governments must comply with new requirements under SSMUH and TOA legislation, if applicable, by June 30, 2024.

If local governments want to collect ACCs on SSMUH and TOA developments, then it is recommended they develop their initial ACC bylaw as soon as possible. This would likely entail developing a program with a shorter timeframe, largely based on information from a local governments' current planning documents, growth projections, and financial planning.

The provincial policy manuals for [SSMUH](#) and [TOA](#) provide additional considerations for the application of ACCs in these areas.

#### *Timeframes for subsequent program updates:*

Over the long-term, local governments could consider timing their ACC program updates with the newly required timeframes for updating Housing Needs Reports (HNR) and OCPs established in Bill 44 and in



alignment with their DCC program updates, if applicable, to achieve greater efficiencies and alignment between land use planning and financial planning.

### ***Determine Area(s) and Amenities***

Under section 570.7(4) of the LGA, local governments are required to consider:

- the applicable OCP(s) and other relevant planning documents (e.g., HNRs, local area plans, public benefits strategies);
- expected increases in population growth of residents and workers; and,
- the financial plan

The ACC bylaw must identify each area where ACCs will be imposed on new development and the amenities in each area that will receive funding.

Under section 523K(4) of the *Vancouver Charter*, the City of Vancouver are required to consider:

- an applicable development plan as defined in section 559;
- an applicable official development plan as defined in section 559;
- other relevant planning documents;
- future land use patterns in the city;
- expected increases in the population of residents and workers; and,
- reports submitted by the Director of Finance.

### ***Determine Charge Amounts***

*Overall considerations:*

Under section 570.7(2) of the LGA and section 523K(2) of the *Vancouver Charter*, ACCs must be set as a flat rate per unit/lot or per square metre of floorspace in a development. As part of determining the charge amounts, local governments must consider the following (as per s.570.7(5) of the LGA and s.523K(5) of the *Vancouver Charter*):

- the capital costs of the amenities in each area;
- the phasing of amenity projects (e.g., the different stages/timelines of the construction of an amenity project)
- whether the charges are excessive in relation to existing standards of services; and,
- whether charges would deter development or discourage construction of reasonably priced housing.

These requirements necessitate that local governments undertake analyses to understand the impact of charges on development viability. Local governments are encouraged to use the same principles and best practices found in the DCC Best Practices Guide when undertaking an analysis on the impact of charges on development viability.

*Deductions from the capital costs of amenities:*

ACCs are meant to assist local governments with the capital costs of amenities required to support population growth. When determining the specific charge amounts, local governments must make the following deductions from the capital costs of amenities (as per section 570.7(6) of the LGA and section 523K(6) of the *Vancouver Charter*):

- Any grants or other sources of funding (e.g., grants from the provincial or federal government) that are being used to finance an amenity.
- The portion of costs allocated to the existing population. This is determined through a benefit allocation exercise that determines how much the amenities would benefit the new population and how much they would benefit the existing population. As amenities often benefit the existing population, local governments will need to fairly distribute the costs of amenities between future population (i.e., the development) and existing population (i.e., the existing tax base).
- The portion of costs attributed to new development that will be funded by the local government—this is known as the “assist factor.” Similar to DCCs, ACCs are intended to “assist” with paying the capital costs of amenities. Therefore, local governments are expected to provide some financial assistance to ensure that new development does not shoulder the entire costs of amenities.

*Varying charges:*

Local governments could also consider the varying impacts of different types of developments (e.g., residential vs. employment-related developments, such as commercial or industrial developments, or between different types of residential development) on demand for and use of amenities. To address any differences, under section 570.7(2) of the LGA and section 523K(2) of the *Vancouver Charter*, local governments are enabled to vary charges for different zones, uses, and sizes or different numbers of lots or units in a development, with the requirement that charges must be similar for all developments that are expected to result in a similar increase in the population of residents or workers.

Charges can also vary by different geographic areas. As charges are set based on the cost of the amenities (minus the required deductions for external grants, benefit allocation, and the assist factor) needed in an area to support the anticipated growth within that area, charges will naturally vary between different areas because amenity and growth needs will vary.

*Waivers or reductions:*

Under section 570.6 (2) of the LGA and section 523J (2) of the *Vancouver Charter*, local governments may waive or reduce charges by bylaw for not-for-profit rental housing (LGA only), for-profit affordable rental housing, and market rate units within a development that is subject to requirements under an affordable and special needs housing zoning bylaw<sup>7</sup>. If a local government chooses to provide waivers or reductions, as is the case with exempted units, they should account for the potential loss of revenue for amenities and prepare for a source other than ACCs with which to make up the loss. Charges cannot be

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<sup>7</sup> Bill 16 made amendments to the ACC legislation to provide local governments with this authority. Local governments can waive or reduce ACCs where it is needed to protect development viability. The financial feasibility analysis will inform the level of waiver or reduction for ACCs.

increased on other forms of development – instead, the local government must use their other revenue sources to make up for this loss.

### ***Consultation During the Development of an ACC Bylaw***

To ensure transparency, accountability, and accuracy in determining amenities and resulting charges imposed on new development, the ACC legislation requires a local government to consult with the public and with affected persons, public authorities, and organizations (e.g., the development community, neighbouring municipalities or regional districts, First Nations) during the development of an ACC bylaw. Consultation is required during the development of the bylaw to provide the public and affected parties with the opportunity to provide feedback and for local government staff to consider and incorporate any feedback before the bylaw is considered by a council or board.

These consultation requirements are similar to those required by the Inspector of Municipalities when considering a DCC bylaw for approval. The recommended best practices for public process in the [Development Cost Charges Best Practice Guide](#) can be used as guidance to provide a meaningful public process for developing an ACC bylaw.

### ***Adopting the Bylaw***

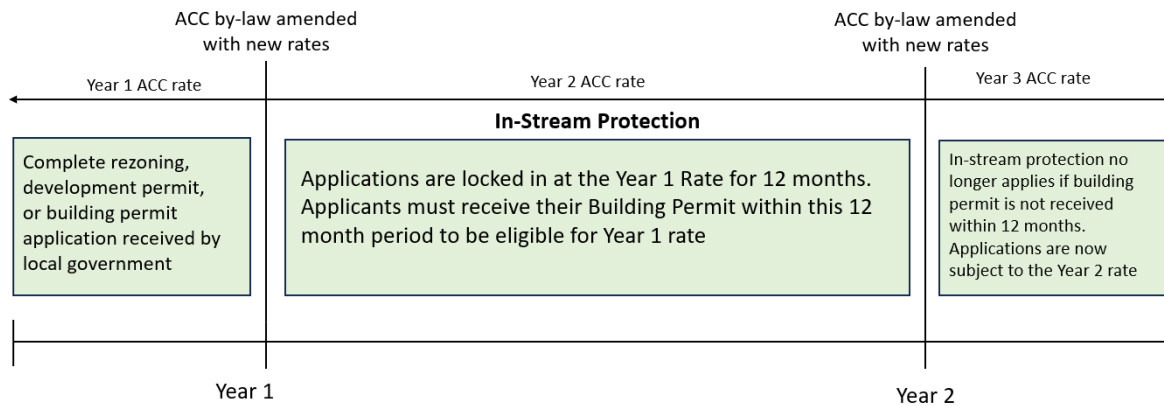
The ACC bylaw must be considered by a local government’s council or board in an open meeting and the bylaw comes into effect once adopted.

## Collecting and Reporting ACCs

### ***Imposing and Collecting Charges***

Once an ACC bylaw is in effect, all applicants for developments in areas where ACCs are imposed (except for developments upon which local governments cannot impose ACCs or has waived them) must pay the applicable ACC as set out in the ACC bylaw upon subdivision approval or issuance of the building permit. The [Development Cost Charge and Amenity Cost Charge \(Instalments\)](#) regulation provides developers with the option to pay ACCs in instalments beyond the building permit stage. The regulation outlines specific details of the timing of ACC payments by a developer based on three equal instalments on the same schedule that is included for how developers may pay DCCs in instalments.

Section 570.91 of the LGA and section 523N of the *Vancouver Charter* include rules to protect development applications that are in progress (e.g., “in-stream”) from being subject to a new or updated charge. When a local government passes their first ACC bylaw, charges cannot apply to a development if the local government has received a complete application for a building permit, a development permit, or an amendment to a zoning bylaw before the date the ACC bylaw was adopted. When a local government amends their ACC bylaw and changes the charge amounts, applicants that have submitted complete building permit, development permit, or zoning bylaw amendment applications are given a 12-month exemption from a new ACC rate, as long as they receive their building permit within that time period.



To enhance transparency and accountability, under section 570.8 in the LGA and section 523L of the *Vancouver Charter*, local governments are required to deposit ACCs in reserve funds established by bylaw for each area in which ACCs are imposed. ACCs collected must be deposited in reserve funds established for each area in which an ACC is imposed. ACC reserve funds, together with interest, can only be used to pay:

- the capital costs of providing, constructing, altering, or expanding amenities as outlined in the ACC bylaw;
- principal and interest on a debt incurred as a result of an expenditure; and,
- a person subject to an ACC for some or all of the capital costs a person has incurred in completing a project if it was completed under a partnering agreement.

A council/board resolution must authorize the use of any funds in an ACC reserve.

### ***In-kind Amenities***

Under section 570.9 of the LGA and section 523M of the *Vancouver Charter*, the legislation also allows applicants to provide an amenity in-kind or land for an amenity in-lieu of paying the monetary ACC amount. In-kind contributions allow for situations where it may be more efficient, economical, and mutually beneficial to both a developer and a local government for an amenity to be provided as part of a particular development. For example, a developer and a local government may agree upon building a youth centre within the base of a new, large multi-residential development, rather than paying a monetary charge to be used by the local government at a later date to build a youth centre.

If an applicant is providing an amenity or land instead of paying a monetary ACC amount, a local government is required to enter into an agreement with the developer that outlines certain matters, including details about when the amenity will be provided, who will provide it, the value of the amenity, and any payment or credit to the developer if the value of amenity or land exceeds what the monetary charge would have been otherwise.

### **Reporting Requirements**

Under section 570.92 of the LGA and section 5230 of the *Vancouver Charter*, local governments are required to prepare and consider a report regarding the collection and use of ACC funds each year. The LGA further requires that these reports must be prepared and considered before June 30.

A report must include the following:

- the amount of ACCs received;
- expenditures from the ACC reserve fund(s), including any expenditures made to a person or public authority under a partnering agreement;
- the balance in the ACC reserve fund(s) at the start and at the end of the applicable year;
- any waivers or reductions made; and,
- any in-kind amenity contributions.

These reports must be made available to the public.

### **Monitoring and Updating an ACC Program**

Local governments can update their ACC bylaw as needed. For greater efficiency and alignment with land use and financial planning cycles, local governments may consider reviewing and updating ACC bylaws in line with new and updated financial plans, OCPs, HNRs, and zoning bylaws.

Local governments may consider regularly monitoring land economic conditions within the community to ensure charges are not too onerous on development and make adjustments to charges accordingly. Along with regular monitoring and reviews of the ACC bylaw, local governments are recommended to regularly review charges and adjust them as needed to keep up with the changing costs of amenities, the introduction of new amenities or the removal of completed amenities when the predicted amount of charges for them has been collected. Regular reviews and updates can prevent against sudden, significant increases in charges, which can negatively affect development viability.

Local governments will need to follow the same legislated process and considerations, including consultation requirements, for any amendment to the ACC bylaw.

### Regulations

The legislation includes various regulation-making authorities for the Province to prescribe additional requirements or address any issues that may arise as local governments begin to impose ACCs.

Regulation-making authorities include:

- defining what cannot be considered an “amenity”;
- authorizing payment of ACCs in instalments;
- setting specific requirements for consultation on the ACC bylaw (e.g., notice and process requirements, who must be consulted, when consultation is not required);
- exempting classes of affordable housing from paying ACCs;

- establishing criteria for what constitutes an eligible development for a waiver or reduction of ACCs;
- prescribing other bases by which local governments can vary charges;
- prescribing additional information that local governments must consider when developing their amenity cost charge bylaws;
- adjusting or limiting charges and setting specific requirements for how local governments set their charges (e.g., establishing a methodology for how local governments allocate benefit of amenities to existing population, which they are required to deduct from charges; requiring that the methodology be applied by an individual with a specific professional designation; setting a minimum assist factor);
- prescribing that additional information is required to be included in agreements between developers and local governments when an in-kind amenity is provided in-lieu of a monetary charge;
- prescribing a period longer than 12 months for in-stream rate protection of precursor development applications (e.g., building permits, development permits, and zoning bylaw amendments); and,
- prescribing that additional information is required in the annual ACC report.

## Key Differences between DCCs and ACCs

For reference, key differences between the DCC and ACC tools include:

Development Cost Charges (DCCs)	Amenity Cost Charges (ACCs)
<b>Existing tool:</b> Introduced in the 1970s	<b>New tool:</b> Introduced in 2023
<b>What funds can be used for:</b> Specified types of infrastructure that service a new development: sewer, water, drainage, roads, parkland and park improvements, fire protection facilities (new), police facilities (new), and solid waste and recycling facilities (new)	<b>What funds can be used for:</b> Amenities that provide social, cultural, heritage, recreational, or environmental <u>benefits</u> to a community (e.g., community centre, library, daycare)
<b>Consultation:</b> No legislated requirement to consult; expectations for consultation are set out by policy. The Inspector of Municipalities looks at evidence of consultation when considering approval of DCC bylaws.	<b>Consultation:</b> Legislation requires local governments to consult with the public and affected persons, public authorities, and organizations during the development of the bylaw
<b>When charges cannot be imposed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a development does not pose capital costs burdens</li> <li>• If a DCC had been previously paid by a development unless there is further development</li> <li>• If a development contains fewer than 4 units (unless authorized by LG bylaw)</li> </ul>	<b>When charges cannot be imposed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a development does not result in an increase in population of residents or workers</li> <li>• If an ACC had been previously paid by a development for a particular amenity unless there is further development</li> <li>• For costs that can be funded through DCCs</li> </ul>

Development Cost Charges (DCCs)	Amenity Cost Charges (ACCs)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If a unit is smaller than 29 square metres</li> <li>If a value of work is less than \$50,000 (unless a greater amount is established by LG bylaw)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On types of affordable housing prescribed by regulation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Waivers or reductions:</b> LG may waive or reduce a DCC for the following eligible development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not-for profit rental housing, including supportive living housing</li> <li>For-profit affordable rental housing</li> <li>A submission of small lots that is designed to result in low greenhouse gas emissions</li> <li>A development that is designed to result in a low environmental impact</li> </ul>	<p><b>Waivers or reductions:</b> LG may waive or reduce an ACC for the following eligible development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not-for-profit rental housing, including supportive living housing</li> <li>For-profit affordable rental housing</li> <li>Housing that is subject to requirements under an affordable and special needs housing zoning bylaw</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bylaw content:</b> Amount of charges must be specified in a schedule or schedules of DCCs</p>	<p><b>Bylaw content:</b> Area(s), amenities, and amount of charges set per lot/unit or per square metre of floor space in a development must be set out in bylaw</p>
<p><b>Consideration requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future land use patterns and development</li> <li>Phasing of works and services</li> <li>Provision of park land described in an OCP</li> <li>How development designed to result in a low environmental impact may affect capital costs</li> <li>Whether the charges are excessive in relation to the capital cost of prevailing standards of service in the municipality or regional district</li> <li>Whether the charges will, in the municipality or regional district, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>deter development,</li> <li>discourage the construction of reasonably priced housing or the provision of reasonably priced serviced land, or</li> <li>discourage development designed to result in a low environmental impact</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Consideration requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicable Official Community Plan(s)</li> <li>Expected increases in population of residents and workers</li> <li>Financial Plan</li> <li>The capital costs of amenities, with deductions made for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The portion of costs to be funded through grants</li> <li>The portion of costs allocated to the existing population, and therefore funded by them (i.e., through property taxes)</li> <li>The portion of costs to be funded by the local government as assistance (i.e., the assist factor)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Approval by Inspector of Municipalities:</b> Required</p>	<p><b>Approval by Inspector of Municipalities:</b> Not required. In place of inspector approval, legislation includes other measures, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation requirement</li> <li>Regulation-making authorities that allow the Province to prescribe additional requirements and/or limitations on the use of ACCs (e.g., limit charges, require a</li> </ul>

Development Cost Charges (DCCs)	Amenity Cost Charges (ACCs)
	minimum assist factor, exempt affordable housing from paying ACCs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspector can request any information from local governments respecting their ACCs</li> </ul>
<b><i>In-stream protection:</i></b> protection from new DCC charges if building permit is issued within 12 months of initial DCC bylaw or amending DCC bylaw subject to a precursor application being submitted	<b><i>In-stream protection:</i></b> protection from new charges for building permits issued after initial adoption of an ACC bylaw and protection for 12 months after amending ACC bylaw subject to a precursor application being submitted
<b><i>Rules against “double-charging”:</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development cannot be charged a DCC if previously paid on same development unless there is further development</li> </ul>	<b><i>Rules against “double-charging”:</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development cannot be charged an ACC twice for a particular amenity unless it results in an increase in population of residents or workers</li> <li>ACCs cannot be used to help fund infrastructure for which DCCs can be used</li> <li>Capital costs of any amenity funded by an ACC must be recovered only once (i.e., local governments cannot use density bonusing to collect for an amenity for which an ACC is being collected)</li> </ul>

## Monitoring

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The Province will monitor the adoption and use of the new development finance tools to ensure that the tools are being used as intended, to inform the need for and use of any regulation-making authority, and/or development of additional guidance or information materials.

## More Information

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Comprehensive guidance on the new development finance tools will be published in late 2024.

Please direct technical questions about Development Cost Charges (DCCs) or Amenity Cost Charges (ACCs) to:

Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Local Government Infrastructure and Finance Branch  
 Telephone: 250 387-4060  
 Email: [LGIF@gov.bc.ca](mailto:LGIF@gov.bc.ca)

Questions about local government housing initiatives can be sent to:

Ministry of Housing, Planning and Land Use Management Branch  
 Telephone: 250-387-3394  
 Email: [PLUM@gov.bc.ca](mailto:PLUM@gov.bc.ca)



Full text of Bill 46: <https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/bills/billscurrent/4th42nd:gov46-1>

More information about local government housing initiatives:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/local-governments-and-housing/housing-initiatives>

## **Sample Methodology of Amenity Cost Charges**

Below are some of the key considerations to be used as an example when creating an Amenity Cost Charge (ACC) bylaw and determining the proposed amount.

### **Methodology Key Considerations**

#### *Allocating Benefits and Project Eligibility*

As summarized in provincial guidelines each land use type and amenity type may vary in its approach to cost recovery. For recreation infrastructure each new unit added across the region increases demand on our regional facilities. Therefore, our new regional facilities to accommodate growth are defined as:

- Artificial turf fields.
- Ice surfaces.
- Aquatic infrastructure.

Community halls or Recreation Centers such Lewis Centre which serve a more defined growth area can be considered through alternative ACC bylaw processes.

Dry floor space and community gathering spaces could be purposely excluded from calculations based on the assumption they serve and are the responsibility of municipalities or Electoral Areas.

#### *Collection point of Amenity Cost Charges*

A logical recommendation in alignment with current practice would be to collect ACCs at the building permit stage however this presents a challenge on the islands as there are no building permits so more research is required.

#### *Exemptions*

Affordable housing units - could be exempt from ACCs to compliment other regional incentives in support of housing. This could be expanded to include all variety of non-market housing.

Demolition of units - where a lot has demolished a home the number of new additional units would be subject to the ACCs. A system would need to be established to track this.

#### *Determining Growth*

There are multiple approaches to determining growth and traditionally regional growth strategies, local land use plans and municipal official community plans would be the starting point backed by census data.

Recently, the Comox Valley Regional District commissioned a Housing Needs Report, was adopted by the board in September. The report outlines growth projections in all areas apart from Denman and Hornby Island. Table 6.6 Anticipated demand disaggregated by price model and required number of bedrooms proves most useful and recently relevant to support ACC calculations.

Table 6-6: Anticipated demand\* disaggregated by price model and required number of bedrooms

	Market		Affordable / below-market		Deeply affordable		Total	
	5-year	20-year	5-year	20-year	5-year	20-year	5-year	20-year
0- / 1-bed	790	4,245	793	2,731	211	519	1,794	5,892
2-bed	1,286	4,245	160	579	42	110	1,488	4,934
3-bed	1,047	3,451	98	380	26	72	1,171	3,904
4+ bed	787	2,733	62	244	16	46	865	3,024
Total	3,910	13,071	1,113	3,934	295	747	5,320	17,750

\* total results may not be perfectly equal to their parts due to rounding.

Source – Housing Needs Report Comox Valley Regional District prepared by Turner Drake and Partners Ltd August 2024.

As such for the purpose of this example 13,701 new units will be used for the 20-year growth calculations from a region wide perspective, excluding Denman and Hornby Island.

In the next 25 years the Islands Trust Northern Region Housing Needs Assessment developed in 2018 identified the need for 165 units on Denman Island with 48 per cent of them being affordable and Hornby Island 158 with 41 per cent which should be affordable housing in the next 25 years. As such market housing on Denman would be 86 units and market housing on Hornby would be 93. Adjusted for 20-year ACC horizon the number would be:

- Denman Market housing – 69 units
- Hornby Housing - 74 units

Market housing needs based on the above data for the CVRD is 13,844 units in the next 20 years.

### *Determining Charge Amounts*

This portion of the analysis is perhaps the most discretionary to understand the impact on development viability especially in the context of anticipated changes in current municipal and regional DCCs while these jurisdictions adjust to new zoning legislation. This section will be a major focus of the background work and coordination needed when creating the ACC bylaw.

The recreation commission has the benefit of recent studies of new infrastructure costs developed during their strategic planning to estimate future costs and future growth needs. From the recent projections from the 20-year capital planning for new infrastructure the following capital costs benchmarks have been set.

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Year Planned</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Artificial Turf Field	2025	6 million
Community Rink	2026	47 million
Aquatic Centre Pool addition	2030	35 million
	<b>Total</b>	<b>88 million</b>

Assumptions on infrastructure:

- ice sheet only with minimal spectator seating,
- no land costs,
- Pool expansion on existing facility only,
- Other community needs identified in previous study findings such as indoor racket sports courts, outdoor pool needs, large flexible dry floor space, wellness expansion needs, agriculture specific indoor venues, were not considered.

The assumptions on growth infrastructure of not including other findings could be viewed as short-sighted and could be added to the calculation with a focus on adjusting the viability to development instead in the background report. If so a proper spectator arena and some other larger needs could easily add an additional 100 to 150 million to the benchmarking data.



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Briefing Note

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**To:** Council

**File No.:** 5335-20

**From:** Director of Infrastructure and Environmental Engineering

**Date:** February 12, 2025

**Subject:** Air Quality Update

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**PURPOSE:** To update Council on air quality within the community, and initiatives to address resident concerns.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The City of Courtenay enjoys good air quality, except during winter nights and times of wildfire smoke. Concerns about air quality in the region are longstanding, and have been raised by residents, Island Health, and the Ministry of the Environment. It is the community vision for the Comox Valley to have clean and healthy air all year round, for current and future generations, as described in the Regional Airshed Protection Strategy.

Work to understand the sources of poor air quality, and the options to improve air quality have been underway for many years, and represent a collaboration between numerous organizations and project partners. Measurements from the provincial air monitoring station indicate that fine particulate matter (also known as PM<sub>2.5</sub>) is responsible for local air quality issues. Fine particulate matter is a key component of wood smoke and it is small enough to inhale, travel through our bloodstream, and cause a range of health problems. Island Health advises that PM<sub>2.5</sub> can cause eye and throat irritation, and may aggravate respiratory and heart illnesses. They further advise that all types of smoke have similar impacts to cigarette smoke.

In the City of Courtenay, the predominant source of PM<sub>2.5</sub> is residential wood burning appliances. This was determined by observing the pattern and timing of elevated concentrations of fine particulate matter. Concentrations of PM<sub>2.5</sub> are highest during winter evenings, as seen in the average monthly and hourly readings collected by the provincial air monitoring station. This pattern aligns with the usage of wood burning appliances in the community. Poor atmospheric venting conditions often occur at night, which traps smoke close to the ground and further worsens air quality.

The City of Courtenay has been working to improve air quality by: installing additional air quality monitors, updating bylaws, hosting an annual public education campaign and collaborating regionally. Updates on each of these initiatives is described below.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **PurpleAir Monitors**

The City partnered with School District 71 to install PurpleAir Monitors on public buildings across the City. PurpleAir monitors report real time readings of fine particulate matter on an online map. By increasing the number of monitoring locations, the public can observe how concentrations of PM<sub>2.5</sub> vary across the region, at different times of day. The City of Courtenay maintains nine PurpleAir monitoring locations and additional air monitors have been installed by residents, local government, and community organizations. Currently there are more than 20 monitoring locations in the Comox Valley.

The BC Ministry of Environment endorses the use of PurpleAir monitors and has created data management tools to include measurements from these devices in the provincial air monitoring dataset. Data collected

from these monitors is used by the province to issue air quality advisories. The data collected from these monitors cannot be evaluated against the BC Air Quality Objectives without a correction factor applied because the monitors are sensitive to humidity. For this reason, the monitors are best at providing information about relative air quality in different neighbourhoods within the region.

### **Bylaws Update**

The City updated the Prevention of Public Nuisances Bylaw No. 2804 to regulate nuisance smoke. Nuisance smoke is defined as smoke that visibly drifts onto an adjacent property; interferes with a person's use and enjoyment of privately owned real property; or smoke that interferes with a person's use or enjoyment of public property including sidewalks, roadways, and parks.

Persistent smoke that meets these criteria, is considered a nuisance. Bylaw Enforcement works with residents to seek voluntary compliance, with enforcement measures used in cases of continued non-compliance.

### **Public Education Campaign**

The City of Courtenay has been running an annual public education campaign for the past couple of winters. The campaign first launched in Winter 2023, continued from Fall 2023 to Winter 2024, and recently launched again in Winter 2025. The education campaign includes information on the city website, along with digital and newspaper advertisements.

The objective of the campaign is to make residents aware of the causes of poor air quality, and the opportunities to improve local air quality. This includes information about PM<sub>2.5</sub> emitted from different heat sources, the rebates available for home heating upgrades, and how to achieve compliance with City of Courtenay nuisance bylaws.

### **Collaborate Regionally**

The City of Courtenay has been collaborating regionally to improve air quality. The City participated as a steering committee member in the development of the Regional Airshed Protection Strategy, led by the Comox Valley Regional District. Since the strategy was published in 2023, the City has worked to implement recommendations within the municipal boundary, and has offered guidance to other local governments within the region. The Regional Airshed Protection Strategy is provided in Attachment 2.

### **Provincial Air Monitoring Data**

The provincial air monitoring station has been measuring fine particulate matter since 2011, and measurements from this station can be evaluated against the BC Air Quality Objectives (AQO). The last ten years of data from this station are presented in Attachment 3. Instruments at this monitoring station are carefully calibrated, and the data is verified by the province. For these reasons, this monitoring station provides the most accurate and long-term perspective on air quality within the region.

Key findings:

- The graph of month averages indicates that concentrations of PM<sub>2.5</sub> above the annual BC AQO of 8 µg/m<sup>3</sup> occur during the winter from October to March each year.
- A daily increase in fine particulate matter above the AQO is observed during winter evenings, as seen in the graph of hourly averages.
- Air quality is generally good during winter afternoons, when atmospheric venting conditions are good and smoke trapped from the previous night has had a chance to clear.
- Winter wood burning has a greater impact on air quality than wildfire smoke, which occurs less frequently. This is seen in the monthly average of PM<sub>2.5</sub>, where smoke from wildfires is responsible

for an increase in PM<sub>2.5</sub> in July and August, and these averages are much less than the average PM<sub>2.5</sub> over the winter months.

- A trend of average air quality improvement started in 2017, and the objectives were met for the first time in 2019. This trend of improvement continues year over year.

In follow-up discussions with the province, it was noted that this ongoing trend of average air quality improvement seems to be unique to the Comox Valley. For example, air monitoring data from the Cowichan Valley shows an increase in PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations following the COVID -19 pandemic. This suggests local efforts to improve air quality are working.

Going forward, air quality will continue to be evaluated by the provincial air monitoring station, and local efforts to improve air quality will focus on reducing smoke during winter evenings.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no new financial implications at this time. Operations and maintenance costs for the PurpleAir monitors, and the annual public education campaign are covered by the Infrastructure and Environmental Engineering general operating budget which has a proposed value of \$33,000 for 2025.

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:**

Infrastructure and Environmental Engineering has led initiatives to improve air quality with support from Information Technology, Communications, Operations, Legislative Services, Bylaw, the Province of BC, and external consultants. Regional initiatives and provincial programs have been led by the Comox Valley Regional District.

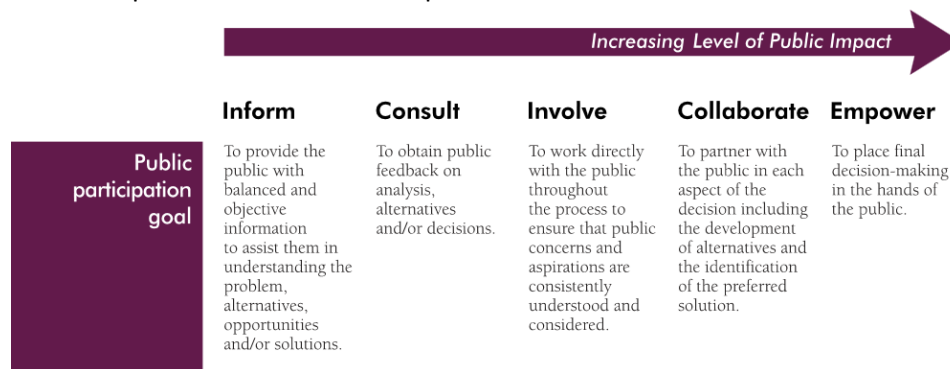
**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:**

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Social Infrastructure - Develop measures and criteria to track progress for the OCP's four cardinal directions: reconciliation, community well-being, equity, and climate action
- Good Governance - Explore and establish a partnership approach with SD71 on mutual interest topics: active travel and traffic planning, shared facilities, community use of schools, climate, reconciliation, child care and youth engagement

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

Staff collaborate with the public to improve air quality, and inform them of the monitoring results, based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation:



**RECOMMENDATION:** THAT Council receive the “Air Quality Update” briefing note.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Presentation – Air Quality Update
2. Regional Airshed Protection Strategy
3. Provincial Air Quality Data (2014-2023)

Prepared by: Jeanniene Tazzioli, P. Eng, Manager of Environmental Engineering

Reviewed by: Chris Davidson, P. Eng, PMP, Director of Infrastructure and Environmental Engineering

Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.PI., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)





City of  
Courtenay

# Air Quality Update



Infrastructure and Environmental Engineering  
City of Courtenay  
February 12, 2025 Council Meeting

# Background

**Vision: to have clean and healthy air all year round, for current and future generations**

- The City of Courtenay enjoys good air quality except during winter nights and times of wildfire smoke
- Longstanding community concerns
- Fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) is responsible for local air quality issues

# Actions to Improve Air Quality

ZOOM Window Space

## Install PurpleAir Monitors

- Installed nine monitors in partnership with SD71

## Bylaws Update

- Prevention of Public Nuisances Bylaw No. 2804

## Public Education Campaign

- Winter 2023
- Fall 2023 - Winter 2024
- Winter 2025

## Collaborate Regionally

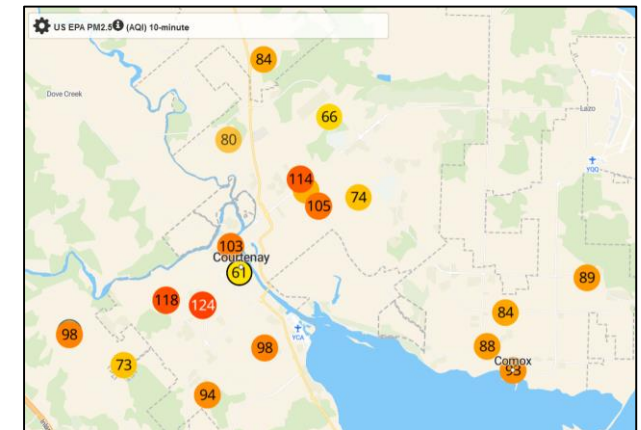
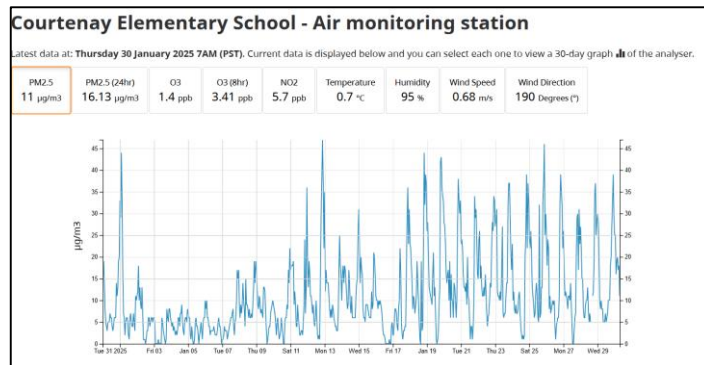
- Regional Airshed Protection Strategy

# Provincial Monitoring vs. PurpleAir

ZOOM Window Space

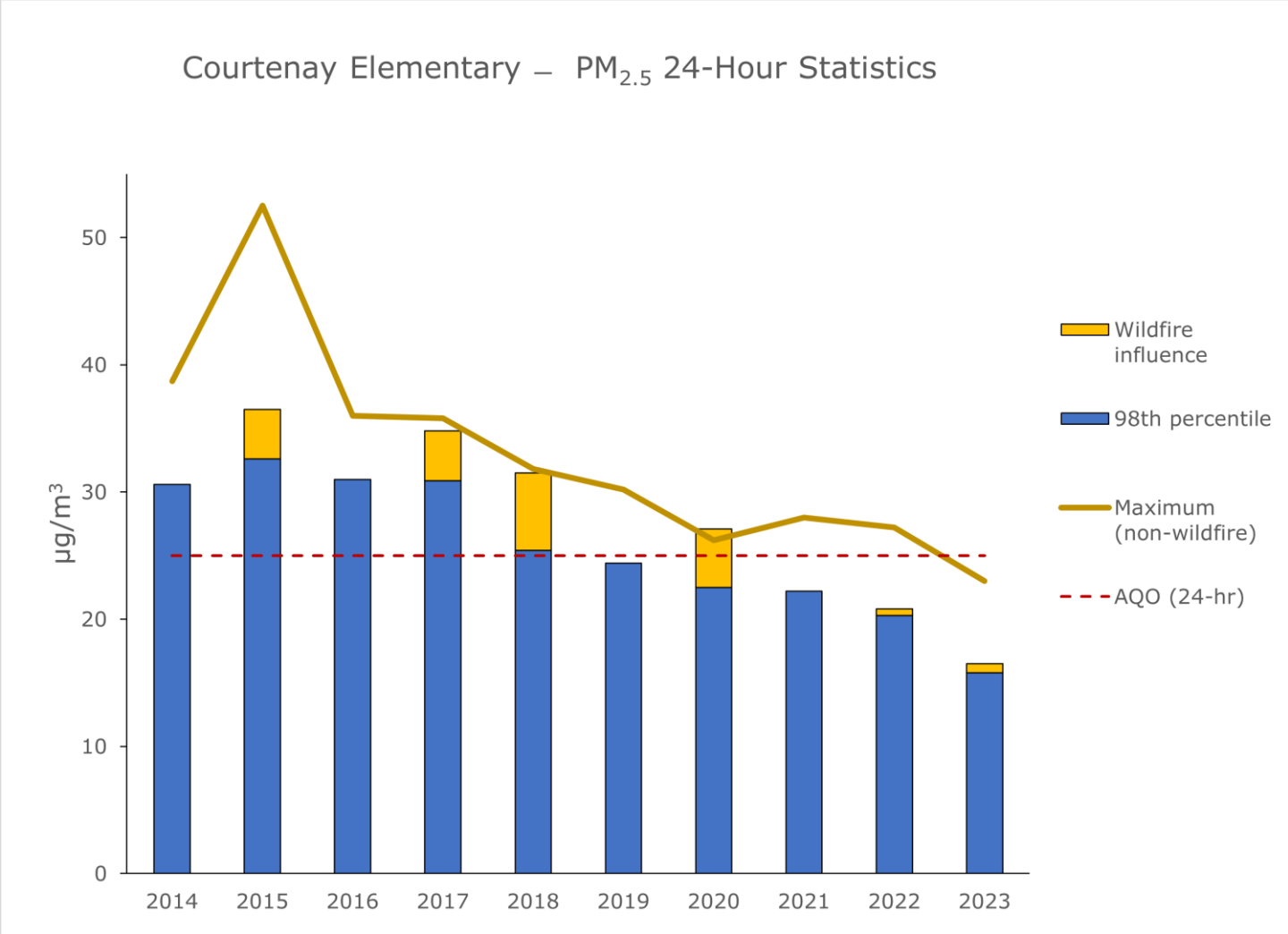
- Readings updated hourly
- One monitoring location
- Scientist led
- Rigorous calibration and verification
- Evaluated using Air Quality Objectives
- Continuous data since 2011

- Real time readings
- Multiple monitoring locations
- Community led
- Little calibration and verification
- Evaluated relative to other monitors
- Data since 2023



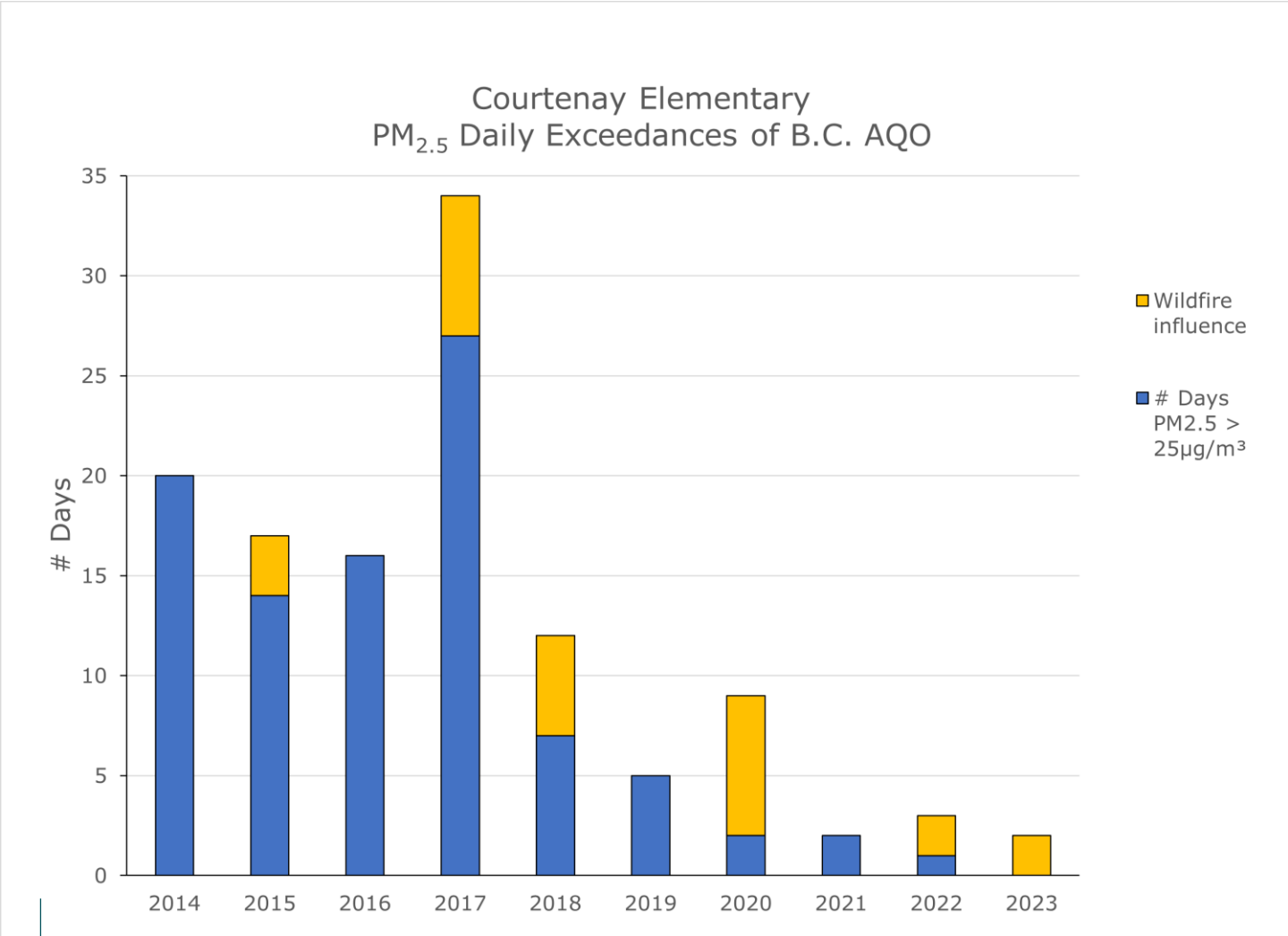
# Provincial Monitoring Data (2014-2023)

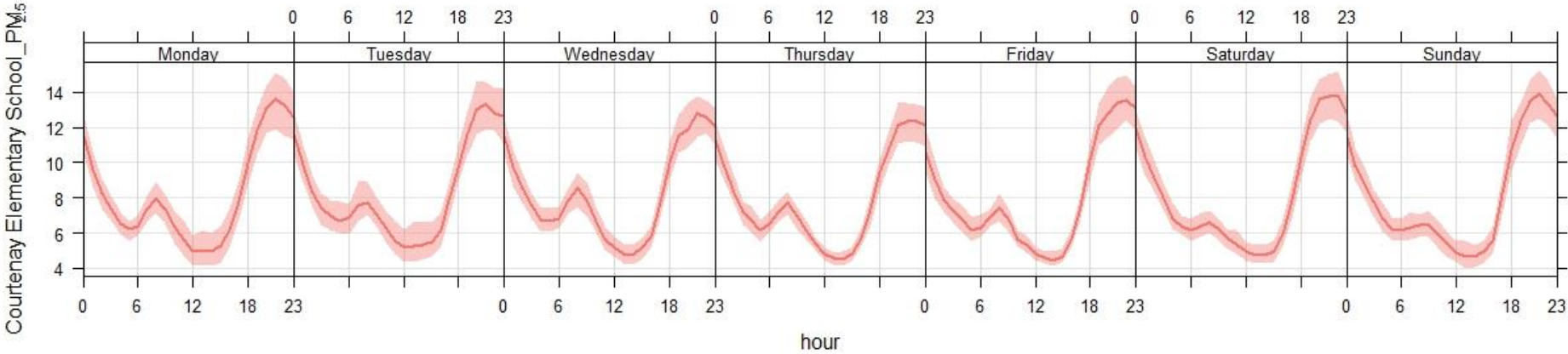
ZOOM Window Space



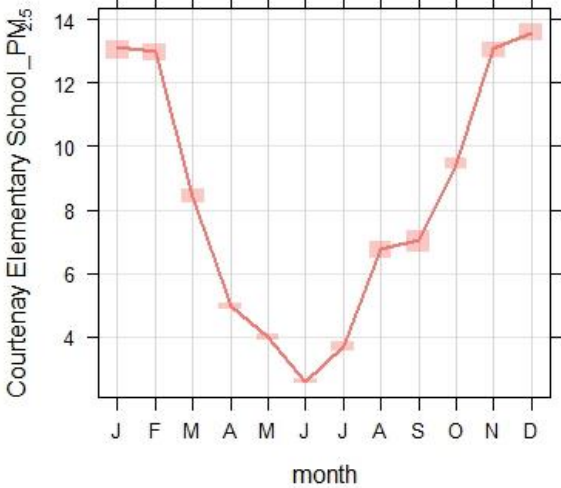
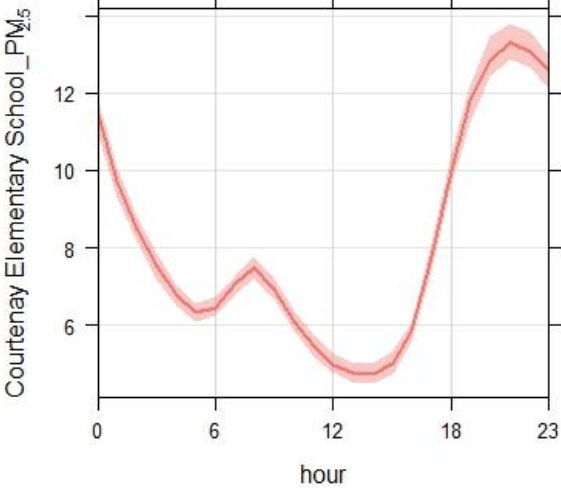
# Provincial Monitoring Data (2014-2023)

ZOOM Window Space

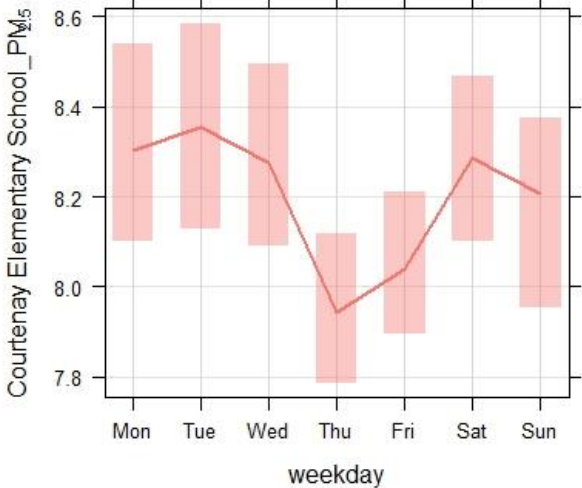




Courtenay Elementary School\_PM<sub>2.5</sub>



mean and 95% confidence interval in mean



# Key Findings

1. PM<sub>2.5</sub> above air quality objectives (AQO) occurs during the winter from October to March.
2. An increase above the AQO occurs daily on winter evenings.
3. Air quality is good during winter afternoons, when atmospheric venting conditions are good
4. Winter wood burning has a greater impact on local air quality than wildfire smoke.
5. A trend of improvement continues year over year.



# Recommendation




ZOOM Window Space

1. THAT Council receive the “Air Quality Update” briefing note.
2. THAT Council Provide alternative direction to staff.



# Regional Airshed Protection Strategy 2023



comoxvalleyrd.ca   



# Acknowledgements

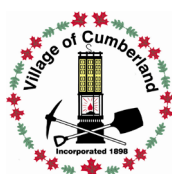
The Regional Airshed Protection Strategy (the Strategy) was developed by the Comox Valley Regional District with the support of member municipalities. The Strategy was developed to provide direction on actions to improve regional air quality. The Comox Valley Regional Airshed Roundtable was engaged to develop a shared understanding of air quality issues and help identify areas for prioritization. Wood smoke was identified as a pollutant of concern and there were various areas of agreement as well as strongly held positions by the Roundtable members. Not all actions were unanimously supported by the Roundtable, however the Strategy reflects various contributions from the Roundtable process and provides direction for many groups and individuals to be a part of improving regional air quality. The development of this Strategy would not have been possible without the time of representatives from member municipalities, the Airshed Roundtable and the Airshed Roundtable Steering Committee.

## **Steering Committee (Also Roundtable Members)**

- Island Health
- Vancouver Island University
- Ministry of Forests
- Ministry of Water Land and Resource Stewardship
- City of Courtenay
- Village of Cumberland
- Town of Comox
- BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (BC ENV)

## **Roundtable Members**

- Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Elemental Energy Advisors
- Focused Energy Assessments
- Comox Valley Farmers Institute
- Breathe Clean Air Comox Valley
- Mid Island Farmers Institute
- Hearth Patio and Barbeque Association
- Cumberland Community Forest Society
- Comox Valley Nurses for Health and the Environment
- Manulife Investment Management
- Comox Valley Community Health Network
- Residents from each municipality and electoral area



# Executive Summary

The *Regional Airshed Protection Strategy (the Strategy)* was developed by the Comox Valley Regional District through the engagement of the Regional Airshed Roundtable (the Roundtable). The Strategy is an iterative document providing a foundation for actions that can be undertaken to improve air quality. The Roundtable was established following the direction of the Comox Valley Regional District Board (CVRD) to create a collaborative framework for improving air quality in the region.

The Roundtable provided diverse perspectives and insights on addressing air quality in the valley and the complexity involved. A key finding in this engagement was the prioritization and focus of wood smoke pollution. However, the Strategy is an iterative document, that will be refined over time to accommodate changing needs and performance monitoring as part of the adaptive process.

## Wood Smoke in the Comox Valley

Particulate matter, 2.5 microns and smaller in aerodynamic diameter ( $PM_{2.5}$ ), has been identified as the pollutant with the greatest cause of concern for human health in the Comox Valley. The largest source of  $PM_{2.5}$  in the Comox Valley is wood burning (indoor and outdoor). Reducing  $PM_{2.5}$  is the most effective way to address the health impacts from air pollution in the

Comox Valley. There is no safe level of  $PM_{2.5}$  and wood burning has significant implications on health.

Air quality in the Comox Valley is concerning especially during the fall and winter seasons when  $PM_{2.5}$  levels regularly exceed provincial and national standards. Local efforts to reduce wood smoke have been spearheaded by the Province, health authority, local governments and community groups. Efforts to date include bylaw amendments, incentive programs, education and outreach. More work is needed however, as the the Comox Valley remains one of the lowest ranked communities for air quality in the province.

“The issue of how to improve air quality in the Comox Valley is a complex one. It is for this reason that the CVRD brought together a large diversity of voices to the Roundtable.”

– Roundtable Member

The Roundtable is a recent initiative tackling the issue of regional air quality through the development of this strategy. The guiding principles, vision and goals developed through the Roundtable are summarized in the following section.



## Vision

The Comox Valley has clean and healthy air all year round, for current and future generations.

## Guiding Principles



**Health Protection:** Work together to ensure the best air possible for all residents in all areas of the Valley.



**Accessibility:** Improve access to actions, programs and investments that help clean our air.



**Innovative and evidence-based approaches:** Use the best available science, evidence and practice to implement innovative approaches to achieve our vision. Continually assess the effectiveness of these approaches.



**Minimizing contributions to climate change:** Focus on minimizing both air pollution and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to support climate action targets. Climate change is linked to air quality, and the key health harming air contaminants (e.g. PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and GHGs have the same sources (e.g. buildings and transportation).

## Goals



Achieve measurable reductions in fine particulate matter levels to protect public health.



Improve and expand knowledge of sources and impacts of air pollution.



Educate and involve the community in understanding and reducing the impacts of air pollution and the links to climate change.

The Strategy's Action Plan consists of the following six actions.

1	Reduce emissions from existing wood-burning appliances
2	Transition away from using wood-burning appliances, prioritizing densely populated areas
3	Reduce emissions from recreational fires and eliminate yard waste burning
4	Promote and advocate for alternatives to non-residential open burning
5	Expand PM <sub>2.5</sub> data research and collection to inform actions
6	Expand wood smoke education programs



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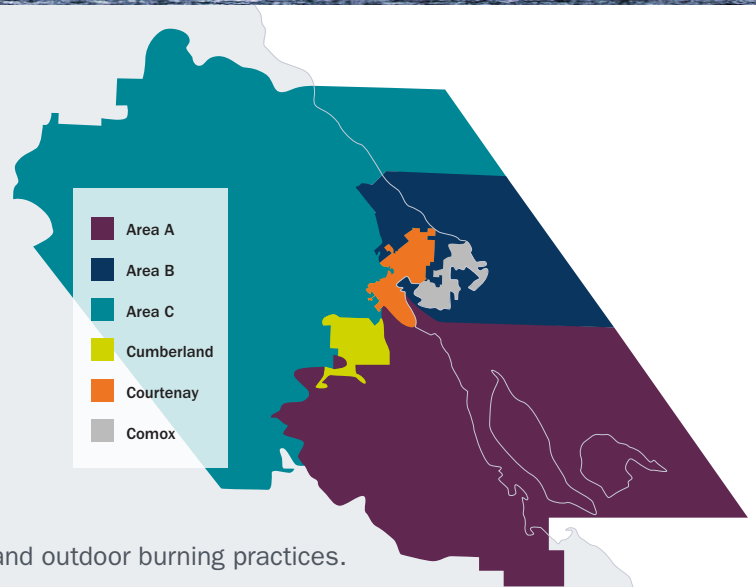
# Comox Valley Air Quality Impacts

## The Comox Valley

The Comox Valley is located on the traditional, unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation.

Home to over 72,000 residents, the Comox Valley offers a diversity of urban and rural areas surrounded by mountains, beaches, and rivers where residents and visitors enjoy a multitude of outdoor activities and vibrant communities. The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) is a federation of three municipalities, Town of Comox, City of Courtenay and the Village of Cumberland and three electoral areas (A (Baynes Sound-Denman/Hornby Islands), B (Lazo North) and C (Puntledge Black Creek)).

The Comox Valley has access to areas of natural heritage and beauty such as the Beaufort Mountains and Strathcona Park. Just as the locational beauty and resources are shared by the Comox Valley communities, so is the air which is breathed. A key pollutant of this air is wood smoke from various indoor



and outdoor burning practices.

### Wood Smoke Sources

Wood Smoke has various environmental and health impacts. Wood smoke is emitted from natural and man-made causes, including sources such as indoor wood-burning appliances, outdoor burning (backyard burning, recreational burning, land clearing and fire abatement). In the Comox Valley, wood is a prevalent and common fuel source due to its relative affordability, reliability and availability.

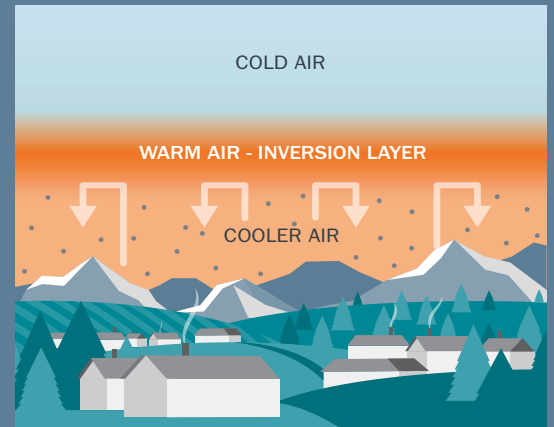


## Topographical and Meteorological Factors

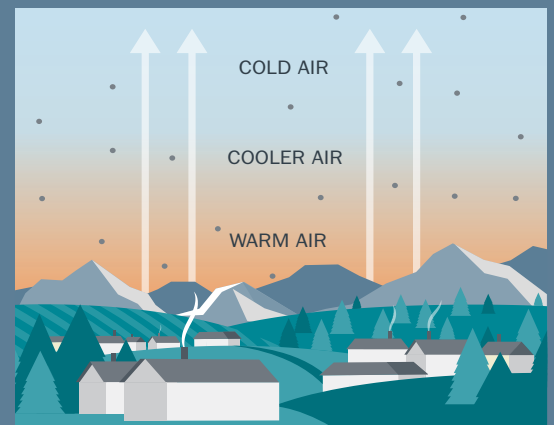
Wood Smoke Pollution is further exacerbated in valley locations by topographic and meteorological conditions. In cold seasons, the Comox Valley is subject to poor ventilation and temperature inversions. Inversions reduce the ability of the atmosphere to disperse pollutants and trap emissions near the ground, prolonging PM<sub>2.5</sub> exposure to residents. Inversions occur when temperature increases with the height above the ground, causing colder, denser air to be trapped under a layer of warmer, lighter air, with very little vertical mixing.

Colder air from the surrounding mountains often flows down to the valley bottom, these “drainage flows” confine wood smoke emissions near the ground, prolonging air pollution and PM<sub>2.5</sub> exposure to residents. As a result PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels in the Comox Valley are elevated during the cold season and often exceed provincial and federal acceptable limits [1].

WITH TEMPERATURE INVERSION



WITHOUT TEMPERATURE INVERSION



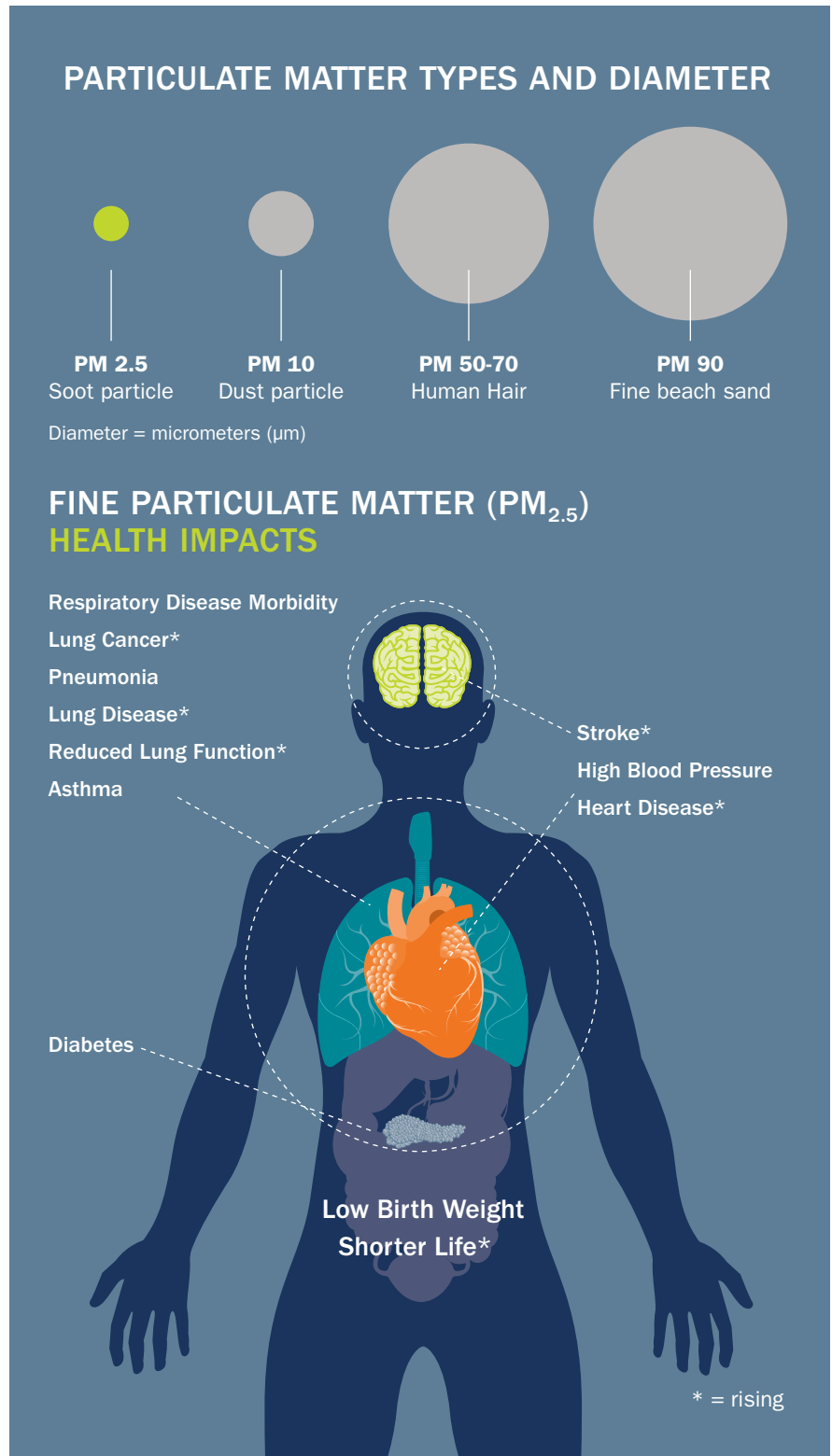
# PM<sub>2.5</sub> Health Impacts

## PM<sub>2.5</sub>

PM<sub>2.5</sub> is a pollutant with suspended particles in the air that are 2.5 microns wide or smaller. PM<sub>2.5</sub> particles are small enough to penetrate into the lungs and the bloodstream, causing health problems. PM<sub>2.5</sub> is directly emitted from combustion (e.g. forest fires, wood burning, vehicle engines, debris burning), and can also form when other pollutants in the air undergo chemical reactions.

## PM<sub>2.5</sub> Health Impacts

PM<sub>2.5</sub> particles in wood smoke pose a health risk to all people and disproportionately impact children, the elderly and people with asthma and other lung disease or heart conditions. Health Canada estimates that 1,200 British Columbians die prematurely every year due to air pollution from PM<sub>2.5</sub>, nitrogen dioxide and ozone [2]. PM<sub>2.5</sub> affects multiple organs and causes both acute and chronic health effects. Exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub> can lead to asthma attacks, chronic bronchitis and heart attacks. The long-term health impacts are significant and concerning as they affect the lungs and cardiovascular health. Furthermore there are many other emerging and rising health effects.



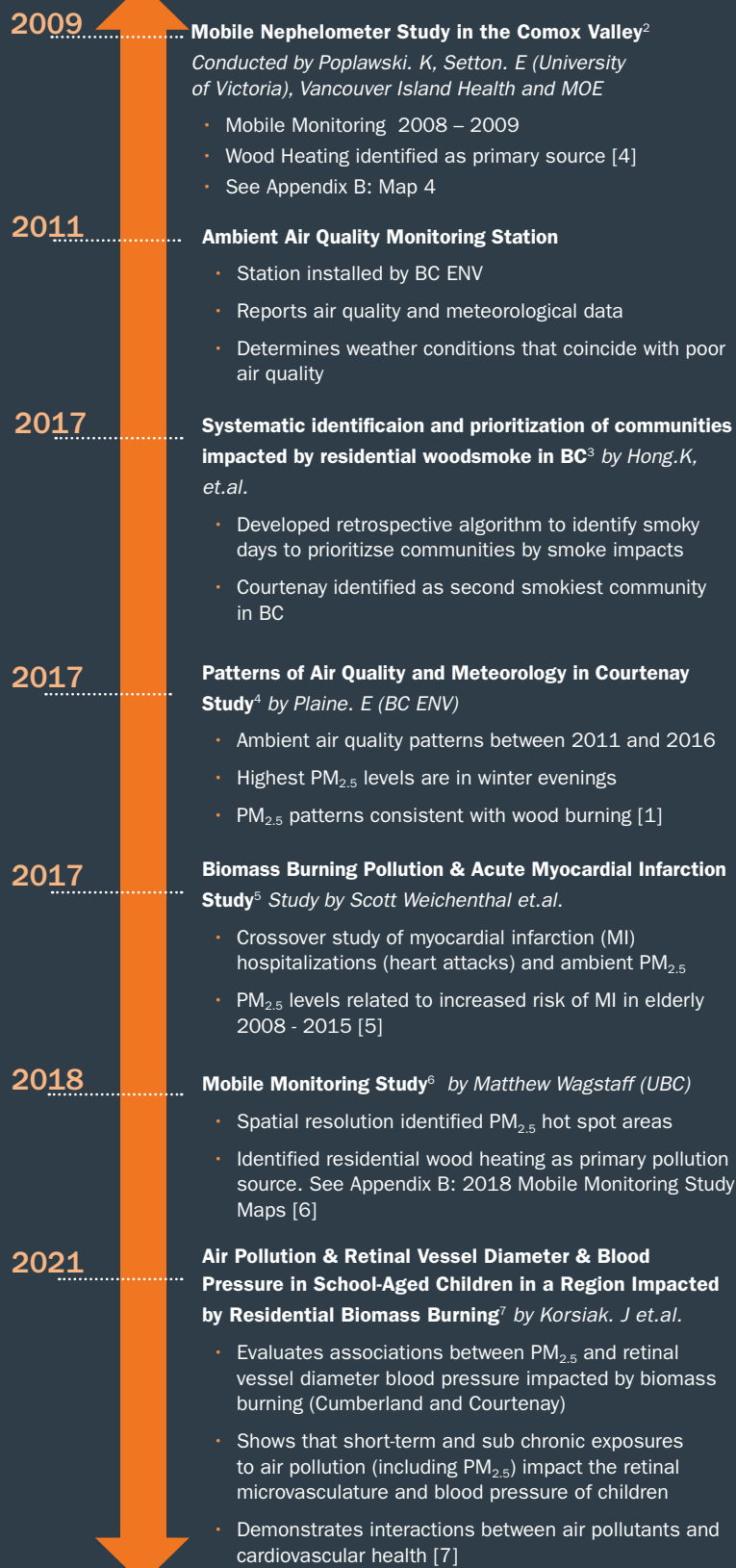
# Comox Valley PM<sub>2.5</sub> Levels

Several provincial and local government research and monitoring initiatives have contributed to the weight of evidence on PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels and impacts in the Comox Valley. These include, stationary monitoring, mobile monitoring and a particulate matter inventory. Stationary monitoring contributes continuous data that is useful for identifying trends. Mobile monitoring is valuable for the identification of PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations and hotspot locations. The particulate matter emissions inventory provides a holistic overview of PM<sub>2.5</sub> sources. These various monitoring methods present data for research to better understand the public health and environmental impacts of PM<sub>2.5</sub>.

The Comox Valley ambient air concentrations including PM<sub>2.5</sub> and meteorology are measured and monitored by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (BC ENV) at the Courtenay ambient air station, under commitments to protect the health of communities. Monitoring shows that the Comox Valley has consistently exceeded Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) and BC Air Quality Objectives (AQOs). These acceptable limits are expressed as PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations in micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m<sup>3</sup>) averaged over a 24 hour period or annually [3].

Air quality reports and real-time data from the Courtenay monitoring station are available on the BC Ministry's website and in the Georgia Strait Air Zone Reports<sup>1</sup>. Real-time data is used to inform air quality advisories and the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI). Since 2012, the Comox Valley has exceeded the BC annual AQOs for PM<sub>2.5</sub> every year except for 2016 and 2019 (see appendix A). Furthermore, Comox Valley PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels have exceeded the BC 24-hour AQO every year except for 2019.

## PM<sub>2.5</sub> Research & Monitoring Timeline



1 <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/air/reports/latest-air-zone-reports>

2 [http://www.llbc.leg.bc.ca/public/pubdocs/bcdocs2010/463390/viha2009airqualitymonitoringreport\\_1.pdf](http://www.llbc.leg.bc.ca/public/pubdocs/bcdocs2010/463390/viha2009airqualitymonitoringreport_1.pdf)

3 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0269749116318292?via%3Dihub>

4 [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/air-land-water/air/reports-pub/courtenay\\_airquality\\_report\\_2011-2016.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/air-land-water/air/reports-pub/courtenay_airquality_report_2011-2016.pdf)

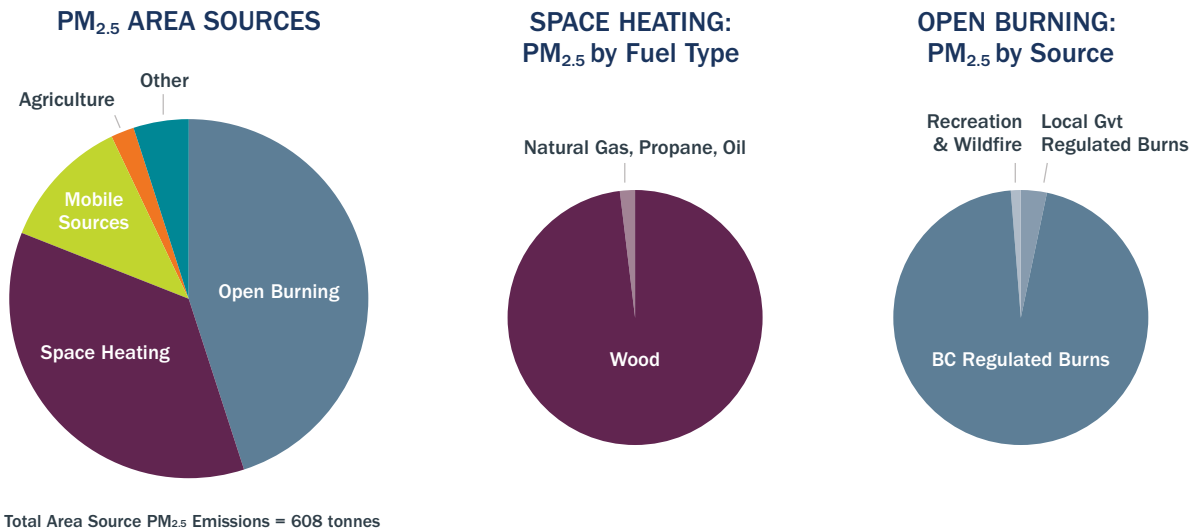
5 [https://journals.lww.com/epidem/Fulltext/2017/05000/Biomass\\_Burning\\_and\\_Risk\\_of\\_Acute\\_Myocardial\\_Infarction.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/epidem/Fulltext/2017/05000/Biomass_Burning_and_Risk_of_Acute_Myocardial_Infarction.aspx)

6 <https://open.library.ubc.ca/media/stream/pdf/24/1.0371217/4>

7 <https://rdcu.be/deYlt>

# Comox Valley Particulate Matter Emissions Inventory

## PM<sub>2.5</sub> Areas Sources



BC ENV compiled a Particulate Matter (PM) Emissions Inventory for the Comox Valley Regional District for 2015 (includes City of Courtenay, the Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, CVRD Electoral Areas A, B and C and the K'ómoks First Nation). Emissions were computed for total particulate matter (i.e. PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>) from various area sources including open burning, space heating and mobile sources. Open burning and space heating were identified as the top two dominant sources of PM<sub>2.5</sub> [8].

**Space heating** contributed **36%** of PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution, 35% was generated from residential wood burning, and less than 1% from natural gas, propane and heating oil.

**Open burning** accounted for **45%** of the total PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions. Provincially-regulated pile and area burns contributed 41.5%. Municipally-regulated backyard burns and pile burns accounted for 3.5% and recreation and wildfires contributed less than

1%. Although forestry burn sites are a large source of PM<sub>2.5</sub>, they are often remotely located and occur under stringent conditions. These conditions are in place to ensure that smoke from fire hazard abatement does not impact community public health and safety. Industrial burning from forestry occurs for two months of the year and only when the venting index is at acceptable levels for PM<sub>2.5</sub> dispersement.

### Uncaptured PM<sub>2.5</sub> sources and factors

The inventory provides a quantitative account of PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions from area sources that include space heating, open burning, mobile sources and agriculture. Analysis of PM<sub>2.5</sub> environmental risks, smoke concentration exposure and impacts are available in other research and monitoring studies. Uncaptured PM<sub>2.5</sub> sources and factors include unregulated backyard burning, spatial context, timing, weather and meteorological conditions.

- **Unregulated Backyard Burning** - Backyard burning sometimes take place outside regulatory requirements, and such instances are not fully captured in the inventory.
- **Spatial Context** - PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution occurs in various spatial contexts and health impacts increase when emissions are concentrated and close to populated areas. Backyard burning is a smaller source of PM<sub>2.5</sub> in the inventory and can have greater health impacts due to residential population proximity.
- **Timing** - Higher concentrations of PM<sub>2.5</sub> can be associated with time of day and season. Winter months and evenings have higher levels of PM<sub>2.5</sub> from

indoor wood heating in residential areas, meaning greater health impacts on larger populations.

- **Weather and Local Meteorological Conditions** - Winds, temperatures, humidity and atmospheric conditions can affect the dispersement of pollution and there is more PM<sub>2.5</sub> accumulation with stagnant air. The venting index estimates how well the air disperses smoke and how well it will mix into the air.



# Air Quality and Wood Smoke Management

## Planning and Tools

**Managing air quality is a multi-jurisdictional challenge: wood smoke emissions can be managed through regulations, standards and initiatives set by various levels of government and authorities. Additionally various partnerships have been developed for measuring air quality, outreach and education.**

### Air Quality Authority

The *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* (CEPA) coordinates the National Air Quality Management System (AQMS), which establishes limits on air pollutants for the protection of human health and the environment through the Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS). CAAQS are set to keep air pollutants below the identified levels. When pollutants near or surpass standards, governments act to reduce those pollutant levels.

The primary authority for air management is the **BC Government** through the Environment Management Act. This is key legislation in regards to wood smoke and includes the following regulations:

- *Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation*: Makes provisions for open burning to minimize smoke, and human and environmental health risks [9].
- *Solid Fuel Burning Domestic Appliance Regulation*: Regulates wood-burning appliances to reduce pollution from wood smoke.

The *Wildfire Act and Regulation* is also key legislation that relates to open air burning as it specifies rules and regulations around fire use, fire prevention and wildfire control.

Local government air quality bylaws can be enacted under provisions of the Local Government Act or the Community Charter through land use planning and environmental policies and programs. Where bylaws cannot be developed, robust educational and incentive programs can be administered.

### Measuring and Monitoring PM<sub>2.5</sub>

In addition to the air quality research and studies, consistent and reliable monitoring is key to reducing emissions and for evaluating initiatives. The Courtenay monitoring station provides reliable real-time data that can be compared to CAAQS and BC AQOs. The Comox Valley had been identified as a ‘red zone’ in all the Georgia Strait Air Zone Reports from 2012 to 2018 and as an ‘orange zone’ from 2017-2020. ‘Red zone’ communities are those that exceed CAAQS and ‘orange zone’ communities are those where action is still needed to prevent CAAQS exceedance.

As an ‘orange zone’ community, it is pertinent to continue to reduce PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels. The Comox Valley has one of the top PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels in the Georgia Strait Air Zone communities and had the highest PM<sub>2.5</sub> 24-hour metric and the second-highest PM<sub>2.5</sub> annual metric in the 2018–2020 Georgia Strait Air Zone Report.

Although the Courtenay monitoring station provides reliable data it does not capture the spatial variations of PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution such as the hot spot areas identified in past mobile monitoring studies.



## Partnerships

- Island Health has partnered with local governments for educational initiatives and provided resources, grants and support for programs such as the Wood Smoke Reduction Program.
- The Airshed Roundtable is a collaborative initiative supported by member municipalities, local health authorities, academia, BC ENV, and represented by various community stakeholders.
- The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (BC ENV) and the BC Lung Foundation support the CVRD's Wood Smoke Reduction Program by providing grant funding through the B.C Community Wood Smoke Reduction Program.
- Municipal partners (the Village of Cumberland, Town of Comox and the City of Courtenay) continue to support regional air quality initiatives and are also represented on the Airshed Roundtable.

## Local Regulations

- Local governments in the Comox Valley have adopted various wood-burning appliance regulations and bylaws that prohibit the installation of wood-burning appliances in new buildings and bylaws that address nuisance smoke emissions. These bylaws are listed in Appendix B Table 3.
- Open burning bylaws are for fire protection and regulation, these bylaws are mainly intended for

reducing the risk of fire and resulting property damage. There are various fire service areas and fire protection regulations in the Comox Valley. Fire protection and regulation bylaws are listed in Appendix B Table 4 and the Fire Service Areas are depicted on Map 1. Beach fire programs in CVRD Parks are temporarily suspended on poor air quality days when the AQHI reaches a rating above 10 (very high risk).

## Education

- Education and outreach initiatives have been undertaken by the CVRD and local community groups including the Wood Smoke Reduction Program which aims to increase awareness of wood smoke impacts while incentivizing and encouraging the removal of wood-burning appliances.

**The Wood Smoke Reduction Program** is offered through funding from the Provincial Community Wood Smoke Reduction Program. The program aims to reduce wood smoke pollution by providing rebate incentives, education and outreach. Increased rebate amounts have been offered through additional funding from Island Health. Rebates are provided for switching out 5+ year old appliances in exchange for an electric heat pump. Enhanced rebates have been provided for hot spot areas (areas that were identified as having higher concentrations of wood smoke) [10].



# Reducing Wood Smoke

**The Roundtable explored and identified a core set of challenges and opportunities for the effective improvement of air quality in the Comox Valley. These were analyzed further by the working groups that were formed in the Roundtable process. This analysis was foundational in the development of targeted and appropriate actions.**

## Challenges

**Awareness:** Lack of public awareness on local wood smoke conditions, health impacts, spatial conditions, existing bylaws and wood smoke reduction initiatives and programs. This makes outreach and behavioural change challenging.

**Acceptance:** Existing strong cultural practices of burning will take time to change. Burning has been linked to social connections and the value of self-reliance.

**Access:** Lack of access to or knowledge of available alternatives such as heat pump installation requirements, accessing seasoned, dry wood and alternative yard waste disposal locations.

**Economic:** High upfront heating system replacement costs can be a barrier for low income households. Education is required on the health impact costs of wood-burning appliance use.

**Regulatory:** A complex regulatory landscape that lacks clarity on local government's authority in some areas. Also effective enforcement of bylaws can be resource intensive.

**Data:** Limitations to available data, particularly in relation to air pollution distribution levels over time. Only one permanent air quality monitor exists in the Comox Valley. There is a lack of information about the number and types of wood-burning appliances currently in use.

## Opportunities

**Policy Potential:** Regional policy support and potential for alignment on air quality initiatives (e.g. through the Regional Growth Strategy and policies).

**Previous Studies:** Existing studies and research on the Comox Valley Air Quality provide a strong foundation for understanding the regional air quality issue.

**Active Community Groups:** Grassroots community groups in the Comox Valley provide and run active local programs.

**Air Quality Improvements:** There are general improvements in PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels in the recent years as demonstrated in the 2018-2020 Georgia Strait Air Zone Report.

**Increased Public Interest:** Public interest in the air quality problem and exploring solutions to reduce PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels has increased.

**Alternative Heating Options:** Increased options for wood-burning appliance switches and success stories of exchanges to cleaner heating appliances exist.



# The Airshed Roundtable

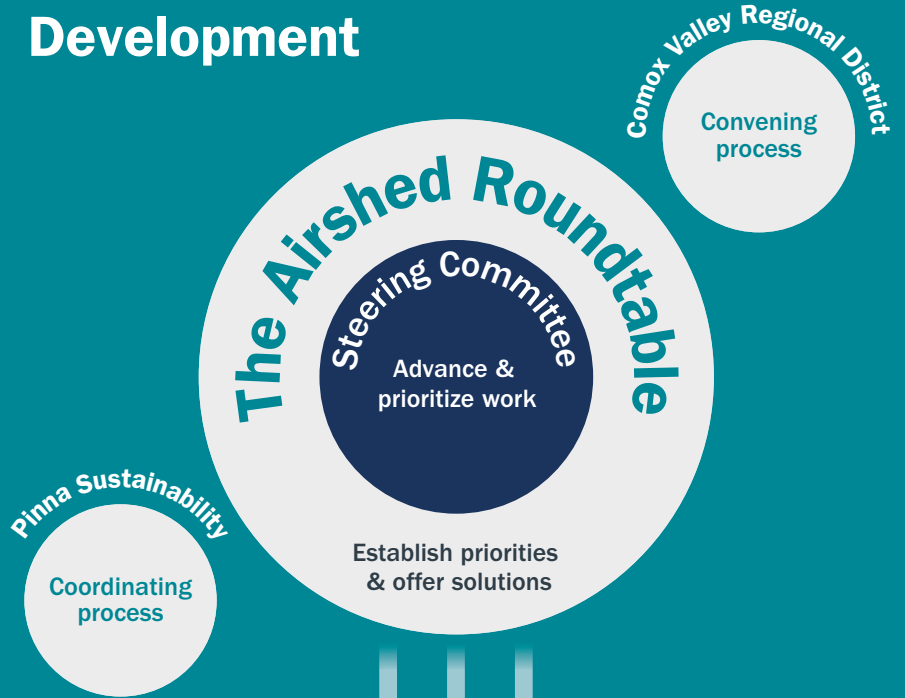
The CVRD launched the Airshed Roundtable initiative in Spring 2020 as a collaborative approach to tackle regional air quality. This was, in part, an effort to recognize the complexity of managing air quality in a community with divergent experiences and opinions about the role of wood burning. The Roundtable, appointed by the CVRD Board, is broadly represented by community members, non-profit organizations, and local industry. These members provided input and expertise on their understanding of the air quality issues in the Comox Valley, and pathways to improve air quality. The Roundtable primarily focused its understanding on the wood smoke issue and on PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution for air quality improvement in the Comox Valley. The Roundtable was supported by a steering committee comprising air quality and public health experts and local government staff, who provided direction and leadership to support strategic planning.

The **Regional Airshed Protection Strategy** is the culmination of the efforts of many organizations and individuals from the Comox Valley who came together as a Roundtable to define a vision, goals, strategies and implementation actions for clean and healthy air for everyone in the region.

# The Process

Substantial input from the Roundtable in 2020 and 2021 developed the Regional Airshed Protection Strategy. The initial engagement focused on local air quality issues and the development of the Vision and Goals. Subsequent Roundtable meetings focused on smaller Working Groups that identified actions to achieve Goal 1. The Roundtable later convened to review the Working Group's outcomes considering Goal 2 and Goal 3. This engagement informed the Action Plan. Although the Action Plan focuses on PM<sub>2.5</sub>, linkages to Climate Action will be part of Future Work.

# The Airshed Roundtable Process in the Strategy Development



## Vision

The Comox Valley has clean and healthy air, all year round for current and future generations

## Goals

**1** Achieve measurable reductions in PM<sub>2.5</sub> to protect public health

**2** Continually improve and expand knowledge of sources and impact of air pollution

**3** Educate and involve the community in understanding and reducing the impacts of air pollution and the links to climate change

**Future Work**

## Working Group 1

Reduce emissions from existing residential wood burning appliances

## Working Group 2

Transition away from biomass systems in populated areas

## Working Group 3

Eliminate the burning of yard waste in residential neighbourhoods

## Action Plan

- 1** Reduce emissions from existing wood burning appliances
- 2** Transition away from using wood burning appliances, prioritizing densely populated areas
- 3** Eliminate biomass burning of yard waste and reduce emissions from recreational fires

- 4** Promote and advocate for alternatives to non-residential open burning
- 5** Expand air quality data collection and research to inform actions
- 6** Expand wood smoke education programs



The Comox Valley has clean and healthy air all year round, for current and future generations.

### Vision Statement

Currently, areas in the Comox Valley experience recurring episodes of poor air quality that negatively affect the health of our residents. Our actions need to be effective in order to **continually improve air quality** while reducing greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate climate change where possible. Our initial focus is on **reducing fine particulate matter** – the air pollutant of greatest concern to the health of our Comox Valley residents. Achieving this vision is complex and will require **working together** and coordinating efforts across several governments, organizations, industry, and community members. **Engaging and involving community members** will be instrumental to our success.

## Goals

1

**Achieve measurable reductions** in fine particulate matter levels to protect public health.

2

**Improve and expand** knowledge of sources and impacts of air pollution.

3

**Educate and involve** the community in understanding and reducing the impact of air pollution and the links to climate change.

The three overarching goals were developed to support the vision and are foundational to guiding the actions. Most of the actions fleshed out in the working groups were developed from **Goal 1**.

**Goals 2 and 3** will be accomplished by some of the 6 proposed actions and 3 will require further expansion and exploration.

The Roundtable demonstrated the need to focus on PM<sub>2.5</sub> and the working groups were established from Goal 1: Achieve measurable reductions in fine particulate matter to protect public health.

# The Airshed Protection Strategy Action Plan

Based on the input of the Airshed Roundtable, its working groups, and the Steering Committee, an action plan was developed. This action plan is intended to coordinate efforts and highlight actionable steps to improve air quality with a focus on wood smoke reduction and, in turn, PM<sub>2.5</sub> in the Comox Valley.

## Reading the Action Plan

The **Action Plan** contains six main actions to improve air quality through wood smoke reduction. These main actions include sub actions and are expanded to include **Key Steps**, **Key Partners**, **Current Initiatives** and **Similar Initiatives** as shown in below example. Actions are also categorized according to the activities and tools available for implementation.

## Example

### 2 Transition Away from Using Wood Burning Appliances, Prioritizing Densely Populated Areas

The use of wood burning appliances in densely populated areas produces higher smoke concentrations that impact larger numbers of the population. Prioritizing populated areas will likely impact more people as compared to rural areas or sparsely populated areas. Core settlement areas can provide initial areas of focus (see Map 2: Core Settlement Areas Map). Core settlement areas are used in the Regional Growth Strategy to define areas where the existing population density is, and where the most significant growth is planned for the region. Rural areas are more dependent on wood burning appliances as a reliable heating option in power outage events.

**2A** **Collect, review and publish data comparing space heating options.** Various space heating options are available such as heat pumps. Incentivizing alternative heating options must consider the added benefits and consequences such as cost, equity, health and climate impacts.

Key Steps	Key Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Update and compile information on appliance emissions, functionality, cost and health impacts.</li><li>Work with property owners to use wood heating appliances as a secondary source of heating during power outages.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Local Governments</li><li>Provincial Government</li><li>Academic Institutions</li></ul>

**Current Initiative:**  
Transition 2050 Residential Retrofit Acceleration Strategy

**Similar Initiative:**  
Home Energy Navigator

## Action Categorization

The sub-actions are organized by the type of activity required for the action (i.e. education, research, monitoring and bylaws). This aids in the identification of the capacity, resources and tools required for actions. For example if implementation of actions is dependent on grants identified for education, then educational actions can be easily selected. The following icons facilitate the categorization of activity types and tools required for the actions.



Research



Education



Monitoring



Bylaws

# Action Plan Overview

1	Reduce emissions from existing wood-burning appliances
2	Transition away from using wood-burning appliances, prioritizing densely populated areas
3	Reduce emissions from recreational fires and eliminate yard waste burning
4	Promote and advocate for alternatives to non-residential open burning
5	Expand PM <sub>2.5</sub> data research and collection to inform actions
6	Expand wood smoke education programs

# 1

## Reduce Emissions from Existing Wood-Burning Appliances

Wood-burning appliances are a source of heat for many homes in the Comox Valley. Based on a home heating and air quality survey report for the Comox Valley conducted in 2018, 38% of respondents use wood-burning appliances, and 75% of those would like to change their heating source. The CVRD's Wood Smoke Reduction Program has been working to reduce emissions from existing residential wood-burning appliances through education and awareness, and by offering incentives to replace old wood-burning appliances with non-wood-burning heating appliances – which has directly led to the replacement of over 230 old wood-burning appliances in the region since 2016. Wood-burning appliances are not permitted in new residential buildings in the Town of Comox, The City of Courtenay and the Village of Cumberland have enacted bylaws that restrict wood-burning appliances. (See Appendix A Table 2). Wood-burning appliances who are allowed in new buildings in the CVRD electoral areas but must meet CSA or US EPA certification. Rebates are also available through the Wood Smoke Reduction Program to the entire CVRD for residents who replace their wood-burning appliance with a heat pump.



**Collect and maintain data on operating wood-burning appliances.** Data can provide direction on targeted efforts and resources to reduce smoke. Useful data may include: number and types of wood-burning appliances in use, frequency of use and sources of fuel. Maintaining this data provides a way to track progress being made and assess the effectiveness of rebates and incentives.

### Key Steps

- Provide incentives for wood-burning appliance inspections.
- Create targeted education and incentives from collected data.
- Work with municipal building departments to promote rebates and incentive programs.
- Develop a wood-burning appliances inventory (e.g., a door-to-door campaign).

### Key Partners

- Local Government
- Health Authority
- Provincial Government

### Similar Initiative:

- Alberni Air Quality Society and Port Alberni Air Quality Council wood-burning appliance survey.<sup>1</sup>



**Develop targeted strategies to enhance cleaner burning education.** Recognizing that some wood-burning appliances will continue to operate, it is important to reach people with wood-burning appliances to improve their burning practices.

### Key Steps

- Leverage existing resources from the wood smoke reduction program for creative smart burning campaigns.
- Disseminate updated information through retailers to clientele.

### Key Partners

- Local Government
- Health Authority
- Industry
- Provincial Government

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.acrd.bc.ca/cms/wpattachments/wpID321atID3489.pdf>

- Incorporate additional education methods such as collaborative campaigns, courses and themed webinars.
- Coordinate and collaborate with member municipalities for educational campaigns.

**Current & Similar Initiatives:**

- CVRD’s Wood Smoke Reduction Program - Moisture meter campaign distributes moisture meters with smart burning tip brochures.
- Healthier Home Heating: Clear the Air Cowichan - Air quality education campaign (Cowichan Valley Regional District, Island Health and BC ENV).<sup>1</sup>



1C

**Review, evaluate and update local bylaws related to indoor burning.** This includes the consideration of local bylaws and enforcement mechanisms such as plume visibility and opacity limits, no burn days during periods of poor air quality, wood-burning appliance registration and complaint mechanisms.

Key Steps	Key Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with local governments to identify potential bylaw mechanisms and effectiveness and areas of alignment.</li> <li>• Identify resource and enforcement requirements and feasibility for potential bylaws.</li> <li>• Establish process for the declaration of compliance for wood smoke appliance users.</li> <li>• Review and monitor bylaws to ensure effectiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• Provincial Government</li> </ul>

**Similar Initiatives:**

- Metro Vancouver Regional District Bylaw regulates the discharge of air contaminants from residential indoor wood-burning appliances, controls burning times, requires registration of wood-burning appliances and permits for operation. Users of residential indoor wood-burning appliances are required to submit a declaration of compliance with best burning practices.<sup>2</sup>
- District of Saanich Fire Prevention Bylaw - Includes opacity regulation.<sup>3</sup>
- The City of Port Alberni - Prohibits the installation of uncertified wood-burning appliances. Only wood pellets or untreated, non-contaminated, and seasoned wood with a moisture content of 20% or less shall be burned in a wood-burning appliance or fireplace.<sup>4</sup>
- Regional District of Alberni-Clayoquot Bylaw - Regulates solid fuel burning appliance emissions. Appliances must comply with CSA Standards. Non-compliant appliances are permitted to remain in service until July 1, 2024.<sup>5</sup>
- The City of Courtenay - Prevention of Public Nuisance Bylaw was amended to regulate smoke that visibly drifts on adjacent property and is a nuisance.

1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOxtX9g6hZc>  
 2 [https://metrovancover.org/boards/Bylaws/MVRD\\_Bylaw\\_1303.pdf#search=bylaw%201303](https://metrovancover.org/boards/Bylaws/MVRD_Bylaw_1303.pdf#search=bylaw%201303)  
 3 <https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Local-Government/Documents/Bylaws-and-Policies/fire-prevention-bylaw-2006-no-8807.pdf>  
 4 [https://portalberni.ca/sites/default/files/bylaws/4802\\_SolidFuelBurning\\_tm.pdf](https://portalberni.ca/sites/default/files/bylaws/4802_SolidFuelBurning_tm.pdf)  
 5 <https://www.courtenay.ca/EN/main/community/environment/air-quality/air-quality-bylaws.html>



# 2

## Transition Away from Using Wood-Burning Appliances, Prioritizing Densely Populated Areas

The use of wood-burning appliances in densely populated areas produces higher smoke concentrations that impact larger numbers of the population. Prioritizing populated areas will likely impact more people as compared to rural areas or sparsely populated areas. Core settlement areas can provide initial areas of focus (see Map 2: Core Settlement Areas Map). Core settlement areas are used in the Regional Growth Strategy to define areas where the existing population density is, and where the most significant growth is planned for the region. Rural areas are more dependent on wood-burning appliances as a reliable heating option in power outage events.



**Collect, review and publish data comparing space heating options.** Various space heating options are available such as heat pumps. Incentivizing alternative heating options must consider the added benefits and consequences such as cost, equity, health and climate impacts.

Key Steps	Key Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Update and compile information on appliance emissions, functionality, cost and health impacts.</li><li>• Work with property owners to use wood heating appliances as a secondary source of heating during power outages.</li><li>• Partner with academic institutions and organizations link to and build knowledge and resources such as the Residential Retrofit Acceleration Strategy.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local Governments</li><li>• Provincial Government</li><li>• Academic Institutions</li></ul>

**Current Initiative:**

***Transition 2050 Residential Retrofit Acceleration Strategy***

The CVRD Regional Growth Strategy and Comox Valley Sustainability Strategy have adopted targets to reduce GHG emissions. The CVRD provides incentive support and promotion of CleanBC programs that improve home efficiency and support the transition to heat pumps.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/projects-initiatives/past-current-projects/transition-2050-residential-retrofit-acceleration>



2B

**Assess the societal costs of wood-burning appliance smoke.** More understanding on the societal costs of wood smoke can inform public policy on wood smoke particularly in relation to health care costs.

**Key Steps** **Key Partners**

- Partner with local health institutions, local municipalities and academic institutions to coordinate and conduct research on health impacts and costs.
- Local Governments
- Provincial Government
- Health Authorities

**Similar Initiatives:**

- The Health and Economic Impacts of Residential Wood Burning in Metro Vancouver report (2017)<sup>1</sup> highlights annual cost benefits associated with PM<sub>2.5</sub> reductions using four scenarios for two policy options. The cost benefits range from ~\$282 million to ~\$869 million.



2C

**Expand financial support and education for wood-burning appliance removals.**

Financial incentives and awareness of incentives encourage switches to healthier sources of heat, however low-income homes in particular face additional barriers to changing heat sources. Current incentive programs could be expanded to increase targeted areas, support low income residents and to align with climate related programs.

**Key Steps** **Key Partners**

- Increase targeted incentives for homes in hotspot areas.
- Explore the establishment of no- or low-interest loans to ease transitions to new heat sources.
- Align with CleanBC and other climate action incentives and low-income support programs for heat pumps.
- Explore additional funding sources.
- Provide supports for rental properties using wood-burning appliances. Consider alignment with initiatives such as the CVRD’s Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- Local Governments
- Provincial Government
- Health Authorities

**Similar Initiative:**

- The District of Saanich Home Energy Retrofit Municipal Financing Program provides up to \$12,000 in zero-interest financing to homeowners to encourage the replacement of oil heating with electric heat pumps<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://metrovancover.org/services/air-quality-climate-action/Documents/health-economic-impacts-of-wood-burning.pdf#search=Air%20Quality%20Health%20and%20economic%20benefits>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/community/sustainable-saanich/climate-change/programs-rebates/heat-pump-financing.html#:~:text=The%20District%20>



## 2D

### **Develop local bylaws to phase out use of wood-burning appliances in densely populated areas.**

Air quality data and studies in the Comox Valley demonstrate high levels of wood-burning appliance pollution linked to health impacts. Developing bylaws to phase out wood-burning appliances is an effective step to reducing emissions from wood-burning appliances.

Key Steps	Key Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Build on action 1.C: To review, evaluate and update local bylaws related to indoor burning, and incorporate bylaws that phase out the use of wood-burning appliances.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local Governments</li><li>• Provincial Government</li></ul>

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#### **Current & Similar Initiatives:**

- Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland and City of Courtenay have “no new installation bylaws” to prevent the increase in wood-burning appliances in their communities (See Appendix B Table 2).
- Metro Vancouver Regional District Residential Indoor Wood Burning Emission Regulation Bylaw No. 1303 - Requires the registration of wood-burning appliances in urban containment areas. Registered appliances must meet required emission standards and non registered appliances will be restricted in September 2025. Bylaw renewal and restricted use conditions will be updated every three years<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.metrovancouver.org/boards/Bylaws1/MVRD\\_Bylaw\\_1303.pdf](http://www.metrovancouver.org/boards/Bylaws1/MVRD_Bylaw_1303.pdf)

# 3

## Reduce Emissions from Recreational Fires and Eliminate Yard Waste Burning

**Recreational fires:** Small recreational fires are allowed in the Comox Valley under various conditions outlined in the fire protection and regulation bylaws. The bylaws outline permit requirements, size of fire, location and time. Locational restrictions include commercial, industrial and comprehensive development areas, and in some areas recreational fires are only allowed in designated campgrounds and tourist parks. Recognizing the cultural and social aspect of occasional small recreational campfires and cooking fires where permitted, smoke from recreational fires must be minimized. Smart burning tips and adherence to recreational fire bylaws and regulations require ongoing education and emphasis.

**Yard waste:** Yard waste burning for the CVRD Electoral Areas is also specified in the fire protection and regulation bylaws. These outline yard burning conditions including permit requirements, season, time and fire size. Comox, Cumberland and Courtenay have curbside collection programs where yard waste can be picked up. The CVRD Electoral Areas do not have yard waste pick up. Therefore residents are responsible for setting up their own curbside pick-up through private providers, or taking their waste to the one of the Comox Strathcona Waste Management facilities. Results from a survey by the CVRD in 2020 showed residents managed yard waste as follows: 49% personal composting, 28% burn when they are allowed, 11% take waste to the landfill, and 5% to private facilities.<sup>1</sup>



### 3A

#### Identify the needs, options and alternatives for debris disposal for all areas.

Understanding the alternatives to burning yard debris in serviced areas is required to support program expansion.

#### Key Steps

- Identify the population without a pickup program, and the biomass types that residents manage.
- Use information collected to inform the program and bylaw updates.

#### Key Partners

- Local Government

#### Similar Initiative:

- Regional District of Central Okanagan Mow/chip/rent-buy-it rebate program.<sup>2</sup>
- Comox and Cumberland: Municipal pilot to test composting technology at Comox Valley Waste Management Centre (SkyRocket compost for sale)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cswm.ca/organics/regional-organics-compost-project/past-engagement>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.rdco.com/en/environment/wood-waste-disposal.aspx>



**Provide outreach and education on composting, chipping and other alternatives to yard waste burning.** Raise awareness of the alternative options to burning yard waste and wood smoke impacts from yard waste management on neighbours.

Key Steps	Key Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide education on alternatives to burning.</li> <li>• Educate and provide outreach for “no burn days” and the air quality venting index.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Government</li> </ul>



**Expand current chipping program to include smoke control measures and consider the establishment of a permanent program.** In 2020, the CVRD delivered the pilot curbside yard-waste chipper program funded by the provincial Community Resiliency Investment (CRI) grant. The program provided residents with an alternative to burning yard waste. Yard waste was collected and chipped curbside by mobile chippers and delivered to CVRD composting facilities. This reduced wood smoke and lessened wildfire fuel load and subsequent hazards. Although the program benefits included wood smoke reduction, the program was intended to reduce the risk of wildfires and mitigate their community impacts.

Key Steps	Key Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify an alternative authority to operate the chipping program, and expand the program to include areas identified in action 3A: Identify the needs, options and alternatives for debris disposal for all areas.</li> <li>• Explore expansion of chipping program with smoke control measures.</li> <li>• Establish initiatives that allow mulching on property for yard work purposes, and exchange incentives for participation such as bonus composted material. These must align with as the “FireSmart” best practices.<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Governments</li> </ul>

**Similar Initiative:**

- Community Resiliency Investment Funding Program. The 2020 program removed ~65 tons of wood chips from ~485 residential properties.

<sup>1</sup> <https://firesmartbc.ca/resource/landscaping-guide/>



3D

**Review and identify opportunities to update local outdoor burning bylaws.** Electoral areas and improvement districts each have separate and unique regulations. The intent of these bylaws are for fire safety under the jurisdiction of the fire departments and not for air quality.

**Key Steps**

**Key Partners**

- Create local government group to review current bylaws.
- Develop guidelines and potential bylaw amendments for alignment.
- Identify feasibility, enforceability and promoting compliance with permits and regulations.

- Local Governments
- Provincial Government



3E

**Develop educational materials and messages to minimize smoke from recreational fires.** Where recreation fires are permitted awareness and education on minimizing smoke, venting index and weather conditions must be communicated continually.

**Key Steps**

**Key Partners**

- Develop creative ways for education and information dissemination.
- Provide education for recreational burning in permitted areas such as campfire park programs (i.e. Goose Spit Park, Joe Walker Park & Royston Marine Drive Park)
- Establish smart burning tip campaign customized for recreational fire burning.

- Local Governments
- Provincial Government

**Current and similar Initiative:**

- CVRD Wood Smoke Reduction Program Smart Burning Campaign.
- US EPA Burn Wise Program. Provides tips for backyard recreational fires.<sup>1</sup>
- American Lung Association Learn Before You Burn. Provides information and resources on backyard fires.<sup>2</sup>

1 <https://www.epa.gov/burnwise>

2 <https://www.lung.org/local-content/mn/learn-before-burn>

# 4

## Promote and Advocate for Alternatives to Non-Residential Open Burning

Non-residential open burning occurs outside of residential properties for land clearing, agricultural waste burning, and fire abatement (prevention) in woodlots and large forest operations. The management, potential alternatives, materials and applicable regulations differ. Air quality for all open burning activities within the CVRD is regulated by the Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation (OBSCR). The large forest operations in the region are signatories to the *West Coast Fuel-Smoke Management Plan* which outlines additional air quality best management practices that are to be followed. Open burning is regulated by fire protection service area and fire protection an regulation bylaws (see Appendix B: Table 4). For areas where there is no Fire Protection Service Area bylaw then the Wildfire Act and Regulation apply. Recent and updated fire safety laws and information are available through local fire departments.



4A

**Identify and assess sources and quantity of material that could be diverted to compost facilities.** Understanding the region’s capacity for managing organic debris from more sources will aid the development of a targeted response to non-residential open burning. This includes understanding the the capacity of local facility debris management as wood chips need further management and time for safe composting.

### Key Steps

- Review of local capacity to manage organic material.
- Review the amount and type of material requiring management.
- Acquire data via surveys, local burn permit records or academic research initiatives.

### Key Partners

- Local Governments
- Provincial Government



4B

**Identify and research fuel abatement opportunities for non-harvested lands and communicate results.** Major forestry land owners are mandated for debris management best practices in operations. Other land owners, such as woodlots, do not have similar mandates and may benefit from information on how to manage debris using alternatives to burning or using practices that minimize smoke from burning when needed.

### Key Steps

- Collaborate with academic groups to research fuel abatement best practices and debris management on other managed properties including parks, agricultural areas, and land clearing for development.

### Key Partners

- Local Governments
- Academic Institutions

- Communicate and provide education on fuel abatement alternatives such as an agricultural chipper program, land spreading, preservation of some trees in land clearing for ecological benefits.

**Similar Initiatives:**

- Regional District of Central Okanagan Agricultural Wood Waste Chipping Program (Okanagan Air Quality Free chipping program).
- Regional District of Central Okanagan Mow/chip/rent-in rebate program. Provides rebates for farmers/orchardists to manage wood waste on their property.<sup>1</sup>



**Build an understanding of the holistic nature of non-residential wood burning and raise awareness of industry best practices.** Outdoor burning management can be complex due to multiple land owners under different regulations and mandates, also having different materials, contexts, economics and land management issues.

Key Steps	Key Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build communications material to accompany outreach efforts highlighting the different land management and economics.</li> <li>• Integrate concepts relating to climate change, including maximizing carbon sinks and minimizing black carbon emissions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• Academic Institutions</li> <li>• Industry</li> </ul>



**Assess the biomass market development opportunities.** The Province supports biomass market development opportunities in regions where forestry is primarily public land (known as the Forest Carbon Initiative). This is not available to Comox Valley operations as they are on private lands.

Key Steps	Key Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct research on the various land management and economic opportunities on private lands for fibre utilization e.g) wood waste use for bio energy, pulp paper and other products and long-lived wood composite products.</li> <li>• Integrate climate change concepts in biomass market opportunity assessments e.g) maximizing carbon sinks, tree improvement and minimizing black carbon emissions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• Provincial Government</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.rdco.com/en/environment/wood-waste-disposal.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/natural-resources-climate-change/natural-resources-climate-change-mitigation/forest-carbon-initiative>



# 5

## Expand PM<sub>2.5</sub> Data Collection and Research to Inform Actions

Expanding local pollution data and exposure impact information can improve actions, policies, and regulations to reduce PM<sub>2.5</sub>. In addition, there is a need to expand the existing air quality monitoring and support research



### 5A

**Expand air quality monitoring networks for education and to conduct ongoing data analysis.** There is currently one permanent monitoring station in the region. Given the results of mobile monitoring studies, this station does not typically reflect the spatial variation in smoke emissions and PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations, which may result in “hot spots” where PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels can be higher than what is captured by a single station.

#### Key Steps

- Establish a low-cost monitoring network in the Comox Valley, similar to other networks in BC.
- Analyze the expanded monitoring data and report findings to guide and inform further action.
- Advocate to the Province for additional monitoring stations.

#### Key Partners

- Local Governments
- Community Groups
- Provincial Government
- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)

#### Similar Initiatives:

- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) Small Low-Cost Air Quality PM Sensor Pilot Project: (ECCC) has undertaken a nationwide initiative of supporting low-cost PM<sub>2.5</sub> monitoring in partnership with First Nations, local and provincial governments, and interested stakeholders. The main objective of this project is to expand current air quality monitoring networks, especially in areas with limited or no air monitoring coverage. Under this initiative, communities can obtain and operate PurpleAir sensors for PM<sub>2.5</sub> monitoring in partnership with ECCC, BC ENV and citizen groups.
- City of Courtenay PurpleAir Monitoring Network. Through this initiative 10 PurpleAir monitors were installed on public buildings across the city providing real time air quality readings to support educational initiatives.
- Cowichan Valley Regional District PurpleAir Monitoring Network.<sup>1</sup> The Cowichan Valley Regional District worked with partners to establish a neighbourhood sensor network that provides real time air quality readings.



### 5B

**Conduct studies and mobile monitoring to fill network gaps.** Regional academic mobile monitoring studies have deployed instruments for short periods, at temporary locations.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cvrld.ca/2187/Air-Quality-Mapping>

Mobile monitoring has provided samples from various geographical points and pockets in the region. This has provided insight for “hot spots” as areas with greater pollution

Key Steps	Key Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with an academic groups to undertake additional updated mobile monitoring studies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• Provincial Government</li> <li>• Academic Institutions</li> </ul>

**Similar Initiative:**

- Monitoring Residential Wood Smoke in British Columbia Communities Study (Monitored Whistler, Courtenay and Vanderhoof) <sup>1</sup>



**Identify and establish academic partnerships for research projects.** A number of actions identified in this strategy would benefit from additional academic partnerships or support and professional research projects. These include:

- 2A & 2B: Collect, review and publish data comparing space heating options, including PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions, climate impacts and societal costs
- 4A: Assess the type and quantity of biomass material, and capacity for managing additional material in local compost facilities.
- 4B: Research fuel abatement opportunities for non-harvested lands.
- 5B: Conduct mobile monitoring study to fill gaps in the monitoring network.
- Research fuel abatement opportunities for non-harvested lands and use results for *Action 4B: Identify and research fuel abatement opportunities for non-harvested lands and communicate results.*
- Identify partnerships and to conduct mobile monitoring study to support *Action 5B: Conduct mobile monitoring study to fill gaps in the monitoring network.*

Key Steps	Key Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and prioritize research projects and initiatives.</li> <li>• Coordinate and promote prioritized research projects to academic institutions.</li> <li>• Source funding and support grant applications for research initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• Provincial Government</li> <li>• Academia</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> <https://open.library.ubc.ca/media/stream/pdf/24/1.0371217/4>

# 6

## Expand wood smoke impact education programs

Various educational initiatives for wood smoke impacts are active in the Comox Valley. These initiatives include partnerships with local community groups, government and health authorities. Ongoing campaigns and or creative multi-stakeholder collaboration will support and increase awareness and education.



### 6A

#### Align education and communication initiatives from the Wood Smoke Reduction Program with the Action Plan.

##### Key Steps

- Obtain testimonies and feedback from residents on experiences with the Wood Smoke Reduction Program. This includes residents impacted by wood smoke and residents that have exchanged wood-burning appliances for heat pumps.
- Incorporate findings from research and monitoring from the Regional Airshed Protection Strategy such as health impacts, costs, monitoring initiatives with the Wood Smoke Reduction Program.

##### Key Partners

- Local Government
- Provincial Government
- Community Groups
- Health Authority

##### Similar Initiative:

- Fraser Basin Council (FBC) wood smoke education course.<sup>1</sup>



### 6B

#### Identify and incorporate creative and collaborative educational campaigns on wood smoke reduction impacts.

##### Key Steps

- Identify and align messaging with local governments, Island Health, BC ENV and BC Wildfire.
- Integrate messaging into existing and new communication tools and education campaigns such as newsletters, signage and webinars.
- Plan educational campaigns that focus on specific themes including health impacts, smart burning tips, available rebates and alternative appliance options.

##### Key Partners

- Local Government
- Provincial Government
- Community Groups
- Industry

##### Current and Similar Initiatives:

- CVRD smart burning and education campaigns include advertising and in person events (e.g. Spring and Fall Home Shows)
- San Francisco Bay Area Spare the Air Program creatively incorporates messaging to emphasize the health impacts.<sup>2</sup>

1 [https://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/WoodSmokeCourse/story\\_html5.html](https://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/WoodSmokeCourse/story_html5.html)

2 <https://www.sparetheair.org/>



6C

## Plan and implement educational events, courses and webinars.

### Key Steps

- Identify opportunities for strategic/themed educational campaigns.
- Source grant funding and support applications to fund research initiatives.
- Leverage existing communications to expand outreach by adding air quality AQHI and VI widgets, targeted flyers.

### Key Partners

- Local Government
- Provincial Government
- Community Groups
- Health Authority



# Implementation

**The implementation of the Strategy is an iterative process and periodic adjustment will be required.** The action plan in the previous section identifies various approaches to address air quality in the Comox Valley. The actions cannot be implemented simultaneously due to resources, timing and jurisdictional considerations.

The Airshed Protection Strategy is a resource that can be utilized by various collaborative and municipal initiatives to improve air quality. Actions can be prioritized based on identified criteria such as resources, jurisdictional control and ability to achieve more than one goal. Appendix B provides a sample prioritization criteria and evaluation process that can be used to guide implementation. Prioritization does not undermine other actions but helps identify the most efficient and effective implementation approaches.

## Funding and Resources

The Strategy was developed as an initiative under the CVRD's Regional Growth Strategy service area. The CVRD committed to complete this Strategy and begin its implementation, with the support of multiple committed government, community and industry organizations. The CVRD does not currently have a service to address air quality. Ensuring the medium and longer-term success of the Strategy will involve identifying a stable source of funding, and partnerships for ongoing implementation.

## Ongoing Multi-Agency Committee

The development of the Strategy has been a multi-agency effort, with substantial input and effort from members of the Steering Committee and the Roundtable. The input of these participants has been invaluable and is greatly appreciated. Existing members of the Steering Committee have committed to this process and will continue to be involved in the first year of implementation to support and champion initiatives, and to seek alignment with similar initiatives underway in their realms. Following the first year of implementation, a renewed multi-agency committee with ongoing input, support and leadership from its members, will be integral to medium and longer-term success of the Strategy.

# Monitoring and Reporting

Under the current initiative, the CVRD committed to providing periodic reports on the development and implementation of the Strategy. The Strategy is an iterative document to be updated periodically as required. Other related reporting to date include:

- **State of the Air Memo (2020)**
- **Regional Airshed Roundtable Year 1 Report (2021)**
- **Staff reports, roundtable meeting presentations**
- **Draft Wood Smoke Reduction Strategy 2022 (Initial iteration of this report). It is recommended that an implementation status report be provided within one year of adoption by the board.**

Periodic reports will serve to state progress on the Strategy and identified initiatives. Reports can include updated air quality monitoring data for the region, as provided by the BC ENV, developed metrics for progress reporting and updated approaches based on lessons learned.

## Other Considerations and Limitations

Other emission sources and air pollutants were not explored in detail due to limited resources and prioritization of PM<sub>2.5</sub> as the main pollutant of concern. The Strategy follows the direction of the Airshed Roundtable to focus on wood smoke as the primary issue. Although other pollutants and emission sources related to transportation and climate action were not explored in detail, there is opportunity to include these emissions in the subsequent strategy reporting and updates.



# Glossary

**Air zone** – Air Zone Management is used to assist with air quality management, provinces and territories have defined smaller geographic areas called air zones that divide their jurisdictions and that have unique air quality characteristics. These characteristics may include pollutant sources, topography, meteorological patterns, population density and other potential factors that influence ambient air concentrations.

**Airshed** – An airshed is a region sharing common airflow patterns hindered by local features, such as mountains and weather, and often exposed to similar levels of air pollution.

**AQHI** – The Air Quality Health Index is a scale (1–10+) designed to help understand what the quality of the air around us means to our health. It is a tool developed by health and environmental professionals based on air pollutants levels including PM<sub>2.5</sub> and is used to communicate the health risk posed by air pollution.

**AQMS** – The Air Quality Management Systems is a comprehensive and collaborative approach by federal, provincial and territorial governments to reduce the emissions and ambient concentrations of various pollutants of concern.

**AQOs** – Air Quality Objectives are adopted air quality objectives and standards for a number of contaminants, including Particulate Matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>), ozone, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide.

**BC ENV** – The Ministry of Environment and Climate Action Strategy is responsible for the effective protection, management and conservation of BC's water, land, air and living resources. It leads work on climate preparedness and adaptation and leads plans to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets.

**CAAQS** – The Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards are developed as a key element of the Air Quality

Management System to drive improvement of air quality across Canada. CAAQS have been developed for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and ozone (O<sub>3</sub>). Ongoing reviews of the CAAQS help ensure they reflect the latest scientific information. The CAAQS are established as air quality objectives under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999*.

**Campfire** – An open fire that burns piled material no larger than 0.5m in width and 0.5m in height used for recreational purposes.

**CEPA** – The Canadian Environmental Protection Act is an Act respecting pollution prevention and the protection of the environment and human health in order to contribute to sustainable development.

**CSA Standard** – The Canadian Standards Association is a Canadian standards development organization that develops and maintains consensus standards to help protect the health and safety of Canadians, enhance Canadians' quality of life, protect the environment, and facilitate trade.

CSA-B415.1 standard. Performance Testing of Solid Fuel-Burning Heating Appliances. The standard specifies requirements for performance testing of solid-biofuel-burning heating appliances, including maximum emission rates.

**MI** – Acute Myocardial Infarction is also known as a heart attack, it is a life-threatening condition that occurs when blood flow to the heart muscle is abruptly cut off, causing tissue damage.

**Nephelometer** – Instrument used for measuring air quality to estimate PM<sub>2.5</sub> an instrument for measuring the size and concentration of particles suspended in a liquid or gas, especially by means of the light they scatter.

**OBSCR** – The *Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation*

regulates land clearing, forestry operations and agriculture, giving the conditions when and where open burning is allowed. It applies to several categories of fire use i.e. category 2 & 3. When diameter exceeds 3cm (partial) and 10cm (full) for local and provincial jurisdictions. Does not apply to campfires or resource management open fires. Also addresses venting and fuel conditions for open burning.

**PM<sub>2.5</sub>** – Fine particulate matter are liquid or solid airborne particles smaller than 2.5 micrometres ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) in diameter. PM may be classified as primary or secondary, depending on the process that led to its formation. PM exists in various sizes and the particles of most concern for human health are those with a diameter of less than 2.5 micrometres.

**PM<sub>10</sub>** – Fine particulate matter are liquid or solid airborne particles smaller than 10 micrometres ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) in diameter.

**RGS** – The Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy is a shared vision for managing growth and community impacts in our diverse urban and rural neighbourhoods. It is a commitment made by the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD), the City of Courtenay, the Town of Comox, and the Village of Cumberland to work together to promote communities that are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable for generations to come. The RGS is implemented within each community through local Official Community Plans, Infrastructure Plans, and regulatory tools such as zoning.





**SFB DAR** – The *Solid Fuel Burning Domestic Appliance Regulation* requires solid fuel burning appliances sold in BC to meet certified emission standards, and regulates that only untreated seasoned wood or wood products can be burned.

**Temperature Inversion** – A temperature inversion is a reversal of the normal behaviour of temperature in the troposphere (the region of the atmosphere nearest to the Earth's surface in which a layer of cool air at the surface is overlain by a layer of warmer weather. Air temperatures usually decreases with height under normal conditions.

**The Roundtable** – The Airshed Roundtable is a collaborative framework that was established direction from the CVRD Board on September 17, 2019 to create a collaborative framework for improving air quality in the Comox Valley.

**TPM** – Total Particulate Matter is particulate matter 10 microns and smaller in aerodynamic diameter and particulate matter 2.5 microns and smaller in aerodynamic diameter.

**US EPA** – The US Environmental Protection Agency is an environmental agency that is responsible for developing and enforcing regulations to protect the environment. The “EPA Standard” means the “New Source Performance Standards, Title 40, Part 60, Sub-part AAA of the Code of Federal Regulations (USA) (7-1-02 Edition)”.

**VI** – The Ventilation Index is a forecast released daily by Environment and Climate Change Canada. It estimates how well the atmosphere disperses smoke on any given day. The index is similar to a weather forecast, except it provides information on how well smoke will mix into the air.

**West Coast Fuel Smoke Management Plan** – The West Coast Fuel Smoke Management Plan standardizes smoke management best practices for major forestry companies in the west coast, providing a pathway to maximize opportunities to abate fire hazards and manage smoke emissions responsibly and appropriately. The signatories agree to open burning subject to conditions for a defined period, in a defined area, during which the conditions are assessed for their effectiveness in reducing fire hazard. The Plan provides a forum to ensure that the smoke from fire hazard abatement does not impact communities, public health and safety. The plan includes developing best management practices for piling, curing, and burning woody debris within their operating areas.

**Wildfire Act and Regulation** – specifies rules and regulations around fire use, fire prevention and wildfire control. It regulates open burning on provincial crown land. Applies on private land and within a local jurisdiction when: there is no structural fire department assigned/responsible for responding to fire in a given





# References

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- 6 Wagstaff, M. 2018. *Monitoring Residential Woodsmoke in British Columbia Communities*. Retrieved from: <https://open.library.ubc.ca/media/stream/pdf/24/1.0371217/4>
- 7 Korsiak, J., Perepeluk, K, et al. (2021). *Air Pollution and reitnal vessel diameter and blood pressure in school-aged children in a region impacted by residential biomass burning*. Retrieved from: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34140605/>
- 8 RWDI Air. (2017). *Particulate Matter Emissions Inventory for the Comox Valley 2015 Base Year*. Retrieved from: [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/air-land-water/air/reports-pub/comox\\_valley\\_pm\\_emissions\\_inventory.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/air-land-water/air/reports-pub/comox_valley_pm_emissions_inventory.pdf)
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- 10 Comox Valley Regional District. (2023). *The Wood Smoke Reduction Program*. Available at: <https://www.comox-valleyrd.ca/projects-initiatives/past-current-projects/wood-smoke-reduction-program>

# Appendices

## Appendix A

PM<sub>2.5</sub> Metrics, Standards and Management Levels

## Appendix B

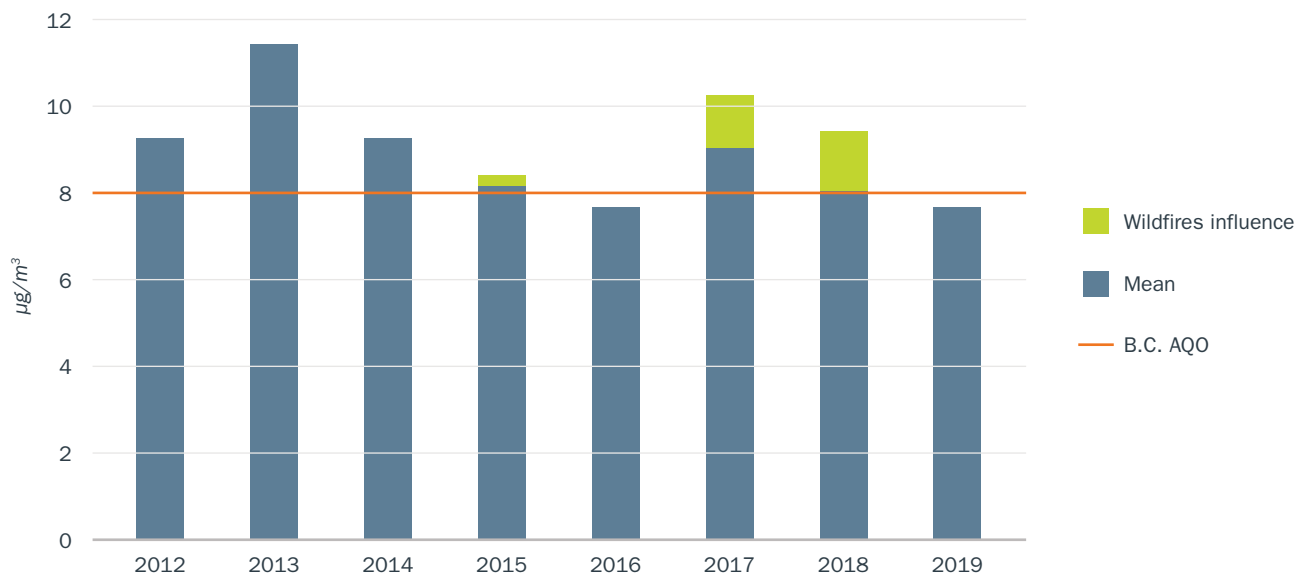
Comox Valley Air Quality Related Regulations and Programs

## Appendix C

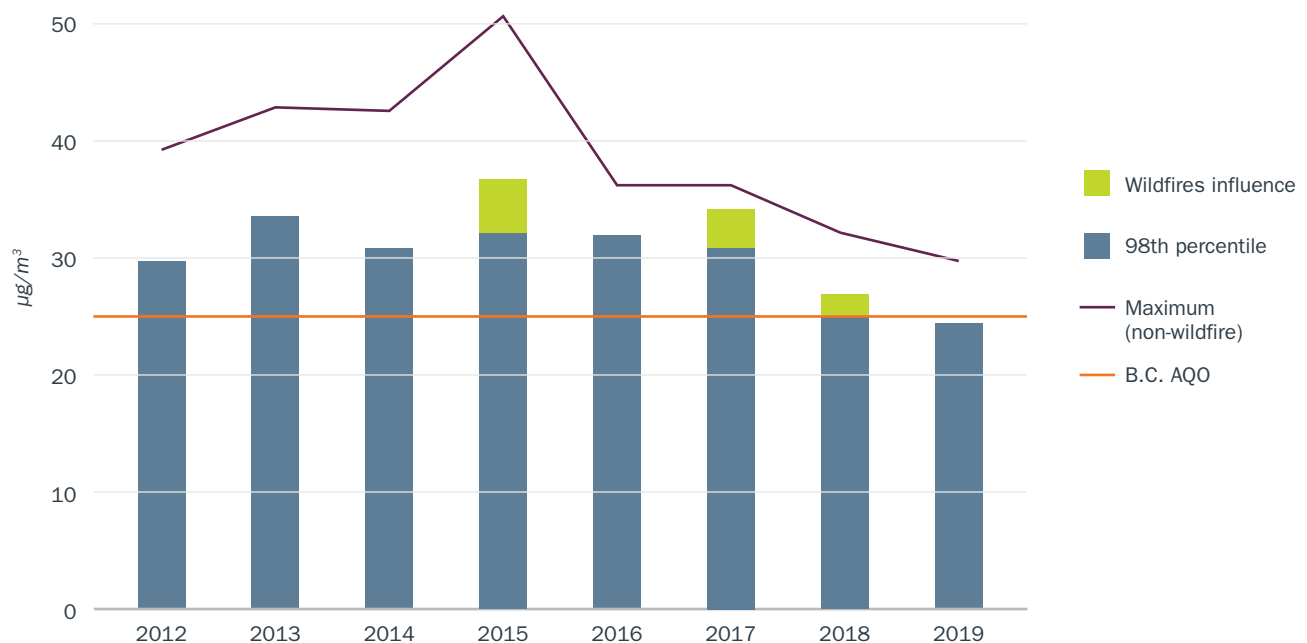
Sample Prioritization Criteria

# Appendix A: PM<sub>2.5</sub> Metrics, Standards and Management Levels

Comox Valley PM<sub>2.5</sub> Annual Metrics Relative to BC Air Quality Objectives (AQOs)



Comox Valley PM<sub>2.5</sub> 24-hour Metrics Relative to BC Air Quality Objectives (AQOs)



## Federal Standard and Provincial PM<sub>2.5</sub> Objectives [2]

Averaging Period	Federal Standard (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Provincial Objective (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )
24 hour	27	25
Annual	8.8	8

## Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) Levels and Objectives 2015–2020

Air Quality Management Levels	Management Levels for the Annual Fine Particulate Matter CAAQS (micrograms per cubic metre)		Management Levels for the 24-hour Fine Particulate Matter CAAQS (micrograms per cubic metre)	
	2015	2020	2015	2020
Red	>10	>8.8	>28	>27
Orange	6.5 to 10	6.5 to 8.8	20 to 28	20 to 27
Yellow	4.1 to 6.4		11 to 19	
Green	≤4.0		≤10	

### Level Objectives

Red	Achieve CAAQS
Orange	Prevent CAAQS Exceedance
Yellow	Prevent Air Quality Deterioration
Green	Keep Clean Areas Clean

## PM<sub>2.5</sub> Metrics and Air Zone Management Levels for the Georgia Strait Air Zone (2017 – 2019) data

Location	No. Valid Years	PM <sub>2.5</sub> 24-hour Metric (98 <sup>th</sup> percentile, µg/m <sup>3</sup> )		PM <sub>2.5</sub> Annual Metric (Annual Average, µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	
		As Measured	TF/EE Adjustment*	As Measured	TF/EE Adjustment
		Campbell River	3	20	18
Colwood	2	28	18	7.1	6.2
Courtenay	2	30	28	9.0	8.6
Crofton	3	23	23	5.1	4.3
Duncan	2	27	25	8.3	8.0
Duncan-Deykin Ave.	3	27	20	8.0	7.2
Langdale	3	35	16	7.3	6.3
Nanaimo	3	22	13	5.1	4.3
Port Alberni	3	28	27	9.7	9.3
Powell River - James Thomson	3	20	8	3.1	2.5
Squamish	3	42	14	6.3	5.1
Victoria	3	22	19	7.7	7.3
Whistler	3	55	17	7.9	6.0

### Level Objectives

Red	Achieve CAAQS
Orange	Prevent CAAQS Exceedance
Yellow	Prevent Air Quality Deterioration
Green	Keep Clean Areas Clean

**2017-2020  
Level Objective  
= Orange  
(To prevent  
CAAQS  
exceedance)**

## PM<sub>2.5</sub> Metrics and Air Zone Management Levels for the Georgia Strait Air Zone (2018 – 2020) data

Location	PM <sub>2.5</sub> 24-hour Metric (98 <sup>th</sup> percentile, µg/m <sup>3</sup> )		PM <sub>2.5</sub> Annual Metric (Annual Average, µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	
	As Measured	TF/EE Adjustment*	As Measured	TF/EE Adjustment
	Campbell River	23	16	7.3
Colwood	39	15	7.5	5.6
Courtenay	27	24	8.3	7.4
Crofton	28	16	6.3	5.6
Duncan	28	22	7.8	6.9
Duncan-Deykin Ave.	28	18	8.0	6.9
Langdale	33	14	6.3	5.2
Nanaimo	23	11	5.3	4.1
Port Alberni	26	23	9.4	8.6
Powell River - James Thomson	18	7	3.1	2.2
Squamish	34	14	6.4	5.2
Victoria	31	17	7.9	6.8
Whistler	38	15	6.6	5.3

\*Transboundary flows TF and exceptional events EE adjustment are accounted for cases where CAAQS's are not achieved because of pollutants over which jurisdictions have little or no control. TF's are defined as the transport of air pollution across provincial and territorial boundaries. EE's are events that contribute to air pollution levels in an air zone that are not reasonably controllable or preventable e.g. forest fires by non-controllable causes, intercontinental transport of air pollution.

# Appendix B: Comox Valley Air Quality Related Regulations and Programs

**Table 1. Air Quality Improvement Action Summary**

Action	CVRD Electoral Areas	City of Courtenay	Town of Comox	Village of Cumberland
Bylaw regulating and/or prohibiting open burning (fire protection bylaws)	✓*	✓	✓	✓
Bylaw prohibiting installation of wood-burning appliances in new construction		✓	✓	✓
Bylaw referencing smoke as a nuisance	✓	✓	x	x
Park/camp recreational fire restrictions on poor air quality days (applies to designated campgroundns and parks)	✓	***	***	
Education and Outreach (The Wood Smoke Reduction Program)	✓	✓**	✓	✓
Comox Valley Waste Management Centre composting program	✓ (drop-off only)	✓ (collection)	✓ (collection)	✓ (collection)

\* This CVRD bylaw has open burning restrictions that are limited in geographic scope

\*\* Education and outreach in addition to the Wood Smoke Reduction Program

\*\*\* Open burning banned all year round

**Please note**

Provincial open burning restrictions apply to all open burning including camp and recreational fires.

Beach fire programs (managed campfire rings) only available at the following CVRD Parks (Goose Spit, Joe Walker & Royston Marine Drive)

**Table 2. Wood-Burning Appliance Regulations**

Jurisdiction	Bylaw Banning Wood-Burning Appliances in New Building	Bylaw	Bylaw Adoption Date
CVRD Electoral Areas		N/A	N/A
Village of Cumberland	✓	<a href="#">The Village of Cumberland Solid Fuel Burning Appliance Bylaw No. 1091</a>	December 10, 2018
Town of Comox	✓	<a href="#">Town of Comox Building Bylaw 1472 &amp; 1903</a>	March 20, 2019
City of Courtenay	✓	<a href="#">City of Courtenay Building Bylaw No. 3001, 2020</a>	April 6, 2020

### Table 3. Smoke Nuisance Related Bylaws

Jurisdiction	Bylaw Details	Bylaw Adoption Date
City of Courtenay	<a href="#">City of Courtenay Prevention of Public Nuisances Bylaw. 2804 &amp; 3079</a>	September 08, 2014 03 October 2022
CVRD Electoral Areas	<a href="#">Electoral Areas Unsightly Premises and Nuisances Regulation Bylaw 377</a>	July 28, 2015

**Please note**

Nuisance smoke identification criteria and bylaw enforcement vary.

### Table 4. Fire Protection & Regulation Bylaws

Jurisdiction/ Fire Service Area	Governing Bylaws/ Regulation	Bylaw Adoption Dates
Black Creek Oyster Bay, Greater Merville, Mount Washington Resort Community Fire Protection Service Area	<a href="#">Northern Fire Protection Service Areas Regulation Bylaw No. 689</a>	January, 25 2022
Comox Fire Protection District	<a href="#">Comox Fire Prevention and Regulation Bylaw No. 1856</a>	April 19, 2017
Courtenay Fire Protection District	<a href="#">Courtenay Fire Protective Services Bylaw No. 2556</a>	October 9, 2008
Denman Island Fire Protection Service Area	<a href="#">Denman Island Fire Control Bylaw No. 281 &amp; 529</a>	November 26, 2013 June 5, 2018
Fanny Bay Fire Protection Service Area	<a href="#">Fanny Bay Fire Protection Service Regulation Bylaw No. 283 &amp; 531</a>	November 26, 2013 June 5, 2018
Hornby Island	<a href="#">Hornby Island Fire Protection Service Regulation Bylaw No. 282 &amp; 530</a>	November 26, 2013 June 5, 2018
Rural Cumberland	<a href="#">Rural Cumberland Fire Protection Service Regulations Bylaw No. 258 &amp; 532</a>	July 30, 2013 June 5, 2018
Ships Point Improvement District	<a href="#">Ships Point Fire Protection and Regulation Bylaw No. 117</a>	May 8, 2023
Union Bay Fire Protection Service Area	<a href="#">Union Bay Fire Protection Service Regulations Bylaw No. 688</a>	January 25, 2022
Village of Cumberland	<a href="#">Fire Protection Services and Regulation Bylaw No. 988</a>	August 11, 2014
Bates-Huband Fire Protection Service Area	<a href="#">BC Wildfire Act Regulation</a>	
Comox Fire Protection Improvement District	<a href="#">BC Wildfire Act Regulation</a>	
Courtenay Fire Protection Improvement District	<a href="#">BC Wildfire Act Regulation</a>	
CFB Fire Protection Area	Federal Regulations / <a href="#">Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation</a>	

**Please note**

Fire Service & Protection Bylaws are intended for fire protection and not for air quality.

This bylaw lists compiled in July 2023. Please confirm with the associated municipalities/ governing bodies for current bylaws as they are subject to change.



# Appendix C: Prioritizing Actions

Various approaches can be used to prioritize actions for (e.g. using a set of criteria or by identifying or categorization of a set of actions according to the capacity, tools and authority of the municipality. The following 2 examples can be used as guidelines to develop priorities for implementation. Example 1 provides sample criteria that can be used for prioritization. Example 2 provides an example of how actions can be categorized for implementation according to the capacity and authority of the local government.

## Example 1: Prioritization Criteria:

### 1. Resources (max score 3 points)

Availability of resources, financing and funding to cover actions. This includes costs of the action, commitment of partners, staff time and related skills and expertise.

*High resource availability* = **High score**

---

*Low resource availability* = **Low score**

---

### 2. Jurisdiction (max score 3 points)

Ability for implementation of actions that are within the direct jurisdictional control of the local government.

Can the action be carried out with existing local government structures and services?

*Action within jurisdictional control* = **High score**

---

*Action is not within jurisdictional control* = **Low score**

---

### Total Score (max score 10) = Resources + Jurisdiction + Goal Impact

Each individual action in under the Regional Airshed Protection Strategy Action Plan has been evaluated using the three outlined criteria. Each action has a priority score of either Low, Medium or High.

Total Score	Priority
1-3	Low
4-7	Medium
8-10	High

### 3. Goal Impact (max score 4 points)

How many goals does the action support? Each of the goals are worth the following:

*Goal 1: Reduce PM2.5* **2 points**

---

*Goal 2: Expand Air Quality Data* **1 point**

---

*Goal 3: Air Quality Education* **1 points**

---

If all the goals are selected the goal impact total will add up to 4 points.

### Time Frames

The Regional Airshed Protection Strategy is designed to guide wood smoke reduction initiatives. Implementation timelines may vary and may not be related to prioritization of actions. The following demonstrates a how timelines can be assigned to the actions:

*Short-Term* **1 – 3 years**

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*Medium-Term* **4 - 6 years**

---

*Long-Term* **More than 6 years**

---

*Ongoing* **ongoing and anticipated to continue**

---

## Example of Action Priority Score Calculation

“Action 2A. Collect, review and publish data comparing space heating options”

	Priority Criteria			
	Resources (1-3)	Jurisdiction (1-3)	Goal Impact (1-4)	Total (1-10)
<b>Action Score</b>	3	3	3	9
<b>What does it mean?</b>	High resource availability	Action is within jurisdictional control	Addresses high percentage of goals	Impact for action is high

## Example 2: Categorization of Actions

A list of actions for implementation can be developed through the identification of actions that fall within the jurisdiction’s authority and capacity. For example if resources and funding are available for educational initiatives, the actions for implementation will be selected accordingly as demonstrated below.

### Education Related Actions



**1B**

Develop targeted strategies to enhance cleaner burning education



**2C**

Develop targeted strategies to enhance cleaner burning education



**3B**

Provide outreach and education on composting, chipping and other alternatives to yard waste burning



**3E**

Develop educational materials and messages to minimize smoke from recreational fires



**4C**

Build an understanding of the holistic nature of non-residential wood burning and raise awareness of industry best practices



**5A**

Expand air monitoring networks for education and to conduct ongoing data analysis



**6A**

Align education and communication initiatives from the Wood Smoke Reduction Program with the Action Plan



**6B**

Identify and incorporate collaborative education campaigns

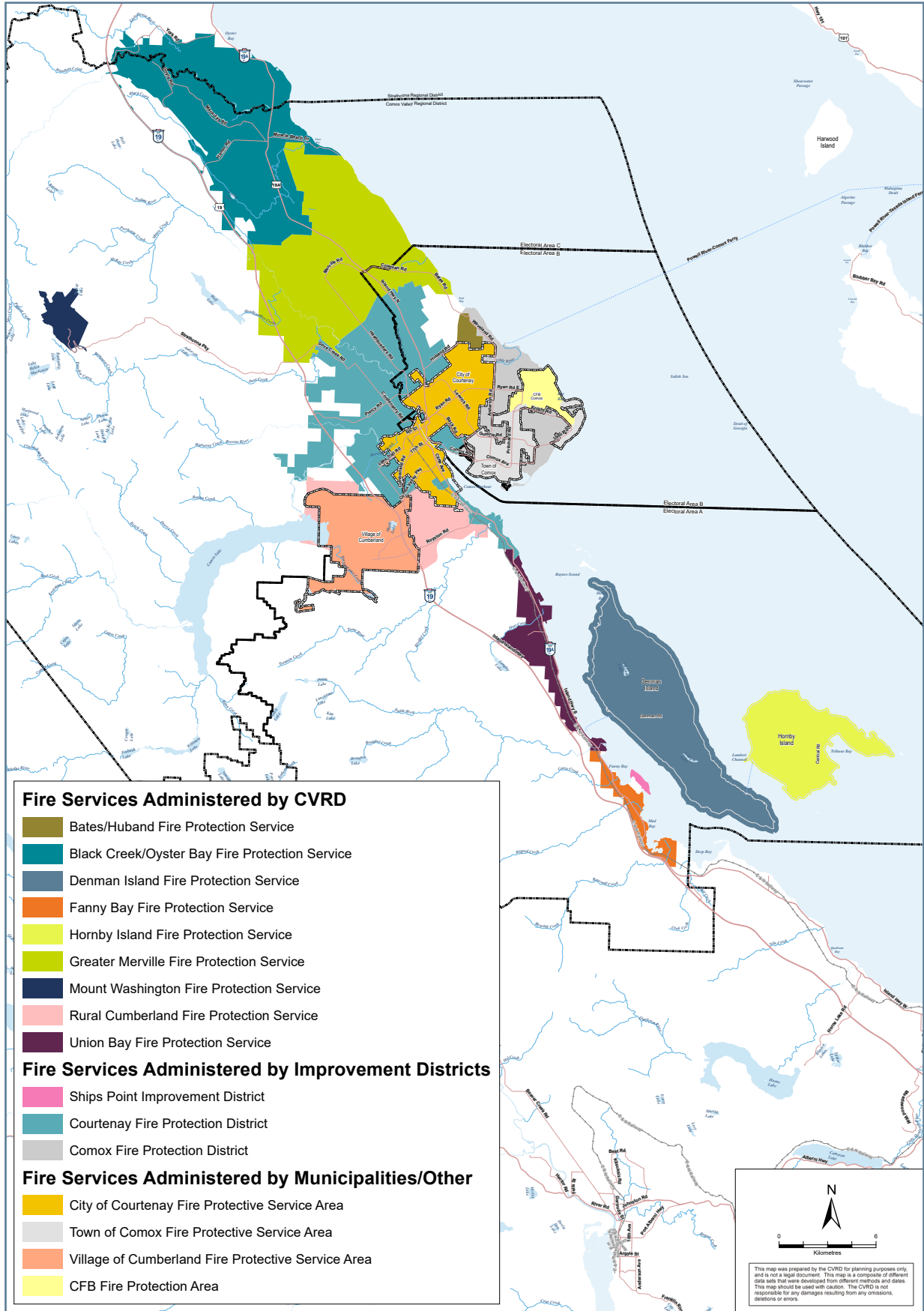


**6C**

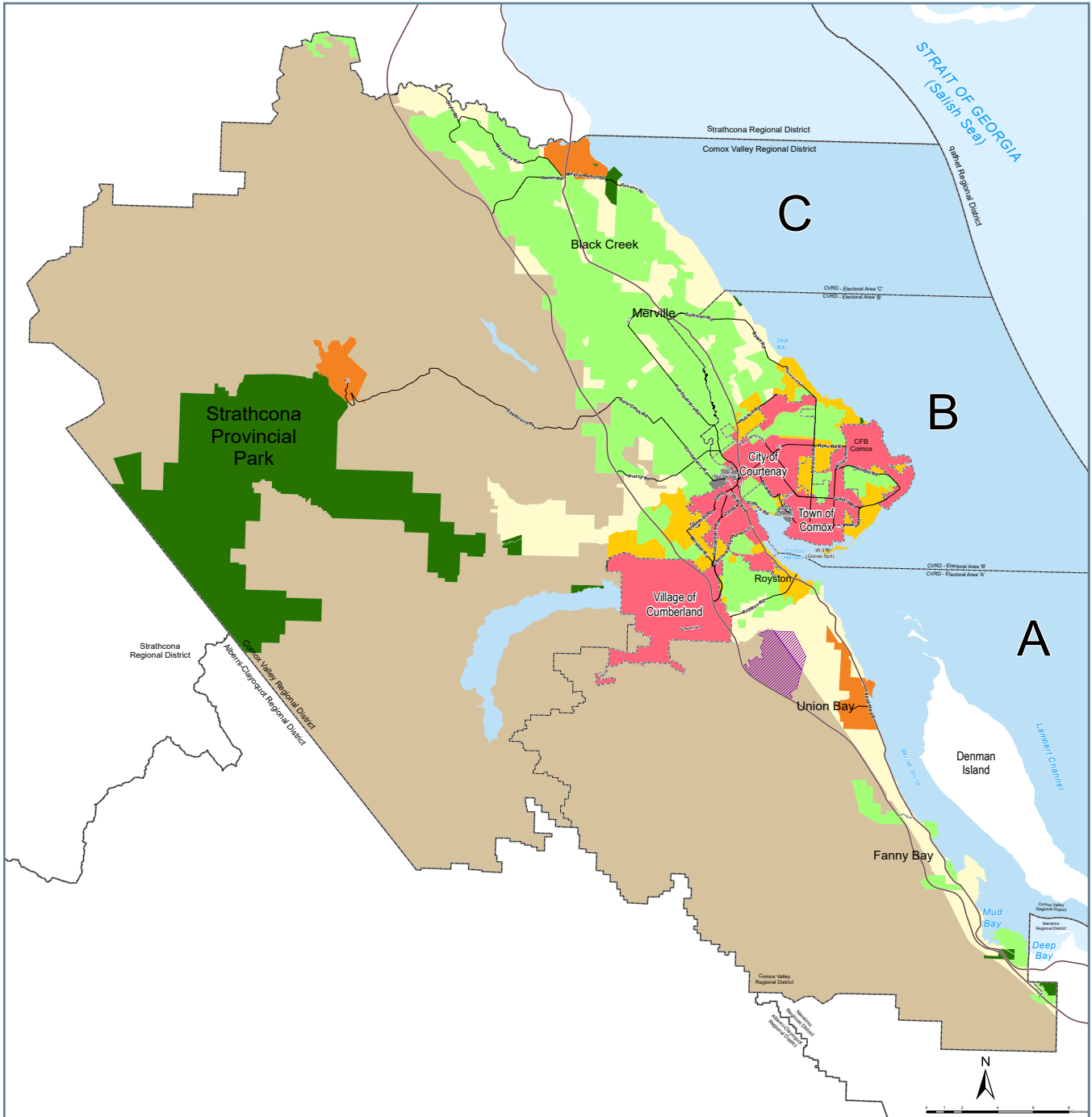
Plan and implement educational events, courses and source funding

# Maps

## Map 1. Fire Service Areas Map



## Map 2. Core Settlement Areas Map



**Core Settlement Areas:**

- Municipal Areas
- Settlement Nodes
- K'ómoks First Nation Lands
- Sage Hills Employment and Settlement Node
- Settlement Expansion Areas
- Agricultural Areas within Municipal Areas

**Rural Areas:**

- Rural Settlement Areas
- Agricultural Areas

**Resource Areas and Provincial Parks:**

- Resource Areas
- Provincial Park

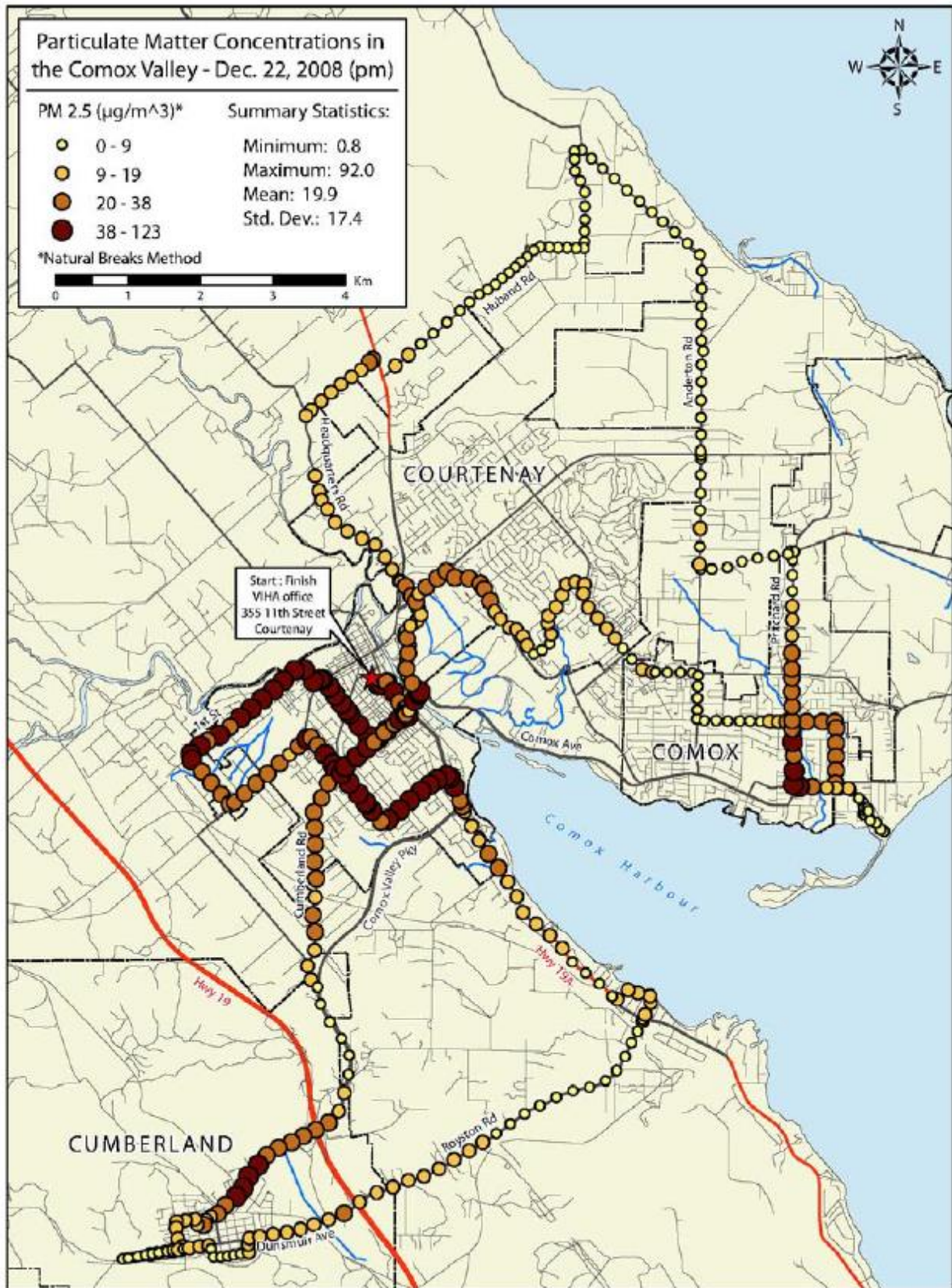
This map was prepared by the CVRD for internal purposes only. It is not intended to be used for any other purpose. The CVRD is not responsible for any errors or omissions in this map. The CVRD is not responsible for any damages or losses resulting from the use of this map. The CVRD is not responsible for any changes made to the map.



### Regional Growth Strategy

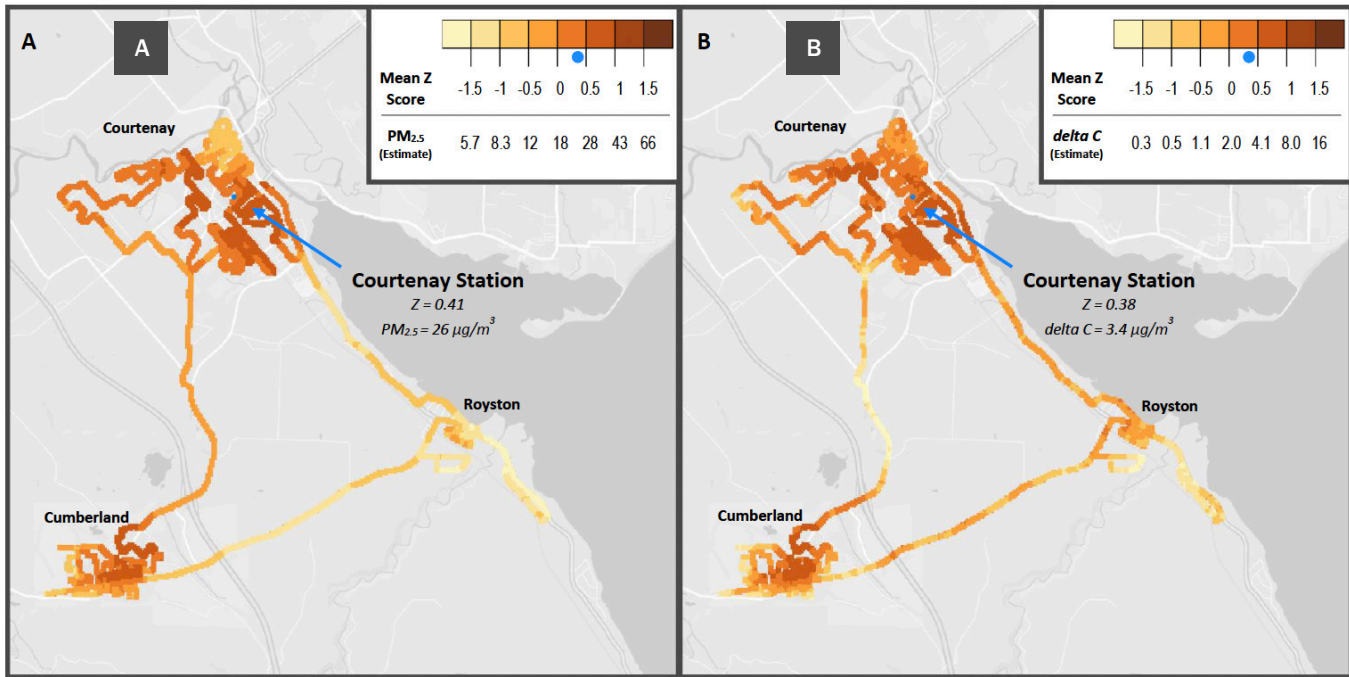
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**Map 3. 2009 Mobile Nephelometer Monitoring Study Map**

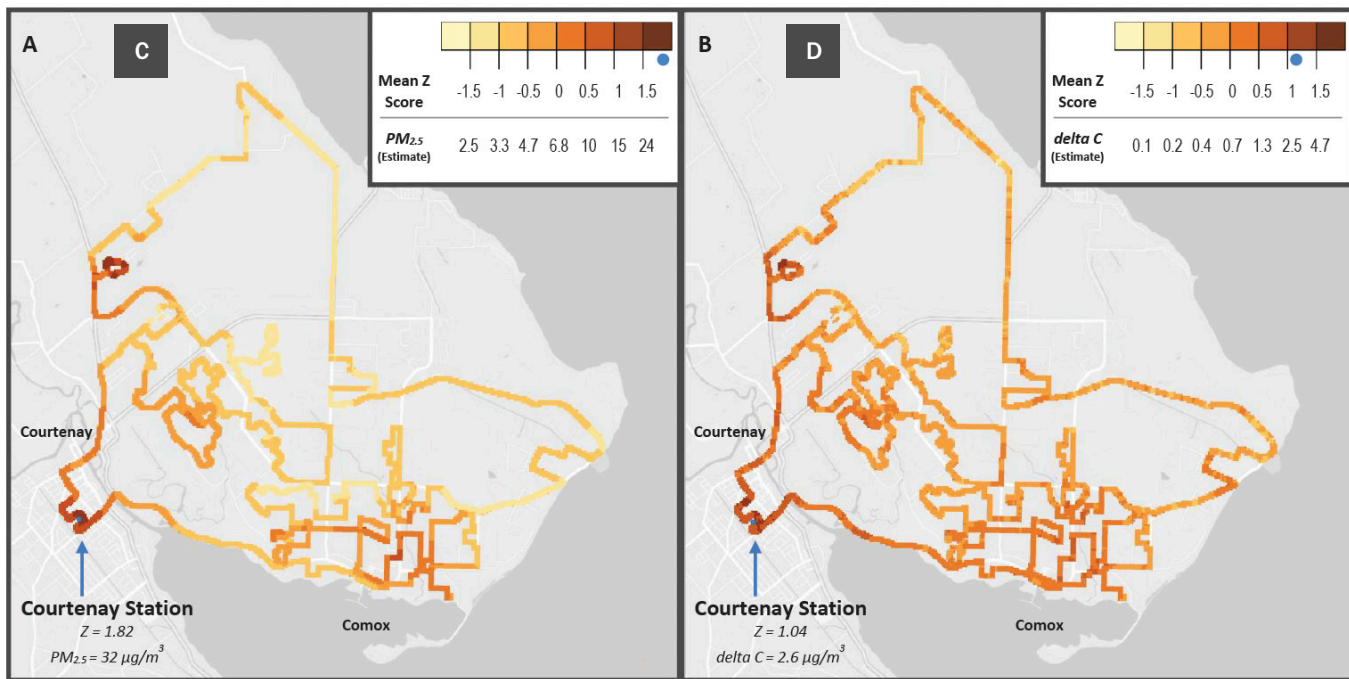


# Map 4. 2018 Mobile Monitoring Study Maps (Matthew Wagstaff)

## Courtenay and Cumberland Monitoring Route



## Courtenay and Comox Monitoring Route

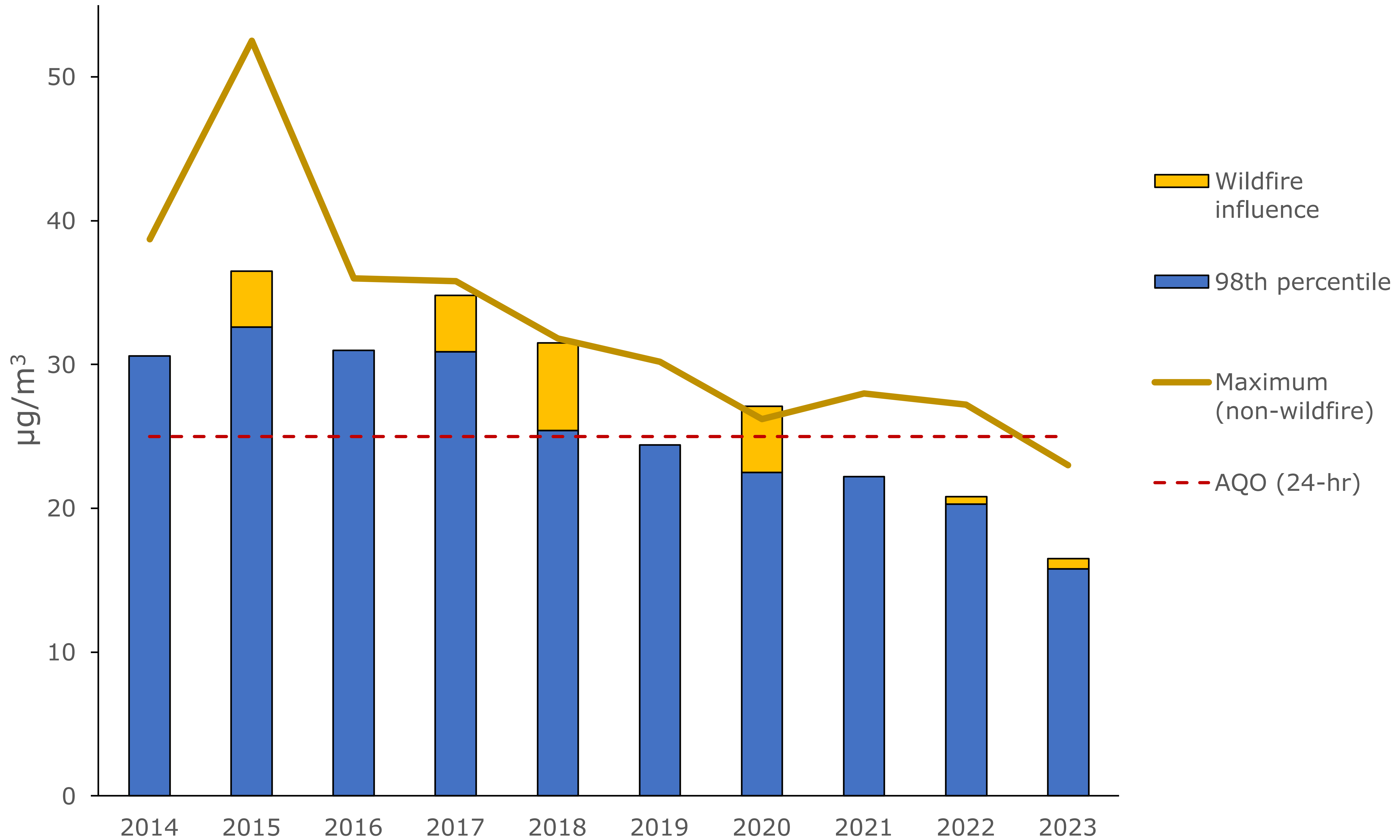




[comoxvalleyrd.ca](http://comoxvalleyrd.ca)   

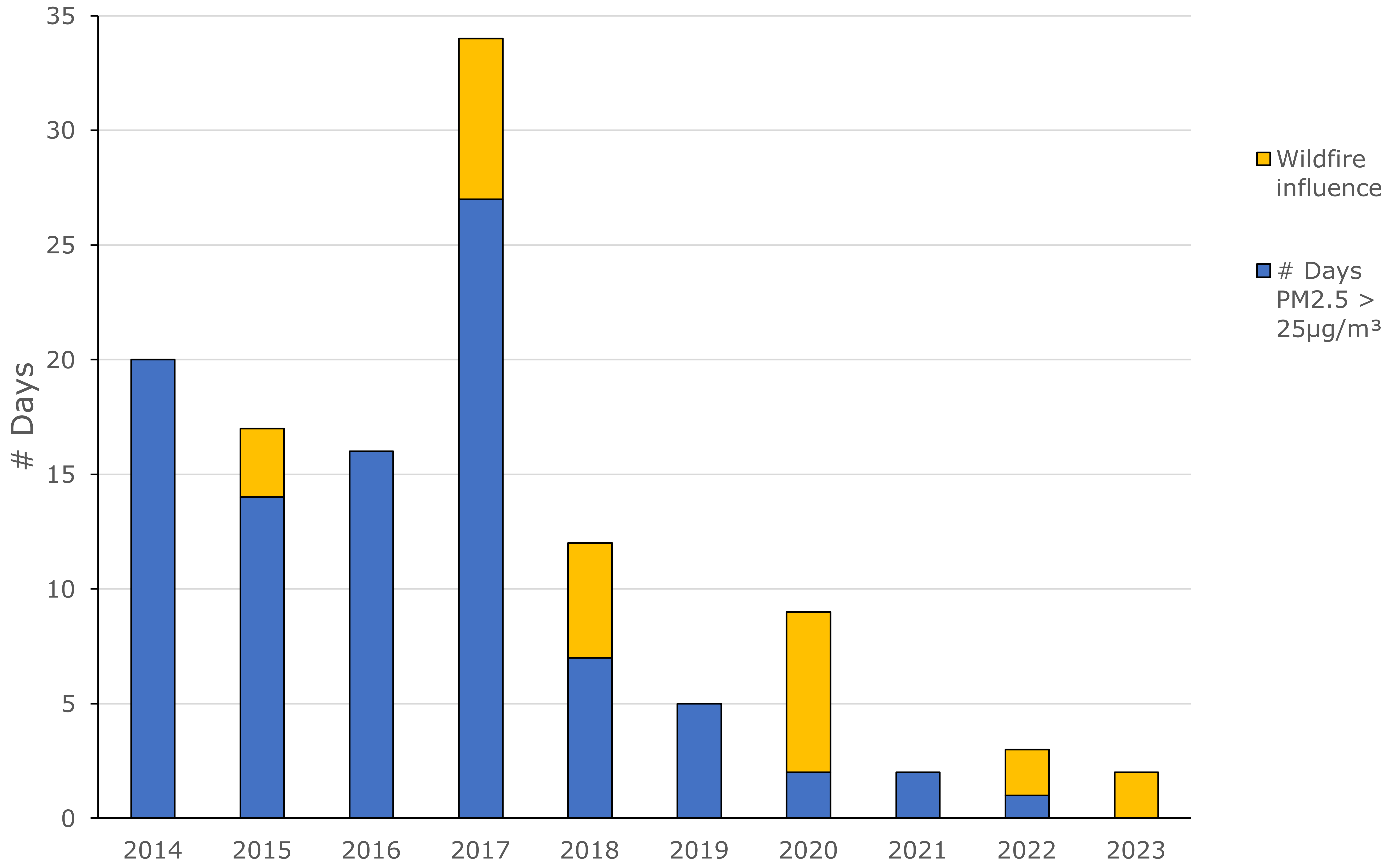
770 Harmston Avenue, Courtenay, BC V9N 0G8  
Tel: 250-334-6000 Toll-free: 1-800-331-6007 Fax: 250-334-4358

# Courtenay Elementary $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ 24-Hour Statistics

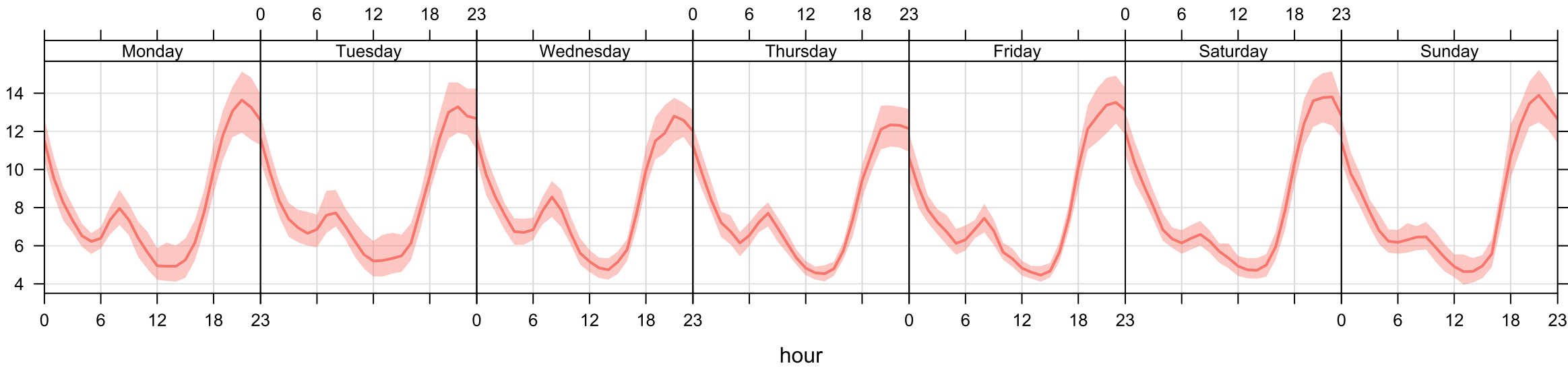




# Courtenay Elementary PM<sub>2.5</sub> Daily Exceedances of B.C. AQO

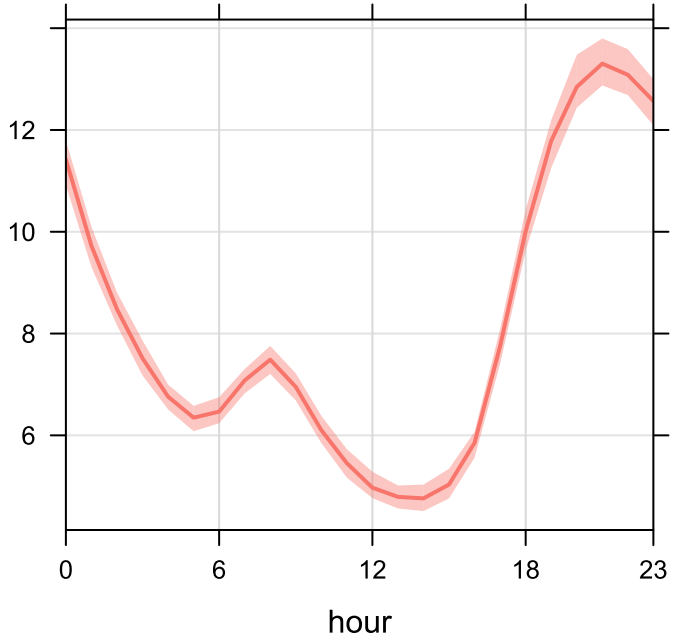


Courtenay Elementary School\_PM<sub>2.5</sub>

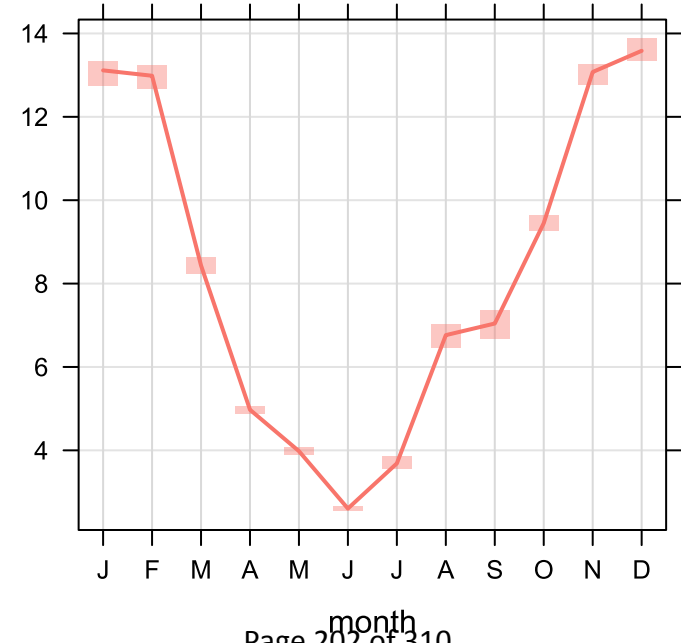


Courtenay Elementary School\_PM<sub>2.5</sub>

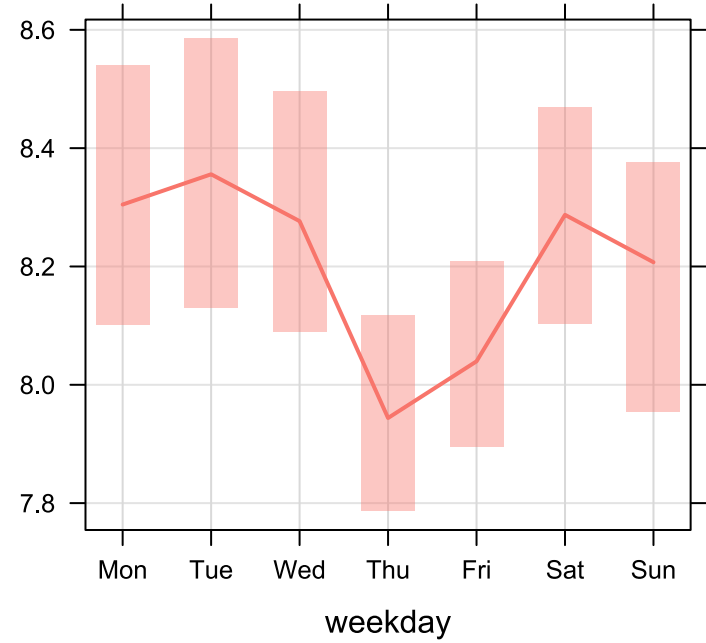
Courtenay Elementary School\_PM<sub>2.5</sub>



Courtenay Elementary School\_PM<sub>2.5</sub>



Courtenay Elementary School\_PM<sub>2.5</sub>





The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Briefing Note

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**To:** Council

**File No.:** 7200-20

**From:** Kurt MacDonald, Fire Chief

**Date:** February 12 2025

**Subject:** Courtenay Fire Department 2024 Annual Report

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## **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this briefing note is to update Council on fire department activities for the year ended 2024.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Courtenay Fire Department provides essential emergency, prevention and educational services to our community. We could not provide this service without the hard work and dedication of our volunteer members, and we are very proud of and grateful for all that they give to our organization and public. This report is a summary of our work and achievements in 2024.

**RECOMMENDATION:** THAT Council receive the Courtenay Fire Department 2023 Annual Report.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. 2024 Annual Report – Fire Department

Prepared by: Kurt MacDonald, ECFO, Fire Chief

Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.PI., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)



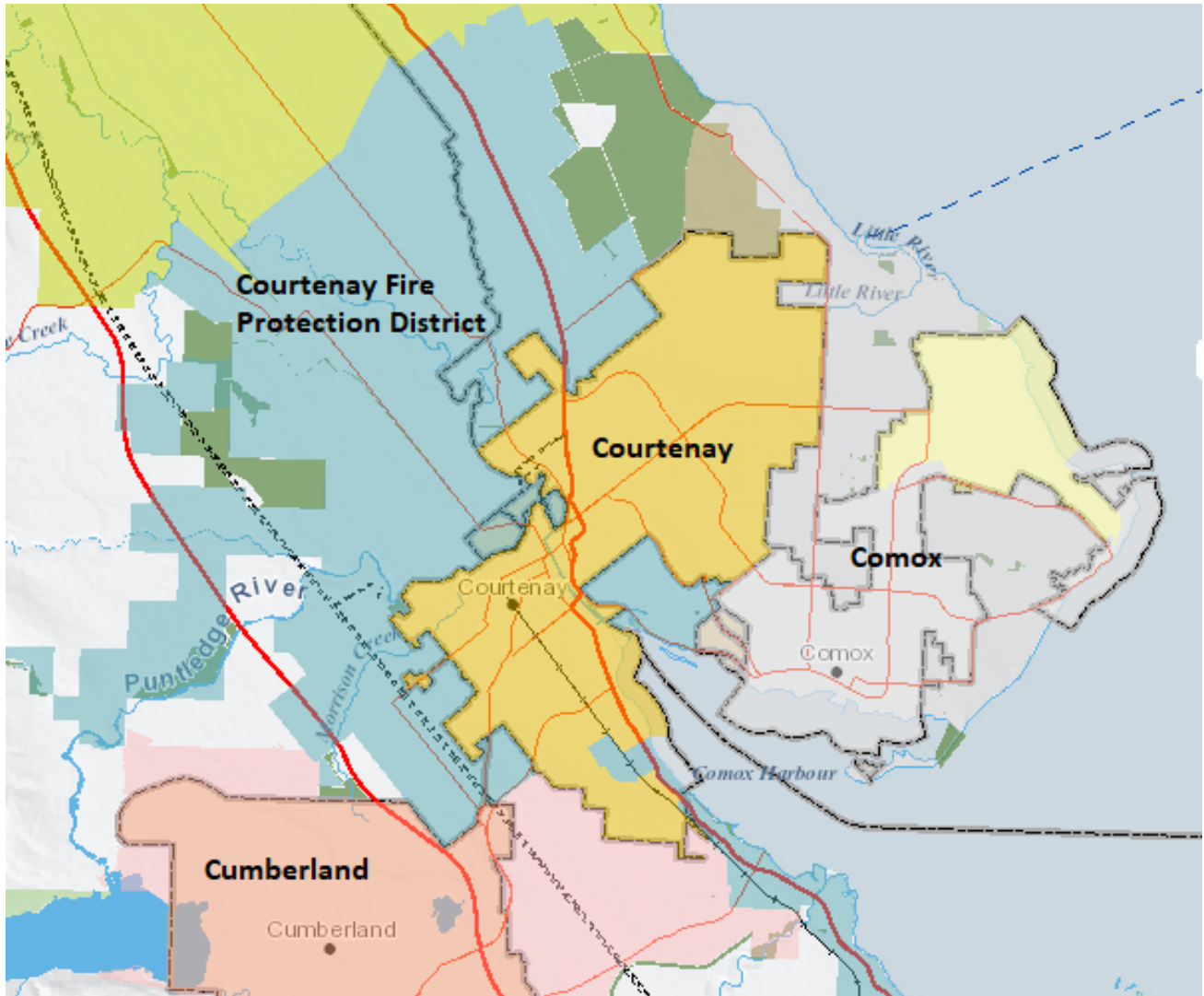
# **2024 ANNUAL REPORT**

## **Courtenay Fire Department**



# FIRE PROTECTION AREA

The Courtenay Fire Department provides service to the City of Courtenay, the Courtenay Fire Protection District and neighboring jurisdictions through reciprocal mutual aid agreements.

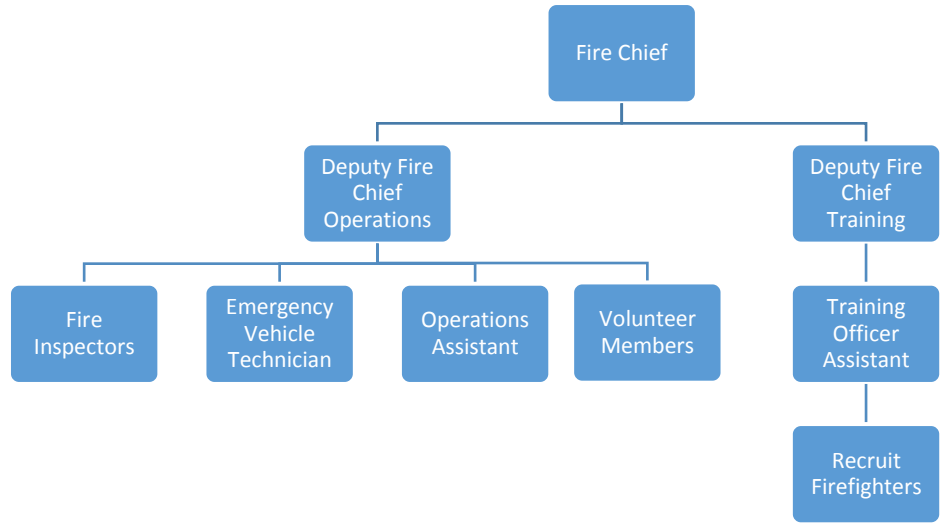


	Population (estimated 2021)	Properties Protected (2021)
<b>City of Courtenay</b>	28,420	13,006
<b>Courtenay Fire Protection District</b>	6,500	2,929
<b>Totals</b>	34,500	15,935

# FIRE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

## Career Staff

- Fire Chief
- Deputy Chief Operations
- Deputy Chief Training
- Fire Inspectors (2)
- Operations Assistant
- Training Officer Assistant
- Emergency Vehicle Technician



## Volunteer Members

- Fire Captains (4)
- Fire Lieutenants (8)
- Firefighters (43)
- Recruit Firefighters (10)

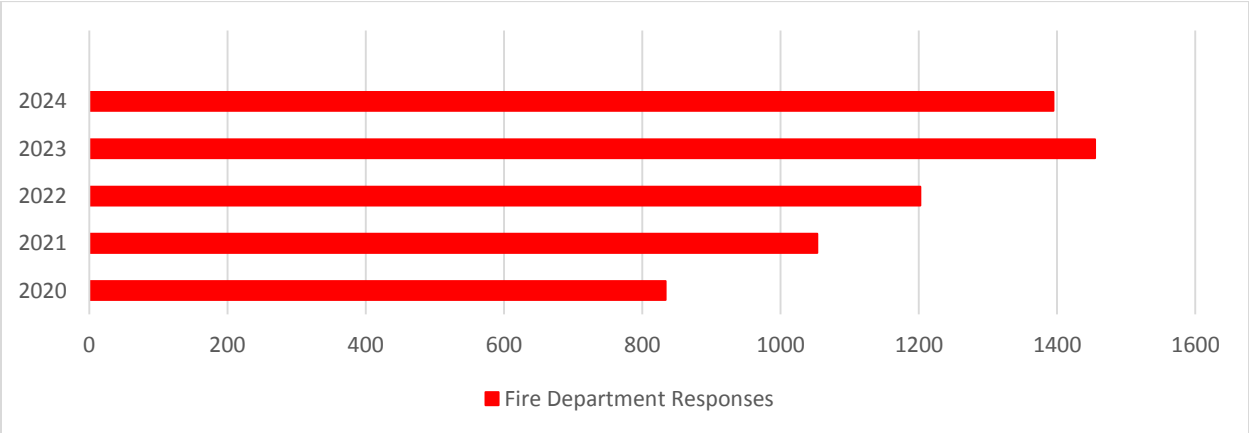


# FIRE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS

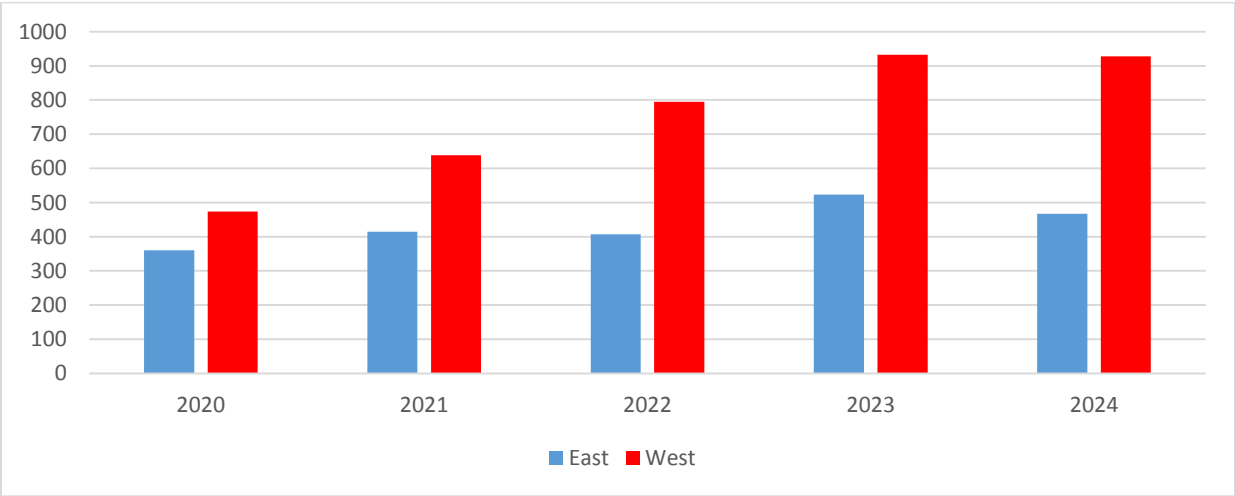
In 2024, the Courtenay Fire Department maintained its commitment to delivering reliable fire protection and emergency response services to the City of Courtenay and the Courtenay Fire Protection District. Over the past year, the department responded to 1,395 calls for service, a slight decrease from the 1,455 responses recorded in 2023. This decline can largely be attributed to a reduction in medical assistance requests from BCEHS, with ambulance assist calls dropping from 185 in 2023 to 139 in 2024.

Of the total incidents, 928 occurred west of the Courtenay River and 467 east, maintaining the consistent distribution seen in previous years. As the department reflects on this year’s activity, it continues to prioritize readiness, community safety, and collaboration with partner agencies to meet the evolving needs of the community.

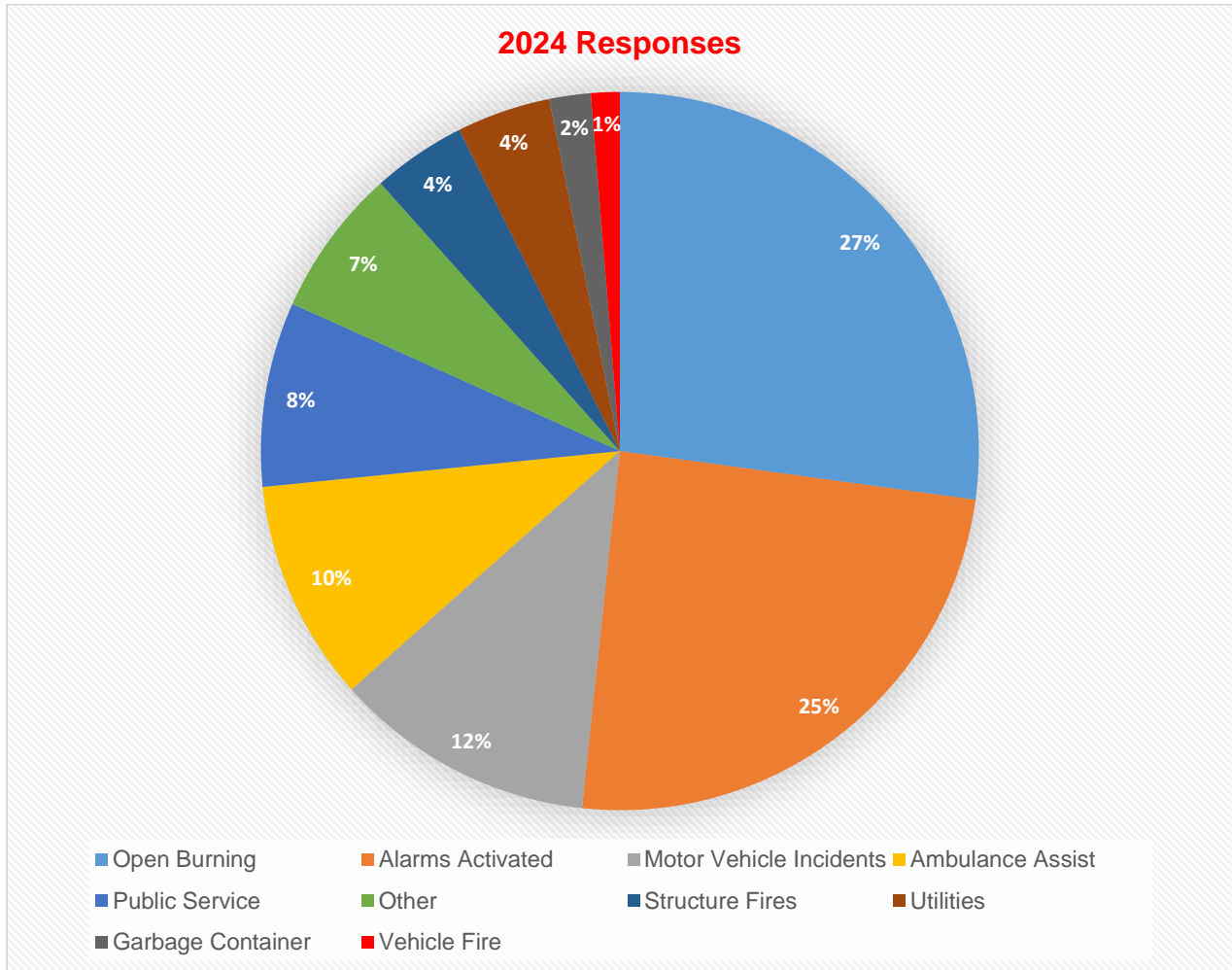
**Chart 1: Fire Department Responses by Year 2020-2024**



**Chart 2: Fire Department Responses East vs. West 2020–2024**



The year-end fire report highlights a busy year for fire response services. The most frequent type of call was for Open Burning, accounting for 379 incidents. Alarm Activations followed closely with 342 calls. Motor Vehicle Incidents were the third most common, with 164 responses. Ambulance Assists (139 calls) and Public Service requests (116 calls) also constituted a significant portion of the workload.



In total, our volunteer firefighters spent over 13,549 hours responding to incidents within the City of Courtenay and the Courtenay Fire Protection District. This works out to each member volunteering to respond to 246 hours' worth of incidents, which does not include the additional time commitment of training, maintaining certifications, public education, etc.



## **FIRE PREVENTION**

Our full-time staff conducted 1801 fire inspections across the city and the Courtenay Fire Protection District, with the majority of properties inspected found to be free of major fire code or life safety violations. Among the violations identified, the most common issues were burned-out emergency lighting and exit signs, as well as fire extinguishers requiring annual servicing.

We also delivered 181 public safety education events for residents within the City of Courtenay and the Courtenay Fire Protection District. These events covered a range of important topics, including FireSmart education, Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness, Fire Safety Talks, and fire station tours. Through these initiatives, we continued to promote fire safety awareness and community preparedness, fostering a stronger culture of safety throughout our region.

## **TRAINING**

The Courtenay Fire Department's Training Division accomplished significant milestones in 2024, ensuring that our members are fully prepared to respond to a wide variety of emergencies. Members dedicated over 4,000 hours to developing and maintaining expertise in critical areas such as fire suppression, confined space rescue, swift water rescue, first responder medical education, and water shuttle operations.

This rigorous training enables our department to meet the British Columbia Structure Firefighter Minimum Training Standards Full-Service designation. This designation allows us to perform advanced structural firefighting operations, including interior attacks and search and rescue in hazardous environments.

Additionally, nine students successfully graduated from our recruit class in October 2024 and are now serving as Provisional Members. Their achievement marks an important step in their journey to becoming fully trained firefighters and ensures the continued strength and readiness of our department for years to come.

## **FIRE DEPARTMENT DEPLOYMENTS**

The 2024 wildfire season in British Columbia (B.C.) was notably severe, marking it as the province's fourth largest on record. Over 1.07 million hectares were burned, a significant increase from the 14,535 hectares in 2020 and approaching the 869,300 hectares affected in 2021.

Although the wildfire season was busy, the British Columbia Wildfire Service did not request assistance from our department. Nevertheless, our fire department remains committed to ongoing training and preparedness to support BC Wildfire efforts whenever needed, ensuring readiness to respond effectively to wildfire incidents across the province.

# EMERGENCY PROGRAM

The Emergency Program played a critical role in supporting the community during adverse events in 2024. Regional warming and cooling services were activated four times each, covering a total of 21 days, providing essential shelter and resources for vulnerable populations. Additionally, the program responded to a localized flood emergency with a one-day activation, ensuring timely coordination and support. These efforts underscore the department’s adaptability in addressing diverse hazards and its commitment to community safety.

# FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In 2024, the Courtenay Fire Department focused on several key strategic priorities to enhance service delivery and community safety. Progress was made on the East Side Fire Hall project design, ensuring the department remains well-positioned to meet the growing needs of the community. The department also successfully completed the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) replacement project, replacing expiring safety equipment to maintain firefighter health and safety.

Additionally, the department continued to explore cost-effective methods to deliver fire and rescue services within the paid-on-call volunteer framework, striving to balance operational efficiency with the commitment to providing a high level of service to the residents of Courtenay. Weekday hours between 0800hrs and 1630hrs continue to be the time that we receive most of our calls for service, and this number has increased by 70.9% since 2020. The addition of volunteer firefighters working casual shifts during this time period has helped us maintain a timely response to incidents and continue to perform fire inspections and investigations as mandated by the Province of BC

In closing, I would like to extend my gratitude to Mayor and Council for their continued support of the Courtenay Fire Department. As we look ahead to 2025, we remain focused on advancing key strategic priorities, including finalizing the East Side Fire Hall project, furthering wildfire preparedness, and expanding fire safety programs for the community. I would also like to thank the dedicated members of the Courtenay Fire Department for their unwavering commitment to serving the community.





City of  
Courtenay

ZOOM Window Space

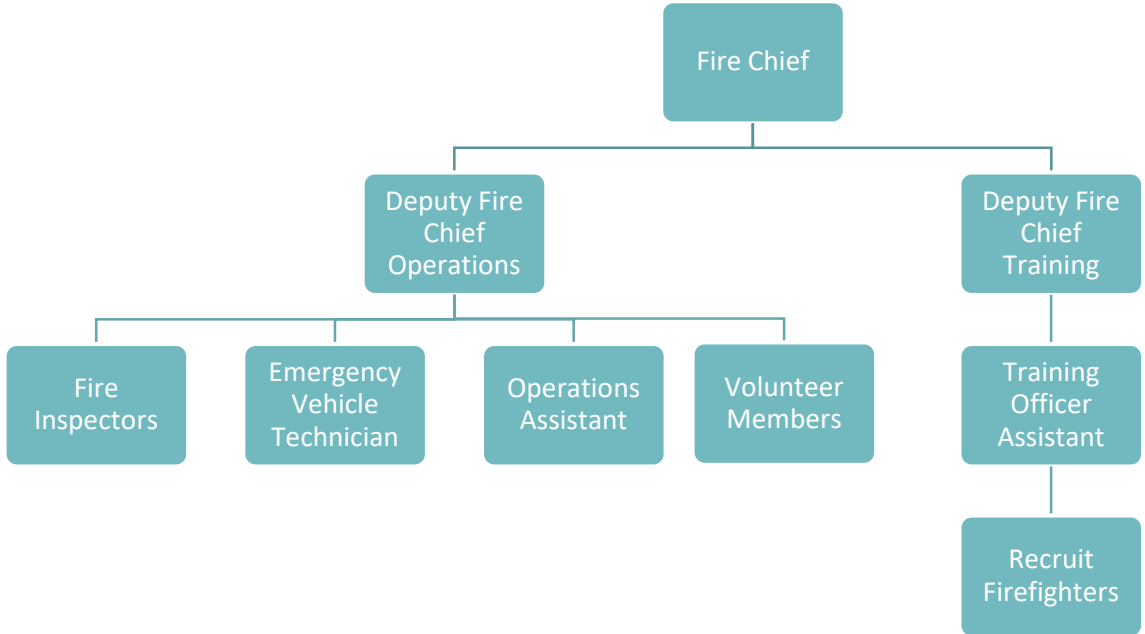
Courtenay Fire Department

# 2024 Annual Report



Presented by:  
Kurt MacDonald, City of Courtenay  
February 12 2025 Council Meeting

# Fire Department Organizational Chart



### Career Staff

- Fire Chief
- Deputy Chief Operations
- Deputy Chief Training
- Fire Inspectors (2)
- Operations Assistant
- Emergency Vehicle Technician
- Training Officer Assistant

### Volunteer Members

- Captains (4)
- Lieutenants (8)
- Firefighters (43)
- Recruits (11)

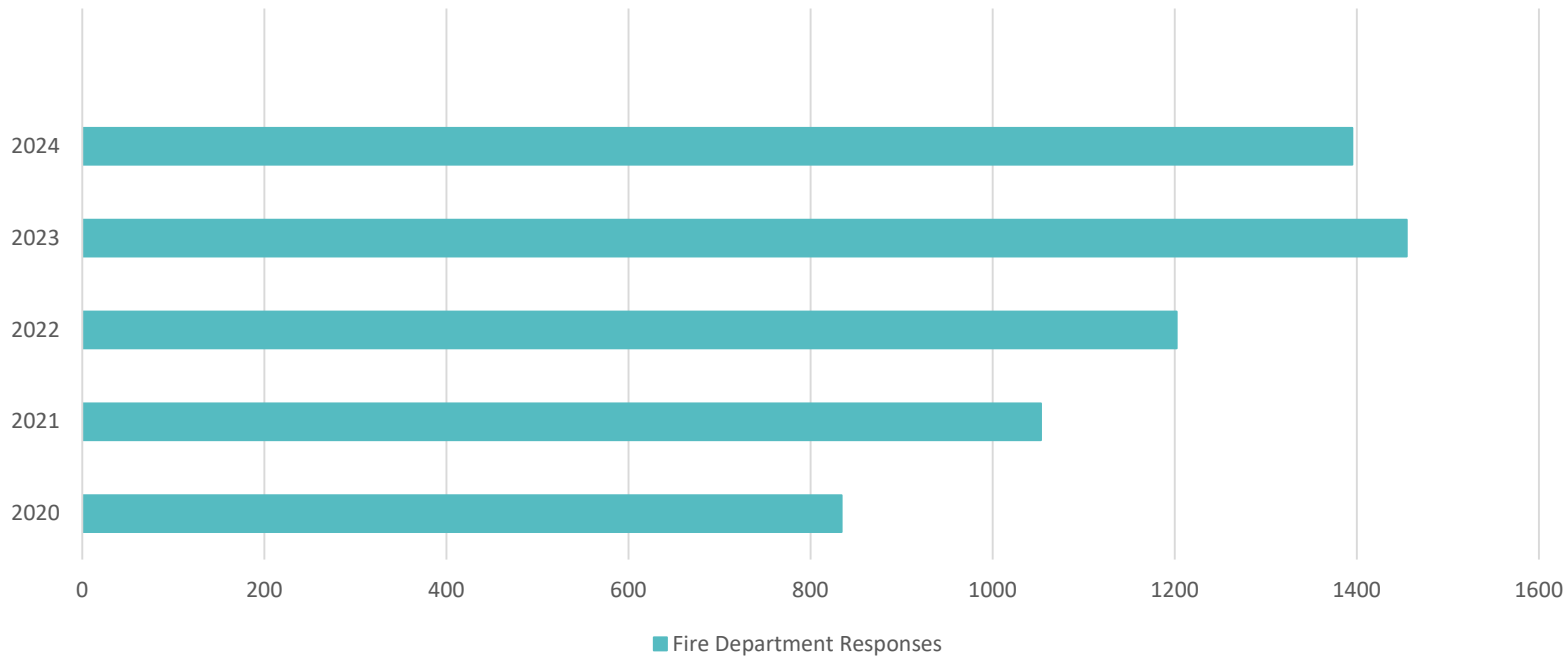
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# Fire Department Operations

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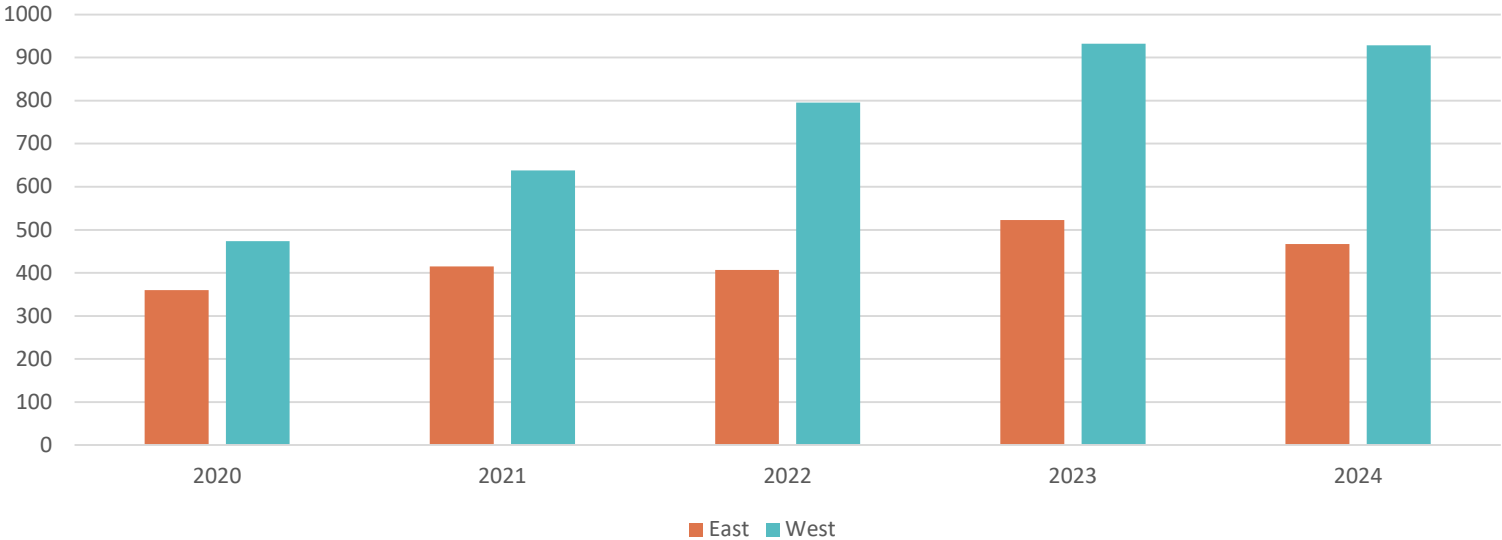
## Responses by Year 2020 - 2024



# Fire Department Operations

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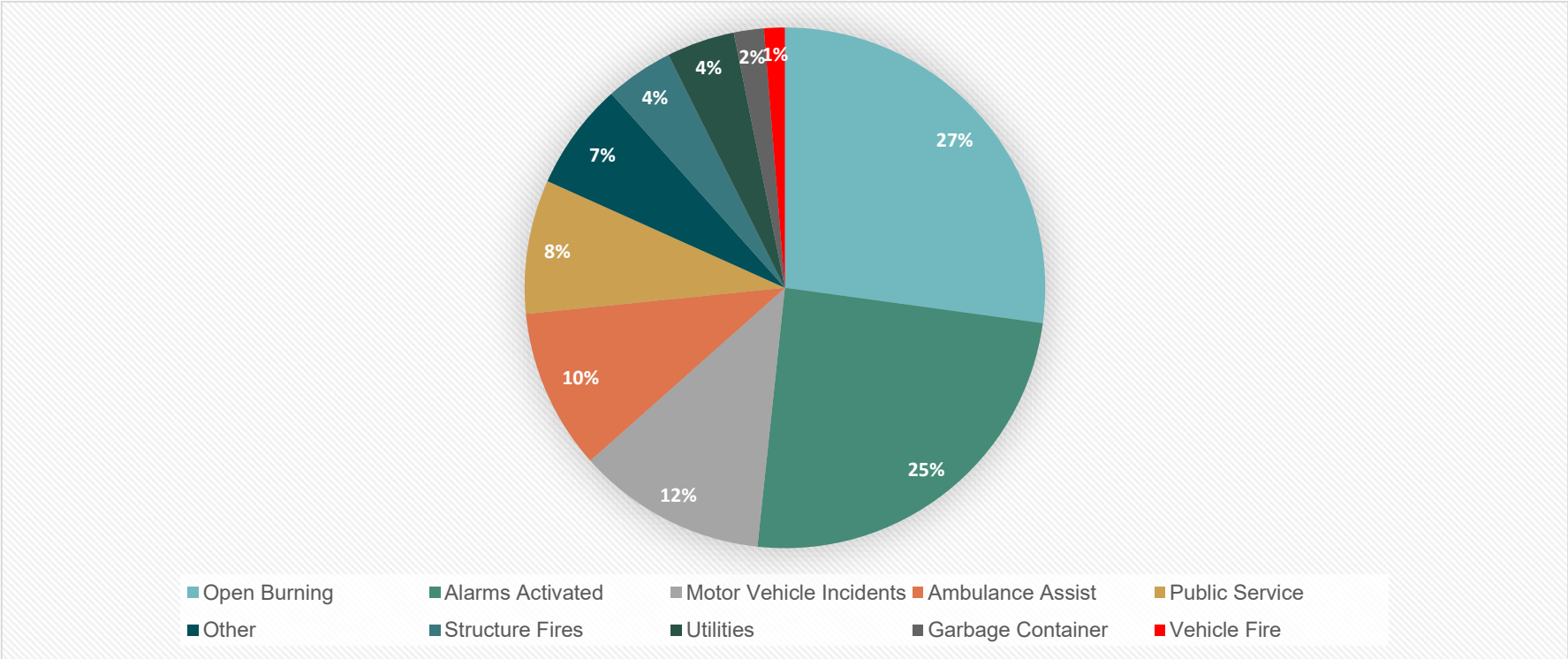
## Responses East vs. West 2020 - 2024



# Fire Department Operations

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## Responses by Type



# Fire Prevention

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## 2024 Activities

- 1801 fire inspections
- 181 public safety events
  - 17 school events
  - 57 adult fire safety sessions
  - 38 NEPP/FireSmart presentations
  - 69 smoke alarm checks
- 280 fire reports





# Fire Training

## 2024 Activities

- Over 4000 hours of training time spent by members
- Topics included:
  - Fire suppression
  - Confined space rescue
  - Swift water rescue
  - First responder medical training

ZOOM Window Space



# Emergency Program/Wildfire Deployments

## 2024 Activities

- Regional warming and cooling services activated for 21 days
- Responded to localized flood emergency
- No requests for assistance with wildfires

ZOOM Window Space



# Strategic Priorities

ZOOM Window Space

## 2024 Activities

- Continued to work on design of East Courtenay fire hall
- Completed SCBA replacement project
- Continued development of long term staffing plan



# Briefing Note

**To:** Council

**File No.:** 1407-20

**From:** Director of Development Services

**Date:** February 12, 2025

**Subject:** Downtown Vitalization Local Area Plan Phase 1 Update

**PURPOSE:** To update Council on Phase 1 of the Downtown Vitalization Local Area Plan (DVLAP) Communication Strategy.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Council received the Downtown Vitalization Local Area Plan Communication Strategy at the October 23, 2024 regular meeting of Council and endorsed the plan (Attachment 1).

Staff and Consultants have now concluded Phase 1 of the communication strategy and this report outlines what we heard from the working group. What we heard forms the planning principles that will guide the development of the DVLAP over the next few months as the project moves into Phase 2.

## **DISCUSSION:**

Phase 1 of the project created a Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis for the plan area (Attachment 2). During this process four districts with unique characteristics and planning opportunities were identified within the plan boundaries as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Planning Districts



The SWOT document provides situational analysis of the plan area as a whole as well as for the distinct districts and includes an inventory of land use, infrastructure and current development. The SWOT reviews existing documents, capital projects and infrastructure to identify big ideas to guide the development of the plan. The process identified the following Big Ideas:

- Reimagining the riverfront
- Activating Harmston Park and surrounding
- Strengthening the Downtown core
- Fitzgerald Corridor as a key corridor with unique place making and design considerations
- Remaining focused on implementing a number of the Downtown Playbook (2016) priorities including enhancing public spaces, improving connectivity, and supporting cohesive development.

As part of Phase 1 project engagement, working group members identified in the *Downtown Playbook: A Partnership Action Plan* (2016) were contacted for focused interviews in order to ensure the project team has a more complete understanding of study area attributes and external factors impacting the project’s success. These working group members are: Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Association, Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce, Comox Valley Art Gallery, Comox Valley Arts, Sid Williams Theatre Society, Courtenay and District Museum and Palaeontology Centre, and two property owners (Central Builders properties and property owner of a number of properties adjacent to Harmston Park).

In preparation for the interviews, the SWOT was distributed to the working group members with the following questions:

- Looking at the SWOT, what's most important? Should we be elevating any of these identified issues or opportunities based on your perspective and/or specific interests?
- Did we miss anything?
- Is there anything you see in the SWOT that is no longer relevant or should be removed?

The interviews were conducted with each group to understand if the SWOT analysis captured the key ideas for the downtown and what aspects of the SWOT analysis required further technical review for the development of the DVLAP. The consultants produced a “What We Heard” document which is Attachment 3 to this report and Table 1 below summarizes the key findings.

Table 1 Key Interview Findings

<b>Key Themes:                      What We Heard from                      Interest-Holder Interviews</b>	<b>Planning &amp; Design Considerations:                      How Feedback Can Inform the LAP Process</b>
Recognize the Cultural District as a Focal Point	Identify the cultural district as a centralized activity hub/focal point and an existing gateway to downtown
Bring People Downtown	To support implementation of the LAP, the City may consider initiatives and investment to encourage downtown visitation such as expanded utility for events/programming, increased transit access, interpretive/historic signage, public art, wayfinding, and public realm enhancements

<b>Key Themes:                      What We Heard from                      Interest-Holder Interviews</b>	<b>Planning &amp; Design Considerations:                      How Feedback Can Inform the LAP Process</b>
Enhance Greenspaces	Consider differences in type, distribution and function of parkland and greenspace in downtown (i.e., for recreation, public realm, access to nature, event programming)
Support Housing Development & Local Businesses	Consider opportunities to support denser forms of housing development in the downtown and pedestrian focused streets to enhance walkability and liveability
Utilize Strength of Community Groups & Potential Partnerships	Include community group involvement as a strength to implementation of the LAP and explore opportunities with KFN and other planning partners
Align with other Plans & Strategies	Ensure that strategic objectives within the Cultural Plan and provincial housing legislation are referenced and/or integrated into all downtown planning efforts

The findings from both the SWOT analysis and the “What We Heard Report” confirm that the vision and number of specific ideas and projects for the downtown as identified in the Downtown Playbook (2016) and incorporated into the Official Community Plan (OCP) remain a strong foundation for the development of the DVLAP. The plan when completed will focus on identifying key projects to include in future financial planning and implementation.

As part of Phase 1 a project page has been developed to launch on Social PinPoint which provides a project schedule, documents, how to provide comments or questions, and how the public can get involved. This project page for the DVLAP can be found on [engagemoxvalley.ca/Courtenay](http://engagemoxvalley.ca/Courtenay).

Staff have reached out to K’omoks First Nation (KFN) to initiate a discussion with KFN on preferred engagement and partnership approach.

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

The table below provides an overview of the next stages of DVLAP planning process including communication and engagement milestones and timelines.

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Estimated Timeline</b>
<b>PHASE 2: Key Directions &amp; Concept Plan</b>	
Prepare Urban Design Framework and draft policies for public and interest holder input including the following but not limited to: project implementation options for each District, overall hierarchy of public spaces, green network, circulation, place-making strategy, areas of cultural value, new residential and mixed-use development location and massing, reimagining vacant properties.	February – March 2025

Public Interest and Intergovernmental engagement session. A one-day session that will bring together interest holders, intergovernmental interests and the general public through the use of creative engagement techniques similar to the OCP 2020 Ideas Fair. Interest holders including intergovernmental will have a separate session for more technical discussion on the same day. (public open house)	April 2025
Virtual Engagement (Social PinPoint): Online survey and input opportunity	Will run for two weeks around the time of the public open house
What We Heard Summary and Draft DVLAP for Council consideration	May 2025
<b>PHASE 3: Refinement &amp; Draft Plan</b>	
Virtual Engagement (Social PinPoint) with focused questions on plan refinement	June 2025
Public Interest and Intergovernmental follow-up meeting	June 2025
Staff report to Council on engagement findings and recommended DVLAP for adoption	August /September 2025

**RECOMMENDATION:** THAT Council receive the “Downtown Vitalization Local Area Plan Phase 1 Update”.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. October 23, 2024 staff report “Downtown Local Area Plan Communication Strategy and Workplan and endorsed the community strategy”
2. Courtenay Downtown & Harmston Park Local Area Plan – SWOT Analysis
3. Phase 1 What We Heard Report

Prepared by: Nancy Gothard, RPP MCIP, Manager of Community and Sustainability Planning  
 Reviewed by: Marianne Wade, RPP MCIP, Director of Development Services  
 Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Staff Report

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**To:** Council

**File No.:** 1470-20

**From:** Director of Development Services

**Date:** October 23, 2024

**Subject:** Downtown Local Area Plan Communication Strategy and Workplan

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**PURPOSE:** For Council to receive the report and endorse the Communication Strategy for the Downtown Local Area Plan (DLAP).

**BACKGROUND:**

At the regular meeting of Council held on July 17, 2024 staff provide a report on the consolidation of Harmston Precinct, Downtown Playbook, OCP Downtown Centre and provided a new boundary for a Downtown Local Area Plan (DLAP) which Council approved. Staff indicated they would report back to Council with a Communication Strategy for the DLAP and staff is seeking Council's endorsement of the proposed plan in accordance with the community engagement and consultation requirements of the Local Government Act.

**DISCUSSION:**

The DLAP is intended to inform and amend the Official Community Plan which triggers consultation requirements pursuant to Section 475 of the Local Government Act in addition to the requirement under Section 477 (3) (c) for the subsequent bylaw amendment.

The proposed communication strategy and actions is outlined in Attachment 1 and provides an overview of the engagement approach. The strategy will provide opportunities, with a variety of methods and utilizing communication tools, to provide early and on an ongoing consultation to form a draft local plan for Council to consider in 2025. This project is intended to implement the OCP and provides and aligns with Council's Strategic priorities. This work has been incorporated into staff's workplan and has been identified in the 2023-2026 financial plan.

In accordance with the legislation, the communication strategy includes broad public and engagement with parties with a direct interest in the DLAP study area. This strategy is designed to reflect the Public Interest will include the general public and groups including but not limited to: Downtown Business Association, Chamber of Commerce, Comox Valley Arts Council, and local property owners. In order to engage with intergovernmental authorities who have an interest in the plan area the strategy includes contact with School District 71, CVRD, MoTI and BC Transit. With respect to K'omoks First Nation, a detailed engagement plan will be developed through following direct contact with the Nation to determine their level of interest in the study area as well as to determine how they would like to be involved in the project and subsequent consideration of the OCP amendment.

Table 1 below is a high-level summary of the three phases of the communication strategy which supports the development of the local area plan by the project team. Staff have initiated the development of the communication strategy and engaged on the first two tasks in Phase 1 in order to provide the strategy to Council and seek endorsement of the plan.



TABLE 1 Summary of Communication Strategy Plan

<p><b>PHASE 1: Planning Context &amp; design Foundations</b> Engagement Planning Workshop (with project team) Communications Strategy Plan (developed with Team) Public Interest and Intergovernmental Interviews</p> <p>Summary of what we heard Material preparations for Social point</p> <p><b>PHASE 2: Key Directions &amp; Concept Plan</b> Public Open house/Pop-up Virtual Engagement Public Interest and Intergovernmental follow-up What we Heard Summary</p> <p><b>PHASE 3: Refinement &amp; Draft Plans</b> Virtual Engagement (Social Point) Public Interest and Intergovernmental follow-up meeting Engagement Analysis &amp; Report</p>
--

This communication strategy supports the development of the local area plan while building upon the work undertaken through the OCP and Downtown play book as discussed at the July 17, 2024 council meeting. Tools being utilized include virtual, in person, survey, and interviews. The engagement will be summarized and utilized to inform the development of the local area plan. Staff will report back to Council at the end of Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the communication strategy to provide status updates and to outline how the engagement is informing the local area plan. These steps will be taken prior to the DLAP being presented for consideration of the OCP Amendment Bylaw.

**POLICY ANALYSIS:**

Section 475(1) in the *Local Government Act* that during the development of an amendment to the Official Community Plan (OCP) the proposing local government must provide one or more opportunities it considers appropriate for the consultation with persons, organizations and authorities it considers will be affected.

*For the purposes of subsection (1), the local government must*  
*(a) consider whether the opportunities for consultation with one or more of the persons, organizations and authorities should be early and ongoing, and*

- (b) specifically consider whether consultation is required with the following:*
- (i) the board of the regional district in which the area covered by the plan is located, in the case of a municipal official community plan;*
  - (ii) the board of any regional district that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan;*
  - (iii) the council of any municipality that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan;*
  - (iv) first nations;*
  - (v) boards of education, greater boards and improvement district boards;*

*(vi)the Provincial and federal governments and their agencies.*

*(3) Consultation under this section is in addition to the public hearing required under section 477  
(3) (c).*

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The 2023-2026 financial plan includes \$150,000 for the Harmston Local Area Plan. The Downtown Local Area Plan includes the Harmston Local Area Plan and has incorporated a number of strategic priorities like the Duncan Mews to create a comprehensive and coordinated local area plan to guide implementation of key actions that have been identified in the Downtown Playbook and OCP. To date \$45,000 has been spent on the first phase of the DLAP to create a SWOT analysis which is required to initiate and inform the communication strategy with the development of the DLAP.

MODUS has provided a proposal to support the DLAP process of \$45,000 plus additional \$10,000 to build the Social point page (Virtual Engagement) and monitor the page throughout the engagement process. The total cost to support the DLAP process is \$55,000 which leaves \$50,000 in the budget. The \$50,000 will be utilized for EKISTICS support to complete the DLAP. Any additional requirements outside of this plan would require additional funds.

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:**

This project is being delivered with a combination of staff resources from Development Services and external consultants. Internally the project will require support from Communications to utilize city social media, webpages, media and newsprint where required. This project will include input and support from all city departments in the development and implementation of the DLAP.

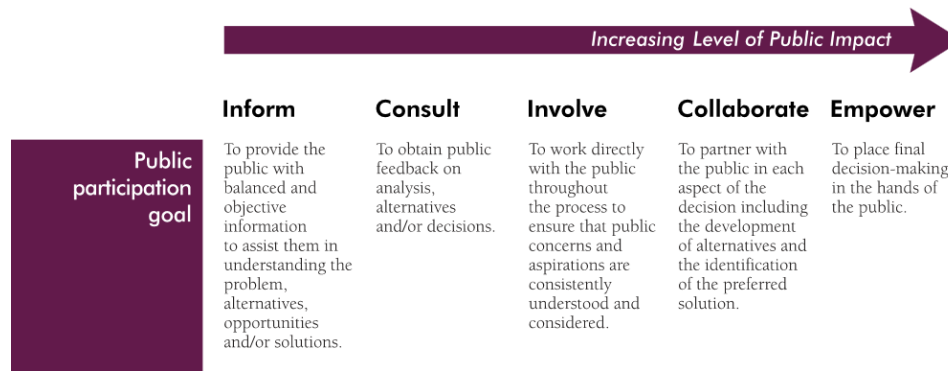
**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:**

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Streets and Transportation - Improve Cliffe Avenue and 5th Street intersection pedestrian facilities
- Streets and Transportation - Plan and implement bike parking and secure storage
- Buildings and Landscape - Update Zoning Bylaw - review maximum building heights
- Buildings and Landscape - Develop a local area plan for Harmston Avenue Civic Precinct
- Buildings and Landscape - Implement Duncan Commons/Downtown Courtenay Playbook, 5th Street staging/phasing
- Buildings and Landscape - Review and update land use regulations and bylaws for consistency with OCP

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

Based 2 Spectrum the communication strategy will inform, consult, involve and collaborate.



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As discussed at the July 17, 2024 Council meeting, Staff is utilizing the engagement undertaken to date from the Downtown Play Book and the OCP to inform the development of the DLAP.

The DLAP will amend the OCP and the amending bylaws to the OCP will be prepared for Council’s consideration after the conclusion of the communication strategy that supports the development of the DLAP.

Staff anticipate initiating and completing the Social Point page to be live and completing the public interest and intergovernmental agencies interviews in November 2024.

Phase 2 would be initiated in February 2025 followed by Phase 3 in April 2025.

#### OPTIONS

1. THAT Council receive the report on the Downtown Local Area Plan Communication Strategy and Workplan and endorse the communication strategy outlined in Attachment 1 in order to guide community and and interest holder engagement;

THAT Council pursuant to section 475 and 476 Local Government Act, Council will provide opportunities it considers appropriate for consultation with persons and parties it considers will be affected, including the Comox Valley Regional District, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, First Nations, and the province/provincial agencies and pursuant to section 476 Local Government Act, Council will consult with Comox Valley School District 71 prior to considering amendments to City of Courtenay Official Commuity Plan Bylaw No 3070, 2022.

2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

#### ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Communication Strategy Downtown Local Area Plan
2. July 17, 2024 SDDR Local Area Plan Update - Staff Report

Prepared by: Marianne Wade, Director of Development Services  
Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)

### Phase 1: Planning Context & Design Foundations

<b>1.1</b>	<b>Engagement Planning Workshop (with project team)</b>
1.1.1	background review (of LAP work to date, other resources, etc.)
1.1.2	facilitate workshop to plan the "what, when, who & how" of engagement
1.1.3	prepare notes from workshop
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Communications &amp; Engagement Strategy</b>
1.2.1	draft plan (including timeline, key messages, etc)
1.2.2	finalize plan
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Public, Interest-holder and Intergovernmental/Agency Interviews</b>
1.3.1	coordination & preparation for interviews/meetings
1.3.2	facilitation (assumes 10)
1.3.3	summary of interview notes and key takeaways

### Phase 2: Key Directions & Concept Plan(s)

<b>2.1</b>	<b>Public Open House / Pop-Up</b>
2.1.2	coordinate open house logistics and preparations
2.1.3	facilitate event (includes travel)
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Virtual Engagement</b>
2.2.1	develop public survey & other online engagement tools through Social Point
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Follow-Up w/ Public, Interest-holder and Intergovernmental/Agencies</b>
2.3.1	coordination of meeting
2.3.2	preparation of materials
2.3.3	facilitation of meeting
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Analysis and Reporting</b>
2.4.1	analysis of all feedback in phase 2
2.4.2	draft engagement summary
2.4.3	final engagement summary

### Phase 3: Refinement & Draft Plan

<b>3.1</b>	<b>Virtual Engagement</b>
3.1.1	develop short form survey for comments/feedback on draft plan
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Follow-Up w/ Public, Interest-holder and Intergovernmental/Agencies</b>
3.2.1	coordination of meeting
3.2.2	preparation of materials
3.2.3	facilitation of meeting
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Engagement Analysis &amp; Reporting</b>
3.3.1	analyze feedback from phase 3
3.3.2	Prepare a short summary of final comments/recommendations to support plan refinement

### Project Management

	Regular Project Meetings
	Project Admin (project setup, invoicing, processing expenses and



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Staff Report

**To:** Council

**File No.:** 3030-01

**From:** Director of Development Services

**Date:** July 17, 2024

**Subject:** Update Local Area Plan Harmston Civic Precinct and Downtown Centre

## PURPOSE:

To update Council on the Strategic Priorities for Harmston Avenue Civic Precinct Local Area Plan and the implementation of the Duncan Commons/Downtown Courtenay Playbook, including 5<sup>th</sup> street staging and phasing that are scheduled for 2024, 2025, and beyond.

## BACKGROUND:

In September 2016, Council adopted the Downtown Courtenay Playbook. The “Playbook” outlines the vision, five strategic goals, high-level planning principles, and detailed actions necessary to initiate goal implementation. Each goal specifies actions, desired outcomes, involved parties, and timelines. The document acknowledges that further detailed analysis is needed to implement actions, which will require budget allocation. While some actions, such as the Sidewalk Patio Policy and Downtown Parking Analysis, have been implemented, others require more detailed analysis and could benefit from a more cohesive plan.

The *Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 3070, 2022* builds on the 2016 Downtown Playbook goals and actions and identifies Harmston Avenue Civic Precinct as a Local Area Plan to be initiated in 2024 and 2025. This is in the departments workplan for 2024 and 2025. In the 2024 Financial Budget \$150,000 was approved for the Harmston Local Area Plan. Further that the 2024 financial plan identifies budget for the design and construction of Harmston Park.

Council’s 2023-2026 Strategic Priorities identify building and landscape priorities:

1. “Develop a Local Area Plan for Harmston Avenue Civic Precinct for 2024 and 2025”
2. “Implement Duncan Commons/Downtown Courtenay Playbook, 5<sup>th</sup> street staging/phasing for 2025 and 2026 and beyond”.

At a regular Council meeting in November 2023, Council passed a resolution for staff to bring forward a report on the Duncan Avenue Summer Pilot project outlining considerations and financial implications for implementation in 2024. Staff were also directed to collaborate with the Duncan Avenue working group to review options for the design, implementation and evaluation of the pilot, and include recommendations informed by the consultation in the report back to Council.

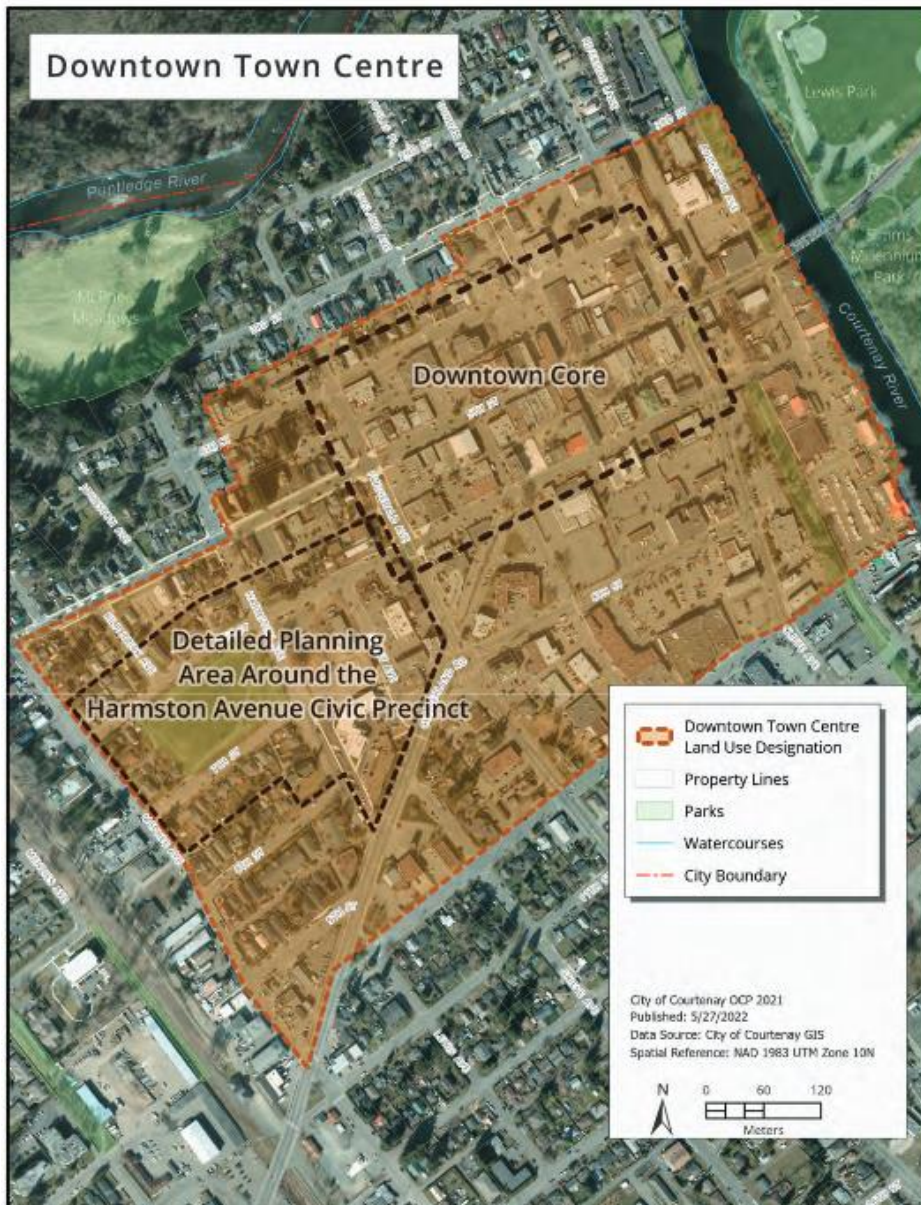
In January of 2024, staff initiated conversations with the Duncan Avenue working group Liaison, the Executive Director of Comox Valley Arts, to discuss the Duncan Commons program. Following these initial discussions, several factors including changes to provincial legislation, enhanced understanding of infrastructure challenges, and the transition from Wednesday markets to “Pulse on the Plaza”, necessitate an adjustment to the overall land use and community planning approach for the downtown core.

**DISCUSSION:**

To develop an effective process for informing the Downtown Town Centre in a coordinated and structured manner, staff are proposing the consolidation of the Harmston Avenue Civic Precinct with the Downtown Playbook to create a comprehensive Local Area Plan. This plan aims to build upon the five strategic goals and actions outlined in the Downtown Playbook, as well as the Official Community Plan (OCP) policies for Harmston Avenue Civic Precinct and the Downtown Centre. The plan will also incorporate the Harmston Park design principles to guide construction.

Figure 1 (below) illustrates the existing Downtown Town Centre from the OCP and identifies the Harmston Civic Precinct and the Downtown Core.

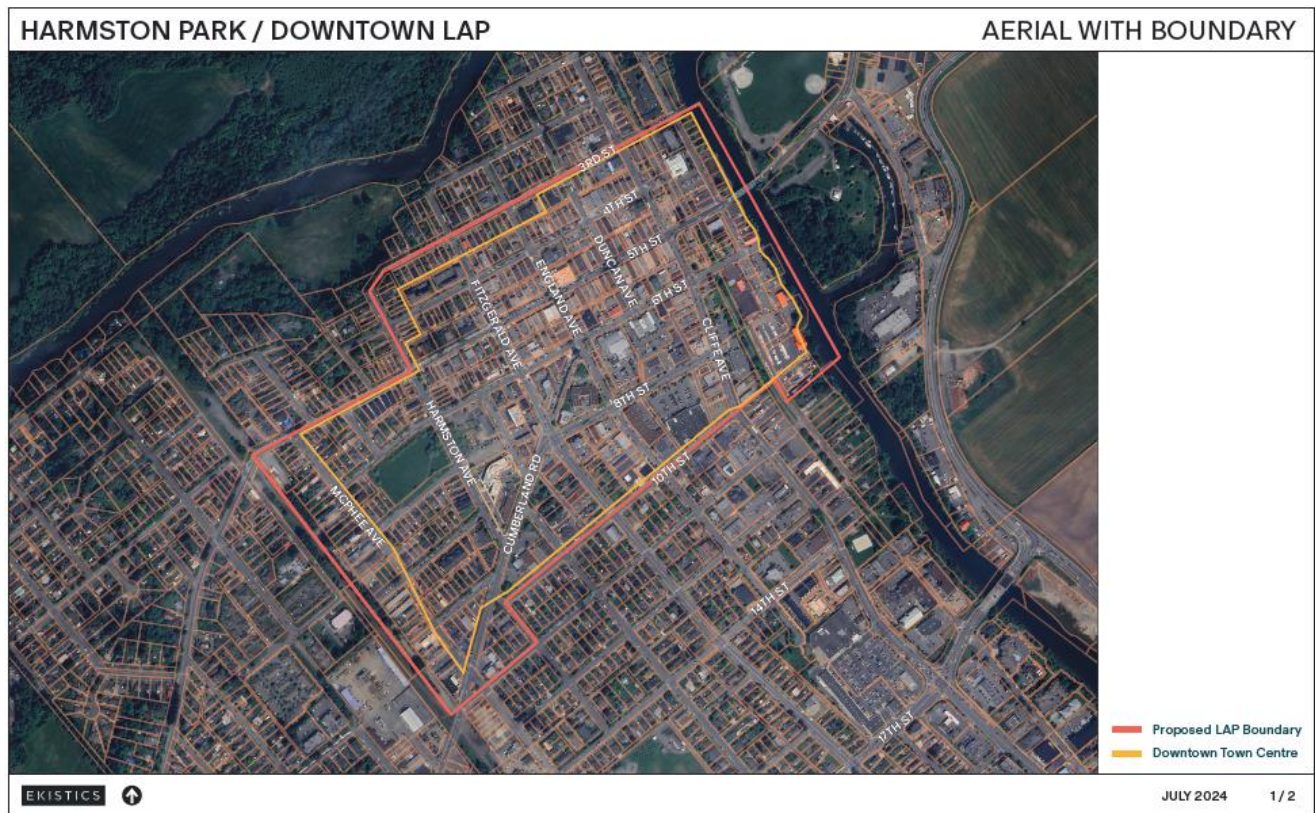
**Figure 1: Downtown Town Centre**



Map B-2 Downtown Town Centre

Figure 2 (below) illustrates the consolidated local area plan in dark orange encompassing the existing Downtown Town Centre Plan in light orange.

Figure 2 Consolidated Local Area Plan



This proposed consolidated Local Area Plan connects and coordinates two strategic priorities for 2024, 2025 and beyond, integrating strategic priorities from various City departments.

Projects such as the Duncan Commons require capital investment to develop the necessary infrastructure for activation and programming. Through the consolidation of existing plans, there is a greater opportunity to align and advance strategic and capital projects, like those actions currently identified in the Downtown Playbook. Through an all-encompassing Local Area Plan, the infrastructure planning can be developed to support activation of programming, connection to the downtown, and to seek opportunities for partnerships for capital investment.

The first phase of this Local Area Plan is to understand the land through Inventory and analysis, workshop with City departments exploring the plan area, a SWOT Analysis with City staff that will outline:

- *Strengths*: Positive attributes of a location that can be leveraged to enhance the success of a project.
- *Weaknesses*: Negative attributes of a location that can hinder the success of a project.
- *Opportunities*: External factors that can favorably affect the project's success.
- *Constraints (Threats)*: External factors that may have a negative impact on the project's Success.

After this analysis work is completed, an engagement plan will be developed for interaction with the community, associations, and agencies for initial discussions on the SWOT analysis. The outcome of Phase One will inform Phase Two which is the development of design principles, partnerships, and incentives.

Ekistics Town Planning has been retained for Phase one of the Local Area Plan. The inventory and analysis are completed, first city inter department workshop was held in June, and the SWOT analysis is underway with a city inter department workshop to be held in late July. Figure 2 below identifies the Local Area Plan boundary based upon this analysis in the orange line and the yellow line represents the Downtown Town Centre boundary from the OCP. Adjustments have been made to incorporate stronger connections to the ICF and River and neighbourhood connectivity.

#### **POLICY ANALYSIS:**

This Local Area Plan address objective 4 of the Official Community Plan “Sub-area planning provides more direction on growth” and will assist in guiding the implementation of the newly adopted Residential-SSMUH zone along with identifying zoning to support the Downtown policies in the OCP.

Further this consolidated Local Area Plan addresses thematic policies in the Official Community Plan that address: Parks and Recreation along with Arts; Cultural and Heritage policies; Streets and Transportation; Social Infrastructure; and Local Economy.

The consolidated Local Area Plan addresses the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Section 3.2.2 Conduct Park Plans:

- Harmston Park is identified as requiring a park plan and is identified as a short term priority in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Implementation Strategy.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The budget for this Local Area Plan is in the 2024 Financial Plan under Development Services Community and Sustainability Special Projects Harmston Local Area Plan for \$150,000. Phase 1 contract is \$35,000.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:**

The development of the Local Area Plan involves all departments and crosses over many strategic priorities for 2024 and 2025. This is a strategic approach to coordinating Infrastructure, natural environment, building, housing, active transportation, to provide informed analysis and priorities to the consolidated area to support programming of space.

#### **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:**

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

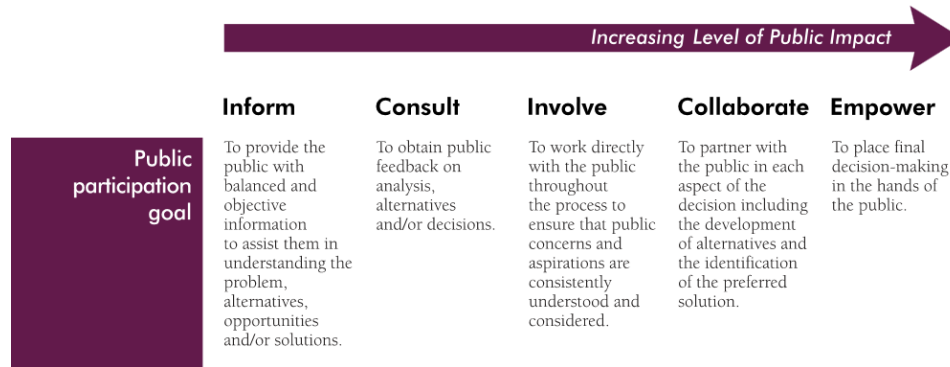
- Buildings and Landscape - Develop a local area plan for Harmston Avenue Civic Precinct
- Buildings and Landscape - Implement Duncan Commons/Downtown Courtenay Playbook, 5th Street staging/phasing
- Buildings and Landscape - Review and update land use regulations and bylaws for consistency with OCP
- Buildings and Landscape - Update Zoning Bylaw - review maximum building heights
- Parks and Recreation - Optimize active public spaces to respond to density increases and increased park use



- Buildings and Landscape - Support investment and redevelopment in downtown core: Review and evaluate Downtown development incentives e.g. fast tracking/density bonuses/DCC

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

An engagement plan will be developed and brought back to Council for endorsement based upon the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation.



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**OPTIONS:**

- 1) THAT Council receive the report “Update Local Area Plan Harmston Civic Precinct and Downtown Centre”; and

THAT Council direct staff to consolidate the Harmston Precinct, The Downtown Playbook, and the Downtown Centre with related land use plans, community plans, and policies into a comprehensive encompassing Downtown Area Plan.

- 2) THAT Council receive the report “Update Local Area Plan Harmston Civic Precinct and Downtown Centre” and provide alternative direction to staff.

Prepared by: Marianne Wade, Director of Development Services  
 Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)

# COURTENAY DOWNTOWN & HARMSTON PARK LOCAL AREA PLAN



SWOT ANALYSIS  
NOVEMBER 2024



City of  
Courtenay

EKISTICS



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The City of Courtenay respectfully acknowledges that the lands to which this Local Area Plan applies are on the Unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

## Why do we make land acknowledgements?

Acknowledging human relationships to place is an ancient Indigenous practice that continues today.

In the spirit of reconciliation, the City of Courtenay makes this land acknowledgment to raise awareness of ongoing Indigenous presence and land rights in the territory that includes and encompasses Courtenay. It invites us – a settler government – to reflect on how we might be perpetuating colonial processes that are ongoing and from which we have benefited, as well as the changes we will make to honour the Indigenous peoples and their lands that we inhabit.

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EXISTING LAND USE & CHARACTER  
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## ▲ LOOKING AHEAD

# BACKGROUND

This **Local Area Plan** for Downtown and Harmston Park (DLAP) builds upon the vision established by the Official Community Plan (OCP, 2022) and the Downtown Courtenay Playbook (2016) of a complete and connected Downtown with a higher residential population, celebrating and connecting to the rivers, establishing a heart through public placemaking, all while working together for success.

Since the Playbook, a number of studies and significant infrastructure and development initiatives have been undertaken that together will comprehensively evolve the downtown. These include: the construction of the 6th Street Pedestrian Bridge, proposed green shores along the Courtenay River, proposed BC Transit exchange along 8th street, a number of larger mixed-use and multi-residential developments under construction or in application process, and the initiation of the Cultural Strategic Plan and Cultural Facilities Assessment. These initiatives will influence placemaking opportunities for the downtown and will become fixtures in the community around which to inform future planning and community input.

The DLAP will identify implementation actions for physical improvements necessary to support the creation of an Urban Design Framework to guide development. Opportunities to incorporate social dimensions of culture, social connectedness and supporting those vulnerable, such as those without homes, will also emerge from the process.

This SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis provides a situational analysis of the downtown local planning area that includes an inventory of land use, infrastructure, and development. The SWOT looks back on existing context, and identifies big idea projects for consideration. The SWOT is used to discuss with Downtown Playbook partners what is still relevant from the 2016 Playbook, what should be removed as we implement for the future, and what is missing in order to inform development of the DLAP and future public and interest-holder engagement.

## STUDY AREA

The boundaries of the plan area are informed by the OCP and Downtown Playbook. The combining of plan boundaries across these two plans allows for a more comprehensive planning process that incorporates the high activity hub of the downtown commercial and mixed-use core as an anchor surrounded by key lands and waters that inform the history and character of the downtown. Within the comprehensive planning area are opportunities to develop distinct planning districts: the Courtenay riverfront to the east, the Fitzgerald Avenue corridor on the edge of the core to the west, and Harmston Park neighbourhood beyond including industrial employment generators, significant municipal lands, public parkland and established residences.



# POLICY CONTEXT

As a type of town centre, the **Downtown and Harmston Park** area is intended to function as the local, citywide and regional centre of cultural, civic, culinary, economic, and public life with the widest range of activities and attraction for residents and visitors, day and night, throughout the year. Identified needs in the downtown are more housing, more space for special events and gatherings, more access to and integration with the Tsolum and Puntledge rivers, and better opportunities to get to and circulate within the downtown – particularly by foot, transit, and cycling.

## Notable Downtown OCP policies informing the LAP:

1. Continue to support a diverse range of land uses within the downtown including diversity of multi-residential housing choices, small scale commercial uses, and other supportive uses to promote the establishment of a complete community and 10-minute neighbourhood.
2. Locate new government facilities downtown.
5. Consider and study the option of eliminating off-street parking requirements throughout the downtown.
6. Ensure more public and semi-public gathering spaces are incorporated into new developments.
7. Consider future use of public lands to promote community goals including for affordable housing, community gathering and open space.
8. Ensure compatibility of land uses between the downtown and adjacent urban residential neighbourhoods by providing transitional form, character, and densities.
10. Improve physical and visual connections to, along, and across the rivers, integrating nature and recreation with the downtown.
11. Support uses and activities that encourage both daytime and nighttime activation.

13. Work towards the vision of a public plaza in the form of a Common and Mews as the public heart of the downtown, providing for informal gathering and formal social and cultural events.
14. Seek opportunities to establish unique character districts.
15. Establish and promote distinctive character designations for the core downtown streets.

## Notable Harmston Park OCP policies informing the LAP:

1. Initiate a process to develop a local area plan for the precinct in order to provide clarity of development goals for the publicly owned lands as well as direction to the development of privately owned lands. This plan will include:
  - a) community-wide consultation
  - b) a mix of land use and tenures
  - c) exploration of different types of housing opportunities
  - d) neighbourhood park function
  - e) consideration to the temporary or permanent closure of Harmston Avenue between 6th and 7th Streets
  - f) general urban design guidelines
  - g) exploration of Indigenous perspectives and worldviews, including K'ómoks First Nation traditional use and practices

## Other Notable OCP policies informing the LAP:

Parks and Recreation 7: Develop a parkland acquisition strategy to provide equitable access to community amenities for residents.

Arts, Culture, and Heritage 7: Continue to support the downtown as the region's arts, culture, and heritage hub.

Food Systems 2: Work with the Comox Valley Farmers Market Association to secure a permanent site and facility for its year-round operation in a suitable and accessible location with necessary supportive amenities, preferably near the downtown.

# EXISTING AREAS OF INTEREST



- 1 CITY HALL
- 2 CENTRAL BUILDERS
- 3 FLORENCE FILBERG
- 4 SID WILLIAMS THEATRE
- 5 NATIVE SONS HALL
- 6 COURTENAY MUSEUM
- 7 CV ART GALLERY
- 8 VI REGIONAL LIBRARY
- 9 COMMUNITY GARDEN
- 10 HARMSTON PARK
- 4<sup>TH</sup> (Market Street)
- 5<sup>TH</sup> (Shopping Street)
- 6<sup>TH</sup> (Green Street)
- STUDY AREA



# DOWNTOWN COURTENAY PLAYBOOK (2016)

The **Downtown Courtenay Playbook**, informed by extensive community engagement in 2015 and 2016, serves as a roadmap for downtown revitalization. It outlines a shared vision for the area, along with principles, goals, and a toolbox of strategies to achieve them. Recognizing the collaborative nature of this endeavour, the Playbook positions itself as a living document, open to ongoing review and adaptation as the community works together to bring new life to downtown Courtenay. Building upon this foundation, the Urban Design Framework does not aim to replace the Playbook, but rather to provide a more detailed and technical lens to translate its vision into actionable projects.

The public process resulted in five strategic planning goals to guide the community through review and implementation of the downtown revitalization projects identified in the Playbook, which remain relevant today:

**Organize for Success** | Partnerships and integrated City work-programs are to be the foundation for revitalization efforts and be structured to promote successful working relationships.

**Establish Downtown as the Community's Heart** | With an explicit emphasis on creating attractive gathering place and public realm, downtown will feel like it is designed with people's comfort and enjoyment first.

**Encourage More Downtown Residents** | A diverse mix of housing and associated services is to be increased throughout the greater downtown area.

**Make it Easier to Get to and Be Downtown** | All modes of transportation are conveniently able to access, circulate, and park within the downtown.

**Celebrate and Connect to the Rivers** | Connections to, along, and across the rivers are to be improved to ensure that nature and recreation are integrated into the downtown experience.

As a part of the Playbook's process, five "Catalyst Projects" were identified as transformational ideas for downtown to demonstrate City commitment, reinforce the community vision, and stimulate future investment. A number of these Catalyst Projects have been advanced, are completed, or are under review. Through the current Downtown Local Area Planning process, these projects will be reviewed, refined, and may be modified based on technical review and public feedback.

1

## DUNCAN MEWS + COMMONS

"Create the Heart" project proposes Duncan Commons as a central hub for events. This includes a car-free Art Gallery Plaza, a pedestrian-oriented Duncan Mews street (a "Woonerf"), and a potential "Market Park."

2

## ESTABLISH 4<sup>TH</sup> / 5<sup>TH</sup> / 6<sup>TH</sup> STREET CHARACTERS

This project characterizes the designated streets by name and theme, with 4th as a market street, 5th as a shopping street, and 6th as a green street.

3

## PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION TO, ALONG, AND ACROSS THE RIVER

By improving access and creating a visual connection, this project aims to revitalize the riverfront and attract people to the area's natural beauty. This includes the approved 6th Street Active Transportation Bridge.

4

## RIVERFRONT DISTRICT BETWEEN 5<sup>TH</sup> AND 6<sup>TH</sup>

The Playbook proposes a riverside district (5th-6th) honouring the Courtenay River's significance. Public access, artisan vibes, and an "industrial character" street aim to reconnect downtown and revive the waterfront.

5

## INFILL HOUSING

This project explores zoning changes, incentives, and designs to create more housing options on underused land.



# OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN (2022)

*While the majority of current OCP land use within the LAP is defined as Downtown, the extension of the boundary includes existing Urban Residential, Neighbourhood Centre, and Urban Corridor.*

## DOWNTOWN

As a type of Town Centre, the downtown is intended to function as the local, citywide and regional centre of cultural, civic, culinary, economic, and public life with the widest range of activities and attraction for residents and visitors, day and night, throughout the year. Identified needs in the downtown are more housing, more space for special events and gatherings, more access to and integration with the Tsolum and Puntledge rivers, and better opportunities to get to and circulate within the downtown – particularly by foot, transit, and cycling.

## URBAN RESIDENTIAL

These neighbourhood areas are largely residential neighbourhoods comprised mainly of ground-oriented single-detached residential buildings. "Gentle infill"\* will be permitted in such areas in the form of an additional secondary residence. This may take the form of a secondary suite, or duplex, or carriage home or garden suite on lots with suitable access characteristics. Triplexes, townhomes, and small apartments will also be supported within these areas, particularly along the Frequent Transit Network, on a case-by-case basis and subject to rezoning applications. Limited small-scale commercial services will also be supported on a case-by-case basis and subject to rezoning applications.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

This area includes smaller-scale mixed-use areas (than that include a diversity of destinations and housing choices. Commercial and community amenities are within easy walking and cycling distance and more residential density could be accommodated to support transit frequency and use.

## URBAN CORRIDOR

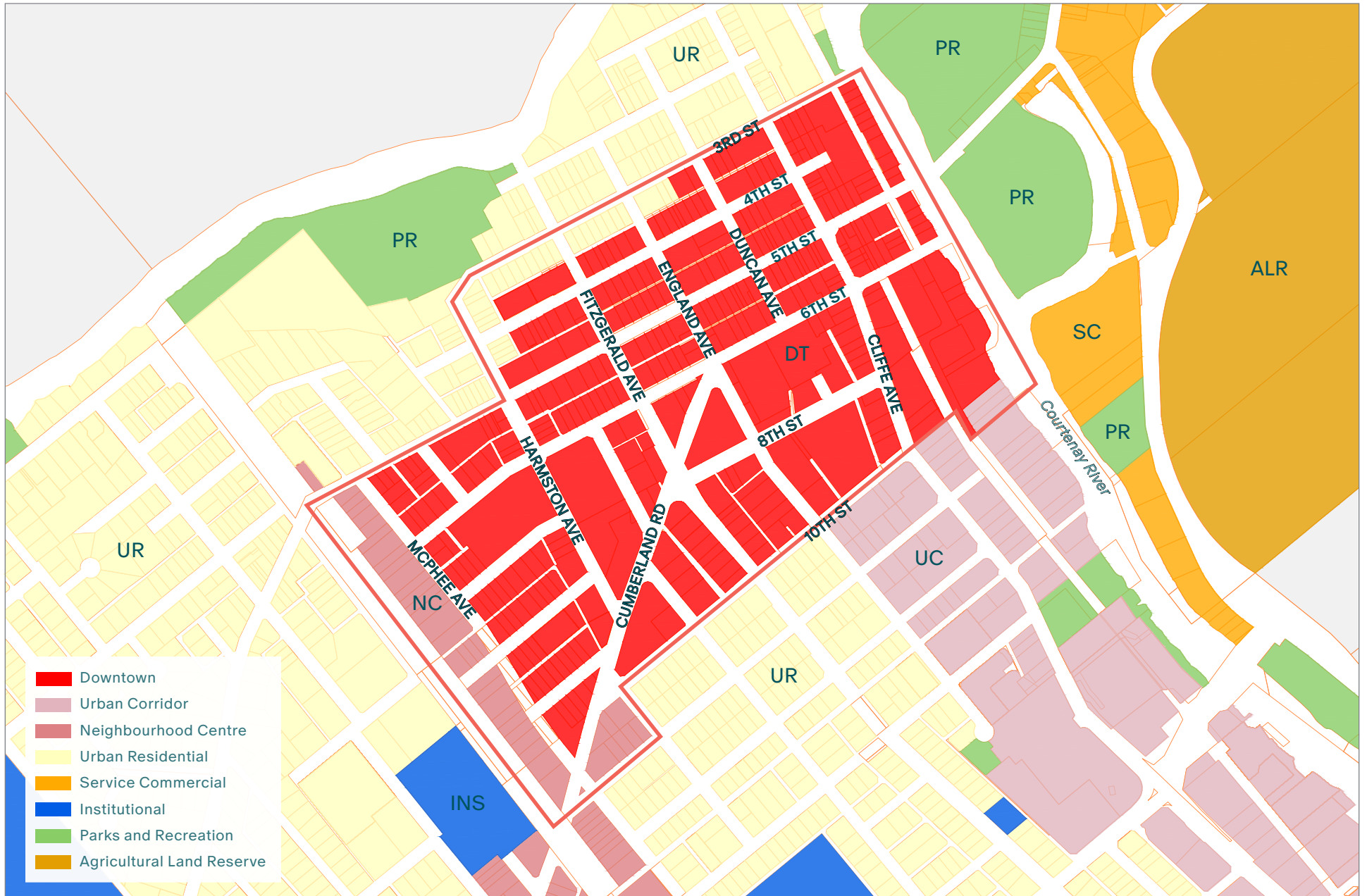
The Urban Corridor is intended to be a primary focus of commercial and residential densities outside the downtown. These areas will support a mix of uses that include a variety of higher-density housing choices as well as regional retail destinations.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

Parks, trails, recreation facilities, and natural areas with limited accessory uses.

*\*While the OCP includes language regarding gentle infill, Bill 44 has provided additional direction to this type of development in the form of Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH).*

# OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN MAP



# CURRENT ZONING

The following zones are prominent within the Downtown LAP area. These zones will be reviewed as a part of the LAP process to align with the OCP land use designations, creating a Downtown of greater housing choices, increased development density, and mix of uses:

## COMMERCIAL ONE (C-1)

C-1 is the defining zone of the Downtown area, allowing for a wide range of commercial uses, as well as multi residential dwellings.

Height: No building in this zone shall exceed 13.5 m

## COMMERCIAL TWO (C-2)

C-2 also allows for a wide range of commercial uses, with the allowance for Building Supply Store use. The riverfront Central Builders parcels fall within C-2.

Height: No building in this zone shall exceed 9.5 m except for a combined commercial-residential building, in which case the height of a building shall not exceed 13.5 m.

## PUBLIC USE AND ASSEMBLY ONE (PA-1)

Primarily institutional, permitted uses include assembly hall, care facility, cemetery, church and religious centre, facility for adults with a disability, government office and facility, hospital and related facility, utility facility, and school. Harmston Park is currently zoned as PA-1, as opposed to being zoned as a park under PA-2.

*\*Floor Area Ratio is the ratio of a building's total floor area to the size of the land it's built on.*

## RESIDENTIAL FOUR B (R-4B)

This zone allows for single residential dwellings, secondary suites, duplex dwellings, multi residential dwellings, accessory buildings and structures, day care, and home occupation. The majority of residential parcels surrounding Harmston Park are zoned as such.

























Floor Area Ratio\*: 1.0 (apartments), 0.7 (all other residential)

Height: 13.71 m (apartments with underground parking), 10.0 m (apartments otherwise), 9.15 m (all other buildings)

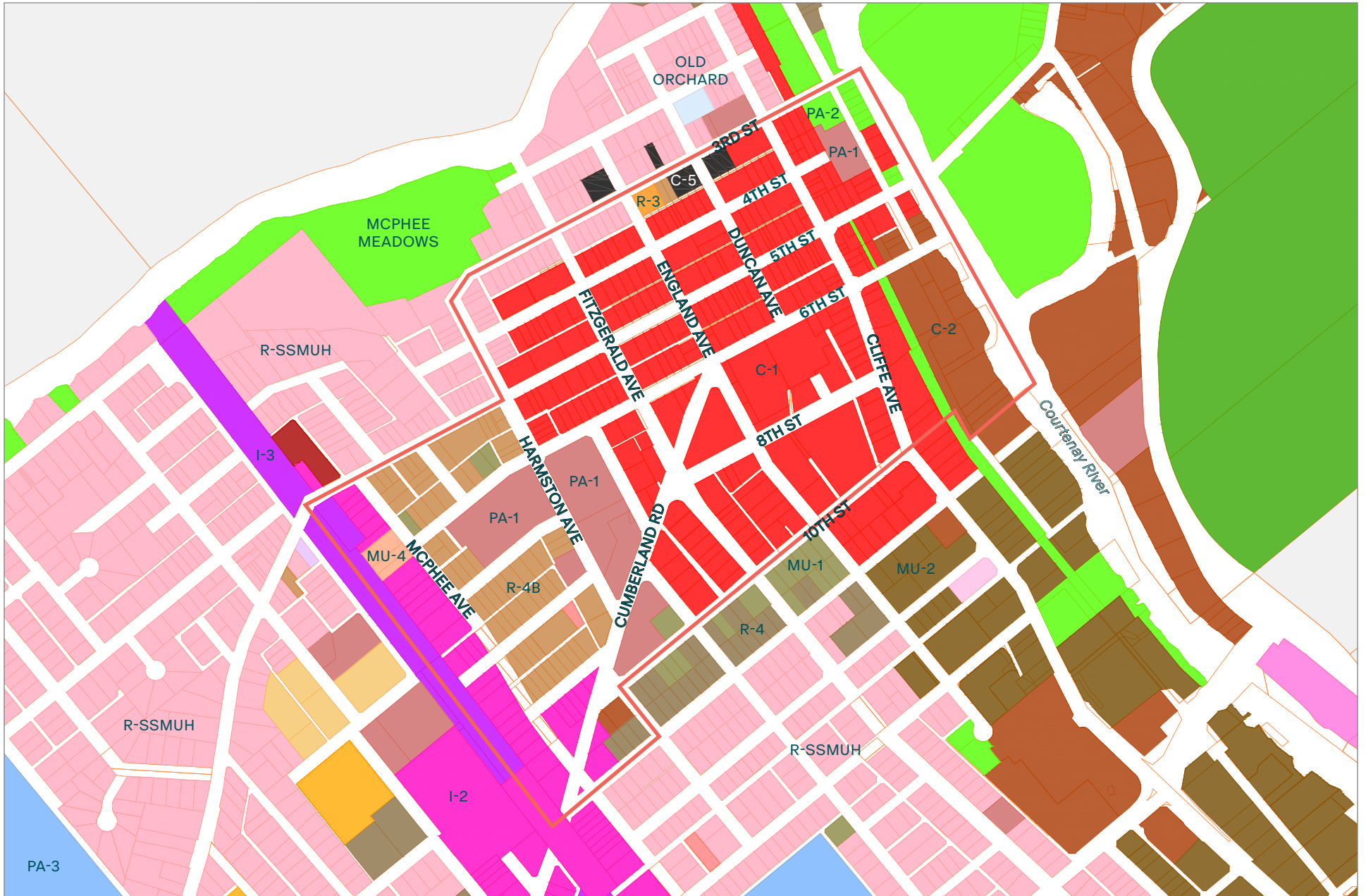
Parking: One space per residential unit

## RESIDENTIAL SMALL-SCALE MULTI-UNIT (R-SSMUH)

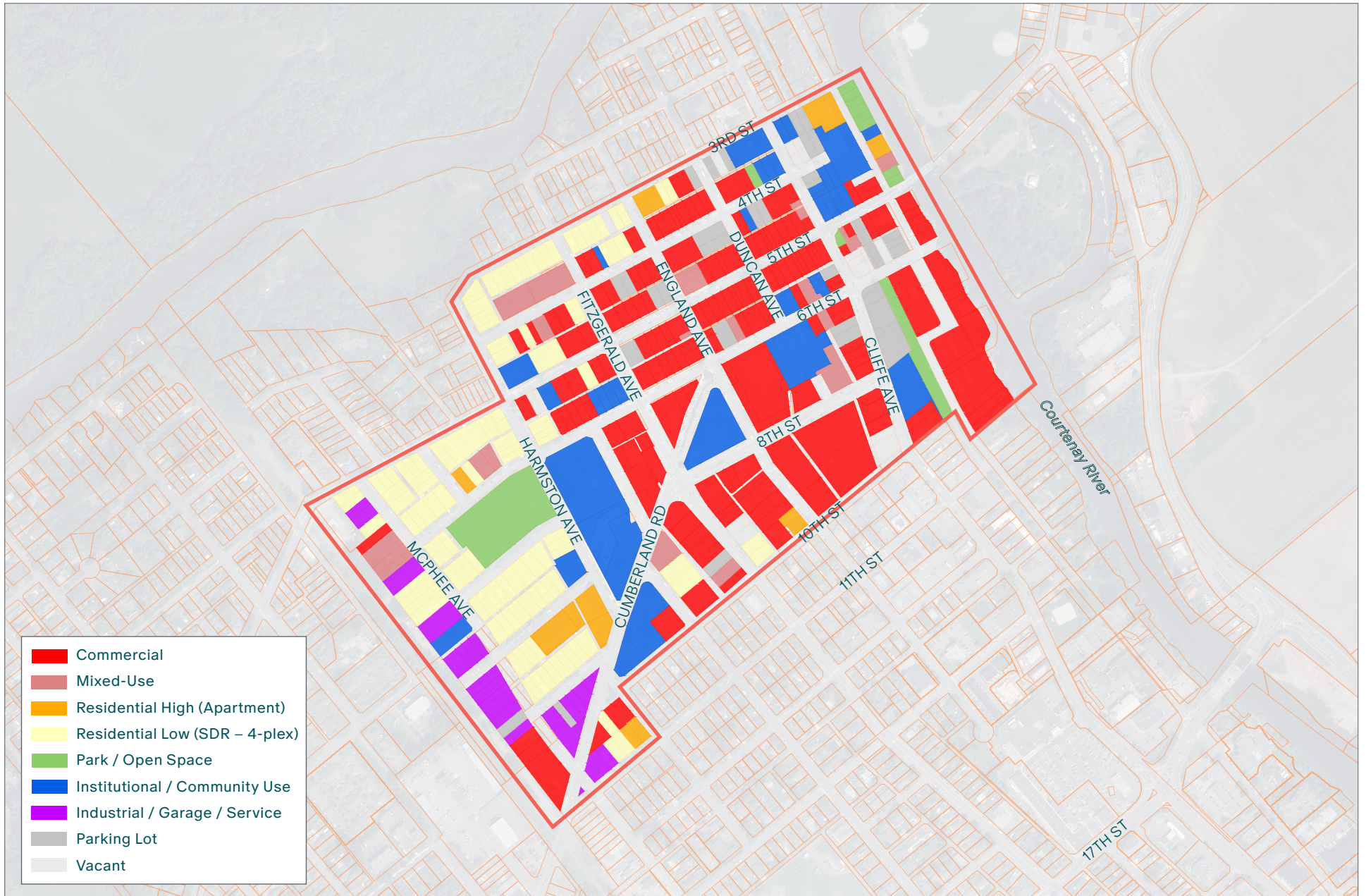
Allowances for residential uses including single residential dwellings, duplexes, townhouses, small-scale multiple unit housing and infill development.

 A-1   Agricultural One	 PA-1   Public Use and Assembly One
 C-1   Commercial One	 PA-2   Public Use and Assembly Two
 C-2   Commercial Two	 PA-3   Public Use and Assembly Three
 C-2A   Commercial Two A	 R-SSMUH   Residential Small-Scale Multi-Unit
 C-3   Commercial Three	
 C-5   Commercial Five	 R-3   Residential Three
 CD-9   Comprehensive Dev. 9	 R-3A   Residential Three A
 I-1   Industrial One	 R-3B   Residential Three B
 I-2   Industrial Two	 R-4   Residential Four
 I-3   Industrial Three	 R-4A   Residential Four A
 MU-1   Multiple Use One	 R-4B   Residential Four B
 MU-2   Multiple Use Two	 R-5   Residential Five
 MU-4   Multiple Use Four	

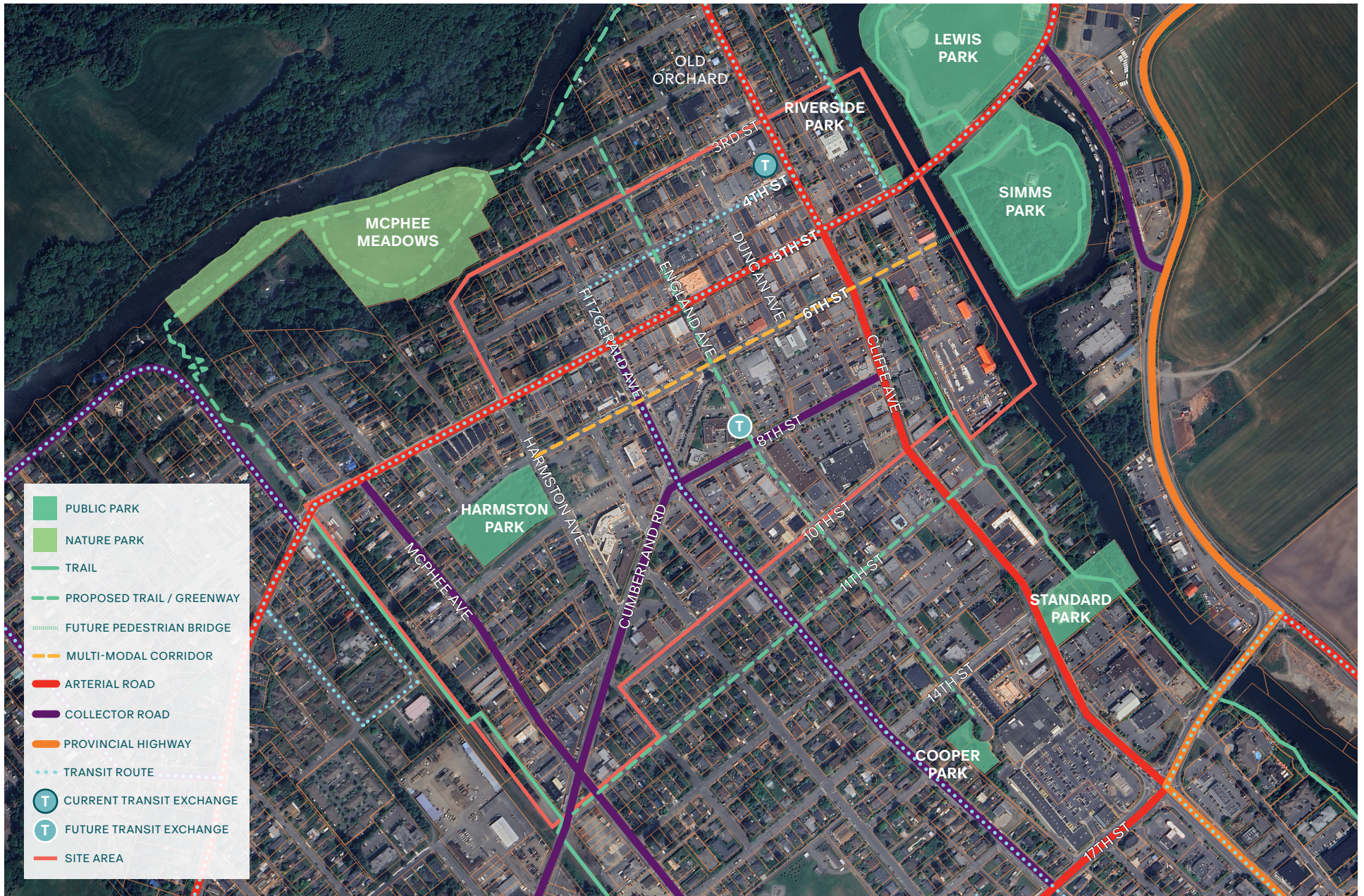
# CURRENT ZONING MAP



# EXISTING LAND USE



# PARKS & TRANSPORTATION CONTEXT





# LAND OWNERSHIP

## CITY

The following are notable municipally-owned parcels within the LAP:

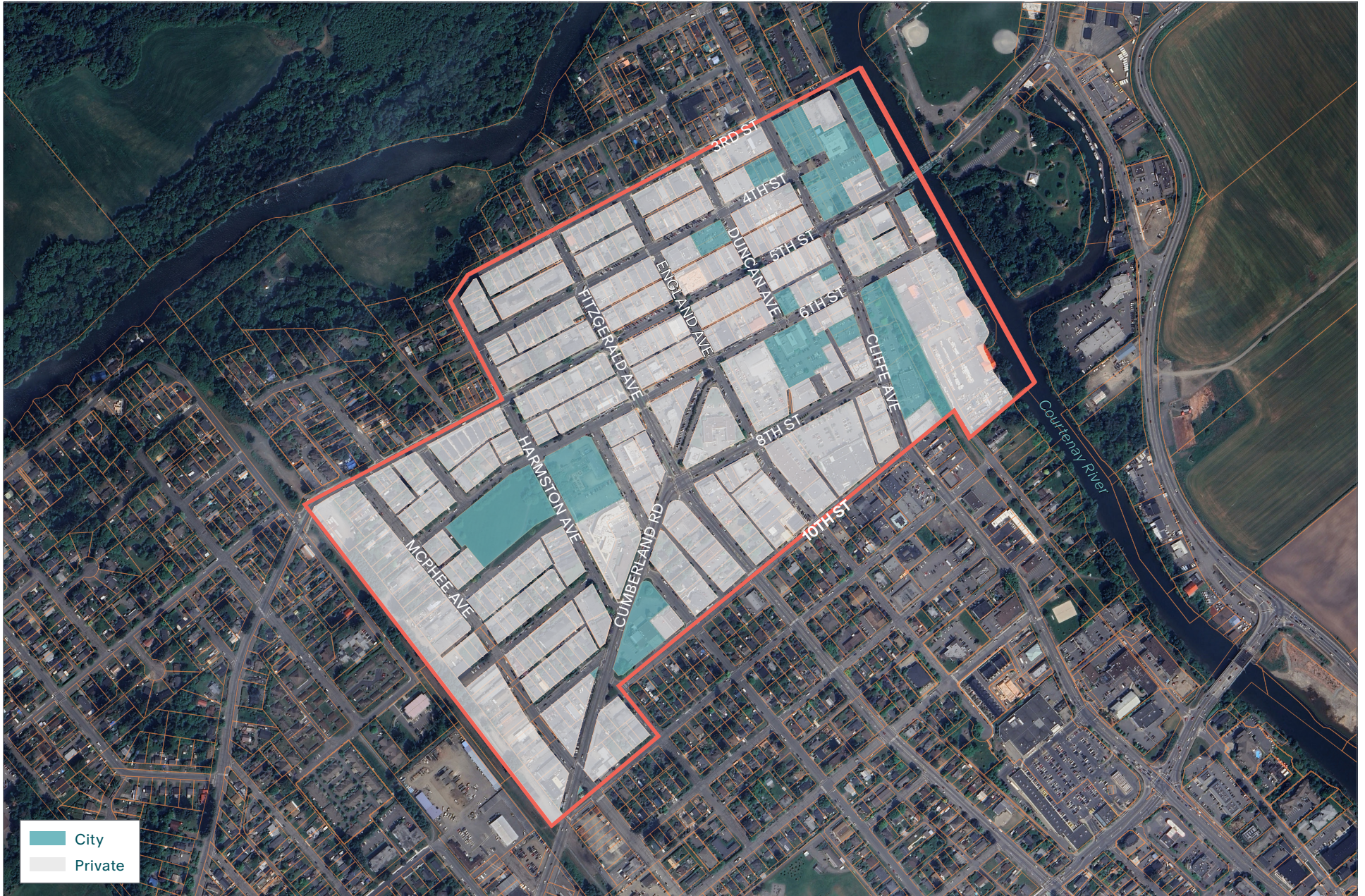
- Harmston Park (003-797-058)
- Share the Harvest Community Garden (030-871-191)
- Native Sons Hall (Multiple Parcels)
- Sid Williams Theatre (Multiple Parcels)
- Florence Filberg Centre (010-227-474)
- Courtenay & District Museum (Multiple Parcels)
- Comox Valley Art Gallery (028-799-925)
- Vancouver Island Regional Library (024-933-074)
- Courtenay City Hall (024-220-914)
- 90 5th Street, The Bridge (001-815-091)
- Parking Lot on Duncan & 4th (005-036-429, 005-036-445)
- Parking Lot on Cliffe between 5th & 6th (001-657-666)
- Parking Lot on Cliffe between 6th & 8th (005-100-992, 005-101-018)
- Riverfront parcels north of 5th (Park)

## PRIVATE

The following are notable privately-owned parcels within the LAP:

- Large collection of singularly-owned parcels south of 5th Street
- Collection of singularly-owned residential parcels southwest of Harmston Park





# SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT UNDERWAY

## **357 5th Street** | *Completed in 2024*

Palace Place, a mixed-use, 4-storey building with 39 apartments and ground floor retail.

## **291 4th Street** | *Under Construction*

Coastal Community Credit Union, interior and exterior upgrades, increased height.

## **574 Cumberland Road** | *Building Permit Issued*

Mixed-use, 3-storey building with 38 studio apartments (312 sq ft), 11 one-bedroom units (700 sq ft), 3 two-bedroom units (775 sq ft), and 3 commercial spaces.

## **419 & 407 4th Street** | *Development Permit, Height Variance Application Submitted*

4th and England, a mixed-use, 4-storey building with 39 units and 4 commercial spaces.

## **578 & 584 Cliffe Avenue** | *Development Permit Variance, Application Submitted*

16-unit multi residential/combined commercial development, downscaled from 34 units to avoid contaminated soil on 590 Cliffe, with minor variance for front landscape buffer.

## **120 & 125 11th Street** | *Rezoning Application, Third Reading*

104-unit rental building. *Rezoning application to change current Commercial Two (C-2) and Multiple Use Two (MU-2) Zones to a Comprehensive Development Zone Forty-One (CD-41)*



# INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

## UTILITY CAPITAL PROJECTS

- Leighton Ave Storm Drain Replacement
- McPhee Ave Sanitary Main Replacement
- Alley between 5th & 6th, England to Duncan, Storm / Sanitary / Water Replacement
- Alley between 4th & 5th, Duncan to Cliffe, Storm Replacement
- Anderton Lift Station
- Decommissioning Sanitary River Crossing

## ENGINEERING PROJECTS

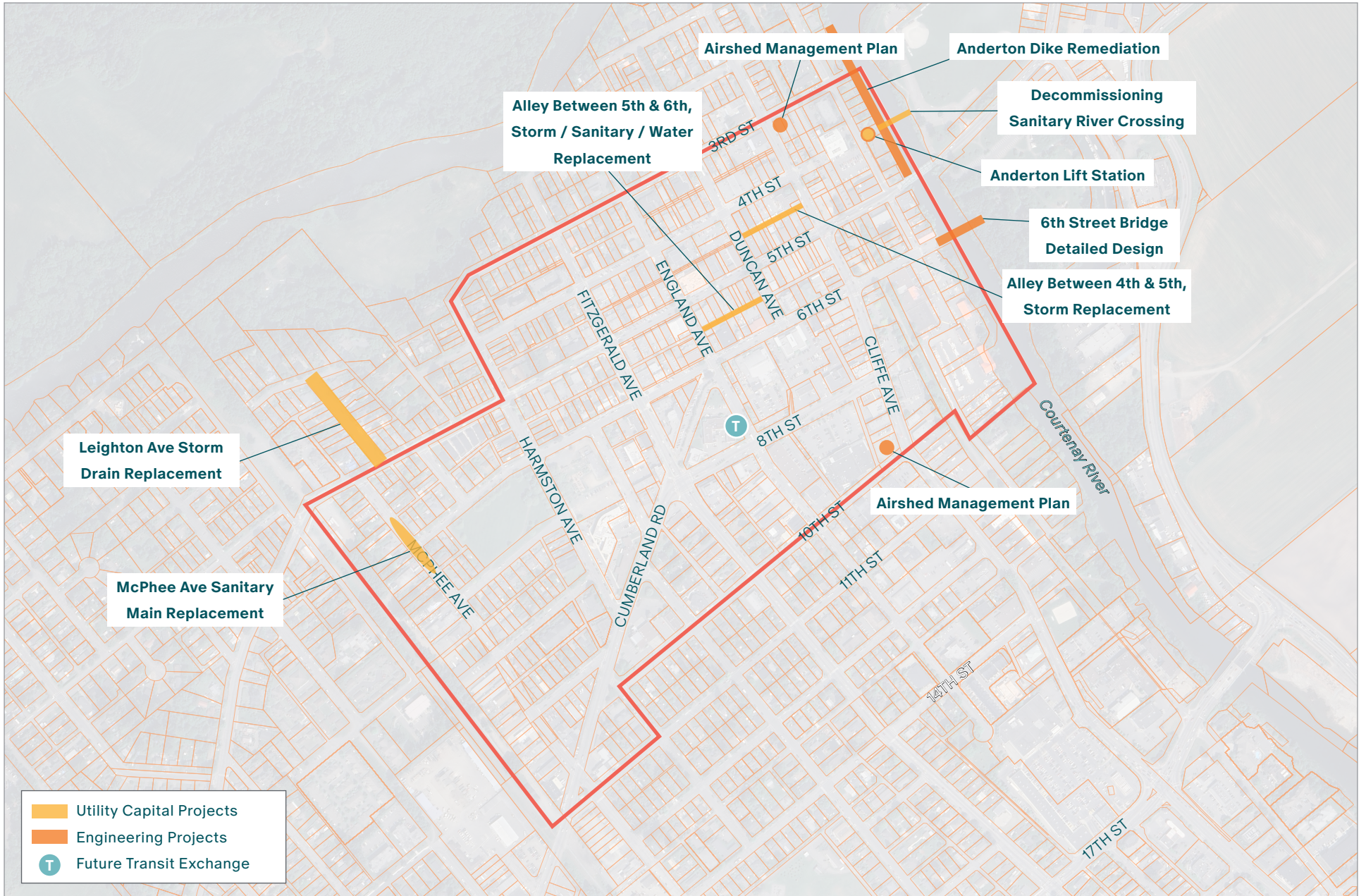
- Airshed Management Plan
- Anderton Lift Station
- Anderton Dike Remediation
- 6th Street Bridge Detailed Design (Construction starting in 2025)
- McPhee Meadows Park

## TRANSIT EXCHANGE

- England Ave between 6th St & 8th St
  - 2025 Construction

## RECREATION, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

- Harmston Park Development
- Cultural Facility Feasibility Studies
- Strategic Cultural Plan



# ANALYSIS | OVERVIEW

Building on the contextual research and groundwork established in this study, the following analysis provides a focused examination of the study area. To facilitate a detailed and organized approach, and as demonstrated on the following page, the area has been divided into four distinct planning districts, each representing unique characteristics and opportunities within the broader landscape:

## Riverfront

## Downtown

## Fitzgerald Corridor

## Harmston Park

This section includes an overview of specific land uses in each planning district, paired with a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis to identify key factors influencing future planning and development. By exploring these elements, the analysis lays the foundation for actionable recommendations tailored to the needs and potential of each district.

While each planning district is unique, the analysis has revealed several overarching themes that apply to the entire study area, offering a cohesive lens for understanding its broader challenges and opportunities:

## STRENGTHS

- Grid urban form
- Cultural hub
- Centrally located with proximity to the river
- Several municipally-owned parcels
- Significant privately-owned parcels open to cohesive development planning

## WEAKNESSES

- Limited existing green space
- Lack of focal point or centralized activity hub
- Lack of 'gateways' to Downtown
- Aged and vacant building stock

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop clear strategies to create or enhance green space, street trees, and the urban forest
- Reimagine public spaces and pedestrian environment
- Encourage cohesive development planning
- Advance Indigenous reconciliation through arts and culture

## THREATS (CONSTRAINTS)

- Upgrading infrastructure may be challenging
- Economic shifts impacting development viability
- Increased traffic pressure as the city grows
- Current public safety perceptions

# PLANNING DISTRICTS





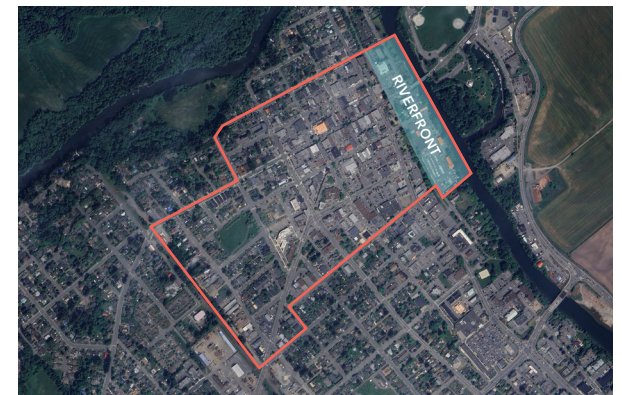
# RIVERFRONT | EXISTING LAND USE & CHARACTER

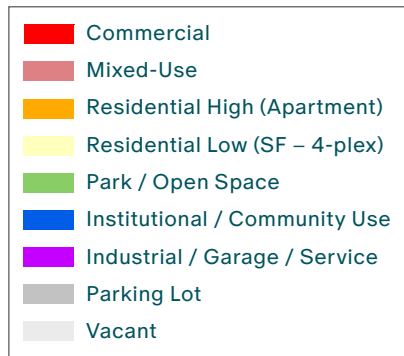
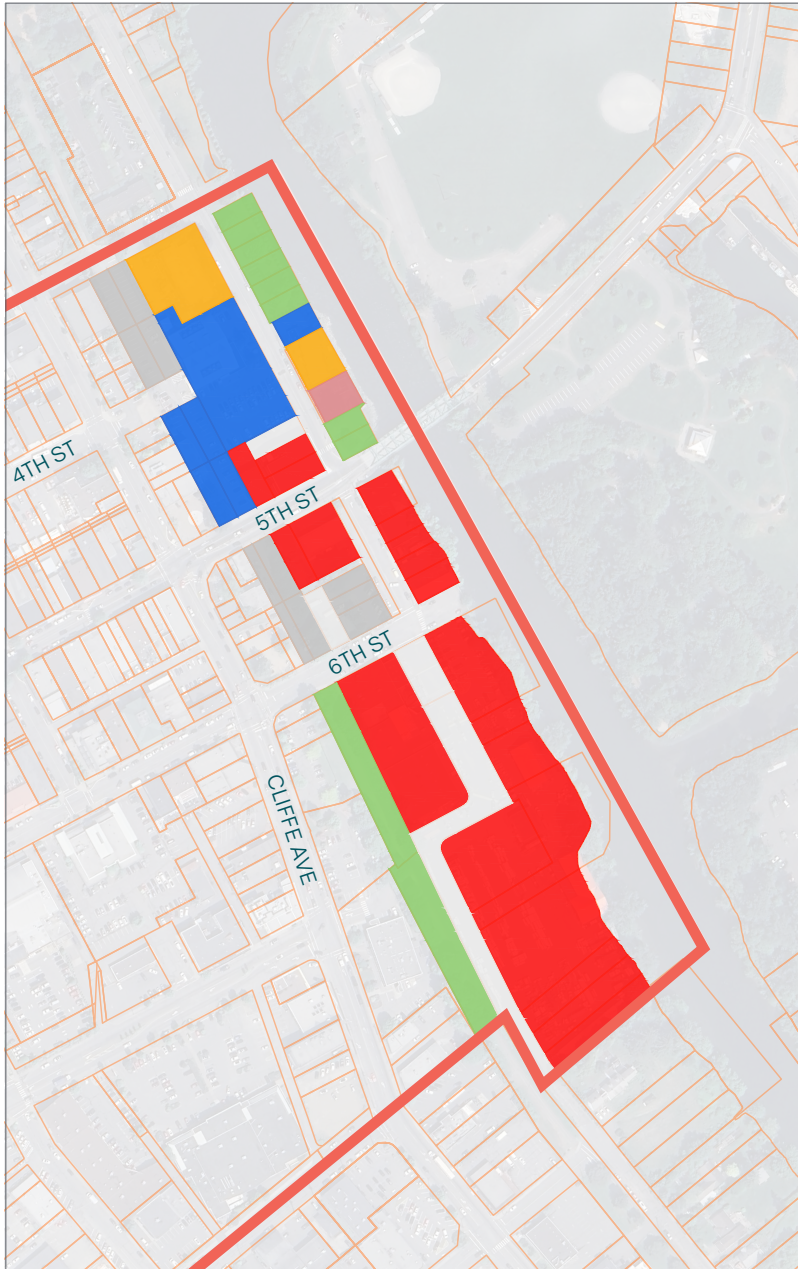
The Riverfront district, as the name suggests, encompasses all parcels on the river's edge, and extends inland to the Courtenay Riverway trail in the southern portion, and the steep bank adjacent to the Florence Filberg Centre in the northern portion.

## Existing Land Use

- Riverside Park\*
- Anderton Arms Apartments (426 Anderton Ave)\*
- Mixed-Use (440 Anderton Ave)
- Florence Filberg Centre\*
- Commercial / Services (5th St)
- The Bridge Building (90 5th St)\*
- Central Builders - Home Hardware
- Courtenay Riverway Trail\*

\* Publicly-owned





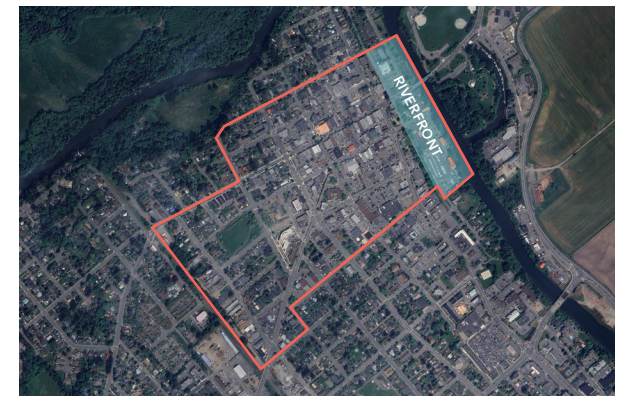
# RIVERFRONT | SWOT ANALYSIS

## STRENGTHS

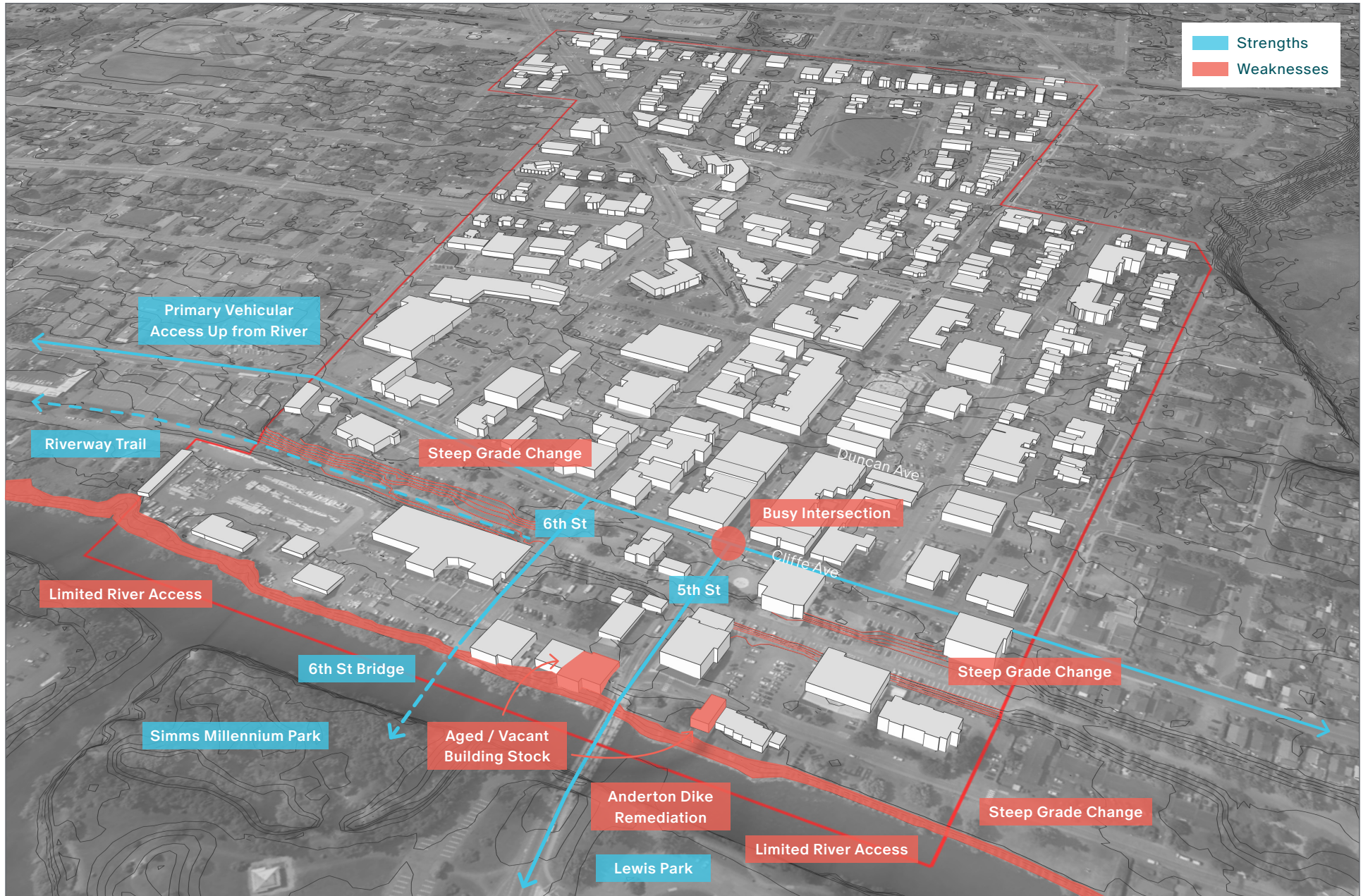
- Scenic area with significant natural beauty, attracting both residents and tourists
- Existing parks and trails along riverfront provide recreational opportunities
- Funding secured for 6th Street Active Transportation Bridge (construction to be completed in 2025)
- Riverfront district is opposite significant municipal parks:
  - Lewis Park
  - Simms Millennium Park
- Primary vehicular circulation at Riverfront is 2nd block back from the water
- 5th Street Bridge acts as 'gateway' to Downtown
- Riverway trail connecting south of Courtenay

## WEAKNESSES

- No direct interaction with the water's edge
- Steep grade changes
- Proximity to river poses a flood risk, which could limit development potential or require costly mitigation measures
- Underutilized spaces
- Limited existing green space
- Lack of focal point / centralized point of activity
- Vacant building stock
- Aged building stock poses increased fire risk
- Busy, auto-oriented 5th & Cliffe creates barrier between Riverfront and Downtown



# RIVERFRONT | SWOT ANALYSIS



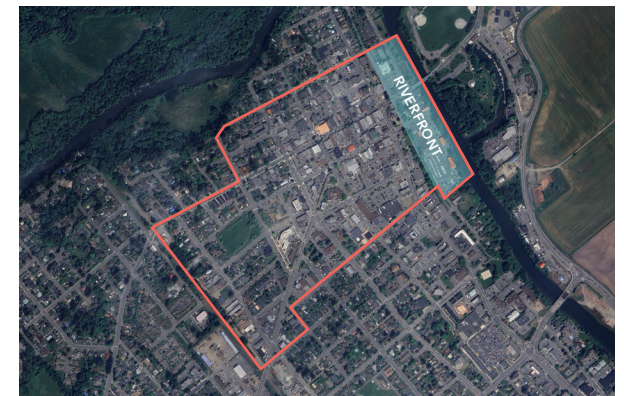
# RIVERFRONT | SWOT ANALYSIS

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Reimagined riverfront access - becoming a destination
- Central Builders - large collection of Riverfront parcels owned by CBS Land Corp with interest in relocation
- Several municipally-owned parcels
- Potential greenways
  - East / West on 6th Street (Harmston Park – Riverfront)
  - North of Courtenay Riverway on Anderton Avenue
- Underutilized spaces with Commercial zoning (Riverfront)
- 8th Street connection, continuing grid urban form
- Riverfront access for tubing
- Advancement of Indigenous reconciliation through arts and culture (consulting with K'ómoks First Nation, urban Indigenous groups, Métis)

## THREATS (CONSTRAINTS)

- Stability of Riverfront land
- Flood risk along Riverfront
- Upgrading infrastructure could be a challenge for a unified development vision



# RIVERFRONT | SWOT ANALYSIS



# DOWNTOWN | EXISTING LAND USE & CHARACTER

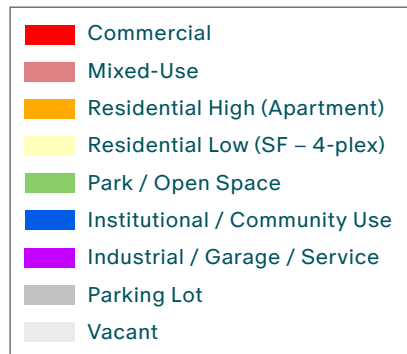
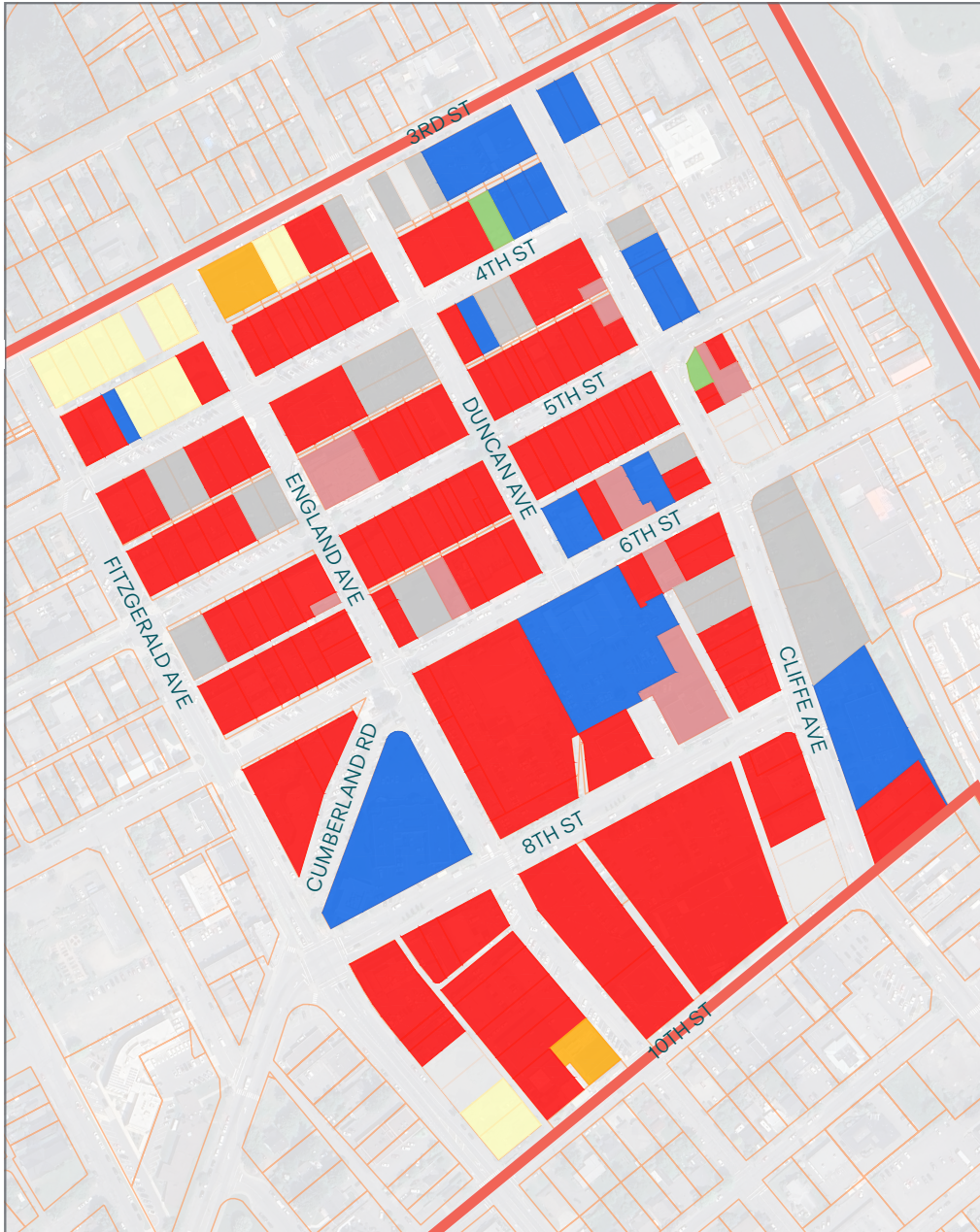
The Downtown district is the most established area within the LAP, guided by the vision outlined in the Downtown Playbook. Character opportunities have been identified for 4th, 5th, and 6th Streets as Market, Shopping, and Green streets, respectively, with predominantly commercial and mixed-use developments. The district's eastern edge is anchored by institutional and community uses, including the Native Sons Hall, Sid Williams Theatre, and Courtenay City Hall. Both the northern and southern boundaries feature a mix of low and higher-density residential properties.

## Existing Land Use

- Small-Scale Commercial and Mixed-Use along 4th, 5th, and 6th Streets
- Native Sons Hall\*
- Sid Williams Theatre\*
- Courtenay City Hall\*
- Courtenay & District Museum\*
- Courtenay Courthouse\*
- The Old Farm Market
- Vancouver Island Regional Library\*

\* Publicly-owned







# DOWNTOWN | SWOT ANALYSIS

## STRENGTHS

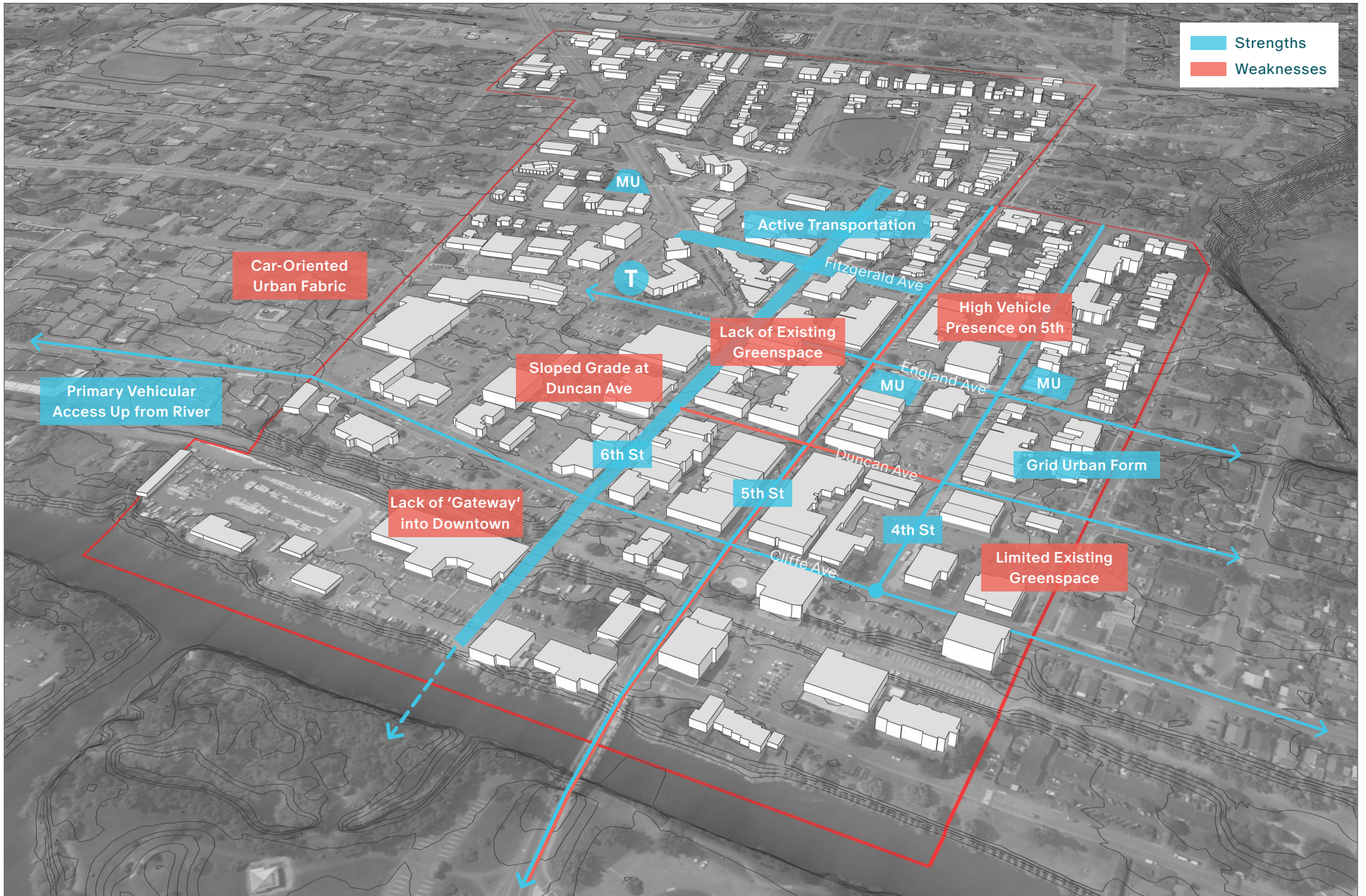
- Centrally located, making it accessible and a focal point for both commerce and cultural institutions
- Character identities of 4th, 5th and 6th Streets (Downtown Playbook)
- Cultural hub (Courtenay & District Museum, Comox Valley Art Gallery, Sid Williams Theatre, Centre for Performing Arts)
- Strong presence of government services (City Hall, Vancouver Island Regional Library, Comox Valley Regional District)
- Strong presence of social services (Island Health, non-profits)
- Grid urban form
- Primary vehicular circulation at Riverfront is 2nd block back from the water
- Mixed-use, residential and commercial developments are underway Downtown
- Active transportation upgrades and street beautification on Fitzgerald Avenue
- Approved future transit exchange on England Avenue + 8th Street

## WEAKNESSES

- Limited existing greenspace, street furnishings, street trees, and urban forest
- Sloped grade and lack of utilities along Duncan Avenue (for purposes of Duncan Commons)
- Aged and vacant building stock poses increased fire risk
- Underutilized public spaces, such as the Randy Wiwchar Plaza
- High vehicle presence, especially along 5th Street
- South of 6th Street is very car oriented
- Lack of focal point / centralized point of activity
- Lack of 'gateways' into the Downtown area
- Cliffe Avenue feels physically separate from Riverfront district



# DOWNTOWN | SWOT ANALYSIS



# DOWNTOWN | SWOT ANALYSIS

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Potential greenways / multi-modal corridors
  - East / West on 6th Street (Harmston Park – Riverfront)
- Continue to strengthen identity of 4th, 5th, and 6th Streets
- Enhance pedestrian environment
- Reduced traffic congestion with investment in pedestrian, cycling and transit infrastructure
- Strategic Cultural Plan and Cultural Services review
- Build upon existing wayfinding program
- Revitalize aging infrastructure through development approval
- Develop clear strategies to create or enhance green space, street trees, and urban forest
- Consider relocating City Hall to 'Municipal Hub'
- Advancement of Indigenous reconciliation through arts and culture (consulting with K'ómoks First Nation, urban Indigenous groups, Métis)

## THREATS (CONSTRAINTS)

- Changes and shifts in the economy could impact the viability of traditional retail and office spaces
- Competition from other commercial areas
- Upgrading infrastructure could be a challenge for a unified development vision
- Parking: On-street parking in Downtown reaches over 80% occupancy during peak hours (11:30 AM to 2:30 PM on weekdays), which could strain parking availability and deter visitors arriving by car during busy periods.



# DOWNTOWN | SWOT ANALYSIS



# FITZGERALD CORRIDOR | EXISTING LAND USE & CHARACTER

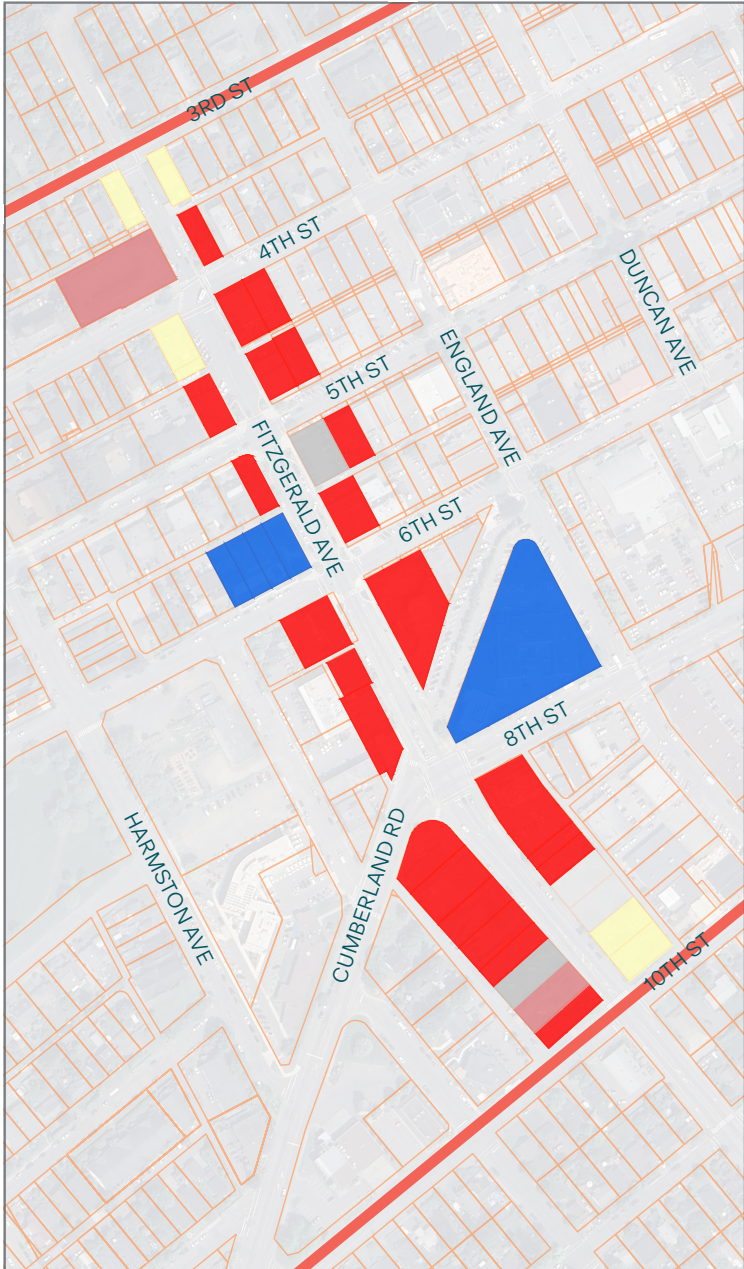
Fitzgerald Corridor acts as a natural divide between the Downtown and Harmston Park Districts. Fitzgerald Avenue itself is a significant collector road with commercial use fronting, along with active transportation and street beautification in progress. As with the Downtown district, the northern and southern edges feature residential uses.

## Existing Land Use

- Mixed-Use at 4th St
- Commercial, Service, and Retail fronting Fitzgerald Ave
- St. George's United Church
- Banks, Financial, and Legal Offices
- Courtenay Courthouse\*

\* Publicly-owned





- Commercial
- Mixed-Use
- Residential High (Apartment)
- Residential Low (SF - 4-plex)
- Park / Open Space
- Institutional / Community Use
- Industrial / Garage / Service
- Parking Lot
- Vacant



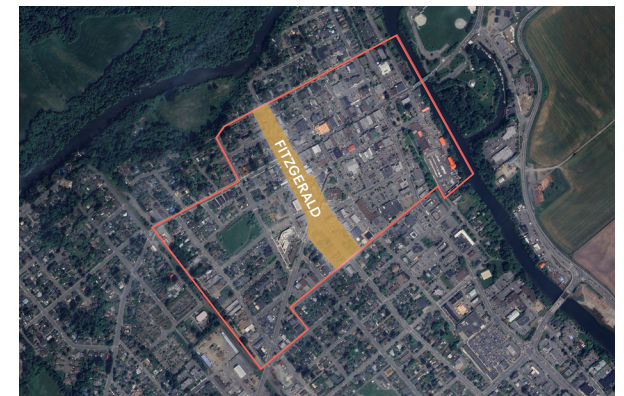
# FITZGERALD CORRIDOR | SWOT ANALYSIS

## STRENGTHS

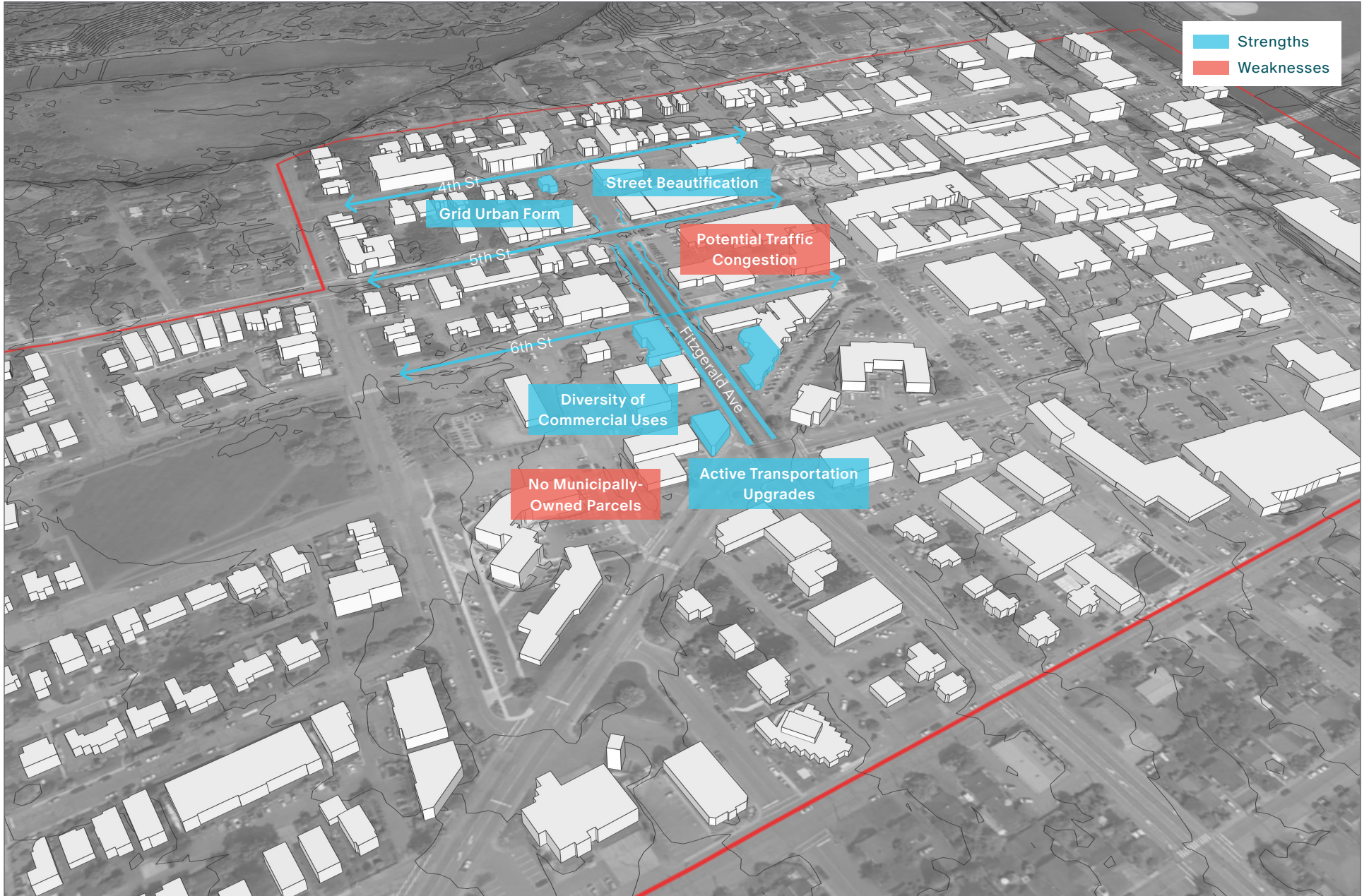
- Strategic location and key thoroughfare, providing access to various parts of the city and serving as a connector between neighbourhoods
- Active transportation and transit upgrades
- Street beautification has begun
- Grid urban form
- Diversity of service and commercial uses fronting Fitzgerald
- Acts as natural divide between Downtown and Harmston Park

## WEAKNESSES

- Active transportation upgrades are constrained between 5th and 8th Streets
- As a major corridor, Fitzgerald Ave may experience traffic congestion, particularly during peak hours
- Acts as natural divide between Downtown and Harmston Park
- No municipally-owned parcels along Fitzgerald Ave



# FITZGERALD CORRIDOR | SWOT ANALYSIS





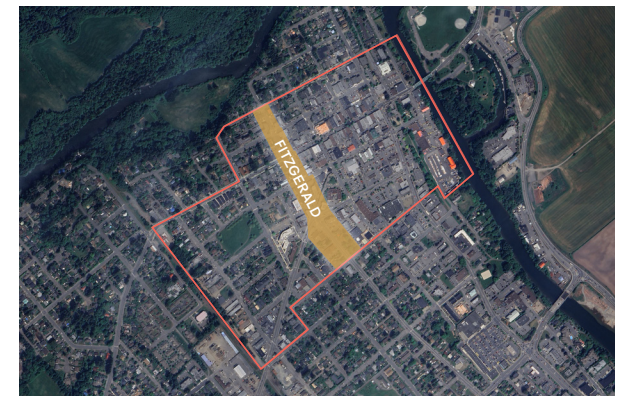
# FITZGERALD CORRIDOR | SWOT ANALYSIS

## OPPORTUNITIES

- 'Gateway' to Downtown
- Further active transportation upgrades and streetscape enhancements for pedestrians and cyclists
- Increase presence of commercial and mixed-use activity
- Potential for infill development, particularly on the northern and southern extents of the planning district
- Build upon existing wayfinding program
- Advancement of Indigenous reconciliation through arts and culture (consulting with K'ómoks First Nation, urban Indigenous groups, Métis)

## THREATS (CONSTRAINTS)

- Commercial land owners could be difficult to incentivize towards increased development
- As the city grows, Fitzgerald Ave could face increased traffic pressure, exacerbating congestion and potentially reducing safety for pedestrians and cyclists
- Upgrading infrastructure could be a challenge for a unified development vision



# FITZGERALD CORRIDOR | SWOT ANALYSIS



# HARMSTON PARK | EXISTING LAND USE & CHARACTER

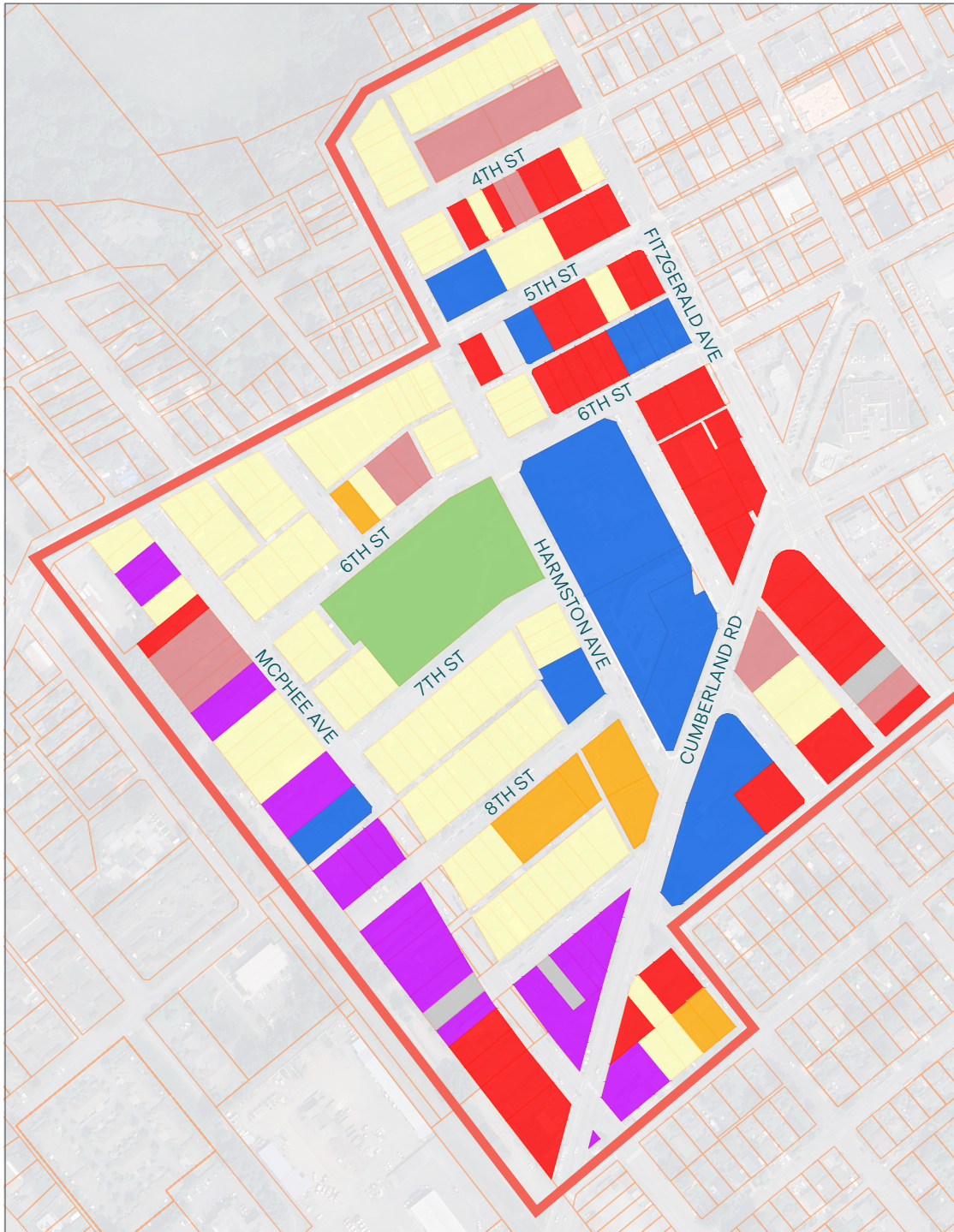
The Harmston Park district is a mosaic of land uses. At its heart lies a park surrounded by low-density residential neighbourhoods featuring primarily single-family homes and townhouses. To the west, light industrial buildings fronting McPhee Avenue and backing onto the Rotary Trail contribute to the area's character. On the eastern edge, a vibrant community hub emerges with the Share the Harvest Community Garden, Old Church Theatre, and essential institutional buildings housing the Comox Valley Regional District, School District 71 offices, and the Courtenay Fire Hall. Commercial establishments along Fitzgerald Avenue complete the district's diverse landscape.

## Existing Land Use

- Harmston Park
- Single-Family Residential
- Fourplex Townhomes
- Light Industrial / Garages on McPhee Ave
- Share the Harvest Community Garden\*
- Old Church Theatre
- Comox Valley Regional District\*
- School District 71\*
- Courtenay Fire Hall\*

\* Publicly-owned





- Commercial
- Mixed-Use
- Residential High (Apartment)
- Residential Low (SF – 4-plex)
- Park / Open Space
- Institutional / Community Use
- Industrial / Garage / Service
- Parking Lot
- Vacant



# HARMSTON PARK | SWOT ANALYSIS

## STRENGTHS

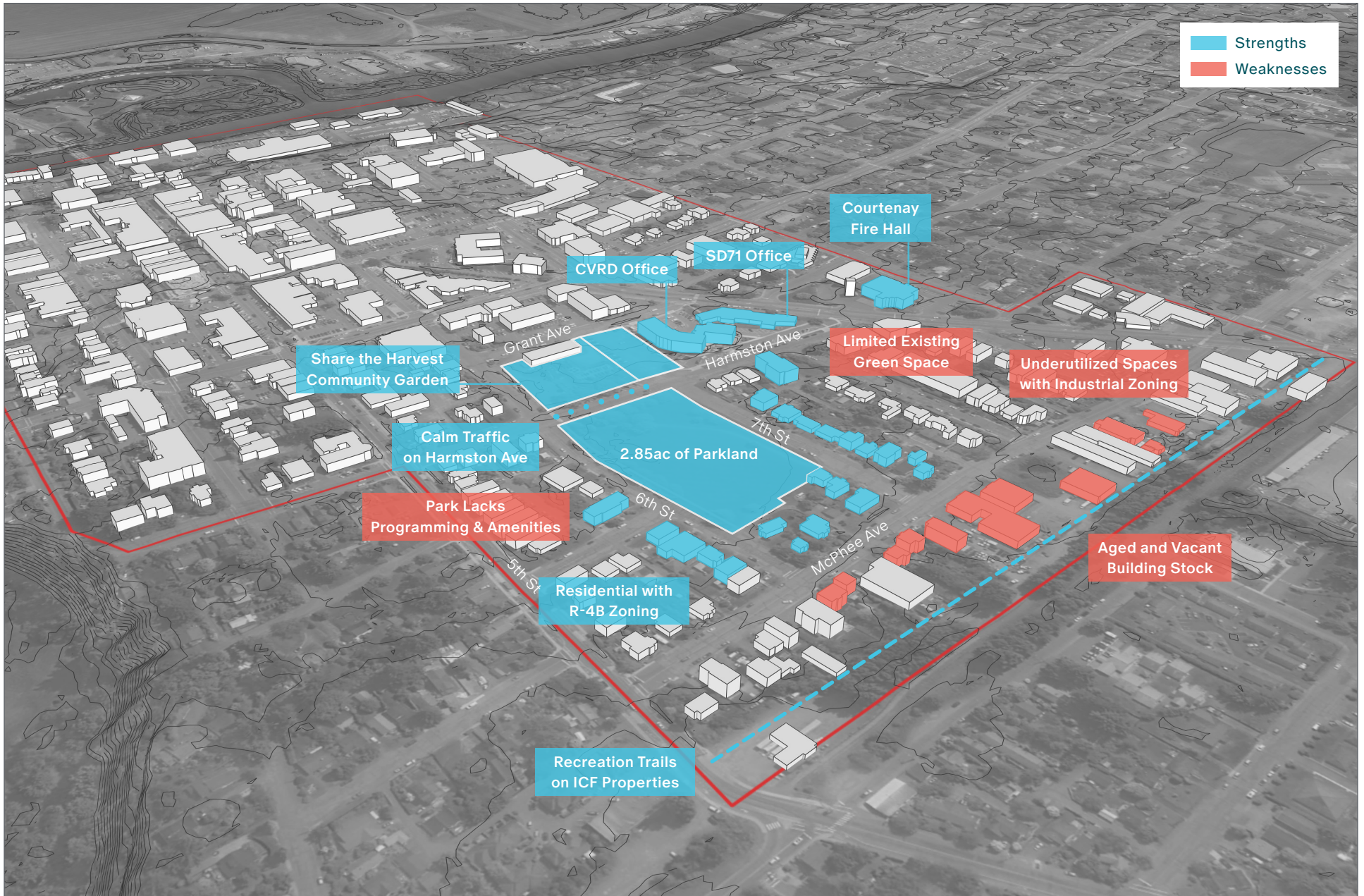
- 2.85 acre (1.15 hectare) parkland surrounded by residential use with favourable zoning, in close proximity to Downtown
- Active community garden (Share the Harvest) adjacent to Harmston Park on municipally-owned land
- Strong presence of both institutional and community land uses
- Calm traffic patterns on Harmston Ave
- Recreation trails on Island Corridor Foundation properties

## WEAKNESSES

- Park lacks programming, modern amenities, and facilities, limiting its attractiveness for a broader range of activities and events
- Underutilized spaces, specifically Industrial zoned land fronting on McPhee Ave
- Limited existing green space
- Aged and vacant building stock



# HARMSTON PARK | SWOT ANALYSIS



# HARMSTON PARK | SWOT ANALYSIS

## OPPORTUNITIES

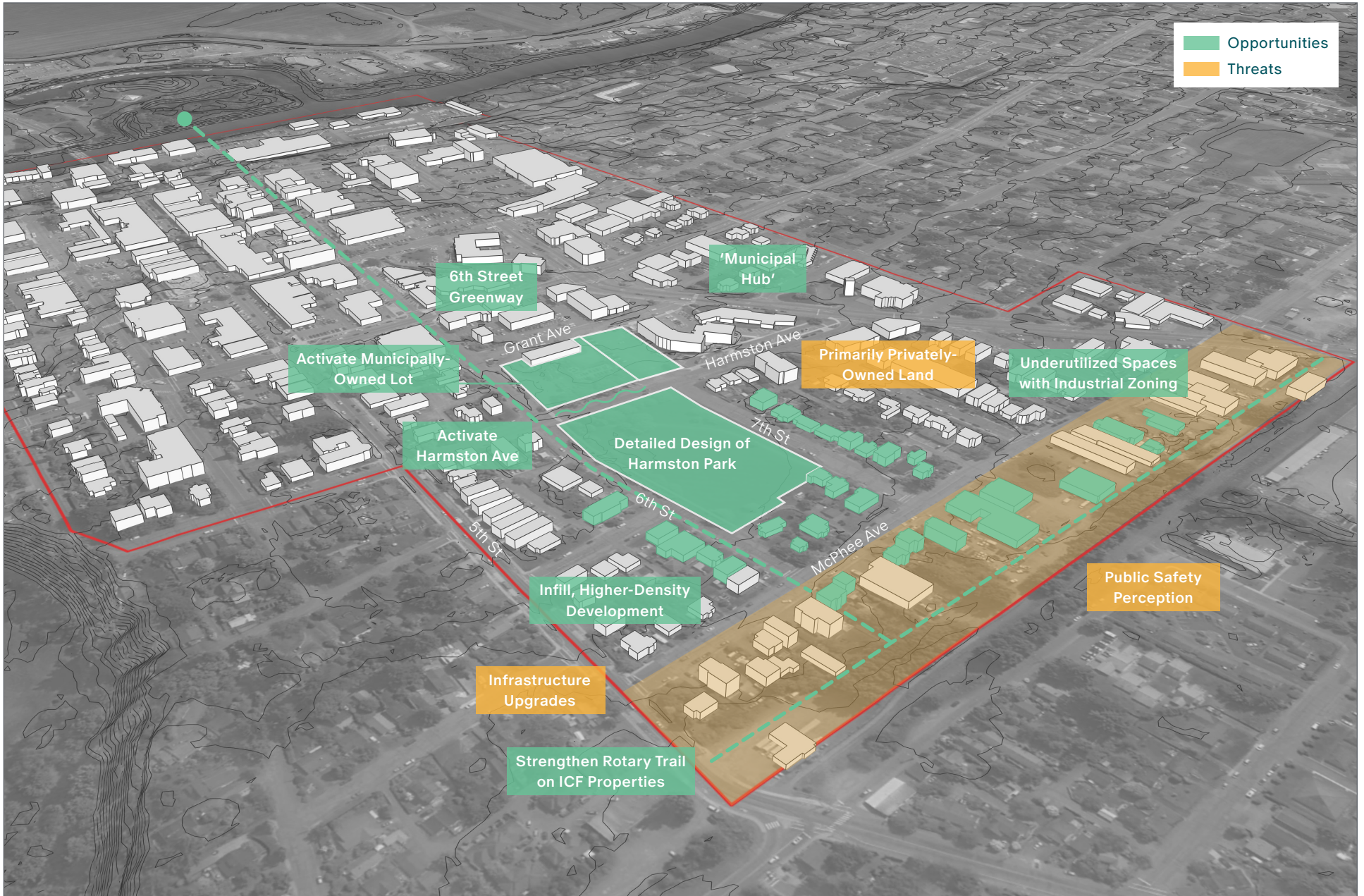
- Detailed design and development of Harmston Park
- Activating Harmston Ave and municipally-owned lot
- Introducing regular programming, enhancing the park's role as a community hub
- Potential greenways
  - East / West on 6th Street (Harmston Park – Riverfront)
- Infill, higher-density development surrounding parkland
- Partner or collaborate with local organizations and businesses to sponsor events and/or amenities
- Underutilized spaces with Industrial and Mixed-Use zoning
- Establishing a 'Municipal Hub', including the relocation of City Hall
- Strengthen Rotary Trail (and connections to trails) on Island Corridor Foundation properties
- Placemaking infrastructure
- Partial closure of Harmston Avenue in order to help activate park and municipally-owned lot (retaining fire access)
- Advancement of Indigenous reconciliation through arts and culture (consulting with K'ómoks First Nation, urban Indigenous groups, Métis)

## THREATS (CONSTRAINTS)

- Current public safety perception of industrial area southwest of Harmston Park
- Privately-owned land around Harmston park could restrict the implementation of a cohesive redevelopment plan
- Upgrading infrastructure could be a challenge for a unified development vision
- Implementation of LAP will need to consider CVRD Regional Growth Strategy



# HARMSTON PARK | SWOT ANALYSIS





# LOOKING AHEAD | BIG IDEAS

The analysis of the study area has provided a detailed understanding of the unique opportunities and challenges facing the Downtown Local Area Plan.

While the Riverfront, Downtown, Fitzgerald Corridor, and Harmston Park planning districts possess distinct identities, several overarching themes have emerged, such as the need to enhance public spaces, improve connectivity, and support cohesive development. These insights form the foundation for a series of transformative actions that can shape the future of the area.

Through the Urban Design Framework process, the following Big Ideas will be further explored, refined, and adapted to align with community priorities and technical considerations. This approach ensures that each initiative is not only visionary but also grounded in feasibility and broad stakeholder support, setting the stage for meaningful change across the study area. While the following list highlights key ideas, it is not exhaustive and will continue to evolve through ongoing collaboration and planning:

## 1 Reimagine the Riverfront

Transform the Riverfront into a vibrant, accessible destination by improving public access, enhancing recreational amenities, and fostering development that integrates natural and cultural assets. This includes activating underutilized spaces and implementing flood-resilient infrastructure.

## 2 Activate Harmston Park and Surrounding

Design and develop Harmston Park as a dynamic community hub, supported by enhanced programming and infrastructure. Opportunities for higher-density housing and innovative uses for adjacent municipal lands, such as partial street closures, can further integrate the park into the community fabric.

## 3 Strengthen the Downtown Core

Revitalize the Downtown through strategic investments in public realm enhancements, green space creation, and improved pedestrian infrastructure. Initiatives such as gateway features and the potential establishment of a central 'municipal hub' could reinforce the Downtown as a cultural and civic heart.

## 4 Fitzgerald Corridor as a Key Connector

Elevate Fitzgerald Avenue's role as a key connector between districts with further streetscape improvements, active transportation infrastructure, and the promotion of mixed-use development. Establishing Fitzgerald as a welcoming gateway to Downtown will ensure it supports the broader vision for the area.





**City of  
Courtenay**



MODUS

from insight to impact

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City Of Courtenay  
Downtown Local Area Plan  
**What We Heard Report - Phase 1**

January 2025

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

The City of Courtenay is evolving to meet the needs of a growing community and accommodate new residents and businesses through a comprehensive approach to land use and community planning in the downtown core.

Building upon the vision established by the Official Community Plan (OCP, 2022) and the Downtown Courtenay Playbook (2016), the **Local Area Plan (LAP) for Downtown and Harmston Park** will provide a detailed understanding of the physical constraints and opportunities to support community development and implementation in the downtown.

By strategically guiding development, partnerships, and capital projects, the LAP will include actions to support residential and commercial growth, activation of civic spaces and programming, and more connection through downtown so that Downtown Courtenay and Harmston Park can become a vibrant, beating heart of the community.

To facilitate more detailed exploration, the LAP is organized into four distinct 'districts' – each representing unique characteristics and opportunities within the broader study area – including: the Riverfront, the Downtown, the Fitzgerald Corridor and Harmston Park.



### Downtown LAP 'SWOT' Analysis

A 'SWOT' analysis of the study area was undertaken as a first step and included policy context and physical analysis of each district, highlighting strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities for community planning. The SWOT Analysis provided the basis for discussion and initial feedback in this first phase of engagement.

## ENGAGEMENT PURPOSE

Public and interest-holder engagement will support the planning and design efforts and communication across all three project phases. Engagement opportunities will be used to gain a better baseline understanding of the study area (phase 1), to inform design directions and draft concepts (phase 2), and to help refine the final LAP and its implementation (phase 3).

Engagement in Phase 1 focused on sharing the Downtown LAP SWOT Analysis with key interest-holders and ensuring the project team has a more complete understanding of study area attributes and external factors impacting the project’s success.

Feedback from Phase 1 informed the final SWOT Analysis, the Communications and Engagement Strategy, and the Draft Design Framework.

	<b>PHASE 1 DESIGN FOUNDATIONS</b>	<b>PHASE 2 KEY DIRECTIONS &amp; CONCEPTS</b>	<b>PHASE 3 DRAFT PLAN &amp; REFINEMENT</b>
<b>engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Interest-holder meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Public Website Launch</li> <li>□ Community Open House</li> <li>□ Virtual Survey</li> <li>□ Interest-holder follow up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Virtual Survey</li> <li>□ Interest-holder follow-up</li> </ul>
<b>outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Communications &amp; Engagement Strategy</li> <li>■ Final SWOT Analysis</li> <li>■ Draft Design Framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Draft Downtown Local Area Plan</li> <li>□ Public Engagement Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Final Downtown Local Area Plan</li> </ul>
	<i>December 2024 – January 2025</i>	<i>February – March 2025</i>	<i>April - June 2025</i>

## ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Interviews were scheduled with individuals and groups based on their availability and regular meeting times and were conducted by phone and/or videoconference. Participants were provided the draft Downtown LAP SWOT Analysis (SWOT) and associated questions ahead of time to help them prepare for the meeting.

Generally, each meeting included a brief project introduction from City staff to provide context, project background, and answer any clarifying questions about the project scope. MODUS then led the discussion by walking through key elements of the materials provided and recording feedback guided by the following questions.

- Looking at the SWOT, what's most important? Should we be elevating any of these identified issues or opportunities based on your perspective and/or specific interests?
- Did we miss anything?
- Is there anything you see in the SWOT that is no longer relevant or should be removed?

Interview questions were intended to guide the conversation but were not explicitly answered as interest-holders provided general feedback based on their own priorities and experiences.

Five meetings and interviews in this first phase allowed the team to collect qualitative information from individuals and groups representing organizations most impacted by the future LAP. This included the following groups:

Organization	Method	Meeting Date
Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce	Interview (virtual)	December 20, 2024
Arts & Cultural Service Providers (Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce, Comox Valley Art Gallery, Comox Valley Arts, Sid Williams Theatre Society, Courtenay and District Museum and Palaeontology Centre)	Group Meeting and follow-up emails	December 5, 2024
Downtown Property Owners (2)	Interview (virtual) Interview (in-person)	December 19, 2024 December 20, 2024
Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Association (DCBIA)	Group Meeting (in-person)	January 13, 2025

## KEY TAKE-AWAYS

Through conversations with interest-holders, several key themes emerged that should be emphasized in the draft Design Framework. The chart below provides an overview of key themes identified from interviews and considerations to inform the planning and design process. This section also includes descriptions of each key theme and comments from different interest-holder groups.

### Overview of What We Heard and Planning Response

Key Themes: What We Heard from Interest-Holder Interviews	Planning & Design Considerations: How Feedback Can Inform the LAP Process
Recognize the Cultural District as a Focal Point	Identify the cultural district as a centralized activity hub/focal point and an existing gateway to downtown
Bring People Downtown	To support implementation of the LAP, the City may consider initiatives and investment to encourage downtown visitation such as expanded utility for events/programming, increased transit access, interpretive/historic signage, public art, wayfinding, and public realm enhancements
Enhance Greenspaces	Consider differences in type, distribution and function of parkland and greenspace in downtown (i.e., for recreation, public realm, access to nature, event programming)
Support Housing Development & Local Businesses	Consider opportunities to support denser forms of housing development in the downtown and pedestrian focused streets to enhance walkability and liveability
Utilize Strength of Community Groups & Potential Partnerships	Include community group involvement as a strength to implementation of the LAP and explore opportunities with First Nations and other planning partners
Align with other Plans & Strategies	Ensure that strategic objectives within the Cultural Plan and provincial housing legislation are referenced and/or integrated into all downtown planning efforts



## Recognize the Cultural District as a Focal Point

- Arts & culture providers stressed the importance of Courtenay's existing **community-built cultural and heritage assets**, including the theatre, art gallery, museum and Native Sons Hall. The LAP can better consolidate, connect and expand these spaces to further establish a cohesive Cultural District. This would strengthen its function as a focal point for downtown and its role in wellness, tourism and economic growth.

Planning & Design Considerations: Identify the cultural district as a centralized activity hub/focal point and an existing gateway to downtown

## Bring People Downtown

- A key challenge identified by the Downtown BIA and Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce was the **limited access to power/utilities** in the downtown, limiting the number of spaces to host public events. This is also important for existing park programming such as the farmers market.
- Many interest-holders expressed the **limited parking capacity** as a current weakness in the downtown. More parking is needed to support visitation, especially for events and art and culture programming. There were suggestions to improve public transit options through a downtown shuttle (that is more frequent and accessible) in addition to "park and ride" lots located outside of the downtown.
- Strengthening the sense of place in the downtown was very important to arts and culture providers and Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce. More **wayfinding** can help lead visitors to and from key destinations, shops or public spaces within the downtown. As the LAP takes shape, the Downtown BIA commented on the need to unify the entire downtown as the **'heart of the Comox Valley'** and cautioned against placing too much focus on creating a unique character or branding for specific streets.
- Other public amenities can also help visitors enjoy the downtown and the riverfront. There were suggestions for more **seating** (benches, picnic tables, hammocks) along the riverfront and pedestrian pathways to enjoy the scenery as well as **shaded areas** with tree canopy (Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce).
- Along the riverfront, the Downtown BIA recommended additional amenities such as **washrooms, waste infrastructure** and **waterfront recreational activities** (i.e., kayaking, swimming, etc.) to encourage visitation. Designating space for **interpretive**

**signage and public art** (i.e. installations, sculptures, murals) - particularly along the riverfront - is a priority for some groups to enrich the city's vibrancy, build community identity, and work with local First Nations to reflect pre-colonial history of the land (Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce).

- Downtown Courtenay BIA emphasized the opportunity for downtown to be not only a local destination, but also a regional 'heart'. **Pedestrianizing sections of the downtown** and directing visitors to local businesses can support this vision, along with **expanding transit connections** and **cycling infrastructure** (i.e. bikeshare) to create more opportunities for people to access the area.
- One property owner identified **perception of safety** as a current barrier to downtown investment, visitation and residential growth. Cases of vandalism and vehicle break-ins were cited as examples that may deter people from spending time downtown.

Planning & Design Considerations: To support implementation of the LAP, the City may consider initiatives and investment to encourage downtown visitation such as expanded utility for events/programming, increased transit access, interpretive/historic signage, public art, wayfinding, and public realm enhancements

### Enhance Greenspaces

- Many interest-holders emphasized the goal to preserve and expand parkland and greenspace throughout downtown. The City can utilize finance tools like Development Cost Charges to ensure public amenities comes with growth (i.e. more green space with more housing density).
- One property owner commented on the opportunity to **expand Harmston Park** with higher density development, providing more green space for residents and recreational amenities.
- Suggestions included expansion of green and public gathering spaces that are closer to commercial streets to support retail and visibility of downtown businesses. **Public events in central green spaces** like Duncan Commons or Duncan Mews can help activate downtown, where Harmston Park is fairly removed from existing businesses (Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce).
- Throughout downtown, greenspace should be increased to **enhance the public realm** and enjoyment of the scenery/surroundings – through tree canopies, grassy areas, etc. (Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce).

Planning & Design Considerations: Consider differences in type, distribution and function of parkland and greenspace in downtown (i.e., for recreation, public realm, access to nature, event programming)

### Support Housing Development & Local Businesses

- Downtown property owners, the Downtown Business Improvement Association and the Chamber of Commerce expressed support for **higher density development in downtown** to meet Courtenay's housing need, specifically around Harmston Park. This can be encouraged through **adjusting height restrictions** to allow for more storeys downtown and **streamlining development and permitting** (provincial archeology and environmental permits were mentioned as particularly challenging processes by one of the landowners).
- One property owner envisions **Harmston Park as a pedestrian-focused nodal** area by expanding both Mcphee Meadows Park and Harmston Park and closing off some laneways and arterial roads. Higher density development in this district could also create an opportunity for public housing (with BC Housing) and future civic projects, building more connection to the arts and cultural hub.
- To strengthen downtown as a key destination and support future residential density in the area, The Downtown BIA expressed interest in dedicating **5<sup>th</sup> Street as a high commercial** street that is pedestrian focused and closed to vehicles. This would require transportation studies, adequate and accessible parking nearby and could start with a pilot street closing during the summer months to test public interest and impact on businesses.
- Property owners also indicated opportunities for **development on City-owned or underutilized lands**. The Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce recognized the recent purchase of the hostel as an opportunity for the City to create more of an activated 'gateway' into the downtown. In the riverfront district, relocating industrial uses such as the Central Builders site could free up land for more riverfront access and/or development. A key challenge identified was the lack of industrial zoned land in the area, limiting where the existing site could be relocated.

Planning & Design Considerations: Consider opportunities to support denser forms of housing development in the downtown and pedestrian focused streets to enhance walkability and liveability

## Utilize Strength of Community Groups & Potential Partnerships

- The involvement and **engagement of community groups** was identified as a strength to the process. These include partnerships between institutions such as the downtown farmer's market, Theatre, Museum, Downtown Courtenay BIA, etc. To ensure LAP meets diverse needs, it will be important to include Courtenay community groups and their networks in the planning through to implementation (Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce).
- Downtown BIA expressed the importance of planning lands, particularly around the riverfront, with **K'ómoks First Nation** and exploring opportunities with **Green Shores**.

Planning & Design Considerations: Include community group involvement as a strength to implementation of the LAP and explore opportunities with First Nations and other planning partners

## Align with other Plans & Strategies

- Arts & culture providers noted that the LAP should be aligned with the recent **Cultural Strategic Plan**, which specifies facility improvements and investments, as well as the upcoming Cultural Facility Space Needs Assessment.
- The LAP should also respond to the updated **Official Community Plan** and **Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH) requirements** to identify where growth can- and should- go within the downtown. The downtown is targeted area for future development, and it will be important to specify how much new housing this study area can support (Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce).

Planning & Design Considerations: Ensure that strategic objectives within the Cultural Plan and provincial housing legislation are referenced and/or integrated into all downtown planning efforts

## NEXT STEPS

Interest-holder feedback will be used to inform the Design Framework. In late February 2025, the City will launch a first round of public engagement to seek feedback on the design framework and key directions for the LAP. Opportunities will include an online survey and community open house. Draft materials and background information will be shared through the project's webpage.

## Public Substance Use Education and Awareness Event

The Local Leadership United (LLU) under the umbrella of the Community Action Initiative (CAI), Comox Valley Substance Use Collaborative, Indigenous Women's Sharing Society, and Comox Valley Community Action Team have committed to co-organizing a public substance use education and awareness event this April.

The event would be held over two days, and would include an evening theatre performance, a business luncheon with guest speakers, and an evening open public presentation with guest speakers and panelists. Potential speakers have been contacted about their availability, and several have committed to participating. These include previous provincial head coroner Lisa Lapointe, North Island Medical Health Officer Dr. Charmaine Enns, Greg Hemminger with the Tailgate Toolkit, and Leslie McBain of Moms Stop the Harm, among others. A letter will go to K'omoks First Nation Chief and Council inviting their participation in the event.

The event dates coincide with the 9 year anniversary of the toxic drug crisis being declared a public health emergency. The purpose of the event is to provide evidence-based information about substance use, to address common myths about substance use and related policies, and to provide resources and support to community members. The goals of this event align with the Official Community Plan, and the council endorsed recommendations of the Comox Valley Substance Use Strategy. This is an excellent opportunity to host high profile speakers who are experts in their fields in our community, with LLU staff providing organizational resources, without adding to city staff's workload.

Providing organization of this event is within the mandate of the LLU. Specifically, tasks they can perform are coordinating guest speakers; making honorarium, travel and accommodation arrangements; moderating the public sessions; luncheon and refreshment arrangements; and other organizational tasks as necessary. Local groups will provide promotion/publicity, assistance with arranging venue(s), and liaison with local speakers, participants, and theatre group.

Links for further information:

<https://thetailgatetoolkit.ca/>  
<https://caibc.ca/llu/>

<https://caibc.ca/>  
<https://www.momsstoptheharm.com/>



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Staff Report

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**To:** Council

**File No.:** 5360-01

**From:** Director of Financial Services

**Date:** February 12, 2025

**Subject:** Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3171 (solid waste)

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## PURPOSE:

To consider amendments to the City of Courtenay Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 1673, 1992 in order to introduce updated solid waste fees and charges for components of the service that were not considered at the onset of automated collection in 2024. The basic annual fees for residences will not change in this amendment.

## BACKGROUND:

City of Courtenay Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 1673, 1992 provides the City with the authority to impose a fee with respect to all or part of a service, the use of municipal property or the exercise of authority to regulate, prohibit or impose requirements pursuant to Section 194 of the Community Charter.

## DISCUSSION:

An amendment to the Fees and Charges Bylaw was made in January 2024 (Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3129, 2024) to accommodate the new user fees associated with automated collection. Following a year of the automated service, the following changes to the fees and charges are proposed:

Add a fee for a 240 L Home Health Care Waste Cart.

- The City has a limited number of 240 L garbage carts, which are mainly allocated to group care residences or households that require the larger garbage carts for home health care waste to help optimize the storage space on their property. To date, staff have charged double the fee for a 120 L home health care waste cart (2 x \$56 = \$112). However, explicitly identifying the fee for the 240 L home health care waste cart will improve transparency.

Adjust the fee for any second recycling cart (any size) on a property to \$32.65.

- Moving to a single fee for additional recycling carts will simplify administration by eliminating the disparity between the fees for first and second recycling carts. This change also aligns with the City's efforts toward cost recovery for recycling services under the proposed Master Service Agreement with Recycle BC.

Add a fee of \$32.65 for a 120L recycling cart.

- Due to demand in 2024, the City ordered 120 L-sized recycling carts which have been popular with smaller units in strata complexes. There is currently no fee outlined for this size of cart in the fees and charges bylaw.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There will be no change to the basic annual fees for properties in the curbside collection service. There are 42 residences that have an additional recycling cart which will result in an increase of \$18.65 for the second cart (from \$14.00 to \$32.65).

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:**

The Financial Services department will update the billing system to implement a consistent fee structure for all recycling carts, regardless of whether it is the first or second cart. Moving to a single fee for additional recycling carts will simplify the administration of solid waste billing and align with the City's efforts toward cost recovery for recycling services under the proposed Master Service Agreement with Recycle BC. The Financial Services department will also update the billing system to reflect changes outlined in the attached bylaw, including adjustments to the 240 L home health care waste cart fees.

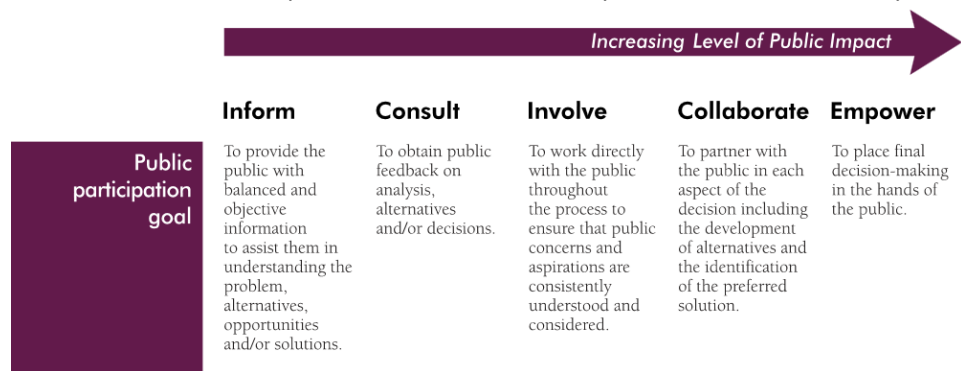
**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:**

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Financial Sustainability - Review City Financial processes: Review fees, charges, and fines

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

Staff would inform the public based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation:



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**OPTIONS:**

1. THAT Council give first, second and third reading to Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3171, 2025 (solid waste).
2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.
3. THAT Council not move forward with the bylaw.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Fees and Charges - Amendment Bylaw No. 3171, 2025 (solid waste)
2. Fees and Charges - Amendment Bylaw No. 3129, 2024 showing new changes

Prepared by: Chris Thompson, Manager of Public Works Services

Reviewed by: Adam Langenmaier, Director of Finance, CFO

Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)





The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Bylaw No. 3171

## A bylaw to amend City of Courtenay Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 1673, 1992

The Council of the Corporation of the City of Courtenay in open meeting assembled enacts as follows:

1. This bylaw may be cited for all purposes as “Fees and Charges - Amendment Bylaw No. 3171, 2025 (solid waste)”.
2. That “City of Courtenay Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 1673, 1992” be amended as follows:
  - (a) That Schedule of Fees and Charges, Section III, Appendix IV, “Garbage Collection Fees” be hereby repealed and substituted therefore by the following attached hereto and forming part of this bylaw:

Schedule of Fees and Charges Section III, Appendix IV – Solid Waste Collection Fees

Read a first time this      day of      , 2025

Read a second time this      day of      , 2025

Read a third time this      day of      , 2025

Finally passed and adopted this      day of      , 2025

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Corporate Officer

**SCHEDULE OF FEES AND CHARGES  
CITY OF COURTENAY FEES AND CHARGES  
AMENDMENT BYLAW NO. 3171, 2025  
SECTION III, APPENDIX IV  
SOLID WASTE COLLECTION FEES**

**Fees associated with Collection of Garbage, Organic Waste, and Recyclables**

The annual rates in this schedule apply to the jurisdictions as outlined in the body of this bylaw.

**A. Single Residential Dwelling (SRD) Unit / Duplex Basic Annual Fee:**

<b>Garbage</b>	<b>Organic Waste</b>	<b>Recyclables</b>	<b>Fee</b>
<b>120 L</b>	<b>360 L</b>	<b>360 L</b>	<b>\$357.50</b>

**B. Multi-residential detached, Manufactured Homes in a Mobile Home Park, Fourplex, and Secondary Suites inside SRDs Basic Annual Fee:**

<b>Garbage</b>	<b>Organic Waste</b>	<b>Recyclables</b>	<b>Fee</b>
<b>120 L</b>	<b>120 L</b>	<b>240 L</b>	<b>\$324.00</b>

**C. Cart Exchange Fee (limited to one set of cart exchanges per year): \$65.00 per exchange**

<u><b>Fee Description</b></u>	<u><b>Annual Fee</b></u>
<b>D. Additional Home Health Care Waste Garbage Cart (120 L):</b>	<b>\$56.00</b>
<b>E. Additional Home Health Care Waste Garbage Cart (240 L):</b>	<b>\$112.00</b>
<b>F. Garbage Cart (120 L):</b>	<b>\$138.20</b>
<b>G. Garbage Cart (240 L):</b>	<b>\$276.40</b>
<b>H. Recycling Cart (120 L, 240 L or 360 L):</b>	<b>\$32.65</b>
<b>I. Organic Waste Cart (120 L):</b>	<b>\$153.15</b>
<b>J. Organic Waste Cart (240 L):</b>	<b>\$169.90</b>
<b>K. Organic Waste Cart (360 L):</b>	<b>\$186.65</b>
<b>L. Assisted Set-out Service:</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>

<u><b>Description of cart replacement charges</b></u>	<u><b>Charge</b></u>
<b>M. Replacement cart fee – 120 L</b>	<b>\$81.60</b>
<b>N. Replacement cart fee – 240 L</b>	<b>\$102.00</b>
<b>O. Replacement cart fee – 360 L</b>	<b>\$117.60</b>
<b>P. Replacement wildlife resistant cart fee - any size</b>	<b>\$217.60</b>

**SCHEDULE OF FEES AND CHARGES  
CITY OF COURTENAY FEES AND CHARGES  
AMENDMENT BYLAW NO. 3129, 2025  
SECTION III, APPENDIX IV  
SOLID WASTE COLLECTION FEES**

**Fees associated with Collection of Garbage, Organic Waste, and Recyclables**

The annual rates in this schedule apply to the jurisdictions as outlined in the body of this bylaw.

**A. Single Residential Dwelling (SRD) Unit / Duplex Basic Annual Fee:**

Garbage	Organic Waste	Recyclables	Fee
120 L	360 L	360 L	\$357.50

**B. Multi-residential detached, Manufactured Homes in a Mobile Home Park, Fourplex, and Secondary Suites inside SRDs Basic Annual Fee:**

Garbage	Organic Waste	Recyclables	Fee
120 L	120 L	240 L	\$324.00

**C. Cart Exchange Fee (limited to one set of cart exchanges per year): \$65.00 per exchange**

**Fee Description Annual Fee**

<b>D. Additional Home Health Care Waste Garbage Cart (120 L):</b>	<b>\$56.00</b>
<b>E. Additional Home Health Care Waste Garbage Cart (240 L):</b>	<b>\$112.00</b>
<b>F. Garbage Cart (120 L):</b>	<b>\$138.20</b>
<b>G. Garbage Cart (240 L):</b>	<b>\$276.40</b>
<b>H. First Recycling Cart (120L, 240 L or 360 L):</b>	<b>\$32.65</b>
<b>I. Additional Recycling Cart (240 L or 360 L):</b>	<del>\$14.00</del>
<b>J. Organic Waste Cart (120 L):</b>	<b>\$153.15</b>
<b>K. Organic Waste Cart (240 L):</b>	<b>\$169.90</b>
<b>L. Organic Waste Cart (360 L):</b>	<b>\$186.65</b>
<b>M. Assisted Set-out Service:</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>

**Description of cart replacement charges Charge**

<b>N. Replacement cart fee – 120 L</b>	<b>\$81.60</b>
<b>O. Replacement cart fee – 240 L</b>	<b>\$102.00</b>
<b>P. Replacement cart fee – 360 L</b>	<b>\$117.60</b>
<b>Q. Replacement wildlife resistant cart fee - any size</b>	<b>\$217.60</b>



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Bylaw No. 3167

## A bylaw to amend City of Courtenay Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 1673, 1992

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the City of Courtenay, in open meeting assembled, enacts as follows:

### Citation

1. This Bylaw shall be cited as “Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3167, 2025 (water)”.

### Amendment

2. That “City of Courtenay Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 1673, 1992” be amended as follows:
  - a) That Schedule of Fees and Charges, Section III, Appendix I, “Waterworks Distribution System” be hereby repealed and substituted therefore by the following attached hereto and forming part of this bylaw:

Schedule of Fees and Charges Section III, Appendix I – Waterworks Distribution System

Read a first time this 5th day of February, 2025.

Read a second time this 5th day of February, 2025.

Read a third time this 5th day of February, 2025.

Adopted this [day] day of February, 2025

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Mayor Bob Wells

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Corporate Officer

**SCHEDULE OF FEES AND CHARGES  
CITY OF COURTENAY FEES AND CHARGES  
AMENDMENT BYLAW NO. 3167, 2025  
SECTION III, APPENDIX I**

**WATERWORKS DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM**

**1. CONNECTION FEES**

- (a) Pursuant to Section 3.2 of Water Regulations and Rates Bylaw No. 1700, 1994, and amendments thereto, every applicant shall pay to the City before any work is done on the connection, a connection fee as follows:

**Connection Size**

Within the City

Connection from either side of road to property line

20 millimetres (3/4 inch)	\$5,500.00
25 millimetres (1 inch)	\$6,500.00

Outside the City

20 millimetres (3/4 inch) minimum charge of \$5,500.00	Actual City cost plus 25% with a
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- (b) Where a larger connection than those listed above is required, the connection will be installed at City cost plus 25%.

(c) **Water Turn On and Turn Off**

If turn on or turn off is for a purpose other than maintenance or the commissioning of a new service the following fees will apply:

Inside the City	\$70.00 for each water turn on or turn off
Outside the City	\$100.00 for each water turn on or turn off

(d) **Abandonment Fee**

Fee for disconnecting an abandoned service connection at the water main irrespective of the size of the connection	Actual City cost plus 25%, with a minimum charge of \$2,500.00
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**2. WATER UTILITY USER RATES**

**(a) Unmetered Water**

The minimum user rate per year or portion thereof for unmetered accounts shall be as follows:

	<b>Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2025</b>	<b>Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2026</b>	<b>Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2027</b>	<b>Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2028</b>	<b>Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2029</b>
Single Residential Dwelling	\$ 624.00	\$ 682.00	\$ 746.00	\$ 797.00	\$ 851.00
Multiple Residential Dwelling-per unit	550.00	625.00	711.00	791.00	880.00
Commercial	575.00	606.00	638.00	655.00	673.00
Outside Commercial User	793.69	863.42	940.87	912.42	1,029.55
Outside Residential User	842.69	939.42	1,048.87	1,054.42	1,207.55

**(b) Metered Water**

All metered accounts for the quantity of water used each quarter shall be calculated at the following rates:

	<b>Bylaw Rates (per annum) Effective Date January 1, 2025</b>
<b>Multi-Residential Metered</b>	
0-48.0 cubic meters	\$ 92.64
Greater than 48.1 cubic meters	1.93
<b>Commercial Metered</b>	
0-48.0 cubic meters	\$ 92.64
Greater than 48.1 cubic meters	1.93
<b>Regional Standpipe</b>	\$ 2.52
<b>Outside City - Multi-Residential Metered</b>	
0-48.0 cubic meters	\$ 120.96
Greater than 48.1 cubic meters	2.52
<b>Outside City - Commercial Metered</b>	
0-48.0 cubic meters	\$ 120.96
Greater than 48.1 cubic meters	2.52
<b>Regional District Bulk, Regional Playing fields</b>	\$ 1.93
<b>Sandwich - Summer Only</b>	\$ 560.98

(c) Where a meter is found not to register, the charge shall be computed on the basis of the amount of water used during the time the meter was working, or from any other information or source which can be obtained, and such amount so composed shall be paid by the consumer.

(d) Where a commercial or industrial consumer has not been connected to a water meter through non-availability of the water meter or because of special exemption being granted by the City, water charges to the consumer will be computed on the basis of consumption recorded for other similar purposes in the City, or from any other information or source which can be obtained, and such amount so computed shall be paid by the consumer.

(e) Where it has been determined that a water leak has occurred during the last billing period on the buried portion of the service between the water meter and the point where the service pipe

enters the building, a maximum one-time rebate of 40% of the metered water utility fee to compensate for the water leak will be made at the discretion of the Finance Officer based on the following:

- i. The leak occurred on the buried water service;
- ii. That a leak of that nature would have caused the volume of excess water usage;
- iii. The leak did not occur as a result of negligence of the owner;
- iv. The owner has provided satisfactory evidence that the leak has been permanently repaired.

**WATER METER RENTALS**

a) Water meter fee shall be as follows:

	<b>Bylaw Rates 2025</b>	<b>Bylaw Rates 2026</b>	<b>Bylaw Rates 2027</b>	<b>Bylaw Rates 2028</b>	<b>Bylaw Rates 2029</b>
	<b>Monthly Rates</b>	<b>Monthly Rates</b>	<b>Monthly Rates</b>	<b>Monthly Rates</b>	<b>Monthly Rates</b>
Up to 3/4"	\$ 1.83	\$ 1.87	\$ 1.91	\$ 1.95	\$ 1.99
1"	\$ 5.07	\$ 5.17	\$ 5.27	\$ 5.38	\$ 5.49
1 1/4" - 1 1/2"	\$ 10.13	\$ 10.33	\$ 10.54	\$ 10.75	\$ 10.97
2"	\$ 15.17	\$ 15.47	\$ 15.78	\$ 16.10	\$ 16.42
3"	\$ 25.26	\$ 25.77	\$ 26.29	\$ 26.82	\$ 27.36
4"	\$ 49.97	\$ 50.97	\$ 51.99	\$ 53.03	\$ 54.09
6"	\$ 75.58	\$ 77.09	\$ 78.63	\$ 80.20	\$ 81.80
8"	\$ 100.85	\$ 102.87	\$ 104.93	\$ 107.03	\$ 109.17
10"	\$ 126.08	\$ 128.60	\$ 131.17	\$ 133.79	\$ 136.47

The above meter fee shall be added to the monthly water rates and will apply both inside and outside the City.

**METER READING CHARGE**

Each call after the first one of each month if access has not been provided or if readings extra to the quarterly reading are requested \$35.00 per call

**3. SUPPLY OF WATER FROM FIRE HYDRANTS OR OTHER SOURCE**

(a) Water may be supplied from a fire hydrant or other for the use of developers during the course of construction of multi-family, industrial, and commercial developments. The charge for such water usage shall be:

For buildings with a gross floor area up to and including 250 square meters	\$250.00
For buildings greater than a gross floor area of 250 square meters	Minimum charge of \$250.00, plus \$0.10 per square meter for floor area in excess of 250 square meters.

(b) Where water is supplied from a fire hydrant or other non-metered source for other uses, the amount of water supplied will be invoiced in accordance with Section 2 – Water Utility Users Rates – Metered Water.

(c) Charge to service fire hydrant after use:

\$95.00 and/or any service costs that may arise from servicing a hydrant in respect of its use.

**4. UTILITY BILLING ADJUSTMENTS AND COLLECTION**

- a) Where a billing error is suspected by the consumer, notification in writing must be made to the City of Courtenay Finance Department within one year of the original billing date for review and consideration. Upon investigation, if it is determined by the City that an error occurred and the consumer has been overcharged, an adjustment will be made to the utility bill in question in an amount to be determined by the City. The City will not provide refunds or adjustments to billing errors made more than two years prior to the date of the notification being received by the City.
- b) The rates and charges, enumerated in this Bylaw, are hereby imposed and levied for water supplied or ready to be supplied by the City and for the provision of the service and other water related services. All such rates and charges which are imposed for work done or services provided to lands or improvements shall form a charge on those lands which may be recovered from the Owner of the lands in the same manner and by the same means as unpaid taxes.





The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Bylaw No. 3168

## A bylaw to amend City of Courtenay Water Service Frontage Tax Bylaw No. 3125, 2024

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the City of Courtenay, in open meeting assembled, enacts as follows:

### Citation

1. This Bylaw shall be cited as “Water Service Frontage Tax Amendment Bylaw No. 3168, 2025”.

### Amendment

2. That “Water Service Frontage Tax Bylaw No. 3125, 2024” is amended as follows:  
a) That “7. The annual amount to be paid under this tax per parcel is \$6.10 per meter of water frontage.”

Be removed and replaced with:

“7. The annual amount to be paid under this tax per parcel per meter of water frontage is:

<b>Year</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>2029</b>
<b>\$/m</b>	\$ 7.17	\$ 8.44	\$ 9.93	\$ 11.69	\$ 13.75

### Severability

3. If any portion of this Bylaw is declared invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, then the invalid portion must be severed and the remainder of the Bylaw is deemed valid.

### Repeal

4. The “Water Service Frontage Tax Bylaw No. 3125, 2024”, as amended, is hereby repealed.

Read a first time this 5th day of February, 2025.

Read a second time this 5th day of February, 2025.

Read a third time this 5th day of February, 2025.

Adopted this [day] day of February, 2025

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Bob Wells

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Corporate Officer



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Bylaw No. 3169

**A bylaw to amend City of Courtenay Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 1673, 1992**

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the City of Courtenay, in open meeting assembled, enacts as follows:

## **Citation**

1. This Bylaw shall be cited as “Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3169, 2025 (sewer)”.

## **Amendment**

2. “City of Courtenay Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 1673, 1992” be amended as follows:
  - (a) That Schedule of Fees and Charges, Section III, Appendix II “Sanitary Sewer System” be hereby repealed and substituted therefore by the following attached hereto and forming part of this bylaw:

Schedule of Fees and Charges Section III, Appendix II – Sanitary Sewer System

Read a first time this 5th day of February, 2025.

Read a second time this 5th day of February, 2025.

Read a third time this 5th day of February, 2025.

Adopted this [day] day of February, 2025

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Mayor Bob Wells

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Corporate Officer

**SCHEDULE OF FEES AND CHARGES  
CITY OF COURTENAY FEES AND CHARGES AMENDMENT  
BYLAW NO. 3169, 2025  
SECTION III, APPENDIX II  
SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM**

**1. CONNECTION FEES**

**(a) Connection Fees**

Connection from either side of road to property line

10.16 centimetres (4" inch) \$6,000.00

Where a larger connection than the one listed above is required, the connection will be installed at City cost plus 25%.

**(b) Abandonment Fee**

Fee for disconnecting an abandoned service connection at the sanitary sewer main irrespective of the size of the connection	Actual City cost plus 25%, min charge \$2,500.00
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**(c) Connection Charges for Annexed Areas**

For owners where commitment letters were issued between 1997 and 2006 quoting a sewer connection bylaw fee of \$1,500 (plus a capital contribution fee of \$5,000), this bylaw fee amount shall be in effect until October 31, 2007, after which the following schedule of connection fees will apply.

Property Use	Connection Charge		
	Capital Contribution		Connection Fee
	Existing Building	New Development	
Single Residential Home OR Duplex	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	Either side of road from main - \$6,000.00
Multi-residential, Strata OR Apartment OR Mobile Homes	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00 for first unit, \$3,000.00 per unit for the next five units, \$2,500.00 per unit for the next five units, \$2,000.00 per unit for the next five units and \$1,500.00 per unit for all units thereafter	For a 100 mm diameter connection or the Bylaw rate for larger pipe sizes:  Either side of road from main \$6,000.00

Industrial OR Commercial OR Public Assembly	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00 minimum or the greater amount calculated based on the design sewage flows from the development.	For a 100 mm diameter connection or the Bylaw rate for larger pipe sizes:  Either side of road from main \$10,000.00
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Note: Under the heading of ‘Capital Contribution’ an ‘Existing Building’ is defined as a building that existed or a property that had a building permit application in place on or before April 14, 2004. ‘New Development’ is defined as a property on which a building permit application was made on or after April 15, 2004.

**1. SANITARY SEWER USER RATES – APPLIED ON A PER-UNIT/SPACE BASIS**

- The minimum user rate per year or portion thereof shall be as follows:

	Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2025	Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2026	Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2027	Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2028	Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2029
<b>Part 1 - Residential Users</b>					
1 Single Residential Dwelling	\$ 478.00	\$ 520.00	\$ 566.00	\$ 616.00	\$ 670.00
2 Multiple Residential Dwelling - per unit	478.00	520.00	566.00	616.00	670.00
3 Mobile Home Park -per space	478.00	520.00	566.00	616.00	670.00
4 Kiwanis Village - per unit	478.00	520.00	566.00	616.00	670.00

	Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2025	Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2026	Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2027	Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2028	Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2029
<b>Part 2 - Commercial Users</b>					
1 Hotels and Motels -per unit	\$ 216.00	\$ 265.60	\$ 326.40	\$ 400.00	\$ 492.00
2 Trailer Park and Campsite -per serviced site	108.00	132.80	163.20	200.00	246.00
3 Wholesale and Retail Stores	540.00	664.00	816.00	1,000.00	1,230.00
4 Car Wash	2,160.00	2,656.00	3,264.00	4,000.00	4,920.00
5 Bus Depot	540.00	664.00	816.00	1,000.00	1,230.00
6 Funeral Parlour	540.00	664.00	816.00	1,000.00	1,230.00
7 Garage	540.00	664.00	816.00	1,000.00	1,230.00
8 Machine Shop and Repair Shop	540.00	664.00	816.00	1,000.00	1,230.00
9 Bakery	540.00	664.00	816.00	1,000.00	1,230.00
10 Photographer	540.00	664.00	816.00	1,000.00	1,230.00
11 Business Office - per office	540.00	664.00	816.00	1,000.00	1,230.00
12 Professional Office -per office	540.00	664.00	816.00	1,000.00	1,230.00
13 Barber and Hairdresser	540.00	664.00	816.00	1,000.00	1,230.00
14 Pool Room and Recreation Facility	540.00	664.00	816.00	1,000.00	1,230.00
15 Theatre	1,080.00	1,328.00	1,632.00	2,000.00	2,460.00
16 Department Store	1,080.00	1,328.00	1,632.00	2,000.00	2,460.00
17 Supermarket	1,080.00	1,328.00	1,632.00	2,000.00	2,460.00
18 Bowling Alley	1,080.00	1,328.00	1,632.00	2,000.00	2,460.00
19 Bank	1,080.00	1,328.00	1,632.00	2,000.00	2,460.00
20 Nursing Home	1,080.00	1,328.00	1,632.00	2,000.00	2,460.00
21 Cafe and Restaurant (including drive-in or take-out)	1,080.00	1,328.00	1,632.00	2,000.00	2,460.00
22 Dry Cleaner	1,080.00	1,328.00	1,632.00	2,000.00	2,460.00
23 Beverage Room	1,080.00	1,328.00	1,632.00	2,000.00	2,460.00
24 Laundry and Coin Laundry	4,320.00	5,312.00	6,528.00	8,000.00	9,840.00
25 Sawmill	5,400.00	6,640.00	8,160.00	10,000.00	12,300.00
26 Dairy Product Processing Plant	40,000.00	49,200.00	60,500.00	74,000.00	91,020.00
27 Other Commercial Users not enumerated in this schedule	1,080.00	1,328.00	1,632.00	2,000.00	2,460.00
28 Cheese Processing Plant	8,910.00	10,960.00	13,480.00	16,500.00	20,295.00

	Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2025	Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2026	Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2027	Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2028	Bylaw Rates (per annum) 2029
<b>Part 3 - Institutional Users</b>					
1 Church	\$ 478.00	\$ 520.00	\$ 566.00	\$ 616.00	\$ 670.00
2 Public Hall	478.00	520.00	566.00	616.00	670.00
3 Utility Office	1,080.00	1,328.00	1,632.00	2,000.00	2,460.00
4 School -per classroom	850.00	910.00	980.00	1,050.00	1,125.00
5 Regional Recreation Complex	37,500.00	40,400.00	43,500.00	46,850.00	50,500.00
6 Regional District Administrative Office	10,100.00	10,877.28	11,710.00	12,600.00	13,560.00
7 Hospital per patient room	190.00	205.00	220.00	237.00	255.00
8 Hospital per staff room	475.00	512.50	550.00	592.50	637.50

**2. UTILITY BILLING ADJUSTMENTS AND COLLECTION**

- a) Where a billing error is suspected by the consumer, notification in writing must be made to the City of Courtenay Finance Department within one year of the original billing date for review and consideration. Upon investigation, if it is determined by the City that an error occurred and the consumer has been overcharged, an adjustment will be made to the utility bill in question in an amount to be determined by the City. The City will not provide refunds or adjustments to billing errors made more than two years prior to the date of the notification being received by the City.
  
- b) The rates and charges, enumerated in this Bylaw, are hereby imposed and levied for sewer utility services supplied or ready to be supplied by the City. All such rates and charges which are imposed for work done or services provided to lands or improvements shall form a charge on those lands which may be recovered from the Owner of the lands in the same manner and by the same means as unpaid taxes.