



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Council Agenda

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**Meeting #:** R5/2025  
**Date:** March 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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7.1 Tariffs Response - City of Courtenay Joins Team Canada (Councillor Jolicoeur) <b>WHEREAS</b> the United States government is proposing to impose tariffs on	

Canadian imports, including a 25% tariff on all Canadian goods entering the US, except for energy resources, which face a 10% tariff; and

**WHEREAS** these tariffs may negatively impact Canadian businesses, industries, and workers, particularly those engaged in manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, and other export-driven sectors, leading to job losses and economic instability in communities such as Courtenay; and

**WHEREAS** supporting Canadian-made goods and services sustains local businesses, protects Canadian jobs, and strengthens the national economy in response to trade restrictions; and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the City of Courtenay encourage residents, businesses, and municipal departments to prioritize the purchase of Canadian-made goods and services whenever feasible; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City of Courtenay prioritize Canadian-made goods and services in current and upcoming municipal procurement and contracts, provided they meet financial and operational requirements; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City engage with local business organizations, including the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area to promote initiatives supporting Canadian businesses and local employment; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that staff report back to Council on the impacts of the above actions;

**AND FURTHER THAT** this resolution be shared with other Comox Valley local governments and K'omoks First Nation for consideration.

## **8. BYLAWS FOR ADOPTION**

- |     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
| 8.1 | 2025-2029 Financial Plan Bylaw No. 3165, 2025               | 324 |
| 8.2 | Sewer Service Frontage Tax - Amendment Bylaw No. 3170, 2025 | 328 |

## **9. COUNCIL REPORTS**

- 9.1 Councillor Cole-Hamilton
- 9.2 Councillor Frisch
- 9.3 Councillor Hillian
- 9.4 Councillor Jolicoeur
- 9.5 Councillor McCollum
- 9.6 Councillor Morin

9.7 Mayor Wells

**10. ADJOURNMENT**



# Council Minutes

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**Meeting #:** R4/2025  
**Date:** February 26, 2025  
**Time:** 4:00 pm  
**Location:** CVRD Civic Room, 770 Harmston Ave, Courtenay

**Council Present:** B. Wells (joined via Zoom)  
W. Cole-Hamilton  
D. Frisch  
D. Hillian  
M. McCollum (Acting Mayor)  
W. Morin

**Regrets:** E. Jolicoeur

**Staff Present:** G. Garbutt, City Manager (CAO)  
A. Langenmaier, Director of Financial Services (CFO)  
K. Macdonald, Fire Chief  
K. O'Connell, Director of Corporate Services (CO)  
S. Saunders, Director of Recreation, Culture & Community Services  
K. Shaw, Director of Operational Services

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Mayor McCollum called the meeting to order at 4:04 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** Frisch

**Seconded By** Hillian

THAT Council add the following late item, that in accordance with the Community Charter must be considered in camera, as agenda item 9 and direct staff to re-order the agenda accordingly:

THAT Council close the meeting to the public pursuant to the following subsections of the Community Charter:

90 (1) A part of a council meeting may be closed to the public if the subject matter being considered related to or is one or more of the following:

(a) personal information about an identifiable individual who holds or is being considered for a position as an officer, employee or agent of the municipality or another position appointed by the municipality.

**CARRIED**

**3. ADOPTION OF MINUES**

**3.1 Regular Council Minutes - February 12, 2025**

**Moved By** Frisch

**Seconded By** Cole-Hamilton

THAT Council approved the February 12, 2025 Regular Council minutes.

**CARRIED**

**4. STAFF REPORTS**

**Moved By** Frisch

**Seconded By** Cole-Hamilton

**4.1 Operational Services**

**4.1.1 Water Conservation - Seasonal Water Use Increases**

**Moved By** Frisch

**Seconded By** Cole-Hamilton

THAT Council receive the *Water Conservation - Seasonal Water Use Increases* report and direct staff to dedicate resources towards water restriction enforcement in 2025 from May 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>, including evenings and weekends; and

THAT Council endorse the draft letter and direct staff to send the letter to the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Water Committee, on behalf of

City Council, requesting an amendment to the CVRD's *Comox Valley Water Conservation Bylaw No. 2010* for a reduction in weekly lawn watering hours under Stage 1 and Stage 2 water restrictions.

**CARRIED**

**5. NOTICE OF MOTION**

**5.1 Tariffs Response - City of Courtenay Joins Team Canada (Councillor Jolicoeur)**

**WHEREAS** the United States government is proposing to impose tariffs on Canadian imports, including a 25% tariff on all Canadian goods entering the US, except for energy resources, which face a 10% tariff; and

**WHEREAS** these tariffs may negatively impact Canadian businesses, industries, and workers, particularly those engaged in manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, and other export-driven sectors, leading to job losses and economic instability in communities such as Courtenay; and

**WHEREAS** supporting Canadian-made goods and services sustains local businesses, protects Canadian jobs, and strengthens the national economy in response to trade restrictions; and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the City of Courtenay encourage residents, businesses, and municipal departments to prioritize the purchase of Canadian-made goods and services whenever feasible; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City of Courtenay prioritize Canadian-made goods and services in current and upcoming municipal procurement and contracts, provided they meet financial and operational requirements; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City engage with local business organizations, including the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area to promote initiatives supporting Canadian businesses and local employment; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that staff report back to Council on the impacts of the above actions;

**AND FURTHER THAT** this resolution be shared with other Comox Valley local governments and K'omoks First Nation for consideration.

**6. 2025-2029 FINANCIAL PLAN**

**6.1 2025-2029 Financial Plan Follow up**

**Moved By** Hillian

**Seconded By** Cole-Hamilton

THAT Council approve the updated **2025-2029 Financial Plan**, as presented on February 26, 2025, and proceed to first, second and third readings of the following bylaws:

- *2025-2029 Financial Plan Bylaw No. 3165, 2025*; and
- *Sewer Service Frontage Tax - Amendment Bylaw No. 3170, 2025*.

**CARRIED**

**7. BYLAWS**

**7.1 For First, Second and Third Reading:**

**7.1.1 2025-2029 Financial Plan Bylaw No. 3165, 2025**

**Moved By** Hillian

**Seconded By** Morin

THAT Council give first, second and third reading to "2025-2029 Financial Plan Bylaw No. 3165, 2025".

**CARRIED**

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

**Moved By** Morin

**Seconded By** Frisch

THAT Council give first, second and third reading to "Sewer Service Frontage Tax - Amendment Bylaw No. 3170, 2025".

**CARRIED**

**7.2 For Adoption:**

**7.2.1 Fees and Charges - Amendment Bylaw No. 3171, 2025 (solid waste)**

**Moved By** Morin

**Seconded By** Hillian

THAT Council adopt the "Fees and Charges - Amendment Bylaw No. 3171, 2025 (solid waste)".

**CARRIED**

**8. COUNCIL REPORTS**

**8.1 Councillor Cole-Hamilton**

No report provided.

**8.2 Councillor Frisch**

No report provided.

**8.3 Councillor Hillian**

No report provided.

**8.4 Councillor Jolicoeur**

No report provided.

**8.5 Councillor McCollum**

No report provided.

**8.6 Councillor Morin**

No report provided.

**8.7 Mayor Wells**

No report provided.

**9. IN CAMERA RESOLUTION**

**Moved By** Frisch

**Seconded By** Hillian

THAT Council close the meeting to the public pursuant to the following subsections of the Community Charter:



90 (1) A part of a council meeting may be closed to the public if the subject matter being considered related to or is one or more of the following:

(a) personal information about an identifiable individual who holds or is being considered for a position as an officer, employee or agent of the municipality or another position appointed by the municipality.

**CARRIED**

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

Acting Mayor McCollum terminated the open portion of the meeting at 5:11 pm. Following the conclusion of the in camera portion of the meeting, Acting Mayor McCollum terminated the meeting at 5:54 pm.

**CERTIFIED CORRECT**

Adopted by Council [MONTH] [DAY], 2025

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Mayor Bob Wells

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Corporate Officer



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Staff Report

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**To:** Council

**File No.:** 3010-00-2501

**From:** Director of Development Services

**Date:** March 12, 2025

**Subject:** Antenna System Applications and Process Policy DS-02

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## **PURPOSE:**

For Council to consider the “Antenna System Applications and Process Policy DS-02”. The intent of the proposed policy is to more effectively assess antenna system proposals, articulate the City’s preferences for siting and harmonize the City’s processes with federal government processes. It is designed to balance a number of community objectives regarding the need for advanced telecommunications infrastructure, aesthetics, health, safety, and environmental impacts. The staff recommend City Council adopt the policy as presented.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Demand for wireless services has increased significantly over the last decade with wide spread usage on wireless devices such as smartphones and tablets. People, businesses and emergency services require reliable wireless coverage and to meet this demand new infrastructure is often needed. This increased demand has challenged the telecommunications industry to provide adequate infrastructure to ensure sufficient coverage and capacity. To meet this demand, and provide reliable wireless coverage to our citizens, new infrastructure is often required in strategic locations across the city. Telecommunications towers have evolved to come in many shapes and sizes, from small units on lamp and utility poles to the familiar tall towers. The industry now refers to these as “Antenna Systems”.

Under the *Radiocommunication Act*, the Federal Minister of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada (ISED) has sole jurisdiction over inter-provincial and international communication facilities. ISED requires all proponents to consult with the local land use authorities and public, notwithstanding that ISED has exclusive jurisdiction in the licensing of telecommunication sites.

Local governments can communicate and provide guidance to the proponent on the particular sensitivities, planning priorities, and characteristics of an area and they can establish siting guidelines as outlined in the proposed policy accompanying this report.

ISED requires that companies first look at sharing existing tower infrastructure, whenever possible, to reduce the number of new towers needed in the community.

ISED provides certain exclusions from consultation. One example is that small cell installations on existing structures (towers and non-tower structures such as buildings, utility poles, streetlights) are excluded from consultation provided that the height of the structure is not increased by more than 25 percent.

Health concerns relating to radiofrequency, energy, and safety are cited by members of the public fall under the national jurisdiction of Health Canada. Municipalities possess no authority to regulate health and safety requirements related to antenna systems. Health Canada requires that all antenna system installations (including 5G installations) comply with all existing safety regulations, including Safety Code 6 (SC6), which determines exposure limits for wireless devices and their associated infrastructure. In addition, ISED requires

that all antenna systems meet Canadian limits on the amount of radio frequency energy that can be present in areas to which the public has access

**DISCUSSION:**

This Policy is to establish the local land use consultation process and a guideline in review and evaluating antenna system siting within the City of Courtenay. The Policy will assist the telecommunications industry, ISED, City staff, City Council, and members of the public in understanding the processes, preferences, and criteria used to evaluate antenna system siting in Courtenay.

Staff performed research on legislative authority, assessed best practices from other British Columbia municipalities, collaborated with other applicable City departments, major telecommunications carrier and referenced the ISED published Antenna System Siting Protocols designed to assist municipalities with developing local processes.

The proposed antenna system policy outlines a number of guidelines summarized as:

1. **Authority, roles and applicable definitions and exemptions**  
The policy seeks to clearly and harmonize overarching framework under the current legislation for traditional towers, monopoles, and small cell technologies.
2. **Location preference and design**  
The policy outlines the criteria for site selection, including co-location on existing structures where feasible, height, proximity to aerodromes, heritage sites, hazardous areas and environmental features. Special considerations are given for maximum height, minimal tree removal and to the visual impact of antennas on the surrounding area.
3. **Public notification and input**  
In alignment with best practises and ISED consultation requirements, the policy includes public notification process that allows local residents and interest holders to help inform Council's decision to provide a statement of concurrence, non-concurrence or to provide no comment.
4. **Application process and fee**  
The policy establishes current application fee (\$2500) and the required documents to form an applicable submission package, such as detailed site plans, landscape plan (where feasible), rationale for site location, proposed mitigation measures for aesthetic and environmental concerns. It also requires Proponents to notify K'ómoks First Nation of their application.
5. **Concurrence**  
Outlines Council's options and procedural considerations for response to applications.

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:**

Should Council approve the Antenna Systems Application and Process Policy DS-02, staff is seeking direction from Council to prepare amendments to Zoning Bylaw No.2500,2007 and Fee and Charges Bylaw No. 1673,1992. These amendments would be brought to Council for consideration in 2025.

**POLICY ANALYSIS:**Official Community Plan Review

The subject property is designated *Institutional* within the Official Community Plan. The proposed development would support, among others, the realization of the following OCP polices:

- Municipal Infrastructure Objective 5: “Third party utility providers such as energy and communications utilities are low carbon and reliable”
- Municipal Infrastructure Policy #20: “Support the creation of high quality and assured communications links.”

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Approval of the Antenna System Applications and Process Policy DS-02 has no negative financial implications to the City’s Financial Plan. Implementation of this Policy will assist in recovering costs associated with managing requests for the installation of applicable antenna systems.

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:**

Processing development requests, including telecommunication antenna systems and related structures, is a statutory component of the corporate work plan and a core duty of the Development Services Department. Work to date has primarily been carried out by Development Services staff, although senior leadership from other departments have provided referral comments such as Fire Services, Legislative & Corporate Services, Information System Services, Operational Services and Recreation, Culture & Community Services.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:**

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Local Economy - Review City processes that may be barriers to economic development
- Good Governance - Review and streamline development process and set targets for application processing times
- Public Safety - Build capacity for emergency planning and local response

**OPTIONS:**

1. THAT Council approve the Antenna System Application and Process Policy DS-02, dated February 28, 2025; and  
THAT Council direct Staff to prepare the bylaw amendments for Zoning Bylaw No. 2500, 2207 and Fee and Charges Bylaw No. 1673, 1992.
2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

**ATTACHMENT:**

1. City of Courtenay Antenna System Applications and Process Policy DS-02

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



# Policy

<b>Subject:</b> Antenna System Applications and Process Policy	<b>Policy Number:</b> DS-02
<b>Section:</b> Development Services Department – Planning Division	<b>Approved by:</b> Council
<b>Approval Date:</b> March 12, 2025	<b>File Reference:</b> 3010-00-2501
<b>Revised Date:</b> NA	<b>Pages:</b> 1 to 8

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the application content, public consultation process and outline the role for the City of Courtenay in applications received for Telecommunication Antenna System (new siting and/ or increasing the height). The industry now refers to these as “Antenna Systems”.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To acknowledge that Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) has exclusive jurisdiction over the approval of the siting and installation of telecommunication infrastructure in Canada.
2. To set out a clear, consistent process for evaluating Antenna System proposals that:
  - a. encourage efficient and effective Antennae System infrastructure siting within the city while minimizing the number of new antenna sites by promoting co-location;
  - b. establishes when public consultation is required; and
  - c. assists the Proponent in identifying potential land uses, siting, or design concerns as early as possible in the process.
3. To establish a local consultation framework that respects the authority of the ISED regarding local land use consultation, resulting in an informed statement of concurrence, concurrence with conditions, or non-concurrence from the Council at the end of the process.
4. To contribute to the orderly and responsible siting of telecommunication infrastructure to achieve a high quality and assured communication network for emergency service providers, local businesses and the public.
5. To recover the costs from telecommunication Proponents for reviewing, evaluating and processing telecommunication infrastructure proposals and any annual fees (if applicable).

## JURISDICTION AND ROLES

### Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada

Under the *Radiocommunication Act*, the Minister of ISED Canada has sole jurisdiction over inter-provincial and national communication facilities. ISED Canada regulates all technical aspects and siting of Telecommunication Antenna Systems, and have established procedures to regulate the process and review of proposed telecommunication structures. As part of the process, Proponents are required to



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notify the local land-use authority and nearby residents and address reasonable and relevant public concerns as outlined in the ISED's *Radiocommunication and Broadcasting Antenna Systems Client Procedures Circular (CPC-2-0-03)*.

## Other Federal Regulations

Proponents must also comply with other applicable federal legislation and regulations, which includes:

- Health Canada's Safety Code 6 (Limits of Human Exposure to Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Fields in the Frequency Range from 3 KHZ to 300 GHZ – Safety Code 6);
- the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*; and
- NAV Canada and Transport Canada's painting and lighting requirements for aeronautical safety.

## Local Government

Local governments are referred applications for proposed antenna systems and provided the opportunity to comment on the proposal. Ultimately, the role of local governments is to issue a statement of concurrence or non-concurrence to the Proponent and ISED Canada. The statement considers the land use compatibility of the antenna structure, the responses of the affected residents, and the Proponent's adherence to this policy. Local government can establish siting guidelines, which includes reasonably augmenting the public consultation process as outlined in CPC-2-0-03.

## Proponent

Throughout the siting process, Proponents must adhere to the antenna siting guidelines, including investigating the possibility of sharing or using existing infrastructure before proposing new antenna-supporting structures (consistent with CPC-2-0-03 and CPC-2-0-17 *Conditions of Licence for Mandatory Roaming and Antenna Tower and Site Sharing and to Prohibit Exclusive Site Arrangements*), contacting the local land use authority to determine local requirements regarding Telecommunication Antenna Systems, and undertaking public notification and addressing relevant concerns as is required and appropriate.

## DEFINITIONS

**Co-location** means the sharing of antenna or equipment space on an existing antenna system owned or operated by a different party.

**Emergency Service Providers** means any police, fire, ambulance or search and rescue organization with a typical response area within the notification distance of a proposed Telecommunication Antenna System.

**ISED Canada** means Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada, and any federal ministry that may replace ISED Canada in the future that has jurisdiction over telecommunication and radiocommunication infrastructure.

**Land Use Authority** means the local governing body whose bylaws and regulations govern land use and land use decisions. This may include a municipality, city, town, village, township, or regional district.

**Policy** means, unless explicitly stated otherwise, the City of Courtenay's Telecommunication Antenna System Application and Consultation Process Policy.



# Policy

**Proponent** means a company or organization, or a representative thereof, for the purpose of providing commercial telecommunication services.

**Qualified Professional** An applied scientist or technologist who is registered and in good standing with an appropriate B.C. professional organization constituted under an *Act*.

**Setback** means the required minimum horizontal distance measured from the respective lot line or other feature as may be identified to any building or structure or part thereof.

**Structure** means anything that is constructed or erected, supported by, or sunk into land or water, and includes swimming pools, mobile home pads, and improvements accessory to the principal use of land, but excludes landscaping, paving improvements, signs under 1.0 metre in height, retaining walls under 2.5 metres in height, and fencing under 2.5 metres in height unless otherwise provided in this policy.

**Telecommunication Antenna System** means an exterior transmitting device(s) used to receive and/or transmit radio-frequency (RF) signals, microwave signals, or other federally-licensed communications energy transmitted from, or to be received by, other antennas. Telecommunication Antenna Systems include the antenna, and may include a supporting tower, mast, or other supporting structure, and a structure or shelter for equipment. This policy refers to the following two types:

- a. **Freestanding Antenna System** means a structure built from the ground for the expressed purpose of hosting transmitting devices; and
- b. **Building/Structure-Mounted Antenna System** means a Telecommunication Antenna System mounted on an existing structure or building and for the purposes of height calculations, height shall be measured from the base of any building or structure to the most elevated portion of any antenna system.

## EXCLUSIONS

ISED's Section 6 of CPC-2-0-03 outlines what activities or works are excluded from City and public consultation requirements as follows:

1. Activities and proposed developments or works that are exempted from the public consultation requirements by ISED Canada through its policies and procedures are also exempted from the City's Policy. Activities and development proposals that ISED Canada exempts from public consultation include:
  - a. New antenna systems: where the height is less than 15 metres above ground level. This exclusion does not apply to antenna systems proposed by telecommunications carriers, broadcasting undertakings or third-party tower owners.
  - b. Existing antenna systems: where modifications are made, antennas added or the tower replaced, including to facilitate sharing, provided that the total cumulative height increase is no greater than 25% of the height of the initial antenna system installation. The exclusion for the replacement of existing antenna systems applies to replacements that are similar to the original design and location; "initial antenna system installation" refers to the system as it was first consulted on, or installed. No increase in height may occur within one year of completion of the



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initial construction. This exclusion does not apply to antenna systems using purpose built antenna supporting structures with a height of less than 15 metres above ground level operated by telecommunications carriers, broadcasting undertakings or third-party tower owners.

- c. Non-tower structures: including antennas on buildings, water towers, lamp posts, etc. These may be excluded from consultation provided that the height above ground of the non-tower structure, exclusive of appurtenances, is not increased by more than 25%. Telecommunications carriers, operators of broadcasting undertakings and third-party tower owners may benefit from local knowledge by contacting the land-use authority when planning an antenna system that meets this exclusion criteria.
  - d. Temporary antenna systems: used for special events or emergency operations. Temporary Antenna Systems must be removed within three months after the start of the emergency or special event.
2. Proponents who are not certain if their proposals are excluded, or whether consultation may still be prudent, are advised to contact the land-use authority and/or ISED for guidance.

## **NOTIFICATION OF EXCLUDED ANTENNA SYSTEMS**

Notwithstanding ISED's exclusion criteria for certain Antenna System siting proposals, Proponents are asked, as a courtesy, to inform the City of all new Antenna System installations within the City's boundaries so the City can:

- a. be prepared to respond to public inquiries once construction/installation has begun;
- b. be aware of site Co-location within the City; and
- c. maintain records to refer to in the event of future modifications and additions. Proponents are to notify the City's Development Services Department of excluded Telecommunication Antenna System installations before commencing construction.

## **PROPOSALS ON MUNICIPAL LANDS**

While regulatory authority rests with ISED, the Municipality has absolute discretion as a landowner to decide whether to enter into a lease arrangement (and under what conditions) for any Telecommunication Antenna System proposals located on land owned by the Municipality. This is independent of the statement of concurrence process. The Municipality may opt to use the process set out in this policy to determine its response to a proposal as landowner, in addition to its role in deciding a statement of concurrence application.

## **SITING AND DESIGN REQUIREMENTS**

The City will assess applications for consistency with the following policy requirements:

### **Siting Policies**

1. ISED directs co-location of an antenna on existing structures where it is feasible. The Proponent should demonstrate effort has been made to locate Telecommunication Antenna System on existing structures such as other Telecommunication Antenna System, utility poles, transmission towers and rooftops.





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2. Locations of topographic prominence affecting public views and vistas of important natural or human-made features should be avoided.
3. Locations within or affecting views of heritage site or structures should be avoided unless designed in an unobtrusive and compatible manner.
4. Areas in proximity to lakes, rivers, the shoreline and other water features should be avoided and areas designated in the Official Community Plan as development permit areas for the protection of hazardous conditions.
5. Design and location should involve minimal or no tree removal. Root protection areas of mature trees should be avoided. Any unavoidable tree removal, including to create space for wildfire protection. Trees with eagle or heron nests should not be removed.
6. Proximity to aerodromes should be avoided.
7. No Antenna Systems are to be located in Environmentally Sensitive Areas, archaeological areas, riparian lands and hazard lands.

## Design Policies

1. Antenna Systems should be designed in terms of appearance and aesthetics to respect their immediate surroundings (e.g. residential, parkland, heritage areas, etc.), including being unobtrusive and inconspicuous, minimizing visual impact, avoiding disturbance to natural features, and reduce the need for future facilities in the same area, where appropriate. This may include being designed to resemble or include a character feature such as tree(s), clock tower or flagpole.
2. Structures and communication equipment should have a non-glare surface.
3. Monopole towers are preferred subject to the requirements of the siting policies outlined in this document.
4. Lattice style poles are strongly discouraged.
5. Negative visual impacts must be mitigated as far as possible by methods such as screening, stealth design and landscaping. Cable trays on buildings should be unobtrusive and concealed.
6. Proponents are encouraged to communicate with building developers at new building design stages to consider options for incorporating integrally screened Telecommunication Antenna support on the rooftops.
7. Vegetative screening is encouraged with a preference for a mix of coniferous and deciduous trees to provide year-round foliage. Irrigation should be provided where necessary.
8. Where a Qualified Professional report has been required for the installation of the antenna systems, all recommendations therein must be incorporated into the Telecommunication Antenna System design wherever technically feasible, including commitment to any post-construction monitoring and actions.



# Policy

## **Signage and Lighting**

1. No advertising signs are permitted. No logos are permitted other than those for a manufacturer of a component of the Antenna System, or as approved in writing by Director of Development Services.
2. Unless specifically required by Transport Canada and/or NAV Canada, the display of any lighting is discouraged.
3. Where Transport Canada and/or NAV Canada requires a structure to be lit, the lighting should be limited to the minimum number of lights and the lowest illumination allowable, and any required strobe lightning should be set to the maximum strobe interval allowed by Transport Canada.
4. The lighting of Antenna Systems and associated equipment shelters for security purposes is supportable provided it is shielded from adjacent residential properties, is kept to a minimum number of lights and illumination intensity, where possible, is provided by a motion detector or similar system.

## **Height Policies**

1. The City prefers that Towers be a maximum of 15 metres in height. It acknowledges that in some cases higher Towers are required to provide telecommunications coverage and will consider these proposals within the context of the land use zoning and adjacent land uses areas.
2. Height for a Tower must be measured from grade to the highest point on the structure, including lighting and supporting structures.
3. The City prefers that the height of building or structure-mounted Antenna Systems, unless shrouded in an acceptable manner, not exceed 3 metres measured from the top of the roof, but not more than 1.2 metres above the highest point of the elevator and/or penthouse.

## **CONSULTATION**

1. Prior to submitting a Antenna System statement of concurrence application, the Proponent should undertake pre-consultation with City Development Services staff.
2. The public consultation process outlined in this section includes and complements the consultation process outlined in CPC-2-0-03 ISED.
3. The Proponent is encouraged to attend regularly scheduled meeting of Council where the proposed development is presented prior to *Public Consultation Process initiated*.
4. The Proponent should host an open house session in order to share relevant information (including visual images of the proposal and site plan submitted in application) with members of the public who may be affected by the proposed development. Arrangements include, but are not limited to:
  - a. an appropriate date, time and location is to be determined in consultation with the City's Development Services staff;
  - b. the Proponent is to host, which should be hosted in-person. The meeting may be hosted virtually during times at which Public Health Orders affect in-person events, but in-person events are still encouraged when strategies to mitigate public health risks can be implemented; and
  - c. Development Services staff have the option to attend.



# Policy

5. The meeting must be communicated in a mail-out notification package to all owners and tenants of all property parcels lying wholly or partially within the notification area. Property addresses may be provided by the City. The notification package must be sent to residents within a certain radius, and must include:
  - a. any information required to be included by ISED Canada, currently outlined in *CP-2-0-03 Appendix 1 – Industry Canada’s Default Public Consultation Process – Public Notification Package*, as amended from time to time;
  - b. the date and location of the public open house; and
  - c. the last date during which the public may submit written comments or feedback.
6. Concurrently with the distribution of the public notice, the open house must be advertised by the Proponent at their cost in at least two consecutive issues of the newspaper in local circulation in a readable and understandable format that illustrates the location of the proposed Telecommunication Antenna System, how to attend the public information meeting. A copy of published advertisement must be sent to the City’s Development Services Department.
7. A public open house must be held, at the cost of Proponent, not less than 14 days from the public notice mailing date, as determined in consultation with the City.
8. The public must be requested to submit written responses to the Proponent within consultation period.
9. The public consultation process is to be repeated if construction on the tower has not begun within three years of the date of the Council meeting at which the letter of concurrence was granted.
10. Following the notification period and the holding of a public open house, the Proponent must provide a written summary to the City’s Development Service Department including number in attendance, any comments provided to the Proponent at the public open house. information meeting.

## **PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND FEES**

1. The Proponent must pay a base application fee of \$2500.00 in accordance with this policy or the application fee outlined in the City of Courtney’s Fee and Charges Bylaw, whichever is the greater of the two.
2. The Proponent is expected to pay the application fee at the time a completed application is submitted. An application will not be deemed to be submitted until the fee payment is received.
3. If an Application are inactive for 12 consecutive months the application will be closed. If an Application is closed, withdrawn or denied, fee pursuant to this policy or the Fee and Charges Bylaw are applicable to new applications.

## **PROCEDURE**

1. An application for a statement of concurrence must include:
  - a. scaled elevation drawings of the structure, siting plan, and details of all design features such as colour, fencing, etc.;



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Policy

- b. where it's technically feasible for landscaping, a detailed landscape plan, prepared by a registered member of the British Columbia Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA), which includes drought resistant and native plantings; and
- c. identification and reasons for disqualification of any other existing or known proposed freestanding Telecommunication Antenna System within 500 meters of the proposed location.

2. The Proponent will notify K'ómok First Nation government of their application.

3. Upon completion of requirements in Consultation and Procedures of this policy, City staff will prepare and present a report to Council on the proposed Antenna System, a site plan, the location of the proposal, public consultation materials and summary of any comments received submitted by the Proponent for Council's review.

## CONCURRENCE

1. It is the discretion of Council to provide a statement of siting concurrence, non-concurrence or to provide no comment with respect to the Proponent's proposal.
2. Council may rescind its concurrence if following the issuance of a concurrence statement, it is determined by the City that the proposal contains a misrepresentation or a failure to disclose all the pertinent information regarding the proposal, or the plans and conditions upon which the concurrence was issued in writing have not been complied with, and a resolution cannot be reached to correct the issue. In such cases, the City will provide notification in writing to the Proponent and to ISED and will include the reason(s) for the rescinding of its concurrence.
3. A concurrence statement remains in effect for a maximum period of three years from the date it was issued by Council for a specific tower proposal. If construction has not commenced within this time period, the concurrence expires and a new submission and review process, including public consultation as applicable, is necessary prior to any construction occurring. In addition, the City requests that the Proponent send a written notification of an intent to construct to the City's Development Services Department once the work to erect the structure is about to start. This notification should be sent 60 days prior to any construction commencing. No further consultation or notification by the Proponent is required.
4. Once concurrence has been issued, that concurrence may be transferred from the original Proponent to another Proponent without the need for further consultation provided that:
  - a. all information gathered by the original Proponent in support of obtaining the concurrence from the City is transferred to the current Proponent;
  - b. the structure for which concurrence was issued to the original Proponent is what the current Proponent builds; and
  - c. construction of the structure is commenced within the duration of the concurrence period.

## TERMS OF THIS POLICY

City of Courtenay's Council is not in any way bound by this policy and is free to apply, or not apply, any evaluation criterion it deems appropriate in its consideration of applications.



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Staff Report

**To:** Council  
**From:** Director of Development Services  
**Subject:** Liquor Licence Application No. 2403 – 244 4th Street

**File No.:** 4530-20-2403/LL000021

**Date:** March 12, 2025

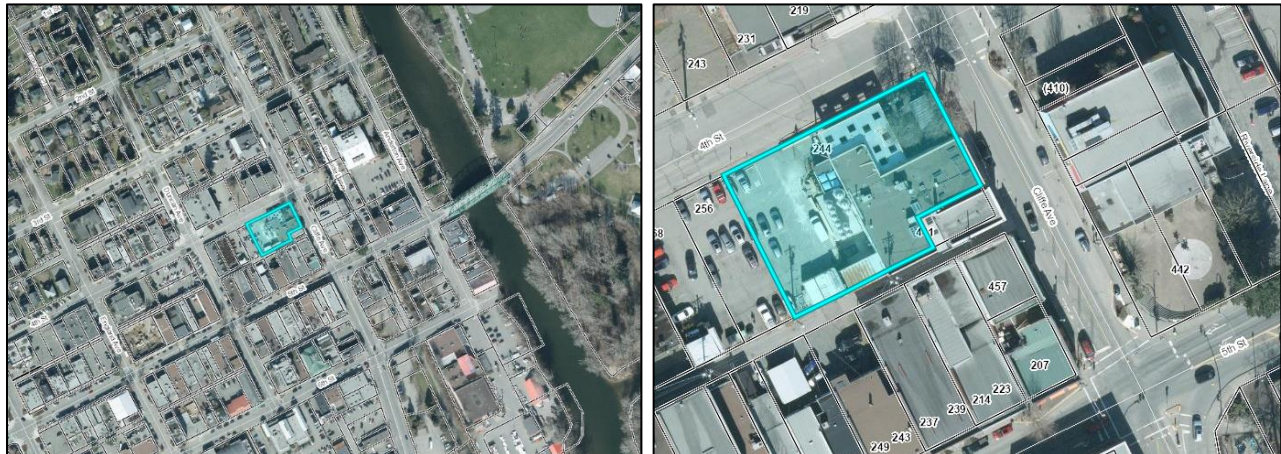
## PURPOSE:

For Council to consider a resolution to the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) in response to Liquor Licence Application No. 2403.

## BACKGROUND:

The owners of Gladstone Brewing Company located at 244 - 4<sup>th</sup> Street (LOT A SECTION 61 COMOX DISTRICT PLAN EPP111555) as illustrated in Figure 1 below, currently hold a valid manufacturing license allowing them to produce and service liquor products at their facility with a 280-person capacity lounge endorsement.

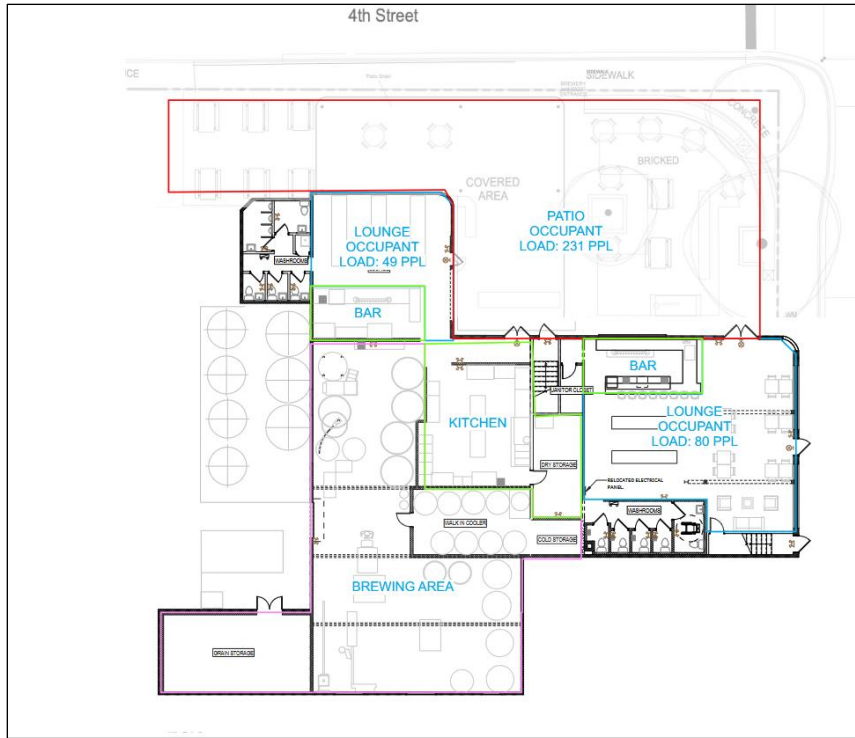
Figure 1: Site location and context



The owners have submitted to the LCRB and the City of Courtenay a liquor licence application to increase the lounge capacity from 280 persons to 360 persons; a difference of 80 people.

If approved by the LCRB, this change will result in the creation of a second lounge area constructed through a concurrent Building Permit with the City's Building Division. A floor plan for the proposed new lounge is in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Floor plan



The proprietor has maintained a manufacturer’s liquor licence since 2015 and has obtained multiple amendments to this licence to facilitate the expansion of its service area and business.

The hours of sale for the business’s current liquor licence are from 9 am to 12 am, daily, and are not subject to change. Generally, the business’s hours of operation are fewer than the licence permits, opening at 11 am, however hours are adjusted seasonally and depending on the day of the week and for events (ex. weekend brunch service).

**DISCUSSION:**

The subjection location is zoned Commercial One (C-1) which permits *licensed premises, microbrewery and restaurant* uses. The site and its surrounding area are designated as Downtown Town Centre in Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 3070, 2022.

To the north of the site across 4<sup>th</sup> Street is the Courtenay & District Museum (207 4<sup>th</sup> Street). To the east of the property across Cliffe Avenue is the Sid Williams Theatre (442 Cliffe Ave). To the south, on the other side of the lane are commercially zoned lots occupied by various businesses. And to the west are two undeveloped lots that are also owned by the brewery and are used for the business’s off-street parking.

The downtown, commercial location means any increase in noise as a result of the amendment to the licence is not anticipated to have much, if any, negative impact on the community within the immediate vicinity of the establishment.

Based on the location, hours of service, referral comments (to Building Division, Operations Services Department, Fire Department, RCMP, K'ómoks First Nation) and public engagement, it is not anticipated that granting the license will have a negative impact the broader community. Further details on the engagement results are provided later in this report under 'Public Engagement'.

**POLICY ANALYSIS:**

As indicated in a February 2025 report to Council regarding the liquor licence application for 975 Comox Road (Heritage House Pub), the City currently lacks a formal liquor licence policy to guide such applications. The development of this policy is underway and is anticipated to be presented to Council for consideration before the end of Q2 2025.

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."*
- Courtenay's OCP Local Economy Policy #12 (LE 12) directs the City and its staff to: *"Work with the local business community and major employers to focus investment, facility and business development in Town and Neighbourhood Centres and Corridors."*

**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 February 14 to February 28, 2025. The City sent mailout notifications to all property owners and occupants within a 30-metre radius of the subject property (25 mailouts) and posted notice of the application on the City's website for two consecutive weeks inviting public comments.

At the time of the writing of this report, the City received zero (0) comments in response to the engagement.

**OPTIONS:**

1. THAT Council recommend the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch (LCRB) approve the application from Gladstone Brewing, located at 244 4th Street (LOT A SECTION 61 COMOX

DISTRICT PLAN EPP111555) for a structural change and permanent increase to the capacity of the licence's service areas from 280 persons to 360 persons 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 results of the public input process described in this report 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 Gladstone Brewing, located at 244 4th Street (LOT A SECTION 61 COMOX DISTRICT PLAN EPP111555) for structural change and permanent increase to the capacity of the license's service areas.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Applicant's Letter of Intent

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



Daniel Sharratt  
Gladstone Brewing Co.  
244 4th Street  
Courtenay, BC V9N 1G6  
Feb, 12, 2025

City of Courtenay  
830 Cliffe Avenue  
Courtenay, BC V9N 2J7

Dear Members of the Council,

Subject: Letter of Intent for Expansion of Gladstone Brewing Co.

Thank you for facilitating our recent conversation regarding Gladstone Brewing Co.'s proposed expansion. We appreciate the City's commitment to public engagement through the legislated input process.

**Intended Hours of Operation for the Lounge:**

- Monday to Sunday: 9:00 AM to 12:00 AM

**Permitted Hours of Service for Existing Liquor Licence:**

- Our license permits service from 9:00 AM to 12:00 AM, seven days a week.

**Composition of the Neighbourhood:**

- Located in the commercial heart of downtown Courtenay, our brewery enhances the area's vibrancy and serves as a cultural hub.

**Compliance with Local Bylaws:**

- We strictly adhere to all local bylaws regarding noise, ensuring that our operations continue without disrupting the commercial nature of our neighborhood.

**Additional Relevant Information:**

- The proposed expansion of our indoor space will enable us to host more events, such as local arts and culture nights, contributing significantly to the downtown social scene.
- This expansion will enhance our kitchen facilities, supporting local agriculture and providing more diverse dining options.
- As a community-centered venue, we provide a safe, family-friendly environment that serves as a gathering place for residents and visitors alike.
- We currently provide over 20 full-time, well-paying jobs with benefits including health, dental, and a pension plan. The expansion will allow us to hire additional staff.

- Gladstone Brewing Co. plays an active role in the community by hosting local events and supporting major local charities like YANA.

We are committed to responsibly managing our expansion in a way that benefits both our patrons and the broader community. We look forward to your support at the Council meeting on March 12, 2025, and are eager to contribute even more positively to downtown Courtenay.

Thank you for your consideration and continued partnership.

Kind regards,

Daniel Sharratt  
Owner, Gladstone Brewing Co.



## STAFF REPORT

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**To: Council**  
**From: Director of Development Services**  
**Subject: Moved on Buildings**

**File No.:** 3800-01-2501  
**Date:** March 12, 2025

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### **PURPOSE:**

For Council to consider the implications of permitting homes older than 15 years to be relocated into the City of Courtenay. Staff have provided three options for Council to consider and Staff are recommending not to amend the Building Bylaw No. 3114.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Building Bylaw No. 3114 was adopted on November 22, 2023, and took effect on January 1, 2024. Part 11, section 11.1(b), states that any building or structure moved into the City must be no more than 15 years old. Previously, there were no age restrictions on relocated buildings, which created challenges for both building owners and staff regarding life safety and did not align with the objectives and policies of the Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 3070, 2022 (OCP).

At the regular Council meeting on November 8, 2023, staff presented a report outlining the proposed changes in Building Bylaw No. 3114. The amended bylaw aimed to align with the policy direction of the Official Community Plan (OCP) for energy efficiency, harmonize with the BC Building Code, and ensure consistency with current practices while minimizing the City's liability.

At the regular meeting of Council on June 26, 2024, a delegation appeared requesting that Council reconsider the building bylaw to allow the relocation of homes older than 15 years within the City of Courtenay. At the regular meeting of Council on July 17, 2024 Council passed the following resolution;

*"THAT Council direct staff to report back on the options and implications of permitting homes older than 15 years to be relocated within the City of Courtenay."*

### **DISCUSSION:**

There are several factors to take into consideration when moving buildings. Some of the factors that staff considered when proposing the changes to the building bylaw and are discussed in more detail below were the policies and objectives of the OCP, cost, but more importantly the life safety for the occupants of the building.

#### ***Life Safety***

Building codes are developed and updated continually to provide minimum standards of life safety for the occupants of the building. The BC Building Code (BCBC) applies to the work necessary to ensure life safety in buildings during and after construction/relocation. Where a building is altered, rehabilitated, renovated or

repaired, or there is a change in occupancy, the level of life safety and building performance shall not be decreased below a level that already exists. As the building department would only be inspecting the new construction an established level of life safety is assumed and that the building is in compliance with the code of the day. The 15 years of age requirement would limit the minimum code requirements to the 2006 BCBC.

Significant changes from the previous 1998 code that was in effect for 10 years were introduced in the 2006 BCBC improving life safety requirements for buildings such as guards, carbon monoxide detectors, building envelope, and environmental loads (wind, seismic, snow). On March 10, 2025 new seismic requirements came into effect that will have a further impact on both new and existing/relocated buildings.

When relocating buildings, the structural capacity of the building from environmental loads have to be considered to ensure that the loads are not higher than its original design. It becomes costly and challenging when buildings are required to be retrofitted to meet current environmental loads. All new work would be required to meet the current 2024 BCBC. This would include but not limited to the footings, foundation, anchorage of the building, and radon.

### ***Energy Efficiency and Greenhouse Gas emissions***

The OCP sets out objectives and policies to meet energy efficiency and greenhouse gas (GHG) targets for both new and existing buildings and it identified that *“existing buildings are responsible for 36% of Courtenay’s total annual emissions after transportation”*. The City has established by bylaw that all new construction to be one step higher than the provincial minimum Energy Step Code standard and on February 28, 2024 Council reconsidered the adopted motion for the implementation of the ZCSC and passed the following resolution:

*“That in keeping with the City’s Official Community Plan, Council direct staff to incorporate into the 2025 work plan and budget the staff resources and funding required for the engagement and policy development needed to accelerate the adoption of levels EL3 and EL4 of the Zero Carbon Step Code.”*

Operational emissions are the emissions released from the ongoing operation of the building. Sources will include heating and cooling, ventilation, lighting, and other electronic appliances. Newer buildings meet higher energy and water efficient standards and will have lower GHG emissions where existing buildings could require significant upgrading depending on the age of the building, but these standards adopted by Council would not be applicable at this time to relocated buildings as they would fall under the code of the day adding to Courtenay’s existing inefficient buildings.

### ***Environmental Considerations***

The environmental impacts of relocating buildings is complicated and beyond the scope of this report, but consideration needs to be given to the impacts of moving the building compared to a responsible demolition approach of the building on site. Relocating buildings delay the demolition of the building, but would occur at the end of its life. Recycling the materials at site when the building is demolished and reusing the foundation would be more beneficial than relocating the building when considering environmental impacts.

Embodied Emissions (also called Embodied Carbon) are the emissions released from the extraction, manufacturing, transportation, installation and decommissioning of building materials. Concrete

foundations make up 25% of the composition of an average 2000sqft wood frame home that would typically be demolished when the building is removed. Additional materials such as perimeter drains would also add to this quantity. Depending on the age of the building hazardous materials (asbestos, lead) can be present and would also need to be remediated. This adds a significant cost when retrofitting equipment, or for building additions and alterations.

### **Local Governments**

There is no consistent approach by local governments in regulating moved in buildings as shown in the bylaw excerpts below. Local governments have used various approaches such as age, value, zoning, but staff consider using an age limit continually improves life safety and meets the objectives and policies detailed in the OCP with respect to energy and water efficiency and GHG emissions. Staff have summarized three local government approaches to moved on buildings; Town of Ladysmith, Sunshine Coast Regional District, Examples of other local government approaches are outlined below.

#### **Town of Ladysmith**

Town of Ladysmith repealed section 13.3 in their Building & Plumbing Bylaw 1994, No. 1119 noted below:

*13.3 Any building moved into the Municipality shall be of an age not greater than 15 years and at the request of the Building Inspector, the applicant shall furnish proof, to the satisfaction of said Inspector, of the age of the building to be moved.*

And replaced Part 13 with Part 12 Building move in the newly adopted Town of Ladysmith Building & Plumbing Bylaw 2024, No.2174 with the following:

*12.1 A person shall not move a building or structure into or within the Town  
(a) except where certified by a registered professional that the building, including its foundation, will substantially comply with the current version of the building code in its new location;*

This change is even more restrictive and would be very difficult to achieve. This language is also contained in the MIABC Core Bylaw that the City of Courtenay's bylaw is based upon.

#### **Sunshine Coast Regional District**

Sunshine Coast Regional District Zoning Bylaw No. 337 Part VI Residential Zones regulate the width of dwelling units in the single-family residential zones

*"No building containing a dwelling may have a width less than 6 metres"*

The 6 metres width minimum dictates what form of housing can be moved on to a site. Limits mobile homes and smaller buildings. These buildings will need to follow the requirements of the most recent BC Building code for life safety issues.

#### **Regional District of Nanaimo**

Regional District of Nanaimo require an appraised value of moved on buildings and is regulated under Building Bylaw 1250 Section 18 Moved on Buildings which states:

18. Moved on Buildings

- (2) The following information must be provided when applying for a Building Permit for a moved-on building:
  - (d) *A report from an accredited appraiser (A.A.C.I.) showing the appraised value of the moved-on building; and,*
  - (e) *The building must appraise (as determined by an accredited appraiser (A.A.C.I.) at a value equal to or greater than 100 percent of the average assessed value of the improvements (as determined by the BC Assessment Authority) of the neighbouring developed properties within 100 metres;*

The value of the building has to be equal or greater than the assessed value of the neighbourhood where you are proposing to move the building. If it does not meet the financial test it can not be placed in this neighbourhood. BC Building code requirements for the structure still apply to life safety and building performance.

### **Availability**

Concerns were raised that it is difficult to obtain buildings of 15 years of age or newer. At the time of the delegation there were 4 buildings recently sold by Nichel Brothers which were all constructed in 2016. These 8-year-old buildings would have been constructed under the 2012 BCBC meeting a higher level of life safety. Staff expect the volume of buildings of 15 years of age and newer to be more available in response to the introduction of the new Provincial zoning requirements and densification.

### **Summary**

Establishing a time period for relocated buildings will ensure that buildings moved into the City would continually meet higher life safety, energy efficiency and GHG emission requirements that would be comparable to or better than existing on site constructed buildings.

Meeting higher standards over time will help reduce the need for costly retrofits, such as upgrades for energy efficiency, emission reductions, and seismic safety, required to comply with current BC Building Code standards.

Staff do not recommend increasing or removing the age limit on relocated buildings, as it aligns with the objectives and policies of the OCP and ensures higher levels of life safety for building occupants. If an amendment to the building bylaw is required, staff recommend including it in the proposed updates for Council's consideration as part of the 2025 department work plan.

### **POLICY ANALYSIS:**

The Community Charter provides municipalities the authority to regulate, prohibit and impose requirements by bylaw in respect to buildings and structures (Part 2: Division 1 Section 8) and to regulate bylaw enforcement and related matters. (Part 8: Division 1 Section 260)

The buildings and landscape objective 1 of the OCP identified that existing buildings are upgraded for higher energy and water efficiency and to perform at net-zero emissions. Maintaining the age limit in the bylaw will address polices BL 1 to BL3 as the need for costly retrofits programs, rebates, and financing mechanisms would not be required.

In addition, limiting the age of the buildings allowed to be relocated and promoting responsible demolition of buildings on site supports objective 5 of the OCP and policy statement BL 13 to help reduce construction waste generation.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

If there are any proposed changes by Council to the building bylaw No.3114 this would only require a minimal amount of staff time and this would not require any increases to the 2025 budget.

**OPTIONS: 1 (Recommended)**

That Council direct staff not to ammend “Building Bylaw No. 3114” Part 11 Section 11.1 .

**OPTIONS: 2**

That Council direct staff to ammend “Building Bylaw No. 3114” Part 11 Section 11.1 to remove the age restriction on buildings or structures that will be moved within or into the City.

**OPTIONS: 3**

That Council provide an alternative age restriction on buildings or structures that will be moved within or into the City and,

That Council direct staff to ammend “Building Bylaw No. 3114” Part 11 Section 11.1 to include the alternative age restriction.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Building Bylaw No. 3114

Prepared by: Paul Preston, RBO, Manager of Building Services,

Reviewed by: Marianne Wade, MCIP, RPP, Director of Development Services

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

**City of Courtenay**  
**BUILDING BYLAW NO. 3114**



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## City of Courtenay

### BUILDING BYLAW NO. 3114

#### A Bylaw for Administration of the Building Code and Regulation of Construction

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GIVEN that the City Council

- A. may by bylaw regulate, prohibit and impose requirements in respect to buildings and structures under sections 8(3)(g) and (l) of the *Community Charter* for the following under section 53(2):
  - (a) the provision of access to a building or other structure, or to part of a building or other structure, for a person with disabilities;
  - (b) the conservation of energy or water;
  - (c) the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions;
  - (d) the health, safety or protection of persons or property;
- B. is enacting this bylaw to regulate construction and administer the British Columbia *Building Code* in the City of Courtenay in accordance with the *Community Charter* and the *Building Act*;
- C. has employed trained building officials for the purposes of this bylaw;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the City of Courtenay enacts as follows:

#### **PART 1: TITLE**

##### **Citation**

- 1.1 This bylaw may be cited as “Building Bylaw No. 3114”.

#### **PART 2: PURPOSE OF BYLAW**

- 2.1 Despite any other provision in this bylaw, this bylaw must be interpreted in accordance with this Part.
- 2.2 Every permit issued under this bylaw is issued expressly subject to the provisions of this Part.
- 2.3 This bylaw is enacted to regulate, prohibit and impose requirements in regard to *construction* in the City in the public interest.

2.4 The purpose of this bylaw does not extend to

- (a) the protection of *owners, designers* or *constructors* from economic loss;
- (b) the assumption by the City or any *building official* of any responsibility for ensuring the compliance by any *owner*, their representatives or any employees, *constructors* or *designers* retained by the *owner*, with the *building code*, the requirements of this bylaw, or other applicable enactments, codes or standards;
- (c) providing any person a warranty of design or workmanship with respect to any *building* or *structure* for which a *building permit* or *occupancy permit* is issued under this bylaw;
- (d) providing any person a warranty or assurance that *construction* undertaken under *building permits* issued by the City is free from latent, or any, defects; or
- (e) the protection of adjacent real property from incidental damage or nuisance.

### PART 3: SCOPE AND EXEMPTIONS

#### Application

- 3.1 This bylaw applies to the geographical area of the City and to land, the surface of water, air space, *buildings* or *structures* in the City.
- 3.2 This bylaw applies to the design, construction or *occupancy* of new *buildings* or *structures*, and the *alteration*, reconstruction, demolition, removal, relocation or *occupancy* or change of use or *occupancy* of *existing buildings* and *structures*.
- 3.3 This bylaw does not apply to
  - (a) buildings or structures exempt by Division A Part 1 of the building code except as expressly provided herein;
  - (b) an accessory *building* with a floor area of less than 10 square metres;
  - (c) platforms or decks without roofs less than 0.6 meters above grade;
  - (d) retaining walls that do not support a building or structure;
  - (e) breakwaters, seawalls, bulkheads, riprap, deposition of materials such as stone and concrete, rubble, bluff stabilization projects, and similar measures employed to protect property from the sea or any lake, swamp, pond or watercourse;
  - (f) a fence, a trellis, an arbour, stairs that are not part of an egress from a building or structure, or other similar landscape *structures* on a parcel zoned for single-family *residential occupancy* uses under the City's zoning bylaw;

- (g) a portable or temporary tent, rigid frame structure covered with a flexible material, or a shipping container used for storage;
- (h) polyethylene film covered greenhouses used for the production of agricultural and horticultural produce and feeds;
- (i) the replacement of plumbing fixtures (sinks, tubs, water closets, valves etc.) or the maintenance of *existing building plumbing systems*, providing the work does not involve the rearrangement of supply, waste or vent lines;
- (j) above or below grade swimming pools not located within a building or structure, spa or hot tubs;
- (k) a *building* or *structure* commonly known as “Canadian Standards Association Z240 MH series, Z241 series or A277 series”, except as regulated by the Building Code.

#### **Limited Application to Existing Buildings**

- 3.4 Except as provided in the *building code* or to the extent an *existing building* is under *construction* or does not have an *occupancy permit*, when an *existing building* has been *constructed* before the enactment of this bylaw, the enactment of this bylaw is not to be interpreted as requiring that the *building* must be reconstructed and *altered*, unless it is expressly so provided by this or another bylaw, regulation or statute.
- 3.5 This bylaw applies if the whole or any part of an *existing building* is moved either within or into the City, including relocation relative to parcel lines created by subdivision or consolidation. Part 11 applies to *building* moves.
- 3.6 If an *alteration* is made to an *existing building*, the *alteration* must comply with this bylaw and the *building code* and the entire building must be made to comply with this bylaw and the *building code*, but only to the extent necessary to address any new infractions introduced in the remainder of the building as a result of the *alteration*.
- 3.7 If an *alteration* creates an *addition* to an *existing building*, the *alteration* or *addition* must comply with this bylaw and the *building code* and the entire building must be made to comply with this bylaw and the *building code*, but only to the extent necessary to address any new infractions introduced in the remainder of the building as a result of the *alteration* or *addition*.

#### **PART 4: PROHIBITIONS**

- 4.1 A person must not commence or continue any *construction, alteration, excavation, reconstruction, demolition, removal, relocation* or change the use or *occupancy* of any *building* or *structure*, including other work related to *construction*:

- (a) except in conformity with the requirements of the *building code* and this bylaw; and
  - (b) unless a *building official* has issued a valid and subsisting *permit* for the work under this bylaw.
- 4.2 A person must not *occupy* or *permit* the *occupancy* of any *building* or *structure* or part of any *building* or *structure*:
  - (a) unless a subsisting *final inspection notice* has been issued by a *building official* for the *building* or *structure* or the part of the *building* or *structure*; or
  - (b) contrary to the terms of any *permit* issued or any notice given by a *building official*.
- 4.3 A person must not knowingly submit false or misleading information to a *building official* in relation to any *permit* application or construction undertaken pursuant to this bylaw.
- 4.4 A person must not erase, alter or modify plans and supporting documents after the same have been reviewed by the *building official*, or plans and supporting documents which have been filed for reference with the *building official* after a *permit* has been issued, except in accordance with this bylaw, including the acceptance of revised plans or supporting documents by the *building official*.
- 4.5 A person must not, unless authorized in writing by a *building official*, reverse, alter, deface, cover, remove or in any way tamper with any notice, *permit* or certificate posted or affixed to a *building* or *structure* pursuant to this bylaw.
- 4.6 A person must not do any work that is substantially at variance with the *accepted* design or plans of a *building*, *structure* or other works for which a *permit* has been issued, unless that variance has been authorized in writing by a *building official*.
- 4.7 A person must not interfere with or obstruct the entry of a *building official* or other authorized official of the City on property in the administration of this bylaw.
- 4.8 A person must not *construct* on a *parcel* unless the civic address is conspicuously posted on the front of the premises or on a signpost so it may be easily read from the public *highway* from which it takes its address.
- 4.9 A person must not contravene an administrative requirement of a *building official* made under the authority set out in section 6.6 or any other provision of this bylaw.
- 4.10 A person must not change the use, *occupancy* or both of a *building* or *structure* or a part of a *building* or *structure* without first applying for and obtaining a *building permit* under this bylaw.

## PART 5: PERMIT CONDITIONS

- 5.1 A *permit* is required if work regulated under this bylaw is to be undertaken.
- 5.2 Neither the issuance of a *permit* under this bylaw, nor the acceptance or review of plans, drawings, specifications or supporting documents, nor any inspections made by or on behalf of the City will in any way
- (a) relieve the *owner* (and if the *owner* is acting through an *agent*, the *agent* of the *owner*) from full and sole responsibility to perform the work in respect of which the *permit* was issued in strict compliance with this bylaw, the *building code*, and all other applicable codes, standards and enactments;
  - (b) constitute a representation, warranty, assurance or statement that the *building code*, this bylaw or any other applicable enactments respecting safety, protection, land use and zoning have been complied with; or
  - (c) constitute a representation or warranty that the *building or structure* meets any standard of materials or workmanship.
- 5.3 No person shall rely on any *permit* as establishing compliance with this bylaw or assume or conclude that this bylaw has been administered or enforced according to its terms.
- 5.4 Without limiting section 5.2(a), it is the full and sole responsibility of the *owner* (and if the *owner* is acting through an *agent*, the *agent*) to carry out the work in respect of which the *permit* was issued in compliance with the *building code*, this bylaw and all other applicable codes, standards and enactments.

## PART 6: POWERS OF A BUILDING OFFICIAL

### Administration

- 6.1 Words defining the authority of a *building official* are to be construed as internal administrative powers and not as creating a duty.
- 6.2 A *building official* may
- (a) administer this bylaw, but owes no public duty to enforce or administer this bylaw;
  - (b) create, amend, publish and prescribe any forms, notices, policies, or other documents that may be convenient for the administration of this bylaw, including stop work orders, the format and content of any supporting documents, and the verification of compliance with the *Energy Step Code and Zero Carbon Step Code*;
  - (c) keep records of applications received, *permits*, notices and orders issued, inspections and tests made, and may retain copies of all papers and documents connected with the administration of this bylaw;

- (d) establish or require an *owner* to establish whether a method or type of construction or material used in the construction of a *building* or *structure* complies with the requirements and provisions of this bylaw and the *building code*; and
- (e) direct that tests of materials, equipment, devices, construction methods, structural assemblies or *foundations* be carried out, or that sufficient evidence or proof be submitted by the *owner*, at the *owner's* sole expense, where such evidence or proof is necessary to determine whether the material, equipment, device, construction or *foundation* condition complies with this bylaw and the *building code*.

### **Refusal and Revocation of Permits**

- 6.3 A *building official* may refuse to issue a *permit* if the proposed work will contravene the requirements of the *building code* or the provisions of this or any other bylaw of the City, and, on request, must state the reason for the refusal in writing.
- 6.4 A *building official* may revoke a *permit* if, in their opinion, the *construction* authorized by the *permit* is not being carried out in accordance with the *building code* or the provisions of this bylaw, or both, the results of tests on materials, devices, construction methods, structural assemblies or *foundation* conditions contravene the *building code* or the provisions of this bylaw, or both, or if all *permits* required under this bylaw have not been obtained.

### **Right of Entry**

- 6.5 Subject to section 16 of the *Community Charter*, a *building official* may enter on property at any time to ascertain whether the requirements of this bylaw are being met.

### **Powers**

- 6.6 Subject to applicable enactments, a *building official* may by notice in writing require:
  - (a) a person who contravenes any provision of this bylaw to comply with that provision within the time ordered;
  - (b) an *owner* to stop work on a *building* or *structure*, or any part of a *building* or *structure*, if the work is proceeding in contravention of this bylaw, the *building code*, or any other enactment of the City or other applicable enactments, or if there is deemed to be an *unsafe condition*, and may enter on property to affix or post a stop work order in the form prescribed by the City;
  - (c) an *owner* to remove or prevent any unauthorized encroachment on a public parcel, a statutory right of way or easement, or a setback or yard required under an enactment;



- (d) an *owner* to remove any *building* or *structure*, or any part of a *building* or *structure*, *constructed* in contravention of a provision of this bylaw;
  - (e) an *owner* to have work inspected by a *building official* prior to covering;
  - (f) an *owner* to uncover any work that has been covered without inspection contrary to this bylaw or an order issued by a *building official*;
  - (g) a person to cease any *occupancy* in contravention of a provision of this bylaw;
  - (h) a person to cease any *occupancy* if any *unsafe condition* exists because of work being undertaken but not complete and where the *building official* has not issued a final inspection notice for the work;
  - (i) an *owner* to correct any *unsafe condition*; and
  - (j) an *owner* to correct any work that contravenes this bylaw, the *building code*, or any other enactment.
- 6.7 Every reference to “*owner*” in section 6.6 includes a reference to the *agent* or *constructor*.
- 6.8 Every person served with a notice under this Part must comply with that notice
- (a) within the time ordered, or
  - (b) if no time is ordered, immediately.

## **PART 7: OWNER’S RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Permit Requirements**

- 7.1 Subject to Part 10 of this bylaw, every *owner* must apply for and obtain a *permit*, prior to
- (a) *constructing*, repairing or *altering* a *building* or *structure*;
  - (b) moving a *building* or *structure* into or within the City;
  - (c) demolishing a *building* or *structure*;
  - (d) *constructing*, repairing or *altering* a *plumbing system* or fire suppression system;
  - (e) *occupying* a new *building* or *structure*;
  - (f) changing the use or *occupancy* of a *building*,

unless the works are the subject of another valid and subsisting *building permit*.

- 7.2 Every *owner* must ensure that plans submitted with a *permit* application bear the name, phone number, address and email address of the *designer* of the *building* or *structure*.

## Owner's Obligations

- 7.3 Every *owner* must
- (a) comply with the *building code*, the requirements of this bylaw and the conditions of a *permit*, and must not omit any work required by the *building code*, this bylaw or the conditions of a *permit*;
  - (b) ensure that all *permits*, all plans and specifications and supporting documents on which a *permit* was based, all municipal inspection certificates, and all professional *field reviews* are available at the site of the work for inspection during working hours by the *building official*; and
  - (c) prior to the issuance of a *building permit*, execute and submit to the City an *owner's* undertaking made in the form prescribed by the *building official*, where required by the *building official*.
- 7.4 Every *owner*-and every *owner's agent*, must carry out *construction* or have the *construction* carried out in accordance with the requirements of the *building code*, this bylaw and other bylaws of the City and none of the issuance of a *permit* under this bylaw, the review of plans and supporting documents, or inspections made by a *building official* or a *registered professional* shall relieve the *owner*, or their *agent*, from full and sole responsibility to perform the work in strict accordance with this bylaw, the *building code* and all other applicable codes, standards and enactments.
- 7.5 Every *owner* to whom a *permit* is issued must, during *construction*,
- (a) allow a *building official* to enter any *building* or premises at any reasonable time to administer and enforce this bylaw;
  - (b) post the civic address on the property so that it may be easily read from the public *highway* from which the property takes its address; and
  - (c) post the *permit* on the property so that it may be easily read from the public *highway* from which the property takes its address.

## Damage to Municipal Works

- 7.6 Every *owner* to whom a *permit* is issued is responsible for the cost to repair any damage to municipal works or land that occurs during and arises directly or indirectly from the work authorized by the *permit*.
- 7.7 In addition to payment of a security deposit under sections 10.11 to 10.15, every *owner* must pay to the City, within 30 days of receiving an invoice for same from the City, the cost to repair any damage to public property or works located on public property arising directly or indirectly from work for which a *permit* was issued.

## Demolition

- 7.8 Prior to obtaining a *permit* to demolish a *building* or *structure*, the *owner* must
- (a) provide to the City a vacancy date;
  - (b) pay capping and inspection chamber installation fees as set out in the City's bylaws governing waterworks and sewer; and
  - (c) ensure that all municipal services and other services are capped and terminated at the property line in a City standard inspection chamber and valve arrangement.
- 7.9 Every *owner* must ensure that, on completion of all demolition procedures, all debris and fill are cleared and the *site* is levelled or graded, or made safe if levelling and grading are not possible.

## Notice

- 7.10 Every *owner* must, at least 48 hours prior to commencing work at a *building site*, give written or online notice to a *building official* of the date on which the *owner* intends to begin such work.
- 7.11 Every *owner* must give written or online notice to a *building official* of any change in or termination of engagement of a *registered professional*, including a *coordinating registered professional*, during construction, within 24 hours of when the change or termination occurs.
- 7.12 If an *owner* or a *registered professional* terminates the engagement of the *registered professional*, including a *coordinating registered professional*, the *owner* must terminate all work under a *building permit* until the *owner* has engaged a new *registered professional*, including a *coordinating registered professional*, and has delivered to a *building official* new letters of assurance.
- 7.13 Without limiting sections 10.32 to 10.47, every *owner* must give at least 48 hours' online or written notice to a *building official*
- (a) of intent to do work that is required or ordered to be corrected during *construction*;
  - (b) of intent to cover work that is required under this bylaw to be, or has been ordered to be, inspected prior to covering; and
  - (c) when work has been completed so that a final inspection can be made.
- 7.14 Every *owner* must give notice in writing to a *building official* and pay the non-refundable fee set out in Appendix A immediately upon any change in ownership or change in the address of the *owner* which occurs prior to the acceptance of final inspection.
- 7.15 Every *owner* must give such other notice to a *building official* as may be required by the *building official* or by a provision of this bylaw.

## PART 8: OBLIGATIONS OF OWNER'S CONSTRUCTOR

- 8.1 Every *constructor* must ensure that all *construction* is done in compliance with all requirements of the *building code*, this bylaw and all other applicable, codes, standards and enactments.
- 8.2 Every *constructor* must ensure that no *construction, excavation* or other work is undertaken on public property, and that such public property is not disturbed or used for the storage of materials, without first having obtained approval in writing from the appropriate authority over such public property.
- 8.3 For the purposes of the administration and enforcement of this bylaw, every *constructor* is responsible jointly and severally with the *owner* for all work undertaken.

## PART 9: REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL'S RESPONSIBILITIES

### Professional Design and Field Review

- 9.1 The provision by the *owner* to the City of letters of assurance in accordance with the requirements of the *building code* shall occur prior to
- (a) the pre-occupancy site review coordinated by the *coordinating registered professional* or other *registered professional* for a *complex building*, or
  - (b) a final inspection for a *simple building* in circumstances where letters of assurance have been required in accordance with the requirements of the *building code*, in which case the *owner* must provide the City with letters of assurance in the form of Schedules C-A or C-B, as appropriate, referred to in subsection 2.2.7, Division C, of the *building code*.
- 9.2 If a *registered professional* provides letters of assurance in accordance with the *building code*, they must also provide proof of professional liability insurance to the *building official*.

### Requirement for a Registered Professional

- 9.3 The *owner* must retain a *registered professional* to provide a *professional design* and plan certification and letters of assurance in the form of Schedules A, B, C-A and C-B referred to in subsection 2.2.7, Division C, of the *building code*, in respect of a *permit* application
- (a) prior to the pre-occupancy site review coordinated by the *coordinating registered professional* or other *registered professional* for a *complex building*, or
  - (b) prior to a final inspection for a *simple building* in circumstances where letters of assurance have been required in accordance with the requirements of the *building code*, in which case the *owner* must provide the City with letters of assurance in the

form of Schedules C-A or C-B, as appropriate, referred to in subsection 2.2.7, Division C, of the *building code*;

- (c) except for single storey garages, carports and garden structures, *foundation* and *excavation* components of new *simple buildings* and *additions* greater than 55 square metres to *simple buildings* in accordance with the *building code*;
- (d) a *building* that is designed with common egress systems for the occupants and requires the use of *firewalls* in accordance with the *building code*;
- (e) prior to *alterations* to a *building*, or to a structural component of a *building* described in paragraph (b);
- (f) for a *building* in respect of which the *building official* determines that site conditions, size or complexity so warrant in the interests of safety of persons or protection of property under the *building code*;
- (g) if the *building* envelope components of the *building* fall under Division B Part 3 of the *building code*, the *building* contains more than four dwellings, or if the *building* envelopes do not comply with the prescriptive requirements of Division B Part 9 of the *building code*; and
- (h) for a parcel of land on which a *building* or *structure* is proposed if the *building official* believes the parcel is or is likely to be subject to flooding, mud flows, debris flows, debris torrents, erosion, land slip, rock falls, subsidence or avalanche, and the requirement for a *professional design* is in addition to a requirement under Division 8 of Part 3 of the *Community Charter*
  - (i) for a report certified by a professional engineer with experience in geotechnical engineering that the parcel may be used safely for the use intended, and
  - (ii) that the plans submitted with the application comply with the relevant provisions of the *building code* and applicable bylaws of the City.

9.4 The *building official* may require any *registered professional* carrying out the *professional design* and *field review* required under section 9.3 to provide evidence that they have experience and expertise in respect of the *professional design* and *field review* of the context and scope required.

### **Professional Plan Certification**

9.5 The letters of assurance referred to in sections 9.1 and 9.3 of this bylaw are relied upon by the City and *its building officials* as certification that the design and plans to which the letters of assurance refer comply with the *building code*, this bylaw and other applicable enactment.

9.6 Letters of assurance must be in the form of Schedules A and B referred to in subsection

2.2.7, Division C, of the *building code*.

- 9.7 For a *building permit* issued for the construction of a *complex building*, the building official shall provide the *owner* with a notice that the *building permit* is issued in reliance on the certification of the *registered professional* that the *professional design* and plans submitted in support of the application for the *building permit* comply with the *building code* and other applicable enactments. Any failure on the part of the *building official* to provide the *owner* with the notice will not diminish or invalidate the reliance by the City or its *building officials* on the certification of the *registered professionals*.
- 9.8 If a *building permit* is issued for a construction of a *complex building*, the *permit fee* is reduced by 5% of the fees payable under Appendix A to this bylaw, up to a maximum reduction of \$500.00 (five hundred dollars).

## PART 10: BUILDING APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

### Requirements before applying for a Building Permit

- 10.1 Prior to issuance of a *building permit*, the *owner* must satisfy the following requirements or conditions:
- (a) the *owner* must apply for and obtain a development permit if the *building* or *structure* is in an area designated by the City's Official Community Plan as a development permit area;
  - (b) the *owner* must ensure that the proposed *building* or *structure* complies with all bylaws of the City, except to the extent a variance of a bylaw is authorized by a development permit, development variance permit or order of the Board of Variance;
  - (c) an approving officer must have approved the subdivision plan that, once registered, would create the parcel on which the proposed *building* or *structure* will be *constructed*, and the subdivision plan must have been registered in the Land Title Office;
  - (d) the *owner* must provide evidence to the *building official* showing that the person applying for the *building permit* is either the *owner* of the parcel that is the subject of the proposed *building permit*, or is the *agent* of the *owner*, in which case, the *agent* must provide the name and contact information of the *owner*;
  - (e) if the parcel that is the subject of the *building permit* application is not intended to be connected to the City's sewage disposal system, the *owner* must apply for and obtain approval from the City and other applicable public authorities for an alternate *private sewage disposal system*;
  - (f) if the parcel that is the subject of the *building permit* application is not intended to be connected to the City's waterworks system, the *owner* must apply for and obtain

approval from the City and other applicable public authorities for an alternate water supply system;

- (g) if the parcel that is the subject of the *building permit* application is not intended to be connected to The City's storm water drainage system, the *owner* must apply for and obtain approval from the City and other applicable public authorities for the alternate storm water drainage and detention system; and
- (h) if all on site and off site works and services required by a City bylaw or other enactment have not been completed in accordance with the enactments, the *owner* must enter into a completion agreement with the City and deliver to the City letters of credit or cash security for completion of the works and service.

### **General Application Requirements**

10.2 An application for a *building permit* shall be submitted electronically and:

- (a) be made in the form prescribed by the *building official* and signed by the *owner*, or a signing officer if the *owner* is a corporation;
- (b) be accompanied by the *owner's* acknowledgement of responsibility and undertaking made in the form prescribed by the *building official*, and signed by the *owner*, or a signing officer if the *owner* is a corporation;
- (c) include a copy of a title search for the relevant property that is subject of the application made on the date of the *permit* application;
- (d) include a copy of a survey plan prepared by a British Columbia Land Surveyor, except the *building official* may waive the requirements for a survey plan, in whole or in part, where conditions warrant;
- (e) include a site plan showing;
  - (i) the bearing and dimensions of the parcel boundaries taken from the registered subdivision plan;
  - (ii) the legal description and civic address of the parcel;
  - (iii) the location and dimensions of *existing* and proposed statutory rights of way, easements and setback requirements, adjacent street and lane names;
  - (iv) the location and dimensions of *existing* and proposed *buildings* or *structures* on the parcel including proposed and *existing* setbacks to property lines;
  - (v) setbacks to the natural boundary of the sea and any lake, swamp, pond or watercourse where the City's land use regulations establish siting requirements related to flooding or riparian areas;

- (vi) the existing and finished ground levels to an established datum at or adjacent to the site and the geodetic elevation of the underside of the floor system or the top of a finished concrete slab of a of a building or structure where the City's land use regulations establish siting requirements related to minimum floor elevation;
- (vii) if applicable, location of an approved *existing* or proposed alternative private or other sewage disposal system, water supply system or storm water drainage system; and
- (viii) the location, dimensions and gradient of parking and parking access,

except that for a *simple building* the *building official* may waive, in whole or in part, the requirements for a site plan, if the *permit* is sought for the repair or *alteration* of an *existing building* or structure;

- (f) include floor plans showing the dimensions and uses of all areas, including the dimensions and height of crawl and roof spaces; the location, size and swing of doors; the location, size and opening of windows; floor, wall, and ceiling finishes; plumbing fixtures; structural elements; and stair dimensions;
- (g) include a cross-section through the *building* illustrating foundations, drainage, ceiling heights and construction systems;
- (h) include elevations of all sides of the building showing finish details, roof slopes, windows, doors, the grade, the maximum building height line, ridge height, spatial separations and natural and finished grade to comply with the building code and to illustrate that the building or structure conforms with the City zoning and development permit;
- (i) include cross-sectional details drawn at an appropriate scale and at sufficient locations to illustrate that the building or structure substantially conforms to the building code; and
- (j) include copies of approvals required under any enactment relating to health or safety, including, without limitation, sewage disposal *permits*, *highway access permits* and Ministry of Health approvals;

### **Application for Complex Buildings**

10.3 In addition to the requirements set out in section 10.2 of this Part, an application for a building permit with respect to a complex building shall be submitted electronically and include;

- (a) a site plan prepared by a *registered professional* showing the information set out in section 10.2(e);
- (b) one set of drawings at a suitable scale of the design prepared by each *registered professional* containing the information set out in section 10.2(f) to (i) and all other



requirements of sections 2.2.1, 2.2.3, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 2.2.6 and 2.2.9, Division C of the *building code*;

- (c) a letter of assurance in the form of Schedule A referred to in subsection 2.2.7 Division C, of the building code, signed by the owner, or a signing officer if the owner is a corporation, and the *coordinating registered professional*;
- (d) letters of assurance in the form of Schedule B referred to in subsection 2.2.7 Division C, of the building code, each signed by such registered professionals as the building official or building code may require to prepare the design for and conduct field reviews of the construction of the *building*;
- (e) include a *building code* compliance summary including the applicable edition of the *building code*, such as without limitation whether the building is designed under Part 3 or Part 9 of the building code, *major occupancy* classification(s) of the *building*, *building area* and *building height*, number of streets the *building* faces, and *accessible* entrances, work areas, washrooms, firewalls and facilities;
- (f) include illustration of any slopes on the subject parcel that exceed 30%;

10.4 A *building official* may require the following to be submitted with a *permit* application for the construction of a *complex building* if the *building official* determines that the complexity of the proposed *building* or *structure* or siting circumstances warrant:

- (a) site servicing drawings, including sufficient detail of off-site services to indicate locations at the property line, prepared and sealed by a *registered professional*, in accordance with the City's Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw, as amended or replaced from time to time;
- (b) a section through the site showing grades, *buildings*, *structures*, parking areas and driveways; and
- (c) any other information required by the *building official* or the *building code* to establish substantial compliance with this bylaw, the *building code* and other bylaws and enactments relating to the *building* or *structure*.

### **Application for Simple Buildings**

10.5 In addition to the requirements set out in section 10.2 of this bylaw, an application for a building permit with respect to a *simple building* shall include;

- (a) one set of drawings at a suitable scale of the design including the information set out in section 10.2(f) to (i);
- (b) a *foundation* and *excavation* design prepared by a *registered professional* in accordance with the *building code*;
- (c) geotechnical letters of assurance, in addition to a required geotechnical report, if the *building official* determines that the site conditions so warrant.

10.6 Where a *project* involves:

- (a) two or more *buildings* with the aggregate footprint area that totals more than 1,000 square meters;
- (b) two or more *buildings* that will collectively contain four or more dwelling units; or
- (c) a determination by the *building official* that the complexity of the proposed *building* or *structure* or siting circumstances warrant,

a *building official* may require the following be submitted with a *permit* application for the construction of each *simple building* in the *project*:

- (i) site servicing drawings, including sufficient detail of off-site services to indicate locations at the property line, prepared and sealed by a registered professional, in accordance with the City's Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw, as amended or replaced from time to time;
- (ii) a section through the site showing grades, *buildings*, *structures*, parking areas and driveways;
- (iii) a roof plan and roof height calculations;
- (iv) structural, electrical, plumbing, mechanical or fire suppression drawings prepared and sealed by a *registered professional*;
- (v) letters of assurance in the form of Schedule B referred to in Division C of the *building code*, signed by a *registered professional*;
- (vi) a *building code* compliance summary including the applicable edition of the *building code*, such as, without limitation, the *building* is designed under Part 9 and compliance with article 2.2.2.1(2), Division C of the *building code*; or
- (vii) any other information required by the *building official* or the *building code* to establish substantial compliance with this bylaw, the *building code* and other bylaws and enactments relating to the *building* or *structure*.

10.7 The building official may waive the requirements under subsection 10.5(b) of this Part in whole or in part, where the permit is sought for the:

- (a) repair or *alteration* of an *existing building* or *structure*; or
- (b) construction of a single story detached storage garage or carport less than 55 square meters in area serving a single-family dwelling.

## Site and Location Information

- 10.8 Without limiting sections 10.2(d) or 10.3(a) of this Part, the building official may in writing require an owner to submit an up to date certificate of location prepared by a British Columbia Land Surveyor which contains sufficient information respecting to the site and location of any building or structure;
- (a) to establish, before *construction* begins, that all the provisions of this bylaw in relation to this information will be complied with;
  - (b) to verify, on completion of the *construction*, that all provisions of this and other applicable bylaws have been complied with;
  - (c) in relation to an *existing building*, substantiate its location, size, including appurtenances whether above, at or below ground level, relative to the site or its relationship to neighbouring grades; and
  - (d) in relation to *construction* of a new *building*, or of an *addition* to an *existing building*, prior to and after the placement of concrete for *foundations* and footings, show the *elevation* at proposed top of concrete on all *building* elevations and at all significant changes of elevation to substantiate its size, location and elevation,
- and every person served with a written requirement under this section must comply with the requirement.

## Application Fees

- 10.9 An application for a *building permit* shall:
- (a) be accompanied by the processing fee as prescribed in Appendix A;
  - (b) be credited against the permit fee when the *permit* is issued.
  - (c) expire and, if applicable, the processing fee shall be forfeited to the *City*, if:
    - (i) the application expires in accordance with section 10.22; or
    - (ii) the permit fee has not been paid within 180 days following the date on which the application was made.

## Building Permit Fee

- 10.10 Before receiving a *building permit* for a *building* or *structure*, the *owner* must first pay to the *City*:
- (a) the *building permit* fee prescribed in Appendix A; and
  - (b) any fees, charges, levies or taxes imposed by the *City* and payable under an enactment at the time of issuance of the *building permit*.

## Security Deposit

- 10.11 Prior to the issuance of a *building permit*, the *owner* must pay to the City, the security deposit prescribed in Appendix A of this bylaw.
- 10.12 The security deposit sum set out in section 10.11 of this Part
- (a) covers the cost borne by the City to maintain, restore or replace any public works or public lands which are destroyed, damaged or otherwise impaired in the carrying out of the work referred to in any *building permit* held by the applicant;
  - (b) covers the cost borne by the City to make the site safe if the *permit* holder abandons or fails to complete the work as designated on the *permit*;
  - (c) serves as the security deposit for provisional *occupancy* when such a *final inspection notice* makes provision for a security deposit; or
  - (d) serves as a security deposit to effect compliance with any condition under which the *permit* was issued.
- 10.13 The security deposit or applicable portion must be returned to the *owner* or to the person identified by the *owner*, when:
- (a) the *building official* is satisfied that no further damage to public works or public lands will occur;
  - (b) the inspections required by this bylaw are complete and acceptable to the *building official*; and
  - (c) the conditions or provisions of a provisional certificate of *occupancy* are completed to the satisfaction of the *building official*;
- and only after the *owner* or *agent* has requested the return of the security.
- 10.14 Any credit greater than the amount of the security deposit used by the City for the purposes described in sections 10.12 of this Part will be returned to the *owner* unless otherwise so directed by the *owner*. Any amount in excess of the security deposit required by the City to complete corrective work to public lands, public works, or the site is recoverable by the City from the *owner*, the *constructor* or the *agent*.
- 10.15 If the proposed work includes *excavation* or construction on lands within 3 metres of works or services owned by the City, the *owner* must deliver to the *building official* a signed agreement in a form prescribed by the City under which the *owner* acknowledges and agrees that any damage to municipal works or services arising from the construction associated with the *building permit* will be repaired by the *owner* at its expense and to the satisfaction of the City, and the *owner* must deposit with the City security in accordance with sections 10.11 to 10.14 of this Part.

10.16 Any security or other deposits held by the City shall be forfeited and paid to the City as a fee for the cost of closing open *applications* or *permits* where an application or a *permit* expires prior to the *owner* obtaining an accepted final inspection report or an extension of its effective date.

### **Permit Fee Refunds**

10.17 No fee or part of a fee paid to the City will be refunded if construction of the *building* has started.

10.18 A *building permit* or other *permit* fee may be partially refunded as set out in Appendix A, only if

(a) the *owner* or *agent* has submitted a written request for a refund;

(b) the *building official* has certified a start has not been made on the construction of the *building* or *structure*; and

(c) the *permit* has not expired.

10.19 A *building permit* or other *permit* fee is not refundable after the *permit* has been extended under section 10.49 of this Part.

### **Design Modification**

10.20 If the *owner* proposes modification to the *building* design of a completed *permit* application ready for issue, an accepted *alternative solution*, or an issued *building permit* or other *permit* that is active, the *owner* must pay to the City a design modification fee based on the plan review hourly rate set out in Appendix A.

### **Construction before Permit Issued**

10.21 The *building permit* or other *permit* fee is doubled for every *permit* application if construction commenced before the *building official* issued a *permit*, to a maximum of \$10,000.00.

### **Expiration of Application for a Permit**

10.22 A *building permit* application that is not complete or does not comply with the applicable provisions of this bylaw expires 180 days from the date an application is received under this Part.

### **Issuance of a Building Permit**

10.23 If:

(a) a completed application in compliance with sections 10.2 to 10.4 or sections 10.5 to 10.7 of this Part, including all required supporting documentation, has been submitted;

- (b) the *owner* has paid all applicable fees set out in sections 10.10 to 10.21 of this Part and Appendix A;
- (c) the *owner* or their representative has paid all charges and met all requirements imposed by any other statute or bylaw;
- (d) the *owner* has retained a *professional engineer* or *professional geoscientist* if required under this bylaw;
- (e) the *owner* has retained an *architect* if required under this bylaw; and
- (f) no covenant, agreement, resolution or regulation of the City requires or authorizes the *permit* to be withheld,

the *building official* must issue the *permit*, in the form prescribed by the City, for which the application is made, and the date of issuance is deemed to be the date the City gives written notice to the *owner* that the *permit* is ready to be picked up by the *owner*.

10.24 Despite section 10.23, the *building official* may refuse to issue a *permit* when the *owner* has been notified of a violation of this bylaw about the construction of another *building* or *structure* by the *owner*.

### **Compliance with the *Homeowner Protection Act***

10.25 If the application is in respect of a *building* that includes, or will include, a *residential occupancy* governed by the *Homeowner Protection Act*, the *building permit* must not be issued unless the *owner* provides evidence under section 30(1) of the *Homeowner Protection Act*, that the proposed *building*

- (a) is covered by home warranty insurance; and
- (b) the *constructor* is a licensed “residential builder” as defined in that *Homeowner Protection Act*.

10.26 Section 10.25 of this Part does not apply if the *owner* is not required to be licensed and to obtain home warranty insurance in accordance with sections 20(1) or 30(1) of the *Homeowner Protection Act*.

10.27 Every *permit* is issued subject to the *owner* and *constructor* maintaining compliance with the *Homeowner Protection Act* during the term of the *permit*.

### **Partial Construction**

10.28 If a site has been *excavated* under a *building permit* for *excavation* issued under this bylaw and a *building permit* is not subsequently issued or a subsisting *building permit* has expired under section 10.48, but without the construction of the *building* or *structure* for which the *building permit* was issued having commenced, the *owner* must fill in the *excavation* to restore the original gradients of the site within 60 days of being served notice by the *building official* to do so.

- 10.29 If a *building permit* has expired and partial construction has progressed, with no extension requested of the *building official* under section 10.49, permanent type fencing with privacy screen complying with the City's Zoning Bylaw, must be erected around the *building* site for protection to the public.

### **Conditions of a Building Permit**

- 10.30 A *building permit* or an application for a *building permit* that is in process may not be transferred or assigned until the *owner* has notified the *building official* in writing, the *building official* has authorized the transfer or assignment of the *building permit* in writing and the *owner* has paid the non-refundable fee required under Appendix A. The transfer or assignment of a *building permit* is not an extension of a *building permit*.
- 10.31 The review of plans and supporting documents and the issuance of a *building permit* do not prevent the *building official* from subsequently requiring the correction of errors in the plans and supporting documents, nor do they prohibit the City from prohibiting *construction* or *occupancy* being carried on that violates this or another bylaw.

### **Inspections**

- 10.32 If a *registered professional* provides letters of assurance in accordance with this Part, the City will rely solely on *field reviews* undertaken by the *registered professional* and the letters of assurance submitted pursuant to this bylaw and the *building code* as assurance that the *construction* substantially conforms to the design, plans and specifications and that the *construction* complies with the *building code*, this bylaw and other applicable enactments respecting safety.
- 10.33 Despite section 10.32 of this Part, a *building official* may attend the site from time to time during the course of construction to ascertain that the *field reviews* are taking place and to monitor the *field reviews* undertaken by the *registered professionals*.
- 10.34 A *building official* may attend periodically at the site of the *construction* of *simple buildings* or *structures* to ascertain whether the work is being carried out in substantial conformance with the *building code*, this bylaw and any other applicable enactments concerning safety.
- 10.35 For all work in respect of *simple buildings* the *owner* must give at least 48 hours' notice to the City when requesting an inspection and must obtain an inspection and receive a *building official's* written acceptance of the following aspects of the work prior to concealing them
- (a) after demolition, the grading of and removal of debris from the site;
  - (b) siting and footing forms prior to pouring concrete;
  - (c) installation of perimeter drain tile, dampproofing and roof drainage system prior to backfilling;

- (d) installation of *building* services before being covered;
- (e) prior to inspection under section 10.35(f), plumbing located below the finished slab level;
- (f) the preparation of ground, including ground cover when required, below slab insulation and perimeter insulation on inside of concrete *foundation* walls;
- (g) installation of rough-in plumbing before it is covered;
- (i) rough in of new factory built chimneys and fireplaces and solid fuel burning appliances;
- (j) framing, sheathing, fire stopping (including drywall in fire separations), bracing, chimney and ductwork, exterior doors and windows, but prior to the installation of insulation, interior finishes, sheathing paper or exterior finishes which would conceal such work;
- (k) insulation and vapour barrier prior to the installation of any finishes that could conceal such work;
- (l) on-site *constructed* tubs or showers and tub or shower trap tests; and
- (m) Final inspection when the *health and safety aspects of the work* and the *Energy Step Code, Zero Carbon Step Code* and accessibility aspects of the work when the *building* or *structure* is substantially complete, ready for *occupancy* but prior to *occupancy*.

10.36 A *building official* will only carry out an inspection under section 10.35 if the *owner* or the *agent* has requested the inspection in accordance with this bylaw.

10.37 Despite the requirement for the *building official's* acceptance of the work outlined in section 10.35, if a *registered professional* provides letters of assurance, the City will rely solely on *field reviews* undertaken by the *registered professional* and the letters of assurance submitted pursuant to this bylaw as assurance that the aspects of the construction referenced by those letters of assurance substantially conform to the design, plans and specifications and that the construction complies with the *building code*, this bylaw and other applicable enactments respecting safety.

10.38 For work in respect of *complex buildings*, the *owner* must

- (a) give at least 48 hours' online or written notice to the City when requesting a preconstruction meeting with the *building official* prior to the start of construction, and the *owner* or their representative must ensure that the *coordinating registered professional*, the *constructor*, as well as representatives of major trades, are in attendance;



- (b) give at least 48 hours' online or written notice to the City when requesting a preoccupancy coordinated by the *coordinating registered professional* or other *registered professional* to have the *owner*, the *constructor* and the *registered professionals* demonstrate to the *building official* and Fire Services the compliance with *the health and safety aspects of the work*, the coordination and integration of the fire and life safety system, applicable City requirements and other enactments respecting safety, the *Energy Step Code*, *Zero Carbon Step Code* and accessibility aspects of the work; and
- (c) cause the *coordinating registered professional*, at least 48 hours prior to the preoccupancy coordinated site review coordinated by the *coordinating registered professional*, to deliver to the *building official* the Confirmation of Required Documentation described in this bylaw, complete with all documentation in the form as prescribed by the *building official*.

### **Stop Work Order**

- 10.39 The *building official* may direct the immediate suspension or correction of all or a portion of the *construction* on a *building* or *structure* or an unsafe *excavation* by attaching notice of a stop work order in the form prescribed by the *building official* on the premises whenever it is found that the work is not being performed in accordance with the requirements of the *building code*, any applicable bylaw of the City or the applicable provisions of the *Homeowner Protection Act*.
- 10.40 The *coordinating registered professional* may request, in writing, that the *building official* order the immediate suspension or correction of all or a portion of the *construction* on a *building* or *structure* by attaching notice of a stop work order in the form prescribed by the *building official* on the premises. The *building official* must consider such a request and, if not acted upon, must respond, in writing, to the *coordinating registered professional* and give reasons.
- 10.41 If a *registered professional's* services are terminated, the *owner* must immediately stop any work that is subject to their design or *field review* and the *building official* is deemed to have issued a *stop work order*.
- 10.42 The *owner* must immediately, after the posting of a *stop work order*, secure the construction and the lands and premises surrounding the construction in compliance with the safety requirements of every statute, regulation or order of the Province or of a provincial agency and of every applicable bylaw of the City.
- 10.43 Subject to section 10.42, no work other than the required remedial measures may be carried out on the parcel affected by a *stop work order* until the *stop work order* has been removed by the *building official*.
- 10.44 The *stop work order* must remain posted on the premises until that which is contrary to the enactments has been remedied.

## **Do Not Occupy Notice**

- 10.45 If a person occupies a *building* or *structure* or part of a *building* or *structure* in contravention of this bylaw, a *building official* may post a Do Not Occupy Notice in the form prescribed by the *building official* on the affected part of the *building* or *structure*.
- 10.46 If a notice is posted under section 10.45, the *owner* of a parcel on which a Do Not Occupy Notice has been posted, and every other person, must cease *occupancy* of the *building* or *structure* immediately and refrain from further *occupancy* until all applicable provisions of the *building code* and this bylaw have been substantially complied with and the Do Not Occupy Notice has been rescinded in writing by a *building official*.

## **Inspection and Other Fees**

- 10.47 In addition to the fees required under other provisions of this bylaw, the *owner* must pay the non-refundable fee set out in Appendix A for
- (a) a second and each subsequent re-inspection where it has been determined by the *building official* that due to non-compliance with the provisions of this bylaw or due to non-complying work, more than one site visit is required for any required inspection;
  - (b) a special inspection during the City's normal business hours to establish the condition of a *building* where such inspection requires special arrangements because of time, location or construction techniques; and
  - (c) inspection required under this bylaw which cannot be carried out during the City's normal business hours.

## **Permit Expiration**

- 10.48 Every *permit* is issued on the condition that the *permit* expires and the rights of the *owner* under the *permit* terminate if:
- (a) the work authorized by the *permit* is not commenced within 180 days from the date of issuance of the *permit*;
  - (b) work is discontinued for a period of 180 days; or
  - (c) the work is not completed within two years of the date of issuance of the *permit*.

## **Permit Extension**

- 10.49 A *building official* may extend the period set out under section 10.48 for only one period, not to exceed twelve months, if construction has not been commenced or has been discontinued due to adverse weather, strikes, material or labour shortages, other similar hardship beyond the *owner's* control, or if the size and complexity of the construction warrants, if

- (a) application for the extension is made at least 30 days prior to the date of *permit* expiration; and
- (b) the non-refundable fee set out in Appendix A has been paid.

### **Building Permit Revocation**

10.50 The *building official* may revoke a *building permit* if there is a violation of

- (a) a condition under which the *permit* was issued; or
- (b) a requirement of the *building code* or of this or another bylaw of the City,

such *permit* revocation must be in writing and sent to the *permit* holder by signature mail to, or personal service on, the *permit* holder.

### **Building Permit Cancellation**

10.51 A *building permit*, or a *building permit* application, may be cancelled by the *owner*, or their *agent*, on delivery of written notification of the cancellation to the *building official*.

10.52 On receipt of the written cancellation notice, the *building official* must mark on the application, and a *permit* if applicable, the date of cancellation and the word "cancelled".

10.53 If the *owner*, or their *agent*, submits changes to an application after a *permit* has been issued and the changes, in the opinion of the *building official*, substantially alter the scope of the work, design or intent of the application in respect of which the *permit* was issued, the *building official* may cancel or amend the *permit* and mark on the *permit* the date of cancellation or amendment and the word "cancelled" or "amended".

10.54 If a *building permit* application or *permit* is cancelled, and construction has not commenced under the *permit*, the *building official* must return to the *owner* any fees deposited under Appendix A, less

- (a) any non-refundable portion of the fee; and
- (b) 15% of the refundable portion of the fee.

### **Occupancy**

10.55 No person may occupy a *building* or *structure* or part of a *building* or *structure* until a final inspection notice has been issued by a *building official*.

10.56 A final inspection notice will not be issued unless

- (a) all letters of assurance have been submitted when required in accordance with this bylaw;

- (b) all aspects of the work requiring inspection and acceptance pursuant to Part 9 and sections 10.32 through 10.38 of this bylaw been inspected and *accepted* or the inspections and acceptance are not required in accordance with this bylaw;
- (c) the *owner* has delivered to the City as-built plans of works and *services* in the prescribed format;
- (d) the *owner* has provided to the City a *building* survey prepared by a British Columbia Land Surveyor showing the *building* height, size, location and elevation determined in accordance with the City's land use regulations;
- (e) all other documentation required under applicable enactments has been delivered to the City; and
- (f) the *owner* has delivered to the City as-built drawings of the *building* or *structure* in digital format as required by the City.

10.57 When a *registered professional* provides letters of assurance in accordance with this bylaw, the City will rely solely on the letters of assurance when issuing a final report authorizing *occupancy* as assurance that the items identified on the letters of assurance substantially comply with the *design, the building code*, this bylaw and other applicable enactments respecting safety.

10.58 A *building official* may issue a final inspection notice for partial *occupancy* of a portion of a *building* or *structure* under construction when

- (a) that portion of the *building* or *structure* is self-contained and provided with essential services respecting *health and safety aspects* of the work, and if applicable, accessibility, *Energy Step Code*, *Zero Carbon Step Code*; and
- (b) the requirements set out in section 10.56 have been met with respect to it.

10.59 A final inspection notice may not be issued unless

- (a) all letters of assurance and the Confirmation of Required Documentation described in this bylaw have been submitted when required in accordance with the requirements of this bylaw;
- (b) all aspects of the work requiring inspection and review pursuant to Part 9 and sections 10.32 through 10.38 of this bylaw have both been inspected and *accepted*;
- (c) the *owner* has executed and delivered to the City every agreement, instrument or form required by the City in relation to the work or the site; and
- (d) all required offsite works respecting safety have been completed.

## Sanitary Facilities

10.60 During the time a *building permit* has been issued and remains valid under this bylaw, the *owner* must provide on the parcel of land in respect of which the *permit* has been issued, sanitary facilities for the disposal of human waste from individual persons who enter on the parcel in relation to the work referred to in the *permit*, which facilities must be accessible and unlocked when not occupied while work is being carried out on the parcel under this bylaw, and every sanitary facility that is not connected to a

- (a) sanitary sewer; or
- (b) septic disposal system approved under the *Health Act*,

by plumbing that complies with the *Plumbing Code* and this bylaw, must be provided, at all times the facility is required under this bylaw, with toilet paper, a locking door for privacy, and ventilation, and must be kept in sanitary condition without leaking beyond the facility and without overflowing within the facility. Such facilities must be located so as not to create a nuisance to neighbouring parcels or *highways*.

## Application for Plumbing Systems

10.61 In addition to the requirements set out in section 10.2(a) to (c) of this Part, an application for a plumbing *permit* with respect to a plumbing system shall include:

- (a) one set of drawings at a suitable scale of design and including the information set out in sentence 2.2.2.1(1) in Part 2 of Division C of the *Plumbing Code* when the registered owner will be installing a plumbing system in accordance with clause 1.2.3.1. (1) (c) Part 1 of Division A of the *Plumbing Code* or at any time deemed necessary by the building official; and
- (b) any other information required by the *building official* or the *building code* to establish substantial compliance with this bylaw, the *building code* and other bylaws and enactments relating to the *building* or *structure*.

## PART 11: BUILDING MOVE

11.1 No person may move a *building* or *structure* into or within the City except:

- (a) where certified by a *registered professional* that the *building*, including its *foundation*, will substantially comply with the current version of the *building code*;
- (b) the *owner* of the premises onto which the *building* is proposed to be moved has provided documentation that the age of the *building* or *structure* is not greater than 15 years old; and
- (c) a *building permit* has been issued for the *building* or *structure*.

## PART 12: NUMBERING OF BUILDINGS

- 12.1 Immediately upon issuance of a *building permit* governing the *construction, alteration* or repair of a *building*, or prior to and during the *occupancy* of a *building*, the *owner* or occupant must display the address number assigned to it by the City
- (a) on or over the entrance to the *building* or where landscaping or *structures* obscure the visibility of a *building* entrance from the adjacent highway, on the *building* property within sight of the adjacent highway; and
  - (b) until such time as the *building* is removed from the site or has been demolished.
- 12.2 Despite section 12.1, the City may renumber or alter the assigned numbers in respect of any *building* on any parcel, including those already in existence or numbered.
- 12.3 Without limiting sections 12.1 or 12.2, the *building official* must, on the issuance of a *building permit*, designate a house number or set of house numbers related to the *building* authorized by the *permit*. The *owner* or occupier must post the number or numbers on the site immediately after obtaining the *building permit* and keep the numbers posted in a conspicuous location at all times during construction.

## PART 13: ENERGY CONSERVATION AND GHG EMISSION REDUCTION

- 13.1 In relation to the conservation of energy and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the City incorporates by reference the *Energy Step Code* in accordance with sections 13.2 through 13.3.
- 13.2 A *building* regulated by Part 3 of the *building code* must be designed and constructed to meet the minimum performance requirements specified in:
- (a) Step 3 of the *Energy Step Code*; or
  - (b) for *building permit* applications received on or after adoption of Step 3 within the *building code*, Step 4 of the *Energy Step Code*.
- 13.3 A *building* regulated by Part 9 of the *building code* must be designed and constructed to meet the minimum performance requirements specified in;
- (a) Step 4 of the *Energy Step Code*; or
  - (b) for *building permit* applications received on or after adoption of Step 4 within the *building code*, Step 5 of the *Energy Step Code*.
- 13.4 When an *Energy Advisor* or an *architect*, as required, provides energy reports or field reviews in accordance with this bylaw, the City will rely solely on field reviews undertaken by the *Energy Advisor* or *architect* and the reports submitted pursuant to this bylaw as assurance that the construction or applicable aspect thereof substantially conforms to the design, and that the construction or applicable aspect thereof

substantially complies with the *building code*, this bylaw, and other applicable enactments respecting energy efficiency.

13.5 Requirements for *Energy Advisors*:

- (a) With respect to a building permit for a *building* or *structure* that falls within the scope of Part 9 of the *building code*, the *owner* must provide, to the satisfaction of the *building official*, all the materials and documentation required by the *Energy Step Code*, prepared and signed by an *Energy Advisor*, and such other reports and materials as required by the *building official*.
- (b) The *Energy Advisor*, providing the required materials and documentation set out in the *Energy Step Code*, must provide evidence to the building inspector that he or she is an *Energy Advisor* registered and in good standing with Natural Resources Canada in accordance with the EnerGuide Rating System Administrative Procedures (ERS) and adheres to the technical standards and procedures of the ERS.
- (c) For certainty, and notwithstanding Sections 13.5(a) above, where a *registered professional* is required under this bylaw, in respect of a *building permit* for a *building* or *structure* that falls within the scope of Part 3 or Part 9 of the *building code*, the professional design and field review shall include the materials and documentation required by the applicable step of the *Energy Step Code*, and such other reports and materials as required by the *building official*.

**PART 14: ACCESS ROUTE FOR FIRE VEHICLE**

- 14.1 Prior to the issuance of a *building permit* for a *building* under Part 9 of the *building code*, the *owner* must satisfy the *building official* that the *building* or *structure* for which the *permit* is issued will be served by a fire access route that complies with the bearing load and surface material standards of the City's Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw, as amended or replaced from time to time.

**PART 15: OFFENCES**

**Violations**

- 15.1 Without limiting Part 4 of this bylaw, every person who

- (a) violates a provision of this bylaw;
- (b) *permits*, suffers or allows any act to be done in violation of any provision of this bylaw; and
- (c) neglects to do anything required to be done under any provision of this bylaw,

commits an offence and on summary conviction by a court of competent jurisdiction, the person is subject to a fine of not more than \$50,000.00, or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or both, in addition to the costs of prosecution. Each day during

which a violation, contravention or breach of this bylaw continues is deemed to be a separate offence.

- 15.2 Every person who fails to comply with any order or notice issued by a *building official*, or who allows a violation of this bylaw to continue, contravenes this bylaw.
- 15.3 Every person who commences work requiring a *building permit* without first obtaining such a *permit* must, if a *stop work order* is issued and remains outstanding for 30 days, pay an additional charge as outlined in Appendix A of this bylaw.

#### **Deemed Offence**

- 15.4 An *owner* is deemed to have knowledge of and be liable under this bylaw in respect of any construction on the parcel the *owner* owns and any change in the use, *occupancy* or both of a *building* or *structure* or part of a *building* or *structure* on that parcel.
- 15.5 No person is deemed liable under section 15.4 who establishes, on a balance of probabilities, that the *construction* or change of use or *occupancy* occurred before he or she became the *owner* of the parcel.
- 15.6 Nothing in section 15.5 affects
- (a) the City's right to require and the *owner's* obligation to obtain a *permit*; and
  - (b) the obligation of the *owner* to comply with this bylaw.

#### **Ticketing**

- 15.7 The offences in Municipal Ticket Information Bylaw No. 2435 Appendix 2 are designated for enforcement under s. 264 of the *Community Charter*.
- 15.8 The following persons are designated as bylaw enforcement officers under section 264(1)(b) of the *Community Charter* for enforcing the offences in Municipal Ticket Information Bylaw No. 2435 Appendix 2 *building officials*, fire inspectors and persons designated by Council as bylaw enforcement officers.
- 15.9 The words or expressions set forth in Column 1 of Municipal Ticket Information Bylaw No. 2435 Appendix 2 are authorized pursuant to s. 264(1)(c) of the *Community Charter* to designate the offence committed under the bylaw section number appearing in Column 2 opposite the respective words or expressions.
- 15.10 The amounts appearing in Column 3 of Municipal Ticket Information Bylaw No. 2435 Appendix 2 are the fines established pursuant to s. 265(1)(a) of the *Community Charter* for the corresponding offence designated in Column 1.



## PART 16: INTERPRETATION

### Definitions

#### 16.1 In this bylaw

- (a) *accepted* means reviewed by the *building official* under the applicable provisions of the *building code* and this bylaw;
- (b) *addition* means an *alteration* to any *building* that increases the total aggregate floor area or the *building height* (in storeys), and includes the provision of two or more separate *buildings* with openings between each other for intercommunication;
- (c) *agent* includes a firm, corporation or other person representing the *owner*, by written designation or contract, and includes a hired tradesperson or *constructor* who may be granted a *permit* for work within the limitations of their licence;
- (d) *alternative solution* means an alternative solution authorized under the *building code*;
- (e) *alter* or *alteration* means a change, repair or modification of the *construction* or arrangement of or use of any *building* or *structure*, or to an *occupancy* regulated by this bylaw;
- (f) *architect* means an architect within the meaning of the *Professional Governance Act*, SBC 2018, c 47;
- (g) *building code* means the *British Columbia Building Code* as adopted by the Minister responsible under provincial legislation, as amended or re-enacted from time to time;
- (h) *building official* means the person designated in or appointed to that position by the City, and includes a building inspector, plan checker, plumbing inspector gas inspector, or electrical inspector designated or appointed by the City, and for certainty the *building official* is the “building inspector” referred to in the *Community Charter and Local Government Act*;
- (i) *complex building* means:
  - (A) a *building* used for a *major occupancy* classified as:
    - (i) *assembly occupancy*;
    - (ii) *care occupancy*;
    - (iii) *detention occupancy*;

- (iv) *high hazard industrial occupancy*,
  - (v) *treatment occupancy*; or
  - (vi) *post-disaster building*,
- (B) a *building* exceeding 600 square metres in *building area* or exceeding three storeys in *building height* used for a *major occupancy* classified as:
- (i) *residential occupancy*;
  - (ii) *business and personal services occupancy*;
  - (iii) *mercantile occupancy*; or
  - (iv) *medium and low hazard industrial occupancy*,
- (j) *coordinating registered professional* means a *registered professional* retained pursuant to the *building code* to coordinate all design work and field reviews of the *registered professionals* required for a development;
- (k) *construct* or *construction* includes build, erect, install, repair, alter, add, enlarge, move, locate, relocate, reconstruct, demolish, remove, excavate or shore;
- (l) *constructor* means a person who *constructs*;
- (m) *Energy Advisor* means a person qualified to carry out any of the activities contemplated by the *Energy Step Code* or *Zero Carbon Step Code*;
- (n) *Energy Step Code* means the *building code*'s performance based standard for energy efficiency in new *construction* which involves energy modelling prior to construction and onsite testing after construction to ensure that the building envelope, equipment and systems, and airtightness are consistent with the performance based standards for the applicable step;
- (o) *existing*, in respect of a *building*, means that portion of a *building constructed* prior to the submission of a *permit* application required under this bylaw;
- (p) *foundation* means a system or arrangement of *foundation* units through which the loads from a *building* are transferred directly to supporting soil or rock and includes any portion of the exterior walls of a building that lie below the finished grade immediately adjacent to the building;
- (q) *health and safety aspects of the work* means design and construction regulated by Parts 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, Division B, of the *building code*; and subject to Parts 1 and 2 in relation to Parts 3 through 10, Division B;

- (r) *owner* means the registered *owner* in fee simple, or an *agent* duly authorized by the *owner* in writing in the form prescribed by the City;
- (s) *permit* means permission or authorization in writing by the *building official* to perform work regulated by this bylaw and, in the case of a final inspection notice, to occupy a *building* or part of a *building*;
- (t) *professional design* means the plans and supporting documents bearing the date, seal or stamp, and signature of a *registered professional*; *project* means any construction operation;
- (u) *professional engineer* has the same meaning as the *Professional Governance Act*;
- (v) *professional geoscientist* has the same meaning as the *Professional Governance Act*;
- (w) *Professional Governance Act*, means the *Professional Governance Act*, SBC 2018, c 47, as amended from time to time;
- (x) *retaining wall* means a *structure* exceeding 1.2 metres in height that holds or retains *soil* or other material behind it;
- (y) *simple building* means a *building* of three storeys or less in *building height*, having a *building area* not exceeding 600 square metres and used for a *major occupancy* classified as
  - (A) residential occupancy;
  - (B) business and personal services occupancy;
  - (C) mercantile occupancy;
  - (D) medium hazard industrial occupancy; or (e) low hazard industrial occupancy,
- (z) *stop work order* means an order issued by a *building official* pursuant to section 10.39 or 10.40 of this bylaw;
- (aa) *structure* means a *construction* or portion of *construction*, of any kind, whether fixed to, supported by or sunk into land or water, except landscaping, fences, and paving;
- (bb) *value of construction* means the amount that is calculated as the greater of:
  - (A) the declared *value of the work*; or

- (B) the value calculated using a method from “Marshall Swift Valuation Service”, an appraiser or another valuation method approved by the *building official*;
- (cc) *Zero Carbon Step Code means the greenhouse gas (GHG) emission requirements set out in the building code.*

16.2 In this bylaw the following words and terms have the meanings:

- (a) set out in section 1.4.1.2 of the *building code* as of the date of the adoption of this bylaw: *accessible assembly occupancy, building, building area, building height, business and personal services occupancy, care occupancy, constructor, coordinating registered professional, designer, detention occupancy, excavation, field review, firewall, first storey, grade, high hazard industrial occupancy, industrial occupancy, low hazard industrial occupancy, major occupancy, medium hazard industrial occupancy, mercantile occupancy, occupancy, post disaster occupancy, private sewage disposal system, registered professional, residential occupancy, treatment occupancy or unsafe condition*;
- (b) subject to this bylaw, set out in the Schedule to the *Community Charter*: *highway, land, occupier, parcel, public authority, service and soil*; and
- (c) subject to this bylaw, set out in section 29 of the *Interpretation Act*: *may, must, obligation, person, property, writing, written and year*.

16.3 Every reference to this bylaw in this or another bylaw of the City is a reference to this bylaw that is in force as of the date of the reference.

16.4 Every reference to

- (a) the *building code* is a reference to the current edition as of the date of issuance of the *building permit*; and
- (b) a section of the *building code* is a reference to the applicable successor sections, as the code or section may be amended or re-enacted from time to time.

16.5 Definitions of words and phrases used in this bylaw that are not included in the definitions in this Part have the meanings commonly assigned to them in the context in which they are used in this bylaw, considering the specialized use of terms with the various trades and professions to which the terminology applies

## Appendices

16.6 Appendix A is attached to and forms part of this bylaw.

## Severability

16.7 If a section, subsection, paragraph, subparagraph or phrase of this bylaw is for any reason declared invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the decision will not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this bylaw.

## PART 17: REPEAL

17.1 Building Bylaw No. 3001, 2020, and all amendments thereto, are hereby repealed.

## PART 18: IN FORCE


18.1 This bylaw comes into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

Read a first time this 8<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2023

Read a second time this 8<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2023.

Read a third time this 8<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2023.

Finally passed and adopted this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of November, 2023.



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Mayor Bob Wells



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Adriana Proton, Corporate Officer

# BUILDING BYLAW NO. 3114

## Appendix A – Fees and Charges

<b>Application Fees</b>	
DESCRIPTION	FEE AMOUNT
<b>Building Permits</b>	
All	\$150 or 25% of the building permit fee prescribed below whichever is the highest
<b>Plumbing, Fire Suppression System Permits</b>	
Complex buildings and structures	\$125
Simple buildings and structures	\$75

<b>Permit Fees</b>	
DESCRIPTION	FEE AMOUNT
<b>Building Permits</b>	
All	\$150 + 1% of the estimated value of construction
<b>Demolition Permits</b>	
All	\$150
<b>Plumbing Permits</b>	
Complex buildings and structures	\$125 + \$15 for each fixture
Simple buildings and structures	\$75 + \$10 for each fixture
<b>Fire Suppression System</b>	
Complex Buildings and structures	\$125 + 1% of the estimated value of construction
Simple buildings	\$75 + 1% of the estimated value of construction

## BUILDING BYLAW NO. 3114

### Appendix A – Fees and Charges

<b>Inspection Fees</b>	
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>FEE AMOUNT</b>
Complex Buildings and structures	\$275
Simple buildings	\$125
Other permits	\$75

<b>Extension Fees</b>	
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>FEE AMOUNT</b>
Complex Buildings and structures	\$275 + 1% of the estimated value of construction
Simple buildings	\$125 + 1% of the estimated value of construction
Other permits	\$75
<p>For the purposes of this table the “estimated value of construction” is the value of construction to complete the building or structure beyond the accepted inspection stage at the time the permit expired.</p>	

<b>Transfer Fees</b>	
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>FEE AMOUNT</b>
Complex Buildings and structures	\$275
Simple buildings	\$125
Other permits	\$75

## BUILDING BYLAW NO. 3114

### Appendix A – Fees and Charges

<b>Archive Research, per site</b>	
Complex Buildings and structures	\$300
Simple buildings	\$150
Buildings containing 1 or 2 dwelling units and other buildings	\$75

<b>Other Fees</b>	
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>FEE AMOUNT</b>
Title Search	At cost + \$25
To obtain a copy of a Restrictive Covenant	At cost + \$25 each
To process a covenant in favour of the City	\$250
Site inspection, Section 56 of the Community Charter	\$125
To remove a Notice on Title, Section 57 of the Community Charter	\$1000
To provide copies of plans	\$10 + applicable taxes per sheet
Rescind a Stop Work Order or Do Not Occupy Order	\$300
Design Modification	\$85/hour
Review of each alternate solution	\$400
Special inspection	\$125
Re-inspection	\$125
Security Deposit for Single/two family Dwelling	\$3000
Security Deposits for Multi-residential/commercial/industrial/institutional	\$300 per metre of frontage or a minimum fee of \$3000 whichever is the highest





The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Staff Report

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**To:** Council

**File No.:** 5335-20

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

**Date:** March 12, 2025

**Subject:** 6th Street Bridge – Project Update

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## **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the Request for Proposals process for the 6<sup>th</sup> St Active Transportation Bridge, and to provide an estimate for the costs to construct the project and ways to fund the construction. Staff will be seeking direction on how to proceed at the March 12, 2025 Council Meeting.

## **BACKGROUND:**

At the June 24, 2019 Council Meeting, Council resolved:

THAT staff bring forward a report providing options for exploring a 6<sup>th</sup> Street multi-use pedestrian-bike bridge at a future Council meeting.

At the September 3, 2019, Council meeting, a delegation of the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Association (DCBIA) asked Council to suspend the addition of the cantilevered multi-use pathway [to the 5<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Rehabilitation Project] and instead reconsider the 6<sup>th</sup> Street multi-use pedestrian bridge option.

At the January 27, 2020, Committee of the Whole meeting, staff presented to Council the “6<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Options Analysis” report. Council received the report for information but postponed consideration until the February 3, 2020 regular Council meeting.

At the February 3, 2020 regular Council meeting, a motion to receive the above noted report was carried.

At the July 6, 2020, Council meeting, Council resolved:

THAT Council request staff to produce a preliminary report on options and costs for the 6th Street Multi-use Pedestrian Bike Bridge to assist Council in refining the number of options to be further developed

At the December 9, 2020 Council meeting, Council resolved:

THAT based on the December 7, 2020 staff report “6<sup>th</sup> Street Multi-Use Active Transportation Bridge Update” Council approve OPTION 1, and direct:

1. Staff to include a line item in 2021 of the 2021-2025 Financial Plan to support design works with potential construction in 2022 subject to successful grant funding and borrowing in place;
2. Staff to proceed with detailed design of a 4 metre wide Symmetrical Cable Stayed Bridge, as per the project schedule presented;
3. Staff to commence public engagement to inform the public of the project;
4. Staff to further review potential grant opportunities in 2021, with the goal of supporting construction in late 2022; and

5. That staff consult with the Comox Valley Arts Council, Comox Valley Art Gallery and K'ómoks First Nation on bridge design elements; in particular regarding the inclusion of public art and potential partnership opportunities for grant funding.

On January 18, 2021, Council heard a delegation of the Comox Valley Cycling Coalition with concerns that the minimum bridge width should be 4.8m.

On February 22, 2021, a motion was moved by Council to consider a minimum width of 4.8m during detailed design of the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge, but this was defeated.

At the July 19, 2021, Council meeting, Council resolved:

THAT based on the July 19<sup>th</sup> staff report “6<sup>th</sup> Street Multi-Use Active Transportation Bridge – Funding Reallocation”, Council approve OPTION 1 and direct Staff to:

Reallocate \$300,000 of Community Gas Tax Funds from the Ryan Road Sidewalk – Sandwick to Braidwood project fund, to the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge project fund in 2021.

At the March 28, 2022, Council meeting, Council resolved:

THAT based on the March 28, 2022 staff report “6<sup>th</sup> Street Active Transportation Bridge – Grant Application”, Council approve OPTION 1 and direct Staff to submit an application for grant funding for the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Active Transportation Bridge project through Infrastructure Canada’s Active Transportation Fund.

At the May 9, 2022, Council meeting, Council resolved:

THAT based on the May 9, 2022 staff report “6<sup>th</sup> Street Active Transportation Bridge – 50% Design Update”, Council approve OPTION 1 and direct Staff to submit an application for grant funding for the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Active Transportation Bridge project through Green Infrastructure – CleanBC Communities Fund (CCF), which is part of the federal government’s Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP).

At the April 10, 2024, Council meeting, upon notice of successful grant funding through Infrastructure Canada’s Active Transportation Fund, it was resolved:

1. THAT Council Direct staff to sign the Infrastructure Canada’s Active Transportation Fund grant and proceed with the project.
2. THAT Council direct staff to increase the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge project to **\$6,886,075** and increase the long term borrowing authorized to **\$2,500,000**.
3. THAT Council direct staff to prepare a loan authorization bylaw using the Approval-Free Liability Zone granted by the Municipal Liabilities Regulation section 7.

At the May 8, 2024, Council meeting, Council resolved:

THAT Council give first, second, and third readings to the “Loan Authorization Bylaw No. 3137, 2024 6<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge”; and

THAT Council proceed to adoption of “Loan Authorization Bylaw No. 3137, 2024 – 6<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge” through the Approval-Free Liability Zone granted by the Municipal Liabilities Regulation section 7.

- On July 17, 2024, the above noted bylaw was adopted by Council.
- On July 31, 2024, it was resolved THAT Council give first, second and third readings to “Temporary Borrowing Bylaw No. 3149, 2024 – 6<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge”.
- On August 28, 2024, the above noted bylaw was adopted by Council.

At the January 29, 2025, Council meeting, Council resolved:

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

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **RFP Evaluation**

A Request for Proposals (RFP) was released to the contracting community on November 29, 2024 in order to select a contractor for the construction of the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge. The RFP closed on January 31, 2025 with five compliant proposals received, a strong competitive response.

The Project Team elected to proceed with an RFP based on:

- access to an industry-standard construction RFP template document (MMCD RFP Template);
- ensuring construction methodology over and around the sensitive ecosystem was properly considered during the procurement process;
- to review and evaluate the construction schedule to ensure the design engineers' indicative schedule was reasonable;
- to better evaluate a proponent's experience in constructing a bridge of this nature;
- to consider the proponent's approach to Indigenous and sustainable concepts;
- the ability to maintain a high weighting on price (50%) to ensure cost competitiveness; and
- past organizational precedent with the 5th Street Bridge project, which was procured with an RFP.

Staff from the Capital Projects team and the City's design consultant evaluated the proposals. Finance and Procurement staff facilitated the process to ensure that it was conducted according to the terms and conditions in the RFP.

Now that a preferred proponent has been established, staff have begun communication with them to understand the following:

- The project's exposure to steel tariffs and the threat of broader tariffs levied by the United States of America;
- Opportunities for savings in the project that may bring the cost to deliver the project down;
- The viability of the project schedule should a value engineering process be undertaken.

### **Estimated Project Costs**

Based on the results of the recent RFP, the total expected cost for the project is estimated to be \$11,165,000. This includes costs for the construction of the bridge, consulting fees to support the project as well as 10% contingency to account for unknowns during the construction of the project.

### **Proposed schedule**

The contractor's preliminary schedule shows construction beginning in fall of 2025 and being complete by summer of 2026. The time between contract award and construction beginning will be spent fabricating steel and the precast panels as well as a large number of submittals to support the construction of the project.

There are a number of environmental items that can affect the schedule. Tree clearing is subject to the Migratory Birds Act. There are two eagle nests in Simms Park and construction activities can be impacted depending on what nest the eagles are using. All work undertaken will be under the direction of a Qualified Environmental Professional.

### **Grant implications**

Although the proposals do not meet the requirements in the agreement signed with the Government of Canada's Active Transportation Fund, preliminary discussions with granting authorities indicate that a change to the agreement's end date should be acceptable. The change has been submitted for their approval.

Also included in these discussions, the granting authority indicated that no additional funds are available to fund any cost overages for the project, and the funds cannot be used to fund other projects in the City of Courtenay. However, the funds can be used to fund a similar project in a different location, or potentially of a different form.

### **Value Engineering**

Post-bid value engineering is a cost-saving and efficiency optimization process conducted after a preferred proponent has been established but before contract award. It aims to identify alternative materials, methods, or design modifications that reduce costs, improve constructability, or enhance long-term value without compromising project quality or functionality. Processes of this nature can take time, and consideration of the broader construction schedule with limited windows may require an accelerated approach. To formalize the results of any value engineering process, some limited project redesign may be necessary to formalize the discussions and award a contract.

### **Tariffs**

Staff have begun communicating with the preferred proponent to better understand the project's exposure to the tariffs and opportunities for mitigation. Initial communications indicate that this RFP process has secured "pre-tariff" pricing. The preferred proponent has suggested that if and when the announced steel tariffs are implemented on or around March 12, 2025, the project will be exposed to up to \$250,000 of additional material costs. This number is preliminary and may be mitigated further.

### **POLICY ANALYSIS:**

The City's Procurement Policy and City of Courtenay Delegation of Purchasing Authority Bylaw No. 3082, 2023, delegate authority to staff to enter into contracts that are budgeted for in the Council-approved financial plan. Since the preferred proponent price for this project is over budget, staff cannot award the contract until the Council amends the budget or provides alternative direction.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

For the purposes of the 2024-2028 Five-year Financial Plan, the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge project was estimated at \$6,588,900. However, on April 10, 2024 Council was presented a staff report indicating a budget shortfall of \$702,825. To accommodate, Council authorized an increase of \$1,000,000 to the long-term borrowing, from \$1,500,000 to \$2,500,000, subsequently increasing the 2024 project budget to \$6,886,100. A breakdown of the funding sources for this budget is below.

Funding Source	Amount
Federal ATF Grant	\$2,502,200
Debt (Long Term Borrowing)	\$2,500,000
Growing Communities Fund	\$1,000,000
New Works Reserve (3 <sup>rd</sup> Cross Fund)	\$815,300
RFE (Reserve for Future Expenditure)	\$68,600
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,886,100</b>

The amount of budget shortfall is shown in the table below

	Amount
Preliminary budget in 2025-2029 Financial Plan	\$6,886,100
Funding required to fund construction	\$11,165,000
Additional funding required	<b>\$4,278,900</b>

**Project Funding Options**

In order to fund the project, staff are proposing the following funding sources to fund the \$4,278,900. There is no single clear solution to funding this project as costs have escalated substantially. Each of the options might be able to be used individually however the likely solution is a mixture of approaches.

**Debt**

Debt could be used to fund the entire overage of this project as the City has adequate debt capacity to add \$4.3M in long term borrowing. The annual debt servicing cost at 5% over a 20-year term would be \$367,053. A 1% change to the interest rate is equal +/- \$43,000 in interest expense. The new debt servicing cost would require about a 1% property tax increase to fund.

**Pros**

- Taxation impact is somewhat limited (1%)
- City has capacity to add more debt
- Interest rates are anticipated to be in the 4-5% range

**Cons**

- Pushes payment burden to future generations
- Timing of accessing funds
- Project is 61% debt funded

Though debt is a reasonable solution to fund this project it is not without its challenges. The most significant challenge with debt is the timing of the project. With construction ideally commencing in 2025 and the length of time it takes to secure long term debt, there is a strong likelihood that the City will have to self fund this project from surplus until the borrowing process can be completed. The borrowing must be included in the financial plan (currently not included), and the financial plan must be adopted prior to commencement of Council considering a borrowing bylaw. In 2024, loan authorization bylaws were first read by Council in early May and were not fully completed until October, furthermore the City was not required to seek electoral approval for the borrowing due to its current low long-term debt holdings. The borrowing process is not quick and borrowing follows the same time line no matter what amount of money is borrowed.

### **Taxation**

To collect \$4,278,900 in taxation would require a 12.4% tax increase in addition to the existing and yet to be determined increase for 2025.

### **Surplus and Reserves**

#### **Other Reserves**

The City holds no additional suitable reserves specifically to fund a net new project of this type. The City's reserves focus on replacement of existing assets and it would not be appropriate to use these reserves to fund a net new asset.

#### **Gaming Funds**

Gaming funds could be used to supplement this project as the expected fund balance is not adequate to cover the entire overage. The expected gaming fund balance available for use in 2025 is \$1.77M, this figure takes into consideration the recent council direction to fund the Bridge building demolition from gaming.

#### **Surplus**

The City does have prior year's unappropriated surplus on hand that is typically used as its working capital reserve to provide a stable cashflow throughout the year. This surplus has seen growth over the past few years and has an anticipated available balance in 2025 of about \$11.5M. This figure is still subject to 2024 year-end adjustments along with Council initiated direction for use in the 2025-2029 Financial Planning process. The desired surplus balance is equal to 20% of annual general fund operating costs which is about \$11.2M or 10 weeks of spending.

#### **Funding Recommendation**

There is no simple, clear solution to this challenge because each option presents its own issues. If we use a long-term lens, debt becomes the best approach as it spreads the burden of cost over 20 years but it comes at the expense of future taxpayers and substantial borrowing costs. If borrowing is the preferred method the total amount borrowed would be \$6.8M (\$2.5M + \$4.3M) and would require \$580K annual debt servicing payments (note \$2.5M of debt servicing costs are included in the draft 2025-2029 Financial Plan). The estimated total repayment cost (interest and principal) to borrow \$6.8M would be \$11.6M. If a mixture of borrowing and other funds is selected it will still require the City to go through the normal borrowing process.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:**

The 6th St Active Transportation Bridge Project will be led by Infrastructure & Environmental Engineering, with support from most other City Departments. Consultants with technical knowledge specific to this work will be utilized to develop and implement detailed designs and processes.

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

A 6th Street Active Transportation Bridge would provide a dedicated cycling and pedestrian connection between downtown Courtenay and Simms Millennium Park as well as a connection to the future cycling network along 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Anderton Avenue, the Courtenay Riverway Trail, and the Lewis Park pathway connection to the Lewis Centre.

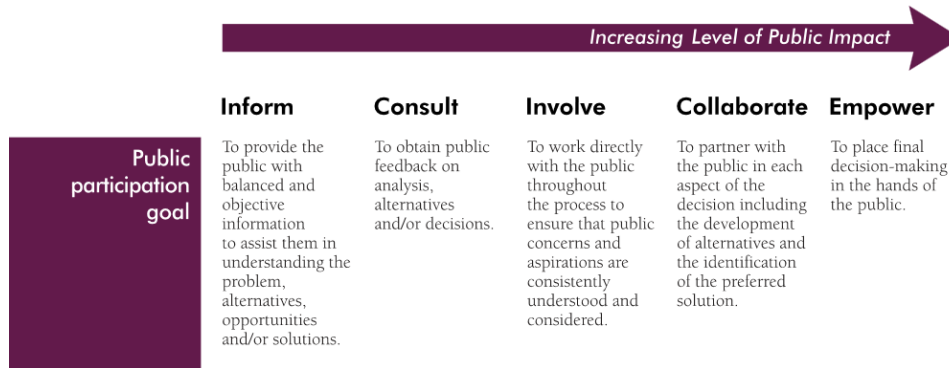
A 6th Street Active Transportation Bridge is included in the Parks & Recreation Master Plan and referenced in the City's Transportation Master Plan as well as the Downtown Courtenay Playbook. The design and funding as well as the construction of the 6th Street Bridge is a Council strategic priority.

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Streets and Transportation - 6th Street Bridge design and funding
- Streets and Transportation - 6th Street Bridge construction

**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 amend the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Capital Budget in the 2025-2029 financial plan to \$11,165,100, and award the construction contract, and proceed with construction of the project.

THAT Council direct staff to prepare a loan authorization bylaw for \$4,300,000.

2. THAT Council cancel the current procurement, and direct staff to report back on alternative options for a 6<sup>th</sup> St Bridge.
3. THAT Council cancel the project.

Prepared by: Adam Pitcher, ASCT, PMP, Manager of Capital Projects

Reviewed by: Chris Davidson, P.Eng, PMP, Director of Infrastructure & Environmental Engineering  
Scott Hainsworth, BCom, Manager of Procurement, Risk and Real Estate  
Adam Langenmaier, BBA, CPA, CA, Chief Financial Officer

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



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Staff Report

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**To:** Council

**File No.:** 1950-02

**From:** City Manager (CAO)

**Date:** March 12, 2025

**Subject:** Parcel Tax Review Panel - 2025

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## **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to establish the time and place for the sitting of the 2025 Parcel Tax Review Panel.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The establishment of the Parcel Tax Review Panel and the time and place of sitting is an annual action of Council. The time and place of the 2025 Parcel Tax Review Panel is proposed to be April 2, 2025, at 3:00 pm at the CVRD Civic Room, 770 Harmston Ave, Courtenay. Council members available for the 2025 Parcel Tax Review Panel include Mayor Wells, Councillor Jolicoeur, and Councillor Hillian.

## **BACKGROUND:**

In accordance with Sections 208 of the *Community Charter*, a parcel tax roll review panel must be convened to consider and respond to any complaints regarding a new or refusal to amend an existing parcel tax. The Parcel Tax Review Panel must consider any complaints prior to the annual property tax levy.

## **DISCUSSION:**

Each year parcel taxes are calculated and assessed on all new or newly subdivided properties added to the water and sewer distribution system within the City of Courtenay. The property owners are provided notice of the amount to be added to their annual property tax notice, and that they have an opportunity to make an appeal at the annual Parcel Tax Review Panel if written notice is received at City Hall at least 48 hours prior to April 2, 2025. If no complaints are received, the parcel tax roll, as amended, is deemed to have been authenticated and the Parcel Tax Review Panel meeting will be cancelled.

## **POLICY ANALYSIS:**

Section 208 of the *Community Charter* outlines the annual requirements for updating the parcel tax roll. Each year a municipality must publish notice in a newspaper that the parcel tax roll is available for inspection and provide direction and a deadline for written complaints. If any complaints related to the addition or refusal to adjust a particular parcel tax are received, a Parcel Tax Review Panel must be established to consider the complaints. Council must appoint at least three people as members of the review panel, establish the time and place, and provide advance notice of the time and place.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Parcel taxes for water and sewer are assessed in accordance with the water and sewer frontage tax bylaws. These revenues assist in the funding required to carry out capital and operational works for the provision of these two utility services, and have been included in the respective 2025-2029 Financial Plans.



**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:**

On Council approval of the time and place for the Parcel Tax Review Panel, staff will notify affected property owners by letter of both their assessment for 2025, as well as their opportunity to appeal the assessment with the review panel.

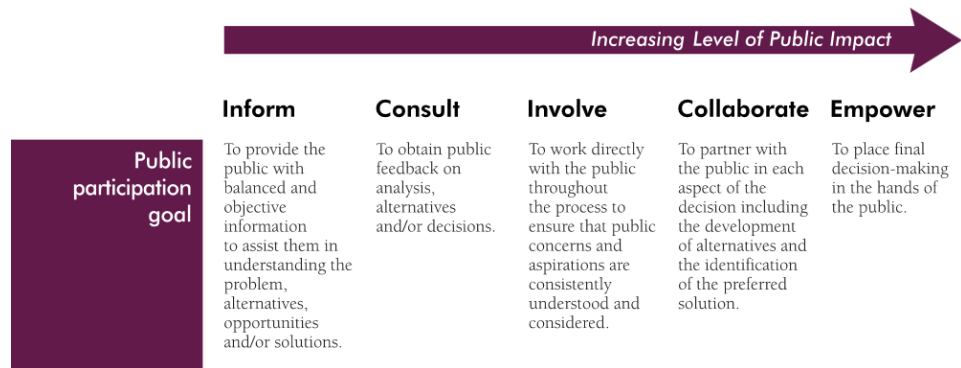
**STRATEGIC PLAN REFERENCE:**

While not specifically referenced in the City’s strategic plan or strategic priorities, this activity is a statutory requirement, and utilizes staff resources in carrying out the actions required.

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

Affected property owners are notified in writing of both the amount of the parcel tax assessed, and their opportunity to appeal the assessment.

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



© International Association for Public Participation

**OPTIONS:**

1. THAT Council set the Parcel Tax Review Panel on Wednesday, April 2, 2025 at 3:00 pm at the CVRD Civic Room, 770 Harmston Ave, Courtenay.
2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.  
While Option 2 is offered, Council should be aware that sufficient time for mailing the notice letters to property owners, meeting the statutory advertising requirements, and meeting of the panel to review and authenticating the 2025 parcel tax roll must all be considered in setting the date.

Prepared by: Scott Sawkins, CPA, CGA, Accounting Supervisor  
 Reviewed by: Krista McClintock, CPA, CGA, Manager of Finance  
 Reviewed by: Adam Langenmaier, BBC, CPA, CA, Director of Financial Services

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



# STAFF REPORT

**To:** Council

**File No.:** 7800-20

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

**Date:** March 12, 2025

**Subject:** Strategic Cultural Plan and Implementation Strategy Adoption

**PURPOSE:** To present the final Strategic Cultural Plan (Attachment 1) and Strategic Cultural Plan Implementation Strategy (Attachment 2) for Council's adoption.

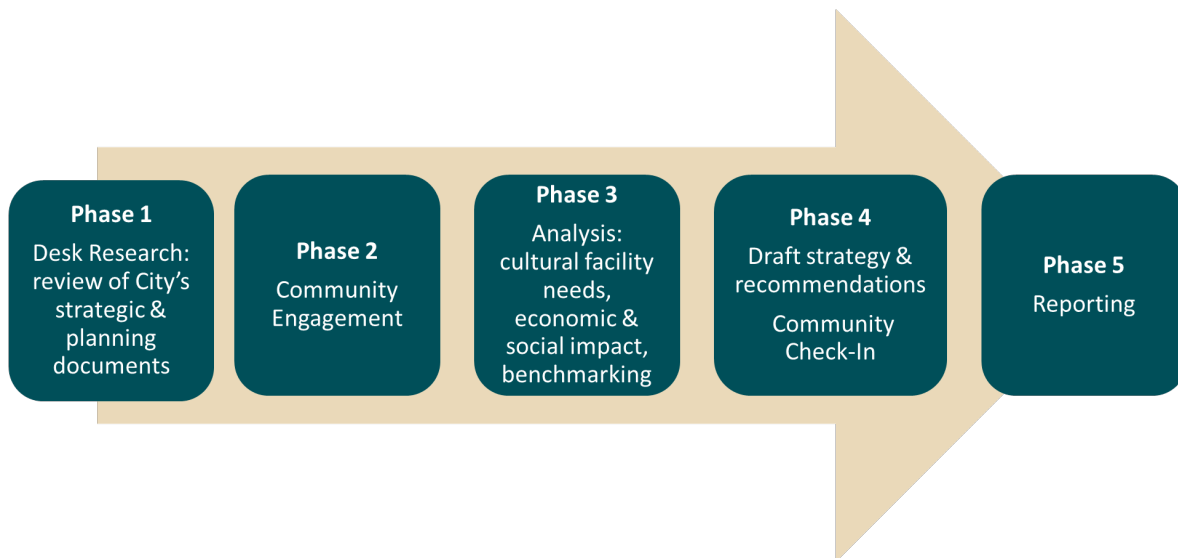
## BACKGROUND:

The goal of the Strategic Cultural Plan (the Plan) is to highlight the impact and value of arts and culture in Courtenay and to provide a framework and roadmap to continue supporting this important aspect of community life. Over a ten-year period, the Strategic Cultural Plan lays out the vision, goals, objectives, and actions that will steer the City of Courtenay in the direction of a future in which arts and culture is integral to everyday life and Courtenay is recognized as a vibrant, sustainable arts and culture hub representing the diversity of residents, communities, and visitors alike.

Initiated in 2023, the Strategic Cultural Plan is a 2023-2026 Council Strategic Priority that is supported by several City policy and background documents: Cultural Services Review (2019), Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2019), and Official Community Plan (OCP) (2022).

The Strategic Cultural Plan was developed through a five-phase process (see Figure 1) and included an extensive public community engagement process based on equity, diversity and inclusion principles that align with the City's OCP cardinal directions.

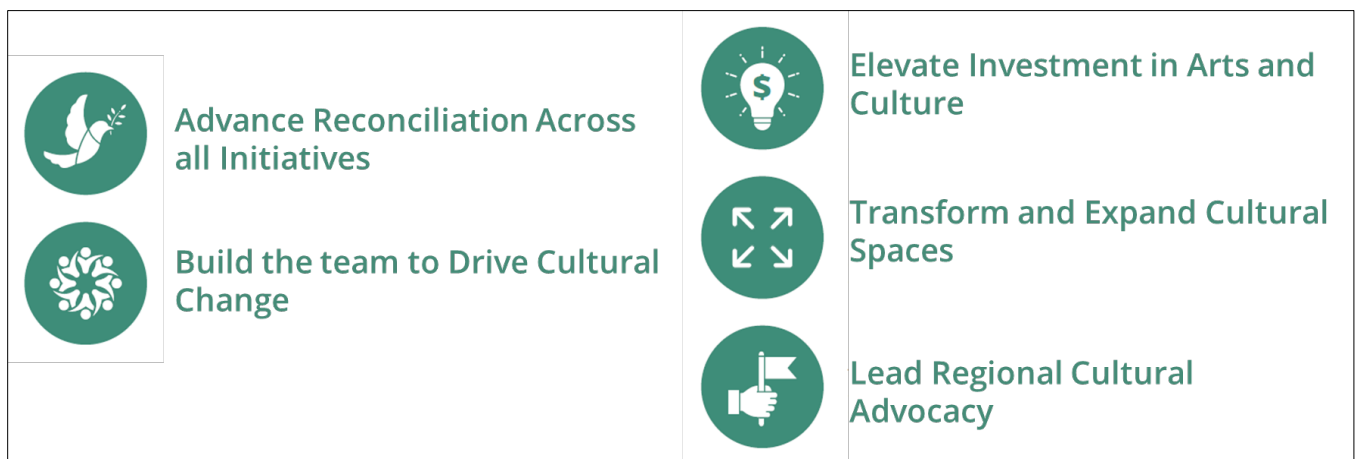
Figure 1: Project Overview



The Draft Strategic Cultural Plan consists of a vision and five overarching goals. Each goal consists of objectives and subsequent actions detailing recommendations for the City of Courtenay to consider in its implementation of the Strategic Cultural Plan over the next ten years and beyond. The Strategic Cultural Plan also includes research findings from the facility options analysis, benchmarking and comparative cultural service review, and social and economic impact analysis. These components were combined with the community engagement findings to form the draft Strategic Cultural Plan.

Foundation Elements were also introduced as an underpinning layer, identifying what will be required to direct the Plan’s vision into achievable goals. The Foundational Elements (Figure 2) establish the core priorities that need to be in place to guide the phasing and actions throughout the implementation of Courtenay’s Strategic Cultural Plan.

Figure 2: Foundational Elements



The Draft Strategic Plan was presented to Council at the September 25, 2024 Council meeting where Council resolved the following:

*THAT Council receive for information the draft Strategic Cultural Plan (Attachment 1); and,  
THAT Council direct staff to proceed with the next steps towards the completion of the Strategic Cultural Plan as detailed in this staff report.*

Following Council’s direction, Staff posted the draft Strategic Cultural Plan along with the Strategic Cultural Plan Summary (Attachment 3) on the website project website. A short questionnaire seeking feedback from the public on the level of support for the vision statement, objectives, goals, actions and any further feedback was made available from October 8th to November 6th, 2024. A summary of the survey results can be found in the next section of this report.

In addition to the public survey, staff engaged directly with key interested parties including Indigenous serving organizations and the City’s four core cultural partners to gain deeper feedback on the draft Plan.

**DISCUSSION:**

**Community Engagement Summary**

The community engagement framework to inform the development of the plan was guided by the OCP’s cardinal directions and intentional approaches to engage a diverse representation of Courtenay’s communities in both a broad and deep way. In addition to a public survey and direct engagement with the arts and culture sector, staff arranged conversations with community organizations representing equity priority groups as intermediaries including Indigenous peoples, people of colour, persons with disabilities, youth, new and emerging artists, people who are unhoused, 2SLGBTQIA+, and newcomers. A summary of engagement activities carried out throughout the project are summarized in Table 1 below.

*Table 1: Phase 2 Engagement Activities*

<b>Engagement Activity</b>	<b>Number of People</b>
<b>Development of the Strategic Cultural Plan (Phase 2)</b>	
Arts and Culture Round Table Focus Group	38 participants
1 on 1 interviews with cultural service providers, City staff, arts and culture interest groups, and equity priority groups including K’ómoks First Nation, MIKI’SIW Métis Association and Indigenous Women’s Sharing Society.	24 interviews & 54 participants
Group conversations with equity priority communities.	28 participants
On-line community survey	~700 respondents
Public Drop-In Event Downtown Courtenay Summer Street Market	
<b>Community Check-In on Draft Vision, Goals &amp; Objectives (Phase 4)</b>	
Community Check-In Public Event	40 participants
Online Survey	78 respondents
<b>Draft Strategic Cultural Plan Reporting (Phase 5)</b>	
Online Survey	~149 respondents
Follow up in-person conversations with representatives from the MIKI’SIW Métis Association, Wachiay Friendship Centre and Indigenous Women’s Sharing Society and attendance at the Comox Valley Regional District Reconciliation Advisory Table	20 participants/4 engagement sessions
Facilitated session with the City’s core cultural partners: Sid Williams Theatre Society, Comox Valley Arts, Courtenay and District Historical Society and Comox Valley Art Gallery Society	4 participants/2 City staff members

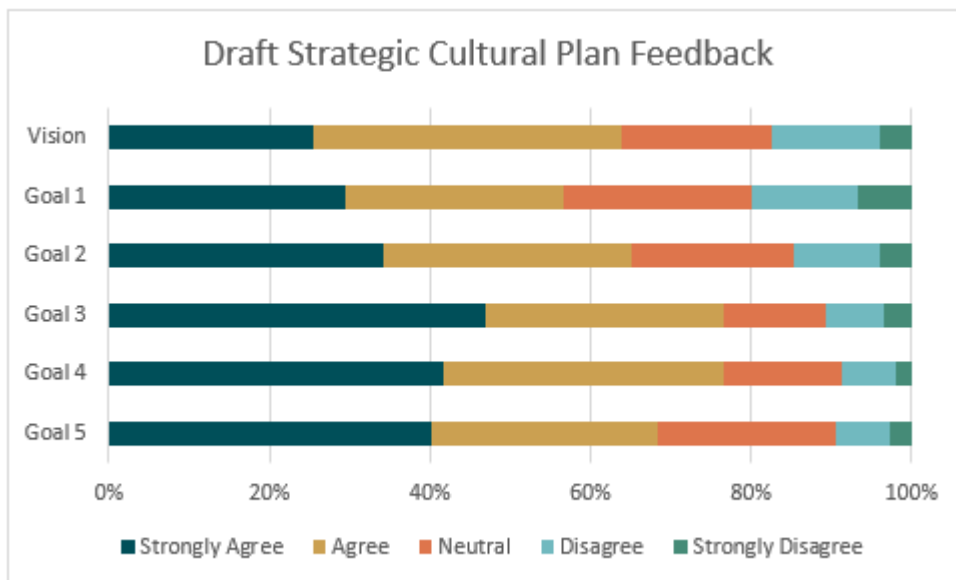
**Draft Strategic Cultural Plan Engagement**

**Online Survey Results**

Approximately 149 responses were received on the public check-in survey. Although the participation rate was much lower than received in the initial survey, it is not out of the norm to receive a lower rate of participation after the extensive consultation process in earlier phases. Each participant was asked what

their level of agreement was for the vision, five overarching goals, and corresponding objectives of the Plan. The results of the survey are summarized in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Draft Strategic Cultural Plan – Level of Agreement with Vision, Goals, and Objectives



Overall the level of support for the vision, goals, and objectives of the draft Strategic Cultural Plan were high, with over 80% of respondents indicating strong agreement, agreement, or neutral agreement, including higher levels of support (~90%) for the goals and objectives related to cultural spaces, bolstering community arts, and strategic development of the sector.

Survey participants were also given an opportunity to provide written feedback which is summarized below.

*Vision Statement:*

- Some respondents felt the statement could be more concise and questioned whether arts and culture can address deeper community issues.
- Comments that the vision should focus on a broader cultural strategy.
- Calls for a more balanced and practical approach that aligns cultural development with the city's broader priorities.

*Goal 1: Advance Truth and Reconciliation through Arts and Culture*

- Support for free training for local Indigenous peoples (K'ómoks First Nation, Métis, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous communities).
- Emphasis that engagement with Indigenous communities must be sincere and meaningful.
- Some felt that reconciliation efforts should be balanced with broader cultural inclusion.

*Goal 2: Build Community Resilience through Arts and Culture*

- Call for more public spaces (outdoor and indoor) for community use, including areas with tables for work and socializing.

- Recommendations for intergenerational programs, heritage preservation, and cross-cultural collaborations.
- Calls for grassroots-led cultural growth rather than a top-down government approach.
- Emphasis on aligning cultural strategies with broader community engagement efforts.

*Goal 3: Develop More Accessible and Affordable Spaces*

- Concerns over limited accessible venues
- Calls for affordable rehearsal spaces for musicians and multi-use downtown venues.
- Suggestions to invest in existing infrastructure (Filberg Centre, Lewis Centre, and art gallery) rather than new projects.
- Strong advocacy for a new, multi-functional venue with a performance hall, meeting rooms, café, and washroom facilities.
- Desire for affordable studio spaces, particularly for ceramics and other creative disciplines.
- Inclusion of technological supports for the hearing impaired.

*Goal 4: Bolster Community Arts*

- Frustration over the removal of the CV Art building's gift shop, which previously showcased local artists.
- Desire for better engagement with choral and theatre communities through collaborative structures.
- Call for more support for local arts organizations, particularly volunteer-led initiatives.
- Suggestions for increasing financial incentives to support community-led arts initiatives.
- Interest in expanding cultural events in Courtenay to attract more participation and increase visibility for the arts sector.

*Goal 5: Support the Strategic Development of the Cultural Sector*

- Concerns over the vague language in action items (e.g., "consider"), with calls for more concrete commitments.
- Desire for more evening events (music, comedy, art shows) alongside local food venues to create a vibrant downtown.
- Agreement with developing downtown as a cultural hub but also a need to address issues such as crime, homelessness, and substance use.
- Skepticism about the plan's ability to result in meaningful change, with calls for clear implementation timelines and oversight.
- Questions about the frequency of plan reviews and whether there will be adequate financial support for its goals.
- Calls for stronger regional collaboration involving Comox, Cumberland, and the broader district.
- Action 5.2.3 (Create a working group to develop a sustainable vision and action plan for nightlife in Courtenay and advocate for the nighttime economy), will be vital for the Valley's development and expanding population.

Overall, survey results show that there is strong support for expanding accessible and affordable arts spaces, increasing opportunities for local artists, and fostering community resilience through cultural initiatives. Many respondents emphasized the need for clear implementation plans, regional collaboration, and financial accountability to ensure meaningful progress. Questions were raised about the cost of the plan, its feasibility without regional involvement, and whether taxpayer funds should focus on pressing social issues like safety and homelessness before arts investment. There are also calls for a grassroots, community-driven approach.

Specific changes to the draft Strategic Cultural Plan were not made as a result of survey feedback as there was high levels of support indicated and the specific pieces of feedback regarding areas of focus, cost and capacity, reporting and accountability, and regional collaboration are addressed either through specific actions outlined in the plan or through the Implementation Plan accompanying this report.

### ***K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, and Indigenous Serving Community Organization Engagement***

As a follow up to the release of the draft strategic plan, staff reached out to K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, and other Urban Indigenous serving community organizations requesting a follow up conversation. In addition, the draft Strategic Cultural Plan was shared with the Comox Valley Reconciliation Advisory Table for discussion. With the foundational element of "Advance Reconciliation Across All Initiatives" and the first goal of the plan as "Advance Truth and Reconciliation through Arts and Culture," it was essential to seek feedback from K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association Inuit and Urban Indigenous community members through separate and direct consultation in alignment with the distinction-based approach to Indigenous engagement.

A summary of the feedback received from MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Indigenous Women's Sharing Society and Wachai Friendship Centre is summarized below:

#### ***K'ómoks First Nation***

At the time of the submission of this report, a follow up opportunity to meet K'ómoks First Nation Chief and Band Council to receive feedback in addition to previous engagement had not presented itself. However, in the City's commitment to advance truth and reconciliation and ensure Indigenous involvement in the development of this Plan, the Strategic Cultural Plan will remain a living document. The Plan will be open to dialogue and adjustment over time and as and when K'ómoks First Nation has the capacity to engage and share feedback on the Plan and how the Plan can support their priorities.

#### ***MIKI'SIW Métis Association***

The feedback highlighted the need for greater inclusion of Indigenous languages, such as incorporating local Indigenous greetings and signage in public spaces. The MIKI'SIW Métis Association shared that it requires stable operational funding, including support for an executive director and administrative resources, as well as event inclusion. Métis cultural competency training for City staff and the community was identified as a need, along with a request that local government consider employing Indigenous cultural coordinators or liaisons to lead initiatives. Recommendations were made to change the language in the strategic cultural plan to emphasize relationship-building rather than transactional terms like "leveraging" or "consider." There was support for honorarium policies to be established in consultation with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, referencing models such as the BC College of Nurses and Midwives. Support was also provided for the identified need for space, programming collaboration, and funding. Improved accessibility, such as free ticket programs, was identified as essential to lowering barriers to arts and culture participation. Additionally, it was identified that Métis representation should be ensured in arts and culture committees, with appropriate compensation. Specific feedback regarding the vision was provided to acknowledge all Indigenous groups beyond KFN as well as the visual representation of Métis culture in the SCP summary. Additionally, there was support for a centralized community event calendar to provide better access to information.

MIKI'SIW Métis Association provided a letter (Attachment 4) that expressed the importance of clarifying the distinctions-based approach and how MIKI'SIW Métis Association sees it being honoured and respected in the Plan.

#### *Indigenous Women's Sharing Society*

The feedback from the Indigenous Women's Sharing Society (IWSS) emphasized the need for culturally safe, inclusive spaces that foster healing, education, and connection while supporting the revitalization and sharing of Indigenous knowledge. It was shared that advancing truth and reconciliation requires respectful storytelling, Indigenous-led planning, and implementing decolonization efforts (E.G. Canada Day), including renaming spaces such as the Native Sons Hall and supporting key commemorative events. Recommendations were provided regarding strengthening intergenerational programs, welcoming newcomers, and collaborating with diverse organizations to enhance community resilience. Support was indicated for accessible and affordable spaces, such as an Urban Indigenous Wellness Centre, as they are seen as essential to fostering safety and cultural inclusion. Feedback was provided that community arts should highlight Indigenous issues through murals, storytelling, and reduced barriers for performers. Finally, it was identified that the cultural sector should integrate Indigenous perspectives from the outset, prioritize cultural safety training, and support Indigenous tourism and economic development through strategic partnerships. Additional feedback included guidance for the City to focus on long-term relationship building with Indigenous serving organizations and community members which would require the City to invest the time and resources necessary to commit to relationship building as a goal in and of itself, as compared to more transactional, utilitarian approaches.

#### *Wachiy Friendship Centre*

The Wachiy Friendship Centre offers services, programs and resources to urban Indigenous, low-income individuals and families in the community at its owned facility. The organization was looking forward to the expansion of their existing space with an addition of community gathering space and commercial kitchen to allow for social gatherings and space for their patrons to connect, in addition to the adjacent 40-unit housing development which is close to completion. Discussion focused on staff learning from and listening to Wachiy staff regarding how they work in community and the services they provide, in addition to the value they place on connecting people to their respective cultures and the role cultural connection plays in health and well-being. Opportunities for working together were identified, including staff connecting them to the Recreation Access and Leisure for Everyone Accessibility Program referral initiative whereby Wachiy staff can make direct referrals for these programs to Courtenay Recreation.

#### *Comox Valley Reconciliation Advisory Table*

Key reoccurring themes expressed through conversations with Indigenous members of the community were also brought forth at the Comox Valley Reconciliation Advisory Table, as summarized below:

- The importance of building relationships with community members including Elders. This takes time and trust that can only be built over time.
- Opportunities to support truth and reconciliation by promoting opportunities for integrating arts and culture into community events, ceremonies and Indigenous programs supported by low barrier and culturally safe gathering spaces.
- When asking Indigenous individuals to share their knowledge or expertise or participate in City planning initiatives, advice was given that it is respectful to provide an honorarium for their work that considers the time, knowledge and experience being provided by the Indigenous individual. It was advised that



this should be done in a culturally sensitive way and based on policy that has been developed in consultation with Indigenous knowledge keepers.

- The importance of local governments considering employing Indigenous staff (i.e. as a liaison) to ensure interactions between the local government and Indigenous community members are connected through a direct lens of Indigenous cultural safety and lived experience.
- Recommendations to advance anti-racism policies to create awareness and support anti-racism and inclusion.

### *Revisions to the Strategic Cultural Plan*

Based on the feedback received from engagement with Indigenous serving organizations, the following revisions have been made to the Strategic Cultural Plan:

#### 1. Revision to the vision statement

- a. The original vision statement referenced “the culture and history of Indigenous peoples, who have lived on these lands since time immemorial.” This original reference unintentionally excluded Metis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous community members. The vision statement has been amended to be inclusive of K’ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous community members, aligning with feedback received from the Indigenous engagement by removing the reference to “...who have lived on these lands since time immemorial.”

#### 2. Distinctions based engagement

- a. Based on feedback received the Strategic Cultural Plan now includes clarity on how the distinction-based approach will be applied to the Plan, including an explanation that the distinctions-based approach is used to differentiate between rights that K’ómoks First Nation, Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous peoples individually hold and the land and title rights that K’ómoks First Nation solely holds for their unceded traditional territory.
- b. The Plan has been adjusted to ensure actions related to Objective 1.2, “Respectfully acknowledge the K’ómoks territory through arts and culture,” solely apply to the K’ómoks First Nation. Whereas actions that guide Objective 1.3, “Increase support and investment in Indigenous arts and culture” apply collectively to the K’ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis, Inuit and Urban Indigenous Peoples in the community.

#### 3. Language adjustments

- a. References to “Métis” were replaced with “MIKI'SIW Métis Association” as the MIKI'SIW Métis Association is authorized as a Métis Nation British Columbia chartered community to represent the Métis community in the region.
- b. Language throughout the Plan was adjusted to reflect the feedback and recommendations provided to focus more on relationship building. As such, words such as “partnership” have been replaced with “relationship” where the intent of the objective or action is to build ongoing, lasting relationships as opposed to developing more transactional partnerships focused on achieving specific actions.

### ***Core Cultural Service Provider Workshop***

The Sid Williams Theatre, Comox Valley Art Gallery, Comox Valley Community Art Council and Courtenay and District Museum and Palaeontology Centre are core cultural partners to the City and as such have been included in the development, refinement, and finalization of the Plan since the start of the project: from the development of the project scope to arts and culture roundtable discussions, one on one interviews and providing feedback on the draft Plan before it was released to the public. This is out of acknowledgement of

the exceptional knowledge and expertise this group brings to this project as experts in their respective arts, culture, and heritage fields.

As part of this ongoing engagement, staff and key representatives of the City's core cultural service providers met on December 9, 2024 to review the City's cultural planning process and discuss how the Strategic Cultural Plan can help address their emerging needs, including but not limited to declining grant streams, impacts rising inflation, and outstanding requests for facility expansion and upgrades. The meeting was also an opportunity for staff to introduce the up-coming Downtown Local Area Plan project and obtain feedback on the findings to date.

Through this engagement, the core cultural partners identified the following priorities and recommendations, providing their feedback on the draft Strategic Cultural Plan:

- To support cultural development in Courtenay, efforts should focus on resourcing a cultural planner / coordinator to act as a bridge between sector needs and the City. This would include support for capacity building in areas such as cultural services development, audience engagement, and destination marketing.
- Importance of prioritizing the completion of a detailed Cultural Spaces and Facilities Needs Assessment to support current and future facility planning needs. A needs assessment should precede facility planning, ensuring functional design programs align with each facility's role within a future cultural district.
- Support for a cultural district downtown, with a recommendation that the City and cultural partners should deepen their understanding the process and benefits of developing a cultural district.
- Request for regional partnerships and funding, with commitments for funding over five-year terms.

A significant portion of the discussion focused on space and facility needs, with a summary as follows:

- Agreement that the City and cultural partners should collaborate on securing funding from sources like the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund and BC Arts Infrastructure Fund to support completion of detailed facility need assessments.
- Climate Mitigation Plan should be conducted to protect cultural assets, alongside exploring off-site storage solutions.
- Optimization efforts for the Centre for the Arts and Comox Valley Art Gallery should address security, space planning, and public programming needs.
- Reviewing the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and museum regarding the property located at 247 4<sup>th</sup> Street where the parklet is currently located.
- Addressing critical gaps such as HVAC, accessibility, safety, and infrastructure upgrades at the Centre for the Arts, Sid Williams Theatre, and Museum, including storage expansion and essential equipment replacements.

#### *Revisions to the Strategic Cultural Plan*

The following changes have been made to the Strategic Cultural Plan - Cultural Facilities Options Working Document to incorporate the feedback received from the cultural partners:

Short term (1-3 Years):

- Addition of planning activities in order to support the development of the Downtown Cultural District.
- Addition of a Cultural Facilities Plan following the cultural facility needs assessment and feasibility studies are completed to guide the City's infrastructure investment over the next 10 years.

Medium Term (3-5 Years):

- Move the timing of the studio theatre and public plaza to the medium term from the longer term. This aligns with the investment requirements to support the downtown cultural district as well as activities as outlined in the phased implementation strategy.

Long Term

- Move the investment in a mobile stage to the long term. This recommendation will be reviewed after the Downtown Vitalization Local Area Planning process as it could be met through civic plaza space or facility studies, as well as a need to assess storage requirements. There may also be an opportunity to meet this need through organizations that specialize in outdoor performances.

Future Term (10+ years):

1. Adjust language for the Downtown Cultural District to reflect all the cultural planning work that is carried out in the short term and medium term will lead to the achievement of the downtown cultural district in this timeframe.
2. Adjust language for the Regional Performance Arts Centre to articulate that this is an aspirational goal for the region that should be considered in the future and assessed through business case analysis to determine the ability of the Comox Valley region to support such infrastructure from an economic, cultural, and community perspective.

***Linking the Plan to the Downtown Vitalization Local Area Plan***

The Downtown Vitalization Local Area Plan (DVLAP) process is currently under way. The Strategic Cultural Plan will provide guidance on how the DVLAP process can support arts and culture through initiatives, programs, and infrastructure investments as illustrated by the Municipal Plan Linkages diagram in Figure 4:

Figure 4: Municipal Plan Linkages<sup>1</sup>



The feedback contained in the *What We Heard* report from the first phase of the Downtown Vitalization Local Area project feedback illustrates the importance of prioritizing investment in the downtown cultural district that is anchored by the City’s cultural facilities: The Centre for the Arts that houses the Comox Valley Art Gallery and Comox Valley Arts, the Courtenay and District Museum and Palaeontology Centre, and the Sid Williams Theatre.

Stakeholder interviews emphasized the significance of Courtenay’s Downtown Cultural District as a key hub and gateway to downtown, highlighting its role in arts, heritage, tourism, and economic development. Investments in event programming, transit accessibility, historic signage, public art, wayfinding, and improvements to public spaces will enhance downtown’s vibrancy, as well as tourism and economic activity. These findings are consistent with the findings of the Strategic Cultural Plan through its community engagement, research and social and economic impact analysis, and are reinforced by specific objectives actions outlined in the Plan.

The Strategic Cultural Plan has been updated to reflect how the alignment of municipal plans will ensure a sustainable strategy for moving forward the recommendations and actions of the Plan. Aligning efforts with existing city strategies will help ensure a cohesive and integrated planning approach. The Plan also highlights the importance of continuing to focus City planning efforts, including capital facility and infrastructure investment in the downtown cultural district to amplify the significant economic, social, and tourism development benefits for the City and that extend to the entire region.

### Final Strategic Cultural Plan

With the conclusion of engagement on the draft Strategic Cultural Plan, staff are recommending the adoption of the final Strategic Cultural Plan and the accompanying Implementation Strategy, including the revisions made as described in this report. This recommendation is the culmination of almost two years of work

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<sup>1</sup> Patricia Huntsman Culture & Communications.

alongside community and key partners and will set the priorities and path forward over the next ten years as the City continues to support the growth and sustainability of arts and culture in Courtenay.

While municipal cultural plans often share consistent themes around space, accessibility, diversity, and impact, they also aim to reflect and represent what makes arts and culture unique in the respective community. Throughout the cultural planning process consistent themes shone through for Courtenay's cultural plan regarding connection and community. Arts and culture were often described as the glue of the community's social fabric, as ways of bringing diverse people and ideas together in inclusive ways, and of facilitating not only joy and creativity, but also dialogue and understanding. As a staff reviewed these themes and reflected on public input, it was important to capture the essence of the Strategic Cultural Plan in a succinct and memorable way. As such, the Strategic Cultural Plan has been designed and built around the theme: Culture Connects Us (see Figure 5).

*Figure 5: Strategic Cultural Plan – Culture Connects Us Logo*



This branding is proposed to be used to not only represent the Strategic Cultural Plan, but also to accompany materials and investments the City makes and provides in relation to arts and culture in Courtenay and in support of the Plan's implementation.

The final vision for the Strategic Cultural Plan is recommended as follows:

**“ Courtenay is a thriving cultural hub of creative opportunities, dedicated to cultivating vibrant and inclusive arts and culture for residents and visitors alike. Culture and history of Indigenous peoples are interwoven into a diverse community where connection and resiliency are celebrated through artistic expression and cultural exchange. ”**

The Strategic Cultural Plan has five goals, each with accompanying objectives and actions, summarized in Table 2. There is a total of 59 actions which can be found in the Strategic Cultural Plan in Attachment 1, as well as the Summary in Attachment 3.

Table 2: Strategic Cultural Plan Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Advance truth and reconciliation through arts and culture	Goal 2: Build community resilience through arts and culture	Goal 3: Develop more accessible and affordable cultural spaces	Goal 4: Bolster community arts	Goal 5: Support the strategic development of the sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize the role and rights of K’ómoks First Nation, MIKI’SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples as it relates to arts and culture</li> <li>Respectfully acknowledge K’ómoks territory through arts and culture</li> <li>Increase support and investment in Indigenous arts and culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use arts and culture to support community belonging and inclusion, where differences and similarities are celebrated</li> <li>Leverage arts and culture as a medium to engage with community on complex social challenges and to support healing</li> <li>Develop cultural programming that appeals to a more diverse community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the availability of accessible and affordable spaces for arts and culture</li> <li>Prioritize initiatives &amp; upgrades that provide enhanced and additional space for arts and culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the capacity building of community-led arts and culture organizations</li> <li>Break down silos and increase collaboration across the cultural sector</li> <li>Increase the awareness of community-led arts and culture event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build and sustain existing social and economic impact by strengthening Courtenay’s professional arts and culture sector</li> <li>Embed culture more firmly in tourism initiatives in Courtenay and the Comox Valley</li> <li>Create new and or updated policies to support the cultural sector</li> <li>Explore strategic ways to meet sector labour needs</li> </ul>

**Implementation Strategy:**

With the finalization of the Strategic Cultural Plan in place, staff looked to develop an Implementation Strategy (see Attachment 2) to ensure the vision, goals, objectives and actions of the plan are able to move forward with adequate support and resources. The execution of Courtenay’s Strategic Cultural Plan follows a phased implementation approach, ensuring that initiatives are systematically prioritized and carried out. The strategy follows a three-phase implementation approach where goals progress at different rates based on priorities and available resources, rather than being restricted to fixed timelines. Each action is thoughtfully structured across the three phases to align with the City’s strategic priorities. This method promotes measured progress, flexibility, and lasting sustainability. Each phase is guided by a vision for the key milestones to be achieved in that phase as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Phased Implementation Approach and Key Milestones of Each Phase

<p><b>PHASE 1</b></p> <p><b>Building Foundations</b></p> <p>Focuses on establishing the necessary frameworks, policies, relationships, and resources to support long-term cultural development.</p>	<p><b>PHASE 2</b></p> <p><b>Enhancing Access and Visibility</b></p> <p>Expands cultural programming, strengthens partnerships and relationships, and increases public engagement, ensuring greater accessibility and representation across the community.</p>	<p><b>PHASE 3</b></p> <p><b>Thriving as a Cultural Hub</b></p> <p>Integrates arts and culture into City and regional planning, economic and tourism development, solidifying Courtenay’s identity as a vibrant and sustainable cultural hub.</p>
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These phases are then expanded upon to identify milestones for each goal within each phase, followed by the specific objectives and actions attached to achieving these milestones. This approach enables all objectives and actions to be strategically aligned to the foundational elements identified in the Strategic Cultural Plan required to build the foundation upon which the rest of the Plan can be implemented, as well as phased according to what the necessary precursors are for each objective and action. The priorities for each goal and phase ensure alignment with strategic vision, capacity, and sustainability with every goal advancing by building on initial efforts, enhancing access, and reinforcing long-term cultural impact.

The Implementation Strategy provides an overview of the goals and related priorities for each phase, the related objectives, and detailed tables identifying the actions for each phase. Table 4 provides an overview of the implementation priorities identified for each goal and phase.

Table 4: Goals and Implementation Priorities

GOAL	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3
<b>Advance Truth and Reconciliation Through Arts and Culture</b>	Strengthen reconciliation as a core value by integrating Indigenous perspectives into cultural planning and policies and investing in relationship building.	Support Indigenous arts and culture to enhance visibility and capacity through programming, public art, and civic engagement in festivals and events.	Deepen reconciliation efforts through long term relationships and embedding of Indigenous knowledge into cultural planning and integration with tourism and economic development.
<b>Build Community Resilience Through Arts and Culture</b>	Strengthen arts and culture support by establishing key roles, policies, and inclusive programming structures.	Expand partnerships with equity-priority groups, schools, and businesses to increase and diversify participation and representation.	Ensure arts and culture remain a core part of community life by fostering long-term collaboration and public involvement.
<b>Develop More Accessible and Affordable Cultural Spaces</b>	Assess cultural infrastructure needs and establish policy frameworks for future space development.	Implement facility policies, secure funding, and initiate infrastructure improvements.	Integrate cultural spaces into city planning, improve accessibility, and strengthen long-term sustainability models.
<b>Bolster Community Arts</b>	Establish funding structures and leadership to enable arts and culture sustainability and growth.	Expand collaboration among artists, organizations, and businesses to increase cultural reach.	Strengthen cultural visibility through reporting, public engagement, and long-term partnerships.
<b>Support the Strategic Development of the Cultural Sector</b>	Enhance and develop sustainable funding strategies and City policies and work towards the downtown as a cultural district.	Strengthen regional collaboration and integration of culture into tourism and economic development.	Position the City as a recognized cultural leader through regional partnerships, marketing, and workforce development.

Also included in the Implementation Strategy is the approach to capital planning for cultural facility improvement and development projects. The Strategic Cultural Plan includes a Cultural Facility Options Analysis that identifies facility needs and gaps and proposes options for the City to consider in meeting these gaps either through repurposing of existing space, improvements to current facilities, or the development of new cultural facilities. As recommended in the Plan the first step before proceeding with facility improvements or developments is to complete facility needs assessments and or feasibility studies, followed by the development of a Cultural Facility Capital Plan. Once these key pieces of work are complete, the recommendations coming forward will be integrated into the appropriate phases of the Implementation Strategy, pending Council's direction. As such, it is recommended that the facility assessments and studies, followed by the Cultural Facilities Capital Plan, be completed in phase 1 with likely improvements to existing facilities occurring in phase 2 and expansions or facility developments to occur in phase 3.

### **Next Steps**

Should Council adopt the Strategic Cultural Plan and accompanying Implementation Strategy, staff will proceed with initiating the work necessary to begin implementation activities for Phase 1, including facility planning which was identified as an urgent priority by the core cultural partners. The approval of the 2025-2029 Financial Plan by Council on February 26, 2025 enables staff to proceed with the recruitment and hiring of a Culture and Events Coordinator, a position that is critical to the advancement of key City and Council priorities related to regional funding strategies, special events and hosting, cultural planning and policy development, and implementation of the Strategic Cultural plan.

### **POLICY ANALYSIS:**

The development and completion of a Strategic Cultural Plan and the implementation of the Strategic Cultural Plan through the Implementation Strategy is identified in the Cultural Service Review (2019), Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2019), and the OCP (2022).

### **Official Community Plan (OCP), 2022:**

Cardinal Direction – Reconciliation: The City commits to incorporating Indigenous perspectives into its work and decision-making process, and to providing equitable and inclusive services that benefit Indigenous peoples. The City will seek guidance from Indigenous partners in how to make this commitment a reality.

#### *Arts, Culture, and Heritage Objectives:*

- Residents and visitors know they are in K'ómoks First Nation territory by the prominent tangible and intangible celebration of their culture and heritage
- Local art, culture and heritage, including natural heritage, are showcased throughout Courtenay
- Courtenay has a reputation as the regional centre for arts and culture
- Community cultural and heritage assets are identified, preserved, and celebrated
- Identities expressed in the public realm and cultural programming are representative of Courtenay and the region
- Community access and participation in arts and culture is strong and widespread

#### *Arts, Culture and Heritage Policy Actions:*

- ACH Action 3: "Work towards the downtown Public Commons public plaza concept identified in the Downtown Courtenay Playbook."
- ACH Action 6: "Create a Courtenay Cultural Plan, including consideration of a dedicated community arts and culture space."



- ACH Action 7: "Continue to support the downtown as the region's arts, culture, and heritage hub by ensuring key cultural partners such as the Comox Valley Art Gallery, the Courtenay and District Museum, the Sid Williams Civic Theatre, and the Comox Valley Community Arts Council continue to be located downtown, and promoting and investing in public art and cultural opportunities downtown."
- ACH Action 11: "Consider the establishment of a dedicated community arts and culture space."

#### **Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2019)**

- Collaborate with the other valley jurisdictions, including K'ómoks First Nation, on a Regional Cultural Plan.

#### **Cultural Service Review (2019)**

- Carrying out a cultural plan is an essential next step through the Inter Municipal Working Group, to help guide investment and decision making over the next ten years

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The financial implications of the Strategic Cultural Plan are summarized on page 13 of the Implementation Strategy. Staff have endeavoured to provide estimated known budget costs for all phases. More detailed budgets will be developed as the City progresses to each phase. Any net new or one-time costs will be brought forward in the annual and five-year operating and capital budgets for Council's consideration.

For capital implications, further analysis is required. The cultural facilities needs assessment and cultural facilities plan are recommended to be carried out in phase 1 to determine the scope and magnitude of upgrades or improvements required to meet the needs and gaps identified by the Plan. The resulting Cultural Facilities Capital Plan will be brought to Council for consideration.

It is also important to note that not all actions will be directly delivered by the City. Some of the actions in the Plan can be achieved through community capacity and partnerships:

1. Actions currently being carried out by the core cultural service providers with existing funding,
2. Actions may be achieved through the core cultural service providers or other community collaborations, but may require additional funding, and or
3. Actions can be carried out through grant funds sought by core cultural service providers or other community organizations leveraged by the city's financial grants or in-kind support.

Should additional funding be required, staff would return to council for approval through the annual budget process.

Table 5 provides a summary of the estimated financial impacts of the Strategic Cultural Plan.

Table 5: Implementation Strategy – Estimate Financial Impacts

Phase	Funding Type	Estimated Funding Required
Phase 1: Building Foundations	Net-New Operating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Medium:</b> Estimated \$160,000</li> <li>▶ Cultural Coordinator, Indigenous engagement &amp; investments, and Arts &amp; Culture Grant Program</li> </ul>
	One-Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Medium:</b> Estimated \$300,000</li> <li>▶ Renaming NSH, Special Events, Facilities Studies and Public Art Policy</li> </ul>
Phase 2: Enhancing Access and Visibility	Net-New Operating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Low:</b> Estimated \$60,000</li> <li>▶ Program partnerships, events, and cultural asset mapping.</li> </ul>
	One-Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Medium:</b> Estimated \$250,000</li> <li>▶ Supporting Indigenous public art, marketing strategy, and capacity building</li> </ul>
Phase 3: Thriving as a Cultural Hub	Net-New Operating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Low:</b> Estimated \$10,000</li> <li>▶ Project partnerships, and committee development</li> </ul>
	One-Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Medium:</b> Estimated \$100,000</li> <li>▶ Public art</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	Net-New Operating	Estimated \$230,000
	One-Time	Estimated \$650,000

Funding types are classified as:

- Net New Operating: Ongoing funding required to sustain new or expanded initiatives, programs, or staffing
- One-Time: Funding allocated for capital projects or time-limited initiatives that do not require ongoing financial commitment

Funding is categorized as:

- Low: Under \$100,000
- Medium: \$100,000 - \$500,000
- High: Over \$500,000

Funding estimates also assume all actions are funded according to recommendations; any change in funding in one area may affect required funding in another area due to capacity or resource implications.

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:**

The completion of the Strategic Cultural Plan is part of the 2024/2025 Recreation, Culture, and Community Services Department work plan.

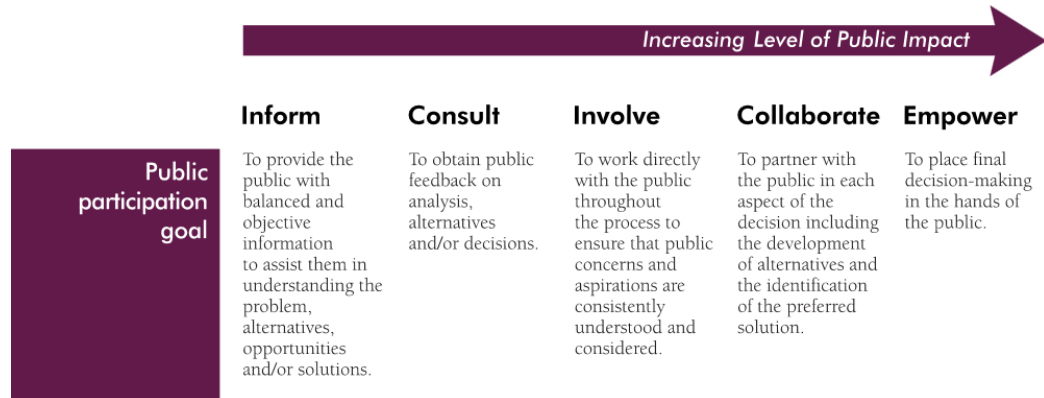
**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:**

This initiative will help address the following strategic priorities:

- Arts, Culture, and Heritage - Complete Strategic Cultural Plan
- Arts, Culture, and Heritage - Implement Strategic Cultural Plan

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

Staff consulted and involved the public based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation:



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**OPTIONS:**

1. THAT based on the March 12, 2025 staff report “Strategic Cultural Plan and Implementation Strategy Adoption,” Council approve the final draft of the Strategic Cultural Plan (Attachment 1) and Implementation Strategy (Attachment 2) as presented.
2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Attachment 1: Strategic Cultural Plan
2. Attachment 2: Strategic Cultural Plan Implementation Strategy
3. Attachment 3: Strategic Cultural Plan Summary
4. Attachment 4: MIKI'SIW Métis Association Letter – February 10, 2025

Prepared by: Joy Chan, Manager of Business Administration, Recreation, Culture and Community Services

Reviewed by: Susie Saunders, Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services  
Adam Langenmaier, Director of Financial Services

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

# Strategic Cultural Plan



**City of  
Courtenay**

March 12, 2025

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### Land Acknowledgement

The City of Courtenay respectfully acknowledges that the lands to which this Strategic Cultural Plan applies are on the Unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

The City is committed to a long-term collaboration with the K'ómoks First Nation to ensure the Strategic Cultural Plan supports Truth and Reconciliation and reflects K'ómoks First Nation values, objectives, and priorities. The City acknowledges that the Strategic Cultural Plan will need to be a living document to allow time for relationship building and meaningful engagement with K'ómoks First Nation that considers Indigenous values, practices, and priorities.

## Executive Summary

Located in the Comox Valley and on the Unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, Courtenay offers a vibrant arts and culture scene with a variety of offerings to residents and visitors. **The city is the heart of arts and culture in the Comox Valley, connecting residents and communities through diverse arts and cultural experiences.** There is also significant community and City support for the cultural sector, with numerous local arts and cultural organizations, and cultural facilities that serve residents of the city and region, as well as visitors.

The Strategic Cultural Plan creates **a framework and roadmap** to continue supporting arts and culture in Courtenay over the next 10 years. The Plan includes specific objectives and actions, informed **by extensive research and consultations**, including with diverse community members, arts and culture patrons, and local arts and culture organizations. The Plan was developed using a **5-phase approach**, involving desk research, community engagement, analysis, followed by the development of a draft strategy and recommendations for community feedback and review, and lastly, the creation of the final Strategic Cultural Plan.

**Community engagement for the Strategic Cultural Plan included:** an online survey which received approximately 700 responses overall, feedback from 120 community members via qualitative engagements, an arts and culture sector focus group attended by 38 participants from local arts and culture organizations, and a public drop-in engagement event in July 2023. The team also held 24 interviews, which engaged 54 participants in total. These interviews included consultations with four core cultural services providers (i.e., the Sid Williams Theatre, the Comox Valley Arts Gallery, the Comox Valley Community Arts Council, and the Courtenay and District Museum). In addition, 28 participants were engaged as part of four group conversations with equity priority communities (i.e., representatives of / persons with lived experience of disabilities, being unhoused, being a newcomer, and being part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community). Before the Strategic Cultural Plan was finalized, feedback from the final check-in survey which received 149 responses and the conversations from four Indigenous serving community organizations and the four core cultural service providers were incorporated into the draft Strategic Cultural Plan to formulate the final Strategic Cultural Plan.

**Community engagement identified priority needs** based on collective findings from engagement activities and across all individual and community group consultations for the Strategic Cultural Plan. Findings indicate there is a need for:

- Engaging K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples with cultural humility and safety.
- More cultural spaces, and better availability and affordability
- Developing more diverse and affordable cultural programming
- Further promotion of community partnerships and collaboration
- Increased support – financial and non-financial, local, and regional
- Further development of cultural tourism

- Attraction and training of technical cultural workers
- Development of a Public Art Policy
- Building relationships with community members including Elders

To support the development of Courtenay's Strategic Cultural Plan, in addition to community engagement activities, the following work was also completed to inform the key findings and recommendations:

- Cultural Facility Options Analysis
- Benchmarking of Comparative Jurisdictions
- Economic and Social Impact Analysis.

### Community-informed vision for arts and culture in Courtenay:

*“Courtenay is a thriving cultural hub of creative opportunities, dedicated to cultivating vibrant and inclusive arts and culture for residents and visitors alike. Culture and history of Indigenous peoples are interwoven into a diverse community where connection and resiliency are celebrated through artistic expression and cultural exchange.”*

### Strategic Goals and Objectives

The Strategic Cultural Plan is structured around **five strategic goals** to enable arts and culture to thrive in Courtenay. Each strategic goal is supported by key objectives, as outlined below. Each objective has specific actions, to guide the City of Courtenay in achieving the objectives. Prioritized actions are detailed in section 4.4 of this Strategic Cultural Plan.

#### **Goal 1: Advance truth and reconciliation through arts and culture**

- Objective 1.1: Recognize the role and rights of K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples as it relates to arts and culture
- Objective 1.2: Respectfully acknowledge K'ómoks territory through arts and culture
- Objective 1.3: Increase support and investment in Indigenous arts and culture

#### **Goal 2: Build community resilience through arts and culture**

- Objective 2.1: Use arts and culture to support community belonging and inclusion, where differences and similarities are celebrated



- Objective 2.2: Leverage arts and culture as a medium to engage with community on complex social challenges and to support healing
- Objective 2.3: Develop cultural programming that appeals to a more diverse community

### **Goal 3: Develop more accessible and affordable cultural spaces**

- Objective 3.1: Increase the availability of accessible and affordable spaces for arts and culture
- Objective 3.2: Prioritize initiatives/upgrades that provide enhanced and additional space for arts and culture

### **Goal 4: Bolster community arts**

- Objective 4.1: Support the capacity building of community-led arts and culture organizations
- Objective 4.2: Break down silos and increase collaboration across the cultural sector
- Objective 4.3: Increase the awareness of community-led arts and culture events

### **Goal 5: Support the strategic development of the cultural sector**

- Objective 5.1: Build and sustain existing social and economic impact by strengthening Courtenay's professional arts and culture sector
- Objective 5.2: Embed culture more firmly in tourism initiatives in Courtenay and the Comox Valley
- Objective 5.3: Create new and or updated policies to support the cultural sector
- Objective 5.4: Explore strategic ways to meet sector labour needs

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Arts and Culture in Courtenay

Courtenay, nestled in the Comox Valley and on the Unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, boasts a **vibrant arts and culture scene** that reflects the city's rich heritage and natural beauty. With a blend of traditional Indigenous influences and modern artistic expressions, Courtenay is **home to a significant number of artists, performers, cultural workers, curators, volunteers, skilled individuals, and numerous cultural institutions** that celebrate creativity in all its forms: such as the Sid Williams Theatre, Comox Valley Centre for the Arts, including the Comox Valley Art Gallery, and the Courtenay and District Museum. The downtown area is a hub of arts and culture activity and lends itself towards the cultivation of a public art program. Throughout the year, various **festivals and events** such as the Vancouver Island Music Festival attract artists and visitors from across the region. Whether exploring the vibrant arts scene, attending a cultural event, or strolling through the streets, Courtenay offers a dynamic and inspiring cultural experience for residents and visitors.

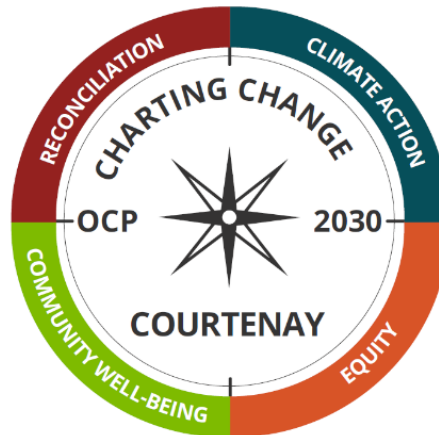
It is impossible to talk about arts and culture without recognizing **that Indigenous peoples have lived on these lands** since time immemorial. The intrinsic link between place and culture is fundamental to Indigenous perspectives and must be acknowledged as the City progresses in this Strategic Cultural Plan endeavor. **Courtenay is dedicated to fostering relationships in a respectful manner and engaging in continuous dialogue with K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples.** The City views the Strategic Cultural Plan as a dynamic document, open to evolving into the future with guidance from and partnerships with Indigenous peoples and communities.

Courtenay envisions itself as **a dynamic cultural hub within the Comox Valley**, fostering creativity and innovation in arts and culture. With a steadfast commitment to nurturing local talent and embracing diverse perspectives, Courtenay aims to be a beacon for artistic expression and cultural exchange in the valley. Through strategic investments in cultural facilities, collaborative partnerships with artists, support for community organizations, and the promotion of diverse programming, the City of Courtenay is dedicated to delivering a vibrant and accessible arts scene for all its residents and visitors. By celebrating the unique heritage of the region while embracing contemporary artistic movements, Courtenay aspires to cultivate an environment where creativity flourishes, enriching the lives of its residents and contributing to the cultural fabric of Courtenay and the Comox Valley.

To that end, the City embarked on the development of a **Strategic Cultural Plan** to provide a framework and roadmap to continue supporting arts and culture in Courtenay over the next 10 years. The City of Courtenay's Strategic Cultural Plan aims to:

- Mirror the values of Reconciliation, Community Wellbeing, Equity and Climate Action – as identified in the cardinal directions of the Official Community Plan (OCP) 2022 Figure 1.

Figure 1.: Official Community Plan, 2022 Cardinal Directions



- Engage in inclusive community dialogue.
- Build on and action existing policy recommendations, e.g., OCP (2022), Parks and Recreation Plan (2019), Downtown Courtenay Playbook (2016) – currently being revisited through the Downtown Vitalization Local Area Plan, and Cultural Service Review (2019).
- Consider both the social and economic impact of arts and culture.

The report summarizes the work that has taken place so far, and what the community has shared about the strengths, challenges, and priority needs relating to arts and culture in Courtenay. The findings have been used to develop goals and objectives including recommendations on how the City can improve support to artists, arts and culture organizations, and creatives, as well as support wider community priorities related to arts and culture. Actions are recommended to implement the Strategic Cultural Plan which will ensure that arts and culture become integrated into the community, as well as representative of all residents.

Furthermore, Courtenay's location in the Comox Valley highlights the interconnectedness of arts and culture within the region. To that end, recommendations include regional approaches and needs, recognizing that Courtenay is not isolated, but rather part of a broader regional arts and cultural ecosystem. Additionally, Courtenay's central position in the valley underscores its significance as a hub for arts and culture in the Comox Valley.

## 2. The Context for the Strategic Cultural Plan

The Strategic Cultural Plan was developed considering Courtenay's cultural profile including its current assets and resources, the City of Courtenay's strategic priorities, and existing cultural sector priorities.

### 2.1 Community Profile

With a natural and beautiful landscape, Courtenay's vibrant arts and culture scene presents a variety of opportunities for residents and visitors from within and beyond the region. The city is situated on the Unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of the land, whose arts and culture informs the artistic inspiration of the city. Courtenay's cultural sector has a strong creative community supported by multiple local arts organizations and many volunteers passionate about arts and culture in the community. The city is home to many artists, cultural practitioners, and curators who add depth to the cultural community.

Courtenay has multiple arts and culture assets including cultural spaces and facilities, community arts and cultural organizations, creative cultural enterprises, festivals and events, cultural heritage, public art, and diverse art forms including visual and performing arts. Specifically, there are over 150 cultural assets<sup>1</sup> in Courtenay, including over 30 community cultural organizations, some 28 cultural facilities<sup>2</sup>, and spaces used for cultural events and programming, and 10 arts-related educational institutions among other resources in the community. Notably, Courtenay is home to three core cultural facilities that anchor the City's cultural district located in downtown Courtenay i.e., Centre For the Arts which houses the Comox Valley Art Gallery and the Comox Valley Community Art Council, Courtenay & District Museum and Paleontology Centre, and Sid Williams Civic Theatre that serve residents and visitors to the city and the Comox Valley.

Various strategic planning documents in Courtenay highlight the need for a plan to guide the City's support of arts and culture. Thus, the Strategic Cultural Plan aims to guide the City in its relationships with the cultural sector, residents (including equity priority groups such as Indigenous communities, newcomers and immigrants, unhoused people, persons with disabilities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ community), and neighbours from the Comox Valley in relation to arts and culture.

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<sup>1</sup> Cultural assets identified through Nordicity asset mapping research. 'Cultural assets' include festivals and events (including arts and culture festivals and events and other events with culture component), creative cultural enterprises, arts education, spaces and facilities (including formal arts and culture venues, and occasional venues), community and cultural organizations (including non-profits, associations/societies, Indigenous organizations and community arts organizations), cultural heritage, multimedia (including radio & television, publishing and printing, film and media), and arts (i.e., performing arts, visual arts and public art).

<sup>2</sup> See Annex D for the list of existing facilities and spaces. Note, these assets will evolve over the lifetime of the Strategic Cultural Plan.

## 2.2 The Role of the City

Courtenay stands as a vibrant nucleus of arts and culture within the Comox Valley and beyond, showcasing a dynamic scene that echoes throughout Vancouver Island. Courtenay also serves as a cultural beacon, drawing talent and enthusiasts from neighboring communities and beyond through the provision of cultural spaces and programs. The City's commitment to cultural institutions has paved the way for a flourishing creative ecosystem, while contributing to the region's tourism appeal and economic vitality. At the heart of the Comox Valley, Courtenay plays a pivotal role in fostering collaboration and cultural exchange among neighboring municipalities, amplifying the collective impact of the region's artistic endeavors.

The City defines its arts and culture role as:

- **Policy and Planner:** Guiding and managing the City arts operations and activities through documents such as the Official Community Plan (2022), Cultural Services Review (2019), Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2019), and Strategic Cultural Plan (2025).
- **Advocate:** Promoting and raising awareness of arts and cultural initiatives in the community to encourage wider participation in and support for the sector.
- **Funder:** Providing funding including fee-for-service grants, operating grants, and cultural event grants, as well as in kind support and direct investment through staff and programming, to organizations such as the Comox Valley Community Arts Council, Courtenay and District Historical Society, Comox Valley Art Gallery Society, Sid Williams Theatre Society, and Courtenay Downtown BIA, as well as the Comox Valley Community Foundation.
- **Cultural Facilities Owner:** Providing key creative spaces in the community such as the Comox Valley Community Art Council - administrative and digital creation hub, Comox Valley Centre for the Arts (operated by the Comox Valley Art Gallery Society), Courtenay & District Museum (operated by the Courtenay and District Historical Society), Sid Williams Theatre (operated by the Sid Williams Theatre Society), and other small office administrative spaces that are complementary to the arts and culture facilities.

Looking ahead, Courtenay aims to continue its ascent as a premier cultural destination, fostering innovation, diversity, and accessibility in arts and culture. With this strong foundation in place, the city is poised to chart a course towards the future, while cementing its status as a cultural hub of the Comox Valley and on Vancouver Island.

### 2.3 City of Courtenay & Cultural Sector Priorities

As per Courtenay’s Official Community Plan (OCP) (see objectives in the grey box below), the Strategic Cultural Plan supports numerous existing community priorities in Courtenay.

**Official Community Plan: Arts, Culture, and Heritage**

Arts, Culture, and Heritage are one of the 11 thematic policy priority areas for the City of Courtenay’s Official Community Plan.

**Objectives:**

1. Residents and visitors know they are in K’ómoks First Nation territory by the prominent tangible and intangible celebration of their culture and heritage
2. Local art, culture and heritage, including natural heritage, are showcased throughout Courtenay
3. Courtenay has a reputation as the regional centre for arts and culture
4. Community cultural and heritage assets are identified, preserved, and celebrated
5. Identities expressed in the public realm and cultural programming are representative of Courtenay and the region
6. Community access and participation in arts and culture is strong and widespread

References:

The following table outlines key priorities identified from a review of existing municipal plans and strategies and notes existing priorities for Courtenay. The relevance to the direction for the Strategic Cultural Plan is highlighted.

**Table 1. Existing community priorities in Courtenay**

Priority	Relevance and Direction for the Strategic Cultural Plan	City Municipal Plans
<b>Advance reconciliation efforts</b>	<p><b>Reconciliation is a guiding cardinal direction</b></p> <p><i>Direction for the Strategic Cultural Plan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prioritize engagement with Indigenous peoples</li> <li>▪ Support actions identified in the OCP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ OCP, 2022</li> <li>▪ Engagement Framework (in development 2024)</li> </ul>
<b>Reduce social inequalities</b>	<p><b>Equity is a guiding cardinal direction</b></p> <p><i>Direction for the Strategic Cultural Plan:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ OCP, 2022</li> <li>▪ Engagement Framework (in development 2024)</li> </ul>

Priority	Relevance and Direction for the Strategic Cultural Plan	City Municipal Plans
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prioritize engagement with equity-priority communities</li> <li>▪ Focus on links between arts and culture and wider community issues</li> <li>▪ Support actions identified in the OCP</li> </ul>	
<b>Address funding challenges</b>	<p><b>Funding is an ongoing challenge identified throughout policy documents</b></p> <p><b><i>Direction for the Strategic Cultural Plan:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evaluate outstanding Cultural Services Report recommendations including financial support and City staff capacity</li> <li>▪ Review Comox Valley Regional District's Principle-Based Framework for Allocating Recreation Grants (Wilson, 2011)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cultural Services Report, 2019</li> <li>▪ OCP, 2022</li> </ul>
<b>Enhance downtown and continue to support downtown as Courtenay's cultural district.</b>	<p><b>Downtown vision remains relevant and desired</b></p> <p><b><i>Direction for the Strategic Cultural Plan:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support steps to advance the Downtown Playbook vision of a cultural district and activate 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets.</li> <li>▪ Conduct cultural mapping, facilities needs assessments, and address ageing infrastructure</li> <li>▪ Policies are needed to support arts and culture (i.e. Public Art Policy)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Downtown Playbook, 2016</li> <li>▪ Downtown Vitalization Local Area Plan, 2025</li> <li>▪ OCP, 2022</li> <li>▪ Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2019</li> <li>▪ Cultural Services Report, 2019</li> </ul>
<b>Support regional interconnectivity</b>	<p><b>Arts and culture in Courtenay serves the region</b></p> <p><b><i>Direction for the Strategic Cultural Plan:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build on Cultural Services Report to identify ongoing gaps in funding, service provision, etc.</li> <li>▪ Revisit Wilson's frameworks</li> <li>▪ Recognize the regional role that cultural services play.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cultural Services Report, 2019</li> <li>▪ For additional reference: CVRD 'A Principle-based Framework for Funding Regional Recreation and Cultural Facilities', J. Wilson, 2011</li> </ul>
<b>Encourage active community engagement</b>	<p><b>Courtenay prioritizes community participation</b></p> <p><b><i>Direction for the Strategic Cultural Plan:</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public Engagement Strategy &amp; Toolkit, 2020</li> <li>▪ OCP, 2022</li> </ul>

Priority	Relevance and Direction for the Strategic Cultural Plan	City Municipal Plans
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engage the community throughout the research</li> <li>▪ Apply processes identified in the Public Engagement Strategy &amp; Toolkit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cultural Plan Scoping Workshop, 2022</li> <li>▪ Engagement Framework (in development 2024)</li> </ul>
<b>Celebrate cultural offerings</b>	<p><b>Courtenay is home to a vibrant cultural scene</b></p> <p><i>Direction for the Strategic Cultural Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Map cultural assets identified in the Community Profile section</li> <li>▪ Document strengths of Courtenay’s cultural scene</li> <li>▪ Need for a special events and hosting policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cultural Services Report, 2019</li> <li>▪ Cultural Inventory Report, 2017</li> <li>▪ Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2019</li> <li>▪ Parks, Rec. &amp; Culture Analysis document, 2017</li> <li>▪ OCP, 2022</li> </ul>
<b>Recognize community impact</b>	<p><b>There is a desire to capture the social and economic impacts</b></p> <p><i>Direction for the Strategic Cultural Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct economic and social impact assessments</li> <li>▪ Recognize the role of arts and culture in tourism development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cultural Services Report, 2019</li> <li>▪ Cultural Plan Scoping Workshop, 2022</li> </ul>



### 3. The Planning Process and Key Insights

#### 3.1 Cultural Planning Process

##### What is Cultural Planning?

Cultural planning is a process of community consultation that aims to help towns, cities, and regions support arts and cultural development, to benefit the community. The planning process highlights a community's unique strengths, gaps, and needs in relation to arts and culture. The aim is to strategically integrate arts and culture with wider municipal planning and strategies. Essentially, it means asking, "Where are we now? Where do we want to be?" – and considers strategies to get there. Cultural plans strive to elevate arts and culture as an essential component of sustainability, aiming to integrate seamlessly into the overall framework of urban planning. By doing so, such plans ensure that arts and cultural considerations are intrinsic to the processes, practices, and decisions that shape cities, ultimately enriching the overall health, well-being, and vitality of communities.

##### Municipal Plan Linkages

The illustration below depicts the municipal plan linkages and how the recommendations from each plan should align and are interconnected in the hierarchy of municipal plans.

Figure 2.: Municipal Plan Linkages<sup>3</sup>




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<sup>3</sup> Patricia Huntsmann Culture and Communications

With the upcoming Downtown Vitalization Local Area Plan in development and other local area plans to be updated or created, the Strategic Cultural Plan provides direction on how these municipal plans could support arts and cultural initiatives, programs and infrastructure investment.

As per the recommendations in the Strategic Cultural Plan, the downtown is envisioned as the City's cultural district – a recommendation supported by initial engagement conducted in the first phase of the Downtown Vitalization Local Area Plan project which sought feedback from key cultural organizations impacted by this work. Initial engagement reaffirmed the importance of recognizing Courtenay's Downtown Cultural District as a central hub and gateway to downtown, emphasizing its role in arts, heritage, tourism, and economic growth. Considerations coming out of the first phase of the LAP include enhancing downtown vibrancy through investments in event programming, transit access, historic signage, public art, wayfinding, and public realm improvements. Community groups and partnerships, including the Sid Williams Theatre Society, Comox Valley Art Gallery Society, Comox Valley Community Arts Council, and Courtenay and District Historical Society are key to implementation, and alignment with existing city strategies will ensure a cohesive planning approach.

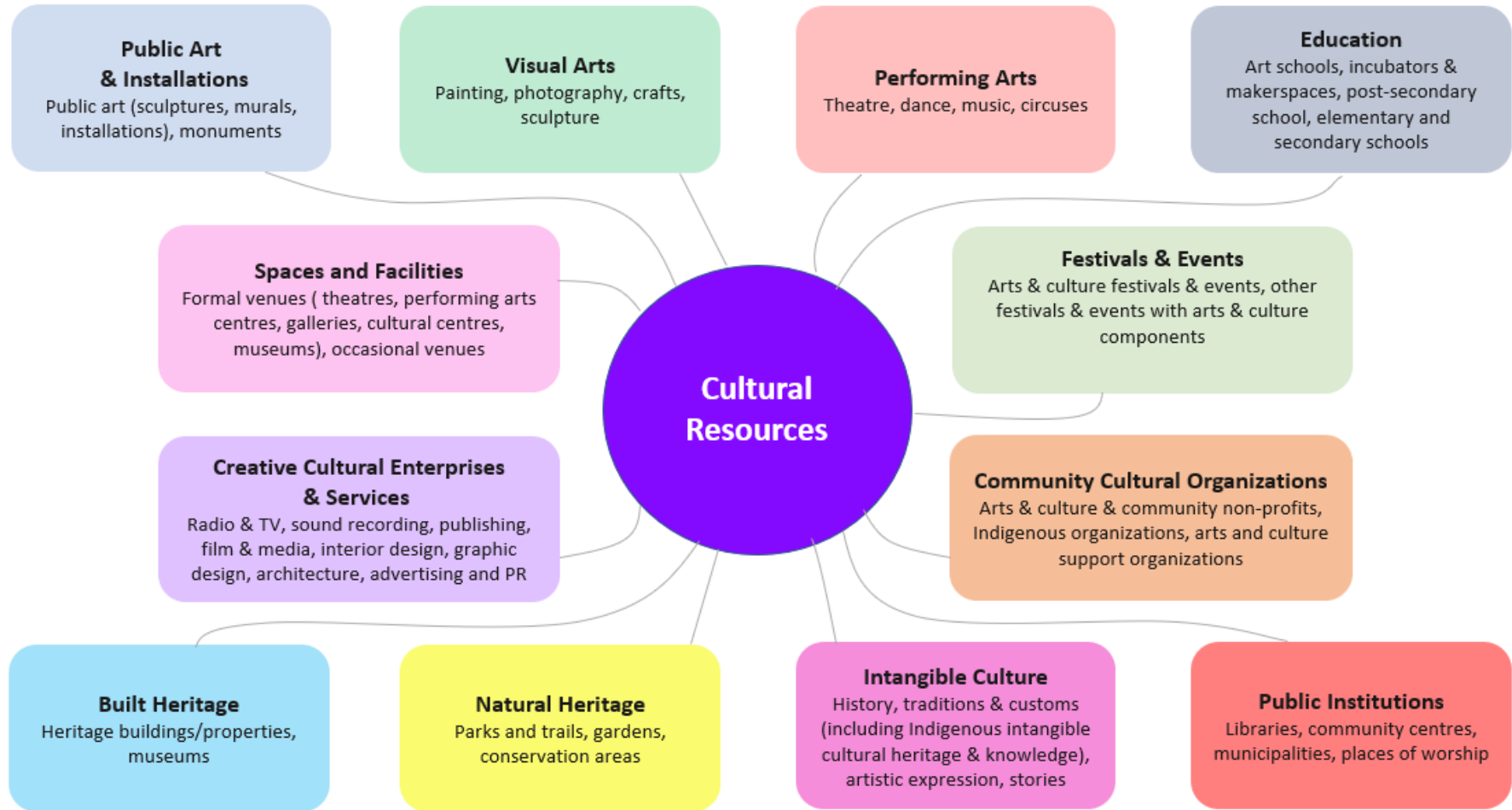
### **Defining Arts and Culture in Courtenay – What's Included?**

Arts and culture can be difficult to define because they mean many things to different people. First, in this report, it should be made clear that arts and culture includes heritage. Second, this Plan defines arts and culture broadly – including tangible assets (like artworks and buildings), organized groups (such as performance and dance troupes), and intangible things (like stories and cultural traditions). These cultural assets contribute to the vitality and resilience of arts and culture by providing the foundation for artistic expression, community building and collaboration, and the transmission of cultural heritage from generation to generation.

The City of Courtenay acknowledges that the definition of 'culture' and its impacts may be different from K'ómoks First Nation's view and that of the Métis, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples in the community. As such, part of the ongoing relationship building with K'ómoks First Nations and MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples in the community will be identifying and defining what 'culture' means in Courtenay.

The 'Cultural Resources Framework' below maps different types of arts and culture resources or assets.

Figure 3. Cultural Resources Framework

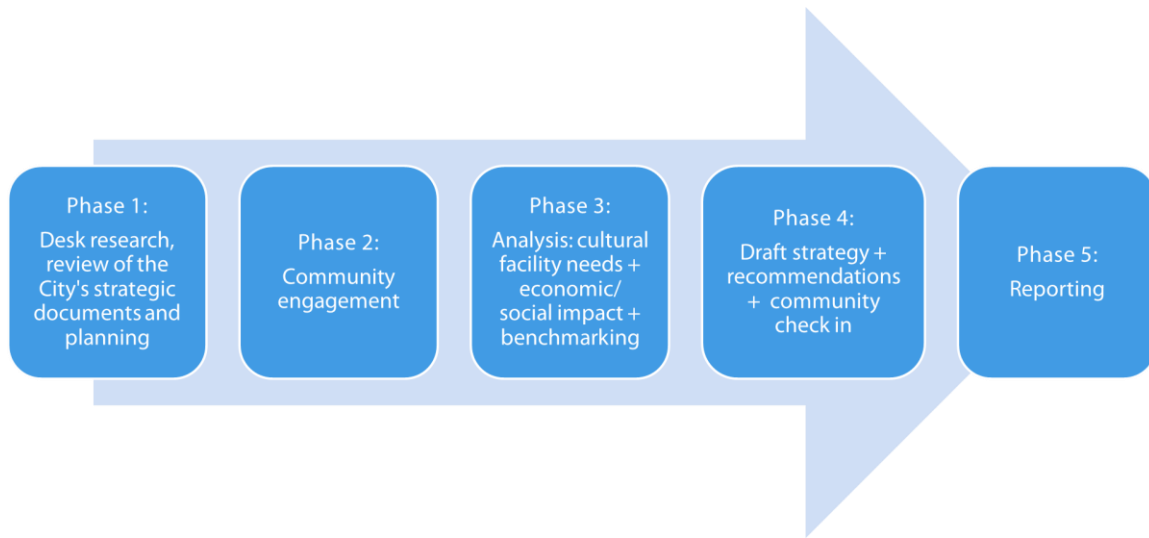


Source: Adapted from Municipal Cultural Planning Incorporated's Cultural Resources Mapping: Guide for Municipalities (2010), Statistics Canada Canadian Framework for Cultural Statistics (2011), and North Shore Culture Compass

### Our Five-Phased Approach

The Strategic Cultural Plan followed a **five-phase process**, involving desk research (including reviewing existing City strategies and policies), community engagement, analysis (including facility options, economic and social impact analysis, and municipal benchmarking via a comparative review), followed by the development of a draft strategy and recommendations for community feedback and review, and lastly, the creation of the final Strategic Cultural Plan.

Figure 4. Five-phase planning process



The community engagement work was led by the City of Courtenay's Recreation, Culture, and Community Services Department, in collaboration with [Nordicity](#), with input from artists, arts and culture organizations, interested community parties, arts and culture facility user groups, and the wider public.

## 3.2 Research Insights

### 3.2.1 The Impact of Arts and Culture

Arts and culture are everywhere in our lives. Whether listening to music on the radio, viewing art on the walls of a coffee shop, or simply telling children a story, arts and culture touch everything. However, one defines arts and culture, its true value is hard to measure, and the full impact is often overlooked. Nonetheless, we know arts and culture bestow important social and community benefits.<sup>4</sup> There are economic benefits in terms of employment, income, tourism, and spillovers to other businesses. For example, in British Columbia, the creative sector contributed \$6.8 billion to total Gross Domestic Product.<sup>5</sup> As well, arts participation is also linked with greater life satisfaction, quality of life, and happiness.<sup>6</sup>

This section provides a basic assessment of the economic impact of cultural organizations in Courtenay, as well as the social and community impacts of arts and culture initiatives. Finally, potential cultural tourism opportunities are noted.

#### **Economic impact**

Arts and culture create economic impact in the community by creating jobs, supporting businesses, and driving tourism, but also by catalyzing long-term investment into the community. Cultural organizations drive impact through their spending on staff wages, and procurement of goods and services. Additionally, individuals who engage with the sector further contribute to economic growth by spending their money and time at local businesses, such as restaurants, cafes, and shops, thereby stimulating economic activity and supporting entrepreneurship. This combined impact underscores the significant role of arts and culture in making communities vibrant places, attracting investment, and fostering community development. It highlights the interconnectedness of cultural vitality with broader economic prosperity, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing and investing in arts and culture as essential components of vibrant and resilient communities. Nordicity's economic impact analysis<sup>7</sup> estimated that cultural organizations in Courtenay:

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<sup>4</sup> OECD (2021). Economic and social impact of cultural and creative sectors: Note for Italy G20 Presidency Culture Work Group, 2021 <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/OECD-G20-Culture-July-2021.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Creative BC (2022). Creative Industries Economic Results Assessment. <https://creativebc.com/sector/research-reports/ciera/ciera-2022>

<sup>6</sup> Government of Canada (2016). Social Impacts and Benefits of Arts and Culture: A Literature Review. Department of Canadian Heritage, February 2016 [http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2018/pch/CH4-187-2016-eng.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2018/pch/CH4-187-2016-eng.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Findings from Nordicity's Courtenay Strategic Cultural Plan Social and Economic Impact Assessment analysis, which drew on findings from the Courtenay Strategic Cultural Plan survey (separate annex document).

- Generated a direct<sup>8</sup> \$3.6 million in labour income from 101 full time employees (FTEs), and \$4 million in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2022.
- Including indirect<sup>9</sup> and induced<sup>10</sup> impact, cultural organizations in Courtenay contributed an estimated \$6.8 million in labour income, 158 in FTEs of employment, and \$11 million in GDP.

To put the economic impacts in perspective, participants in the Courtenay Strategic Cultural Plan survey reported that they **spend an average of \$105 within the community before or after attending/participating in cultural events** (such as at local restaurants, bars, etc.). This observation suggests that there is a strong economic impact from cultural events.

A more wholistic economic impact assessment of the local arts and culture sector would include the incomes of artists, not just arts organizations as done for this report. Furthermore, these impact numbers do not include the wider Comox Valley region. Estimates of economic impact of the arts in the region would certainly be larger, and further assessments are warranted to capture the full impact.

Through the City's multi-year grant funding, the core cultural service providers (Sid Williams Theatre Society, Comox Valley Art Gallery Society, Courtenay and District Historical Society and the Comox Valley Community Art Council) are able to leverage the City's arts and culture funding contribution to obtain additional grant funding. In 2024 this total amount was approximately \$1,600,000.<sup>11</sup>

### Social and community impacts

Arts and culture create social and community impacts in various ways. In Courtenay, [Walk With Me](#), a project of Comox Valley Art Gallery, addresses the toxic drug poisoning crisis through deep sharing and close listening. Meanwhile, Comox Valley Community Arts Council's [Art + Land](#) project promotes environmental stewardship via arts events and experiences that inspire collaboration, reflection, and learning. Arts and culture can also play a profound role in truth and reconciliation initiatives. For example, sculptures and

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<sup>8</sup> Direct Impact refers to the increase in GDP, FTEs, and labour-driven income directly associated with arts and culture organizations.

<sup>9</sup> Indirect impacts estimate the employment, GDP and labour income supported by purchases from suppliers. For instance, a cultural organization might stimulate employment in the marketing industry through purchases of communications services from local suppliers, or an artist may enlist light manufacturers to fabricate sculptures.

<sup>10</sup> Induced impacts use modelling techniques to estimate how labour income affects the economy through household purchases. For example, a cultural organization employee will spend their employment income to purchase household goods from local businesses.

<sup>11</sup> The amount is based on 2024 estimated figures. Leveraged funds are mostly project or program based and may vary year to year.

murals can increase awareness that Courtenay is on K'ómoks First Nation territory, while cultural programming can create chances to learn and understand.

Participants in the Courtenay Strategic Cultural Plan survey identified the 'top three' social impacts of arts and culture locally as:

- Encouraging social participation and a sense of belonging;
- Enhancing Courtenay as an attractive place to live; and
- Building empathy, awareness, and understanding between different and distinct cultural backgrounds.

### **Findings from Arts and Culture Impact Study for Creative Coast**

Findings from Courtenay echo an all-Island study conducted by Nordicity for the Digital Innovation Group (now Creative Coast) in 2021,\* where:

- 97% (of 1,371 survey respondents) agreed that the regional arts sector in their community improves personal wellbeing (mental and/or physical);
- 96% agreed that the sector attracts visitors to the region as a tourist destination; and,
- 94% agreed that the sector helps to create a distinct local identity.

\*Nordicity (2021). Arts and Culture Impact Assessment: Vancouver Island & Gulf Islands Super Region.

### **Cultural tourism – a growing opportunity**

Courtenay and the Comox Valley boast a rich array of cultural attractions. The [Vancouver Island Music Festival](#), [Filberg Festival](#), and performances at the [Sid Williams Theatre](#) draw visitors from across the Island and beyond. In addition, [Courtenay and District Museum and Palaeontology Centre](#)'s 80-million-year-old Elasmosaur is now the fossil emblem of B.C.. Arts and culture in Courtenay and the region makes a significant positive impact, and with strategic focus and support, this impact can grow – for the benefit of all.

As stated earlier, survey participants reported **spending an average of \$105 within the community before or after attending/participating in cultural events**. This finding further points to how attending arts and cultural activities benefits not just the arts and culture sector, but also the broader community in terms of the ripple effects of such spending, which can be increased when derived from tourism and bringing spending in from outside the community.

There is an opportunity to capitalize further on cultural tourism, considering that:

- Cultural tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing tourism markets;<sup>12</sup>
- ‘Cultural Explorers’ make up the second largest group for global tourists, according to Destination Canada;<sup>13</sup> and,
- Research conducted by Americans for the Arts found that arts and culture travelers spend more than other travelers, are more likely to stay in a hotel or bed and breakfast, are more likely to spend \$1,000 or more during their stay, and stay longer than other visitors.<sup>14</sup>
- Experience Comox Valley tourism strategy recognizes the Comox Valley as the premier, year-round Vancouver Island destination for outdoor, culinary, and cultural activities<sup>15</sup>.

Courtenay’s Strategic Cultural Plan serves as a catalyst for enhancing the economic, social, and tourism impacts of arts and culture, driving forward the city’s overall development. By investing in arts and culture, Courtenay not only fosters economic growth through tourism revenue and job creation within the creative sector, but also cultivates a vibrant and inclusive community that attracts residents and businesses alike. The social benefits of a thriving arts scene are immeasurable, fostering civic pride, social cohesion, and a sense of belonging among residents.

Additionally, by showcasing its unique cultural identity and offerings, Courtenay elevates its profile as a must-visit destination in the Comox Valley, drawing visitors and stimulating further economic activity for the region. As Courtenay continues to prioritize arts and culture in its strategic planning, it paves the way for sustainable and holistic development, where creativity and community thrive.

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<sup>12</sup> OECD. The Impact of Culture on Tourism. [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/industry-and-services/the-impact-of-culture-on-tourism\\_9789264040731-en#page11](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/industry-and-services/the-impact-of-culture-on-tourism_9789264040731-en#page11)

<sup>13</sup> ‘Cultural Explorer’ visitors pursue opportunities to embrace, discover and immerse themselves in the culture, people, and settings of the places they visit. Source: Destination Canada, EQ Profile. [https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/archive/2013-01-01/Tools\\_ExplorerQuotient\\_Profiles\\_2015\\_EN.pdf](https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/archive/2013-01-01/Tools_ExplorerQuotient_Profiles_2015_EN.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Americans for the Arts (2017). Arts and Economic Prosperity 5. [https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/aep5/PDF\\_Files/ARTS\\_AEPsummary\\_loRes.pdf](https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/aep5/PDF_Files/ARTS_AEPsummary_loRes.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> [4VI – Experience Comox Valley City of Courtenay MRDT presentation to Courtenay Council: May 8, 2024.](#)



### 3.2.2 Benchmarking Analysis (Comparative Review)

A comparative review was conducted to benchmark Courtenay against four other municipalities of comparable size and demographics. Unique approaches and practices in arts and culture planning were also considered in this selection of comparable municipalities. **The District of Squamish, City of Campbell River, City of Langley, and City of Nelson** were selected for review in relation to Courtenay.

The research included a review of municipal delivery models and core service and cultural provision budgets, with consideration of areas such as funding both financial and in-kind support and investment. The review also sought to include indicators such as number of cultural facilities, arts and culture investment per capita, staffing levels (in FTEs), and identification of other supporting policies or plans available. Key takeaways identified included:

- 3 out of 4 municipalities operate with in-house departments, typically maintaining around 1-2 FTEs of dedicated arts and culture staff.
- All comparators have significantly different arts and culture budgets, ranging between \$200k to \$940k annually.
- Langley and Campbell River provide the largest amount of other funding of arts and culture (e.g., grants, public art, in-kind support). They spend approximately \$700k to \$400k respectively. Notably, while Courtenay provides regular operating support to major arts and culture facilities in the community, it does not provide any significant culture grants for which community groups or members can apply.
- Municipalities are guided in their arts and culture endeavors by a variety of strategic and master planning documents (i.e., Culture Plan or Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plans), as well as supporting documents (i.e., service and facility reviews/studies).

The full Benchmarking of Comparative Jurisdictions document [Appendix B] is a valuable reference to assess the effectiveness of different approaches, reveal best practices, and support informed decision-making related to investment into arts and culture facilities in Courtenay.

### 3.2.3 Cultural Facilities Options

A **Cultural Facilities Options Analysis** was conducted for this project. The process included site visits to core cultural partners and organizations and feedback received from interviews and community check-ins about cultural spaces and facilities in Courtenay. **Specific needs identified include space for live performances, multi-disciplinary programming, rehearsal and creation, and spaces particularly for diverse community groups.** Findings were used to develop a **working document which outlines short-term, medium-term, and longer-term priorities for consideration**, as well as future vision for cultural facilities and spaces that would meet the needs of individuals and community groups in Courtenay.

The next step is for the City to consider conducting a Cultural Facility Needs Assessment or Study for City-owned facilities to further understand how existing needs can be met, building on the Cultural Facilities Options work conducted in the strategic planning process. There is also an opportunity for the City to prioritize investment in existing facilities in the downtown area to actively work towards the vision of a downtown cultural district, as well as advocate for a regional effort toward the community aspiration of an Arts and Cultural Centre, which should be considered in the future based on population growth, cultural engagement, and business case analysis. The Cultural Facilities Options working document [Appendix C] will become a foundational document for conducting any future in-depth cultural facility needs assessments.

### **Alignment of Cultural Facility Needs with City of Courtenay Official Community Plan (OCP)**

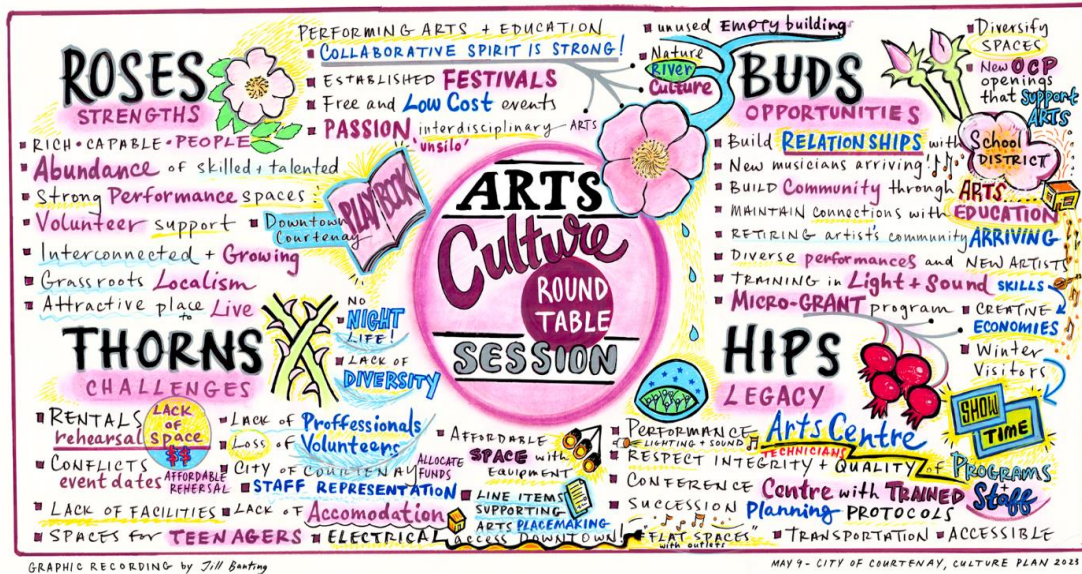
The City of Courtenay Official Community Plan (OCP) articulates some existing facility needs that align with cultural facility needs identified through the Courtenay Strategic Cultural Planning process. These include:

- The Arts, Culture and Heritage Chapter [p. 155-162] describes the need “for a larger outdoor performance venue than currently available at Simms Park, the downtown Commons outdoor performing space and public plaza.”
- the Arts, Culture and Heritage (ACH) Chapter describes the need “for a community arts and culture centre.”
- the ACH Action 3: “Work towards the downtown Public Commons public plaza concept identified in the Downtown Courtenay Playbook.”
- the ACH Action 6: “Create a Courtenay Cultural Plan, including consideration of a dedicated community arts and culture space.”
- the ACH Action 7: “Continue to support the downtown as the region’s arts, culture, and heritage hub by ensuring key cultural partners such as the Comox Valley Art Gallery, the Courtenay and District Museum, the Sid Williams Civic Theatre, and the Comox Valley Community Arts Council continue to be located downtown, and promoting and investing in public art and cultural opportunities downtown.”
- the ACH Action 11: “Consider the establishment of a dedicated community arts and culture space.”

### 3.3 Community Engagement Insights

This section presents the engagement approach and activities and a summary of what we heard from the community and cultural sector findings. A detailed What We Heard report can be found in the appendices providing further information on the results of the community engagement.

Figure 5. Live graphic recording by Jill Banting from the May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024 focus group with arts and culture sector participants



#### 3.3.1 Engagement Approach and Activities

Aligning with the City's Official Community Plan, 2022, the Strategic Cultural Plan was developed through a process of inclusive community consultation. The key engagement principles employed were: (i) taking a **human-centred** approach; (ii) having **respect for First Nations and Indigenous Peoples** – especially K'ómoks First Nation, on whose Unceded territory Courtenay is located; (iii) **trust and privacy**; and (iv) taking an **intersectional approach**. The latter means taking into consideration the perspectives of diverse community members, including equity priority groups who are often not included in engagement activities due to barriers that limit their participation.<sup>16</sup> This approach included:

<sup>16</sup> "Intersectionality brings attention to how people are defined by differing positionalities in a society based on their gender, ethnicity or race, sexual orientation, ability, and class, etc. These are identities and positionalities that form overlapping positions of inequality and privilege. They are in hierarchical relations to one another according to which some people have more power in societies than others." Source: Salla Sariola (2020) Intersectionality and Community Engagement: Can Solidarity Alone Solve Power Differences in Global Health Research?, *The American Journal of Bioethics*, 20:5, 57-59, DOI: [10.1080/15265161.2020.1745951](https://doi.org/10.1080/15265161.2020.1745951)

- Respectfully seeking input from equity priority groups including Indigenous, Black and People of Colour, youth, 2SLGBTQIA+, persons with disabilities, and unhoused community members.
- Leveraging established relationships with existing community organizations advocating for equity priority groups to ensure that all community members, especially historically underrepresented communities, have a voice.
- Recognizing the need for long-term commitments to relationship building with Indigenous communities.

### **Engagement with K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples**

The City of Courtenay's Strategic Cultural Plan project team is committed to working with K'ómoks First Nation to ensure that the Strategic Cultural Plan aligns with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and is guided by the Truth and Reconciliation Findings and Calls to Actions.

The City recognizes the colonial aspects of having a specific and limited timeframe, which creates barriers to meaningful engagement. As such, the City is committed to working together with K'ómoks First Nation to define a path forward recognizing that true relationship building takes time. The ambition is for the Strategic Cultural Plan to become a living document rather than a static, one-time report – one that is open to adjustment to ensure K'ómoks First Nation's priorities are included in the process. This iterative approach should allow time for true relationship building and community engagement with K'ómoks First Nation and could include a regular review of the Plan and implementation progress.

Furthermore, to ensure this project also includes the Métis, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous communities who live within the community, the engagement approach aligned with the [distinction-based approach](#) adopted by the Province of British Columbia. The engagement approach respects and acknowledges the unique cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. To that end, the City will continue to work with K'ómoks First Nation to ensure that their land rights are met. In addition, the City is committed to working with the K'ómoks First Nation, the MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit and Urban Indigenous-serving organizations to respect the distinct rights and interests of each individual Indigenous community.

City staff and elected officials met with K'ómoks First Nation Elected Chief and Council and will continue to engage with K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, and Urban Indigenous serving organizations throughout the Strategic Plan development and implementation.

Engagement with Indigenous groups included feedback from MIKI'SIW Métis Association, an Indigenous Elder involved in the Walk with Me project, and a member of the Wachiay Friendship Centre Society. Staff endeavor to continue building relationships and seeking feedback on the Strategic Cultural Plan from Indigenous groups and community members. It is significant to note that 17% of the survey responses were from respondents who identified as Indigenous peoples.

## Community Engagement Activities

The project sought to ensure that a diverse and representative range of voices were heard. A detailed report on engagement activities and findings can be found in the What We Heard Report attached in Appendix A.

Community engagement research for the Strategic Cultural Plan was extensive and sought to engage in a variety of ways and to reach a diverse group of residents. To summarize, the figure below graphically presents the various community engagement activities.

Figure 5. Engagement activities at a glance



### 3.3.2 Key Insights from What We Heard

The engagement process gathered the community's participation and perception regarding arts and culture in Courtenay, identifying needs and gaps relating to cultural services and facilities. A detailed "What We Heard" report was completed providing further information on the results of the community engagement (Appendix A).

The engagement process generated key findings highlighted below.

### 3.3.3 Survey Highlights

The survey was completed by ~700 participants – a sample size of approximately 2.8% of Courtenay's population of approximately 28,420 residents.<sup>17</sup> See Appendix A for full survey findings in the What We Heard Report.

- The overall survey results show that a very **high number of respondents are culturally engaged (94%)**. Performing arts (such as theatre, dance, and music) are the most popular way to engage.
- Arts and culture in Courtenay encourage **social participation** and a sense of belonging.
- **The main barriers to accessing culture** in Courtenay are limited options nearby (29%), limited options of interest (21%), and not having enough time (20%). However, nearly a quarter of all participants stated that they do not experience any barriers.
- **Critical needs**, according to culture sector respondents (artists and cultural sector workers), are more space for performance/exhibitions (identified as a challenge by 45% of sector respondents), more rehearsal and creation space (36%), and supportive bylaws and policies for arts and culture (32%).
- **The future arts and culture offerings respondents would most like to see** more include live performances (selected by 44% of total participants), more education, programming, and workshops (29%), and more Indigenous arts and culture (28%).
- **The main cultural themes that the City should prioritize in the Culture Plan**, according to all survey participants, are enhancing space for arts and culture (35% of participants selected this option) and using arts and culture to enhance community wellbeing (26%).
- **Expenditure:** The average amount spent in the community before and after a cultural event is \$105 per individual.

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<sup>17</sup> Statistics Canada. City of Courtenay Census Profile 2021. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=courtenay&DGUIDlist=2021A00055926010&GENDERlist=1&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

### 3.4 Cultural Sector Findings

These findings draw on discussions at a cultural sector roundtable event hosted on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, one-to-one interviews with artists and members of Courtenay's cultural community, and discussions at a public event on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Courtenay's cultural sector has a collaborative spirit and is supported by numerous arts and culture organizations, volunteers, and cultural facilities. While the cultural sector offers rich and vibrant arts and cultural offerings, certain needs have been identified by the sector, including:

- **More equipped and accessible cultural spaces and performance venues** (e.g., with different sizes for different audiences and art forms). Specific types of space needs identified include a studio theatre, multi-use or adaptive spaces, and outdoor venues equipped for performances. Other space needs identified include:
  - **Greater access to City-owned spaces for rentals with discounted pricing for small community groups** – i.e., the cost of spaces was identified as a barrier for small and medium-sized local arts organizations.
  - **To conduct an accessibility audit of City-owned facilities and upgrade facilities where accessibility is an issue** for groups such as seniors (e.g., provide grab bars in washrooms, stage upgrades for performances).
  - For the **City to provide support** in setting up spaces (including outdoor) for events.
- **More funding (i.e., community grants) to help subsidize cultural events and programs.** The cost of some events/programs remains too high for sections of the population including seniors, newcomers, youth, and the unhoused. Cultural organizations are also under financial pressure and unable to meet all participation costs, hindering the sector from offering more inclusive programming.
- **A need for regional support through the development of cultural facilities/spaces, and funding programs** to support arts and cultural organizations within the region including those based in Courtenay (e.g., it was noted that other residents in the region benefit from Courtenay's cultural offerings).
- **To review transportation options to cultural events.** Transit is often a barrier for seniors, newcomers, youth, and unhoused community members.
- **The need for the City to play a coordinating role** in facilitating event schedules across cultural service providers and to maintain an event calendar.
- **To foster relationships between the cultural sector and the community** including the school district.
- **Succession planning protocols for local arts and cultural organizations.** For example, internships and mentorships for youth could enhance their interest in working within the arts and culture sector.



- **More technical and professional cultural workers** to support programming and events in Courtenay. Partnerships with educational providers including the school district and North Island College (NIC) could be beneficial, for example, to encourage more young people to work in the sector and to offer technical courses in sound and lighting, crowd control & management, arts administration and event management among others.

It must be noted that throughout Canada, and across most forms, insufficient funding remains a consistent challenge for the arts and culture sector. Particularly, art forms for which there is some form of admission charges, the financial challenges are severe. A combination of “pandemic hesitancy”, costs rising faster than inflation, and flatline government budgets amid increased demands to support new voices, remain a critical part of the context in funding of arts and culture today. Courtenay’s cultural organizations are facing similar challenges with funding flatlining despite inflation pressures and increasing demands (usage and population). It is important to note that new sources of revenue (such as some form of arts tax credits or social finance), and new forms of collaboration to support important cost saving or revenue enhancing initiatives, will be required to trigger new initiatives towards resolving this problem and continuing to support the positive economic and social impact of arts and culture in our communities.

### 3.4.1 Community-Identified Priority Needs

The following priority needs were identified based on collective findings from all engagement activities across all individual and community group consultations.



#### *Engaging K’ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis , Inuit, and Urban Indigenous communities*

- Many participants want to see **more Indigenous arts and culture in public spaces** – e.g., for storytelling and educational opportunities, especially to raise awareness of K’ómoks’ ongoing culture and heritage.
- The City of Courtenay is committed to **engaging with K’ómoks First Nation** Chief and Council regarding the development of the Strategic Cultural Plan. The City is committed to working collaboratively with K’ómoks First Nation to ensure the plan is representative of Indigenous values and supportive of work towards reconciliation.
- Part of the engagement with K’ómoks First Nation will be identifying and defining what ‘culture’ means in Courtenay, given that it is situated on the traditional Unceded territory of K’ómoks First Nation.
- The City is also committed to also engaging with the MIKI'SIW Métis, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous communities to build long term relationships and provide opportunities for engagement on the Strategic Cultural Plan.



## *More cultural spaces, and better availability and affordability*

- Participants expressed the **need for more equipped and accessible cultural spaces and performance venues** to meet various sector needs, including the need for rental space. The types of spaces needed include small, medium, and larger venues, including live performance and rehearsal venues, creation venues and spaces for multi-disciplinary programming.



## *Developing more diverse and affordable cultural programming*

- There is a desire for more **diverse and affordable cultural programming**, both in terms of services delivered by the City and by local arts and cultural groups.



## *Further promotion of community partnerships and collaboration*

- There is a need for more community collaborations and partnerships. There is also a need to have **avenues for knowledge sharing** across the sector, for example through regular gatherings.



## *Increased support – financial and non-financial, local, and regional*

- There is a desire for increased City financial support for arts and culture, especially community grants.
- Participants further expressed the **need for regional funding support for arts and culture in Courtenay**, given cultural offerings are beneficial or serve the wider population in the Comox Valley or region.



## *Further development of cultural tourism*

- Participants expressed the need to leverage events such as gallery exhibitions and festivals to help make Courtenay the **cultural hub of the region** and to **promote cultural tourism**.



## *Attraction and training of technical cultural workers*

- There is a need for more **technical expertise on how to host live performances and events** – i.e., more sound and lighting technicians, stage management and crowd control specialists are in high demand.



## *Development of a Public Art Policy*

- There is a desire for Courtenay to develop a **Public Art Policy** that is reviewed periodically to support public arts in the city. Individuals noted such a policy could

leverage the talent of young artists and other Equity Priority artists while involving them in community public art initiatives.

### 3.4.2 Community-check in on Strategic Goals and Objectives

A short community check-in survey was deployed from November 10<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, receiving 78 responses. The purpose of the survey was to share findings from the “What We Heard Report” and gain feedback from community members on the draft strategic directions for the Plan. The survey also sought to gain feedback on developing a vision statement. A variety of quantitative and qualitative feedback was received. **Overall, there was community support for the strategic goals and objectives presented at the check-in.** Key takeaways from the results include:

- 71% of survey respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the proposed vision statement.
- 71% of survey respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the direction to ‘Advance truth and reconciliation through arts and culture.’
  - Respondents acknowledge with this direction that arts and culture initiatives encompass diverse cultures within the community and recognize that collaboration with Indigenous peoples is key to supporting and integrating Indigenous cultures as desired by Indigenous communities.
- 71% of survey respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the direction to ‘Build community resilience by strengthening arts and culture’s innate value.’
  - Respondents see arts and culture at the heart of Courtenay’s identity, and with appropriate investment there can be increased capacity for the community to pursue opportunities.
- 85% of survey respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the direction to ‘Develop more accessible cultural spaces.’
  - Respondents highlighted with this direction that cost and affordability are significant barriers for both community arts groups and the public to access cultural spaces. It was also noted that the community has outgrown existing cultural spaces such as the Sid William Theatre and Filberg Centre and that the need for a larger cultural facility in the community should be explored in this direction.
- 81% of survey respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the direction to further ‘Boster community arts.’
  - In this direction, respondents spoke to the specific need for the sector to build stronger relationships in the community, and that such relationships could help to further raise awareness to community arts and help alleviate space demands within the community.

- 74% of survey respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the direction to ‘support the strategic development of the cultural sector.’
  - It was noted by respondents for this direction that there is a need for the City to foster closer alignment with local, regional, and national economic development initiatives that relate to arts and culture, and for the City to better support arts groups seeking funding from external sources.

The high level of agreement from survey respondents to the draft strategic directions points to how the strategic directions are well aligned to the wide range of community needs and aspirations. The feedback received guided the development of the final strategic goals, objectives, and actions and draft Strategic Cultural Plan.

The draft Strategic Cultural Plan along with the Strategic Cultural Plan Summary were posted on the website project as the final step in Phase 5 of the project. A short questionnaire seeking feedback from the public on the level of support for the vision statement, goals, and objectives and any further feedback was made available from October 8th to November 6th, 2024. Approximately 80-91% strongly agreed, agreed, or were neutral in their support for the five goals and corresponding objectives.

Staff held in-person conversations with representatives from the MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Wachiay Friendship Centre and Indigenous Women's Sharing Society, the Comox Valley Regional District Reconciliation Advisory Table and the core culture service providers: the Sid Williams Theatre Society, Comox Valley Community Arts Council, the Courtenay and District Historical Society and the Comox Valley Art Gallery Society.

Feedback from the final check-in survey and the conversations were incorporated into the draft Strategic Cultural Plan to formulate the final Strategic Cultural Plan.

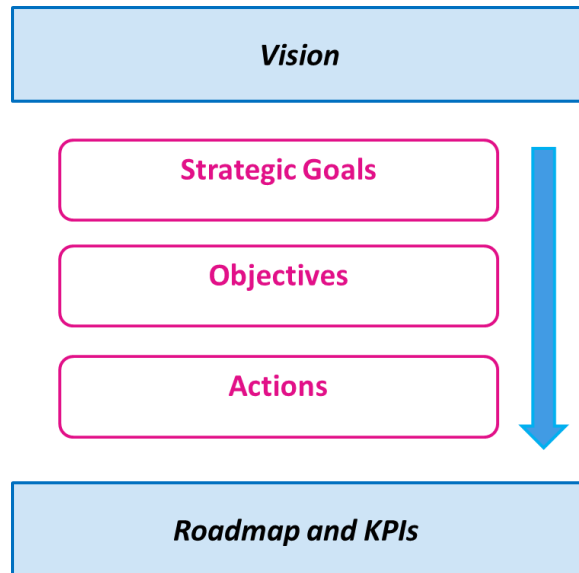
## 4. Strategic Cultural Plan

### 4.1 Introduction

The Courtenay Strategic Cultural Plan has several components: a vision for arts and culture, strategic goals; objectives linked to each goal; and specific actions linked to each objective (Figure 6). The implementation plan – or ‘roadmap’ – will follow completion of the Cultural Strategic Plan. The purpose of the roadmap is to outline which actions need to happen and when, with key performance indicators so the City can monitor progress towards the goals.

The strategic goals are at the heart of the Strategic Cultural plan. They are the key ingredients that will guide the City on where to focus efforts to support arts and culture across the next 10 years.

Figure 6. Components of the Cultural Strategic Plan



## 4.2 At A Glance – Goals and Objectives

### The Courtenay Vision

This Strategic Cultural Plan is inspired and guided by the Vision for Courtenay drawn from municipal strategic priorities and community consultation.

*“Courtenay is a thriving cultural hub of creative opportunities, dedicated to cultivating vibrant and inclusive arts and culture for residents and visitors alike. Culture and history of Indigenous peoples are interwoven into a diverse community where connection and resiliency are celebrated through artistic expression and cultural exchange.”*

### Goals and Objectives

#### Goal 1: Advance truth and reconciliation through arts and culture

- Objective 1.1: Recognize the role and rights of K’ómoks First Nation MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples as it relates to arts and culture
- Objective 1.2: Respectfully acknowledge K’ómoks territory through arts and culture
- Objective 1.3: Increase support and investment in Indigenous arts and culture

**Goal 2: Build community resilience through arts and culture**

- Objective 2.1: Use arts and culture to support community belonging and inclusion, where differences and similarities are celebrated
- Objective 2.2: Leverage arts and culture as a medium to engage with community on complex social challenges and to support healing
- Objective 2.3: Develop cultural programming that appeals to a more diverse community

**Goal 3: Develop more accessible and affordable cultural spaces**

- Objective 3.1: Increase the availability of accessible and affordable spaces for arts and culture
- Objective 3.2: Prioritize initiatives/upgrades that provide enhanced and additional space for arts and culture

**Goal 4: Bolster community arts**

- Objective 4.1: Support the capacity building of community-led arts and culture organizations
- Objective 4.2: Break down silos and increase collaboration across the cultural sector
- Objective 4.3: Increase the awareness of community-led arts and culture events

**Goal 5: Support the strategic development of the cultural sector**

- Objective 5.1: Build and sustain existing social and economic impact by strengthening Courtenay's professional arts and culture sector
- Objective 5.2: Embed culture more firmly in tourism initiatives in Courtenay and the Comox Valley
- Objective 5.3: Create new and or updated policies to support the cultural sector
- Objective 5.4: Explore strategic ways to meet sector labour needs

### 4.3 Foundational Elements

The strategic vision for Courtenay's cultural landscape sets the stage for a dynamic and inclusive future where arts and culture play a pivotal role in community identity and resilience. To translate this vision into actionable goals, it is essential to establish the

foundational elements that will guide the City's efforts in responding to the strategic plan's goals, objectives, and actions. These elements represent the core priorities that must be integrated across all cultural initiatives, ensuring that our strategy is both comprehensive and sustainable.



### **Advance Reconciliation Across All Initiatives**

A key action for Courtenay is to weave the principles of truth and reconciliation into the fabric of every cultural effort. This means ensuring that the history, culture, and contributions of K'ómoks First Nation, Métis, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples are not only acknowledged but celebrated throughout the city. This commitment to reconciliation must guide the City's actions, policies, and the way it engages with the community, making it a cornerstone of Courtenay's cultural identity.



### **Build the Team to Drive Cultural Change**

To lead Courtenay's cultural transformation, the City must invest in building a strong, dedicated team. This involves reflecting on the findings of the benchmarking analysis and determining Courtenay's approach to resource creation that is required to drive this ambitious cultural agenda. New cultural resources will be required either internally, externally, or a blend of both and with the right people in place, Courtenay can effectively deliver on its cultural promises, ensuring that arts and culture are accessible and thriving for all.



### **Elevate Investment in Arts and Culture**

One of the most impactful actions the City can take is to increase its financial commitment to arts and culture. By prioritizing funding and investment, Courtenay will enable its cultural sector to grow and innovate and continue to deliver on the exceptional social, economic, and tourism impacts of the sector. This move is about more than just funding projects—it's about creating a sustainable environment where funding can be leveraged to so that arts and culture can reach its full potential.



### **Transform and Expand Cultural Spaces**

Courtenay's cultural spaces located in the downtown are at the heart of community life, and enhancing these facilities is a critical move to achieving the vision of a cultural district. Whether it's upgrading existing venues, creating new multi-purpose spaces, or improving accessibility, these investments will ensure that the City's cultural infrastructure meets the

needs of a growing and diverse population. This move is essential for fostering a sense of place and ensuring that all residents and visitors can participate in the City's cultural life.



### **Lead Regional Cultural Advocacy**

Courtenay must take a leadership role in advocating for arts and culture not just within its own boundaries, but across the Comox Valley. By championing regional collaboration and investment, and positioning Courtenay as a cultural leader, the City can attract new opportunities, enhance tourism, and strengthen its cultural sector. This move will require building strong partnerships and advocating for policies and investments that benefit the entire region and reflect the regional impact of Courtenay's arts and culture assets.



## 4.4 Courtenay Strategic Cultural Plan Goals, Objectives and Actions

### Goal 1. Advance truth and reconciliation through arts and culture

This goal recognizes the role of arts and culture as a powerful medium in advancing truth and reconciliation in Courtenay and surrounding communities in the region. It emphasizes collaboration with K'ómoks First Nation, Métis, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples in acknowledging and celebrating Indigenous history and culture of the community. It was noted that there is a lack of visibility of Indigenous arts, culture, and heritage, thus a desire to see more Indigenous arts and culture in public spaces.

This goal aligns with key objectives of Courtenay's Official Community Plan. Reconciliation is a cardinal direction of the OCP: The City commits to incorporating Indigenous perspectives into its work and decision-making process, and to providing equitable and inclusive services that benefit Indigenous peoples. The City will seek guidance from Indigenous partners in how to make this commitment a reality.

#### **OCP, 2022 - Arts, Culture, Heritage (ACH 1):**

*"Incorporate art, culture and heritage, including K'ómoks First Nation heritage, into place-making efforts throughout the city, including in the design of new private and public buildings and spaces."*

#### **Objective 1.1: Recognize the role and rights of K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples as it relates to arts and culture**

**Action 1.1.1:** Commit to **ongoing relationship building** with K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples to allow for the **continuous shaping of the Strategic Cultural Plan** as a living document reflective of the Indigenous history of Courtenay and the region.

**Action 1.1.2:** Engage with K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples to **seek input, guidance, and consent** in cultural planning processes and co-designing protocols through **decolonized practices**.

**Action 1.1.3:** Include Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community leaders in **cultural planning processes** to ensure the incorporation of traditional wisdom.

#### **Objective 1.2: Respectfully acknowledge K'ómoks territory through arts and culture**

**Action 1.2.1:** Continue to **respectfully acknowledge the land**, recognizing the Unceded traditional territories of the K'ómoks First Nation, in all City-led engagement and activities. Further this through the development of the City's Reconciliation Framework, and include corporate policy to ensure K'ómoks

First Nation land acknowledgment is carried out consistently across City operations.

**Action 1.2.2:** Support the creation of **public art installations that celebrate K'ómoks First Nation and Indigenous cultures** and reinforce the City's commitment through development of a **Public Art Policy**. These installations can serve as a visible and lasting representation of the respect and acknowledgment of the territory and should be commissioned from Indigenous artists.

**Action 1.2.3:** Consider **renaming the Native Sons Hall** following an appropriate process that acknowledges the harms caused by the Native Sons of Canada to a number of equity deserving groups. The process should be conducted with consent from K'ómoks First Nation as part of acknowledging the Indigenous history of Courtenay.

### **Objective 1.3: Increase support and investment in Indigenous arts and culture**

**Action 1.3.1:** Consider establishing **dedicated funding and grants for Indigenous artists, cultural projects, and public art** through a City-funded Arts and Culture Grant Program.

**Action 1.3.2:** Investigate **financial investment** opportunities to support K'ómoks First Nation, Métis, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples to bolster their capacity for meaningful engagement in City Arts and Culture initiatives such as the Strategic Cultural Plan. Further this through the development of the City's Reconciliation Framework and potential Arts and Culture Grant Program.

**Action 1.3.3:** Support and encourage participation in **Indigenous-led cultural events and ceremonies** and explore ways to decolonize existing arts and cultural activities by integrating Indigenous arts and culture into events like Canada Day.

**Action 1.3.4:** Foster **collaboration with Indigenous artists and creators** by commissioning or showcasing their work and exploring facilitation of networking opportunities to connect with peers, collaborators, mentors, and buyers

**Action 1.3.5:** Advocate for **sustainable tourism initiatives and tourism investments** that respectfully highlight and celebrate Indigenous arts and culture in collaboration with K'ómoks First Nation, Métis, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples.

**Action 1.3.6:** Explore partnerships with Indigenous communities to co-develop arts and culture-related **policies, learning opportunities, programs, events, and workshops** that foster understanding of Indigenous histories, traditions, and values.

## Goal 2. Build community resilience through arts and culture

Located in a beautiful geographic location, Courtenay offers a variety of cultural activities that are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. The city is also home to strong cultural anchors who work collaboratively to support cultural activities and there is strong community support and interest in arts and culture. In addition, feedback gathered from equity priority groups (including Indigenous, Black and people of colour community members, youth, immigrants, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, persons with disabilities, and unhoused people), indicated that arts and culture fosters a sense of belonging and identity, community connections and healing, while offering an outlet of expression for community members. Nonetheless, it was also identified that more cultural programming and activities are needed for diverse groups, particularly for youth and other equity priority groups hence the need to specifically address the needs of these communities.

This goal supports the desire for more inclusive community programs and aligns with key objectives of Courtenay's Official Community Plan, specifically with prioritization of equity as a cardinal direction of the OCP.

### **OCP, 2022 - Arts, Culture, Heritage (ACH 4 & 25):**

*"Regularly monitor and update arts and culture programs to keep pace with the needs of a range of users as the community grows", and*

*"Seek new partnership models that support providing more arts and cultural opportunities throughout the city. "*

### **Objective 2.1: Use arts and culture to support community belonging and inclusion, where differences and similarities are celebrated**

**Action 2.1.1:** Explore establishing a **Cultural Coordinator position** at the City as a dedicated resource for arts and culture. This role will be responsible for connecting with communities, building relationships, and ensuring that arts and culture initiatives are effectively integrated and supported throughout the City.

**Action 2.1.2:** Review the **City's current event and festival support**, as well as community activities, with a lens to enhance diverse cultural representation and celebrations (i.e. Complete a Special Events and Hosting Policy for the City of Courtenay).

**Action 2.1.3:** Explore ways to make arts and cultural events, as well as heritage offerings **more inclusive, accessible, and representative** in collaboration with community arts groups.

*Action 2.1.4:* Explore **collaborations with community arts groups** that serve distinct community members in creating cultural spaces and developing activities that are accessible and welcoming to everyone.

### **Objective 2.2: Leverage arts and culture as a medium to engage community on complex social challenges and to support healing**

*Action 2.2.1:* Support ongoing **collaborative arts and culture projects** with local organizations that encourage dialogue, collective problem-solving, and storytelling through diverse media to address social challenges like isolation, while promoting relevant grant funding streams to support this work.

*Action 2.2.2:* Develop **partnerships with organizations that provide arts and culture-based wellness activities to support healing and well-being**, especially for community members affected by trauma or social disparities.

### **Objective 2.3: Develop cultural programming that appeals to a more diverse community**

*Action 2.3.1:* **Strengthen partnerships with equity priority groups** (Indigenous, Black and people of colour, immigrants, 2SLGBTQIA+, persons with disabilities, and unhoused community members) to support or co-create inclusive programs and events, provide space for feedback on cultural sensitivity, and identify diverse programming opportunities that reflect the needs and interests of all community members

*Action 2.3.2:* **Showcase the contributions of diverse individuals and local organizations** in the cultural sector through an awards program or by integrating recognition into existing community events.

*Action 2.3.3:* Explore **partnerships with local groups and institutions**, such as North Island College and School District 71, to develop **youth arts and culture** programming both in schools and community, focusing on reducing barriers to participation.

## **Goal 3. Develop more accessible and affordable cultural spaces**

Courtenay is home to several cultural facilities i.e., 29 facilities and spaces used for arts and cultural events, programming and activities that not only serve Courtenay residents, but residents from neighboring cities in the Comox Valley and visitors to the region. However, community consultations revealed that there is limited availability and affordability of suitable cultural facilities that meet the needs of individuals and local community groups i.e., there is not enough spaces to meet the growing cultural needs. Specific space needs identified include space for live performances, multi-disciplinary programming space, rehearsals, and creation spaces. Limited accessibility and awareness of existing space were also mentioned.

A Cultural Facilities Options analysis was conducted to identify specific space needs, as well as existing spaces that could potentially meet these needs (including short-term,

medium-term, longer-term priorities and consideration for a future vision to build new facilities).

This goal supports the desire for more cultural spaces and aligns with key objectives of Courtenay's Official Community Plan including the goal of supporting the downtown as a Cultural District. Prioritizing facility investment in cultural facilities downtown is a key strategic action to achieve this vision.

**OCP, 2022 - Arts, Culture, Heritage (ACH 6, ACH9, ACH 11, ACH 23 and ACH 24):**

*"Consider the establishment of a dedicated community arts and culture space."*

*"Create a Courtenay Cultural Plan that provides a foundation for partnership models, cultural development, asset investment, and management."*

*"Recognize local cultural, arts, and heritage assets as foundational to Courtenay's community identity"*

*"Examine opportunities for art installations in public spaces as a routine part of public realm and parks, trails and greenway upgrades, open space design, and infrastructure projects"*

*"Explore opportunities within public buildings such as community centres and schools to display local arts, culture, and heritage."*

**Objective 3.1: Increase the availability of accessible and affordable spaces for arts and culture**

**Action 3.1.1:** Conduct a **facility needs assessment and accessibility audit** of City-owned arts and culture spaces as the first step in developing a Cultural Facilities Plan. This assessment will consider factors like location, transportation, and potential upgrades, with the findings directly informing the plan to guide future development of cultural spaces.

**Action 3.1.2:** **Encourage other arts and cultural spaces (non City-owned) to conduct accessibility audits of their spaces.** The City can support this by communicating and promoting external grant opportunities that support facility retrofits.

**Action 3.1.3:** **Advocate to the region for transit** providers to include consideration for events and programming relating to arts and culture (i.e., car and bike usage, shuttle usage, walking and parking) in service planning.

**Action 3.1.4:** Consider exploring **digital platforms to host a Cultural Asset and Resource map** that communicates the inventory, availability, and pricing of cultural facilities, in partnership with a community lead agency.

### **Objective 3.2: Prioritize initiatives/upgrades that provide enhanced and additional space for arts and culture**

**Action 3.2.1:** Complete **Facility Feasibility / Needs Assessments** to look at how existing City-owned arts and culture facilities can be modified to meet emerging community needs and support the cultural district in the downtown area where existing cultural assets are located (including spaces for live performance, multi-disciplinary, rehearsal, and creation spaces). These efforts should be integrated into a Cultural Facilities Plan to align with the City's long-term cultural infrastructure strategy.

**Action 3.2.2:** Develop a **Cultural Facilities Plan** with short, medium and long term priorities, leveraging relevant feedback collected and analysis undertaken in the Strategic Cultural Plan project including the Cultural Facilities Options Analysis.

**Action 3.2.3:** Work with partners to **promote grant opportunities**, such as the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, for both City and non-City-owned cultural organizations to fund renovations, specialized equipment, and feasibility studies.

**Action 3.2.4:** Advocate to **the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD)** regarding regional funding to support future capital arts and culture projects that demonstrate regional impact.

**Action 3.2.5:** Develop policy to include **arts and cultural facilities and amenities as eligible to receive development related funding** including but not limited to Amenity Cost Charges. These funds could be directed toward projects identified in the Cultural Facilities Plan. These tools provide a funding mechanism to ensure that the increased demand on community amenities such as arts and cultural services is accommodated as the community grows, as well as provides for street improvement amenity features that can assist in the unique feeling and community practice of place-making at the neighbourhood scale.

## **Goal 4. Bolster community arts**

Courtenay is home to several community-led arts and cultural organizations, who prioritize participation, collaboration, and engagement within the community itself. Through community partnerships, and cultural programming, local organizations are committed to empowering local artists, enriching community spaces, and fostering meaningful connections through the arts. By amplifying the voices and talents of community members, local arts groups strive to create a dynamic cultural hub where everyone can participate, express themselves, and find inspiration. However, there is a need to further build the capacity of local organizations, increase local collaborations, and create awareness of existing arts, culture and heritage offerings in the community.

**OCP, 2022 - Arts, Culture, Heritage (ACH 25):**

*“Seek new partnership models that support providing more arts and cultural opportunities throughout the city.”*

**Objective 4.1: Support the capacity building of community-led arts and culture organizations**

**Action 4.1.1: Continue supporting core cultural service providers** (i.e., Comox Valley Art Gallery, the Courtenay and District Museum, the Sid Williams Civic Theatre, and the Comox Valley Community Arts Council) to ensure continuity and ability to meet their full potential as cultural anchors in the community.

**Action 4.1.2:** Leverage the City’s relationship with Comox Valley Community Arts Council to support organizational capacity building in the sector through its **training and professional development initiatives**.

**Action 4.1.3:** Consider establishing a **City-funded Arts and Culture Grant Program** to support community-led events, initiatives, and organizational capacity building. This grant program would be the primary mechanism for providing financial resources to local arts organizations, community groups, and Indigenous artists.

**Action 4.1.4:** Explore establishing a **dedicated Cultural Coordinator role in the City** to act as a liaison for the cultural community, support capacity building, identify and act on arts and culture opportunities, lead coordination activities, and implement the Cultural Strategic Plan.

**Objective 4.2: Break down silos and increase collaboration across the cultural sector**

**Action 4.2.1:** Work with one of the core cultural service providers to organize **regular networking events, conferences, and forums that connect organizations**, facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration, and exchange resources to strengthen community capacity throughout the region.

**Action 4.2.2:** Consider **fostering a relationship between the cultural sector and other local institutions** – e.g. North Island College and SD71. Such a relationship can support youth engagement in arts and culture as well as access to the use of school spaces.

**Action 4.2.3:** Investigate opportunities to **develop policies or incentives to encourage partnerships between local businesses** (i.e. Downtown Courtenay BIA), and local artists, groups, and organizations.

### **Objective 4.3: Increase the awareness of community-led arts and culture events**

***Action 4.3.1:*** Introduce an **annual Arts and Culture report to Council from core cultural service providers** that includes insights from community on their programs and services, as well as performance metrics, and reports on implementation of Strategic Cultural Plan.

***Action 4.3.2:*** Consider **partnering with existing non-profit organizations who are curating event calendars** locally and on Vancouver Island to support promotion and increased awareness of local events.

***Action 4.3.3:*** Consider **support for development of an awareness and marketing strategy to promote arts and culture events and offerings**, with a focus on reaching diverse groups. This strategy will also consider event promotion and collaboration with partners like the Comox Valley Community Arts Council.

***Action 4.3.4:*** Promote and raise awareness of arts and culture by **supporting community-based arts projects supported by public art policy**.

***Action 4.3.5:*** Consider creating an **annual or bi-annual process of updating Courtenay's Cultural Asset Map** in collaboration with Creative Coast to highlight Courtenay's cultural offerings and encourage regional collaboration.

## **Goal 5. Support the strategic development of the cultural sector**

Courtenay is home to several arts and cultural organizations with demonstrated social and economic value of arts and culture to the community. There is also strong municipal support for core cultural partners, who provide cultural offerings to residents of the city and region, as well as visitors. However, there is a need for more support particularly for community arts and culture and at the regional level to support the city as a cultural hub in the region. Planning for and investment in the downtown as a cultural district can capitalize on tourism and economic impacts that contribute to the vitalization of this important part of the City.

This goal prioritizes the robust support and strategic development of Courtenay's cultural sector, recognizing its profound impact on the city and region's identity and economy. Through targeted initiatives and investments, Courtenay can cultivate an environment where the arts flourish, fostering creativity, diversity, and innovation. By nurturing partnerships, creating cultural tourism opportunities and policy frameworks, Courtenay can unlock the full potential of its cultural sector, enriching the lives of residents and visitors alike while positioning the city as a vibrant cultural destination in the Comox Valley and on Vancouver Island. To achieve this strategic development goal, regional collaboration and funding support are essential.



**OCP, 2022 - Arts, Culture, Heritage (ACH 8 and ACH 10):**

*"Work regionally and in partnership to coordinate arts and cultural services and invest and raise the Comox Valley's profile as a centre for contemporary artistic creation."*

*"Advocate for investment in arts, culture, and heritage as a local tourism economic development driver."*

**Objective 5.1: Build and sustain existing social and economic impact by strengthening Courtenay's professional arts and culture sector**

**Action 5.1.1: Integrate arts and culture into City's Community Economic Development Analysis and economic strategies**, including fostering closer alignment with local, regional, and national economic development initiatives by collaborating with entities like the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA) and Canadian Heritage.

**Action 5.1.2: Review and enhance existing funding structures to support core cultural service providers** (Comox Valley Community Arts Council (CVAC), Comox Valley Art Gallery (CVAG), Sid William Theatre, and Courtenay and District Museum) by considering integrating existing funding into a dedicated stream within a City-Funded Arts and Culture Grant Program. This will ensure that these providers continue to meet the evolving needs of the community.

**Action 5.1.3: Cultivate diverse collaborations with interest groups**, including educational systems (e.g., North Island College, School District 71), private studios, individual arts educators, and music organizations, to build a robust network that amplifies the sector's influence and supports arts education and Indigenous collaborations.

**Action 5.1.4: Explore a regional funding and coordination approach with Comox Valley local governments and the Comox Valley Regional District** to support arts and culture. This includes establishing regional funding for core cultural partners who provide regional services, as well as community grants and capital funding for arts and culture.

**Objective 5.2: Embed arts and culture more firmly in tourism initiatives in Courtenay and the Comox Valley**

**Action 5.2.1: Collaborate with the Comox Valley Regional District and Experience Comox Valley** to highlight cultural tourism opportunities in Courtenay, aligning with their Tourism Strategy Plan.

**Action 5.2.2: Work with local organizations** (e.g., Comox Valley Community Arts Council, Experience Comox Valley) to develop a **marketing and outreach strategy** for events and programs and to promote the City and Comox Valley

as a cultural tourism destination. Leverage Experience Comox Valley's annual Destination Plan.

**Action 5.2.3:** Create a Working Group to **develop a sustainable vision and action plan for nightlife** in Courtenay and advocate for the nighttime economy, potentially leveraging the existing Comox Valley Tourism Advisory Committee or Economic Development Strategy.

**Action 5.2.4:** Work with Experience Comox Valley to **establish signature tourism events** during the shoulder months (outside of summer) to draw year-round visitors to Courtenay and the Comox Valley.

### **Objective 5.3: Create new and or updated policies to support the cultural sector**

**Action 5.3.1:** Develop a **Special Events and Hosting Policy or Guidelines** that support arts and cultural events including those that serve as a tourism draw for Courtenay. The policy could also outline how to create accessible materials for hosting events that would be useful to community-led and grassroots event organizers. The policy should further clarify guidelines for when the City is being a host, a facilitator or a location for special events. Note, this policy should align with cultural tourism and economic development plans.

**Action 5.3.2:** Develop a **Public Art Policy** that supports public art and mural projects in the community. The policy would outline how to prioritize commissions for local artists, as well as support the representation of Indigenous arts and culture in the community. The policy could also help foster youth engagement in community public art initiatives.

**Action 5.3.3:** Consider reviewing the **City's Street Entertainer Program and the associated regulation bylaw**. Explore opportunities for leveraging the program for nightlife and community placemaking activities via collaboration with local businesses.

**Action 5.3.4:** Consider establishing an **arts and culture committee** for the City to advise Council and staff on priorities, activities, and initiatives related to arts and culture in Courtenay, including the implementation of the Strategic Cultural Plan and alignment with local tourism and economic development activities.

**Action 5.3.5:** Include arts and culture in local area planning initiatives, with specific consideration for **identifying Downtown as an arts, culture, and heritage district** in line with the OCP.

### **Objective 5.4: Explore strategic ways to meet sector labour needs**

**Action 5.4.1:** Consider opportunities of **working with School District 71 and local organizations to integrate arts and culture into school curricula** to foster the interest of children and youth in the arts and cultural sector.

***Action 5.4.2:*** Support **collaborations between local organizations and educational institutions** (such as North Island College and Excel Career College) to **develop and fast-track technical and short courses related to arts and culture** including sound and lighting, stage management and crowd control related courses.

***Action 5.4.3:*** Investigate ways the City can support local arts and culture organizations to offer **volunteer, mentorship, and co-op educational opportunities** for youth and community members who are interested in developing a career in the cultural sector.

***Action 5.4.4:*** Support the approval of developments that provide **housing and workspaces for artisans and the cultural sector** in the community (similar to Tin Town) in the community. Advance land use planning in Town Centres where this type of use is allowed as per the OCP, and consider other tools such as pre-zoning specific areas (i.e. through the Downtown Vitalization Local Area Plan) to enable the development of artist housing and workspace. This initiative can draw inspiration from successful models like Montreal and Vancouver, where affordable housing contributes to vibrant artistic communities and can also attract talent to support the cultural sector.

## 5. Conclusion

Courtenay's Strategic Cultural Plan lays a strong foundation for fostering a vibrant and inclusive cultural landscape that reflects the community's unique identity and aspirations. The Plan is the result of extensive community engagement with individuals and arts and cultural organizations, and it sets the stage for the next decade of work and investments in the sector. By focusing on five key areas or foundational elements - advancing truth and reconciliation, building community resilience, developing more accessible and affordable cultural spaces, bolstering community arts, and supporting strategic cultural sector growth - the plan lays a strong foundation for success.

The benefits of investing in arts and culture go far beyond the costs, with significant economic, social, and tourism development spinoffs that will enhance the community. When municipalities commit funding, arts and culture groups can leverage those investments to secure additional financial resources, amplifying the impact. The economic and social benefits are quantifiable and should be considered in long term capital investment decisions required to anchor and support arts and culture activities as demonstrated in Courtenay's downtown cultural district.

Regional collaboration will also be essential to realizing the full potential of this plan. The arts and culture sector's growth and sustainability cannot be fully realized without support that extends beyond municipal boundaries. Many of the initiatives—such as the development of affordable cultural spaces, bolstering community arts, and advancing truth and reconciliation—require a coordinated effort from neighboring municipalities and regional bodies. Regional funding will play a critical role in ensuring that the broader Comox Valley continues to benefit from arts and cultural offerings located in Courtenay, and it will provide the necessary resources to elevate the sector in the entire region. Working together at the regional level can amplify impact, create more inclusive and accessible arts experiences, and unlock the full potential of arts and culture as drivers of economic, social, and cultural development throughout the area.

The next step will be the completion of an Implementation Plan following Council's adoption of the final Strategic Cultural Plan, to bring these ideas to life. The Implementation Plan will ensure that the strategic goals are effectively integrated into the City's broader strategic agenda, solidifying Courtenay's commitment to cultural growth, enhancing the quality of life for residents and positioning the city as a hub of creativity and innovation.

Courtenay is dedicated to fostering relationships in a respectful manner and engaging in continuous dialogue with K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples. The City views the Strategic Cultural Plan as a living document, open to evolving into the future with guidance from Indigenous peoples and communities developed over time through long-term meaningful relationships.

## 6. Appendices

Appendix A. What We Heard Report

Appendix B. Comparative Review

Appendix C. Cultural Facilities Options

Appendix D. List of Existing Facilities and Spaces

# **Courtenay**

# **Strategic 10-Year Cultural Plan**

## **What We Heard Report**

September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Prepared for**

**City of Courtenay**

**Prepared by**

**Nordicity**



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## Executive Summary

### Background

This 'What We Heard' report shares **community engagement research findings for the Courtenay Strategic Cultural Plan**. The purpose of the Plan is to provide a framework and roadmap to support arts and culture in Courtenay over the next 10 years. This document summarizes findings from the community engagement research, highlighting community-identified needs relating to arts and culture in Courtenay.

### Methodology and Engagement Approach

The Strategic Cultural Plan is following a **5-phase process**, involving desk research, community engagement, analysis (including facility options and economic and social impact analysis), followed by the development of a draft strategy and recommendations for community feedback and review, and lastly, the creation of the final plan.

The planning process has involved inclusive community consultation with an equity lens. This engagement approach has included:

- Respectfully seeking input from across the community, including from equity priority groups such as Indigenous and Black community members and People of Colour, LGBTQ2S+ individuals, and unhoused people.
- Leveraging established relationships with existing community organizations advocating for equity priority groups to ensure that all community members, especially historically underrepresented groups, have a voice.
- Recognizing the need for long term commitments to relationship building with Indigenous communities.

### Community engagement activities

Community engagement research for the Strategic Cultural Plan has included an **online survey** (live from June 14<sup>th</sup> to July 14<sup>th</sup> 2023) which received ~700 responses, an **arts and culture sector focus group consultation event** attended by 38 participants from local arts and culture organizations in May 2023, and a **public drop-in engagement event** in July 2023.

The planning process has also involved **1:1 interviews** with community members, and **targeted group conversations** with four equity priority communities (i.e., representatives of/people with lived experience of disabilities, homelessness, being a newcomer, and being part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community).

### Key Findings

#### Survey Highlights

- The overall survey results show that a very **high number of respondents are culturally engaged (94%)**. Performing arts (such as theatre, dance, and music) are the most popular way to engage.
- Arts and culture in Courtenay encourage **social participation** and a sense of belonging.



- **Main barriers to accessing culture** in Courtenay are limited options nearby (29%), limited options of interest (21%), and not having enough time (20%). However, nearly a quarter of all participants stated that they do not experience any barriers.
- **Critical needs**, according to culture sector respondents (artists and cultural sector workers), are more space for performance/exhibitions (identified as a challenge by 45% of sector respondents), more rehearsal and creation space (36%), and supportive bylaws and policies for arts and culture (32%).
- **The future arts and culture offerings respondents would most like to see** more of include live performances (selected by 44% of total participants), more education, programming and workshops (29%) and more Indigenous arts and culture (28%).
- **The main culture themes that the City should prioritize in the Culture Plan**, according to all survey participants, are enhancing space for arts and culture (35% of participants selected this option) and using arts and culture to enhance community wellbeing (26%).
- **Expenditure:** The average amount spent in the community before and after a cultural event is \$105 per individual.

For more on specific findings relating to the community-identified needs of the cultural sector and equity priority groups in Courtenay, see pages 30-33 of the full What We Heard report. Detailed survey results can be found in Appendix A.

## Strengths, Challenges and Gaps

Courtenay's current strengths, challenges and gaps when it comes to culture, based on analysis of all engagement findings, include the following:

### + Strengths

- Courtenay has a beautiful geographic location that provides artistic inspiration.
- Strong cultural anchors, collaborative spirit, and cultural capital.
- Established City municipality support for core arts and culture organizations.
- Community support for and interest in arts and culture is notable in Courtenay.
- Variety of cultural offerings to attract people year-round to the city.
- Demonstrated social and economic impact of arts and culture in Courtenay.

### - Challenges and Gaps

- Lack of visibility of Indigenous arts, culture, and heritage in Courtenay.
- Inadequate municipal support for arts and culture, including at the City and regional level.
- Limited human resources, including technical professionals, in some areas of the arts and culture sector.
- Lack of accessibility to cultural spaces and events.
- Limited arts and culture programming opportunities for youth, and lack of awareness of what is available.

## Community-Identified Priority Needs

### *Engaging K'ómoks First Nation, Métis, Inuit, and other Urban Indigenous communities*

- Many participants want to see **more Indigenous arts and culture in public spaces** – e.g., for storytelling and educational opportunities, especially to raise awareness of K'ómoks' ongoing culture and heritage.
- The City of Courtenay is currently in the process of **engaging with K'ómoks First Nation** Chief and Council regarding the development of the Strategic Cultural Plan. The City is committed to working collaboratively with K'ómoks First Nation to ensure the plan is representative of Indigenous values and supportive of our work towards reconciliation.
- Part of the engagement with KFN will be identifying and defining what 'culture' means in Courtenay, given that it is situated on the traditional unceded territory of K'ómoks First Nation.

### *More cultural spaces/facilities, and better availability and affordability*

- Participants expressed the **need for more equipped and accessible cultural spaces and performance venues** to meet various sector needs, including the need for rental space. The types of spaces needed include small, medium, and larger venues, including performance and rehearsals venues.

### *Developing more diverse and affordable cultural programming*

- There is a desire for more **diverse and affordable cultural programming**, both in terms of services delivered by the City and by local arts and cultural groups.

### *Further promotion of community partnerships and collaboration*

- There is a need for more community collaborations and partnerships. There is also a need to have **avenues for knowledge sharing** across the sector, for example through regular gatherings.

### *Increased municipal support – financial and in-kind, local, and regional*

- There is a desire **for increased City financial support** for arts and culture, especially in the form of community grants.
- Participants further expressed the **need for regional funding support for arts and culture in Courtenay**, given cultural offerings are beneficial or serve the wider population in the Comox valley or region.

### *Further development of cultural tourism*

- Participants expressed the need to leverage events such as gallery exhibitions and festivals to help make Courtenay the **cultural hub of the region**, and to **promote cultural tourism**.

### ***Attraction and training of technical cultural workers***

- There is a need for more **technical expertise in relation to hosting live performances and events** – i.e., more sound and lighting technicians, stage management and crowd control specialists are in high demand.

### ***Development of a Public Arts Policy***

- There is a desire for Courtenay to develop a **Public Arts Policy** that is reviewed periodically to support public arts in the city. Individuals noted such a policy could **leverage the talent of young artists** and involve them in community public arts initiatives.

### **Next Steps**

- **Ongoing and open dialogue with K'ómoks First Nation** Chief and Council to discuss meaningful engagement;
- **Municipal benchmarking** and comparative review;
- Assessing the **economic impact** of Courtenay's arts and culture sector;
- Analyzing **cultural facilities options**, drawing on the survey and other research engagement findings shared in this report;
- **Drafting recommendations**, and seeking community check-in via a public event and online feedback
- Developing the final **Strategic Cultural Plan**

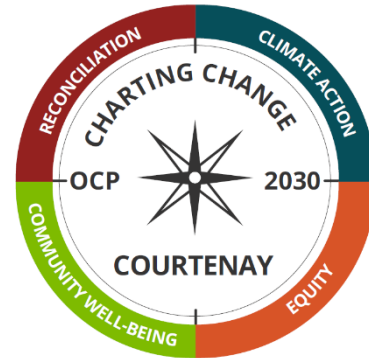
## Courtenay 10-year Strategic Cultural Plan: What We Heard

### Background

This What We Heard report shares community engagement research findings for the Courtenay Strategic Cultural Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to provide a framework and roadmap to support arts and culture in Courtenay over the next 10 years.

Through the Strategic Cultural Plan, the City of Courtenay aims to:

- Mirror the City of Courtenay’s values of Reconciliation, Community Wellbeing, Equity and Climate Action – as identified in the Official Community Plan.
- Engage in inclusive community dialogue.
- Build on and action policy recommendations, e.g., OCP (2022), Parks and Recreation Plan (2019), Cultural Service Review (2019).
- Consider both the social and economic impact of arts and culture.



**“Cardinal Directions” from the City of Courtenay Official Community Plan Update, 2022**

This document summarizes the work that has taken place so far, and what the community has told us about the strengths, challenges and priority needs relating to arts and culture in Courtenay. The findings will be used to develop recommendations on how the City of Courtenay can support artists, arts and culture organizations and creatives, as well as support wider community priorities through arts and culture. Through these actions, the Strategic Cultural Plan will seek to ensure that arts and culture is integrated into the community, and representative of all residents.

### What is Cultural Planning?

Cultural planning is a process of community consultation which aims to help towns and cities to support arts and culture development, to benefit the community. The planning process highlights a community’s unique strengths, gaps, and needs in relation to arts and culture. The aim is to strategically integrate arts and culture with wider municipal planning and strategies. Essentially, it means asking, “where are we now? Where do we want to be?” – and considers strategies to get there.<sup>1</sup>

### Defining Arts and Culture – What’s Included?

Arts and culture can be difficult to define because they mean many things to different people. This Plan defines arts and culture broadly – including tangible assets (like artworks and

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<sup>1</sup> Drawing from Cultural Planning (2022), Government of Ontario <https://www.ontario.ca/page/cultural-planning>

buildings), organized groups (such as performance and dance troupes), and intangible things (like stories and cultural traditions). The ‘Cultural Resources Framework’ below maps different types of arts and culture resources or assets.

The City of Courtenay is currently in the process of **engaging with K’ómoks First Nation** Chief and Council regarding the development of the Strategic Cultural Plan. The City of Courtenay acknowledges that the definition of ‘culture’ and its impacts may be different from K’ómoks First Nation’s view. As such, part of the engagement with KFN will be identifying and defining what ‘culture’ means in Courtenay, given that it is situated on the traditional unceded territory of K’ómoks First Nation.

**Figure 1. Cultural Resources Framework**



Source: Adapted from Municipal Cultural Planning Incorporated’s Cultural Resources Mapping: Guide for Municipalities (2010), Statistics Canada Canadian Framework for Cultural Statistics (2011), and North Shore Culture Compass.

## Planning Process

Figure 2. Five-phase planning process



The Strategic Cultural Plan is following a **5-phase process**, involving desk research, community engagement, analysis (including facility options, economic and social impact analysis, and municipal benchmarking via a comparative review), followed by the development of a draft strategy and recommendations for community feedback and review, and lastly, the creation of the final plan.

The community engagement work has been led by the Business Administration section of the City of Courtenay’s Recreation, Culture and Community Services Department, in collaboration with [Nordicity](#), with input from artists, arts and culture organizations, interested community parties, and the wider public.

## Planning Context

### Community Context

Located in the Comox Valley, Courtenay offers a natural and beautiful landscape that supports artistic inspiration. The city’s vibrant arts and culture scene presents a variety of opportunities for residents and visitors from within and beyond the region. Courtenay’s cultural sector has a strong creative community who are supported by multiple local arts organizations, and a high number of volunteers who are passionate about arts and culture in the community. The city is also home to many artists who add depth to the artistic community.

Courtenay has multiple arts and culture assets including cultural spaces and facilities, community arts and cultural organizations, creative cultural enterprises, festivals and events, cultural heritage, public arts, diverse art forms including visual and performing and public arts.

Specifically, there are over 150 cultural assets<sup>2</sup> in Courtenay, including over 30 community cultural organizations, 29 facilities and spaces used for cultural events and programming, 10 arts-related educational institutions among other resources in the community.

Furthermore, arts and culture in Courtenay contribute to community wellbeing and economic development (through events such as the [Downtown Courtenay Summer Street Markets](#) and [Vancouver Island Music Festival](#), which draws visitors to the city, and initiatives such as the [Youth Media Project](#) which provides skilled training to youth in the community). Arts and culture can further play a profound role in addressing important issues like reconciliation (e.g., by increasing awareness that Courtenay is on K'ómoks First Nation territory through public arts such as murals and sculptures), and addressing mental health and the toxic drug poisoning crisis (through programs such as [Walk With Me](#), a project of the Comox Valley Art Gallery).

Various strategic planning in Courtenay highlighted the need for a plan to guide the City's support of arts and culture. The Strategic Cultural Plan will therefore guide the City in its relationships with the cultural sector, residents (including equity priority groups such as Indigenous communities, newcomers and immigrants, people who are unhoused, people with disabilities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ community), and neighbours from the Comox Valley in relation to arts and culture.

## City of Courtenay Priorities

The Strategic Cultural Plan can support a number of existing community priorities in Courtenay. The following table outlines key priorities identified from a review of existing plans and strategies and indicates how the Strategic Cultural Plan can support them.

**Table 1. Existing community priorities in Courtenay**

Priority	Relevance and Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy	City Municipal Plans
<b>Advance reconciliation efforts</b>	<p><b>Reconciliation is a guiding cardinal direction</b></p> <p><b>Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritize engagement with Indigenous partners</li> <li>Support actions identified in the OCP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Engagement Strategy &amp; Toolkit, 2020</li> <li>OCP, 2022</li> </ul>

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<sup>2</sup> Cultural assets identified through Nordicity asset mapping research. 'Cultural assets' include festivals and events (including arts and culture festivals and events and other events with culture component), creative cultural enterprises, arts education, spaces and facilities (including formal arts and culture venues, and occasional venues), community and cultural organizations (including non-profits, associations/societies, Indigenous organizations and community arts organizations), cultural heritage, multimedia (including radio & television, publishing and printing, film and media), and arts (i.e., performing arts, visual arts and public arts).

Priority	Relevance and Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy	City Municipal Plans
<b>Reduce social inequalities</b>	<p><b>Equity is a guiding cardinal direction</b></p> <p><b>Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prioritize engagement with equity-priority communities</li> <li>▪ Support actions identified in the OCP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public Engagement Strategy &amp; Toolkit, 2020</li> <li>▪ OCP, 2022</li> </ul>
<b>Address funding challenges</b>	<p><b>Funding is an ongoing challenge throughout policy documents</b></p> <p><b>Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evaluate outstanding Cultural Services Report recommendations</li> <li>▪ Review Comox Valley Regional District's Principle-Based Framework for Allocating Recreation Grants (Wilson, 2011)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cultural Services Report, 2019</li> <li>▪ OCP, 2022</li> </ul>
<b>Enhance downtown</b>	<p><b>Downtown vision remains relevant and desired</b></p> <p><b>Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support steps to advance Duncan Commons vision and activate 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Downtown Playbook, 2016</li> <li>▪ OCP, 2022</li> <li>▪ Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2019</li> <li>▪ Cultural Services Report 2019</li> </ul>
<b>Support regional interconnectivity</b>	<p><b>Arts and culture in Courtenay serves the region</b></p> <p><b>Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build on Cultural Services Report to identify ongoing gaps in funding, service provision, etc.</li> <li>▪ Revisit Wilson's frameworks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CVRD 'A Principle-based Framework for Funding Regional Recreation and Cultural Facilities', J. Wilson, 2011</li> <li>▪ Cultural Services Report, 2019</li> </ul>
<b>Encourage active community engagement</b>	<p><b>Courtenay prioritizes community participation</b></p> <p><b>Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engage the community throughout the research</li> <li>▪ Apply processes identified in the Public Engagement Strategy &amp; Toolkit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public Engagement Strategy &amp; Toolkit, 2020</li> <li>▪ OCP, 2022</li> <li>▪ Cultural Plan Scoping Workshop, 2022</li> </ul>



Priority	Relevance and Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy	City Municipal Plans
<b>Celebrate cultural offerings</b>	<p><i>Courtenay is home to a vibrant cultural scene</i></p> <p><b>Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Map cultural assets</li> <li>▪ Document strengths of Courtenay’s cultural scene</li> <li>▪ Need for a special events and hosting policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cultural Services Report, 2019</li> <li>▪ Cultural Inventory Report, 2017</li> <li>▪ Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2019</li> <li>▪ Parks, Rec. &amp; Culture Analysis document, 2017</li> <li>▪ OCP, 2022</li> </ul>
<b>Recognize community impact</b>	<p><i>There is a desire to capture social and economic impacts</i></p> <p><b>Direction for the Cultural Planning Strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct economic and social impact assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cultural Services Report, 2019</li> <li>▪ Cultural Plan Scoping Workshop, 2022</li> </ul>

### Existing Cultural Sector Priorities

Previous consultation with Courtenay’s arts and culture sector highlighted the following points as important considerations for the Strategic Cultural Plan:<sup>3</sup>

- **Developing sector capacity**
  - Ensuring sustainable levels of core services
  - Adequate financial support and staff capacity
- **Engaging with local First Nations**
  - There is a need to engage meaningfully with K’ómoks First Nation, in recognition that the lands Courtenay is situated on are on unceded, traditional K’ómoks territory.
- **Maintaining cultural capital assets**
  - There is a need for Cultural Mapping, a Facilities Needs Assessment, and support for aging infrastructure.
- **The City of Courtenay playing an enhanced role**
  - The City needs a cultural plan and a review of how the City funds and supports arts and culture.

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<sup>3</sup> Sources: Culture Services Report (2019) and consultative scoping for the Cultural Plan with the core cultural service providers (i.e., those that receive operational funding from the City of Courtenay).

- New policies are required to support arts and culture (e.g., Public Art Policy, Special Events Policy).
- **Recognizing the role of arts and culture in economic development and tourism**
  - There is a need for increased marketing investment to support the valuable role that arts, culture, and heritage drive in attracting visitors and spending to the region.
  - There is a need to recognize the regional role that cultural services play.
  - Demonstrating this role will help the sector to make the case for increased financial support.
- **Serving all of Courtenay**
  - Arts and culture in Courtenay need to reach under-represented groups.
  - There's a need for a greater focus on the links between arts and culture and wider community issues (such as housing and affordability).

## Community Engagement Approach

Aligning with the City's Official Community Plan and the 2022 action policies, the Strategic Cultural Plan is being developed through a process of inclusive community consultation. The key engagement principles are taking a **human-centred** approach; having **respect for Indigenous Nations and People** – especially K'ómoks First Nation, on whose unceded territory Courtenay is located; **trust; privacy**; and taking an **intersectional approach**. Taking an intersectional approach to engagement means taking into consideration the perspectives of diverse community members, including equity priority groups who are often not included in engagement activities due to barriers that limit their participation.<sup>4</sup> This approach has included:






- Respectfully seeking input from equity priority groups including Indigenous and Black community members and People of Colour, youth, LGBTQ2S+ individuals, and unhoused people.
- Leveraging established relationships with existing community organizations advocating for equity priority groups to ensure that all community members, especially historically underrepresented communities, have a voice.
- Recognizing the need for long term commitments to relationship building with Indigenous communities.

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<sup>4</sup> "Intersectionality brings attention to how people are defined by differing positionalities in a society based on their gender, ethnicity or race, sexual orientation, ability, and class, etc. These are identities and positionalities that form overlapping positions of inequality and privilege. They are in hierarchical relations to one another according to which some people have more power in societies than others." Source: Salla Sariola (2020) Intersectionality and Community Engagement: Can Solidarity Alone Solve Power Differences in Global Health Research?, *The American Journal of Bioethics*, 20:5, 57-59, DOI: [10.1080/15265161.2020.1745951](https://doi.org/10.1080/15265161.2020.1745951)

See the figure below for details of how these principles informed the engagement approach.

**Figure 3. Community engagement principles**

Principles				
Human-centred	Respect for Indigenous Nations and People	Trust-based	Privacy	Intersectional
				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People-focused</li> <li>Respectful sharing environment</li> <li>Community based</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respect stature</li> <li>Respect time considerations</li> <li>Respect a mutually-defined process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear communication</li> <li>Transparent processes</li> <li>Incorporate feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consent-based</li> <li>Secure storage and disposal of data</li> <li>Aggregate data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following an equity lens</li> <li>Cultural competency</li> <li>Foster safe</li> </ul>
Processes				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowing people space to speak</li> <li>Engaging with under-represented communities</li> <li>Providing materials so representative organizations could facilitate sessions with people with lived experience in their community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeking to consult with K'ómoks First Nation Council to develop protocols for engagement around arts and culture</li> <li>Connecting with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers to incorporate their perspectives for the plan via interviews and small group discussions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly explaining the purpose of interviews, focus groups, and the survey and how findings will be used</li> <li>Updating the approach in response to feedback</li> <li>Reporting back to the community for input and iteration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not recording online engagements (typed notes only)</li> <li>Anonymizing participant responses</li> <li>Sharing notes with participants who want to see them</li> <li>Saving data securely and deleting when no longer needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeking perspectives from people from equity priority communities, including BIPOC and LGBTQ2S+</li> <li>Engaging groups who may not regularly engage in arts and culture activities (e.g., newcomers, unhoused people, people with disabilities)</li> </ul>

### Engagement with K'ómoks First Nation

The Strategic Cultural Plan project team looks forward to working with K'ómoks First Nation (KFN) to ensure that the Strategic Cultural Plan is developed in a meaningful way, aligned with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) and guided by the Truth and Reconciliation Findings and Calls to Actions.

The City recognizes the colonial aspects of having a specific and limited timeframe, which creates barriers to meaningful engagement. The City hopes to work together with KFN to define a path forward recognizing that true relations building takes time. The ambition is for the Strategic Cultural Plan will become a living document rather than a static, one-time report – one that is open to adjustment to ensure KFN priorities are included in the process. This iterative approach should allow time for true relations building and community engagement with KFN members, and could include a regular review of the Plan and implementation progress with KFN Chief and Council.

### Engagement Methodology

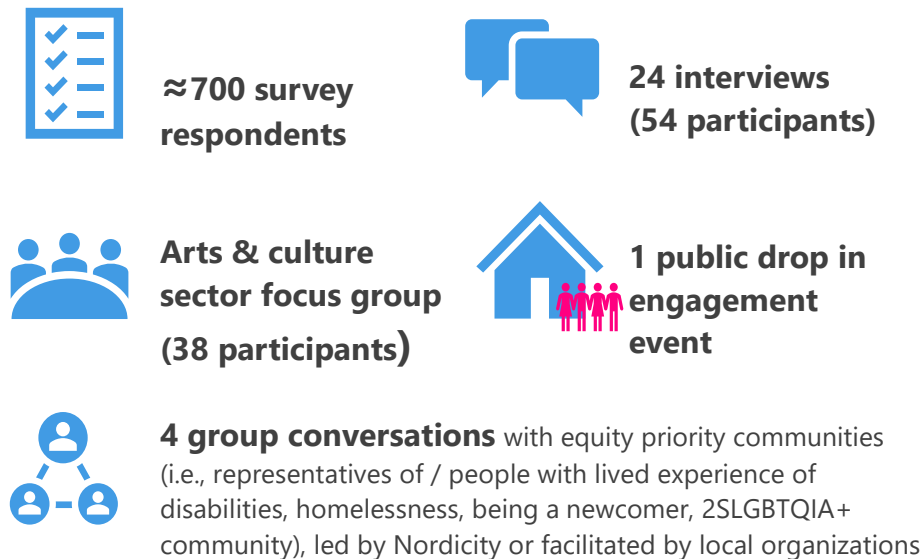
Figure 4 presents the engagement activities at a glance. The project has sought to ensure that a diverse and representative range of voices are heard. As such, community engagement research for the Strategic Cultural Plan has included an **online survey**, which was live from June 14<sup>th</sup> to July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and received **~700 responses** overall. In addition, the Project Team heard from **over 120 community members via qualitative engagements**.

The qualitative research engagements included an **arts and culture sector focus group** consultation event in May 2023 which was attended by 38 participants from local arts and culture organizations, and a **public drop-in engagement event** in July 2023. The team also

held **24 interviews, which engaged 54 participants** in total. These interviews included consultations with four core cultural services providers (i.e., the Sid Williams Theatre, the Comox Valley Arts Gallery, the Comox Valley Community Arts Council, and the Courtenay and District Museum). In addition, 28 participants were engaged as part of **four group conversations with equity priority communities** (i.e., representatives of / people with lived experience of disabilities, being unhoused, being a newcomer, and being part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community). These conversations were led by Nordicity or facilitated by local organizations (including the Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness and the Comox Valley Accessibility Committee) which work specifically with these communities. See Appendix B for a list of participating organizations.

Furthermore, to ensure this project also includes other Indigenous peoples who live within the community, the City aligns with the [distinction-based approach](#) adopted by the Province of British Columbia. The engagement process respects and acknowledges the unique cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. To this end, the City will continue to work with KFN to ensure that K'ómoks First Nation's land rights are met and that KFN culture is represented and celebrated, while also ensuring that newcomers, settlers, and members of other Indigenous groups feel welcome and can celebrate their unique cultures.

**Figure 4. Engagement activities at a glance**



## What We Heard

Note, the City of Courtenay will continue to receive feedback until the draft Strategic Cultural Plan is created. The survey participant numbers reported in this section vary because some participants opted to only answer some questions rather than the whole survey.

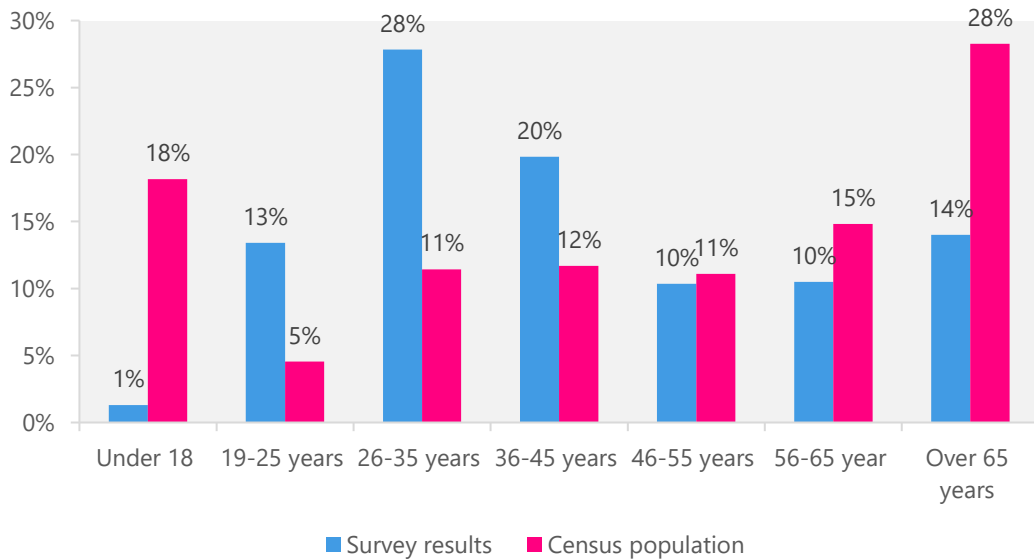
### Key Survey Findings

#### Survey participant profile

63% of respondents provided stated they are from a Courtenay postal code, while 37% identified as living outside of Courtenay. When participants were asked how they engage with culture in Courtenay, 67% said that they engage as members of the public, 35% as a practicing artist or cultural worker, and 14% as an owner/manager/operator of an arts and culture organization or facility. Survey results include all survey participant responses unless stated otherwise. (Note, some information from organizations will also be used to complete economic impact analysis which will be completed in the later phases of Strategic Cultural Plan development work).

In comparison with the Statistics Canada City of Courtenay Census population age breakdown, the survey garnered a higher portion of those between the ages of 26-35 years, and a lower portion of those over 65 years.

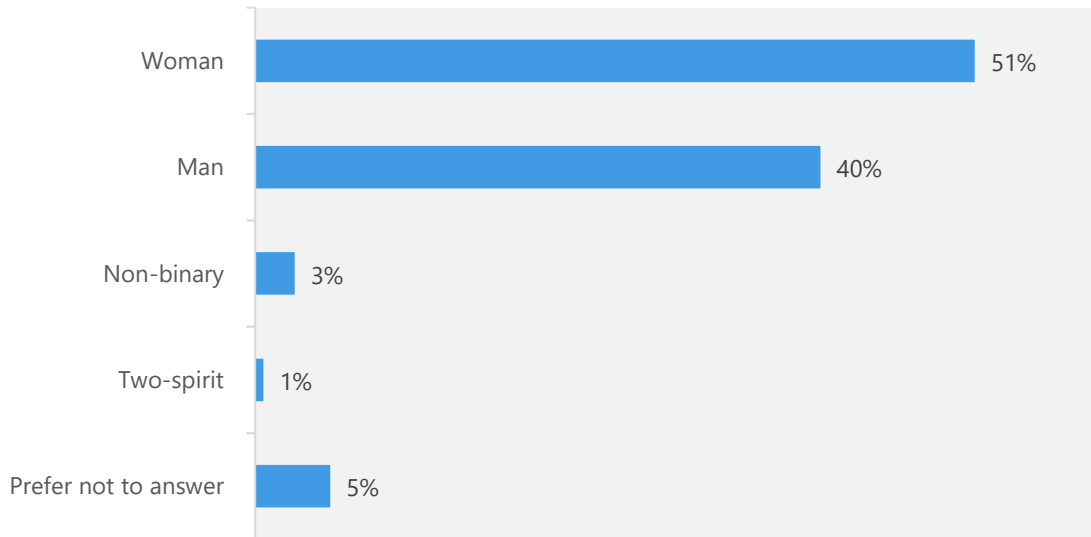
**Figure 5. Population age characteristics (all responses, n=686)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023 and Statistics Canada Census Profile for the City of Courtenay 2021

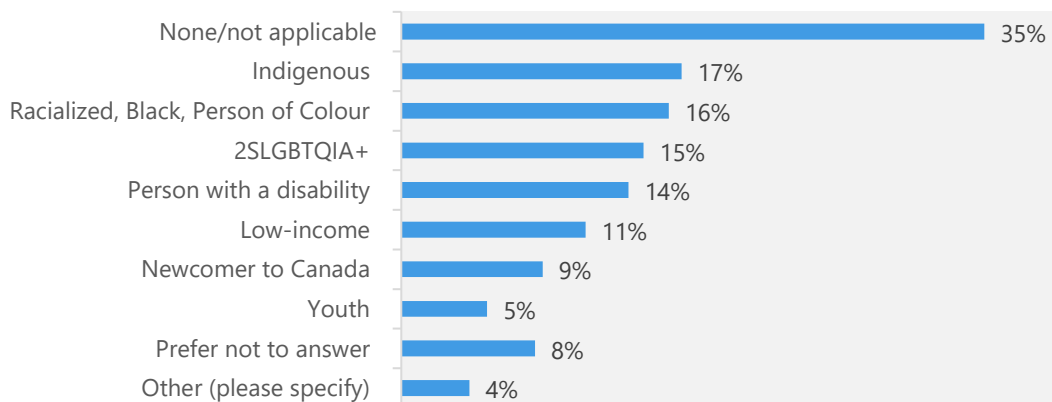
Survey participants were asked to self-identify their gender (Figure 6). The majority of participants identified as female (51%) and male (40%). Of the remaining respondents, 3% identified as non-binary, 1% two-spirit, and 5% preferred not to answer.

**Figure 6. What is your gender? (all responses, n=675)**



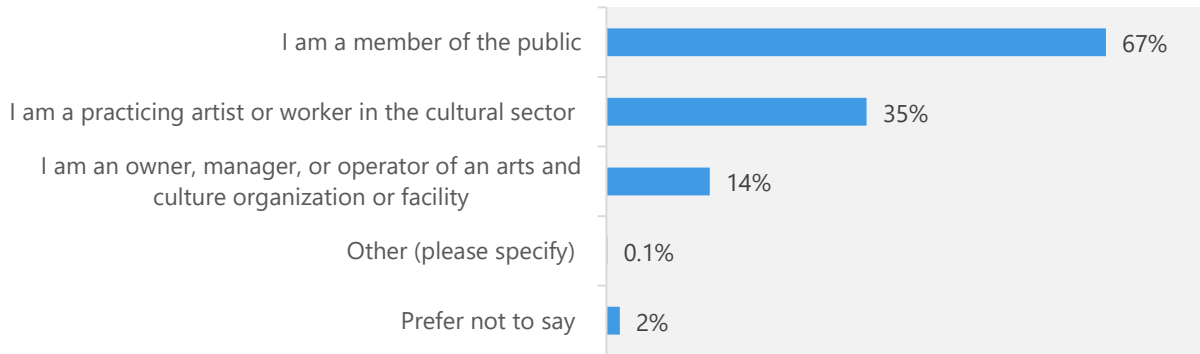
The survey was able to reach a wide range of identities (Figure 7). While 35% did not identify with any visible group, 17% identified as Indigenous, 16% identified as racialized (Black or person of colour), and 14% 2SLGBTQIA+. The Statistics Canada Census Profile for the City of Courtenay shows that 8% of the population identify as a visible minority, and 8% of the population are of Indigenous ancestry. Therefore, the survey garnered a higher proportion of those who identified from these identities. Moreover, 21 individuals identified with more than one category. This finding shows that the survey was able to reach a diverse representation of Courtenay’s ethnographic makeup, while also showing that there is diverse participation in arts and culture in Courtenay.

**Figure 7. Do you identify with any of the following? Select all that apply (all responses, n=655)**



When participants were asked how they engage with culture in Courtenay (Figure 8), 67% said that they engage as members of the public, 35% as a practicing artist or cultural worker, and 14% as an owner/manager/operator of an arts and culture organization or facility.

**Figure 8. How do you engage with culture in Courtenay? Please select the statement(s) that best describe you (all responses, n=779)**

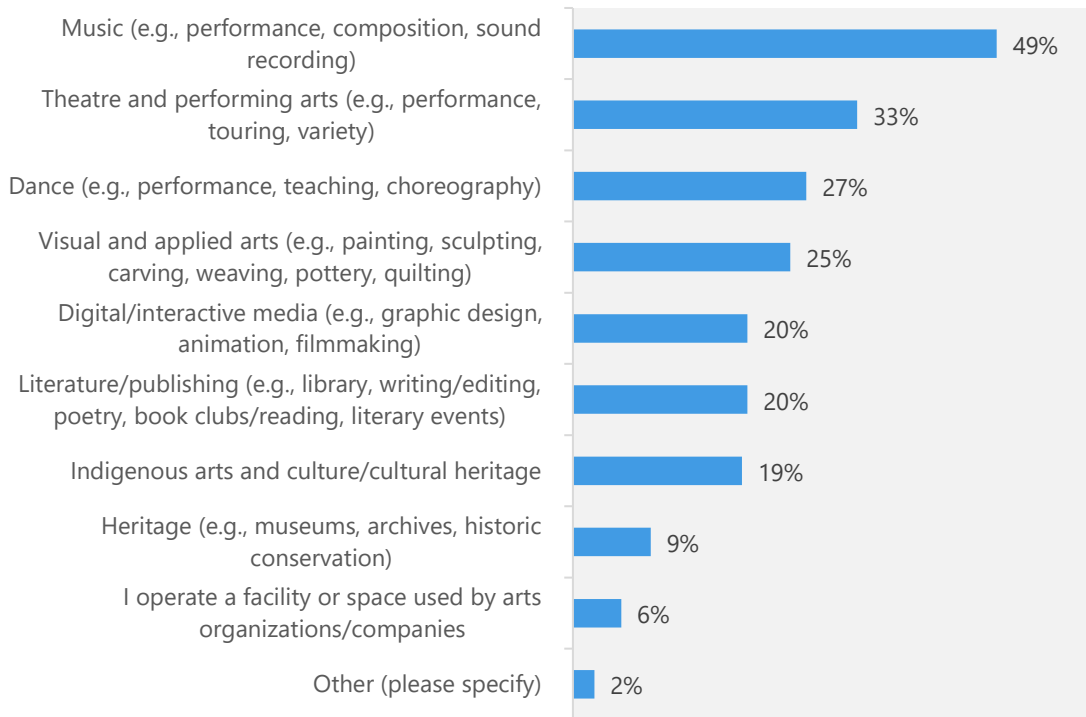


Artists and owners/managers of arts and culture organizations/facilities were asked which sub-domain of arts and culture they work within (Figure 9). The top three areas of work included music (49%), theatre and performing arts (33%), and dance (27%). These responses were followed by visual and applied arts (25%).<sup>5</sup> Notably, the performing arts sector encompassed the top three identified areas of work. Although the survey was not designed to be statistically representative, the findings suggest that performing arts are a particularly strong aspect of the arts and culture sector in Courtenay.

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<sup>5</sup> The responses do not add up to 100% as participants could select more than one sub-domain, reflecting that artists and organizations often work across more than one artistic discipline.

**Figure 9. In which area(s) of arts and culture do you or your organization/company work? Select all that apply (culture sector responses, n=324)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

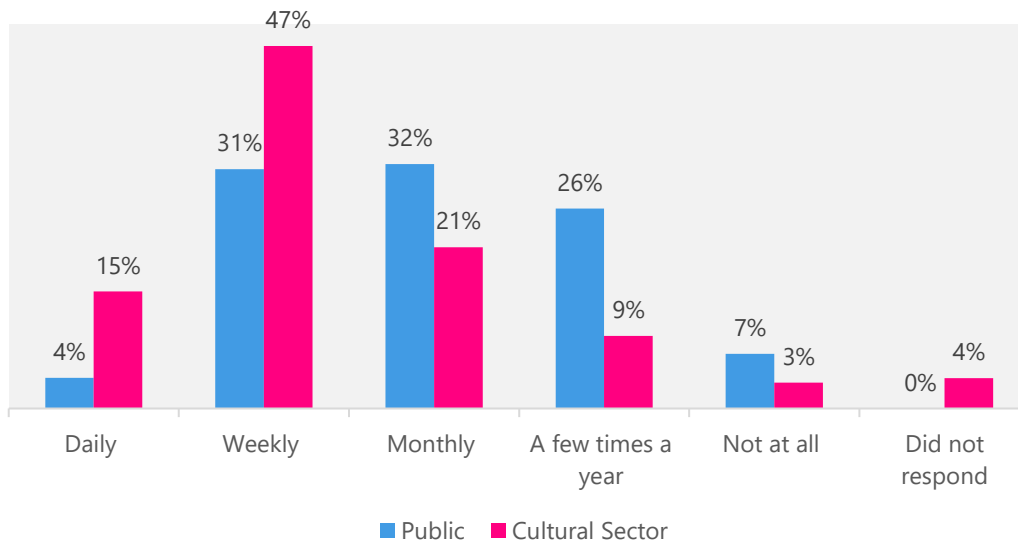


## Survey Highlights



**The survey results show that a very high number of respondents are culturally engaged.** Approximately 450 members of the public responded to this question while 329 creators and culture sector respondents (creators and organizations) responded. 62% of culture sector respondents identified that they engage with arts and culture in Courtenay weekly or more, with 47% identifying they participate in arts and culture weekly. Comparatively, 63% of the public participate in arts and culture events or activities weekly to monthly (Figure 10).

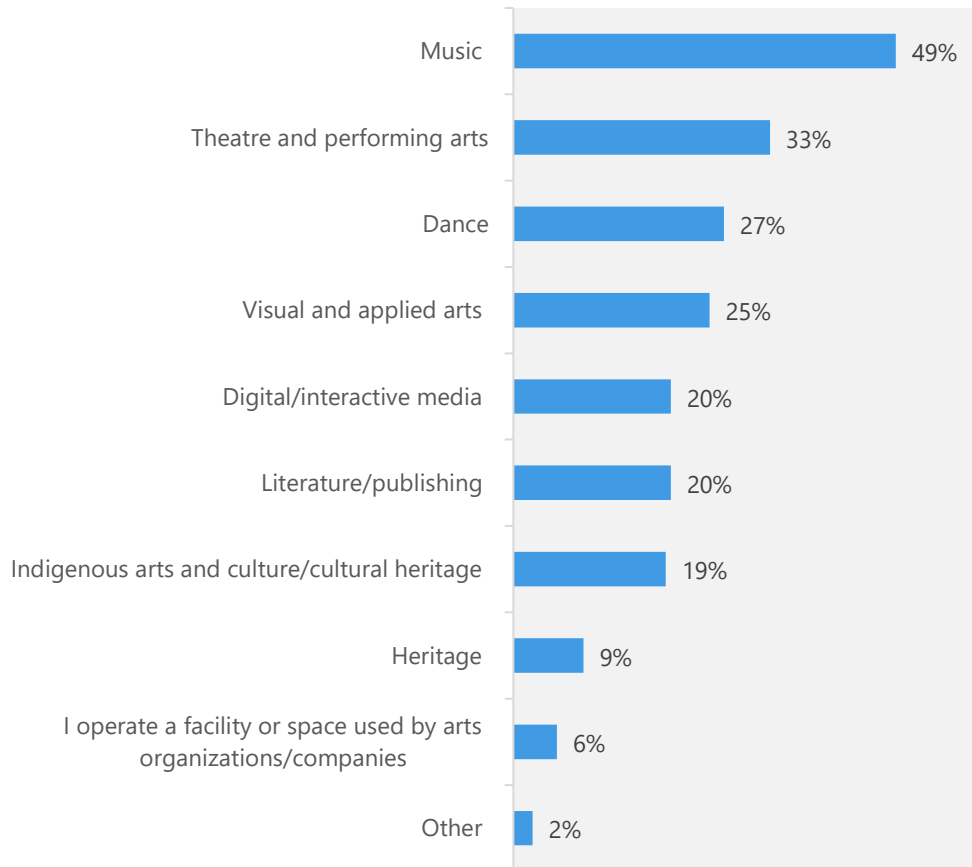
**Figure 10. How often do you participate in arts and culture events or activities in Courtenay? (all responses, n=779)**





**Performing arts (such as theatre, dance, and music) are the most popular way to engage** with arts and culture in Courtenay according to survey participants (Figure 11). Also, performing arts is the sub-sector that artists and cultural organizations in Courtenay are most likely to work in.

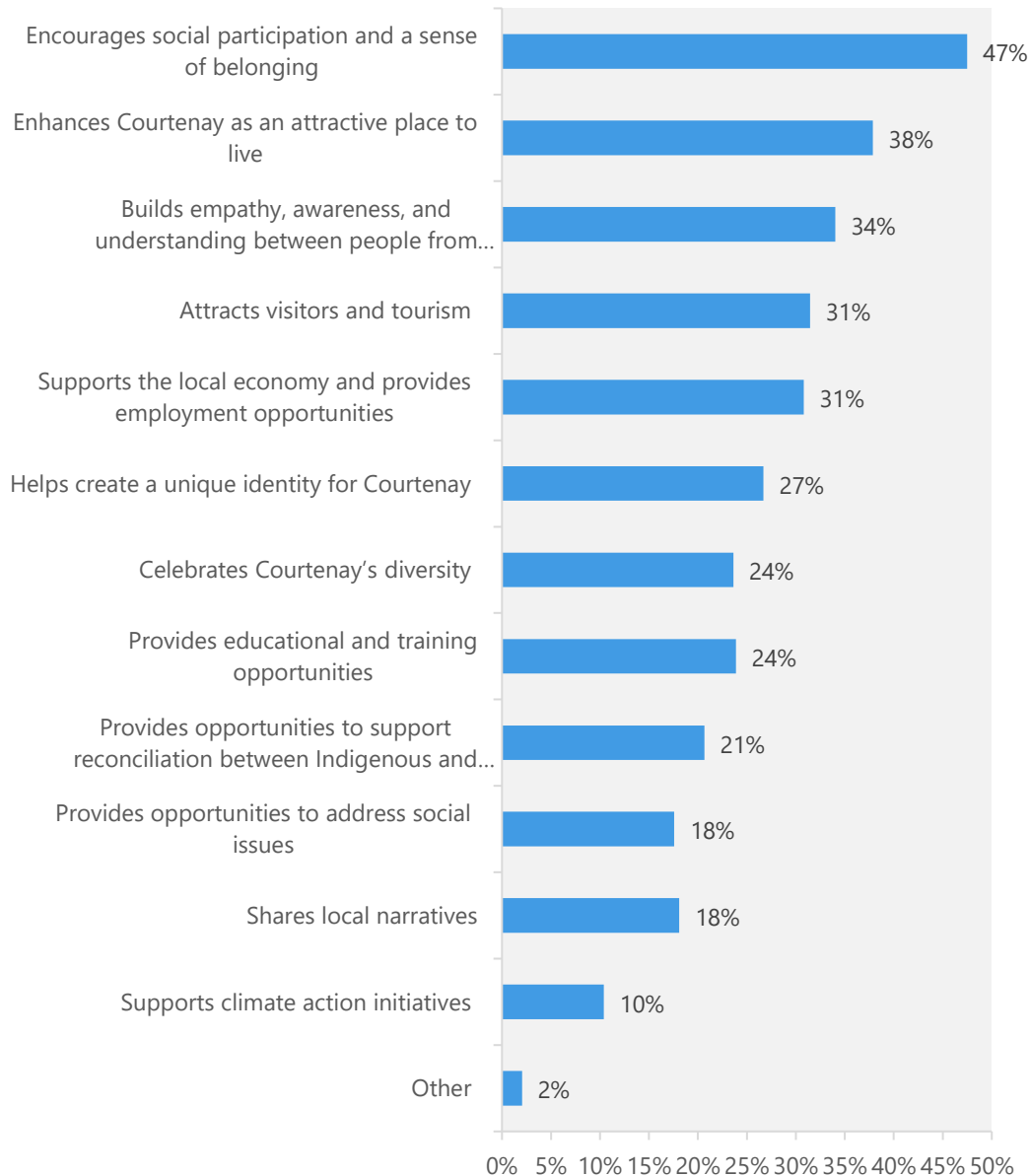
**Figure 11. In which area(s) of arts and culture do you or your organization/company work? Select all that apply (culture sector responses, n=324)**





When asked about how the local arts and culture sector impacts the community (Figure 12), 47% said that **arts and culture in Courtenay encourage social participation and a sense of belonging**. 38% said arts and culture enhance Courtenay as an attractive place to live, and 34% said the arts help build empathy, awareness, and understanding between different and distinct cultural backgrounds (Figure 12).

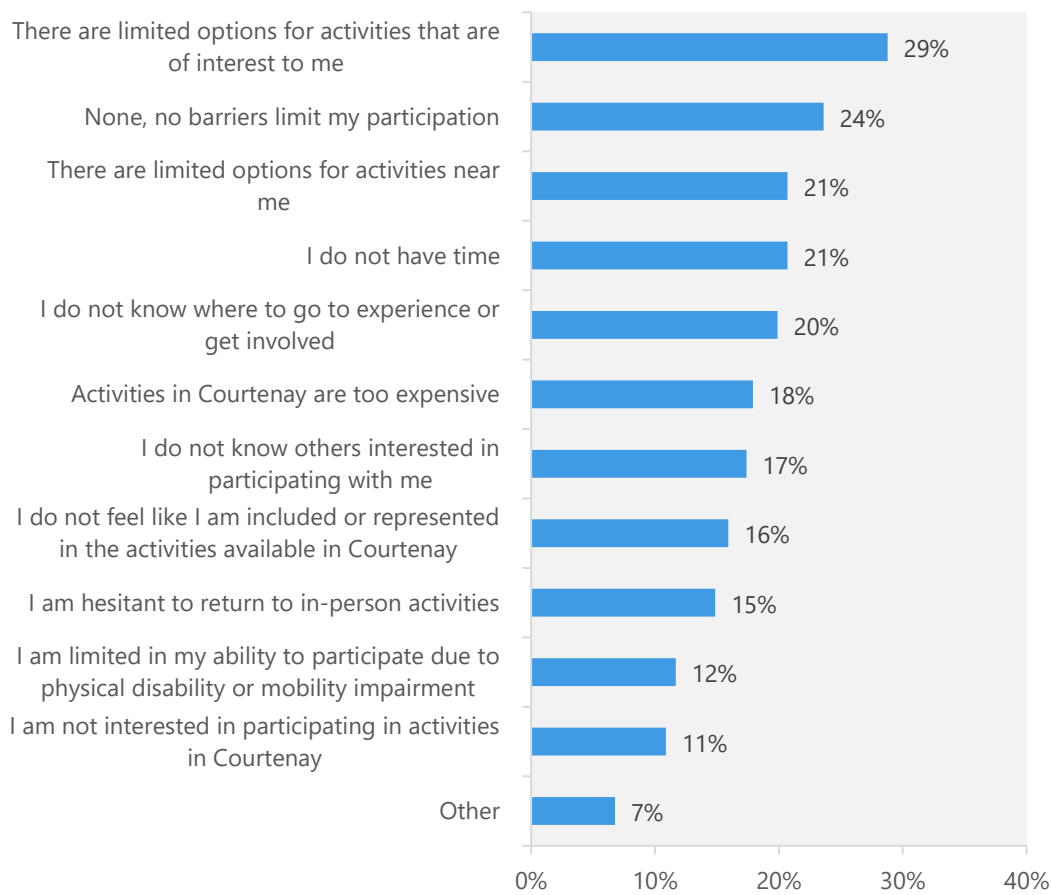
**Figure 12. What social impact does arts and culture have on Courtenay and the wider community? Select your top 3 (all responses, n=779)**





**Barriers to accessing culture in Courtenay** (Figure 13) according to survey participants, are 'limited options near me' (29%), 'limited options that interested me' (21%), 'not having enough time' (21%), and 'not knowing where to go to find out about arts and culture in Courtenay' (20%). However, nearly a quarter of survey participants stated that they do not experience any challenges to accessing culture in Courtenay (24%). Other, please specify examples included, 'transportation and carpooling, as I live in Campbell River,' 'I do not feel safe getting to and from arts and culture locations,' and, 'I do not know where to find out about activities near me.'

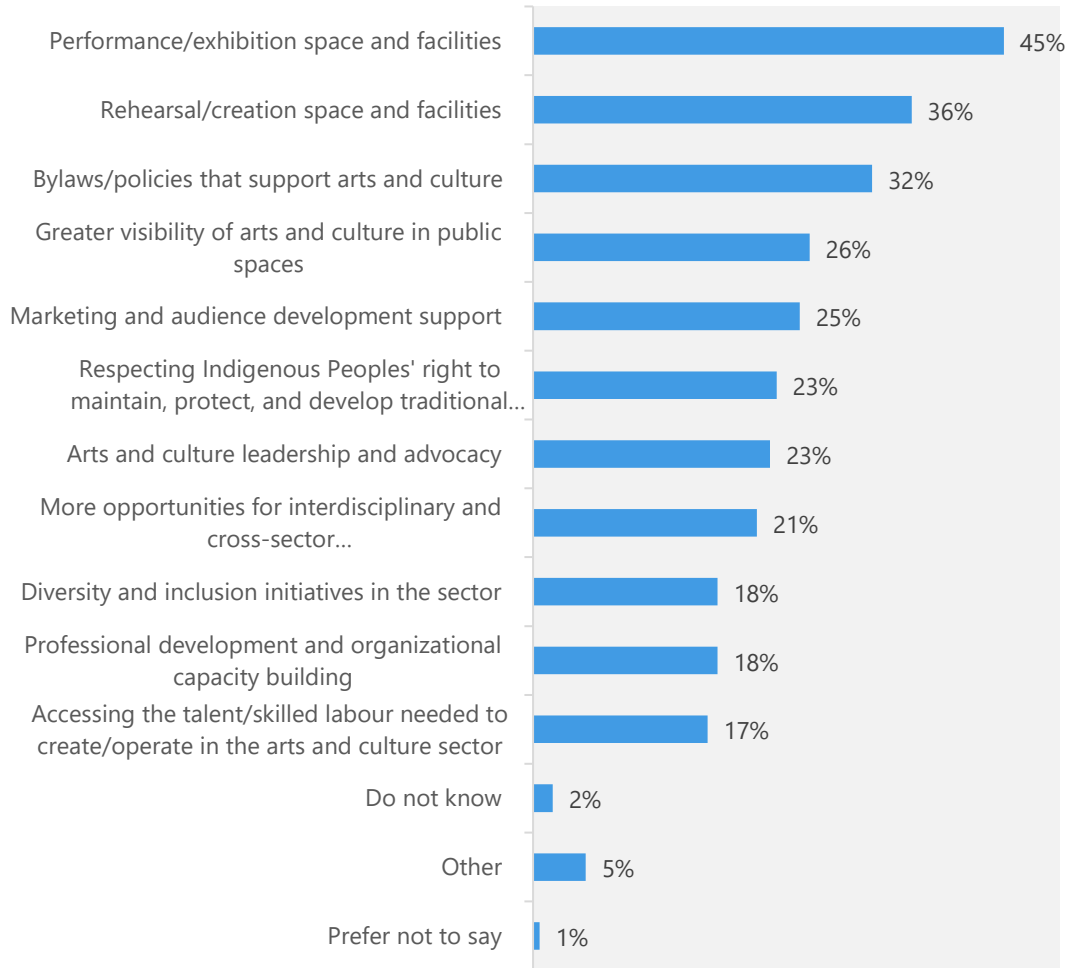
**Figure 13. What factors, if any, might limit you from accessing and/or participating in arts and culture in Courtenay? Select up to 3 (all responses, n=754)**





**Critical needs in the local arts and culture sector**, according to survey participants who identified as artists and workers in the sector, relate to the need for space (Figure 14). More specifically, the top needs highlighted were performance/exhibition space (45%), rehearsal and creation space (36%), and bylaws and policies that support arts and culture (32%).

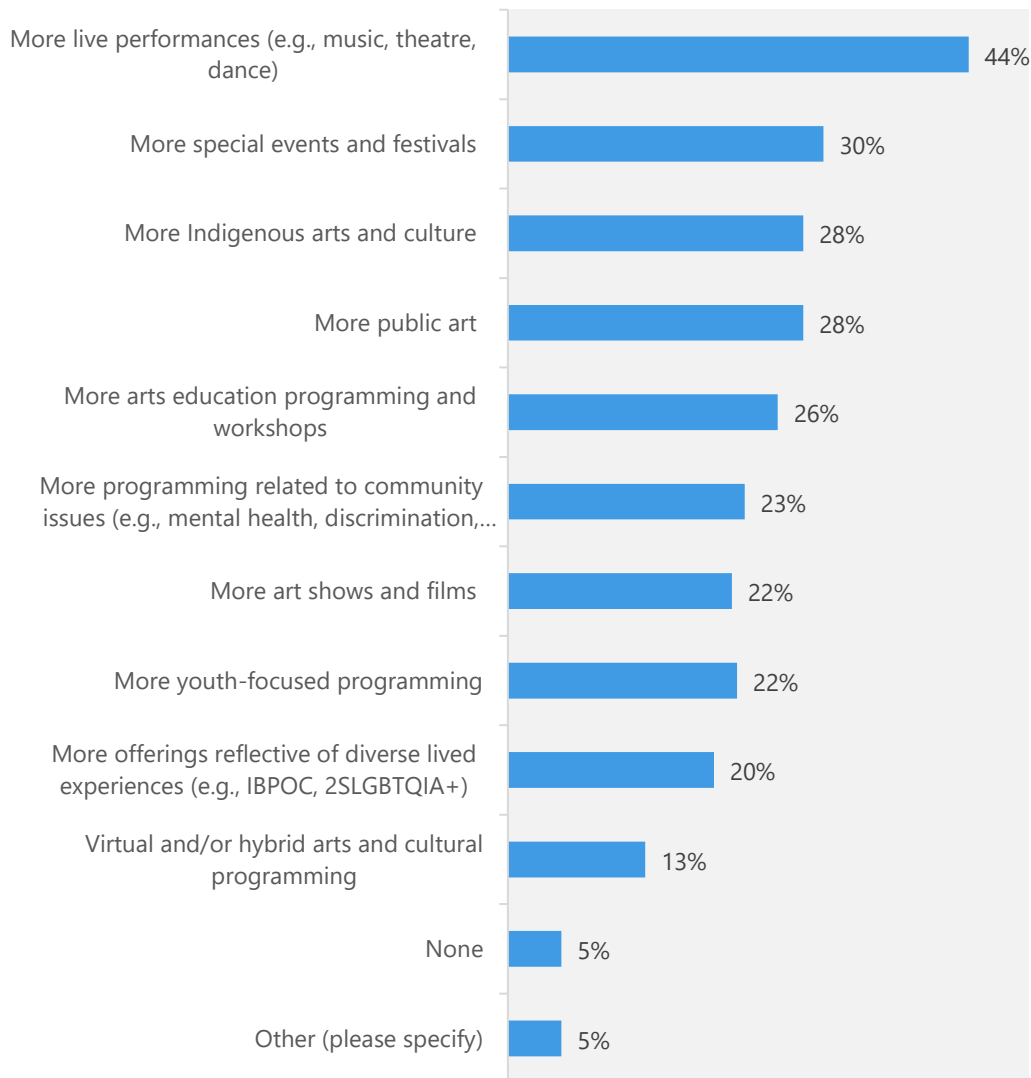
**Figure 14. What do you think are the most critical needs for arts and culture to thrive in Courtenay? Select your top 3 (culture sector responses, n=320)**



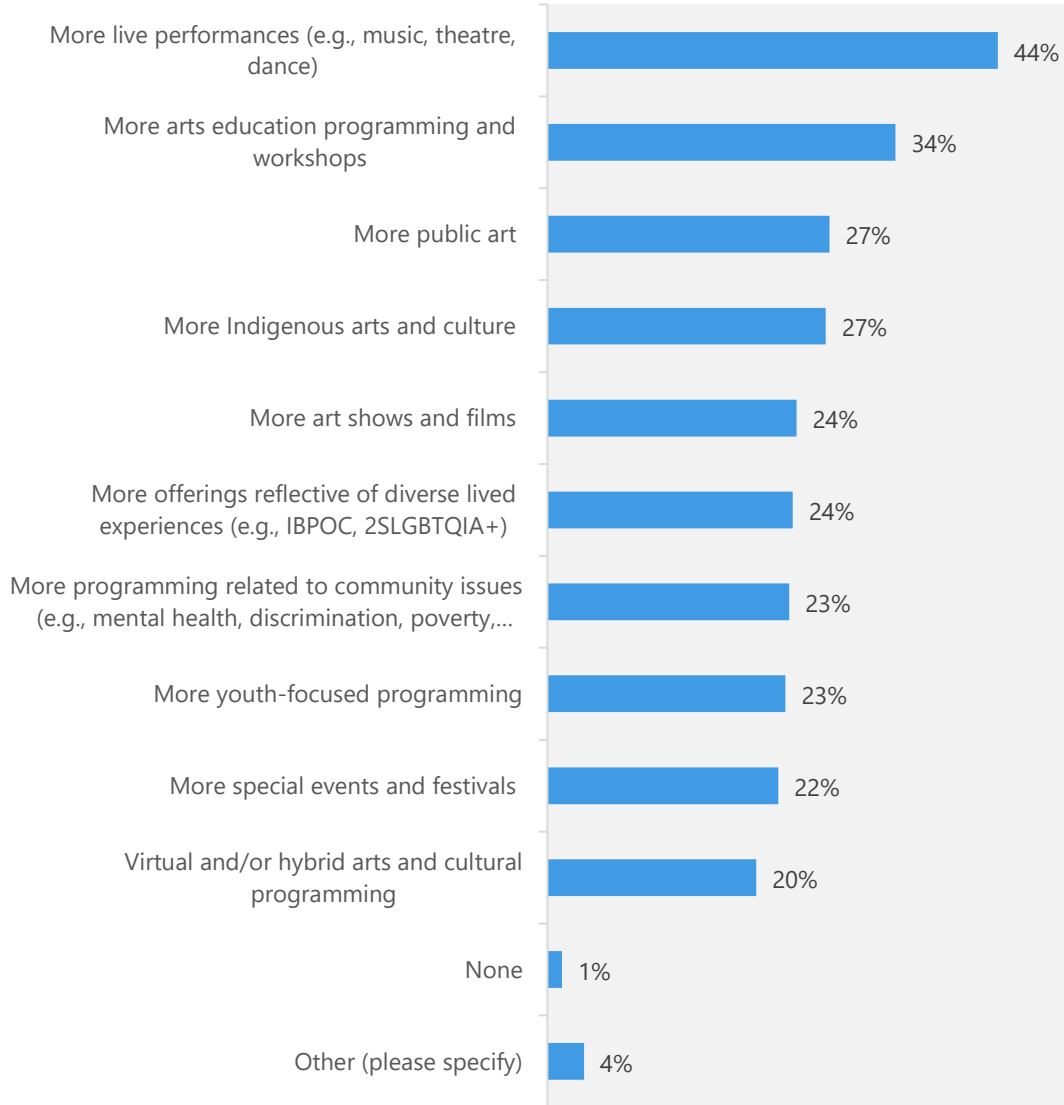


**When asked what future arts and culture offerings people would like to see more of in Courtenay** (Figure 15) the top response from members of the public was more live performances (44% selected that option). The second most popular response was more special events and festivals (30%), followed by more Indigenous arts and culture (28%), and more public art (28%). Responses from artists and those who work in the cultural sector were very close to these total participant responses, also highlighting the need for more live performances (44%). However, the second most popular response was more arts education programming and workshops (34%) rather than more special events and festivals (Figure 16).

**Figure 15. Looking to the future, what arts and culture offerings would you like to see more of in Courtenay? Select your top 3 (public responses, n=409)**



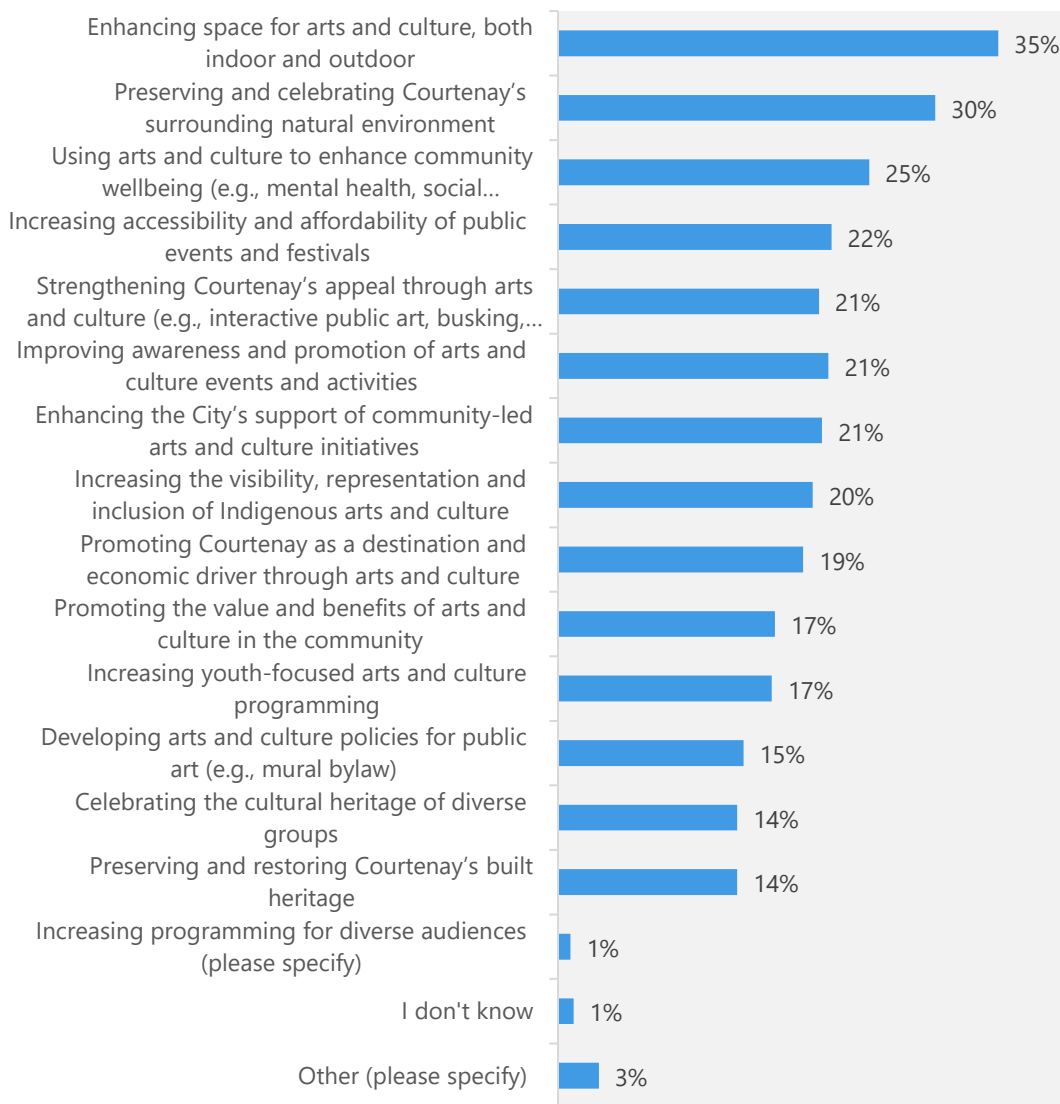
**Figure 16. Looking to the future, what arts and culture offerings would you like to see more of in Courtenay? Select your top 3 (culture sector responses, n=282)**





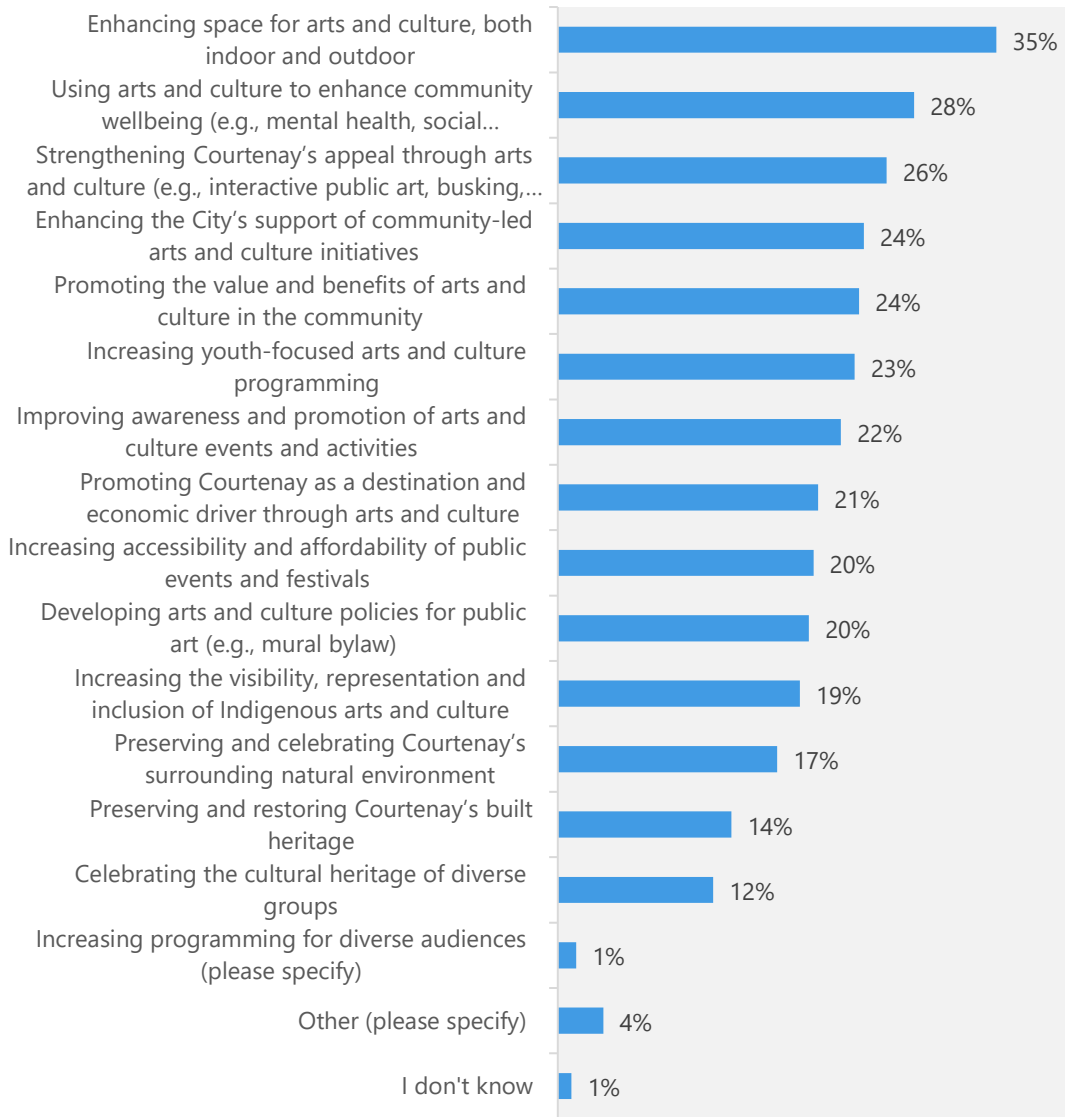
**The main culture themes that the City should prioritize in the Culture Plan**, according to public survey participants (Figure 17), are enhancing space for arts and culture (35% of participants selected this option). Culture sector participants also identified enhancing space for arts and culture as the top need (35%). Overall, however, there was a lack of consensus about what the priorities should be. The wide range of opinions could indicate participants' uncertainty regarding what the focal points for the Culture Plan should be, as well as the profound influence of arts and culture throughout so many areas of the community's fabric.

**Figure 17. What do you think the City of Courtenay should prioritize in the new Strategic Cultural Plan? Select your top 3 (public responses, n=404)**





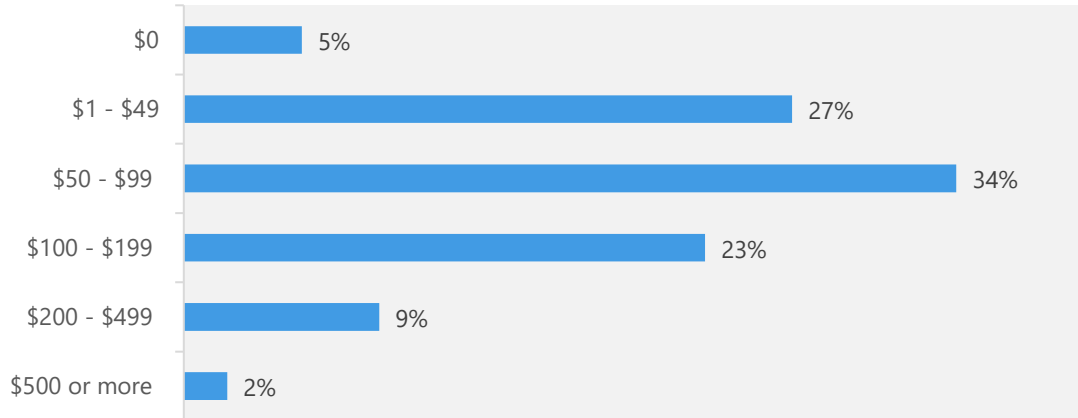
**Figure 18. What do you think the City of Courtenay should prioritize in the new Strategic Cultural Plan? Select your top 3 (culture sector responses, n=278)**





When respondents were asked how much money they spend in the community before and after a cultural event, the total average was **\$105 per individual** (Figure 19).

**Figure 19. As an individual, how much do you typically spend before or after attending/participating in cultural events? (all responses, n=728)**



Full survey results can be found in Appendix A.

### Cultural Sector Findings

These findings draw on discussions at a cultural sector roundtable event hosted on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, one-to-one interviews with artists and members of Courtenay’s cultural community, and discussions at a public event on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

**Figure 20. Live graphic recording by Jill Banting from the May 9th focus group with arts and culture sector participants**



## Key Findings

Courtenay's cultural sector has a collaborative spirit and is supported by numerous arts and culture organizations and cultural facilities. The sector is further supported by volunteers who have a passion for arts and culture.

While the cultural sector offers rich and vibrant arts and cultural offerings, certain needs have been identified by the sector, including:

- **More equipped and accessible cultural spaces and performance venues** (e.g., with different sizes for different audiences and art forms). Specific types of space needs identified include a black box theatre, multi-use or adaptive spaces and outdoor venues equipped for performances. Other space needs identified include:
  - **Greater access to City-owned spaces for rentals with discounted pricing for small community groups** – i.e., cost of spaces was identified as a barrier for small and medium sized local arts organizations.
  - **To conduct an accessibility audit of City-owned facilities and upgrade facilities where accessibility is an issue** for groups such as seniors (e.g., provide grab bars in washrooms, stage upgrades for performances).
  - For the **City to provide support** setting up spaces (including outdoor) for events.
- **More funding (i.e., community grants) to help subsidize cultural events and programs.** The cost of some events/programs remains too high for sections of the population including seniors, newcomers, youth and the unhoused. Cultural organizations are also under financial pressure and unable to meet all participation costs, hindering the sector from offering more inclusive programming.
- **A need for regional support through development of cultural facilities/spaces, and funding programs** to support arts and cultural organizations within the region including those based in Courtenay (e.g., it was noted that other residents in the region benefit from Courtenay's cultural offerings).
- **To review transportation options to cultural events.** Transit is often a barrier for seniors, newcomers, youth, and unhoused community members.
- **The need for the City to play a coordinating role** in facilitating event schedules across cultural service providers and to maintain an event calendar (e.g., the City of Courtenay could play this role by appointing an Events Coordinator and also hosting an events calendar on City website).
- **To foster relationships between the cultural sector and the community** including the school district.
- **Succession planning protocols for local arts and cultural organizations.** For example, internships and mentorships for youth could enhance their interest in working within the arts and culture sector.
- **More technical and professional cultural workers** to support programming and events in Courtenay. Partnerships with educational providers including the school district and North Island College (NIC) could be beneficial, for example to encourage more young

people to work in the sector and to offer technical courses in sound and lighting, crowd control & management, arts administration and event management among others.

## Specific Community Findings

The interviews and group conversations highlighted specific needs pertaining to different types of community members, which are important to highlight in their own right. Table 2 presents specific needs pertaining to Indigenous community members (including Indigenous organizations),<sup>6</sup> newcomers and immigrants, unhoused community members, people with disabilities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ community members. These findings emerged from 1:1 interviews and group conversations.

**Table 2. Specific community needs identified**

Community/Group	Identified Needs
<b>Indigenous community members<sup>7</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is a need to provide opportunities to include Indigenous voices and presence in community activities. Having an Indigenous Liaison staff member at the City could help meet this need.</li> <li>▪ It is important to ease bureaucratic barriers and decolonize practices in the City so that it is able to fully respond to requests from Indigenous communities.</li> <li>▪ There is a need to provide support to create Indigenous cultural spaces such as an urban cultural wellness centre, campgrounds (with firepits that are open to community gatherings including outdoor cultural events) and outdoor spaces for Indigenous gatherings.</li> <li>▪ There is a desire for partnerships with the City to host Indigenous cultural events (e.g., ‘Spirit Walk’ held on September 30<sup>th</sup>).</li> <li>▪ There is a need to create more awareness of Indigenous culture through cultural events and public art.</li> <li>▪ Participants noted that there should be more opportunities for Indigenous cultural education for City staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Newcomers and immigrants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is a need for more arts and culture programming that welcomes newcomers to the community to help address social isolation.</li> <li>▪ Another need is to provide more information on arts and cultural services or programs that newcomers can access or participate in, e.g., art galleries, theatres.</li> <li>▪ Newcomer and immigrant participants would like to see more opportunities for more representation of different cultures in cultural programming. This could include programming that celebrates different cultures and providing language options other than English.</li> <li>▪ There is a need to foster collaboration among immigrant groups (such as CV Immigration Welcome Centre and CV Multicultural Society) –</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> Note, the City’s engagement with K’omoks First Nation is in the early stages and will be ongoing throughout the Strategic Cultural Plan development and beyond. These findings are from conversations with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and Indigenous-led organizations in Courtenay.

Community/Group	Identified Needs
	<p>connecting them, for example through facilitated introductions and multi-cultural events.</p>
<p><b>Unhoused community members</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is a need for a gathering space that provides opportunities for free drop-in arts and cultural classes/activities for the unhoused population. Such spaces could be developed in partnership with community organizations.</li> <li>▪ A wellness centre could respond to individuals’ needs, both tangible and intangible. Basic facilities for unhoused community members are lacking in Courtenay, as there is no 24/7 water source, nowhere to do laundry and nowhere for people to store their belongings. A centre could offer opportunities to participate in the arts, and a place to connect to Indigenous learning and culture.</li> <li>▪ Although the majority of participants with lived experience of homelessness said they felt welcome at the City’s cultural facilities, more critical thinking is needed in the arts and culture sector (and more broadly) about how to respond to the needs of people engaged in public spaces (including access to washrooms, a chance to charge phones, etc.). There is a need for more listening to people with lived experience, deeper engagement, and critical imagining of new possibilities/solutions – including innovative housing options.</li> <li>▪ There is a need to create a more welcoming atmosphere at events and programs for people experiencing homelessness, overcoming stigma and discrimination from substance use. Having cultural and recreation staff (with appropriate training) or social workers present would help people feel comfortable.</li> <li>▪ Arts participation and therapy can be an important part of healing. For example, many participants from across community groups highlighted the Comox Valley Art Gallery’s Walk With Me project as exceptional, because the project addresses critical issues relating to homelessness and the toxic drug poisoning crisis through culture and storytelling – building empathy and understanding.</li> </ul>
<p><b>People with disabilities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ People with accessibility needs of all types need to be included in creating solutions.</li> <li>▪ There is a need to ensure that cultural activities and events are truly accessible, with venues that follow universal design principles and meet Accessibility Standards Canada. For example, there should be a review of whether bathrooms are genuinely accessible, if lighting is sensory-friendly, and so forth – with people with lived experience carrying out the accessibility testing.</li> <li>▪ There is a need for clear information on the accessibility of venues and activities to help community members to plan. E.g., is the venue wheelchair accessible, are parking/bathrooms accessible, and will loop systems or captioning be available? Advertising for events and programming should include symbols relating to accessibility, so people know what they can expect (e.g., wheelchairs, sign language, assistive listening, accessible print, braille - see <a href="#">example</a>).</li> </ul>

Community/Group	Identified Needs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is a need to adapt facilities so that accessible seats are not for only one person with one companion but a whole group. This change would enable people with physical disabilities to participate with their friends and families.</li> <li>▪ Transit to get to arts and culture needs further improvement. Although buses are accessible, schedules are not in sync with the timing of events, creating a real barrier to participation.</li> <li>▪ Hybrid programming has largely stopped since the pandemic, but there remains a need for hybrid options for some people with disabilities, including those with invisible disabilities.</li> </ul>
<b>2SLGBTQIA+ community members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overall, there is a lack of visibility of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Courtenay. Although there are various queer artists and creatives in the city, they are scattered and there are limited opportunities for them to meet.</li> <li>▪ There is a need for a central place for the 2SLGBTQIA+ to gather. Although there are some great organizers in the city (Queer Culture, Pride) no one has a brick-and-mortar space. Additionally, although allies are important and welcome, some participants noted a need for some events or programming to be for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community only, as the dynamic and level of understanding is different.</li> <li>▪ Although overall there has been an outpouring of support for Pride events in Courtenay, phobia and incidents of violence or intimidation continue. Some people are deterred from attending 2SLGBTQIA+ events as they fear attracting attention to themselves. Real effort is needed to ensure 2SLGBTQIA+ people are not only welcome, but safe.</li> <li>▪ With some more focus, there is an opportunity to launch more 2SLGBTQIA+ activities and art shows in Courtenay – both virtually and in person. Such events/activities should be developed with accessibility in mind, including considering ways to address time/financial barriers. Potential opportunities include arts exhibitions during Pride month and other key 2SLGBTQIA+ dates.</li> </ul>

## Summary Findings

This section summarizes Courtenay’s current strengths, challenges and gaps when it comes to culture, based on analysis of the engagement findings.

+ Strengths	- Challenges and Gaps
Courtenay has a beautiful geographic location that provides artistic inspiration.	Lack of visibility of Indigenous arts, culture, and heritage in Courtenay.
Strong cultural anchors, collaborative spirit, and cultural capital.	Inadequate municipal support for arts and culture, including at the City and regional level.
Established City municipality support for core arts and culture organizations.	Limited human resources, including technical professionals, in some areas of the cultural sector.
Community support for and interest in arts and culture is notable in Courtenay.	Lack of accessibility to cultural spaces and events.
Variety of cultural offerings to attract people year-round to the city.	Limited arts and culture programming opportunities for youth, and lack of awareness of what is available.
Demonstrated social and economic impact of arts and culture in Courtenay.	

### Strengths

- **Courtenay has a beautiful geographic location that provides artistic inspiration.**
  - Courtenay’s geography and location in the Comox Valley contribute to its overall appeal.
  - Courtenay’s natural beauty, with picturesque landscapes and proximity to water bodies, provides residents with recreational opportunities and rich inspiration for arts and culture.
  - Although the community is small, numerous participants highlighted its substantial, and vibrant arts scene.

*“The location and landscape of Courtenay is the Comox Valley is a point attraction to most people who move here, for example for retirement or visit.”*

- **Strong cultural anchors, collaborative spirit, and cultural capital.**

- Courtenay hosts numerous arts and culture organizations, including cultural anchor institutions such as the Sid Williams Theatre, the Comox Valley Arts Gallery, the Comox Valley Community Arts Council, and the Courtenay and District Museum.
- These facilities are in proximity to the downtown core and offer a variety of cultural offerings. These cultural anchors are a draw for the region, and support other communities in the Comox Valley, as well as Courtenay.
- Other key cultural organizations include, but are not limited to, the Old Church Theatre Society, HMCS Alberni Memorial Museum, as well as cultural events such as Simms Summer Series and Vancouver Island Music Festival.
- The city is home to people with a background in a variety of art forms and cultures whose creativity feeds the cultural growth in the community. Many participants mentioned a strong collaborative spirit across the sector.
- In addition, North Island College supports arts and culture through related courses and draws students from the valley and beyond.

***“A strong creative community and variety of activities are offered locally.”***  
- Survey participant

- **Established City municipality support for core arts and culture organizations.**

- The City of Courtenay provides funding support to the core cultural partner organizations (i.e., the Sid Williams Theatre, the Courtenay and District Museum, the Comox Valley Art Gallery and the Comox Valley Community Arts Council).
- The City also maintains and invests in other facilities such as the Florence Filberg Centre, Native Sons Hall, and the LINC Youth Centre, each of which host arts and culture-related activities alongside other community uses.
- The City works with the Heritage Advisory Commission to support heritage conservation and celebration of heritage assets.
- The City developed a Downtown Playbook (in consultation with the public and businesses) to support the revitalization of downtown Courtenay – a strategy with strong links to culture.

***“The structured delivery of arts and culture is a key thing –i.e., the City municipality support to four core partners.”***  
- Focus group participant



- **Community support for and interest in arts and culture is notable in Courtenay.**

- Courtenay boasts many individuals and organizations with a high level of interest in promoting arts and culture in the community.
- Many artists live in the community, and there are numerous cultural groups, and volunteers who run cultural events.
- Almost all survey participants (94%) participate in arts and culture in Courtenay at least a few times a year. Nearly half (47%) participate weekly or more.

*"... there are a lot of arts consumers; people who go out and support local filmmaking, and local theatre. There's just a tremendous tradition here of supporting music of all kinds, local music, music from all over the world, it's particularly more sophisticated than many other communities of its size."*

- **Variety of cultural offerings to attract people year-round to the city.**

- The city has both summertime and winter activities that promote cultural tourism and draw visitors to the community year-round.
- Courtenay and the region offers a variety of cultural events including festivals such as the Canada Day and Vancouver Island Music Festival, which appeal to locals and visitors alike.

*"...so many choices in terms of the number of things hosted in the city."*  
- Focus group participant

- **Demonstrated social and economic impact of arts and culture in Courtenay.**

- There is an awareness of the social and economic impact of arts and culture in Courtenay. Note, economic impact analysis is currently in progress.
- Social impacts cited by participants include contribution to mental and emotional well-being, quality of life, bringing the community together in a positive way, and creating a sense of belonging.
- The survey findings showed participants think arts and culture in Courtenay encourage social participation and a sense of belonging (47% of participants highlighted this impact); enhance Courtenay as an attractive place to live (38%); and build empathy, awareness, and understanding between different and distinct cultural backgrounds (34%).
- Economic contributions come from arts and culture across the board, from events/festivals, employment, consumer spending and cultural tourism - e.g., Music Festival was noted as an event that brings economic value to the city and region.

*"Art is a mental and emotional thing. I think it's therapeutic for humans to make things."*  
- Focus group participant

## Challenges and Gaps

- **Lack of visibility of Indigenous arts, culture, and heritage in Courtenay.**

- Courtenay is located on the lands of the K'ómoks First Nation, but there is currently limited visibility of K'ómoks arts and culture. Elements that participants suggested could be incorporated include signage, murals, and sculptures, or changing/rotating installations that tell the history and stories of K'ómoks territory to residents and visitors.
- There is also a lack of awareness, recognition, and representation of distinct Indigenous cultures, including Métis and Urban Indigenous people's cultures.
- Although several cultural groups collaborate with Indigenous Elders and artists, including K'ómoks, there is not yet formal collaboration between the City and K'ómoks First Nation in relation to arts and culture.
- There remains a need to educate the community on Indigenous cultures and reconciliation and to celebrate Indigenous cultural heritage in Courtenay, to increase understanding and eradicate racism.

***"How can we support learning about Indigenous cultures, & truth and then moving towards reconciliation together as a community?"***  
- Interview participant

- **Limited availability and affordability of suitable cultural spaces/facilities.**

- When the survey asked sector participants about the top three critical needs to help arts and culture thrive in Courtenay, the top responses all pointed to space. 45% selected 'Performance/exhibition space and facilities', followed by 'rehearsal/creation space and facilities' (selected by 36%).
- Outdoor performance spaces (e.g., an amphitheatre) and multi-purpose spaces were also noted by participants as lacking in Courtenay.
- Existing facility rentals are too costly for many community arts groups, or often have conflict in scheduling. These challenges can make it difficult for cultural groups – especially performing arts groups – to find space.
- Although there are some multipurpose facilities in the city which are used for cultural purposes, they are not adequately equipped for performing arts. For example, Native Son's Hall has no

***"...we [a cultural organization] cannot fill the Filberg, so we need small type intimate spaces for shows. Affordable rentals will also help with overhead cost and in turn pricing for shows so everyone would then be able to afford to attend."***

***"We desperately need a big theatre for performances. The Sid William's Theatre is far too small a venue."***

stages for performing arts groups to use the venue, and the Florence Filberg Centre does not have suitable acoustics for some types of shows.

- **Inadequate municipal support, including at the City and regional level.**

- City municipality support in terms of funding is currently considered inadequate, especially when it comes to funding beyond that offered to the Comox Valley Art Gallery, Courtenay and District Museum, Sid Williams Theatre, and Comox Valley Community Arts Council.

*Municipalities surrounding Courtenay use the city's cultural amenities, but do not equitably pay to maintain or sustain (and vice versa). Any capital plans are affected by this (in all communities)"*

- There is a desire for more arts and culture-specific grants. Several participants expressed that there is a challenge in balancing community or local groups needs with the needs of professional institutions and felt that smaller organization are not as valued as larger organizations – e.g., as they lack access to funding and resources.
- There is no dedicated staff for arts and culture only at the City of Courtenay. Having dedicated cultural services staff could provide a useful liaison point between different groups in the community.
- Participants expressed there is limited coordinated investment in arts and culture from surrounding municipalities. Given that it is not only Courtenay residents who benefit from Courtenay's cultural offerings, this is considered a gap.
- Survey respondents (32%) identified bylaws and policies that support arts and culture as the third most critical need in the cultural sector.

- **Limited human resources, including technical professionals, in some areas of the cultural sector.**

- Technical professionals in lighting and sound who can work on events/festivals are in particularly high in demand and lacking in Courtenay.
- The capacity of local arts and culture organizations is limited by a lack of paid staff. Most local arts groups are supported by volunteers only, and as such, have limited human capacity to offer more programming as they would like to.
- One survey respondent suggested that there is growing demand for experiences that include interactive technology, materials, and design. This often requires more specialty training and skills, which can be difficult to find in Courtenay at present.

*"There are more things that could be done but we just don't have the people to do it."*  
- Survey participant

- **Lack of accessibility to cultural spaces and events.**

- Accessibility barriers – including structural accessibility for people with physical disabilities, ease of access via transit, awareness of offerings and financial costs – limit arts and culture participation. These barriers are prevalent for some groups, including newcomers, seniors, youth and unhoused people.
- Other accessibility concerns include the opening hours of some cultural spaces (i.e., 10am to 4pm). Daytime opening hours only mean some community members cannot attend, including those who work full time and families who want to bring their children outside of school hours.
- In open-ended comments, survey respondents identified a need for increased availability and awareness of what arts and culture activities are occurring in the community.

*"I wish there was more information on the website or in the media. We as newcomers are very willing to participate in community activities."*

- **Limited arts and culture programming opportunities for youth, and lack of awareness of what is available.**

- There are limited arts and culture programming opportunities, as well as awareness of existing programs, for youth in Courtenay at present. This includes programming for Indigenous youth to connect to their culture, e.g., through language, crafting, or drumming.
- For example, in the survey, one participant commented that they would like to see greater diversity of exhibits as well as range of content for programs offered in the community for youth and children, as the existing offer is quite static.
- Participants described how there are almost no evening cultural activities in Courtenay, i.e., limited live music events in the evening, and no nightclubs.
- There is a need for more funding dedicated to supporting young and emerging artists.

*"...there are currently no music or dance programs in middle school; there were some changes a few years back that led to the cutting of several middle school programs. The kids do have something in elementary school and high school but there is a gap in between."*  
- Survey participant

## Community-Identified Priority Needs



### *Engaging K'ómoks First Nation, Métis, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous communities<sup>7</sup>*

Many participants want to see **more Indigenous arts and culture in public spaces** – e.g., for storytelling and educational opportunities, to raise awareness of K'ómoks' ongoing culture and heritage. Indigenous survey participants (n=111) were most likely to say that Courtenay can further reconciliation and support Indigenous artists through more Indigenous naming, signage, and visibility, more opportunities to learn about Indigenous cultural protocols, and more opportunities to learn about Indigenous arts, culture, and language.

Other priority needs relating to Indigenous engagement and reconciliation include the need for proper land acknowledgements during public events, as well as continuous engagement with Indigenous communities in strategic planning initiatives. Interview and group conversation participants suggested programming such as Call for Indigenous Artists, an Indigenous arts residency, festivals or events to engage Indigenous communities, as well as create learning opportunities for residents and visitors.



### *More cultural spaces/facilities, and better availability and affordability*

Participants expressed the **need for more equipped and accessible cultural spaces and performance venues**, to meet various sector needs, including the need for rental space. The types of spaces identified include small, medium, and larger venues, including performance and rehearsals venues. Specific types of spaces include a **black box theatre, multi-use spaces** that can be adapted for different uses, and **outdoor venues** equipped with stages for performances.

There is also a need for spaces to be **affordable** for local community groups. In addition, existing **facilities require upgrades** to meet requirements for events particularly in terms of sound system and stage set-ups for live performances. The **core cultural facilities** funded by the City also require various upgrades to meet their needs.



### *Developing more diverse and affordable cultural programming*

There is a desire for more **diverse and affordable cultural programming**, both in terms of services delivered by the City and by local arts and cultural groups. Programming needs noted by participants include an Artists in

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<sup>7</sup> Needs identified from engagement with Indigenous organizations and community members, as well as broader community members. Note, K'ómoks First Nation feedback will be included in later stages of Strategic Cultural Plan development.

Residence program facilitated by the City in collaboration with arts organizations; more youth programming, and multi-cultural programming to bring diverse groups together in the community.

Developing programming in partnership with organizations that serve **diverse groups** including newcomers, people who are unhoused, Indigenous (including Métis, Urban Indigenous), 2SLGBTQIA+ communities was described as a priority need in group conversations and interviews.

There is a desire for support in develop cultural opportunities that **support nightlife** – e.g., live music events to offer residents a chance to participate and enjoy such events.



### *Further promotion of community partnerships and collaboration*

There is a need for more community collaborations and partnerships. For example, several participants highlighted the need to foster a better relationship between the arts and cultural sector and the school district. Greater collaboration could potentially lead to programming in the school and use of school facilities/spaces for cultural events outside school hours.

There is a need to have **avenues for knowledge sharing** across the sector, for example through regular gatherings.

Other partnerships of interest include **building relationships with diverse groups** including Indigenous communities, newcomer/immigrant groups, people who are unhoused, people who use substances, and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.



### *Increased municipal support – financial and in-kind, local, and regional*

There is a desire **for increased municipal financial support** for arts and culture, especially in the form of community grants.

There is a desire for the City to offer **operational funding to more local arts organizations to support the hiring of full-time staff** – which would build capacity as well as succession planning needs. Additionally, many participants identified a need for **dedicated staff for arts and culture** services at the City of Courtenay.

Other forms of support required from the City noted by participants include: **facilitating corporate support** for arts and culture, e.g., through sponsorships; providing more support (i.e., operating and project grants, City space rental discounts, capacity building e.g., grant writing) to **smaller and medium-sized groups or organizations**; developing a **one stop place to access information on events** and programs, i.e., a community events calendar facilitated or hosted by the City; and **capacity building** for local organizations.

Participants further expressed the **need for regional funding support for arts and culture in Courtenay**, given cultural offerings are beneficial or serve the wider population in the Comox valley or region.



### *Further development of cultural tourism*

Participants expressed the need to leverage events such as gallery exhibitions and festivals to help make Courtenay the **cultural hub of the region**, and to **promote cultural tourism**. Additionally, community members would like to see more representation of **public arts** in the downtown core, e.g., more murals and sculptures.

There is a need for **coordination among cultural groups on summer events schedules** to ensure that this opportunity is maximized. Individuals noted that the City could create a role that coordinates such collaborations and support promotion of events, while others suggested this could be a role led by the Comox Valley Arts Council.



### *Attraction and training of technical cultural workers*

There is a need for more **technical expertise in relation to hosting live performances and events** – i.e., more sound and lighting technicians, stage management and crowd control specialists are in high demand. These needs could potentially be met through collaborations with educational bodies such as North Island College to develop **professional courses/micro-credentials**. Additionally, **mentorship and internship programs** could help the youth to learn useful skills that are in demand in the local arts and culture sector.

Individuals noted that there is a need to make Courtenay a vibrant cultural community in the Comox Valley, in order to attract such skilled cultural workers (and others who value a vibrant cultural scene).



### *Development of a Public Arts Policy*

There is a desire for Courtenay to develop a **Public Arts Policy** that is reviewed periodically to support public arts in the city. Individuals noted such a policy could **leverage the talent of young artists** and involve them in community public arts initiatives.

## Next Steps

The research analysis, and engagement with K'ómoks First Nation is still in progress. The future stages of the Strategic Cultural Plan development are as follows:

### **Further engagement and analysis activities:**

- Ongoing and open dialogue with K'ómoks First Nation Chief and Council to discuss meaningful engagement;
- Municipal benchmarking and comparative review;

- Assessing the economic impact of Courtenay’s arts and culture sector;
- Analyzing cultural facilities options, drawing on the survey, municipal benchmarking, and other research engagement findings shared in this report

**Strategy development:**

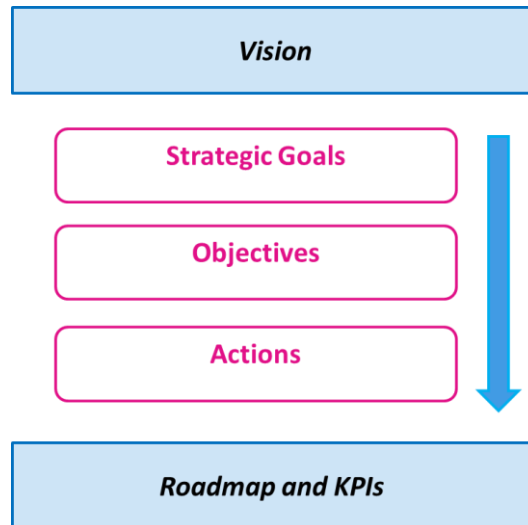
- Drafting strategic goals for the Strategic Cultural Plan
- Developing strategic recommendations and an implementation plan
- Sharing draft recommendations with the community, and seeking feedback via an in-person community check-in event and online feedback
- Revising the draft Strategic Cultural Plan in line with feedback received

**Reporting:**

- Drafting the final Strategic Cultural Plan
- Presenting the draft Plan to City Council
- Finalizing the Strategic Cultural Plan

The final Courtenay Strategic Cultural Plan will have several components: a **vision** for arts and culture, informed by the community; **strategic goals**; **objectives** linked to each goal; and specific **actions** linked to each objective (Figure 18). Lastly, it will include an **implementation plan** – or ‘roadmap’. The purpose of the roadmap is to outline which actions need to happen when, with key performance indicators, so the City of Courtenay can monitor progress towards the goals.

**Figure 21. Components of a strategic arts and culture plan**





## Appendix A. Full Survey Results

To gain valuable, broad engagement input from the community for the Strategic Cultural Plan, a survey questionnaire was deployed from June 14<sup>th</sup> to July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The survey collected a total of 779 useable responses and, of that number, 697 complete survey responses. Survey results include all survey participant responses unless stated otherwise. The following tables and figures collate all survey results.

### 1. Key Survey Findings

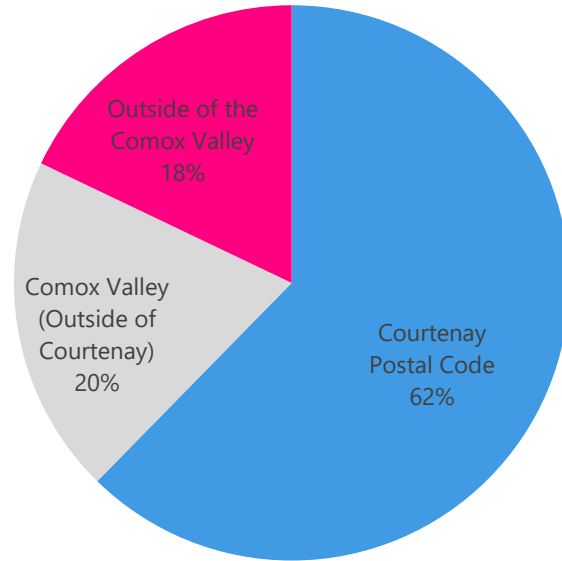
- The overall survey results show that a very **high number of respondents are culturally engaged (94%)**. Performing arts (such as theatre, dance, and music) are the most popular way to engage.
- Arts and culture in Courtenay encourage **social participation** and a sense of belonging.
- **Main barriers to accessing culture** in Courtenay are limited options nearby (29%), limited options of interest (21%), and not having enough time (20%). However, nearly a quarter of all participants stated that they do not experience any barriers.
- **Critical needs**, according to culture sector respondents (artists and cultural sector workers), are more space for performance/exhibitions (identified as a challenge by 45% of sector respondents), more rehearsal and creation space (36%), and supportive bylaws and policies for arts and culture (32%).
- **The future arts and culture offerings respondents would most like to see** more of include live performances (selected by 44% of total participants), more education, programming and workshops (29%) and more Indigenous arts and culture (28%).
- **The main culture themes that the City should prioritize in the Culture Plan**, according to all survey participants, are enhancing space for arts and culture (35% of participants selected this option) and 'using arts and culture to enhance community wellbeing (26%).
- **Expenditure:** The average amount spent in the community before and after a cultural event is \$105 per individual.

### 2. Survey Participant Profile

The following section provides a profile of survey participants. All questions were optional. While the survey did not seek to be statistically representative of the community, there were a higher number of responses from those aged 26-35 and over 65, as well as visible minority groups (i.e., IBPOC).

Survey respondents were asked to share the first three digits of their postal codes. Of the 257 respondents who opted to share these details, 62% identified that they live in Courtenay, 20% identified they live outside of Courtenay but within the Comox Valley, while 18% stated that they live outside of the Comox Valley.

**Figure 22 Residence (all responses, n=257)**

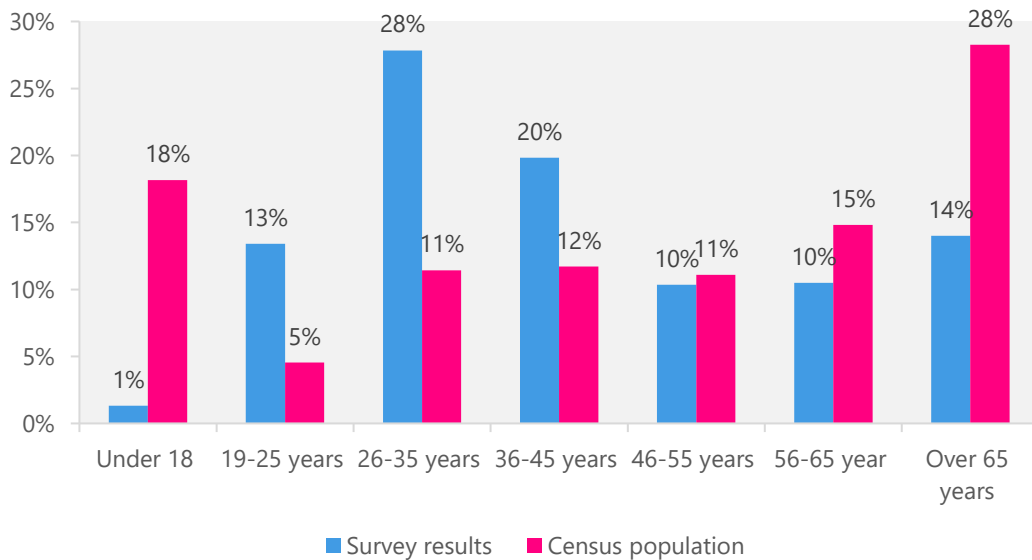


Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

Figure 23 indicates the age range of survey participants compared to Stats Canada 2021 Courtenay Profile findings. The largest share of participants was between the ages of 26-35 (28%) and 36-45 (20%). This is followed by those aged 65 and over (14%). At only 1%, participants aged under 18 years are underrepresented in the survey data.

In comparing the survey age breakdown with the Statistics Canada Census 2021 Courtenay Profile,<sup>8</sup> the survey was able to garner a much higher representation of adults between the ages of 26-45. This is significant, as it is quite common that online survey results are skewed towards an older demographic (65 years and above).

**Figure 23. Survey and population age characteristics (all responses, n=686)**



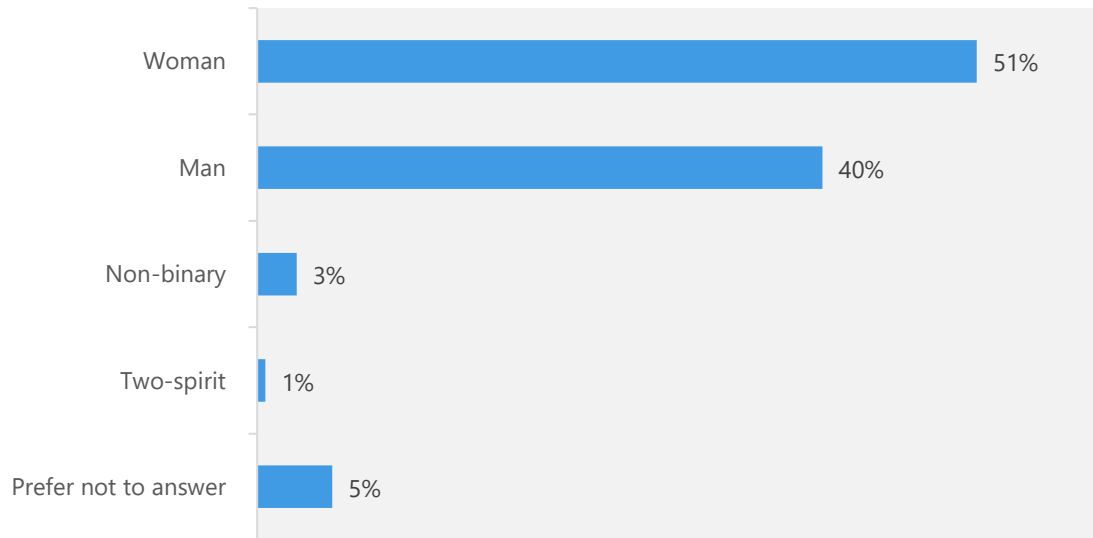
Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023 and Statistics Canada – City of Courtenay Census Profile 2021

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<sup>8</sup> Statistics Canada 2021. City of Courtenay Census Profile 2021 – Census of Population.  
<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=courtenay&DGUIDlist=2021A00055926010&GENDERlist=1&STATISTIClist=1&HEADERlist=0>

Survey participants were asked to self-identify their gender. The majority of participants identified as female (51%) and male (40%). Of the remaining respondents, 3% identified as non-binary, 1% two-spirit, and 5% preferred not to answer.

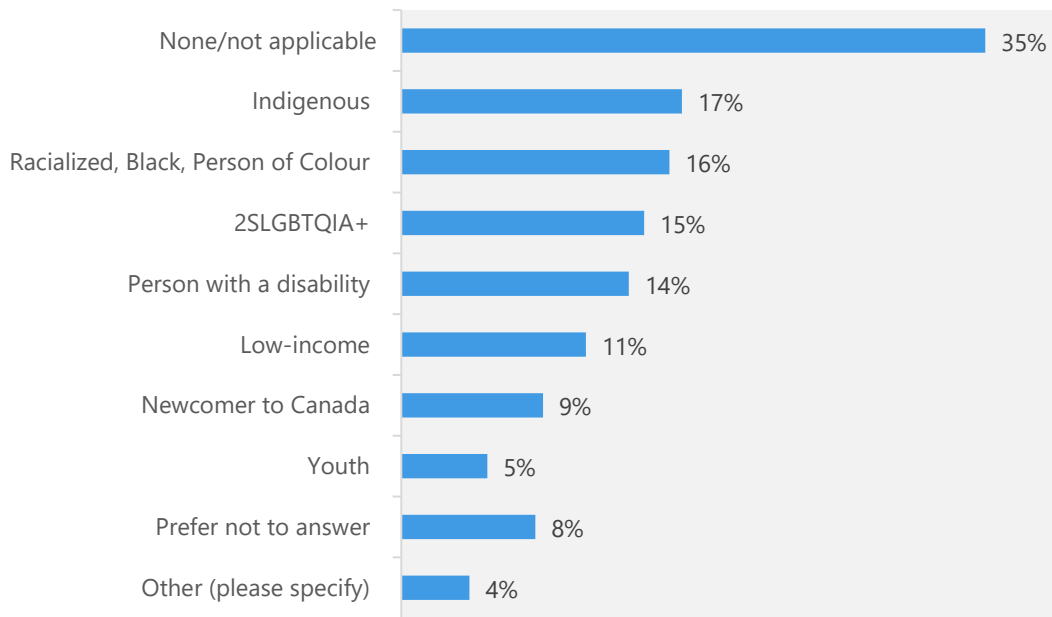
**Figure 24. What is your gender? (all responses, n=675)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

The survey was able to reach a wide range of identities. While 35% did not identify with any visible group, 17% identified as Indigenous, 16% identified as racialized (Black or person of colour), and 14% 2SLGBTQIA+. Moreover, 21 individuals identified falling in more than one category. These findings indicate that the survey was able to reach a diverse range of Courtenay residents.

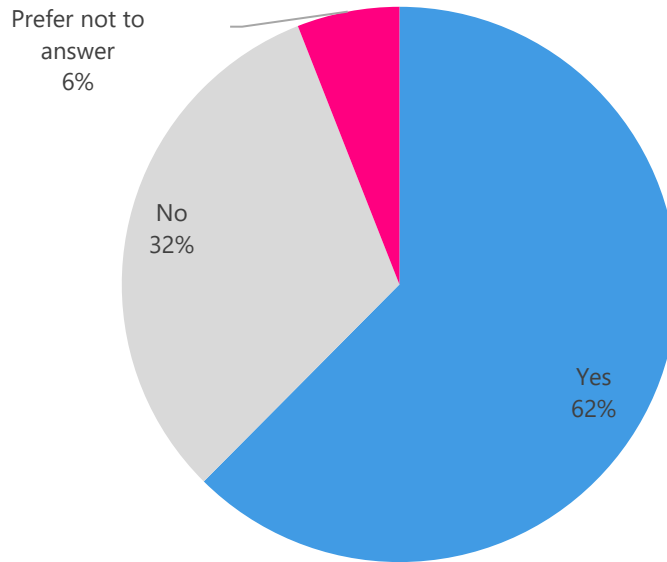
**Figure 25. Do you identify with any of the following? Select all that apply (all responses, n=655)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

As illustrated in Figure 26 below, the majority of households had two or more wage earners (62%). Additionally, 32% had one or no wage earner (or were retired), while 6% preferred not to answer.

**Figure 26. Does your household have two or more wage earners? (all responses, n=671)**

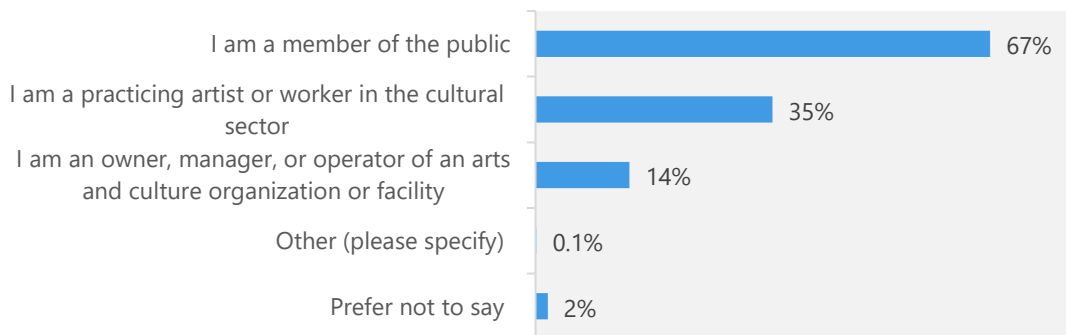


Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

### 3. Engaging with Culture in Courtenay

When participants were asked how they engage with culture in Courtenay, 67% said that they engage as members of the public, 35% as a practicing artist or cultural worker, and 14% as an owner/manager/operator of an arts and culture organization or facility.

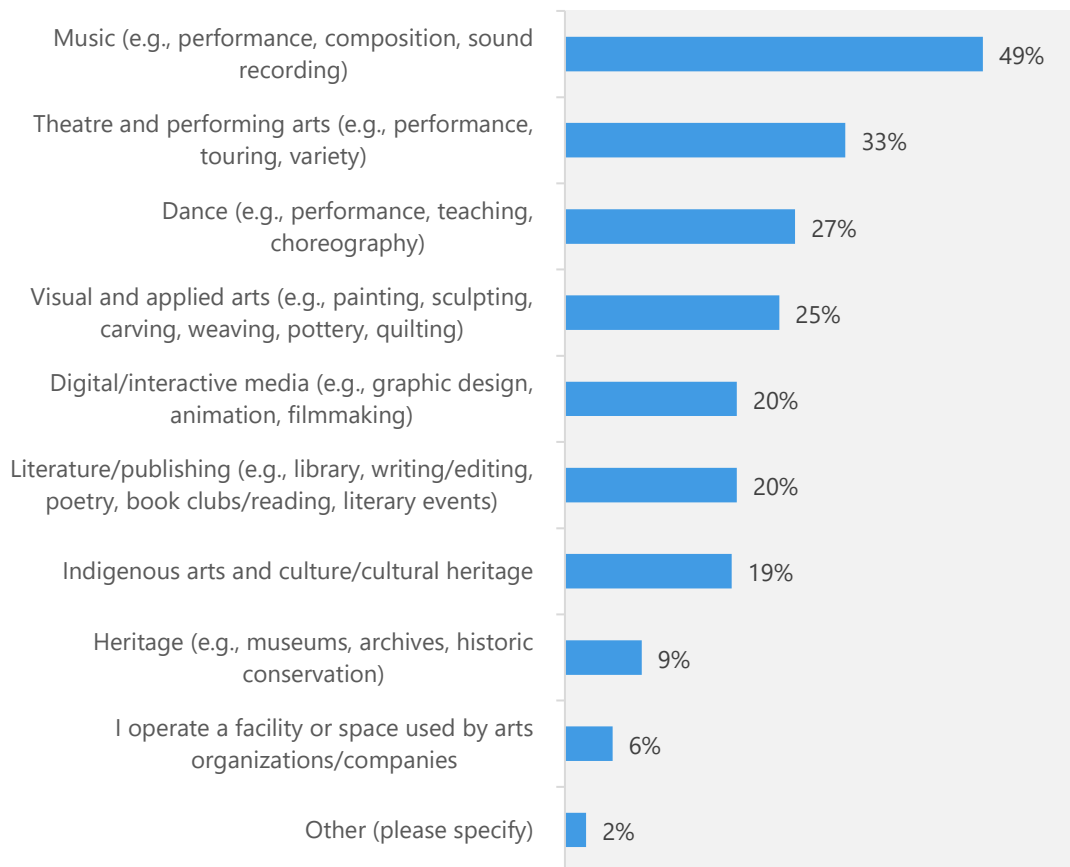
**Figure 27. How do you engage with culture in Courtenay? Please select the statement(s) that best describe you (all responses, n=779)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

Artists and owners/managers of arts and culture organizations/facilities were asked which sub-domain of arts and culture they work within. The top three areas of work included music (49%), theatre and performing arts (33%), and dance (27%). These responses were followed by visual and applied arts (25%).<sup>9</sup> Notably, the performing arts sector encompassed the top three identified areas of work. Although the survey was not designed to be statistically representative, the findings suggest that performing arts are a particularly strong aspect of the arts and culture sector in Courtenay.

**Figure 28. In which area(s) of arts and culture do you or your organization/company work? Select all that apply (culture sector responses, n=324)**

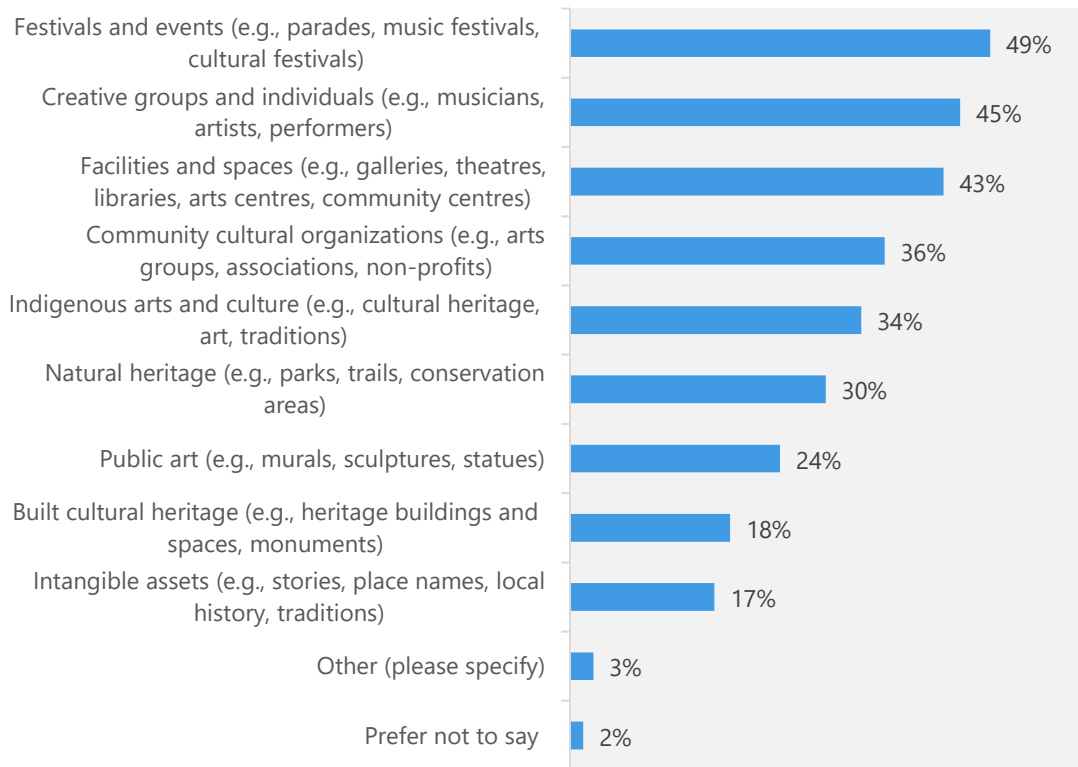


Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

<sup>9</sup> The responses do not add up to 100% as participants could select more than one sub-domain, reflecting that artists and organizations often work across more than one artistic discipline.

All survey participants were asked what comes to mind when they think of arts and culture in Courtenay. The most widely cited responses by survey participants included festivals and events (49%), creative groups and individuals (45%), and facilities and spaces (43%). Other examples specified included arts in education and research-based arts practices.

**Figure 29. When you think of arts and culture in Courtenay, what comes to mind? Select your top 3 (all responses, n=779)**

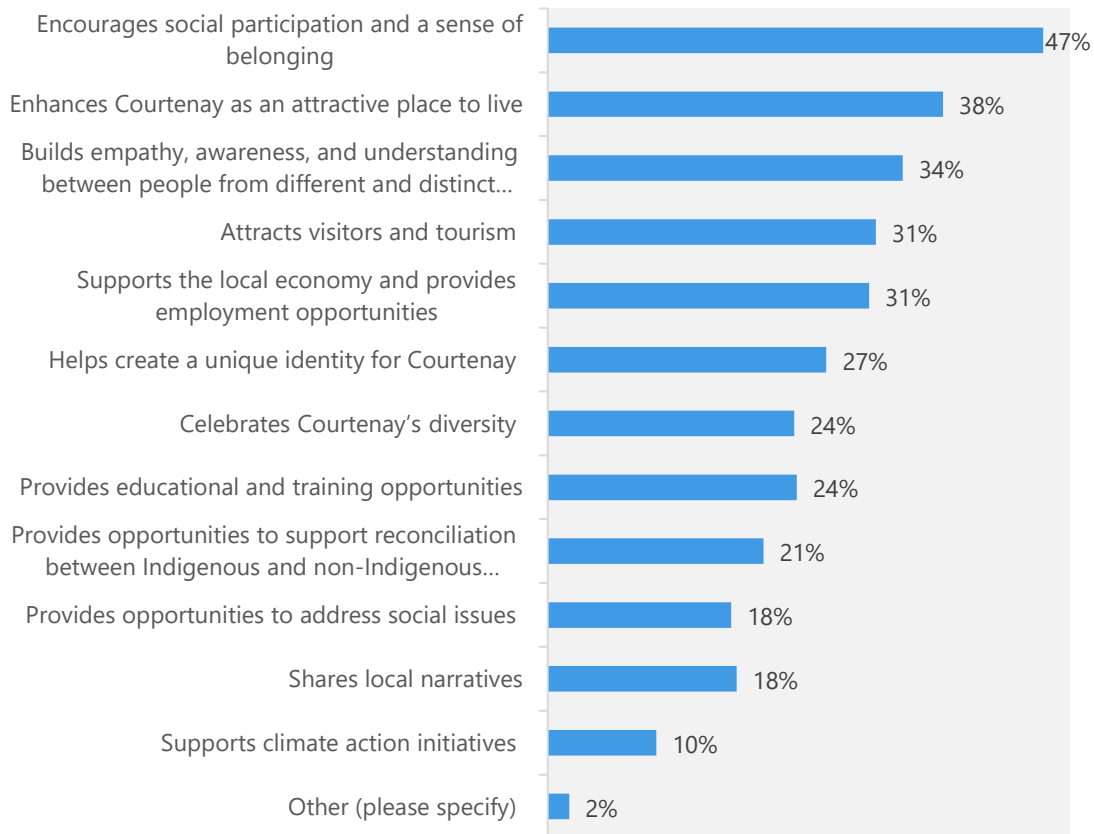


Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023



It is widely recognized that arts and culture provide significant benefits to communities, creating lasting impact. When participants were asked to select the top three social impacts of arts and culture in Courtenay, participants were mostly likely to choose 'encourages social participation and a sense of belonging' (47% of respondents selected this option); 'enhances Courtenay as an attractive place to live' (38%); and 'builds empathy, awareness, and understanding between different and distinct cultural backgrounds' (34%).

**Figure 30. What impact does arts and culture have on Courtenay and the wider community? Select your top 3 (all responses, n=779)**



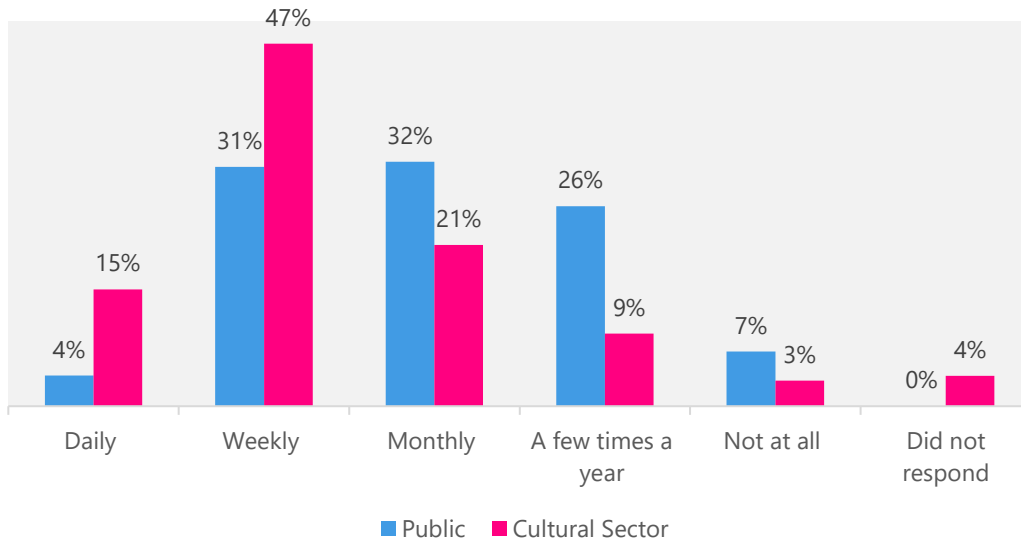
Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

#### 4. Cultural Programming

Survey respondents participate in arts and culture activities in Courtenay on a regular basis. The figure below compares public responses with culture sector responses. 62% of culture sector respondents said that they participate weekly or more, while 35% of the public identified participating weekly or more. Most culture sector participants participate weekly (47%), while most members of the public participate monthly (32%) and weekly (31%). Only 10% of all survey participants said they do not participate in arts and culture in Courtenay at all. The greatest number of survey respondents identified participating weekly to a few times a year.

While the overall distribution is consistent with regional culture research findings,<sup>10</sup> it is skewed slightly higher towards weekly participation.

**Figure 31. How often do you participate in arts and culture events or activities in Courtenay? (all responses, n=779)**



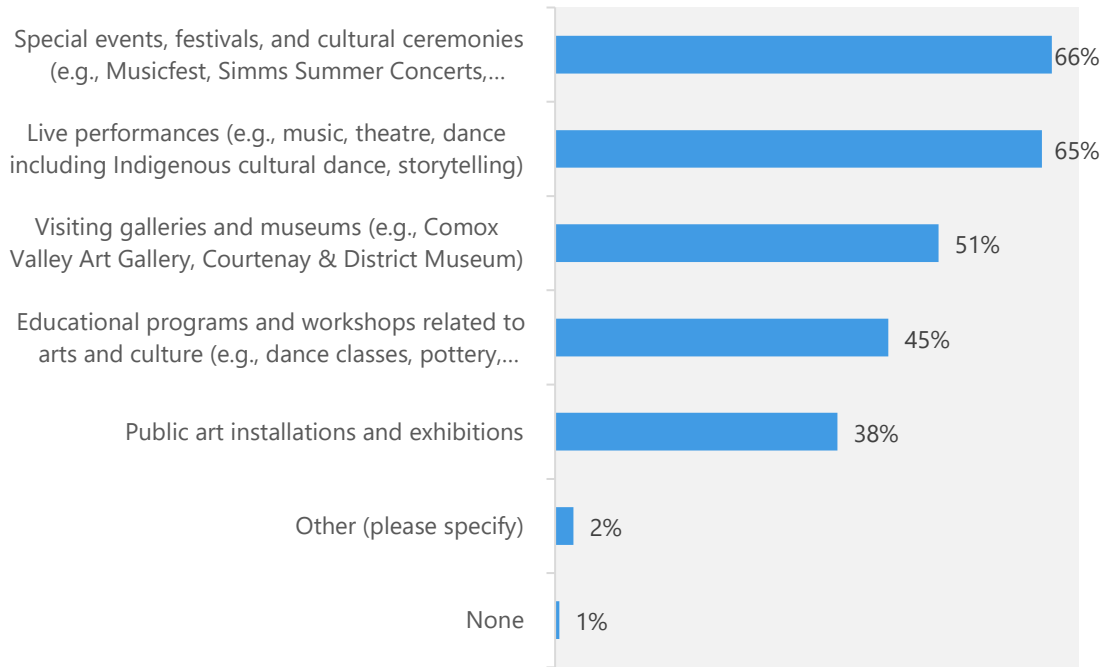
Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

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<sup>10</sup> Comparing these survey responses with findings from the 2021 *Arts and Culture Impact Assessment: Vancouver Island & Gulf Islands Super Region* that Nordicity conducted for the Digital Innovation Group (now Creative Coast).

The **top three arts and culture activities** that survey participants have experienced in Courtenay include special events, festivals, and cultural ceremonies (66%); other types of live performances (65%); and visiting galleries and museums (51%).

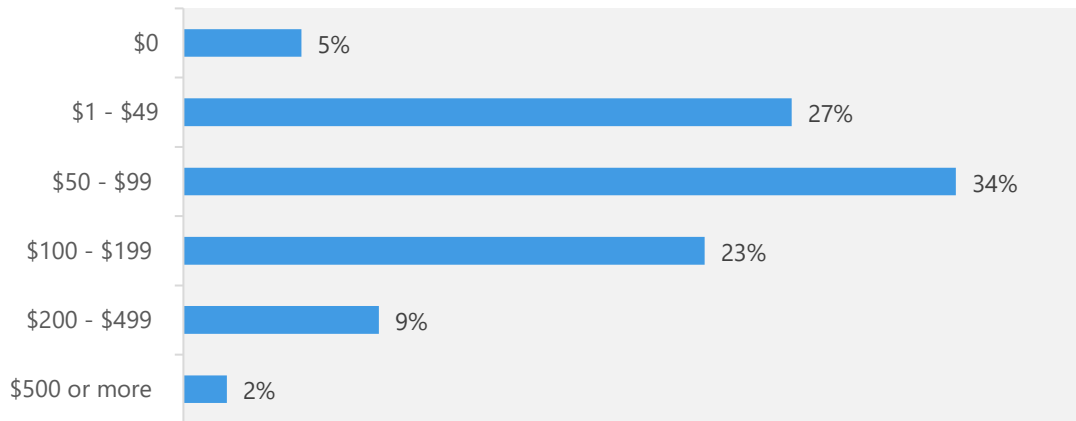
**Figure 32. Which of the following arts and culture activities have you experienced (within Courtenay)? Select all that apply (all responses, n=731)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

Interaction or participation in arts and culture in Courtenay contributes to the local community's economy through additional spending in other areas. Significantly, **survey participants spend an average of \$105 in the community before or after attending/participating in cultural events** (such as at local restaurants, bars, etc.). To put this in perspective, if every adult in Courtenay were to attend one cultural event in Courtenay, this could contribute to an additional \$2.4 million of spending in the community.<sup>11</sup> Illustrated below, the largest cohort of survey respondents indicated spending between \$50 and \$100 (34%). A smaller group of participants (11%) spend above \$200.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 33. As an individual, how much do you typically spend before or after attending/participating in cultural events? (all responses, n=728)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

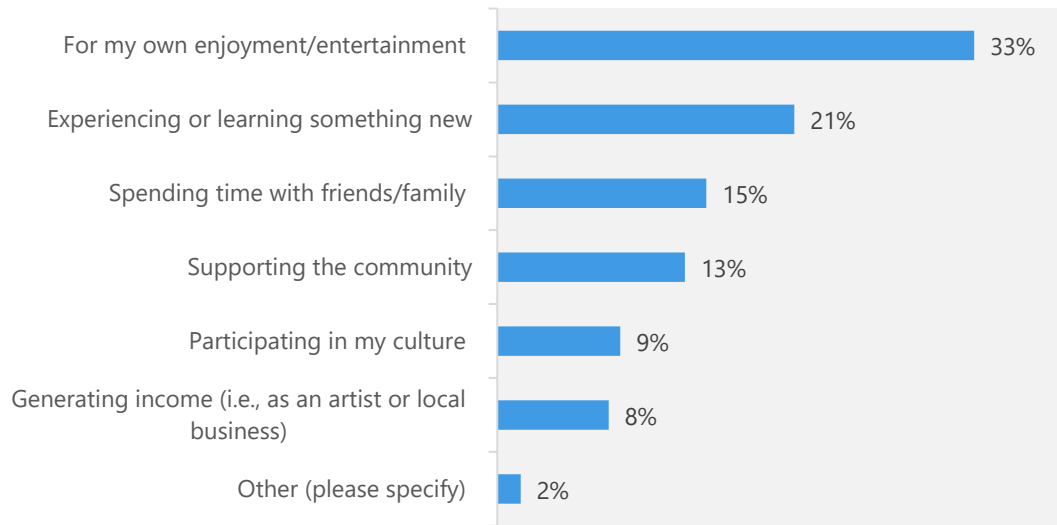
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<sup>11</sup> This finding uses the population figure from the Statistics Canada - City of Courtenay Census Profile population of approximately 28k. Note, it does not include children and youth.

<sup>12</sup> Further information will be included in the economic analysis work.

The main reason survey respondents participate in arts and cultural events in Courtenay is 'for my own enjoyment/entertainment' (33%). This response was followed by 'experiencing or learning something new' (21%) or 'spending time with friends/family' (21%). These findings reflect how participants value arts and culture events for social and not only personal reasons.

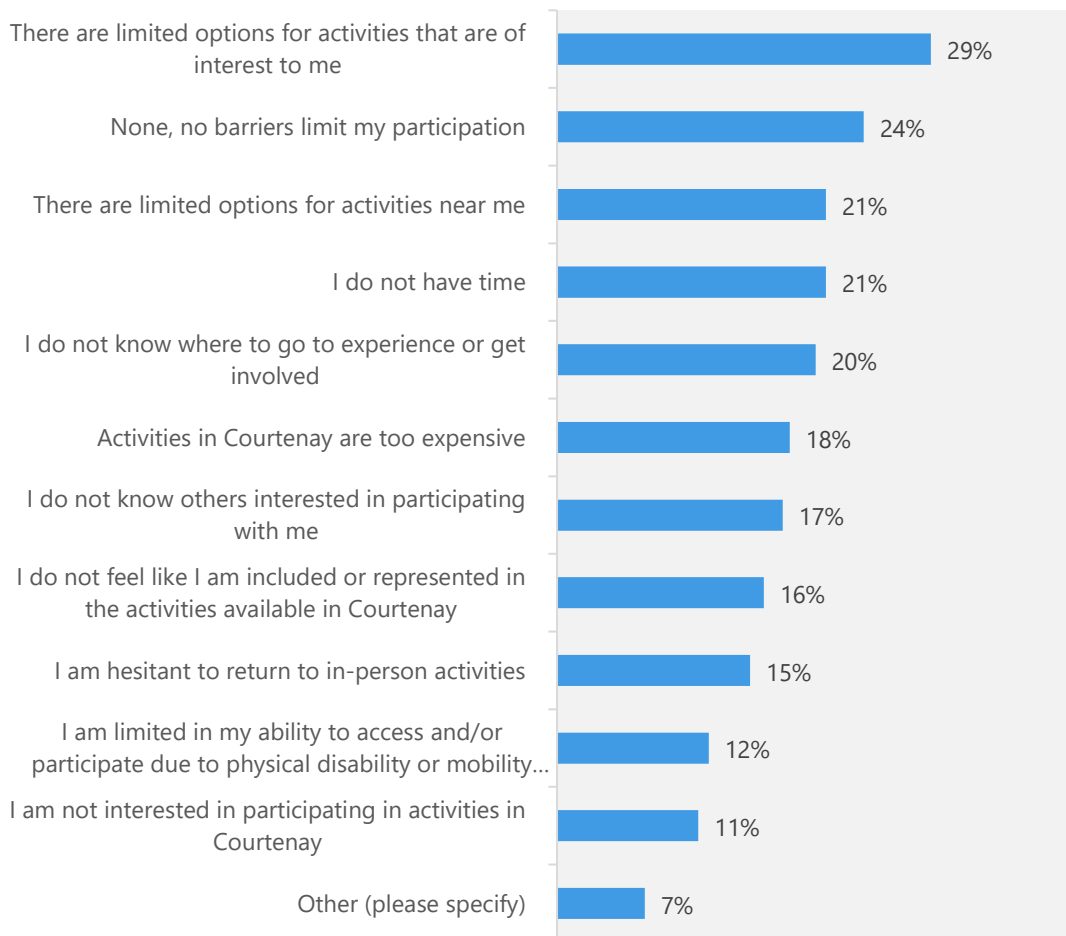
**Figure 34. What is your main reason for participating in arts and cultural events or activities in Courtenay? (all responses, n=731)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

When asked if any factors might limit them from accessing and/or participating in arts and culture in Courtenay, the top three survey responses included 'there are limited options for activities that are of interest to me' (29%); 'none, no barriers limit my participation' (24%); and 'there are limited options for activities near me' (21%). Two of the top responses relate to the diversity of arts and culture activities offered. Notably, and positively, many survey respondents do not experience any barriers to participating in arts and culture in Courtenay. Other, please specify examples included, 'transportation and carpooling, as I live in Campbell River,' 'I do not feel safe getting to and from arts and culture locations,' and, 'I do not know where to find out about activities near me.' This final response could point to the need for further communications and marketing to let the community know what is available in Courtenay.

**Figure 35. What factors, if any, might limit you from accessing and/or participating in arts and culture in Courtenay? Select up to 3 (all responses, n=754)**



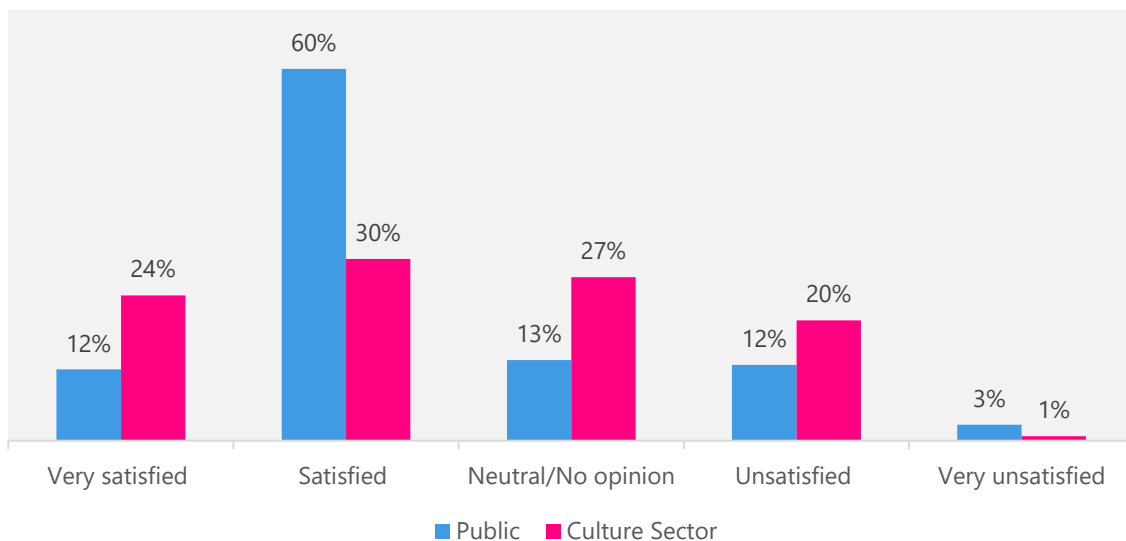
Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

The public and culture sector participants were asked to rate their overall experience with arts and culture activities in Courtenay. Significantly, **72% of public respondents said they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with arts and culture activities, while only 54% of the culture sector said they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied.'** Generally, the culture sector was more

'unsatisfied' to 'very unsatisfied' (21%), than the public (15%). When asked to explain this rating, some interesting comments to highlight include:

- *"The Courtenay area has a rich history and cultural traditions that go back hundreds of years. These traditions are highly valued and protected by the local people and can be reflected and displayed through museums, art festivals and cultural events."*
- *"Could be so much better than it already is. Unfortunately, I don't think we've collectively prioritized arts and culture enough over the years as a community so it can feel underwhelming. Also, not always a fan of the arts presented in the city."*
- *"I am both a participant and observer. I think local cultural organizations are doing a pretty good job of both showcasing local artists and bring provocative and/or inspiring artists from away. However, I would say our performance and gallery spaces limit the opportunities. In summary, we are doing well however there can always be improvements."*

**Figure 36. How would you rate your experience with arts and culture activities in Courtenay? (all responses, n=715)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

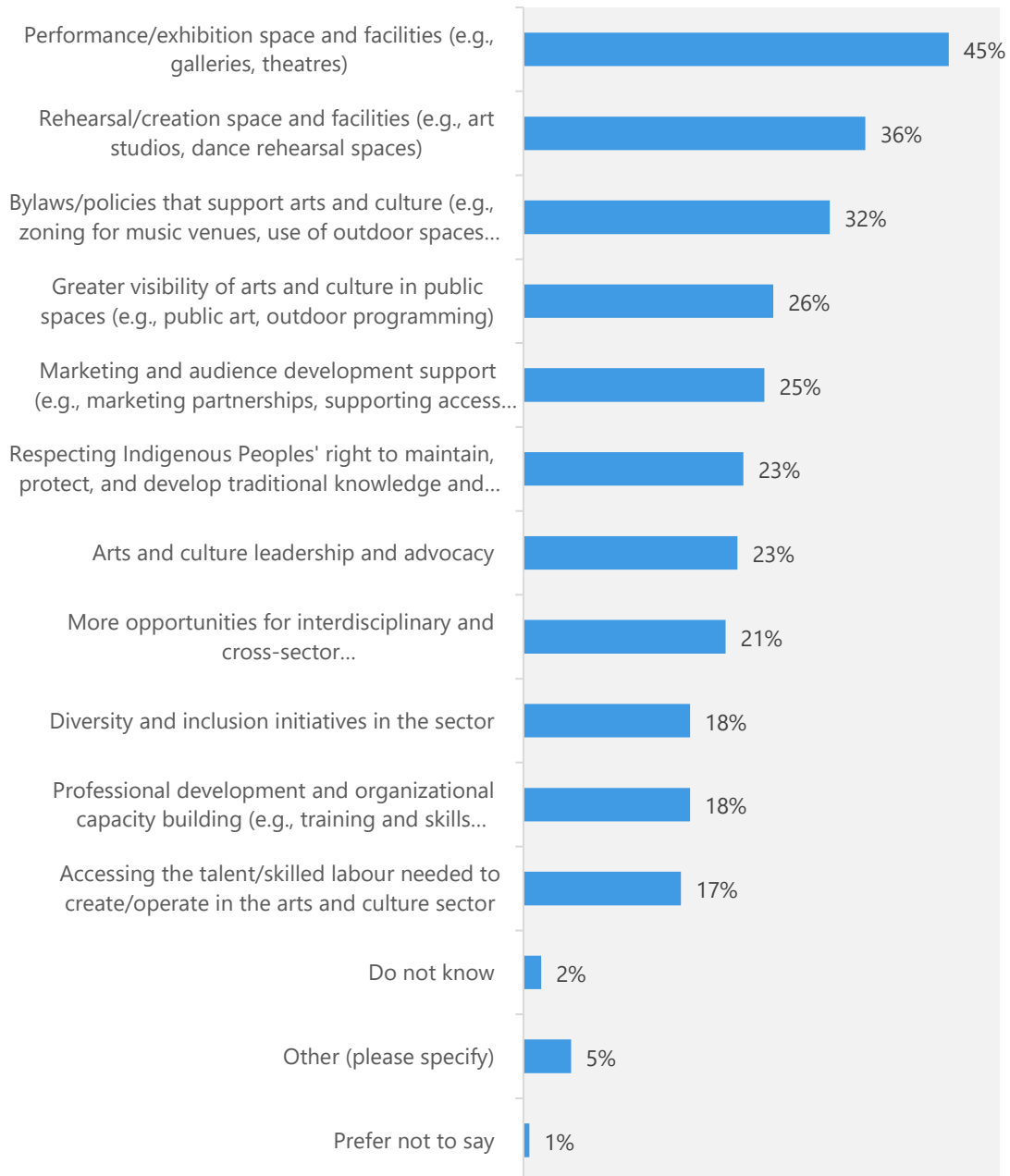
## 5. Facilities and Spaces

Facilities and spaces are essential for community-based arts and culture. In the following section, all survey participants were asked to identify the types of facilities and spaces they have visited or used in the past two years, as well as identify their level of satisfaction regarding those existing arts and culture spaces in Courtenay.

Artists and culture organizations were asked an additional question on what they see as the most critical needs for arts and culture to thrive in Courtenay. The following figure, **the most critical needs identified for arts and culture in Courtenay relates to space and facilities**. 'Performance/exhibition space' was identified by artists and cultural sector survey participants as the top need (45%), followed by 'rehearsal and creation space' (36%). The third most critical

need identified was 'bylaws and policies that support arts and culture' (32%), such as zoning for venues – a need that is also related to cultural space. Other examples provided included a need for greater access to funding and finding financial patrons for the arts and culture sector.

**Figure 37. What do you think are the most critical needs for arts and culture to thrive in Courtenay? Select your top 3 (culture sector responses, n=320)**



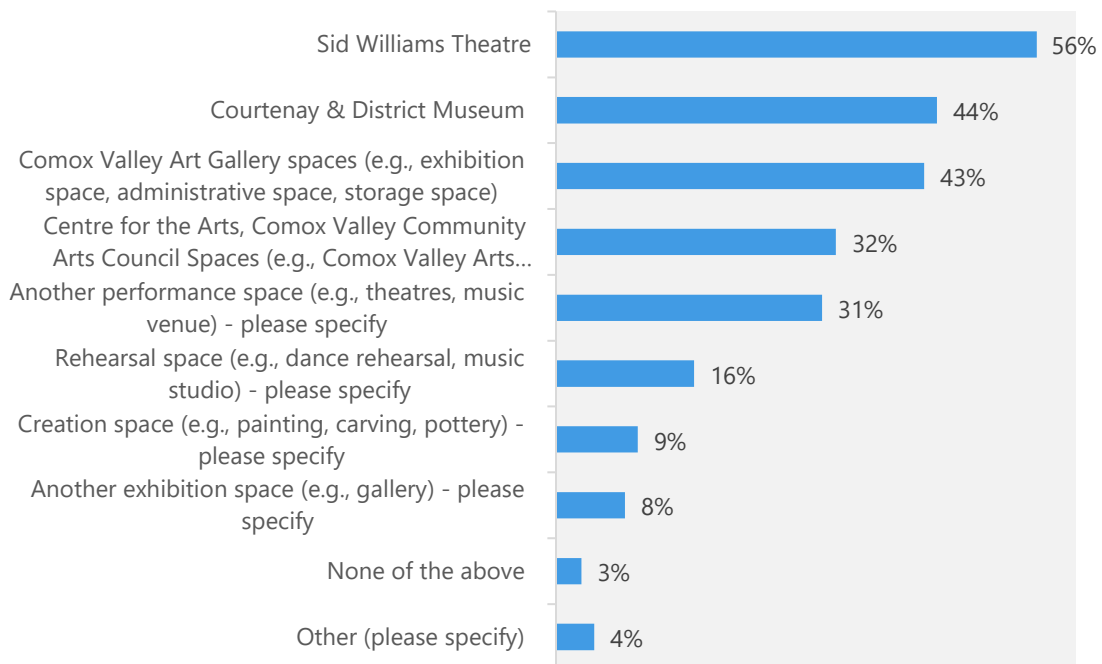
Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023



The following illustrates which Courtenay facilities survey participants visited in the past two years. The top three facilities included the Sid Williams Theatre (56%), Courtenay & District Museum (44%), and Comox Valley Art Gallery spaces (43%).

Survey participants also identified other types of spaces they visit in the community in terms of performance spaces, rehearsal spaces and creation spaces. Performance spaces included Native Sons Hall, Filberg Centre, Little Red Church, Old Church Theatre, Simms Park, St. Georges United Church, Stan Hagen, and Vanier Secondary School Theatre. Examples of additional exhibition spaces identified include Artful the Gallery, ArtWrx studio, Pearl Ellis Gallery, and Potters Place. Rehearsal spaces identified include Courtenay Little Theatre, a variety of churches, as well as high school theatre spaces. Finally, creation spaces identified include Lupine Art Studio, Make it Zone, Scrapbook Central, Spool Sewing Studio, Tin Town, and North Island College.

**Figure 38. In the past two years, which Courtenay facilities have you visited for an arts and cultural activity? Select all that apply (all responses, n=677)**

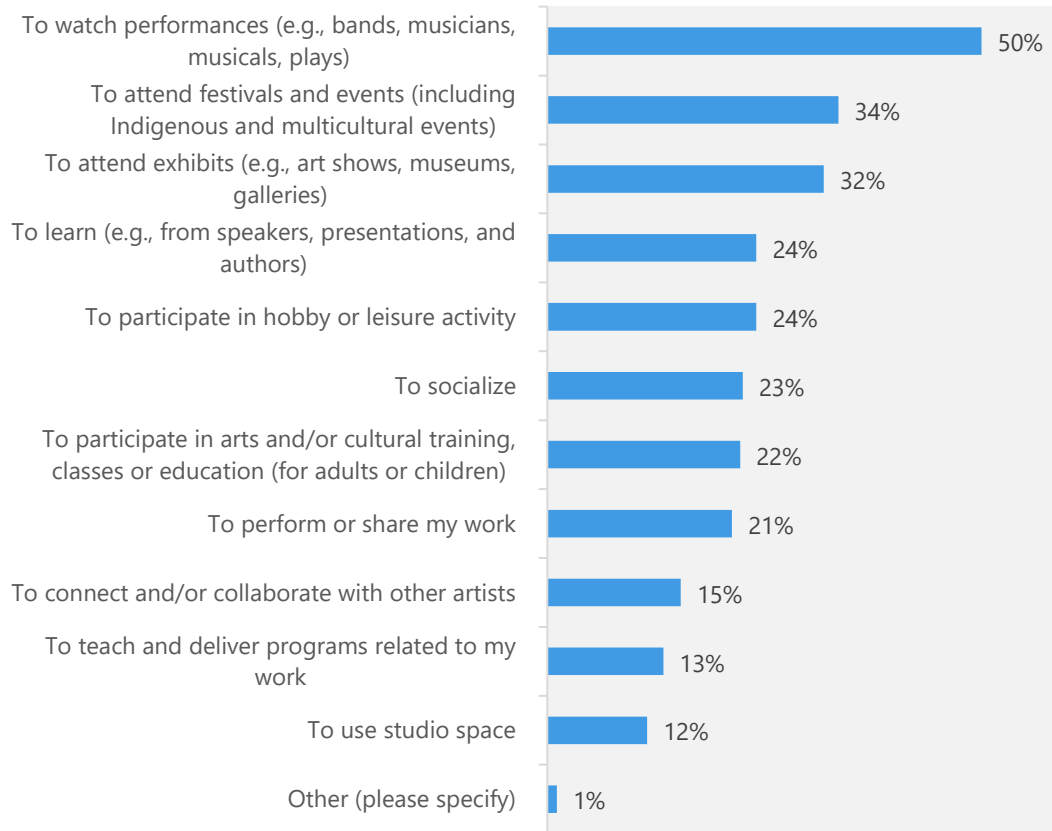


Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

## 5.1 Cultural facility needs

All survey participants were asked to identify their top three reasons they usually visit arts and culture facilities in Courtenay. 'To watch performances' (50%), 'attend festivals and events' (34%), and 'attend exhibits' (32%), were the statements that most resonated with survey participants.

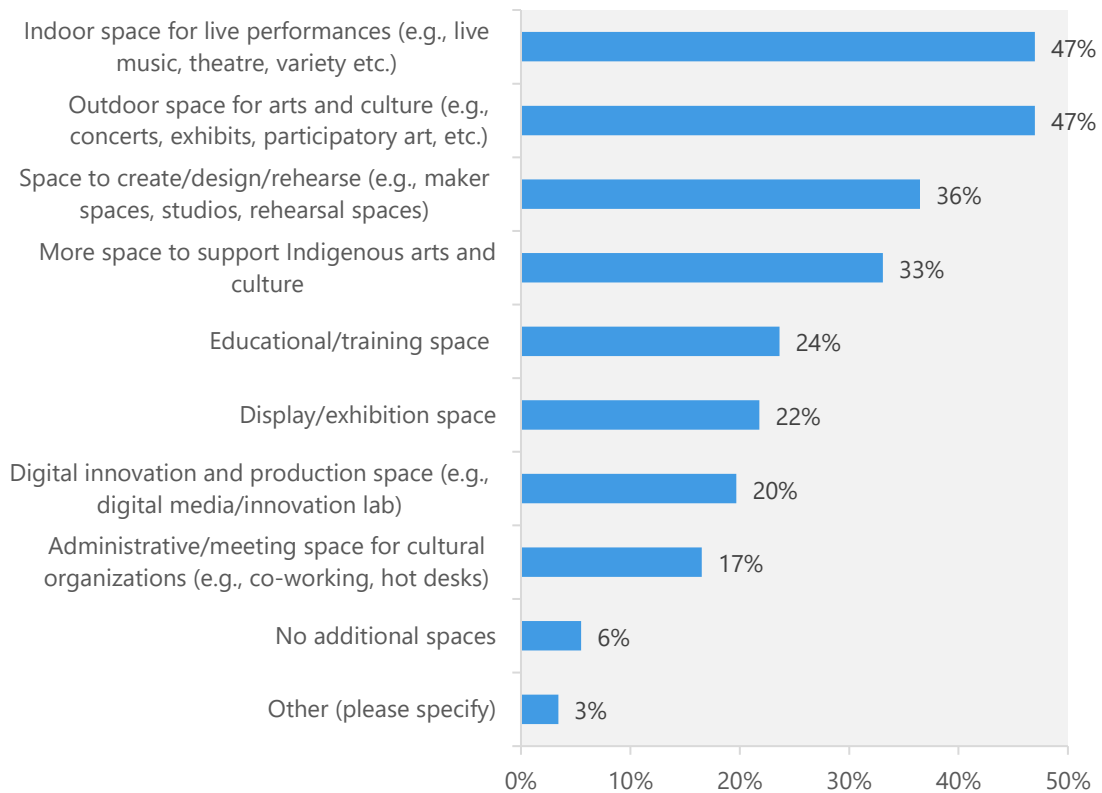
**Figure 39. What are the main reasons you usually visit arts or culture facilities in Courtenay? Select your top 3 (all responses, n=639)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

Looking to the future, public survey participants were asked to identify **the top three future types of facilities** they would like to see in the community. Survey participants identified that they would like to see **'more indoor space for live performances'** (44%), and **'more special events and festivals'** (30%). These findings illustrate that arts and culture space and events are needed in Courtenay, especially live performances.

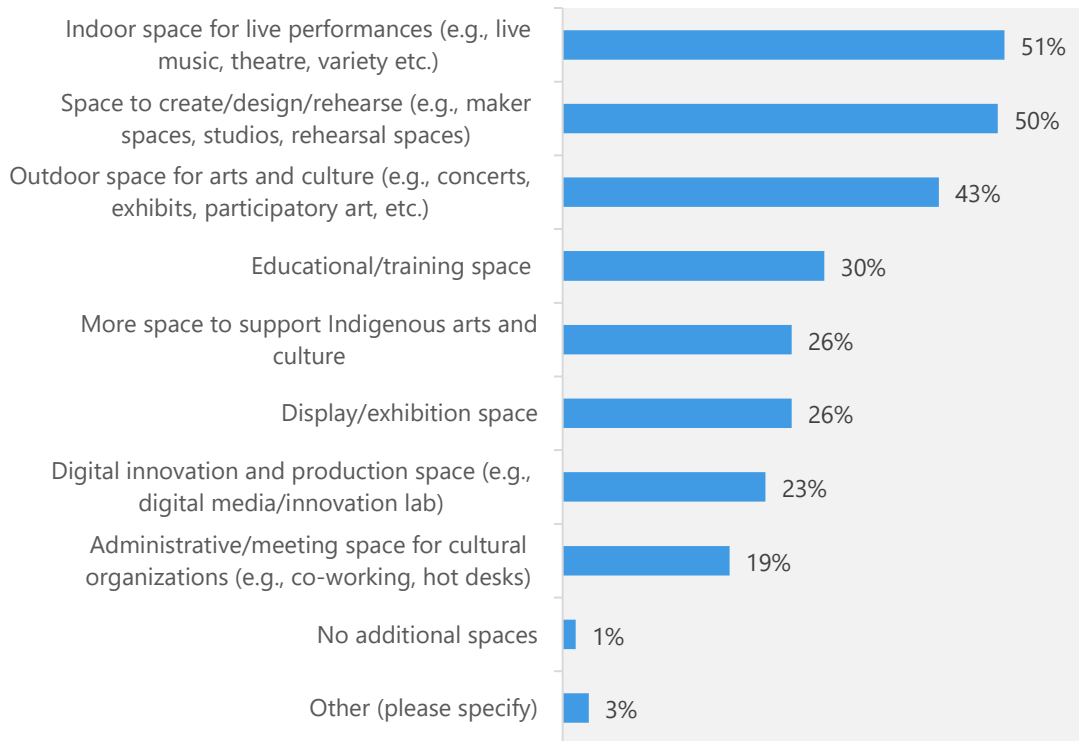
**Figure 40. What kinds of facilities would you like to see more of in the future (if any)? Select your top 3 (public responses, n=381)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

Future facilities, according to survey participants who identified as artists and workers in the sector, include 'indoor space for live performance' (51%), 'space to create/design/rehearse' (50%), and 'outdoor space' (43%). Compared to the overall results for this question, the top three responses are the same but in different order, however, 'indoor space' was highlighted in both cases as the top need.

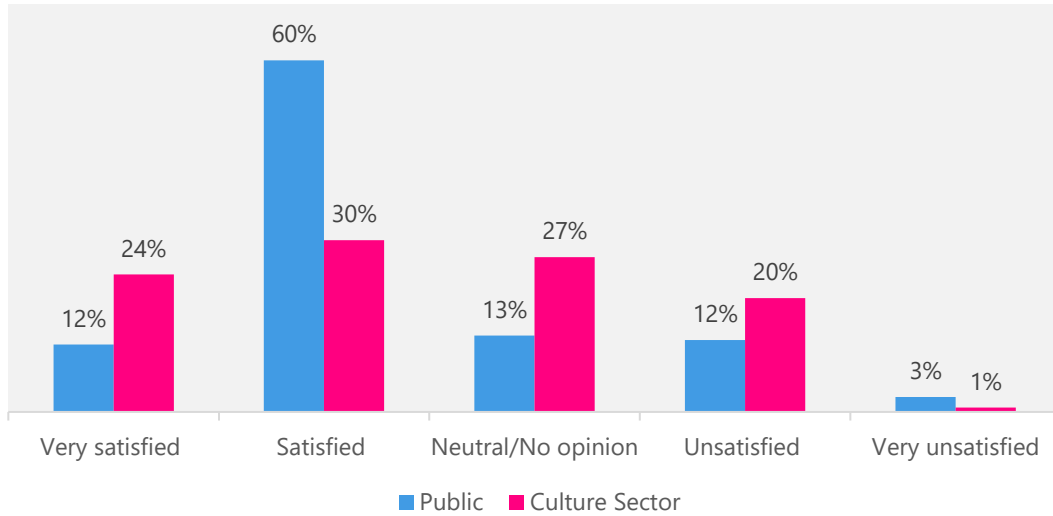
**Figure 41. What kinds of facilities would you like to see more of in the future (if any)? Select your top 3 (culture sector responses, n=267)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

Participants were also asked about their overall satisfaction with the **availability of live performance/cultural entertainment options**. The following figure illustrates responses for the public versus culture sector. It was found that 72% of the public is 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied,' while only 54% of the culture sector is 'satisfied' to 'very satisfied.' 21% of the culture sector is 'unsatisfied' to 'very unsatisfied,' while 15% of the public is 'unsatisfied' or 'very unsatisfied.'

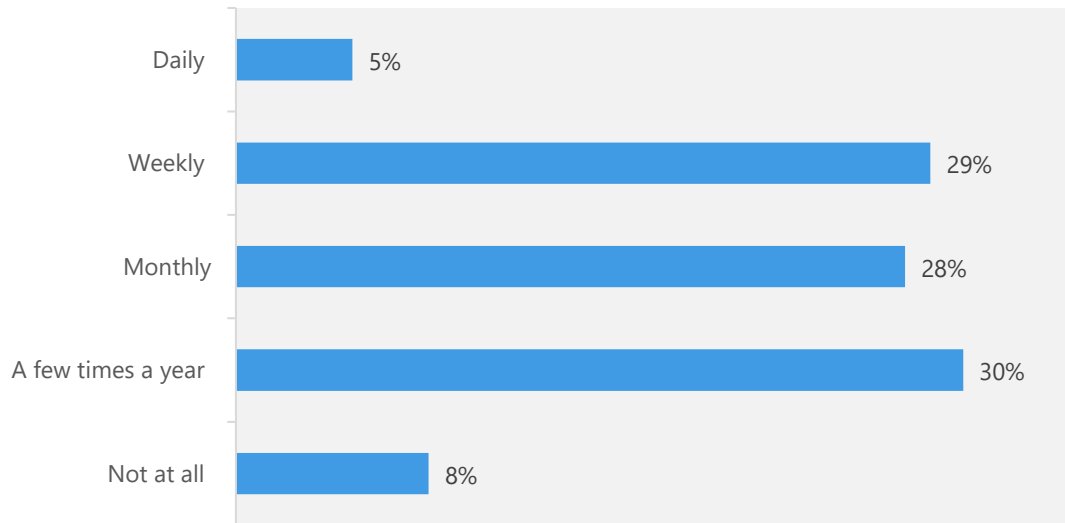
**Figure 42. How satisfied are you with the availability of live performance/cultural entertainment options in Courtenay (not including the surrounding region)? (all responses, n=660)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

Considering facilities outside of Courtenay, survey participants were also asked how often they visit facilities outside of the city, but within the Comox Valley region. Weekly (29%), monthly (28%), and a few times a year (30%), garnered very similar levels of response. These findings indicate that nearly 60% of participants frequently travel outside of the immediate community to experience or participate in arts and culture.

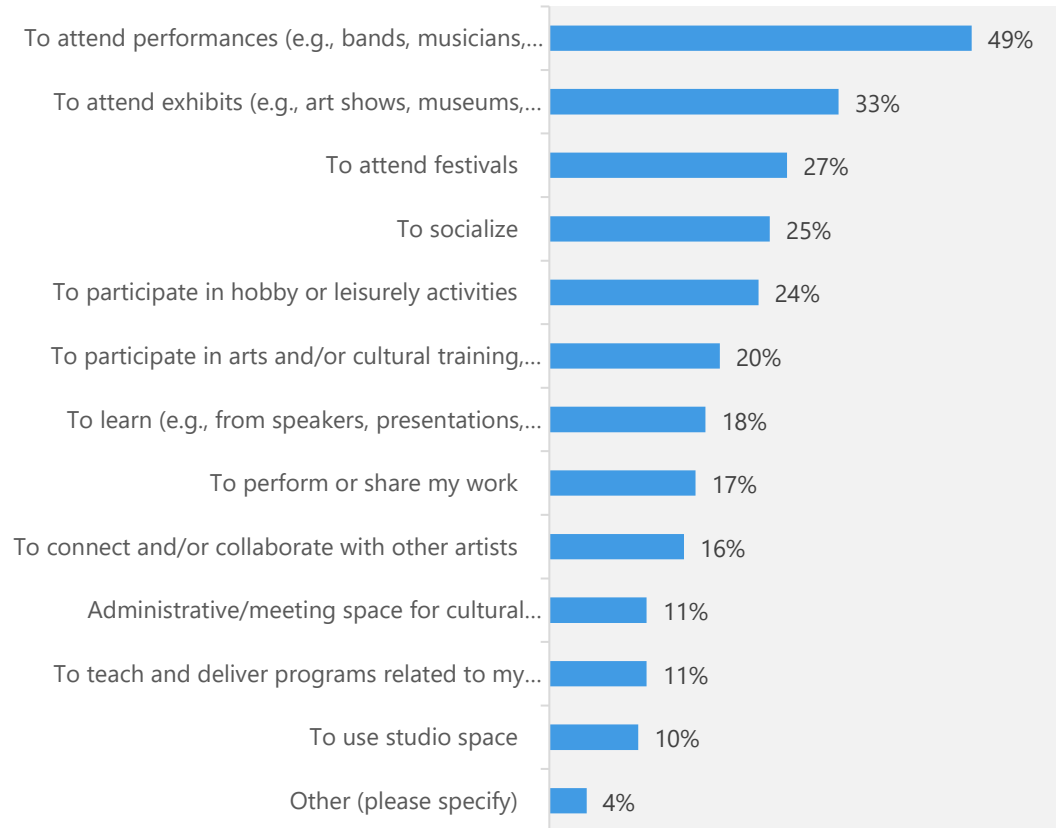
**Figure 43. How often do you visit facilities outside of Courtenay but within the Comox Valley region for arts and culture activities? (all responses, n=660)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

When asked what for the **primary reason for visiting cultural facilities outside of Courtenay**, the top responses included 'to attend performances' (49%), 'to attend exhibits' (33%), and 'to attend festivals' (27%). This finding could point to opportunities that Courtenay could pursue in terms of expanding the current community offer, such as more live performances, shows, festivals, and exhibits. Further investigation would be needed to identify whether these trips are taking place because the participants' needs are unmet within Courtenay.

**Figure 44. What is your primary reason for visiting cultural facilities outside of Courtenay but within the Comox Valley region? Select your top 3 (all responses, n=605)**

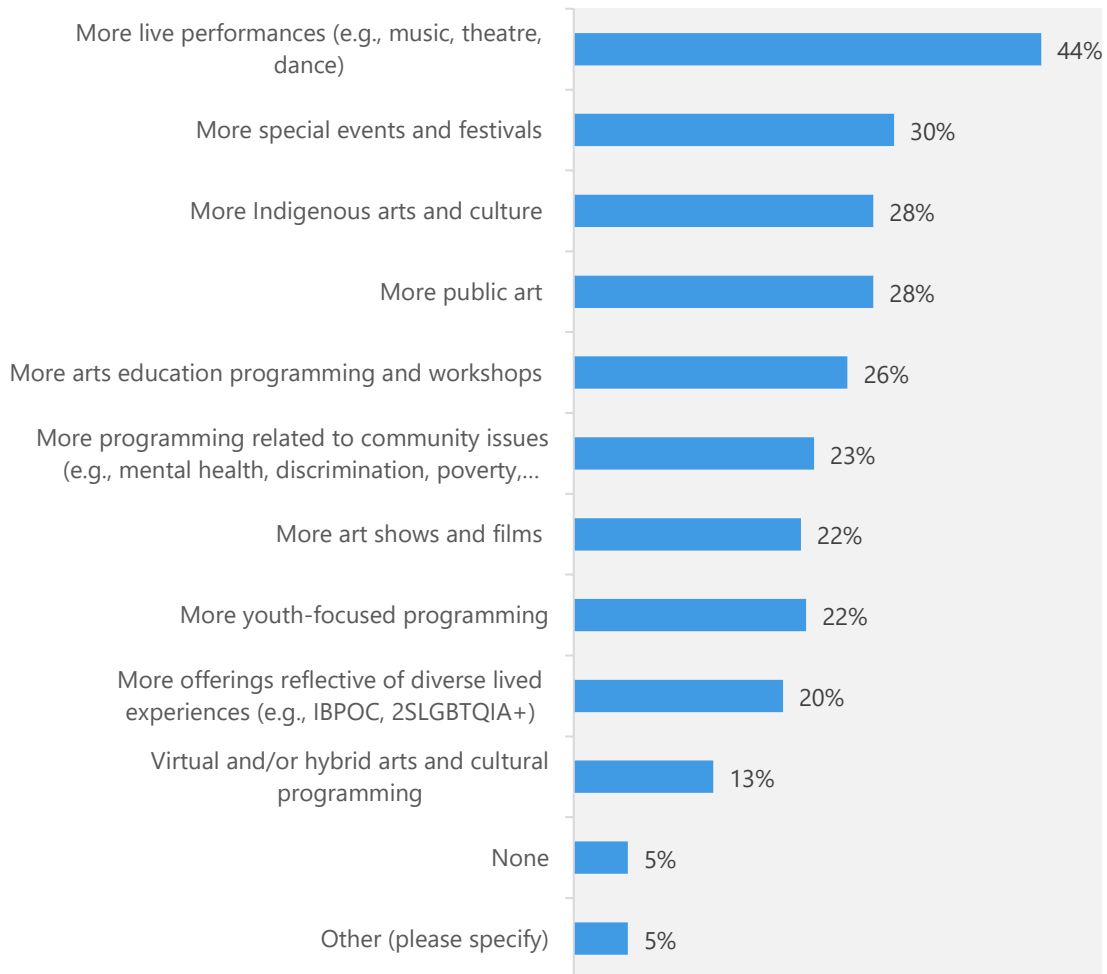


Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

## 6. The Future of Arts and Culture

Finally, survey participants were asked questions regarding the future of arts and culture in Courtenay. When asked what types of arts and culture offerings they would like to see more of in Courtenay, the top response was 'more live performances' (44%). Other popular responses included 'more special events and festivals' (30%), 'more Indigenous arts and culture' (28%), and 'more public art' (28%).

**Figure 45. Looking to the future, what types of arts and culture offerings would you like to see more of in Courtenay? Select your top 3 (public responses, n=409)**

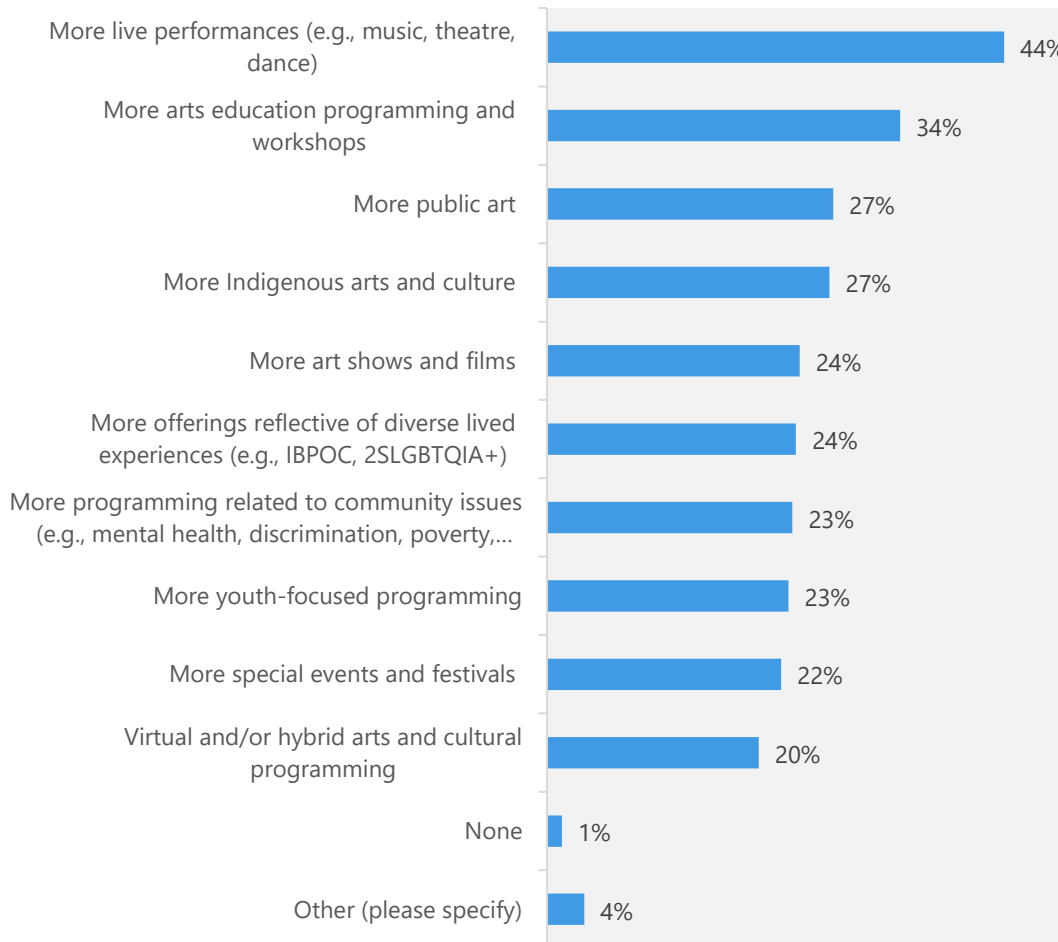


Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023



Culture offerings, according to survey participants who identified as artists and workers in the sector, the top response was also 'more live performances' (44%), 'more arts education and programming' (34%), 'public art' (27%), and 'Indigenous arts' (27%).

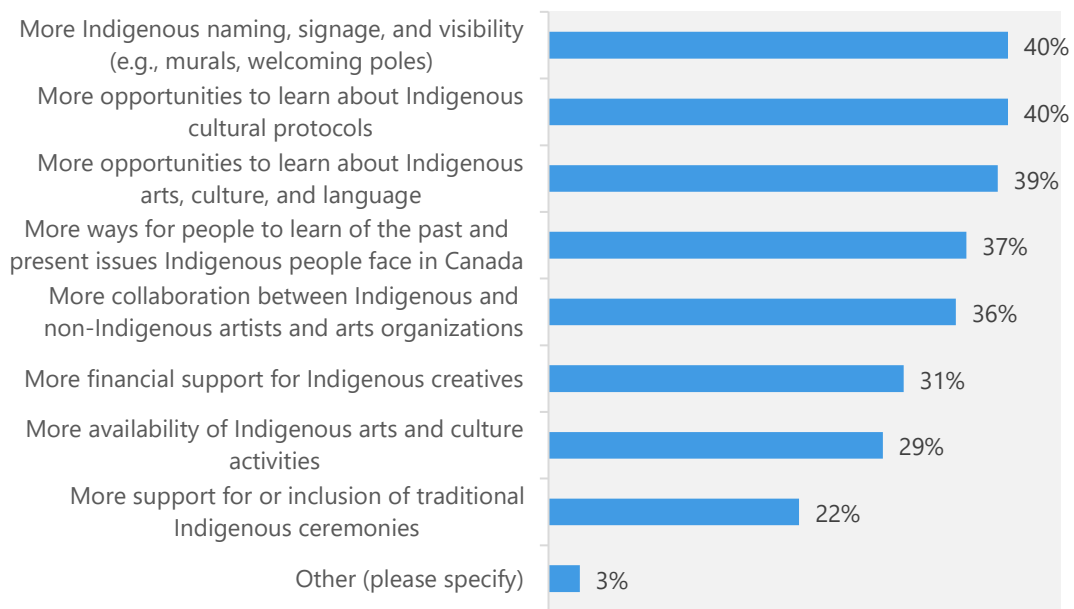
**Figure 46. Looking to the future, what types of arts and culture offerings would you like to see more of in Courtenay? Select your top 3 (culture sector responses, n=282)**



Source: City of Courtenay Culture Plan Public Survey

The City of Courtenay is home to a diverse Indigenous community with a rich cultural heritage. Survey participants were asked how Courtenay can further reconciliation and support Indigenous arts and culture. Indigenous survey participants were most likely to say that Courtenay can further reconciliation and support Indigenous artists through 'more Indigenous naming, signage, and visibility' (40% of Indigenous respondents selected this option); 'more opportunities to learn about Indigenous cultural protocols' (40%); and 'more opportunities to learn about Indigenous arts, culture, and language' (39%). Other open-ended responses included the need for fiscal stewardship, environmental protection, and group events and activities to bridge differences.

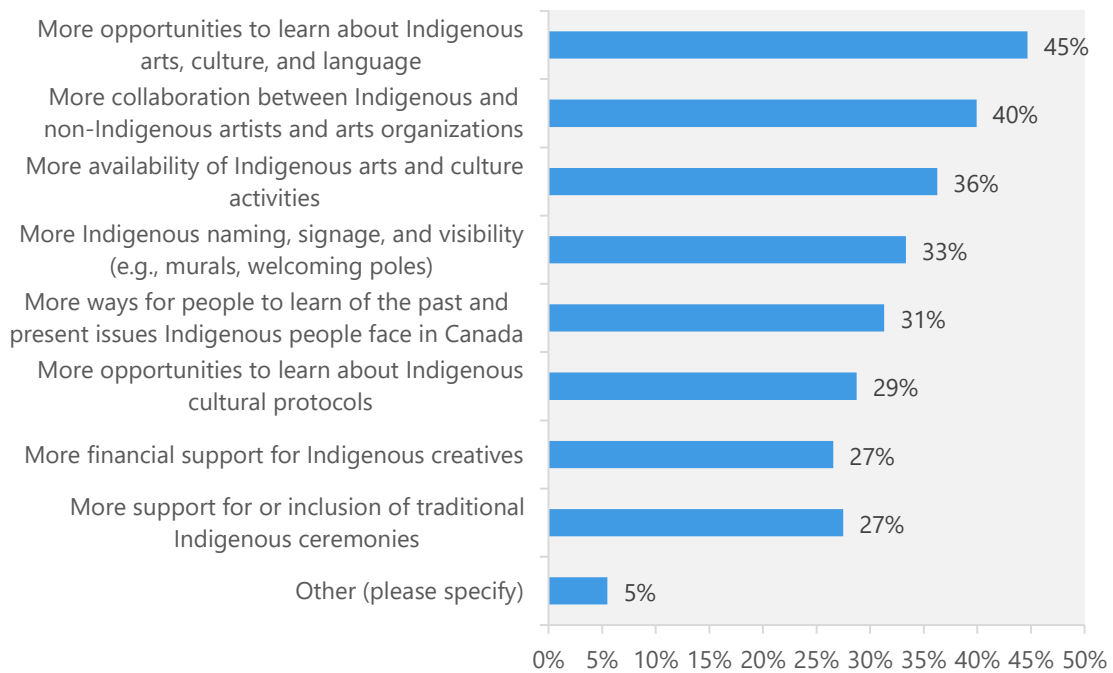
**Figure 47. How do you think Courtenay can further reconciliation and support Indigenous arts and culture? Select your top 3 (Indigenous responses, n=109)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

In comparison to overall results for this question, survey respondents (including results from non-Indigenous and Indigenous participants combined) were mostly likely to say 'more opportunities to learn about Indigenous arts, culture, and language' (with 45% of respondents choosing this option); and 'greater collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists and arts organizations' (40%). These responses were closely followed by 'more availability of Indigenous arts and culture activities' (36%) and 'more Indigenous naming, signage, and visibility' (33%).

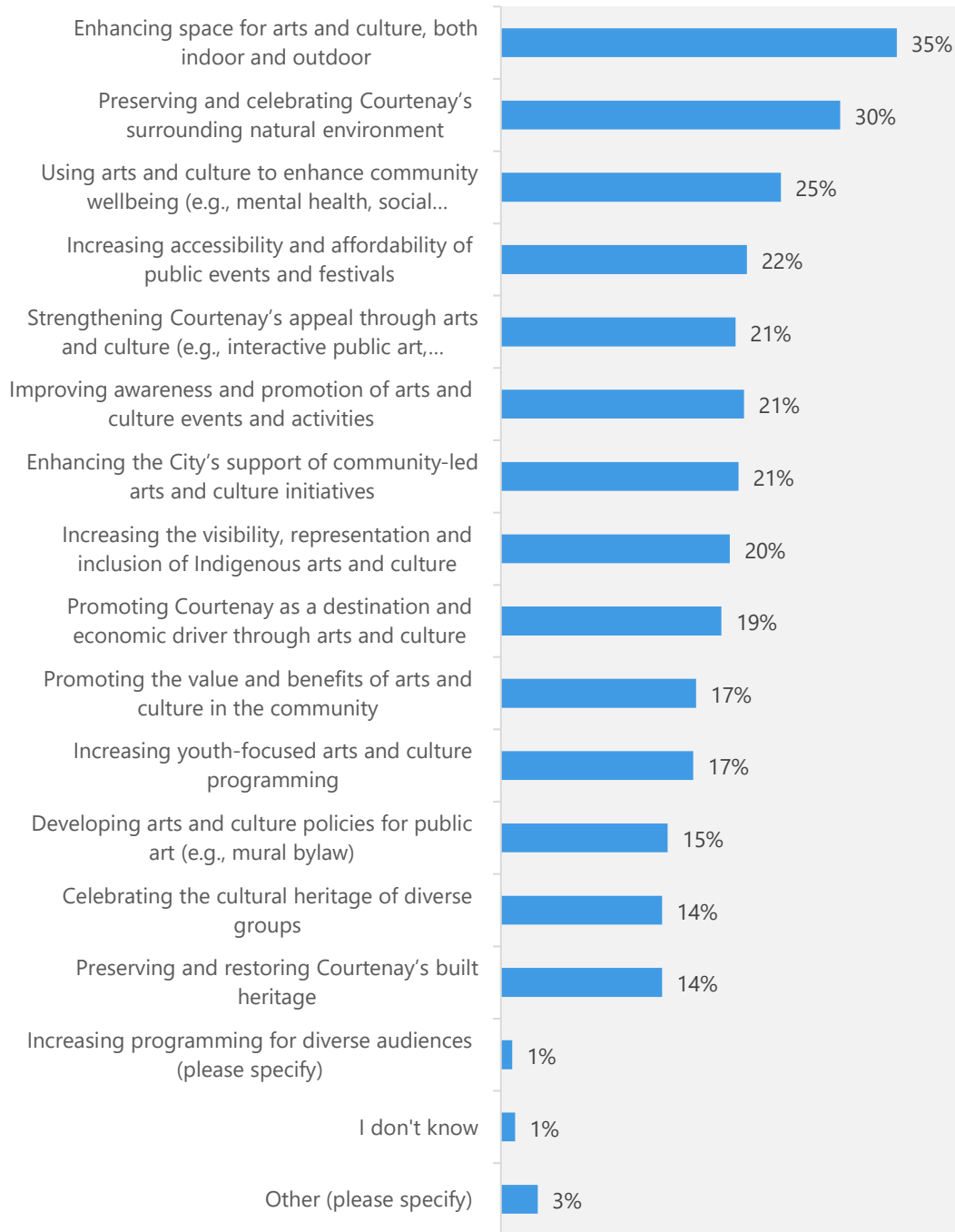
**Figure 48. How do you think Courtenay can further reconciliation and support Indigenous arts and culture? Select your top 3 (public and culture sector responses, n=546)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

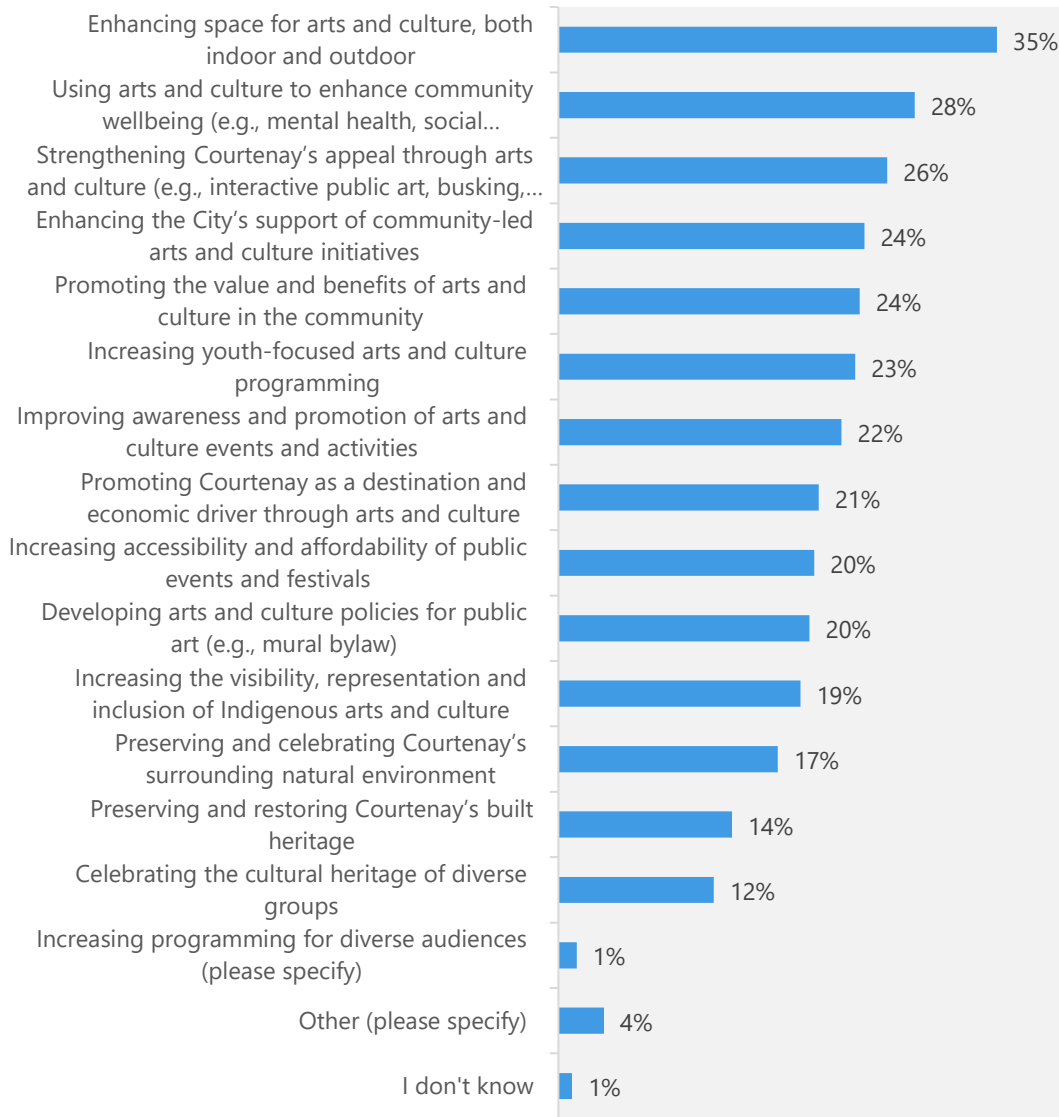
Survey participants were also asked more broadly **what should be prioritized within the Strategic Culture Plan** (see Figure 49 on following page). 'Enhancing space for arts and culture both indoors and outdoors' was the most popular response overall by both the culture sector and public (with 35% of respondents choosing this option). Overall, however, there was a lack of consensus about what the priorities should be. The wide range of opinions could indicate participants' uncertainty regarding what the focal points for the Culture Plan should be or the profound influence of arts and culture throughout so many areas the community's fabric.

**Figure 49. What do you think the City of Courtenay should prioritize in the new Strategic Cultural Plan? Select your top 3 (public responses, n=404)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

**Figure 50. What do you think the City of Courtenay should prioritize in the new Strategic Cultural Plan? Select your top 3 (culture sector responses, n=278)**



Source: City of Courtenay Culture Plan Public Survey

## Appendix B. Participants

Table 4 presents a list of organizations consulted through interviews and roundtables.

**Table 4. Community Engagement Participants**

Organization	Date	Number of participants
<b>Interviews</b>		
Courtenay and District Museum and Paleontology Centre	May 2023	24 Interviews with 54 participants in total
Comox Valley Art Gallery (CVAG)	May 2023	
Sid Williams Civic Theatre	May 2023	
Comox Valley Community Arts Council (CVCAC)	May 2023	
SD 71	May 2023	
CRA Evergreen Club and Building Friendships Program (at the Lewis Centre)	May 2023	
CV Social Planning Committee/CV Accessibility Committee	May 2023	
City of Courtenay - Senior Leadership	May 2023	
Comox Valley Regional District	May 2023	
City of Comox	May 2023	
Town of Cumberland	May 2023	
Comox Valley Folk Society (MUSICFEST) and NI Festival of Performing Arts	May 2023	
Elevate the Arts	May 2023	
City of Courtenay Heritage Committee (Nordicity facilitated group interview with 7 members)	May 2023	
City of Courtenay - Department of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services, Development Services (Nordicity facilitated group interview with 4 participants)	May 2023	
KFN Elder	June 2023	
Wachiay Friendship Centre Society	June 2023	
Comox Valley Metis Association (Nordicity facilitated group conversation with 6 members)	June 2023	

Organization	Date	Number of participants
Indigenous Women's Sharing Society	June 2023	
Walk With Me (a project of Comox Valley Art Gallery)	June 2023	
Homeless Response Team (Nordicity facilitated group interview with 12 members)	June 2023	
Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce	July 2023	
AVI Health and Community Services	July 2023	
Theatre Works Centre for Performing Arts	July 2023	
Performing arts sector leader	July 2023	
<b>Roundtables/Group Conversations</b>		
Arts and culture sector focus group	May 9, 2023	38 participants
CV Coalition to End Homelessness (intermediary-facilitated group conversation with 11 participants with lived experience)	June 30, 2023	5 group conversations with 28 participants in total
CV Accessibility Committee (intermediary-facilitated group conversation with 12 participants)	June 26, 2023	
CV Immigration Welcome Centre (Nordicity facilitated group conversation with 3 participants)	July 14, 2023	
CV Pride Society (Nordicity group conversation with 2 members)	July 20, 2023	
<b>Community Event</b>		
Public drop in engagement event	July 12, 2023	



# Courtenay Strategic Cultural Plan

**Benchmarking of Comparative  
Jurisdictions**

Delivered to







**City of  
Courtenay**



# Benchmarking of Comparative Jurisdictions

A comparative review is a valuable way to benchmark a municipality against other comparable communities considering aspects such as funding, policies, staffing, service delivery, and best practices. Four municipalities/districts known for their arts and culture were included for the following reasons:

Municipality	Rationale for Selection
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diverse age and ethnicity demographics (including similar growing young adult population)</li> <li>▪ Strong emphasis on healthy communities through outdoor recreation, culture, and adventure</li> <li>▪ Small to medium sized community</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Location (e.g., small urban centre within a more rural region)</li> <li>▪ Strong emphasis on healthy communities through outdoor recreation, culture, and adventure</li> <li>▪ Unique Cultural Development administrative approach to delivery of arts and culture</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diverse age and ethnicity demographics</li> <li>▪ Location (e.g., smaller city on the outskirts of a larger metropolitan area)</li> <li>▪ Growth as an arts and culture hub with increasing recognition of Indigenous heritage</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Proximity to Courtenay</li> <li>▪ Small urban centre in a more rural region</li> <li>▪ Support for arts and culture through programs, grants, and facilities (e.g., City supports local the museum and theatre)</li> </ul>

# Benchmarking of Comparative Jurisdictions

Overview of benchmarking of comparable jurisdiction findings:

*Note, as each municipality delivers cultural services and reports spending differently, figures should be understood as indicative only.*

	City of Courtenay	District of Squamish	City of Campbell River	City of Langley	City of Nelson
<b>Population*</b>	28,420	23,820	35,520	28,960	11,110
<b>Type of Municipal Development Model</b>	Municipal department – Recreation, Culture, and Community Services	Municipal Fund/Partner or Service Agency – Squamish Arts Council	Municipal Department – Parks, Recreation and Culture	Municipal Department – Recreation, Culture, and Community Services	City Cultural Development Committee and Cultural Office
<b>Arts &amp; Culture Operating Budget* (\$/yr, excluding libraries)</b> <i>Grants covered in next section.</i>  <b>**budget figures are for 2022 for all municipalities</b>	~\$500k (includes in-kind facility maintenance & repairs support for Centre For the Arts, Museum and Theatre, \$129k for City special events, and \$5.1k to the Heritage Society and Commission)	~\$200k	~\$275k	Not available (requested and followed up)	Not available (requested and followed up)

\*Population figures from Statistics Canada 2021 Census Profiles

# Benchmarking of Comparative Jurisdictions

Overview of benchmarking of comparable jurisdiction findings:

*Note, as each municipality delivers cultural services and reports spending differently, figures should be understood as indicative only.*

	City of Courtenay	District of Squamish	City of Campbell River	City of Langley	City of Nelson
<b>Other funding of arts and culture (e.g., operating grants, gaming grants, grants community members apply for, public art)</b>	\$666.6k core cultural service providers of which \$56k is for the Arts Council \$5k to Courtenay BIA for arts and culture events	\$47.5k Arts and Culture Grant	\$643k is for the core cultural service providers including \$29k for the Arts Council \$40k Beautification Grants \$31k Public Art \$9.8K Grant-in-aids	\$435.5k Community Grants (no breakdown provided)	CTB ReDi Grants – amount not available  Last of COVID-19 Grants \$122k
<b>Dedicated Arts &amp; Culture Staff (FTEs)</b>	0.4 FTE (of which .2 FTE Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services; .2 FTE Manager of Business Administration)	2.5 FTEs (of which 1 FTE Manager of Arts and Culture, 1 FTE worker, and 1 PTE)	4.5 FTEs (of which .5 FTE Senior Recreation and Culture Manager, 1 FTE two frontline Managers of Programs and Operations, and 3 FTEs of dedicated culture staff)	1 FTE (of which .5 FTE Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services; .5 FTE cultural support staff)	2 FTEs (of which 1 FTE Cultural Development officer, ~1FTE for Cultural Development Committee Board Members)
<b>Guiding Documents (not including OCPs)</b>	2019 Cultural Services Review  2019 Parks and Recreation Master Plan	2022-2025 SAC Strategic Plan	2007 Culture and Heritage Plan	Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan (drafted)	Recreation Master Plan (includes culture)  2022 Heritage Master Plan

# Benchmarking of Comparative Jurisdictions

Overview of benchmarking of comparable jurisdiction findings:

*Note, as each municipality delivers cultural services and reports spending differently, figures should be understood as indicative only.*

	City of Courtenay	District of Squamish	City of Campbell River	City of Langley	City of Nelson
<b>Municipality-funded Cultural Facilities (not including libraries)</b> Grant funding amounts are also included in the operating budget	3 facilities	1 facility	3 facilities	Not available (requested and followed up)	3 facilities
<b>Gallery</b>	Comox Valley Art Gallery ~4,400 sq. ft., ~20,000 visitors a year, \$109.2k in grant funding	N/A	Campbell River & District Public Art Gallery ~10,000 visitors a year, \$80k in funding		Capitol Theatre – 426 seats, ~30,000 visitors a year
<b>Museum</b>	Courtenay & District Museum ~21,000 sq. ft., ~24,000 visitors a year, \$190.8k in grant funding	N/A	Museum at Campbell River ~21,000 sq. ft., ~20,000 visitors a year, \$246.5k in funding		Touchstones Nelson Museum ~2,000 sq. ft., ~7,000 visitors a year
<b>Theatre</b>	Sid Williams Civic Theatre – 500 seat theatre, ~45,000 visitors a year, \$305.5k in grant funding	Eagle Eye Theatre – 180 seats, \$10k in funding	Tidemark Theatre – 434 seats, ~20,000 visitors a year, \$207.5 in funding		Nelson Civic Theatre – 306 seats ~10,000 sq ft

# Key Findings | Benchmarking Comparative Jurisdictions

- 3 city municipalities – Courtenay, Campbell River, and Langley – operate with an in-house department (not an external or arms-length organization ) with staff working in **cultural administration**. However, it is notable that **Courtenay is also working with CVCAC to provide cultural planning functions**. Meanwhile, the District of **Squamish maintains an arms-length relationship** with an additional body mandated to deliver cultural administration functions (an Arts Council). The City of **Nelson** has a Cultural **Development Office with a Cultural Development Officer and City Cultural Development Committee** to lead culture.
- Three of the comparators have very different **arts and culture operating budgets**, ranging between \$200k - \$500k annually.
- **Langley and Campbell River** provide the largest amount of **other funding of arts and culture** (e.g., grants, public art, in-kind support). However, Langley did not provide a further breakdown of their culture funding. Notably, while Courtenay provides regular operating support to major arts and culture facilities in the community, it does not provide any significant culture grants that community members can apply for.
- On average, comparators typically maintain around **1-2 FTEs of dedicated staff for arts and culture**. However, the City of Campbell River stands out with a considerably larger number of dedicated FTEs, totaling 4.5, due to having 2 positions as Frontline Managers (1 FTE of arts and culture work) focused on programs and operations, and 3 dedicated culture staff. The District of Squamish currently has 1 part-time worker (.5 FTEs) that may become a full-time position in 2024.
- **Courtenay and Campbell River** each provide **major funding support to three cultural facilities** within their communities, Nelson allocates funding to two facilities, and Squamish contributes to one major facility. Notably, the Eagle Eye Theatre is mainly owned and operated by the Squamish School District, as it is located in the Howe Sound Secondary School.

# Comparator| District of Squamish

## Third-party Arts and Culture Delivery Guided by a Strategic Plan

- [The Squamish Arts Council \(SAC\)](#), also known as Squamish Arts, is the umbrella arts organization representing more than 25 arts, culture, and heritage groups in the community.
- SAC has a third-party agreement to deliver arts and culture on behalf of the District of Squamish. This agreement includes the primary delivery of cultural development activities, core community service provision, and grant distribution.
- Additionally in 2020, SAC took on the role of the Public Art Advisor for the District. This role is guided by the District's [Public Art Policy](#).
- Following an arts-based community development mandate, SAC has undergone its most extensive strategic planning process to date. The strategic priorities to guide SAC for the next three years include building capacity, expanding EDIA practices, strengthening branding, and increasing awareness.
- Key events and programs led by SAC include the Squamish Arts Festival, Squamish ArtWalk, Amped in the Park, and Artist Speaks Series.
- SAC is found operating out of the Arts Council Building in Pavilion Park



Source: Squamish Arts Council

# Comparator| City of Campbell River

## Arts and Culture Grant Delivery

- The City of Campbell River offers a variety of grants, including grants-in-aid, to support arts and culture organizations. The City of Campbell River recognizes that *“Grants sponsor several important community functions that the City may be expected to offer if these were not provided by community organizations.”*
- 2022 witnessed a new funding request and approval in the amount of \$306,000, bringing the overall grant amount to over \$730,000 (including operating grants).
- Recommendations from the **Community Partnership Committee** guide Campbell River City Council in making decisions about granting operations. The Committee comprises a mixture of community members with representatives from various organizations, artists, and the general public. Open callouts are often issued to attract and enlist new members. Members serve on the committee for three-year terms.
- Annual Community Partnerships Grants are approved by Campbell River City Council to be included in the annual Financial Plan before being managed and distributed by the Community Partnership Committee.
- A tiered system comprising four categories of grants is provided for arts and culture. These categories include 1) Core Operating Assistance, 2) Ongoing event and/or service, 3) Discretionary, and 4) One-off special event and/or service travel grants. This range ensures that a diverse grants are available in the community, including for core operating organizations but also for smaller groups and individual applicants.

# Comparator | City of Langley

## Open Callouts to Artists

- The City of Langley regularly extends open callouts to artists to participate in a variety of City-led projects, programs, and events.
- Recent examples include In Remembrance, In Thanksgiving, Fall Street Banner Program, Seniors Week Art Gallery, Youth Week Art Gallery, Celebrating Arts and Culture in Langley City, and the Summer Street Banner Program.
- Regular open callouts for artists to participate in city events and projects are helpful for fostering engagement, promoting advocacy, and cultivating a vibrant community, while creating economic opportunities for local artists.
- Such regular callouts not only encourage active participation and collaboration among artists but also amplify their voices, enrich the community's cultural fabric, and contribute to the economic growth and sustainability of the city.



Source: Langleycity.ca



# Comparator | City of Nelson

## Distinct Operating Model for Arts and Culture

- Arts and culture in the City of Nelson is guided by a [Cultural Development Committee](#) (CDC). Its work is guided by the [City of Nelson Comprehensive Cultural Sector Policy](#).
- The CDC is composed of up to 13 members including 1 Cultural Development Officer, 1 Secretary (a City staff liaison), and 1 Nelson City Council member.
- CDC has three different working groups including a cultural policy working group, a heritage working group, and a public art working group.
- Notable programs led by the CDC include the [Art Rental Program](#), [Art in Public Places Program](#), and [Cultural Ambassador Program](#).
- Most events and festivals held in the City of Nelson are led by community groups such as the [Nelson District Arts Council](#) (i.e., ArtWalk, Appetite for Art, and Mural Festival) but are supported by the City of Nelson.



Source: Super, Natural BC

# **City of Courtenay**

## **Strategic Cultural Plan**

### **Cultural Facilities Options – Working Document**

March 12, 2025



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## 1. General Space Needs and Considerations

Several considerations were articulated by community members and local arts and culture organizations. Community engagements consistently highlighted a **need for more cultural spaces/facilities** in Courtenay – including better affordability and availability. In addition to the specific types of cultural spaces (discussed in Section 3), general points mentioned by participants included the need for:

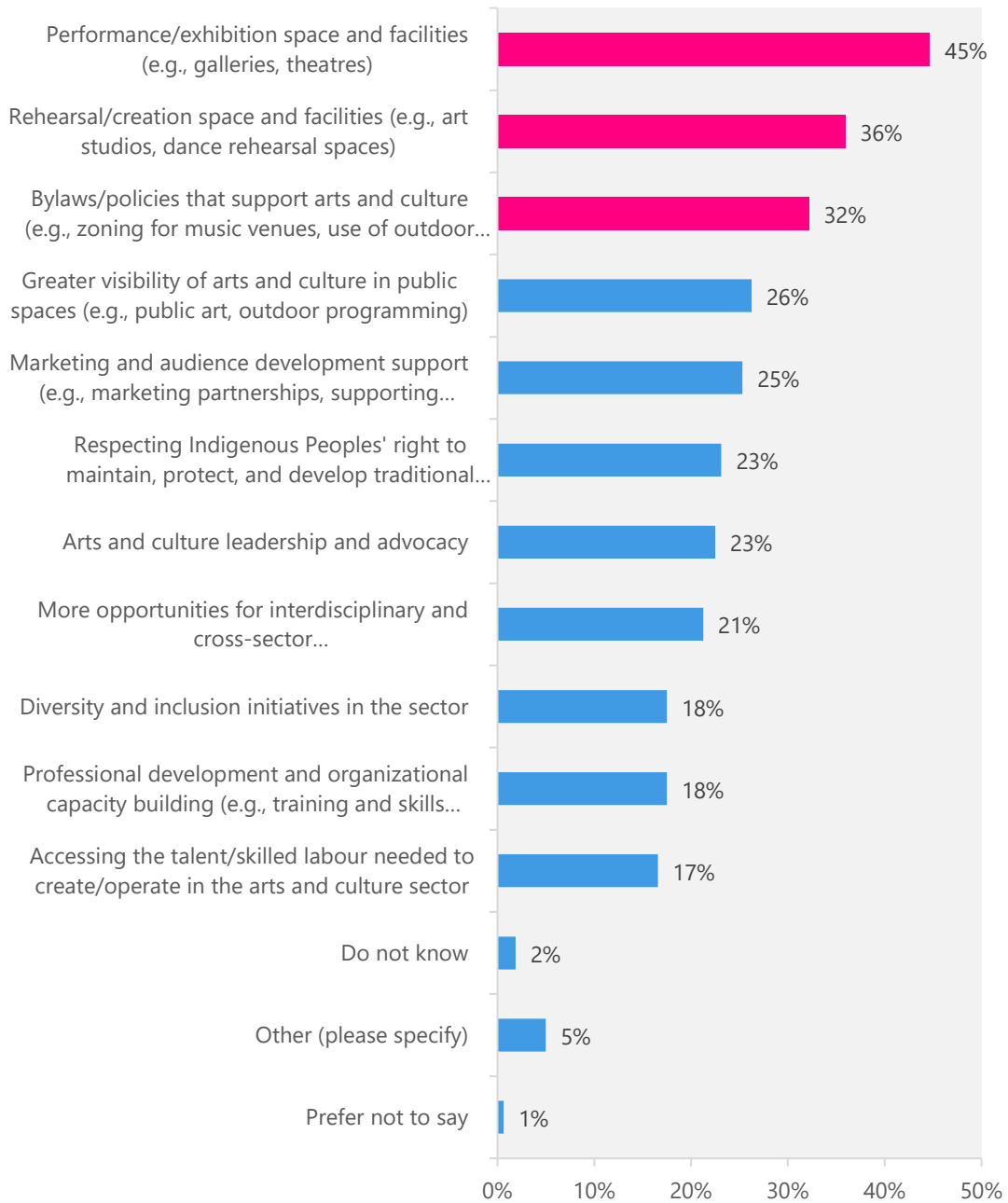
- **Adequate equipment in existing spaces for performing arts** (i.e., sound systems and stage set-ups for live performances) – e.g., the Native Sons Hall has no stages, and the Florence Filberg Centre does not have suitable acoustics for all types of shows.
- **More affordable rental spaces** for community art groups and organizations.
- **Overcoming accessibility barriers in existing spaces** – including structural accessibility for people with physical disabilities and opening hours of some cultural spaces.
- **Dedicated spaces for community gatherings for underserved groups** including Indigenous communities, people who are unhoused and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

Note, these needs emerged from community engagement including from interviews, focus group, conversations and public survey.

### **Critical needs related to cultural spaces identified in community Survey**

The top three most critical needs for arts and culture in Courtenay, identified in the community survey were all related to space, with performance/exhibition space identified by survey participants as the top need (45%), followed by rehearsal and creation space (36%) (Figure 1). The third most critical need identified was bylaws and policies that support arts and culture (32%), such as zoning for venues, still related to space.

**Figure 1: What do you think are the most critical needs for arts and culture to thrive in Courtenay? (n=320)**

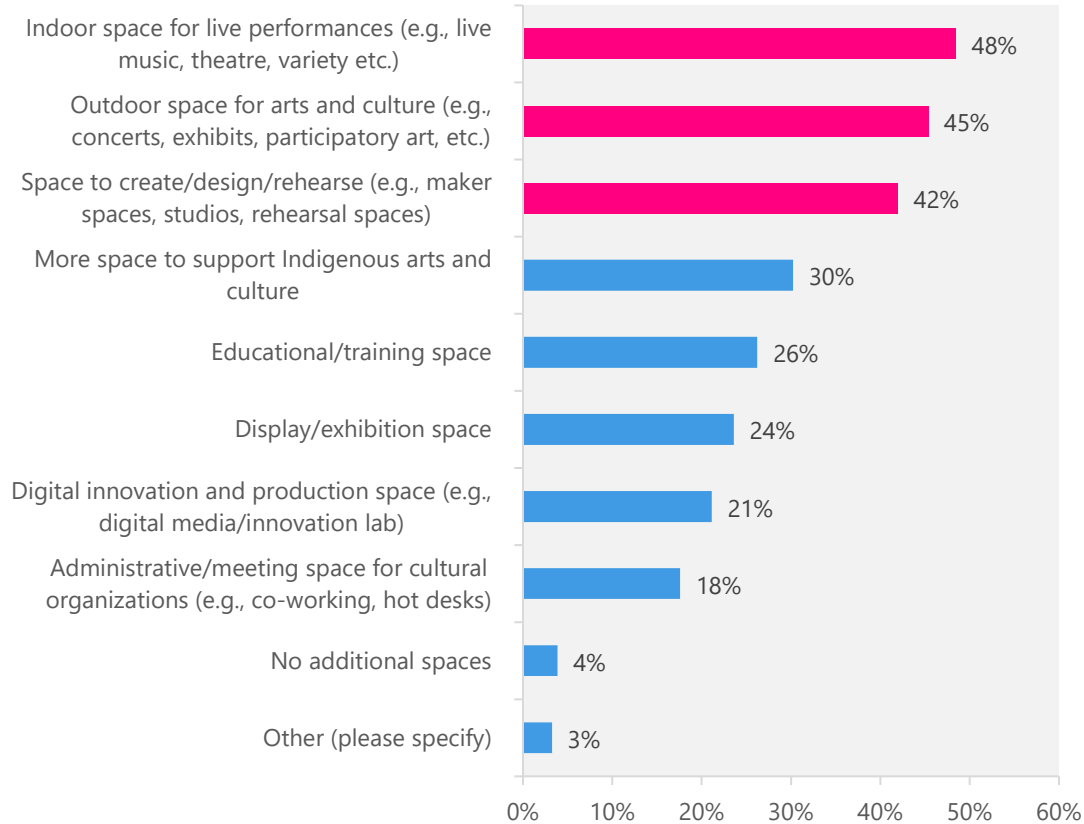


Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

## **Future facility needs identified in community survey**

The top three types of facilities survey participants identified that they would like to see more of include indoor space for live performances (48%), outdoor space for arts and culture (45%), and space to create/design/rehearse (42%) (Figure 2). These findings illustrate that arts and culture spaces are needed in Courtenay for all stages of the creative process.

**Figure 2 What kinds of facilities would you like to see more of in the future (if any)? (n=648)**

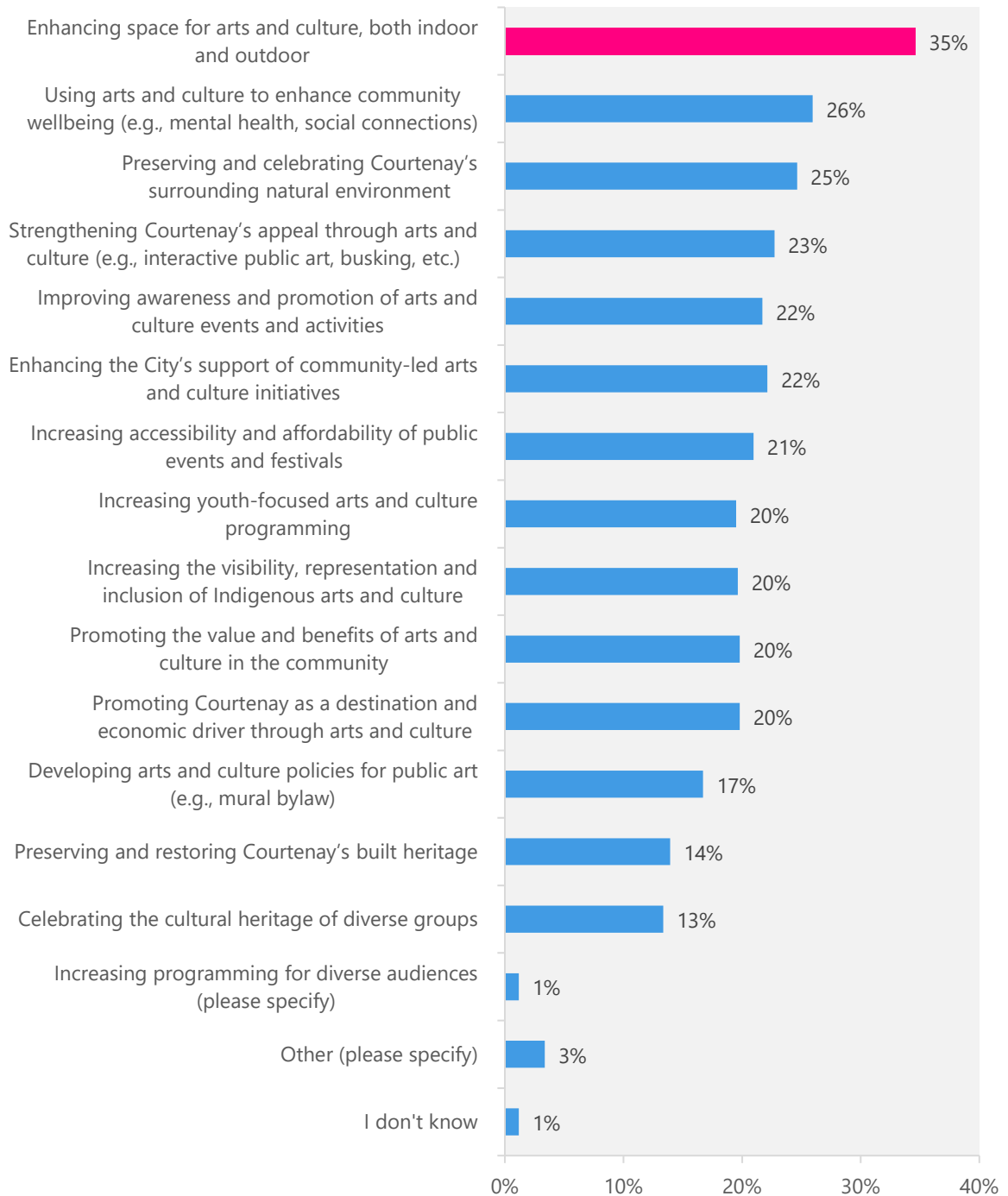


Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

### **Priorities of the Strategic Cultural Plan**

Survey participants identified “enhancing space for arts and culture both indoors and outdoors (35%)” as a top priority for the Strategic Cultural Plan (Figure 3).

**Figure 3 What do you think the City of Courtenay should prioritize in the new Strategic Cultural Plan? (n=682)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

Note, qualitative research i.e., interviews, focus groups and pop-up events identified other space needs such as affordability, accessibility, and safety of cultural spaces.

## 2. Core Cultural Facility Needs

Specific needs shared by the core cultural service providers:

- **The Sid Williams Theatre** requires a replacement stage elevator<sup>1</sup> (for which partial City funding is needed), which includes stage resurfacing and a gala lift/spiral lift system<sup>2</sup>. The Sid has already secured grant funding from other sources for upgrades to its audio system, hearing assist system, lighting bay improvements, and various other upgrades.
- **Comox Valley Art Gallery (CVAG)**: The City is aiming, in collaboration with CVAG, to implement new HVAC infrastructure in 2026 which is crucial for the appropriate exhibition and preservation of artworks. Storage space is currently a challenge at the gallery. CVAG has undertaken renovations to improve accessibility in the exhibition space, for example by widening the doorways in the exhibition space; however, there remains a need to improve accessibility in the areas outside the Gallery. For example, the plaza is uneven and CVAG would like to have automatic sliding entry doors. CVAG has applied for funding and is waiting for confirmation. In addition, the administrative space in CVAG is at or over capacity. The Gallery would like to explore more efficient uses of space to better accommodate the staff team. Currently, CVAG rents additional space elsewhere in Courtenay to house the Walk With Me team, as there is no space available within the Centre for the Arts building.
- **Courtenay and District Museum** needs more exhibition and storage space for collections. The Museum is proposing an expansion to extend the building into the adjacent south lot to create the extra square footage required. The Museum also requires a new lift for patron accessibility to the 2nd floor which could be considered as part of the future expansion.
- **Comox Valley Community Arts Council (CVCAC)** lacks programming space. The organization would like space to organize community programs to fulfill its mission of providing opportunities for the community to engage in the arts.

Note, further assessment or research is required (building on findings from the strategic cultural planning process) to uncover specific details on facility upgrade and expansion for City-owned cultural facilities – e.g., what is driving such upgrade requests, whether the existing cultural assets are able to meet the future service level considerations identified in the Strategic Cultural

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<sup>1</sup> Stage elevator means a **permanent powered hoisting and lowering mechanism** that has a platform which serves as a part of a permanent stage.

<sup>2</sup> Stage Lift (Gala has a [SpiralLift technology](#)) systems allow for **gentle and quiet movement of stages**, orchestras, equipment, and seating platforms.

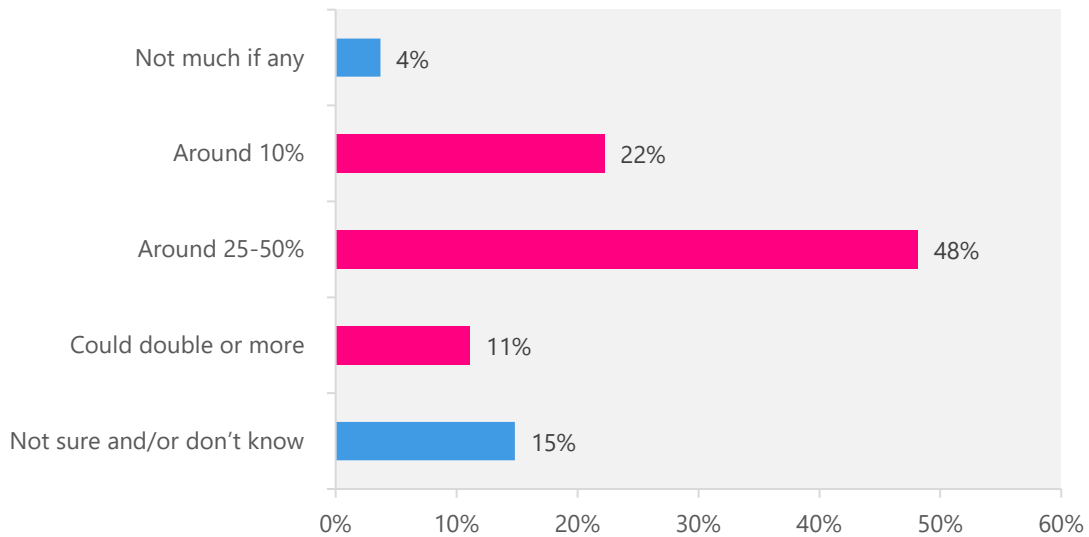


Plan, and what are the long term cultural facilities requirements to address the needs identified in the community engagement process.

**Benefits of improved cultural facilities**

Cultural organizations were asked to identify what incremental revenue increases they think their organization could earn with improved facilities. Significantly, 81% of survey respondents felt that their revenue could increase (Figure 4). More specifically, 22% identified their revenue could increase by around 10%, while 48% believed their revenue could increase around 25-50%.

**Figure 4 What incremental revenue increase do you think your organization could earn with improved facilities? (n=27)**



Source: Courtenay Strategic Culture Plan Survey 2023

### 3. Priority Cultural Facilities Needs

#### Alignment with City of Courtenay [Official Community Plan](#) (OCP)

The City of Courtenay Official Community Plan (OCP) articulates some existing facility needs that align with cultural facility options identified through the Courtenay Strategic Cultural Planning process. These are articulated in the Arts, Culture, and Heritage (ACH) chapter and include:

- [p. 155-162] the need “for a larger outdoor performance venue than currently available at Simms Park, the downtown Commons outdoor performing space and public plaza.”
- the need “for a community arts and culture centre.”
- ACH Action 3: “Work towards the downtown Public Commons public plaza concept identified in the Downtown Courtenay Playbook.”
- ACH Action 6: “Create a Courtenay Cultural Plan, including consideration of a dedicated community arts and culture space.”
- ACH Action 7: “Continue to support the downtown as the region’s arts, culture, and heritage hub by ensuring key cultural partners such as the Comox Valley Art Gallery, the Courtenay and District Museum, the Sid Williams Civic Theatre, and the Comox Valley Community Arts Council continue to be located downtown, and promoting and investing in public art and cultural opportunities downtown.”
- ACH Action 11: “Consider the establishment of a dedicated community arts and culture space.”

Based on community engagement findings, the highest priority needs relating to cultural spaces in Courtenay are as follows:

### 3.1 Spaces for Live Performance

#### Studio Theatre



#### Definition & Description:

*A versatile space for theatre, dance, and music performances. A studio theater is a simple performance space, typically a square room with black walls and a flat floor. The space's simplicity allows it to create a variety of configurations of stage and audience interaction.*

#### Existing spaces that could meet this need:

- No existing facilities have a studio theatre currently.
- The Regier Theatre (former Old Church Theatre) is available for rent (180 seats) – and needs air conditioning and heat pump upgrades ([currently fundraising](#)). However, it has fixed seating which makes it restrictive for some types of performances.
- Little Red Church (Comox) - can meet some of the live performance needs, with better acoustics and accessibility.
- The City could discuss with School District 71 if Vanier Theatre can potentially meet this need.

#### Other potential ways to meet this need:

- Extension to Sid Williams Theatre
  - The Sid Williams Theatre is assessing options for facility expansion that could include a studio theatre.

- Building a new facility / arts centre equipped with a studio theatre, in partnership with others such as SD71 and North Island College.

## Outdoor Performance Space



### Definition & Description:

*Large outdoor performance space – such as an Amphitheatre – for concerts and shows in a natural setting.*

### Existing spaces that could meet this need:

- Simms Park Rotary Centennial Pavilion – while community engagement findings suggest that the pavilion is not seen as an answer to this need, further review could include questions of whether improvements could be made to render it more of a solution.
- Outdoor stage at Lewis Park (between tennis courts and outdoor pool) – further investigation is required to identify what improvements would be needed to make this space useful.
- Randy Wiwchar Civic Plaza – space is visually pleasing and can potentially meet this need. However, it may not be viable due to loud traffic.

### Other potential ways to meet this need:

- Investing in a mobile stage and bleachers for quick setup at various locations may prove to be very helpful. However, this would require additional administrative duties for the City or the establishment of a fee-for-service agreement with another organization to coordinate it.
  - Establishing and identifying spaces in partnership with SD71 and Comox Valley Exhibition Grounds

## Large Capacity Performance Venue



### Definition & Description:

*Suitable for large events, shows, and concerts that can seat up to 1000+ people and accommodate a 70+ member orchestra.*

Note that such an indoor venue may be disproportional to the size of Courtenay and the Comox Valley's market. In other smaller cities (population under 50,000 of a city and surrounding area), performance venues are typically smaller in seating capacity, say around 250-500. It is not that they cannot be built and operated successfully, but theatres of this size can incur annual million-dollar subsidies even in cities of several hundred thousand population. Consideration of any performance venue, particularly of this size would require a substantial feasibility study.

### Existing spaces that could meet this need:

- There are no existing spaces that can fulfil this need as the maximum seating capacity of Sid Williams Theatre is 500.
- Florence Filberg Conference Hall – there would be a need to investigate what could be done to enhance this space to meet this need partially or completely as it relates to community group performance space needs. Look at extending stage onto balcony and taking over Soroptomist Lounge area, improve acoustics, etc.

### Other potential ways to meet this need:

- New build facility for future vision, likely pursued as part of a regional effort with Comox Valley Regional District and other local municipalities. It would likely need to be outside of downtown Courtenay to find a suitable site.
- As noted above, a full feasibility study would be needed to determine what is feasible for the region.

### 3.2 Multi-disciplinary programming space

#### Smaller spaces (50-100 seats)



#### **Definition & Description:**

*For hosting group workshops and smaller events.*

#### **Existing spaces that could meet this need if they are currently not being fully utilized:**

- The Native Sons Hall Lodge Room (1500 sq ft) and Dining Room (900 sq ft) could meet this need .
- Florence Filberg Centre Rotary Hall could fit this need (2900 sq ft).
- Lawn Bowling Club (1468 sq ft) – available in fall / winter months into early spring for rentals when lawn bowling is not in session or season.
- Lewis Centre Multipurpose Hall could be used for a non-performance type workshop and events.
- Chamber of Commerce board room can accommodate small groups for meetings and workshops.
- Further study of utilization is required that factors in current utilization use and whether available space is during the times that workshops and smaller events are needed.

### Medium spaces (100 to <500 seats)



#### **Definition & Description:**

*For medium-sized events for a range of disciplines.*

#### **Existing spaces that could meet this need:**

- Native Sons Grand Hall (4350 sq ft) which can accommodate 400 people could meet this need, but has a high annual utilization which signals that it may be difficult to rent out the space consistently.
- Florence Filberg Centre Conference Hall could fit this need (5,940 sq ft)
- Little Red Church in Comox (267 capacity in the main hall standing; generally, only 1-2 bookings a day, except Tuesdays which are busier – see calendar. Cost of \$60 per hr. to rent the main hall).
- Old Church Theatre may potentially meet this need.
- Vanier Theatre may meet this need with 200 seats, however, SD71 uses are a priority during the school year.
- Stan Hagan Theatre may meet this need with 208 seats, but utilization rate was not available. However, the North Island College uses take precedent.
- Lewis Centre Multipurpose Hall can hold up to 500 people with 3500 square feet (about the area of a tennis court).
- There are other community hall spaces that may help with this need including Elks Hall, Union Bay Community Hall, Fallen Alders Community Hall, and Dove Creek Hall.

Further study of utilization is required that factors in current utilization use and whether available space is during the times that there is a need for medium sized space.

**Other potential ways to meet this need:**

- Building a new facility or transforming existing spaces in partnership with SD71, North Island College, or an arts based organization.

**Holistic Wellbeing Space**



**Definition & Description:**

*Small spaces suitable for Arts & Crafts, Meditation, Yoga. For hosting drop-in arts and cultural events that contribute to wellbeing.*

**Existing spaces that could meet this need:**

- Tsolum Building is a wheelchair-accessible facility next to Lewis Park.
- Salish Building (in Lewis Park)
- Lewis Centre Craft room A.
- Lewis Centre Craft Room B.
- Further study of utilization is required that factors in current utilization use and whether available space is during the times that spaces are needed.

**Other potential ways to meet this need:**

- Via partnerships with community organizations, VIRL, etc.
- Via review of Centre for the Arts facility needs including CVAG and CVA.



### 3.3 Rehearsal and creation spaces

#### Creation Spaces and Studios for Artmaking



#### Definition & Description:

*Studios and creative spaces for creating various forms of art. There appears to be demand for both professional artist studios and creative making spaces/programming spaces for community arts.*

#### Existing spaces that could meet this need:

- Tsolum Building is a wheelchair-accessible facility next to Lewis Park.
- Salish Building (in Lewis Park) could meet this need and could accommodate storage required for arts programming.
- Lewis Centre Craft room A and B.
- Lawn Bowling Building - Bill Moore Park – non-cultural space but underutilized and has a natural setting; available late fall, winter, and early spring.
- Further study of utilization is required that factors in current utilization use and whether available space is during the times that creative making spaces are needed.

#### Other potential ways to meet this need:

- Live-work subsidized housing with studio space.
- Building a new facility or transforming existing spaces in partnership with SD71 or North Island College or an arts based organization.

## Rehearsal Spaces for Larger Groups



### **Definition & Description:**

*Facilities for rehearsals and practice, accommodating larger groups, dance troupes, and choirs (60+ capacity).*

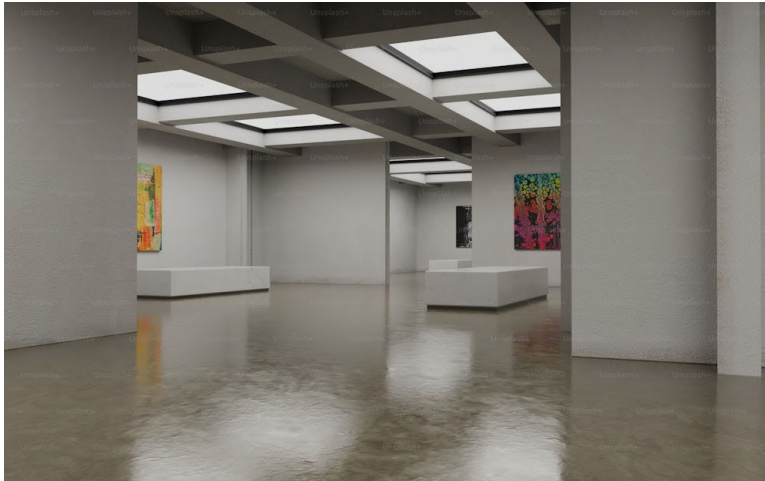
### **Existing spaces that could meet this need:**

- Lewis Centre Multipurpose Hall can hold up to 500 people with 3500 square feet (about the area of a tennis court).
- Little Red Church in Comox (267 capacity in the main hall standing; generally, only 1-2 bookings a day, except Tuesdays which are busier – see [calendar](#). Cost of \$60 p/h to rent the main hall).

These spaces present options for rehearsal spaces with some modifications – e.g., lack of boundaries, or any kind of rehearsal hall needs, like mirrors, sprung floor, sound proofing, bars for ballet, etc. If pressed, they could be made available with certain modifications - at least part time, but it would require a feasibility analysis to determine improvements required to address arts and culture specific needs.

### 3.4 Other Key Facility Needs

#### Community Art Exhibition Spaces



##### **Definition & Description:**

*Spaces designed for showcasing local arts and promoting arts education. There is a need for more exhibition space for local artists.. Other spaces available include Artful the Gallery and ARTWRX (which accommodates nine artists).*

##### **Existing spaces that could meet this need:**

- While the Grand Lodge Room (4350 sq ft) at the Native Sons Hall is operating at a high utilization, the Lodge Room (1500 sq ft) is not fully utilized. This space could be used if deemed a possible exhibition space.
- Further study of utilization is required that factors in current utilization use and whether available space is during the times that showcasing art and exhibition space is needed.

##### **Other potential ways to meet this need:**

- Courtenay and District Museum’s proposed expansion could potentially meet this need.
- Providing rent subsidies for private spaces that could be repurposed as temporary galleries. Supporting “pop up” style galleries.
- Partnerships with Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Association / Chamber, North Island College, SD71, other businesses to showcase local artwork in businesses or vacant store fronts. Comox Valley Arts currently partners with Downtown BIA and the Comox Valley Airport to showcase local artwork.
- Lobbies (i.e .community centre, Florence Filberg Centre, library, airport, city hall etc)

## 4. Cultural Facilities Options

Community engagement for Courtenay's Strategic Cultural Plan revealed significant cultural space needs within the city, highlighting a demand for accessible venues for arts, performances, and community gatherings. Residents expressed a desire for more inclusive and diverse spaces that reflect the cultural richness of the community.

This section propose short, medium and longer term recommendations, as well as a future vision to address cultural space needs. The rationale for these recommendations came from community identified needs in Courtenay's strategic cultural planning process (as illustrated by survey results in section 1). While residents of Courtenay recognize existing cultural facilities and the role they play in the community (as demonstrated by the social and economic impact of arts and culture in Courtenay's Strategic Cultural Plan), they also highlighted the gaps identified in this report and the need for more cultural spaces for diverse cultural needs of residents that continue to evolve with the growth of the community.

### 4.1 Short-term (1-2 years)

#### 4.1.1 Online 'Space Finder' Platform

**Description:** Digital platform that inventories existing spaces in Courtenay that could be utilized/better utilized by cultural groups. The platform could potentially:

- Include a search function so that users can easily find spaces of suitable size/specification that would be available on the dates required
- Either book directly via the system or find contact details to book the spaces

**Considerations:**

- Need to determine the best organization to provide this service, or for the City of Courtenay to fund another organization to run the platform.
- The SWTS operates a venue booking software that could be explored to expand to include multiple venues, including box office services. SWT is currently applying for funding to increase the capacity of the box office to service events external to the SWT. The City could explore ways to support SWTS to provide this service.
- Project funding is likely to be available via the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA) towards a digital project like this. CCA's criteria would require the signing on of a group of arts organizations agreeing to participate in providing "space finder" reservations.

- The query log (i.e., record or user searches) would help highlight which types of space needs remain unmet in Courtenay, to help with future prioritization of investment into cultural spaces.

**Case Study – 3<sup>rd</sup> party online space finder platforms**

- “Peerspace” is a third party online space finder platform that allows users to list their space for free. Typically, 3<sup>rd</sup> party space finders are catered for business meetings and company events, however Peerspace has a separate section for galleries and studio space. The search function of Peerspace can also filter for different cities, a list Courtenay spaces can potentially explore to be added.
- Peerspace takes a a service fee after a successful booking is completed. The benefits of a 3<sup>rd</sup> party service is that it removes the need to maintain and operate internally. This is a viable option to showcase the availability of underutilized facilities.

#### 4.1.2 Downtown Cultural District Planning

**Description:** Incorporate the goal of establishing a cultural district in Courtenay’s downtown in the downtown local area plan as per the OCP and Cultural Strategic Plan recommendations. Alongside capital planning and facility needs assessments consider the opportunities available downtown and within current facilities to support, enhance, and expand arts and cultural spaces for performance, exhibition, rehearsal, and creation downtown. Integrate planning for the downtown cultural district with facility needs assessments and cultural facilities plans to support bringing the-downtown Cultural District to life over the next 10 years.

**Considerations:**

Collaboration with community groups and organizations—such as the Sid Williams Theatre Society, Comox Valley Art Gallery Society, Comox Valley Community Arts Council, and Courtenay and District Historical Society—will be essential to achieve the downtown cultural district through the implementation of the Downtown Vitalization Local Area Plan and the integration of cultural facilities plans.

#### 4.1.3 Using Native Sons Hall as Flexible Arts Programming Space

**Description:** The Native Sons Hall is a beautiful facility in the heart of Downtown Courtenay that has had long associations with arts and culture. The space has been used over the decades for dances and concerts and was previously home to the Courtenay and District Historical Society. The space is already wheelchair accessible, and there are commercial kitchens available for events.

- The space could potentially be used for visual arts programming (e.g., drawing and painting activities) hosted by Comox Valley Community Arts Council and others in the rooms with natural light – e.g., lodge room.
  - Need to review the space with CVCAC to determine what upgrades are required for the space to be programmable.

- Sinks may need to be installed or could use sinks in adjoining kitchens (for the cleaning of paintbrushes, etc.).
- Mobile stage and sound dampening would be required for live performances (e.g., live performances could be hosted in the grand hall).

**Considerations:**

- Recreational programming that currently takes place at the facility would most likely need to move or readjusted.
- Many in the community are uncomfortable with the facility's name. As such, the City should work with community partners to investigate its renaming.
- Comox Valley Community Arts Council needs storage space – need to investigate if some of the storage needs could be met at Native Sons Hall.

#### **4.1.4 Feasibility Study or Needs Assessment for Existing Facilities**

A feasibility study could be conducted for Filberg and Native Sons Hall to determine potential of one or both meeting the identified cultural facility needs. The City has identified that funding for facility needs assessments or feasibility studies is available in 2025 to look at the Filberg, Sid Williams Theatre, Courtenay and District Museum, and Comox Valley Art Gallery to assess specific facility needs, consider how upgrades could meet community needs, and prioritize facility improvements. A similar assessment could be done for the Native Sons Hall. The Sid Williams Theatre Society is already carrying out some planning work in this area.

#### **4.1.5 Cultural Facilities Plan**

Following the completion of needs assessments and or feasibility studies, complete the development of a cultural facilities capital plan. This capital plan will provide recommendations to the City to guide infrastructure investment over the next 10 years. It will also enable the City to support advocacy and fundraising efforts of the core cultural partners as they seek third party funding to support critical cultural facility investment in line with the City's Cultural Strategic Plan and in support of developing the cultural district in Courtenay's downtown.

## **4.2 Medium-term (3-5 years)**

### **4.2.1 Targeted Funding for Upgrades to Existing Facilities**

**Description:** Some existing cultural spaces in Courtenay need upgrades to help them meet the needs of the cultural community. For example, some venues remain inaccessible for people with physical disabilities or do not have suitable sound equipment for professional performances.

The City of Courtenay could consider creating a dedicated funding stream to encourage such upgrades of community cultural spaces – e.g., an operational funding stream for core cultural partners (City-owned) and a capital grant stream for community facilities (non-City owned). Another option is identifying a City staff member as a liaison with the cultural community to share relevant provincial/federal grants available. For example, the Department of Canadian Heritage's [Canada Cultural Spaces Fund](#) offers a specialized equipment funding stream that

organizations may qualify for. Local non-profits may need some support in accessing funding like this that is available to them.

Example required upgrades:

- The The Regier Theatre (former Old Church Theatre) does not have full lighting and audio equipment of the standard needed for some professional shows; also needs a new HVAC system as there is currently no climate control ([currently fundraising](#)).
- The Sid Williams Theatre needs a replacement stage elevator (City funding required), stage resurfacing and a gala lift/spiral lift stage elevator system. Note, the Sid has already secured grant funding for upgrades to its audio system, and hearing assist system. The Society is effective at securing funding from other sources but will need City finance to fund some of these items. The Society upgraded its lighting grid system in 2024 with an investment of \$600,000.
- The Courtenay and District Museum is proposing an expansion to extend the building into the adjacent lot to create the extra square footage required for storage and exhibitions. The Museum also requires new lift for patron accessibility to the 2nd floor and could be considered as part of the future expansion.
- The Sid Williams Theatre is envisioning expanding the theatre lobby through expansion into the Randy Wicher Plaza that could meet both studio theatre needs and potential arts exhibition space.

**Considerations:**

- City team to support mapping and needs analysis to determine feasibility and need for certain improvements for existing facilities.
- The City needs to look at its overall granting functions to determine if and how to fund arts and culture groups and facilities, and whether it is one-time, operating, and or capital grants.

#### **4.2.2 Studio Theatre Extension to Sid Williams Theatre**

**Description:** A recurring theme in engagements was the need for flexible, affordable space for live community performances. Many needs could potentially be met by a studio theatre, as it could be used for rehearsals across a range of disciplines, as well as performances.

The Sid William Theatre has engaged an architectural firm to design a facility expansion, which could potentially include a studio theatre. This expansion would extend the lobby outwards and upwards, also addressing the need for larger lobby space at the Sid and space for volunteers.

Currently, the Sid Williams Theatre is oversubscribed (it was shared via site visit that the theatre turns away 60 to 100 bookings each year), and some community groups consider its rates unaffordable although they are subsidized. Not all groups require full theatre space.

**Considerations:**

The studio theatre could potentially also meet the need for rehearsal space for groups of 60+, i.e., choirs.

### 4.2.3 Centre for the Arts (580 Duncan Ave.) Review and Plan

**Description:** Currently, Comox Valley Community Arts Council and Comox Valley Art Gallery are both housed within the 'Centre for the Arts' building at 580 Duncan Ave. However, the Comox Valley Art Gallery currently does not have enough administrative space, and needs more storage space for its collection. There is a need to determine if the vision of the space remains a "centre for the arts" or otherwise.

- There are other tenants currently in the space, i.e., art and non-art tenants, and it could be worth investigating such arrangements to determine their suitability for the space.
- Moving Comox Valley Community Arts Council's administrative location from the 'Centre for the Arts' could potentially provide enough administrative space for Comox Valley Art Gallery.
- Comox Valley Arts Gallery's Walk With Me team already has to rent space elsewhere in Courtenay as there is not enough space in the current location.
- Investigate potential office locations for the organizations upon determining the vision of the Centre for Arts.

**Considerations:**

- In the short term, this option does not include finding programming space for Comox Valley Community Arts Council in the same location as its offices. However, the proposed repurposing of portions of Native Sons Hall for arts and culture could potentially answer the need for programming space. However, further discussion and study is required through the cultural facility needs assessment.
- In the future, it would make sense for Comox Valley Community Arts Council's administration and programming to take place in the same location – for example, within a community arts centre (as mentioned in the Official Community Plan).

### 4.2.4 Public Plaza (for Outdoor Performing Arts)

**Description:** Community engagement has indicated the need for medium to larger spaces for outdoor performing arts.

The creation of a new downtown Public Commons public plaza concept was identified in the Downtown Courtenay Playbook (2016). It is also mentioned in policy ACH 3 of the [Courtenay Official Community Plan](#) as well as OCP Action 55: "Work towards the vision of the Downtown Commons and Mews public plaza."

**Considerations:**

- The scope and scale of public plaza spaces in the Downtown will be informed by the Downtown Vitalization Local Area Plan (DVLAP) process that is anticipated to be completed by Fall 2025. The DVLAP would focus cultural planning effort, including capital facility and infrastructure investment in the downtown cultural district to amplify the significant economic, social, and tourism development benefits that extends to the entire region.



- a “commons” for medium to large scale performance / community based arts and culture (small concerts, art shows, community engaged arts, etc.)
- a large public performance place (focus on Simms park or other options) for large scale performances / events / gatherings.

#### **Case Study – Municipal-operated mobile performance platform**

- Within Canada, there are two successful government-run mobile stage services in Windsor, Ontario and Hinton, Alberta. Both services offer the same amenities that can accommodate 200 adults with portable bleachers, and an adaptable stage that can operate in two different sizes. (16'x24' and 24'x30 feet)
- Stage setup and pick-up of the Showmobile is done by the town staff. Additional amenities are available upon request and affect the overall pricing. The standard daily rental rate is \$682.50 with an additional day costing \$525 for Hinton. Mileage isn't accounted for unless the rental is out-of-town. In this case it is an additional \$2.10 per kilometer.
- Websites: [Windsor](#), [Hinton](#)

### **4.3 Longer-term (6 years+)**

#### **4.3.1 Holistic Well-being Space**

**Description: Modeling the Walk With Me program**, the City of Courtenay could work with local and regional partners to create a space for cultural programming targeted towards Indigenous peoples, unhoused and unsheltered community members, and people affected by substance use and addiction. If possible, it would be beneficial for the space to be co-located or supported by facilities or programs that also offer services such as hot meals and showers.

Such an initiative would require working with partners to see if any existing spaces could be repurposed to become such a centre. A short-term option could be a programmatic approach in the community centres / recreation centres, VIRC, – i.e. drop in arts and culture programming during set hours each day / week or a dedicated space.

**Potential partners:** Regional District; K'omoks First Nation; Comox Valley Transition Society; Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness; Dawn to Dawn Action on Homelessness Society; BC Housing; and Comox Valley Art Gallery Society.

### 4.3.2 Indoor/Outdoor Mobile Stage

**Description:** City of Courtenay to consider purchasing a mobile stage that local presenters can use for live performances. The City can also investigate partnership options with other local organizations to acquire a mobile stage such as the Vancouver Island Music Festival who already owns a mobile stage.

- Size required is likely to be around 32 Square feet
- Could be used to equip both outdoor spaces and indoors (such as the Native Sons Hall and parks in Courtenay)

**Considerations:**

- Potential funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage's [Canada Cultural Spaces Fund](#) specialized equipment funding stream.
- Administrative time/staff to manage bookings and payments
- Team to transport and set up/take down stage (risk management)
- Storage space for the mobile stage should be considered.
- Partner with a local cultural organization to be facilitator of the mobile stage. Decide if to be used for non-City events or only for City facility use.

## 4.4 Future Vision (10 years +)

### 4.4.1 Downtown Cultural District

Courtenay has the opportunity to address its cultural facility needs by investing in existing spaces in the downtown core, transforming the area into a vibrant **cultural district**. By enhancing and repurposing current facilities, the City can create a centralized space where arts and culture thrive, fostering creativity, community engagement, and economic growth. This investment would not only continue to activate the downtown core but also provide accessible venues for cultural organizations, artists, and the public to gather, collaborate, and showcase their work. A downtown cultural district would serve as a focal point for the community, drawing visitors and residents alike, and positioning Courtenay as a cultural hub for arts and culture in the region. The investment and upgrades to the core cultural facilities in the downtown core carried out in early phases will lead to the establishment of the downtown cultural district over the 10 year horizon.

#### 4.4.2 Regional Performance Arts Centre

**Description:** A purpose-built arts and culture facility that can accommodate large arts and culture performances. Such a facility has been mentioned in the Official Community Plan and related policy documents, albeit without much detail (as noted in section 3).

Based on the needs we heard, this centre would potentially comprise:

- 1000+ seat theatre with space for a full orchestra and appropriate acoustics
- Flexible rehearsal spaces (for music, dance, and drama) that could also be rented by community groups for events
- Storage (e.g., of mobile stage, seating, tables, sound equipment)
- The centre could potentially also include:
  - ‘Messy space’ programming rooms for visual arts programming and creation
  - Exhibition space for visual artists in the community to exhibit their artwork
  - Café/restaurant – potentially run by a third party.

**Considerations:**

- Such a facility would need a relevant user base, regional funding models, and a business case to support a facility of such magnitude and as such is positioned as a visionary goal to consider based on population growth, engagement in the arts and cultural sector, and a strong business analysis in the future.
- Needs to be a regional initiative (with Comox Valley Regional District, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, and the City of Courtenay) supported by a regional cultural plan.
- Likely to require a fundraising campaign targeting major donors – in which case, a non-profit organization would need to take the lead to fundraise.
- Consider a business case or feasibility study taking into account the size of the community (potential funding from the Canada cultural Spaces Fund’s feasibility study stream).

## 5. Governance Model Options for Cultural Facilities

The City of Courtenay and its partners can consider a number of governance models for any future cultural facility e.g., Regional Arts Centre. It is of note that no specific model is recommended, as governance decisions are an iterative process.

This section presents basic governance models that may be combined or adapted as conditions change. For example, the model may begin as City owned and operated and plan to transition to a non-profit model. Or it may begin as a not-profit within strict financial authorities retained by the City until the external board and operating management meet a certain performance level.

Governance Model	Description
<b>City-Owned and Operated</b>	<p>In a city-owned and operated model, the City would own and operate the Cultural Facility. Consideration will be given to bylaws, policies, and procedures that allow for more flexibility and ease of access for potential Cultural Facility users.</p> <p>The model allows the City to retain full control of the facility and ensure operations are aligned with municipal priorities.</p>
<b>City Established and Owned, Non-profit Operated</b>	<p>In this model, the City continues to own the property but also establish a non-profit (or delegate to an existing one), which would have operational responsibilities in managing the Cultural Facility.</p> <p>The facility should have a board composed of City employees, arts, cultural and creative sector and community representatives.</p> <p>The City would need to create an agreement to stipulate funding and other support arrangements, while also establishing other governing policies. This non-profit would be more at arms-length and be governed under the terms of a “contribution agreement” type of arrangement between the City and the not-for-profit organization.</p>
<b>City External Agency</b>	<p>In this model, the City may consider establishing an external agency of the City to manage the facility and manage programming and partnerships.</p> <p>The agency should have its own Board of Directors and an established service agreement with the City.</p>
<b>Existing Non-Profit Model</b>	<p>This model bestows day-to-day operations and management to an existing cultural organizations/non-profit. The City would retain ownership of the building and is responsible for capital improvements. The operating non-profit would be considered the “anchor tenant”, and would contribute significantly to the programming, services, and events at the Cultural Facility.</p> <p>The non-profit would be governed by its own independent board. The City would need to establish an agreement, clarify funding, and support terms. The agreement should also lay out policies that allow for the facility to be used by other organizations and community members to ensure that the space remains accessible.</p>

Governance Model	Description
<b>For-Profit or Public/Private Partnership Model</b>	<p>In this model, the facility would be owned and/or managed by a developer, a management group, or another third party. This governance model is commonly used for large performing/entertainment complexes that serve a wider community of presenters and performers.</p> <p>In this case, the City would either sell the property to a for-profit company or, more commonly, lease the space to any of these groups and have them fully manage operations. A public/private partnership can also take the form of a private company coming in as a funding partner and sharing operational and management responsibilities with the City.</p>
<b>Community/Artists Run or Land Trust Model</b>	<p>A “land trust” model has been adopted in many cities across the world for arts and culture. This model may involve an organization or entity acquiring properties and would allow for artists and cultural organizations to have collective stewardship and ownership. The goal would be to ensure community governance and protection of spaces that are dedicated to arts and culture, through equity ownership or long-term leases. Funds would emerge from government sources, grants, investments, fundraising, and philanthropy.</p>

## Appendix D. List of Existing Facilities and Spaces

1. Comox Valley Art Gallery
2. Comox Valley Exhibition Grounds
3. Courtenay & District Museum & Paleontology Centre
4. Sid Williams Theatre
5. Centre for the Arts
6. Florence Filberg Centre
7. Lawn Bowling Building - Bill Moore Park
8. Lewis Centre
9. Native Sons Hall
10. Salish Building
11. The LINC Youth Centre
12. Tsolum Building
13. Valley Park Clubhouse
14. Comox Valley Presbyterian Church (Comox)
15. Silver Bowerbird Gallery and Studio
16. Vanier Theatre
17. Artful: The Gallery
18. Courtenay Library
19. HMCS ALBERNI Museum and Memorial
20. I-Hos Gallery
21. Little Red Church Community Arts Centre (Comox)
22. The Regier Theatre (former Old Church Theatre)
23. St. John The Divine Anglican Church
24. Stan Hagen Theatre
25. Courtenay Legion
26. Rotary Centennial Pavilion
27. St. George's United Church
28. The Spool Sewing Studio



**CULTURE**  
**CONNECTS US**

**Strategic Cultural  
Plan Implementation  
Strategy**



City of  
Courtenay



## Vision

**Courtenay is a thriving cultural hub of creative opportunities, dedicated to cultivating vibrant and inclusive arts and culture for residents and visitors alike. Culture and history of Indigenous peoples are interwoven into a diverse community where connection and resiliency are celebrated through artistic expression and cultural exchange.**

## Introduction

The City of Courtenay's Strategic Cultural Plan creates a framework and roadmap to support and strengthen arts and culture in Courtenay over the next 10 years and beyond. The Plan includes specific objectives and actions, informed by extensive research and consultations, including with diverse community members, arts and culture patrons, and local arts and culture organizations.

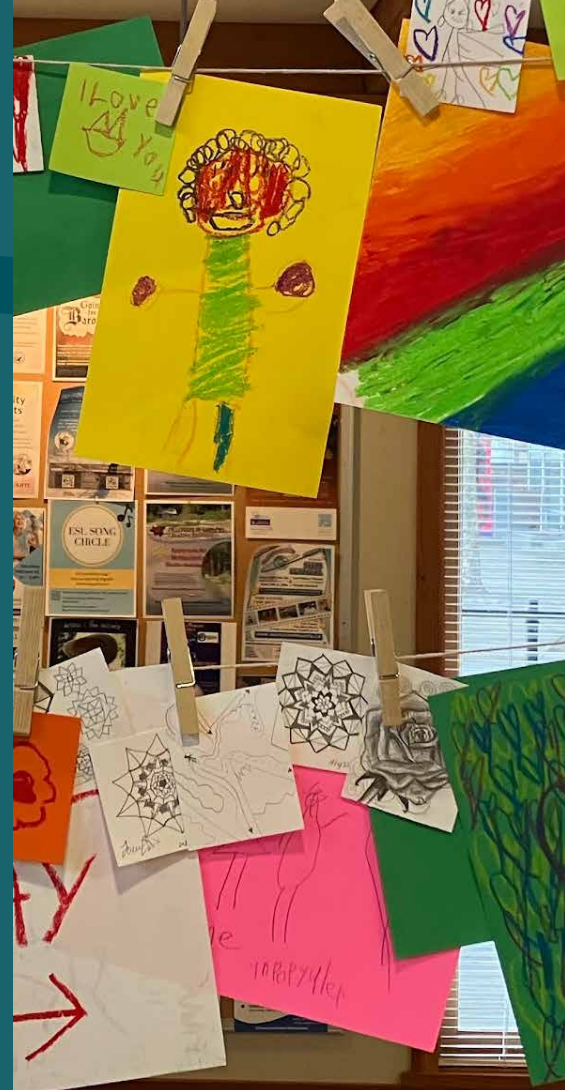
This document serves as the **Implementation Strategy**, outlining the key actions, priorities, and resources required to put the Strategic Cultural Plan into practice. It provides a structured approach to guide the delivery of cultural initiatives, ensuring they are effectively resourced, phased, and aligned with the City's long-term vision.



# Strategic Cultural Plan Implementation Strategy

This document serves as the implementation strategy for the Strategic Cultural Plan, outlining a structured yet flexible approach to advancing cultural plan initiatives. The strategy follows a three-phased implementation approach where goals progress at different rates based on priorities and available resources, rather than being restricted to fixed timelines.

This document provides an overview of that strategy, detailing how actions are sequenced, how foundational elements guide implementation, and how funding considerations support long-term sustainability.



The document provides a summary of the strategy and is organized into three key sections:

## SECTION 1

### Phased Implementation Approach

Explains how actions are organized across phases to support long-term cultural development.

## SECTION 2

### Phase Overviews

Provides a summary of each phase, including key priorities, alignment with foundational elements, and major actions.

## SECTION 3

### Funding Summary

Estimates financial costs and impacts by phase and gives a capital planning overview.

- Low (\$0-\$100,000)
- Medium (\$100,000-\$500,000)
- High (over \$500,000)

By structuring implementation in adaptable phases, this strategy ensures that cultural initiatives are realistic, financially sustainable, and responsive to the evolving needs of the community.

# Phased Implementation Approach

This section outlines how actions are organized across phases, ensuring a clear path for advancing the Strategic Cultural Plan.

The implementation of Courtenay's Strategic Cultural Plan follows a **phased approach**, ensuring that actions are prioritized and executed in a structured manner. Each action within the strategy has been carefully mapped across three phases, aligning with the city's strategic priorities. This approach allows for **measured progress, adaptability, and long-term sustainability**.



## PHASE 1

### Building Foundations

Focuses on establishing the necessary frameworks, policies, relationships, and resources to support long-term cultural development.

## PHASE 2

### Enhancing Access and Visibility

Expands cultural programming, strengthens partnerships and relationships, and increases public engagement, ensuring greater accessibility and representation across the community.

## PHASE 3

### Thriving as a Cultural Hub

Integrates arts and culture into City and regional planning, economic and tourism development, solidifying Courtenay's identity as a vibrant and sustainable cultural hub.

Each phase is not timebound, allowing goals to progress at different rates—some may advance to the next phase sooner as resources and conditions align, while others continue developing until they are ready to move forward.

# Foundational Elements

The strategic vision for Courtenay's cultural landscape sets the stage for a dynamic and inclusive future where arts and culture play a pivotal role in community connection and resilience. To translate this vision into action, it is essential to establish the foundational elements that will guide the City's efforts in responding to the Strategic Cultural Plan's goals, objectives, and actions.

These elements represent the core priorities that must be integrated across all cultural initiatives. While they remain relevant throughout all phases, the necessary work to establish them must be completed in Phase 1, positioning them as the first pieces of the puzzle.

By prioritizing this work early, the implementation strategy is built on a strong, strategic framework, allowing each phase to advance in a sustainable, inclusive, and impactful way.



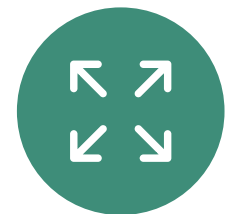
**Advance Reconciliation  
Across All Initiatives**



**Build the Team to  
Drive Cultural Change**



**Elevate Investment  
in Arts and Culture**



**Transform and Expand  
Cultural Spaces**



**Lead Regional  
Cultural Advocacy**



# Goals and Implementation Priorities

The foundational elements shape the priorities for each goal across all phases, ensuring that actions align with strategic vision, capacity, and sustainability. Each goal progresses in a way that builds on early efforts, expands access, and strengthens long-term cultural impact.

GOAL	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3
<b>Advance Truth and Reconciliation Through Arts and Culture</b>	Strengthen reconciliation as a core value by integrating Indigenous perspectives into cultural planning and policies and investing in relationship building.	Support Indigenous arts and culture to enhance visibility and capacity through programming, public art, and civic engagement in festivals and events.	Deepen reconciliation efforts through long term relationships and embedding of Indigenous knowledge into cultural planning and integration with tourism and economic development.
<b>Build Community Resilience Through Arts and Culture</b>	Strengthen arts and culture support by establishing key roles, policies, and inclusive programming structures.	Expand partnerships with equity-priority groups, schools, and businesses to increase and diversify participation and representation.	Ensure arts and culture remain a core part of community life by fostering long-term collaboration and public involvement.
<b>Develop More Accessible and Affordable Cultural Spaces</b>	Assess cultural infrastructure needs and establish policy frameworks for future space development.	Implement facility policies, secure funding, and initiate infrastructure improvements.	Integrate cultural spaces into city planning, improve accessibility, and strengthen long-term sustainability models.
<b>Bolster Community Arts</b>	Establish funding structures and leadership to enable arts and culture sustainability and growth.	Expand collaboration among artists, organizations, and businesses to increase cultural reach.	Strengthen cultural visibility through reporting, public engagement, and long-term partnerships.
<b>Support the Strategic Development of the Cultural Sector</b>	Enhance and develop sustainable funding strategies and City policies and work towards the downtown as a cultural district.	Strengthen regional collaboration and integration of culture into tourism and economic development.	Position the City as a recognized cultural leader through regional partnerships, marketing, and workforce development.

# Phase 1: Building Foundations

Phase 1 focuses on laying the groundwork for Courtenay’s long-term cultural development by establishing key policies, strengthening relationships, and building foundational structures. This includes policy development, governance frameworks, infrastructure assessments, and financial planning to support a strong and sustainable arts and culture sector.

GOAL	IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES
<b>Advance Truth and Reconciliation Through Arts and Culture</b>	Strengthen reconciliation as a core value by integrating Indigenous perspectives into cultural planning and policies and investing in relationship building.
<b>Build Community Resilience Through Arts and Culture</b>	Strengthen arts and culture support by establishing key roles, policies, and inclusive programming structures.
<b>Develop More Accessible and Affordable Cultural Spaces</b>	Assess cultural infrastructure needs and establish policy frameworks for future space development.
<b>Bolster Community Arts</b>	Establish funding structures and leadership to enable arts and culture sustainability and growth.
<b>Support the Strategic Development of the Cultural Sector</b>	Enhance and develop sustainable funding strategies and City policies and work towards the downtown as a cultural district.

**Outcome:** Established frameworks, relationships, and leadership to support sustainable cultural growth.

# Phase 1 Key Actions

The table below summarizes the key actions that will be implemented in Phase 1. These actions will set the stage for future growth, allowing for expanded programming, enhanced accessibility, and stronger community engagement in the next phases.

GOAL	SUMMARY OF KEY ACTIONS
<b>Advance Truth and Reconciliation Through Arts and Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Foster ongoing relationships with Indigenous communities to guide cultural planning and practices (1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3)</li> <li>▶ Develop and implement policies that acknowledge K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit and urban Indigenous cultural heritage (1.2.1, 1.3.6)</li> <li>▶ Support Indigenous artists and cultural projects through dedicated funding and city grants (1.3.1)</li> <li>▶ Acknowledge Indigenous history through renaming initiatives and culturally appropriate processes (1.2.3)</li> </ul>
<b>Build Community Resilience Through Arts and Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Establish a Cultural Coordinator position to lead and integrate arts and culture initiatives across the City (2.1.1, 4.1.4)</li> <li>▶ Enhance event and festival support to reflect diverse cultural representation and refine inclusive practices to ensure accessibility and representation in arts and cultural offerings (2.1.3, 2.1.2)</li> </ul>
<b>Develop More Accessible and Affordable Cultural Spaces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Advocate for regional funding to support capital arts and culture projects with broad community impact (3.2.4)</li> <li>▶ Assess the needs and accessibility of City-owned arts and culture facilities to inform future development (3.1.1, 3.2.1)</li> <li>▶ Develop a Cultural Facilities Plan with prioritized actions to address community needs (3.2.2)</li> </ul>
<b>Bolster Community Arts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Create a City-funded Arts and Culture Grant Program to support community-led cultural initiatives (4.1.3)</li> <li>▶ Sustain and strengthen core cultural service providers as community anchors (4.1.1, 5.1.2)</li> </ul>
<b>Support the Strategic Development of the Cultural Sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Advocate for regional funding approaches and build diverse collaborations to support arts and cultural services and initiatives (5.1.3, 5.1.4)</li> <li>▶ Develop policies to guide and promote arts and cultural activities, including a Special Events and Hosting Policy and a Public Art Policy (5.3.1, 5.3.2)</li> <li>▶ Incorporate arts and culture into local area planning, including establishing an art, culture and heritage district Downtown (5.3.5)</li> </ul>

# Phase 2: Enhancing Access and Visibility

With the foundational structures in place, Phase 2 focuses on expanding cultural access, increasing community participation, and strengthening visibility. This phase moves from planning to implementation, ensuring that cultural policies, programs, and funding structures are actively put into practice.

GOAL	IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES
<b>Advance Truth and Reconciliation Through Arts and Culture</b>	Support Indigenous arts and culture to enhance visibility and capacity through programming, public art, and civic engagement in festivals and events.
<b>Build Community Resilience Through Arts and Culture</b>	Expand partnerships with equity-priority groups, schools, and businesses to increase and diversify participation and representation.
<b>Develop More Accessible and Affordable Cultural Spaces</b>	Implement facility policies, secure funding, and initiate infrastructure improvements.
<b>Bolster Community Arts</b>	Expand collaboration among artists, organizations, and businesses to increase cultural reach.
<b>Support the Strategic Development of the Cultural Sector</b>	Strengthen regional collaboration and integration of culture into tourism and economic development.

**Outcome:** Cultural access and visibility are strengthened as the City implements policies, programs, and partnerships and builds relationships that foster engagement and inclusivity.

# Phase 2 Key Actions

The table below outlines the key actions and milestones that will drive progress in Phase 2, focusing on broadening participation, enhancing visibility, and fostering deeper connections across the cultural sector.

GOAL	SUMMARY OF KEY ACTIONS
<p><b>Advance Truth and Reconciliation Through Arts and Culture</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Bolster Indigenous capacity and engagement in arts and culture initiatives through targeted investments and funding programs (1.3.2)</li> <li>▶ Celebrate Indigenous culture through public art installations and visible acknowledgments of K'ómoks First Nation territory (1.2.2)</li> <li>▶ Promote and integrate Indigenous arts and culture into community events and ceremonies (1.3.3)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Build Community Resilience Through Arts and Culture</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Strengthen partnerships with equity-priority groups to co-create inclusive programs and events that reflect community needs (2.3.1)</li> <li>▶ Collaborate with community arts groups to make arts and cultural offerings more inclusive, accessible, and welcoming (2.1.4)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Develop More Accessible and Affordable Cultural Spaces</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Promote grant opportunities to support renovations, equipment, and feasibility studies for cultural spaces (3.2.3)</li> <li>▶ Explore digital platforms to map and communicate cultural facility resources and availability (3.1.4)</li> <li>▶ Develop policies to secure development-related funding for arts and cultural facilities and amenities (3.2.5)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bolster Community Arts</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Support organizational capacity building through partnerships with the Comox Valley Community Arts Council (4.1.2)</li> <li>▶ Collaborate with partners to promote and increase awareness of arts and culture events (4.3.2, 4.3.3)</li> <li>▶ Introduce annual reporting to track progress and highlight community cultural initiatives (4.3.1)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support the Strategic Development of the Cultural Sector</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Integrate arts and culture into economic development strategies and align with broader initiatives (5.1.1)</li> <li>▶ Develop a marketing strategy and establish signature tourism events to promote Courtenay as a year-round cultural destination (5.2.2, 5.2.4)</li> <li>▶ Promote cultural tourism opportunities and advocate for a vibrant nighttime economy (5.2.1, 5.2.3)</li> <li>▶ Leverage the Street Entertainer Program and placemaking initiatives to enhance community engagement and nightlife (5.3.3)</li> </ul>



# Phase 3: Thriving as a Cultural Hub

Phase 3 focuses on embedding arts and culture into the city’s identity, economy, and planning, ensuring long-term sustainability and impact. By this stage, cultural initiatives are fully integrated into municipal planning, and Courtenay is recognized as a dynamic hub for arts and culture.

As the City moves into Phase 3, the focus shifts to solidifying cultural initiatives within city planning, economic development, and regional partnerships.

GOAL	IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES
<b>Advance Truth and Reconciliation Through Arts and Culture</b>	Deepen reconciliation efforts through long term relationships and embedding of Indigenous knowledge into cultural planning and integration with tourism and economic development.
<b>Build Community Resilience Through Arts and Culture</b>	Ensure arts and culture remain a core part of community life by fostering long-term collaboration and public involvement.
<b>Develop More Accessible and Affordable Cultural Spaces</b>	Integrate cultural spaces into city planning, improve accessibility, and strengthen long-term sustainability models
<b>Bolster Community Arts</b>	Strengthen cultural visibility through reporting, public engagement, and long-term partnerships.
<b>Support the Strategic Development of the Cultural Sector</b>	Position the City as a recognized cultural leader through regional partnerships, marketing, and workforce development.

**Outcome:** The City becomes a dynamic, sustainable arts and culture hub.

# Phase 3 Key Actions

The table below outlines the key actions that will drive this phase, ensuring that Courtenay’s arts and culture sector continues to evolve, strengthen partnerships, and remain a defining element of the city’s identity.

GOAL	SUMMARY OF KEY ACTIONS
<b>Advance Truth and Reconciliation Through Arts and Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Foster collaboration and opportunities for Indigenous artists to showcase their work and connect (1.3.4)</li> <li>▶ Advocate for sustainable economic and tourism development initiatives that respectfully highlight Indigenous arts and culture (1.3.5)</li> </ul>
<b>Build Community Resilience Through Arts and Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Support collaborative arts and culture projects that address social challenges through dialogue and storytelling and foster partnerships that provide arts and culture-based wellness activities to support healing and well-being (2.2.1, 2.2.2)</li> <li>▶ Recognize and celebrate contributions to the cultural sector through awards programs and community events (2.3.2)</li> <li>▶ Develop youth arts and culture programming by partnering with local groups and institutions to reduce barriers to participation (2.3.3)</li> </ul>
<b>Develop More Accessible and Affordable Cultural Spaces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Advocate for improved transit planning to support access to arts and culture events and programming (3.1.3)</li> <li>▶ Encourage and support accessibility improvements for non-City-owned cultural spaces through grant opportunities (3.1.2)</li> </ul>
<b>Bolster Community Arts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Facilitate networking and collaboration through events and forums for cultural organizations (4.2.1)</li> <li>▶ Support cultural visibility through public art projects and resource mapping (4.3.4, 4.3.5)</li> <li>▶ Develop policies or incentives to encourage partnerships between local businesses and cultural groups (4.2.3)</li> </ul>
<b>Support the Strategic Development of the Cultural Sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Establish an arts and culture committee to guide priorities and initiatives (5.3.4)</li> <li>▶ Collaborate with educational institutions to create training opportunities and technical courses in arts and culture (5.4.2)</li> <li>▶ Support mentorship, co-op opportunities, and affordable housing for artisans and cultural workers to strengthen the sector (5.4.3, 5.4.4)</li> <li>▶ Strengthen relationships with local institutions to enhance youth engagement in arts and culture, including working with educational institutions to integrate arts and culture into school curricula (5.4.1, 4.2.2)</li> </ul>

# Funding Summary

This section presents a high-level overview of funding needs across each phase. A detailed breakdown by phase and activity is available in the appendix. The outlined funding requirements do not account for future financial implications of the Facilities Capital Plan.

Phase	Funding Type	Estimated Funding Required
Phase 1: Building Foundations	Net-New Operating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Medium:</b> Estimated \$160,000</li> <li>▶ Cultural Coordinator, Indigenous engagement &amp; investments, and Arts &amp; Culture Grant Program</li> </ul>
	One-Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Medium:</b> Estimated \$300,000</li> <li>▶ Renaming NSH, Special Events, Facilities Studies and Public Art Policy</li> </ul>
Phase 2: Enhancing Access and Visibility	Net-New Operating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Low:</b> Estimated \$60,000</li> <li>▶ Program partnerships, events, and cultural asset mapping.</li> </ul>
	One-Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Medium:</b> Estimated \$250,000</li> <li>▶ Supporting Indigenous public art, marketing strategy, and capacity building</li> </ul>
Phase 3: Thriving as a Cultural Hub	Net-New Operating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Low:</b> Estimated \$10,000</li> <li>▶ Project partnerships, and committee development</li> </ul>
	One-Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Medium:</b> Estimated \$100,000</li> <li>▶ Public art</li> </ul>
Total	Net-New Operating	Estimated \$230,000
	One-Time	Estimated \$650,000

### Funding sources are classified as:

**Net New Operating:** Ongoing funding required to sustain new or expanded initiatives, programs, or staffing

**One-Time:** Funding allocated for capital projects or time-limited initiatives that do not require ongoing financial commitment

*\*Assumes all actions are funded according to recommendations. Any change in funding in one area may affect required funding in another area*

### Funding Categories:

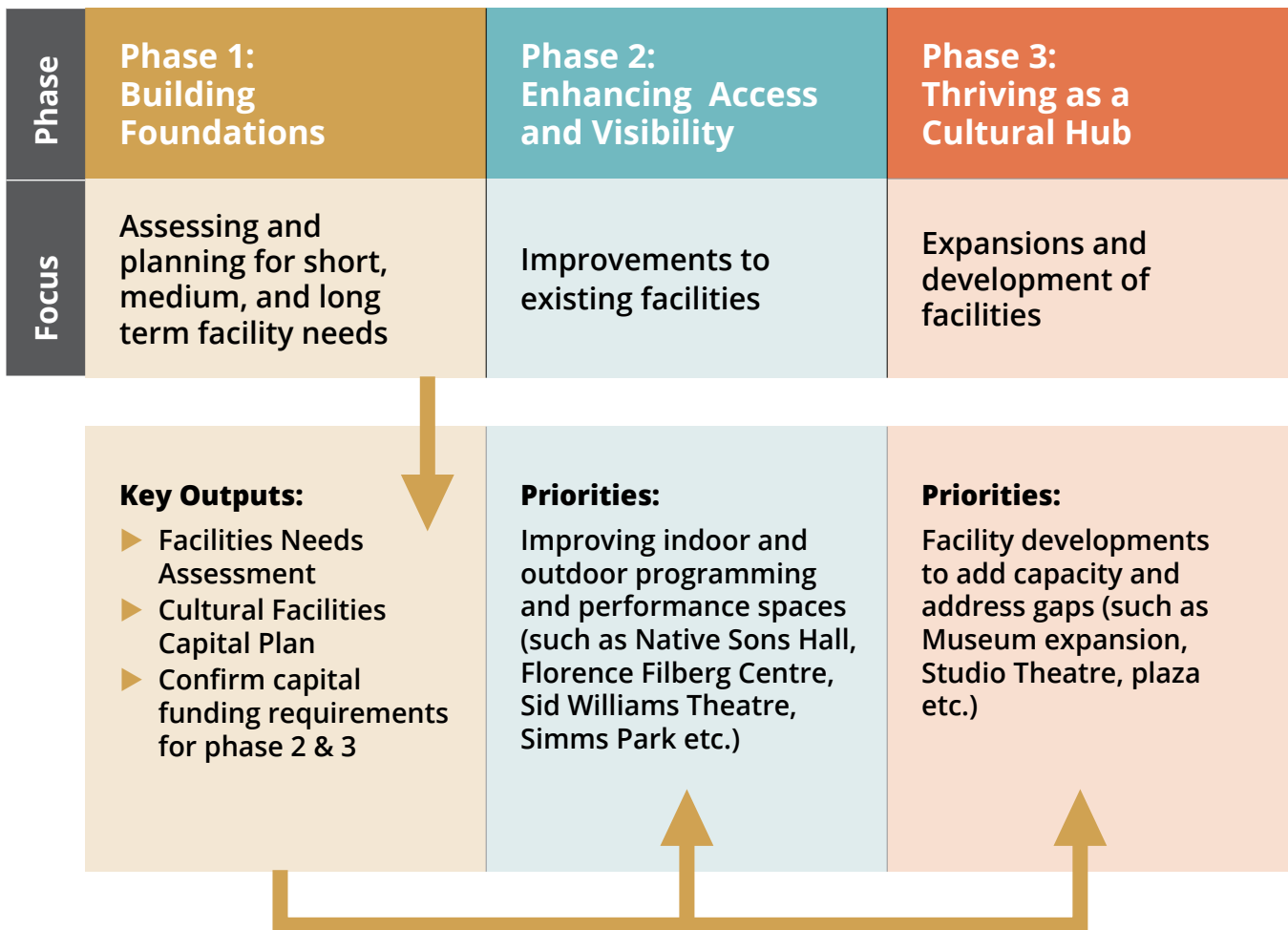
**Low:** Under \$100,000

**Medium:** \$100,000 - \$500,000

**High:** Over \$500,000

# Capital Facility Planning & Projects

The approach to capital planning integrates with the phased approach ensuring infrastructure planning and assessments support long-term cultural facility development. Phase 1 lays the groundwork for future investments in Phase 2 and Phase 3 by assessing needs, developing funding strategies, and establishing a strong foundation for cultural facility improvement and development.



The facilities capital plan will determine capital projects and funding requirements to inform phase 2 and 3 projects and priorities.

# Appendix 1: Detailed Implementation Strategy

## Implementation Strategy - By Goal

Objectives	Actions	Phase	Budget Estimate	Existing, Net New Operating, One-time
<b>Goal 1. Advance truth and reconciliation through arts and culture</b>				
<b>1.1: Recognize the role and rights of K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples as it relates to arts and culture</b>	1.1.1: Commit to ongoing relationship building with K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples to allow for the continuous shaping of the Strategic Cultural Plan as a living document reflective of the Indigenous history of Courtenay and the region	1	N/A	Existing
	1.1.2: Engage with K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples to seek input, guidance, and consent in cultural planning processes and co-designing protocols through decolonized practices.	1	N/A	Existing
	1.1.3: Include Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community leaders in cultural planning processes to ensure the incorporation of traditional wisdom.	1	Low (\$10,000)	Net New Operating
<b>Objective 1.2: Respectfully acknowledge K'ómoks territory through arts and culture</b>	1.2.1: Continue to respectfully acknowledge the land, recognizing the Unceded traditional territories of the K'ómoks First Nation, in all City-led engagement and activities. Further this through the development of the City's Reconciliation Framework and include corporate policy to ensure K'ómoks First Nation land acknowledgment is carried out consistently across City operations.	1	N/A	Existing
	1.2.2: Support the creation of public art installations that celebrate K'ómoks First Nation and Indigenous cultures and reinforce the City's commitment through development of a Public Art Policy. These installations can serve as a visible and lasting representation of the respect and acknowledgment of the territory and should be commissioned from Indigenous artists.	2	Medium (\$200,000)	One-time (Recurring Capital)
	1.2.3: Consider renaming the Native Sons Hall following an appropriate process that acknowledges the harms caused by the Native Sons of Canada to a number of equity deserving groups. The process should be conducted with consent from K'ómoks First Nation as part of acknowledging the Indigenous history of Courtenay.	1	Low (\$50,000)	One-time
<b>Objective 1.3: Increase support and investment in Indigenous arts and culture</b>	1.3.1: Consider establishing dedicated funding and grants for Indigenous artists, cultural projects, and public art through a City-funded Arts and Culture Grant Program.	1	See 4.1.3	Net New Operating
	1.3.2: Investigate financial investment opportunities to support K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples to bolster their capacity for meaningful engagement in City Arts and Culture initiatives such as the Strategic Cultural Plan. Further this through the development of the City's Reconciliation Framework and potential Arts and Culture Grant Program.	2	Low (\$50,000)	One-time
	1.3.3: Support and encourage participation in Indigenous-led cultural events and ceremonies and explore ways to decolonize existing arts and cultural activities by integrating Indigenous arts and culture into events like Canada Day.	2	N/A	Existing
	1.3.4: Foster collaboration with Indigenous artists and creators by commissioning or showcasing their work and exploring facilitation of networking opportunities to connect with peers, collaborators, mentors, and buyers.	3	See 1.2.2	One-Time
	1.3.5: Advocate for sustainable tourism initiatives and tourism investments that respectfully highlight and celebrate Indigenous arts and culture in collaboration with K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples.	3	N/A	Existing
	1.3.6: Explore partnerships with Indigenous communities to co-develop arts and culture-related policies, learning opportunities, programs, events, and workshops that foster understanding of Indigenous histories, traditions, and values.	1	See 1.3.2	Net New Operating

# Appendix 1: Detailed Implementation Strategy

## Implementation Strategy - By Goal

Goal	Objectives	Actions	Phase	Budget Estimate	Existing, Net New Operating, One-time
<b>Goal 2. Build community resilience through arts and culture</b>					
<b>Objective 2.1: Use arts and culture to support community belonging and inclusion, where differences and similarities are celebrated</b>	2.1.1: Explore establishing a Cultural Coordinator position at the City as a dedicated resource for arts and culture. This role will be responsible for connecting with communities, building relationships, and ensuring that arts and culture initiatives are effectively integrated and supported throughout the City.		1	Medium (\$100,000)	Net New Operating
	2.1.2: Review the City's current event and festival support, as well as community activities, with a lens to enhance diverse cultural representation and celebrations (i.e. Complete a Special Events and Hosting Policy for the City of Courtenay)		1	See 5.3.1	One-Time
	2.1.3: Explore ways to make arts and cultural events, as well as heritage offerings more inclusive, accessible, and representative in collaboration with community arts groups.		1	N/A	Existing
	2.1.4: Explore collaborations with community arts groups that serve distinct community members in creating cultural spaces and developing activities that are accessible and welcoming to everyone.		2	Low	Net New Operating
<b>Objective 2.2: Leverage arts and culture as a medium to engage community on complex social challenges and to support healing</b>	2.2.1: Support ongoing collaborative arts and culture projects with local organizations that encourage dialogue, collective problem-solving, and storytelling through diverse media to address social challenges like isolation, while promoting relevant grant funding streams to support this work.		3	See 4.1.3	Net New Operating
	2.2.2: Develop partnerships with organizations that provide arts and culture-based wellness activities to support healing and well-being, especially for community members affected by trauma or social disparities.		3	See 2.1.4	Net New Operating
<b>Objective 2.3: Develop cultural programming that appeals to a more diverse community</b>	2.3.1: Strengthen partnerships with equity priority groups (Indigenous, Black and people of colour, immigrants, 2SLGBTQIA+, persons with disabilities, and unhoused community members) to support or co-create inclusive programs and events, provide space for feedback on cultural sensitivity, and identify diverse programming opportunities that reflect the needs and interests of all community members		2	See 2.1.4	Net New Operating
	2.3.2: Showcase the contributions of diverse individuals and local organizations in the cultural sector through an awards program or by integrating recognition into existing community events		3	Low	Net New Operating
	2.3.3: Explore partnerships with local groups and institutions, such as North Island College and School District 71, to develop youth arts and culture programming both in schools and community, focusing on reducing barriers to participation.		3	See 2.1.4	Net New Operating
<b>Goal 3. Develop more accessible and affordable cultural spaces</b>					
<b>Objective 3.1: Increase the availability of accessible and affordable spaces for arts and culture</b>	3.1.1: Conduct a facility needs assessment and accessibility audit of City-owned arts and culture spaces as the first step in developing a Cultural Facilities Plan. This assessment will consider factors like location, transportation, and potential upgrades, with the findings directly informing the plan to guide future development of cultural spaces.		1	Low (\$75,000)	Existing
	3.1.2: Encourage other arts and cultural spaces (non-City-owned) to conduct accessibility audits of their spaces. The City can support this by communicating and promoting external grant opportunities that support facility retrofits.		3	N/A	Existing
	3.1.3: Advocate to the region for transit providers to include consideration for events and programming relating to arts and culture (i.e., car and bike usage, shuttle usage, walking and parking) in service planning.		3	N/A	Existing
	3.1.4: Consider exploring digital platforms to host a Cultural Asset and Resource map that communicates the inventory, availability, and pricing of cultural facilities, in partnership with a community lead agency.		2	Low (\$10,000)	Net New Operating
<b>Objective 3.2: Prioritize initiatives/upgrades that provide enhanced and additional space for arts and culture</b>	3.2.1: Complete Facility Feasibility / Needs Assessments to look at how existing City-owned arts and culture facilities can be modified to meet emerging community needs and support the cultural district in the downtown area where existing cultural assets are located (including spaces for live performance, multi-disciplinary, rehearsal, and creation). These efforts should be integrated into a Cultural Facilities Plan to align with the City's long-term cultural infrastructure strategy.		1	See 3.1.1	Existing
	3.2.2: Develop a Cultural Facilities Plan with short, medium and longer term priorities, leveraging relevant feedback collected and analysis undertaken in the Strategic Cultural Plan project including the Cultural Facilities Options Analysis.		1	Medium (\$100,000)	One-time
	3.2.3: Work with partners to promote grant opportunities, such as the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, for both City and non-City-owned cultural organizations to fund renovations, specialized equipment, and feasibility studies.		2	N/A	Existing
	3.2.4: Advocate to the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) regarding regional funding to support future capital arts and culture projects that demonstrate regional impact.		1	N/A	Existing
	3.2.5: Develop policy to include arts and cultural facilities and amenities as eligible for development-related funding, including but not limited to Amenity Cost Charges. These funds could be directed toward projects identified in the Cultural Facilities Plan. These tools provide a funding mechanism to ensure that the increased demand on community amenities such as arts and cultural services is accommodated as the community grows, as well as provides for street improvement amenity features that can assist in the unique feeling and community practice of place-making at the neighbourhood scale.		2	N/A	Existing

# Appendix 1: Detailed Implementation Strategy

## Implementation Strategy - By Goal

Goal	Objectives	Actions	Phase	Budget Estimate	Existing, Net New Operating, One-time
<b>Goal 4. Bolster community arts</b>					
<b>Objective 4.1: Support the capacity building of community-led arts and culture organizations</b>	4.1.1: Continue supporting core cultural service providers (i.e., Comox Valley Art Gallery, the Courtenay and District Museum, the Sid Williams Civic Theatre, and the Comox Valley Community Arts Council) to ensure continuity and ability to meet their full potential as cultural anchors in the community.		1	N/A	Existing
	4.1.2: Leverage the City's relationship with Comox Valley Community Arts Council to support organizational capacity building in the sector through its training and professional development initiatives.		2	N/A	Existing
	4.1.3: Consider establishing a City-funded Arts and Culture Grant Program to support community-led events, initiatives, and organizational capacity building. This grant program would be the primary mechanism for providing financial resources to local arts organizations, community groups, and Indigenous artists.		1	Low (\$50,000)	Net New Operating
	4.1.4: Explore establishing a dedicated Cultural Coordinator role in the City to act as a liaison for the cultural community, support capacity building, identify and act on arts and culture opportunities, lead coordination activities, and implement the Cultural Strategic Plan.		1	See 2.1.1	Net New Operating
<b>Objective 4.2: Break down silos and increase collaboration across the cultural sector</b>	4.2.1: Work with one of the core cultural service providers to organize regular networking events, conferences, and forums that connect organizations, facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration, and exchange resources to strengthen community capacity throughout the region.		3	Low	Net New Operating
	4.2.2: Consider fostering a relationship between the cultural sector and other local institutions – e.g. North Island College and SD71. Such a relationship can support youth engagement in arts and culture as well as access to the use of school spaces.		3	N/A	Existing
	4.2.3: Investigate opportunities to develop policies or incentives to encourage partnerships between local businesses (i.e. Downtown Courtenay BIA), and local artists, groups, and organizations.		3	N/A	Existing
<b>Objective 4.3: Increase the awareness of community-led arts and culture events</b>	4.3.1: Introduce an annual Arts and Culture report to Council from core cultural service providers that includes insights from community on their programs and services, as well as performance metrics, and reports on implementation of Strategic Cultural Plan.		2	Low (\$5,000)	Existing
	4.3.2: Consider partnering with existing non-profit organizations who are curating event calendars locally and on Vancouver Island to support promotion and increased awareness of local events		2	N/A	Existing
	4.3.3: Consider support for development of an awareness and marketing strategy to promote arts and culture events and offerings, with a focus on reaching diverse groups. This strategy will also consider event promotion and collaboration with partners like the Comox Valley Community Arts Council.		2	Low (\$50,000)	One-time
	4.3.4: Promote and raise awareness of arts and culture by supporting community-based arts projects supported by public art policy.		3	N/A	Existing
	4.3.5: Consider creating an annual or bi-annual process of updating Courtenay's Cultural Asset Map in collaboration with Creative Coast to highlight Courtenay's cultural offerings and encourage regional collaboration.		3	See 3.1.4	Net New Operating

# Appendix 1: Detailed Implementation Strategy

## Implementation Strategy - By Goal

Goal	Objectives	Actions	Phase	Budget Estimate	Existing, Net New Operating, One-time
<b>Goal 5. Support the strategic development of the cultural sector</b>					
<b>Objective 5.1: Build and sustain existing social and economic impact by strengthening Courtenay's professional arts and culture sector</b>	5.1.1: Integrate arts and culture into City's Community Economic Development Analysis and economic strategies, including fostering closer alignment with local, regional, and national economic development initiatives by collaborating with entities like the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA) and Canadian Heritage.		2	N/A	Existing
	5.1.2: Review and enhance existing funding structures to support core cultural service providers (Comox Valley Community Arts Council (CVAC), Comox Valley Art Gallery (CVAG), Sid William Theatre, and Courtenay and District Museum) by considering integrating existing funding into a dedicated stream within a City-Funded Arts and Culture Grant Program. This will ensure that these providers continue to meet the evolving needs of the community.		1	See 5.1.4	Existing
	5.1.3: Cultivate diverse collaborations with interest groups, including educational systems (e.g., North Island College, School District 71), private studios, individual arts educators, and music organizations, to build a robust network that amplifies the sector's influence and supports arts education and Indigenous collaborations		1	N/A	Existing
	5.1.4: Explore a regional funding and coordination approach with Comox Valley local governments and the Comox Valley Regional District to support arts and culture. This includes establishing regional funding for core cultural partners who provide regional services, as well as community grants and capital funding for arts and culture		1	N/A	Existing
<b>Objective 5.2: Embed arts and culture more firmly in tourism initiatives in Courtenay and the Comox Valley</b>	5.2.1: Collaborate with the Comox Valley Regional District and Experience Comox Valley to highlight cultural tourism opportunities in Courtenay, aligning with their Tourism Strategy Plan.		2	N/A	Existing
	5.2.2: Work with local organizations (e.g., Comox Valley Community Arts Council, Experience Comox Valley) to develop a marketing and outreach strategy for events and programs and to promote the City and Comox Valley as a cultural tourism destination. Leverage Experience Comox Valley's annual Destination Plan.		2	See 4.3.3	One-Time
	5.2.3: Create a Working Group to develop a sustainable vision and action plan for nightlife in Courtenay and advocate for the nighttime economy, potentially leveraging the existing Comox Valley Tourism Advisory Committee or Economic Development Strategy.		2	Low (\$50,000)	One-time
	5.2.4: Work with Experience Comox Valley to establish signature tourism events during the shoulder months (outside of summer) to draw year-round visitors to Courtenay and the Comox Valley.		2	Low (\$50,000)	Net New Operating
<b>Objective 5.3: Create new and or updated policies to support the cultural sector</b>	5.3.1: Develop a Special Events and Hosting Policy or Guidelines that support arts and cultural events including those that serve as a tourism draw for Courtenay. The policy could also outline how to create accessible materials for hosting events that would be useful to community-led and grassroots event organizers. The policy should further clarify guidelines for when the City is being a host, a facilitator or a location for special events. Note, this policy should align with cultural tourism and economic development plans.		1	Low (\$75,000)	One-time
	5.3.2: Develop a Public Art Policy that supports public art and mural projects in the community. The policy would outline how to prioritize commissions for local artists, as well as support the representation of Indigenous arts and culture in the community. The policy could also help foster youth engagement in community public art initiatives.		1	Low (\$75,000)	One-time
	5.3.3: Consider reviewing the City's Street Entertainer Program and the associated regulation bylaw. Explore opportunities for leveraging the program for nightlife and community placemaking activities via collaboration with local businesses.		2	N/A	Existing
	5.3.4: Consider establishing an arts and culture committee for the City to advise Council and staff on priorities, activities, and initiatives related to arts and culture in Courtenay, including the implementation of the Strategic Cultural Plan and alignment with local tourism and economic development activities.		3	Low (\$10,000)	Net New Operating
	Action 5.3.5: Include arts and culture in local area planning initiatives, with specific consideration for identifying Downtown as an arts, culture, and heritage district in line with the OCP.		1	N/A	Existing
<b>Objective 5.4: Explore strategic ways to meet sector labour needs</b>	5.4.1: Consider opportunities of working with School District 71 and local organizations to integrate arts and culture into school curricula to foster the interest of children and youth in the arts and cultural sector.		3	N/A	Existing
	5.4.2: Support collaborations between local organizations and educational institutions (such as North Island College and Excel Career College) to develop and fast-track technical and short courses related to arts and culture including sound and lighting, stage management and crowd control related courses.		3	N/A	Existing
	5.4.3: Investigate ways the City can support local arts and culture organizations to offer volunteer, mentorship, and co-op educational opportunities for youth and community members who are interested in developing a career in the cultural sector.		3	N/A	Existing
	5.4.4: Support the approval of developments that provide housing and workspaces for artisans and the cultural sector in the community (similar to Tin Town) in the community. Advance land use planning in Town Centres where this type of use is allowed as per the OCP, and consider other tools such as pre-zoning specific areas (i.e. through the Downtown Local Area Plan) to enable the development of artist housing and workspace.		3	N/A	Existing



# Appendix 2: Detailed Implementation Strategy by Phase

Implementation Strategy - Phase 1					
Goal	Objectives	Actions	Phase	Budget Estimate	Existing, Net New Operating, One-time
Goal 1. Advance truth and reconciliation through arts and culture	1.1: Recognize the role and rights of K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples as it relates to arts and culture	1.1.1: Commit to ongoing relationship building with K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples to allow for the continuous shaping of the Strategic Cultural Plan as a living document reflective of the Indigenous history of Courtenay and the region	1	N/A	Existing
		1.1.2: Engage with K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples to seek input, guidance, and consent in cultural planning processes and co-designing protocols through decolonized practices.	1	N/A	Existing
		1.1.3: Include Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community leaders in cultural planning processes to ensure the incorporation of traditional wisdom.	1	Low (\$10,000)	Net New Operating
	Objective 1.2: Respectfully acknowledge K'ómoks territory through arts and culture	1.2.1: Continue to respectfully acknowledge the land, recognizing the Unceded traditional territories of the K'ómoks First Nation, in all City-led engagement and activities. Further this through the development of the City's Reconciliation Framework and include corporate policy to ensure K'ómoks First Nation land acknowledgment is carried out consistently across City operations.	1	N/A	Existing
		1.2.3: Consider renaming the Native Sons Hall following an appropriate process that acknowledges the harms caused by the Native Sons of Canada to a number of equity deserving groups. The process should be conducted with consent from K'ómoks First Nation as part of acknowledging the Indigenous history of Courtenay.	1	Low (\$50,000)	One-time
	Objective 1.3: Increase support and investment in Indigenous arts and culture	1.3.1: Consider establishing dedicated funding and grants for Indigenous artists, cultural projects, and public art through a City-funded Arts and Culture Grant Program.	1	See 4.1.3	Net New Operating
	1.3.6 Explore partnerships with Indigenous communities to co-develop arts and culture-related policies, learning opportunities, programs, events, and workshops that foster understanding of Indigenous histories, traditions, and values.	1	See 1.3.2	Net New Operating	
Goal 2. Build community resilience through arts and culture	Objective 2.1: Use arts and culture to support community belonging and inclusion, where differences and similarities are celebrated	2.1.1: Explore establishing a Cultural Coordinator position at the City as a dedicated resource for arts and culture. This role will be responsible for connecting with communities, building relationships, and ensuring that arts and culture initiatives are effectively integrated and supported throughout the City.	1	Medium (\$100,000)	Net New Operating
		2.1.2: Review the City's current event and festival support, as well as community activities, with a lens to enhance diverse cultural representation and celebrations (i.e. Complete a Special Events and Hosting Policy for the City of Courtenay)	1	See 5.3.1	One-Time
		2.1.3: Explore ways to make arts and cultural events, as well as heritage offerings more inclusive, accessible, and representative in collaboration with community arts groups.	1	N/A	Existing
Goal 3. Develop more accessible and affordable cultural spaces	Objective 3.1: Increase the availability of accessible and affordable spaces for arts and culture	3.1.1: Conduct a facility needs assessment and accessibility audit of City-owned arts and culture spaces as the first step in developing a Cultural Facilities Plan. This assessment will consider factors like location, transportation, and potential upgrades, with the findings directly informing the plan to guide future development of cultural spaces.	1	Low (\$75,000)	Existing
	Objective 3.2: Prioritize initiatives/upgrades that provide enhanced and additional space for arts and culture	3.2.1: Complete Facility Feasibility / Needs Assessments to look at how existing City-owned arts and culture facilities can be modified to meet emerging community needs and support the cultural district in the downtown area where existing cultural assets are located (including spaces for live performance, multi-disciplinary, rehearsal, and creation. These efforts should be integrated into a Cultural Facilities Plan to align with the City's long-term cultural infrastructure strategy.	1	See 3.1.1	Existing
		3.2.2: Develop a Cultural Facilities Plan with short, medium and longer term priorities, leveraging relevant feedback collected and analysis undertaken in the Strategic Cultural Plan project including the Cultural Facilities Options Analysis.	1	Medium (\$100,000)	One-time
		3.2.4: Advocate to the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) regarding regional funding to support future capital arts and culture projects that demonstrate regional impact.	1	N/A	Existing
Goal 4. Bolster community arts	Objective 4.1: Support the capacity building of community-led arts and culture organizations	4.1.1: Continue supporting core cultural service providers (i.e., Comox Valley Art Gallery, the Courtenay and District Museum, the Sid Williams Civic Theatre, and the Comox Valley Community Arts Council) to ensure continuity and ability to meet their full potential as cultural anchors in the community.	1	N/A	Existing
		4.1.3: Consider establishing a City-funded Arts and Culture Grant Program to support community-led events, initiatives, and organizational capacity building. This grant program would be the primary mechanism for providing financial resources to local arts organizations, community groups, and Indigenous artists.	1	Low (\$50,000)	Net New Operating
		4.1.4: Explore establishing a dedicated Cultural Coordinator role in the City to act as a liaison for the cultural community, support capacity building, identify and act on arts and culture opportunities, lead coordination activities, and implement the Cultural Strategic Plan.	1	See 2.1.1	Net New Operating

## Appendix 2: Detailed Implementation Strategy by Phase

### Implementation Strategy - Phase 1

Goal	Objectives	Actions	Phase	Budget Estimate	Existing, Net New Operating, One-time
Goal 5. Support the strategic development of the cultural sector	Objective 5.1: Build and sustain existing social and economic impact by strengthening Courtenay's professional arts and culture sector	5.1.2: Review and enhance existing funding structures to support core cultural service providers (Comox Valley Community Arts Council (CVAC), Comox Valley Art Gallery (CVAG), Sid William Theatre, and Courtenay and District Museum) by considering integrating existing funding into a dedicated stream within a City-Funded Arts and Culture Grant Program. This will ensure that these providers continue to meet the evolving needs of the community.	1	See 5.1.4	Existing
		5.1.3: Cultivate diverse collaborations with interest groups, including educational systems (e.g., North Island College, School District 71), private studios, individual arts educators, and music organizations, to build a robust network that amplifies the sector's influence and supports arts education and Indigenous collaborations	1	N/A	Existing
		5.1.4: Explore a regional funding and coordination approach with Comox Valley local governments and the Comox Valley Regional District to support arts and culture. This includes establishing regional funding for core cultural partners who provide regional services, as well as community grants and capital funding for arts and culture	1	N/A	Existing
	Objective 5.3: Create new and or updated policies to support the cultural sector	5.3.1: Develop a Special Events and Hosting Policy or Guidelines that support arts and cultural events including those that serve as a tourism draw for Courtenay. The policy could also outline how to create accessible materials for hosting events that would be useful to community-led and grassroots event organizers. The policy should further clarify guidelines for when the City is being a host, a facilitator or a location for special events. Note, this policy should align with cultural tourism and economic development plans.	1	Low (\$75,000)	One-time
		5.3.2: Develop a Public Art Policy that supports public art and mural projects in the community. The policy would outline how to prioritize commissions for local artists, as well as support the representation of Indigenous arts and culture in the community. The policy could also help foster youth engagement in community public art initiatives.	1	Low (\$75,000)	One-time
		Action 5.3.5: Include arts and culture in local area planning initiatives, with specific consideration for identifying Downtown as an arts, culture, and heritage district in line with the OCP.	1	N/A	Existing

# Appendix 2: Detailed Implementation Strategy by Phase

Implementation Strategy - Phase 2					
Goal	Objectives	Actions	Phase	Budget Estimate	Existing, Net New Operating, One-time
Goal 1. Advance truth and reconciliation through arts and culture	Objective 1.2: Respectfully acknowledge K'ómoks territory through arts and culture	1.2.2: Support the creation of public art installations that celebrate K'ómoks First Nation and Indigenous cultures and reinforce the City's commitment through development of a Public Art Policy. These installations can serve as a visible and lasting representation of the respect and acknowledgment of the territory and should be commissioned from Indigenous artists.	2	Medium (\$200,000)	One-time (Recurring Capital)
	Objective 1.3: Increase support and investment in Indigenous arts and culture	1.3.2: Investigate financial investment opportunities to support K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples to bolster their capacity for meaningful engagement in City Arts and Culture initiatives such as the Strategic Cultural Plan. Further this through the development of the City's Reconciliation Framework and potential Arts and Culture Grant Program.	2	Low (\$50,000)	One-time
		1.3.3: Support and encourage participation in Indigenous-led cultural events and ceremonies and explore ways to decolonize existing arts and cultural activities by integrating Indigenous arts and culture into events like Canada Day.	2	N/A	Existing
Goal 2. Build community resilience through arts and culture	Objective 2.1: Use arts and culture to support community belonging and inclusion, where differences and similarities are celebrated	2.1.4: Explore collaborations with community arts groups that serve distinct community members in creating cultural spaces and developing activities that are accessible and welcoming to everyone.	2	Low	Net New Operating
	Objective 2.3: Develop cultural programming that appeals to a more diverse community	2.3.1: Strengthen partnerships with equity priority groups (Indigenous, Black and people of colour, immigrants, 2SLGBTQIA+, persons with disabilities, and unhoused community members) to support or co-create inclusive programs and events, provide space for feedback on cultural sensitivity, and identify diverse programming opportunities that reflect the needs and interests of all community members	2	See 2.1.4	Net New Operating
Goal 3. Develop more accessible and affordable cultural spaces	Objective 3.1: Increase the availability of accessible and affordable spaces for arts and culture	3.1.4: Consider exploring digital platforms to host a Cultural Asset and Resource map that communicates the inventory, availability, and pricing of cultural facilities, in partnership with a community lead agency.	2	Low (\$10,000)	Net New Operating
	Objective 3.2: Prioritize initiatives/upgrades that provide enhanced and additional space for arts and culture	3.2.3: Work with partners to promote grant opportunities, such as the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, for both City and non-City-owned cultural organizations to fund renovations, specialized equipment, and feasibility studies.	2	N/A	Existing
		3.2.5: Develop policy to include arts and cultural facilities and amenities as eligible for development-related funding, including but not limited to Amenity Cost Charges. These funds could be directed toward projects identified in the Cultural Facilities Plan. These tools provide a funding mechanism to ensure that the increased demand on community amenities such as arts and cultural services is accommodated as the community grows, as well as provides for street improvement amenity features that can assist in the unique feeling and community practice of place-making at the neighbourhood scale.	2	N/A	Existing
Goal 4. Bolster community arts	Objective 4.1: Support the capacity building of community-led arts and culture organizations	4.1.2: Leverage the City's relationship with Comox Valley Community Arts Council to support organizational capacity building in the sector through its training and professional development initiatives.	2	N/A	Existing
	Objective 4.3: Increase the awareness of community-led arts and culture events	4.3.1: Introduce an annual Arts and Culture report to Council from core cultural service providers that includes insights from community on their programs and services, as well as performance metrics, and reports on implementation of Strategic Cultural Plan.	2	Low (\$5,000)	Existing
		4.3.2: Consider partnering with existing non-profit organizations who are curating event calendars locally and on Vancouver Island to support promotion and increased awareness of local events	2	N/A	Existing
		4.3.3: Consider support for development of an awareness and marketing strategy to promote arts and culture events and offerings, with a focus on reaching diverse groups. This strategy will also consider event promotion and collaboration with partners like the Comox Valley Community Arts Council.	2	Low (\$50,000)	One-time
Goal 5. Support the strategic development of the cultural sector	Objective 5.1: Build and sustain existing social and economic impact by strengthening Courtenay's professional arts and culture sector	5.1.1: Integrate arts and culture into City's Community Economic Development Analysis and economic strategies, including fostering closer alignment with local, regional, and national economic development initiatives by collaborating with entities like the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA) and Canadian Heritage.	2	N/A	Existing
	Objective 5.2: Embed arts and culture more firmly in tourism initiatives in Courtenay and the Comox Valley	5.2.1: Collaborate with the Comox Valley Regional District and Experience Comox Valley to highlight cultural tourism opportunities in Courtenay, aligning with their Tourism Strategy Plan.	2	N/A	Existing
		5.2.2: Work with local organizations (e.g., Comox Valley Community Arts Council, Experience Comox Valley) to develop a marketing and outreach strategy for events and programs and to promote the City and Comox Valley as a cultural tourism destination. Leverage Experience Comox Valley's annual Destination Plan.	2	See 4.3.3	One-Time
		5.2.3: Create a Working Group to develop a sustainable vision and action plan for nightlife in Courtenay and advocate for the nighttime economy, potentially leveraging the existing Comox Valley Tourism Advisory Committee or Economic Development Strategy.	2	Low (\$50,000)	One-time
		5.2.4: Work with Experience Comox Valley to establish signature tourism events during the shoulder months (outside of summer) to draw year-round visitors to Courtenay and the Comox Valley.	2	Low (\$50,000)	Net New Operating
		5.3.3: Consider reviewing the City's Street Entertainer Program and the associated regulation bylaw. Explore opportunities for leveraging the program for nightlife and community placemaking activities via collaboration with local businesses.	2	N/A	Existing

## Appendix 2: Detailed Implementation Strategy by Phase

Implementation Strategy - Phase 3					
Goal	Objectives	Actions	Phase	Budget Estimate	Existing, Net New Operating, One-time
Goal 1. Advance truth and reconciliation through arts and culture	Objective 1.3: Increase support and investment in Indigenous arts and culture	1.3.4: Foster collaboration with Indigenous artists and creators by commissioning or showcasing their work and exploring facilitation of networking opportunities to connect with peers, collaborators, mentors, and buyers.	3	See 1.2.2	One-Time
		1.3.5: Advocate for sustainable tourism initiatives and tourism investments that respectfully highlight and celebrate Indigenous arts and culture in collaboration with K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples.	3	N/A	Existing
Goal 2. Build community resilience through arts and culture	Objective 2.2: Leverage arts and culture as a medium to engage community on complex social challenges and to support healing	2.2.1: Support ongoing collaborative arts and culture projects with local organizations that encourage dialogue, collective problem-solving, and storytelling through diverse media to address social challenges like isolation, while promoting relevant grant funding streams to support this work.	3	See 4.1.3	Net New Operating
		2.2.2: Develop partnerships with organizations that provide arts and culture-based wellness activities to support healing and well-being, especially for community members affected by trauma or social disparities.	3	See 2.1.4	Net New Operating
	Objective 2.3: Develop cultural programming that appeals to a more diverse community	2.3.2: Showcase the contributions of diverse individuals and local organizations in the cultural sector through an awards program or by integrating recognition into existing community events	3	Low	Net New Operating
Goal 3. Develop more accessible and affordable cultural spaces	Objective 3.1: Increase the availability of accessible and affordable spaces for arts and culture	2.3.3: Explore partnerships with local groups and institutions, such as North Island College and School District 71, to develop youth arts and culture programming both in schools and community, focusing on reducing barriers to participation.	3	See 2.1.4	Net New Operating
		3.1.2: Encourage other arts and cultural spaces (non-City-owned) to conduct accessibility audits of their spaces. The City can support this by communicating and promoting external grant opportunities that support facility retrofits.	3	N/A	Existing
Goal 4. Bolster community arts	Objective 4.2: Break down silos and increase collaboration across the cultural sector	3.1.3: Advocate to the region for transit providers to include consideration for events and programming relating to arts and culture (i.e., car and bike usage, shuttle usage, walking and parking) in service planning.	3	N/A	Existing
		4.2.1: Work with one of the core cultural service providers to organize regular networking events, conferences, and forums that connect organizations, facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration, and exchange resources to strengthen community capacity throughout the region.	3	Low	Net New Operating
		4.2.2: Consider fostering a relationship between the cultural sector and other local institutions – e.g. North Island College and SD71. Such a relationship can support youth engagement in arts and culture as well as access to the use of school spaces.	3	N/A	Existing
	Objective 4.3: Increase the awareness of community-led arts and culture events	4.2.3: Investigate opportunities to develop policies or incentives to encourage partnerships between local businesses (i.e. Downtown Courtenay BIA), and local artists, groups, and organizations.	3	N/A	Existing
		4.3.4: Promote and raise awareness of arts and culture by supporting community-based arts projects supported by public art policy.	3	N/A	Existing
Goal 5. Support the strategic development of the cultural sector	Objective 5.3: Create new and or updated policies to support the cultural sector	4.3.5: Consider creating an annual or bi-annual process of updating Courtenay's Cultural Asset Map in collaboration with Creative Coast to highlight Courtenay's cultural offerings and encourage regional collaboration.	3	See 3.1.4	Net New Operating
		5.3.4: Consider establishing an arts and culture committee for the City to advise Council and staff on priorities, activities, and initiatives related to arts and culture in Courtenay, including the implementation of the Strategic Cultural Plan and alignment with local tourism and economic development activities.	3	Low (\$10,000)	Net New Operating
	Objective 5.4: Explore strategic ways to meet sector labour needs	5.4.1: Consider opportunities of working with School District 71 and local organizations to integrate arts and culture into school curricula to foster the interest of children and youth in the arts and cultural sector.	3	N/A	Existing
		5.4.2: Support collaborations between local organizations and educational institutions (such as North Island College and Excel Career College) to develop and fast-track technical and short courses related to arts and culture including sound and lighting, stage management and crowd control related courses.	3	N/A	Existing
		5.4.3: Investigate ways the City can support local arts and culture organizations to offer volunteer, mentorship, and co-op educational opportunities for youth and community members who are interested in developing a career in the cultural sector.	3	N/A	Existing
	5.4.4: Support the approval of developments that provide housing and workspaces for artisans and the cultural sector in the community (similar to Tin Town) in the community. Advance land use planning in Town Centres where this type of use is allowed as per the OCP, and consider other tools such as pre-zoning specific areas (i.e. through the Downtown Local Area Plan) to enable the development of artist housing and workspace.	3	N/A	Existing	

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**City of  
Courtenay**

**CULTURE**  
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**Strategic  
Cultural Plan  
Summary**



City of  
Courtenay

## Vision

**Courtenay is a thriving cultural hub of creative opportunities, dedicated to cultivating vibrant and inclusive arts and culture for residents and visitors alike. Culture and history of Indigenous peoples are interwoven into a diverse community where connection and resiliency are celebrated through artistic expression and cultural exchange.**



## Land Acknowledgment

The City of Courtenay respectfully acknowledges that the lands to which this Strategic Cultural Plan applies are on the Unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

The City is committed to a long-term collaboration with the K'ómoks First Nation to ensure the Strategic Cultural Plan supports Truth and Reconciliation and reflects K'ómoks First Nation values, objectives, and priorities. The City acknowledges that the Strategic Cultural Plan will need to be a living document to allow time for relationship building and meaningful engagement with K'ómoks First Nation that considers Indigenous values, practices, and priorities.

# Summary

Located in the Comox Valley and on the Unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, Courtenay offers a vibrant arts and culture scene with a variety of offerings to residents and visitors. **The city is the heart of arts and culture in the Comox Valley, connecting residents and communities through diverse arts and cultural experiences.** There is also significant community and City support for the cultural sector, with numerous local arts and cultural organizations, and cultural facilities that serve residents of the city, and region, as well as visitors.



The Strategic Cultural Plan creates a **framework and roadmap** to continue supporting arts and culture in Courtenay over the next 10 years. The Plan includes specific objectives and actions, informed by **extensive research and consultations**, including with diverse community members, arts and culture patrons, and local arts and culture organizations. The Plan was developed using a **5-phase approach**, involving desk research, community engagement, analysis, followed by the development of a draft strategy and recommendations for community feedback and review, and lastly, the creation of the final Strategic Cultural Plan.

**Community engagement for the Strategic Cultural Plan included:** an online survey which received approximately 700 responses overall, feedback from 120 community members via qualitative engagements, an arts and culture sector focus group attended by 38 participants from local arts and culture organizations, and a public drop-in engagement event in July 2023.





The team also held 24 interviews, which engaged 54 participants in total. These interviews included consultations with four core cultural services providers i.e., the Sid Williams Theatre Society, the Comox Valley Arts Gallery Society, the Comox Valley Community Arts Council, and the Courtenay and District Historical Society). In addition, 28 participants were engaged as part of four group conversations with equity priority communities (i.e., representatives of/persons with lived experience of disabilities, being unhoused, being a newcomer, and being part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community).

Before the document was finalized, feedback from an online survey which received 149 responses, four Indigenous serving community organizations, and feedback from an additional session with the core cultural service providers were incorporated.

**Community engagement identified priority needs** based on collective findings from engagement activities and across all individual and community group consultations for the Strategic Cultural Plan.

Findings indicate there is a need for:

- Engaging K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples with cultural humility and cultural safety
- More cultural spaces, and better availability and affordability
- Developing more diverse and affordable cultural programming
- Further promotion of community partnerships and collaboration
- Increased support – financial and non-financial, local, and regional
- Further development of cultural tourism
- Attraction and training of technical cultural workers
- Development of a Public Art Policy
- Building relationships with community members including Elders

# Foundational Elements

The strategic vision for Courtenay’s cultural landscape sets the stage for a dynamic and inclusive future where arts and culture play a pivotal role in community identity and resilience. To translate this vision into actionable goals, it is essential to establish the foundational elements that will guide our efforts in responding to the strategic plan’s goals, objectives, and actions. These elements represent the core priorities that must be integrated across all cultural initiatives, ensuring that our strategy is both comprehensive and sustainable.



## Advance Reconciliation Across All Initiatives

A key action for Courtenay is to weave the principles of truth and reconciliation into the fabric of every cultural effort. This means ensuring that the history, culture, and contributions of the K’ómoks First Nation, MIKI’SIW Métis Association, Inuit and Urban Indigenous peoples are not only acknowledged but celebrated throughout the city. This commitment to reconciliation must guide the City’s actions, policies, and the way we engage with the community, making it a cornerstone of Courtenay’s cultural identity.



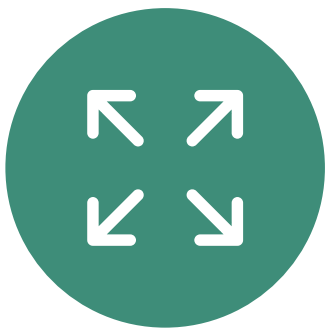
## Build the Team to Drive Cultural Change

To lead Courtenay’s cultural transformation, the City must invest in building a strong, dedicated team. This involves reflecting on the findings of the benchmarking analysis and determining Courtenay’s approach to resource creation that is required to drive this ambitious cultural agenda. New cultural resources will be required either internally, externally, or a blend of both and with the right people in place, Courtenay can effectively deliver on its cultural promises, ensuring that arts and culture are accessible and thriving for all.



### **Elevate Investment in Arts and Culture**

One of the most impactful actions the City can take is to increase its financial commitment to arts and culture. By prioritizing funding and investment, Courtenay will enable its cultural sector to grow and innovate and continue to deliver on the exceptional social, economic, and tourism impacts of the sector. This move is about more than just funding projects—it’s about creating a sustainable environment where funding can be leveraged to so that arts and culture can reach its full potential.



### **Transform and Expand Cultural Spaces**

Courtenay’s cultural spaces located in the downtown are at the heart of community life, and enhancing these facilities is a critical move to achieving the vision of a cultural district.. Whether it’s upgrading existing venues, creating new multi-purpose spaces, or improving accessibility, these investments will ensure that the City’s cultural infrastructure meets the needs of a growing and diverse population. This move is essential for fostering a sense of place and ensuring that all residents and visitors can participate in the City’s cultural life.

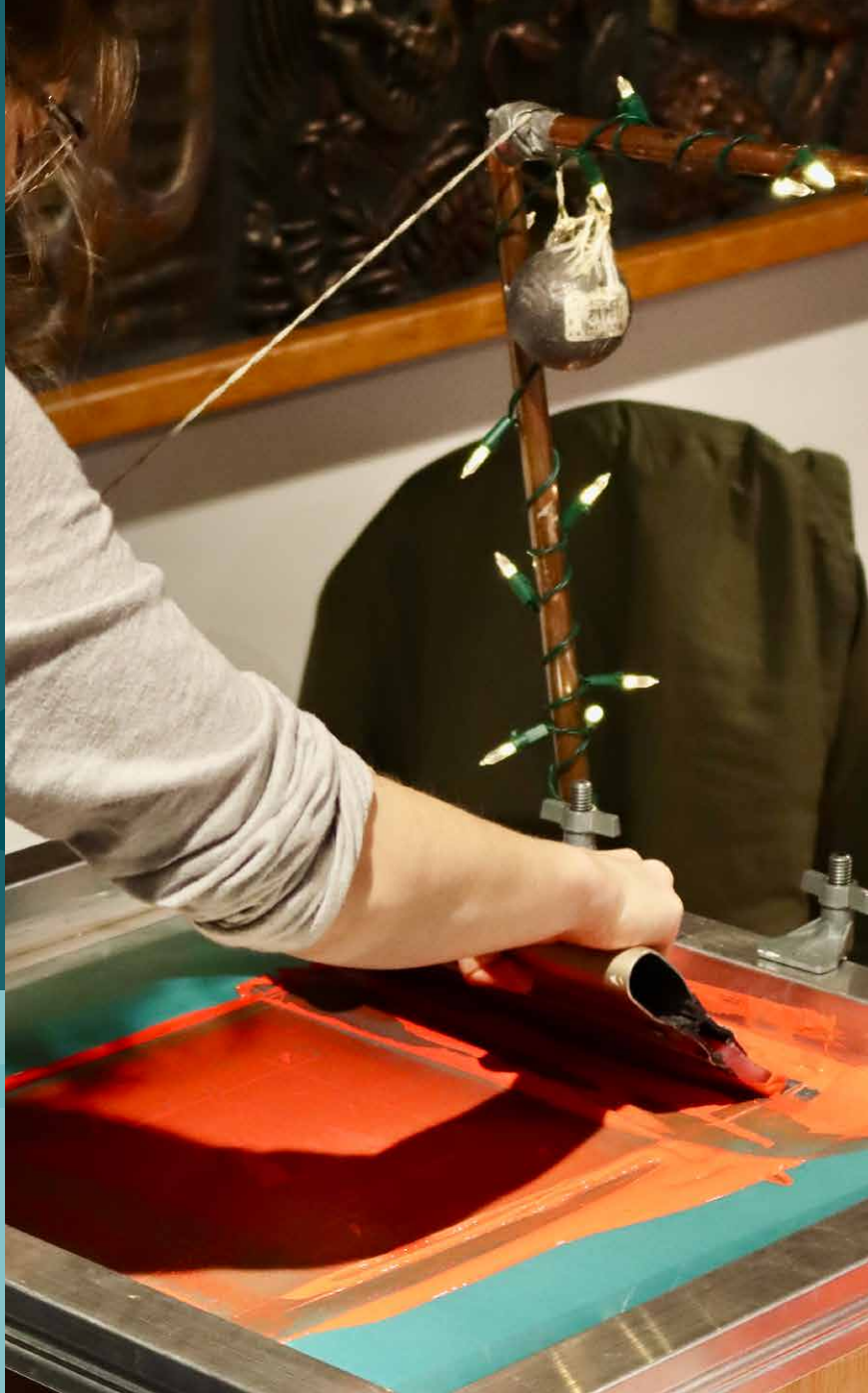


### **Lead Regional Cultural Advocacy**

Courtenay must take a leadership role in advocating for arts and culture not just within its own boundaries, but across the Comox Valley. By championing regional collaboration and investment, and positioning Courtenay as a cultural leader, the City can attract new opportunities, enhance tourism, and strengthen its cultural sector. This move will require building strong partnerships and advocating for policies and investments that benefit the entire region and reflect the regional impact of Courtenay’s arts and culture assets.

# Courtenay Strategic Cultural Plan Goals, Objectives, and Actions

## GOAL 1 Advance truth and reconciliation through arts and culture



### OBJECTIVE 1.1

Recognize the role and rights of K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit and Urban Indigenous peoples as it relates to arts and culture

- ▶ **Action 1.1.1:** Commit to **ongoing relationship building** with K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit and Urban Indigenous peoples to allow for the **continuous shaping of the Strategic Cultural Plan** as a living document reflective of the Indigenous history of Courtenay and the region.
- ▶ **Action 1.1.2:** Engage with K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit and Urban Indigenous peoples to **seek input, guidance, and consent** in cultural planning processes and co-designing protocols through **decolonized practices**.
- ▶ **Action 1.1.3:** Include Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community leaders in **cultural planning processes** to ensure the incorporation of traditional wisdom.



### OBJECTIVE 1.2

#### Respectfully acknowledge K'ómoks territory through arts and culture

- ▶ **Action 1.2.1:** Continue to **respectfully acknowledge the land**, recognizing the Unceded traditional territories of the K'ómoks First Nation, in all City-led engagement and activities. Further this through the development of the City's Reconciliation Framework, and include corporate policy to ensure K'ómoks First Nation land acknowledgment is carried out consistently across City operations.
- ▶ **Action 1.2.2:** Support the creation of **public art installations that celebrate K'ómoks First Nation and Indigenous cultures** and reinforce the City's commitment through development of a **Public Art Policy**. These installations can serve as a visible and lasting representation of the respect and acknowledgment of the territory and should be commissioned from Indigenous artists.
- ▶ **Action 1.2.3:** Consider **renaming the Native Sons Hall** following an appropriate process that acknowledges the harms caused by the Native Sons of Canada to a number of equity deserving groups. The process should be conducted with consent from K'ómoks First Nation as part of acknowledging the Indigenous history of Courtenay.

### OBJECTIVE 1.3

#### Increase support and investment in Indigenous arts and culture

- ▶ **Action 1.3.1:** Consider establishing dedicated **funding and grants for Indigenous artists, cultural projects, and public art** through a City-funded Arts and Culture Grant Program.
- ▶ **Action 1.3.2:** Investigate **financial investment** opportunities to support K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit and Urban Indigenous organizations to **bolster their capacity for meaningful engagement** in City arts and culture initiatives such as the Strategic Cultural Plan. Further this through the development of the City's Reconciliation Framework and potential Arts and Culture Grant Program.
- ▶ **Action 1.3.3:** Support and encourage participation in **Indigenous-led cultural events and ceremonies** and explore ways to decolonize existing arts and cultural activities by integrating Indigenous arts and culture into events like Canada Day.
- ▶ **Action 1.3.4:** Foster **collaboration with Indigenous artists and creators** by commissioning or showcasing their work and exploring facilitation of networking opportunities to connect with peers, collaborators, mentors, and buyers.
- ▶ **Action 1.3.5:** Advocate for **sustainable tourism initiatives and tourism investments** that respectfully highlight and celebrate Indigenous arts and culture in collaboration with K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit and Urban Indigenous cultures.
- ▶ **Action 1.3.6:** Explore partnerships with Indigenous communities to co-develop arts and culture-related **policies, learning opportunities, programs, events, and workshops** that foster understanding of Indigenous histories, traditions, and values.

## GOAL 2

# Build community resilience through arts and culture

### OBJECTIVE 2.1

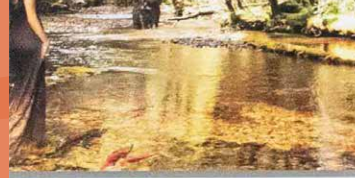
**Use arts and culture to support community belonging and inclusion, where differences and similarities are celebrated**

- ▶ **Action 2.1.1:** Explore establishing a **Cultural Coordinator position** at the City as a resource for arts and culture. This role will be responsible for connecting with communities, building relationships, and ensuring that arts and culture initiatives are effectively integrated and supported throughout the City.
- ▶ **Action 2.1.2:** Review the **City's current event and festival support**, as well as community activities, with a lens to enhance diverse cultural representation and celebrations (i.e. Complete a Special Events and Hosting Policy for the City of Courtenay).
- ▶ **Action 2.1.3:** Explore ways to make arts and cultural events, as well as heritage offerings more **inclusive, accessible, and representative** in collaboration with community arts groups.
- ▶ **Action 2.1.4:** Explore **collaborations with community arts groups** that serve distinct community members in creating cultural spaces and developing activities that are accessible and welcoming to everyone.

### OBJECTIVE 2.2

**Leverage arts and culture as a medium to engage community on complex social challenges and to support healing**

- ▶ **Action 2.2.1:** Support ongoing **collaborative arts and culture projects** with local organizations that encourage dialogue, collective problem-solving, and storytelling through diverse media to address social challenges like isolation, while promoting relevant grant funding streams to support this work.



- ▶ **Action 2.2.2:** Develop **partnerships with organizations that provide arts and culture-based wellness activities to support healing and well-being**, especially for community members affected by trauma or social disparities.

### OBJECTIVE 2.3

**Develop cultural programming that appeals to a more diverse community**

- ▶ **Action 2.3.1:** **Strengthen partnerships with equity priority groups** (Indigenous, Black and people of colour, immigrants, 2SLGBTQIA+, persons with disabilities, and unhoused community members) to support or co-create inclusive programs and events, provide space for feedback on cultural sensitivity, and identify diverse programming opportunities that reflect the needs and interests of all community members.
- ▶ **Action 2.3.2:** **Showcase the contributions of diverse individuals and local organizations** in the cultural sector through an awards program or by integrating recognition into existing community events.
- ▶ **Action 2.3.3:** Explore **partnerships with local groups and institutions**, such as North Island College and School District 71, to develop **youth arts and culture** programming both in schools and community, focusing on reducing barriers to participation.

## GOAL 3

### Develop more accessible and affordable cultural spaces



#### OBJECTIVE 3.1

##### Increase the availability of accessible and affordable spaces for arts and culture

- ▶ **Action 3.1.1: Conduct a facility needs assessment and accessibility audit** of City-owned arts and culture spaces as the first step in developing a Cultural Facilities Plan. This assessment will consider factors like location, transportation, and potential upgrades, with the findings directly informing the plan to guide future development of cultural spaces.
- ▶ **Action 3.1.2: Encourage other arts and cultural spaces (non City-owned) to conduct accessibility audits of their spaces.** The City can support this by communicating and promoting external grant opportunities that support facility retrofits.
- ▶ **Action 3.1.3: Advocate to the region for transit providers** to include consideration for events and programming relating to arts and culture (i.e., car and bike usage, shuttle usage, walking and parking) in service planning.
- ▶ **Action 3.1.4:** Consider exploring **digital platforms to host a Cultural Asset and Resource map** that communicates the inventory, availability, and pricing of cultural facilities, in partnership with a community lead agency.

#### OBJECTIVE 3.2

##### Prioritize initiatives and upgrades that provide enhanced and additional space for arts and culture

- ▶ **Action 3.2.1:** Complete Facility Feasibility / Needs Assessments to **look at how existing City-owned arts and culture facilities can be modified to meet**

**emerging community needs** and support the **cultural district in the downtown area** where existing cultural assets are located (including spaces for live performance, multi-disciplinary, rehearsal, and creation spaces). These efforts should be integrated into a Cultural Facilities Plan to align with the City's long-term cultural infrastructure strategy.

- ▶ **Action 3.2.2:** Develop a **Cultural Facilities Plan** with short, medium and long term priorities, leveraging relevant feedback collected and analysis undertaken in the Strategic Cultural Plan project including the Cultural Facilities Options Analysis.
- ▶ **Action 3.2.3:** Work with partners to **promote grant opportunities**, such as the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, for both City and non-City-owned cultural organizations to fund renovations, specialized equipment, and feasibility studies.
- ▶ **Action 3.2.4: Advocate to the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD)** regarding regional funding to support future capital arts and culture projects that demonstrate regional impact.
- ▶ **Action 3.2.5: Develop policy to include arts and cultural facilities and amenities as eligible to receive development related funding** including, but not limited to, Amenity Cost Charges. These funds could be directed toward projects identified in the Cultural Facilities Plan. These tools provide a funding mechanism to ensure that the increased demand on community amenities such as arts and cultural services is accommodated as the community grows, as well as provides for street improvement amenity features that can assist in the unique feeling and community practice of place-making at the neighbourhood scale.

## GOAL 4 Bolster community arts



### OBJECTIVE 4.1

#### Support the capacity building of community-led arts and culture organizations

- ▶ **Action 4.1.1: Continue supporting core cultural service providers** (i.e., Comox Valley Art Gallery, the Courtenay and District Museum, the Sid Williams Civic Theatre, and the Comox Valley Community Arts Council) to ensure continuity and ability to meet their full potential as cultural anchors in the community.
- ▶ **Action 4.1.2:** Leverage the City's relationship with Comox Valley Community Arts Council to support organizational capacity building in the sector through its **training and professional development initiatives**.
- ▶ **Action 4.1.3:** Consider establishing a **City-funded Arts and Culture Grant Program** to support community-led events, initiatives, and organizational capacity building. This grant program would be the primary mechanism for providing financial resources to local arts organizations, community groups, and Indigenous artists.
- ▶ **Action 4.1.4:** Explore establishing a **dedicated Cultural Coordinator role in the City** to act as a liaison for the cultural community, support capacity building, identify and act on arts and culture opportunities, lead coordination activities, and implement the Cultural Strategic Plan.

### OBJECTIVE 4.2

#### Break down silos and increase collaboration across the cultural sector

- ▶ **Action 4.2.1:** Work with one of the core cultural service providers to organize **regular networking events, conferences, and forums that connect organizations**, facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration, and exchange resources to strengthen community capacity throughout the region.

- ▶ **Action 4.2.2:** Consider **fostering a relationship between the cultural sector and other local institutions** – e.g. North Island College and SD71. Such a relationship can support youth engagement in arts and culture as well as access to the use of school spaces.
- ▶ **Action 4.2.3:** Investigate opportunities to **develop policies or incentives to encourage partnerships between local businesses** (i.e. Downtown Courtenay BIA), and local artists, groups, and organizations.

### OBJECTIVE 4.3

#### Increase the awareness of community-led arts and culture events

- ▶ **Action 4.3.1:** Introduce an **annual Arts and Culture report to Council from core cultural service providers** that includes insights from community on their programs and services, as well as performance metrics, and reports on implementation of Strategic Cultural Plan.
- ▶ **Action 4.3.2:** Consider **partnering with existing non-profit organizations who are curating event calendars** locally and on Vancouver Island to support promotion and increased awareness of local events.
- ▶ **Action 4.3.3:** Consider **support for development of an awareness and marketing strategy to promote arts and culture events and offerings**, with a focus on reaching diverse groups. This strategy will also consider event promotion and collaboration with partners like the Comox Valley Community Arts Council.
- ▶ **Action 4.3.4:** Promote and raise awareness of arts and culture by **supporting community-based arts projects supported by public art policy**.
- ▶ **Action 4.3.5:** Consider creating an **annual or bi-annual process of updating Courtenay's Cultural Asset Map** in collaboration with Creative Coast to highlight Courtenay's cultural offerings and encourage regional collaboration.



## GOAL 5

### Support the strategic development of the cultural sector

#### OBJECTIVE 5.1

**Build and sustain existing social and economic impact by strengthening Courtenay's professional arts and culture sector**

- ▶ **Action 5.1.1: Integrate arts and culture into City's Community Economic Development Analysis and economic strategies**, including fostering closer alignment with local, regional, and national economic development initiatives by collaborating with entities like the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA) and Canadian Heritage.
- ▶ **Action 5.1.2: Review and enhance existing funding structures to support core cultural service providers** (Comox Valley Community Arts Council (CVAC), Comox Valley Art Gallery (CVAG), Sid William Theatre, and Courtenay and District Museum) by considering integrating existing funding into a dedicated stream within a City-Funded Arts and Culture Grant Program. This will ensure that these providers continue to meet the evolving needs of the community.
- ▶ **Action 5.1.3: Cultivate diverse collaborations with interest groups**, including educational systems (e.g., North Island College, School District 71), private studios, individual arts educators, and music organizations, to build a robust network that amplifies the sector's influence and supports arts education and Indigenous collaborations.
- ▶ **Action 5.1.4: Explore a regional funding and coordination approach with Comox Valley local governments and the Comox Valley Regional District** to support arts and culture. This includes establishing regional funding for core cultural partners who provide regional services, as well as community grants and capital funds for arts and culture.



#### OBJECTIVE 5.2

**Embed arts and culture more firmly in tourism initiatives in Courtenay and the Comox Valley**

- ▶ **Action 5.2.1: Collaborate with the Comox Valley Regional District and Experience Comox Valley** to highlight cultural tourism opportunities in Courtenay, aligning with their Tourism Strategy Plan.
- ▶ **Action 5.2.2: Work with local organizations** (e.g., Comox Valley Community Arts Council, Experience Comox Valley) to develop a **marketing and outreach strategy** for events and programs and to promote the City and Comox Valley as a cultural tourism destination. Leverage Experience Comox Valley's annual Destination Plan.
- ▶ **Action 5.2.3: Create a Working Group to develop a sustainable vision and action plan for nightlife** in Courtenay and advocate for the nighttime economy, potentially leveraging the existing Comox Valley Tourism Advisory Committee or Economic Development Strategy.
- ▶ **Action 5.2.4: Work with Experience Comox Valley to establish signature tourism events** during the shoulder months (outside of summer) to draw year-round visitors to Courtenay and the Comox Valley.

### OBJECTIVE 5.3

#### Create new and/or updated policies to support the cultural sector

- ▶ **Action 5.3.1:** Develop a **Special Events and Hosting Policy or Guidelines** that support arts and cultural events including those that serve as a tourism draw for Courtenay. The policy could also outline how to create accessible materials for hosting events that would be useful to community-led and grassroots event organizers. The policy should further clarify guidelines for when the City is being a host, a facilitator a location for special events. Note, this policy should align with cultural tourism and economic development plans.
- ▶ **Action 5.3.2:** Develop a **Public Art Policy** that supports public art and mural projects in the community. The policy would outline how to prioritize commissions for local artists, as well as support the representation of Indigenous arts and culture in the community. The policy could also help foster youth engagement in community public art initiatives.
- ▶ **Action 5.3.3:** Consider reviewing the **City's Street Entertainer Program and the associated regulation bylaw**. Explore opportunities for leveraging the program for nightlife and community placemaking activities via collaboration with local businesses.
- ▶ **Action 5.3.4:** Consider establishing an **arts and culture committee** for the City to advise Council and Staff on priorities, activities, and initiatives related to arts and culture in Courtenay, including the implementation of the Strategic Cultural Plan and alignment with local tourism and economic development activities.
- ▶ **Action 5.3.5:** Include arts and culture in local area planning initiatives, with specific consideration **for identifying Downtown as an arts, culture, and heritage hub or district** in line with the OCP.



### OBJECTIVE 5.4

#### Explore strategic ways to meet sector labour needs

- ▶ **Action 5.4.1:** Consider opportunities of **working with School District 71 and local organizations to integrate arts and culture into school curricula** to foster the interest of children and youth in the arts and cultural sector.
- ▶ **Action 5.4.2:** Support **collaborations between local organizations and educational institutions** (such as North Island College and Excel Career College) **to develop and fast-track technical and short courses related to arts and culture** including sound and lighting, stage management and crowd control related courses.
- ▶ **Action 5.4.3:** Investigate ways the City can support local arts and culture organizations to offer **volunteer, mentorship, and co-op educational opportunities** for youth and community members who are interested in developing a career in the cultural sector.
- ▶ **Action 5.4.4:** Support the approval of developments that **provide housing and workspaces for artisans and the cultural sector** in the community (similar to Tin Town). **Advance land use planning in Town Centres** where this type of use is allowed as per the OCP, and consider other tools such as pre-zoning specific areas (i.e. through the Downtown Local Area Plan) to enable the development of artist housing and workspace. This initiative can draw inspiration from successful models like Montreal and Vancouver, where affordable housing contributes to vibrant artistic communities and can also attract talent to support the cultural sector.



## Conclusion

Courtenay's Strategic Cultural Plan establishes a strong framework for fostering a vibrant, inclusive cultural sector through five key focus areas: advancing truth and reconciliation, building community resilience, developing accessible cultural spaces, bolstering community arts, and supporting sector growth. The plan, built on extensive community input, outlines the economic, social, and tourism benefits of investing in arts and culture, with regional collaboration essential to its success. The Strategic Cultural Plan sets the stage for the next decade of work and investment in arts and culture in Courtenay. It remains a living document which will evolve into the future with guidance from Indigenous peoples and communities through long-term and meaningful relationships.

**Contact Info**

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[courtenay.ca/strategicculturalplan](http://courtenay.ca/strategicculturalplan)



**City of  
Courtenay**



# MIKI'SIW Métis Association

207-576 England Avenue, Courtenay, BC, V9N 2N3  
T. 250-871-7353 E. comoxvalleymetisoffice@gmail.com

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February 10, 2025

830 Cliffe Avenue  
Courtenay, BC, V9N 2J7

Tansi Joy Chan,

Thank you again for inviting and hosting the MIKI'SIW Métis Association (MIKI'SIW) Board of Directors to review and provide feedback on the City of Courtenay Strategic Cultural Plan on October 21, 2024. Your personal approach to meeting with our board members was conducted in a manner that demonstrated cultural humility, safety and respect.

We understand that reconciliation and Indigenous engagement and consultation is often seen as complex. We have tried to address some of your questions and further explain the nuances.

## **Municipal Affairs Mandate**

Mandate Letter to Honourable Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs, from David Eby, Premier, November 18, 2024.

*"This work will be enabled and accelerated by advancing true, lasting, and meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Reconciliation is not just a priority—it is foundational to our collective future. Our government will strengthen our relationships with Indigenous communities in tangible, measurable ways that benefit all communities across the province."*

Ministry of Housing 2024/25-2026/27 Service Plan, February 2024.

*"Government will continue working collaboratively with Indigenous Peoples as it implements the Action Plan for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and delivers initiatives that advance reconciliation in ways that make a difference in communities throughout the province."*

## **Indigenous Peoples**

The provincial government passed the *Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) into law in 2019. This establishes the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) as the Province's framework for reconciliation.

The *Indigenous Governing Bodies in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* document provides guidance on what constitutes an "entity authorized to act on behalf of Indigenous peoples" is a matter of Indigenous self-determination, as articulated in the UN Declaration including in articles 3, 4, and 5:

*“Article 3: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.*

*Article 4: Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.*

*Article 5: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.”*

### **Métis as Indigenous People with Section 35 Rights**

The Métis people of Canada are identified under Section 35 of the Constitution as a rights-holding Aboriginal peoples. These rights are equal to the First Nations and Inuit peoples of Canada. There is a misconception nationally that treaty rights with First Nations supersede the Section 35 rights of the Métis, or merely that the Section 35 rights of the First Nations supersede Métis Section 35 rights. This misconception is not supported by the Constitution or any relevant case law. Métis Section 35 rights are equal to the Section 35 rights of First Nations and Inuit.

In his 2016 report to the Government of Canada, *A Matter of National and Constitutional Import: Report of the Minister’s Special Representative on Reconciliation with Métis: Section 35 Métis Rights and the Manitoba Métis Federation Decision*, Tom Issac states:

*“Reconciliation is more than platitudes and recognition. Reconciliation flows from the constitutionally protected rights of Métis protected by Section 35 and is inextricably tied to the honour of the Crown, and must be grounded in practical actions.”*

### **Métis Nation British Columbia**

The Métis Nation BC (MNBC) represents the Section 35 rights of over 27,000 Métis citizens who are registered with MNBC and advocates for the over 98,000 self-identified Métis in BC. MNBC is recognized by the Métis National Council, Provincial Government of British Columbia, and the Federal Government of Canada, as the Governing Nation for Métis in BC. MNBC represents forty (40) Métis Chartered Communities. The MIKI’SIW Métis Association is the Chartered Community of MNBC in the Comox Valley.

### **Understanding Rights, and Land and Title Rights**

All First Nations, Métis and Inuit have Section 35 rights. Land and title rights are held by Indigenous Nations that have an inherent Aboriginal right to land or a territory. The Canadian legal system recognizes Aboriginal title as a *sui generis*, or unique collective right to the use of and jurisdiction over a group’s ancestral territories. This right is not granted from an external source but is a result of Aboriginal peoples’ own occupation of and relationship with their home territories as well as their ongoing social structures and political and legal systems. As such, Aboriginal title and rights are separate. A distinctions-based approach is used to differentiate between Section 35 rights and land and title rights.

In the Comox Valley, the K'omoks First Nation (KFN) holds land and title rights. The non-status, urban and away First Nations population does not hold the same land and title rights. Neither do Métis or Inuit. However, these Indigenous communities still hold Section 35 rights. MNBC and MIKI'SIW respectfully acknowledge KFN rights and title to their unceded traditional territory and do not claim any rights or title to these lands.

### **Understanding the distinctions-based approach**

The province utilizes a distinctions-based approach to consulting and engaging with Indigenous Peoples.

*"A distinction-based approach means that the Province's work with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit will be conducted in a manner that acknowledges the specific rights, interests, priorities and concerns of each, while respecting and acknowledging these distinct Peoples with unique cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments."*

A distinctions-based approach means that where engagement is intended for Indigenous Peoples, this is inclusive of First Nations, Métis and Inuit. For First Nations, this includes land and title holders; as well as, non-status, urban and away First Nations. There is no hierarchy of rights. Only when the engagement is specific to, and deals with land or title rights of the First Nation, would it be appropriate to consult with that First Nation individually.

### **City of Courtenay Cultural Strategic Plan**

Any content or graphics contained in the City of Courtenay Cultural Strategic Plan should honour and respect the information provided above.

Marsii.

Respectfully,



Tom Adams  
President, MIKI'SIW Métis Association  
T. 250-702-7144 E. [comoxvalleymetis@gmail.com](mailto:comoxvalleymetis@gmail.com)

MIKI'SIW Métis Association Board of Directors:

Chrys Sample  
Brad Dillen  
Carole O'Brennan  
Candace Thorne  
Heather Grealey  
Laurie Chase  
Nick Brady  
Richard Williams



City of  
Courtenay

ZOOM Window Space

# Strategic Cultural Plan



Presented by: Recreation, Culture, and  
Community Services

March 12, 2025 Council Meeting



# Presentation Outline

ZOOM Window Space

## Strategic Cultural Plan & Implementation Strategy

Project Process Overview

Draft Strategy – Engagement Highlights

Courtenay's Strategic Cultural Plan

Implementation Strategy

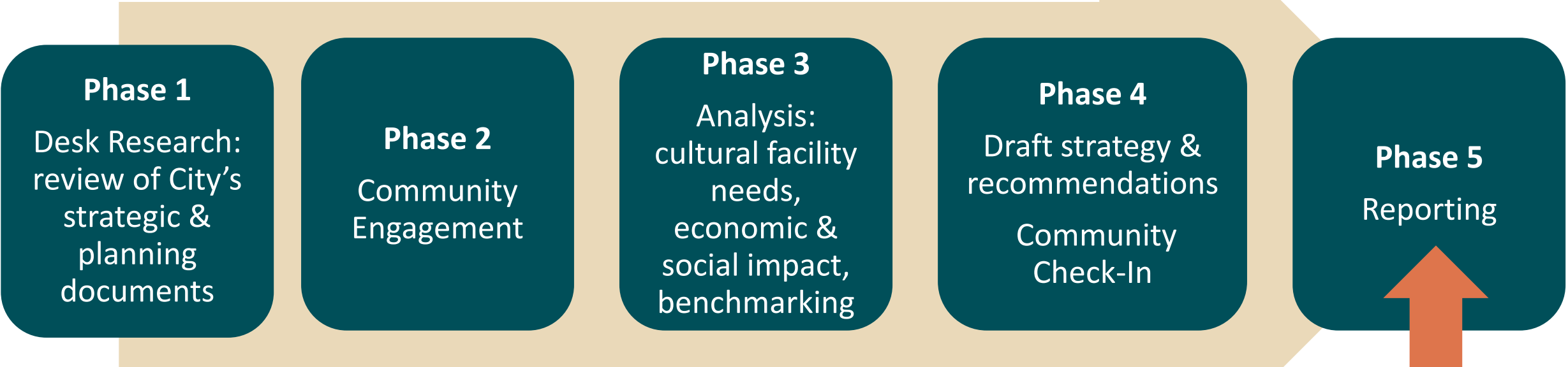
Recommendation



# Project Overview

## Cultural Planning Process

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### Phase 1

Desk Research:  
review of City's  
strategic &  
planning  
documents

### Phase 2

Community  
Engagement

### Phase 3

Analysis:  
cultural facility  
needs,  
economic &  
social impact,  
benchmarking

### Phase 4

Draft strategy &  
recommendations  
Community  
Check-In

### Phase 5

Reporting



We are here!

# Community Engagement

ZOOM Window Space



**Online Surveys**  
Phase 1: ~700 Responses  
Check-In: 78 Responses



**24 Interviews**  
(54 participants)



**Arts & Culture Sector  
Focus Group**  
(38 participants)



**Public Drop-In Event  
Community Check-in  
Event**



**4 Group Conversations  
with equity priority  
communities**  
(28 participants)



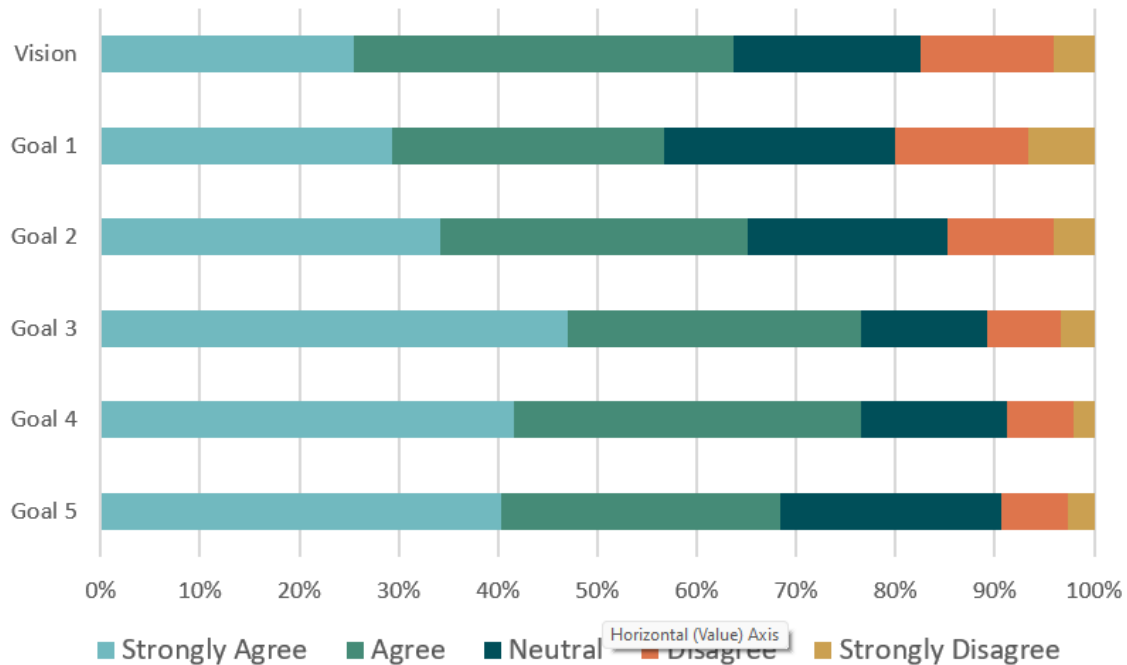
**Indigenous serving  
organizations  
Core Cultural Partners  
Public Survey**  
(~149 responses)

# Draft Strategic Cultural Plan

ZOOM Window Space

## What we heard – Online Survey

Draft Cultural Strategic Plan Feedback



- Support for affordable arts spaces.
- More opportunities for local artists.
- Cultural initiatives for community resilience.
- Need for clear plans, collaboration, and accountability.
- Recognition of truth and reconciliation efforts.
- Questions regarding costs and feasibility.
- Debate on funding arts vs. social issues.
- Support for grassroots, community-driven efforts.

# Draft Strategic Cultural Plan

ZOOM Window Space

## What we heard – Community Conversations

### Indigenous Serving Organizations

- Support for distinction-based approach, with guidance on interpretation.
- Significant value placed on relationship building with community members, including Elders.
- Support for promoting truth and reconciliation through arts and cultural events.
- Importance of providing honorariums for Indigenous contributions and knowledge.
- Recommendation that local governments employ Indigenous staff to support culturally safe interactions.
- Need to advance anti-racism policies for awareness and inclusion.

### Core Cultural Partners

- Support for the creation of a staff position focused on culture to respond to sector and City needs.
- Importance of completing cultural facility needs assessments and feasibility studies to address urgent infrastructure and program requirements and ensure cultural assets are protected from climate impacts.
- Support for a cultural district downtown.
- Advocacy for regional partnerships and funding models.
- Willingness and desire to collaborate on grant applications from Federal and Provincial sources.

**CULTURE**  
**CONNECTS US**

**Strategic  
Cultural Plan**



# Strategic Cultural Plan: Culture Connects Us

ZOOM Window Space

## Vision

“

Courtenay is a **thriving cultural hub of creative opportunities**, dedicated to cultivating vibrant and inclusive arts and culture for residents and visitors alike. Culture and history of **Indigenous peoples** are interwoven into a diverse community where connection and resiliency are celebrated through **artistic expression and cultural exchange**.

”

# Strategic Cultural Plan

## Goals & Objectives

ZOOM Window Space

### Goal 1: Advance truth and reconciliation through arts and culture

- Recognize the role and rights of K'ómoks First Nation, MIKI'SIW Métis Association, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous peoples as it relates to arts and culture
- Respectfully acknowledge K'ómoks territory through arts and culture
- Increase support and investment in Indigenous arts and culture

### Goal 2: Build community resilience through arts and culture

- Use arts and culture to support community belonging and inclusion, where differences and similarities are celebrated
- Leverage arts and culture as a medium to engage with community on complex social challenges and to support healing
- Develop cultural programming that appeals to a more diverse community

### Goal 3: Develop more accessible and affordable cultural spaces

- Increase the availability of accessible and affordable spaces for arts and culture
- Prioritize initiatives & upgrades that provide enhanced and additional space for arts and culture

Plus 59  
Actions

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### Goal 4: Bolster community arts

- Support the capacity building of community-led arts and culture organizations
- Break down silos and increase collaboration across the cultural sector
- Increase the awareness of community-led arts and culture event

### Goal 5: Support the strategic development of the sector

- Build and sustain existing social and economic impact by strengthening Courtenay's professional arts and culture sector
- Embed culture more firmly in tourism initiatives in Courtenay and the Comox Valley
- Create new and or updated policies to support the cultural sector
- Explore strategic ways to meet sector labour needs



# Strategic Cultural Plan

## Foundational Elements

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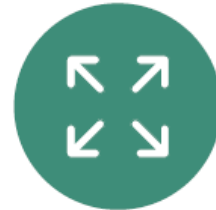
**Advance Reconciliation Across all Initiatives**



**Build the team to Drive Cultural Change**



**Elevate Investment in Arts and Culture**



**Transform and Expand Cultural Spaces**



**Lead Regional Cultural Advocacy**

# Strategic Cultural Plan

## Document Overview

### Strategic Cultural Plan

- Strategic Plan
- What We Heard Report
- Comparative Review
- Cultural Facilities Options

### Strategic Cultural Plan – Summary

### Strategic Cultural Plan – Implementation Strategy

ZOOM Window Space



# Implementation Strategy

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## Phased Implementation Approach

### PHASE 1

#### **Building Foundations**

Focuses on establishing the necessary frameworks, policies, relationships, and resources to support long-term cultural development.

### PHASE 2

#### **Enhancing Access and Visibility**

Expands cultural programming, strengthens partnerships and relationships, and increases public engagement, ensuring greater accessibility and representation across the community.

### PHASE 3

#### **Thriving as a Cultural Hub**

Integrates arts and culture into City and regional planning, economic and tourism development, solidifying Courtenay's identity as a vibrant and sustainable cultural hub.

# Implementation Strategy

## Funding Summary

Phase	Funding Type	Estimated Funding Required
Phase 1: Building Foundations	Net-New Operating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Medium:</b> Estimated \$160,000</li> <li>▶ Cultural Coordinator, Indigenous engagement &amp; investments, and Arts &amp; Culture Grant Program</li> </ul>
	One-Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Medium:</b> Estimated \$300,000</li> <li>▶ Renaming NSH, Special Events, Facilities Studies and Public Art Policy</li> </ul>
Phase 2: Enhancing Access and Visibility	Net-New Operating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Low:</b> Estimated \$60,000</li> <li>▶ Program partnerships, events, and cultural asset mapping.</li> </ul>
	One-Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Medium:</b> Estimated \$250,000</li> <li>▶ Supporting Indigenous public art, marketing strategy, and capacity building</li> </ul>
Phase 3: Thriving as a Cultural Hub	Net-New Operating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Low:</b> Estimated \$10,000</li> <li>▶ Project partnerships, and committee development</li> </ul>
	One-Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Medium:</b> Estimated \$100,000</li> <li>▶ Public art</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	Net-New Operating	Estimated \$230,000
	One-Time	Estimated \$650,000

### Funding sources are classified as:

- **Net New Operating:** Ongoing funding required to sustain new or expanded initiatives, programs, or staffing
- **One-Time:** Funding allocated for capital projects or time-limited initiatives that do not require ongoing financial commitment

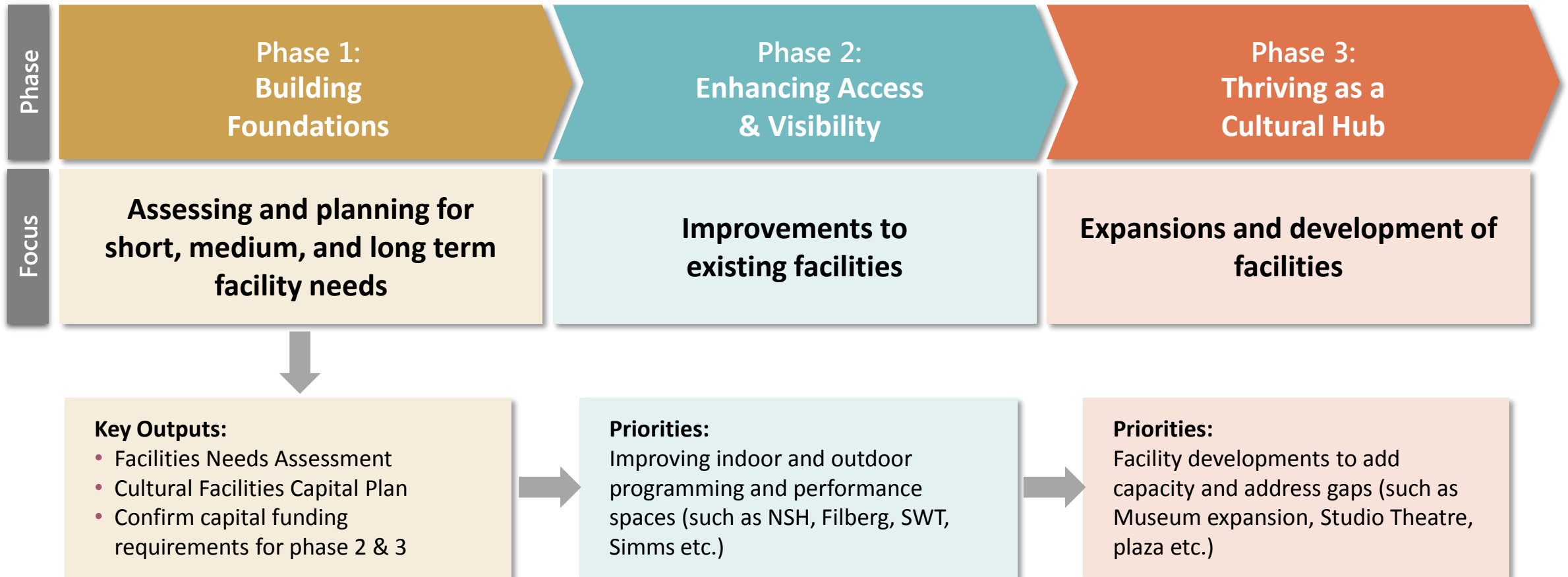
### Funding Categories:

- Low: Under \$100,000
- Medium: \$100,000 - \$500,000
- High: Over \$500,000

# Implementation Strategy

ZOOM Window Space

## Capital Facility Planning & Projects



The facilities capital plan will determine capital projects and funding requirements to inform phase 2 and 3 projects

# Strategic Cultural Plan

## Recommendation

THAT based on the March 12, 2025 staff report “Strategic Cultural Plan and Implementation Strategy Adoption,” Council approve the final draft of the Strategic Cultural Plan (Attachment 1) and Implementation Strategy (Attachment 2) as presented.

ZOOM Window Space





# PRIDE SOCIETY OF THE COMOX VALLEY

December 6, 2024

Dear Mayor Wells and Courtenay City Council,

We are requesting support for our application to the *Local Festivals - Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage* grant, aimed at expanding Pride Week in August 2025. There is an attached Municipal Government Support form that can be completed; however support may also be confirmed in a letter outlining the cash and/or in-kind value on an official letterhead from the city's finance department. While cash or in-kind support (e.g. venue rentals and park permits) is preferred, the updated grant guidelines now accept letters of support, even without financial contributions. In brief, our grant application includes three key components:

1. **Heritage Component:**

- Capturing the **local history of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community**, an **Indigenous-Led Workshop** discussing how queer history began with Two-Spirit people and the impacts of colonization, and an **Allyship Workshop** focusing on combating hate and discrimination.

2. **Performance Component:**

- **Pride in the Park & Pride Youth Dances:** Featuring local drag performances, DJs, and choirs.

3. **Arts Component:**

- Showcasing 2SLGBTQIA+ artists through **vendor booths**, a **literary event** at the library, and **art workshops** on historical 2SLGBTQIA+ culture, including accessibility-led events.

The grant would allow our organization to provide more inclusive and accessible gatherings, reducing reliance on sponsorship funds, which historically have only supported the Pride in the Park event. While we cannot guarantee the success of our grant application, we have implemented contingency plans to prioritize key events, ensuring that the expansion of Pride Week will move forward regardless.

We want to extend our deepest gratitude for your previous and ongoing support. Your commitment to ensuring the 2SLGBTQIA+ community remains visible, celebrated, and supported has made a profound impact in our city, and we are incredibly thankful for your efforts.

Questions can be directed to Janine at [psc2021@gmail.com](mailto:psc2021@gmail.com).

In Pride,

Janine Scheffler, Facilitator  
The Pride Society of the Comox Valley Board of Directors



## Confirmation of Support from Municipal Government or Equivalent Authority

APPLICANT: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of festival: \_\_\_\_\_

Funding by the Program is conditional upon confirmation of cash and/or in-kind support from the applicant's municipal government or equivalent authority (referred to below as - "the municipality").

For applications from a local band council, local tribal council, other local Aboriginal government or equivalent authority, that authority must provide written confirmation of support. Public organizations such as police, public transportation, waste management, or libraries, if directly under the municipal authority, can also provide municipal support. Financial support from the discretionary funds of elected officials is considered a donation from an individual and cannot constitute municipal support.

This form, once completed and signed, constitutes proof of support from the municipality. Support may also be confirmed in a letter that includes the cash and/or in-kind value of the municipal contribution for the event or activity. Should the municipality withdraw its support, the applicant must immediately notify the Department of Canadian Heritage.

**Please complete this form, print it and have it signed by an authorized representative of your municipality or equivalent authority and submit with your application. Authorized representatives are employees of the municipal administration or equivalent authority or any elected official with signing authority.**

<b>CASH</b>	
This amount <b>must</b> appear in the budget.	
Total:	

<b>IN-KIND</b> (monetary value)	The in-kind support for this festival will be as described in the following table. (Use additional pages if necessary) Please itemize contributions of in-kind goods and services.
Total:	

Name of authorized representative (required): Authorized representatives are employees of the municipal administration or equivalent authority or any elected official with signing authority.	
Title and municipality (required):	
Telephone number (required):	
Authorized representative's signature (required):	
Date YYYY-MM-DD (required):	





# Briefing Note

**To:** Council

**File No.:** 1845-20

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

**Date:** March 12, 2025

**Subject: Comox Valley Community Foundation Grant: Community Winter Response and Storage Solutions**

**PURPOSE:** To inform Council about a \$28,500 grant awarded to the City of Courtenay from the Comox Valley Community Foundation to enhance community winter response and storage solutions for individuals experiencing homelessness.

## **BACKGROUND:**

At the April 10, 2024 Council meeting, the following resolution was adopted in response to the staff report, "Update on Temporary Shelter Housing Options":

*THAT Council direct staff to include storage options for the belongings of unhoused individuals in the next update on temporary housing.*

On July 31, 2024, as a measure to support washroom and storage access for people experiencing homelessness in the City of Courtenay, Council passed the following resolution (relevant parts listed):

*THAT Council allocate up to \$150,000 from the 2023 surplus towards the installation of a temporary washroom trailer and storage solutions (in the lot adjacent to the Connect); and*

*THAT Council direct staff to request operating funding contributions for the temporary washroom and/or storage facility from: BC Housing, Comox Valley Regional District (Function 451), Town of Comox, and other appropriate funders.*

## **DISCUSSION:**

At the October 2024 Council meeting, City staff provided an update on activity to move forward the resolutions made at the July 31, 2024 meeting. Five key developments were noted:

- The City, CVTS, BC Housing, and the surrounding community were engaged in preliminary discussions about improved washroom and storage facilities in the lot adjacent to Connect.
- A consultant had been hired to develop a site plan and oversee the installation of utility services (hydro, water, and sanitary while addressing concerns of nearby business owners).
- Funds for planning and equipment installation were being drawn from the \$150,000 allocated for this purpose.
- Operational funds were still required for the washroom trailer and the storage area.
- An application to the Comox Valley Community Foundation (CVCF) had been made in partnership with the Comox Valley Transition Society (CVTS) and the Comox valley Coalition to End Homelessness (CVCEH) to support implementation and operation of the storage area.

In fall 2024, the City in partnership with the Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness applied to the CVCF Housing and Homelessness Supports grant stream. In December of 2024, the City received notice from the CVCF that the joint proposal to enhance community response to extreme weather conditions for individuals experiencing homelessness, was successful. The City was awarded a \$28,500 grant to support two specific activities:

- 1) Implementation of a storage program next to the Connect centre, offering temporary storage for the personal belongings of people seeking shelter. Eligible expenses include the purchase and installation of shelves and bins within the storage units, and the provision of paid peer support workers to assist with operationalization of the unit(s) over the term of the grant.
- 2) The provision of essential winter gear and emergency supplies including warm clothing, winter jackets, boots, hats, gloves, blankets, toiletries, first aid kits, and laundry passes for personal hygiene.

This 12-month project, commencing January 1, 2025 and concluding December 31, 2025 will be administered by the City in coordination with the Coalition to End Homelessness. Staff will establish and oversee agreements with three separate community agencies who have stepped forward to carry out the above activities – Comox Valley Transition Society (CVTS), the Indigenous Women’s Sharing Society, and Solid Outreach Society.

A summary of project outcomes and impacts will be shared with Council following the conclusion of the grant.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Staff do not anticipate any financial impacts as the grant covers all aspects of the activities therein.

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:**

This grant will be managed by Recreation, Culture, and Community Services staff as part of their current roles and responsibilities.

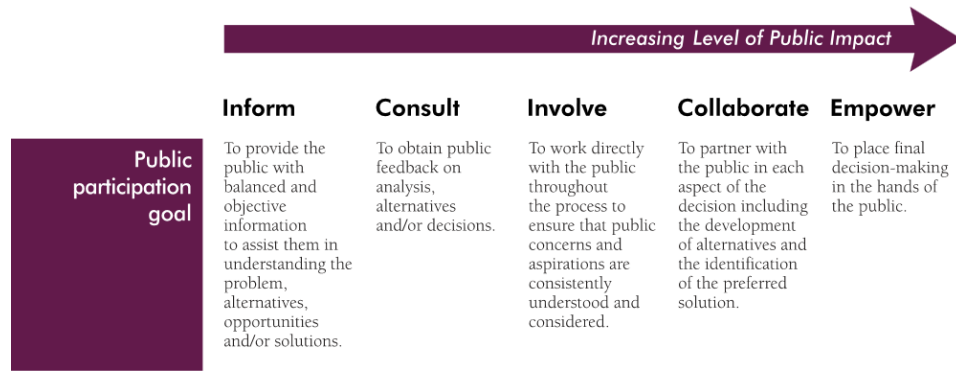
**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:**

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Social Infrastructure - Continue working with community agencies to deliver day services. Explore role in the provision of social support services, including future of Connect Centre.

**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)

**RECOMMENDATION:** THAT Council receive the “Comox Valley Community Foundation Grant: Community Winter Response and Storage Solutions” briefing note for information.

Prepared by: Joanne Bays, Community Development Coordinator, Recreation, Culture, and Community Services

Reviewed by: Susie Saunders, Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services  
 Marianne Wade, Director of Development Services

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



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Bylaw No. 3165

## A bylaw for the City of Courtenay Five-Year Financial Plan for the Period 2025 to 2029

### WHEREAS

- A. Section 165 of the *Community Charter* requires that every municipality must have a five-year financial plan that is adopted annually, by bylaw, before the annual property tax bylaw is adopted and that the financial plan must set out the objectives, and policies of the municipality for the planning period in relation to the funding sources, the proportion of total revenue from the funding sources, the distribution of property value taxes among the property classes and the use of permissive tax exemptions;
- B. Section 166 of the *Community Charter* requires that, before adopting a bylaw under section 165, a Council must undertake a process of public consultation regarding the proposed financial plan; and
- C. Council for the City of Courtenay has complied with section 166 of the *Community Charter*.

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the City of Courtenay, in open meeting assembled, enacts as follows:

- A. 2025 – 2029 Financial Plan Bylaw No. 3165, 2025 that authorizes all revenue and expenditures for the period 2025 – 2029.

### Citation

- This Bylaw shall be cited as “**2025 – 2029 Financial Plan Bylaw No. 3165, 2025**”.

### Application

- The attached schedules A and B form part of this Bylaw.

### Severability

- 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

- The “2024 – 2028 Consolidated Financial Plan Bylaw No. 3130, 2024” is hereby repealed.

Read a first time this 26th day of February, 2025.

Read a second time this 26th day of February, 2025.

Read a third time this 26th day of February, 2025.

Adopted this [day] day of [month], [year]

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Mayor Bob Wells

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Corporate Officer

### Schedule A

Revenue	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Property Taxation	\$ (37,076,300)	\$ (42,040,500)	\$ (45,311,100)	\$ (48,692,700)	\$ (51,948,900)
Frontage and Parcel Taxes	(4,155,700)	(4,459,600)	(4,814,200)	(5,220,800)	(5,705,300)
Fees and Charges	(26,776,900)	(28,880,200)	(31,082,400)	(33,225,500)	(35,628,300)
Government Transfers	(8,255,593)	(5,986,400)	(9,704,800)	(4,768,600)	(4,895,800)
Other Revenue	(4,444,900)	(10,108,600)	(9,089,900)	(4,101,400)	(4,351,400)
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ (80,709,393)</b>	<b>\$ (91,475,300)</b>	<b>\$ (100,002,400)</b>	<b>\$ (96,009,000)</b>	<b>\$ (102,529,700)</b>
<b>Expenses</b>					
General Government Expenses	\$ 7,695,000	\$ 7,422,500	\$ 7,685,300	\$ 7,874,000	\$ 8,144,600
Fire Services	3,297,400	3,382,800	3,866,000	4,088,000	4,493,200
Police Services	9,518,100	9,757,900	9,952,000	10,359,000	10,584,400
Engineering Services	2,591,700	1,416,900	1,459,800	1,517,000	1,787,300
Operational Services	11,795,400	11,841,100	12,272,700	12,817,300	13,266,400
Solid Waste Services	4,011,100	4,201,200	4,405,100	4,618,300	4,842,200
Development Services	3,895,900	2,896,600	3,014,300	3,289,800	3,853,500
Recreational and Cultural Services	7,868,700	7,736,700	7,784,100	7,956,900	8,106,300
Sewer Services	9,779,700	9,855,400	9,944,600	10,213,000	10,512,500
Water Services	11,009,000	11,212,800	11,983,100	12,867,700	13,805,600
Financial Services	3,666,900	3,665,800	3,756,400	3,908,200	4,051,000
Gaming Expenses	466,500	467,500	467,500	467,500	463,500
Debt Interest	898,653	2,093,300	3,361,300	3,965,200	4,215,800
Amortization	7,040,000	7,040,000	7,040,000	7,040,000	7,040,000
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 83,534,053</b>	<b>\$ 82,990,500</b>	<b>\$ 86,992,200</b>	<b>\$ 90,981,900</b>	<b>\$ 95,166,300</b>
<b>Operating Deficit / (Surplus)</b>	<b>\$ 2,824,660</b>	<b>\$ (8,484,800)</b>	<b>\$ (13,010,200)</b>	<b>\$ (5,027,100)</b>	<b>\$ (7,363,400)</b>
<b>Transfers and Acquisitions</b>					
Equity in Capital Assets	\$ (7,040,000)	\$ (7,040,000)	\$ (7,040,000)	\$ (7,040,000)	\$ (7,040,000)
Principal Payments	829,600	1,308,900	2,629,400	2,737,800	3,112,800
Capital Aquisitions	28,709,456	59,228,200	33,864,500	16,297,800	8,215,000
Borrowing	(6,300,000)	(38,500,000)	(14,127,700)	(10,000,000)	-
Transfer to Reserve	3,838,100	5,741,000	6,941,500	8,668,700	10,634,900
Transfer from Reserve	(22,861,816)	(12,253,300)	(9,257,500)	(5,637,200)	(7,559,300)
<b>Total Transfers and Acquisitions</b>	<b>\$ (2,824,660)</b>	<b>\$ 8,484,800</b>	<b>\$ 13,010,200</b>	<b>\$ 5,027,100</b>	<b>\$ 7,363,400</b>
<b>(Surplus) / Deficit</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

## Schedule B

### Objectives and Policies for Schedule “B”

In accordance with section 165 (3.1) of the *Community Charter*, the City of Courtenay is required to include in the Five-Year Financial Plan, objectives, and policies regarding each of the following

- The proportion of total revenue that is proposed to come from that funding source
- the distribution of property value taxes among the property classes that may be subject to the taxes
- the provision of development potential relief under section 198.1 of the *Community Charter*
- the use of permissive tax exemptions

### Proportion of Revenue by Source

#### Property Tax

- The City of Courtenay will attempt to keep the proportional share of revenue from property taxes at a level similar to the average of comparable municipalities.
- Where new sources of revenue are made available to the City from senior governments, wherever possible these revenues will be used to reduce dependency on property taxation revenue.

#### Frontage & Parcel Tax

- Parcel taxes will be used whenever Council determines that they are more appropriate than property taxes.

#### Fees & Charges

- Wherever possible, fees & charges will be used to assign costs to those who benefit from the service provided. The proportion of costs recovered by fees and charges will vary with the nature of the service provided.

#### Transfers from other Governments and Agencies

- The City will ensure that all government transfers are used in accordance with the terms and conditions attached to the funding and that all reporting requirements are met.
- Unconditional government transfers will be considered as general revenue in the financial plan

#### Other Sources of Revenue

- The City will continue to seek other sources of revenue in order to reduce reliance on property taxes.

#### Proceeds of Borrowing

- Borrowing will be considered when determining the funding sources of large capital projects that provide benefits to taxpayers over a long period of time.

#### Proportions of Total Revenue by Source

Revenue Source	2024		2025	
	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total
Property Tax	\$ 34,007,000	39.0%	\$ 37,076,300	42.6%
Frontage and Parcel	3,516,400	4.0%	4,155,700	4.8%
Fees and Charges	25,517,600	29.3%	26,776,900	30.8%
Transfers from Other G	7,581,300	8.7%	8,255,593	9.5%
Other Sources	4,160,100	4.8%	4,444,900	5.1%
Borrowing	12,426,000	14.2%	6,300,000	7.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 87,208,400</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$ 87,009,393</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## 2025 Distribution of Property Tax Revenue by Class

<b>Property Class</b>	<b>Tax Revenue</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>Property Assessment \$</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
1 Residential	\$ 24,406,705	65.8%	\$ 9,034,370,211	89.0%
2 Utilities	136,180	0.4%	3,404,500	0.0%
3 Supportive Housing	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
5 Light Industry	124,076	0.3%	12,782,800	0.1%
6 Commercial	12,379,343	33.4%	1,092,107,467	10.8%
8 Recreational	26,699	0.1%	5,954,600	0.1%
9 Farm	3,297	0.0%	1,165,513	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 37,076,300</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$ 10,149,785,091</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

***Permissive Tax Exemptions***

- A permissive tax exemption is strictly at the discretion of the City of Courtenay Council. After careful consideration of all applications Council may approve a full, a partial, or no tax exemption. The tax exemption may vary for the different applicants.
- The cumulative value of permissive tax exemptions shall not exceed 2% of the total tax levy of the previous year.
- The Annual Municipal Report for 2024 contains a list of permissive exemptions granted to not-for-profit institutions that form a valuable part of our community. These include religious institutions, historical societies, service societies and recreational organizations.



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Bylaw No. 3170

## A bylaw to amend City of Courtenay Sewer Service Frontage Tax Bylaw No. 3124, 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 “Sewer Service Frontage Tax - Amendment Bylaw No. 3170, 2025”.

### Amendment

2. That “Sewer Service Frontage Tax Bylaw No. 3124, 2024” be amended as follows:
  - a) That “7. The annual amount to be paid under this tax per parcel is \$10.70 per meter of sewer frontage.”

Be removed and replaced with:

“7. The annual amount to be paid under this tax per parcel is \$12.50 per meter of sewer frontage.”

### 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 “Sewer Service Frontage Tax Bylaw No. 3124, 2024”, as amended, is hereby repealed.

Read a first time this 26th day of February, 2025.

Read a second time this 26th day of February, 2025.

Read a third time this 26th day of February, 2025.

Adopted this [day] day of [month], 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Bob Wells

\_\_\_\_\_  
Corporate Officer