THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

COUNCIL AGENDA

Meeting #: R18/2023
Date: October 11, 2023
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.

7.1 Toxic Drug Deaths - Councillor Morin

WHEREAS the lives of at least 12,264 British Columbians have been lost to unregulated drugs since the public health emergency was first declared on April 14, 2016, with 154 lives lost in the Comox Valley;

WHEREAS unregulated drug toxicity is now the leading cause of death for those aged 10 to 59 in BC, numbering more than homicides, suicides, deaths from accident and natural disease combined;

WHEREAS these lives matter and are valued, and we all must do more to reduce stigma and save lives;

WHEREAS Council would like to acknowledge and honour the lives lost in the Comox Valley to the unregulated toxic drug supply crisis;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council read this statement following triannual updates from the BC Coroner's Service: Courtenay Council would like to acknowledge the deaths of [number] Comox Valley community members in the period of [dates] due to the unregulated toxic drug supply crisis, for a total of [number] deaths of Comox Valley Community members since the public health emergency was first declared. Our hearts go out to their loved ones. We want you to know their lives matter, and Council will continue to push for action and effective policy to stop these preventable and unnecessary deaths.

7.2 Refurbishment of Historic Clocks - Councillor Hillian

WHEREAS the City of Courtenay Heritage Commission has requested clarity regarding the refurbishment of historic clocks;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT a staff report be prepared to address this request.

8. NOTICE OF MOTION

8.1 Zero Carbon Step Code - Councillor Cole-Hamilton & Councillor McCollum

WHEREAS the City of Courtenay's new Official Community Plan (OCP) has identified climate action goals and aims to reduce GHG emissions in our community by 45% below 2016 levels by 2030;

WHEREAS OCP policy BL 6 commits the City to "Advocate to and support the Province in amending the BC Building Code and other building related policies to: a) regulate carbon pollution for new buildings as soon as possible" and policy BL 7 commits the City to "Review and update immediately relevant building, zoning, and development permitting policies upon any new legislative authorities that support policies within BL 6;" and

WHEREAS the Province has responded to advocacy by the City and numerous other local governments by introducing the Zero Carbon Step Code which provides new authority to local governments to regulate carbon pollution from

new buildings;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT pursuant to policies BL6 and BL7 of Courtenay's OCP, staff prepare a report outlining options for implementing the Zero Carbon Step Code in order to meet the City's 2030 emissions reduction target.

9. BYLAWS

9.1 For Final Adoption

9.1.1 Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 3101 – 1410 Glen Urquhart Drive 240

10. COUNCIL REPORTS

10.1 Councillor Cole-Hamilton

10.2 Councillor Frisch 242

10.3 Councillor Hillian

10.4 Councillor Jolicoeur

10.5 Councillor McCollum 243

10.6 Councillor Morin 245

10.7 Mayor Wells

11. IN CAMERA RESOLUTION

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

90 (1) (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; and

(c) labour relations or other employee relations.

12. ADJOURNMENT

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

COUNCIL MINUTES

Meeting #:	**R17/2023**
Date:	**September 27, 2023**
Time:	**4:00 pm**
Location:	**CVRD Civic Room, 770 Harmston Ave, Courtenay**

Council Present: D. Hillian, Acting Mayor
W. Cole-Hamilton
D. Frisch
E. Jolicoeur (electronic)
M. McCollum
W. Morin (electronic)

Regrets: B. Wells

Staff Present: G. Garbutt, City Manager (CAO)
A. Langenmaier, Director of Financial Services (electronic)
K. Macdonald, Fire Chief
K. O'Connell, Director of Corporate Services
S. Saunders, Director of Recreation, Culture & Community Services (electronic)
J. Chan, Manager of Business Administration
A. Guillo, Manager of Communications
A. Proton, Manager of Legislative Services
R. Matthews, Deputy Corporate Officer

1. CALL TO ORDER

- Acting Mayor Hillian called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm and respectfully acknowledged that the land on which the meeting was conducted is the Unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.
- Councillor Jolicoeur announced that September 30th is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and encouraged the community to wear orange on Saturday as a symbol of the stripping away of culture, freedom and self-esteem experienced by Indigenous children over generations. The City of Courtenay will

be raising the *Every Child Matters* Flag this week to honour and recognize the children of residential schools that were forcibly separated from their families, their culture, communities, and the many that did not return home.

- Councillor Morin provided a statement on behalf of the City of Courtenay regarding RCMP Constable Rick O'Brien, a member of the Ridge Meadows RCMP detachment, who lost his life in the line of duty this past weekend in Coquitlam while in the course of his duties.
- Councillor McCollum acknowledged that October 2nd is Wrongful Conviction Day, which is a global movement dedicated to advocating for innocent individuals who have been wrongly convicted.
- Councillor Cole-Hamilton advised that October is Circular Economy Month in British Columbia which is an opportunity for local governments to show their support for preserving natural resources, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and supporting local economies.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

With no late items or objections, Council proceeded with the agenda as presented.

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Regular Council Minutes - September 13, 2023

Moved By Frisch
Seconded By Cole-Hamilton

THAT Council adopt the September 13, 2023 Regular Council minutes.

CARRIED

4. DELEGATIONS

4.1 Walk With Me

Christopher Hauschildt, Operations Coordinator, and Sharon Karsten, Project Coordinator, provided an overview of the Walking Together Policy report.

5. STAFF REPORTS

5.1 Recreation, Culture and Community Services

5.1.1 Comox Valley Community Substance Use Strategy – Phase Two Report Back

Moved By McCollum
Seconded By Cole-Hamilton

THAT the Comox Valley Substance Use Strategy – Phase Two Report be received for information.

CARRIED

5.2 Corporate Services

5.2.1 Parks Control Bylaw Modernization Project – Parks and Open Spaces Bylaw Guiding Document

Moved By Frisch
Seconded By Cole-Hamilton

THAT Council approve the Parks and Open Spaces Bylaw Guiding Document and direct staff work with external legal counsel to draft a new Parks and Open Spaces Control Bylaw; and,

THAT staff be directed to report back to Council on any further amendments to B.C.'s current decriminalization policy and or at such time further guidance for local governments is provided by the Province.

CARRIED

5.3 Financial Services

5.3.1 Audit Service Plan for Year Ending December 31, 2023

Moved By Frisch
Seconded By Cole-Hamilton

THAT Council appoint MNP LLP as the City's auditors for 2023;

AND THAT Council approve the 2023 Audit Service Plan as presented for the year ending December 31, 2023.

CARRIED

6. INTERNAL REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

6.1 Resident Survey – Your Courtenay, Your Voice – Results Presentation

Moved By Cole-Hamilton
Seconded By Frisch

THAT Council receive the "Resident Survey, Your Courtenay, Your Voice – Results" briefing note.

CARRIED

6.2 Communication Strategy Report – Research Strategy Update

Moved By McCollum
Seconded By Frisch

THAT Council receive the "Communication Strategy Report – Research Strategy Update" briefing note.

CARRIED

With no objections, Council varied the order of the agenda by moving Item 9.1.2 Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 3101, before Item 6.3 Management Reports, and renumbered the agenda accordingly.

7. BYLAWS

7.1 Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 3101 – 1410 Glen Urquhart Drive

Moved By Frisch
Seconded By McCollum

THAT Council give first, second and third readings to "Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 3101".

CARRIED

Acting Mayor Hillian called a recess at 6:41 pm. The Council meeting resumed at 7:01 pm.

8. INTERNAL REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

8.1 Management Reports

Moved By Cole-Hamilton
Seconded By McCollum

THAT Council receive the Public Works, Finance, Development Services, and Fire Department management reports as presented for information.

CARRIED

8.2 Bylaw and Public Works Services, Service Initiative

Moved By Frisch
Seconded By Cole-Hamilton

THAT Council receive the "Bylaw and Public Works Services, Service Initiative" briefing note.

CARRIED

8.3 BC Housing Update

Moved By McCollum
Seconded By Frisch

THAT Council receive the BC Housing Update Briefing Note for information.

CARRIED

8.4 Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) Meeting Minutes - July 6, 2023

Moved By McCollum
Seconded By Frisch

THAT Council receive the July 6, 2023 Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission minutes.

CARRIED

8.5 Heritage Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes - May 24, 2023

Moved By McCollum
Seconded By Frisch

THAT Council receive the May 24, 2023 Heritage Advisory Commission minutes.

CARRIED

9. COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

9.1 K'ómoks First Nation Flag - Councillor Cole-Hamilton

Moved By Cole-Hamilton
Seconded By McCollum

WHEREAS the flying of flags is a way of showing acknowledgment and respect in many cultures; and

WHEREAS the City of Courtenay has committed to building a strong and respectful relationship with K'ómoks First Nation;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT staff engage with K'ómoks First Nation and report back to Council on options for displaying the K'ómoks First Nation flag at Courtenay City Hall.

CARRIED

10. NOTICE OF MOTION

10.1 Refurbishment of Historic Clocks - Councillor Hillian

WHEREAS the City of Courtenay Heritage Commission has requested clarity regarding the refurbishment of historic clocks;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT a staff report be prepared to address this request.

10.2 Toxic Drug Deaths - Councillor Morin

WHEREAS the lives of at least 12,264 British Columbians have been lost to unregulated drugs since the public health emergency was first declared on April 14, 2016, with 154 lives lost in the Comox Valley;

WHEREAS unregulated drug toxicity is now the leading cause of death for those aged 10 to 59 in BC, numbering more than homicides, suicides, deaths from accident and natural disease combined;

WHEREAS these lives matter and are valued, and we all must do more to reduce stigma and save lives;

WHEREAS Council would like to acknowledge and honour the lives lost in the Comox Valley to the unregulated toxic drug supply crisis;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council read this statement following triannual updates from the BC Coroner's Service: Courtenay Council would like to acknowledge the deaths of [number] Comox Valley community members in the period of [dates] due to the unregulated toxic drug supply crisis, for a total of [number] deaths of Comox Valley Community members since the public health emergency was first declared. Our hearts go out to their loved ones. We want you to know their lives matter, and Council will continue to push for action and effective policy to stop these preventable and unnecessary deaths.

11. BYLAWS

11.1 For First, Second and Third Readings

11.1.1 Consideration of 2024 Permissive Property Tax Exemptions

Moved By Frisch
Seconded By McCollum

THAT Council give first, second and third readings to "Tax Exemption 2024, Bylaw No. 3091, 2023".

Amendment:
Moved By Jolicoeur
Seconded By Frisch

THAT Council amend the motion to remove the 2024 permissive tax exemptions for:

- Roll 1960.006, 2966 Kilpatrick Ave, Aaron House Ministries
- Roll 3200.32, 4729 Headquarters Rd, Youth for Christ

AND THAT Council give first, second and third readings to "Tax Exemption 2024 Bylaw No. 3091, 2023" as amended.

DEFEATED
Opposed: Acting Mayor Hillian, Councillor Cole-Hamilton, Councillor Frisch, Councillor McCollum, Councillor Morin

Main motion:
Moved By Frisch
Seconded By McCollum

THAT Council give first, second and third readings to "Tax Exemption Bylaw No. 3091, 2023".

CARRIED
Opposed: Councillor Jolicoeur

Acting Mayor Hillian declared a conflict of interest as he is on the Board of Directors for the John Howard Society, and left the meeting at 8:04 pm. Councillor McCollum stood in as Acting Mayor.

Moved By Cole-Hamilton
Seconded By Frisch

THAT Council give first, second and third readings to "Tax Exemption 2024, Bylaw No. 3110, 2023".

CARRIED

Acting Mayor Hillian returned to the meeting at 8:04 pm.

Councillor Morin declared a conflict of interest as she is an employee of the Comox Valley Transition Society, and left the meeting at 8:04 pm.

Moved By Jolicoeur
Seconded By Cole-Hamilton

THAT Council give first, second and third readings to "Tax Exemption 2024, Bylaw No. 3111, 2023".

CARRIED

Councillor Morin returned to the meeting at 8:05 pm.

Councillor Jolicoeur declared a conflict of interest as he is on the Board of Directors for the Dawn to Dawn Action on Homelessness Society, and left the meeting at 8:05 pm.

Moved By Frisch
Seconded By Cole-Hamilton

THAT Council give first, second and third readings to "Tax Exemption 2024, Bylaw No. 3112, 2023".

CARRIED

Councillor Jolicoeur returned to the meeting at 8:06 pm.

Moved By Frisch
Seconded By Cole-Hamilton

THAT Council give first, second and third readings to "Tax Exemption Churches 2024, Bylaw No. 3092, 2023".

CARRIED

Moved By McCollum
Seconded By Cole-Hamilton

THAT Council direct staff to update the Permissive Tax Exemption Policy #1960.00.01 to align with current strategic priorities.

CARRIED

11.1.2 Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area Bylaw No. 3105

Moved By Cole-Hamilton
Seconded By McCollum

THAT Council give first, second and third readings to "Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area Bylaw No. 3105".

CARRIED

12. COUNCIL REPORTS

12.1 Councillor Cole-Hamilton

Councillor Cole-Hamilton reviewed his attendance at the following event:

- Sept 18-22 - 2023 UBCM Convention

12.2 Councillor Frisch

Councillor Frisch submitted a report of activities, see agenda.

12.3 Councillor Jolicoeur

Councillor Jolicoeur advised that the resolution submitted by the City of Courtenay *Removal of Racist and Discriminatory Clauses from BC Land Titles* was endorsed at the 2023 UBCM Convention.

12.4 Councillor McCollum

No report provided.

12.5 Councillor Morin

No report provided.

12.6 Acting Mayor Hillian

Acting Mayor Hillian submitted a report of activities and thanked Council for their efforts at the 2023 UBCM Convention and staff for their work prepping Council for their activities.

13. IN CAMERA RESOLUTION

Moved By Frisch
Seconded By McCollum

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

90 (1) (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; and

(c) labour relations or other employee relations.

CARRIED

14. ADJOURNMENT

Acting Mayor Hillian terminated the open portion of the meeting at 8:16 pm. Following the conclusion of the in camera portion of the meeting, Acting Mayor Hillian terminated the meeting at 9:25 pm.

CERTIFIED CORRECT

Adopted by Council October 11, 2023

Acting Mayor Doug Hillian	Adriana Proton, Corporate Officer

Project Safe Park

Secure Parking Facilities for the Vehicular Homeless

As of last count in 2020 there are over 132 persons in the Comox Valley that have experienced homelessness, with the number visibly increasing in the years since the last count. In the face of recent social and economic challenges a significant number of them find themselves living in their vehicles as a last resort.

This reality has led to a growing need for safe and secure parking facilities tailored to meet the basic needs of those who have been forced into this situation due to poverty. Such parking facilities would serve as emergency shelters, offering essential amenities like sanitation, electricity, and security to ensure the well-being of the occupants.

Ensuring **community and neighbourhood acceptability is vital to create a harmonious environment that benefits both occupants and the neighbourhoods they become a part of.**

The goal is to provide support to transition the transient vehicular homeless into regularized residents of the community.

The Wiseland Humanitarian Association **is looking for partners to help provide such a facility in the Courtenay area.**

About Project Safe Park

Project Safe Park will play a crucial role in providing a lifeline to individuals who are grappling with homelessness and economic adversity. A secure parking facility would serve as a **dignified alternative to sleeping in public spaces,** offering a more private and secure environment.

B.C. rest areas, park-and-rides fill with people who can't afford a home

"It used to be that to end up homeless, people had a combination of vulnerabilities — mental health, addiction, childhood trauma. Now, they just don't have enough money."

https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/b-c-rest-areas-park-and-rides-fill-with-people-who-cant-afford-a-home

It is important to note that the BC Supreme Court has upheld the charter right to dwell in public parks between 7pm and 9am. We all want a more harmonious solution than ever increasing homeless encampments, which makes providing humane alternatives for those facing housing instability a urgent concern.[1]

A prime example of such a facility is the Safe Parking LA program in Los Angeles, California.[2] This initiative partners with faith-based organizations to transform their parking lots into safe havens for people living in their vehicles. The program offers not only a secure place to park but also **access to washroom facilities, showers, and social services**. This comprehensive approach tackles both the immediate need for shelter and the underlying factors contributing to homelessness.

In addition to addressing hygiene and safety concerns, these facilities contribute to the overall well-being of individuals by providing access to electricity. The Safe Parking Program in Santa Barbara, California, for instance, connects participants to **power sources for charging essential devices and maintaining a basic level of comfort.**[3] This simple amenity can make a significant difference in the lives of those who rely on their vehicles as their primary dwelling.

Security remains a paramount consideration in designing and operating these parking facilities. To ensure the safety of occupants, facilities could implement well-lit parking areas, surveillance systems, and on-site security personnel. The SafePark program in Seattle and Vancouver Washington, exemplifies this approach by partnering with **local law enforcement and security companies to offer a secure environment for vehicle dwellers.**[4] [5]

Creating safe parking facilities for individuals living in their vehicles not only addresses immediate needs but also fosters a sense of community and support. By offering **access to social services, mental health resources, and connections to housing opportunities,** these programs empower individuals to regain stability and work towards transitioning out of vehicular homelessness.

Sooke Homeless Coalition seeks safety for people sleeping in cars

"[Advocates push for] a two-year emergency billeting pilot program where property owners would offer their driveway or space."

https://www.vancouverislandfreedaily.com/news/sooke-homeless-coalition-seeks-safety-for-people-sleeping-in-cars/

1 http://archive.abbotsfordtoday.ca/bc-supreme-court-rules-homeless-have-right-to-public-spaces/
2 https://safeparkingla.org
3 https://santabarbaraca.gov/government/priorities-policies/homelessness-initiatives/new-beginnings-safe-parking-program
4 https://lakewaumc.org/safe-parking-program-page/
5 https://www.cityofvancouver.us/cmo/page/vancouver-safe-parking-zone

Fostering Community Acceptance of Safe Park

The establishment of safe parking facilities is also about integrating these spaces seamlessly into existing communities. **The goal is to provide support to transition the transient vehicular homeless into regularized residents of the community.** Ensuring community and neighbour acceptability is vital to create a harmonious environment that benefits both occupants and the neighbourhoods they become a part of.

Facility design: By strategically locating safe parking facilities in areas that have limited impact on adjacent residential properties, noise and visual disturbances can be minimized. For example, positioning the facility near commercial zones rather than quiet residential streets could mitigate noise concerns.

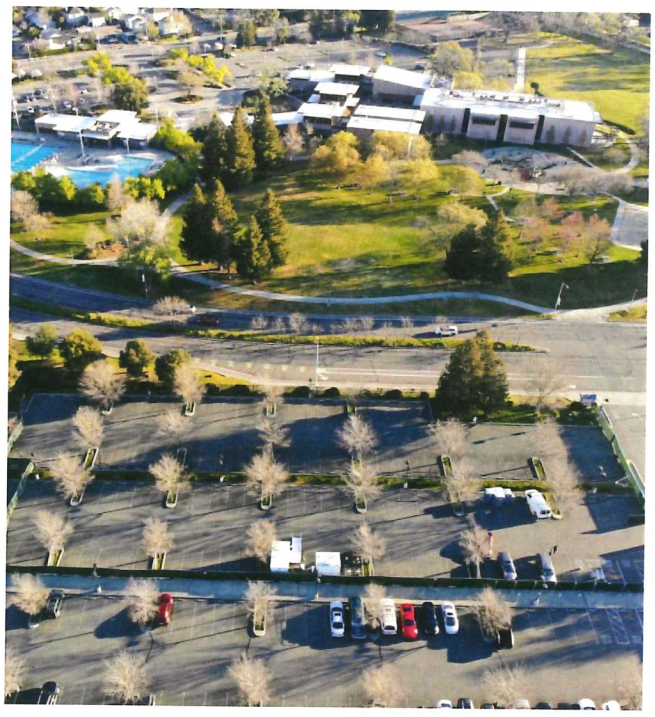
Screening procedures: Thorough background checks and verification processes can help ensure that individuals seeking refuge in these facilities do not pose a threat to the safety and security of the surrounding area. The San Diego Safe Parking Program, for instance, utilizes a stringent participant screening process to enhance safety and reassure the local community.

Crime concerns: Robust security measures are crucial, which can include 24/7 on-site security personnel, surveillance cameras, and controlled access points. Collaborating with local law enforcement to establish a visible presence and quick response in case of emergencies can alleviate fears related to crime.

Waste and cleanliness: Establishing strict protocols for trash disposal and waste management can prevent issues related to litter and messiness. Regular maintenance and cleaning schedules can ensure that the facility remains well-kept, contributing positively to the visual impact on adjacent properties.

Codes of conduct: Clear guidelines on noise levels, appropriate behaviour, and respecting neighbouring properties can help maintain a peaceful coexistence. The Denver Safe Parking Program, for example, provides participants with a code of conduct that outlines expected behaviour and responsibilities.

Community engagement: Holding regular meetings between facility operators, local authorities, and residents can provide a platform for addressing concerns, clarifying misconceptions, and building a sense of trust. Engaging community members in the design process and seeking their input can also create a sense of ownership and investment in the project.



Principles of operation

- Screening of participants limits access to only those with no other option i.e. No tourists
- Washrooms and basic sanitation, device charging and other basic amenities
- Decorative fencing, high quality materials, landscaping and site selection to make a positive visual contribution to the neighbourhood
- Codes of conduct and behaviour for residents i.e. no violence or threats
- Good neighbour agreements to address adjacent community concerns
- No narcotics, illegal or commercial activities
- No RVs, uninsured, or non-functional vehicles.
- Foot and vehicle traffic managed through access hours and gates
- Limitations on guests
- Police cooperation
- Integration with existing social and health services
- Active and present on-site supervision and security
- Non-discrimination and inclusion
- Duration of stay is variable with goal to transition to affordable supportive housing as it becomes available
- Trash and litter eliminated through professional maintenance contracts
- Preference given to local displaced persons

To learn more, donate, or partner with us contact us:

wiseland.human.assoc@gmail.com
250-334-2074 (office)
250-650-1230 (mobile)
wiseland-humanitarian-association.ca

Registered Charitable Organization
Established in 2016

WISELAND HUMANITARIAN ASSOCIATION

Vanier Nature Park

Garry Oak Ecosystem

Delegation to Council by the
CVN Vanier Forest Garry Oaks
Restoration Team

October 2023

Project Goals

Restore this rare and at risk Garry Oak grove

Monitor the results of our work

Establish a community stewardship group

Progress to date:

Tree Survey

Invasive Plant Survey

Revised Proposal

Engagement with others

Organize walks in the Oak Grove

Provide webinars on benefits of Garry Oak ecosystems

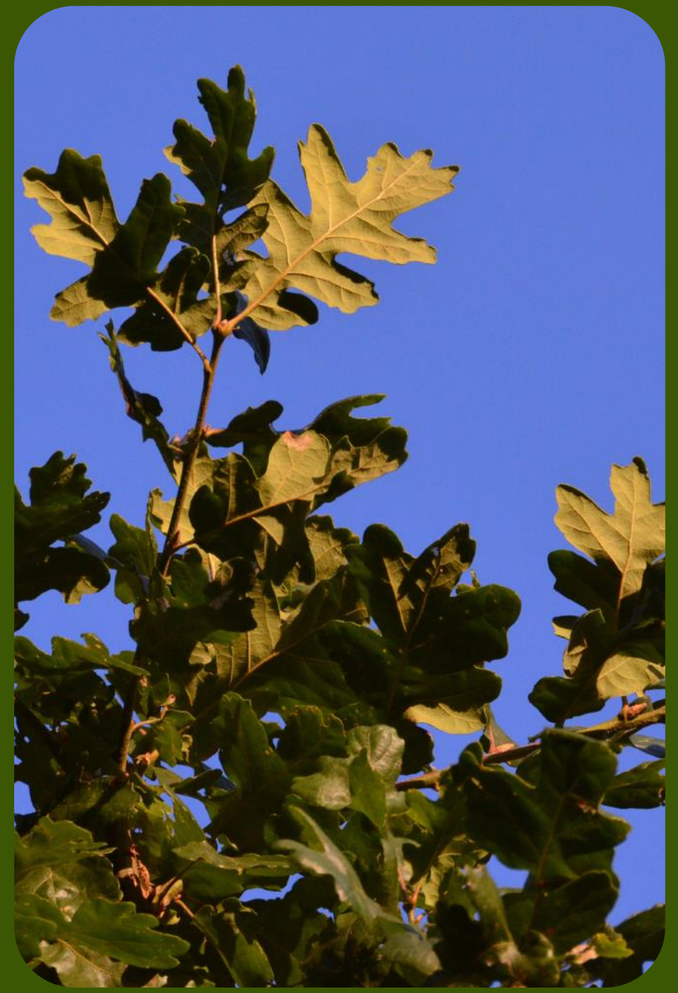
Tours of other Garry Oak sites on Vancouver Island

Project steps:

- Tree risk assessment
- Mitigation of hazard trees
- Invasive plant removal
- Reduction of 4 over-topping firs to wildlife snags
- Removal of 8 sweet cherries
- Repeating process over the following 4 years

Letters of Support

- Verna Mumby, Mumby’s Arboriculture Consulting
- Ryan Senechal, Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society
- Dr Loys Maingon, CVN
- Frank Hovenden, CVN (Air Park)
- Veronique McIntyre, CVN
- Margaret Lidkea, Friends of Uplands Park
- Jason Straka, BC Conservation Data Centre
- Dr John Neilson, CVN
- Wayne White, Tsolum River Restoration Society
- Dr Nancy Shackelford, University of Victoria
- Thomas Munson, District of Saanich
- Robin Harrison, CVN
- David Innes, Coordinator - CVN
- Dave Weaver, Beaufort Watershed Stewards



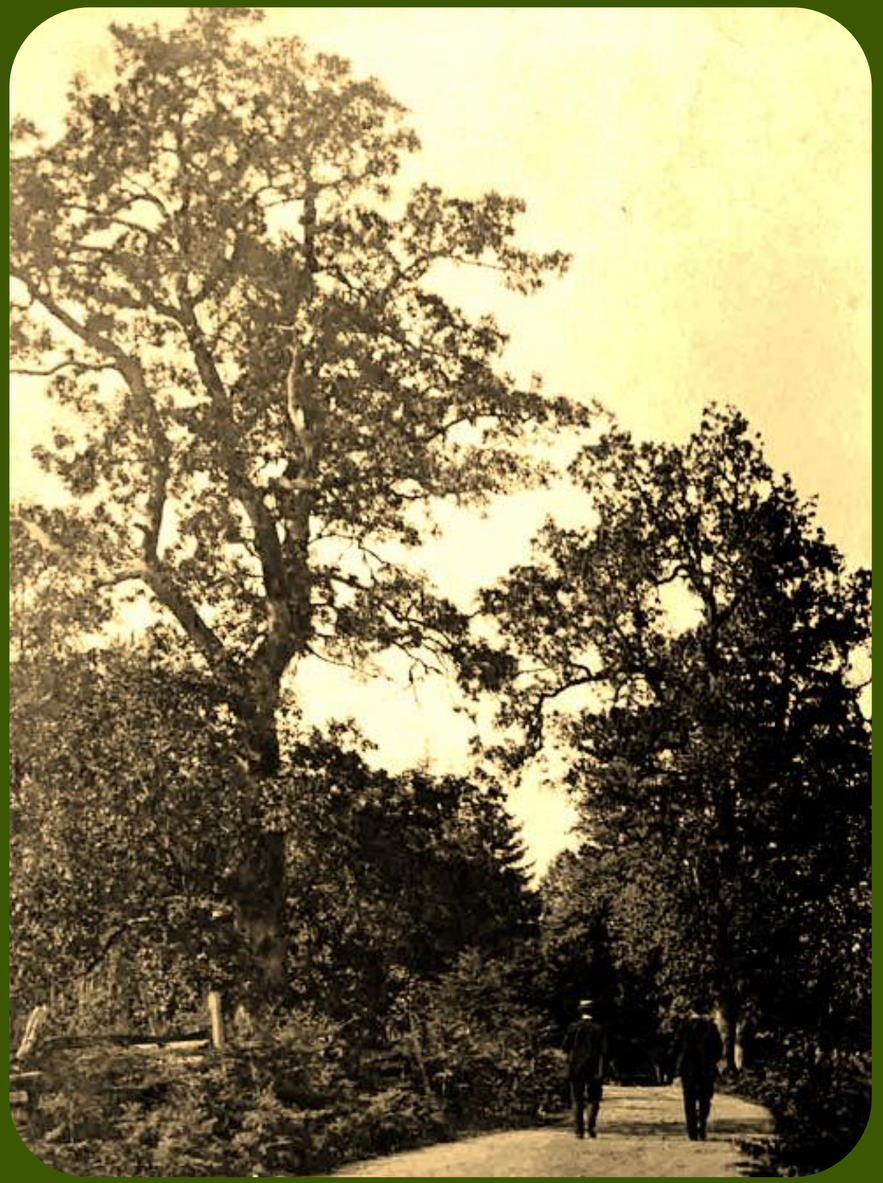
“Never let it be said that you stood by and watched a species disappear into the halls of extinction. Now is the opportunity to save this legacy." Thomas Munson

Other Garry Oak projects

- City of Courtenay Air Park
- CVN Garry Oak Nursery
- Salt Spring Island
- Saanich
- Oak Bay
- Cowichan Valley
- Helliwell Park, Hornby Island
- Tumbo Island Ecological Reserve

Requests of the City

- Funds for removal of identified hazard trees
- Permission for CVN to begin the removal of invasive plants
- Collection and disposal of invasives
- Funds for reduction of conifers
- Collaboration on outreach to public



Thank You

Presentation to Council - October 11, 2023

Vanier Nature Park - Garry Oak Ecosystem

To our esteemed Mayor and Council Members:

We are Karen Cummins and Eloise Holland, speaking on behalf of Comox Valley Nature and the Vanier Forest Garry Oaks restoration team.

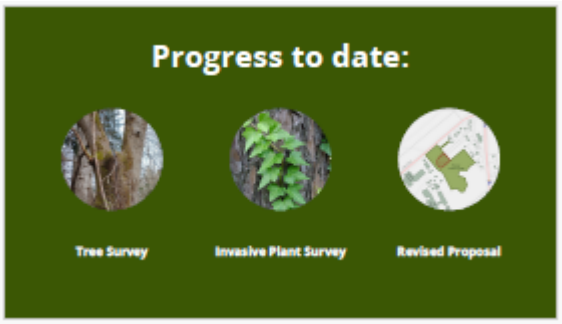
Project Goals

In 2021 three members of the pilot project team appeared before Mayor and Council to request Council's support for the implementation of the pilot project in Vanier Nature Park. The goals of the project then and today are to:

1. Assess and gradually restore this rare and at risk Garry Oak grove to increased sun and health through a site specific restoration plan.
2. Monitor the results of our work
3. Establish a long-term community stewardship group for this project.

Council's decision in 2021 was to refer the proposal to staff for their input. We are here again to ask for your support for our proposal with the encouragement of Susie Saunders, director of Parks, Culture and Recreation.

Progress to Date



In the documents we have provided you will find a full list of our continued work since 2021.

1. In the fall of 2021 we continued the work of assessing the Garry Oak grove in Vanier Nature Park and in April 2022 we published a site specific tree survey. The report mapped and provided details on all the trees in the grove as well as pinpointing the 21 conifer trees that could be reduced to wildlife snags, thereby providing more sun to the oaks.
2. In April 2023 we completed an invasive plant survey of the Garry Oak grove. An important part of our proposal is to do a large part of the initial invasive plant removal before any tree reduction work begins.
3. We have revised the length of our proposal for work on the site from 3 years to 5 years. This will include:

    a) the tree reduction work
    b) much of the invasive plant removal and
    c) the development of a stewardship group that includes the wider community. (You'll find a draft of an outreach brochure in your documents)

To address concerns raised by the Tsolum River Restoration Society we plan to extend the tree reduction over a longer period and delay reduction of any conifers on the south side of tributary 1 until year 3 to 5

Engagement with Others

In 2022 and 2023 we organized walks in the Vanier Nature Park oak grove for City staff members Craig Rushton and Susie Saunders, as well as community members such as KFN K'omox Guardians, Tsolum River Restoration Society, Biologists Warren Fleenor and Nick Page and others who provided feedback on our proposal.

In the spring of 2022 we hosted two webinars for CVN members and the general public on the benefits of Garry Oak ecosystems.

In the fall of 2021 CVN members and our restoration committee toured Somenos Garry Oak Protected Area and Mt. Tzouhalem Ecological Reserve with the reserve wardens. Both sites are in Duncan. Both sites had conifers reduced to wildlife trees to restore or maintain Garry Oak ecosystems.

Project Steps

We have prepared a detailed timeline for the 5 year project which includes:

1. A tree risk assessment of the Garry oak grove prepared and submitted to the City of Courtenay. (this has already been carried out pro-bono by Verna Mumby)
2. Hazard trees already identified by the tree risk assessment to be mitigated in the fall of 2023 or early winter 2024.
3. Invasive plant removal by CVN to begin after tree mitigation in fall 2023 or early winter 2024
4. Reduction of 4 of the identified over-topping firs to wildlife snags and removal of 8 sweet cherries completed by tree care professionals in early fall 2024
5. The succeeding 4 years of the project are similar: invasive plant removal by CVN in fall and winter and conifer reduction work is completed by tree care professionals in the early fall.

Letters of Support

There were numerous letters of support submitted to council. These advocates remind us that Garry Oaks are an educational and cultural resource. They increase biodiversity, are adaptable to our warming climate and are resistant to fire.

Verna Mumby, Mumby's Arboriculture Consulting
Ryan Senechal. Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society
Dr Loys Maingon, CVN
Frank Hovenden, CVN (Air Park)
Veronique McIntyre, CVN
Margaret Lidkea, Friends of Upland Park
Jason Straka, BC Conservation Data Centre
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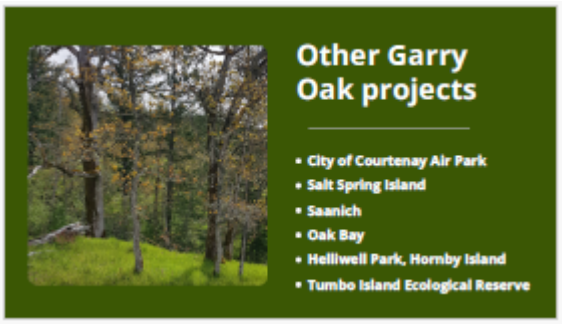
Robin Harrison, CVN
David Innis, Coordinator, CVN
Dave Weaver, Beaufort Watershed Stewards

Thomas Munson (Environmental Planner / District of Saanich) wrote, "Never let it be said that you stood by and watched a species disappear into the halls of extinction. Now is the opportunity to save this legacy."

Other Garry Oak Projects

There are many communities where this type of restoration work has been done, including:

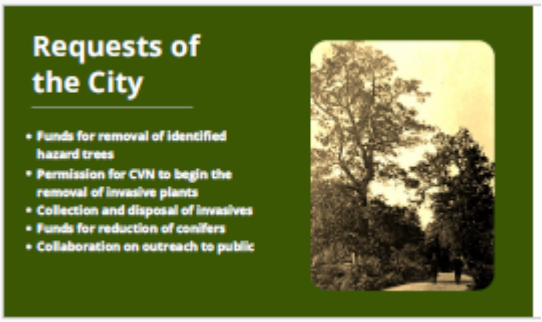
City of Courtenay Air Park, CVN Garry Oak Nursery, Salt Spring Island, Saanich, Oak Bay, Cowichan Valley, Helliwell Park on Hornby Island, and Tumbo Island Ecological Reserve.



You've received in your package a document with links to these projects.

Requests of the City

We request the following from the city of Courtenay:



1. $5760 for the removal of identified hazard trees in fall of 2023 or the winter of 2024
2. Permission for CVN to begin the removal of invasive plants in the Garry oak grove starting as soon as the mitigation of hazard trees is completed
3. That the City of Courtenay agrees to pick up and dispose of invasive plants removed and collected by CVN members
4. $3710 for the reduction of 4 conifer trees to wildlife trees in the fall of 2024 and each year for another 4 years. This represents 50% of the annual cost, with CVN matching those funds
5. Collaboration on outreach to the public regarding this project, for example: press releases, brochure printing, assisting at an open house.

Thank You

We'd like to end with a quote from Ryan Senechal, Chair of the Board of Directors for the Saanich Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society

"*Stewardship of Garry oak ecosystems is an act of recognition, appreciation, and support for Indigenous historic and ongoing management. Garry oak ecosystem patches have become increasingly fragmented and continue to degrade with low and no management approaches. Restoring practices of- ecosystem stewardship based in First Nations local knowledge and in using alternative practices (e.g., wildlife snag creation) where fire cannot be accommodated is crucial to reconnect community members to each other and to reconnect the community with nature.*"

Thank you for your time.

Eloise Holland, CVN
Karen Cummins, CVN

Appendix 1 - Timeline for Vanier Garry Oak 2024 to 2029

Certain tasks maybe performed on a monthly or yearly schedule. Such tasks will be:

An annual biological species survey in the late spring of each year
Annual monitoring of released oaks for epicormic growth
Regular monitoring previous invasive control for regrowth
An annual report will be prepared for City each December until 2029
Removal of cherry and holly will be done in phases as well
Acorn count annually Mid-August to Mid-September
Annual analysis of work done in 2023 and revisit plans for next year
Annual report to CVNS Board and City for 2023

2023

September/ October

Hazard-Tree Assessment by Verna Mumby of *Mumby's Arboriculture Consulting*
Hazard-Tree Mitigation quote from Aaron Wurts of *Grow Tree Care*
Subordination and sweet cherry removal estimate from Aaron Wurts of *Grow Tree Care*
2023-10-11 **Delegation** to Mayor and Council, Eloise, Ian, Karen and Jim

November-December

City has **hazard-trees abated**, Trunks left on ground, branches chipped and spread out
Begin 1st season of **invasive removal**, debris stored by SD fence. Larger Holly and Sweet Cherry no more than a third at this time (cherries <5m in height < 8cm DBH, free from entanglement hand tools only. Cut ivy stems on oaks in late fall/early winter
Identify 1st cohort of conifers (4 firs) to be sub-ordinated to oaks in Fall of 2024
Identify 5 study oaks that will be released by 1st subordination, photograph for epicormic monitoring
Hold **public info meeting** on stewardship with **brochure;** Vanier High, KFN, and Neighbors
Annual Report

2024

January-March

Continue with invasive removal, and invasive **re-growth**.
Community Information event with City, with KFN, TRRS, others participating
CVNS to seek out **grant sources** for the CVN portion of cost of fir subordination

April to August

Cut large flowering **common hawthorn** when blooming or seed just setting.
Invite BCFS Pathologist **Dave Rusch** to investigate further the decline of the grand firs.
Guided walks by CVNS for those interested in stewardship
Inform KFN archaeologist when most of holly gone.
Annually assess health and status of all oaks in the grove

September to December

Begin 2nd season Invasive removal
Subordination of 1st cohort of 4 firs identified in fall of 2023
Identify 2nd cohort of conifers (4 firs) to be sub-ordinated to oaks in Fall of 2025

Identify 5 released study oaks from 2nd subordination, photograph **for epicormic monitoring**

2025

January to March:

Invasive plant control and invasive regrowth
Identify possible areas for establishment of seedling Garry oaks.
CVNS to seek out grant sources for the CVN portion of cost of fir subordination.

April to August

Oak grove to be **monitored on a regular basis** and any concerns brought to City
Cut back regrowth of holly, Daphne, cherry, Ivy
Informative **Public walks**
Research **trench remediation** and use of LWD from of firs abatement
Assess health and status of all oaks in the grove

September to December:

Subordination of 2nd cohort of 4 firs identified in fall of 2024
Identify **3rd cohort** of conifers (4 firs) to be sub-ordinated to oaks in Fall of 2026
Identify **5 released study oaks**: photos for epicormic monitoring.
Have larger cherry trees removed by tree care professionals.
Begin 3rd year of Invasive plant control
Annual Report

2026

January to March

Invasive plant control and regrowth control continues.
Begin planting native **species of forbs and grasses.**
Transplant oak seeding trees (same genotype) and protect with fencing
Re-measurement of DBH and crown diameter of the released and control oaks
CVNS to seek out **grant sources** for the CVN portion of cost of fir subordination

April to August

Public informative walks
Monitor growth of seedling oaks and other native plants

September to December

Acorn survey post treatment of control, half and full treatment oaks
Subordination of 3rd cohort of 4 firs
Determine 4th cohort (4) of firs for subordination in 2027
Identify 5 released study oaks from subordination, photograph for epicormic growth
Annual Report

2027

January to March:

Winter invasive plant and **invasive regrowth** control continues.
CVNS will apply to **Grant sources** .
Stewardship group organized and working with City *and CVNS*

April to August

Spring and fall invasive plant control and invasive regrowth continues.

Stewardship group organized and working with City and CVNS

September to December

Subordination of 4th cohort of 4 firs identified in fall of 2026.
Identify 5th cohort of conifers (5 firs) to be **subordinated** to oaks in Fall of 2028
Identify 5 released study oaks, photograph for epicormic growth.
Control invasive plant regrowth
Annual Report

2028

January to April

Spring invasive plant control continues.
CVNS will apply to Grant sources.

April to August

Spring invasive and invasive **regrowth control** continues.
CVNS will apply to **Grant sources.**
Stewardship group organized and working with City *and CVNS.*

September to December

Subordination of 5th cohort of 5 firs identified in fall of 2027.
Identify 2nd cohort of conifers (4 firs) to be sub-ordinated to oaks in Fall of 2025.
Identify 5 released study oaks, photograph for epicormic monitoring.
Annual Report

2029

January –March

Assist Stewardship group with planning for future activities and CVNS may take less of a role.

April – August

Public outreach with City and Stewards

September to December

Final Report

Appendix 2 - CVN Work Completed Oct 2021 to Aug 2023)

Date	Item	Comments		
2021-10-10	Tree survey of main Garry oak Grove	Report published April, 2022 and given to the Acting Director of Recreation, Culture and Community Services		
2022-07-12	Stem Density and Diversity Survey, with Verna Mumby	Received Nov 5 2022		
2022-07-19	Walk with Craig R. and Nick P.			
2022-10-07	Walk with Susie, 5 from KFN, and Warren F.			
2022-10-25	SPEA; City's discretion what protection to provide			
2022-11-16	Proposal for Hydrological Assessment, GW Solutions	Pro bono professional Hydrologist's assessment and quote		
2022-12-26	Video records of surface flows into and through VNP	Shows road ditch flows into park on Vanier Dr.		
2023-02-06	TRRS Water Temperature Concerns	Met with TRRS, ground well monitoring and hydrologists quote resulted		
2023-02-24	Walk with Botany and Bird Leaders			
2023-03-23	Tag Living Oaks, measure DBH			
2023-04-18	Walk with Susie			
2023-04-27	Botany Blitz, Jocie CVNS and I-Naturalist page created			
2023-05-06	Bird survey by CVNS identified 12 species of bird present			
2023-05-31	Ground Wells and Water Table Data Jan 12 to May 31	Pending analysis		
2023-05-31	GPS Oaks and other trees of interest & firs recommended for subordination			
2023-06-28	Invasive Polygon Mapping Report	Delivered to City June 28, 2023		
2023-08-04	Video Drone flight	Permit was for maximum height of 200 feet, in the general vicinity of Park		
2023-08-21	Meeting with Susie @ City Hall			
2023-08-28	Meeting with Ian SD71 re access for city truck and chipper	Permission for City truck and volunteer access will be available		

2023-08-31	Acorn Count with Kevin Brown, more data collected on 20+ year US Forest Service study on Garry Oaks in the Pacific Northwest.			

Stem Density and Diversity Survey

Mumby's Arboriculture Consulting, with CVNS volunteers assisting

- Data collected July 12, 2022, report received Nov. 5th, 2022
- Three sample plots, covering 942 square meters, about 1/10th of the Garry Oak grove were inventoried, a total of 68 trees.
- Species inventoried were Garry Oak (22), Sweet Cherry (31), Grand Fir (8), Big Leaf Maple (1), Hawthorn (3), Crab Apple (2), and Pacific Dogwood (1). Hollys were not counted.
- Reduction of the firs and cherry is seen as a way to promote growth in the oaks, maples, and dogwoods.

Proposal for Hydrological Assessment

Antonio Barroso professional hydrogeologist in Nanaimo was contacted by phone, and provided a quote and proposed tasks to be undertaken on the Park hydrology, done pro bono. The work would cost $4,800, and the quote was provided to the City for their consideration.

Bio-Blitz for iNaturalist.org site, 2023-04-27

Jocie Brooks, a biologist with CVNS, lead a group of volunteers on a 1-day bio-blitz to record species in the Park. Currently there are photographs of 35 species in iNat, and a total of 66 species have been recorded in the 2015 and 2023 biological surveys. We will continue to do life surveys during the course of the proposal, as we expect to see a resurgence in native growth once the ground shading issues are reduced.

https://www.inaturalist.org/places/vanier-nature-park-bc

Ground Wells and Water Table Data Jan 12 to May 31

8 Ground wells were installed in the Park by Current Environmental in 2013. All wells are slightly less than 1 meter in depth, and go down to compacted soil. 5 months of data was collected weekly, but has not yet been analysed. 2 weeks of no rain in May resulted in no water seem in any of the wells. Standing water was only seen at the confluence of the Trib 1 and 2, near the SD storage yard in the spring.

Surface water flows Dec 26, 2022

A video study was done on surface flows into and through the Park. Water was entering the Park from Vanier Drive drainage, and from private properties

above the Park. Two semi-permanent flows result from seeps on this same private land.

GPS Oaks and other trees of interest

We used cell phone GPS to map all the oaks in the grove, and other species of interest. These GPS values have errors up to 10 meters, but will be ground truthed in the future, once the holly and cherry start to be removed.

We also identified 21 first we recommend for subordination.

Invasive Polygon Mapping Report, June 28, 2023

At the request of the City of Courtenay, we mapped the locations and density of 5 invasive species: Daphne, Holly, Cherry, Ivy and Black Berry. A few other non-native plants such as hawthorn were seen.

Bird survey by CVNS, May 6, 2023

A bird survey with 4 CVNS members on May 6th, 2023 recorded a total of 17 birds in 12 species. The Group has a pending request that Vanier Nature Park be declared a hot spot on the eBird site, which would attract a wider group of citizen scientists. The link to the Park is here: *https://ebird.org/checklist/S136333860*

Walk with Susie, 5 from KFN, and Warren F. 2022, Oct 10

We have arranged a number of walks every year since 2020, This particular walk had 5 representatives from K'omoks First Nation, invited by the City. On pervious walks we had representatives of the KFN Guardians, and the hereditary Chief on walks. At the request of the City, we have not directly approached KFN for support to date.

TRRS Water Temperature Concerns

The fish biologist for Tsolum River Restoration Society raised a question regarding possible changes in surface water temperature once overtopping firs are subordinated. CVN spoke with 3 experts (Antonio Barroso, Will Marsh and Loys Maingon) who agreed that surface water plays a small part in the total flows, as subsurface water contributes more to stream flow, and is effected little by air temperature.

Video Drone flight 2023-08-04

A permit for a video over-flight of the grove, below 200 feet of altitude was received, and the top of the grove was inspected.

Changes to Project

Time-line extended to 5 years from 3 years. Conifers on the south-west side of Tributary 1 delayed until year 3 monitoring is completed and TRRS consulted.

Tree Survey

Tree Survey: Mapped, tagged, and provided details on all the trees in the grove. It also pinpointed the 21 conifer trees that could be reduced to wildlife snags and the many sweet cherries that should be removed in order to provide more sun and less competition to the Garry oaks

Appendix 3 - Reference Projects

Comox Valley Nature Wetland Restoration at the City of Courtenay Airpark has been led by member Frank Hovenden since 1995 and has included planting Garry oaks and their associated plants. See the Airpark reports at the link below.

https://comoxvalleynaturalist.bc.ca/cvns-wetland-habitat-restoration-project-reports/

Comox Valley Nature Garry Oak Restoration and Nursery: since 2013 CVN member Dr. Loys Maingon has grown and distributed over 2,000 Garry oaks to be planted and stewarded on both private and public lands https://goert.ca/comox-valley/

Garry oak restoration projects like our proposal for Vanier Nature Park have been carried out in these Vancouver Island communities:

Saanich

Oak Haven Park in Central Saanich
https://www.vicnews.com/news/central-saanich-park-among-sites-for-local-garry-oak-restoration-projects-84966

Playfair Park Garry oak Restoration
https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/parks-recreation-community/parks/parks-trails-amenities/signature-parks/playfair-park.html

Oak Bay

Friends of Uplands Park
https://news.mongabay.com/2023/06/volunteers-first-nations-work-to-bring-back-a-disappearing-oak-prairie/
https://www.oakbaynews.com/community/decades-of-conservation-work-in-oak-bay-park-draws-national-attention-535477
https://www.gvnaturehood.com/post/caring-for-uplands-park
https://www.vicnews.com/news/restoration-of-uplands-parks-garry-oak-ecosystem-pays-off-45561

Helliwell Provincial Park, Hornby Island (which involved both the removal or pruning of many conifers)

https://goert.ca/ecosystem-restoration-in-helliwell-provincial-park-a-backgrounder-report/
https://www.campbellrivermirror.com/community/endangered-butterfly-species-to-be-reintroduced-to-hornby-island-1494686
https://engage.gov.bc.ca/bcparksblog/2022/05/13/beautiful-butterflies-in-helliwell-provincial-park/

Victoria

https://vancouverisland.ctvnews.ca/rare-garry-oak-meadow-to-become-victoria-s-newest-park-1.5194497

https://www.vicnews.com/community/garry-oaks-camas-reveal-agricultural-impacts-of-colonialism-on-vancouver-island-90771

Cowichan Valley

Cowichan Garry Oak Preserve: https://www.natureconservancy.ca/en/where-we-work/british-columbia/featured-projects/salish-sea/cowichan-garry-oak-preserve.html

Somenos Garry Oak Preserve https://www.yeyumnuts.ca/settler-voices/naturalists

Salt Spring Island https://www.stqeeye.ca/phwulhp

Videos

CBC Documentary on Garry oak ecosystems 2023
https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2243236419537

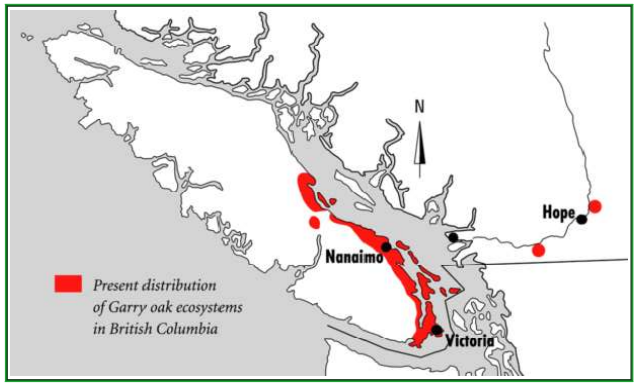
United States

San Juan Islands: San Juan Preservation Trust
https://sjpt.org/see-garry-oak-directors-cut/

History of Garry Oaks in the Comox Valley

Garry Oak Meadows are an example of a culturally modified ecosystem.
For centuries the coast Salish peoples used grass fires in these meadows to burn off unwanted undergrowth and allow the edible Camas bulbs to flourish. Garry Oak meadows were a rich source of food and medicine for the Coast Salish peoples. Indigenous stewardship and agriculture allowed Garry Oaks to thrive.

The Vanier forest Garry Oaks are a unique part of several remaining groves that once covered 160 square kilometres and stretched from the Comox estuary to present day Smith Road.



Present distribution of Garry oak ecosystems (map source: Province of BC)

Today less than 5% of Garry Oak ecosystems in Canada remain in a near natural state. Much of this loss is due to development, farming, road building and the spread of invasive plants.

How Can You Help?

Volunteer to help remove invasives in the Vanier Nature Park

Connect with nature in your neighbourhood by joining Comox Valley Nature
www.comoxvalleynaturalist.bc.ca

Discover more about Garry Oaks through the Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Team website.
www.goert.ca

Grow and Nurture native plants and insects in your own backyard.
www.satinflower.ca
www.pollinatorpartnership.ca

Read about the City of Courtenay Urban Tree Management Strategy
www.courtenay.ca/EN/main/community/environment/tree-management/urban-forest-strategy.html

Learn about dealing with invasives like Holly, spurge laurel, ivy, and bitter cherry,
www.bcinvasives.ca

Vanier Nature Park Garry Oak Grove

A rare ecosystem in need of restoration

Garry Oaks in open meadow (quercus garryana)

Garry Oak ecosystems are the richest land-based ecosystems in coastal British Columbia. They include open forests dominated by groves of soaring sculptural Garry Oak trees that can reach up to 25 metres. The forest understory is composed of shrubs and grassy meadows of wildflowers that carpet the ground in the spring.

An exceptional list of native plants

Many species are associated with Garry Oaks

- Trees such as Garry Oak, Arbutus and Douglas-fir.
- Shrubs like Snowberry, Oceanspray, Nootka Rose.
- Wildflowers including Camas, Shooting Star, Checker Lily, White Fawn Lily, Nodding Onion, and Sea Blush
- Mammals such as Black-tailed Deer, Black Bear, Moles and Shrews
- Birds, insects and reptiles including the Western Bluebird, Sharp-tailed Snake, the Island Marble Butterfly and the endangered Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly

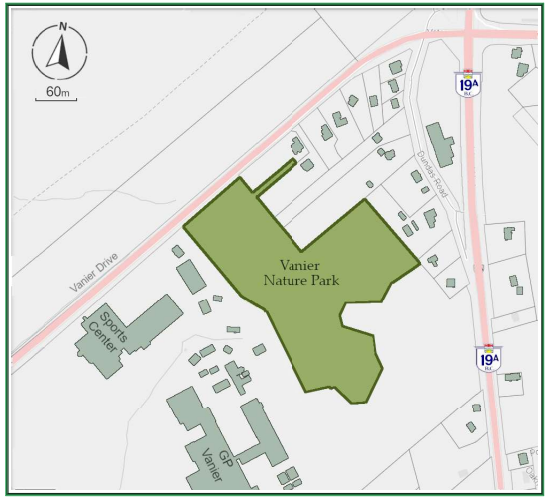
Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly

Comox Valley nature has been studying this Garry Oak grove since 2009...

In that time they have catalogued and measured the trees in the grove and monitored their health. Together with Tsolem River Restoration they have analyzed ground water and soil quality. In 2013 there were 130 oaks in the grove. By 2023 there were only 70, which represents a 40% loss in 10 years.

Garry Oaks need full sunlight to thrive. Invasive trees like Sweet Cherry and Holly as well as native conifers, that grow taller and faster, block the light and weaken oak trees. In the understory Daphne and Ivy inhibit the growth of younger oak trees. Today the oaks in the grove are all over 70 years of age.

The loss of Garry Oak habitat also endangers the plants and animals that normally thrive there. More than 100 species are at risk in Garry Oak areas. **Unless action is taken these species will disappear.**



Vanier Nature Park NE of GP Vanier High School

Next steps:

Comox Valley Nature and the Vanier Woods Stewardship group will

- work with the city to open the canopy through selective pruning of over-topping of trees to create wildlife trees.
- remove invasives such as Holly, Ivy and Sweet Cherries
- monitor the regeneration of tree species
- reintroduce Garry Oak native plants
- connect with SD71 schools by using Vanier Nature Park as an outdoor educational laboratory supporting curriculum led environmental stewardship programs
- provide stewardship support for the grove in the future

There are habitat restoration groups working in Garry Oak meadows throughout their range. We need to be a part of this vital work.

"What can I do to make a better tomorrow?"
Maiya Modeste, Garry Oak Restoration Project Coordinator Stqeeye' Learning Society, Salt Spring Island.

Camas

Assignment

Provide data and recommendations in relation to stem density in areas where the Garry oaks are being overshadowed.

Observations

In July 2022 I sampled three plots in the proposed Vanier Garry oak forest to determine species composition, size and density. Three ten metre sized plots in the areas where canopy overshadowing of the oaks is present, were inventoried. See Picture 1.

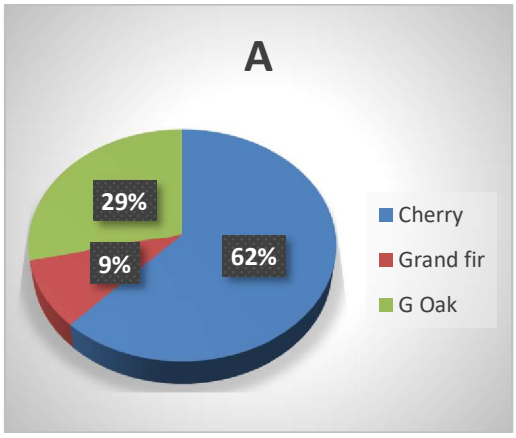
Picture 1

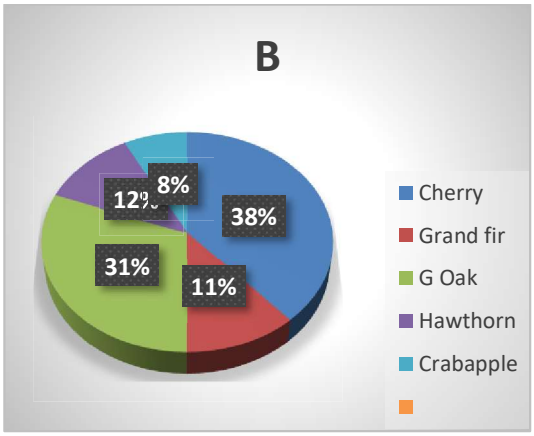
A total of 68 trees were inventoried with the three areas representing 942 square meters of forest.

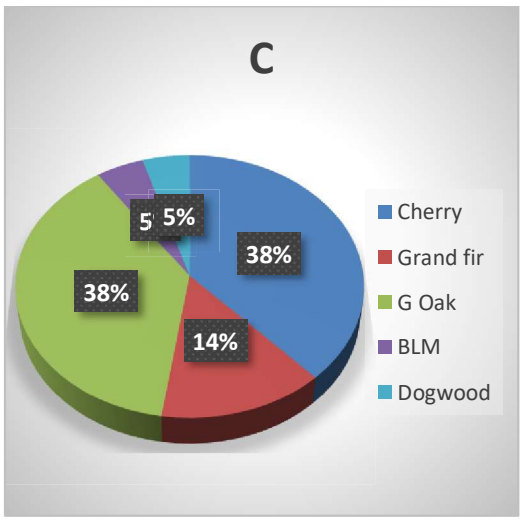
Mumby's Arboriculture Consulting Division of Mumby's Tree Services Ltd.
ISA Certified Arborist / ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualified
ASCA Tree & Plant Qualification
Member, American Society of Consulting Arborists
www.treelady.ca

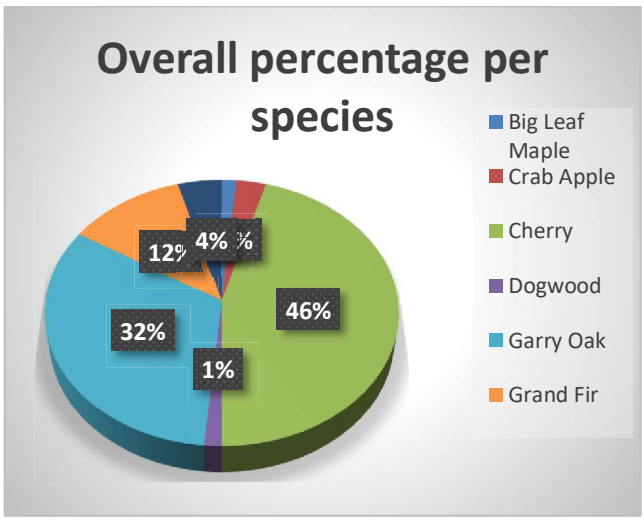
Number of tree types per Area A, B, and C. Precentages shown in pie charts.

Area	Cherry	Grand fir	G Oak	Hawthorn	Crab apple	BLM	Dogwood
A	13	2	6				
B	10	3	8	3	2		
C	8	3	8			1	1









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Average tree DIAMETER in centimeters (cm) per Area A, B, and C

Area	Cherry	Grand fir	G Oak	Hawthorn	crab-apple	BLM	Dogwood
A	17	38	61				
B	17	26	44	30	10.5		
C	18	35	56			10	18

Discussion

In these sample areas, the cherry trees are smaller in caliper however, higher in numbers. This results in a broader canopy cover reducing the amount of sunlight to the forest floor for any new oaks or other species to establish. The higher cherry tree density also reduces the health of the existing oaks by forcing them to grow upright and spindly which is not their natural growth pattern.

Reducing the number of cherry trees to increase sunlight penetration can be determined on a tree by tree basis. Those closer to a fish bearing creek could be retained whereas cherries further away from the riparian zones could be removed.

The Grand firs being taller and with wider canopies, also reduce the sunlight to the oaks or other tree species trying to get established. Selective removal or canopy pruning of the Grand firs would greatly enhance sunlight to the lower forest area and to the exisiting oaks.

Longevity of tree species is an important item to consider in forest density. Grand firs and cherries are among the shorter living tree species versus the Garrry oaks. Allowing the native dogwood and big leaf maple to establish in the forest is important to the survivability of a mixed woods forest. The data shows a very low rate of establishment for dogwood and maple.

If the goal is to enhance this forest to be a Garry oak forest, the stem density data concludes that some cherry tree removal and fir tree management would not impact the overall forest density but provide the needed area for the Garry oaks and other tree species to thrive in.

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Member, American Society of Consulting Arborists
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ARBORIST DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Arborists are tree specialists who use their education, knowledge, training, and experience to examine trees, recommend measures to enhance the beauty and health of trees, and attempt to reduce the risk of living near trees. Clients may choose to accept or disregard the recommendations of the arborist or seek additional advice. Arborists cannot detect every condition that could possibly lead to the structural failure of a tree. Trees are living organisms that fail in ways we do not fully understand. Conditions are often hidden within trees and below ground. Arborists cannot guarantee that a tree will be healthy or safe under all circumstances, or for a specified period of time. Likewise, remedial treatments, like any medicine, cannot be guaranteed. Treatment, pruning, and removal of trees may involve considerations beyond the scope of the arborist's services such as property boundaries, property ownership, site lines, disputes between neighbors, landlord-tenant matters, etc. Arborists cannot take such issues into account unless complete and accurate information is given to the arborist. The person hiring the arborist accepts full responsibility for authorizing the recommended treatment or remedial measures. Trees can be managed, but they cannot be controlled. To live near a tree is to accept some degree of risk.

The only way to eliminate all risks is to eliminate all trees. I further certify that I am a member in good standing of the American Society of Consulting Arborists and the International Society of Arboriculture. I have been involved in the field of Arboriculture in a full-time capacity for a period of more than twenty years.

Vanier Nature Park

Garry Oak Tree Survey

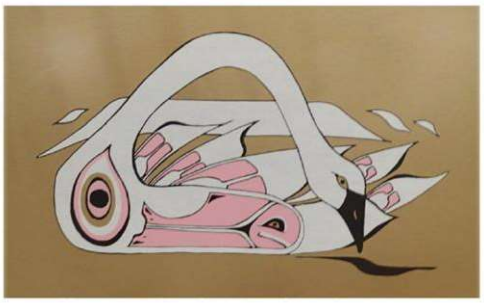
October – November 2021

Comox Valley Naturalist Society

Published: April 11, 2022

Comox Valley Naturalist (CVN) Volunteers

Jim Boulter	Bachelor of Technology, BC Diploma Adult Education
Karen Cummins	Diploma in Horticulture, ISA Certified Arborist
Daniel Devine	BSc Natural Resource Management, Diploma Restoration of Natural Systems
Robert Hauser	BSc Geology
Fred Newhouse	Registered Professional Forester



Comox Valley Naturalists Society

NOTE

You can follow the **bolded text** in this document for a summary level read.

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Introduction

This report is a follow up to the Vanier Forest Garry Oaks Restoration & Stewardship Pilot Project proposal presented to the City of Courtenay Mayor and Council by the of Comox Valley Naturalist Society (CVN) in July 2021.

This report discloses valuable observations and scientific data about the current state of the Vanier Park Garry oaks and its associated ecosystem that was not presented in the July 2021 proposal. The report supplies recommendations for minimally intrusive methods to manage trees that are encroaching on the Garry oaks in Vanier Nature Park.

CVN volunteer members inventoried and assessed the Vanier Park Garry oaks to provide the City of Courtenay with population and health data to aid and inform the city's future decisions about management of the site to conserve its unique natural heritage. The City of Courtenay has public documents which mention the need and intention to conserve the Vanier Garry oaks, including the City's *Urban Forest Strategy*, and the *Parks and Recreation Master Plan.* (**See**: Appendix A – Garry Oaks – City of Courtenay Documents)

The data presented in this report was collected in October through November 2021 using non-invasive methods. Volunteers collected physical and health data on 190 trees in our survey area. These data collections have taken 89 hours of on-site measuring and observation and hours of mapping and drafting this report. We see this report as a start on the process to name specific and practical strategies for improving the conditions for the Garry oaks and their associated ecosystem whilst keeping and respecting the surrounding forest dominated primarily by conifers**.**

Indigenous Acknowledgement and History

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

While we acknowledge that the Garry oak ecosystems of the Comox Valley evolved from the stewardship of the K'omoks people, this report does not intend to usurp or represent Indigenous knowledge or rights.

We do respectfully submit that the conditions of the remnant Garry oak stands left today in the Comox Valley are a result of the joint influences over time of Indigenous practices, past and present climatic changes, and the repercussions of colonial settlement. The latter includes changes to Indigenous

land management such as precluding cyclical burning of meadows that kept the oak savannahs clear of unwanted shrubs or conifers.[1]

A. Purpose for Data Collection

Why the need for data collection? Prior to this survey, little data on the state of the Garry oak trees within the Vanier Park had been collected. The number, size, health and age of the Garry oaks as well as the trees that overtop them were not precisely determined or quantified.

It is not possible to make realistic plans without sound, reliable data. Without the data collected in the survey, it would not be possible to confirm the need or viability of the restoration and stewardship pilot project.

Also, **data collection based on best scientific and professional practices, can be used to find proper methods for Garry oak tree restoration that is minimally invasive.**

Why save these particular Garry oaks? Garry oaks have been on Vancouver Island and west coast of the United States for at least 6000 years, and were culturally maintained by the local Indigenous cultures. It has been estimated that only 5% of the original Garry oak ecosystems survived[2] colonization, and in the Comox Valley that percentage shrinks to less than 1%.

The Vanier Garry oak ecosystem, a deep soil wetland, is so rare it is not even recognized provincially, and the oaks themselves are a unique genotype adapted to living in this particular space. The biogeoclimatic zone is likely CWHxm (Coastal Western Hemlock, dry maritime), and the presence of Garry oaks is considered rare[3].

Concern has been expressed over the current density of oak trees in the grove. This property was preempted in 1862, which accounts for the large percentage of oaks post 1862. The oak grove density is therefore naturally set by this particular genotype, absent any disturbance or competition with other trees for sunlight.

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[1] Barlow, Pellatt, and Kohfeld, *Garry Oak Ecosystem Stand History in Southwest British Columbia, Canada*

[2] Maingon, Loys, personal conversation March 2022

[3] Meidinger & Pojar, *Ecosystems of British Columbia*, B.C Ministry of Forests, page 60

B. Survey Area

The survey area hatched in orange, (Figure 1) covers approximately 0.5 hectares (Ha) of the 0.84 Ha that the oaks occupy in Vanier Park. The total park area is 5.33 Ha.

The survey area is roughly 10% of the park area. This area is the bulk of the main Garry oak grove and the area that requires intervention as soon as possible. There are approximately ten Garry oaks and many conifers in the boundary area between the survey area and the property line to the south. This boundary area receives more sunlight and is in better health. So presently, it has been excluded from the survey and placed on the list of future attention.

Figure 2, on the next page, is a diagram of the survey area with trees named by species and canopy size shown. Following sections of this report describe observations about specific trees. Diagram #8 on page 22 in the Appendix references all the tree numbers.

Figure 1 *- Survey Area in Vanier Park*

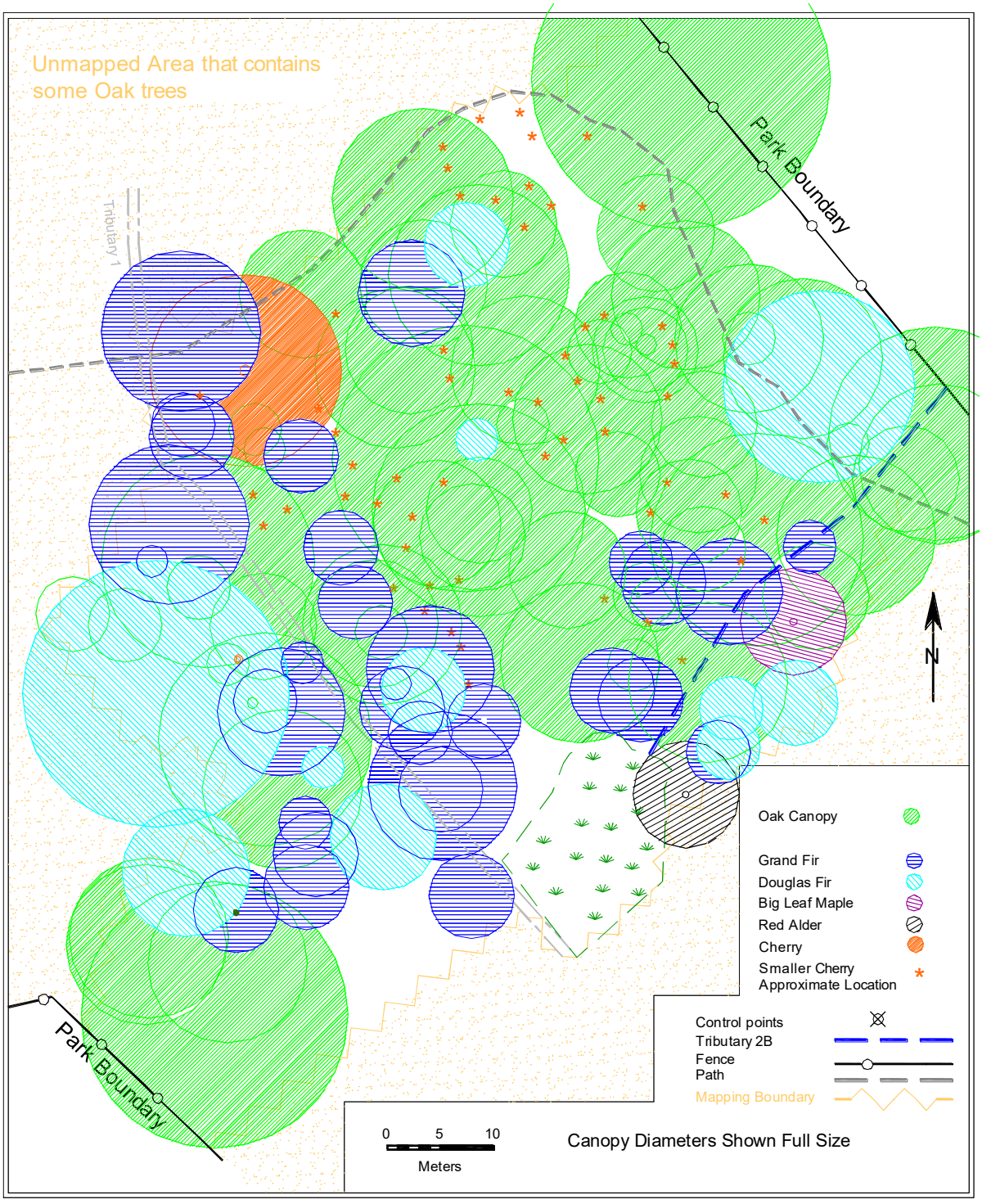

Figure 2*- Survey Area with Trees Identified by Species and the Full Canopy Size*

C. Data Collection Methodology

We used 1" by1" pine stakes driven into the ground near the trees to uniquely identify each tree, and recorded size, health, and vigor of the individual tree.

A 30-meter tape and laser range finder were used to measure distances as GPS used under the dense canopy of this forest was inexact for finding trees. Compass readings were taken with palm compasses and corrected for true North. **Tree diameter was measured with a DBH tape in cm**. **Live crown height and crown diameter were measured in meters and the live crown ratio determined. The crown die back in the Garry oaks was estimated**.

A subjective evaluation of health and vigor of the Garry oaks was done by certified arborist and forester volunteer members of CVN. This included **seeing and noting any epicormic growth** on the Garry oaks, as well as **inspecting the stem for wounds, disease, or other defects**. **A subjective analysis of the state of the ecosystem was recorded**, as were the presence of any test ground wells that were installed for an earlier survey.[4] All 9 wells appeared to be intact, but no current data have been taken from them.

D. Survey Area Ecosystem Overview

Data from 190 trees, including 62 live Garry oaks and 15 dead Garry oaks, were collected in our survey area and the trees mapped. (See: Figure 2)

The **largest Garry oak tree** in this survey was **tree #89**, with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of 106.2 cm (**See**: Appendix C - Estimating Tree Age for calculation details). The **estimated age of this tree is about 265 years. No other live Garry oak trees less than 70 years old (28 cm) were seen and are unlikely to be present due to the elevated level of shade. Few live seedlings were noted, and few acorns were found.**

Two exceptionally large Douglas firs were found and mapped: **Tree # 94** (DBH 145cm) is on the southern edge of the grove and **tree #108** (DBH 138) is on the northern edge.

The ground slopes south and south-east to a small vernal stream (Tributary 2B) that originates above the park on private land to the east and joins the wet lowlands to the south-west before flowing into Towhee Creek. **To the west of the plot is a deep trench Tributary 1** (approximately 1 meter deep and 2

[4] Current Environmental et al., *SD 71 Vanier Oak Property Ecological Assessment and Protection Plan*

meters wide). We suspect this was dug for the Sandwick Army Base in the 1940-1950s. **Many large grand firs and other species of trees have grown up on its edges**. One of these, a large Douglas fir, tree was blown down during the windstorms of October 2021.

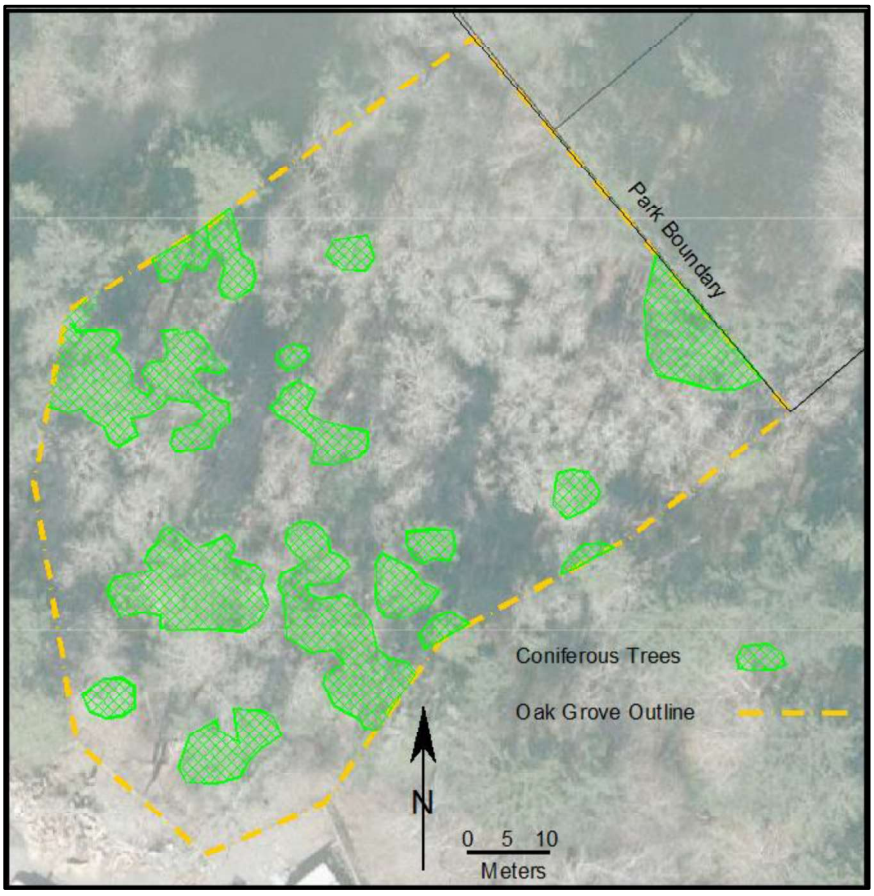

Figure 3 *- Coniferous Tree Coverage in Survey Area*

Crown cover is almost complete. The Garry oaks dominate the canopy in some areas of the main grove but are being overtopped by Douglas firs (*Pseudotsuga menziessii*) **and grand firs** (*Abies grandis*).

The green hatched pattern in Figure 3 shows the coniferous tree coverage in the Garry oak grove. The coniferous coverage was digitized from an air photo taken on March 19, 2020, at approximately noon and represents 19% of the area of the grove. **Darker areas north of the trees are the shadows of the trees**. Shadows in the photo would be roughly half the size during the May to Sept growing season and will of course change position during the day. **The evergreen trees and their shadows create significant shade for the Garry oaks beneath them and immediately to the north.**

Non-native sweet cherry (*Prunus avium*) **is intermediate to co-dominate with the Garry oaks**. **Other tree species present** include **red alder** (*Alnus rubra*), **Pacific dogwood** (*Cornus nuttalii*) and **big leaf maple** *(Acer macrophyllum).* **Undergrowth is mostly ferns**, **mosses**, and **snowberry**, with patches of **non-native shrubs daphne laurel** (*Daphne laureola,* **English ivy** (*Hedera helix)* and **Himalayan blackberry** (*Rubus armeniacus*)

While we have focused on sunlight being a major limiting factor to the health of the Garry oaks in Vanier Park, the competition for resources with the English holly, Daphne, Himalayan blackberry and English ivy is also a major issue. English holly is admirably adapted to the shade of understory forests, can grow to up to 20m tall and 25cm DBH and reach 55 years of age. **The regeneration of Garry oaks and the persistence of native understory forbs and grasses without removal of these invasive plants are impossible**. We are just now learning of the long-term effects of English holly on the physical and chemical properties of forest soil such as lower pH and higher amounts of sulfur. [5] Even more recently studied is the effect of exotic invasive plants on soil fungal communities that can alter the structure and health of native plant communities.[6] **We could speculate that without management it is possible that the climax state of this woodland could be English holly**.

E. Initial Observations

1. Establishment Date vs Number of Living Garry Oaks (n=65)

Analysis of the tree population and their ages is essential to understanding where the grove currently is in the forest succession sequence. In a healthy Garry oak grove, the general shape expected is a bell-curve, with median-aged individuals in the mid-range life span. Noticeably young and old individuals will be fewer, but young individuals should have a higher population compared to elders to promote continuity. Although Garry oaks can exceed 500 years, existing trees over 300 years old are rare and their ecosystems are doubly so.[7]

[5] Berger, Soil Impacts Due to the Invasion of Ilex Aquifolium (English Holly) into Second Growth Forests of the Pacific Northwest

[6] Pickett, Maltz, and Aronson, *Impacts of Invasive Plants on Soil Fungi, and Implications for Restoration*

[7] Dunwiddie et al., *Environmental History of a Garry Oak*

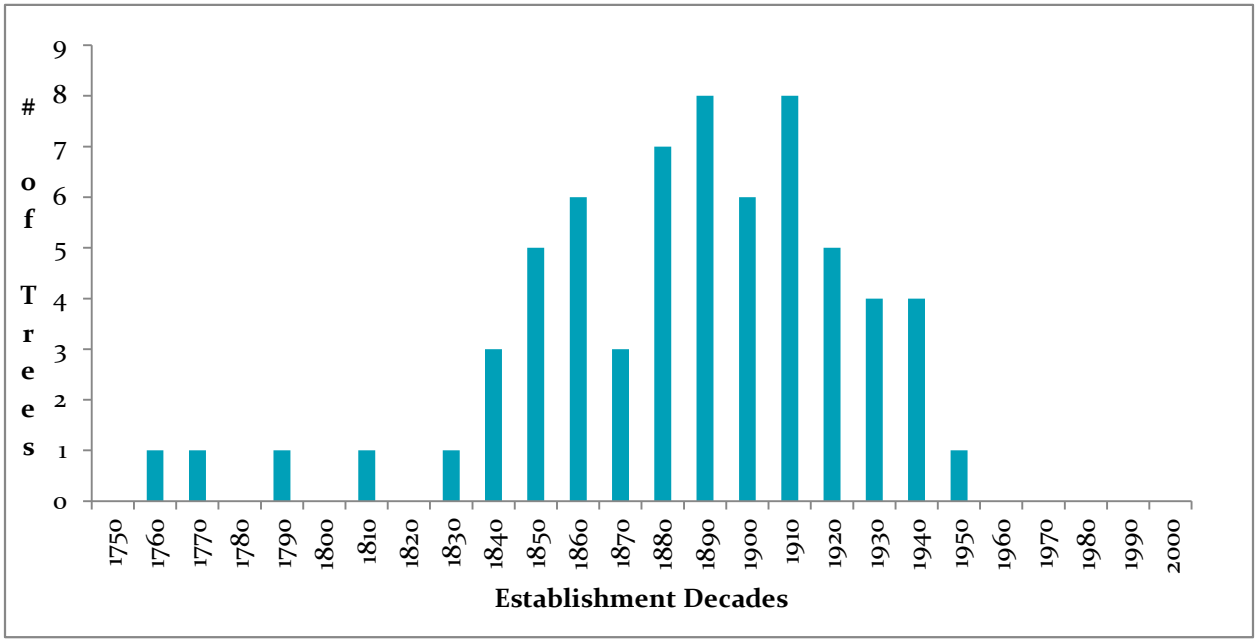

Figure 4 *- Estimated decades of establishment for 65 oak trees in Vanier Park.*

2. Study Area Observations

a) **Smallest live Garry oak** (DBH) was **28 cm (#4**), estimated to be **70years old**.

b) **The largest Garry oak** was **106.2 cm (#89),** estimated to be **265 years old**.

c) **No living Garry oak trees established after the 1950s were found**.

d) **Few seedlings were found and few acorns were present**.

e) **The grove was self-sowing after pre-emption in 1862, but seedlings ceased to be viable after 1950**.

3. Total Tree Height and Relative Positions to Each Other

Total tree height and the relative positions of trees to each other are crucial factors in considering how the Garry oaks are currently shaded and how to plan for their release from shading.

Noting the live crown heights of overtopping conifers has been valuable in planning how to subordinate these trees.

In measuring and mapping the **62 sweet cherries** we realize that though these trees are small in diameter (12-25cm DBH with two specimens 32 and 36 cm DBH) they range from 10-23m in height while the 49 Garry oaks in the same area

range from 16-27m in height. **The sweet cherries are competing with the Garry oaks for sun and other resources such as nutrients and wate**r. Being another new species to this ecosystem we do not know what other effects sweet cherries may be having on the physical characteristics of soil or soil biology.

4. Live Crown Ratio, Epicormic Growth and Crown Dieback

A high live crown ratio generally indicates more leaf surface, better health, and more access to sunlight. **From earlier studies[8] we expect that the Garry oak trees with a higher live crown ratio will have the greatest response to "release" from shade in their production of epicormic growth and increased diameter growth**. Trees with smaller crowns may produce less or varied epicormic and diameter growth but all the released trees will have more new growth than trees that are still shaded.

Our inventory notes the presence or absence of existing epicormic growth on the stem and first order limbs below the live crown base. Photographs and counts should be taken of the Garry oaks before any release treatment to compare epicormic growth response in post release oaks.

The live crown ratio of the Garry oaks will continue to be reduced as the over-topping conifers further restrict the amount of light the Garry oaks receive, which will lead to increased crown die-back, and eventually the death of the Garry oaks.

The degree of crown dieback in Vanier Park is the most concerning factor of these three factors at present. The stand of Garry oaks nearby to the northwest of the Sportsplex that has good exposure to sun from the south and southwest has similar live crown heights and ratios to those in our survey in Vanier Nature Park. Yet the stand by the Sportsplex shows little sign of dieback or crown thinning and produces a healthy crop of acorns.

5. Tree Health and Disease Observations

a) Grand Firs

There are three standing dead grand firs found in three locations within our study area (tree #75, #101 and #116) as well as tree #130 that is dead and down at the bottom of the small stream coming from the east. **Fanning out from these trees are other grand firs showing signs of decline: crowns are thin and new foliage is sparse**. These symptoms can be associated with root rot. We consulted Regional BC Forest Service Pathologist Dave Rusch who found no direct

[8] Devine and Harrington, *A Practical guide to Oak Release*

evidence of root rot and saw no history of typical disease centers which would be characterized by downed trees with distinctive root wads[9]. The pattern for these declining grand firs is to remain standing a long time though the top may break off.

Environmental stress generally contributes to trees being vulnerable to root diseases.[10] Pacific Forestry Center research scientist Mike Cruikshank shared with us his opinion that "Our summers have been getting hotter and we have longer periods without rain. Grand fir is one tree that is least able to handle this (condition) followed by western hemlock and western red cedar. Garry oak and arbutus are best at this (condition) followed by Douglas fir." Garry oaks are not susceptible to laminated root rot.

b) Garry Oaks

We have noted **three sightings of *Armillaria* fruiting bodies** on a dead and downed Garry oak and two dead standing Garry oaks. *Armillaria* can live for many years as a saprophyte (living on dead or decaying plant material) in soil, infected stump and roots.[11]

Garry oak trees can also be infected with *Armillaria* and survive by compartmentalizing the infection and replacing roots. Stress, however, can tip the balance in favor of the fungus. Some symptoms of root system decline due to *Armillaria* are the same as those of trees experiencing too much shade: dieback and crown thinning. Other positive signs for the identification of pathogenic infection by *Armillaria* are the sighting of fruiting bodies at the base of live trees, white fan-like mats of mycelium (fungal tissue) and decayed wood under the bark as well as rhizomorphs (black string like fungal tissue) under the bark or on the exposed wood of stems or roots. We have not seen any *Armillaria* fruiting bodies on live trees. Exploring under the bark of a live Garry oak that fell this winter after the heavy snowfall (this tree had been leaning heavily) we found no evidence of mycelial growth and no rhizomorphs on the roots. This suggests that at least for this Garry oak, *Armillaria* was either not present or not pathogenic. Mycelium and rhizomorphs can grow through the soil to new roots and the fruiting bodies produce spores carried by the wind.

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[9] Rusch, David, personal communication

[10], Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, *Managing Root Disease in British Columbia*

[11] Pacific Northwest Extension Publication, Oregon State University, "Oak (Quercus spp.)-Armillaria Root Rot".

One of the top recommended strategies for managing *Armillaria* in Garry oaks is to increase their vigor. In the case of the Vanier oaks this would mean increasing the sunlight they receive by decreasing the competition for it.

6. Current Hydrology Conditions

Vanier Forest is the located in the Towhee Creek watershed, and provides seasonal flows to this fish bearing stream. The lower stretches of the Towhee often dry up in the spring, before the juvenile Coho salmon are ready to leave the creek and move to the Tsolum River. Although no flow records for Towhee Creek are known to the Tsolum River Restoration Society, TRRS suspects that this has been a problem since the Comox Valley Sportplex and the School district increased their foot print further into the Vanier Forest in the 1990s.[12]

The wetlands of the Vanier Forest are created by two main sources. Wet seeps on the upper slopes provide near-surface ground water in the upper soil levels which are moderately well-drained. The second source is the deep trench, the upper end of which ties into the drainage ditch along Vanier Road. This ditch has water most of the year, much of which is intercepted sub-surface flow. Except for the open streams, surface water rarely, if ever, occurs in the principal grove[13] as water sinks quickly through the loose, upper soil layers. An impermeable layer, about 1 meter below the surface, limits further downward movement.

Waters feeding fish bearing streams need to be cool, consistent in volume, and unburdened by sediment and pollutants. In addition, the water should carry nutrients, both for the fish directly and for the organisms the fish feed on.

Lack of shading for the riparian areas, especially for surface water, is of concern. The Park has a number of vernal wetlands above and below the principal oak grove which are unshaded, allowing the surface water to rise in temperature. These wetlands will not be affected in any way by the work proposed. Water temperature of sub-surface flows is less susceptible to variation as sub-surface ground temperatures remain relatively constant during the day. **There is enough existing Garry oak canopy to maintain shade over the tributaries from the time the oaks leaf out in April until the late fall.** The reduction of early spring shading may increase insect populations[14] and encourage growth of native plants.

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[12] Tripp, Chamberlain & Heim "*Juvenile Coho Salmon Rescue, Procedures and April Population Estimate…"*

[13] Current Environmental et al., *SD 71 Vanier Oak Property Ecological Assessment and Protection Plan*

[14] Banks, li, & Herlihy "*Influence of clear-cut logging…Central Oregon Coast Range*"

Water retention in the forest is managed by reservoirs created in pockets of the porous soils in the earth column. This subsurface water moves through the soil in its downward flow to Towhee Creek. **Larger and more frequent rain storms are predicted by climate change models, and it is likely that these will cause greater surface flow in the grove.** The deep trench would likely collect much of the storm water, flood the wetlands below the grove, and create a surge down Towhee Creek, which would bring sediments and pollutants directly into the creek. Remediation of the trench to encourage more surface water infiltration and flood mitigation may be possible, but is beyond the parameters of this project.

Fish productivity is adversely affected by low pH levels[15] in the water, a condition exacerbated by populous stands of firs. Conifer litter and phytochemicals created by conifers increase the acidity, while **Garry oak litter is more alkaline and therefore more conducive to fish production.** One of the historic reasons for the pre-settlement salmon productivity of the Tsolum River system is the chemistry of the oak dominated "prairies" which lined the Tsolum to Headquarters.[16]

F. Recommendations for Managing Encroaching Trees

The definition of "woodlands" generally refers to stands of deciduous or mixed deciduous-conifer trees with a continuous or semi-open canopy.[17] **We are about to lose the Garry oak component of this woodland**. Even though the encroachment of conifers and other competing plants into the Garry oak ecosystem is a natural process**, consider that it is our human activities that have led to remnant Garry oak groves such as Vanier Nature Park to be fewer in number, fragmented and degraded**. **We suggest accepting responsibility for this and intervening now to simulate past processes used by the First Nations such as fire to return the Garry oaks to dominance and health in their area of Vanier Park**. **In place of controlled burning, various manual management methods are available to us.**

To "release" the Garry oaks to sun and improved health we need to:

1) Subordinate those specific overtopping trees that are within one oak height to the south and southwest of the Garry oaks and remove the 62 non-native sweet cherries that are competing at the intermediate to co-dominate level, so the Garry oaks dominate in the main grove (see Figure 5). Invasive removal will be an

[15] Rombough, Peter J. *Effects of Low pH on Eyed Embryos and Alevins of Pacific Salmon*
[16] Maingon, Loys, Personal Communication, March 2022
[17] US Bureau of Land Management. *A Landowner's Guide for Restoring and Managing White Oak Habitats*

ongoing task, and should be initiated before any major tree subordination.

2) Remove the invasive understory such as holly, Daphne, blackberry and ivy that restrict the regeneration of the Garry oaks and other native plants that would naturally associate with the Garry oaks on this site. While native snowberry shrubs are abundant, the herb layer we would expect on this site, such as great camas, white fawn lily, chocolate lily, blue wild rye and California brome are noticeably absent. These plants may regenerate from existing seedbanks once the invasive plants are removed.[18] Low impact invasive control initially requires use of hand tools and many hours of labor. CVN is volunteering to do the lion's share of this work for 3 years. This would reduce the cost to the City, and once most of the existing invasives are removed, future control operations will be less labor intensive and costly to the City.

Invasive removal would be scheduled for the fall, outside nesting season and when the soil is dry. In order to prevent further overtopping of the oaks by other species of trees, native or otherwise, the grove could be cleared of these in a few days' work, regularly whenever the trees grow to a few meters. Invasive control outside the principal oak grove is beyond the scope of this project.

3) Encourage native plants within the seed bank to proliferate on this site. We may choose to actively restore or re-introduce some of the above forb and grass species as well as fruiting shrubs such as bitter cherry, Pacific crabapple and Indian plum in the sunny edges. CVNS currently has a large number of seedling Garry oaks raised from Vanier genotype acorns, which can be used to supplement the lack of oaks less than 60 years of age.

4) Maintain a certain level of disturbance over time such as the continued removal of young conifers and invasive plants that would otherwise shade or reduce Garry oak and native plant health and regeneration.

1. A Strategy for Subordinating the Overtopping Trees

Thinning is a common silviculture practice in which trees are removed to increase the growth of trees that are kept by reducing the competition for water, nutrients, or sunlight. To "release" Garry oaks to more sunlight is to favor the Garry oaks over the conifers that are shading them. The alternative is to continue to do nothing and watch the Garry oaks and their ecosystem values die. **This is a limited time opportunity**. **Given the current rate of mortality in the**

[18]Shackleford, et al., *Ten years of pulling*

grove, we strongly believe this may be the last opportunity to save the Vanier Garry oaks.

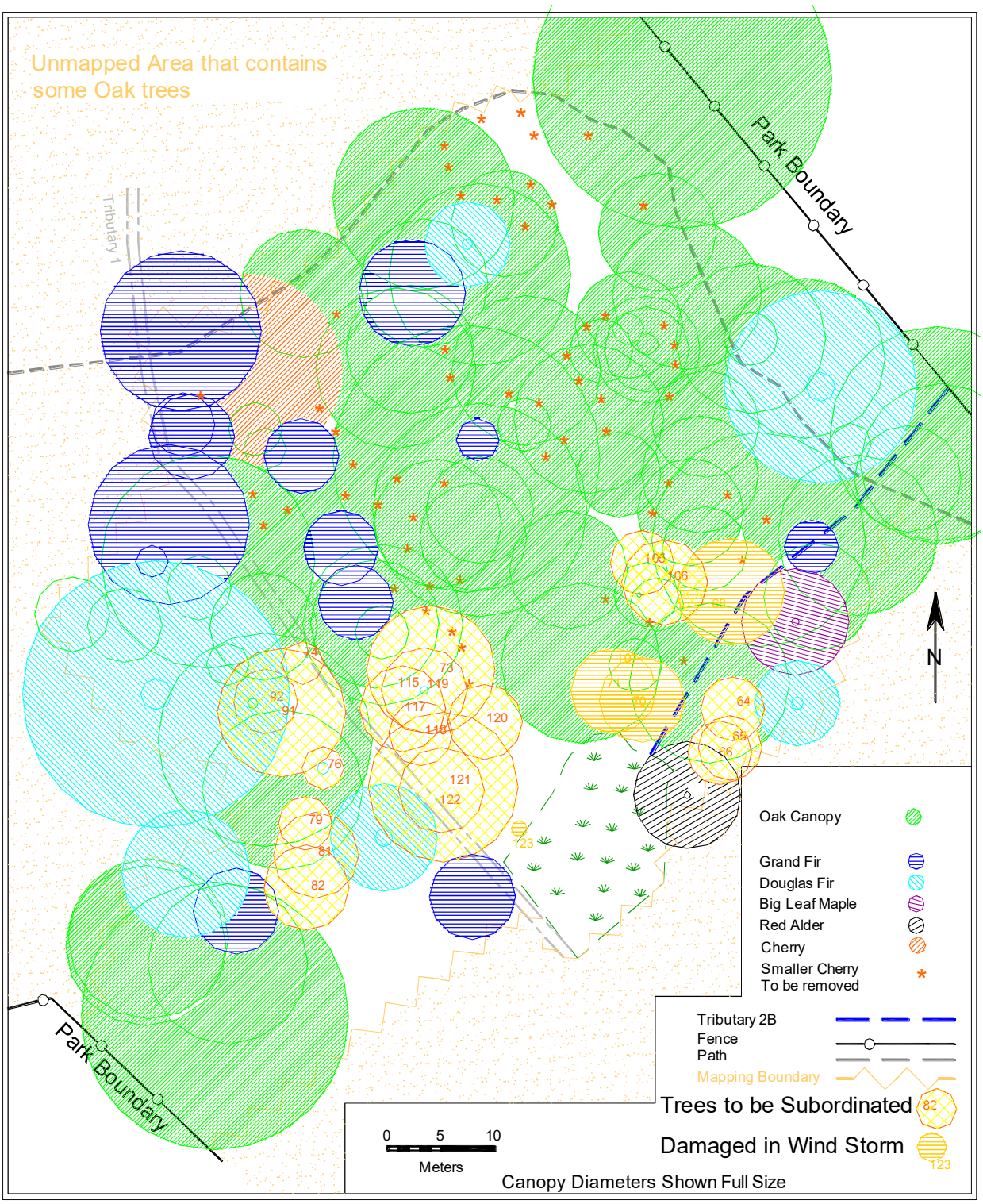


Figure 5 *- Trees in Orange Recommended for Modifying to Habitat Snags*

To thin only the tallest trees that are shading the Garry oak grove from the south and slightly southwest, we have specifically identified 3 Douglas firs and18 grand firs. Two veteran firs (#94 & #108) will not be affected.

To protect the tributaries, the soil and the existing vegetation cover as well as maintain natural infiltration of water and water flow, we suggest subordinating the conifer trees to snags or wildlife trees as opposed to outright removal. Where conifers are designated for subordination, note that there are existing Garry oaks that will continue to provide shade for the tributaries.

Two of the younger and smaller conifers in the 20 DBH range may be removed at the base with minimal impact.

Some of the sweet cherries and conifers that are close to and intertwined with the Garry oaks may be girdled.

The tree work would be phased over the 3-year pilot project. This work should be carried out in the early fall in order to be past bird breeding season, working in a dry period and reduce the risk of sunscald to the Garry oaks.

2. The Value of Snags as Wildlife Trees

It is becoming a more customary practice in the urban forest to reduce hazardous trees to wildlife snags rather than outright removal whenever possible. **Trees that are subordinated to snags continue to function ecologically even after they die**. Standing snags offer food and shelter for wildlife species. Downed deadwood also supplies food for wildlife, is critical for soil health and provides nutrients to streams. There are more than 80 species of wildlife in BC that are dependent on wildlife trees for nesting, feeding, communicating, roosting, sheltering, and overwintering. Tall, large diameter trees that are greater than 50cm DBH are particularly valuable as they last longer but all sizes of snags can be used.[19]

Forest Service Pathologist David Rusch[20] recommended the use of MCH anti-aggregate pheromone which can be stapled to the bole of the subordinated trees and will reduce the risk from Douglas-fir beetle.

[19] BC Parks – Ministry of Environment, *Wildlife/Danger Tree Assessor's Course Workbook*
[20] Rusch, David, Personal communication, 2022

3. Options for Creating Snags from Live Trees[21]

All the methods listed below would remove most of the shade potential of these trees at the outset **yet cause them to die slowly** with the decay process moving from inside the tree to the outside creating a longer lasting snag. **The length of time that snags stand depends on the diameter and species**. Douglas fir snags will last longer than grand firs and larger diameter snags will last longer than smaller diameter snags. Douglas fir snags of DBH 30-50cm size that were created in 2004-2005 in Somenos Garry Oak Protected area in Duncan are still standing and used by wildlife in 2021 (Figure 6).

a) Remove the top ~1/3 (creating a jagged top that looks most natural and helps start the decay process) **of the tree and half the remaining limbs**.

b) Leave the top and remove or shorten most of the side branches.

c) Remove most of the living tree crown but keep at least one or two large branches.

d) Leave the top but remove all the branches

The choice of method would depend on the conifer height, live crown height and the location. A diversity of snag heights and types would be ideal. No wildlife trees taller than 1 tree height of the main path around the oak grove to reduce future risk.

***Figure 6** –Snags in Somenos Garry Oak Reserve*

[21] Washington Dept of Fish and Wildlife, *Snags - the Wildlife Tree*

Girdling is done by removing a 4" belt of inner and outer bark around the trunk. It also creates wildlife snags, but the decay process moves from the outside in. By the time decay has progressed enough for cavity nesters such as woodpeckers to excavate a cavity, the trunk is vulnerable to outright breakage. Girdled trees are susceptible to breakage at the girdle point. A report from girdling done at Mt, Tzouhalem Ecological Reserve in Duncan notes that it took several years for needles to even start to fall. [22] For these reasons we suggest that this technique be used primarily on trees where it is most useful such as those that are close to and intertwined with the Garry oaks or other trees.

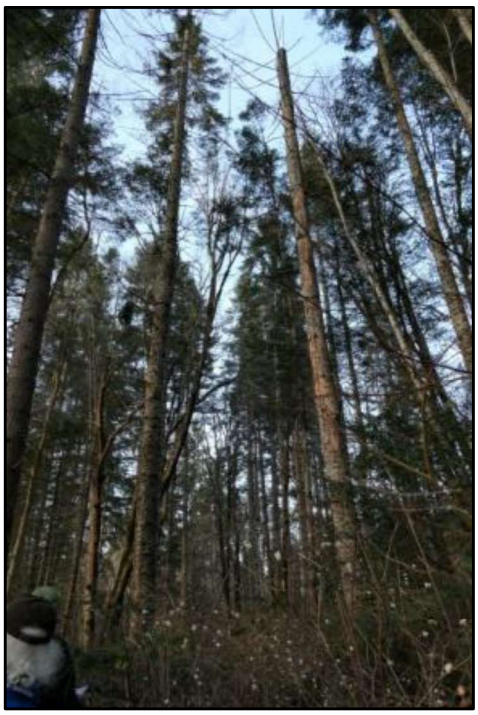


Figure 7 – Trees with Snags in Vanier Park Principal Grove

4. Chipping of Branches and Coarse Woody Debris

Most of the branches removed in the pruning of native species should be removed for chipping but the logs larger than 20 cm can be kept on the ground in the woodland. Placing the logs parallel on the slopes of the main grove will help to slow water runoff, trap sediments as well as nutrients and would create excellent nurse logs in addition to the other benefits already noted for downed wood. In the recent Helliwell Provincial Park restoration project where 81 trees were removed, logs 2 meters long were laid end to end and piled 2 high to define the

[22] Polster, D*. 2014 Mt. Tzouhalem ER Df Removal and Monitoring Report*

park boundary.[23] This strategy could perhaps be used in Vanier to delineate the main path.

It may be beneficial to leave some of the branches of the native species on the forest floor, unchipped. This would allow the plant material to slowly decompose into the soil.

All invasive plant parts would be removed from the site as detailed in the CVN Vanier Forest Garry Oaks Restoration and Stewardship Pilot Project.

G. Recommended Future Actions

a) We have shared this report with KFN, and are happy to receive input from them at any time.

b) Continue Garry oak survey to west of trench with staking and mapping **and recommendations for tree remediation**.

c) Receive permission to remove specified invasives with support of the City of Courtenay, following current best practices.

d) Assist the City of Courtenay in outreach to stakeholders

e) Work with other entities to improve water retention in the wetlands.

f) Consult with the City of Courtenay on assessing CVN reports for Vanier Garry oaks restoration priority as part of the Parks Master Plan review and parks management project scheduling.

g) Monitor the released oaks for epicormic growth, increased twig growth, acorn production and signs of improved health. A control area untouched and with the oaks un-released, could be established in the remnant grove north of the main trail. The CVRD grove behind the arenas could also be used as a reference site with the recent subordination of a grand fir which formerly was shading the grove.

[23] Godfrey, J. *Helliwell Provincial Park Habitat Restoration completed in 2020 for Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly: Conifer Removal Summary*

h) Begin regular and systematic observations of the grove eco-system through to the fall, and to watch for expected ephemeral perennials, amphibians and invertebrates.

i) Monitor stream flow into Towhee Creek for changes or improvement. Historical data may be available from others.

Conclusion

Vanier Park has a Garry oak ecosystem that is a rare example of a wetland/deep soil ecosystem. This ecosystem is in danger of being lost as conifers, which only recently began to invade the property during the mid-20th Century, overtop the oaks. Garry oaks are shade-intolerant and cannot survive or reproduce in the shade of the taller and faster growing Douglas firs and grand firs. Likewise, stressed Garry oaks produce fewer acorns which do not generate well in shadows, or under dense underbrush.

We have a limited time opportunity to save this rare treasure.

This report offers workable recommendations, in line with accepted arboriculture and forestry practices, that can be incorporated into a three-year plan proposed in the March 2021 CVN report. The recommendations are focused on having a <u>minimally invasive impact</u> to the Vanier Forest.

Comox Valley Naturalists Society supports the protection and restoration of the Garry oaks trees present in the City of Courtenay's Vanier Park. These trees are the largest collection of Garry oaks on public property in the Comox Valley, and a significant remnant of First Nations' cultural practice of keeping Garry oak woodland for the cultivation of food, protection from fire and hunting areas.

In BC and across the Pacific North West community organizations, academics and land managers have cooperated to spearhead Garry oak ecosystem restoration over the last 30 years. University of Victoria Environmental Science researchers have recently created an online geospatial tool to map and collect management information and reports about 120 Canadian Garry oak restoration projects.[24] Currently, there are two projects in the Comox Valley on this map: Helliwell Provincial Park on Hornby Island and the Courtenay River Airpark. Comox Valley Nature is proud to be listed as a collaborator with the City of Courtenay on this project since 1995. Let's put another great Garry oak restoration project on this map.

[24] https://garryoakrestoration.wixsite.com/garryoakrestoration

We welcome feedback on the survey and the recommendations of this report from all interested parties.

Appendix A – Garry Oaks - City of Courtenay

The City of Courtenay has public documents which mention the Vanier Park Garry oaks, including the City's *Urban Forest Strategy*, and the *Parks and Recreation Master Plan.*

1. Urban Forest Strategy[25]

Vanier Park has been named in the Parks and Recreation Plan as a priority to receive a specific management plan. They note that without human intervention firs will eventually shade out the Garry oaks.

"Garry oak are a heritage tree that defines Courtenay's future"

Garry oak forests are part of the "Significant stands and corridors" designation.

Garry oaks with their long lives and dense wood are the best local choice for best carbon storage.

The Garry oak woodlands in the vicinity of Vanier Park are a notable example of significant and sensitive ecosystems that are not under municipal ownership or otherwise protected.

Protect Actions 11h.: Target a permanent protection solution for the Garry Oak ecosystem in the vicinity of G.P. Vanier Secondary School and Vanier Park.

2. Parks Management Plan

"Vanier Park Consider enhancement and protection of this Garry oak Forest"

3. City Bylaw 2850 Consolidated version [26]

"**Protected species**" means a **Garry oak** (Quercus garryana)

"**Protected tree**" means

a) a public tree

[25] City of Courtenay, *Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Final)*

[26] City of Courtenay, *Bylaw No. 2850*

b) a tree of any size within a: Riparian Assessment Area; or Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA).
c) a protected species over 0.5 meters in height

4. Tsolum River Garry Oak Ecosystem [27]

The larger area of the Tsolum River Garry oak meadows was recommended by the City of Courtenay and accepted for registration with Canada's Historic Places in 2009. Of interest is the photo of the oaks known at this time. **The Vanier Park grove was owned by SD71 and has not been inventoried by the City of Courtenay yet**.

Among other comments in the Registry are the following:

a) "Mature Garry oak trees occurring either in groups or as isolated trees"

b) "Associated native vegetation including other trees and understory shrubs, ferns, wildflowers and grasses"

c) "Native animals including birds, small mammals and butterflies that use Garry oak or other components of the system"

d) "Rich soils that developed with the oaks and which were influenced by First Nations burning"

Based on this collection of city bylaws, published plans and commitments the overall ecological importance of the Garry oak grove in Vanier Park has been well proven.

Appendix B - Parameters for Data Collection

We have been using a template to collect several physical data points, as well as appraising the vigor and health of the trees of note.

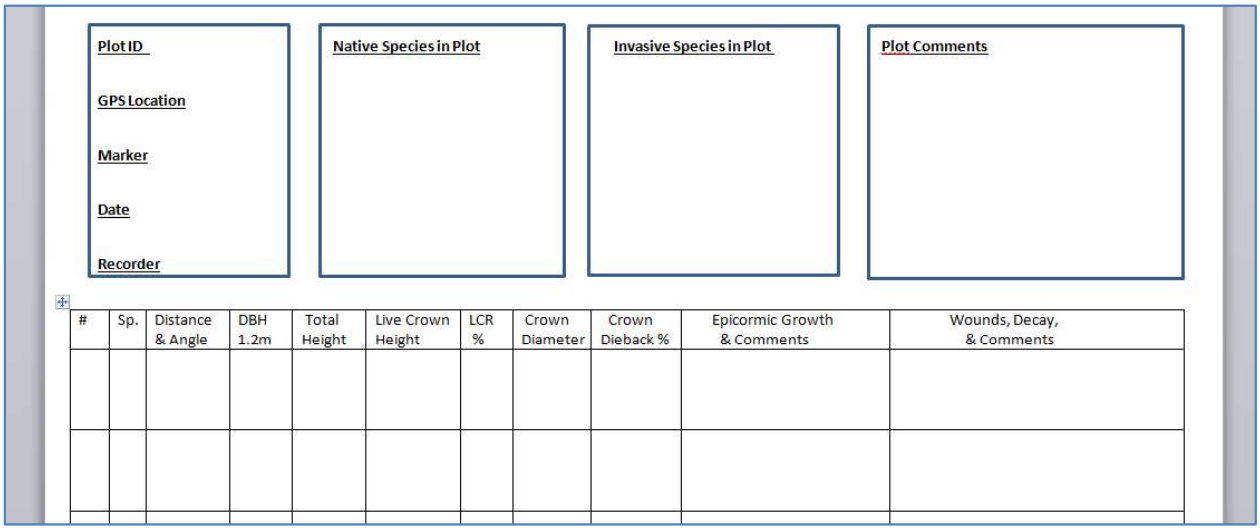
Total Tree Height and Live Crown Height in meters: estimated with a range finder. Live crown height refers to the vertical length of the live section of trunk.

Stem Diameter in centimeters (DBH): Use a DBH tape around the stem at exactly 1.2m above the ground. In later monitoring years this should be repeated at the

[27] Canada's Historic Places, Tsolum River Garry Oak Ecosystem

same time of year. This is a particularly useful measure of how the tree is responding to its growing condition and changes in tree vigor.

Crown diameter (width of crown) in meters: measured with two measurements perpendicular to each other, and averaged. This can be a sign of past crowding or shading.



Plot ID

GPS Location

Marker

Date

Recorder

Native Species in Plot

Invasive Species in Plot

Plot Comments

#	Sp.	Distance & Angle	DBH 1.2m	Total Height	Live Crown Height	LCR %	Crown Diameter	Crown Dieback %	Epicormic Growth & Comments	Wounds, Decay, & Comments

***Figure 8** - Data Collection Form*

Live Crown Ratio (LCR): a ratio of live crown height to tree height. It is calculated by dividing the vertical length of the live crown by the total tree height and multiplied by 100 to arrive at a percentage. The lower the live crown ratio is on the trunk, the larger the ratio.

Crown dieback: Express as a percent of the tree. Crowns with dieback greater than 50% are of concern since stress has clearly occurred to reduce photosynthesis. However, when lack of sun has caused the dieback, oaks can recover from dieback when they are "released" from shading.

Wounds on the stem or evidence of decay. There are of diseases that are specific to the Garry oaks and the other species of trees near or in the grove.

Presence of epicormic growth: Epicormic branches sprout from suppressed buds under the bark on the trunk and branches of Garry oaks. This growth may be triggered by injury such as crown dieback or damage by limb breakage. However, Garry oaks also sprout epicormics growth in response to a sudden increase in sunlight such as "release" from shading. Note if epicormic growth is present on the stem and first-order limbs below the live crown.

Complete data information is available upon request.

Appendix C – Estimating Tree Age[28]

An important characteristic of any tree is its age, but this cannot be accurately figured out without using an invasive measure, such as drilling incremental core bores and counting the rings or cutting cross-sections. This is because an individual's growth rate is only loosely determined by referring to the species average growth rate. Several variables determine its trunk size, including access to sunlight, availability of soil nutrients, moisture levels, root stresses and the tree's vigor and general health. In the case of a grove, the individual ages of the trees in the grove can provide a better understanding of the grove's past and its position in the succession processes, and its health and future.

The International Society of Arboriculture first proposed using DBH and an average growth factor based on the average number of annual rings/cm across the trunk radius to arrive at a rough estimate of tree age. We have been able to count annual rings in three Garry oaks in the grove that were down and cut across the trunk. Using the calculation $\#rings \div trunk\ radius(DBH \div 2)$ we found the average number of annual rings/cm. was 4.9. We used this factor rounded to 5/cm in the following calculation to estimate the age of other Garry oaks in the grove: $radius \times av.\#rings\ per\ cm\ (5) = tree\ age$

[28] Michigan Department of Natural Resources, *How Old is My Tree?*

Appendix D – Tree Location Map

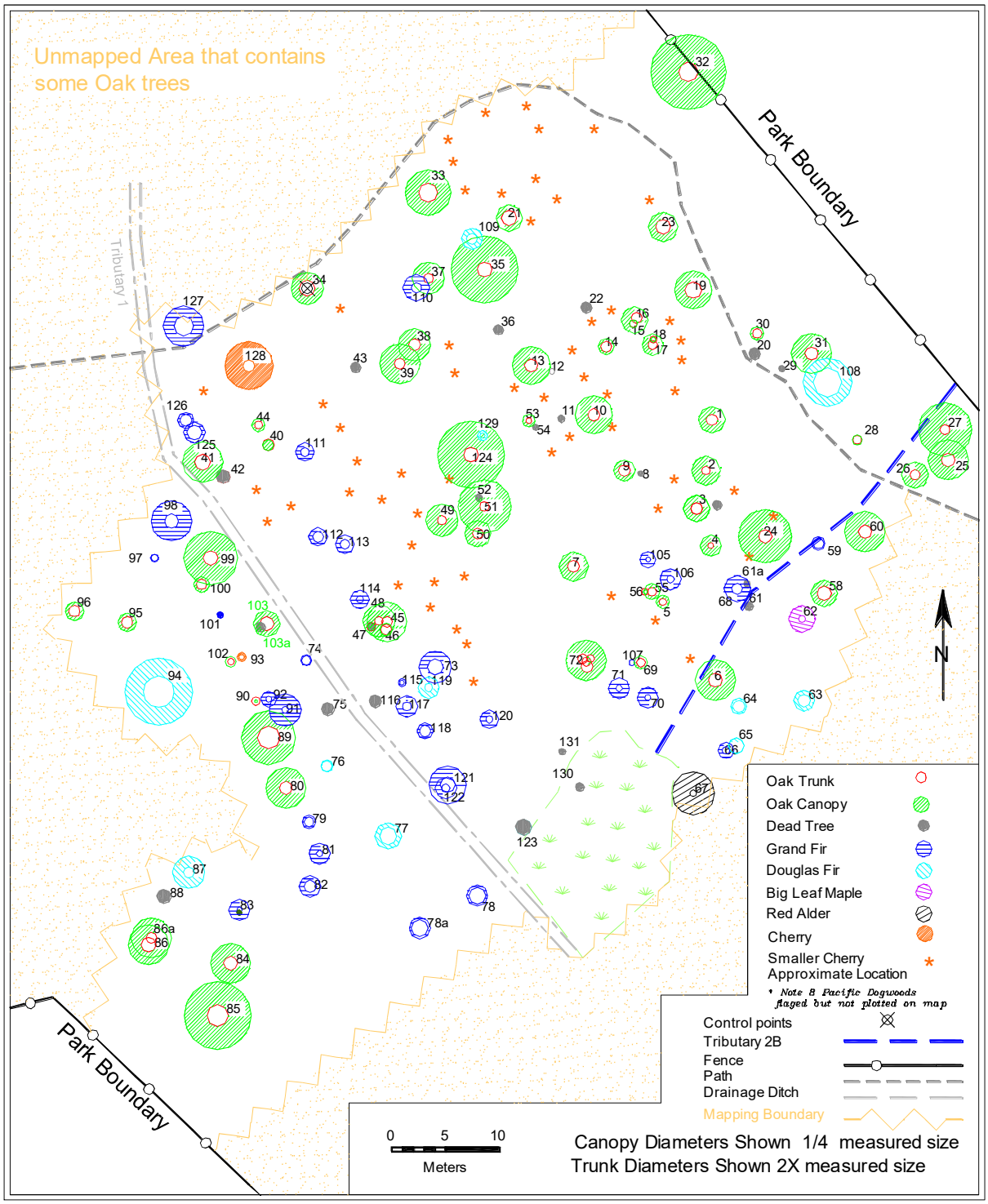


Figure 8 Tree Location Map shows all tree numbers and canopies at 25%

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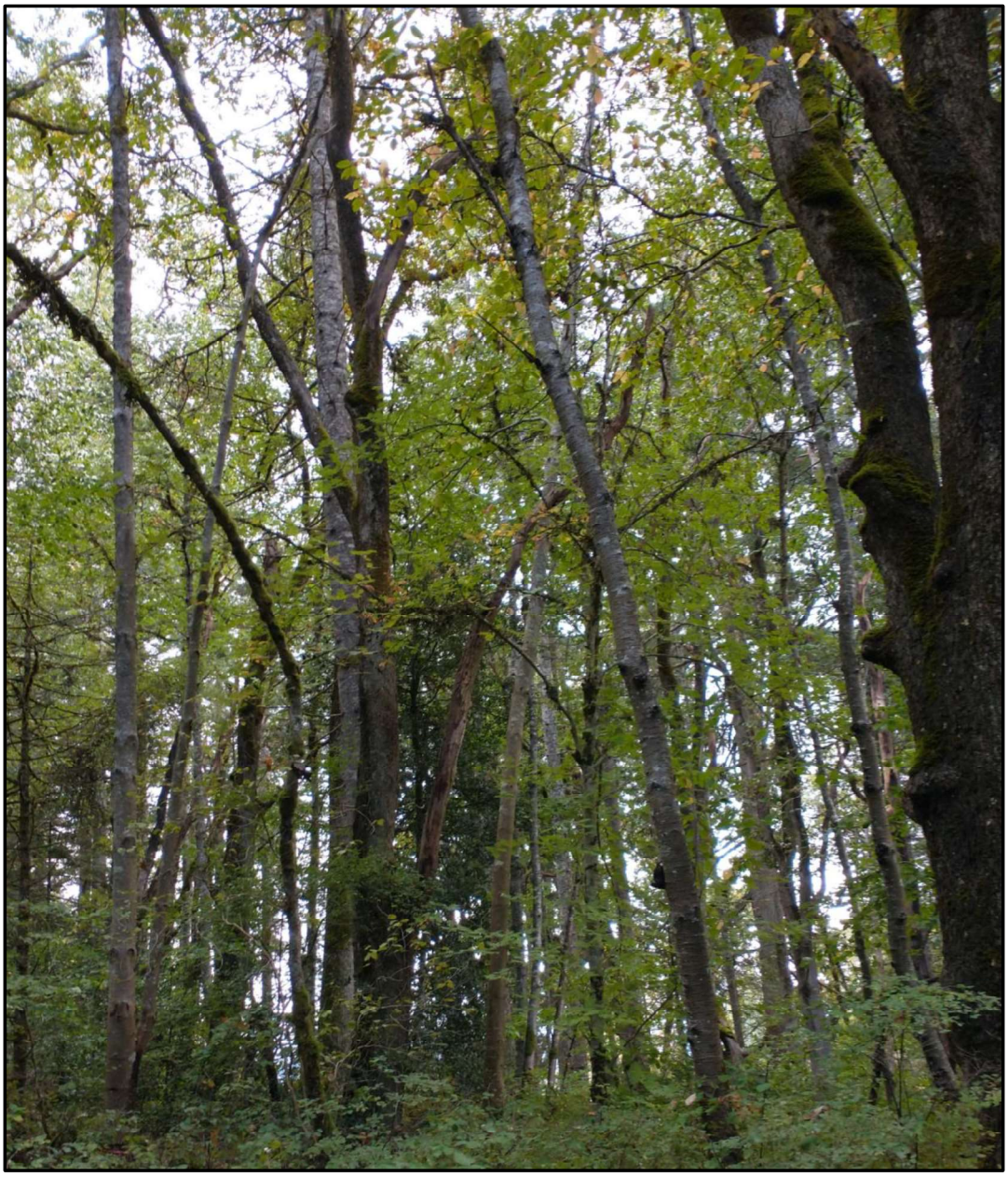
Vanier Nature Park Invasive Species Survey & Garry Oak Mapping Report



Comox Valley Naturalist Society June 28, 2023

Vanier Nature Park Invasive Species Survey & Garry Oak Mapping Report

1) Outline of Proposal

Comox Valley Naturalists Society's (CVNS) prime objective in our proposal is to return this fragment of the Tsolum River Garry Oak[1] ecosystem to dominance in the Vanier Nature Park. To do this, the Garry oaks must be released from the shade of the overtopping conifers above all else. Left to itself since indigenous peoples stopped active management of the oaks, the oak grove has been invaded by the conifers and shade tolerant invasive alien species, and oak regeneration has stopped. Without intervention the oaks will die; we estimate the youngest oaks at about 70 years old, and have found few seedlings. This oak grove needs the action promoted by the City since 2013 to counter the cause of its decline.

CVNS realizes that the City of Courtney does not regularly budget money for the Park, and that is why we have proposed that our Vanier Oak team provide volunteer, unpaid help to remove the majority of invasives, and to assist the City in the tree subordination costs. Our hope is that a local stewardship group will take over the long term care of the Garry oaks, and that our work will help ensure this group has a better chance at establishing regeneration of the oaks.

2) Purpose of this Report

This is our second progress report on the activities we have undertaken in the Garry oak grove in Vanier Nature Park., and it incorporates and updates information from our "*Garry Oak Tree Survey*" of April, 2022, and data from the Mumby "*Stem Survey*"

The City of Courtenay requested a map of the non-native invasive plants of concern, and our suggested methods of species-specific control. The four non-native target species CVNS is concerned with are English holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), sweet cherry*(Prunus avium*), Ivy (*Hedera sp*.), and Daphne (*Daphne laureola*). CVNS volunteers performed a visual survey of the Garry oak grove over the course of a few days, totalling approximately 24 hours.

Additionally, we will also update our report on other ongoing initiatives in the Park.

[1] City of Courtenay's "*Tsolum River Garry Oak Ecosystem*" is registered in Historic Canada

3) Specific Requests t o the City of Courtenay

3a) A positive recommendation and support from the Parks Department to the CAO for our proposal to release the oaks in a 1 hectare Garry Oak wetland ecosystem in Vanier Nature Park from shading by the taller conifers to the south and south west in the grove, with costs for tree work shared between the City and CVNS.

3b) Permission from the City allowing CVNS to begin invasive controls within the 1 Ha Garry oak grove this year.

3c) Permission from City allowing CVNS to work directly with City Staff in assessing the best method of subordination the identified competing sweet cherries, Grand and Douglas firs to ensure low risk, etc.

3d) An inspection and report on recommendations and actions initiated by the City arborist by the fall of 2023 to remove the hazard posed by partially failed and other high-hazard trees in the vicinity of the main grove, in order to reduce the hazard to volunteers and other park users.

4) Methodology for Invasive Mapping

In general, a team of 6 or 7 volunteers used the method outlined in the Invasive Alien Plant Program (IAPP[2]) of BC as a "cursory" survey, targeting specific species. The IAPP was designed for use over large areas of many hectares or even square kilometers, with pockets of invasive species scattered through the area under study. In addition to its main purpose as a BC-wide spatial database of alien invasives, the purpose of performing a detailed invasive survey is to create a plan for removing the invasives, using best current practices, and to be able to relocate the species for revisits to treat and monitor the area invaded.

Under normal conditions and area the size of the principle grove of oaks would likely be treated as one polygon within the IAPP, with a variety of invasives plants scattered throughout the polygon. In our case we have gone to a finer resolution than normal, and have identified infested areas smaller than 10 square meters, and in some cases individual specimens such as hawthorns and Daphne. The work entailed a number of visits to the Park. The area, although not large, is heavily overgrown with English holly and sweet cherries, in addition to the native snow berries. This work was done during the

[2] IAAP Reference Guide *https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/plants-animals-and-ecosystems/invasive-species/iapp-resources/iapp_reference_guide_part_i.pdf*

months of March and April in 2023, before the late spring growth, and some invasive species, e.g. Herb-Robert, were not noted in our survey. We mapped the blackberry, but will be leaving its control to the School District.

5) Invasive Polygons and Observations

The four main invasives species which have the largest negative effects on the Garry oaks (*Quercus garryana*) in this grove are sweet cherry (*Prunus avium*), English holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), ivy (*Hedera sp*.) and Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*). An additional species of concern is the Daphne (*Daphne laureola*), which has toxic characteristics, but poses little direct threat at this time. The cherry trees are in direct completion with the oaks, while the dense Holly shade as well as ivy or blackberry ground covers reduce the ability of oak acorns to geminate and grow. Although the conifers we have recommended for subordination are the greatest cause in the decline of this grove, they are native species.

It is important that as many of the invasive plants as possible be removed before any subordination of the conifers takes place so that the increase of sunlight to the forest floor benefits the oak and other native plant regeneration not the invasives. All parts of an invasive species should be removed from the site to prevent vegetative reproduction and treated as toxic waste in landfills.

Each species has a range of possible methods of removal, and best practices would be used. In all cases we will endeavour to use the least invasive methods of removal, timed for the best season in which to do the removal. Hollies and cherry, for instance would be worked on in the fall after any chance of bird nesting is past, while Daphne and ivy can be pulled from late fall until very early spring or when any existing ephemeral perennials begin to grow and the soil remains moist.

5a) Cherry and Blackberry Distribution

Our survey indicates that the highest density of sweet cherries occur where the Garry oaks currently dominate the upper story. As discussed in the Garry Oak Mapping section, the younger oaks are clustered on the east side of Tributary 1, the trench, and are in direct competition with nearby conifers and cherries. The cherry trees grow to approximately the same height as the oaks, but quicker and hence tend to dominate the oaks once they are established. In some cases cherry crowns have grown into the old oak crowns.

Cherry trees are present throughout the grove, with some very substantial, older specimens scattered about. The Mumby Report data indicates that there are likely more cherry trees than oaks in the grove.

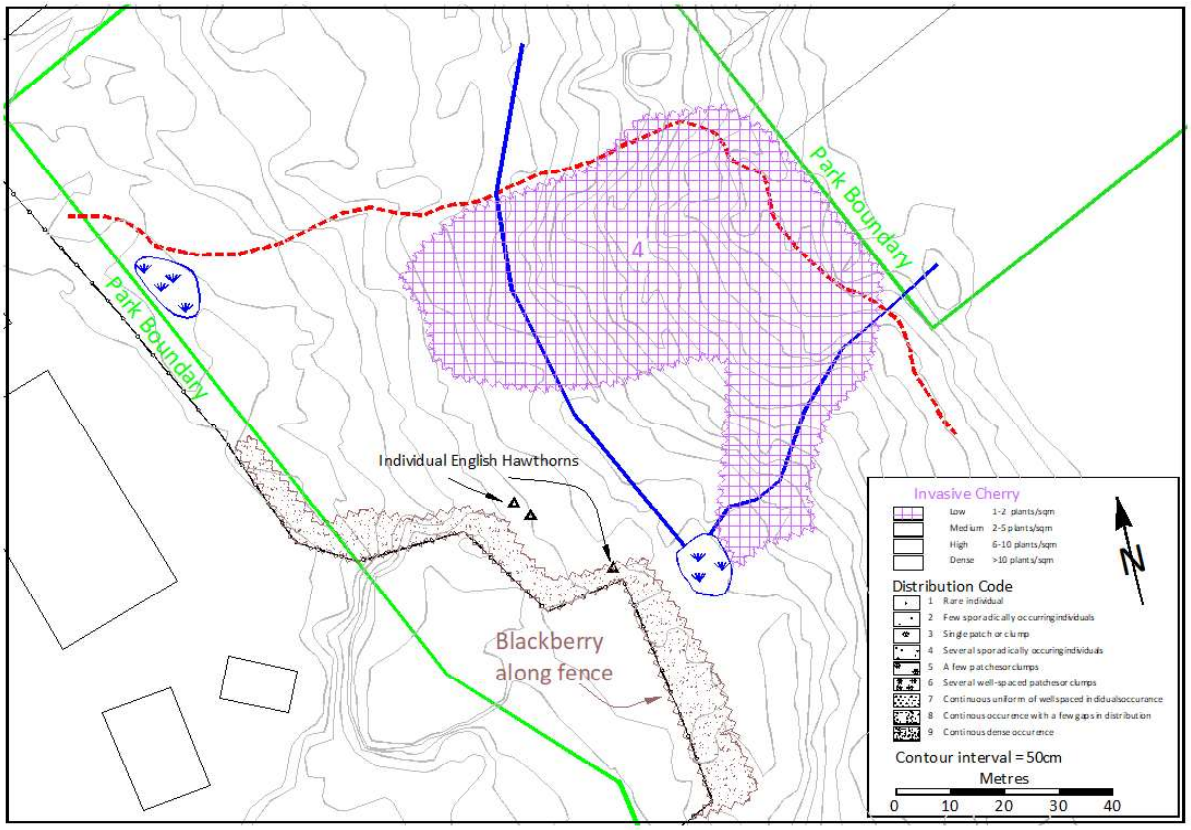


Figure 1: Cherry and Blackberry Distribution

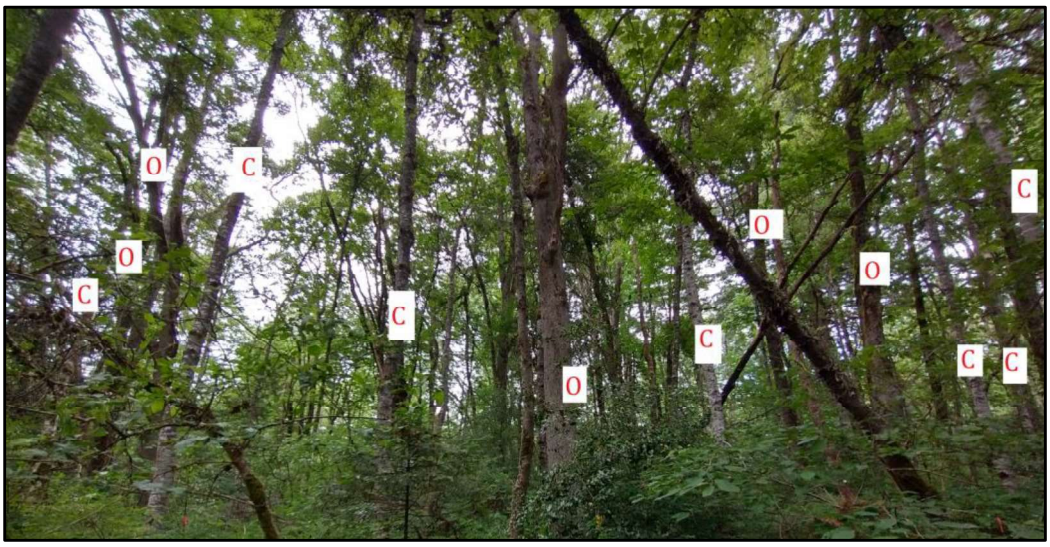


Figure 2: Oaks (O) and cherry (C) trees in direct competition

The heavy concentration of blackberry along the SD71 fence also needs to be removed. We have been advised that the blackberry came in with backfill when the School District expanded their storage area onto City park property, and that the School District has admitted its responsibility to remove the blackberry cane. We have not included blackberry removal in our invasive control. The School District is currently removing invasives in their portion of the Vanier Forest.

5b) <u>Daphne Distribution</u>

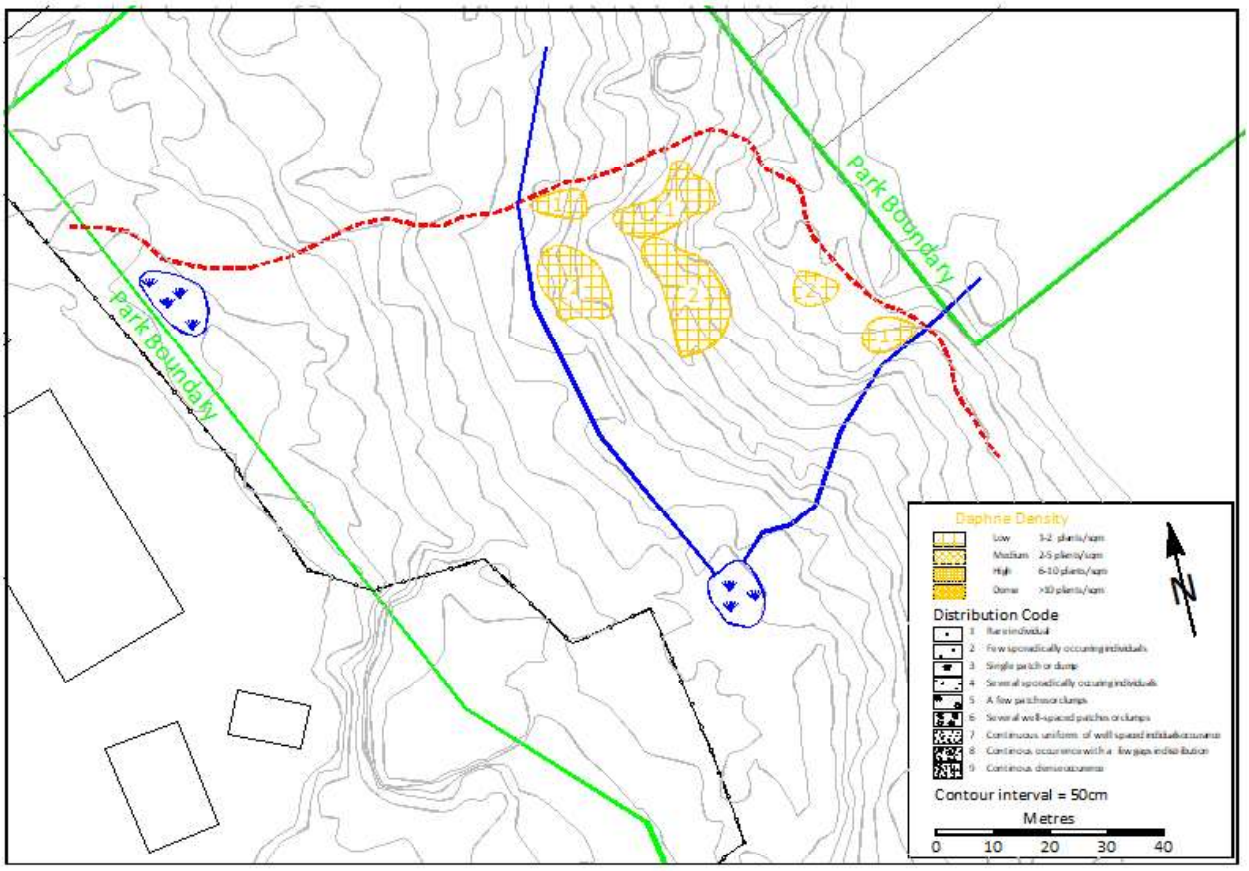


Figure 3: Areas of high density of Daphne

Daphne is a poisonous shrub which, although slow to establish itself, can spread to create large dense patches where few other plants can survive. The plant contains a number of poisonous chemicals which can produce itchy rashes when the skin is exposed to the latex sap. Crushing or burning Daphne releases a gas that can cause respiratory issues, nausea and unconsciousness. The berries, if eaten, can cause death.

Control of Daphne requires either pulling of small plants or cutting older stems below the plant's root collar. Like Scotch broom, new plants

cannot form from the roots, only above the root collar, where the stem begins. Always cut the root below the first radial root. It is not necessary to pull all the roots. Hand cutting is recommended as any form of weed-whacker will just tear the plant's skin and allow the sap to volatize. Specimens would be black bagged, wholly removed from the site and treated as toxic waste.

Daphne is not a large problem currently, but it will continue to reproduce and expand its coverage if left unattended. Seedlings are to be expected for about 3 years after the adults are removed.

5c) <u>Holly Distribution</u>

English holly is a shade loving understory tree or bush, and regenerates by seed, spread by birds and animals, and by clone saplings from roots. Our survey indicates that holly is most dense in the areas where the overtopping conifers create the densest shade.

Figure 4: Dense Holly grove near SD Fence

The most effective method of control is the total removal of the root system, but this is very disruptive of the soil, and likely to encourage other invasives to move into the vacated areas. In most cases we will cut the holly stems at or slightly below ground level, or pull small seedlings. Cutting will encourage clones to spring up, which will require annual cutting to discourage. future growth. Hollies would be removed from the site as cut trees and treated as toxic waste.

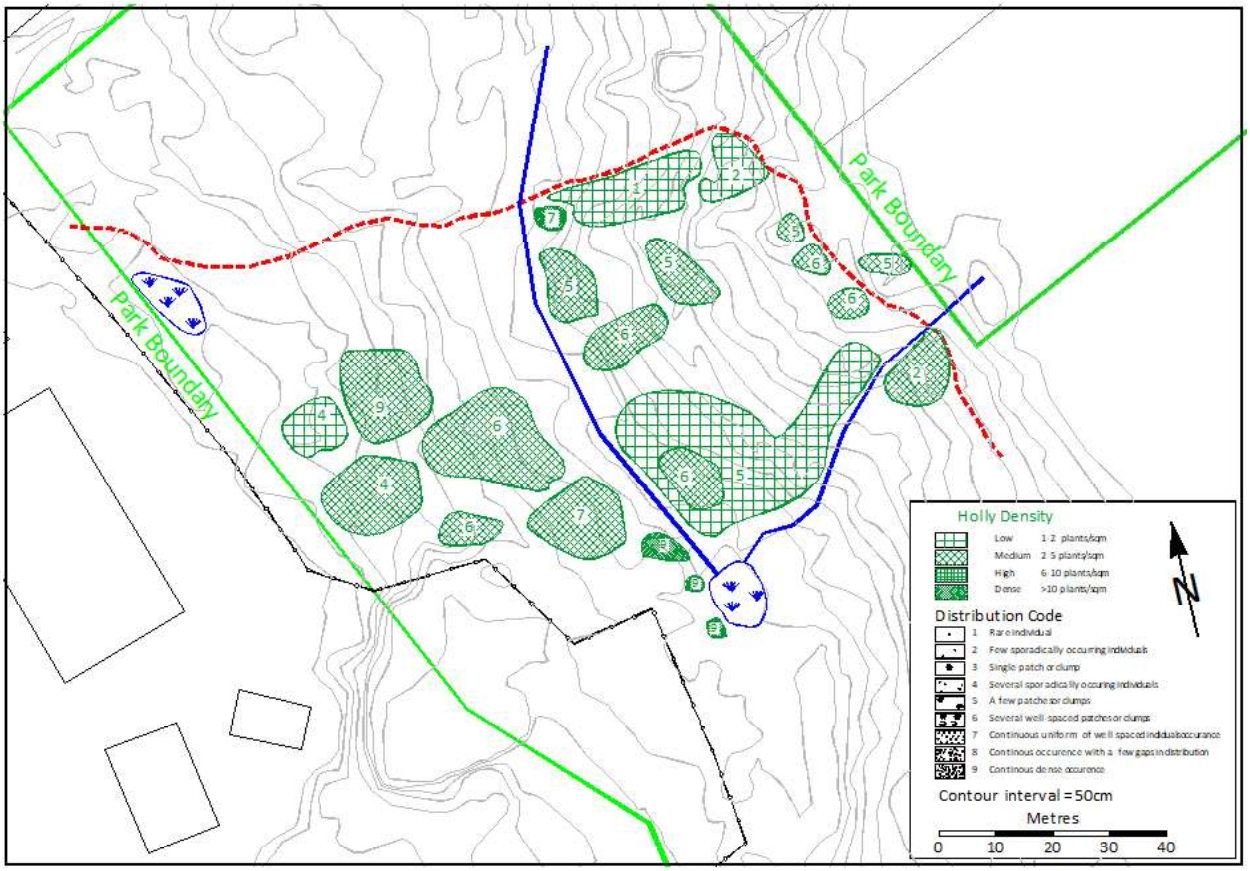


Figure 5: Holly Density and Distribution

5d) Ivy Distribution

English ivy is present at some level throughout much of the Park where surface water rarely flows. In dense mats, it can prevent most native species, including the oaks, from germinating and gaining a toe hold to grow to maturity. Ivy can also scale a tree, and contribute to its decline and possible failure. .

Figure 6: Ivy and a Garry Oak

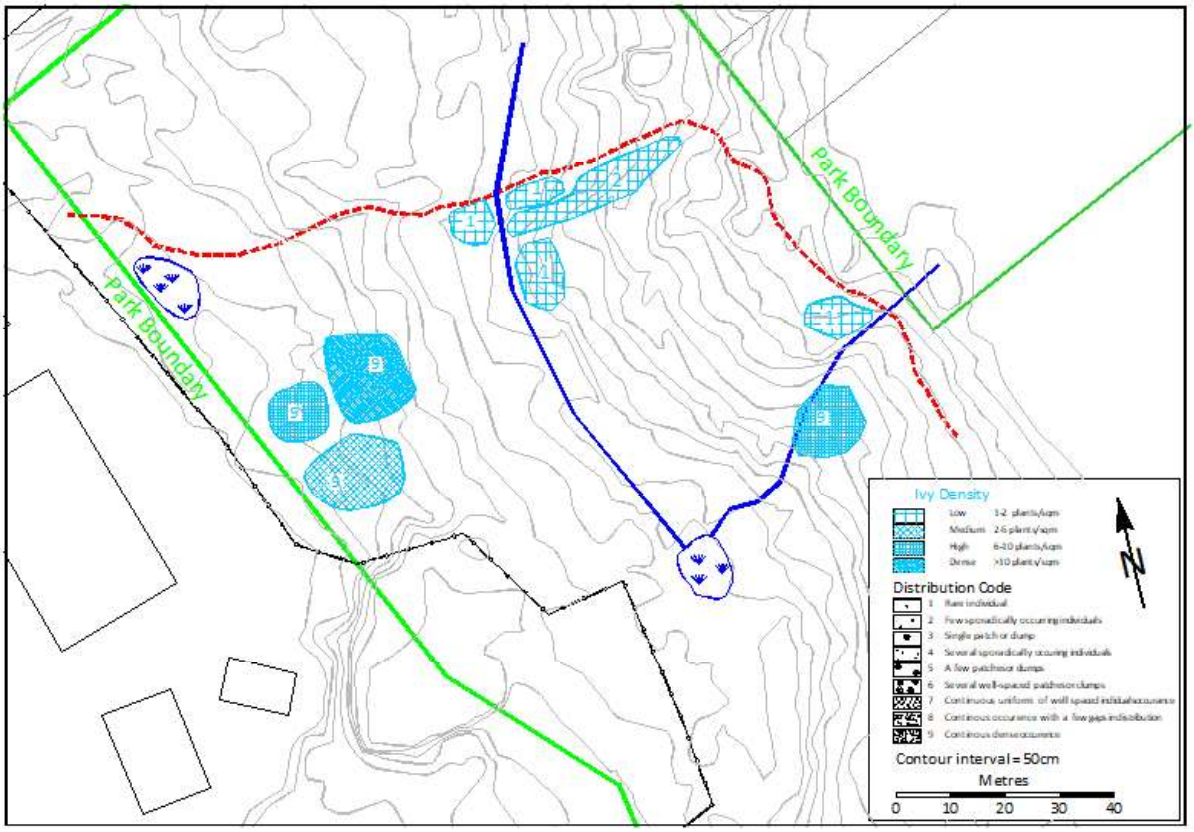


Figure 7: Ivy Density and Distribution

Figure 8: Ivy Climbing firs along Vanier Dr.

6) Mapping and Labeling the Garry Oaks

6a) Methodology for Mapping and Labeling Garry Oaks

We believe that all living oaks within the SD71 fence and the main trail from Vanier Drive are now labeled with metal tags, showing a number between 1701 and 1800, or between 1901 and 2000. A total of 93 live oaks have been labeled, as have 15 dead oaks, 54 non-oaks, including 9 Pacific Dogwoods (*Cornus nuttallii*). A total of 197 trees have been mapped. A few cherries were mapped, but no holly except as an invasive polygon. A total of 21 firs have been recommended for subordination to release the crop oaks.

All trees were tagged at 1.3 meters trunk height which is the height for DBH (Diameter Breast Height) measurement, on the northern side of the trees. It is hoped that future DBH measurements will be taken at these easy to locate reference points.

GPS accuracy is generally 3 meters or more.

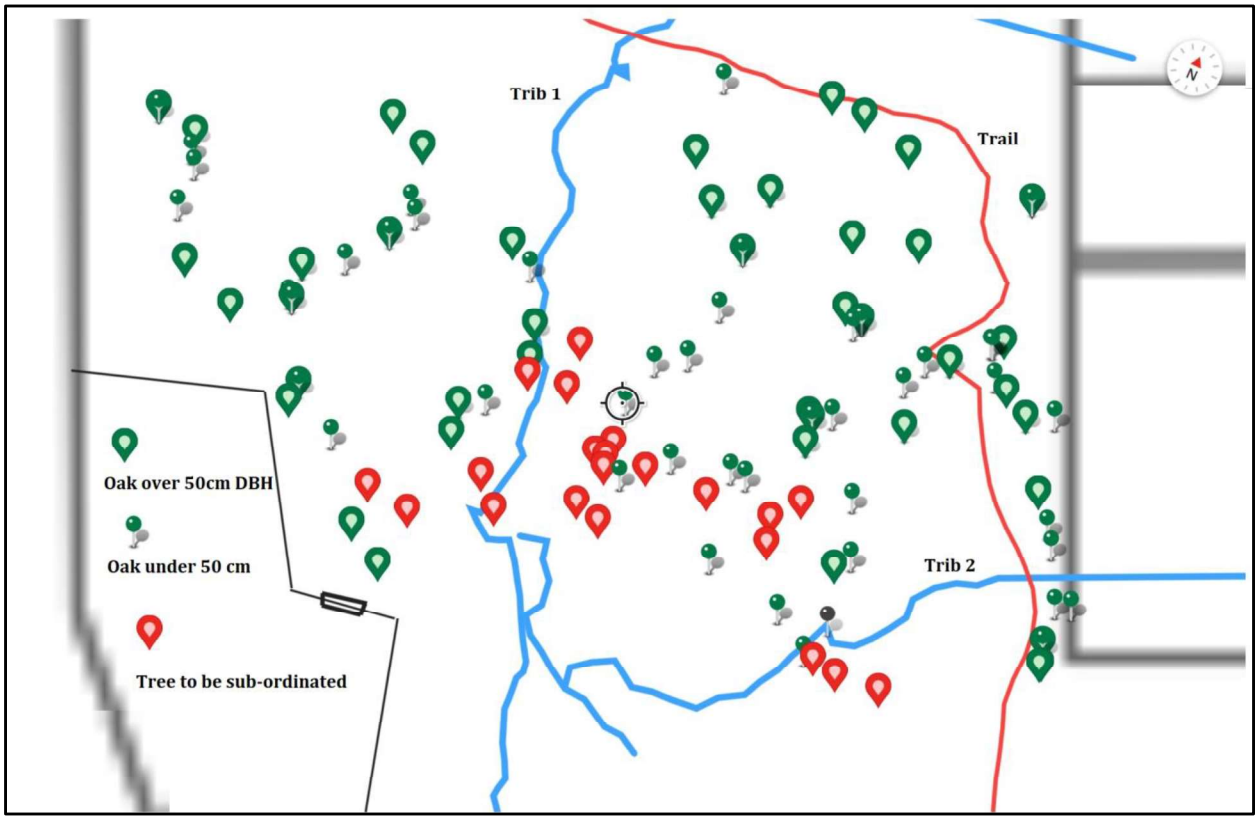


Figure 9: Oaks (green) and Sub-ordinate Trees

6b) Observations on the Garry Oaks

Few oaks exist outside of the principle grove, which we have defined as the area bound by the trail and the School District fence. Two older trees are above the trail, and a few in the southern part of the Vanier Forest, on school property. Few seedling oaks have been found, although we continue to look. Although we are showing 93 live oaks, this number is subject to correction as we'll be verifying living oak trees this fall.

A number of oaks have benefitted from being released by the removal of southern and south-western conifers when the SD works yard was constructed.

6c) Conifers recommended for sub-ordination

We have previously provided the City with our recommendations for managing the encroaching and overtopping trees[3], and held discussions with Tsolum River Restoration Society (TRRS) on site. Initially TRRS had concerns regarding removal of the shade on surface water, but after consultation with others familiar with the Park, it was determined that the majority of the water is subsurface ground water, which was observed in our 5-month water table study.

CVNS now recommends that the previously flagged conifers on the south side of the trench not be treated until after the 3rd year of subordination treatments, and only considered after assessment of shade on the trench etc., and with consultation with TRRS.

Our list of 21 trees recommended for sub-ordination is:

1764, 1765, 1766 (on east side of Trib. 2B)

1905, 1906, 1768 (west side of Trib. 2B)

1773, 1915, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922

A further seven trees are recommended on the south side; we would recommend that these 7 be treated in the final phase are: 1774, 1776, 1779, 1781, 1782, 1791 and 1992, or, in their alternate, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1909, 1910 and two others.

[3] Vanier Nature Park Garry Oak Tree Survey, p. 13-19

7) Ongoing Projects

7a) iNaturalist:

The iNaturalist Project "**Vanier Nature Park (BC)**" started in March of 2023. The Botany group of CVNS hosted a bio-blitz on April 27th, 2023, and posted a large number of photographs. These listing will continue to grow of the seasons and years.

The link to the Vanier Nature Park project page in iNaturalist is:

https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/vanier-nature-park-bc

As of June 24, 2023, a total of 117 Observations have been made by 6 different observers, with 74 species identified so far.

7b) Water Table Data Collection

Eight shallow (1 meter or less) ground test wells were installed in 2012, and we took advantage of them to collect weekly water table depths from January 12th to May 31 (18 sample dates in total). Each well is described in Current Environmental's 2013 Eco-assessment[4], but in general had a cemented sandy clay loam layer less than 1 meter below ground level, which could not be pierced by a hand boring tool. Each well has a 2 inch stand pipe access point. Three additional points where surface water are seasonal present are Trib 1, Trib 2 and a small culvert near the Vanier Drive entrance that handles surface waters. Trib 2 is feed by a small spring that comes from a buried sand stream up-hill on private property.

Three wells (wells 2, 3, 9) had water present on less than 1/3 of the collection dates. Wells 6 and 7 had the highest average water levels at 22 cm and 35 cm respectively. At no time during the measurement period was still water present near any of the wells, although the water table did approach 10 to 15 cm of the surface. The nearest area of still surface water was by the blackberry infestation, below the oak grove below where Trib 1 and Trib join.

[4] "*SD 71 – Vanier Oak Property Ecological Assessment and Protection Plan*", Jan 11, 2013

Sources of water into the Park are from surface flow from drainage ditch along Vanier Drive, and one or more low flow seeps, predominately Trib 2. The main flow of surface water is in Trib 1 (the "Trench") which average 8 cm deep at the discharge end of the large culvert. It collects some water from the drainage ditch alongside Vanier Drive and surface water from up slope.

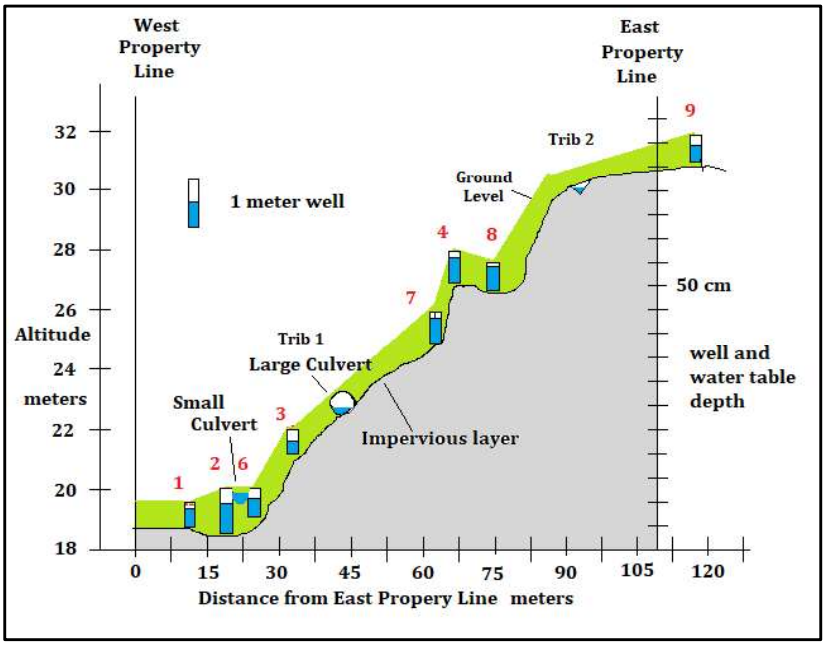


Figure 10: Well location, Altitude vs Distance

General Observations of Park Hydrology:

Some concern was raised by TRRS that removal of the overtopping conifer shade would tend to overheat the surface waters flowing through the grove. After pro-bono consultations with a hydrologist in Nanaimo, it was suggested that the impact of our small scale proposal on surface water temperature could not be easily predicted, but that the majority of the water charge into the Towhee would likely be sub-surface flows, which vary little in temperature over the seasons.

During our many visits to the grove over the last 3 years, we have not found any area north of Trib 2 where flowing surface water was present for an extended period of time, except for known seeps up-hill from the Park and the drainage trench called Trib 1. Trib 2 is itself sourced at a seep, and is the only regular source of surface water in the Park. Where Trib 2 and Trib 1 unite, south and below the oak grove is a large slough sedge *(Carex obnupta)* meadow[5]. Well #7 is in the general vicinity and showed the highest average water table during the observation dates. This may be the wetland named 3A in the 2013 Eco-Asset report.

A small sedge meadow of approximately 25 m^2 is also present in western side of the grove, where a level area allows the water table to exceed ground level during raining seasons when the soil is fully saturated.

[5] 2013 Eco-Asset, pp. referred to as wetland 3

Most of the surface water in the oak grove is vernal, and due to rain storms and runoff, with at least one regular surface seep above the Park.

1) Ground well (GW) 7 had the highest average water level at 35 cm

2) Lowest averages were at GW 4 (1.8cm), GW2 and GW9. These 3 wells also were dry on 2/3 of the collection dates

3) Trib 2 starts at a spring on property above the Park boundary and is the only surface water seen year round

4) Trib 1 receives most of its water surface run off and little from base flow (sub-surface recharging the running water in trench). During the storms in late December 2023, water was seen entering the Park from the drainage ditch alongside Vanier Drive.

5) All measurable sub-surface water was gone 14 days after last rain on May 24th.

7c) <u>Bird Studies</u>:

The CVNS Binding Group hosted a bird survey on May 6th, 2023, with 4 members and a total of 17 birds identified, in 12 species. The Group has a pending request that Vanier Nature Park be declared a hot spot on the eBird site , which would attract a wider group of citizen scientists. The link to the Park is here:

https://ebird.org/checklist/S136333860

Appendix: Volunteer Time at Vanier Nature Park from Dec 2022 to Present

Date	Total # of Hours	Purpose Of Visit	# of People.	
Dec 26	3	Video surface storm water	1	
Jan 9	6	Water table data collected	2	
Jan 12	2	Water table	1	
Jan 18	2	Water table	1	
Jan 25	2	Water table	1	
Jan 25	2	Water table	1	
Feb 5	2	Water table	1	
Feb 12	2	Water table	1	
Feb 18	2	Water table data	1	
Feb 21	2	Weed wench test on Daphne	1	
Feb 22	2	Water table	1	
Feb 24	18	Botany & Birder walk	9	
Mar 7	1	Pre-locate first 10 oaks	1	
Mar 8	21	Metal tags on Oaks day 1	7	
Mar 9	2	Water table data collected	1	
Mar 15	18	Metal tags on Oaks day 2	6	
Mar 16	2	Water table	1	
Mar 27	17.5	Invasive polygons day 1	5	
Apr 12	2	Water table	1	
Apr 18	20	Walk with Susie	8	
Apr 25	2.5	Trees tag and Water table	1	
Apr 27	10	Bio-blitz with Jocie	4	
Apr 27	6	Invasive polygon mapping	3	
May 2	2.5	Water Table & Tree Tagging	1	
May 6	4	Bird Survey with Kelly	4	
May 9	1.5	Water Table	1	
May 24	1.5	Water Table	1	
Total Hours	156.5 Hrs	Person Visits	66 person-visits	

To: Ms. Susie Saunders
Director Parks, Culture and Community Services
City Of Courtney, ssaunders@courtenay.ca

From: Margaret Lidkea [redacted], Victoria BC V8R 5W1

September 4, 2023

Re: The Garry Oak Grove in Vanier Nature Park

Dear Ms. Saunders,

I am writing to you to express my support for Comox Valley Nature's proposal to the City of Courtenay to conserve the at risk Garry Oak grove within Vanier Nature Park. I am familiar with the CVN proposal, and agree with the need to release the oaks by removing the overtopping conifers which are shading and killing the oaks. If a sustainable oak grove is desired, the oaks must be given more access to sunlight, which will increase their vitality, including acorn production and oak seedlings. Planting of native wildflowers and other indigenous plants of the Garry oak Ecosystem is also important.

I have been leading community restoration of the globally endangered ecosystem of Uplands Park in Oak Bay, Victoria, for over 30 years. I grew up a free-range child in the Garry Oak areas of Victoria, have a BSc from UBC, a teaching degree and taught environmental classes at Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary for 21 years. When I retired, I co-founded the volunteer group, Friends of Uplands Park in 2010, which partners with Oak Bay Parks. Our Mission is to provide opportunities for stewardship, education and inspiration.

We became a Society in 2018 with a Board that includes experts like Matt Fairbarns, Rare Plant Specialist, and Wylie Thomas, Ecological Botanist and Invasive Plant Manager of Uplands Park. Our Municipal Council and Oak Bay Parks is very supportive. Wylie, on contract, manages the work paid for by the Habitat Stewardship Program and other federal grants. Friends of Uplands Park also partners with other organizations and experts in their specialties. Because of all the hours volunteers and school students put into restoring the park, and because we have over 24 rare plants, Oak Bay Parks has also received Priority Places federal funding that allows for restoration in most natural areas in Oak Bay.

Uplands Park will soon be recognized nationally as a Key Diversity Area in Canada by the Wildlife Conservation Society of Canada. Last Fall, over 130 Conservation Coaches from around the world came to see Uplands Park. International recognition continued this summer with 3 groups of youth (about 100) from Asia, South America and beyond, learning

about environmental leadership. and spending part of a day removing invasive plants. They were very impressed with Uplands Park.

Please check our website, *friendsofuplandspark.org*, for additional information and photos of our Restoration, Educational Programs and Celebrations. In 2022 we organized 175 events.

Our Garry Oak Ecosystem is one of the top two endangered ecosystems in Canada. The other is the Carolinian Forest of Ontario. It extends down into the United States where it is not considered endangered. Our Garry Oak Ecosystem is limited to the east side of Vancouver Island north to Vanier Nature Park in Courtenay, in the Gulf and San Juan Islands, and in one place in the lower mainland near the Fraser River. It does not extend further because it depends on the Mediterranean climate in our "rain shadow" areas. So, there is a case for thinking that it could be the most endangered ecosystem.

Centuries ago, it extended all along the southern border of now British Columbia because the climate was much warmer. When the climate cooled, the coniferous forests took over. As climate now warms up, the plants of the Garry Oak Ecosystem will probably survive better than some of the current plants. It is a good plan for municipalities to increase the numbers of these plants and to protect and restore the wild Garry Oak areas, to combat climate warming.

Less than 5% of the ecosystem exists today since the arrival of European settlers in the mid-1800's. The ecosystem, managed for thousands of years, by the indigenous people for the plants and animals that it provided, especially the Camas flower bulbs, was largely Garry Oak meadows. These beautiful meadows provided an easy place for settlers to create farms, build homes, towns, cities and industry. With arrival of European settlers, diseases decreased the population of the indigenous people by about 90%. Their traditional areas were then built on by the settlers leaving mere pockets of the ecosystem intact. Many invasive plant species arrived over the years and have taken over much of the remaining ecosystem.

It is imperative that the Garry Oak Ecosystem be protected and restored by communities, including children to create stewards of tomorrow, and including the indigenous people working together. It is a cultural and an ecological necessity.

Thank you for your consideration.

Margaret Lidkea, President, and Board members of Friends of Uplands Park Society
Partnering with Oak Bay Parks
friendsofuplandspark.org and on Instagram and Facebook
[redacted]

From: Jennifer & Robin Harrison
Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 7:55 PM
To: Saunders, Susie
Cc: Jim Boulter
Subject: Garry Oaks in Vanier Nature Park

From: Robin Harrison,
September 19, 2023

Re: The Garry Oak Grove in Vanier Park

Dear Ms. Saunders,

I am writing to express my support for Comox Valley Nature's proposal to the City of Courtenay to conserve the at risk Garry Oak grove within Vanier Nature Park. Shading by fast growing evergreen trees is affecting the growth of the oaks, weakening them and causing some to die. Topping the conifer trees would allow more sunlight to reach the oaks thereby increasing their vitality and acorn production.

As a long-time member of CVN, I have been aware of this situation for many years and have walked through the park to see for myself the relationship between the oaks and conifers. It is a rare occurrence to have Garry oaks growing in a wet area. In my opinion, it is well worth saving this unique grove of oaks but action must be taken soon before the health of the oaks deteriorates further.

Thank you for considering this proposal.

Sincerely,

Robin Harrison

cc Garry Oak Team

To: Ms. Susie Saunders
Director Parks, Culture and Community Services
City Of Courtney, ssaunders@courtenay.ca

From: Verna Mumby
Mumby's Arboriculture Consulting
[redacted]
Comox, BC

Dear Ms. Saunders,

I assessed the Vanier Nature Park area many years ago for a potential development site. At that time was impressed with the high number of Garry oak trees. I was also impressed at the public meeting how many people came out and voiced their concern about developing the area and thereby not retaining the oaks. I remember one gentleman who spoke up, stated he was a builder, and this forest had too many good memories for many people of the valley and should not be developed. Jump ahead 20 years and the work and subsequent plan Comox Valley Nature (CVN) has developed for the potential retention of this incredible forest is impressive.

They have asked many professionals for opinions and mitigating measures (yes I have authored a few reports for them) and their plan is concise. The oaks do need to obtain more sunlight by selective tree work on the conifers. They have not overlooked other parts of the ecosystem in their plan and the goal to increase the oak vitality and increased regeneration can be achieved.

In closing, I ask you to make this area a dedicated Garry oak preserve and healthy forest. As a consulting arborist, when I work in the Duncan area where there are so few Garry oak areas left intact; I see this as an opportunity for Courtenay to embrace retaining one of the few(er) intact Garry oak forests and work alongside with a very passionate and dedicated group of people who love the forest.

Sincerely

Verna Mumby

cc. Gary Oak Team [redacted]

Mumby's Arboriculture Consulting Division of Mumby's Tree Services Ltd.
ISA Certified Arborist PR-0113A / ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualified
ASCA Tree & Plant Qualification
Member, American Society of Consulting Arborists
www.treelady.ca

To: Ms. Susie Saunders
Director Parks, Culture and Community Services
City Of Courtney, ssaunders@courtenay.ca

From:
Thomas Munson, Ecologist
[redacted]
Victoria, BC V8Z 6S4
Email: [redacted]

September 20, 2023

Re: The Garry Oak Grove in Vanier Nature Park

Dear Ms. Saunders,

I am writing to you to express my support for Comox Valley Nature's proposal to the City of Courtenay to conserve the at-risk Garry Oak grove within Vanier Nature Park. I am familiar with the CVN proposal, and have visited the site several times on trips to the Comox Valley. I agree with the need to release the Oaks by removing the overtopping conifers which are shading and killing the Oaks. If a sustainable Oak grove is desired, the Oaks must be given more access to sunlight, which will increase their vitality, including acorn production and oak seedlings.

I am a field ecologist with over 20 years' experience in ecological restoration on southern Vancouver Island in the rare and red-listed Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystems, which include Garry Oak ecosystems. I worked for 10 years in protecting and restoring native plants in the small remnants of Garry Oak ecosystems in the City of Victoria Park system. I am now working as Senior Environmental Planner for the District of Saanich, charged with protecting the small amount of Garry Oak ecosystems here, against the rapid pace of housing development.

With less than 5% of the Island's Coastal Douglas-fir forests and ecosystems still in a natural state on Vancouver Island, it is imperative to protect what we have, especially stands of Garry Oaks that have stood the test of time. The Garry Oak Grove in Vanier Nature Park is the most northerly Garry Oak stand on the Island and in British Columbia, and as such, is a unique remnant of what the trees that once covered the eastern side of the Island. This grove should be preserved for present and future generations, and all restoration practices employed to improve its condition. If Garry Oak ecosystems are to expand with climate change, it is from this location that the groves will expand northward.

I urge you to take all necessary measures to both protect and restore the Vanier Nature Park Garry Oak grove. Never let it be said that you stood by and watched a species disappear into the halls of extinction. Now is the opportunity to save this legacy. Thank you for your consideration.

Thomas Munson, MSc., P.Ag.
Victoria, BC

cc. Garry Oak Team

To: Ms. Susie Saunders
Director Parks, Culture and Community Services
City of Courtenay

From: Frank Hovenden
[redacted]
Courtenay, BC V9N 3A5

August 31, 2023

Dear Ms. Saunders;

I am writing you to express my support for the proposal from Comox Valley Nature (CVN) to the City of Courtenay to conserve the at-risk Garry Oak grove within the Vanier Nature Park. I am familiar with the proposal and the site itself, which I have visited many times over the years.

I have worked with the City on the Courtenay Airpark Restoration Project for over 25 years. In this project CVN has removed invasive plants and planted native flora including Garry Oaks at the Courtenay River Airpark. I work closely with the City of Courtenay through their Parks Manager Mike Kearns. An annual report is prepared which summarizes the work of our volunteers. Several hard copies are submitted to City of Courtenay Parks. It is also available on line at the CVN's website.

I agree that the Garry Oaks need to be released from the shade of over-topping conifer trees. I would call this a slight ecosystem tweaking to the natural succession process in order to preserve the Garry Oaks. The Garry Oak ecosystem is the most threatened on Vancouver Island, and it is imperative that the City supports this plan to preserve this very small stand of Garry Oak, which is but a remnant of the Oak prairies that covered much of the Comox Valley in pre-settlement days. An added benefit which the City should be acknowledging is the wild fire susceptibility of this area. This area falls within what can be described as the urban / forest interface zone. This summer many BC communities have suffered serious losses in these areas due to wild fire. Deciduous stands are less susceptible to wildfire than conifer stands. This is an added benefit of reducing the conifer content of this grove.

Thank you for your consideration,

Frank Hovenden B.Sc.F.

From: Dr. John D. Neilson <[redacted]
Sent: Monday, September 4, 2023 9:27 AM
To: Saunders, Susie
Cc: JIM BOULTER
Subject: Letter of Support for the Comox Valley Nature proposal for Garry Oaks at Vanier Park

Dear Ms. Saunders,

I am writing to express my support for the proposal of Comox Valley Nature to conserve the Garry Oaks in Vanier Nature Park. As I understand it, the stand of Garry Oaks is a remnant of a much larger population. As a professional biologist and past member of Canada's Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), I can affirm the importance of maintaining rare habitats such as Vanier Nature Park. Such urban forests with native species often turn out to be biodiversity hotspots. The City of Courtenay has a very important biological asset, and I hope the City supports the sensible recommendations presented by the Comox Valley Nature group to the Recreation, Culture and Community Services Department, August 21, 2023.

Thank you for considering my view on this important matter.

Sincerely,

John D. Neilson, Ph.D
[redacted]
Comox, BC V9M 2P6

From: Patrick Maingon <
Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2023 9:47 PM
To: Saunders, Susie
Cc: Wells, Bob; Hillian, Doug; CouncilAlias; Boulter, James and Anette
Subject: The Garry Oak Grove in Vanier Nature Park

Re: The Garry Oak Grove in Vanier Nature Park

To: Ms. Susie Saunders
Director Parks, Culture and Community Services
City Of Courtney, ssaunders@courtenay.ca
From: Dr. L. Maingon (RPBio)

31 August 2023

Dear Ms. Saunders,

I am writing to you to express my support for Comox Valley Nature's proposal to the City of Courtenay to conserve the at-risk Garry Oak grove within Vanier Nature Park. I do so both a a Registered Professional Biologist, as well as a City Courtenay taxpayer and voter, since I own property in Courtenay, though I reside in Area C.

My association with the oaks on the Vanier property goes back to October 1970 when I came with a university friend, Neil Frazer, who is now a retired professor of Earth Sciences at the University of Hawaii. His parents, who built and owned Comox Trucking after 1945 and lived on a small farm by St. Andrews Church, were then already concerned about the future of the Vanier Oaks.

Around 2000, as I approached retirement, I wrote a report on Towhee Creek for the Tsolum River Restoration Society, which included concerns for the stunning deterioration of the oaks after four decades of mismanagement and neglect. The ill-advised development of the ice facility had already extirpated a thriving coho population, it had also extirpated 60% of the oaks associated with the coho wetlands of that site.

In 2013 I initiated a Garry oak restoration programme for the Comox Valley, as an extension of my work with the Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Team.

At the time I strongly publicized that given that according to the Ministry of Forests' own research the current population amounted to "less than 1%," and, that given mortality rates, the state of the three genetic populations of Garry oaks in the Comox Valley was such that Garry oaks would be extirpated from the Comox Valley between 2030 or 2040. In 2014, at the urging of then Councillor Jim Gillis, I wrote a small letter-report for CVRD Board members, and if my recollection serves me right I did a short presentation for council.

Given that background, it comes to me as no surprise to find out from the Comox Valley Nature report, and from the independent work of arborists, that another decade of neglect has resulted in the loss of 40% of the 40% that remained after the 1998 ice rink disaster. That means that there is less than 24% of "less than 1%" of the original population left, about <0.24%. As a scientist, for reasons I will detail below, I am appalled that given that the data and information have been available for at least 20 years, that under both the School Board's and the City of Courtenay's stewardships, this important part of the Pentlatch heritage has been treated with the same duty of care as was given to residential school children. This is First Nations' heritage and we owe it a better duty of care. As a taxpayer and voter I am outraged that my tax dollars were not used with more foresight and care for the well-being of future generations. And again, as a taxpayer, I am shocked that there is no accountability for this neglect.

If this summer should have taught us anything, it is that we are entering into a new climate frontier. From what climate scientists note, the summer and drought we experienced this year will seem like a very pleasant memory ten years from now, even if we take steps to control climate change. That would return us to a climate at best similar to the extreme heat that was normal in British Columbia before 1750, without the benefit of the off-sets between July and September provided by the abundance of water that previously came from from glaciers and old-growth. That is an important consideration because basic plant physiology tells us that photosynthesis is optimal at 21°C. At 46.5°C even the leaves of tropical plants collapse. If you recall, after hovering for several days at 47.5°C Lytton ignited at 49.5°C. That should be our climate planning point of reference for potential conditions in Courtenay.

Tree species are adapted to a range of temperatures. Climate adaptation, which is becoming increasingly important, requires that we plant and conserve city trees with that in mind. Additionally, with water shortages becoming an increasing climate change concern, we should not be planting trees that require watering. As has long been known from the work of Dr. Richard Hebda, trees that require an abundance of water and cool weather, such as red cedar and grand fir are not expected to withstand the new climate frontier on Vancouver Island. Garry oaks exceed Douglas fir in drought tolerance, heat extreme and low flammability. (The 1,500 Garry oaks in my nursery have required no watering over the past three summers - even through the "Heat Dome" of 2021.) Their presence in the Comox Valley bears witness to pre-1750 extreme drought conditions that we should learn from. The conditions in which the Garry oaks are now in the Vanier site, overtopped and crowded-out by grand-firs are anomalous. The grand firs are unlikely to survive climate extremes expected in the next decade and their continued presence endangers the survival of the Garry oaks which have survived droughts on the West Coast for six millenia. If the current regime of neglect

continues it will only take a couple of heat waves for the City of Courtenay to be graced with a hillside of dead and dying trees. As a taxpayer, I would like to know who will be accountable for that?

In my professional opinion, the plan proposed by the Comox Valley Garry Oak Team is an extremely conservative small-scale demonstration excercise. It is neither ground-breaking not experimental, since it follows standard prescriptions, very successfully tested and implemented in Mt. Tzouhalem and at Somenos Marsh by Dave Polster in collaboration with local First Nations. These prescriptions have been successfully replicated in Saanich and on Saltspring Island and there is no reason why it should not be successful, unless Courtnay is on another planet. This simple project ,which the proponents have developed with great diligence, presents very little risk and many benefits. I am surprised that it is not being funded under a climate adaptation grant given the importance of this work for Courtenay's "Climate Emergency," response.

As a Courtenay taxpayer, I would be both delighted and relieved to see my tax dollars put to such good use for the benefit of future generations.

PDF attached.

Yours,
L.Maingon (MA, PhD, MSc, RPBio)
[redacted]
CourtenayBC V9J 1N9
[redacted]
cc. mayor@courtenay.ca
dhillian@courtenay.ca
council@courtenay.ca
[redacted]

--
Loys Maingon MA, PhD, MSc (RPBio)
[redacted]
Courtenay,
BC V9J 1N9

Telephone: [redacted]
Cell: [redacted]

From: Dave
Sent: Wednesday, October 4, 2023 12:15 PM
To: Saunders, Susie
Cc: JIM BOULTER
Subject: The Gary Oak Grive in Vanier Nature Park

Dear Ms. Saunders,
I am writing to you to express my support for Comox Valley Nature's proposal to the City of Courtenay to conserve the at risk Garry Oak grove within Vanier Nature Park. I am familiar with the CVN proposal, and agree with the need to release the oaks by removing the overtopping conifers which are shading and killing the oaks. If a sustainable oak grove is desired, the oaks must be given more access to sunlight, which will increase their vitality, including acorn production and oak seedlings.
I am very familair with the Oak Grove, for I have assessed it a few times with CV Nature volunteeers, since I have a forestry background. As well, I linked CV Nature with the Coastal Ministry of Forests Pathologist from Nanaimo and we all assessed the disease issues in the grove. These wetland oak groves are extremely rare on the eastside of the island and represent some the last remaining stands of this type.
Both I and the regional pathologist recommend the proposed treartments.
Thank you for your consideration.

Dave Weaver
Retired Professional Forester.

To: Ms. Susie Saunders
Director Parks, Culture and Community Services
City of Courtenay, ssaunders@courtenay.ca

From: Veronique McIntyre [redacted]

August 28th, 2023

Re: The Garry Oak Grove in Vanier Nature Park

Dear Ms. Saunders,

I am writing to you to express my support for Comox Valley Nature's proposal to the City of Courtenay to conserve the at-risk Garry Oak grove within Vanier Nature Park. I am familiar with the CVN proposal and agree with the need to release the oaks by removing the overtopping conifers which are shading and killing the oaks. If a sustainable oak grove is desired, the oaks must be given more access to sunlight, which will increase their vitality, including acorn production and oak seedlings.

As a regular user of the Comox Sports Centre, I often walk through this grove on my way to and from the arena and the pool. I am therefore quite familiar with it and think it would be a shame to lose it when not much is needed to give it a chance to survive.

Garry oaks are the basis of rich ecosystems, and we all benefit when we protect them. This particular grove is exceptional in that it is located in a wetland area, which for this species is quite rare. The grove is also close to a high school and could be used as an on-going example of conservation practices in environmental studies programs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Veronique McIntyre

cc. Garry Oak Team [redacted]

Tsolum River Restoration Society
www.tsolumriver.org

PO Box 488 Merville BC V0R 2M0, tsolumriver@shaw.ca, 250 897-4670

Ms. Susie Saunders
Director Parks, Culture and Community Services
City Of Courtney, ssaunders@courtenay.ca

September 15, 2023

Re: The Garry Oak Grove in Vanier Nature Park

Dear Ms. Saunders,

I am writing to you to express the support of the Tsolum River Restoration Society (TRRS) for Comox Valley Nature's proposal to the City of Courtenay to conserve the at-risk Garry Oak grove within Vanier Nature Park. We are familiar with the CVN proposal and agree with the need to release the oaks by suppressing the overtopping conifers which are shading and killing the oaks. We understand that, if a sustainable oak grove is desired, the oaks must be given more access to sunlight, which will increase their vitality, including acorn production and oak seedlings.

Vanier nature Park is the headwaters of Towhee Creek and is an important to the health of Tsolum River Coho salmon. It feeds the ponds in the forest below the Comox Valley exhibition grounds which the Coho use as a high-water refuge area during the high flows in the winter. These ponds hold thousands of Coho fry each year and it is important that the water temperature remains as cool as possible in spring. We appreciate that CV Nature recognizes the importance of the Vanier Forest to the Coho downstream in Towhee Creek.

TRRS supports the new plan of invasive species removal first, as well as the longer-term suppression strategy for the over-topping Douglas Firs. This allows for ongoing assessment of the effect of this activity on the water quality, especially water temperature, in Towhee Creek. The monitoring of Towhee Creek as a component of the plan is appreciated by the TRRS.

We think it's important that a group like CV Nature cares about this forest to ensure its long-term protection. The Vanier Forest is an important cultural and recreational resource in the City of Courtenay and the Comox valley.

Thank you for your consideration.
Yours,

Wayne White, President
Tsolum River Restoration Society

cc. Garry Oak Team

University of Victoria

School of Environmental Studies
David Turpin Building, B243
Victoria, BC, V8W 3R4, Canada
Tel: 1 (778) 922-1752, Email: nshack@uvic.ca

September 19, 2023

Ms. Susie Saunders
Director Parks, Culture and Community Services
City Of Courtney

Re: The Garry Oak Grove in Vanier Nature Park

Dear Ms. Saunders,

I am writing to you to express my support for Comox Valley Nature's proposal to the City of Courtenay to conserve the at risk Garry Oak grove within Vanier Nature Park. The Park is an important piece in the Tsolum River Valley, which is one of Canada's Historic Places, and houses rich and rare national biodiversity.

Vanier Nature Park is home to a stunning oak meadow, which is a deeply cultural landscape that was maintained as open canopy cultivation areas for millennia by the Coast Salish peoples, with Vanier specifically managed by the K'ómoks Nation and its families. The dispossession of the traditional management activities, coupled with the introduction of species from around the globe, has led to many of our meadows experiencing encroachment by trees and shrubs, with the eventual shading out of important species like camas and the oaks for which the meadows are named.

I am familiar with the CVN proposal, and agree with the need to reduce canopy cover across the park by removing the overtopping conifers. If a sustainable meadow is desired, the land must be given more access to sunlight, which will maintain and increase the unique diversity in the park.

Understanding, and helping protect, these ecosystems has been an important part of my role since I arrived at the University of Victoria. These spaces are not ours – they are the legacy and lands of the people who shaped them. However, it is our job to help protect them, which includes maintaining their unique open structure and rich community of flowers and grasses.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nancy Shackelford

Assistant Professor, School of Environmental Studies
Academic Director, Restoration of Natural Systems Program
University of Victoria
www.restorationscience.net

I work on the traditional territories of the ləkʷəŋən peoples and the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. I, and most of my group, are uninvited settlers here. We are committed to deepening our understanding of how we can assist in the movement of reconciliation, dismantling the systems that continue to cause harm, and honoring the traditional stewards that have shaped this land.

GARRY OAK MEADOW
PRESERVATION SOCIETY

GOMPS

To: Ms. Susie Saunders
Director Parks, Culture and Community Services
City of Courtney
ssaunders@courtenay.ca

Re: Vanier Park Garry Oak Stand Preservation

The Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society is a 100% volunteer-run advocacy organization that also grows and distributes Garry oak seedlings from locally obtained acorns on South Vancouver Island. Many of the threats facing the sustainability of Garry oak and associated ecosystems further south have similarities to threats of Garry oak patches at the northern reaches of the Garry oak ecosystem (GOE), for example, Vanier Park. This unique local genetic adaptation to the environment and its associated species community would be difficult to re-introduce if lost, and this localized species community could have great importance in a changing climate for biodiversity and human health.

The culminating pressures diminishing natural regeneration of Garry oaks are primarily human associated: the restriction of Indigenous stand management using fire, the encroachment of urban development, increased recreational impacts, the spread of forest pathogen, an array of invasive species inhibiting biodiversity, and increasingly hot and dry summers. Further south on Vancouver Island and on the Southern Gulf Islands we have witnessed stand-level forest conifer decline occurring near built up areas as has been anticipated in climate modeling. The decline of western redcedar, grand fir, western hemlock, western yew, and Douglas fir is occurring at a rate that is challenging from a management perspective and from a loss of benefits to the communities that are adjacent to these forests.

Established stands of Garry oak on the other hand are highly adapted to severe droughts and heat, including on rocky outcrops with shallow soil. Garry oak's role as a long-lived keystone species in a highly biodiverse ecosystem has evolved over the past 8000 years. Protecting existing patches of GOE, providing appropriate management and expanding patches will have great importance for the life cycles of many organisms. Diversity of species observed in GOE include amphibians (7), reptiles (7), birds (104), mammals (33), more than 800 insects and mites, and nearly 700 species of plants.

Through the GOMPS Board of Directors, I would like to express our support for Comox Valley Nature's proposal to the City of Courtenay to conserve the at-risk Garry Oak grove within Vanier Nature Park. We believe the proposal is an opportunity for a stewardship partnership between First Nations knowledge keepers, community volunteers and experts, stewardship organizations, and the City of Courtenay to work together toward enhancing this ecosystem. We believe the strategy prepared is grounded in best management practice and supported by peer-reviewed research. GOMPS would be pleased to support this initiative should it be approved in a technical or advisory capacity, including recommendation of qualified professionals, and assembling relevant research.

Stewardship of Garry oak ecosystems is an act of recognition, appreciation, and support for Indigenous historic and ongoing management. Garry oak ecosystem patches have become increasingly fragmented and continue to degrade with low and no management approaches. Restoring practices of-

ecosystem stewardship based in First Nations local knowledge and in using alternative practices (e.g., wildlife snag creation) where fire cannot be accommodated is crucial to reconnect community members to each other and to reconnect the community with nature.

Sincerely,

Ryan Senechal
Board President – Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society
Saanich, BC

References

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Comox Valley Nature

(Comox Valley Naturalists Society)
PO Box 3222, Courtenay BC V9N 5N4

Ms. Susie Saunders
Director Parks, Culture and Community Services
City of Courtney
ssaunders@courtenay.ca

September 27, 2023

Dear Ms. Saunders,

We are writing in support of the Comox Valley Nature's proposal to the City of Courtenay to conserve the at-risk Garry Oak grove within Vanier Nature Park. We are familiar with the CVN proposal, and agree with the need to release the oaks by removing the overtopping conifers which are shading and killing the oaks. If a sustainable oak grove is desired, the oaks must be given more access to sunlight, which will increase their vitality, including acorn production and oak seedlings.

The CVN Board has discussed the proposal with the dedicated volunteers that continue to work hard on this project. The plan proposed by the Comox Valley Garry Oak Team is an extremely conservative small-scale demonstration of the action needed to preserved this important Garry Oak park. The park represents a rare oak grove with cultural significance and educational benefits. In addition, the park includes the Towhee Creek headwaters and wetlands within the Park are integral to sustaining the natural ecology and environment of Vanier Forest and lower watershed of Towhee Creek.

Thank you for considering this important proposal.

Sincerely,

Signed on behalf of the Board of CVN,

David Innes,

Coordinator, Comox Valley Nature

cc. Garry Oak Team:

CVN Secretary: cvnsecretary@gmail.com

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

STAFF REPORT

To: Council **File No.:** 0570-01

From: Director of Corporate Services **Date:** October 11, 2023

Subject: 2024 Council Meeting Calendar

PURPOSE:

To seek Council approval of the 2024 Council Meeting Calendar.

BACKGROUND:

Prior to December 31st each year, Council is required to adopt the annual meeting calendar for the following year, including dates, times and places.

In 2023, Council meetings took place on Wednesdays, with 22 meetings held in the calendar year.

Prior to 2023, Council meetings were scheduled on Mondays. Council meeting schedules with meetings on Mondays were more heavily impacted by statutory holidays throughout the year. Moving Council meetings from Mondays to Wednesdays in 2023 resulted in no meetings having to be rescheduled. It also provided additional time to Council and the public to review the agenda, including more staff time to broadly communicate and raise awareness of agenda items and the content of the meeting.

DISCUSSION:

The 2024 Council Meeting Calendar (Attachment 1) proposes that Council meetings continue to be held on Wednesdays at 4:00 pm in the Civic Room at the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) administration building located at 770 Harmston Avenue, Courtenay, BC unless otherwise posted.

Committee and commission meetings, board meetings, in camera meetings, professional development opportunities and workshops are not included in the annual Council meeting calendar.

The calendar is amended to accommodate annual events such as the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) AGM & Convention, Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Conference, and Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Convention.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial implications.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no significant administrative implications since the 2024 Council Meeting Calendar proposes to be similar to the 2023 Council Meeting Calendar.

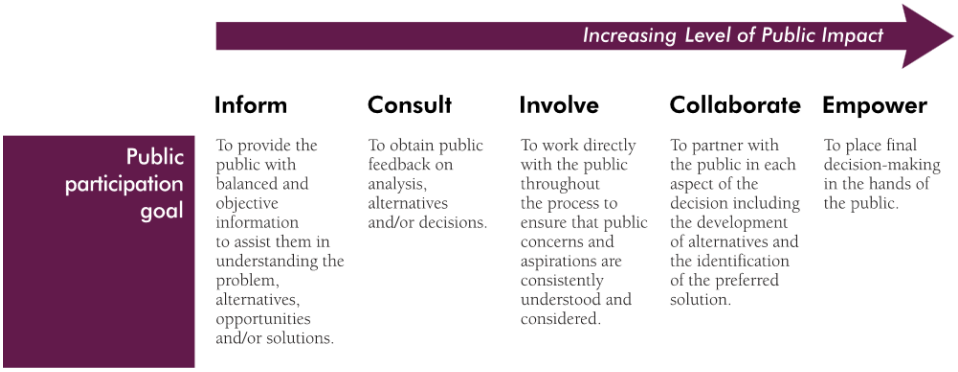
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Notice will be provided in accordance with Section 127 of the *Community Charter* and Council Procedure Bylaw No. 2730, 2013:

Community Charter: Notice of Council Meetings (Section 127(1)(b))

127(1)(b) (b) give notice of the availability of the schedule in accordance with section 94 [public notice] at least once a year.

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



OPTIONS:

1. THAT Council approve the following 2024 Council Meeting Calendar:
   - January 10th and 24th
   - February 14th and 28th
   - March 13th and 27th
   - April 10th and 24th
   - May 8th and 22nd
   - June 12th and 26th
   - July 17th and 31st
   - August 28th
   - September 11th and 25th
   - October 9th and 23rd
   - November 13th and 27th
   - December 11th; and,

   THAT the Council meetings be held at 4:00 pm in the Civic Room at the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) administration building located at 770 Harmston Avenue, Courtenay, BC unless otherwise posted.

2. THAT Council refer the 2024 Council Meeting Calendar to staff with alternative direction.

ATTACHMENT:

1. 2024 Council Meeting Calendar

Prepared by: Rayanne Matthews, BCom, Deputy Corporate Officer
Reviewed by: Adriana Proton, MPA, CRM, Manager of Legislative Services
Kate O'Connell, MPP, Director of Corporate Services
Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.PI., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)

2024 Courtenay Council Calendar

Meetings held at CVRD Civic Room, 770 Harmston Ave | 250-334-4441 | www.courtenay.ca

Meetings Accessible Electronically & Via Livestream on the City's YouTube Channel

- Council Meeting
- Public Hearing
- Statutory Holiday (Facilities Closed)
- Conference
- Spring Break
- Meeting Cancelled

Meetings start at 4:00 pm

Agendas, minutes & video at **www.courtenay.ca**

Meeting schedule subject to change

Last update: **September 22, 2023**

JANUARY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
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FEBRUARY

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MARCH

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APRIL

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NOVEMBER

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DECEMBER

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THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

STAFF REPORT

To: Council **File No.:** 0135

From: Manager of Legislative Services **Date:** October 11, 2023

Subject: Comox Valley Accessibility Framework

PURPOSE: To seek Council approval of the Comox Valley Accessibility Framework.

BACKGROUND:

In April 2023, Council directed staff to meet the City's obligations under the *Accessible BC Act* by proceeding with the development of a Comox Valley Accessibility Framework in partnership with the Comox Valley Accessibility Committee (CVAC), Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) , Town of Comox and Village of Cumberland.

Legislative Services collaborated with the CVAC, CVRD, Town of Comox and Village of Cumberland in spring and summer 2023 to establish the agreement and governance to work collaboratively, and draft a Comox Valley Accessibility Framework. This framework establishes shared accessibility principles to support a consistent approach to accessibility in the Comox Valley. Each municipality can continue the work with individual action plans and projects.

The accessibility framework is now ready for adoption. It has been reviewed and endorsed by the Comox Valley Accessibility Committee and CVRD, and is scheduled for review by Cumberland and Comox this month.

DISCUSSION and POLICY ANALYSIS:

The *Accessible BC Act* was brought into law in September 2022. It requires that local governments establish an accessibility committee, develop an accessibility plan, and establish a process for receiving public feedback on accessibility. The City is meeting the requirement to have an accessibility committee, and has made progress toward an accessibility plan with the accessibility framework. As the framework is a collaboration between four local governments, it was not meant to include requirements or specific actions for Courtenay. The Accessibility Framework establishes a three-year timeframe for individual local governments to begin or continue assessments, and create action plans.

While the framework broadly discusses equity and inclusion, the legislation has a narrower focus. Future work on accessibility plans may include equity and inclusion, but must be focused on accessibility for people with disabilities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The CVRD contributes $20,000 to the Social Planning Society per year for administration. At this time, there are no direct financial implications for the City of Courtenay. Additional work required for planning and

implementation of a Courtenay-specific Accessibility Action Plan will be addressed through department submissions to the 2024 or future financial plans.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

Legislative Services worked with the CVAC, CVRD, Town of Comox and Village of Cumberland in spring and summer 2023 to establish the agreement and governance. Now that the governance structure and framework is complete, accessibility work will continue with projects and planning through all City departments.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Public engagement is a mandated part of the *Accessible BC Act*. Part of the engagement is through the accessibility committee, and the City must also establish a process for receiving comments from the public on its accessibility plan, and barriers to individuals in or interacting with the City. The CVRD, Comox, Cumberland and Courtenay will continue to coordinate to develop feedback mechanisms that are consistent across the valley. Input from the accessibility committee will be sought on engagement strategies. Communication will also continue on specific projects, and items will continue to be referred to the CVAC for input through staff or Council.

OPTIONS:

1. THAT Council approve the Comox Valley Accessibility Framework and direct staff to execute the Agreement with the Comox Valley Social Planning Society.
2. THAT Council direct staff to request the following changes to the Comox Valley Accessibility Framework: [list changes here].
3. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Comox Valley Accessibility Framework
2. Letter of Support from Betty Tate, President, Comox Valley Social Planning Society
3. Agreement with Comox Valley Social Planning Society

Prepared by: Adriana Proton, MPA, CRM, Manager of Legislative Services
Reviewed by: Kate O'Connell, MPP, Director of Corporate Services
Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, City Manager (CAO)

Comox Valley Local Governments Accessibility Framework

Collaboration to identify, eliminate and prevent accessibility barriers (draft July 2023)

Table of Contents

1) Introduction

People living with disabilities need access to local government services, programs, goods and facilities in a way that respects their dignity and that is equitable.

The Comox Valley local government partners are taking steps to create connected, accessible and inclusive communities that promote well-being and belonging. This collaborative framework reflects this commitment. This framework aims to help local governments identify, eliminate and prevent accessibility barriers.

Accessibility is the degree to which a product, service, program or environment is available to all.

A **barrier** is anything that prevents the full and equal participation in society of people living with disabilities. Barriers come in many forms, but some of them might be; physical, architectural, attitudinal, technological.

The aim of accessibility is to consider whether a program, service or environment can be used by everyone however they may encounter it.

Equity is the policy or practice of treating everyone fairly by; acknowledging each unique situation and person, accounting for the differences in each person's starting point, ensuring equal opportunity, allocating the exact resources or support based on the need of the person that is required to reach an equal outcome

The aim of equity is to ensure that every person has equal access to benefits or outcomes based on the specific needs of that person.

Inclusion is the practice or policy of involving and integrating all groups, especially those who have been historically excluded, who suffer discrimination or who live with disabilities. Inclusion is the extent to which a person feels a sense of belonging and value within their community. Inclusion is a universal human right.

The aim of inclusion is to create, foster and sustain conditions that allow every person to be fully themselves, feel accepted and be treated equally.

Belonging is a feeling of being happy and comfortable as part of a group. Belonging is a positive relationship with other members. Belonging is a positive relationship with other members of a group because they welcome you and accommodate you. Belonging is one of the most basic human needs and is crucial for good mental health.

The aim of belonging is to create space for people to be safe, seen, accepted, valued and connected.

Shifting attitudes about equity, inclusion and belonging requires self-reflection, education, awareness, commitment and planning. This framework takes a systematic and coordinated approach to reduce barriers in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people living with disabilities.

The framework involved and applies to all Comox Valley local government partners, but each local government will have different ways of implementing it based on its resources and opportunities. The actions a local government takes to identify, eliminate and prevent barriers will evolve as each community's understanding of accessibility grows.

Our accessibility commitment

This framework exists thanks to the support, insights and expertise of accessibility experts. Contributions of this knowledge, and perspectives of people with lived experience of disability, are essential, and these voices will be included in community planning and decision making. Local government elected officials and staff are aware of their roles in influencing accessibility and support positive community attitudes.

2) Guiding direction

The purpose of the Comox Valley Accessibility Framework is to create systemic processes to invite the community to give feedback to Comox Valley local governments about ways to promote social and political equity in existing and proposed policies, bylaws and infrastructure. Further, the framework will apply an equity lens to ensure local government actions and investments are inclusive and accommodating to all citizens.

This framework acknowledges that many local government programs, services and infrastructure have been introduced without full consideration of how these measures may affect people with different abilities. This framework aims to help government identify opportunities to treat everyone fairly by acknowledging their unique situation and addressing systemic barriers to ensure that everyone has access to benefits and outcomes determined through an equity lens.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to accessibility, so local governments will consider the following principles when addressing systemic barriers in the Comox Valley:

- Inclusion: All people must be able to take part in the community with individual autonomy and choice.
- Adaptability: Services will need to change as accessibility services, technology, and attitudes change.
- Diversity: All people are respected for their differences and lived experiences, including disabilities/abilities, age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, religious beliefs, and immigration status.

- Collaboration and engagement: Accessibility is a group responsibility. Local governments commit to engaging community members and work with all stakeholders to end barriers and build an accessible society.
- Intersectionality: Some people are discriminated against in more than one way. Classism, racism, sexism, homophobia, trans-antagonism, ageism, and ableism are more harmful when combined.
- Respect: All people are treated with respect and dignity, for a community focused on positive mental health.

The Comox Valley local governments and the Accessibility Committee described in section 3, as participants in this framework, will aim to:

- identify barriers to inclusion and accessibility and recommend ways to remove and prevent these barriers;
- identify best practices in other communities and recommend ways to promote social and political equity based on the findings;
- participate in reviewing Comox Valley local government draft plans, policies and procedures to prevent future barriers;
- help develop a strategy for engaging with the community on issues relating to accessibility and inclusiveness;
- review documents such as Comox Valley's Regional Growth Strategy, Official Community Plans, zoning bylaws and other policies to identify opportunities to support the related policies;
- discuss other issues referred to the Accessibility Committee by the councils or chief administrative officers of the valley;
- work with elected officials to increase public awareness on issues related to accessibility and inclusion for all citizens; and
- implement the framework's commitments through accessibility assessments and plans according to the local government's priorities, processes, policies and consultations with the community.

3) About the committees

The Comox Valley has two committees focused on accessibility and inclusion:

- The Village of Cumberland's Accessibility and Inclusion Committee is a select committee of Cumberland Council. It is chosen by Council and reports to the Council.

- The Comox Valley Accessibility Committee (the "Accessibility Committee") is a community-based committee that has served as a resource to local governments and the broader community for 25 years.

Both committees promote equity, social inclusion and accessibility through many activities. At least one member of the Accessibility Committee also sits on Cumberland's Accessibility and Inclusion Committee. The contributions and longstanding work of these individuals, striving for a more accessible community, is gratefully acknowledged.

To meet the requirements of the *Accessible British Columbia Act* and through collaboration with the Comox Valley Social Planning Society, the local governments and the Comox Valley Accessibility Committee have established a formal relationship and structure. Under this arrangement, the Accessibility Committee will advise and help the local government develop and update action plans and assessments based on this framework.

According to the terms of reference for the Accessibility Committee, selecting accessibility committee members must, to the extent possible, meet the following objectives:

- at least half the members are (a) people with disabilities, (b) individuals who support people with disabilities or (c) individuals who are from organizations that support people with disabilities;
- members reflect a diversity of people with disabilities;
- at least one member is an Indigenous person; and
- members reflect the diversity of people in British Columbia.

The local governments and the Accessibility Committee both wish to achieve meaningful progress and action through this ongoing collaboration.

4) Consultation with the Comox Valley Accessibility Committee

Removing barriers to accessibility and ensuring full and equal participation requires dialogue with the community and particularly with people with disabilities. The Comox Valley Accessibility Committee is made up of residents with considerable expertise, experience and commitment to community-wide accessibility.

Because this framework establishes a shared vision and commitments to remove barriers, it was developed collaboratively between local government staff, the Comox Valley Social Planning Society and representatives of the Accessibility Committee. Key insights and themes that came from this collaboration include the following:

- All participants agree to the framework and commit to work towards action plans to reduce barriers and increase accessibility of all types.
- All participants will ensure transparency as the framework is being implemented.

- The Accessibility Committee members will cover the range of disability from invisible to visible, neurodivergent to neurotypical, and so on.
- The Accessibility Committee will strive to be disability led. It prefers people with disabilities over service providers and aspires to be over 50% of people with disabilities on the Committee.
- Community engagement processes will aim to seek feedback from people with a range of disabilities.
- Participants will all aspire to create plain language documents and will strive to consider all types of disabilities (for example, hard of hearing, blindness, neurodivergence) with appropriate adaptations so they can participate in public processes.
- Roles and responsibilities of all participant groups will be clearly defined.
- All participant groups will communicate clearly with one another.
- A regular check-in will be established (for example, local government staff attend Accessibility Committee meetings quarterly).
- Participants will respond to one another in a timely manner.

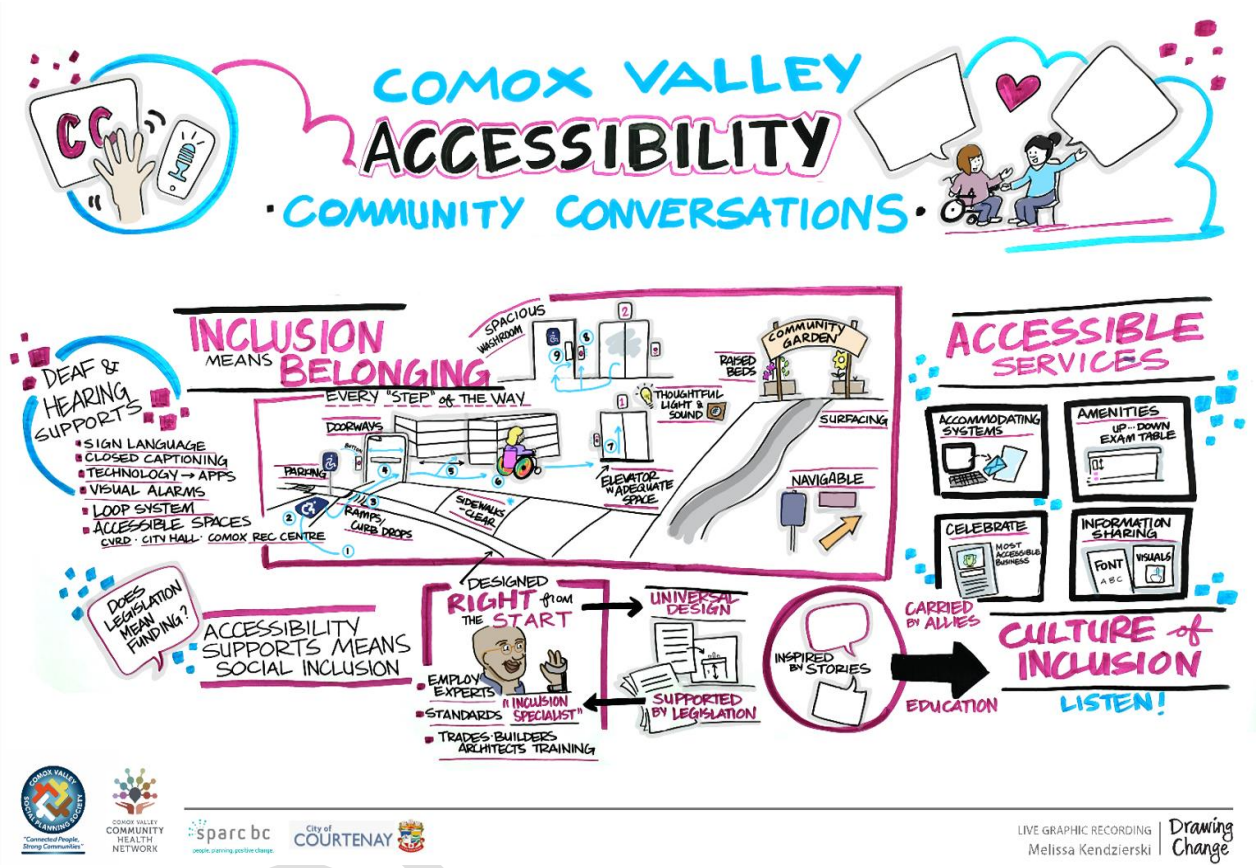
Each local government will implement the framework's commitments through accessibility assessments and plans with consultations considered according to its own priorities, processes and policies. The Accessibility Committee will help the local governments identify barriers to people who work in or interact with the local governments, and advise the local governments on how to remove and prevent these barriers.

5) Public feedback mechanism

Local governments have the power and obligation to incorporate the voices of their communities in their decision making. Giving people with a variety of disabilities and other members of the public meaningful opportunities to give feedback about accessibility and inclusion will help ensure that the work of the local governments reflects community-wide needs and priorities. All people who use local government services play a vital role in helping to identify, reduce, minimize and prevent barriers.

The *Accessible British Columbia Act* and its regulation requires organizations in the province, including local governments, to establish processes for receiving public feedback on accessibility plans and general ideas and concerns related to accessibility. These feedback mechanisms complement the work of the committees and local governments to make the Comox Valley the accessible and inclusive place we strive to be.

One recent example that occurred in the Comox Valley was a series of 5 community conversations hosted by the Comox Valley Accessibility Committee that asked the question "What does inclusion mean to you?" Five graphic recordings were produced, and one is included below.



Developing public feedback processes will be incremental: the processes to gather community feedback will happen in stages based on available resources and knowledge gained over time. Local governments will take further steps to gather feedback on a community-wide basis or at an individual level, or they may establish feedback processes that happen at regular intervals (for example, every year or every 2 years).

The local governments and Accessibility Committee recognize that feedback processes must be accessible through many formats, which may include web submissions, email, phone, mail, in-person conversations, direct engagement with the Accessibility Committee and other approaches. Further adaptive approaches will be needed to gather information from some people with disabilities, such as people who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind, non-verbal, or neurodivergent. Some examples of adaptations are American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, braille or large-font documents, dyslexic-friendly print, and plain language. The local governments will review and consider all feedback on accessibility assessments and action

plans in consultation with the Accessibility Committee. Each local government will include a process for receiving comments from the public about barriers in their action plans.

6) Identifying barriers

According to the 2021 Survey on Accessibility in Federal Sector Organizations, 75% of British Columbians with disabilities, difficulties or long-term conditions encountered at least one barrier related to accessibility (Statistics Canada, 2021). Although data from local governments is not available, Comox Valley residents with disabilities, difficulties or long-term conditions likely experience similar barriers in accessing local government services and information.

Disability Alliance BC identifies that barriers prevent a person from participating fully in their community. Disability type and severity can also impact a person's experience of barriers (Government of Canada, 2022). BC's Accessibility Plan identifies the following barriers (Disability Alliance BC, 2020):

- ***Attitudinal*** – when people think and act based on false ideas, such as:
    - making decisions about people with disabilities without including them
    - not believing that a person with a disability can contribute to the workforce
- ***Physical*** – when obstacles make access difficult, such as:
    - a washroom with an accessible stall but no automatic door opener
    - a meeting or public event in a space with no wheelchair access
- ***Information or communication*** – when communication methods do not reach people with disabilities, such as:
    - using small print or not providing large-print versions of materials
    - videos, events, or meetings that do not have captions
- ***Systemic*** – when an organization's policies or procedures aren't inclusive, such as:
    - not providing an America Sign Language interpreter or captioning
    - requiring a driver's license for a position when another form of transportation could be used
- ***Technology*** – when technology can't be accessed by people with disabilities, such as:
    - websites, documents, or databases that are not accessible for screen readers
    - website graphs and charts that do not have text to explain them
- ***Sensory*** – when lights, sounds or smells prevent participation in the environment, such as:
    - co-workers wearing perfume in the workplace
    - fluorescent lighting in public event spaces

7) Assessments and action plans

Action plans will clearly describe the local government's commitment to improving accessibility and reducing barriers. Action plans will identify both short-term and long-term actions that may coincide with other planned work, like major infrastructure works listed in other planning and budget documents. The local government can prioritize actions based on several factors, including greatest impact to the most people, or financial and other resources. The Accessibility Committee will support the work to prioritize actions.

Each local government represents a unique community, and each provides similar but distinctive services to its residents, based on each community's needs. The local governments may each take a different approach to assessments and action plans under the guiding direction of this framework. Each local government will determine the resources it allocates towards the goals in its action plan, so each local government's assessments and action plans will be unique.

Factors that the local governments may consider include the following:

- existing planning documents, policies and practices,
- the age of infrastructure and facilities,
- existing capital plans for upgrades and replacement projects,
- interim measures to help improve accessibility, and
- actions that will likely make the biggest impact.

Actions will be part of a long-term commitment to continuous improvement. As new technology, new processes, and understanding of accessibility evolve, further actions to improve accessibility will be planned.

Actions may not satisfy everyone. Feedback on actions can be used to inform future action planning. Taking steps towards greater accessibility and working towards viewing the community with an accessibility lens are paramount.

8) Three-year timeframe

The local governments are expected to begin assessments and create action plans within 18 to 24 months after this framework is finished. Action plans will be reviewed and updated every 3 years, after monitoring and evaluation.

Participants will regularly review this framework and update if needed. Updates may highlight completed actions and confirm renewed commitments from local governments.

9) Monitoring and evaluation

Each local government is responsible for developing qualitative and quantitative metrics to monitor and evaluate (a) accessibility barriers to participation, (b) representation of people with disabilities in government processes and services, and (c) the impact of initiatives on inclusion and access.

Local governments may identify barriers through many different monitoring and evaluation approaches. For example, analyzing program registration information and comparing it with local statistical averages in the community may uncover barriers. Local governments may also identify barriers to participation through surveys, interviews and other feedback mechanisms. The perspectives of both those who did and those who did not participate are important to understand the possible barriers to participation.

Local governments typically ask standard demographic questions when they seek community feedback. These questions ask about age, gender and income, but rarely do local governments ask about ability. Like the federal government, local governments could consider (a) incorporating Statistics Canada disability screening questions in surveys to capture important information on accessibility and (b) collecting qualitative data through focus groups or interviews to complement survey results. Engaging in both qualitative and quantitative monitoring and evaluation will improve representativeness and inclusion. Increased attention to accessibility information will help ensure findings represent the needs and experiences of a diverse range of people with disabilities.

The local governments will share their monitoring and evaluation processes and results with each other and with the Accessibility Committee.

10) Conclusion

This framework captures our overall commitment to accessibility. As planning develops, there will be continual assessments and opportunities to reduce barriers to local government services. Our collective efforts will help improve social health and well-being across the region.

September 19, 2023

Board of Directors
Comox Valley Regional District Board
770 Harmston Avenue
Courtenay BC V9N 0G8

I am writing to you on behalf of the Comox Valley Social Planning Society and the Comox Valley Accessibility Committee in support of the Comox Valley Local Governments Accessibility Framework that is coming before you on Sept 26, 2023.

The Comox Valley Social Planning Society works in the Valley to provide support to local governments and to the community in areas of equity, accessibility, living wage and increasing supports for marginalized populations. The Comox Valley Accessibility Committee is a community-based committee that has served as a resource to local governments and the broader community for 25 years. The two groups are collaborating to improve accessibility in the Comox Valley.

Earlier this year, CVRD staff came to both groups to ask if the Accessibility Committee would consider taking on the role of the regional Accessibility Committee required under the *Accessible British Columbia Act*. Both groups were pleased with this invite and extremely supportive of having one committee for the 3 municipalities and regional district instead of each local government forming their own committee. Since then, CVRD staff have met several times with the Accessibility Committee requesting feedback on the drafts of the Local Governments Accessibility Framework. CVRD staff have incorporated the feedback into the document you have today, including the suggestion to have a plain language expert review the document to make it is as accessible as possible. We see this as an example of already collaborating on accessibility in the Valley and we look forward to much more.

We are therefore in full support of this Framework and are excited about our ongoing collaboration to implement it and move to action to make the Comox Valley more and more accessible over the coming years.

Sincerely,

BTate

Betty Tate
President, Comox Valley Social Planning Society
comoxvalleysocialplanning@gmail.com

AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT made this day of , 2023.

BETWEEN:

Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD)
770 Harmston Avenue, Courtenay, B.C, V9N 0GB

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

Town of Comox
1809 Beaufort Avenue Comox, BC V9M 1R9

Village of Cumberland
2673 Dunsmuir Avenue Cumberland BC V0R 1S0

AND:

Comox Valley Social Planning Society
c/o Lewis Centre489 Old Island Highway Courtenay, BC V9N 3P5

hereinafter collectively referred to as the "Parties"

WHEREAS:

A. The Comox Valley local governments are responsible for providing local government regional and community services and infrastructure and include:
   - The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD);
   - The City of Courtenay;
   - The Town of Comox; and
   - The Village of Cumberland;

B. The Comox Valley Social Planning Society is a registered non-profit society in the Province of British Columbia formed to provide information to individuals, organizations and policymakers to advocate for and guide the development of social planning strategies throughout the Comox Valley;

C. The CVRD Board, at its sole discretion, has provided funding to the Comox Valley Social Planning Society to, in part, administer an Accessibility Committee that works to increase accessibility and social inclusion to make the Comox Valley a place for everyone to belong;

D. The Accessibility British Columbia Act (the "Act") requires that all local governments develop an accessibility plan, establish an accessibility committee and provide for public feedback to the plan;

E. In recognition of the importance of clear roles, responsibilities and expectations to drive successful outcomes, the Parties wish to formalize a collaborative arrangement whereby annual financial support for the administration of the Accessibility Committee is maintained under certain terms and conditions that enable the CVRD and its member jurisdictions to meet their obligations under the Accessibility British Columbia Act for the establishment of an accessibility committee.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises and the mutual covenants and conditions herein contained, the Parties hereby agree as follows:

1. The CVRD shall provide funding to the Comox Valley Social Planning Society in the amount of $20,000 per annum during the term of this agreement to, in part, administer and support the operation and functioning of the Accessibility Committee in accordance with the agreement.

2. The Accessibility Committee shall act as a resource and provide advice to the CVRD and its member municipalities to support the advancement of accessibility and inclusion within the Comox Valley in accordance with, and in the spirit of, the Accessible British Columbia Act.

3. The CVRD and its member municipalities shall be entitled to meet regularly with the Accessibility Committee according to a mutually agreed schedule to support the development and implementation of an accessibility framework.

4. The Parties recognize that the accessibility framework is intended to be an overarching guidance document for Comox Valley local governments that:
    a) is developed through the full participation of the CVRD, Village of Cumberland, City of Courtenay, Town of Comox and the Accessibility Committee;
    b) includes, and gives consideration to, the guiding principles of inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design; and
    c) guides the development of further assessments or action plans by the individual jurisdictions that may identify barriers in employment, service delivery, built environment, information and communications, transportation, health, education and procurement.

5. The Accessibility Committee shall establish and maintain a terms of reference which, amongst others, provides for membership expectations, standards of conducts and committee composition which, to the extent possible, strives for the following in accordance with Section 9 of the Act:
    a) at least half of the members are:
        i. persons with disabilities, or
        ii. individuals who support, or are from organizations that support, persons with disabilities;

b) the members described in paragraph (a) reflect the diversity of persons with disabilities in British Columbia;
c) at least one of the members is an Indigenous person;
d) the committee reflects the diversity of persons in British Columbia.

6. The Accessibility Committee shall:
   a) Serve as one method of public feedback on accessibility and inclusion in the Comox Valley;
   b) Use their networks to solicit additional feedback / participation, where appropriate as part of its work with CVRD and its member municipalities;
   c) Engage with accessibility and inclusion-related community organizations and groups; and
   d) Consider opportunities for further collaboration amongst all local government entities.

7. As a public body, the CVRD must comply with statutory obligations under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act concerning personal information and providing access to information under its control. The Comox Valley Social Planning Society acknowledges and agrees to provide reasonable assistance to the CVRD in complying with its statutory obligations under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

8. This Agreement shall remain in full force and effect from the date of execution until December 31, 2023.

9. In entering into this Agreement, the Parties also express their intention to enter into a subsequent three-year agreement with consideration to a review of the accessibility framework and the other related work of the Parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have caused this Agreement to be executed by their duly authorized officers as follows:

COMOX VALLEY SOCIAL PLANNING SOCIETY	
Signed by: B. Fat PRESIDENT	Date: JUNE 5 / 2023
CITY OF COURTENAY	
Signed by: _____	Date: _____
TOWN OF COMOX	
Signed by: _____	Date: _____
VILLAGE OF CUMBERLAND	
Signed by: _____	Date: _____
COMOX VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT	
Signed by: _____	Date: June 6, 2023

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

STAFF REPORT

To: Council **File No.:** 0360 and 0550

From: Manager of Legislative Services **Date:** October 11, 2023

Subject: Committee Review

PURPOSE: To provide background on historical and current committees, commissions, and other advisory bodies and seek Council approval to schedule a Committee of the Whole meeting to review current committees, their structures, mandates, and support options.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report provides an overview and background of Council's own advisory bodies, and Council member participation on external committees. It reviews the legislation governing committees, including provincial requirements, City bylaws and policies. This is a broad topic with numerous decision points. Staff recommend that Council schedule a Committee of the Whole workshop to determine:

- How can committees and commissions best meet the City's needs?
    - What does Council want to accomplish with its committees?
    - What topics/areas can most benefit from committee work?
    - Which committees does Council want to maintain?
    - What needs to be done with existing committees to ensure they are meeting Council's goals?
    - Does Council want to consider any new committees?
    - Is Council satisfied with the communication between Council and committees?
    - Which model of committee administration should the City use?
- Does Council wish to review its participation on external committees?
- Does Council want to consider increasing committee budgets for committee operations, management and to address potential barriers to participation (e.g. caregiving)

BACKGROUND:

Municipalities often have internal committees, commissions, boards, or other bodies in addition to Council. The Community Charter provides a general structure for standing committees, select committees and commissions:

Standing Committees (CC s. 141):

- The Mayor must establish standing committees for matters the Mayor considers would be better dealt with by committee, and must appoint persons to those committees
- At least half the members of a standing committee must be Council members
- This limits the number of members to 6; a maximum of 3 Council members can attend a meeting to discuss City business or there would be quorum and it would constitute a Council meeting

Select Committees (CC s. 142):

- A Council may establish and appoint a select committee to consider or inquire into any matter and report its findings and opinion to Council
- At least one member of a select committee must be a Council member

- Select committees are typically formed for a limited period of time on a specific topic
- Courtenay's "Boards, Committees and Commissions" policy 0550.00.02 from 1998 (pre-Community Charter) notes that ad hoc committees of Council will not be established unless they are governed by clear Terms of Reference and a sunset clause indicating when the committee will cease to exist

Commissions (CC s. 143):

- A Council may establish and appoint a commission to do one or more of the following:
    - Operate services
    - Undertake operation and enforcement in relation to Council's power to regulate, prohibit and impose requirements; and
    - Manage property and licenses held by the municipality

Other advisory bodies:

It is common for municipalities to have other bodies that do not fit neatly into one of the categories above. This can include:

- Committee of the Whole (COW)
    - Composed of all members of Council
    - These meetings are most often scheduled to discuss a specific important topic in depth often using a workshop style approach
    - Normally the COW does not make decisions itself but makes recommendations to Council
    - Courtenay has a COW bylaw, the "Committee of the Whole Delegation Bylaw No. 2271" which delegates authority to the COW
    - Under the COW bylaw, Courtenay's COW cannot consider bylaws; appoint, suspend or terminate officers; hear appeals; reconsider decisions; give statutory consent to items; or hold hearings; however, it has all of Council's other powers and can make decisions
- Advisory committees
    - May be similar to standing committees but often have a larger proportion of non-Council members
- Working groups
    - Includes advisory groups to staff.
    - May also be a group of staff from the municipality and other organizations working on a topic together
- Roundtables
    - Roundtables often include more non-Council members, like advisory committees
    - May be a larger group
    - Roundtables are more likely to have members who are not subject matter experts, and a roundtable may function more like a focus group

All of the above are subject to the same general rules of procedure as Council, i.e. open meetings, minute-taking, and electronic meetings from the Council Procedure Bylaw and *Community Charter*. The Procedure Bylaw has additional committee procedures. Committees often have unique procedures and guidelines, contained in a bylaw or policy / terms of reference (TOR). Council also has a Council policy, the "Boards, Committees and Commissions" policy 0550.00.02 from 1998. While the policy is active, it is not in line with current practice (see Administration section for further discussion).

In addition to internal committees, the City is also required to appoint members of Council to external committees and boards.

Required Committees/Boards

There are three committees/boards that the City is required to maintain:

- Accessibility Committee
    - The *Accessible BC Act* requires that the City have an Accessibility Committee by September 2023
    - The committee must assist the organization to identify barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization, and advise the organization on how to remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization.
    - The Comox Valley Accessibility Committee, part of the Comox Valley Social Planning Society, has an agreement with the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) to fulfil this function for the City of Courtenay, Village of Cumberland, Town of Comox, and CVRD
    - Courtenay contributes to the committee's operating budget through the CVRD
    - The City may refer accessibility items to the Accessibility Committee. This usually happens at a staff level, but Council may also refer items to the committee.
    - There are membership requirements legislated by the *Accessible BC Act*
- Board of Variance (BOV)
    - The *Local Government Act* (LGA) requires that the City have a BOV to deal with land use applications that request a variance to the zoning bylaw due to hardship
    - The City has a BOV bylaw, and is also subject to further requirements in the LGA, e.g. for municipalities over 25,000 residents, the BOV must have five members appointed by Council
    - Board of Variance members are typically individuals who have experience in the subject area, such as retired contractors, surveyors, realtors, architects and civil engineers
    - The City provides training to new members to ensure they understand their role and the parameters of their decision-making
    - The Board only meets when an application to the BOV has been made, and must meet within 40 days of an application
    - Board of Variance members may not receive remuneration
    - Council has no influence over the decisions of the Board and the appeal process is through the BC Supreme Court
- Parcel Tax Review Panel
    - The Parcel Tax Review Panel (PTRP) is required by the *Community Charter*
    - Before a parcel tax is imposed for the first time, the PTRP must consider any complaints and authenticate the parcel tax roll
    - Council must appoint at least three people to be members of the PTRP
    - The City currently has two Council members appointed and a third will need to be appointed prior to the preparation of the next parcel tax roll in 2024
    - There are only specific circumstances where a complaint would be considered by the PTRP, and often all complaints can be resolved by staff. In that case, the PTRP does not have to meet per *Community Charter* s. 208(10).

Internal Commissions

The City also has two active commissions:

- Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC)
    - The PRAC is governed by the Parks and Recreation Commission Bylaw No. 1039, 1971 and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission Terms of Reference, 2017

  - The commission's mandate is to advise the Director of Recreation, Culture and Community Services (RCCS), to provide a forum for public engagement on parks and recreation matters, to reflect the diverse views of the citizens of Courtenay, to provide advice to Council on any matters referred to it by Council, and to assist Council to achieve its strategic priorities
  - The PRAC receives administrative support from the RCCS department
  - The commission typically meets every two months and advises staff
  - The commission does not function like a commission, e.g. operating services on behalf of the City, but more like an advisory committee to staff
    - The 2017 TOR notes that it is an advisory body, and not directive or decision-making in nature
  - Council has provided direction to staff to review the Terms of Reference for the committee and report back with options that will support diversity of members on the Commission
- Heritage Advisory Commission (HAC)
  - The HAC is governed by the Heritage Advisory Commission Bylaw No. 1918, 1996
  - The commission's mandate is to advise Council on heritage matters, and to undertake and provide support for heritage activities in the City. It is authorized to develop education and public awareness programs and raise funds for local heritage conservation projects.
  - The HAC receives administrative support from the long-range planning division of the Development Services department
  - The commission is not currently functioning like a commission, e.g. operating services on behalf of the City, but more like a committee

Historic Committees

There are three committees/commissions that have existed in recent years, but are no longer active Council committees:

- Courtenay Canada Day Commission
  - A volunteer committee organized Canada Day celebrations for many years, and became a commission for insurance purposes for the 2017 festivities
  - On January 29, 2018, Council directed that staff take the lead on Canada Day event planning thereby terminating the commission, and proceed with City operation of the event with support from volunteers in the form of an ad hoc advisory committee to staff only.
  - The Canada Day committee currently operates as a volunteer working group, advising and volunteering alongside Recreation staff, and is not considered a City committee
  - It is not necessary to appoint a Council member to the Canada Day organizing team
- Finance Select Committee
  - Council established the Finance Select Committee in 2019, with three members of Council appointed
  - The purpose of the Committee was to identify alternative asset management funding sources to minimize the impact of assuming new long-term capital debt, and identify service options in line with taxpayers' willingness to pay
  - The Committee was to report back to Council by January 6, 2020
  - On February 12, 2020, the Committee recommended to Council that its mandate be extended to include land strategy, capital project business cases, and financial policies on surpluses and reserves, and that Council extend its timeline
  - There is an agenda for a meeting on January 15, 2021, but no minutes. It is unclear whether the meeting took place. Items on the agenda included COVID restart funds and a discussion about the committee's mandate.

  - Council received a report from the committee on January 25, 2021 and endorsed the recommendation to extend its mandate until January 31, 2022. The committee does not appear to have met after January 2021, and it did not report back to Council a final time.
  - Council has already provided direction to review the Terms of Reference. Staff recommend starting this work during a Committee of the Whole workshop (see recommendation).
- Official Community Plan (OCP) Advisory Committee
  - This committee operated from fall 2019 to summer 2022 to provide technical guidance on community issues related to the OCP
  - The long-range planning division of Development Services provided administrative support
  - The committee's work was completed when Council adopted its new OCP in summer 2022

Required External Appointments

There are some external bodies that Council must participate on. This includes:

- Comox Valley Regional District (4 directors, 19 votes)
- CVRD committees and commissions
- Vancouver Island Regional Library Board

Discretionary External Appointments

Council members also participate on the following eleven external committees and commissions upon the (historic) request of the external body, and/or due to Council interest:

- Community Substance Use Strategy Committee
  - The Committee was founded in 2002; Council approved its terms of reference February 18, 2002 and has appointed a member to this committee since 2002.
  - The current committee TOR does not speak to Council or members' roles, but its mission is to "work together as a community to develop and implement a fair and equitable plan to reduce substance-related harms in the Comox Valley"
  - The City has been closely involved with the committee over the years, providing funding and entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Comox Valley Community Health Network to support the development of a Comox Valley Substance Use Strategy
  - Administrative support for the Committee is provided by the Comox Valley Community Health Network and staff work closely with the Substance Use Strategy Coordinator and Committee
- Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness
  - The Coalition is a group of organizations (approximately 40) working to address homelessness and housing insecurity in the Comox Valley
  - The mission is to "work as a collective to plan, coordinate, recommend and implement community responses to homelessness"
  - Local governments are not part of the coalition but may be municipal partners/advisory participants. Elected officials may attend meetings and contribute to discussions but may not participate in decision-making processes
  - The Coalition receives financial support through the Homelessness Supports Services function of the CVRD
  - Council members have attended coalition meetings since at least 2016 but do not appear to have officially appointed a member until November 5, 2018

    - Council members had previously participated on other housing-related committees, including the Housing and Homelessness Standing Committee and the Comox Valley Housing Task Force (established 2011 by the CVRD)
- Comox Valley Community Action Team
    - The CVCAT was established in 2018 and "is responsible for supporting the coordination and communication of overdose response within the municipality of Courtenay and the CVRD"
    - "Local Government Agencies" are part of committee membership
    - Island Health attended the February 6, 2017 Council meeting and requested that the City appoint a City staff member as a participant in the Comox Valley Overdose Prevention and Management Working Group
    - Council appointed a member to the "Overdose Working Group" on November 5, 2018
    - In response to a November 22, 2018 letter from Island Health, requesting that Council appoint an elected official and a member of staff to the "Comox Valley Overdose Working Group" Council appointed a member to the "Comox Valley Overdose Prevention & Management Working Group" on December 3, 2018
    - This group appears to have been renamed the Comox Valley Community Action Team since it is referred to in 2019-2020 minutes as "Comox Valley Overdose Working Group Community Action Team" and "Overdose Prevention Community Action Team"
- Comox Valley Community Justice Society
    - The Community Justice Centre requested that Council confirm its mandate and appoint a member to its Steering Committee in a letter dated February 12, 1998
    - Council appointed a member to the Community Justice Centre Steering Committee at the March 2, 1998 Council meeting
    - The Community Justice Centre mission: "the CJC is a volunteer-powered non-profit that uses restorative justice principles and practices to support peace-making and the resolution of conflicts for the community. This is achieved through resolution conferences, dialogues, and education."
    - There are representatives from all Comox Valley local governments on the Board
    - Prior to that, Council appointed a representative to the Family Court and Youth Justice Committee
- Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative
    - The CVEYC mission is to "collectively engage, educate, and inform our communities to enhance early years supports and services to children (conception to age 8), their families and the Comox Valley"
    - The CVEYC was established in 2015 but grew out of several other related committees and networks
    - The first evidence of Council participation is Council appointment of a Council member at the inaugural meeting in 2018. It is unclear whether this was requested or was a Council initiative
    - Participants include other Comox Valley local governments
    - Administrative support is from the Early Years Collaborative Coordinator
- Comox Valley Food Policy Council
    - Request from LUSH Valley to appoint a representative July 2019
    - Council appointed a representative on August 19, 2019
    - Closely connected to CVRD and with local government representatives, but not a local government committee
    - Administrative support from Lush Valley
    - Member from Courtenay (not specified whether staff or Council) in TOR

    - The City has provided support to the Society via grants
- Comox Valley Social Planning Society
    - The CVSPS was incorporated in June 1996
    - In a letter dated February 9, 2012, the CVSPS requested an official Council liaison in order to strengthen communication, strengthen the relationship between CVSPS and Council, and foster understanding. Staff returned with a report at the March 12 meeting, stating that staff were unaware of any requests for funding from the City, and Council appointed a member to the CVSPS.
    - Their mission is to "provide information to individuals, organizations, and policy makers to advocate for and guide the development of social planning strategies throughout the Comox Valley". They define social planning as "a process that involves local governments and community members working together to address social issues and build healthy communities. Integrated with other types of planning, social planning focuses on the people themselves in the community planning context."
    - Work has included partnering to produce Vital Signs reports and calculating a local living wage
    - The Accessibility Committee is part of the Social Planning Society
    - The CVSPS includes representatives from all Comox Valley local governments
    - Administrative support is from a part-time CVSPS staff member
    - The CVSPS receives $20,000 in annual administrative funding through CVRD general administration
- Downtown Community Business Improvement Association
    - The DCBIA was formed in October 1995
    - Its purpose is "to provide leadership in the business community to ensure that the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Area continues to be vibrant and responsive, meeting the needs of its members and the public, and remaining on the leading edge of change"
    - Council members have attended meetings since 2012 but did not officially appoint a member until its inaugural meeting in December 2014
    - The DCBIA has more than 240 members and receives administrative support from a part-time Executive Director
    - The DCBIA requests funding from the City regularly for projects and in-kind services
- Junction Community Advisory Committee
    - The Junction is a supportive housing facility operated by the John Howard Society that opened in April 2019
    - The Junction CAC's purpose is "to build and maintain positive relationships amongst the community, the building operators and the housing program partners; to facilitate information sharing and dialogue; to support the identification and resolution of issues, opportunities and concerns related to building operations; and to support the success of the supportive housing project"
    - The TOR for the committee notes that membership includes a City of Courtenay representative
    - The John Howard Society has requested funding from Council in the past
    - While staff could not locate an initial resolution appointing a member to the committee, it appears Council members have attended since the committee's inaugural meeting on June 5, 2019
    - John Howard Society staff attended the September 21, 2020 Council meeting and noted that both City staff and Council members were on the Junction CAC

    - Administrative support from John Howard Society staff
- Kus-kus-sum Restoration Project Watershed
    - The Kus-kus-sum Restoration project is administered by Project Watershed, in partnership with the K'ómoks First Nation and City of Courtenay. Its intent is to restore a former sawmill site to its natural state as part of the estuary.
    - The idea was discussed as early as 2008. Council appointed two members as liaisons to the project at its March 2, 2015 Council meeting upon the request of a Council member.
    - Project Watershed representatives presented several times to Council prior to the official launch of the project. Project Watershed representatives attended the May 15, 2017 Council meeting to propose that the City partner in the restoration. At the June 12, 2017 meeting, Council resolved to support the project in principle. The project was launched in September 2017.
    - Administrative support from Project Watershed, and historically, upon request, from the City of Courtenay
    - Project Watershed has made multiple requests to the City for in-kind support and funding on this and other projects. While the project has many aspects of partnership, administration is mainly conducted through Project Watershed, and support and funding from the City is on an ad-hoc basis.
- Physician Recruitment Committee
    - Request from Comox Valley Division of Family Practice representative Jonathan Kerr (also Councillor for Town of Comox) December 2021
    - Requested one staff member and one Council member
    - Council appointed two Council members January 17, 2022
    - There is no TOR, but the mission is "to build partnerships and work together towards developing a sustainable family physicians' recruitment and retention strategy"

The "Non-Council Boards, Committees & Commissions Policy" 0360.00.01 governs Council's participation on external committees. This policy states that:

- Council will not appoint Council members to external bodies that may request funding, services, tax exemptions or other exemptions from the City
- Council may appoint a member of Council or a staff member, but not both, unless the staff member is serving in an advisory role
- The only exceptions are appointments required by legislation

This policy is not generally not being followed. The goals and activities of many of the groups above include advocacy to the City of Courtenay, and requesting funding from the City of Courtenay, with some having both council and staff appointed. The policy does not address external committees based on partnerships, and some of the above may include some kind of partnership with the City, such as the Kus-kus-sum Restoration Project.

Typically, the role of a Council member who is appointed to an external committee is to represent the City and report back to Council on activities. They may or may not be a voting member, but if appointed by the City as a Council representative, would represent the City's interests rather than the committee's. A committee's terms of reference may provide further guidance, or may be silent on the Council member's role.

The Conflict of Interest Exceptions Regulation (2016) states that elected officials are not necessarily in a pecuniary conflict of interest due to fact of their appointment on an external body, when discussing and voting on a matter concerning that external body. Council members should still exercise caution if appointed

to an external body, and consider requests from external bodies in the context of City strategic priorities and their role as a Council member.

Council can choose whether to appoint a representative to external committees, and may wish to periodically review these appointments. Appointing a Council member to an external committee signals the importance of that committee to the City, and can be an effective way to share information in both directions. However, Council member time is limited, and it may be useful to review whether the current external appointments still provide value.

DISCUSSION:

A high-functioning committee or commission provides value to a local government by:

- Providing insight on a topic through detailed analysis or subject matter expertise that is not provided elsewhere
- Providing opportunities for public engagement through volunteer opportunities and including members of the public in local government decision-making
- Discussing a topic in more detail than Council is able to
- In the case of a commission, operating services or enforcement, or managing property and licences
- Through rotation of committee members, providing fresh perspectives and volunteer opportunities to a greater number of residents

Courtenay committees are not currently operating optimally:

- Some committees do not have enough members, and others have not had regular rotation of members
- City committees do not meet often (3-4 times per year), which can indicate that they are semi-active or not engaged on vital projects
- Council rarely interacts with its internal committees/commissions, another indication that they may not be engaged on high-priority City work or that Council-committee communications are not functioning adequately
- Council has noted the high demands on Council members' time, and it is important to ensure external appointments are bringing value
- Council's internal commissions are operating more as advisory committees or working groups rather than commissions; the structure does not match committee activities
- Inconsistent committee administration results in varying efficacy of communication with Council and the public

Committee membership:

The most notable benefits of having Council committees is to gain insight from subject matter experts and encourage participation in local government policy development processes. For example, when the City is seeking members for its Board of Variance, it would seek individuals who have experience in the subject area, such as contractors, surveyors, realtors, architects and civil engineers. To ensure comprehensive and inclusive policy development, diverse representation of community perspectives and experiences is essential. This could include diversity of age, gender, social and ethnic backgrounds, abilities, sexual orientation, and professional/volunteer/lived experience.

Courtenay's committees have many long-serving members, including members who have been on committees for more than two decades, the long tenure of Courtenay's committee members is anomalous. Upon review of other municipalities, committee members typically have terms of 2-3 years for ongoing

committees. While long-term appointments provide excellent continuity, continuity can be maintained through staggered appointments and staff liaison appointments. It is generally best practice to have a regular rotation of members to ensure fresh perspectives and provide volunteer opportunities to a greater number of residents.

Participation in committees can foster interest in local government democratic processes, and can prepare future local government candidates by providing an opportunity to learn committee procedures, participate in policy options analysis and make recommendations to elected officials on public policy that will affect their community. Setting staggered but limited terms and identifying representation objectives may increase the number of candidates running for office, and increasing diversity on committees is likely to lead to increased diversity on elected bodies.

Administration:

The *Community Charter* states that the Corporate Officer is responsible for ensuring that accurate minutes of Council committees are prepared, that the minutes of Council committees are maintained and kept safe, and that access is provided to the records of Council committees as required by law or authorized by Council.

Options to administer the Courtenay committee structure include:

> ***Decentralized model (current)*** – A department is responsible for administering a committee and conducts all administration for that committee. Committees may differ in how they are administered, including how minutes are taken and how they communicate with Council. Legislative Services provides procedural advice as requested, pre-or post-meeting, but is not involved in committee administration nor has a staff member attended meetings.
>
> ***Centralized model*** – Legislative Services administers committees, including committee recruitment, agendas, minutes, and attend meetings to take minutes and provide administrative support. Each committee additionally has staff subject matter experts to support committee activities.
>
> ***Hybrid model*** – Legislative Services produces agendas and minutes for committees in coordination with a department, and may assist with recruitment and other activities.

While the current, decentralized model does not require much time from Legislative Services, the committees do not benefit from overview on aspects such as procedure and privacy. Agendas and minutes are inconsistent across the City, and are not available online in the same location as Council agendas. Publication is not consistent and does not currently follow the Council Procedure Bylaw.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

In addition to Provincial legislation such as the *Accessible BC Act*, *Community Charter*, and *Local Government Act*, the following City bylaws, policies and TORs are related to City of Courtenay committees:

- Board of Variance Bylaw No. 1697, 1994
- Committee of the Whole Delegation Bylaw No. 2271
- Council Procedure Bylaw No. 2730, 2013
- Heritage Advisory Commission Bylaw No. 1918, 1996
- Parks and Recreation Commission Bylaw No. 1039, 1971
- Boards, Committees and Commissions policy 0550.00.02
- Non-Council Boards, Committees & Commissions policy 0360.00.01

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The following committees and commissions have budgets:

- Heritage Commission has a budget of $19,900 for 2023. This includes $18,400 for the City Hall clock project, and $1500 in committee expenses, including memberships and dues, training and education, meals and meeting expenses, and travel.
- The OCP Committee's expenses were included in the OCP budget
- The Accessibility Committee receives $20,000 administrative funding through the CVRD, and may receive further project-related funding

Committee members do not typically receive compensation for their volunteer services, and there are some committees, such as the Board of Variance and Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, that are not permitted to receive compensation for their services as members due to provincial legislation (LGA s. 536[7]) or bylaw. It is, however, permitted to cover expenses that committee members incur in order to participate in meetings, such as caregiving.

Overall, the more committees the City has, and the more active they are, the more staff time and budget is required.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

Administering committees can be a significant responsibility for staff. Committee administration includes:

- Writing and reviewing bylaws or terms of reference
- Creating an annual schedule
- Annual committee recruitment
- Committee training, if required
- Providing procedural and technical advice
- Coordinating with committee members re: scheduling, agendas, etc.
- Producing material for the committee, e.g. writing reports both to the Committee and from the Committee to Council
- Producing committee agendas
- Attending meetings
- Taking committee minutes
- Reporting back to Council on committee activities

Administrative requirements depend on how often the committee meets, how many members there are, the number and complexity of committee activities/projects and committee meeting procedure (e.g. streamed/broadcasted or not). Most committees are underutilized and Council does not refer items to committees. A review of the current committee and advisory body structures may identify approaches that will maximize the benefit and impact of the committee or advisory body's expertise and effort.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Good Governance - Review operations and terms of reference of City committees
- Financial Sustainability – Review City Financial Processes – Review the Terms of Reference for the Finance Select Committee

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

At this time, staff are recommending Council's consideration of the City's Committee, Commission and Board structure at a future Committee of the Whole meeting where staff will review the opportunities, challenges, and potential changes to the existing structure, ultimately seeking Council's direction on next steps. Communication and public participation will be greatly informed by the outcome of the COW discussion.

OPTIONS:

1. THAT Council direct staff to schedule a Committee of the Whole meeting to discuss Council's priorities for its committees, committee format and operations, committee communications, committee budgets, committee administration, and Council's participation on external committees.

2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

Prepared by: Adriana Proton, MPA, CRM, Manager of Legislative Services
Reviewed by: Kate O'Connell, MPA, Director of Corporate Services
Concurrence: Susie Saunders, Director of Recreation, Culture and Community Services (Acting City Manager)

Committee Review

Two Council strategic priorities:

- Review operations and terms of reference for City committees (2023)
- Review City Financial processes: Review the Terms of Reference for the Finance Select Committee (2024-2025)

Council direction Nov 2022 to delay appointments to Canada Day and Finance committees until TORs reviewed

Types of Committees

- Standing Committees (Community Charter s. 141)
- Select Committees (Community Charter s. 142)
- Commissions (Community Charter s. 143)
- Other advisory bodies: Committee of the Whole, advisory committees, working groups, roundtables

Internal Committees

- **3 required committees:**
  Accessibility Committee, Board of Variance,
  Parcel Tax Review Panel
- **2 active commissions:**
  Heritage Advisory Commission, Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
- **3 + historic committees:**
  Canada Day Committee, Finance Select Committee, Official Community Plan Advisory Committee

External Committees

- Required appointments: CVRD, Library Board
- Discretionary appointments: Council members participate on 11 external committees
- Policy is not currently aligned with practice

What are committees for?

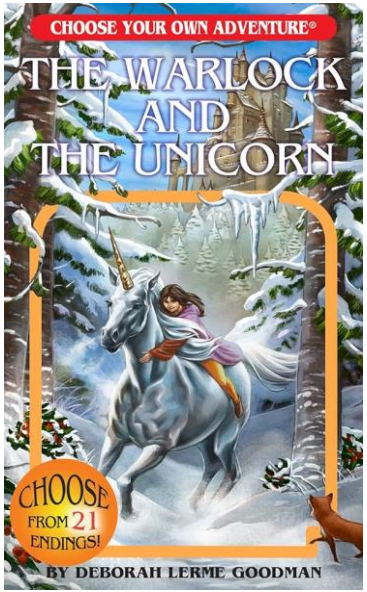
- Providing insight on a topic – detailed analysis or subject matter expertise
- Public engagement, volunteer opportunities
- Fresh perspectives through rotation of members
- Discussing topics in depth
- Commissions can operate services and enforcement or manage property and licenses
- Communication with/knowledge of external committees

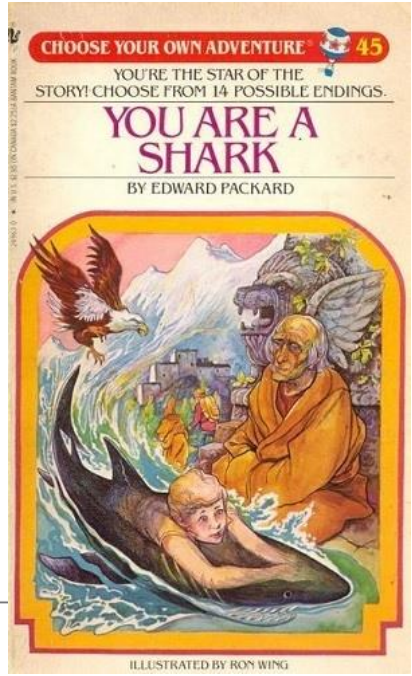
What are some current issues?

- Not enough members; not enough rotation
- Committees are semi-active and may not be engaged on high-priority items
- External appointments are ad hoc and can be time-consuming for Council members
- Policy is not aligned with practice
- Internal committee structure does not match committee activities
- Decentralized administration results in inconsistencies across the City

Recommendations

- No changes recommended until we have Council's input
- Staff are requesting that Council schedule a Committee of the Whole meeting to discuss
- Choose your own priorities!





THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

STAFF REPORT

To:	Council	**File No.:**	7900-00
From:	Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services	**Date:**	October 11, 2023
Subject:	**Sports Field Strategy and Allocation Report Back**		

PURPOSE: To provide Council with information on the outcomes of the Comox Valley Regional District's Sport Field Strategy and secure approval for the City of Courtenay to initiate an allocation policy review and update on behalf of the region, including consideration of the City of Courtenay acting as a central booking agent for all sport fields in the Comox Valley.

BACKGROUND:

In Fall 2021 the Comox Valley United Soccer Club (CVUSC) made delegations to local municipal governments and the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD). At the October 28, 2021 Council meeting it was resolved:

> *THAT in response to the Comox Valley United Soccer Club's delegation during the September 27th, 2021 Council meeting, Council direct staff to conduct an analysis to maximize the use of existing outdoor playing field space in Courtenay, including the Bill Moore Memorial Park.*

Following the delegations, the inter-municipal recreation leadership group came to consensus that an update to the CVRD's 2008 Sport Field Study was required to understand the demand on local sport fields and any changes in projections that may have occurred since the study was completed. As such, to confirm sport field demand and usage, prioritize strategic initiatives, and identify sites that could support an additional artificial turf field a comprehensive field assessment was launched by the CVRD in partnership with the local municipalities in March 2022. The Sports Field Strategy (Attachment 1) was presented to the CVRD Recreation Commission in February 2023.

DISCUSSION:

Comox Valley Sports Field Strategy

The Comox Valley is unique in that the majority of field sport groups access fields and amenities across the region and are not tied to specific municipalities in either participant or facility location. As such it was critical that any review of field allocation, usage, and facility condition consider all local governments in the Comox Valley as well as School District 71 (SD71). The resulting regional Sports Field Strategy provides information and recommendations to guide Council and staff decision making (i.e. project priorities, resource allocation), identify opportunities to enhance facility inventory, and provides guidance on key topics and issues (i.e. artificial turf needs, allocations, user fees, etc.).

The purpose of the Sports Field Strategy was to: 1) assess the current state of sport fields within the Comox Valley, 2) identify focus areas and priorities for capital investment, and 3) identify opportunities to optimize how the sport field inventory is managed.

Through research, analysis, and community engagement, including a public field user survey and meetings with sport field groups, the following key findings were established:

- User satisfaction levels with sport field inventory and associated amenities differ significantly between summer ("dry") and winter ("wet") months.
- Utilization analysis suggests that sufficient overall capacity exists within the sport field inventory, however a relatively small number of fields accommodate the majority of program-based bookings.
- User groups have specific desires for enhanced fields and support amenities. Overall there is strong support for focusing on improvements that enhance field functionality, increase usability year-round, and improve user experiences.
- Opportunities exist to improve data collection, management and analysis capabilities. This information can help better inform capital and operational planning.
- Trends and population growth forecasts suggest that participation numbers will continue to increase.

Based on the key findings and review of regional, provincial, and national trends and leading practices, the following strategy outcomes were recommended:

1. Enhance and standardize data collection methods.
2. Utilize the refreshed sport field classifications as a guideline for operational and capital investment in the sport field facility inventory.
3. Target capital investment in sport field infrastructure towards a focus in maximizing the quality of sport field infrastructure and adding functional capacity:
    a. Consider adding a second artificial turf surface
    b. Develop a new baseball hub site
    c. Add lighting and washrooms / changerooms at 2-4 sites over the next 10 years
    d. To meet potential long-term needs, begin planning for a new multi-field site
4. Develop a new approach for sport field bookings and allocations based around clear standards of play.
5. Advance efforts to actively promote spontaneous and unstructured sport field play.
6. Create a more streamlined and cohesive sport field system in the region through aligning planning and policy, shifting bookings responsibility to a single entity, and inviting the Village of Cumberland into the sport field service.

While leadership for implementation of some of the strategy outcomes lives with the CVRD, some can be implemented by individual municipalities and others require inter-municipal collaboration. The inter-municipal recreation leadership group is in active discussion regarding the implementation of the recommendations.

Utilization of Available Capacity

The Sports Field Strategy includes an analysis of utilization of available capacity of all sports fields within the Comox Valley, including on SD71 property. While there appears to be sufficient supply within the current available inventory, it is important to note that there is a large discrepancy in the intensity of the bookings on a field by field basis, noting that referenced booked hours in the strategy do not include daytime use by schools. The analysis also demonstrated that while only one field is at or over capacity (Bill Moore), a relatively small number of fields appear to accommodate the bulk of available utilization based on the data provided. There is a demonstrated significant demand on Bill Moore Park to accommodate a high volume of winter season use. Further details on utilization and capacity can be found within the report.

Allocation Policy and Administration

The Sports Fields Strategy includes two recommendations specifically related to allocation and administration:

Recommendation #4: Develop a new approach for sport field bookings and allocations based around clear standards of play; and

Recommendation #6: Create a more streamlined and cohesive sport field system in the region.

Best practice guidance from Sport for Life[1] recommends that access to publicly provided recreation assets be allocated based on clear rationale that supports physical literacy and Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) principles. As such, the Strategy recommends that allocation be done based on standards of play that are aligned with Sport for Life's Long-Term Development Model that each National Sport Organization in Canada is required to follow at provincial and local levels. This approach will enable allocation to occur based on need, not historical access, and will help to advance equity in sport development as well as make best use of sport infrastructure. Updating the allocation policy will bring the region's approach in line with national sport organization expectations regarding standards of play and will reinforce the adoption of these standards at the local level.

As there is inconsistency in the Comox Valley regarding usage fees for sports fields it is also recommended that the allocation policy review include implementation of consistent fees and charges in an equitable and transparent way. Improvements to sports fields fees and charges, including consideration of implementation of a youth minor sport fee, has been shown to reduce block booking and no shows (freeing up underutilized field space), more equitably distribute the costs associated with sports field provision among user groups, and enhance financial contribution to the administration and maintenance of sports fields. Implementing effective fees and charges policies will also contribute to addressing Strategy Outcome five (5) to actively promote spontaneous and unstructured sport field play through the reduction of blanket bookings and increased access to sports fields for the general public.

The Sports Field Strategy also identifies the opportunity to enhance and improve service to sports fields user groups through increased collaboration and partnership between the local governments and SD71. This includes a recommendation that all field bookings be administered through a single point of contact and implementation of aligned allocation and fee policies across the region. This is in recognition of the fact that most sports field user groups and participants are accessing fields across jurisdictional boundaries. Additionally, a centralized approach to field booking would also address strategy outcome one (1) in the Sports Fields Strategy to enhance and standardize data collection which can help inform capital planning, operational decision making, and equitable allocation of field times.

Courtenay currently allocates sports fields based on historical use and long-term usage agreements associated with fieldhouse agreements. In addition to the City's own sport fields, Courtenay administers the booking and permitting of SD71 school fields located in Courtenay and the processing of permits for the Vanier artificial turf as directed by the CVRD. Comox administers field bookings on behalf of SD71 for fields located in Comox. The vast majority of sports fields (including SD71 facilities) in the Comox Valley are in Courtenay (41) and Comox (24).

[1] Canadian Sport for Life, https://sportforlife.ca/

The inter-municipal recreation leadership group has come to a shared consensus that the City of Courtenay is best positioned to take on the role of the centralized allocation and booking function for sports fields in the Comox Valley. This is due to the already large inventory of sports field facilities administered by Courtenay, as well as our organizational structure within Recreation and staff preference for Courtenay to take the leadership role. Additionally, as Courtenay has completed the work of and adopted a Fees and Charges Framework, staff are already planning to undertake work shortly to update sports fields fees and charges, as well as recommend allocation policy updates as per the strategy. Staff are recommending Council support this initiative and approve City of Courtenay staff to take a regional leadership role and initiate work on the development of a new sports field allocation policy, including fees and charges, and examine the work required for Courtenay to become the centralized booking and administrative function for Comox Valley sports fields.

Staff from the Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, and CVRD will be approaching their respective Councils and Boards this fall to seek endorsement for this approach and approval to initiate work. Should all local government partners agree a consultant would be procured to conduct the following activities beginning in early 2024:

- Lead the development of a new allocation policy based on clear standards of play and best practices
- Work collaboratively with staff and sports fields user groups to address needs and create a collaborative committee in support of the work
- Provide recommendations on the implementation of consistent fees and charges across the Comox Valley in line with the benefits-based approach articulated in Courtenay's Fees and Charges Framework
- Draft partnership agreement requirements for the local government partners, including recommendations on roles and responsibilities, financial impacts and cost recovery for the City of Courtenay in taking on the centralized role, and any other relevant items identified by the parties
- Support implementation of the new allocation policy and centralized administration function, if approved by Council

If approved by Council to proceed with this work, local government staff would work collaboratively with sports fields user groups on the aforementioned items. All policies and recommendations would then be brought back to each respective local government partner for consideration and approval, following which the partners would enter into agreements to begin implementation based on Council direction.

The central booking and allocation administration function is not meant to replace local control or responsibility for parks, sports fields and amenities. The scope of work for the City of Courtenay, if approved, is to implement a regional allocation and fees and charges policy on behalf of the local government partners once approved by each jurisdiction. Local governments will retain responsibility for park maintenance, improvements, special events, and other applicable policies and bylaws.

Should any of our local government partners choose not to proceed with this work following receipt of the updated policies and recommendations, the work will still be of significant benefit to the City of Courtenay as Courtenay will be able to proceed with implementing an improved and equitable sports field allocation policy and updated fees and charges that align with Courtenay's Recreation Fees and Charges Framework.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

Official Community Plan

Parks and Recreation Objective 5, "partnerships are in place to achieve parks and recreation objectives," identifies the following policies:

- PR 27: Seek out partnerships to achieve the goals and objectives of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan including, but not limited to working with:
    - SD71 to increase access to school facilities after hours for community uses and City programs
    - Non-profit and private sector organizations to expand sport and physical activity options, and expand recreation opportunities for all residents
    - Neighbouring jurisdictions and other government agencies and community groups, to coordinate recreation and park services and to consider alternative service delivery methods including maintenance agreements

Staff's recommendation for the City of Courtenay to take a regional leadership role to establish a shared allocation and fees and charges framework for sports fields in the Comox Valley directly responds to this objective and demonstrates our work toward implementing policies in the OCP.

Courtenay Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Courtenay's Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) was adopted by Council on September 30, 2019. It includes recommendations regarding sports field facilities and usage within the City of Courtenay. Feedback received through the PRMP engagement process is similar to that heard in the Sports Field Strategy. The PRMP makes the following recommendations regarding sports fields in Courtenay:

- 3.3.2: Explore opportunities to collaborate with SD71 on school site improvement projects that can also serve the community, such as another field upgrade.
- 3.3.3: Work with others in the region to explore potential locations for new sports amenities including the following:
    - A ball diamond complex
    - Another synthetic turf with lights
- 3.3.4: Explore opportunities for sports field users to expand their hours of use
- 3.3.11: Add and upgrade the following amenities as part of park development:
    - More or better sports fields as the population grows and in partnership with other jurisdictions in the Comox Valley
    - Upgrade existing washrooms as needed

The consistency of recommendations in the PRMP with the Sports Field Strategy demonstrates the need for regional and local investment in sports field amenities and policies across the Comox Valley. Implementation of the PRMP is ongoing and a prioritized implementation strategy will be presented to Council at a future Council meeting.

Recreation Fees & Charges Framework

Courtenay's Recreation Fees and Charges Framework was adopted by Council on June 27, 2022 and staff were directed to begin implementation of a benefits-based approach to fees and charges in recreation. Included in the framework is an analysis of sports fields fees including a comparison with other municipalities. Recommendations include applying the benefits-based approach to sports field fees, introducing "Minor" fees, and aligning field and diamond fees. Staff will be presenting to Council on implementation of the Recreation Fees and Charges Framework for indoor spaces at an upcoming Council

meeting. Staff will align implementation of the Recreation Fees and Charges Framework for sports fields with work on the sports field allocation policy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The estimated cost of procuring a consultant to develop a new allocation policy, including fees and charges recommendations and implementation plans, is $35,000 based on similar work conducted in other municipalities. Courtenay staff have been in discussion with CVRD staff and will be submitting a request through the CVRD Recreation Commission grant service function for the full amount of funds for Courtenay to take on this work on behalf of the region.

The Recreation, Culture, and Community Services department does not currently have the administrative resources necessary to take on a centralized allocation and booking function on behalf of the region. The outcomes of the consultant work will include an options analysis and recommendations for the City of Courtenay and regional partners to consider in the implementation including an assessment of resources required and funding models for consideration.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

Administration of Courtenay's allocation and fees and charges policies are within the core duties of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services. Development and implementation of a new allocation policy with updated fees and charges is part of staffs 2024 work plan and included within the short-term priorities of the PRMP.

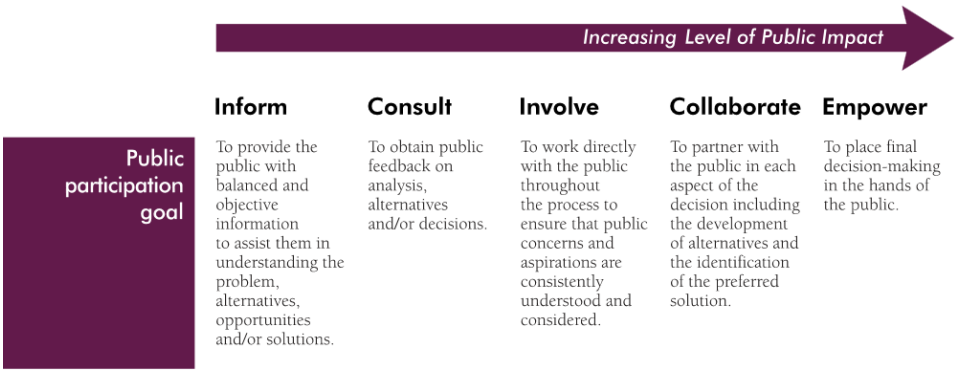
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Parks and Recreation - Optimize active public spaces to respond to density increases and increased park use
- Parks and Recreation - Review recreation programs and engage with community on current and future needs, changing demographics
- Good Governance - Explore and establish a partnership approach with SD71 on mutual interest topics: active travel and traffic planning, shared facilities, community use of schools, climate, reconciliation, child care and youth engagement

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

As significant community engagement, including a public survey and direct engagement with sports fields user groups, was conducted to support the development of the Sports Fields strategy as well as Recreation's Fees and Charges Framework, the renewal of the allocation policy will focus on informing the general public while directly involving impacted sports fields user groups based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation:



OPTIONS:

1. THAT Council receive for information the Comox Valley Regional District Sports Field Strategy and direct staff to initiate work on behalf of the region to develop a new sports field allocation policy and centralized booking function for the Comox Valley and to report back with recommendations.
2. THAT Council receive for information the Comox Valley Regional District Sports Field Strategy.
3. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

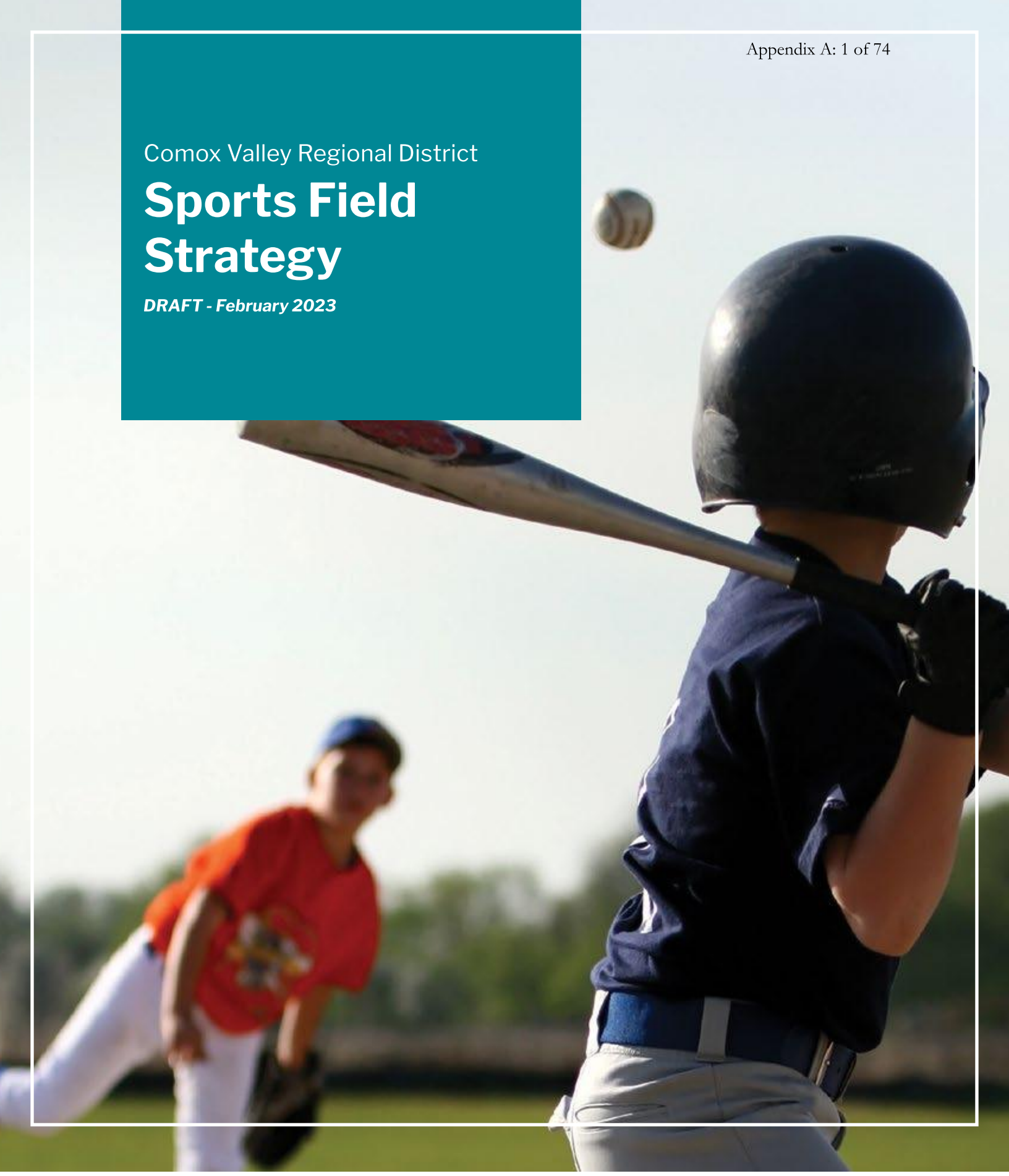
1. Comox Valley Regional District Sports Field Strategy

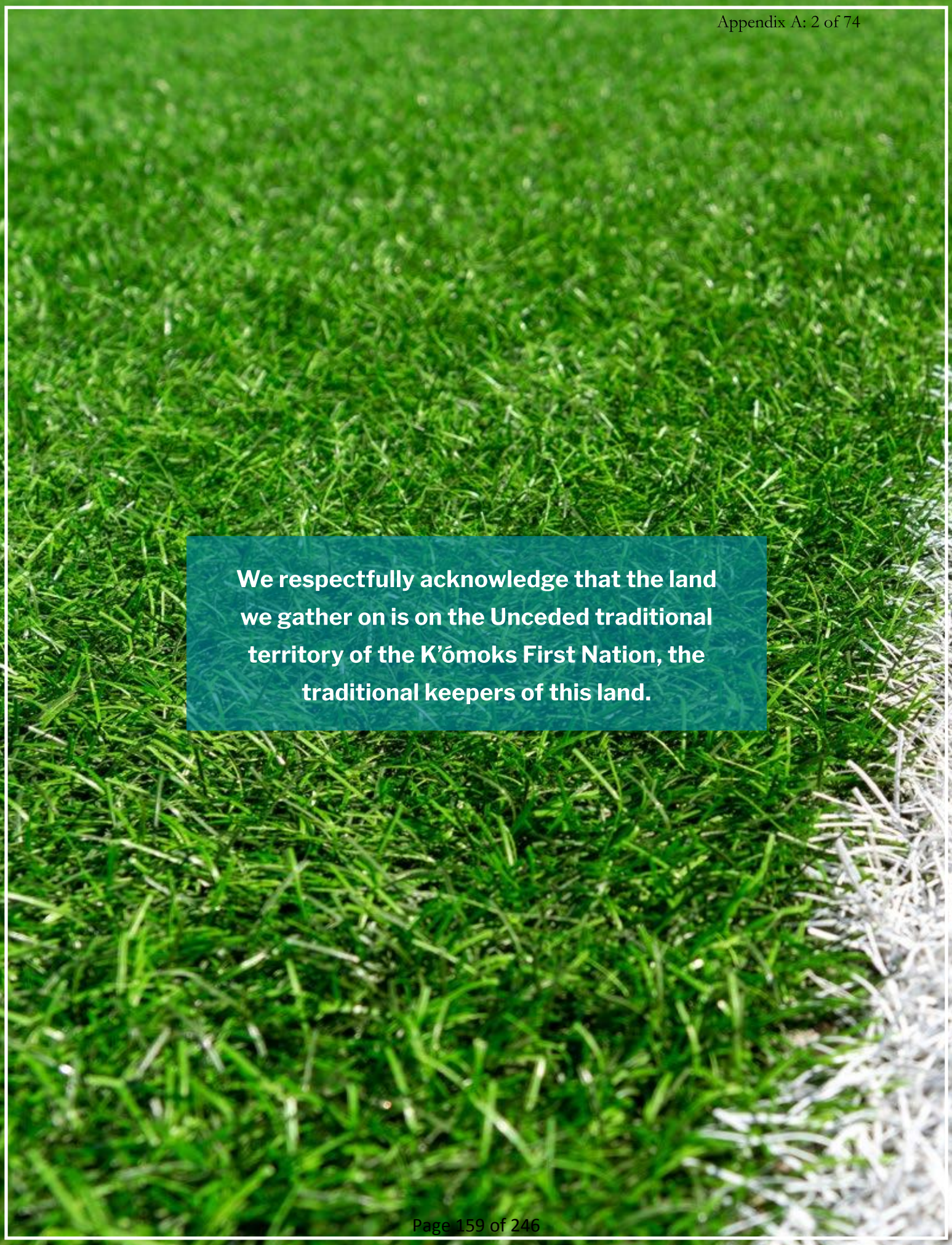
Prepared by: Susie Saunders, Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services; Acting City Manager

Comox Valley Regional District

Sports Field Strategy

DRAFT - February 2023




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

Executive Summary

Study Purpose

The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) has developed a new Sports Field Strategy in collaboration with its partners - the City of Courtney, Town of Comox, the Village of the Cumberland and School District 71. The Strategy was undertaken to:

- Assess the current state of sports fields within the CVRD;
- Identify key focus areas and priorities for capital investment; and
- Identify opportunities to optimize how the sport field inventory is managed.

Research and Engagement Overview and Key Findings

The project team undertook a program of research to identify trends, gaps, opportunities and desired future priorities. Key research inputs included:

- Discussion sessions with stakeholders
- A public field user survey
- Analysis of available sport field utilization data
- Review of regional, provincial and national trends and leading practices
- Identification of key population and growth characteristics
- Spatial analysis of the sport field inventory

Summarized as follows are key findings from the project research:

- User satisfaction levels with the sport field inventory and associated amenities differ significantly between the summer (“dry”) and winter (“wet”) months.
- Utilization analysis suggests that sufficient overall capacity exists within the sport field inventory, however a relatively small number of fields accommodate the majority of program based bookings.
- User groups have specific desires for enhanced fields and support amenities. Overall, there is a strong support focusing on improvements that can enhance field functionality, increase useability (especially during winter months), and improve user experiences.
- Opportunities exist to improve data collection, management, and analysis capabilities. Having this information available in a more consistent manner can help better inform future capital and operational planning.
- Trends and population growth forecasts suggest that participation numbers will continue to increase.

Strategy Outcomes

Summarized as follows are the Strategy Outcomes provided in Section 8 of the Strategy. These Strategy Outcomes address the opportunities, gaps and needs identified through the project research as well as provide guidance on the key sport field topics identified in the Strategy project terms of reference.

- Enhance and standardize data collection methods (Strategy Outcome #1).
- Utilize the Refreshed Sport Field Classifications as Guideline for Operational and Capital Investment in the Sport Field Inventory (Strategy Outcome #2).
- Target Capital Investment in Sport Field Infrastructure Towards a Focus on Maximizing the Quality of Sport Field Infrastructure and Adding Functional Capacity (Strategy Outcome #3). Included under this Strategy Outcome are the following identified projects:
  - » Consider adding a second artificial turf surface (3 candidate sites have been identified and guidance is provided on suggested next steps).
  - » Develop a new baseball hub site (test fits have been developed for 2 potential candidate sites).
  - » Add lighting and washrooms / changerooms at 2-4 sites over the next 10 years if capacity benefits can be sufficiently demonstrated.
  - » To meet potential long-term needs, begin planning for a new multi-field site.
- Develop a New Approach for Sport Field Bookings and Allocations Based Around Clear Standards of Play (Strategy Outcome #4).
- Advance Efforts to Actively Promote Spontaneous and Unstructured Sport Field Play (Strategy Outcome #5).
- Create a More Streamlined and Cohesive Sport Field System in the Region through aligning planning and policy, shifting bookings responsibility to a single entity, and inviting the Village of Cumberland into the sport field service (Strategy Outcome #6).

Table of Contents

Section 1.0

Introduction

Included in this section:

- Strategy purpose and objectives.
- Strategy process overview.

The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) undertook the development of this document, the Sports Field Strategy, in collaboration with its partners - the City of Courtney, Town of Comox, the Village of the Cumberland and School District 71. The Strategy provides the CVRD and its partners with an important point of reference that will inform future decision making and resource allocation. More specifically, the Strategy will:

- Guide Council and staff decision making (e.g. project priorities, budgeting and resource allocation, etc.);
- Identify opportunities to enhance the sport field inventory; and
- Provide guidance on key topics and issues (future artificial turf needs, allocations, user fees, etc.).

The Strategy was initiated in the Spring of 2022 and completed in early 2023. The following graphic illustrates the overall process used to develop the Strategy.

Important questions explored during the research and engagement included:

- How well are the available sport fields being utilized?
- What is the functional condition of the sport field inventory relative to best practice?
- Are there enough sport fields?
- Do all residents living within the CVRD have equitable and sufficient access to sport field opportunities?
- What opportunities exist to enhance how the sport field inventory is managed?
- What are the best approaches to addressing future sport field needs?

Findings from the research, engagement and analysis are contained in Sections 2 – 7 of this Strategy document. Section 8 provides recommendations (Strategy Outcomes) aimed at optimizing future investment and actions related to sport field provision in the CVRD.

Overview of the Research and Engagement Inputs

- Analysis of utilization data
- Inventory and assessment
- Spatial analysis of the sport field inventory
- Review of key population characteristics
- Trends and leading practices review
- Engagement with the public and sport field user groups

Section 2.0

Inventory and Assessment

Included in this section:

- Overview of the current sport field inventory and key spatial characteristics.
- Findings from the assessments of the sport field inventory.

Overview of the Sport Field Inventory

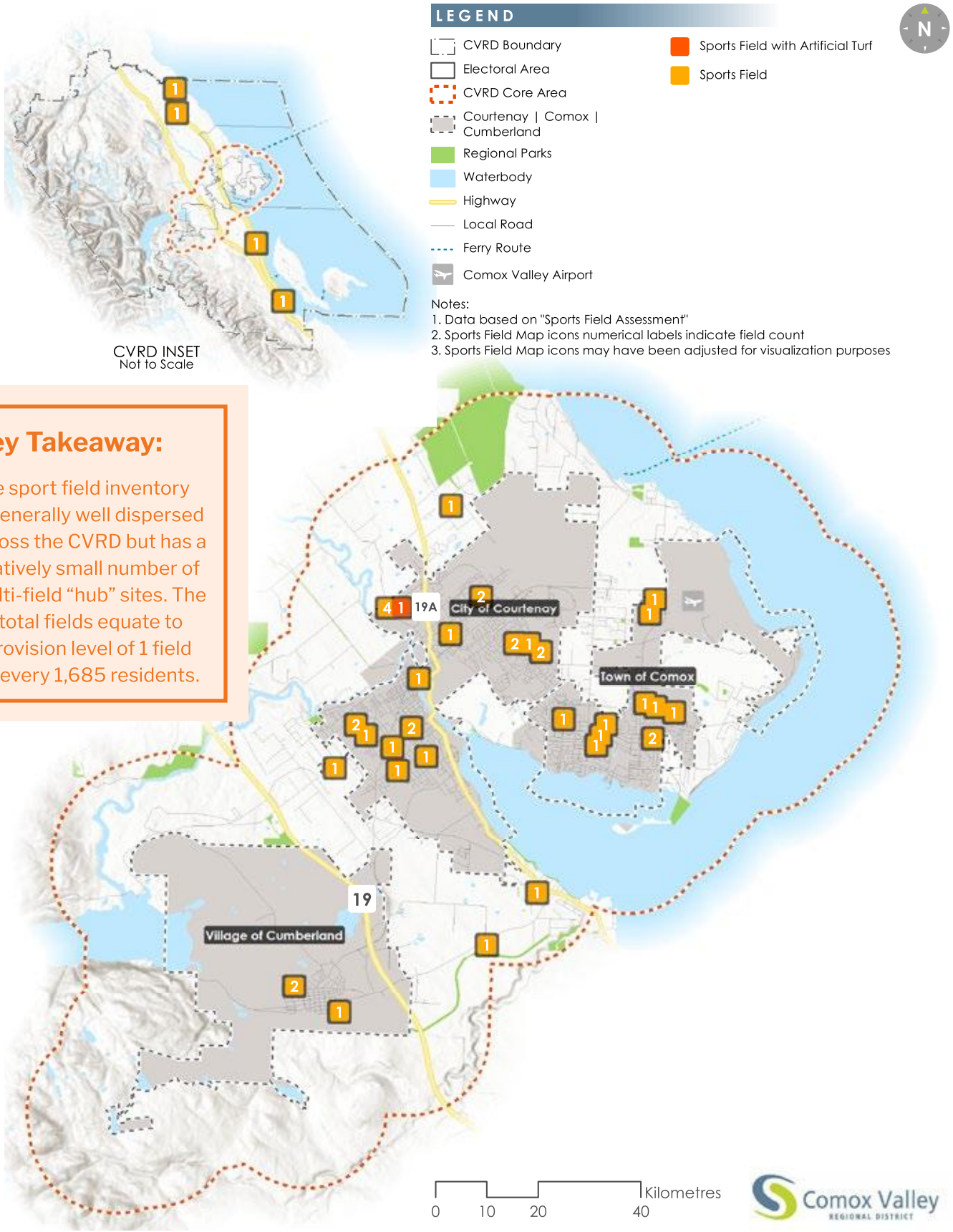
The following table summarizes the current sport field inventory in the CVRD. **The inventory reflected in the table includes school fields within the bookable inventory.*

Table 1: Sport Field Inventory Overview

Location	Rectangular Field - Natural Surface	Rectangular Field – Artificial Surface	Ball Diamonds
Courtenay	22	1	18
Comox	11	0	13
Cumberland	3	0	1
CVRD Electoral Areas	7	0	5
Total	**43**	**1**	**37**

The maps on the following pages reflect additional spatial and service level characteristics of the current sport field inventory in the CVRD.

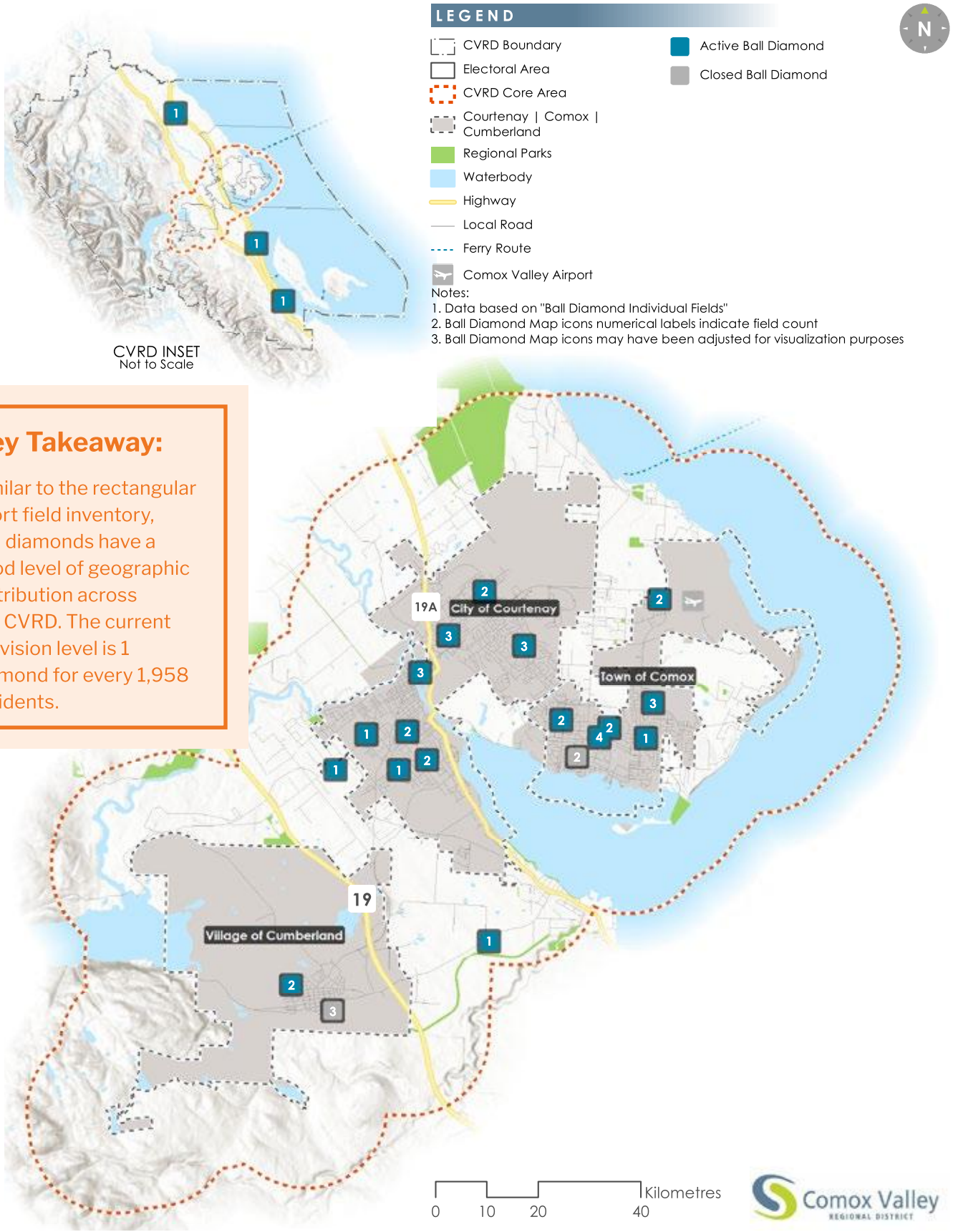
Rectangular Sports Fields – Overview



Key Takeaway:

The sport field inventory is generally well dispersed across the CVRD but has a relatively small number of multi-field "hub" sites. The 43 total fields equate to a provision level of 1 field for every 1,685 residents.

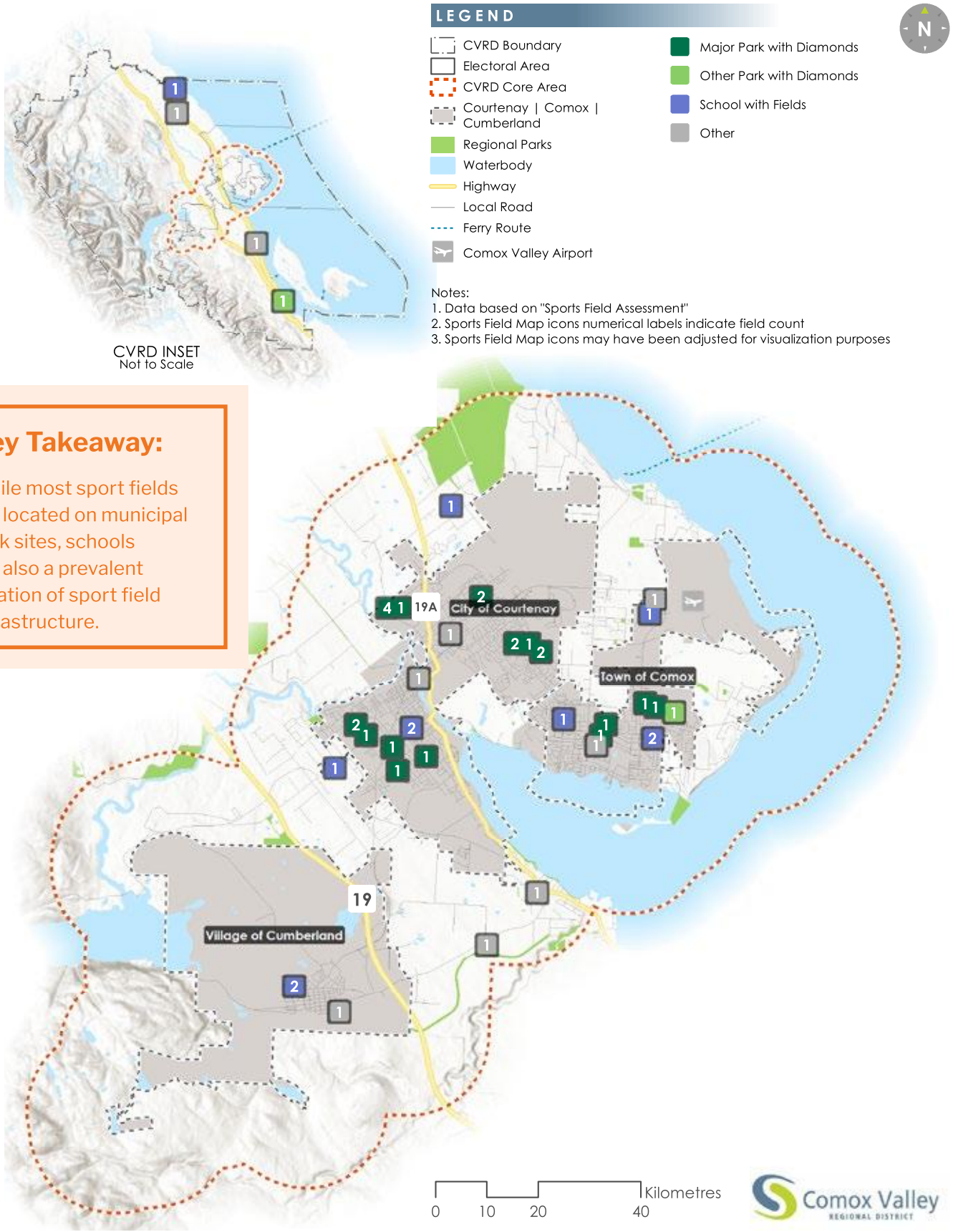
Ball Diamonds – Overview



Key Takeaway:

Similar to the rectangular sport field inventory, ball diamonds have a good level of geographic distribution across the CVRD. The current provision level is 1 diamond for every 1,958 residents.

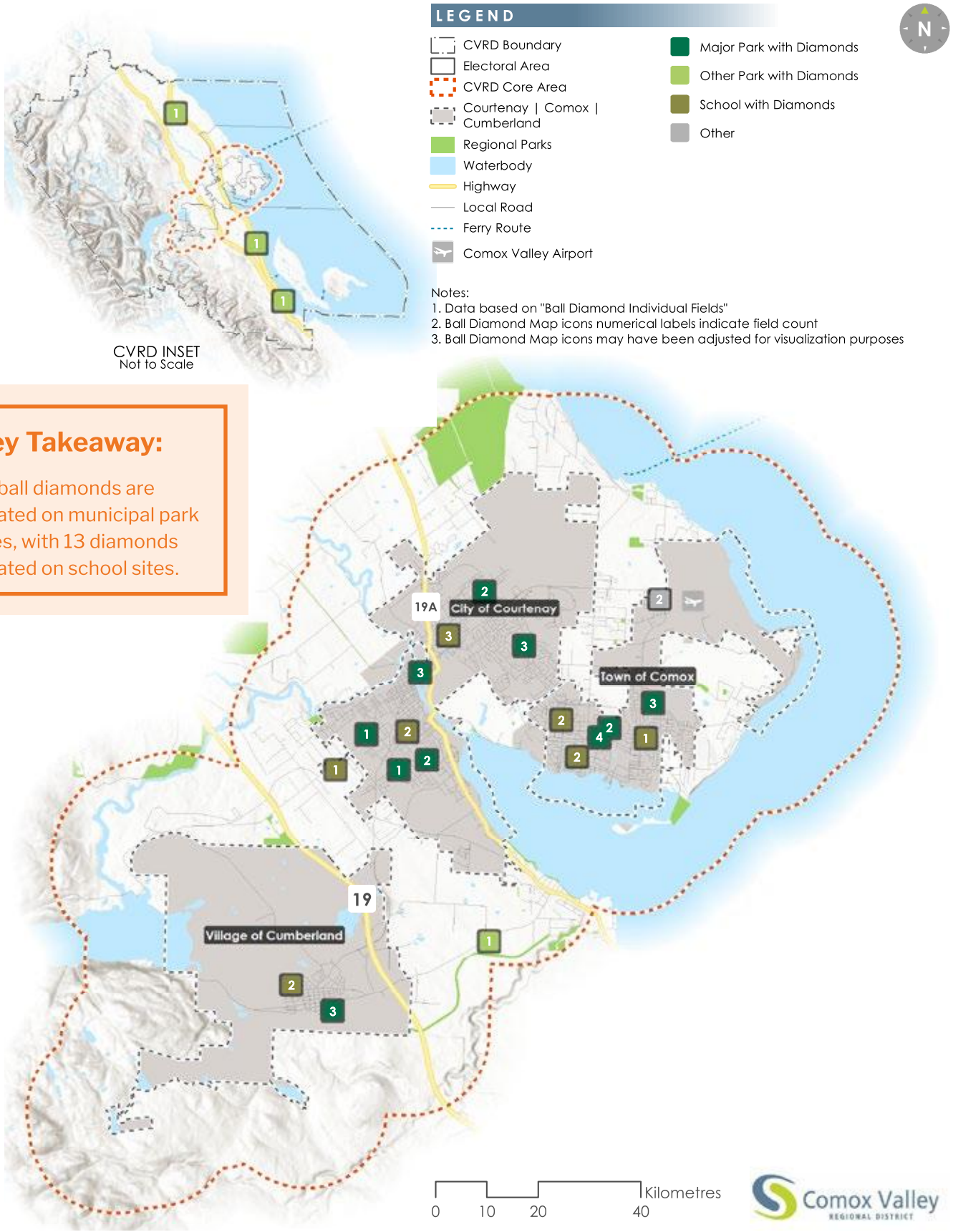
Rectangular Sports Fields by Location Type



Key Takeaway:

While most sport fields are located on municipal park sites, schools are also a prevalent location of sport field infrastructure.

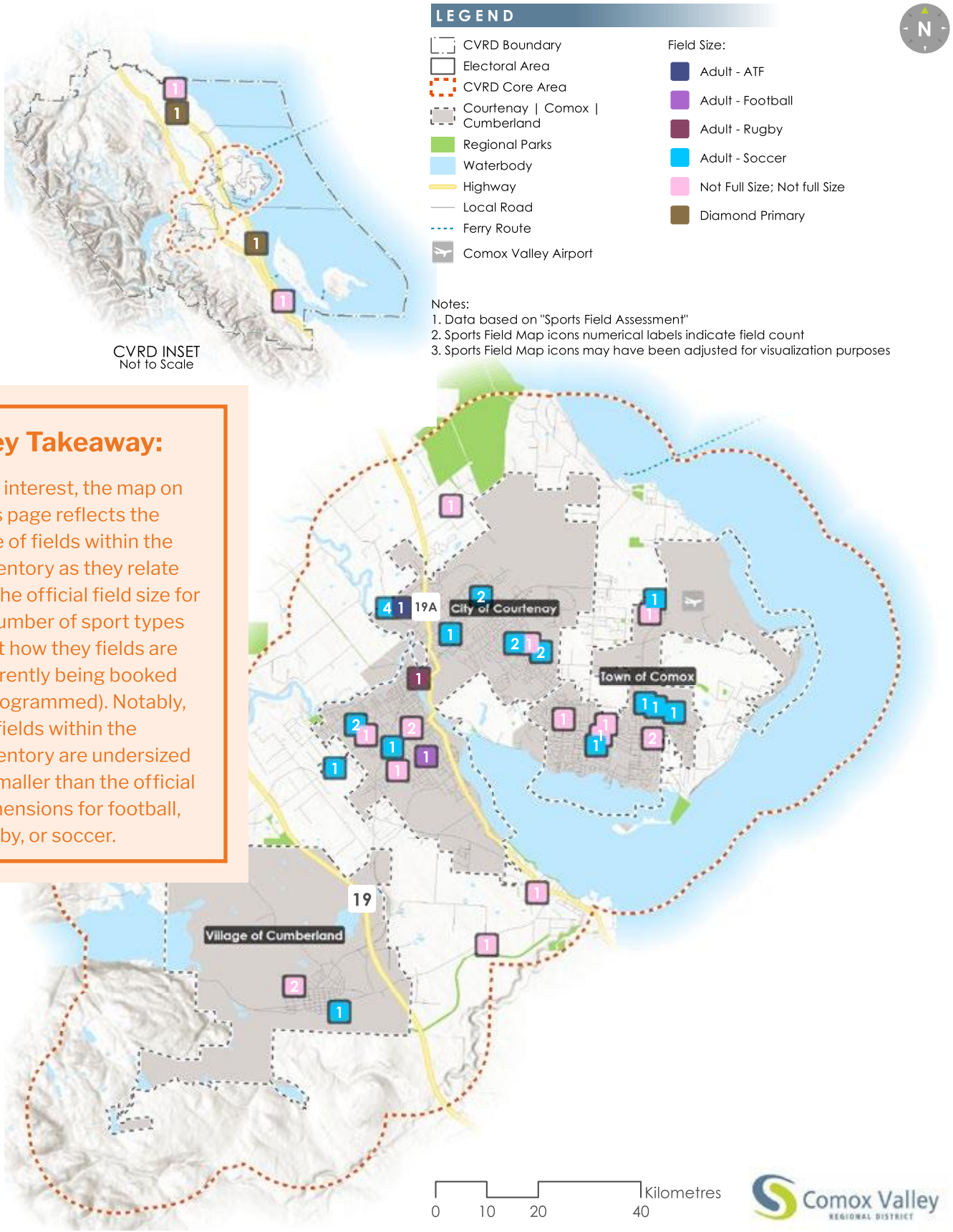
Ball Diamonds by Location Type



Key Takeaway:

24 ball diamonds are located on municipal park sites, with 13 diamonds located on school sites.

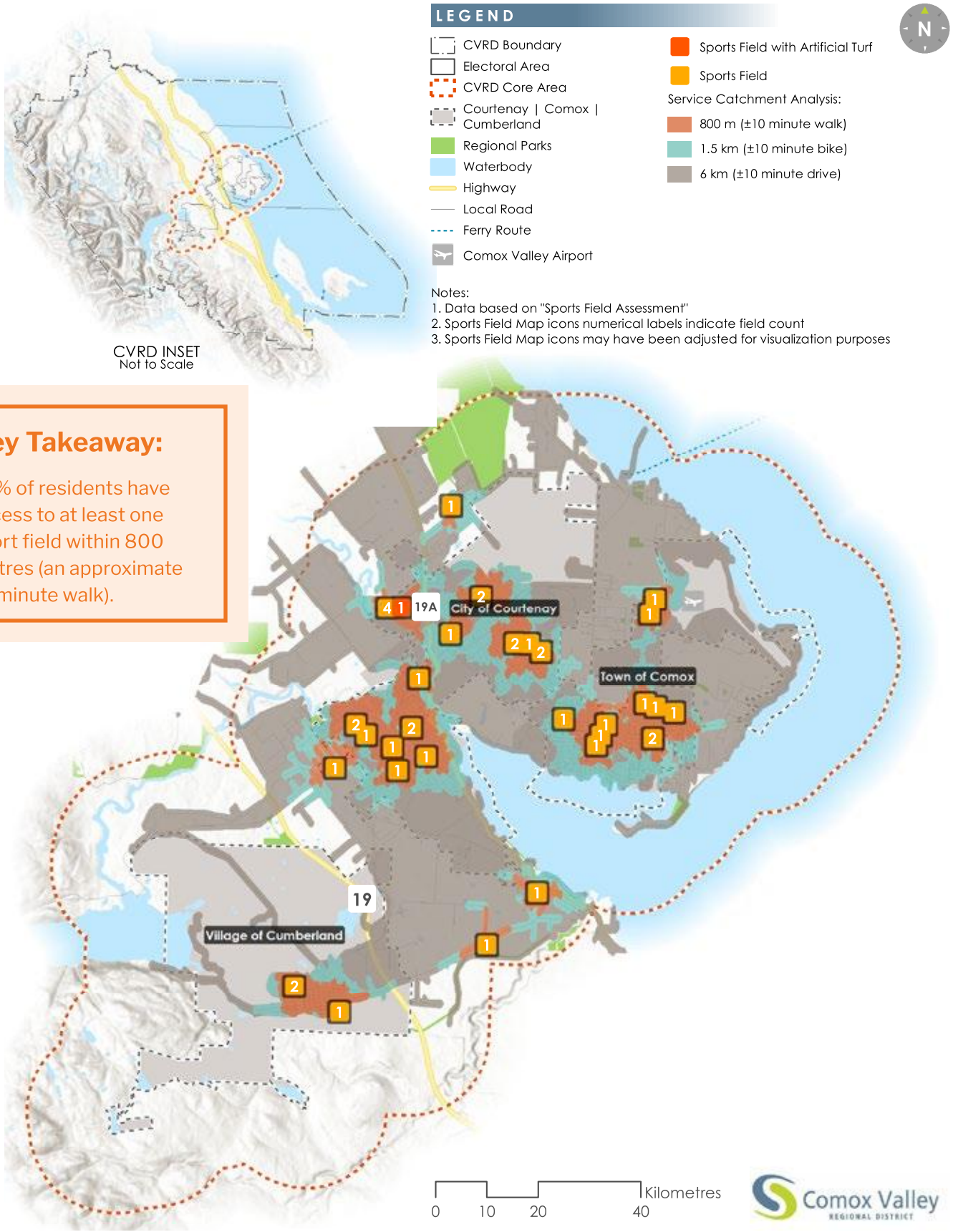
Rectangular Sports Fields by Dimension Opportunity



Key Takeaway:

For interest, the map on this page reflects the size of fields within the inventory as they relate to the official field size for a number of sport types (not how they fields are currently being booked / programmed). Notably, 14 fields within the inventory are undersized – smaller than the official dimensions for football, rugby, or soccer.

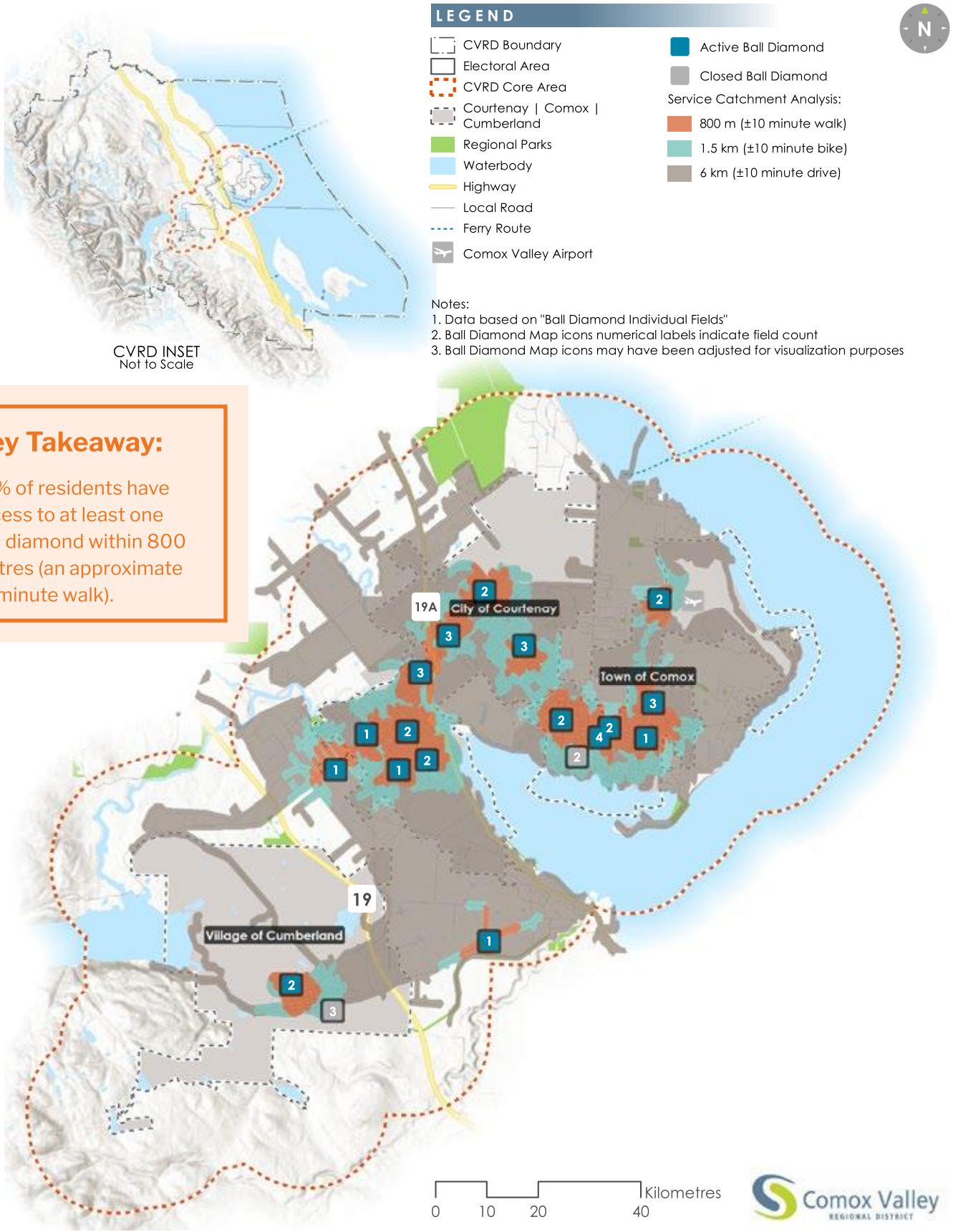
Sports Field Catchments and Access



Key Takeaway:

82% of residents have access to at least one sport field within 800 metres (an approximate 10 minute walk).

Ball Diamonds Catchment and Access



Key Takeaway:

73% of residents have access to at least one ball diamond within 800 metres (an approximate 10 minute walk).

Sport Field Assessments Summary

Technical experts from the consulting team conducted on-site assessments on the sport field inventory within the CVRD. The objectives of this assessment were to:

- Analyze and update the previous (2008) classification of fields.
- Identify system wide opportunities for enhancement.
- Assess sites that may be good candidates for capital investment (e.g. artificial turf field development).
- Confirm key attributes and characteristics of the inventory (e.g. on-site support amenities).

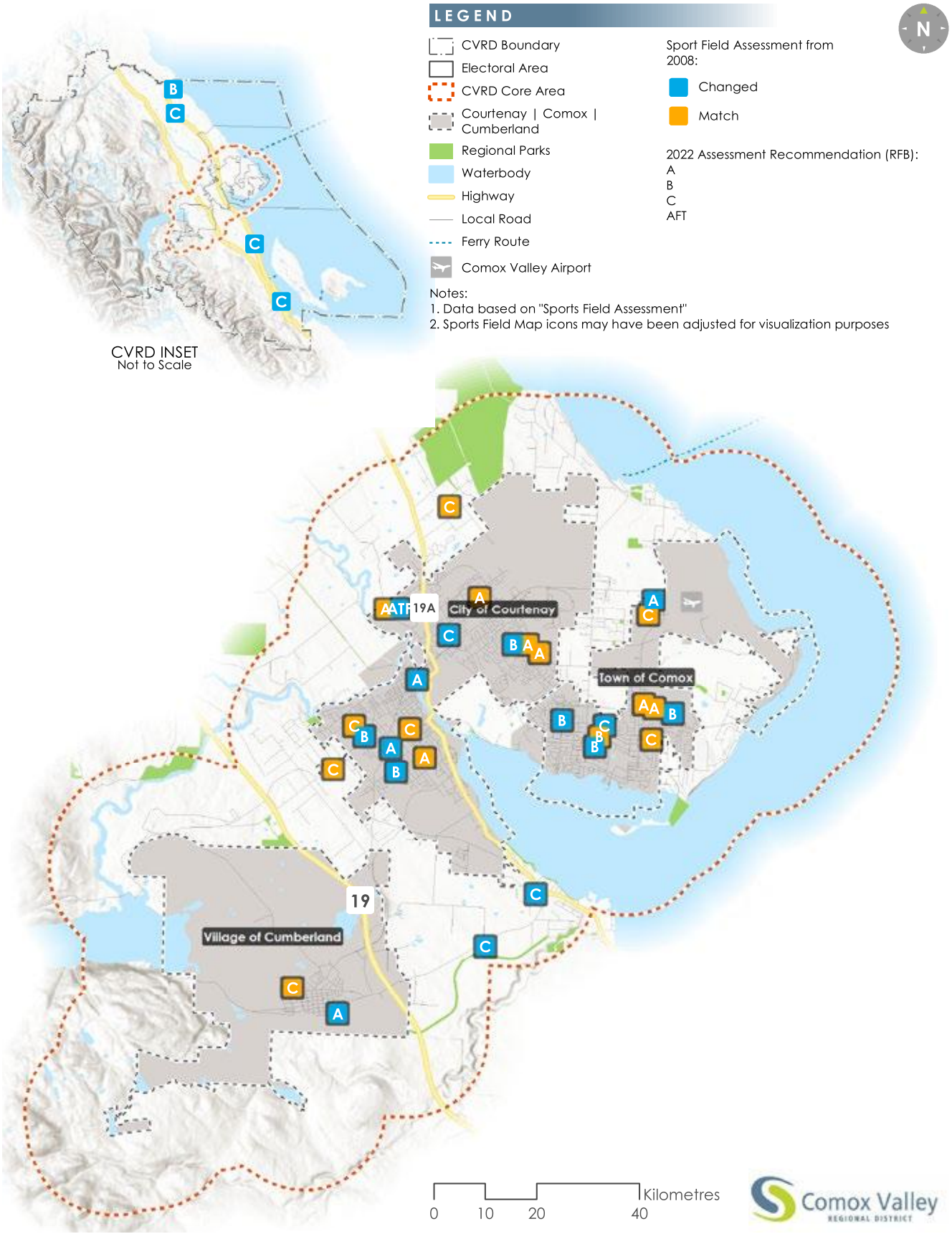
The review of field classifications used Sports Turf Canada guidelines – a best practice used across the recreation and sport sector. The following table summarizes how the current sport field inventory, as assessed during the summer of 2022, aligns with the previous 2008 assessment and classification.

**Note: ball diamonds were visited to get a general sense of condition and characteristics are not included in this table.*

Table 2: Classification and Condition Summary

Class	2008 Assessed Inventory Count	2022 Assessed Inventory Count	Change (+/-)	Average Condition Score
ATF	0	1	+1	N/A
A	12	16	+4	12.56
B	6	9	+3	11.89
C	13	18	+5	7.94
C+	3	0	-3	N/A
No Rating 2008	2	N/A	N/A	N/A

Summary Map: Comparison to 2008 Inventory and Assessment



Recommended actions pertaining to specific fields (where applicable) are provided in Section 8 and the detailed scoring values for each field are provided in the Appendices.

Provided are general, system wide observations form the on-site inventory and assessments.

General Maintenance and Field Grading

- Municipal parks were generally well maintained. Most are at an "A" level field, providing a good surface for most typical activities.
- School fields were often in worse shape than adjacent parks. There is also appears to be a wider variance in the maintenance levels and quality of fields at school sites.
- Irrigation was consistent throughout the sport field inventory (estimated that 60% of fields have irrigation). This characteristic will help the inventory be resilient through climate change.
- Drainage characteristics impact the ability of some fields to provide winter usability. For example, Lewis Park is located in a flood catchment area which retains water during the rainy months.

Amenities & Experiential Features

- Available washrooms are not commonly found at sport field sites (only 10 sites had dedicated washrooms; 9 including Black Creek Community Hall is not included) and, when in existence, often requires groups to request them to be opened. This finding is not in alignment with trends and leading practices.
- Dedicated parking is rare at sport field sites and, perceptually, fields can be located a fair distance from parking. This factor likely results in significant parking challenges and frustrations during peak times and seasons of use.
- Signage or mapping could be improved at many sport field sites. Courtenay has schematic maps available at most sites, which are very helpful.
- A relatively small number of field sites (4) have lighting. This characteristics limits capacity during spring, fall and winter months.

Section 3.0

Engagement Findings

Included in this section:

- Key findings and themes from the stakeholder and rights holder discussions.
- Key findings from the Field Use Survey.

Stakeholder Discussions

Seven discussion sessions were convened with sport field user groups in order to better understand their perspectives on the current inventory, future needs, and opportunities to optimize the sport field situation in the CVRD. The following table summarizes the groups that participated in each session.

Table 3: Participating User Groups

Session	Participating Groups
Session #1	• Comox Valley Minor Baseball
Session #2	• Comox Valley Raider Football • Comox Valley Kickers Rugby
Session #3	• Comox Valley United Soccer
Session #4	• Comox Valley Sports & Social Club
Session #5	• Komox Men's Real Baseball League • Parksville Royal Baseball
Session #6	• Comox Valley Field Hockey
Session #7	• Comox Valley Road Runners • Cougars Track Club • Comox Valley Pickleball Club

While wide ranging viewpoints were shared during the discussions, a number of consistent themes and points of interest emerged and are summarized as follows.

Overall Perspectives on Field Quality and Needs

- Groups indicated that there is a shortage of field space and this situation impacts groups' ability to grow. In general, there is a belief that more fields and diamonds are needed.
- For groups interested in having more access to artificial turf field surfaces, uniform condition (always available with the same surface condition), and not weather concerns were the primary driver of this demand.
- Condition and maintenance of fields / diamonds is not uniform throughout the CVRD – different entities manage the field inventory and there is a need for greater consistency and quality.
- Some fields have poor drainage which limits their use for large portions of the year.
- Groups reflected a clear preference for sport field "hubs" (multiple fields/diamonds on the same site). The benefits of these hubs expressed by groups include a better ability to facilitate tournament play, atmosphere, and minimizing driving for parents, participants and volunteers.
- Several groups mentioned a willingness to contribute resources (financial and non) to help realize the development of a second artificial turf surface if there organization could be guaranteed sufficient and suitable time access.

Perspectives on Allocations and Bookings

- Some groups expressed challenges dealing with separate entities for bookings and allocations, noting that there are multiple contacts and different processes.
- Concerns about the enforcement of rules / processes were expressed.
- There is a perspective among some stakeholders that large groups dominate sport field discussions and receive priority allocations over smaller groups.
- It was suggested that the CVRD and its partners re-examine or develop a model based around standards of play – these may limit use (e.g. how much field time should younger children really have?).
- Differing thoughts exist about whether larger financial contributions to facility development should align with greater allocation (quantity and priority).

Desired Amenity Improvements

- There is a desire for greater access to washroom facilities at outdoor fields / diamonds.
- Additional group storage is also strongly desired.
- The benefits of added lighting to more sites to extend play and add capacity to the system was expressed by some stakeholders.

Field Use Survey

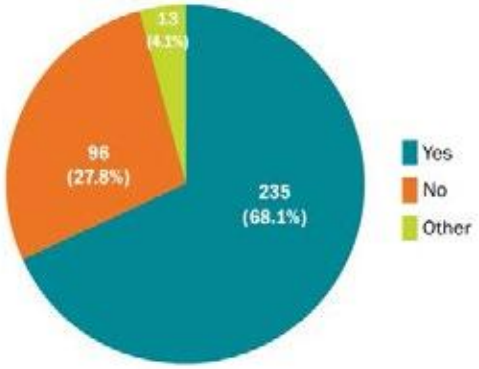
At the outset of the Strategy, the CVRD conducted a Field Use Survey in order to gauge broader perspective from the public on their use of sport fields and desired future improvements to the inventory.

The survey garnered 486 responses from residents across the CVRD.

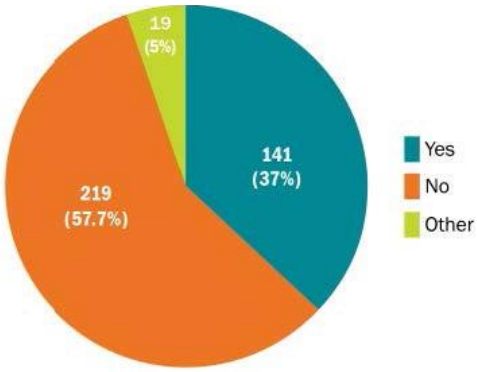
Key findings from the survey Summary Report are presented as follows. Please refer to Appendix B for the complete Summary Report document.

Key Finding: The majority of respondents generally felt that the sport field inventory meets their summer needs, but not their winter season needs. Commonly identified reasons why the sport field inventory is perceived as lacking during the winter months were field conditions and amenities (don't have enough artificial turf or lighted fields), a general lack of field time, and deficient support amenities (e.g. washrooms).

Meeting Summer Needs



Meeting Winter Needs



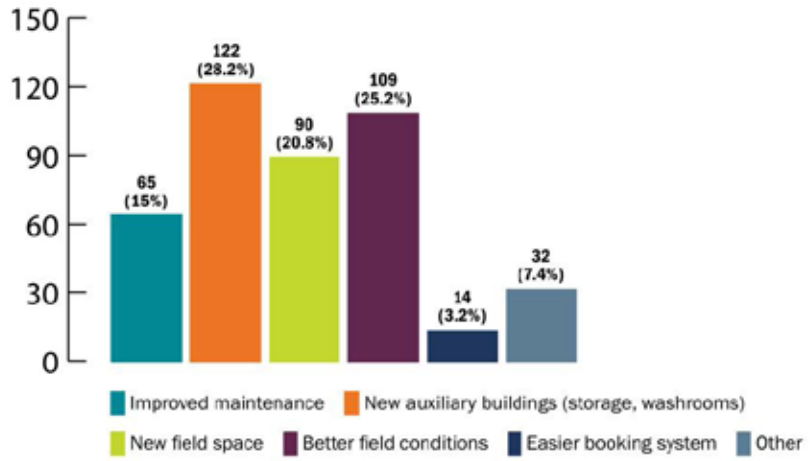
Overview of the Survey Respondents

- 63% directed to the survey by social media.
- 47% indicated that children in their households use sports fields.
- 45% indicated that adults in their household use sports fields.
- Responses by location of residency generally aligned with the population distribution of the CVRD.

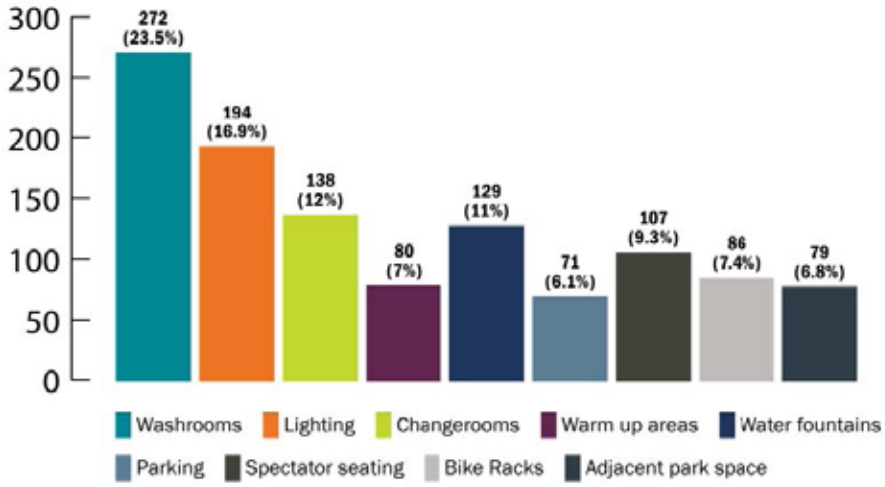
Key Finding: Most sport field sites in the CVRD are accessed by personal motor vehicle. Over two-thirds (67%) access sport field sites by car / motorized vehicle, followed by walking (17%) and cycling / scooter (14%).

Key Finding: Reflecting the previous finding, there is a strong demand for improved support amenities at sport field sites.

Desired improvements to the sport field inventory...



Would like these offered in greater supply...



Section 4.0

Utilization Data Analysis

Included in this section:

- Analysis of available utilization data.

Context on the Utilization Analysis

Sport field booking data was provided by City of Courtney, Village of Cumberland and the Town of Comox. While the data provides valuable insights into utilization of the available sport field inventory, some limitations and challenges exist which are important to note.

- Courtenay, Comox and Cumberland have different bookings and data management practices which impacts the ability to analyze the data in a completely uniform manner.
- Changes in bookings systems and the COVID-19 pandemic required some different years to be used when analyzing the data. (e.g. the City of Courtney provided booking data from 2021, while the Village of Cumberland and Town of Comox provided data from 2022.

For the purposes of this analysis, the term “sports fields” describes both rectangular fields (fields used for soccer, rugby, etc.) and ball diamonds (used for softball, slow-pitch and baseball).

Sport Field User Groups

The table below depicts the number of user groups, and the total hours booked in each community.

Table 4: Overview of User Groups and Hours Booked

Jurisdiction	# of User Groups in Each Community	Total Hours Booked
City of Courtney	18	5,625
Town of Comox	20	1,431
Village of Cumberland	3	146
Grand Total:	41*	7,202

**This is a total of the user groups in each community, but it does not mean unique groups to the area.*

Some of the user groups book sport fields in more than one community, therefore the grand total of user groups in the table above does not represent unique user groups to the area. There are 36 unique user groups in the area, which means that 5 user groups book fields in more than one community. The table below describes these user groups as Cross Community User Groups. The Cross Community User Group table indicates that those 5 user groups account for 60% of the booked hours across the three communities.

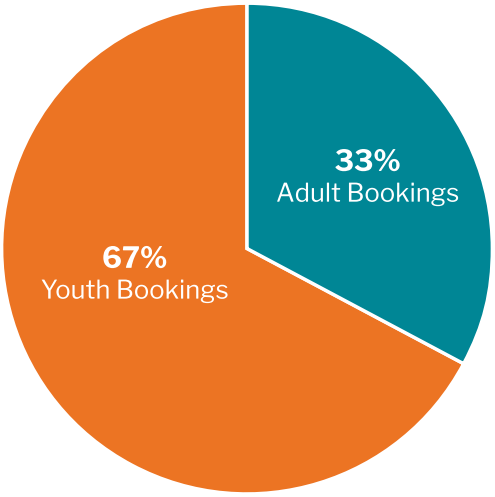
Table 5: Cross Community User Groups (groups that book fields across multiple jurisdictions within the CVRD)

Cross Community User Groups	
Total Number of User Groups	36
Number of Cross Community User Groups	5
Hours Booked by Cross Community User Groups	4,350
% of Bookings made by Cross Community User Groups	60%

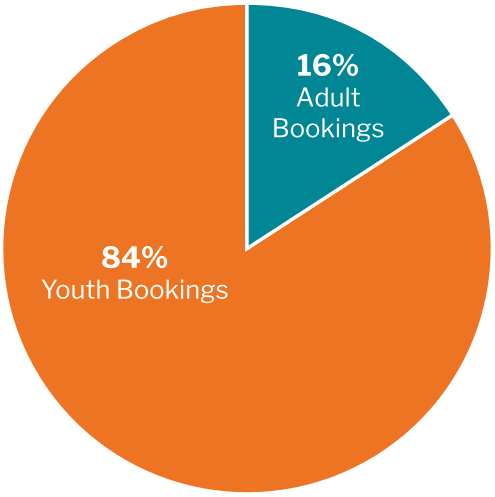
Sport Fields User Groups Age Demographics

Across all three community's user groups that typically use rectangular fields (84%) and ball diamonds (67%) are most prevalent youth serving groups.

Ball Diamonds Bookings



Rectangular Field Bookings



Utilization of Available Capacity

When trying to project forward sport field needs, it is important to estimate total use of available capacity. The table below describes the annual capacity assumption for use on each field type.

Table 6: Field Capacity Assumptions

Field Type	Annual Capacity (hrs)	Assumption
Artificial Turf	2,024	Unlike natural surface fields, capacity for artificial turf is not limited by field condition. The total annual capacity was calculated by estimating the annual weeks that play could occur on the field (46 weeks) by the number of prime hours available each week (44 hours). **Prime time hours are 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM on weekdays and 8:00 AM - 8:00 PM on weekends.*
Natural Surface Rectangular Field	600	600 hours of capacity represents an industry standard for the intensity of use a natural surface field can typically accommodate before field surface deterioration and damage is likely. **Note: a number of other factors may impact this assumption (+ of -), including the field specs (e.g. sand based fields can typically accommodate a higher level of use, drainage, level of maintenance input, etc.).*
Ball Diamond	600	600 hours of capacity represents an industry standard for the intensity of use a natural surface field can typically accommodate before field surface deterioration and damage is likely. **Note: a number of other factors may impact this assumption (+ of -), including the field specs (e.g. sand based fields can typically accommodate a higher level of use, drainage, level of maintenance input, etc.).*
Cross Over Field	900	Approximate capacity could be 1.5 x the capacity of a natural surface sport field or diamond.

The assumptions used in Table 6 were applied to the utilization data provided by the three communities. As reflected in the following table, there generally appears to be sufficient supply within the current available inventory. **However, it is important to note that there is a large discrepancy in the intensity of bookings on a field-by-field basis and booked hours reflected in the table do not include daytime school use of the fields (e.g. physical education programming, recess play, etc.).** While only one field is at or over capacity (Bill Moore), a relatively small number of fields appear to accommodate the bulk of available utilization based on the available data.

Table 7: Courtney Utilization of Capacity (Year-Round)

2021	Natural Grass Rectangular Fields	Artificial Turf Field	Ball Diamonds
Booked Hours	2,525	1,085*	1,230
Number of Fields	16	1	8
Hours of Available	9,600	2,024	4,800
% Booked of Available Hours	26%	54%	26%

**The booked hours represent the total hours booked, the available hours for artificial turf represents the amount of hours that are available at the times that are preferred and necessary for most user groups (e.g. youth sport organizations can't play late into the evening or during school hours).*

Recognizing that access to playable field time is at a premium in the winter season months (October - March), additional analysis was undertaken that looked at grass field utilization at three specific sites – Lewis Park, Vanier, and Bill Moore Park. As reflected by Table 7.1 there are significant demands on Bill Moore Park to accommodate a high volume of winter season use.

Table 7.1: Courtney Utilization of Capacity Winter (October – March)

Field	Field Type	Hours Booked	Hours Available	% Booked of Capacity
Lewis Park Soccer Field 1	Natural Grass Rectangular Field	48	150	32%
Lewis Park Soccer Field 2	Natural Grass Rectangular Field	22	150	15%
Lewis Park Ball Diamond	Ball Diamond	7	150	5%
G.P. Vanier Soccer Field 1	Natural Grass Rectangular Field	46	300	15%
G.P. Vanier Soccer Field 2	Natural Grass Rectangular Field	62	300	21%
Vanier - Rugby Field	Natural Grass Rectangular Field	23	200	12%
Bill Moore Park	Natural Grass Rectangular Field	327	300	109%

Overall field utilization indicators for Comox and Cumberland are summarized by the following tables.

Table 8: Comox Utilization of Capacity

2022	Natural Grass Rectangular Fields	Ball Diamonds
Hours Booked	412	1,018
Number of Fields	9	5
Hours Available	5,400	3,000
% Booked of Available Hours	8%	34%

Table 9: Cumberland Utilization of Capacity

2022	Natural Grass Rectangular Fields	Ball Diamonds
Total Hours Booked	403	32
Number of Fields	1	1
Total Hours Available	600	600
% Booked of Available Hours	67%	5%

Table 10 summarizes overall field utilization across the three communities.

Table 10: Summary of Overall Utilization of Available Capacity

Field Type	Total Hours Booked	Percentage Booked of Capacity
Natural Grass Rectangular Field	3,340	21%
Artificial Turf Field (Rectangular)	1,085	54%
Ball Diamonds	2,280	27%

**An assumption was made that the City of Courtney Sport Field 2021 bookings are similar enough to their 2022 bookings to be compiled for a cross community analysis.*

Key Take-Away's – Utilization Analysis

- The user groups that are consuming the most total hours are booking fields across multiple communities.
- While field time may be limited during some very specific peak times and seasons, available data indicates that a fair amount of capacity exists within the overall inventory.
- A relatively small number of fields within the inventory receive the concentration of bookings.
- Opportunities exist to enhance utilization data collection, management, and consistency across the three communities.

Section 5.0

Key Population Characteristics and Growth Indicators

Included in this section:

- Overview of key population and demographics indicators.
- Potential impacts of future growth on sport field needs.

Key Population Characteristics and Attributes

Provided as follows are pertinent population characteristics and attributes that are important to consider when planning for future sport and recreation infrastructure – including sports fields and related amenities.

Overview

In 2022, the total population of the Comox Valley is estimated to be about 73,000. The most recent census results, summarized in Table 11, show that the three urban areas and the K'ómoks First Nation reserve constitute about 66% of the total regional population, while the three Electoral Areas make up the remaining 34%.

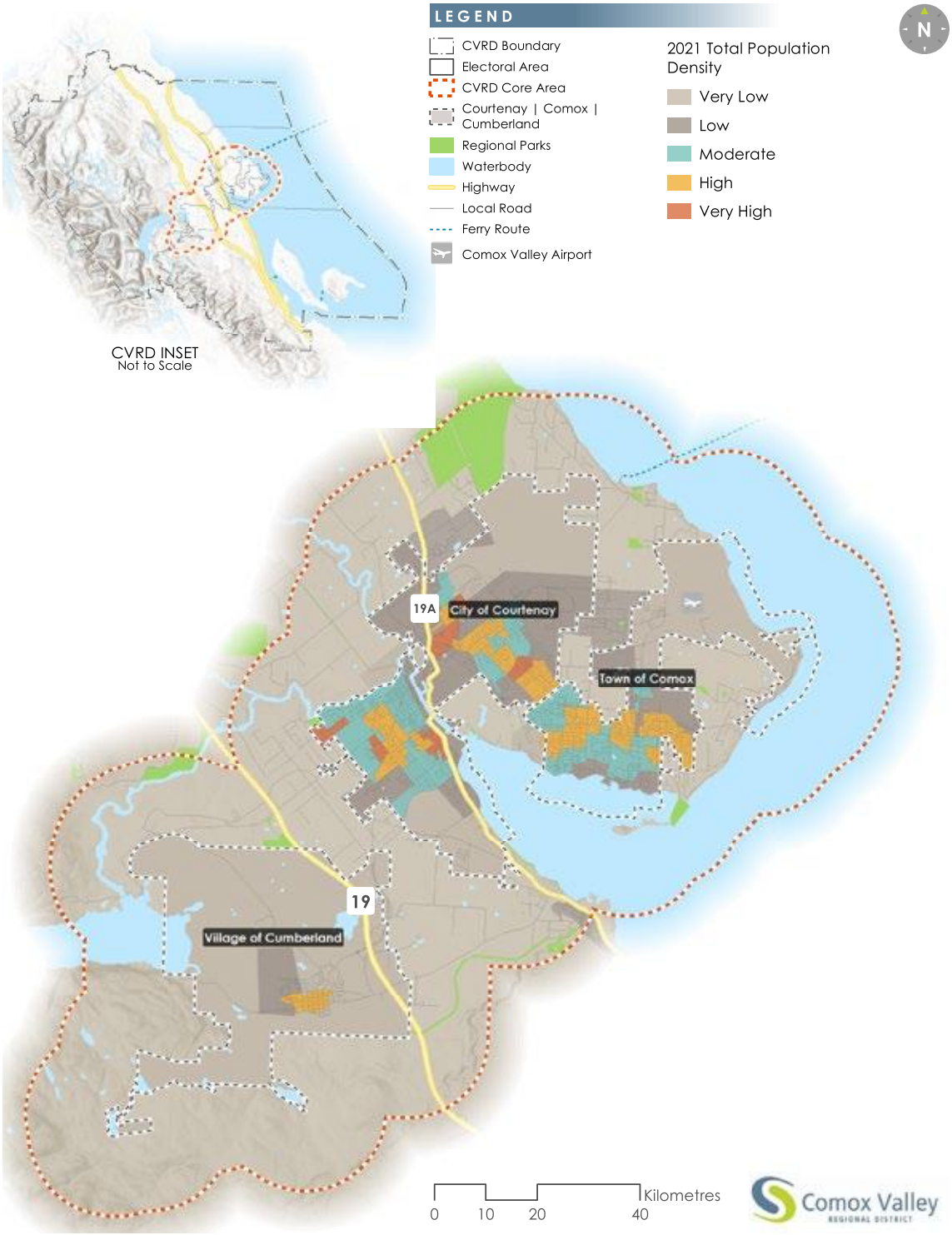
Table 11: Population Summary in 2021 Census

Jurisdiction	Population in 2016	Population in 2021	Increase
Courtenay	25,639	28,420	10.8%
Comox	14,028	14,806	5.5%
Cumberland	3753	4447	18.5%
K'ómoks First Nation	222	291	31.1%
Electoral Area A	7,213	7,926	9.9%
Electoral Area B	7,095	7,392	4.2%
Electoral Area C	8,617	9,158	6.8%
Totals	66,567	72,440	8.9%

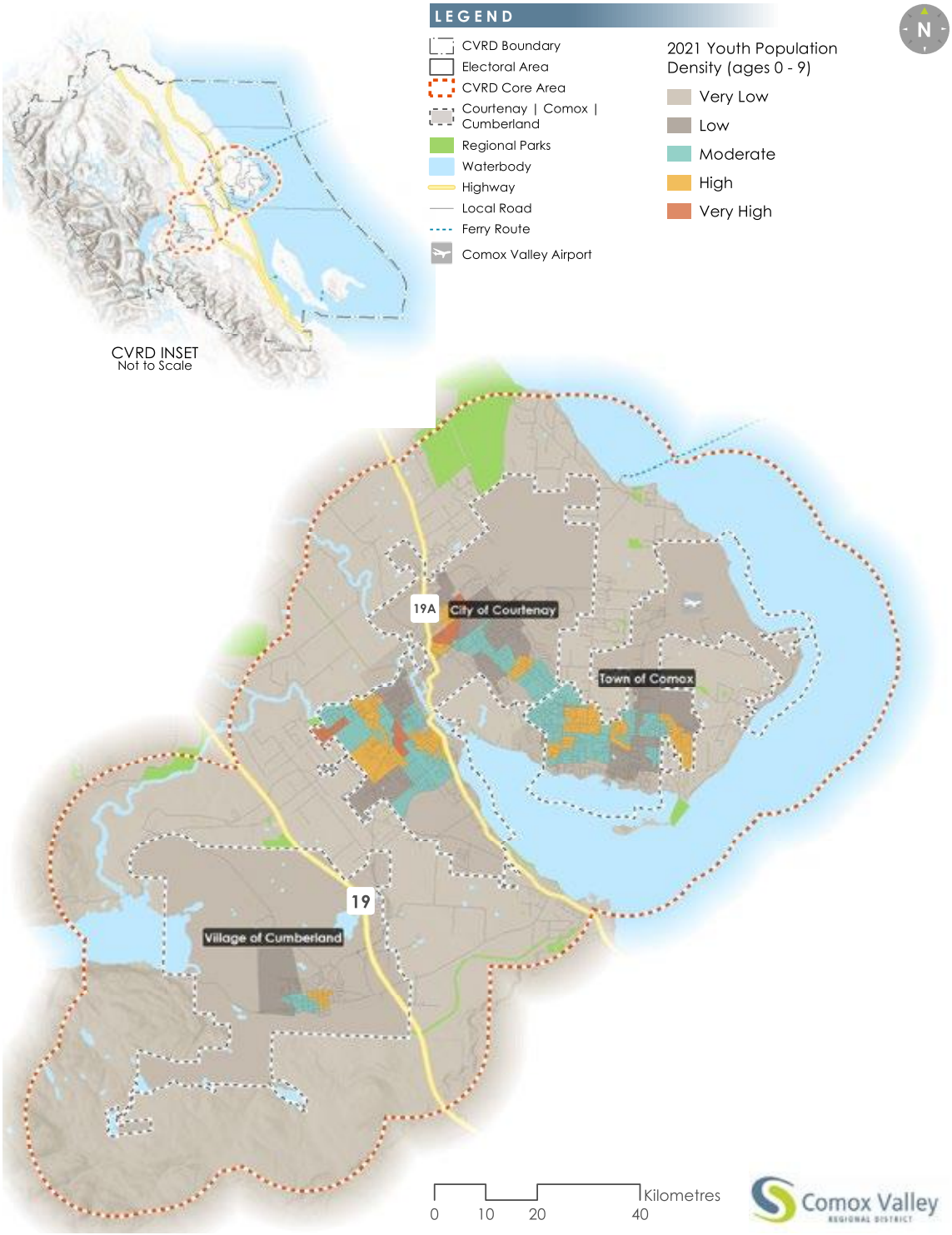
As reflected in Table 11, the Courtenay, K'ómoks First Nation and Electoral Area A are growing faster than the average while Electoral Areas B and C and Comox are growing more slowly.

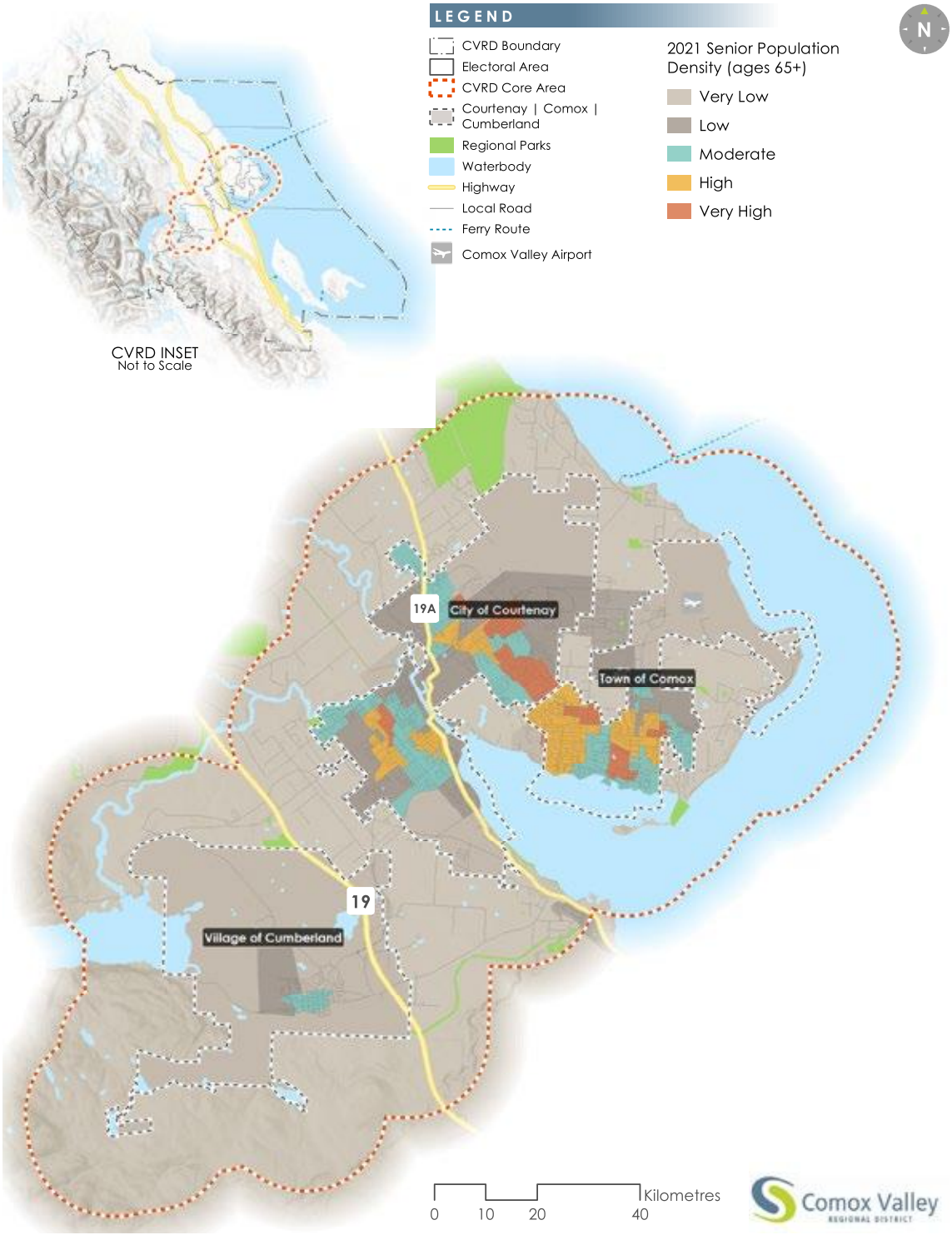
Key Characteristics

As with most regional districts on Vancouver Island, population density varies significantly with some emerging higher density development, suburban residential areas, and rural or “country residential” style development. As previously noted, the current sport field inventory is generally well dispersed throughout the CVRD.

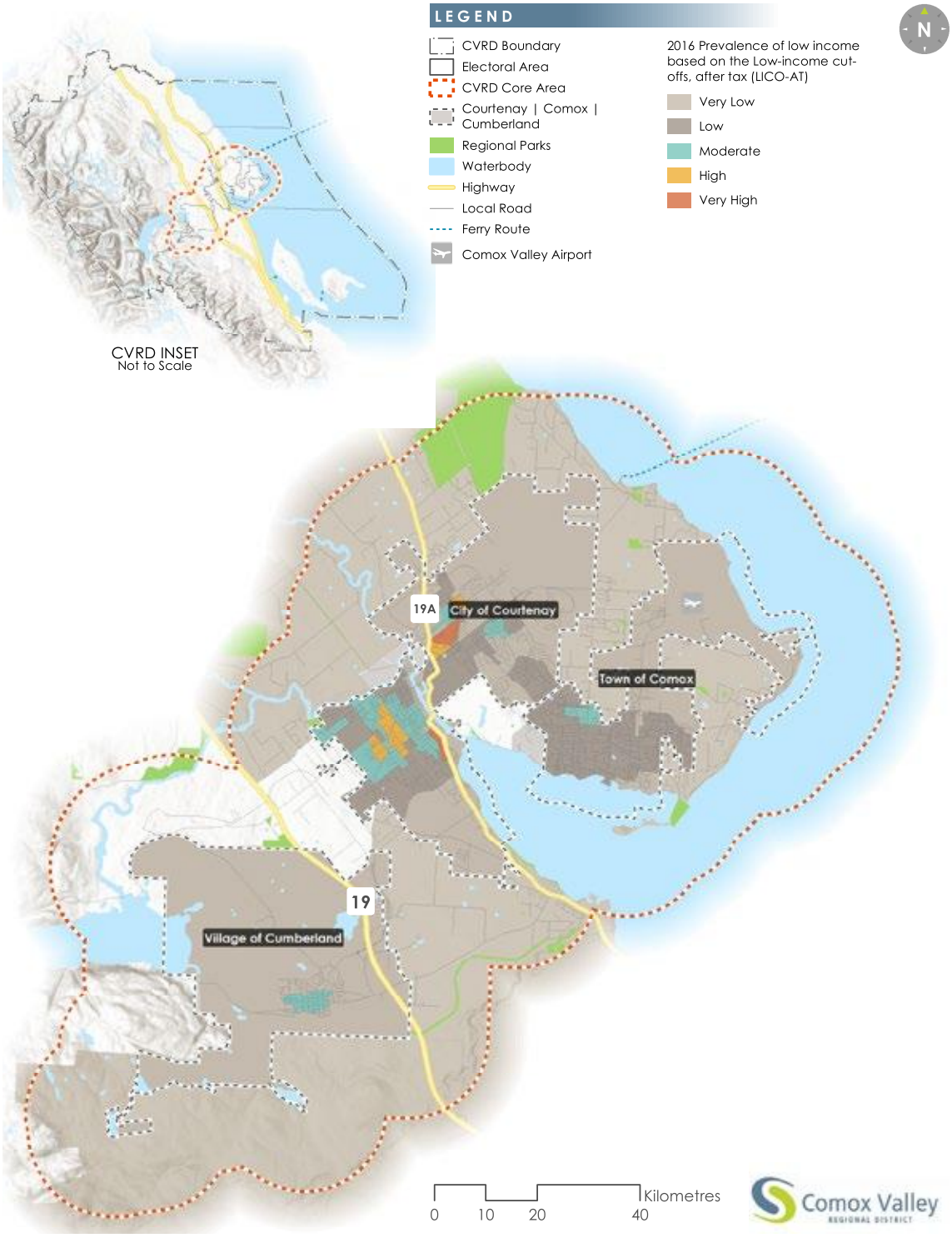


As reflected by the following two maps, youth population density is concentrated in a handful of neighbourhoods while older adults populations tend to be more dispersed throughout the study area.




LEGEND
CVRD Boundary
Electoral Area
CVRD Core Area
Courtenay | Comox | Cumberland
Regional Parks
Waterbody
Highway
Local Road
Ferry Route
Comox Valley Airport
2021 Senior Population Density (ages 65+)
Very Low
Low
Moderate
High
Very High
N
CVRD INSET
Not to Scale
19A
City of Courtenay
Town of Comox
19
Village of Cumberland
Kilometres
0
10
20
40
Comox Valley

The following map reflects areas within the CVRD that have a higher prevalence of residents that meet the Low Income Cut-Offs After Tax (LICO - AT) – a Statistics Canada designation for individuals living in very low income conditions. Notably, there is some overlap between areas with high concentrations of youth and a higher prevalence of residents that meet LICO-AT.



Projecting the Impacts of Growth

As reflected by Table 12, the population of the CVRD is anticipated to grow to between 85,000 – 90,000 residents over the next decade and exceed 95,000 residents by 2040.

Table 12: Population Projections

Source	Project Population Growth
Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy (2010)	88,500 (by 2030)
Province of British Columbia - BC Stats, Population Estimates & Projections (2022)	85,404 (by 2030) 95,748 (by 2040)

Based on the current and projected population, it is reasonable to assume that the CVRD and its partners will need to provide sport field infrastructure for up to approximately 15,000 additional residents over the next 10-15 years. The most logical way to project the future field infrastructure needs of organized user groups is to extrapolate growth into the number of teams that will need to be accommodated by the sport field inventory. It is important to note that this methodology assumes that while specific sport field interests may change, overall participation levels will stay relatively similar (a reasonable assumption based on historical data). The following table reflects some basic assumptions that are used to undertake this calculation.

Table 13: Future Field Need Assumptions

Participation rate in organized field sport activities	10%*
Number of new residents participating in organized field sports **Based on 15,000 new residents and the above noted participation rate*	1,500
Average number of participants per team **Not all program participants attend every practice or game*	15
Number of new teams based on population growth	125
Hours required per team, per week **Reflects 1.5 hour for practice unique to the team, and 2 hours minus a 50% reduction for game time shared with another team*	2.5
Average weeks in a season per program (2.5 months)	10

**Provincial and national data on participation rates in organized field sports vary significantly. 10% is used as a conservative assumption that reflects a general middle point between the various sources of participation data.*

Based on the assumption in Table 13, the sport field inventory in the CVRD may need to accommodate up to 2,500 incremental hours within the next 10-15 years. It is important to reiterate that this analysis is high level and may require revisiting once better local and regional participation rates data is available. For additional context, 2,500 hours is generally equivalent to 1 artificial turf field or 4 natural surface fields.

Table 14: Potential Sport Field Supply Needs to Accommodate Growth

Current Hours Booked (based on available data)	6,705 hrs
Estimated Incremental Hours Required (based on assumptions)	2,500 hrs
Total Estimated Hours Required to Accommodate 15,000 Population Growth	9,205 hrs

It is important to note that the previous calculations do not account for spontaneous / unstructured participation or programs during school hours. Section 8 provides additional guidance on how the sport field inventory in the CVRD can accommodate future growth.

Future, long-term participation trends are challenging to predict and may also impact future capacity needs. Unlike other programs, sport field activity participation at a provincial and national level has remained relatively consistent in lockstep with population growth, possibly due to factors like relative affordability and the diversity of field sports that can use rectangular sport field infrastructure.

Section 6.0

Trends and Leading Practices

Included in this section:

- Summary of key trends and leading practices.

Recreation and sport activities, preferences and community needs are dynamic and require public service providers of these opportunities to remain current on trends and leading practices. Summarized in the following table are key sport field trends and leading practices.

Table 15: Trends and Leading Practices Summary

Trend / Leading Practices	
Shifting allocations away from historically based practices to those that consider equity and development best practices (e.g. Sport for Life and Long Term Development).	• Recognition that historical allocations and bookings practices embed inequality. • Requirement for sport groups to align with their National Sport Organization's (NSO) Long Term Development model. • Movement in sport towards physical literacy and fundamental skill development.
Increasing provision of artificial turf.	• Need to make efficient use of scarce land supply (artificial turf fields can accommodate 3-5 times the level of use intensity as natural surfaces). • Increasing user and user group expectations for surface quality. • Climate change considerations (preserving water supply, variable weather patterns, etc.).
Emergence and growth of activities like cricket, ultimate, and Kabaddi in communities of all sizes.	• Increasing diversification and transient nature of society. • Diversifying sport and recreation interests. • Increased societal willingness to try new activities.
Spontaneous and unstructured recreation and sport demand.	• Increasing desire for low commitment activity options. • Cost of organized sport.
Demand for multi-field sites and preference for this infrastructure over stand-alone fields.	• User expectations for support amenities like washrooms, seating areas, and concessions. • Perceptions over enhanced convenience and user experience. • Effective use of limited land resources.

Section 7.0

Benchmarking

Included in this section:

- Comparative analysis of sport field provision in the CVRD with other jurisdictions.

Table 14 provides an overview of sport field provision within the CVRD relative to other comparator communities. The comparator communities were selected to reflect a range of different jurisdictions, including regional districts and small to medium sized urban centres. This benchmarking comparison suggests that the provision of rectangular natural surface sports fields and ball diamonds in the CVRD is better than the comparators, while the provision of artificial surface sports fields is lower.

The Importance of Considering the Benchmarking Data in the Right Context

While infrastructure provision benchmarking provides interesting insights that are worthwhile to consider along with the other research and engagement inputs, it is also important to note a number of limitations with benchmarking:

- The benchmarking data is simply a count of the infrastructure unit and does not take into account the quality and functionality of the inventory in the various comparator communities.
- Municipalities and regional districts count their inventory in different ways. The inventory reflected in the table for the comparator communities are those fields that are considered within the booking system for each jurisdiction. ***In some of the jurisdictions this includes all school fields, while in others it does not.***
- Further to the above bullet, the collection of benchmarking data is a secondary research exercise that relies on municipal and regional district websites, master plan and study documents, and use of the consulting team's files and contacts. While the communities selected for the benchmarking reflect those for which relatively accurate data is available, some margin of error likely exists (especially for a high volume amenity type like sport fields).

Table 16: Benchmarking Summary

Community / Region	Rectangular Sports Field - Natural Surface	Artificial Surface Sports Fields	Ball Diamonds
Chilliwack	1: 4,660 (20 fields)	1: 31,068 (3 fields)	1: 2,589 (36 diamonds)
Cowichan Valley Reginal District	1: 7,418 (12 fields)	1: 29,671 (3 fields)	1: 2,782 (32 diamonds)
Langley (Township)	1: 2,174 (61 fields)	1: 18,943 (7 fields)	1:1,768 (75 diamonds)
Mission	1: 2,966 (14 fields)	1: 41,519 (1 field)	1: 3,194 (13 diamonds)
Nanaimo	1: 4,755 (21 fields)	1: 33,288 (3 fields)	1: 3,329 (30 diamonds)
Port Coquitlam	1: 3,844 (16 fields)	1: 30,749 (2 fields)	1: 2,674 (23 diamonds)
Port Moody	1: 3,726 (9 fields)	1: 16,768 (2 fields)	1: 2,395 (14 diamonds)
Prince George	1: 3,653 (21 fields)	1: 25,569 (3 fields)	1: 4,794 (16 diamonds)
Regional District of Nanaimo	1: 8,113 (21 fields)	-	1: 8,518 (20 diamonds)
AVERAGE	**1: 4,590 (22 fields)**	**1: 28,447 (3 fields)**	**1: 3,560 (29 diamonds)**
CVRD Total	*1: 1,685 (43 fields)*	*1: 72,445 (1 field)*	*1: 1,958 (37 diamonds)*

Section 8.0

Strategy Outcomes

Recommended future guidance is provided in this section under six overarching Strategy Outcomes. The strategic guidance provided under each Strategy Outcome is intended to optimize the sport field system, guide future projects, and help plan for projected growth.

Strategy Outcome #1: Enhance and Standardize Data Collection.

Rationale for this Direction:

- The partners involved in sport field bookings have differing practices for bookings and data management, which presents a challenge when trying to comprehensively understand regional use, participation levels, trends, and long-term needs.
- Having comprehensive and consistent utilization data can help inform future decision capital planning and operational decision making.
- A number of groups use fields across the multiple jurisdictions. Collaborative tracking of utilization will help ensure these groups are using appropriate volumes of field time.

Recognizing that sport fields are just one of a number of amenity types that have some level of multi-jurisdictional provision in the CVRD, it may be prudent for the CVRD and its partners to establish a working group that can discuss more broadly how utilization data can be collaboratively tracked and managed. This suggested action may could also be paired up with a collaborative approach to allocations (as further discussed in Strategy Outcome #4).

Strategy Outcome #2: Utilize the Refreshed Sport Field Classifications as Guideline for Operational and Capital Investment in the Sport Field Inventory.

As summarized in Section 2, the project team undertook an inventory and assessment of the sport field inventory that included a refreshed classification of the inventory using the previous 2008 assessments – *please refer to the Appendices for the detailed assessment findings.*

Based on the field assessments and evaluation of the inventory versus the previous classification, it was suggested that the development of a refreshed classification system would be helpful to provide a point of reference for both capital planning and ongoing operations. The refreshed classification system outlined in Table 17 identifies suggested, high-level field and amenity standards, maintenance input levels, and targeted use characteristics. Use of this classification system by the CVRD and its partners will also help ensure consistency across the inventory and guide field enhancement and new development projects.

Table 17: Recommended Classification System

Class	Maintenance Input	Field Type and Characteristics	Amenities	Maximum Level of Permitted Use	Target Uses
Artificial Turf	As required	• Drainage system required	• Washrooms • On-site change areas • Lighting • Storage • Spectator seating	N/A (no limits to use potential)	All
A	High	• Sand based, natural surface field • Drainage and irrigation required • Full sized regulation surface	• Washrooms • On-site change areas • Lighting optional if rationalized by type of use and characteristics • Storage • Spectator seating • Diamonds are fenced	600 hours	Game play
B	Moderate	• Sand or soil based • Drainage and irrigation optimal	• *Selected Class A amenities where deemed appropriate.*	300 hours	Practices and recreational sport game play
C	Low	• Soil based • Drainage and irrigation optional	• Not required	300 hours	Practices and spontaneous / unstructured use

Strategy Outcome #3: Target Capital Investment in Sport Field Infrastructure Towards a Focus on Maximizing the Quality of Sport Field Infrastructure and Adding Functional Capacity.

As per the analysis in Section 5, it is reasonable to anticipate based on expected population growth that the CVRD and its partners may need to accommodate approximately 2,500 incremental hours of sport field demand over the next 10-15 years. While sport field user groups and public survey respondents expressed concerns over a lack of available capacity, the analysis of utilization data suggests that there is sufficient capacity within the system to accommodate growth. **These divergent findings from the research and analysis suggest that available resources should be focused primarily on improving the quality, functionality and experiential aspects of current sport field sites.**

Provided as follows are suggested priorities for sport field investment over the next 10-15 years. **It is important to note that the majority of sites identified for future investment are owned by School District 71 and future capital works on these sites would require District input, approval and potential partnership.**

Focus Area: Artificial Turf

Providing a second artificial turf surface through the retrofit of an existing natural surface field is the most efficient and effective approach to addressing user group needs, meeting future growth, and optimizing use of available sport field land resources. While the current artificial turf field is not being used to capacity, benchmarking and trends provide additional justification for developing a second artificial turf surface based on the following rationale:

- Multi-use capability / functionality
- Ability to provide increased shoulder and winter season capacity
- Maintenance and operational efficiencies

Site assessments were conducted on existing sport field sites across the CVRD to determine artificial turf suitability. This analysis aimed at identifying sites that are most suitable based on a number of key attributes, including:

- Existing site infrastructure (e.g. lighting infrastructure, support amenities and complementary indoor spaces / facilities)
- Site adjacencies (e.g. surrounding neighbourhood characteristics)
- Access and parking
- Other observed characteristics (e.g. drainage and surfacing)

Three sites were identified as being most suitable with each site having advantages and disadvantages. Table 18 provides a high level overview of the key characteristics and future considerations for the three sites.

Table 18: Summary of Potential Artificial Turf Sites

Site	Considerations
Bill Moore Park	• The site has a large footprint to work with which will support amenity provision and provide flexibility. • Lighting infrastructure exists, however it is configured for ball and would need to be adapted. • Observed site conditions suggest this option may incur additional costs to improve drainage and grading.
G.P. Vanier Secondary School	• 2 fields on the site are deemed viable – Field #1 (NE field) and Field #2 (field with the existing track) • Field #1 (NE field) is the suggested option as retrofitting Field #2 would impact the track and require relocation of the athletics amenities. • Developing a second artificial turf surface on the site presents the opportunity to create a multi-synthetic field hub that will support tournament and event hosting. • Pre-existing amenities provide an opportunity for some cost savings.
Highland Park	• Opportunity to provide a synthetic turf field in a different geographic area. • There is not currently lighting on the site. • Additional site improvements for parking/drop off may be required because the field site is relatively far from the school lot and Torrence Road.

Mark R. Isfeld Secondary has previously been identified as a desired location for a second artificial turf surface. While this site and a number of other sites in the community could technically be retrofitted to artificial turf, a number of challenges were noted that resulted in it not being identified as a highly suitable location.

- The location of field has numerous access point and flow challenges.
- The field is tucked away behind the school with minimal viewing and vantage points, presenting a high level of amenity vandalism risks.
- Lighting infrastructure does not exist and would need to be added.

Potential Capital Cost Impacts

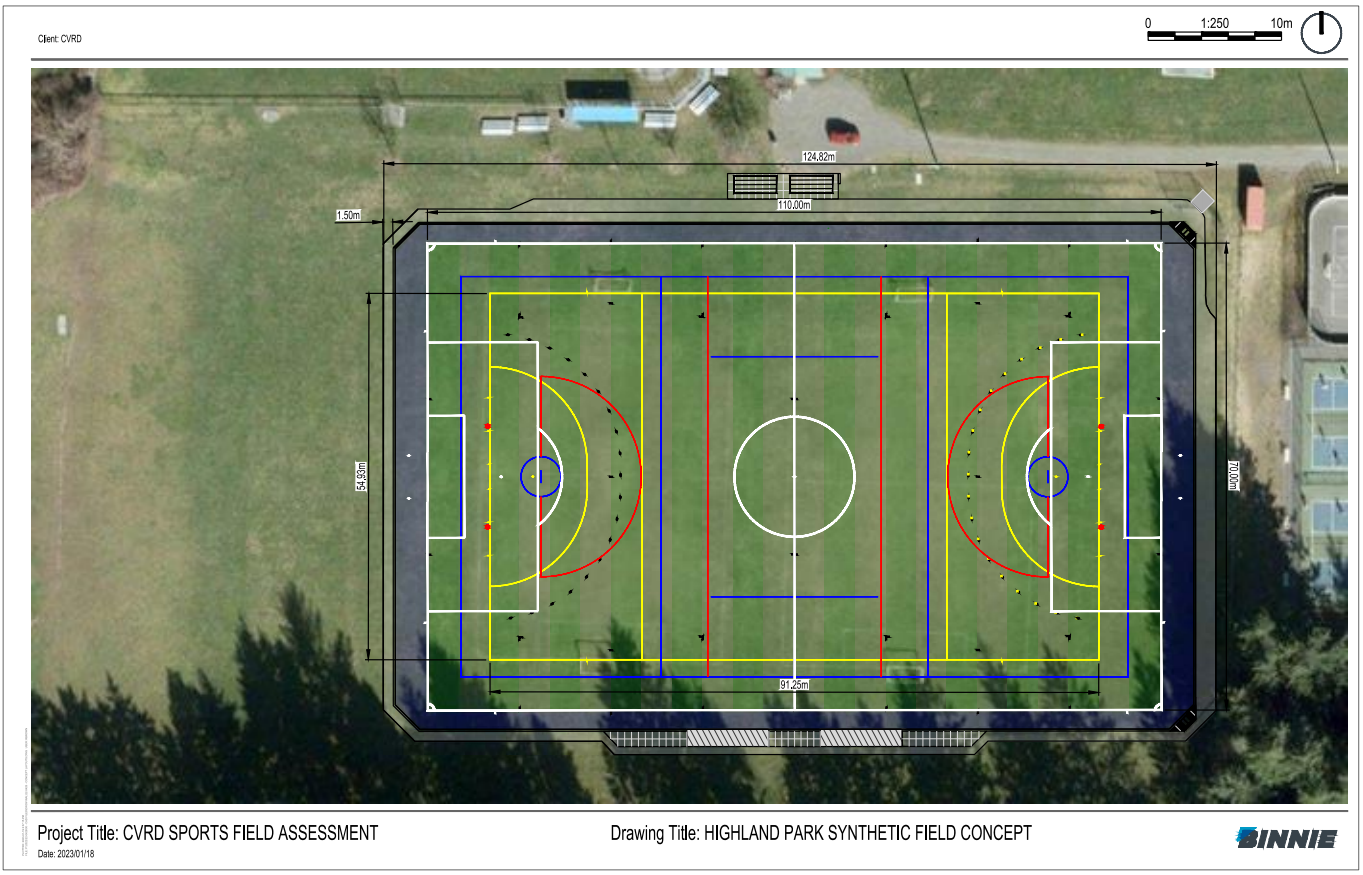
$4,000,000 - $5,000,000 is a typical cost range for an artificial turf retrofit project, which generally includes:

- A regulation field size
- Standard field shockpad, surface, and infill
- Lighting
- Basic complement of support infrastructure (washrooms)

Before proceeding with the development of any site, further technical analysis should be undertaken as a number of factors can significantly impact cost, including:

- Geotechnical condition
- Atypical lighting requirements (e.g. location of existing power source, upgrades required, site limitations, mitigation of light pollution, etc.).
- Water run-off mitigation requirement

Conceptual Test Fit: Highland Park



Conceptual Test Fit: Bill Moore Park (Option 1)

Conceptual Test Fit: Bill Moore Park (Option 2)

Conceptual Test Fit: G.P. Vanier Park

Recommended Next Steps

The CVRD and its partners should undertake feasibility analysis to further explore:

- Technical condition of the suggested candidate site(s)
- Detailed capital cost analysis on a preferred site(s)
- Partnership and operating approaches
- Site program options – including the type of field surface required and support amenity requirements

It is also suggested that any future investment in a synthetic turf field be undertaken with access equity as a primary consideration. While large user groups may have fundraising and resource capacity to contribute, these considerations should not be deemed more important than providing an artificial turf surface that can provide broad based community benefits.

Feasibility analysis should also explore potential reasons why utilization of the existing artificial turf field has not been maximized and whether this factor is due to how time is currently allocated or other factors (e.g. market characteristics, user group barriers to use, etc.).

Other Capital Projects to Optimize the Current Inventory

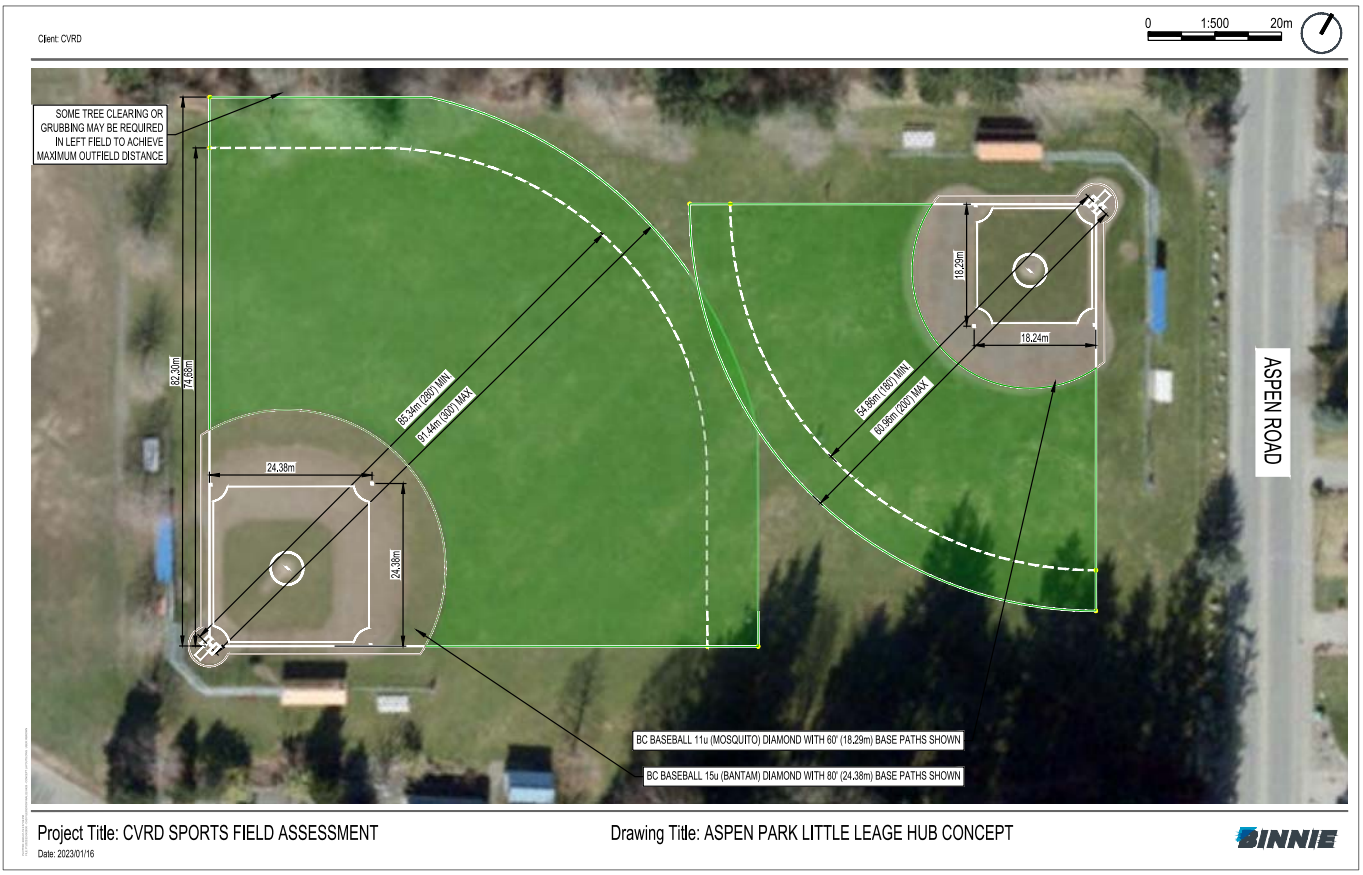
Based on the research and engagement, a number of other priorities for capital investment have been identified. These projects advance the overarching recommendation goal of optimizing the current sport field inventory through focused investment where it can be most beneficial.

Table 19: Summary of Other Recommended Capital Investment Focus Areas

Project	Rationale and Benefits	Next Steps	Potential Capital Cost Impacts*
Add washroom and/or changeroom structures to 2 – 4 field sites over the next 10 years	• Improves user experience. • Responds to key needs identified through the engagement.	• Identify project sites based on use (current use and opportunities to increase use). • Undertake the necessary design and cost analysis.	$150,000 - $750,000
Add lighting to 2 – 4 field sites over the next 10 years if capacity benefits can be sufficiently demonstrated.	• Increases evening capacity, making better use of existing assets. ***Before proceeding with the addition of lighting to a site, further analysis should be conducted to ensure that the capacity benefits warrant the capital expenditure, and, that additional capacity will not result in overuse of a grass surface field.***	• Identify project sites based on use (current use and opportunities to increase use). • Undertake the necessary design and cost analysis.	$60,000 - $80,000 per pole, plus servicing ($100,000 - $200,000)
Develop a baseball hub site	• Responds to a potential field type gap. • Provides baseball with enhanced infrastructure that can support growth and tournament hosting.	• Further evaluate the suitability of Aspen Park and Queenesh Park (these two sites have been preliminarily identified as potential locations for a baseball hub).	$500,000 (field only; not including amenities)

**High level cost estimates. These amenities have a high degree of variability.*

Conceptual Test Fit: Aspen Park



Conceptual Test Fit: Queenesh Elementary School

Initiate Planning for a Multi-Field Hub

The CVRD and its partners should begin the process of massing land for a major multi-sport hub site. While the development of this site is likely not needed for at least 10-15 years based on current demand and the need to focus available resources on enhancing existing sport field sites, initiating planning now is prudent and will help position the region to accommodate future growth.

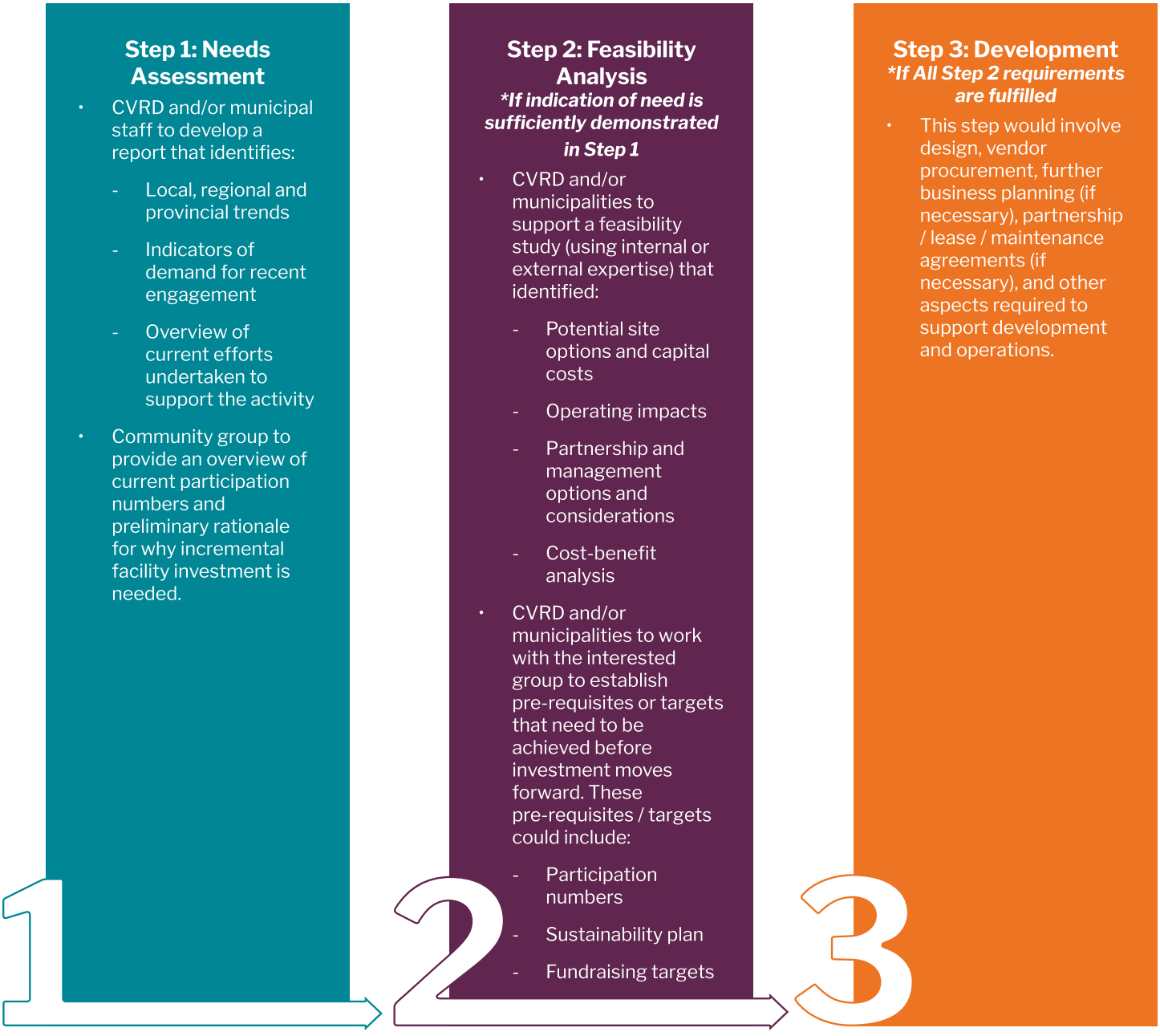
The advantages of initiating planning in the near term for a future site are numerous and include:

- The potential to address potential tournaments hosting gaps.
- Aligning with identified user needs and preferences for multi-field venues with a high provision of support amenities.
- The flexibility to potentially consolidate the sport field inventory (e.g. repurposing underutilized, stand-alone fields for higher value recreation and leisure uses).
- The flexibility to meet future, unknown (or unclear) needs for new and emerging types of sport field activities that may be challenging to accommodate at existing sites.

While amassing land for this site through the development process and/or purchase should begin in the short term, feasibility analysis and business planning is not required for at least 5-10 years.

Establish a Clear Process and Pre-Requisites for Investment in New Types of Field Infrastructure

Providing infrastructure to support emerging activities is important and reflects a commitment towards providing diverse and inclusive infrastructure. However, investment in infrastructure to support these activities needs to be rationalized and make prudent use of public resources. Outlined as follows is a recommended process for the CVRD and its partners to follow when community demand comes forward for investment in new types of sport field infrastructure.



Strategy Outcome #4: Develop a New Approach for Sport Field Bookings and Allocations Based Around Clear Standards of Play.

Allocating based on need and achieving public benefit reflects a commitment to equity and making the best use of available recreation infrastructure. Best practice guidance from Sport for Life recommends that publicly provided recreation assets be allocated based on clear rationale that supports physical literacy and Long Term Development (LTD) principles.

As a next step emanating from the Strategy, the CVRD and project partners should establish standards of play that are based around the following core principles.

1. Alignment with Sport for Life's Long Term Development Model (LTD). *Every sanctioned National Sport Organization in Canada is required to have an LTD plan that is followed at the provincial and local levels.
2. Commitment to appropriate and efficient use of field time (e.g. booking only the time that is needed, sharing time with other groups, etc.).
3. Using the right fields at the right times (aligning programs with the appropriate class of field).

It is also important to note that currently not all sport field user groups pay to access field time for practices and games. The refreshed allocation approach should also look at user fees and consider the following:

- Having a clear, transparent and equitable rationale for what groups pay to access field time.
- The impacts of fees on "field hoarding".
- The cost to provide fields and support amenities (including capital reserve and lifecycle needs for specialty and high value fields).

Example Standards of Play

National Sport Organizations (NSO's) in Canada are required to have Long Term Development (LTD) plans that provide provincial and local organizations with guidance on appropriate sport development. While the various NSO's have differing levels of detail within their LTD plans as it pertains to practice and game duration, these important documents can be used to develop local standards of play that can guide allocations

Example: Soccer Canada Grassroots LTD Standards

CANADA SOCCER GRASSROOTS STANDARDS

	ACTIVE START	FUNDAMENTALS		LEARN TO TRAIN	
CRITERIA	**U5-U6**	**U7**	**U8-U9**	**U10-U11**	**U12-U13**
Match format (maximum)	No formal matches	3v3	4v4 (no GK) or 5v5 (with GK)	7v7	9v9 (U12) 9v9 or 11v11 (U13)
Coaching qualification	Active Start + MED + RiS + Making Headway + EAP	Fundamentals + MED + RiS + Making Headway + EAP	Fundamentals + MED + RiS + Making Headway + EAP	Learn to Train + MED + RiS + Making Headway + EAP	Learn to Train + MED + RiS + Making Headway + EAP
Maximum match duration	Informal play	30 minutes	40 minutes	50 minutes	70 minutes (U12) 80 minutes (U13)
Maximum match time per player per day	N/A	60 minutes	60 minutes	80 minutes	100 minutes
Minimum rest time between matches	N/A	Duration of one (1) match	Duration of one (1) match	Duration of one (1) match	Duration of one (1) match
Maximum goal size	Pop-up goals 3ft (0.91m) x 5ft (1.52m)	Pop-up goals 3ft (0.91m) x 5ft (1.52m)	5ft (1.52m) x 8ft (2.44m)	6ft (1.83m) x 16ft (4.88m)	6ft (1.83m) x 18ft (5.49m)
Field size	N/A	**Width:** 18-22m **Length:** 25-30m	**Width:** 25-30m **Length:** 30-36m	**Width:** 30-36m **Length:** 40-55m	**9v9 Width:** 42-55m **Length:** 60-75m **11v11 Width:** 45-90m **Length:** 90-120m
Ball size	3	3	3 or 4 (or 4 super light)	4 (or 5 light)	9v9: 4 (or 5 light) 11v11: 5 (or 5 light)
Number of memorable events (maximum)	N/A	N/A	Two (2) per year	Two (2) per year	Four (4) per year **One (1) event may be overseas*
Referee or Game Leader	N/A	Game Leader	Game Leader or Referee	Game Leader or Referee	Referee
Restarts from Sidelines	N/A	Pass in or dribble in	Pass in or dribble in	Pass in or dribble in	Throw-in

CANADA SOCCER GRASSROOTS STANDARDS

	ACTIVE START	FUNDAMENTALS		LEARN TO TRAIN	
CRITERIA	**U5-U6**	**U7**	**U8-U9**	**U10-U11**	**U12-U13**
Offside	N/A	N/A	No	No	Yes
Retreat line	N/A	Yes (halfway line)	Yes (halfway line)	Yes (one third)	Optional (one third)
Substitutions	N/A	Unlimited (any stoppage or on the fly)	Unlimited (any stoppage or on the fly)	Unlimited (any stoppage)	Unlimited (any stoppage)
Season or block length (indoor/outdoor)	6-16 weeks	6-16 weeks	6-22 weeks	10-22 weeks	10-22 weeks
Team travel time	Within organization	Under 60 minutes each way	Under 60 minutes each way	Under 60 minutes each way	Under 60 minutes each way
Playing time (players encouraged to try all positions)	Players all play	Fair playing time for all players	Fair playing time for all players	Fair playing time for all players	Fair playing time for all players
Player-to-coach ratio	**Ideal:** 4:1 **Maximum:** 8:1	**Ideal:** 6:1 **Maximum:** 8:1	**Ideal:** 8:1 **Maximum:** 10:1 **(5v5)**	**Ideal:** 10:1 **Maximum:** 12:1	**9v9 Ideal:** 12:1 **Maximum:** 16:1 **11v11 Ideal:** 16:1 **Maximum:** 18:1
Practice-to-match ratio	N/A	1:1	1:1 or 2:1	2:1 or 3:1	2:1 or 3:1
Structured practice duration	30-45 minutes	30-45 minutes	45-60 minutes	60-75 minutes	60-75 minutes
Match day roster guidelines (game day only)	N/A	**Ideal:** 6 players	**Ideal:** 8 players	**Ideal:** 10 players	**9v9 Ideal:** 14 players **11v11 Ideal:** 16 players
Match day format	N/A	Festival format	Festival format	Festival format	Festival or league format
Number of match days (Festival or league play) per week	N/A	One (1)	One (1)	One (1)	One (1)

The following tables further reflect an example of how NSO standards of play can be translated into local standards of play for the purposes of field allocations. This example uses the Canada Soccer's Grassroots Standards as a guideline, however it is important to note that a significant amount of flexibility exists within these guidelines and therefore some assumptions need to be made for this example model (e.g. Canada Soccer's guidelines reflects duration ranges for the season of play, practice and game times and other key elements). It is recommended that the CVRD and its municipal partners work collaboratively with the sport groups to refine and test the various standard of play assumptions.

Potential Standards of Play Model Example – Grassroots Level Soccer

Table 20: Initial Calculation of Sport Field Time Needs by Age Groups

**This table utilizes Canada Soccer's LTD guidelines to generally identify hours of field time required on a per participant or per group/team basis.*

Age Group	Weeks in a Season	Average Practices per Week	Duration of Practice (minutes)	Matches per Week	Maximum Match Time per Player per Week (Minutes)	Minutes of Field Time Required per Participant (or grouping/ team of participants) per Week During the Season of Play	Minutes of Field Time Required per Participant (or grouping/ team of participants) per Season of Play	Hours of Field Time Required per Participant (or grouping/ team of participants) per Season of Play
U5-U6	10	1	45	0	0	45	450	8
U7	10	1	45	1	60	105	1,050	18
U8-U9	12	1.5	60	1	60	150	1,800	30
U10-U11	14	2	75	1	80	230	3,220	54
U12-U13	16	3	75	1.5	100	375	6,000	100

Table 21: Example Allocation Model

**This table reflects how field time needs can be extrapolated into how allocations can be determined.*

Age Group	Hours of Field Time Required per Participant (or grouping/team of participants) per Season of Play	# of Teams/ Program Groupings **Examples Purposes Only (not real #'s)*	Total Hours of Field Time Required per Age Group	Space Needs (Portion of a full size field required to meet programming needs)	Relative Allocation (hours of full size field time equivalent needed)
U5-U6	8	20	150	0.25	38
U7	18	10	175	0.25	44
U8-U9	30	10	300	0.5	150
U10-U11	54	5	268	0.5	134
U12-U13	100	5	500	1	500

Strategy Outcome #5: Advance Efforts to Actively Promote Spontaneous and Unstructured Sport Field Play.

While much attention is often given to organized, program based field use, it is important to remember that a significant proportion of sport field activity occurs in unstructured and spontaneous ways through pick-up games, individual practice, and informal small group play. The following strategies are recommended to support spontaneous and unstructured use.

- **Consider designating a handful of sport fields for non-bookable use.** These fields should be removed from the bookable inventory and promoted as always available for spontaneous use.
- **Develop messaging that encourages spontaneous play.** The CVRD and its partners can use their social media platforms and other communications channels to encourage non-program based activity on sports fields.
- **Ensure clarity around when fields are booked.** Post field bookings on municipal websites so individuals know when they can access fields.
- **Work with groups to reduce "blanket bookings".** When groups do not need field time, they should be clearly promoted and communicated as available for spontaneous use. While groups may be concerned with field quality and feel a sense of ownership of the facility, spontaneous use can be managed and in most cases is likely to have minimal impact on the field surface and amenities.

Strategy Outcome #6: Create a More Streamlined and Cohesive Sport Field System in the Region.

The CVRD, City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland and School District 71 have successfully collaborated in various ways, informally and formally, across a number of service areas. Future opportunities exist to increase and optimize collaborations in order to provide the best possible user experiences and maximize efficiency across the sport field system.

Identified as follows are suggested actions to increase collaboration and enhance overall management practices.

Suggested Action	Rationale and Benefits
Bring the Village of Cumberland in the sport field service.	• Creates a more cohesive system and better overall consistency across. • Recognizes that many groups are using fields across jurisdictional boundaries.
Shift all field bookings towards a single point of contact.	• Improves user experience and convenience. • Enables more efficient and effective data collection, management and analysis.
Wherever possible, align policy and practices pertaining to key elements of sport field service delivery like allocations and user fees.	• Creates consistent practices. • Recognizes that many groups are using fields across jurisdictional boundaries.

As new or enhanced sport field infrastructure is developed in the future, it will also be important for the various partners in sport field provision to clearly understand and consider the impacts of capital investment. These future discussions should not only consider up front capital investment but also capital reserve and lifecycle. The lifespan of an artificial turf surface is approximately 10 – 12 years, requiring ongoing lifecycle budgeting to be undertaken. Other higher value sport field infrastructure (e.g. Class A fields with bleachers and permanent structures) will also require re-investment to ensure safe and functional use.

Section 9.0

Implementation Summary

The following table summarizes the six Strategy Outcomes and identifies the potential capital and operational resource requirements associated with each.

Strategy Outcome	Capital Resource Requirements	Operational Resource Requirements
1. Enhance and Standardize Data Collection.	• N/A	• Incremental staff time and potential systems investment.
2. Utilize the Refreshed Sport Field Classifications as Guideline for Operational and Capital Investment in the Sport Field Inventory.	• Use by staff on an ongoing basis to guide field improvement projects.	• Use by staff on an ongoing basis to guide operational planning and resource allocation.
3. Target Capital Investment in Sport Field Infrastructure Towards a Focus on Maximizing the Quality of Sport Field Infrastructure and Adding Functional Capacity.	• Further technical and feasibility analysis required for a second artificial turf field ($75,000 - $10,000) • Cost of developing a second artificial turf surface: $4 – 5 M (pending detailed site analysis) • Addition of washrooms and lighting to 2-4 field sites. Additional cost analysis required after sites have been identified. • Recommended baseball hub requires further site and cost analysis ($500,000 is a typical cost for a Class A level diamond). • Land cost for the recommended long-term new multi-sport field hub.	• Staff time to support further analysis.

Strategy Outcome	Capital Resource Requirements	Operational Resource Requirements
4. Develop a New Approach for Sport Field Bookings and Allocations Based Around Clear Standards of Play.	• N/A	• Staff time to support refining the standards of play and implementation.
5. Advance Efforts to Actively Promote Spontaneous and Unstructured Sport Field Play.	• N/A	• N/A
6. Create a More Streamlined and Cohesive Sport Field System in the Region.	• N/A	• Staff time to support the recommended focus areas / initiatives and sport field management changes.

Appendices

Appendix A: Field Assessment Charts

<<<To be added>>>

Appendix B: Field Use Survey Summary Report

Comox Valley Regional District
Field Use Survey

Summary Report
June 2022

Comox Valley
REGIONAL DISTRICT
comoxvalleyrd.ca

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – General Public Survey (Hard Copy)

APPENDIX 2 – Public Survey Summary Results

1.0 Executive Summary

The Comox Valley Regional District's recreation team undertook a review of their sports fields in order to plan ahead for the community's growing needs. As part of the overall assessment, the CVRD invited the public's input on how they currently use fields, any challenges/barriers they face, and what they would like to see for field programming and what would improve their experiences.

To collect this input from the general public, a survey was created and promoted widely. Over 415 completed submissions were returned, providing insight for the CVRD team into how the community currently uses fields in the community.

Among the highlights were:

Of those who responded, fields are being used almost equally by children (under 18) and adults (19-64), with half saying they use the fields both formally and informally.

The majority felt that fields were meeting their needs in the summer time, while the majority felt their needs were not being met in the winter.

Over 50% said the programming is currently meeting their needs but that improvements to amenities/conditions would improve their overall experience: including new auxiliary buildings and improved field conditions.

This summary will be provided to the CVRD for consideration alongside a field assessment, underway now. Combined, they will support the recreation team's planning for future improvements and priorities.

2.0 Introduction

In order to plan for the future, the Comox Valley Regional District is reviewing the current conditions of fields in the community, and collecting information about how they are currently used by residents. In early 2022, the recreation staff undertook an engagement process to collect feedback from those using fields in the community.

2.1 PROJECT BRIEF & CONSULTATION OVERVIEW

The CVRD is working to update their 2008 Playing Fields Study, with assessment now underway to update inventory, identify field expansion locations and provide best management practices for allocation of fields based on current use, research and trends. In order to supplement that work, the CVRD wanted to collect information from the general public that includes how they use the fields, and what they would like to see moving forward.

In order to collect that feedback, a survey was created and distributed/promoted using a range of tools. The results of that survey are summarized in this report.

2.2 ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The objectives for this stage of engagement were laid out in a Public Engagement Plan created by the CVRD. These included:

- Increase awareness regarding the current needs, uses and trends regarding sports field requirements within the CVRD.
- Ensure that all residents have an opportunity to provide feedback.
- Find out current needs/uses within region. (CVRD Communications/Zinc)

2.3 ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND PROMOTION

To achieve these objectives, a range of tools and materials were used to encourage as wide participation as possible, and generate constructive feedback from participants with a range of understanding and engagement in recreation.

- **SURVEY**: A (15 question) survey was drafted asking about current use, what fields are used and how fields are currently meeting community needs. The survey was live May 17 – June 3, 2022.
- **PRESS RELEASE**: A news release promoting the survey was distributed on May 17, 2022.
- **PRINT ADS:** Print ads were published in local papers during the survey window.
- **EMAIL:** An email invitation was distributed to the community via Perfect Mind.
- **SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS:** Three posts for Facebook and Twitter were posted and shared.

3.0 Consultation Results

CVRD staff hear regularly from the organizations that manage structured programming in the Comox Valley. In order to better understand their needs, and the community's wider needs while gauging interest in new programs and/or amenities, the survey was shared with the general public. Below is a summary of the results.

3.1 OVERVIEW RESULTS

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

Courtenay: 41.7%
Comox: 33%
Cumberland: 3.6%
Electoral Area A: 5.8%
Electoral Area B: 5.5%
Electoral Area C: 7%
Campbell River/SRD: 1.7%

WHO USES FIELDS IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD?

Children (under 18): 46.6%
Adults (19-64): 45%
Seniors (65+): 6.1%
No one: 2.3%

Overall, there is an average or moderate degree of satisfaction with the current sport field programs available in the Comox Valley, and a moderate degree of satisfaction in the current sports field conditions/amenities.

Average rating for programming

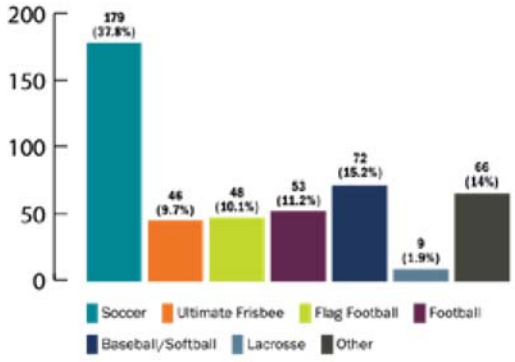
Average rating for conditions/amenities

3.2 CURRENT USE

HOW FIELDS ARE USED

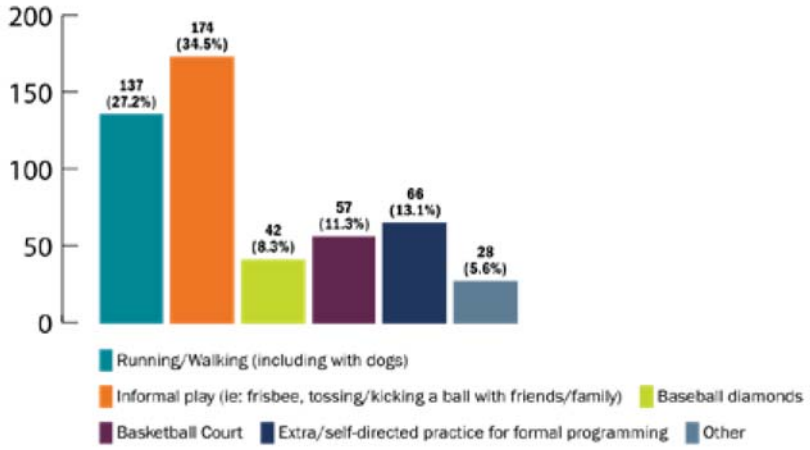
When asked to describe their current sports field usage, the **largest percentage indicated they use fields both formally and informally (47.2%).** Nearly 36% said they use fields only for formal programming and 13.3% said it was only for informal use.

A) Top formal activities included:



Responses for 'other' included significant representation for rugby, disc golf, volleyball, cricket, basketball and tennis.

B) Top Informal activities included:



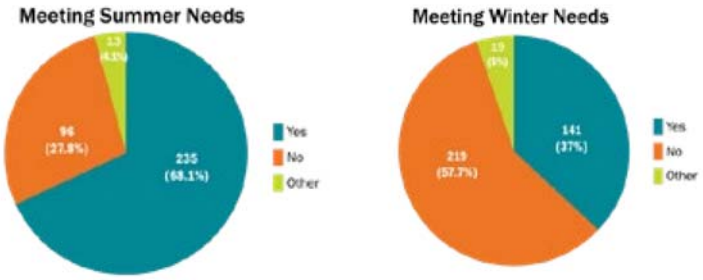
C) Field Use seemed to land in three general categories of usage, outlined in the table below:

Tier 1 (10-12%)	Vanier School grass fields
	Vanier School turf fields
	Valley View School grass fields (including ball diamonds)
	Mark R. Isfeld School grass fields
	Highland School grass fields (including ball diamonds)
Tier 2 (4-9%)	Lewis Park Grass fields (includes ball diamonds)
	Woodcote Park grass field
	Vanier all weather turf field
	Bill Moore grass field (includes ball diamonds)
	Queenesh School grass fields
Tier 3 (0.5-4 %)	Village Park frass field
	Martin Park field (includes lacrosse box)
	School fields in Electoral Area C
	Standard Park (volleyball/pickleball courts)
	School fields in Electoral Area A
	School fields in Electoral Area B
	CFB fields (includes ball diamonds)

D) Cars/motorized vehicles are the most common transportation method (67%), followed by walking (17%), cycling/scooter (14%)

MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Survey respondents were asked whether the fields meet their needs during the summer, during longer daylight hours, and during the winter when days are shorter.



The primary reasons given that fields did not meet summer needs were:

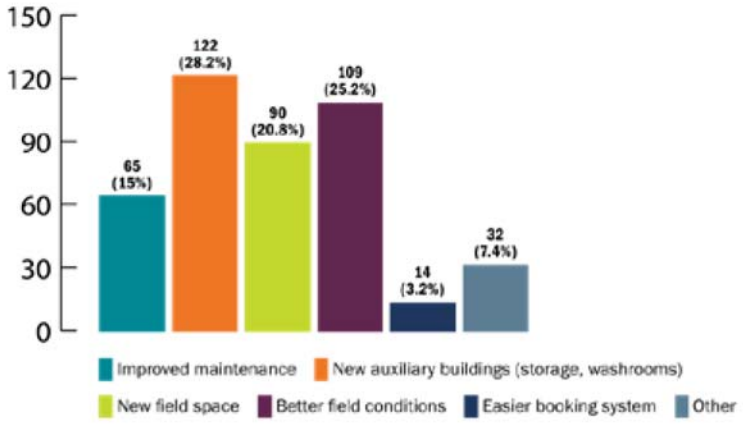
- Fields don't have conditions required (ie: turf for all weather play).
- Would like more field time.
- Field doesn't have facilities required.

The main reasons given that fields did not meet winter requirements were;

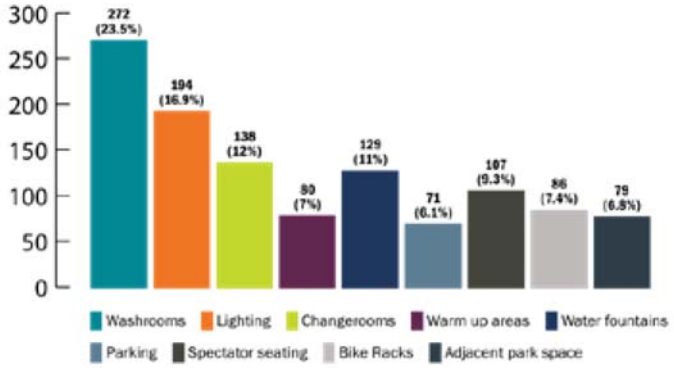
- Fields don't have conditions required (ie: lights)
- Field doesn't have facilities required
- More field time required

Overall, when asked how current field use meets their needs, 52.8% of respondents said existing programming/scheduling meets their needs, but changes to field conditions/amenities would improve their experience. About 17% said neither condition/amenities or programming/scheduling meets their needs.

Those who indicated conditions/amenities changes would improve their experience indicated these as the priorities. The top ranking for new field space, and better field conditions, were echoed in the results of those who said nether conditions/amenities or programming were sufficient.



When asked what amenities residents would like to see offered in greater supply at sports fields, residents indicated:



Most respondents indicated they were not sure what formal programming they would like to see that isn't currently an option (46%). Of the options given, frisbee golf, cricket and bocce were selected the most.

4.0 Conclusion

The CVRD's fields are used for a wide swath of activities that include both formal and informal programming by adults and children. They are well-used and in general the programming and services are meeting the needs of the community. There are recommendations for improvement that could offer opportunities for increased use and improved experiences.

Among the takeaways from these results are:

Fields are meeting the community's summer needs better than their winter needs. Satisfaction with field conditions is moderate with an average score of 5.5.

The majority indicated they were satisfied with programming but indicated improved amenities/conditions would improve their experience.

The top recommended improvements to amenities/conditions were new auxiliary buildings (washrooms/storage) and better field conditions.

The feedback from the community will supplement the in-depth work underway to update the 2008 Playing Fields Study, providing insight into the interests and priorities of those in the general public.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – General Public Survey (Hard Copy)
APPENDIX 2 – Public Survey Summary Results

770 Harmston Avenue, Courtenay, BC V9N 0G8
Tel: 250-334-6000 Fax: 250-334-4358
Toll free: 1-800-331-6007
www.comoxvalleyrd.ca

Comox Valley REGIONAL DISTRICT

File: 530.01

September 25, 2023

Sent via email only: aproton@courtenay.ca

Adriana Proton
Manager of Legislative Services
City of Courtenay
830 Cliffe Avenue
Courtenay, BC V9N 2J7

Dear Ms. Proton:

Re: Notice of Inaugural Meeting

Please note that the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) inaugural board meeting will take place as follows:

Date: Tuesday, November 7, 2023
Time: 4:00 pm
Location: CVRD Civic Room, 770 Harmston Avenue, Courtenay, BC

This correspondence serves as a reminder that the City of Courtenay Council must make the following appointments:

- Four directors and alternate directors from its mayor and council to the CVRD Board;
- three members and at least three alternate members from its mayor and council to the CVRD Sewage Commission; and,
- three members and at least three alternate members to the Regional Parks and Trails Committee.

Please bring this matter forward to your council in advance of the inaugural meeting with an effective date for such appointments being November 7, 2023.

As directors to the CVRD Board, the City of Courtenay appointments are automatically members of the Comox Strathcona Waste Management Board, the Comox Strathcona Regional Hospital District Board, the Comox Valley Water Committee and the Comox Valley Recreation Commission (note: Sewage Commission and Regional Parks and Trails Committee appointments are made separately as identified above). Further, the council appointments to the board may also be named to any standing or select committees, such as the Committee of the Whole.

Weighted Voting

Under the *Local Government Act*, regional districts follow Part 6 - Regional Districts: Governance and Procedures to determine voting entitlements and procedures for most matters at board meetings. The voting unit in the Comox Valley Regional District is 1500 and based on the 2021 census, one City of Courtenay director has four votes on weighted matters, and three have five votes on weighted matters (see Appendix A). Please ensure your council appointments identify which directors have four votes and five votes

In addition, voting at the Water Committee follows CVRD Bylaw No. 1783 being the "Water Local Service Establishment Bylaw, 1995" and related committee policy statements. The City of Courtenay currently has seven votes, split amongst four directors; that is three directors with two votes and one director with one vote.

Please confirm the assignment of directors and weighted votes for the Water Committee effective November 7, 2023 to ensure the committee meeting in December can be conducted in accordance with the above-mentioned bylaw and policies.

Weighted voting for the Water Committee in 2024 will be determined early in the new year based on the previous year's consumption values. A follow-up letter will be sent to the city advising if any further action is required to assign weighted votes to committee members.

Please forward this information to your mayor and council as you see fit. I have attached a suggested resolution for your consideration (Appendix B). I would appreciate a response by November 1, 2023 in order for us to prepare for our inaugural meeting.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

L. Dennis

Lisa Dennis
Manager of Legislative Services

Encl. Appendix A – 2021 Census figures for voting strength
Appendix B – Sample resolution

cc: J. Warren, Acting Chief Administrative Officer
J. Martens, General Manager of Corporate Services

APPENDIX A – 2021 CENSUS FIGURES FOR VOTING STRENGTH

Comox Valley Regional District
(incorporated February 15, 2008)
Voting Unit: 1,500 population

	2021 Census including subsequent population changes certified by the Minister [1]	Number of Directors (voting strength/5)	Voting Strength (population/ voting unit)
City:			
Courtenay	28,420	4	19
Town:			
Comox	14,806	2	10
Village:			
Cumberland	4,447	1	3
Electoral Areas:			
A (Baynes Sound / Denman Island)	7,926	1	6
B (Lazo North)	7,683	1	6
C (Puntledge-Black Creek)	9,163	1	7
Totals:	72,445	10	51

Populations certified as necessary by the Minister of Municipal Affairs under sections 196 and 197 of the *Local Government Act* as per the definition in the Schedule to the *Community Charter*.

Effective November 1, 2022.

These population figures are to be used only in the determination of voting strength and Director representation.

1. Population includes people residing on Indian Reserves and boundary extensions to December 31, 2021.

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE Resolution

THAT the following appointments be made to the Comox Valley Regional District effective November 7, 2023:

Comox Valley Regional District Board of Directors and Comox Valley Water Committee:

Name	CVRD Board Votes	Water Committee Votes
	5 votes	2 votes
	5 votes	2 votes
	5 votes	2 votes
	4 votes	1 vote

Alternate Regional District Directors:
Councillors _____

Sewage Commission:
Councillors _____, _____and _____;

Alternates: _____, _____and _____

Regional Parks and Trails Committee:
Councillors _____, _____ and _____;

Alternates: _____, _____ and _____.

BRITISH
COLUMBIA

VIA EMAIL

Ref. 61625

October 4, 2023

Her Worship Nicole Minions
Mayor of the Town of Comox
1809 Beaufort Avenue
Comox BC V9M 1R9
Email: mayor.dahl@campbellriver.ca

Her Worship Vickey Brown
Mayor of the Village of Cumberland
2673 Dunsmuir Avenue
Cumberland BC V0R 1S0
Email: councillor.brown@cumberland.ca

His Worship Bob Wells
Mayor of the City of Courtenay
830 Cliffe Avenue
Courtenay BC V9N 2J7
Email: bwells@courtenay.ca

Dear Mayors Dahl, Wells and Brown:

I am writing to provide you with the final results from the Point in Time (PiT) homeless count that was conducted in the Comox Valley on March 14, 2023. The count was led by Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness in collaboration with the Homelessness Services Association of BC (HSABC). HSABC organized the counts on behalf of BC Housing and the Ministry of Housing. The data from this count and others conducted across the province will be included in a provincial summary planned for release in fall 2023.

The results identify the number of people experiencing homelessness in the Comox Valley, including those identified as sheltered and unsheltered. Data is also organized by age, gender, Indigenous and racial identity, health concerns, reasons for housing loss, and use of social services. Key limitations and methodological considerations are also included. These results will be posted publicly on BC Housing's website on October 6, 2023, at: https://www.bchousing.org/research-centre/housing-data/homeless-counts.

.../2

Office of the Minister of Housing

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/housing

Mailing Address:
PO Box 9074 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E9
Phone: 236 478-3970

Location:
Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8V 1X4
Email: HOUS.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Our government is taking bold steps to tackle the housing crisis and deliver the affordable homes British Columbians need. In Budget 2023, we launched the Homes for People action plan, building on the 2018 housing strategy – the largest investment in housing in BC's history. The action plan includes details on the additional $4 billion over three years announced in Budget 2023, as well as a commitment to invest $12 billion over the next 10 years, to deliver more homes faster for people.

Alongside Homes for People, government is implementing Belonging in BC, a collaborative plan to prevent and reduce homelessness. The plan recognizes the intersectional factors that lead to homelessness and brings together all levels of government, BC Housing, Indigenous Peoples, the non-profit sector, developers and the construction industry to ensure all British Columbians get the care and support they need and deserve. The plan received a $633 million investment in Budget 2022, with a further $1.18 billion in Budget 2023.

If you have any questions about the count, you can contact Angela Fletcher, at comoxvalleyhousing@gmail.com. We hope this data will assist you with the work you are doing to address homelessness in your community.

Sincerely,

Ravi Kahlon
Minister of Housing

Attachment

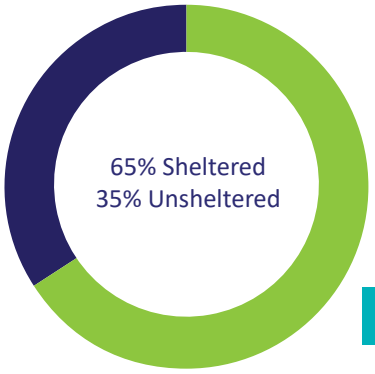
pc: Ronna-Rae Leonard, MLA, Courtenay-Comox
Honourable Josie Osborne, MLA, Mid Island-Pacific Rim

Comox Valley - 2023 Homeless Count

Point-in-Time (PiT) homeless counts provide a snapshot of people who are experiencing homelessness in a 24-hour period, their demographic characteristics, service use and other information.

272 People were identified as experiencing homelessness compared to 132 in 2020.

Where did individuals stay the night of the count?



Of Unsheltered Respondents*

- 37% Someone Else's Place
- 31% Outside
- 17% In a Vehicle

AGE BREAKDOWN

Youth Under 25 | Adult 25-54 | Senior 55+

GENDER

51% Experienced homelessness for the first time as a youth

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

12% of respondents identified as 2SLGBTQIA+

TRANS EXPERIENCE

5% of respondents identified as having trans experience

INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

28% of respondents identified as Indigenous

Compared with 7% of the Census population

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

67% of Indigenous-identifying respondents reported having lived or generational experience with residential school

RACIAL IDENTITY

* Top responses highlighted

For the purpose of this count, an individual **was defined as experiencing homelessness if they did not have a place of their own where they paid rent and could expect to stay for at least 30 days.** This included people who:

- Stayed overnight on the night of the count in homeless shelters, including transition houses for women fleeing violence and youth safe houses, people with no fixed address (NFA) staying temporarily in hospitals, jails or detox facilities (defined as "**sheltered**"); and,
- Stayed outside in alleys, doorways, parkades, parks and vehicles or were staying temporarily at someone else's place (couch surfing) and/or using homelessness services (defined as "**unsheltered**").

Since the PiT Count in 2020, several new shelter spaces had been made available during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the Cliffe Avenue Motel conversion. This can contribute to higher PiT numbers by making sure more people are counted in these spaces than if they were not sheltered.

The 2023 PiT Count took place in Cumberland, Courtenay, and Comox on the evening of March 13 and the daytime of March 14. It is important to consider that youth are one of several population groups often underreported in this methodology.

In the 2020 PiT Count, 20% of respondents identified as Indigenous.

This year, the PiT Survey asked respondents if they, a parent, or grandparent attended residential school. The Indigenous Homelessness Steering Committee and the Indian Residential School Survivors Society were instrumental in helping create this question and provide resources for respondents and interviewers to stay safe.

HSABC Homelessness Services Association of BC

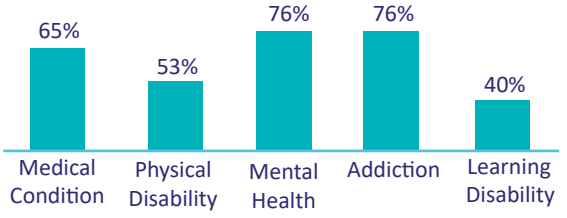
BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC HOUSING RESEARCH CENTRE

REASONS FOR HOUSING LOSS*

- **56% Not Enough Income**
- **31% Substance Use Issue**
- **27% Mental Health Issue**
- **17% Conflict with Spouse/ Partner**

HEALTH CONCERNS



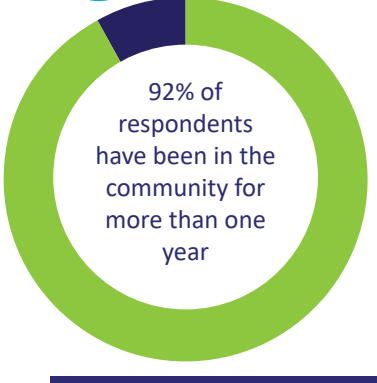
44% Reported an acquired brain injury

84% Reported two or more health concerns

LENGTH OF TIME EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

12% Under six months

77% One year or more



66% have been in the community for five years or more

16% Have always been in the community

SERVICES ACCESSED*

OVERNIGHT LOCATIONS IN LAST YEAR*

- **68% Homeless Shelter**
- **48% Outside**
- **45% Someone Else's Place**
- **45% Vehicle**

* Top responses highlighted

PiT counts are an undercount and represent only those individuals identified during a 24-hour period.

- While PiT Counts are an accepted methodological tool, the numbers are understood to be the minimum number of people who are experiencing homelessness on a given day in that community.
- Percentages are based on the number of respondents to each question, not the total population experiencing homelessness.

The number of respondents indicating they are living with an acquired brain injury increased from 33% in 2020.

Responses for other health concerns all increased, as did the number of respondents reporting two or more health concerns, up from 68%.

In 2020, 33% of respondents had experienced homelessness for under six months.

Compared to 2020, fewer respondents have been in the community for less than six months, suggesting many people experiencing homelessness in the Comox Valley were in the Comox Valley the last time they were housed.

97% of respondents reported having an income source. The most common income sources were income assistance and disability benefit. Around 7% reported a full or part-time job.

New for the 2023 PiT Count, the survey asked respondents to check all the locations they had stayed in the past year from a list, rather than only asking if they had stayed in a shelter.

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

BYLAW NO. 3101

A bylaw to amend Zoning Bylaw No. 2500, 2007

The Council of the Corporation of the City of Courtenay in open meeting assembled enacts as follows:

1. This bylaw may be cited for all purposes as **"Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 3101, 2023"**.

2. That "Zoning Bylaw No. 2500, 2007" be hereby amended as follows:

   (a) Amending section 8.6.1 by adding "(7) Notwithstanding any provisions of this bylaw, a detached secondary residence is a permitted use on Lot 3, Section 47, Comox District, Plan 20073 (1410 Glen Urquhart Drive), as shown in bold outline on **Attachment A**.

3. This bylaw shall come into effect upon final adoption hereof.

Public Hearing notice waiver published in two editions of the Comox Valley Record on the 13 day of September, 2023 and the 20 day of September, 2023 (pursuant to Section 467 of the *Local Government Act*)

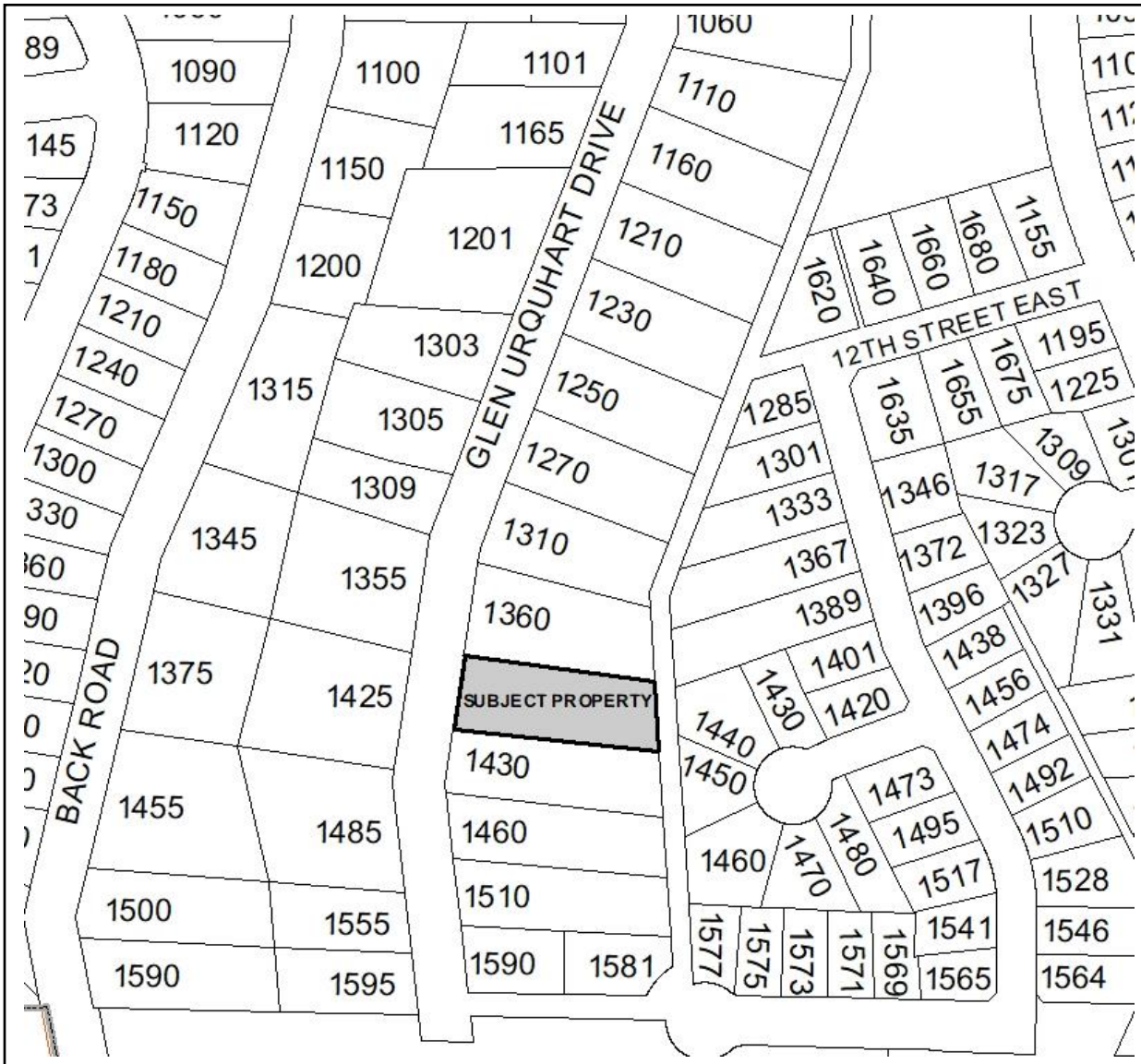
Read a first time this 27th day of September, 2023

Read a second time this 27th day of September, 2023

Read a third time this 27th day of September, 2023

Finally passed and adopted this day of , 2023

Bob Wells	Adriana Proton, MPA, CRM
Mayor	Corporate Officer



THE CITY OF COURTENAY
ATTACHMENT "A"
Part of Bylaw No. 3058, 2022
Amendment to the
Zoning Bylaw No. 2500, 2007

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORT

To: **COUNCIL** File No.: 0540

From: Councillor Frisch Date *(MMM-YYYY)*: Oct-2023

Subject: **REPORT OF ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS**

	DATE *(MMM-DD)*	EVENT/LOCATION	COMMENTS
1.	Sep-26	North Island College Site Blessing - Center in Excellence in Early Learning	Komoks First Nation Blessing and Federal and Provincial Funding for new childcare and Early Learning Centre
2.	Sep-28	Every Child Matters Flag raising/lowering	The City also raised the Canadian Indigenous flag, BC Indigenous flag, and Komoks First Nation Flag to half mast
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORT

To: **COUNCIL** File No.: 0540

From: Councillor McCollum Date *(MMM-YYYY)*: Sep-2023

Subject: **REPORT OF ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS**

	DATE *(MMM-DD)*	EVENT/LOCATION	COMMENTS
1.	Sep-05	Search and Rescue Fundraiser	Fundraiser hosted at Innisfree Farm, to raise funds for the new SAR hall
2.	Sep-06	Municipal Finance Authority Trustee Meeting	
3.	Sep-07	Meeting with K MacKinnon re: Community Justic Centre	Discussed role in community & oppurtunities to work with City of Courtenay
4.	Sep-07	Jesse from Early Years Collaborative	Discussed opportunities for childcare delegation on use of public land to facilitate space creation
5.	Sep-11	Climate Caucus AGM	
6.	Sep-12	Trans Canada Trail presentation hosted by Gord Johns	
7.	Sep-12	CVRD Sewage Commission & CVRD Board Meeting	
8.	Sep-14	CSWM Board Meeting	

	DATE *(MMM-DD)*	EVENT/LOCATION	COMMENTS
9.	Sep-14	Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting	
10.	Sep-18	UBCM Sep 18 - Sept 22 MFA board and trustee meeting on Sept 19	
11.	Sep-21	Agenda review for upcoming Recreation Commision meeting	
12.	Sep-26	CVRD Recreation Commission CVRD Board Meeting	
13.	Sep-27	Community Energy Association Board Meeting	
14.	Sep-27	North Island College Site Blessing and Lunch with Selina Robinson	
15.	Sep-28	Food Policy Council Meeting	Alternate for Councillor Morin
16.	Sep-29	19 Wing Tour and Lunch	
17.	Sep-30	National Day of Trush and Reconciliation - Spirit Walk opening ceremony	
18.			

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

COUNCIL MEMBER REPORT

To: **COUNCIL** File No.: 0540

From: Councillor Morin Date *(MMM-YYYY):* 09-2023

Subject: **REPORT OF ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS**

	DATE *(MMM-DD)*	EVENT/LOCATION	COMMENTS
1.	09-07	Decarbonization & Zero Step Carbon Step Code workshop	
2.	09-12	Active Transportation Roundtable with MP Gord Johns & Eleanor McMahon	Eleanor is President & CEO of the Trans Canada Trail
3.	09-12	CVRD Board Meeting	
4.	09-13	CV Food Policy Council Municipal Policy Sub-Committee Meeting	
5.	09-14	Comox-Strathcona Waste Management Board Meeting	
6.	09-18	Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) convention - meeting with Island Health	Attended 'Breaking Barriers' session re: barriers to equitable represention in local government leadership
7.	09-19	UBCM convention - meetings with Min of Emergency Mgmt & Municipal Affairs,	Re: grants for city infrastructure projects
8.	09-19	UBCM convention - meeting with Min of Land, Water, & Resource Stewardship	Re: Watersheds protection/BC Watershed Security Strategy & Fund

	DATE *(MMM-DD)*	EVENT/LOCATION	COMMENTS
9.	09-20	UBCM convention - meeting with Min of Mental Health & Addictions	Advocacy for increased supports and coordination for treatment etc
10.	09-21	UBCM convention	
11.	09-22	UBCM convention	
12.	09-26	CVRD Board Meeting	
13.	09-30	Spirit Walk - in honour and recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation	
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			