



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Council Agenda

Meeting #: R4/2024
Date: February 28, 2024
Time: 12:30 p.m.
Location: CVRD Civic Room, 770 Harmston Ave, Courtenay

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

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7.1 Collaborate with Youth Climate Corps BC for Climate Action - Councillors Hillian	

and Cole-Hamilton

WHEREAS youth are particularly impacted by the climate crisis and Youth Climate Corps BC is an organization that has worked successfully with local governments in BC to empower youth, providing paid work and training to young people in climate action projects that foster hope by helping to reduce emissions, build resiliency and adapt communities to the changing climate;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to explore and report back on the possibility of the City working with the Youth Climate Corps, including potential funding sources and projects related to climate action, to engage the public in promoting climate change mitigation and resilience.

7.2 Active Transportation on Ryan Road - Councillor Frisch

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8.1 Reconsideration - Zero Carbon Step Code

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In accordance with the Community Charter and the City of Courtenay Council Procedure Bylaw No. 2730, 2013, the Mayor placed the following motion passed at the February 14, 2024 meeting on the agenda for reconsideration:

THAT Council adopt the Provincial Zero Carbon Step Code;

AND THAT Council direct staff to amend "Building Bylaw No. 3114, 2023 to include the Zero Carbon Performance Levels in accordance with the timelines established in the CleanBC Road Map for all applicable Part 3 and Part 9 buildings starting with EL2 in 2024 and EL3 in 2027 and EL 4 in 2030;

AND THAT Council direct staff to engage with the development industry and community to inform on the Zero Carbon Step Code and its mandates.

8.2 The Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce Funding Request

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9. NOTICE OF MOTION

9.1 Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Beds - Councillor Jolicoeur

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10. COUNCIL REPORTS

10.1 Councillor Cole-Hamilton

10.2 Councillor Frisch

10.3 Councillor Hillian

10.4 Councillor Jolicoeur

10.5 Councillor McCollum

10.6 Councillor Morin

10.7 Mayor Wells

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Council Minutes

Meeting #: R3/2024
Date: February 14, 2024
Time: 4:00 pm
Location: CVRD Civic Room, 770 Harmston Ave, Courtenay

Council Present: B. Wells
W. Cole-Hamilton (electronic)
D. Frisch
D. Hillian
E. Jolicoeur
M. McCollum (electronic)
W. Morin

Staff Present: G. Garbutt, City Manager (CAO)
A. Langenmaier, Director of Financial Services
K. Macdonald, Fire Chief
K. O'Connell, Director of Corporate Services
S. Saunders, Director of Recreation, Culture & Community Services
M. Wade, Director of Development Services
J. Bagnall, T/Manager of Legislative Services
A. Proton, Manager of Legislative Services
L. Bourgeois, Deputy Corporate Officer

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Wells called the meeting to order at 4:09 pm and respectfully acknowledged that the land on which the meeting was conducted on the Unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

Councillor Hillian provided a statement on behalf of Council to acknowledge the deaths of 33 Comox Valley community members in the period of January to December 2023 due to the unregulated toxic drug supply crisis, for a total of 175 deaths of Comox Valley Community members since the public health emergency was first declared.

Mayor Wells noted that Council will consider the 2024-2028 Financial Plan, the budget, on February 28, 2024. The February 28th regular Council meeting will start at 12:30 pm, and Council will review the budget starting at 4 pm.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

Moved By Jolicoeur

Seconded By Hillian

THAT Council add Dayna Forsgren to the agenda as a delegation under a new item numbered 4.3 Dayna Forsgren - Parks and Open Spaces Bylaw No. 3121.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Regular Council Minutes - January 24, 2024

Moved By Frisch

Seconded By Morin

THAT Council adopt the January 24, 2024 Regular Council minutes.

CARRIED

4. DELEGATIONS

4.1 Tracey Clarke – Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce (Funding Request)

Delegation by Tracey Clarke, Executive Director of the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce (CVCC), presented a proposal outlining a four-phased, three-year Business Recruitment and Retention Program. The program's objective is to stimulate economic growth and vitality in the Comox Valley region by engaging with businesses and the public to identify and address economic gaps. The delegate recommended that funding be divided between the Town of Comox (35%) and the City of Courtenay (65%).

4.2 Alicia Fennell – The Brazilian Cultural Foundation (Funding Request)

Alicia Fennell, representing The Brazilian Cultural Foundation (BCF), is seeking financial assistance for an intercultural event between Brazilian and Kamugwe indigenous artists scheduled at the K'ómoks Big House on March 16, 2024. This event is part of the broader celebration of 15 years of Capoeira in the Comox Valley. The delegate requested \$5,000 from the City of Courtenay to cover various event costs, including food and housing for cultural leaders, rental of K'ómoks Big House, accommodations, and transportation.

4.3 Dayna Forsgren – Parks and Open Spaces Bylaw No. 3121

Dayna Forsgren presented a report titled "Working towards System Change: Assessing Courtenay's Approach to End Homelessness," which included an analysis of Bylaw No. 3121. The report focused on Courtenay's marginalized community members, their interactions with Courtenay Bylaw enforcement, their concerns regarding proposed Parks and Open Spaces Bylaw No. 3121, and proposed amendments to the bylaw.

5. PRESENTATIONS

5.1 Comox Valley RCMP – Report for the 2nd & 3rd Quarters of 2023

Staff Sergeants Beauregard and Kilborn reviewed the RCMP reports for the 2nd and 3rd Quarters of 2023, highlighting year-over-year changes in 911 calls, traffic offenses, violent crimes, property crimes, and controlled drug and substances incidents.

They also reviewed the downtown foot patrols program, which ran from May to September 2023, aimed at increasing visibility downtown and in parks.

Moved By Morin

Seconded By Frisch

THAT Council write the RCMP requesting implementation of the downtown foot patrol program on an ongoing basis from April 1 to Labour Day weekend;

AND THAT all costs related to this service be included in the 2024 Financial Plan.

CARRIED

6. STAFF REPORTS

6.1 Corporate Services

6.1.1 Bylaw Dispute Adjudication System

Moved By Frisch

Seconded By Jolicoeur

THAT Council direct staff to proceed with the preparation of all bylaws, policies, procedures, and agreements necessary to create a Bylaw Adjudication Program;

AND THAT staff be authorized to work with the Province of BC as needed to gain provincial approval for the City of Courtenay to use the Bylaw Adjudication System as outlined in the Local Government Bylaw Notice Enforcement Act.

CARRIED

6.2 Development Services

6.2.1 Zero Carbon Step Code

Moved By Hillian

Seconded By Frisch

THAT Council adopt the Provincial Zero Carbon Step Code;

AND THAT Council direct staff to amend "Building Bylaw No. 3114, 2023" to include the Zero Carbon Performance Levels in accordance with the timelines established in the CleanBC Road Map for all applicable Part 3 and Part 9 buildings starting with EL2 in 2024 and EL3 in 2027 and EL 4 in 2030;

AND THAT Council direct staff to engage with the development industry and community to inform on the Zero Carbon Step Code and its mandates.

CARRIED

Opposed: Councillor Cole-Hamilton, Councillor Jolicoeur, Councillor McCollum

Moved By Jolicoeur

Seconded By Frisch

THAT Council vary the agenda to move Item 10.2.1 - Parks and Open Space Bylaw No. 3121 to Item 7.1.1, and re-number the agenda accordingly.

CARRIED

Opposed: Councillor Hillian

Mayor Wells called a recess at 6:52 pm. The Council meeting resumed at 7:16 pm.

7. BYLAWS

7.1 For Third Reading

7.1.1 Parks and Open Spaces Bylaw No. 3121

Moved By Morin

Seconded By McCollum

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

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

(n) the consideration of whether a council meeting should be closed under a provision of this subsection or subsection (2).

CARRIED

The meeting went in camera at 7:47 pm. Following the conclusion of the in camera portion of the meeting, Mayor Wells resumed the open meeting at 7:55 pm.

Moved By Frisch

Seconded By Jolicoeur

THAT Council direct staff to report back on the following requests and amendments, as proposed in the report “Working Toward System Change – Assessing Courtenay’s Approach to Homelessness”:

1. Remove the term “offensive” from section 5.9(b)
2. Strike out “with or without shelter” from section 5.9(d)
3. Strike out 5.9(g) in its entirety
4. Incorporate language from the Bylaw Compliance Policy, which discusses how City employees should behave while enforcing the bylaw
5. Include express language outlining trauma-informed bylaw enforcement

6. Remove reference to “interfering with a bylaw officer in performing their duties” and replace with language that prohibits physical obstruction or interference with City employees while carrying out their duties in parks
 - Strike out Section 5.10(d) and combine it with 5.10 (c)
7. Strike out section 7.2(f)
8. Strike out “and in doing so may be assisted by another such officer or a City personnel” from section 10.2, and consider specifying “emergency personnel”
9. Add language to the bylaw that emphasizes Social Service partnership and support

Amendment:

Moved By Jolicoeur

Seconded By Hillian

THAT the following words be added to the main motion "AND THAT Council direct staff to highlight options to work with Indigenous partners on the proposed bylaw in the report".

CARRIED

Main motion as amended:

THAT Council direct staff to report back on the following requests and amendments, as proposed in the report “Working Toward System Change – Assessing Courtenay’s Approach to Homelessness”:

1. Remove the term “offensive” from section 5.9(b)
2. Strike out “with or without shelter” from section 5.9(d)
3. Strike out 5.9(g) in its entirety
4. Incorporate language from the Bylaw Compliance Policy, which discusses how City employees should behave while enforcing the bylaw
5. Include express language outlining trauma-informed bylaw enforcement

6. Remove reference to “interfering with a bylaw officer in performing their duties” and replace with language that prohibits physical obstruction or interference with City employees while carrying out their duties in parks
 - Strike out Section 5.10(d) and combine it with 5.10 (c)
7. Strike out section 7.2(f)
8. Strike out “and in doing so may be assisted by another such officer or a City personnel” from section 10.2, and consider specifying “emergency personnel”
9. Add language to the bylaw that emphasizes Social Service partnership and support.

AND THAT Council direct staff to highlight options to work with Indigenous partners on the proposed bylaw in the report.

CARRIED

8. INTERNAL REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

8.1 Strategic Plan for Bylaw Compliance - Update

**Councillor Cole-Hamilton and Councillor McCollum left the meeting at 8:33 pm.
Councillor McCollum rejoined at 8:43 pm.**

Moved By Hillian

Seconded By Frisch

THAT Council receive the “Bylaw Strategic Plan Initiatives – Update” briefing note.

CARRIED

Moved By Frisch

Seconded By Hillian

THAT Council extend the meeting beyond 9:00 PM, until 10:00 PM, in accordance with Section 17.2 of the Council Procedure Bylaw No. 2730.

CARRIED

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

9.1 Make Back Road Safe delegation

Moved By Frisch
Seconded By Morin

THAT Council direct staff to prepare a report on the requests from the January 24, 2024 Back Road delegation including speed reduction, noise, and safety concerns, and the request to prioritize Back Road in the first phase of reducing the speed limit for all collector roads to 40 km/h.

CARRIED

10. NOTICE OF MOTION

10.1 Collaborate with Youth Climate Corps BC for Climate Action - Councillors Hillian and Cole-Hamilton

WHEREAS youth are particularly impacted by the climate crisis and Youth Climate Corps BC is an organization that has worked successfully with local governments in BC to empower youth, providing paid work and training to young people in climate action projects that foster hope by helping to reduce emissions, build resiliency and adapt communities to the changing climate;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to explore and report back on the possibility of the City working with the Youth Climate Corps, including potential funding sources and projects related to climate action, to engage the public in promoting climate change mitigation and resilience.

10.2 Active Transportation on Ryan Road - Councillor Frisch

WHEREAS the Province and the City of Courtenay are both committed to Greenhouse Gas reduction, poverty reduction, and positive health care outcomes;

WHEREAS safe cycling infrastructure and active transportation in general is an important part of achieving those goals;

WHEREAS the City has endorsed a cycling infrastructure plan and begun the investment to provide cycling and active transportation infrastructure on the portions of Ryan Rd that fall within its control;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to draft and send a letter on behalf of City Council, to the Minister's office to formally request:

- A meeting with the Minister of Transportation;
- Inclusion of active transportation infrastructure within Ministry of Transportation corridors, and;
- That the local Courtenay office be directed to work with City of Courtenay staff to develop actionable plans for the inclusion of active transportation infrastructure on Ryan Road.

11. BYLAWS

11.1 For First, Second, and Third Readings

11.1.1 Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 3120 (2923 Lupton Rd)

Moved By Hillian

Seconded By Jolicoeur

THAT Council give first, second and third readings to "Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 3120" (2923 Lupton Road) subject to the following conditions prior to adoption:

- A Section 219 no build covenant be placed on title requiring a works and services agreement be executed prior to construction; and
- A Preliminary Layout Review (PLR) be issued.

CARRIED

11.2 For Adoption

11.2.1 Sewer Service Frontage Tax Amendment Bylaw No. 3124, 2024

Moved By Frisch

Seconded By Morin

THAT Council adopt "Sewer Service Frontage Tax Amendment Bylaw No. 3124, 2024".

CARRIED

11.2.2 Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3122, 2024 (sewer)

Moved By Frisch

Seconded By Hillian

THAT Council adopt "Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3122, 2024 (sewer)".

CARRIED

11.2.3 Water Service Frontage Tax Amendment Bylaw No. 3125, 2024

Moved By Frisch

Seconded By Jolicoeur

THAT Council adopt "Water Service Frontage Tax Amendment Bylaw No. 3125, 2024".

CARRIED

11.2.4 Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3123, 2024 (water)

Moved By Frisch

Seconded By Hillian

THAT Council adopt "Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3123, 2024 (water)".

CARRIED

11.2.5 Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3126, 2024 (solid waste)

Moved By Frisch

Seconded By Morin

THAT Council adopt "Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3126, 2024 (solid waste)".

CARRIED

12. COUNCIL REPORTS

12.1 Councillor Cole-Hamilton

As Councillor Cole-Hamilton left the meeting at 8:33 pm, he did not provide a report.

12.2 Councillor Frisch

No report provided.

12.3 Councillor Hillian

Councillor Hillian submitted a report of activities, see agenda.

12.4 Councillor Jolicoeur

Councillor Jolicoeur reviewed his attendance at the following events and submitted a report of activities:

- Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness
- Physician Recruitment Committee Meeting (with Councillor Hillian)
 - Update: The list of Comox Valley residents needing primary care physicians is about 2000, whereas a few years ago it was 7-8000.
- Fundraiser for Dawn to Dawn is scheduled for Saturday, Feb 24, 2024 "Coldest Night of the Year".

12.5 Councillor McCollum

Councillor McCollum submitted a report of activities, see agenda.

12.6 Councillor Morin

Councillor Morin spent most of today with JD, also known as the Flower Man, aboard a decorated Transit bus that visited schools, hospitals, and businesses in celebration of St. Valentine's Day.

12.7 Mayor Wells

Mayor Wells reviewed his attendance at the following events and submitted a report of activities:

- Climate Change and Health Community conference in Nanaimo hosted by Island Health and Snuneymuxw First Nation.
- The 2023 Comox Valley Chamber Awards Gala 'Go For the Gold!' recognized the achievements of businesses, organizations, and individuals in the community.
- The Chamber of Commerce held an "Economic Outlook Breakfast."
- Hospital Porters Appreciation Week took place at the Comox Valley Hospital.

13. IN CAMERA RESOLUTION

Moved By Frisch

Seconded By Morin

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

90 (2) A part of a council meeting must be closed to the public if the subject matter being considered relates to one or more of the following:

(b) the consideration of information received and held in confidence relating to negotiations between the municipality and a provincial government or the federal government or both, or between a provincial government or the federal government or both and a third party.

CARRIED

14. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Wells terminated the open portion of the meeting at 9:17 pm. Following the conclusion of the in camera portion of the meeting, Mayor Wells terminated the meeting at 10:00 pm.

CERTIFIED CORRECT

Adopted by Council February 28, 2023

Mayor Bob Wells

Adriana Proton, Corporate Officer



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Staff Report

To: Council
From: Manager of Legislative Services
Subject: Procedure Bylaw Amendments

File No.: 3900-2730
Date: February 28, 2024

PURPOSE: To propose amendments to the Council Procedure Bylaw No. 2730, 2013.

BACKGROUND and DISCUSSION:

Council amended its Council Procedure Bylaw No. 2730 in July 2023 as follows:

1. Set the standard meeting type as hybrid (in person and electronic) and permit electronic participation in all meetings in accordance with the Community Charter.
2. Delegate to the City Manager the authority to change the meeting type from hybrid to electronic in circumstances that pose a risk to the meeting participants.
3. Change the process for setting the annual council meeting schedule, requiring an annual meeting schedule to be adopted by Council prior to the December 31st of the preceding year.
4. Update the meeting location section and permit meetings at the CVRD administrative building and Courtenay City Hall, and alternative locations within City boundaries.
5. Authorize the Corporate Officer, in consultation with the Mayor and City Manager to amend the start time of a Regular Council meeting to accommodate the closed portion of the meeting prior to the open portion of the meeting, and cancel or establish a different day, time or place for the meeting without council resolution.
6. Remove the prescribed order of the agenda to accommodate any items of interest to Council in consultation with the Mayor and City Manager.
7. Update the public notice posting place to reflect current meeting locations.
8. Amend gendered language to be inclusive and non-binary.
9. Add a section identifying a procedure for notices of motion where notice is provided in writing and read aloud at a preceding meeting for consideration at the next regular meeting unless council resolves to consider the motion without notice.
10. Identify ineligible delegations.
11. Change the adjournment time from 12:00 a.m. to 9 p.m.
12. Update language generally to clarify procedures without changing the procedure or its intent.

Most of the amendments were general updates or aimed at increasing meeting flexibility, while maintaining transparency of decision making. The updated bylaw has been in effect for 7 months, and staff have identified five further amendments for Council's consideration:

1. Remove 13(10), "A motion resulting from a Delegation must be made by way of a notice of motion."
This will also result in the removal of "delegation" from item 35.1(1).

First, staff have noted Council's preference to consider most delegation requests at the meeting after the delegation appears, but this process is not currently permitted under the Procedure Bylaw. If Council removes s. 13(10) from the bylaw, staff will add the delegation's request to "Unfinished Business" at the next regular Council meeting, pending any other developments. To ensure appropriate communication back to

delegations on Council's decision in response to any request, Council may upon consideration of unfinished business provide direction to staff, including but not limited to:

- Referral to staff for report
 - Denial of the request and notification to the delegation (may include information about appropriate jurisdiction e.g. Province, CVRD etc.)
 - Defer consideration of the request to a specific meeting
2. Remove 32(3), (4), and (5).

This second proposed amendment is to remove limits within the Bylaw to what Council can do procedurally when a main motion is on the floor. When Provincial legislation and the Procedure Bylaw are silent, Robert's Rules of Order (RRO) applies. The provisions in s. 32 (3), (4), and (5) limit what Council can do further than RRO. For example, under RRO Council could make a subsidiary motion to limit debate. It also suggests that most privileged or incidental motions would not be permitted, such as recess, division of the motion, suspending the rules, etc. If Council removes these sections, then RRO would apply, which is more consistent to other bodies and will provide more options and clarity to what can happen when a main motion is under consideration.

This is similar to the third proposed amendment, which would remove limits within the bylaw about what motions can be debated.

3. Remove section 29.

For example, the bylaw currently says that first readings of bylaws cannot be debated. Staff recommend removing this section so that RRO would apply.

4. Amend s. 20(6) to read "Before third reading, Council may amend, strike out or add clauses". The current section is incorrect about when Council can make amendments.

The fourth proposed amendment is to amend section 20(6). It currently reads, "After either second or third reading, Council may amend, strike out or add clauses". This is incorrect, as it is procedurally inappropriate to make any changes to a bylaw after third reading. The *Community Charter* s. 135 requires that bylaws receive three readings prior to adoption, and requires that there be at least one clear day between third reading and adoption. One of the reasons for requiring three readings, and requiring the pause between third reading and adoption, is to foster transparency in government. If amendments are permitted after third reading, then a bylaw can be adopted immediately following amendments, and before members of the public can possibly be aware of what is contained in the bylaw. Staff recommend changing this to "Before third reading, Council may amend, strike out or add clauses".

5. Amend s. 9 to add a new section 9 (6) (d): "When participating electronically, members must make best efforts to participate using facilities that enable participants and the public to clearly watch and hear the member's participation."

The final proposed amendment is to clarify the use of video during electronic meetings, or during electronic participation in meetings. Section 9 of the Procedure Bylaw states that,

"A member of Council or a Committee who is unable to attend in person at a regular Council meeting, a special meeting of Council or a Committee meeting may participate in the meeting by means of electronic or other communication facilities...the facilities must enable the meeting's participants to

hear, or watch and hear, the participation of the member of Council...the facilities must enable the public to hear, or watch and hear, the participation of the member of Council or a Committee.”

Due to “show of hands” voting, desire for transparency and public trust, and clear communication between meeting participants, it is best practice for members to use video when participating in meetings. Staff recommend adding the following to the bylaw: “When participating electronically, members must make best efforts to participate using facilities that enable participants and the public to clearly watch and hear the member’s participation.” This allows electronic participation without changing how meetings are conducted – e.g. if members participate by voice only, then votes would be taken verbally rather than by show of hands.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

The *Community Charter* requires Council to establish a bylaw identifying general procedures to be followed by Council and Council Committees.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

These amendments would have minor administrative implications, but will provide greater clarity to staff on setting the agenda and providing procedural advice.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

In accordance with the Community Charter s. 94 (public notice) and s. 124(3) (procedure bylaws), the City must provide notice of the proposed bylaw amendments, describing the proposed changes in general terms.

OPTIONS:

1. THAT Council direct staff to bring forward a bylaw to amend the Council Procedure Bylaw No. 2730, 2013 as follows:
 - a. Remove the requirement for a motion resulting from a delegation to be made by way of a notice of motion;
 - b. Remove language limiting what Council can do when a main motion is under consideration in section 35;
 - c. Remove language limiting which motions can be debated in section 29;
 - d. Amend section 20(6) so that bylaw amendments are permitted prior to third reading;
 - e. Amend section 9 to require that members joining the meeting electronically make best efforts to use facilities that allow participants and the public to clearly watch and hear the member’s participation.

2. THAT Council direct staff to bring forward a bylaw to amend the Council Procedure Bylaw No. 2730, 2013 as follows:
[Council to provide direction on amendments]

3. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Council Procedure Bylaw No. 2730, 2013 (unofficial consolidation)

Prepared by: Adriana Proton, MPA, CRM, Manager of Legislative Services

Reviewed by: Kate O’Connell, MPA, Director of Corporate Services

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

UNOFFICIAL CONSOLIDATED VERSION

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

BYLAW NO. 2730

A bylaw establishing rules of procedures for the Council and Committees of the City of Courtenay

(Consolidated for convenience with Bylaw Nos. 2846, 2918, and 3102).

WHEREAS the *Community Charter* requires that a council must, by bylaw, establish the general procedures to be followed by council and committees in conducting their business.

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the City of Courtenay in open meeting assembled enacts as follows:

PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

Title

1. This Bylaw shall be cited for all purposes as "**Council Procedure Bylaw No. 2730, 2013**".

Definitions (BYLAW 3102)

2. In this Bylaw:

“Acting Mayor” means the person designated to act in place of the Mayor pursuant to section 4(1) of this bylaw;

“Closed Meeting” means a regular or special Council meeting, Committee of the Whole meeting, or Committee meeting, or portion thereof, closed to the public pursuant to section 90 of the *Community Charter*;

“Corporate Officer” means the Corporate Officer appointed pursuant to Section 148 of the *Community Charter* and includes their Deputy or Delegate;

“Commission” means a municipal commission established under Section 143 of the *Community Charter*;

“Committee” means a standing, select, or other Committee of Council, but does not include Committee of the Whole;

“Delegation” means an address to Council or Committee at the request of the person wishing to speak and which is generally related, but not limited to, an item of business on the agenda of the Meeting at which the person wishes to appear;

“Inaugural Meeting” means the first Council meeting following a General Local Election;

“Member” means any member of Council and includes the Mayor;

“Notice Board” means the notice board located at City Hall, 830 Cliffe Avenue, Courtenay, B.C.

“Public Notice Posting Place” means the notice board located at City Hall and the City of Courtenay Website;

“Robert’s Rules of Order” means the text, Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 12th Edition by Henry M. Robert (Public Affairs, 2020), or the most recent subsequent edition.

Application of Rules of Procedure (BYLAW 3102)

3. (1) The provisions of this Bylaw govern the proceedings of Council and all Committees of Council, as applicable.
- (2) In cases not provided for under this Bylaw, *Robert's Rules of Order* apply to the proceedings of regular Council, standing Committees, select Committees, and Committee of the Whole to the extent those rules are:
 - (a) applicable to the circumstances;
 - (b) not inconsistent with provisions of this Bylaw; and
 - (c) not inconsistent with the *Community Charter* or other applicable enactments.

PART 2 - DESIGNATION OF MEMBER TO ACT IN PLACE OF MAYOR

4. (1) At the Inaugural Meeting, Council must from amongst its members designate Councillors to serve on a rotating basis as the member responsible for acting in the place of the Mayor (Acting Mayor) when the Mayor is absent or otherwise unable to act or when the office of the Mayor is vacant.
- (2) Deleted (BYLAW 3102)

PART 3 - COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

Inaugural Meeting (BYLAW 3102)

5. Following a general local election, the first regular Council meeting will be held on the first Monday in November .

Notice Requirements for Regular Council Meeting Schedule (BYLAW 3102)

6. (1) Prior to December 31st each year, the Corporate Officer must provide to Council, for approval, an annual schedule of all regular meetings including dates, times and places and give notice of the availability of the schedule in accordance with the *Community Charter*.
- (2) At least 48 hours before a regular meeting of Council, the Corporate Officer will give public notice of the time, place, and date of the meeting by posting a notice and a copy of the agenda, except for those meetings closed to the public, at the Public Notice Posting Place.
- (3) Where revisions to the annual schedule of regular Council meetings are made as a result of a cancellation or change to the date, time, and/or place of a regular Council meeting, the Corporate Officer will post a notice at the Public Notice Posting Place.

Regular and Special Council Meetings (BYLAW 3102)

7. (1) Unless Council otherwise resolves, regular and special Council meetings will take place in the Civic Room located at 770 Harmston Avenue, Courtenay or at Courtenay City Hall located at 830 Cliffe Avenue, Courtenay.
- (2) Notwithstanding Subsection (1), and subject to Subsections (3) and (4), Council may meet at a place other than City Hall, or outside the boundaries of the City.
- (3) Where a Council meeting is to be held at a place other than the Civic Room or at Courtenay City Hall, the Corporate Officer will post a notice as to the alternate location at the Public Notice Posting Place.
- (4) Regular Council meetings will:
 - (a) be held in accordance with the schedule of Council meetings, as approved by Council; and
 - (b) begin at 4:00 p.m., unless preceded by a Closed Meeting, or a public hearing.
- (5) Notwithstanding Subsection (4), the Corporate Officer may, in consultation with the Mayor and City Manager, cancel, postpone or reschedule a regular Council meeting, and establish a different day, time or place for that meeting.

Notice of Special Council Meetings (BYLAW 3102)

8. (1) Except where notice of a special meeting is waived by a unanimous vote of all Council members, at least 24 hours before a special meeting of Council, the Corporate Officer will give notice of the time, place and date of the special meeting by posting a notice, and a copy of the agenda, except for those meetings closed to the public, in the Public Notice Posting Place.

Electronic Meetings (BYLAW 3102)

9. (1) Subject to Section 128 of the *Community Charter*, regular Council meetings may be conducted by means of electronic or other communication facilities.
- (2) Subject to Section 128.1(1) of the *Community Charter*, special meetings of Council may be conducted by means of electronic or other communication facilities.
- (3) Subject to Section 128.2(1) of the *Community Charter*, Committee meetings may be conducted by means of electronic or other communication facilities.
- (4) At least 48 hours before an electronic regular Council meeting, special meeting of Council, or Committee meeting, the Corporate Officer will give advanced public notice in the same manner as provided in Section 6(2) of the way in which the meeting is to be conducted by means of electronic or other communication facilities.
- (5) A member of Council or a Committee who is unable to attend in person at a regular Council meeting, a special meeting of Council or a Committee meeting may participate in the meeting by means of electronic or other communication facilities if the requirements of Subsection (5) are met.
- (6) The following rules apply in relation to a meeting referred to in Subsection (5):
 - a) the meeting must be conducted in accordance with this bylaw;
 - b) the facilities must enable the meeting's participants to hear, or watch and hear, the participation of the member of Council or a Committee; and
 - c) Except for any part of the meeting that is closed to the public, the facilities must enable the public to hear, or watch and hear, the participation of the member of Council or a Committee.
- (7) Members of Council or a Committee who are participating under this Section in a meeting conducted in accordance with this Section are deemed to be present at the meeting.

Order of Business at Regular Meetings (BYLAW 3102)

10. (1) Prior to each:
 - a) Regular Council meeting;
 - b) Regular Council public hearing; and
 - c) Special Council meeting;

the Corporate Officer, in consultation with the Mayor and City Manager, must prepare an agenda of all items to be considered by Council at such meeting, and Council must proceed in the order set out, unless that order is varied by Council.

- (2) The agenda for a regular Council meeting may consist of any items of interest to Council or requiring Council action or direction.
- (3) Late items not included on the agenda may be considered at a regular Council meeting if the introduction of the late item is approved by a majority vote of Council.
- (4) The agenda for a regular Council public hearing may consist of any items referred to a public hearing by Council motion or for which a public hearing is required by legislation, or other Council policy.
- (5) The agenda for a special Council meeting shall include only those items which are identified in the notice of such meeting.
- (6) Council may add a late item of an urgent nature to a special Council meeting that was not stated on the notice with a 2/3 majority vote of those present.

Council Meeting Agendas

11. Deleted (BYLAW 3102)

Additional Agenda Items

12. Deleted (BYLAW 3102)

Delegations to Council Meetings (BYLAW 3102)

13. (1) The Mayor and or the Corporate Officer is responsible for considering Delegation requests, having the authority to approve or deny based on the criteria contained in Section 13(3) and 13(4).
- (2) The Corporate Officer is responsible for determining:
 - a) the meeting type the Delegation will be presenting to including regular or special Council meeting, Closed Meeting, standing or select Committee; and the meeting date of the Delegation's presentation.
- (3) Delegation requests must include:
 - a) the full particulars of the subject matter;
 - b) the proposed action which is within the jurisdiction of Council;
 - c) the name and department or division of the city staff that the Delegation

- has consulted with;
- d) the names and addresses of the person(s) or the organization comprising the Delegation; and
 - e) the name, address, email address and telephone number of the designated speaker(s).
- (4) Except otherwise permitted by Council, Delegations must not be heard to address the following:
- a) a bylaw in respect of which a public hearing has been or will be held where the public hearing is required under an enactment as a pre-requisite to the adoption of a bylaw;
 - b) an issue which is before the courts or on which Council has authorized legal action;
 - c) a matter in respect of which a city-led public consultation process is planned or in progress;
 - d) the promotion of commercial projects and services;
 - e) the promotion of a political party or of a candidate for elected office;
 - f) publicly tendered contracts or proposal calls for the provision of goods or services for the city, between the time that such contract or proposal call has been authorized and the time that such a contract or proposal call has been awarded, either by Council or city staff;
 - g) a Delegation having appeared before Council within the previous twelve (12) months on the same topic or request; or
 - h) a purpose or subject that is beyond the jurisdiction of Council.
- (5) Only two (2) Delegations are permitted at each meeting of Council unless by resolution Council permits additional Delegations at a meeting.
- (6) The maximum time for appearance of a Delegation before Council is ten (10) minutes, with an additional allowance to respond to Council's questions, if any.
- (7) A presentation by a Delegation at a Council or Committee meeting shall be confined to the subject which was indicated in the application.
- (8) Questions of members of Council shall be limited to seeking clarification or additional details and not engage in a debate on the merits of the issue.
- (9) Council may waive strict compliance with Section 13(6) by resolution passed by a majority of Members present.

- (10) A motion resulting from a Delegation must be made by way of a notice of motion.

Public Attendance at Meetings (BYLAW 3102)

- 14.** (1) Unless a meeting or part of a meeting is authorized to be closed to the public in accordance with Section 90 of the *Community Charter*, all meetings shall be open to the public.
- (2) Before closing a meeting or part of a meeting to the public, Council must pass a resolution in accordance with Section 92 of the *Community Charter*.

Minutes of Council Meetings (BYLAW 3102)

- 15.** (1) Minutes of the proceedings of Council meetings must be:
- a) legibly recorded with decisions and action items;
 - b) adopted by resolution of Council;
 - c) certified as correct by the Corporate Officer; and
 - d) signed by the Chair of the meeting.
- (2) The Corporate Officer must record in the minutes:
- e) the text of every motion;
 - f) the names of any Members who voted in the negative regarding a motion;
 - g) the name of any Member absent from the meeting at a vote.
- (3) Discussion may be recorded in the minutes at the discretion of the Corporate Officer.

Minutes of Committee, Commission and Board Meetings (BYLAW 3102)

- 16.** (1) Minutes of the proceedings of Committee, Commission and board Meetings must be:
- a) legibly recorded with decisions and action items;
 - b) adopted by the Committee, Commission or board by resolution;
 - c) certified as correct by the Committee Secretary; and
 - d) signed by the chair of the meeting; and
 - e) meet the minute standards established by the Corporate Officer.

- (2) Draft or amended minutes must be provided to Council for information.
- (3) The Committee Secretary must record in the minutes:
 - a) The text of every motion;
 - b) The names of any Members who voted in the negative regarding a motion;
 - c) The name of any Member absent from the meeting at a vote.
- (4) Discussion may be recorded in the minutes at the discretion of the Committee Secretary.

Adjournment (BYLAW 3102)

17. (1) If there is no quorum of Council present within fifteen (15) minutes of the scheduled time for a Council Meeting, the Corporate Officer must:
 - a) record the names of the Members present;
 - b) record the names of the Members absent; and
 - c) adjourn the meeting until the next scheduled Council meeting.
- (2) A Council meeting may continue after 9 p.m. only by an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Council members present.
- (3) A motion for continuation under Section 17(2) must establish a specific time for the adjournment of the Council meeting.

Calling Meeting to Order

18. (1) In the event the Mayor does not attend within 15 minutes after the time appointed for a meeting, the Acting Mayor must take the chair.
- (2) In the absence of the Acting Mayor the Corporate Officer must call the members to order and if a quorum is present, the members must appoint a member to preside during the meeting or until the arrival of the Mayor or Acting Mayor.
- (3) In the event the Mayor is required to leave a meeting, the Acting Mayor must take the chair; or in the absence of the Acting Mayor the members must appoint a member to preside during the meeting until the return of the Mayor.
- (4) The member appointed under section 18 (2) and 18 (3) has the same powers and duties as the Mayor in relation to the particular matter.

Quorum

19. Should there be no quorum present within 15 minutes after the time appointed for the meeting, the Corporate Officer must record the names of the members present at the expiration of the 15 minutes and the meeting of Council is deemed to have been cancelled.

Proposed Bylaws

20.
 - (1) Before Council considers any proposed bylaw, the Corporate Officer must provide each member with a copy of the proposed bylaw.
 - (2) Council is deemed to have passed a proposed bylaw when all approvals and procedures required by statute prior to adoption have been followed and Council has given the following readings to the bylaw:
 - (a) first reading, which is by title only;
 - (b) second reading, which is by title only unless Council resolved to read the proposed bylaw;
 - (c) third reading, which is by title only; and
 - (d) final adoption.
 - (3) A bylaw may be read one, two, or three times at a meeting of Council unless otherwise required by an enactment.
 - (4) A zoning or official community plan bylaw or amendment bylaw may be adopted at the same meeting at which third reading was given.
 - (5) Council may reconsider any clause of a proposed bylaw before the bylaw is adopted, subject to section 894 of the *Local Government Act* regarding Public Hearings.
 - (6) After either second or third reading, Council may amend, strike out or add clauses.
 - (7) Every bylaw adopted by Council must be signed by the Mayor or other member of Council presiding at the meeting at which the bylaw has been adopted, and must be signed by the Corporate Officer.
 - (8) The Corporate Officer must affix to every bylaw adopted by Council the Corporate Seal of the Corporation of the City of Courtenay.

PART 4 - RESOLUTIONS

Copies of Resolutions to Council Members

21. A resolution not included on a Council meeting agenda may be introduced at a Council meeting only if a copy of it has been delivered to each Council member at least 24 hours before the Council meeting, or if all Council members unanimously agree to waive this requirement at a Council meeting.

Form of Resolution

22. (1) A resolution introduced at a Council meeting must be in printed form.
- (2) The presiding member may
- (a) have the Corporate Officer read the resolution; and
 - (b) request a motion that the resolution be introduced.

PART 5 - MEETING RULES OF CONDUCT AND DEBATE

Recognition

23. (1) A member may speak in a meeting after
- (a) the member has raised his or her hand; and
 - (b) the member has been recognized by the presiding member.

Presiding Member Powers

24. (1) The presiding member must preserve order and decide all points of order which may arise, subject to an appeal by other members of Council present.
- (2) If an appeal is taken by a member from the decision of the presiding member, the question "*Shall the Chair be sustained?*" must be immediately put and decided without debate and the presiding member will be governed by the majority of the votes of the members then present (exclusive of the presiding member), and in the event of the votes being equal the question will pass in the affirmative.
- (3) If the presiding member refuses to put the question "*Shall the Chair be sustained?*" Council must appoint the Acting Mayor, or if absent, one of the members to preside temporarily in lieu of the presiding member, and the Acting Mayor or member so temporarily appointed must proceed in accordance with the previous section.

Title of Members

25. Members must address the Mayor as “Mr. Mayor” or “Madam Mayor”, whichever is appropriate, or as "Your Worship", and must refer to another member as "Councillor”.

Conduct of Speaker

26. (1) A member may not speak
- (a) unless in relation to the matter in debate;
 - (b) to a matter already decided upon at the meeting;
 - (a) for more than five (5) minutes at a time.
- (2) A member may not speak more than once to the same matter, except with the permission of the majority of Council; or to
- (a) explain a material part of the member's speech which may have been misconceived, but then only to correct the matter; or
 - (b) ask a question for purposes of clarification.

General Conduct

27. (1) A member must not interrupt a member who is speaking except to raise a point of order and must not make any disturbance during the meeting.
- (2) When two or more members desire to speak, the presiding member must name the member who is to have the floor.
- (3) A member may require the question or motion under discussion to be read at any time during debate, but not so as to interrupt a member when speaking.
- (4) After a question is finally put by the presiding member, no member may speak to the question, nor may any other motion be made until after the result of the vote has been declared; and the decision of the presiding member as to whether the question has been finally put will be conclusive and not open to challenge.
- (5) Council must vote separately on each distinct part of a question that is under consideration if requested by a member.

Improper Conduct

28. (1) If the presiding member considers that another person at a meeting is acting improperly, the presiding member may order that the person be expelled from the meeting.
- (2) If the person who is expelled does not leave the meeting, a peace officer may

enforce the order under as if it were a court order.

Matter Open to Debate

- 29.** Members may debate any motion except the following:
- (a) to lay on the table;
 - (b) to give first reading to a bylaw;
 - (d) to postpone indefinitely;
 - (e) to postpone to a certain time;
 - (f) to move that the motion be put to a vote; and
 - (g) to adjourn.

Verbal Enquiries by the Public

- 30.** A verbal enquiry by a member of the public may only relate to an item on the agenda and may only be heard when Council so resolves.

Privilege

- 31.** (1) Every member may:
- (a) at any time during the debate require that the matter under discussion be read for the member's information, but must not exercise this right in order to interrupt a member speaking without the acquiescence of that member;
 - (b) require the presiding member to state the rule applicable to a point of practice or order and the presiding member must then state the rule without argument or comment but subject to appeal to a vote of the members present; or
 - (c) by means of a question to the presiding member, seek information relating to any matter connected with the business of Council or the affairs of the municipality and the question must be in writing if so required by the presiding member.

PART 6 - MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

Motions Generally

- 32.** (1) All resolutions and bylaw readings must be by motion duly moved and seconded by members.

- (2) A motion other than a motion to adopt minutes, to receive reports, to refer to a committee or staff, to introduce or pass a bylaw or to adjourn must, if required by the presiding member, be put in writing before being debated or put from the Chair.
- (3) When a main motion is under consideration no other motion may be received except to
 - (a) refer to a Committee of Council;
 - (b) amend;
 - (c) lay on the table;
 - (d) postpone indefinitely;
 - (e) postpone to a certain time;
 - (f) move that the motion be put to a vote; and
 - (g) adjourn.
- (4) The seven motions referred to in Section 32(3) have precedence in the order in which they are named, and the last five are not subject to amendment or debate.
- (5) A motion to refer the subject matter to a committee, until it is decided, precludes all amendments to the main question.
- (6) The Corporate Officer must record any motion other than a procedural motion in writing and, after a member has seconded a motion, the Corporate Officer may read it aloud prior to the members debating it or the presiding member putting it.
- (7) Once the Corporate Officer has read aloud a motion, no member may withdraw it without permission of the members and no member may withdraw a motion once passed.

Motion to Adjourn

33. A member at any time may make a motion to adjourn and if seconded, the members must promptly decide the motion without debate and no member may make a second adjournment motion if the first is defeated unless other proceedings intervene.

Motion to Lay on the Table

34. Except when a motion to adjourn has been made, a member may make a motion to lay a pending question(s) on the table, and this motion is not debatable or amendable.

Motion to Put Question

- 35.** (1) If a member moves to put the main question, or the main question as amended to a vote, that motion must be dealt with before any other amendments are made to the motion on the main question.
- (2) If the motion for the main question, or for the main question as amended is decided in the negative, Council may again debate the question or proceed to other business.

Notice of Motion (BYLAW 3102)

- 35.1.** (1) A Council member who wishes to bring before Council a motion resulting from a Delegation, presentation, agenda item or other business that is not listed as Council action on the meeting agenda may do so by way of notice of motion.
- (2) A Council member making a notice of motion must provide written notice and the motion as it is to appear on the agenda to the Mayor, City Manager and Corporate Officer on or before 4:30 p.m. on the Monday of the week preceding the week of the meeting at which the motion is to be considered.
- (3) Upon receipt of the written notice and motion, the Corporate officer will circulate a copy of the motion to Council as soon as practicable.
- (4) The notice of motion must be read aloud at the meeting preceding the meeting at which the motion is to be considered.
- (5) Council may waive strict compliance with this Section 35.1 and present such a motion for immediate consideration by a 2/3 majority vote of all the members present.

Inadmissible Motion

- 36.** When the presiding member is of the opinion that a motion offered is contrary to this bylaw or relates to matters beyond the powers of the members, the presiding member may inform the members immediately, giving reasons for his or her opinion, and may refuse to put the question.

Amendment of a Motion

- 37.** (1) No member may move any motion to amend that negates the purpose of the main motion.
- (2) Members must withdraw or decide any amendment to a motion before the main question is put to a vote.
- (3) If an amendment to a motion is:

- (a) carried, the previous motion is then voted on as amended; or
- (b) defeated, the previous motion is again before the members.

Defeated Resolution

- 38.** Unless specifically provided by statute or bylaw, a defeated resolution or a substantially similar resolution must not be considered within 12 months of the date of the defeat of the resolution. This time limit may be waived by an affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the Council members eligible to vote on the resolution.

Reconsideration of Matter by Mayor

- 39.** (1) The Mayor may require Council to reconsider and vote again on a matter that was the subject of a vote at the same council meeting as the vote took place, or within the 30 days following that meeting.
- (2) A matter may not be reconsidered under section 39 (1) if
- (a) it has had the approval of the electors or the assent of the electors and was subsequently adopted by the council; or
 - (b) there has already been a reconsideration in relation to the matter.

Reconsideration of Matter by Council Member

- 40.** (1) Subject to subsection (5) a member may, at the next Council meeting
- (a) move to reconsider a matter on which a vote, other than to postpone indefinitely, has been taken; and
 - (b) move to reconsider an adopted bylaw (with the exception of a land use bylaw) after an interval of at least 24 hours following its adoption.
- (2) A member who voted in the affirmative for a resolution adopted by Council may at any time move to rescind that resolution. In order to be passed, a motion to rescind requires
- (a) a two-thirds affirmative vote; or
 - (b) a majority affirmative vote when notice of motion has been given at the previous meeting or the call to order of the present meeting.
- (3) Council must not discuss the main matter referred to in subsection (1) unless a motion to reconsider that matter has been adopted.
- (4) A vote to reconsider must not be reconsidered.
- (5) Council may only reconsider a matter that has not:

- (a) received the approval or assent of the electors and been adopted;
 - (b) been reconsidered under subsection (1) or section 39;
 - (c) been acted on by an officer, employee or agent of the City.
- (6) The conditions that applied to the adoption of the original bylaw, resolution, or proceeding apply to its rejection under this section.
- (7) A bylaw, resolution, or proceeding that is reaffirmed under subsection (1) or section 39 is as valid and has the same effect as it had before reconsideration.

PART 7 - VOTING

Putting of the Question

41. (1) When debate on a question is closed the presiding member must immediately put the question to a vote.
- (2) Members must signify their votes on every question openly and individually by the raising of hands and members must not vote by ballot or any method of secret voting.

Recording of Votes

42. (1) Any member may call for his or her vote on any issue to be recorded and each time this request is made, the Corporate Officer must record in the minutes the name of the members and the way in which the member voted.
- (2) Immediately upon the announcement of the result of a vote by the presiding member, any member may call for a division whereupon each member present must orally announce his or her vote.
- (3) Should any member not indicate his or her vote when any question is put, the member will be regarded as having voted in the affirmative and his or her vote must be counted accordingly.
- (4) The Corporate Officer must record in the minutes of a meeting the name of any member who voted in the negative on any question.

PART 8 - COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

Committee of the Whole

43. Meetings of the Committee of the Whole must be held in City Hall Council Chambers on the last Monday of each month, with the exception of December, at 4:00 p.m. unless the

meeting day falls on a holiday, in which case the meeting would be held the following day.

Presiding Members at Committee of the Whole

44. (1) The Mayor must preside at Committee of the Whole meetings if he or she is in attendance.
- (2) The presiding member of the Committee of the Whole must maintain order in the committee and subject to appeal from the members present, decide points of order that may arise and must attest to the correctness of the proceedings thereof.

Notice of Committee of the Whole Meetings

45. (1) At least 72 hours before a meeting of the Committee of the Whole, the Corporate Officer must give public notice of the time, place and date of the meeting by
- (a) posting a copy of the agenda on the notice board;
 - (c) leaving copies of the agenda at the reception counter at City Hall for the purpose of making them available to members of the public; and
 - (c) delivering a copy of the agenda to each member of Council at the place to which the Council member has directed notices to be sent.
- (2) At any time during a Council meeting, Council may by resolution go into Committee of the Whole.

Minutes of Meetings

46. (1) Minutes of Committee of the Whole meetings must be
- (a) legibly recorded;
 - (b) signed by the chair or member presiding at the meeting or at the next meeting at which the minutes are adopted; and
 - (c) open for public inspection at City Hall during regular office hours.

Rules of Procedure

47. (1) The Committee of the Whole members must observe the rules of procedure of Council in any meeting, except:
- (a) the number of times members are permitted to speak is at the discretion of the presiding Member;
 - (b) Members may hear a verbal enquiry from a member of the public on any matter taken up at the meeting whenever a majority of the members

present so wish.

Select Committees

- 48.** (1) Council may from time to time appoint a Select Committee to enquire into any matter and to report its findings and opinions to Council.
- (2) A Select Committee may report to Council at any regular meeting or must report if directed by Council.
- (3) The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of a Select Committee must be appointed from the members of the Select Committee by resolution of Council.
- (4) A meeting of a Select Committee must be called by a resolution of the Select Committee which specifies the day, hour and place of the meeting, except for the first meeting which must be called by resolution of Council which specifies the day, hour and place of the meeting.
- (5) A Select Committee must, on completion of its assignment or on submitting its report to Council, dissolve.

Procedure for Committees

- 49.** Members of Council may attend the meetings and participate in the discussion of committees of which they are not members but only those members of Council who are members of the committee may vote on deliberations of that committee.
- 50.** (1) The committee members must observe the rules of procedure of Council in any meeting, except that in a Select Committee
- (a) the number of times members are permitted to speak is at the discretion of the presiding Member;
- (b) members may hear a verbal enquiry from a member of the public on any matter taken up at the meeting whenever a majority of the members present so wish;
- (c) a request to present a petition or to appear before the committee as a delegation is handled in the same manner as delegations or petitions to Council;
- (d) a delegation is allowed one speaker and a maximum of ten minutes to make its presentation to the committee;
- (e) the Mayor is a member of all committees and is entitled to vote at all committee meetings;
- (f) each committee may meet at the discretion of its presiding member and must also meet when directed to do so by council, the Mayor, or a

majority of the members of that committee;

- (g) the Corporate Officer must convene a meeting of a committee when requested in writing to do so by the Mayor, the presiding member of the committee or majority of the members of that committee;
- (h) when a committee desires to submit a written report to Council, the presiding member of the committee must deliver the report to the Corporate Officer not later than 4 working days prior to the date of the next regular meeting of Council and the Corporate Officer must have the report delivered to each member of Council not less than 72 hours prior to the convening of the regular meeting of Council which next follows the committee meeting from which the written report arose.

Standing Committees

- 51.** (1) In his/her address at the Inaugural Meeting, the Mayor must appoint the Chairman and members of Standing Committees of Council.
- (2) Standing Committees must consider, inquire into, report, and make recommendations to Council about all of the following matters:
- (a) matters that are related to the general subject indicated by the name of the committee;
 - (b) matters that are assigned by Council;
 - (c) matters that are assigned by the Mayor
- (3) Standing committees must report and make recommendations to Council at all of the following times:
- (a) in accordance with the schedule of the committee's meetings;
 - (b) on matters that are assigned by Council or the Mayor
 - (i) as required by Council or the Mayor, or
 - (ii) at the next Council meeting if the Council or Mayor does not specify a time.

Minutes of Committee Meetings

- 52.** (1) Minutes of Committee meetings must be
- (a) legibly recorded;
 - (b) signed by the chair or member presiding at the meeting; and

- (c) open for public inspection at City Hall during regular office hours.

Quorum

- 53. The quorum for a committee is a majority of all its members.

Schedule of Committee Meetings

- 54. (1) At its first meeting after its establishment, a standing or select committee must establish a regular schedule of meetings.
- (2) The Chair of a committee may call a meeting of the committee in addition to the scheduled meetings or may cancel a meeting.

Notice of Committee Meetings

- 55. (1) Subject to section 54 (2), after the committee has established the regular schedule of committee meetings, including the times, dates and places of the committee meetings, notice of the schedule must be given by
 - (a) posting a copy of the schedule on the notice board; and
 - (b) providing a copy of the schedule to each member of the committee.
- (2) Where revisions are necessary to the annual schedule of committee meetings, the Corporate Officer must as soon as possible post a notice on the notice board which indicates any revisions to the date, time, and place or cancellation of a committee meeting.
- (3) The Chair of a committee must cause a notice of the day, time and place of a meeting called under section 54 (2) to be given to all members of the committee at least 24 hours before the time of the meeting.

PART 9 - COMMISSIONS

Schedule of Commission Meetings

- 56. (1) At its first meeting after its establishment, a commission must establish a regular schedule of meetings.
- (2) The Chair of a commission may call a meeting of the commission in addition to the scheduled meetings or may cancel a meeting.

Notice of Commission Meetings

- 57. (1) Subject to subsection (2), after the commission has established the regular schedule of commission meetings, including the times, dates and places of the

commission meetings, notice of the schedule must be given by

- (a) posting a copy of the schedule on the notice board at City Hall; and
 - (b) providing a copy of the schedule to each member of the commission.
- (2) Where revisions are necessary to the annual schedule of the commission meetings, the Corporate Officer must, as soon as possible, post a notice on the notice board at City Hall which indicates any revisions to the date, time and place or cancellation of a commission meeting.
- (3) The Chair of a commission must cause a notice of the day, time and place of a meeting called under section 56 (2) to be given to all members of the commission at least 24 hours before the time of the meeting.

Minutes of Commission Meetings

- 58.** (1) Minutes of the proceedings of a commission must be
- (a) legibly recorded;
 - (b) certified by the Corporate Officer; and
 - (c) open for public inspection at City Hall during regular office hours.

Quorum

- 59.** The quorum for a commission is a majority of all its members.

PART 10 - GENERAL

- 60.** If any section or subsection of this bylaw is for any reason held to be invalid by the decision of a court of competent jurisdiction, such decision will not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this bylaw.
- 61.** This bylaw may not be amended or repealed and substituted unless Council first gives notice in accordance with section 94 of the *Community Charter*.
- 62.** "Procedure Bylaw No. 2492, 2007" and amendments thereto is hereby repealed.

Read a first time this 2nd day of December, 2013

Read a second time this 2nd day of December, 2013

Read a third time this 2nd day of December, 2013

Notice published pursuant to section 94 of the *Community Charter* on the 6th and 10th of December, 2013

Finally passed and adopted this 16th day of December, 2013

Mayor

Director of Legislative Services



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Staff Report

To: Council

File No.: 7710-01

From: Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services

Date: February 28, 2024

Subject: Research Proposal – College and Community Social Innovation Fund Grants

PURPOSE: To request Council’s support for Courtenay Recreation to partner with Langara College and the British Columbia Parks and Recreation Association (BCRPA) in a research proposal to the College and Community Social Innovation Fund¹ through the Government of Canada’s Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada.

BACKGROUND:

Courtenay Recreation has been approached by Langara College’s Department of Recreation Studies to partner on a research proposal to the College and Community Social Innovation Fund. Additional project partners include BCRPA and the City of Burnaby. The research proposal will investigate access to public recreation, specifically as it relates to barriers that immigrant and racialized groups in British Columbia may face in accessing public recreation services. The project would explore a process in which interventions and initiatives can be co-created by immigrant and racialized communities alongside municipal recreation staff to increase accessibility and visibility of public recreation.

The City of Courtenay was identified to provide representation of a smaller community to ensure research findings can be applicable to non-urban centres in Canada, as well as for its growing immigrant and racialized communities.

DISCUSSION:

The Department of Recreation at Langara College will be submitting a research proposal to the College and Community Social Innovation Fund to investigate the experiences of public recreation by immigrant and racialized communities, as well as explore strategies to enhance accessibility. The proposed project will be a partnership between Langara College, BCRPA, the City of Burnaby and the City of Courtenay. The project is proposed to occur over a period of three years (2024 to 2027) with the following major project objectives:

1. To identify whether immigrant and racialized communities conceive and define recreation differently from native-born citizens currently working in public recreation;
2. To identify successful interventions and programs currently supporting access, and the gaps and barriers that immigrant and racialized communities face in accessing public recreation in British Columbia;
3. To explore the implementation of Belonging, Dignity, Justice, and Joy ([Davis, 2021](#)) as an engagement philosophy in the sustainable pursuit of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion goals within a community; and
4. To document a scalable and meaningful engagement process between interest groups where they co-create initiatives that increase public recreation access for equity deserving groups such as immigrant and racialized communities.

¹ [NSERC - College and Community Social Innovation Fund grants \(nserc-crsng.gc.ca\)](https://nserc-crsng.gc.ca/)

Courtenay Recreation’s role in the research project would require in-kind contributions in the form of staff time (interviews, focus groups, and the co-creation process), as well as provision of meeting space. There are no funding requirements of the City for participation in the research project.

Should Langara College be successful in receiving funding for the proposed project, work would begin in fall 2024 and would continue through to fall 2027. The phases of work include:

- Phase 1: Langara Ethics Review Board approvals: building detailed survey and focus group design.
- Phase 2: Preliminary Research: direct engagement with immigrant and racialized individuals and communities, as well as municipal recreation staff.
- Phase 3: Co-creation Process: Engaging immigrant/racialized communities and municipal recreation staff in a co-creation process to develop initiatives to increase access to public recreation
 - Prior to initiating this step, municipal recreation staff involved in the project would receive EDI training based on the findings from Phase 2.
- Phase 4: Data analysis and evaluation
- Phase 5: Creation and sharing of knowledge products as a result of the research project.

In order to participate as a partner in this research project the City of Courtenay is required to provide a letter of support that addresses the project, the City’s role in it, and the benefits that the expected outcomes will bring to Courtenay Recreation. If the research proposal is successful, Langara College will be notified in the summer of 2024.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

OCP, 2022

Goal 7: A City for Everyone:

Courtenay will ensure equity is integrated into planning and design considerations, so that everyone – including racialized people, newcomers, 2SLGBTQIAP, women, persons with disabilities, children, youth, and elders – are equal participants in the city and in city building.

Goal 9: Investing in Relationships:

The City of Courtenay will value the contributions of all its citizens, nurturing and practicing a culture of proactive involvement in local government reconciliation and all community decisions by creating new avenues for community participation and action.

Community Participation

CP 1 The City will take a proactive community participatory approach for the purpose of encouraging open dialogue and co-creating inclusive decision-making processes.

CP 8 The City will explore partnerships as strategies to achieve OCP vision, goals and policies. Partnerships will employ innovative and structured approaches to ensure all parties are involved and mutually supported to maximize individual and collective efforts.

Parks and Recreation

Objective 4: The parks and recreation system exemplifies leadership in reconciliation, climate action, equity, and community well-being through its services, programs, and partnerships.

Objective 5: Partnerships are in place to achieve parks and recreation objectives.

Social Infrastructure:

- SI 1 Develop and employ a locally-relevant framework for assessing social, equity, and health impacts in policy, development, program and service decisions.
- SI 2 Undertake a city-wide equity audit to identify social inequities and barriers to access in municipal service delivery and develop a strategy to inform decision-making processes related to planning and service allocation in the community. Ensure anti-discrimination, diversity, and inclusion form part of any new policies and programs as well as equitable access to all City services based on needs.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Participation in the proposed research project does not have any financial impacts.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

Recreation, Culture, and Community Services will lead the City’s involvement in the proposed project. The scope of the project is limited to Courtenay Recreation and will require in-kind contributions of staff time and meeting space from 2024 through to 2027.

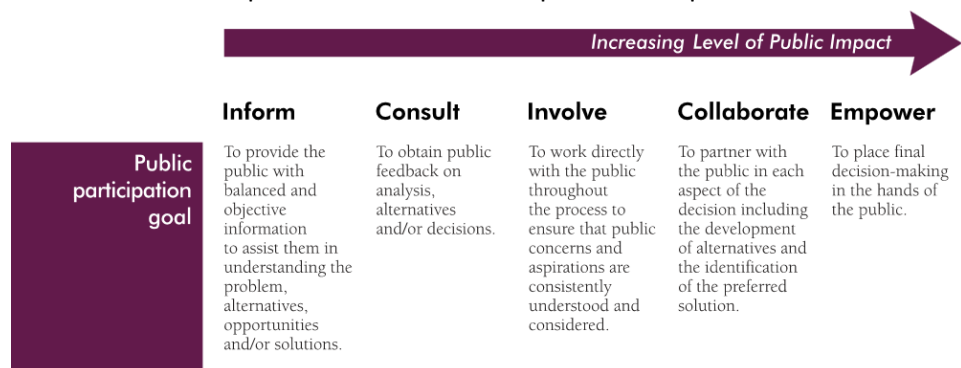
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Social Infrastructure - Review City operations with a social equity, reconciliation and anti-racism lens and develop corporate policy
- Parks and Recreation - Review recreation programs and engage with community on current and future needs, changing demographics

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Langara College will lead any public engagement and communications efforts. Staff would inform the public based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation as required:



© International Association for Public Participation www.iap2.org

OPTIONS:

1. THAT Council direct staff to provide a letter of support indicating the City of Courtenay’s commitment to participating in Langara College’s Department of Recreation Studies research proposal to the College and Community Social Innovation Fund.
2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

Prepared by: Susie Saunders, Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services

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



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Staff Report

To: Council

File No.: 6140-20

From: Director of Recreation, Culture and Community Services

Date: February 28, 2024

Subject: Comox Valley Nature - Garry Oaks Restoration and Stewardship Pilot Project

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to:

1. Update Council on the Comox Valley Nature (CVN) Vanier Nature Park Garry Oaks restoration and stewardship pilot project request;
2. Seek Council's approval of the funding of the tree risk abatement work for 2024; and
3. Subject to a qualified third-party environmental review of the CVN proposal, approve a five-year grant agreement with CVN.

BACKGROUND:

At the October 2023 council meeting, Comox Valley Nature appeared as a delegation requesting Council support their Vanier Park Garry Oaks Restoration Pilot Project ("pilot project"). The following is a summary of their request:

- Funds for removal of identified hazard trees specifically within the Garry oak grove so CVN can carry out remediation, invasive species removal, and stewardship work
- Permission for CVN to begin the removal of invasive plants
- Collection and disposal of invasive materials
- Funds for reduction of conifers
- Collaboration on outreach to public

CVN is requesting Council support a five-year pilot project that will implement the Garry oak restoration strategies outlined in the Comox Valley Nature Vanier Forest Garry Oaks Restoration and Stewardship Pilot Project Presentation Notes, October 11, 2023 (Attachment 1) and the Vanier Nature Park Invasive Species Survey and Garry Oak Mapping Report, 2023 (Attachment 2).

Council directed staff to report back through the following resolution at the November 8, 2023 Council meeting:

THAT based on the delegation by Comox Valley Nature in regards to Vanier Nature Park and the Garry Oak grove located in the park, Council direct staff to report back to Council on options for working with Comox Valley Nature and other partners to support the restoration of the Garry Oak grove in Vanier Nature Park.

The CVN have provided a clear plan and rationale for this initiative, including engaging with multiple partners, and providing volunteer activity to advance this work over the years. If Council approves the pilot project, CVN is well positioned to seek funding to match their ask of the City (50% of the invasive removal work). Over the past few years, CVN has engaged with K'ómoks First Nation staff and Councillors, as well as Guardian Watchmen, as well as other community groups in preparing their proposed pilot project including Tsolum

River Restoration Society, and several local biologists who are familiar with the ecological values of this park. They have also provided a number of letters of support from other community interest and environmental stewardship groups. Staff and CVN will continue to engage with K'ómoks First Nation and the Guardian Watchmen, as well as other community interest groups as the pilot project progresses.

DISCUSSION:

Vanier Nature Park (formerly named Vanier Oaks) was donated by School District 71 to the City in 2014 and dedicated as a park through the adoption of Bylaw No. 2797. Vanier Nature Park is classified by the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) as a nature park. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2019 also identifies the following regarding Vanier Park:

- Challenges: contains invasive species such as ivy and blackberry.
- Consideration for planning: consider enhancement and protection of the Garry Oak forest.
- Prepare a park management plan informed by interest holders.

The PRMP Implementation Strategy, 2022 identified the development of Vanier Nature Park management plan as a short-term (1-3 year) recommendation. Staff have scheduled this planning work for Vanier Park in 2024. Strategies for vegetation management and invasive species control would be included in the process as identified in section 3.2.3 of the PRMP. As such, the pilot project could be considered complementary to a park management plan. Although the park management plan is schedule to be developed in 2024, after consulting with CVN and city operational staff, there are time sensitive matters to consider that require this project to be advanced more urgently.

According to CVN's research the Garry oak grove is estimated to have experienced a rate of loss of 15 to 20 percent from 2014 to 2021. "Data from Current Environmental shows that a 2013 census counted 130 oaks (which was 20% of the oak population in the Tsolum River Valley). By 2023 the census indicated we had only 77 oaks, which is a 40% reduction in 10 years."¹ CVN has illustrated the loss in Attachment 3: Garry Oak Tree Loss from 2013 vs 2023.

Before the pilot project remediation and invasive species removal work can proceed, tree risk abatement must occur to ensure a safe working environment for CVN and volunteers. This work must be carried out before March 15th, to mitigate the risk of disturbing the nests of migratory birds. In addition, staff will require that CVN conduct a nest survey of the work area in advance of the work to further confirm that there are no active nesting activities before the tree risk abatement work commences. If the work does not proceed before March 15th of this year, the tree risk abatement work will need to be postponed until the fall, delaying the restoration work another year. As required by operations staff, CVN has obtained a Tree Risk Assessment report, prepared by a Qualified Tree Risk Assessor Certified Arborist, for the Garry oak grove which informed the scope of work for the tree risk mitigation. This tree risk assessment is specifically for the purpose of enabling CVN to carry out the pilot project. It does not address any tree risks in other areas of the park outside the proposed Garry oak grove. Tree risk assessments for this park are not carried out at this time in line with operational procedures for nature parks in Courtenay.

In past years through discussions with K'ómoks First Nation staff, it was identified that K'ómoks First Nation may have interest in carrying out midden work following the removal of invasive species and before the large tree pruning begins. Moreover, K'ómoks First Nation staff indicated that there may also be an interest in having Vanier Park and or the Garry oak grove recognized for its cultural significance to K'ómoks First Nation

¹ CVN e-mail correspondence dated February 15, 2024.

through some form of Indigenous cultural or historical designation. Staff and CVN will continue to engage in discussion with K'ómoks First Nation regarding the Garry oak grove and CVN will involve K'ómoks First Nation Guardian Watchmen as necessary in the pilot project to ensure the Cultural Heritage Policy is adhered to.

Considering the sensitive nesting windows and proposed strategies to mitigate further losses of the Garry oak grove, staff are proposing the following steps for the City to support the pilot project:

1. Allow CVN to proceed with the tree risk abatement work that must be carried between March 1st to March 15th, 2024, subject to an advance nest survey.
2. Direct staff to enter into a memorandum of understanding for this work to address risk management requirements and clarify roles and responsibilities until a formal agreement is entered into. This will also enable CVN to start applying for grants to provide matching funds for the remediation works.
3. Staff to engage a qualified environmental consultant to develop Vanier Park Management Plan and include the review of the proposed CVN invasive species and Garry oaks restoration management plan. The review of the Garry oaks restoration plan by a qualified consultant will be a priority so that the CVN Garry oak restoration pilot project can proceed without further delay. If approved by the qualified environmental consultant, CVN's environmental management strategies will be included in the final park management plan. CVN has indicated they've already received this confirmation from a local qualified environmental consultant.
4. Once a qualified environmental consultant confirms the proposed pilot project aligns as an acceptable environmental protection strategy, a five-year service and funding agreement for the proposed Garry oak restoration and stewardship pilot project will be entered into by the CVN and the City with the following financial support identified:
 - Year 1: up to \$5,800 to cover the cost of identifying and removing the tree risks within the Garry oak area of remediation.
 - Year 1 to Year 5: up to \$4,000 each year to fund remediation work, representing up to 50% of the required annual cost with CVN providing matching funds.
 - The agreement will outline grant deliverables, reporting requirements, annual grant funding levels, pilot program objectives and performance indicators, risk management, City's in-kind support, and K'ómoks First Nation and community engagement requirements.
5. Each year, CVN will provide an annual report to the City to summarize the outcomes of the pilot project to date as set out in the five-year agreement.
6. After year five, subject to a final review of the outcome of the pilot project, staff will provide Council with recommendations regarding a potential long-term stewardship service agreement with CVN to ensure the Garry Oak ecosystem is preserved through on-going invasive and stewardship management.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

Several of the City's strategic and policy documents align with CVN's pilot project request:

Urban Forest Strategy, 2019 Action Framework

- On public lands, formalize urban forest asset management and protection in City corporate policies and systems
- Set neighbourhood tree canopy and character goals in consultation with the community to refine expectations and specificity regarding protection, character and function of the urban forest
- Regularly update urban forest data and key planning and policy documents to respond to changes in land use and technology

Comox Valley Nature - Garry Oaks Restoration and Stewardship Pilot Project

- Actively pursue funds and respond to partnership requests to support the UFS
- Continue to regularly collect information to populate the city tree asset management system
- Use information from the asset management system to inform resourcing requirements, including human resources, for the desired level of service
- Establish forums for interdepartmental, inter-jurisdictional and interagency communication to continuously improve tree management protocols and clarify tree management expectations across public and private lands
- Work together with K'ómoks First Nation and community groups to steward the City's urban forest
- Develop a Communications Strategy to effectively share the story of the urban forest and engage the community in managing public and private trees

OCP, 2022*Natural Environment Chapter*

Objective 1

Remaining sensitive ecosystems are protected; lost or degraded sensitive ecosystems are restored.

Policies

- NE 1 Preserve sensitive ecosystems areas and the connection between them in natural condition to the maximum extent possible.
- NE 4 Collaborate with land owners, other levels of government, non-governmental organizations, and neighbouring jurisdictions in developing regionally consistent approaches to inventorying, mapping, conserving, and restoring environmentally sensitive areas, watershed health and species at risk, using the principles of precaution, connectivity, and restoration.
- NE 5 Consider entering into joint ownership and/or management agreements of protected land with non-government organizations or other government jurisdictions where required.
- NE 8 Work in partnership to minimize the further introduction and spread of invasive species, and to develop an invasive species management plan to prevent, eradicate, contain, and control the spread of invasive species within Courtenay and the wider region.

Objective 4

The urban forest is healthy and growing towards a 34 – 40% canopy cover target.

- NE 23 Continue to integrate City trees, forests, and green infrastructure into asset management planning, including budgeting, policy development, and staff resourcing.

Objective 6

Information and opportunities are in place for the wider community to play an active role in the protection, restoration, and stewardship of the natural environment.

- NE 36 Partner with senior levels of government, regional jurisdictions, conservation professionals and organizations to maintain publicly accessible mapping and associated information of ecological systems of the area.
- NE 38 Work in partnership on the development and delivery of robust public education campaigns to promote a local culture of nature and watershed conservation, restoration, and stewardship.

Opportunities on private land should include, but not be limited to, invasive species management, tree planting and care, pesticides, native, bio-diverse, and watershed-sensitive landscaping

Parks and Recreation Chapter

PR 23: When designing and programming parks and recreational facilities ensure the following perspectives and factors are considered and included:

- a. Indigenous perspectives and worldviews, including K'ómoks First Nation traditional use and practices, in the provision of recreational programming and in the formation of park types, layouts, features, and purposes; and
- b. Unique and culturally significant spaces highlighted in parks and provide spaces and amenities to celebrate a diversity of heritage, art and culture of our community.

PR 24: Where appropriate, use existing and new parks, greenways, and recreational facilities as climate friendly leadership, education and demonstration opportunities that can be studied, evaluated, and marketed to foster support from the public, development community, and City for broader application. Specifically consider:

- d. Planting of local and climate-adapted species, and the restoration of local habitats in park spaces;
- e. Urban forest management and good arboriculture practices;
- f. Education about local ecosystems, their services and sensitivities, and our relationships and responsibilities to the natural world;

PR 25: Protect sensitive ecosystems and ecological functions within City parks by:

- a. Creating designated protection areas;
- b. Limiting access points;
- c. Installing interpretive signage for increasing public awareness; and
- d. Developing guidelines to determine compatible and incompatible recreational land uses in Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

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:

- e. 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;

Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2019

3.2.3 Prepare Park Management Plans for natural areas using the process below:

- Inform the relevant City residents of the process and consult with and involve those interested in each park; for major Natural Areas, inform the City; for other Natural Areas, inform interest holders.
- Work with Comox Valley Land Trust on parks where they have interests.
- Conduct an inventory of natural resources
- Prepare strategies for vegetation management, including weed/invasive species control and potential native planting.
- Plan for natural corridors within and between parks to provide connectivity for wildlife where possible

Comox Valley Nature - Garry Oaks Restoration and Stewardship Pilot Project

- Identify trail systems and supporting infrastructure to provide varied and interesting experiences to visitors while protecting environmentally sensitive areas and features
- Consider other amenities the park could support without negative environmental impacts
- Protect and enhance fisheries values in riparian areas
- Establish interpretive programs, including signs, online resources, and activities where applicable

3.2.7 Work on improving natural areas and green spaces in collaboration with partners as opportunities arise as per park management plan.

The Park and Recreation Master Plan Implementation Strategy was adopted by Council in 2023. This document provides a phased delivery of the PRMP recommendations in the short, medium, and long term. The preparation of a park management plan for Vanier Park has been identified as a park planning project in the 2024 work plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Comox Valley Nature has requested the following to support the pilot project:

- \$5,800 towards tree risk abatement in 2024
- Up to \$4,000 annually from 2024 to 2028 inclusive to support Garry oak remediation work, with CVN matching these funds

It is recommended that pilot project be funded by gaming funds allocated to Council Initiatives. Historically this budget line has \$75,000 of which spending can vary from year to year. For 2024 there has been no proposed change to the \$75,000 budget.

The table below outlines past spending 2023 and approved spending for 2024 to date.

Gaming	Budget	Actual
Council Initiatives 2023	\$75,000	\$29,335
Council Initiatives 2024	\$75,000	\$7,500

The future Vanier park management plan will establish the service levels required for the operational management of the park. These service levels will be used to establish the annual operational budget required to sustainably maintain the park as outlined in the park management plan.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

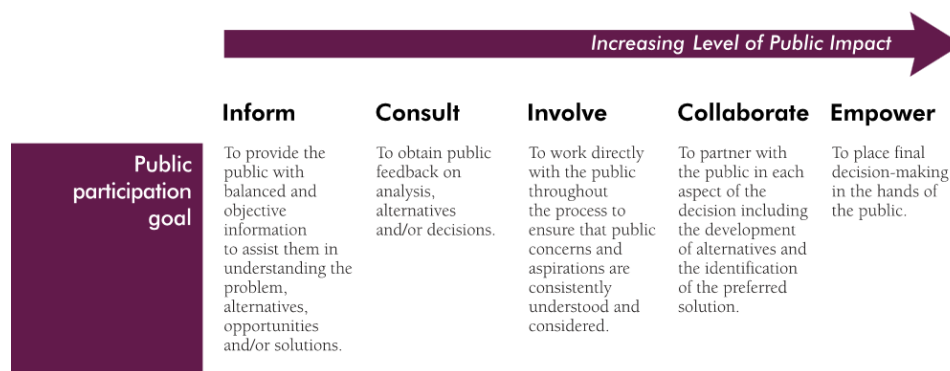
The development and administration of the memorandum of understanding and subsequent agreements will be led by the Department of Recreation, Culture and Community Services (RCCS) in collaboration with other relevant internal departments.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

N/A

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

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



© International Association for Public Participation

OPTIONS:

1. THAT Council direct staff to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Comox Valley Nature outlining the terms and conditions of the City’s support of the Garry Oaks Restoration Pilot Project; and,
 THAT subject to the execution of an MOU, Comox Valley Nature receive a grant of up to \$5,800 for the tree risk abatement required for this pilot project in 2024; and,
 THAT Council delegate authority to the Director of Recreation, Culture and Community Services to determine the terms and conditions for a five year grant and service agreement for the Garry Oak remediation and stewardship pilot project , subject to the review of the CVN’s invasive removal and Garry oaks remediation management plan and and confirmation that the proposed CVN project align with a park management plan by a qualified environmental consultant; and
 THAT the Director of Recreation Culture, and Community Services be authorized to execute the agreement(s) on behalf of the City funded from Gaming.
2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Comox Valley Nature Vanier Forest Garry Oaks Restoration and Stewardship Pilot Project Presentation Notes, October 11, 2023
2. Vanier Nature Park Invasive Species Survey and Garry Oak Mapping Report, 2023
3. CVN Illustration of Garry Oak Tree Loss From 2013 vs 2023

Prepared by: Joy Chan, Manager of Business Administration, Department of Recreation, Culture and Community Services
 Joanne Bays, Community Development Coordinator, Department of Recreation, Culture and Community Services

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

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

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:



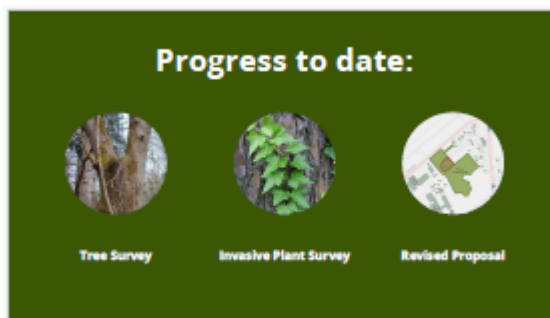
1. Assess and gradually restore this rare and at risk Garry Oak grove to increased sun and health through a site specific restoration plan.
2. Monitor the results of our work
3. Establish a long-term community stewardship group for this project.

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.

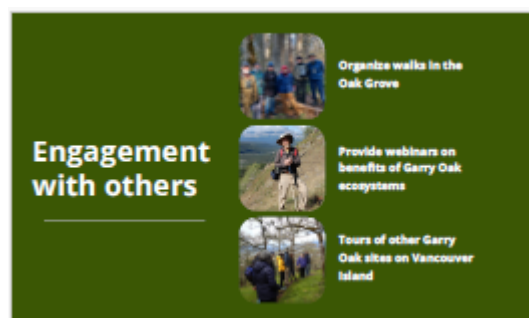
1. In the fall of 2021 we continued the work of assessing the Garry Oak grove in Vanier Nature Park and in April 2022 we published a site specific tree survey. The report mapped and provided details on all the trees in the grove as well as pinpointing the 21 conifer trees that could be reduced to wildlife 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
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 Innis, Coordinator, CVN
Dave Weaver, Beaufort Watershed Stewards

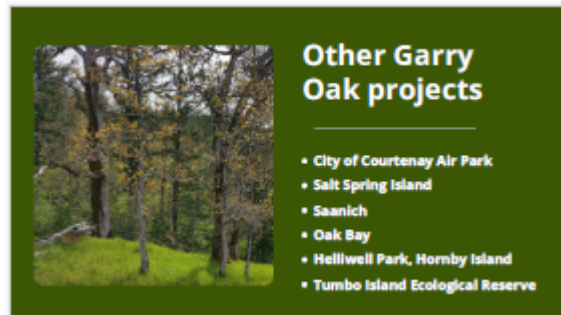


Thomas Munson (Environmental Planner / District of Saanich) wrote, "Never let it be said that you stood by and watched a species disappear into the halls of extinction. Now is the opportunity to save this legacy."

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)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Comments</u>		
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.		
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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). Hollies 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-background-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/>

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 Oak¹ 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 Courtenay 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 to 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 (IAPP²) 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 competition with the oaks, while the dense Holly shade as well as ivy or blackberry ground covers reduce the ability of oak acorns to germinate 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.

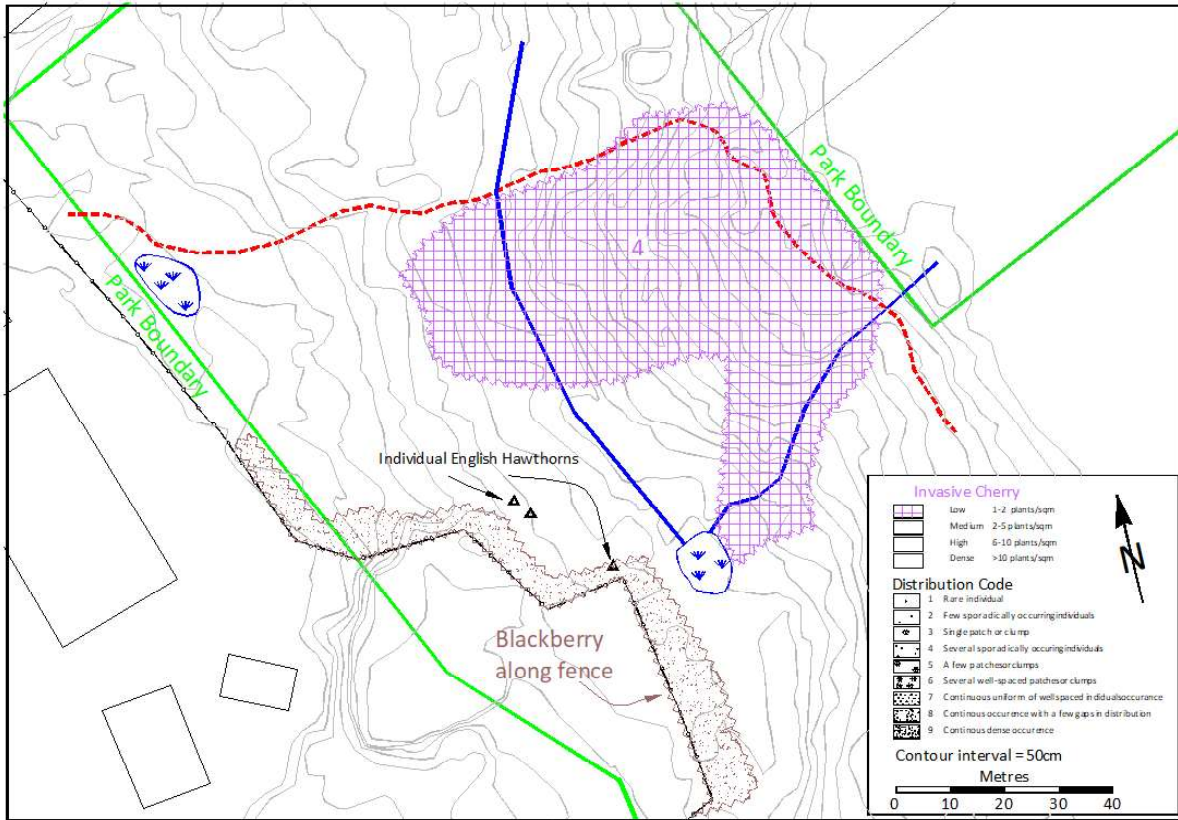


Figure 1: Cherry and Blackberry Distribution



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) Daphne Distribution

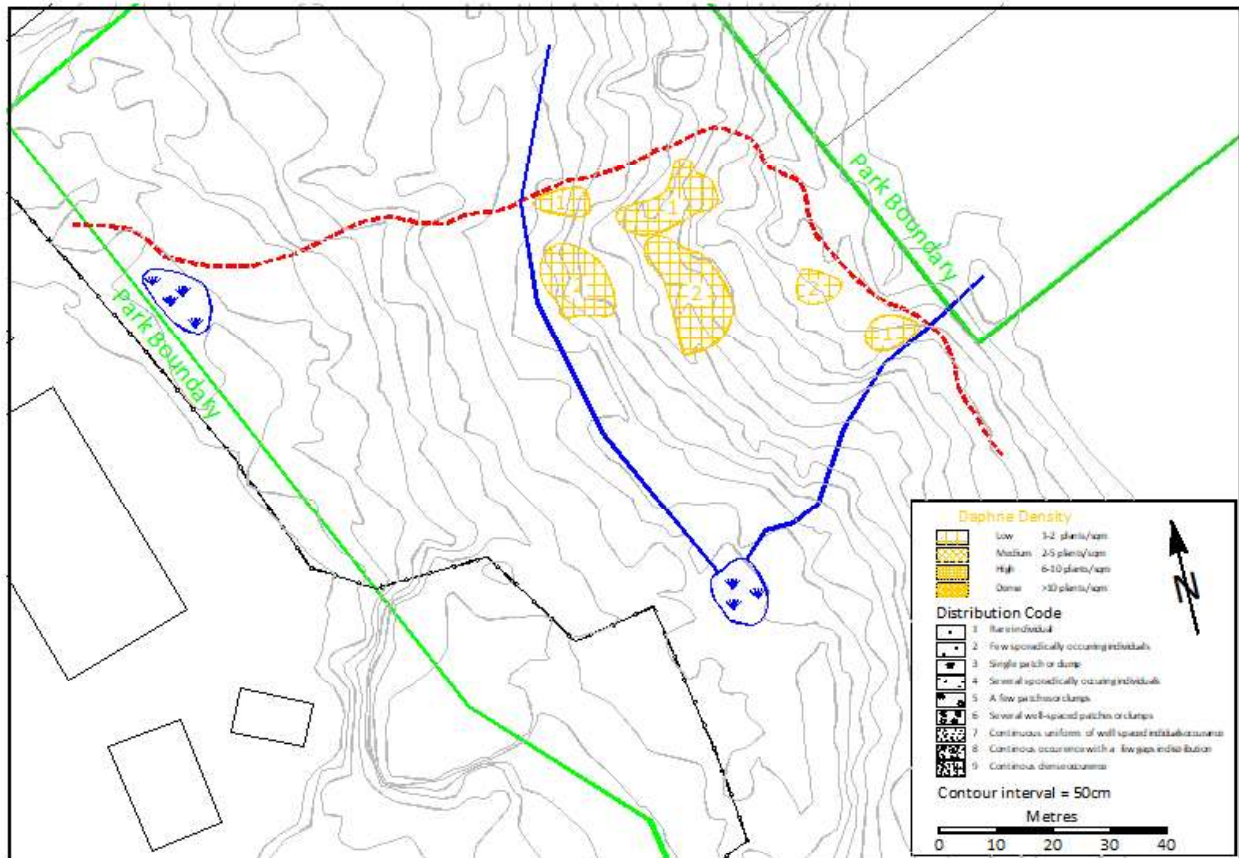


Figure 3: Areas of high density of Daphne

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) Holly Distribution

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.

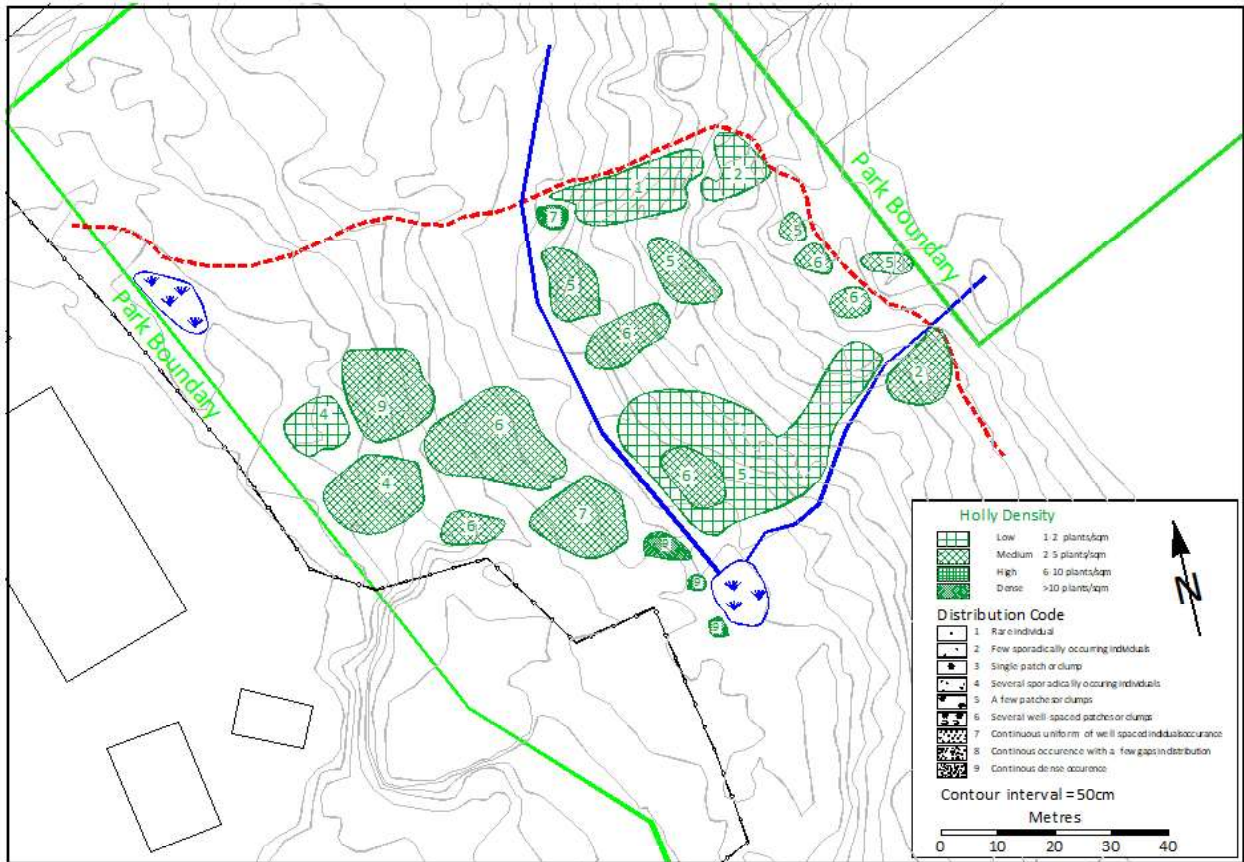


Figure 5: Holly Density and Distribution



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

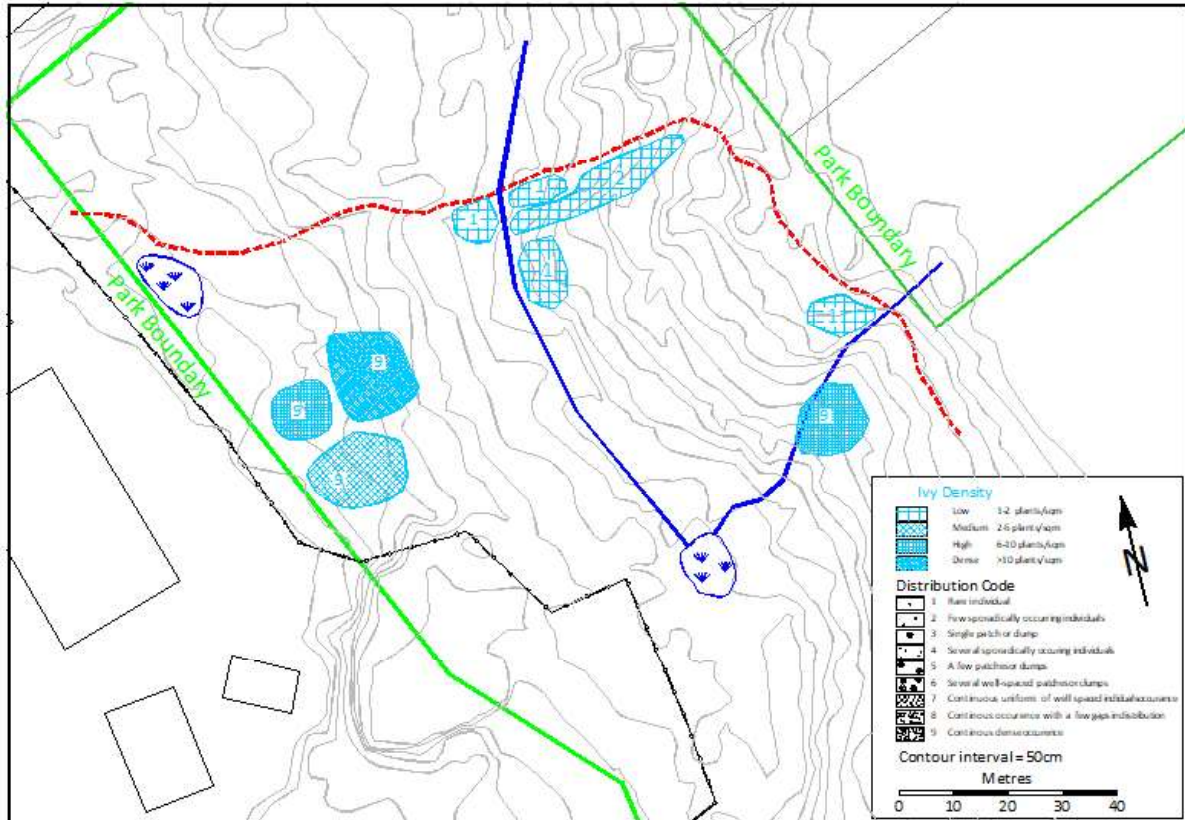


Figure 7: Ivy Density and Distribution

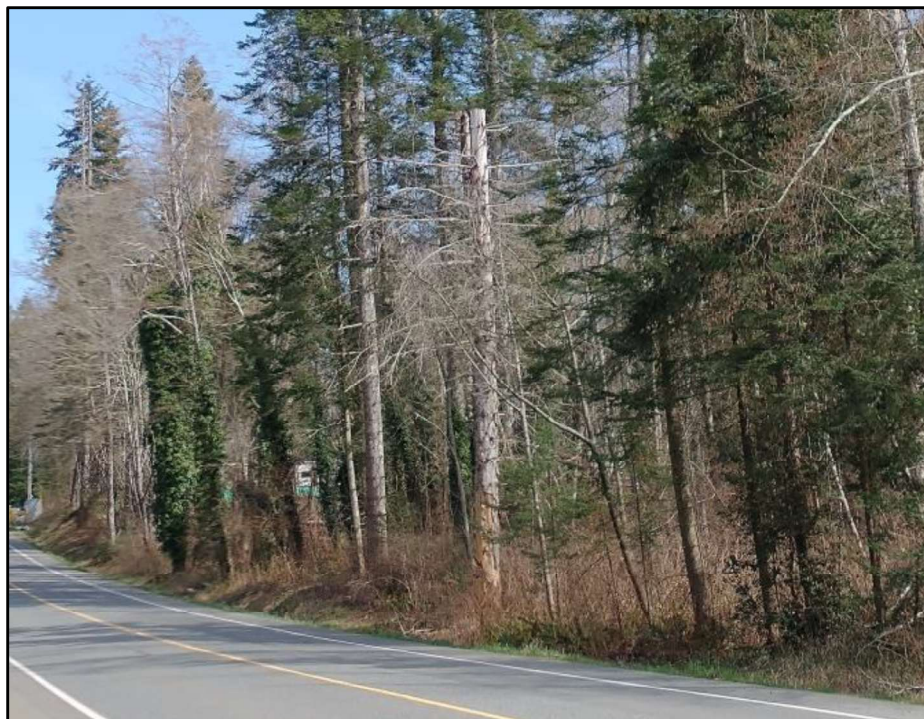


Figure 8: Ivy Climbing firs along Vanier Dr.

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.

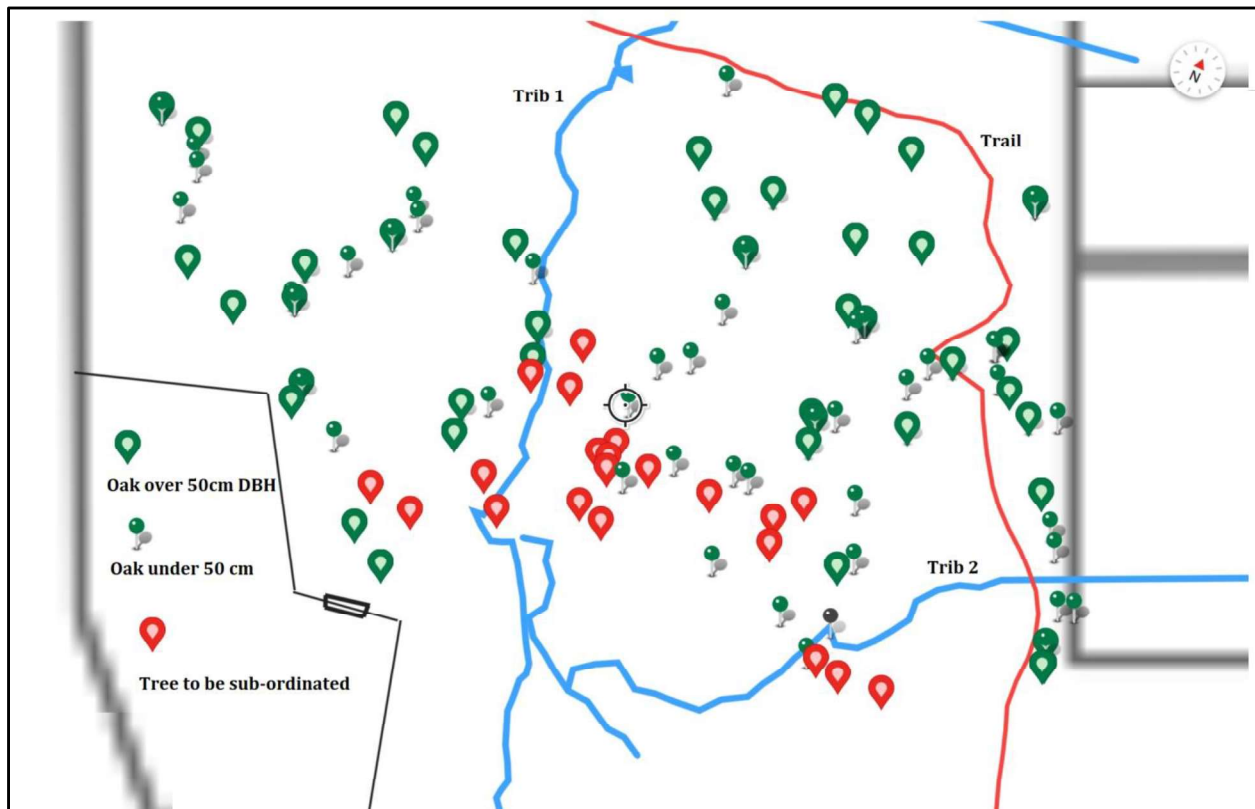


Figure 9: Oaks (green) and Sub-ordinate Trees

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 trees³, 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-assessment⁴, 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.

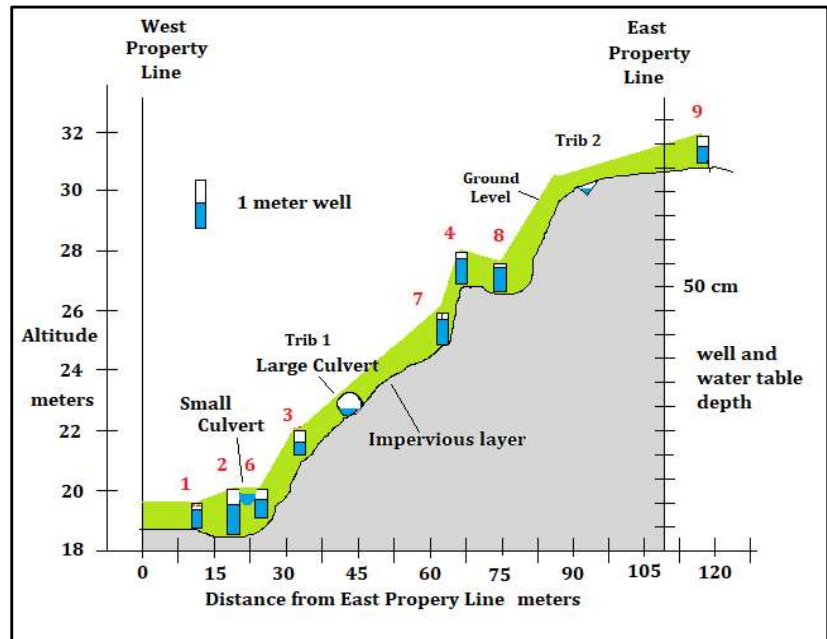


Figure 10: Well location, Altitude vs Distance

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*) meadow⁵. 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 m² 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.

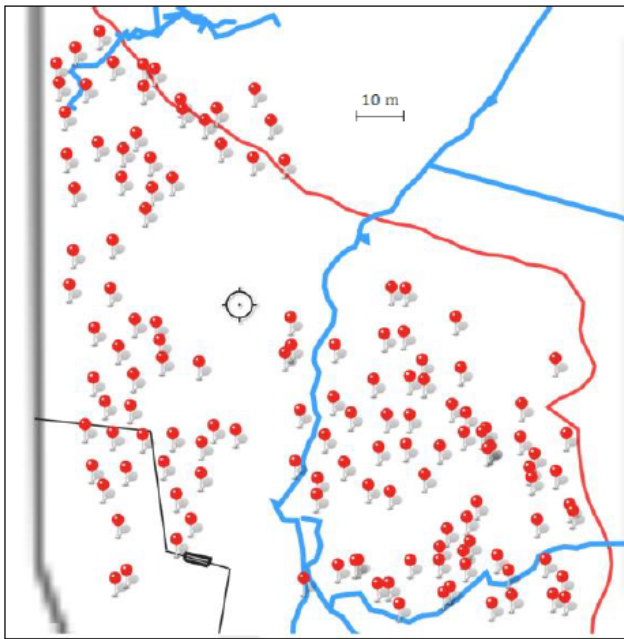
7c) Bird Studies:

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>

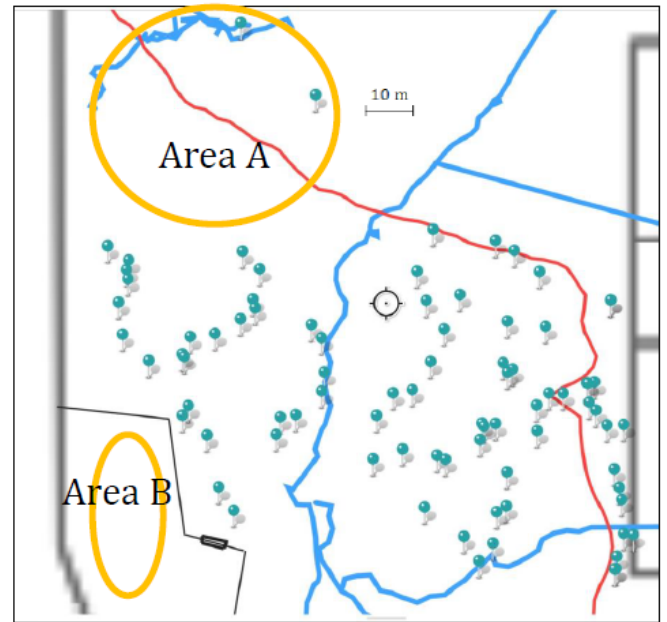
Appendix: Volunteer Time at Vanier Nature Park from Dec 2022 to Present

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	



2013 Survey

Yes!



2023 Survey

The 2013 census has **130 oak** trees, about **20% of total** oaks, within the confines of the Vanier Grove (left map). Our 2023 census (right) has

77 oaks A 40% reduction in 10 years.

Garry Oaks require full sun, all day to thrive. We have only found two living oaks in Area A, which is heavily shaded. Area B was cleared by SD71 for their works yard.

From: "Kilborn, Corey (RCMP/GRC)" <c.kilborn@rcmp-grc.gc.ca>

Date: February 19, 2024 at 12:05:58 PM MST

To: "Garbutt, Geoff" <ggarbutt@courtenay.ca>, jwall@comox.ca, jwarren@comoxvalleyrd.ca, Rachel Parker <rparker@cumberland.ca>, jordan.templeman@komoks.ca

Cc: "Mercer, Scott (RCMP/GRC)" <scott.mercer@rcmp-grc.gc.ca>

Subject: Community Priorities for RCMP Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Good day,

As you may be aware, each RCMP detachment sets yearly priorities and goals with specific activities to achieve each. A key tenet of determining these priorities is Community consultation with those that we serve. I would like to open up lines of communication with each of our Communities in order to help us determine what our priorities will be for the next year.

Our priorities were set last year as the following:

1. Community Issues
 1. Road Safety (roadways)
 2. Crime Reduction
 3. Liaison with residents and community
 4. Safety (watercrafts)
 5. Parks/Campgrounds
 6. Road Safety (off-road vehicles)
 7. Property Crime
 8. Drug Trafficking
 9. Violence in Relationships
 10. Sexual Assaults
 11. Bylaws: Homeless Encampments
 12. Collaboration with CVRD emergency planning
 13. Police/Community relations re KFN bylaws
 14. Increasing communications support with KFN
 15. Mental Health Awareness/Support
 16. Downtown Police Presence

I would ask that each community please identify the top 5 areas of concern for Policing Services. As a detachment we would then look to harmonize common concerns where possible and identify internal action items to support each goal with these efforts in place for the start of our fiscal year (April). Please feel free to call anytime, or I am available to meet to discuss further. We had our share of challenges and successes last year. We look forward to the continuing dialogue so that we can most effectively provide Policing Services to the Comox Valley.

Thank you,
Corey

Staff Sergeant / *Sergent d'état-major* Corey Kilborn
Officer in Charge, (acting)

Accredited Team Commander

Comox Valley RCMP
800 Ryan Road, Courtenay BC
V9N 7T1
250-334-5909



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Staff Report

To: Council
From: City Manager (CAO)
Subject: Management Reports

File No.: 0570-01
Date: February 28 2024

PURPOSE:

To update Council on 2024 projects and strategic priorities, by providing the attached Management Reports.

OPTIONS:

1. THAT Council receive the management reports as presented for information.
2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Fire Department Report
2. Public Works Services Management Report
3. Development Services Report
4. Finance Management Report

Prepared by: Marianne Wade, Director of Development Services
Kurt Macdonald, Fire Chief
Kyle Shaw, Director of Public Works
Adam Langenmaier BBA, CPA, CA Director of Finance

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

DEPARTMENT	FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE CHIEF	Kurt MacDonald



INITIATIVE	DETAILS	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE	% OF TASK COMPLETE	UPDATE & COMMENTS
Capital Projects				
Chevy Tahoe Replacement	Vehicle used by Fire Chief for both emergency and non emergency calls, and for daytime work duties	12/31/2023	95%	Project has been delayed by supply chain issues. Computer and charging system are expected to arrive by February 14 2024.
Self Contained Breathing Apparatus Replacement	Self contained breathing apparatus used to perform interior firefighting operations and protect the respiratory tracts of firefighters when working in hazardous environments	12/31/2024	10%	January 31 2024 - Background work on different options being investigated. Work will fully begin once budget has been approved.
Operational Projects				
2023-2024 Recruit class	Recruit Training Program	9/30/2024	42%	September 20 2023 - Training program complete.
Training Officer Assistant (TOA) Position	TOA will assist Deputy Chief Training with the development and delivery of firefighter training programs as well as provide another asset for daytime emergency responses.	4/30/2024	25%	Job description completed, job posting TBD.
Strategic Initiatives				
Emergency and Disaster Management Act (EDMA) - Implementation	Working with CVEM to understand,advise and develop a plan to implement new EDMA regulations	12/31/2024	10%	Feedback paper sent back to Province, waiting for regulations that will guide the CVEM to be written by the Province.

DEPARTMENT	PUBLIC WORKS SERVICES
DIRECTOR	KYLE SHAW



INITIATIVE	DETAILS	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE	% OF TASK COMPLETE	UPDATE & COMMENTS
CAPITAL PROJECTS:				
Civic - Centre for Arts - Accessibility	Install accessible door openers	Carry forward	95%	Carry to 2024; system installed, awaiting commissioning
Civic - Centre for Arts - HVAC	Needs assessment for 2024 design/replacement	Complete	100%	Complete. RCCS, PWS, and cultural partner of future needs required.
Civic - City Hall - Renovation	New meeting room and staff offices	Complete	100%	Complete
Civic - Filberg Centre - Stairs	Exterior Stair Repair	Complete	100%	Stairs complete; patio needs to TBD with RCCS staff
Civic - Filberg Centre - Accessibility	Install 4 accessible door openers	Complete	100%	Complete
Civic - Lewis Outdoor Washroom	EoL roof replacement	Carry forward	10%	Carry to 2024; Quotes over budget.
Civic - LINC	EoL roof replacement	Carry forward	10%	Carry to 2024; Quotes over budget.
Civic - Museum - Façade	Repair of deteriorating masonry	Complete	100%	Complete
Civic - Museum - Lift Upgrade	Assessment/design for EOL replacement of freight elevator	Complete	100%	Complete. Consultant report does not recommend upgrade of current unit; requires RCCS, PWS, and cultural partner review.
Civic - PWS - Telus Bld. Renovation	Renovate former Telus building for staff use	Carry forward	0%	Pushed to 2024; Pending Roof Replacement
Civic - PWS - Charging Stations	Procurement & installation of PW fleet EV charge stations	Complete	100%	Contractor having connectivity issues
Civic - PWS - Training Bld.	EoL roof replacement	Carry forward	10%	Carry to 2024; Quotes over budget.
Fleet - PWS - Heavy Vehicles	Backhoe	Complete	100%	Complete
Fleet - Heavy Vehicle	Single Axle Dump Truck w/ Sander & Plow	Complete	100%	Received unit, issues resolved, invoice processed. Complete.
Fleet - Light Vehicle - 3/4 Tonne Ex Cab 4wd	Vendor - Metro Motors 2023 F-F250	TBD	90%	RFP Complete/ Contract Awarded - ETA 2024
Fleet - Light Vehicle - Hybrid SUV	Vendor - Metro Motors Ford 2023 Ford Escape Hybrid	TBD	90%	One outstanding delivery - factory recall item
Fleet - Equipment - Tow Behind Mower	Vendor - Oakcreek Golf & Turf - Progressive TD65-B Model	Complete	100%	Complete
Parks - Playground Equip. Renewal	Riverside Fitness Park	Complete	100%	Complete
Parks - Pedestrian Bridge Renewal	Riverway Trail - 31st Street	Complete	100%	Complete
Parks - Marina Storage Compound Relocation	Construction	Complete	100%	Complete
Parks - Cemetery - Lawn Crypts	Construction	Complete	100%	Complete
Trans - PCPRP - Pine Pl.	Road surface treatment	Complete	100%	Complete
Trans - PCPRP - Cedar Cres. - Hemlock Pl.	Road surface treatment	Complete	100%	Complete
Trans - PCPRP - Lewis Ave. - 17-19th	Road surface treatment	Complete	100%	Complete
Trans - PCPRP - 22nd, 23rd, 25th, Harmston & Grant	Road surface treatment	Complete	100%	Complete
Trans - CNP Implementation_2023	SDS Bylaw Update, 1st Street, Puntledge, Piercy Ave	Carry forward	55%	Carry Forward: painted bike lane installation to be actioned with line painting Q3 of 2024
Trans - CNP Implementation_2024	Cumberland Rd, Headquarters, Vanier Dr.	08/01/24	0%	In progress
UTL - Water - Water Smart Action Plan - DMZ	District Meter Zone - Zone 1	10/01/23	99%	DMZ PRV Installation @ Cowichan Ave - 120/138 Zone, Minor Contractor deficiencies
OPERATIONAL PROJECTS:				
Civic - Pool	2024 Start-up	06/03/24	10%	In Progress_June 3rd
Parks - Morrison Sr. Park	Environmental Mitigation Works	Complete	100%	Complete
Parks - Conservation	Smart Water Action Plan - Irrigation Controller Upgrade	Complete	100%	complete
Parks - Mile of Flowers	2024 Plant-in Event	05/28/24	20%	In Progress_ May 28th
Trans - Crown Isle	Speed Reduction Trial/Study/Report (40km)	Complete	100%	Complete
Trans - Snow & Ice Control	Policy Update	09/15/24	33%	In Progress
Trans - Road Condition Assessment	Condition assessment	05/01/24	85%	Preliminary review complete. Awaiting final report from contractor.
Trans - Snow & Ice Reserve Bylaw	Council Report, Bylaw	05/08/24	0%	Report to be started
Trans - FLEET - EV Review	Policy Development / Fleet Review - EV Conversion	HOLD	55%	Draft Provincial Regulations/Guidelines Under Review by Municipalities: Framework defined, emissions calculated
UTL - RecycleBC Transition Plan	Submission and Approval of RBC Transition Plan for Automated	Complete	100%	Complete and approved. Change order signed.
UTL - SW - Old Container collection	Started, undercollecting in Week 1	02/15/24	90%	Fewer old containers collected than expected, good reuse uptake. To be delivered to Merlin Plastics for recycling
UTL - SW - Contamination Mgmt	To begin Feb 2024	08/30/24	0%	Feb to May to begin followed by summer ambassadors
UTL - SW - Seasonal Excess Yard Waste	Fall 2024	12/05/24	0%	Potential pilot program budgeted, under review
UTL - Water & Sewer - Rate Review	Revamp Rate Structures; include future capital funds/reserve	10/31/23	95%	Final Report in DRAFT
UTL - Rescind SW Bylaw 2244, Update MTI Bylaw (fines)	Council Report, Bylaw (rescind), Bylaw MTI updates	04/24/24	0%	Reports to be started
UTL - Solid Waste Reserve Bylaw	Council Report, Bylaw	05/08/24	0%	Reports to be started
AM - SIIP Report to Council	Finalize SIIP, staff report	02/28/24	85%	SIIP edits needed, staff report underway
Strategic Initiatives				
Civic - EV Charging Stations	10 level 2 EV charging stations_PWS FLEET	Complete	100%	Complete
Trans - CNP Update / 5yr Implementation Plan	Complete Review, Update & Develop 5 yr Imp Plan	Complete	100%	Complete
Trans - CNP BCAT 2023 Grant	5th Street, LakeTrail MUP	Complete	100%	Complete
DCBIA - Street Lights - Laneway	BC HYDRO Lighting Review - Lanes	Complete	90%	BC Hydro confirmed 6 of 8 installations
Trans - SD71 - SASP	Safe Active School Program	TBD	10%	Anticipated RFP for the spring 2024
Trans - Traffic Calming Policy	Policy Development	04/01/24	80%	Draft policy developed and under review for finalization.
UTL - Water - Water Smart Action Plan	Update 2019 Plan, Report on outcomes, Universal Meter Options	10/30/24	25%	In progress
UTL - SW - Community Clean-up Event	Earth Day - Community Clean-up Event	04/22/24	10%	In progress

DEPARTMENT	DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
DIRECTOR	Marianne Wade



INITIATIVE	DETAILS	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE	% OF TASK COMPLETE	UPDATE & COMMENTS
Modernization of Subdivision and development servicing bylaw	The Bylaw 2919 to be repealed and replaced to align with a professional reliance model, best practices, and new supplemental design guidelines.	Q3 2024 Phase 1 Bylaw Q4 2024 Phase 2 Supplemental Designs	Phase 1 50% Phase 2 10%	Drafting of the bylaw has been initiated , once a draft is completed Staff will consult with development community before finalizing this work. Integration of master plans : cycling network, IRMP, parks, road heirachy , water, sewer , landscape and playground has changed the original scope of the update that was initiated in 2019. Further the population projection from OCP is low and needs to be adjusted which impacts master plans. To truly reflect the current status of this project staff have adjusted the February 2023 percentage from 50% to the actual . Components of the SDSS have been revised such as: Works and Service Agreement, internal processes to follow the professional reliance model. Adjustments are being made on PLR templates and processes to streamline.
DCC Update	Bylaw 2840 to be repealed and replaced with a new bylaw and approved by the superintendent	Q4 2024	25%	Population growth projections need to be updated to include 2021 census which may impact the current infrastructure master plans and the associated DCC projects. The Province has annouced new DCC for Fire, cost sharing with MOTI on highway upgrades, solid waste faciliaities to support the new housing legislation. THIS EXPANDS THE SCOPE OF dcc FEES. Once drafted a report to council will be made and consultation with the development industry will occur. Consultants are updated master plans with new population numbers and are in the process of developing the project list.

CPI Increase to DCC Bylaw	Bylaw 3116	Q4 2024	100%	Complete- Bylaw to increase DCC No.2840, 2016 by 6.9%
DCC Waiver Affordable Housing	Bylaw 3118	Q4 2024	100%	Complete- waiver for DCC as per Section 563 of the LGA for eligible projects- not-for-profit rental housing sunset clause June 1 2027
ACC Regulations	New Regulations to support impacts of new housing regulations on community infrastructure	Q 4 2024	0%	This replaces community amenity cahrges negotiated at rezonings with transparent set fees for new growth areas to pay for capital costs of community amenities such as community centres, libraries, recreation centres, to sup[port liveable communities in areas where projected growth and housing supply will occur. Requires modeling and approval by Inspector.
Internal development servicing process updates	Evaluating requirement for development servicing information in the context of full cycle of development approvals process (from rezoning, development permit, subdivision (where applicable), to building permit) for overall efficiency in development application processes.	complete	100%	Established type of servicing drawings required for each stage of land approval application based upon Industry standards. The outcome is concurrence of land use applications to inform servicing capacity and off site requirements. Met with civil consulting on several occasions and discussed at the Development Industry meeting held in July. Staff finalizing materials for webpage and applications.
Pre-Application Meetings	Opportunity for applicants to meet with staff prior to applying for a planning application and receive a comprehensive interdepartmental preliminary review .	complete	100%	Staff have implemented and encouraged pre-application meetings. Staff have developed a pre-application checklist.
Modernization of Zoning Bylaw	To align the Zoning Bylaw with the updated OCP and NEW provincial Housing legislation	Q2 -SSMUH 2024 Q4 full update	25%	The New Provincial Housing legislation has impacted the order of updating the bylaw. SSMUH will be done by June 30 2024, followed by revisions that will result from complete communities spatial anylisis and update in OCP from 5 to 20 year population projections. Consultants are engaged to assist staff.

Building Bylaw update	Comprehensive review of Bylaw including incorporating BC Building Code and OCP policy energy step code requirements.	Q4 2023	100%	Complete
Short Term Rental Regulations	New STR provincial regulations to guide update to Zoning Bylaw	Q2 2024	25%	New STR regulations will guide the update to Zoning Bylaw and have a consultant engaged to assist staff. Anticipate this following the SSMUH zoning amendments. Provincial regulations in effect as of May 1, 2024 for business licencing .
Buisness Licencing Bylaw Amendment for STR	Establish Buisness licence for STR	Q2 2024	0%	Establish Business licencing category, enforcent and fees work with Corporate Services
Developers meetings	Developer meetings have been re-established	Ongoing	25%	Meetings commend in July 2023 and regular schedule been established.
Kus Kus Sum development and rehabilitation	Plan and partnership agreement to rehabilitate old mill site along Courtenay River	Q4 2024	60%	Committee formed to raise funds and guide the rehabilitation process. Date provided is estimated completion of restoration activities.
Harmston Precinct Local Area Plan	Comprehensive plan for City owned Harmston Park and adjacent block land as a strategic downtown development precinct.	Q4 2024	2%	This project is in the 2024 workplan and staff has begun scoping the project to engage a consultant and is working with RCCS.
Downtown Playbook Update	Key capital projects envisioned for the downtown	Q2 2025	2%	This is an interdepartmental initiative to be lead by Development Services. DS is reviewing scope of the update and is coordinating on the feasibility of the Duncan Mews pilot project.
Tree Protection Bylaw update	Review of the bylaw for alignment with the new OCP and housing legislation	Q3 2024	0%	Staff have identified revisions for clarity for implementation and will prepare anmendment.

Development Procedure Bylaw	Development Applications Bylaw 2740 to be repealed and replaced with a new bylaw that incorporates Bill 26 (Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act) policies on public hearings and delegation of variances along with	Q4 2023	100%	Complete Bylaw No.3106
Age-friendly public spaces and mobility networks audit	BC Healthy Communities \$15,000 funding received to conduct audit of key infrastructure.	Q4 2024	90%	The Social Planning Society has complete their study and is providing a draft to staff for review.
Fees and Charges Bylaw amendment for Development Application Fees	Fees to align with Development Procedures Bylaw	Q4 2023	100%	complete- Bylaw No. 3107 increase fees and capture new fees

**CITY OF COURTENAY
MANAGEMENT REPORT**

DEPARTMENT	FINANCIAL SERVICES
DIRECTOR	ADAM LANGENMAIER



INITIATIVE	DETAILS	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE	% OF TASK COMPLETE	UPDATE & COMMENTS
Other Department Support - Projects				
Water and Sewer Rates Review	Public Works Project	April 30, 2024	80%	Provide Finance Support
AMTS - Asset Management Plan (20yr)	Public Works Project	April 30, 2024	80%	Provide Finance Support
Operational Projects				
2024 Parcel Tax Review Panel	Annual - Statutory	April 30, 2024	20%	Annual Statutory Process, meeting date sent to be April 10, 2024, notification letters sent, public notification to be published.
2024-2028 Consolidated Financial Plan Bylaw	Annual - Statutory	May 14, 2024	80%	Staff working through annual budget process internally prior to bringing draft to Council early 2024
2024 Tax Rate Bylaw	Annual - Statutory	May 14, 2024	50%	Requires approved taxation levels and Revised BC Assessment roll. Must be adopted after Financial Plan Bylaw.
2023 Year End Audit and Financial Statements	Annual - Statutory	May 14, 2024	30%	Interim Audit Fall. Auditors to arrive late March with Financial Statements due by the end of April. Statutory Requirement to complete by May 15, 2024.
Local Government Data Entry (LGDE & LGDE TAX)	Annual - Statutory	May 14, 2024	30%	Annual Provincial Reporting
2023 Statement of Financial Information (SOFI)	Annual - Statutory	June 30, 2024	100%	Annual Provincial Reporting
2024/2025 Approval in Principal RCMP Contract	Annual - Statutory	April 30, 2024	50%	2024/25 approval in principal completed
2024 Tax Levy and Collection	Annual - Statutory	July 3, 2024	10%	Involves entire Finance Department. May-July.
2024 Tax Sale Auction	Annual - Statutory	October 7, 2024	10%	Initial contact made with current year delinquent property tax land owners.
2024 Permissive Tax Exemption Process	Annual - Statutory	October 31, 2024	10%	Staff are reviewing PTE policies and bylaws to present recommendation to Council
Solid Waste, Water, Sewer 2024 User Fees	Annual - Statutory	March 31, 2024	90%	To be presented to Council in January 2024.
2025-2029 Financial Planning	Annual - Statutory	May 14, 2024	5%	Financial Planning process starts in summer. Council budget workshops schedule for late November.

Strategic Initiatives				
Grant in Aid Agreement with Comox Valley Community Foundation	Move administration of Grant in Aid Program to 3rd Party	June 30, 2023	100%	Completed. Council direction given to re-evaluate program after 1 year. Report to Council anticipated for summer 2024.
Asset Retirement Obligations	Public Sector Accounting Standard Change (PSAB)	May 15, 2024	85%	Project Plan underway. PSAB has delayed this by 1 year due to COVID-19 and impacts to Financial Professionals. Effective December 31, 2023 Financial Statements. Will involve all Departments
Budget software and Financial statement automation.	Implementation of budget software. Operating module 2023, Capital and Fund modules for 2024. Financial statement module for 2023 Yearend	December 31, 2024	80%	Budget information has historically been held in excel. Increases in complexity, size and sophistication of budgeting software have lead to the decision to switch from Excel to a specific budget software to improve the budgeting process and gain efficiencies.
Financial Policies	Establish and update Financial Policies: - Investments - 2022 - ARO/TCA - 2023 - Procurement (include Social) - 2022 - Reserves/Surplus (Asset Management plans required) - Future 2024	December 31, 2024	50%	Investment policy adopted 2022, Procurement (including social and indigenous) policy adopted 2023, TCA and Reserve to be brought forward in 2024

**Minutes of a Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission Meeting
Held at Atlas Café – Thursday December 14, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.**

Attending: Iris Churchill
Michael Lynch
Mary Crowley
Allan Douglas
Bill Green
Carolyn Janes
Erik Eriksson
Susie Saunders (Ex Officio)
Melanie McCollum (Council Representative)

Regrets: Tom Demeo

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Acknowledgements

The group acknowledged that the land on which the meeting is conducted is the Unceded Traditional Territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

Adoption of Previous Meeting Minutes

MINUTES Minutes of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission meeting on Thursday, November 2, 2023, were adopted as read. All in favor. CARRIED

New Business

Parks and Recreation Master Plan Implementation Strategy Carried to next meeting (February 1, 2024)

Playground Design Standards Carried to next meeting (February 1, 2024)

Old Business

Recreation Fees & Charges (Susie) Carried to next meeting (February 1, 2024)

Parks and Recreation Commission Terms of Reference Carried to next meeting (February 1, 2024)

Next Meeting

February 1, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. (Location TBD)

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.



Briefing Note

To: Council

File No.: 0720-01

From: Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services

Date: February 28, 2024

Subject: Improvements to Bill Moore Park Baseball Diamond

PURPOSE: To inform Council of proposed improvements by the Comox Valley Baseball Association to the baseball diamond located at Bill Moore Park.

BACKGROUND:

The Comox Valley Baseball Association (CVBA) and Courtenay Recreation have been in discussion regarding improvements to the baseball diamond at Bill Moore Park. CVBA has submitted a proposal (see Attachment 1: CVBA Proposal) outlining a series of improvements to the baseball diamond that would enhance the baseball experience including a more stadium like setting through fencing improvements, addition of a bullpen, and installation of a scoreboard. CVBA has secured funding to proceed with these improvements at no or little expense to the City of Courtenay.

DISCUSSION:

Bill Moore Park is home to the Comox Valley Baseball Association and Comox Valley Raiders Youth Football Club. The sports fields at Bill Moore Park, consisting of two baseball diamonds and one rectangular grass field, are irrigated and have lighting, in addition to a concession, changerooms, and washrooms. The two clubs coordinate sharing of the field and diamonds, as well as a clubhouse to support their respective sport programs.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) identifies the need for the development of a park plan for Bill Moore Park and the PRMP Implementation Strategy identifies it as a short-term priority. As such, the proposed 2024 Financial Plan includes the development of a park plan for Bill Moore in 2024. The financial plan also identifies capital drainage and irrigation improvements for the sports fields in 2025.

CVBA has approached the City of Courtenay with a proposal to make improvements to the baseball diamond at Bill Moore Park, funded by the CVBA through grants and donors. The proposed improvements include:

- Additional perimeter fencing to create entry points to the stands to create a stadium experience
- Addition of a bullpen along the first base fence to enable separate warm-up pitching areas for the home and away teams
- Relocation of perimeter fencing along third base to expand seating area
- Additional fencing in front of dugouts to expand dugout areas for teams and players
- Installation of a scoreboard

As per CVBA's proposal, these improvements would enable CVBA to expand its programming and provide high calibre U15 and U18 baseball programs for Comox Valley residents. Currently Comox Valley players are required to travel extensively in order to continue playing baseball at these levels. CVBA has indicated that making these improvements would result in an expansion of higher level baseball to the Comox Valley, in addition to extended community benefits including increased park activation, additional community events and attractions, and enhanced sport development opportunities for Comox Valley children and youth.

CVBA has indicated they would like these improvements to be complete by the start of the baseball season (mid-April 2024). Staff have consulted with CVBA, Comox Valley Raiders Youth Football, and internal City departments on the proposal. The fencing improvements proposed by CVBA are supported by staff and doable within the timeframe proposed.

Staff are continuing to review the scoreboard proposal and will work collaboratively with CVBA towards its installation in a timely manner however the electrical requirements and ongoing maintenance obligations require further exploration and as such may not be able to be completed by the mid-April date. Staff, CVBA, and Comox Valley Raiders Youth Football met to discuss opportunities for shared scoreboards however due to the nature of the sports and the unique field positions, the sports require separate scoreboards located in different parts of the park.

CVBA's proposal builds on the recommendations of the CVRD Sports Field Strategy by targeting investment in sport field infrastructure to maximize quality and add capacity. The CVRD Sports Field Strategy also identifies the need to develop a baseball hub site in the Comox Valley to support baseball's sport development, including tournament hosting. While a park planning process for Bill Moore Park will be initiated in 2024, it is envisioned that the sports field use by football and baseball will remain a key element of park use and the proposal by CVBA is not expected to interfere with or limit the park planning process or its outcomes.

Staff will continue to work with CVBA to bring their proposal to fruition, including exploring entering into a longer term memorandum of understanding regarding the development and improvement of the baseball facilities at Bill Moore Park, and or other City parks, to support CVBA's vision for baseball in the Comox Valley. This work will be done in collaboration with Comox Valley Raiders Youth Football regarding Bill Moore Park, and with the CVRD Recreation Commission as they undertake planning work to implement recommendations of the CVRD Sports Field Strategy.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

OCP, 2022

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:

- d. Non-profit and private sector organizations to expand sport and physical activity options, and expand recreation opportunities for all residents.
- e. Citizens to foster resident-driven solutions and involvement in park use and community involvement.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2019

3.2.2 Conduct park plans as per the process outlined in the PRMP.

- Bill Moore Park Plan identified as short term (1-3 years) priority in PRMP Implementation Strategy

3.2.5 Work on improving community parks as opportunities arise.

- Bill Moore Park identified as priority park for capital improvements.

3.3.11 Add and upgrade the following amenities as part of park development:

- More or better sports fields as the population grows in collaboration with other jurisdictions in the Comox Valley

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The proposal put forward by CVBA does not require any direct financial support from the City of Courtenay as all funding has been sourced from grants and donors. The project however will require in kind administration and project oversight from City staff to ensure it meets City requirements. Should there be any unexpected financial contributions from the City, funding could be made available through the City’s Partners in Parks capital funding program at the discretion of the Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

Recreation, Culture, and Community Services will lead the development and administration of the project proposal, including any necessary agreements. However, the project will involve interdepartmental coordination and collaboration between RCCS, finance (procurement and risk management), and Public Works Services (Parks, Civic Facilities, etc).

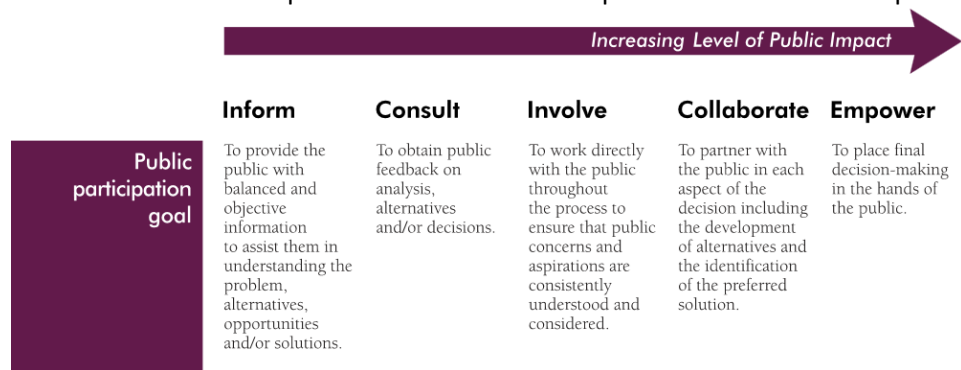
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Parks and Recreation - Optimize active public spaces to respond to density increases and increased park use

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

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



© International Association for Public Participation www.iap2.org

RECOMMENDATION: THAT Council receive the “Improvements to Bill Moore Park Baseball Diamond” briefing note.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. CVBA Proposal

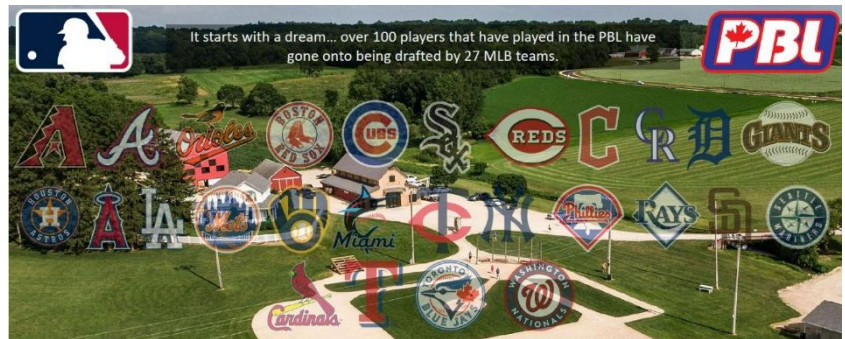
Prepared by: Susie Saunders, Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services
Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)

CVBA Proposal

The CVBA is extremely excited about the local support led by private donors and the City of Courtenay to initiate our long-term vision of providing a local option for our high caliber U15 and U18 Comox Valley born and raised baseball players to compete at home.

In many sports, local players as young as 13 years of age are forced to leave home to try and achieve their athletic dreams. This has also been true for baseball, but due to tremendous support, the Comox Valley has an opportunity to provide a local option for the top caliber level of amateur baseball in Canada.

The British Columbia Premier League (PBL) is the top level of amateur baseball in Canada with 13 teams throughout BC competing in a 15U and 18U league. Over 100 players from the PBL have been drafted and played professionally with a Major League team, including 20 players that have reached the pinnacle and played in the Major Leagues. Additionally, a significant percentage, upward of 70% of the players for some organizations, receive scholarships and play for a college or University program.



Contingent on significant facility upgrades to Bill Moore Park, a team in the BC Premier League has agreed to multiple organizational changes regarding game and practice scheduling, as well as organizational name and branding changes that create a partnership with the CVBA and a home for the team in the Comox Valley.

The potential benefit of providing a local option for our high caliber Comox Valley players is enormous, but the benefits extend much beyond only the players and families that have a roster spot on the team.

The CVBA launched a "Saturday Night Lights" program which provided free pizza and juice boxes to any player, as young as 4 years of age, that is registered in the CVBA who attended a 15U or 18U game at Bill Moore Park last year. The first evening brought in 15-20 families (pictured right) in support. By the final Saturday Night Lights event there was over 100 people comprised of kids, adults, and supporters at the park.



With the significant field upgrades planned at Bill Moore Park to provide more of a stadium like feel, combined with the quality of baseball taking place on the field, it should allow this program to thrive.

The improvements will provide a significant positive impact on the future of not only local baseball families, but the enjoyment of all families in the Comox Valley who want to come out to the yard and eat a hot dog while watching future college baseball players and potentially future major leaguers compete at Bill Moore Park.

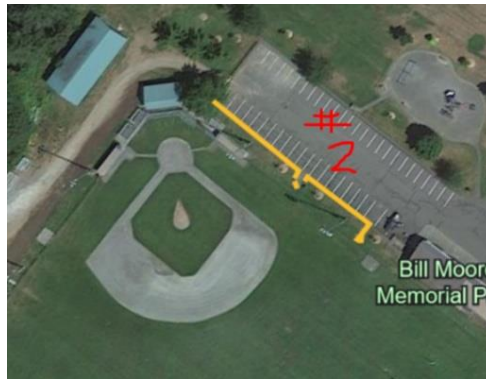
This is just the first step of the CVBA's long term vision. Members of the CVBA have a passion for our vision and with community and the City of Courtenay's support, we will continue to invest in our local facilities and programs for future generations of Comox Valley families to enjoy. The City of Courtenay representatives have been extremely supportive, creative, and helpful throughout this process and the CVBA is extremely thankful for their support.

Below are the following fencing and scoreboard requests that would be fully funded by the CVBA.

Item 1 & 2

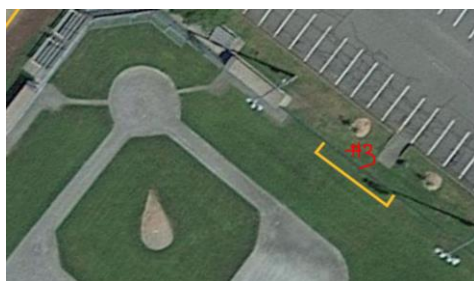
The most important items in the fencing project are labeled below as #1 and #2. The yellow line represents fencing. The fencing would provide a perimeter and create main entry points on the current stairways. The stairways would then become the “entry ways” into the ballpark which helps create the atmosphere of a real baseball field. There would also be an entry way on the 3B side of the ballpark that does not include stairs.

Additionally, the same perimeter fencing would create a separate bullpen area for the home and away team’s players to warm-up pitching before entering the game. This is needed for the caliber of teams that will be playing at Bill Moore. Without a bullpen, the league would likely not allow them to play.



Item 3:

#3 is a minor change to the fencing for fan viewing. Ideally, if we are able to move the fence 10 feet towards the playing surface, the area on the ground is flat enough to add bleachers for seating. Currently, the fence is situated on a slope which is likely the reason why there are no bleachers along that side. Additional seating areas was one of the main feedback items we received from hosting our Saturday Night Lights program last year.



Item 4:

#4 is considered a high priority. The yellow lines in front of both dugouts would create essentially a much-needed dugout extension. The dugouts are too small for the size of current teams and by adding a railing in front of the enclosed dugout allows for more room for the players to move around. This is very common in high school and college fields around Canada and the USA.



Item 5: Scoreboard

The showpiece. Comox Valley Baseball scoreboard which would be located either on the 3B, 1B side inside the perimeter fencing. A scoreboard is a necessity in order to offer the highest level of amateur high school baseball. This scoreboard will bring life and excitement to the park that will go along way to providing the stadium type effect.





STAFF REPORT

To: Council
From: Director of Development Services
Subject: Zero Carbon Step Code

File No.:
Date: February 14, 2024

PURPOSE:

This report is to provide options to Council on the implementation of the Zero Carbon Step Code.

BACKGROUND:

At the regular meeting of Council on 25th October 2023, Council adopted the following resolution

“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.”

On 1st May 2023 the province introduced the Zero Carbon Step Code (ZCSC) to the BC Building Code to regulate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in new construction. The ZCSC follows the same tiered approach as the BC Energy Step Code that was introduced in 2017

The ZCSC has four carbon performance steps of increasing stringency and has been introduced on a voluntary basis.

1. Measure Only (EL-1)
Measures the buildings emissions and is intended to build knowledge and understanding without reductions
2. Moderate Carbon Performance (EL-2)
In most cases require decarbonizing of either space heating or domestic hot water system
3. Strong Carbon Performance (EL-3)
In most cases will require decarbonizing of both space heating and domestic hot water system
4. Zero Carbon Performance (EL-4)
In most cases will require full electrification with full decarbonizing of the building and the operation of the building is as close to zero GHG emissions

The CleanBC Roadmap to 2030 commits to requiring increasingly stringent GHG emission requirements for new buildings in 2024 and 2027 with the full decarbonizing by 2030. After 2023, all new space and water heating equipment sold and installed in BC will be at least 100% efficient. (See Attachment 1)

A few local governments have already adopted the ZCSC to restrict emissions to varying degrees of implementation. Although higher performance emissions have been established they have not accelerated the Energy Step Code (ESC). The new City of Courtenay building bylaw has accelerated the ESC and the proposed introduction of the ZCSC is accelerating the ZCSC ahead of the BC Building Code while meeting the CleanBC road map.

City of Courtenay Building Bylaw No. 3114 which, came into effect on 1st January 2024, requires the energy efficiency of all new buildings to be one step higher than the BC Energy Step Code and aligns with policies in the Official Community Plan (OCP). Higher efficiency buildings will have an impact on GHG emissions due to reduced energy requirements.

Further, on the March 8th 2024 the next addition of the BC Building will come into effect which will introduce further requirements for accessibility, enable mass timber construction, rough-ins for radon safety, adopting cooling requirements to provide one living space that does not exceed 26 degrees Celsius, and a few other items.

Staff had met with the Development Industry in July 2023 and the Industry was not familiar with the ZCSC. Given the unfamiliarity staff were proposing to carry out an engagement process.

In response to the motion noted above, staff would like to provide the following implementation options for the ZCSC.

- Develop a communication and engagement strategy on the ZCSC to develop an implementation plan and propose bylaw amendments. This would require an amendment to strategic priorities and staff work plan. An implementation plan would be brought back to Council for consideration based on the communication and engagement plan. Budget for this would have to be identified in the 2024 financial plan and staff work plan be adjusted.
- Align with the CleanBC road map which also aligns with the City's implementation of the Energy Step Code being one step higher than the building code requirements, this would be introduce EL-2 of the Zero Carbon Step Code in 2024, then EL-3 in 2027 and EL-4 in 2030. This approach would align with the Step Code policy in the OCP but staff would recommend a communication and engagement strategy.
- Align with the CleanBC road map and adopt the Zero Carbon Step Code with the prescribed timelines to reach level 4 by January 1, 2030. Staff to provide information and engage with development industry. This would require an amendment to Building Bylaw No. 3114 to adopt the Zero Carbon Step Code.
- Follow the prescriptive requirements of the BC Building Code. At this time, it is voluntary to follow the ZCSC and therefore has no requirements, or effect on reducing GHG emissions. (See Attachment 2)
- Council provide an alternative direction on the implementation of the ZCSC.

DISCUSSION:

Staff have reviewed other Local Governments processes and timelines on the implementation of the ZCSC and the acceleration of the Energy Step Code. The City of Nanaimo participated in a public engagement process organized by the Regional District of Nanaimo to obtain stakeholder input on the development of a strategy for Net Zero Buildings that included the implementation of the ZCSC. The process to consult and prepare reports for Council consideration was approximately six months.

The City of Victoria and the District of Saanich worked collaboratively together and were the first jurisdictions to enact the ZCSC. An engagement process was embarked upon from February 2022 to August 2022 (approximately six months).

Utilizing Nanaimo, City of Victoria and District of Saanich as examples to the implementation of the Zero Carbon Step Code and Energy Step Code, each government has taken a phased approach with the implementation of both the ZCSC and the ESC, which is summarized below.

District of Saanich City of Victoria	Implementation Timeline		
Zero Carbon Step Code	Part 9	EL-1 May 2023	EL-4 November 2023
	Part 3 (MURB)	EL-1 May 2023	EL-4 July 2024
	Part 3 (All)		EL-4 November 2024
Energy Step Code	Part 9	BCBC Step 3	Not accelerated
	Part 3	BCBC Step 2	Not accelerated

City of Nanaimo	Implementation Timeline		
Zero Carbon Step Code	Part 9	EL-1 October 2023	EL-4 July 2024
	Part 3	EL-1 October 2023	EL-4 July 2024
Energy Step Code	Part 9	BCBC Step 3	Not accelerated
	Part 3	BCBC Step 2	Step 3 Jan 2026

To undertake a full development community and public engagement process on the implementation of the ZCSC would take approximately six months based upon Nanaimo process. This task is not an action in the 2024 work plan or budget. Adjustments would be required to staff’s work plan for 2024 and another task would need to be deferred to 2025

The province will be mandating minimum EL levels as noted above and these can be amended into Building Bylaw No. 3114. Council can consider following the approach to the Energy Step Code which was adopted in the OCP to be one level higher than what the province would mandate for that year. Staff do recommend that consultation is undertaken with this option to provide information to the development

industry and community as there is an impact to business operations and implementation to the industry. There would be impact on staff work plan and budget for 2024.

Alternatively, Council can adopt the Zero Carbon Step Code and amend Building Bylaw No.3114 to incorporate the Province's strategy through the CleanBc Roadmap with a defined time line to reach zero GHG emissions by 2030 starting in 2024. This follows the performance steps in the ZCSC and is a progressive pathway to compliances that would allow the construction industry to adapt to the change.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

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

The City of Courtenay Official Community Plan outlines objectives and policies (BL6 and BL7) to accelerate energy efficiency and to regulate carbon pollution for new buildings.

The CleanBC Roadmap launched in late 2018 sets out polies on climate change and the reduction of GHG emissions with a range of accelerated actions for zero carbon in new buildings by 2030.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

As this task is not currently envisioned in the 2024 work plan or financial plan. Should Council give direction on the implementation of the Zero Carbon Step Code, staff time will need to be considered which may result in a review and realignment of 2024 with tasks moved to 2025. Associated budget for consultation and legal review will need to be considered depending on the direction being considered by Council.

OPTIONS: 1 (Recommended)

1. That Council adopt the Provincial Zero Carbon Step Code; and
That Council direct staff to amend "Building Bylaw No.3114 " to include the Zero Carbon Performance Levels in accordance with the timelines established in the CleanBC Road Map for all applicable Part 3 and Part 9 buildings starting with EL2 in 2024 and EL3 in 2027 and EL 4 in 2030;
and

Direct staff to engage with the development industry and community to inform on the Zero Carbon Step Code and its mandates.

2. THAT Council adopt the Provincial Zero Cabon Step Code; and
THAT Council direct staff to consult with the development industry and community prior to amending *Building Bylaw No.3114* to:
 - a) require all applicable Part 3 and Part 9 buildings meet the Zero Carbon Performance Level (EL-2) of the Zero Carbon Step Code six months after adoption of the bylaw ammendment, or one step higher than the BC Building Code; and

- b) require all applicable Part 3 and Part 9 buildings meet the Zero Carbon Performance Level (EL-3) of the Zero Carbon Step Code on January 1, 2027, or one step higher than the BC Building Code; and
 - c) require all applicable Part 3 and Part 9 buildings meet the Zero Carbon Performance Level (EL-4) of the Zero Carbon Step Code on January 1, 2030; and
 - d) include funding in the 2024 financial plan for consultants to lead engagement for this task; and
 - e) direct staff to bring forward amendments to the 2024 and 2025 workplan.
3. That Council not proceed with implementation of the ZCSC at this time.

ATTACHMENTS:

Building and Safety Standards Branch Information Bulletin

Prepared by: Paul Preston, RBO, Manager of Building Services,
Acting Manager of Development Servicing (Development Engineer)

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

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



cleanBC
our nature. our power. **our future.**

Roadmap to 2030



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge with respect and gratitude that this report was produced on the territory of the Ləkʷəŋən peoples, and recognize the Songhees and Esquimalt (Xwsepsum), and W̱SÁNEĆ Nations whose deep connections with this land continue to this day.

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A MESSAGE FROM PREMIER JOHN HORGAN

Here in British Columbia, people share a deep connection to the clean water, abundant forests and rich farmland around us. Our province's landscape is a source of beauty, food and economic opportunities. It is a source of great pride for all of us. There is simply nothing more important than protecting this natural inheritance for future generations.

Today, the things we cherish the most in B.C. are at risk like never before.

While we are living through a time of uncertainty and overlapping crises, the greatest challenge we face now and into the future is climate change. The threat is no longer decades or even years away. The impacts are all around us – from devastating wildfires and intense heat waves to droughts and dying crops.

Three years ago, our government introduced CleanBC – North America's most progressive climate action plan. In that time, we have regulated carbon emissions from the biggest polluters, legislated strong climate targets, and made it easier for people and businesses to switch from fossil fuels to clean energy solutions.

The scale of the climate emergency we are living through demands that we act with even greater urgency.

We have accomplished a lot together, but there is so much more we need to do. As British Columbians, we know we can't afford to delay action. That's why we're taking the next big step on our continent-leading plan and introducing new measures so that we can meet our Paris emissions reduction targets for 2030 and reach net zero by 2050.

The CleanBC Roadmap builds on the progress we've made. It will help power more businesses and communities with clean, renewable hydro power. Working with large industry partners, it will ensure sector-specific plans to reduce their climate pollution. Most importantly, it will encourage innovation of clean alternatives, which will become more affordable to British Columbians.

In developing this Roadmap, we listened to input from people across British Columbia – including consultation with Indigenous leaders and expert advice from the Climate Solutions Council. As the plan is rolled out, we will seize the opportunity to build stronger partnerships with Indigenous peoples by ensuring they share in decision making and the prosperity created in the low carbon economy.

Tackling climate change is not only our greatest challenge. It's also an opportunity to build a stronger, more resilient B.C.

The world has changed since we first launched CleanBC. But our province is uniquely well-positioned to thrive in the emerging clean economy. We have abundant clean energy and renewable resources. We are strategically located as a gateway to the Asia-Pacific region and a major port to the rest of North America.

By far our biggest asset is our people. If the recent forest fires and the pandemic have taught us anything, it's that we're best when we work together. It is that same sense of common purpose that we must bring to the fight against climate change. No one person, or government, can turn things around on their own. It will take all of us doing our part to seize the opportunity in overcoming this historic challenge.

That's what this plan is all about. Working together to chart a path to a cleaner, brighter future with good jobs and opportunities – for everyone.

Honourable John Horgan
Premier of British Columbia



A MESSAGE FROM MINISTER GEORGE HEYMAN

When we launched CleanBC in 2018 we were very clear that our modelling left us with an emissions gap. We needed to intensify our focus across all sectors to hit our emissions reduction goal by 2030. We have since introduced legislatively enforced accountability measures that support the findings of recent landmark reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and others. In short, everyone needs to do more to address climate change.

CleanBC set out a series of actions to begin a 30-year journey to build opportunity, keep communities strong and sustain human and ecological health. In many respects it set a standard for others to reference given its comprehensive approach. The Roadmap to 2030 takes its lead from CleanBC and takes us even further. In fact, it takes us to 100 percent of the achievement of our 2030 emissions reduction target and sets the course to fulfill our net-zero commitment by 2050.

The Roadmap is a clear articulation of where we need to expand and accelerate our action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It takes note of where things are showing signs of early success and where renewed approaches are necessary. It creates the opportunity for new partnerships like bringing together B.C.'s burgeoning clean tech sector with traditional industries to position B.C. products and services for new and evolving markets. Increasingly global investors are recognizing climate-centred technologies as critical in how we transition to living better on the planet. British Columbia is ideally positioned to take advantage of these new opportunities and the Roadmap supports that case.

A number of the actions will show rapid results as we commit to meeting or exceeding the federal benchmark on carbon pricing, enact requirements for all new buildings to be zero carbon by 2030 and eliminate emissions from all new cars by 2035. As these new technologies come on stream we will increase clean energy and fuel efficiency to support the transition.

Like all maps, the purpose of the Roadmap is to set the direction and offer choices to guide our efforts as we continue to track progress. It will allow us to anticipate challenges and potential changes in course. It expands on the principles of fairness and equity so that costs and benefits are evenly distributed as we introduce new measures.

The plan laid out in the pages that follow is admittedly technical. The tables, charts and analysis tell a story to help decision-makers across all sectors reach our goals. They are tools to help construct that better future we all want for our children and their children. In developing this plan we have not lost sight for one moment that ultimately the Roadmap is about people. It is about our connection to place, a place that we are seeing with new eyes through the lens of reconciliation and renewed relationships with Indigenous peoples. Our success will ultimately be determined by the way our natural environment responds to our choices in this journey. I am confident that with the Roadmap focusing our efforts we will arrive at our destination and more importantly we will all arrive together.

George Heyman

Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The need to take urgent action together to reduce the impacts of climate change and build a strong clean economy for everyone has never been clearer than it has this past year. Two international reports outlined the challenge ahead and called for faster action. The landmark study from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change¹ provided the latest scientific consensus on climate change and was characterized as a ‘code red for humanity’ by leading scientific and climate experts.

In British Columbia, we saw the impacts first-hand with an unprecedented heat wave, severe droughts and dangerous wildfires this past summer. These events were a poignant example of how serious the climate crisis is and why we need to act now.

Challenges and opportunities

This spring, the International Energy Agency also released a detailed report² outlining the challenges and opportunities of meeting net-zero emissions globally by 2050. The report acknowledged that countries around the world

are struggling to meet the moment with policies and plans to reduce emissions and create a vibrant, resilient low carbon future.

The last year saw growing recognition in the financial and business community that business-as-usual is no longer an option. Global investors like the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero – representing over \$80 trillion (USD) in investment capital – have called for an accelerated transition to net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest. Increasingly, investors are asking for detailed plans outlining how companies can prosper in a carbon-constrained world as a prerequisite for investment.

1 International Energy Agency. (May 2021). Net Zero by 2050. Available online: www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-by-2050

2 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (2021). Sixth Assessment Report. Available online: www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6

These significant developments in the global economy represent major opportunities for British Columbia. Our province's CleanBC plan includes a wide range of actions to reduce emissions, build a cleaner economy and prepare for the impacts of climate change. Launched in late-2018, CleanBC is helping improve how we get around, heat our homes and power our industry – setting us on the path to a cleaner, stronger future. It includes groundbreaking policies that are leading the way forward on climate change. For example, we were the first in the world to make it law that all new car and truck sales would be zero-emission vehicles by 2040. Since that time, we've seen the highest uptake in electric vehicle purchases on the continent, thanks in part to CleanBC incentives and investments that make 'going electric' more affordable and convenient.

Across B.C., we have seen industries and businesses respond both to CleanBC actions and to the new global economic environment. At least half of all emissions from large operators in B.C. are now covered by a corporate commitment to reach net zero by 2050. We've worked with industry to accelerate this transition by investing in new technologies that reduce emissions and support good jobs for people. And we are accelerating industrial decarbonization by utilizing one of B.C.'s strongest assets in the fight against climate change – our supply of clean, abundant, and affordable hydro-electricity.

While we have made enormous progress in a few short years, we know there is much more to do. B.C. has not been immune to the challenges faced by other jurisdictions trying to reach their targets.

As required by our climate accountability legislation, government presents the latest information every year on progress to our emissions targets. New emissions projections show the road ahead is significantly more

challenging than when CleanBC was originally launched in 2018.

While there are several reasons for this shift – including revised emissions methodology from the federal government – it's clear that substantial new and sustained action is required to meet our commitments.



The CleanBC Roadmap to 2030 is our plan to achieve 100% of our emissions target while building a cleaner economy that benefits everyone. It includes a range of accelerated and expanded actions across eight pathways.

- Low Carbon Energy
- Transportation
- Buildings
- Communities
- Industry, including Oil and Gas
- Forest Bioeconomy
- Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries
- Negative Emissions Technologies

The Roadmap will strengthen action in areas already showing positive results, as well as those at the earlier stages of transition. Each action is based on how affordable and available clean solutions are in each market – known as 'market readiness'. If low-carbon technologies are already available and affordable, for example, the

Roadmap will help increase their adoption on a wider scale through targeted supports, regulations and other policies. If technologies are limited in their availability and expensive, actions instead focus on supporting research, development, and commercialization to create affordable, clean options. This approach will help minimize costs and maximize benefits in the long run.



Foundational Roadmap actions include:

- A stronger price on carbon pollution, aligned with or exceeding federal requirements, with built in supports for people and businesses
- Increased clean fuel requirements and doubling the target for renewable fuels produced in B.C. to 1.3 billion litres by 2030
- An accelerated zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) law (26% of new light-duty vehicles by 2026, 90% by 2030, 100% by 2035)
- New ZEV targets for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles aligned with California
- Complete B.C.'s Electric Highway by 2024 and a target of the province having 10,000 public EV charging stations by 2030
- Actions to support mode-shift towards active transportation and public transit
- Stronger methane policies that will reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector by 75% by 2030 and nearly eliminate all industrial methane emissions by 2035
- Requirements for new large industrial facilities to work with government to demonstrate how they align with B.C.'s legislated targets and submit plans to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050
- Enhancing the CleanBC Program for Industry to reduce emissions while supporting a strong economy
- Implement programs and policies so that oil and gas emissions are reduced in line with sectoral targets
- A cap on emissions for natural gas utilities with a variety of pathways to achieve it
- New requirements for all new buildings to be zero carbon and new space and water heating equipment to be highest efficiency by 2030
- Implement a 100% Clean Electricity Delivery Standard for the BC Hydro grid
- A new program to support local government climate and resiliency goals with predictable funding
- Support for innovation in areas like low carbon hydrogen, the forest-based bioeconomy and negative emissions technologies
- Household affordability will continue to be a key focus, especially for those who need it most.

British Columbia's plan will be aligned with actions being taken at the federal, municipal and Crown corporation levels. When emissions reductions from these actions are considered, we expect B.C. to further surpass our 2030 emissions target.

These actions and others included in the Roadmap will help drive deeper emissions reductions at a faster pace and support clean economic opportunities.

In less than a decade, people across our province will live, work and play in a cleaner and more prosperous B.C. Almost all new vehicles sold in the province will be zero emissions. We'll see more people walking, biking and taking transit.



Our communities will be more comfortable with less pollution. New homes and buildings will no longer emit carbon pollution and will use energy much more efficiently, saving people money on their energy bills. They will be built using materials that are less carbon intensive. People will have more affordable options to retrofit their homes. The system that delivers natural gas to heat homes and businesses today will transition to also deliver cleaner fuels like renewable natural gas and hydrogen. And more of us will find jobs in the clean economy working to reduce pollution with innovative advanced technologies that are exported beyond our borders.

A central pillar of the Roadmap focuses on our abundant supply of clean and affordable hydroelectric power as an alternative to fossil fuels. B.C. is one of the few jurisdictions in the world with an electricity grid that can deliver close to 100% zero-emissions electricity to power our homes, businesses and vehicles. Further, by pairing this resource with our commitment to innovation and partnership between B.C.'s clean tech sector and traditional industries, we're

ensuring B.C. is ideally positioned for a world that is increasingly focused on near-term emissions reductions and reaching net-zero emissions by mid-century.

The Roadmap recognizes that we are at a defining moment of change and need to make sure we're ready for a global economy that is rapidly moving towards a future defined by net-zero emissions. It also builds on other efforts across government including the upcoming Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy and economic plan, as well as work to modernize the forest sector and implement the recommendations of the Old Growth Strategic Review.

Nature often offers the best solutions to strengthening our response to climate change. In British Columbia, we are blessed to have a natural environment that sustains our health, strengthens our communities and builds hope for the future. The Roadmap demonstrates that at the core of our approach to climate change is a foundational commitment to protecting and preserving our environment now and for future generations.



CHAPTER 1: CLEANBC AND THE ROAD TO 2030

1.1 Accelerating Climate Impacts, Accelerating Climate Action

Climate change is often called the defining issue of our time. It demands simultaneous action on two fronts: reducing greenhouse gas emissions and making sure our homes, communities, businesses and infrastructure can withstand the impacts of a changing climate in the years to come.

It's hard work, but British Columbians are rising to the challenge – changing our behavior (what we buy, how we get around, how we heat and cool our homes), our economy (what we produce and how we produce it), and our energy system (how much and what kinds of energy we use, as well as how often we use them). More and more people are choosing electric vehicles, installing heat pumps in their homes and buildings, and investing in low carbon technologies and approaches.

These trends are encouraging. At the same time, we know we need to do much more. The pace and scale of climate change are accelerating, threatening so much of what we hold dear.

B.C.'S NET-ZERO COMMITMENT

Like our current emission reduction targets, B.C.'s commitment to a net-zero future will be backed by legislation. We'll engage with Indigenous communities, local governments, business, industry and others in 2022 to ensure the legislation is consistent with the targets, and the paths to reach them.

Net zero means that any greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from our economy are balanced by equivalent amounts of GHG removals from the atmosphere. Working to achieve this balance will advance our economy, create good jobs and help to keep us competitive.

Net zero and the new global economic context

On top of these changes, international markets are shifting and demand is growing quickly for new climate-friendly technologies and services, renewable energy and low carbon products. Dozens of countries, accounting for roughly 70% of global GDP, have now adopted net-zero-by-2050 targets. Our neighbours and partners in the Pacific Coast Collaborative – Washington, Oregon and California – are significantly ramping up their own climate actions. And almost 20% of the world's biggest companies – representing annual sales of nearly \$14 trillion – now have plans to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.³

During 2020, even with the global downturn created by COVID-19, investment in clean energy and climate solutions grew significantly. Companies and governments around the world put half a trillion dollars into renewable energy, electrified transport, electrified heat, energy storage, hydrogen production, and carbon capture and storage.⁴ And B.C. clean tech companies are at the forefront of this transition – with four on the 2021 Global Cleantech 100 list.

GLASGOW ALLIANCE

Over 250 firms with more than \$88 trillion in assets have joined forces to steer the global economy towards net-zero emissions. The Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero, chaired by Mark Carney, UN Special Envoy on Climate Action and Finance and former Bank of Canada governor, brings together leading net-zero initiatives from across the financial system to accelerate the transition to net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest.

Members include major asset owners and managers as well as banks with the power to mobilize trillions of dollars behind the transition to net zero.

Closer to home, the B.C. based [Catalyst Business Alliance](#) – a network of companies focused on clean growth – believes that climate change is the greatest risk to jobs and the economy. It champions strong climate and energy policy, and the creation of a resilient economy that benefits customers, employees, communities and the environment.

There's also a growing global movement to ensure that solutions are responsibly sourced and conform to high environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards. Investors with more than \$120 trillion worth of assets under management have signed on to the [United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment](#), which advocates a greater focus on ESG investing.

These developments support the business case for increasing our climate ambition. B.C. is well positioned to meet the interests of ESG investors with abundant clean energy, a vibrant clean tech sector, clean industries and a rich, diverse and growing bioeconomy.

3 Taking stock: A global assessment of net zero targets. (23 March 2021). Available online: www.eciu.net/analysis/reports/2021/taking-stock-assessment-net-zero-targets

4 BloombergNEF 2021 Executive Factbook. (March 2 2021). Available online: www.about.bnef.com/blog/bloombergnef-2021-executive-factbook

We're also making progress in partnership with Indigenous peoples, as part of our commitment to implement the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#). The Province and Indigenous peoples are working together to develop a province-wide, whole-of-government action plan, setting out a path towards reconciliation. The plan will describe the long-term actions needed to meet the objectives of the [UN Declaration](#), along with specific actions the Province will take in the next five years.

We've shown that working together with Indigenous peoples creates more opportunities for everyone. As the plan is implemented, we will have renewed opportunities to build stronger partnerships and better incorporate Indigenous rights, perspectives and interests into provincial climate plans and policies. We have heard clearly from Indigenous peoples about the importance of early and meaningful engagement, and that more can be done to increase capacity to ensure Indigenous peoples can participate most effectively. There is also enormous opportunity that comes with mobilizing Indigenous resources to build new economic opportunities while protecting the environment. We will further strengthen our consultation and engagement work on climate action, including with First Nations Economic Development Officers (EDOs) or similar leadership groups from Nations that don't have EDOs.



Ongoing engagement with Indigenous peoples has informed and shaped this Roadmap, the Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy and our continued partnership on shared climate objectives. This includes work with the First Nations Leadership Council, which is developing a B.C. First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan.

These actions are consistent with our commitment to address our greatest challenges in ways that benefit people, communities and the environment, along with the economy. This Roadmap provides another set of opportunities to make our society more inclusive and sustainable – by putting people first and ensuring we consider and mitigate impacts to B.C.'s diverse populations.

“I would say with a pretty high degree of confidence that in the next three years a net-zero commitment and a plan to achieve it will be the norm for public companies”

– Mark Carney, UN Special Envoy on Climate Action and Finance
and former Bank of Canada governor⁵

5 Financial Post. (September 21, 2021). Mark Carney says net-zero plan to be 'norm' for public firms in coming years. Available online: <https://financialpost.com/news/economy/mark-carney-says-net-zero-plan-to-be-norm-for-public-firms-in-coming-years>



1.2 How Does the Roadmap Work?

As we continue to implement the long-term actions in CleanBC, the Roadmap builds on our progress to date with an expanded and accelerated approach to meeting our targets and transforming markets for clean solutions. The Roadmap:

- Examines the eight key areas of our economy that generate emissions or can create solutions
- Assesses our progress in developing and deploying low- and zero-carbon products, approaches and technologies
- Sets out a series of pathways to support innovation in sectors where low carbon solutions are emerging, and drive deployment in sectors where they're already mature – helping to deliver more clean solutions, faster.

Some of the pathways are specific to economic sectors. Others cut across sectors to advance key objectives, such as developing our bioeconomy and exploring the potential of negative emissions technologies. Each pathway describes where we need to be by 2030 and maps out the most promising routes to get there – recognizing that some of these routes break new ground and will only reveal their strengths and weaknesses with time.

Foundational pathway actions to achieve our targets and advance market readiness for decarbonization include:

- Beginning in 2023, B.C.'s carbon tax will meet or exceed federal carbon price requirements, while considering impacts to household affordability. We'll also improve our industry programs to help meet our climate targets by supporting the adoption of new technologies while keeping our businesses competitive.
- New regulations will enhance the Low Carbon Fuel Standard, one of our most successful climate action measures. It requires fuel suppliers to make continuous reductions in their products' carbon intensity. We will double the target for renewable fuels produced in B.C. to 1.3 billion litres by 2030.
- We're accelerating our targets for zero-emission vehicles and we will set new standards for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles aligned with leading jurisdictions. By 2030, ZEVs will account for 90% of all new light-duty vehicle sales in the province (and targets of 26% by 2026 and 100% by 2035).

- We'll complete B.C.'s Electric Highway by 2024 and target having 10,000 public EV charging stations by 2030.
- A comprehensive Clean Transportation Action Plan in 2023 will support emission reductions by focusing on efficiency-first transportation options.
- A reduction of methane emissions from the oil and gas sector will lower emissions by 75% below 2014 levels by 2030, equivalent with the federal commitment. We'll also aim to eliminate methane emissions from oil and gas, mining, forestry and industrial wood waste by 2035.
- New large industrial facilities will be required to work with government to demonstrate how they align with government's 2030 and 2040 targets and submit plans to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.
- The CleanBC Program for Industry will be enhanced to reduce emissions while supporting a strong economy.
- We'll implement programs and policies so that oil and gas emissions are reduced in line with sectoral targets.
- A greenhouse gas (GHG) cap for natural gas utilities – limiting emissions from the gas used to heat our homes and buildings and power some of our industries – will encourage new investment in low-carbon technologies and fuels (including renewable natural gas and hydrogen) and energy efficiency.
- By 2030, all new buildings will be zero carbon, and all new space and water heating equipment will meet the highest standards for efficiency.
- We'll implement a 100% Clean Electricity Delivery Standard for the BC Hydro grid.
- A new program will support local governments to continue taking climate action.
- We'll support innovation in areas like low-carbon hydrogen, the forest-based bioeconomy and negative emissions technologies.
- Household affordability will continue to be a key focus, especially for those who need it most.

Together, these measures will deliver significant reductions in GHG emissions. But the actions in this Roadmap are not just about climate change. Transforming our economy provides an opportunity to implement solutions that will also build on our broader social, environmental and fiscal priorities. These include:

- Advancing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples
- Improving people's health and well-being
- Spurring innovation in clean technologies that we can use and export to build a stronger economy and drive clean job creation
- Reducing inequalities so everyone has the opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, our growing clean economy
- Attracting investment based on sound ESG credentials.

This Roadmap will serve as an evolving plan to get us to our targets. Climate policy doesn't work if you set it and forget it, so the Roadmap will be updated as we move forward, learn from our experience and craft new solutions to meet our goals.

In the months and years ahead, we will continue to work with Indigenous peoples, recognizing their essential role as climate action partners. Many of the solutions we're developing and pursuing together will affect their territories, creating new opportunities for joint decision-making to advance self-government, self-determination and sustainable economic development in support of the Province's commitment to the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

We will also continue working closely with local governments, industry, civil society partners and the independent [Climate Solutions Council](#) to further shape our pathways and hone our approaches to meet our targets for 2030 and beyond.

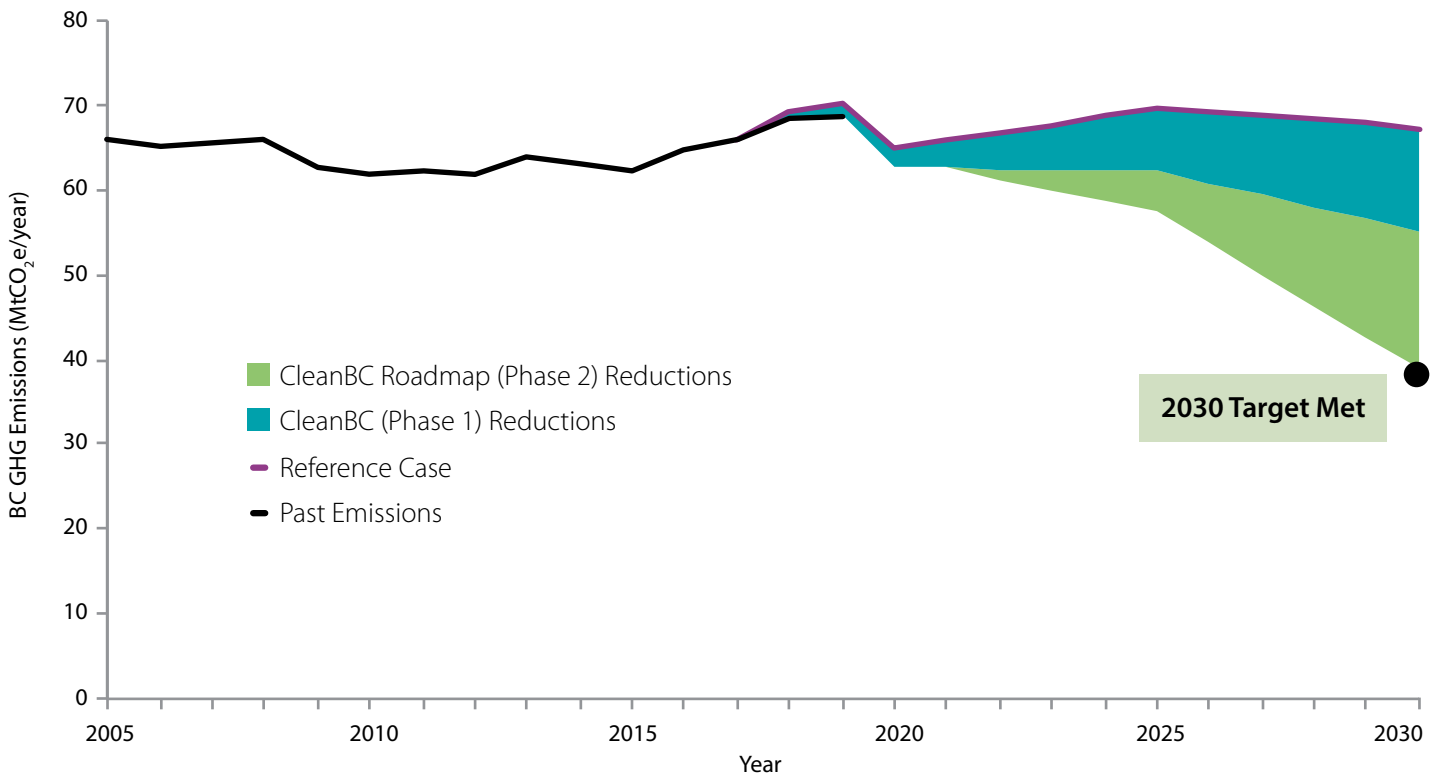
ENGAGEMENT WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Indigenous peoples across British Columbia were invited to contribute their knowledge and experience during engagements in 2021. The interests, opportunities, ideas and perspectives shared by Indigenous leaders and community members have helped shape the Roadmap to 2030. For example, through these conversations Indigenous peoples:

- Expressed interest in low carbon economic opportunities in their communities
- Affirmed the need for greater affordability and accessibility of CleanBC programs, leading to the commitment to a single-window access for all CleanBC incentives and programs and a renewed focus on affordability in program design
- Emphasized public climate education as key to support community decision making, understanding priorities and the importance of climate action, which influenced the Roadmap commitment to implement public awareness and education campaigns with a dedicated youth strategy
- Highlighted the importance of expanding clean transportation beyond ZEVs to ensure safe and reliable public transportation, which the Clean Transportation Action Plan's "efficiency first" approach will work to address
- Shared the need for cleaner transportation options suited to rural and remote living, contributing to the expansion of the Low Carbon Fuel Standard
- Expressed a desire for skills training to ensure participation in clean growth opportunities, as will be the focus in the upcoming workforce readiness framework
- Noted the high cost of transporting recycling and waste, leading to the commitment to a circular economy strategy.

In each pathway you'll find 'What we heard' boxes that provide examples of the perspectives of Indigenous peoples we worked with in the development of this Roadmap.

CleanBC Emissions Reductions



CLIMATE SOLUTIONS COUNCIL

B.C.'s [Climate Solutions Council](#) provides strategic advice on climate action and clean economic growth. It includes members representing Indigenous peoples, environmental organizations, industry, academia, youth, labour and local government. This Roadmap responds to many of the Council's recommendations, including:

- Increasing carbon tax in line with the federal benchmark while providing additional supports for emissions-intensive, trade-exposed industry
- Increasing the zero-emission vehicle standard for light-duty vehicles to between 80 and 100% by 2030
- Implementing medium- and heavy-duty, zero-emission vehicle regulations
- Supporting local governments
- Strengthening the Low Carbon Fuel Standard and implementing a new emissions cap for natural gas utilities.

By increasing the pace and scale of these and other CleanBC initiatives, the council says, "B.C. can both create more stable employment opportunities and achieve additional emission reductions that assist in getting the province on track for our 2030 climate change targets."



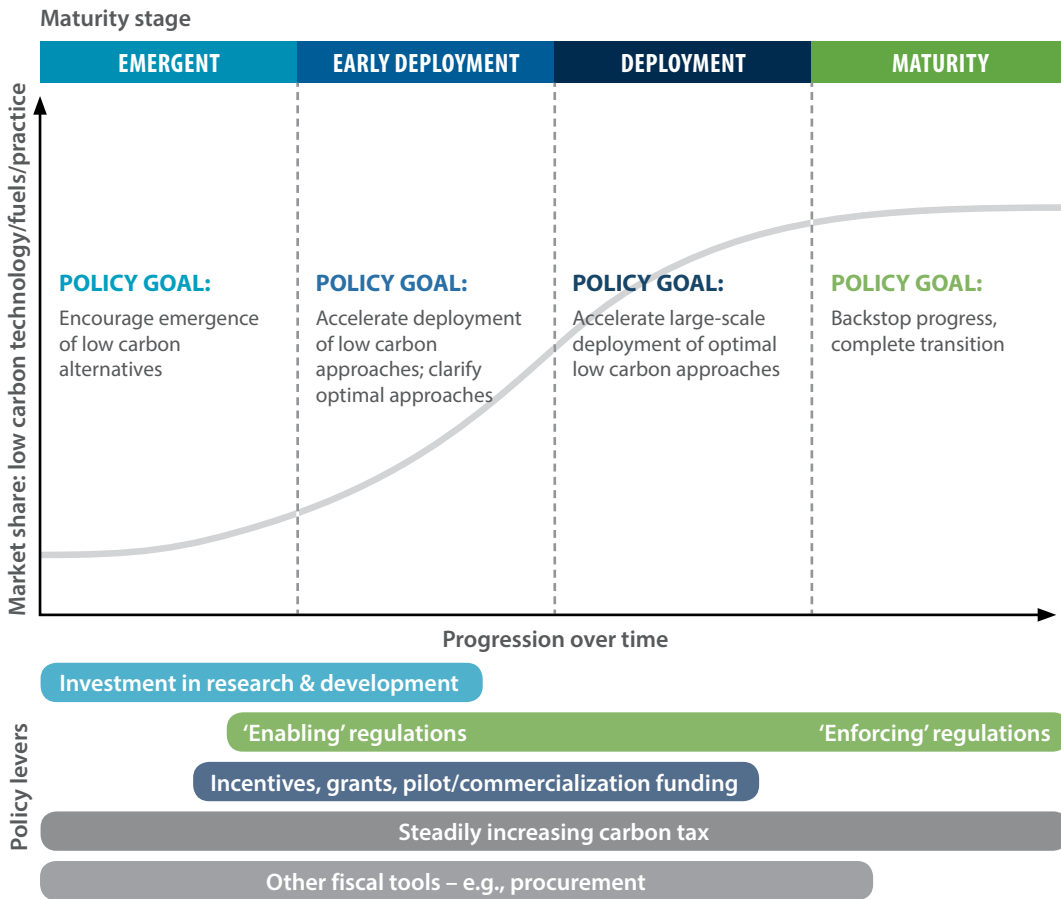
1.3 Climate Solutions – from Innovation to Wide-Scale Implementation

With CleanBC, our province began a set of bold, ambitious actions to transform our economy by shifting away from fossil fuels and towards clean, renewable energy and innovative technology. This Roadmap builds on our work to date and sets the stage for a broader, deeper transformation of large-scale societal systems – from how we produce and use energy to how we build low carbon, climate-resilient communities that keep us safe as the climate changes.

To reach this goal, we’re focusing on tailoring approaches for each sector – recognizing that we need different tools for different market stages. Our actions will focus on growing markets for, and speeding up the adoption of, technologies we know are ready for deployment, such as zero-emission vehicles and heat pumps, while supporting research and development in areas where alternative solutions are still emerging.

In all cases, we will prioritize actions that solve unique problems or unlock co-benefits, such as improving people’s health or achieving equity outcomes.

Stages of Market Readiness



Adapted from: Victor, D.G. et al. 2019. *Accelerating the Low Carbon Transition: The case for stronger, more targeted, and coordinated international action.* The Brookings Institution; and Meadowcroft, J. et al. 2021. *Pathways to Net Zero: A decision support tool.* Transition Accelerator Reports

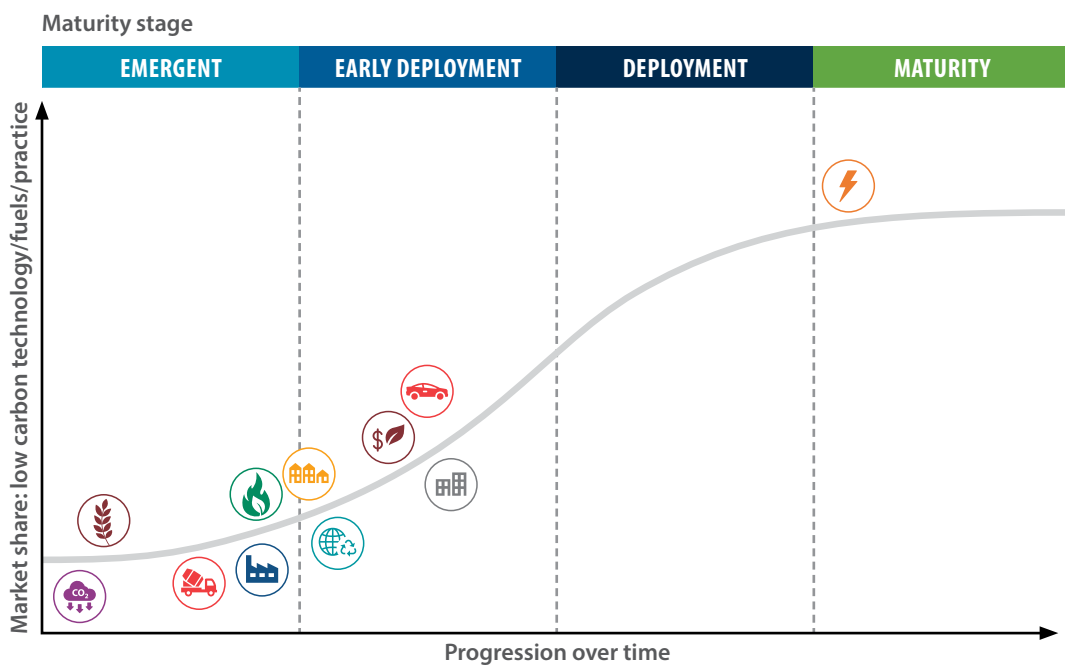
Market readiness indicators

To inform the types of actions needed to drive decarbonization, and to help us track our progress, we're developing a series of readiness indicators, which will be applied across the pathways. The indicators address key issues including:

- Market share of technologies, reflecting the extent to which low-emission solutions are being adopted
- Cost of transitioning to low-emission solutions
- Workforce and skills readiness, reflecting our capacity to adopt new approaches
- Economic and social opportunities, pointing to important co-benefits in areas such as reducing inequality and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Based on these indicators, we've developed a baseline (below) showing where each of the pathways or Roadmap elements is starting from.

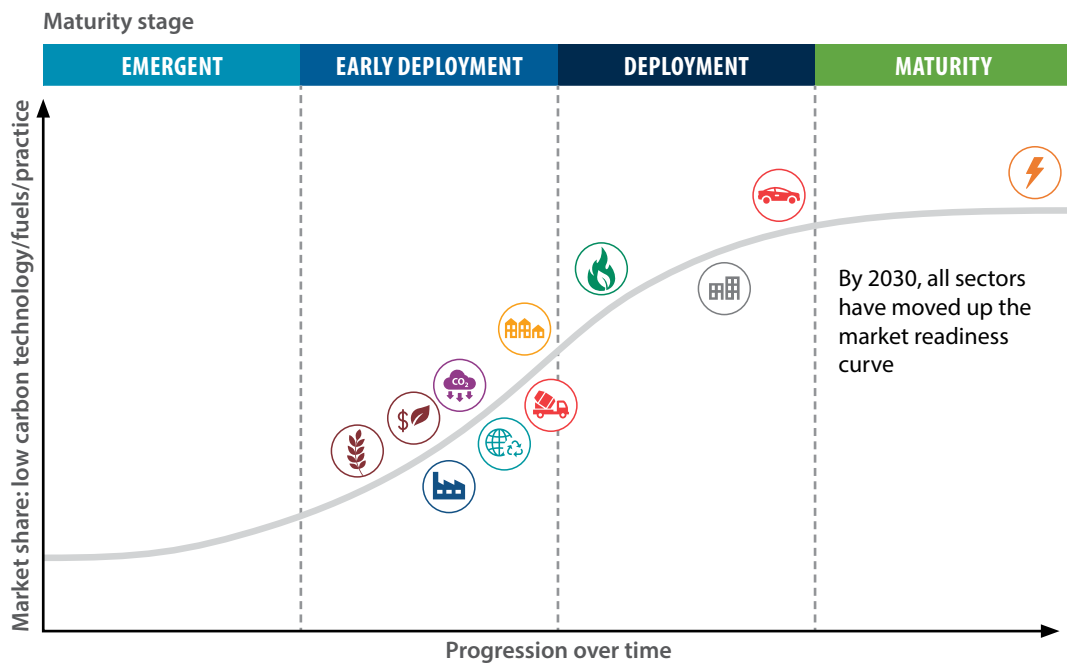
Current State of Market Readiness



- Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries
- Forest Bioeconomy
- Personal Travel
- Commercial Transportation
- Circular Economy
- Buildings
- Negative Emissions Technologies
- Low Carbon Energy
- Electricity
- Communities
- Industry/Oil and Gas

By 2030, we will achieve the following advances in market readiness:

State of Market Readiness by 2030 with Roadmap



 Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries


 Forest Bioeconomy

 Personal Travel

 Commercial Transportation

 Circular Economy

 Buildings

 Negative Emissions Technologies

 Low Carbon Energy

 Electricity

 Communities

 Industry/Oil and Gas

1.4 Modelling and Economic Analysis

To forecast the impacts of our climate actions, B.C. follows well-established best practices, using the best available data and sophisticated computer modeling. However, projections change over time as new information becomes available and methodologies are updated and it can be challenging predicting specific outcomes a decade or more away. As noted earlier, we now expect the measures in CleanBC (not including Roadmap actions) to achieve 32 to 48% of our 2030 targets – compared to the original estimate of 75%. The increased gap is due to several factors, including:

- Updated modelling: for example, new data on natural gas and electricity have lowered projected GHG reductions from industrial electrification
- Higher than expected emissions in sectors such as transportation and pulp and paper
- Changes in the federal approach to measuring emissions from sectors such as waste.

Detailed information on model updates and estimates are available as part of the 2021 [Climate Change Accountability Report](#).

Through the measures in this Roadmap we expect to reach 100% of the 2030 emissions target.

Impacts on jobs and GDP

In today's economy, citizens and the global financial community are insisting that governments and companies have credible, long-term plans to reduce climate pollution – making this Roadmap an economic necessity.

Based on provincial data, we expect investment in Roadmap initiatives to generate approximately 18,000 direct and spinoff jobs with:

- GDP increases of 19% by 2030 and 89% by 2050 from 2020 levels
- Job growth of 7% and 37% by 2030 and 2050 respectively from 2020 levels.

These are conservative estimates; the economic benefits could be even greater if, for example, new clean technologies turn out to cost less than we expect. The Roadmap, like any credible climate plan, will increase the cost of fossil fuels. Government will minimize the impacts by continuing the Climate Action Tax Credit and providing increased support to help people and businesses reduce emissions and costs.



CHAPTER 2: PATHWAYS

The pathways presented here are not unlike a road network, intersecting in various places and offering multiple routes to reach our destination. They're also affected by a number of broader, overarching initiatives that provide a foundation for ongoing climate action in British Columbia.

Carbon pricing

A price on carbon pollution is one of the most effective and economically efficient ways to reduce GHG emissions. Consistent with the recommendations of the Climate Solutions Council, B.C.'s carbon tax will continue to meet or exceed any federal carbon price requirements for 2023 and beyond.

What we heard

In the consultations that informed this Roadmap, we heard from many local governments, the Climate Solutions Council, and others that the carbon tax needs to be raised and in line with the federal benchmark. From industry, we heard there is overall support for carbon pricing, along with concerns about competitiveness and carbon leakage.

Between now and 2030, we'll analyze the price and program options that best support meeting our climate targets while protecting affordability and competitiveness for people and businesses. We are working to develop mechanisms to support long-term funding for climate action in B.C., including preparing for the impacts of climate change.

The federal government has announced a carbon price of \$170 per tonne in 2030, with annual \$15 increases beginning in 2023. B.C.'s current price is \$45 per tonne – already the strongest, most comprehensive carbon-pricing policy in Canada. Increasing the tax will support greater emissions reductions while encouraging sustainable growth and investment in new low carbon innovations.



At the same time, a higher carbon price can create challenges. For example, it can impact people who still depend on fossil fuels to get to work and heat their homes. It can also affect industries that sell their products in global markets, competing with producers who don't pay a carbon tax, or don't pay as much. Where carbon tax represents a significant operating cost that can't be addressed through investments in cleaner technologies, this can lead to carbon leakage – the movement of business, industry and jobs to places with lower carbon prices.

We'll explore other approaches to help make low-carbon options more affordable for low- and middle-income people in British Columbia. To promote greater fairness, we'll work with the federal government to explore ideas such as carbon border adjustments – ensuring that goods from places without strong climate policies face similar costs to those produced domestically. Through the CleanBC Program for Industry, B.C. uses carbon tax revenue to support emission performance improvements and competitiveness.

Government leadership

Every year since 2010, B.C. has achieved net-zero (carbon neutral) operations across the public sector, including health authorities, school districts, universities, and Crown corporations. As part of this Roadmap, we're building on our progress with the following new measures:

- Factoring climate considerations into government decision making, ensuring a focus on climate-resilient, zero- or low carbon projects. This priority will be delivered through capital projects as they include an assessment of these factors in their planning and approval processes
- Making zero-emission vehicles the default option for B.C. public sector fleets, with ZEVs accounting for 100% of light-duty vehicle acquisitions by 2027
- Requiring all new public sector buildings to align with our climate goals beginning with performance standards (2023) and moving to zero-carbon new buildings (2027)
- Developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy (2024) to transform our existing buildings portfolio to a low carbon and resiliency standard
- Implementing a public awareness and education campaign; this will include a dedicated strategy for connecting with youth and involving them in climate action
- Providing single-window access to all CleanBC incentives and programs.

Climate preparedness and adaptation

B.C.'s Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy will be released in 2022, strengthening our capacity to anticipate and respond to the impacts of climate change in every part of B.C. These include sudden events like wildfires, floods and heat waves, as well as changes that happen more slowly like habitat loss, sea level rise and changes in growing seasons.

The strategy builds on the substantial work already underway in B.C. to adapt to climate change, lower long-term costs of impacts and help keep our communities safe, ensuring government programs and policies continue to achieve their goals as the climate changes. The strategy draws on a [2019 assessment](#) of the greatest climate risks to B.C. and outlines actions to prepare for them in ways that respect and respond to the diverse needs of people and communities across B.C.

Circular economy

A circular economy refers to a system where, by design, there is no waste – in contrast to the traditional Western model, which can be described as take-make-waste: we take raw materials, make them into products, use them and throw them away. The circular approach emphasizes sharing, reusing, repairing and recycling – eliminating waste and reducing GHG emissions while making better use of our resources.

What we heard

In the consultations that informed this Roadmap, people from Indigenous and remote communities said they face significant challenges and expenses to transport recycling and waste, especially when they have to use barges, forest service roads, or planes. There is support for developing a circular economy, including expanding B.C.'s continent-leading extended producer responsibility recycling system.

With this Roadmap, we're taking more steps to advance the circular economy, especially in sectors such as agriculture and forestry. They generate byproducts that can be used to create low carbon building materials, renewable energy and other clean products – generating value and new opportunities while shrinking our carbon footprint.

We will develop a Circular Economy Strategy in 2022, supporting both our climate goals and our economy. Key components will include advancing the [Plastics Action Plan](#) and requiring more manufacturers to take responsibility for their products' eventual recycling, reuse or safe disposal.

The strategy will build on recent actions we've taken to expand our continent-leading recycling system, which will include electric vehicle batteries and chargers, mattresses, and electronic products such as solar panels, lithium-ion batteries and e-cigarettes.

A Workforce Readiness Framework: Preparing for a cleaner economy

The global transition to a low-carbon future will create new jobs in a range of sectors, and we want to make sure those jobs benefit people across B.C. A workforce readiness framework is being developed to ensure people are positioned for good jobs in a future, cleaner economy and that B.C. has the workers needed for sustainable economic growth and innovation.

Some jobs will be new. In other cases, existing jobs will evolve to incorporate new technologies, approaches and innovations. Some areas will see immediate changes while others will experience smaller shifts over time as we build a future workforce that is more inclusive, resilient and adaptable – in partnership with Indigenous peoples, industry, post-secondary institutions and others.

The framework will include measures to ensure B.C. has the number and diversity of workers to meet employers' needs; ensure there are opportunities for workers to upgrade their skills to adapt to changing jobs; and new training programs, standards and credentials that workers and employers are increasingly looking for as we transition to a low carbon economy.

The framework will guide work with industry, stakeholders, and Indigenous peoples to understand developing job growth opportunities and the skills needed for the current and future clean economy, and to identify barriers to train, attract and retain workers to support the just transition to a low-carbon economy.

EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY (EPR) AND THE CLEANBC PLASTICS ACTION PLAN

B.C. has one of the strongest, most comprehensive recycling systems in North America known as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). EPR requires producers to take responsibility for the lifecycle of their products, including collection and recycling. B.C.'s EPR strategy recovers \$46 million worth of materials annually and reduces greenhouse gas emissions by more than 200,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. It generates an estimated \$500 million annually through recycling programs, and collects approximately 315,000 tonnes of plastic from bottles, packaging and electronics. We're expanding this system to include electric vehicle batteries and chargers, solar panels, more types of lithium-ion batteries, mattresses and e-cigarettes.

B.C. is building on this leadership in EPR and developing the circular economy on plastics supported by the CleanBC Plastics Action Plan, which identifies actions to ban single-use items and reclaim more materials. These aims are bolstered by the CleanBC Plastics Action Fund that encourages innovation to turn used plastics into new products, as well as the Clean Coast Clean Waters initiative that supported the largest shoreline clean-up in the province's history. This initiative partnered with Indigenous and coastal communities, as well as local tourism operators and environmental groups. More than 550 tonnes of marine debris has been removed to date, with the majority of the material being reused and recycled.



2.1 Low Carbon Energy

Whether it's for producing food, lighting and heating our homes, moving people and goods or supporting industrial growth – energy underpins almost every aspect of our lives and economy in British Columbia.

To decarbonize our economy and accelerate the shift to clean technologies in the buildings, transportation and industrial sectors, we need to use energy more efficiently and replace fossil fuels with clean energy, including more clean electricity, renewable natural gas, low carbon hydrogen and liquid biofuels.

What we heard

In the consultations that informed this Roadmap, industrial operators said low carbon fuels can provide short-term flexibility as a substitute for natural gas but to ramp up production we need to address barriers, such as:

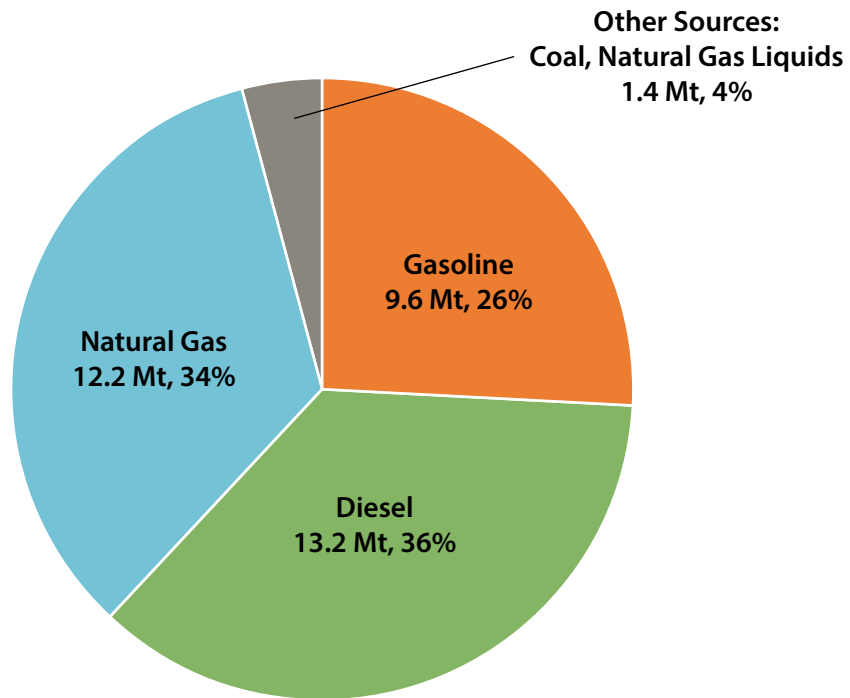
- *Biomass supply and uncertainties related to technology/capital purchases*
- *The impact of increasing transportation fuel costs on final production for certain industries*
- *The need for partnerships to implement the B.C. Hydrogen Strategy*

Indigenous peoples pointed to potential job creation opportunities through wood waste transfer facilities to create biofuel, as well as a waste collection program to support biofuel creation. There was also interest in more solar and wind power including cost sharing agreements.

Where we're starting from

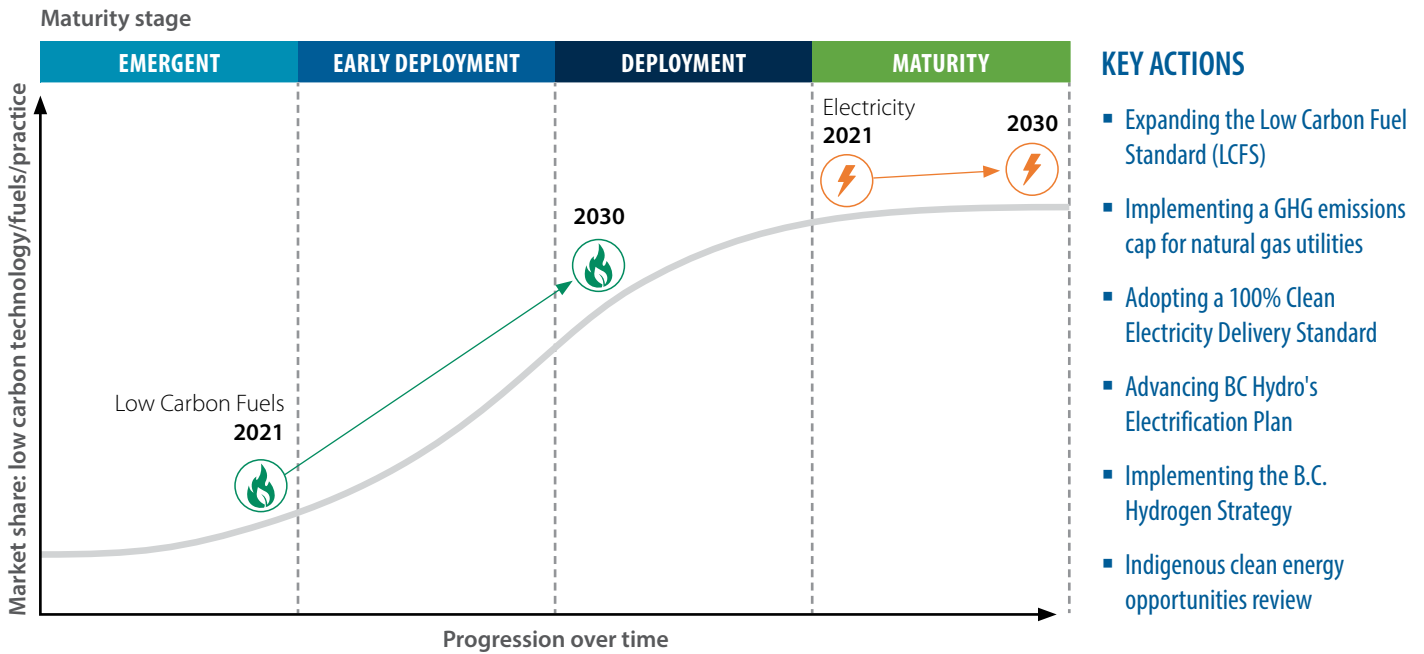
B.C. uses a diverse mix of energy types to meet demands from our transportation, industry and building sectors. Clean electricity currently accounts for only 19% of the total. Low carbon biomass and biofuels meet an additional 11%, and that proportion will rise in the future. However, most of our energy needs – the remaining 69% – are still met by fossil fuels, mainly in the form of refined petroleum products and natural gas. Fossil fuel production and consumption accounts for approximately 80% of B.C. emissions, underlining the need to move to cleaner fuels, faster. The pie chart below shows a breakdown of emissions by energy source.

2020 Emissions by Energy Source for Transportation, Buildings and Industry (Excluding Oil and Gas Sector)



Most of our electricity is clean and renewable, putting its market readiness stage at early maturity. Liquid biofuels are available but emergent, limited by a number of factors including the availability of feedstock, such as vegetable oils and tallow for products like renewable diesel. Low carbon gaseous fuels such as biomethane and hydrogen are also emergent, limited by factors such as capital investment, feedstocks and access to commercial-ready technologies.

Low Carbon Energy



To maximize production of low carbon energy, we need a suite of regulatory and program initiatives that build on approaches we know work well and create incentives for new innovation.

Expanding the Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS)

B.C.'s Low Carbon Fuel Standard is one of our most successful approaches to reducing GHGs from transportation. It requires fuel suppliers to progressively decrease the average carbon intensity of the fuels they supply to users in B.C.

With CleanBC, we increased its stringency by doubling the carbon-intensity reduction for gasoline and diesel from 10% to 20% by 2030. As part of this Roadmap, we intend to modernize the legislation governing the Low Carbon Fuel Standard, including to expand it to cover marine and aviation fuels beginning in 2023. We'll also consider new compliance options such as negative emissions technologies, while increasing the financial implications of failing to comply.

After careful assessment of impacts, we will raise our target beyond the current 20%, consistent with advice from the Climate Solutions Council, using 30% by 2030 as a starting point for further analysis and consultations. We will also double our commitment to develop production capacity for made-in-B.C. renewable fuels to 1.3 billion litres per year by 2030, creating new jobs and economic opportunities across the province.

Implementing a GHG emissions cap for natural gas utilities

B.C.'s existing pipeline infrastructure can play an important role in reducing greenhouse gases by transitioning away from delivering fossil natural gas to delivering renewable gas. B.C.'s gas utilities have been leaders in enabling this transition.

To help drive this transition, we will introduce a GHG emissions cap that will require gas utilities to undertake activities and invest in technologies to further lower GHG emissions from the fossil natural gas used to heat homes and buildings and power some of our industries.

Following further modelling and analysis, the cap will be set at approximately 6 Mt of CO₂e per year for 2030, which is approximately 47% lower than 2007 levels. Since emissions from gas consumption are linked to industry (excluding oil and gas) and the built environment, the cap is consistent with emissions targets for those sectors.

Utilities will determine how best to meet the target, which could include acquiring more renewable gases as well as supporting greater energy efficiency. Measures in CleanBC allow gas utilities to use renewables such as synthetic gas, biomethane, green and waste hydrogen and lignin to achieve this.

The B.C. Utilities Commission will have a mandate to review gas utilities' plans, investments and expenditures to ensure they're aligned with the GHG emissions cap and cost effective, helping to keep rates affordable for people and businesses.

Adopting a 100% Clean Electricity Delivery Standard

B.C.'s abundant supply of clean electricity is one of our greatest allies in the fight against climate change. Currently, an average of 98% is from renewable sources, mostly hydro power.

As part of this Roadmap, we are committing to increase this to 100% – making our power even cleaner; creating new opportunities in areas such as the bioeconomy; and helping to attract new businesses by supporting their sustainability strategies. BC Hydro will meet the new standard by ensuring it has produced or acquired sufficient clean electricity to meet the needs of its domestic customers and phasing out remaining gas-fired facilities on its integrated grid by 2030.

Advancing BC Hydro's Electrification Plan

BC Hydro will advance its Electrification Plan by offering customers incentives, tools and business-to-business support to help them run their homes and businesses with clean electricity – and to reduce the time it takes to connect to the grid.

Subject to the approval of the BC Utilities Commission, over the next five years, the Crown corporation plans to invest over \$260 million to advance electrification, including more than \$190 million to promote fuel switching in buildings, transportation and industry and more than \$50 million to attract new customers – such as data centres and hydrogen producers – who can locate anywhere but see the advantages of B.C.'s clean, reliable, affordable hydroelectric power.

To help support and drive BC Hydro's focus on GHG reductions, we will add electrification and fuel-switching to its mandate, introduce an internal carbon price to evaluate electrification initiatives in regulatory applications, and enable investments in green hydrogen production and commercial vehicle incentives and infrastructure.

BC HYDRO'S INTEGRATED RESOURCE PLAN

BC Hydro is preparing an Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), which outlines how BC Hydro plans to provide reliable, affordable and clean electricity to meet customer demand now and into the future. It considers BC Hydro's 20-year projections of electricity demand in B.C. The IRP includes high and low load ranges and scenarios to account for a range of potential impacts, including support of CleanBC as policies and regulations are implemented and electrification ramps up to help achieve 2030 emissions reduction targets.

Implementing the B.C. Hydrogen Strategy

When burned or used in a fuel cell, hydrogen produces no carbon emissions. Hydrogen is one of the only solutions for decarbonizing sectors of the economy where direct electrification is not practical, such as heavy-duty transportation or industrial heating. When injected into the natural-gas grid, renewable hydrogen can displace fossil fuels for heating homes and businesses. Hydrogen can also be used for producing low carbon, synthetic fuels to reduce emissions in transportation and industry.

B.C. is the first province in Canada to release a comprehensive hydrogen strategy. The [B.C. Hydrogen Strategy](#) outlines how the Province will support the development of production, use and export of renewable and low carbon hydrogen for the next 10 years and beyond. It complements the [federal hydrogen strategy](#), serving as a blueprint for regional development with 63 actions for the short term (2020-2025), medium term (2025-2030) and long term (2030-beyond).

Implementing the B.C. Hydrogen Strategy and developing our hydrogen economy will generate more clean economic opportunities, help reduce emissions and contribute to meeting our climate targets. The strategy's immediate priorities include scaling up production of renewable hydrogen, establishing regional hydrogen hubs and deploying medium- and heavy-duty fuel-cell vehicles.

OPENING THE B.C. CENTRE FOR INNOVATION AND CLEAN ENERGY (CICE)

With an initial \$35 million provincial investment leveraging an additional \$70 million from federal and private sources, the Centre for Innovation and Clean Energy will be a member-based, non-profit corporation, independent from government and private entities. The Centre will bring together innovators, industry, governments and academics to accelerate the commercialization and scale-up of B.C. based clean energy technologies. It will also be a catalyst for new partnerships and world-leading innovation to deliver near- and longer-term carbon emission reductions.

The Centre's initial focus areas for funding and project delivery will include:

- Carbon capture, utilization and storage
- Production, use and distribution of low-carbon hydrogen
- Biofuels and synthetic fuels (including marine and aviation fuels)
- Renewable natural gas
- Battery technology, storage and energy management systems.

The Centre will also initiate new technology pathways to accelerate larger reductions on the path to net-zero emissions by 2050.

Indigenous clean energy opportunities review

The actions in the Roadmap will open up a wide range of economic opportunities in B.C.'s low carbon energy sector. The Province is committed to working with First Nations to maximize the benefits for Indigenous communities. As a key step, the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation and the First Nations Leadership Council, through their designate, the BC First Nations Energy and Mining Council, are launching a co-designed and co-led Indigenous Clean Energy Opportunities engagement process. Through the process, the Ministry and the Council will jointly engage First Nations to identify and support clean energy opportunities. They will also seek to collaborate with First Nations rights holders on the development of strategic clean energy policy and legislation, and meaningfully explore and develop policy, regulatory and program support to enable Indigenous participation within the growing and diverse clean energy sector.



2.2 Transportation

Transportation plays a major role in all our lives, connecting us to each other and the world. It's also our largest single source of GHG emissions, accounting for approximately 40% of our annual total in British Columbia. Actions that reduce these emissions have a wide range of benefits, from cleaner air and less congestion to better health, more clean jobs and economic development – benefits we'll see more of as we implement this Roadmap.

What we heard

In the consultations that informed this Roadmap, many groups supported accelerating and expanding zero-emission vehicle targets and enhancing funding and supports for active transportation. People in commercial transportation supported measures to predictably reduce emissions from medium- and heavy-duty fleets. In engagements with Indigenous peoples, we heard suggestions to expand clean transportation supports such as charging infrastructure, electric buses and public transportation, especially in the North.

Where we're starting from

The B.C. market for decarbonizing personal travel is at the early deployment stage. People can choose from more than 50 models of light-duty, zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs). However, these still cost about 20-40% more than equivalent non-ZEVs (before considering government rebates and lower maintenance and fuel costs). And more work is needed to build out the infrastructure for ZEV charging and hydrogen fueling. For active transportation, many communities still have significant gaps to fill to complete their networks for people of all ages and abilities.

The market for commercial travel is in the emergent stage, with ZEV solutions for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles starting to be deployed. Costs remain high and the commercial market is behind the personal market.

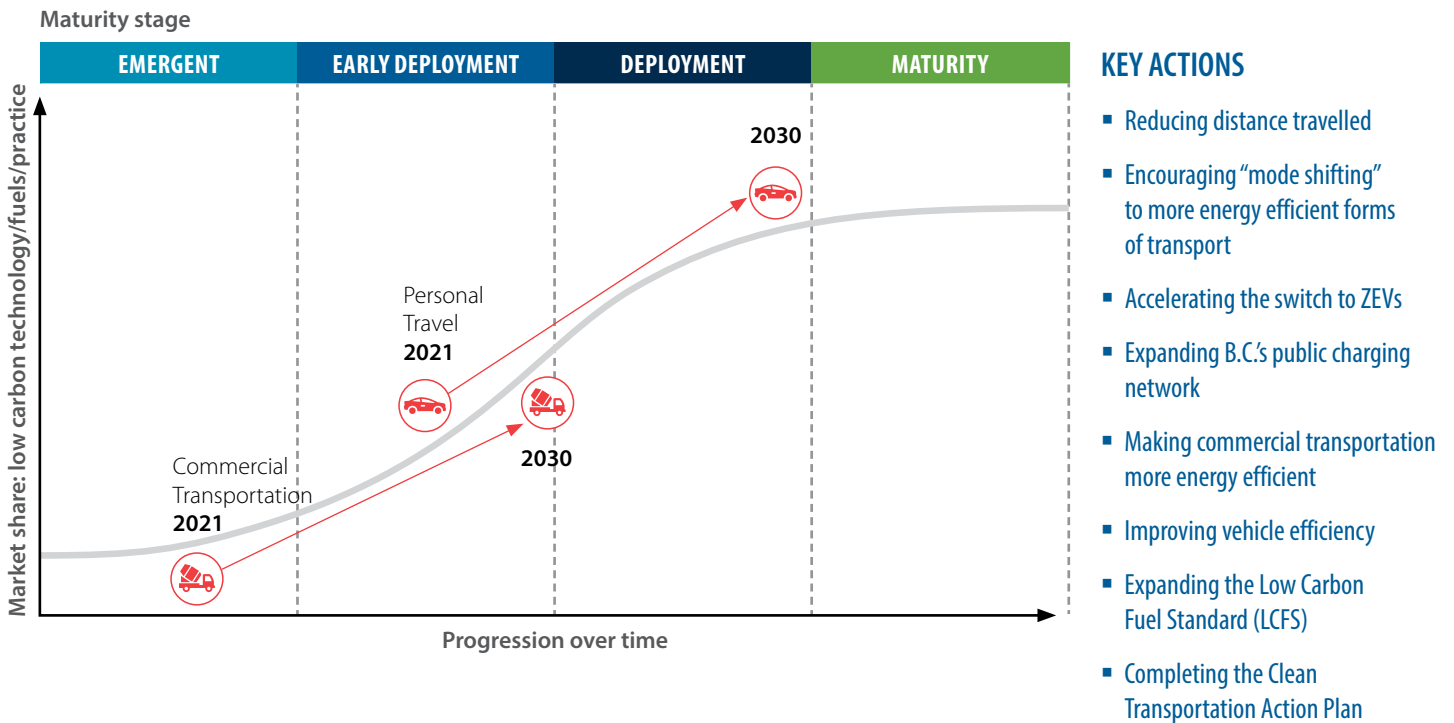
CLEANBC GO ELECTRIC COMMERCIAL VEHICLE PILOTS

The CleanBC Go Electric Commercial Vehicle Pilots program, launched in 2021, supports the switch to zero-emission commercial vehicles of all types, including trains, ships, trucks, construction and agricultural equipment, along with the necessary charging and fueling infrastructure.

The companion CleanBC Go Electric Specialty Use Vehicle Incentive program is supporting the transition for specialty vehicles, such as delivery trucks, passenger shuttles and a variety of other vehicles. Purolator is among the companies using the program to advance cleaner choices, running battery-electric trucks from its facility in Richmond.

More work is also needed to explore opportunities to move more goods by rail and shipping. This includes short sea shipping – using barges and waterways to get goods from ports to regional facilities. Ultimately, we expect there will be no single solution but a range of cleaner options for commercial transportation, reflecting the diversity of needs and opportunities.

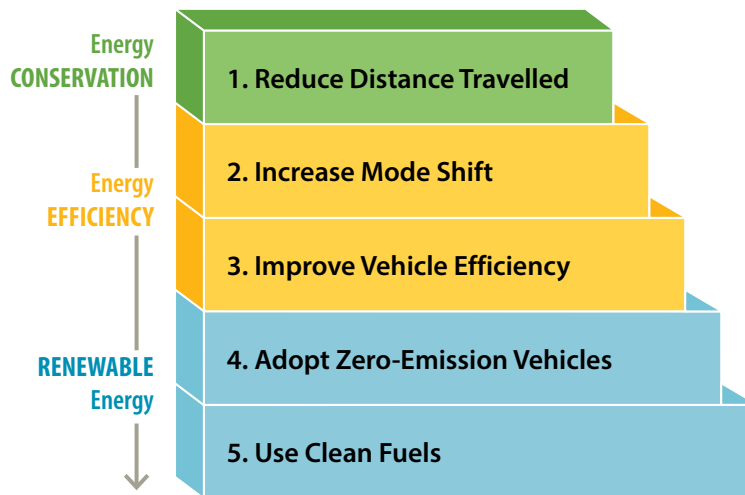
Transportation



THE ROAD TO TRANSFORMATION - 2030 AND BEYOND

Meeting our targets in the transportation sector demands aggressive action in addition to our world-leading ZEV and fuel standards. With this Roadmap, we're working across five areas, from encouraging more walking and cycling to reducing the carbon intensity of fuels. This approach, illustrated below, is based on an efficiency-first model, consistent with energy conservation principles.

In 2023, the actions in this Roadmap will be complemented by a new Clean Transportation Action Plan, setting out our next set of actions to reduce transportation emissions by 27-32% (from 2007) by 2030. Specific actions will be consistent with advice from the Climate Solutions Council.



Reducing distance travelled

As part of this Roadmap, we will work to reduce the distances travelled in light-duty vehicles by 25% by 2030, compared to 2020. This can be achieved in part by supporting more compact urban planning in partnership with municipalities to increase active transportation and public transit. We will also provide continued support for digital access and remote work where feasible, building on the lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, we will work with ICBC to monitor vehicle kilometres travelled and develop additional ways to bring them down, helping to reduce emissions, transportation costs, collision risk, and wear and tear on our roads.

To help inform future decisions, we'll continue to collect and share transportation data, supporting both provincial goals and planning and analysis by partners, such as local governments and Indigenous communities.



Encouraging “mode shifting” to more energy efficient forms of transport

One of the surest ways to reduce our GHG emissions from transport is to choose the least energy-intensive and polluting ways to get around. For personal travel that generally means walking, cycling or taking transit. For commercial travel, it means moving more goods by rail, water or cargo bike where possible instead of using heavy-duty, on-road vehicles.

To encourage these shifts, we will establish energy intensity targets for personal and commercial transportation and work with key partners to:

- Increase the share of trips (e.g., commuting for work and personal activities) made by walking, cycling, transit to 30% by 2030, 40% by 2040 and 50% by 2050. In a 2019 survey, 24% of people in B.C. said they primarily used sustainable transportation (walking, cycling or public transit) to get to work.
- Reduce the energy intensity of goods movement (tonne-kilometres) by at least 10% by 2030, 30% by 2040, and 50% by 2050, relative to 2020.

Accelerating the switch to ZEVs

B.C.'s Zero-Emission Vehicles Act, passed in 2019, has already helped to transform the marketplace. Thanks in part to government rebates, we're close to achieving our 2025 target, with ZEVs accounting for 9.4% of all new light-duty vehicle sales in 2020. To build on that momentum, we're accelerating our targets in alignment with automakers' published deployment plans. Our new light-duty ZEV sales targets are 26% by 2026, 90% by 2030 and 100% by 2035.

To support these targets, we will bring in "right-to-charge" legislation, allowing more people to install EV charging infrastructure in strata and apartment buildings. We will also introduce new ZEV targets for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, in consultation with automakers, businesses and industry in alignment with the state of California.

Heavy-duty vehicles account for a large part of transportation emissions and modelling suggests the new targets will have a significant impact. Given the time required for research and engagement, we expect these targets will be in place by 2023.

Making cleaner models more affordable will help get more of them on our roads. And rising demand for cleaner vehicles will act as a further incentive for automakers, driving further improvements in efficiency and generating high-value jobs in ZEV research and development. We will explore other fiscal measures to broaden consumer access to ZEVs, accelerate market transformation and create a more sustainable fiscal framework for the ZEV transition.



Expanding B.C.'s public charging network

We will also ensure it's easy to charge your ZEV, wherever you are in the province. We will work with the private sector, utilities, Indigenous communities, the federal and local governments and others to achieve an overall target of B.C. having 10,000 public EV charging stations by 2030. This will include completing B.C.'s Electric Highway by ensuring broad geographic coverage across the Province for fast-charger EV sites by Summer 2024. BC Transit, TransLink and BC Ferries are also moving increasingly to zero-emission vehicles.

Making commercial transportation more energy efficient

In partnership with industry and other key stakeholders, we will work to make our commercial transportation systems more competitive while accelerating innovation and driving the adoption of clean B.C. technologies to support and advance climate change goals. As noted above, we're committed to reducing the energy intensity of goods movements by 10% in 2030, 30% by 2040 and 50% by 2050. We'll also use better data technology to make our transportation systems more efficient, intelligent and competitive.

Having one of the cleanest, greenest transportation networks in the world will add to our competitive advantages, supporting economic growth along with GHG reductions.



Improving vehicle efficiency

When you need to use a vehicle, it makes sense to choose the most efficient one. And this is another place where government can help move the market through regulations, standards and incentives.

To help drive improvements in vehicle efficiency, we'll work with business and industry to encourage faster fleet turnover for the oldest vehicles, work with the federal government to strengthen emissions standards, and develop new equipment regulations for air, rail, marine and off-road vehicles. We'll also identify how the CleanBC Heavy Duty Vehicle Efficiency Program can drive further improvements. For example, the Province could offer higher incentives for tires that reduce fuel consumption on specific types of commercial heavy-duty vehicles and encourage the use of speed-limiting technology and electronic tracking to improve safety while continuing to reduce GHG emissions.

Expanding the Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS)

As noted in the Low Carbon Energy pathway, the Low Carbon Fuel Standard is one of our most successful approaches to reducing GHGs from transportation. It requires fuel suppliers to progressively decrease the average carbon intensity of the fuels they supply to users in B.C.

As part of this Roadmap, we will increase its stringency, consider expanding it to apply to marine and aviation fuels, and consider allowing new compliance options such as negative emissions technologies.

Completing the Clean Transportation Action Plan

In addition to the specific actions in this Roadmap, we will develop a comprehensive Clean Transportation Action Plan in 2023. The Plan will highlight additional steps government will take to reduce emissions in the transportation sector, including ports and airports, to meet our 2030 targets and align with the development of complete, compact, connected communities to reduce vehicle travel.



2.3 Buildings

Buildings – the places where we live, work, learn and play, and a vital component of B.C.’s economy – account for about 10% of the province’s GHG emissions, mainly from the energy we use to heat them and provide hot water.

Our building sector has been getting steadily cleaner and greener in recent years, but current emissions reductions are not at the scale needed to meet our 2030 targets.

INVESTING IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACROSS B.C.

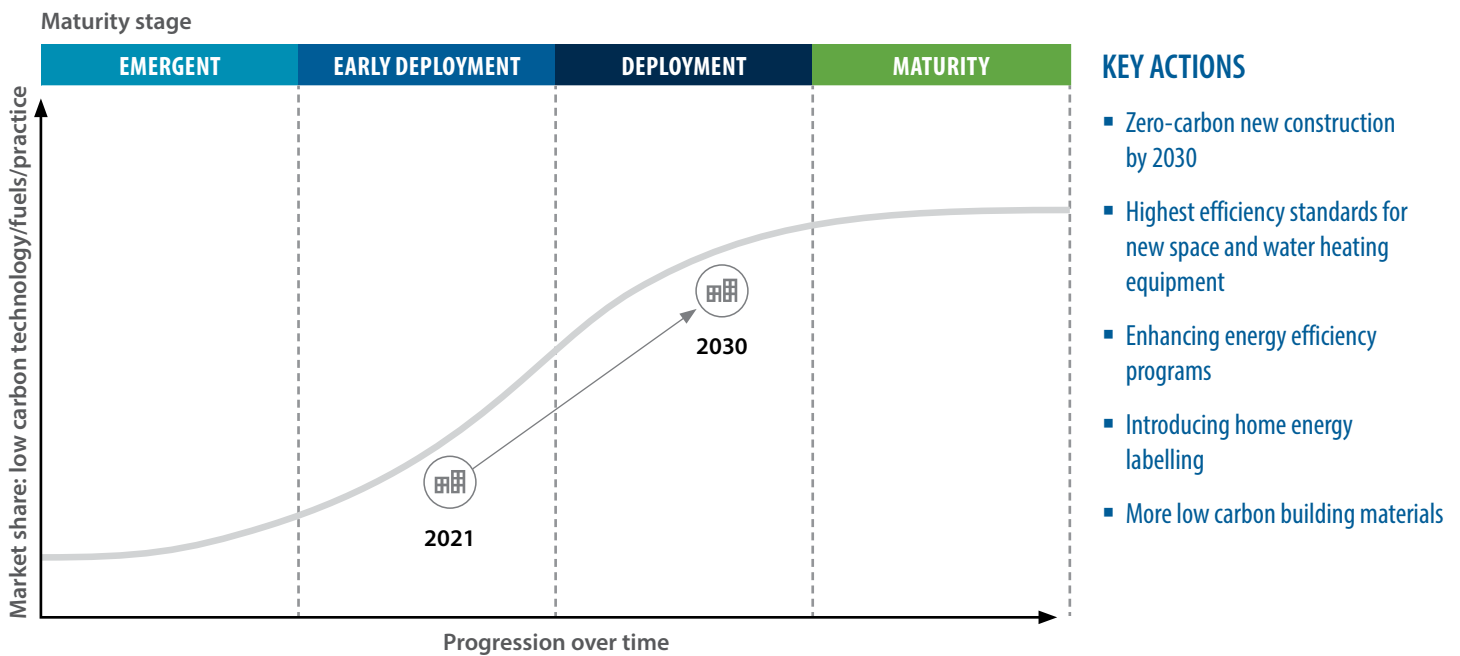
The Province is working to make housing more affordable for everyone in B.C. With \$7 billion dedicated over 10 years, we’re making the largest investment in housing in B.C.’s history. By working with partners, including local governments, we’re delivering 114,000 affordable homes over this time period. In just over three years, more than 30,000 new affordable homes are already complete or underway in more than 100 communities across the province. And we continue to make progress on our plan to retrofit 51,000 units of publicly owned social housing over ten years, making them more energy efficient, less polluting and safer, while significantly reducing heating costs for residents.

Where we're starting from

The decarbonization of buildings is at an early deployment phase. Households and businesses can choose from a range of low carbon solutions and B.C. is already a leader in this space. New construction is steadily moving towards the highest efficiency levels and builders are growing their capacity to make new buildings cleaner, supported by increasing adoption of the Energy Step Code, which sets higher energy-efficiency standards than the base BC Building Code. However, we still rely on fossil fuels to meet more than half our energy needs in buildings.

Low carbon electric technologies like baseboard heaters are commonplace, but not the most efficient options available. Heat pump technologies are more than twice as efficient and cost less to operate. Plus, they double as air conditioners in increasingly hotter summers and can include air filtration, protecting people from wildfire smoke, pollen and pollution. Heat pumps are gaining in market share, with options available for all major building types and climates. However, costs are still a barrier for many households and businesses.

Buildings



What we heard

In the consultations that informed this Roadmap, a wide range of groups including local governments, utilities, Indigenous peoples, professionals and organizations, shared their views on decarbonizing buildings, such as:

- *Regulating carbon as well as energy efficiency in the BC Building Code for new buildings*
 - *Accelerating highest efficiency heating equipment standards for existing buildings*
 - *Addressing affordability impacts especially for those who need it most*
 - *Integrating climate resilience, for example, to address heat waves and air quality issues*
 - *Considering unique Indigenous geographic and cultural needs*
 - *Ensuring program incentives support and align with future building codes and standards.*
-

THE PATH TO TRANSFORMATION – 2030 AND BEYOND

Zero-carbon new construction by 2030

Current requirements for new construction focus on energy efficiency without directly addressing the issue of GHG emissions. Since natural gas is still a dominant, low-cost energy source for buildings, efficiency requirements alone are not enough to meet our climate targets.

That's why we're adding a new carbon pollution standard to the BC Building Code, supporting a transition to zero-carbon new buildings by 2030. We're already working with local governments to develop voluntary carbon pollution standards. Those communities will serve as pilots for future province-wide requirements. The standard will be performance-based, allowing for a variety of options including electrification, low carbon fuels like renewable natural gas, and low carbon district energy.

In 2023, we'll review our progress and, based on what we've learned, we'll start phasing in provincial regulations over time (2024, 2027, 2030). We'll also incorporate energy-efficiency standards for existing buildings into the BC Building Code starting in 2024.

Highest efficiency standards for new space and water heating equipment

Space and water heating are the primary drivers of GHG emissions from buildings. To meet our targets, we need to ensure these functions are super-efficient, improve resilience and, wherever possible, run on clean electricity or other renewable fuels. To help accelerate this transition, we're committing to highest-efficiency standards for new space and water heating equipment by 2030, and earlier where feasible.

After 2030, all new space and water heating equipment sold and installed in B.C. will be at least 100% efficient, significantly reducing emissions compared to current combustion technology. Electric resistance technologies like baseboard and electric water heaters are 100% efficient: they convert all the energy they use into heat. But heat pump technologies exceed 100% efficiency by capturing and moving ambient heat, without having to produce it. The new requirements will encourage more people to install electric heat pumps while continuing to allow the use of electric resistance technologies. They will also allow hybrid electric heat pump gas systems and high-efficiency gas heat pumps.

As building owners, professionals, tradespeople and supply chains prepare for these significant shifts in how we build in B.C., the Province will continue to support market readiness and affordability through CleanBC Better Homes and Better Buildings rebates and financing, innovation funding, technical guidance and ongoing industry training.

CLEANBC BETTER HOMES INCOME QUALIFIED PROGRAM

CleanBC Better Homes is B.C.'s online hub for homeowners to access information, rebates and support to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in their homes.

The CleanBC Better Homes Income Qualified Program is a new, time limited, efficiency and electrification offer that provides high-value incentives to low- and moderate-income households. It complements existing residential energy efficiency programs to help make life more affordable while improving the quality, comfort and resiliency of homes, saving energy, and reducing GHG emissions.

Enhancing energy efficiency programs

Energy companies like BC Hydro and FortisBC have been working for years to encourage efficiency, offering information, tools and support and partnering with the Province to provide incentives and rebates. Utility-funded programs have been effective in reducing emissions, but like so many aspects of our climate-change response, they need to go further, building on initiatives in CleanBC to support the deep reductions needed to meet our long-term targets.

We'll achieve that, in part, with updated regulations to shift the focus of utility-funded efficiency programs to support market readiness for future standards and codes, place more emphasis on electrification, and to ensure affordability for households and businesses. Instead of seeing incentives for conventional gas-fired heating equipment such as furnaces and boilers, consumers will see more support for building-envelope improvements such as insulation and better windows, and all kinds of high efficiency heat pumps – electric, gas and hybrid. We'll also look for ways to further coordinate and integrate energy efficiency programs to make them more effective and easier to access.

We will proceed with the next steps on a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program, which is a form of financing for energy retrofits designed to help building owners save on energy costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. PACE programs link an energy improvement loan to a specific property through a municipal tax lien. The annual payments for the improvements are tied to the property, not an individual, and paid through local government property taxes. This allows for longer terms, helping to reduce upfront loan repayment costs for building improvements. If the property changes hands to a new owner, the outstanding balance of the PACE loan is also transferred over to the new owner.

Introducing home energy labelling

We've done it for years with appliances and vehicles. Now we're putting tools in place to show people how energy efficient their next home could be. B.C. home sale listings will include an energy efficiency rating or label, letting buyers know what their energy costs and carbon footprint will be. Along with raising public awareness, home energy labelling can motivate owners to invest in retrofits that save energy and cut GHG emissions, knowing it will impact future salability.

As a first step, we will introduce a user-friendly, web-based, virtual home-energy rating tool to let people see how efficient their homes are. The tool will be linked to the Better Homes web hub, helping to make CleanBC and utility program offers more accessible. In-home EnerGuide assessments will continue to play a role where homeowners want a more in-depth evaluation, or where homes are too unique for virtual energy ratings to be accurate.



More low carbon building materials

Much of our work to date around cleaner buildings has focused on the amount and types of energy they use. The next bold step is to reduce embodied carbon, which refers to the total GHG emissions created through a building's lifecycle – from material extraction through manufacturing, transportation, construction, maintenance, and end-of-life disposal or reuse.

One approach is to use low carbon building materials, such as mass timber, wood-based insulation, carbon-absorbing concrete, and concrete made with lignin fibres from trees and other plants. Along with reducing embodied carbon, choosing cleaner materials can support a waste-free, circular economy while creating new opportunities in sectors such as forestry where the emphasis is shifting from high-volume to high-value products.

To help build the market for these cleaner materials, we will develop a Low Carbon Building Materials Strategy by 2023 that includes a holistic approach to decarbonizing buildings, initially emphasizing public sector buildings, supporting the development and implementation of embodied carbon targets for public sector buildings by 2030. We're also developing methods for quantifying and analyzing the total embodied carbon of our built environment and identifying pathways to reduce it.





2.4 Communities

B.C.'s local governments play a vital role in meeting provincial climate targets. Along with directly controlling emissions from their own facilities, operations and vehicle fleets, municipalities and regional districts have the capacity to influence about 50% of our GHG emissions through decisions on land use, transportation and infrastructure that affect where people live and work, how they get around, and how their communities grow and change with time.

This puts local governments on the front lines of climate action, where all these policies converge.

Local Government Relative Influence over GHG Emissions

High ←—————→ Low

Municipal infrastructure, buildings and fleet

Transportation network
Land use patterns
Solid waste
Building efficiency standards

Transportation mode share
Residential and business energy efficiency
Food security

Air travel
Industrial energy efficiency
Vehicle standards
Energy utilities

Adapted from: Options to Accelerate Climate Action. Available online: <https://kelownapublishing.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=29429>

What we heard

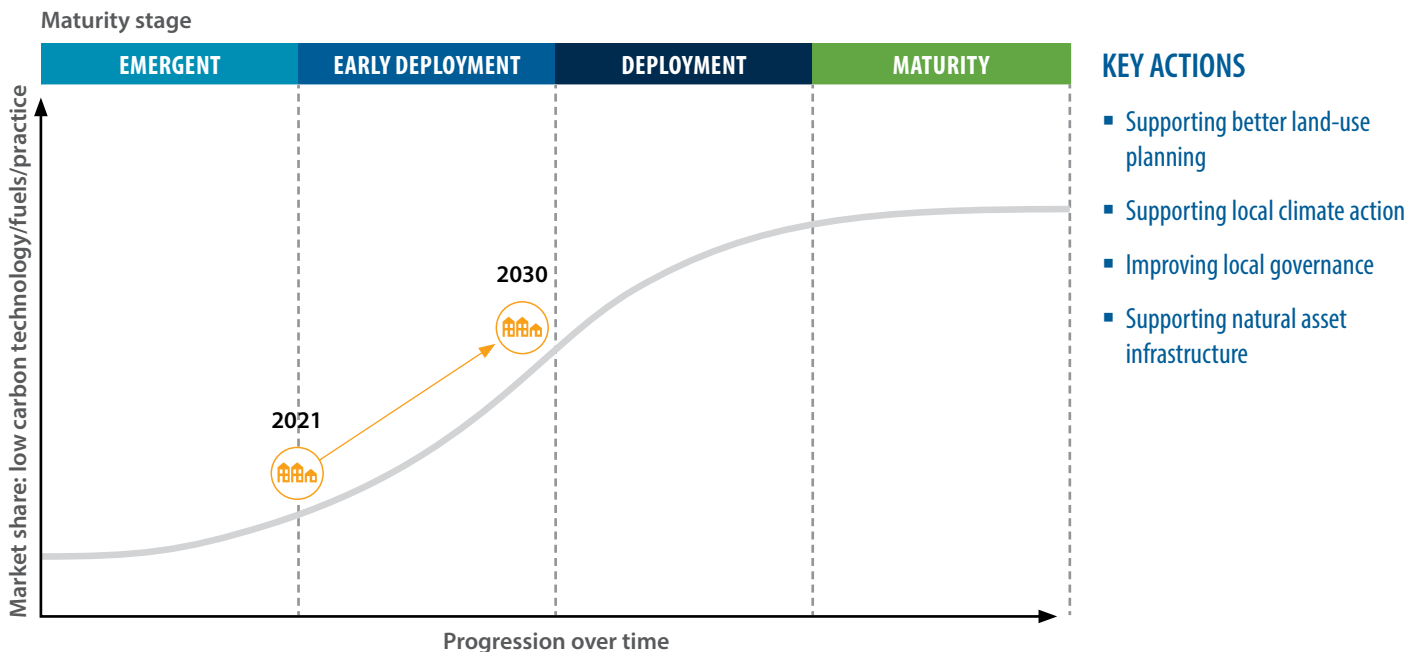
In the consultations that informed this Roadmap, many local governments shared their views regarding the need to:

- Provide sufficient, flexible and guaranteed climate action funding
 - Enable local governments to regulate via opt-in legislation and expanded authority
 - Target capacity constraints through coordination, funding and tailored support
 - Consider legislative changes to better integrate climate action into Official Community Plans and take a more holistic approach to integrate climate resilience
 - Increase ZEV targets, carbon tax and the Low Carbon Fuel Standard.
-

Where we're starting from

Since 2008, virtually all of B.C.'s local governments have signed the B.C. Climate Action Charter, a voluntary agreement to work toward corporate carbon neutrality, measure community-wide emissions and create complete, compact, more energy-efficient rural and urban communities. Many have ambitious targets and much has been achieved. However, within communities – especially in smaller and rural areas – capacity, environment, geography and size can add to the challenges of taking climate action.

Communities



THE PATH TO TRANSFORMATION – 2030 AND BEYOND

Transformation for this sector is closely tied to actions in the other Roadmap pathways, including transportation, buildings and low carbon energy, all of which have significant impacts on communities' GHG emissions and will require local government leadership to implement. In this pathway, our work addresses land-use planning, infrastructure and governance – key elements contributing to the larger climate action picture.

Supporting better land-use planning

Land-use planning links communities to the environment and the economy. It's multi-faceted, complex work that affects people's daily lives and plays a large role in shaping how communities will look, feel and function in the future. As part of this Roadmap, we'll work with municipalities and regional districts to enhance their work on land-use planning by:

- Providing better supports, tools and guidance
- Making data available to help inform decisions and assess progress
- Using a climate lens to review provisions in areas such as Regional Growth Strategies, Official Community Plans and zoning.

INTEGRATING TRANSPORTATION AND LAND-USE PLANNING

The Province is developing an integrated planning approach to better align transportation and land-use planning. The goal is to integrate future transportation investments with local and regional development plans, supporting the seamless movement of people and goods, enabling trade, preparing for future growth, and encouraging the development of diverse, affordable, resilient connected communities that provide the amenities, housing and quality of life people value.

As communities grow, we will support them to better align land-use and transportation planning to build connected, mixed-use communities where more people can live closer to jobs, services and transportation choices, helping to reduce commute times and greenhouse gas emissions. Climate sensitive land-use planning can also reduce emissions from deforestation by reducing urban sprawl.

Supporting local climate action

Local governments are climate action leaders and we want to make sure they maintain their momentum. The Province will partner with local governments to find new ways to support their work. This will include establishing a new program in 2022 to support local government climate actions through flexible, predictable funding. And we will continue to work with federal partners to enable local governments, Indigenous communities and stakeholders to apply a climate and resilience lens for all major infrastructure funding applications. This will help ensure that B.C.'s future infrastructure is clean, low carbon and able to withstand the impacts of a changing climate.



Improving local governance

B.C.'s *Community Charter*, the *Local Government Act* (LGA) and the *Vancouver Charter* define the core authorities of local governments and guide their decision making across a range of areas including land-use planning. Because better land use is essential to climate action, we will evaluate opportunities to strengthen the local government legislative framework – working with municipalities, regional districts, Indigenous communities and other key partners to identify where improvements may be needed.

We're also taking steps to re-invigorate and refresh the Province's partnership with local governments and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) through the Green Communities Committee, established under the Climate Action Charter. Committee members support the development of strategies, actions, supports and incentives to advance climate action in all of our communities. They also work with local governments to build their capacity to plan and implement climate change initiatives.

Other actions in this pathway will include:

- Supporting access to GHG emissions data related to buildings, transportation and waste
- Enhancing the existing Community Energy Emissions Database for local governments and Indigenous communities
- Working to develop regionally specific adaptation and resilience strategies as part of B.C.'s Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy; this includes supporting access to data needed for hazard and land-use risk reduction.

Supporting natural asset infrastructure

Natural assets such as aquifers, forests, streams, wetlands and foreshores provide important environmental services equivalent to those from many engineered assets. When we keep them healthy, they're also inherently resilient and adaptable to climate change. With effective monitoring, maintenance and rehabilitation, natural assets can provide services and add value for decades in ways that many engineered assets cannot match. Supporting natural assets can also reduce deforestation, leading to lower emissions.

As part of this Roadmap, we will support the development of natural asset infrastructure for local governments and Indigenous communities, aligned with local government climate initiatives.



2.5 Industry, Including Oil and Gas

B.C.'s industries are making great strides in low carbon innovation, delivering some of the cleanest industrial products of their kind in the world. Keeping them competitive is both an economic and environmental imperative. We produce resources the world needs, and we can make them with a smaller carbon footprint than most of our competitors, helping to address the impacts of climate change worldwide. If production moves to places with less environmentally friendly practices, the planet will be worse off and so will our economy.

To meet our climate targets, B.C. companies will need to continue investing in low carbon technologies and practices. In some cases, they will need support to further reduce emissions so they can stay competitive, attract new investment and showcase their successes to the world.

Where we're starting from

The market for fully decarbonizing large industry in B.C. is at the emergent stage, with a number of solutions and technologies being piloted or demonstrated. Because each industrial facility is different, there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and some operators are farther along the low carbon continuum.

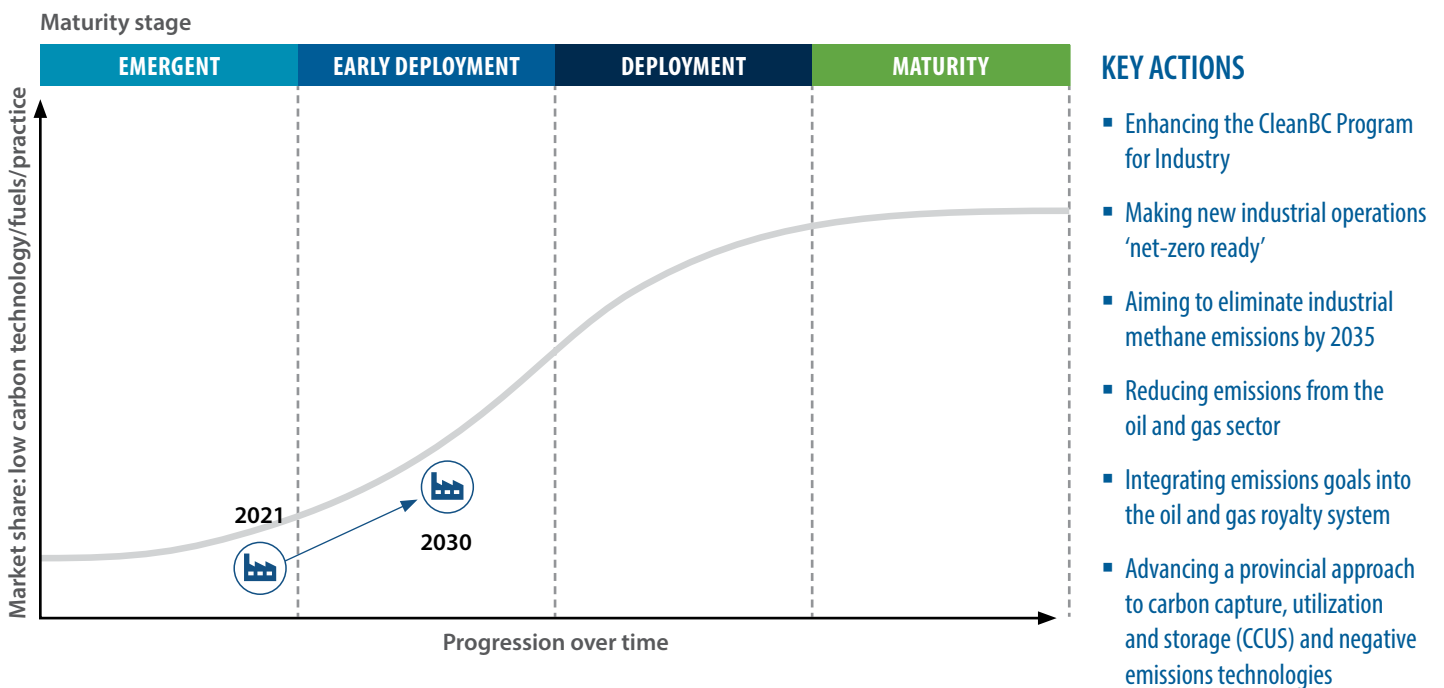
Commercial deployments are also at different stages, largely due to economic factors including cost, scale and regulatory considerations. Promising technologies such as carbon capture and storage are still in early development. And, while we're making progress towards reducing methane emissions in some sectors, we still have work to do on measuring and managing them in others.

What we heard

In the consultations that informed this Roadmap, industry leaders stressed the need to leverage their low carbon advantage while building on our natural resources to create opportunities for low carbon growth, including:

- Providing a predictable and forward-looking policy landscape that allows for long-term emissions reduction planning and investment
- Increasing protection for emissions-intensive trade-exposed industry and considering flexible options, such as offsets or credit generating systems, to help address competitiveness concerns
- Providing clarity on how to advance carbon capture, utilization and storage projects, including through regulatory certainty and fiscal measures
- Tackling major barriers to electrification such as high initial investment and operating costs and timing uncertainty
- Advancing low carbon fuel production and use to fill specific niches within industry.

Industry, Including Oil and Gas



THE PATH TO TRANSFORMATION – 2030 AND BEYOND

To help meet our climate targets and keep B.C. industry at the forefront of low carbon innovation and production, we need to work together to reduce industrial emissions as quickly as possible, including continuing to invest in low carbon technologies and practices and implementing more circular processes.

As part of this Roadmap, we'll encourage more facilities to connect to clean electricity, use more low carbon fuels such as hydrogen, explore how best to capture and safely store or use carbon, and reduce industrial methane emissions. We're also moving forward with a suite of new initiatives to help keep our industries competitive as we move to a net-zero future.

Enhancing the CleanBC Program for Industry

The CleanBC Program for Industry supports GHG reductions and competitiveness by investing carbon tax revenue in projects that reduce emissions and costs across B.C. In 2022, we will work with industry, the Government of Canada and Indigenous peoples to redesign the program to align with new federal carbon pricing rules while continuing to promote a competitive business environment and significant GHG reductions.

Our work will include determining how best to support common infrastructure needs through projects such as transmission grids and access to low carbon fuels. We will also explore ways of structuring projects to include and further benefit Indigenous communities.

Making new industrial operations 'net-zero ready'

Some of B.C.'s largest industrial operators – accounting for almost 50% of industrial GHG emissions – have already committed to reaching net-zero emissions by 2050. Building on that progress, we're introducing a new requirement: all new large industrial facilities must have a plan to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. New facilities will also have to show how they align with B.C.'s interim 2030 and 2040 targets.

This means facilities will have to be designed to minimize emissions as much as possible. Where emissions can't be reduced, companies will have to assess the use of new technologies such as carbon capture or consider the purchase of high-quality offsets from projects offering long-term carbon sequestration, such as through the use of negative emissions technologies. New net-zero plans will be required and assessed at different stages of development, subject to review, revision and enforcement over time. Government will work with facility proponents to align new policies and compliance mechanisms to support net-zero-emission plans.



This type of planning will future proof our newest industrial facilities, ensuring they can meet the needs of investors and purchasers adhering to a stringent definition of net zero. This approach will also help to drive investments in new, clean B.C. technologies while providing the certainty industry needs to thrive in a global net-zero economy. Government will work with stakeholders and First Nations as these requirements are further developed.

Aiming to eliminate industrial methane emissions by 2035

Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas, with more than 80 times the warming power of carbon dioxide during its first 20 years in the atmosphere. Clearly, we need to reduce its emissions – but measuring them and identifying where they’re from has long been a major challenge.

New solutions are becoming available and we’re learning more about them, thanks to the work we’ve been doing with research organizations, the oil and gas sector, the federal government and non-profits. Through the BC Methane Emissions Research Collaborative, we’ve demonstrated that methane emissions from oil and gas can be detected, attributed and quantified at specific sites, likely in a more cost-effective way than traditional methods.

With this Roadmap, we are committed to building on that research and applying it across the industrial sector to achieve our goal of zero emissions from methane – or as close to zero as possible – by 2035, and to reduce methane emissions in the oil and gas sector by 75% (compared to 2014) by 2030, consistent with the federal commitment. Methane from industrial wood waste landfills can be converted to less-harmful greenhouse gases through landfill management.

Reducing emissions from the oil and gas sector

Currently responsible for 20% of B.C.’s emissions and 50% of industrial emissions, the oil and gas sector will be required to make a meaningful contribution to BC’s climate targets. B.C. is the first jurisdiction in Canada to set a specific sectoral target for reducing emissions from the oil and gas industry.

The Province will work to implement policies and programs to reduce emissions in line with its sectoral target of a 33-38% reduction below 2007 levels. In addition to strengthening B.C.’s methane regulations and modernizing B.C.’s royalty system, our new industrial climate program, to be released in 2023, will be designed to ensure the oil and gas sectoral target is met.

We will also commit to cleaning up 100% of current orphan wells in B.C. before 2030 through the industry-funded Orphan Site Reclamation Fund.

Integrating emissions goals into the oil and gas royalty system

B.C.'s royalty system was set up nearly 30 years ago in the 1992 Petroleum and Natural Gas Royalty and Freehold Production Tax Regulation. The way natural gas is produced has changed significantly since then, as have market conditions, drilling technology and costs, and global concerns on the need to address climate change.

As part of this Roadmap, the Province will review the rules for oil and gas royalties to ensure they support our goals for economic development, environmental protection and a fair return on the resource for the people of B.C. It's part of our commitment to reduce emissions from oil and gas by 33-38% by 2030, compared to 2007 levels.

The review will examine ways to adjust the royalty system to help meet provincial emission reduction targets and will consider recommendations from the independent panel currently reviewing B.C.'s royalty system. Policy tools will be considered to encourage further emissions reductions from the sector, and to support the other pathways in this Roadmap.

Advancing a provincial approach to carbon capture, utilization and storage and negative emissions technologies

The full decarbonization of B.C. industry will require widespread electrification; the use of low carbon fuels like lignin, renewable gas and hydrogen; and the use of carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS) and other negative emissions technologies across different sectors.

CCUS technologies can reduce emissions in hard-to-abate industrial sectors such as oil and gas, pulp and paper, and cement, where emissions associated with chemical processes cannot be eliminated in any other way. Since they are still in the emergent phase, we will develop a coordinated, comprehensive provincial approach to guide their deployment.



2.6 Forest Bioeconomy

B.C.'s expansive forests are central to our bioeconomy – the part of our economy that uses renewable resources to produce things we use every day like textiles and packaging. By using the residuals from conventional forestry, our forest bioeconomy supports the sector's shift from high volume to high value and contributes to a waste-free, circular economy while helping in the fight against climate change.





INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND FOREST MANAGEMENT

Forests are, and have been, central to many Indigenous communities whose inherent rights are connected to their respective territories. They provide food, shelter, economic opportunities, tools and medicine along with materials for arts, culture and spiritual activities. For example, some Indigenous peoples see cedar as the tree of life, using it for homes, clothing, canoes, baskets and traditional ceremonies.⁶ As the original stewards of the land we now call British Columbia, Indigenous peoples are essential partners in transforming our forest sector from high-volume to high-value, and keeping it sustainable.

What we heard

The Province engages regularly with industry, academia, Indigenous peoples and governments to advance forest sector innovation and build a broader bioeconomy in support of sustainable forest use. Key themes discussed in the consultations informing this Roadmap were:

- *Need for a competitive carbon policy that incentivizes GHG reduction practices and investments in the forest sector*
- *Investments and further engagement to support commercialization of new bioproducts that can replace more GHG intensive products; this includes using lignin in asphalt instead of bitumen and cellulose foams instead of Styrofoam.*

Indigenous peoples we engaged with emphasized the need to balance environmental and economic benefits, noting the alignment between bioeconomy opportunities and their traditional knowledge principles. Some also expressed interest in pursuing carbon offset projects.

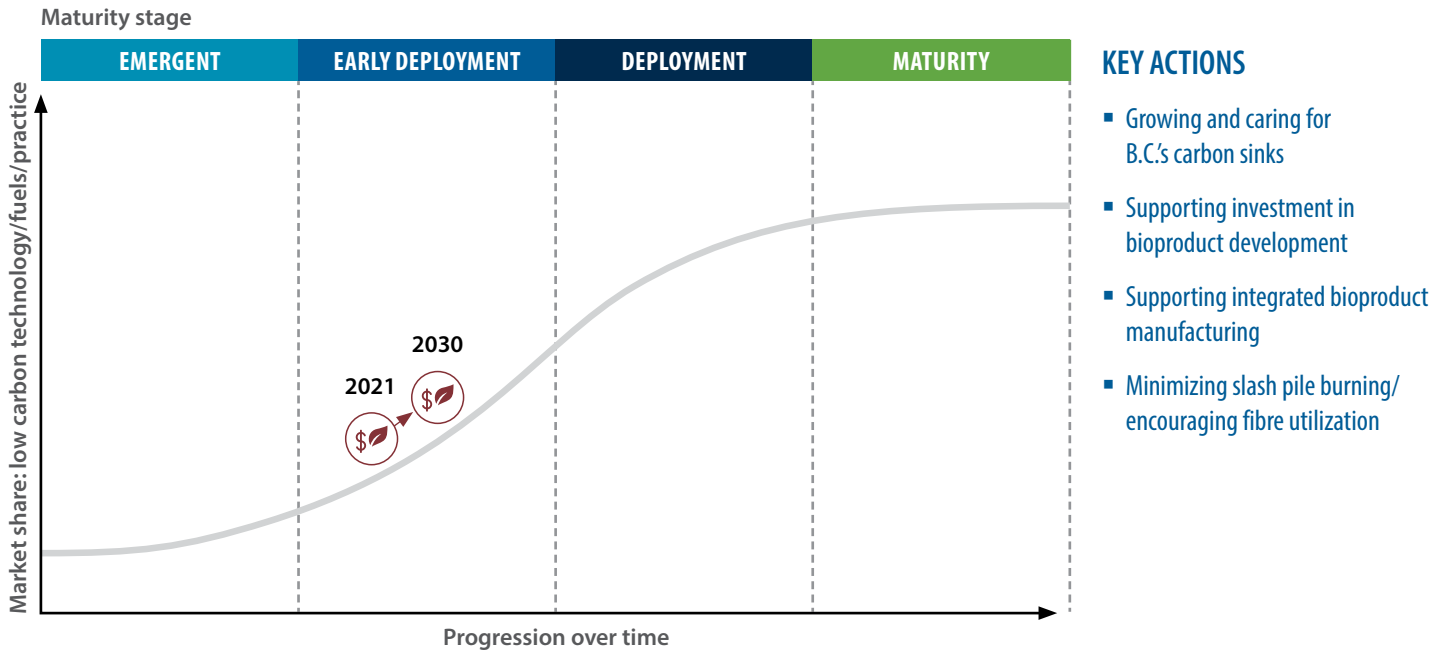
Where we're starting from

The B.C. bioeconomy is currently in early deployment, supported by partnerships with Indigenous peoples and private companies throughout the province. For example, the [Indigenous Forest Bioeconomy Program](#) has supported the production of a wide range of innovative high-value bioproducts – from essential oils extracted from conifer needles, to new health beverages from trees, to biochemicals extracted from bark.

There's also a growing market for forest carbon offsets – tradable credits used to offset or counterbalance greenhouse gas emissions. They provide a pathway to meeting climate targets for sectors whose emissions are particularly tough to abate.

6 "The Tree of Life": https://umistapotlatch.ca/enseignants-education/cours_4_partie_2-lesson_4_part_2-eng.php

Forest Bioeconomy



THE PATH TO TRANSFORMATION – 2030 AND BEYOND

The global market for bioproducts is expected to undergo a major transition over the next 10 years, with advanced biomaterials and biochemicals making up the largest market segments.

By 2030, the province should be producing bioproducts at scale and providing high-quality jobs in the bioproducts sector. We'll reach these goals through the following actions.

Old Growth Strategy

Old growth forests – those containing trees that are more than 250 years old – make up nearly one quarter of B.C.'s total forested area. Old growth has a range of benefits, on top of protecting biodiversity, watershed protection and helping the Province adapt to the effects of climate change, they also store large amounts of carbon. Because trees store carbon as they grow, old growth seems like a natural ally in the fight against climate change.

Consistent with the recommendations from the Old Growth Strategic Review, we're integrating climate mitigation into forest management and undertaking research to improve our understanding of old growth forests and their impacts on greenhouse gases. B.C. uses many mitigation options in our forests, including reforestation, fertilization, managing forest health, reducing slash pile burning and using more fibre in longer lived products. Conserving old growth forests as carbon sinks is one of those strategies.

Growing and caring for B.C.'s carbon sinks

B.C. will explore opportunities to partner with the federal government to plant more trees, creating larger carbon sinks and rehabilitating wildfire impacted lands – areas that absorb more carbon than they emit into the atmosphere. We'll also evaluate additional reforestation and forest management activities that sequester carbon and foster climate resilience – including through fertilization, forest health improvements and wildfire mitigation – ensuring opportunities for Indigenous businesses.

A new B.C. Forest Carbon Offset Protocol will expand access to the carbon-offset market for Indigenous communities and forest companies, supporting them to generate revenue while helping others meet their climate commitments. The Protocol will also help to focus attention on the value of non-timber forest benefits, including biodiversity protection and carbon sequestration.

Offset projects will include afforestation (planting trees in areas where there is no forest), reforestation, and improved forest management through practices such as letting trees grow longer before they're harvested. The Province will also explore updating policy and laws to allow the use of Crown land for offset purposes.

Supporting investment in bioproduct development

The Province will partner with Indigenous peoples and industry to build the market for high-value wood products that store carbon or displace products made with fossil fuels. This will include:

- Exploring policy actions, such as biomass content requirements, to increase the use of biomaterials in carbon-intensive products such as concrete, asphalt and plastic components used in finishing cabinets, flooring and other materials
- Encouraging the use of biomaterials in the packaging, consumer goods and biochemical sectors; this could include replacing single-use plastic packaging with biobased materials
- Exploring opportunities to support sector growth through measures such as market and supply chain studies, capacity building, technology assessments and pilot projects for scale-up opportunities
- Advancing mass timber production and use through a Mass Timber Action Plan; work to develop the plan is being guided by a steering committee representing Indigenous communities, industry and government
- Exploring the potential for regional bio-hubs to help ensure communities have access to fibre for diversified manufacturing, and to enhance the number of well-paying forest sector jobs across the province.



Supporting integrated bioproduct manufacturing

One of the potential downsides of forest-based bioproduct manufacturing is having to move material from one site to another. Integrating manufacturing with existing pulp and paper facilities and pellet mills eliminates that issue, creating significant logistical and cost advantages. As part of this Roadmap, we will explore ways to streamline regulations and generate investment for bioproducts facilities at pulp mill sites, allowing producers to make full use of B.C.'s forest resources.

Minimizing slash pile burning and encouraging fibre utilization

Slash piles – the residue from conventional forest harvesting– have long been burned as a way to help reduce the risk of wildfires, and to enhance habitat for wildlife and replanting. The Province will work towards near elimination of slash pile burning by 2030 and will increasingly divert materials away from slash piles and into bioproduct development, reducing both air pollution and GHG emissions while creating new economic opportunities.

In the months ahead, we will partner with forest licensees and Indigenous communities to explore ways to make this feasible, taking into account any impact on wildfire risks. We'll also continue to invest in projects that encourage greater use of forest fibre that would otherwise be burned.



2.7 Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries

The agriculture sector directly accounts for just under 4% of B.C.'s GHG emissions. The largest source is from enteric fermentation, a digestive process of cattle and other ruminants that produces methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. The next largest sources of agricultural emissions are on-farm energy, agricultural soils and manure management.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND ADAPTATION

Adaptation to climate change has been, and continues to be, a key focus of climate action for agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture. These industries are extremely vulnerable to the impacts of changing weather patterns and severe weather events, including high intensity rainfall, heat waves, drought, wildfire and changing marine conditions. Industry and Indigenous partners are acutely aware that the changing climate affects their productivity and livelihoods, and that building resilience is critical. New measures to support the sector's adaptation will be included in the Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy, due for release in 2022.



What we heard

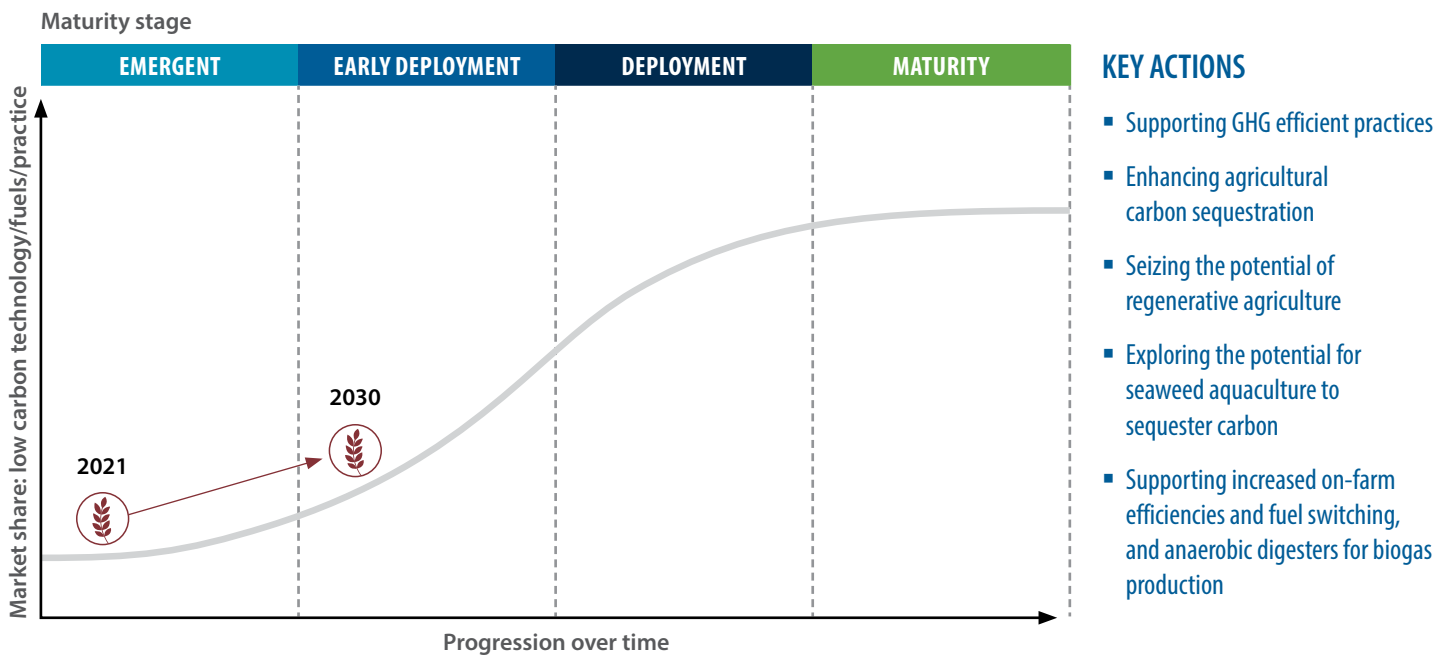
In the consultations that informed this Roadmap, people in the agriculture and aquaculture sectors said they want to continue being informed and consulted as programs and policies are developed and implemented, and want to see their roles and expected contributions more clearly defined. They also highlighted the importance of:

- Providing financial support to help sectors transition practices and technology
- A high-level of buy-in from producers who will readily take up practices that are economically viable
- Undertaking research and development and developing monitoring and measurement frameworks to establish benchmarks and track GHG reductions.

Where we're starting from

The market for decarbonizing agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries is in the emergent phase. Stakeholders have emphasized the need to be realistic about what can be achieved by 2030, noting that cost and economic viability present significant barriers to adopting new solutions.

Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries



To help move the market to early deployment by 2030, we're supporting producers to increase GHG efficient practices and exploring several measures to enhance carbon sequestration.

Supporting GHG efficient practices

As part of this Roadmap, the Province will continue to support the transition to technologies and practices that reduce both net GHG emissions and operating costs for producers. This includes encouraging fuel switching and electrification to reduce emissions from equipment in agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries, along with increased efficiency in manure and nutrient management. We'll encourage the development and piloting of new clean solutions such as electric tractors and technologies to further improve energy efficiency in greenhouses. And, we'll encourage more local, sustainable food production, which has the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in B.C.

Waste management will be supported by growing opportunities to capture biogas, turning farm waste into a valuable resource. Pathway strategies related to biogas will contribute to our goal for renewable energy to make up at least 15% of the content of B.C.'s natural gas by 2030.

Enhancing agricultural carbon sequestration

We will work with the agriculture sector to determine beneficial management practices to maximize carbon sequestration and its benefits to biodiversity, soil and water quality, and farm profitability. Our primary focus in this area is supporting research and monitoring to fill in critical knowledge gaps. We will support applied research, explore piloting promising ideas, monitor results and work to improve local technical knowledge of climate adaptation.

We will also encourage producers to implement regenerative agricultural practices and technologies that improve soil health and biodiversity, allowing farmland to store more carbon. And we'll work with Indigenous communities and the aquaculture sector to explore the carbon-storage potential of seaweed cultivation.





2.8 Negative Emissions Technologies

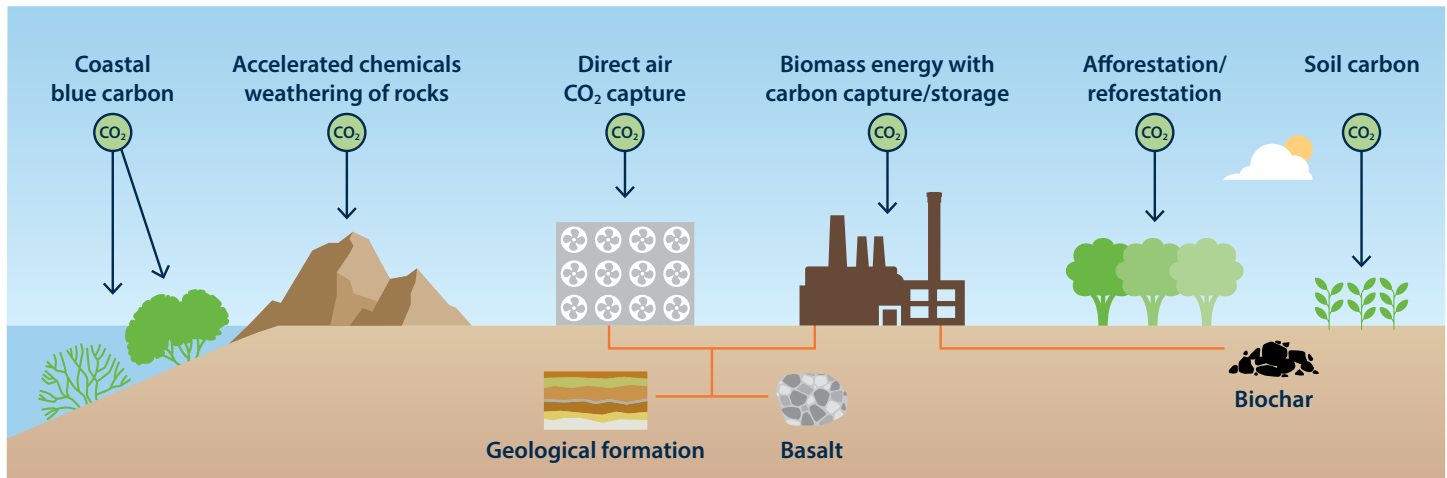
THE NEED FOR NEGATIVE EMISSIONS TECHNOLOGIES

According to the International Energy Agency, almost half the GHG reductions targeted worldwide for 2050 will come from technologies currently in the demonstration phase. Expert groups like the Canadian Institute for Climate Choices agree on the need for high-risk, high-reward technologies, projecting that solutions such as negative emissions technologies (NETs) could deliver two thirds of the reductions needed to meet our 2050 targets.

Negative emissions technologies can play an important role in meeting our climate targets, especially the long-range commitment to reach net-zero by 2050. They remove CO₂ from the atmosphere, offsetting emissions that have already occurred. NETs range from biological options, such as forest and soil ecosystems, to novel engineered technologies. This pathway is focused on the latter.



Negative Emissions Technologies



Adapted from: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2019. *Negative Emissions Technologies and Reliable Sequestration: A Research Agenda*.

Available online: www.nap.edu/download/25259

What we heard

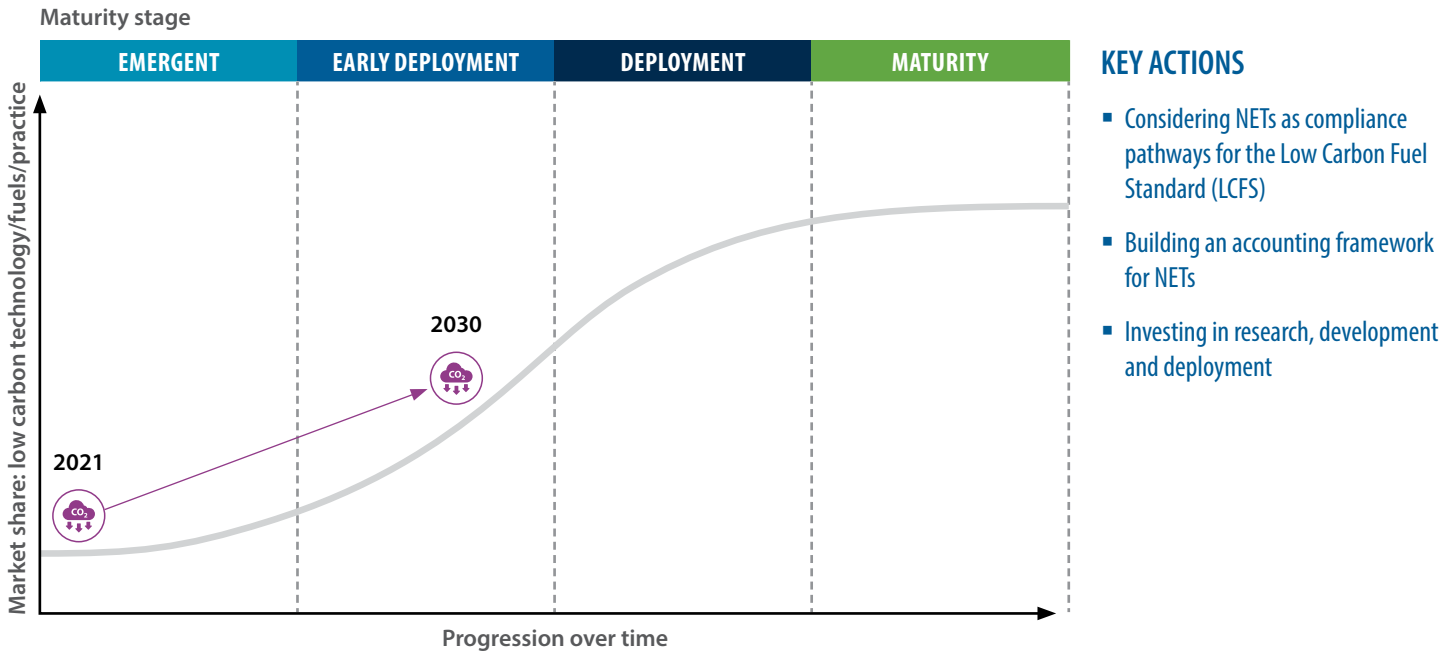
In the consultations that informed this Roadmap, industry, Indigenous peoples, businesses, clean tech companies and others encouraged the Province to explore the potential of NETs. Key themes discussed were:

- Continuing engagement to develop a policy framework including a clear definition of NETs, especially as many technologies are in development or in early stages
- Encouraging NETs as part of a global solution, and considering equity and affordability implications
- Targeting NETs to offset emissions in hard-to-decarbonize industries, not as a replacement for decarbonization
- Providing adequate funding supports for technology development and to scale technologies for adoption

Where we're starting from

The market for NETs is still in the emergent stage but B.C. has the capacity and potential advantage to play a lead role in moving it forward. We're home to a rich ecosystem of innovation and clean tech companies with NET solutions at various stages of development. Because of their novelty and complexity, it will take significant time and investment to determine whether their large-scale deployment is cost-effective and functional.

Negative Emissions Technologies



THE PATH TO TRANSFORMATION – 2030 AND BEYOND

To support the scale-up of NETs by 2030, B.C. needs an enabling environment that supports innovation, incentivizes public-private involvement and is flexible enough to adapt to change. That could include a supportive regulatory and policy climate, economic incentives, measures to reduce costs or new business models to achieve economies of scale.

To achieve these goals and move the market, we will provide investments through InBC to help small- and medium-sized B.C. companies scale up and reach their highest potential. InBC investments will help foster a low carbon economy by anchoring talent, innovation, intellectual property and high-quality, family-supporting jobs throughout the province. We'll also take the following actions.

Considering NETs as compliance pathways for the Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS)

The LCFS requires fuel suppliers to progressively decrease the average carbon intensity of the fuels they supply to users in B.C. By 2030, they'll have to deliver a reduction of more than 20%, with the target continuing to rise in the coming years.

Recognizing the challenges inherent in reducing carbon intensity, we will consider allowing NETs as an option for compliance. This could attract significant new investment to B.C., along with new jobs in clean technology. A final decision on the LCFS will be based on consultations and assessments of recent program changes affecting costs and emissions.

Building an accounting framework for NETs

Currently, our GHG accounting used to measure progress to targets only captures emission reductions from forest-offset projects, since they are the only NET that currently meets our rigorous standards for planning, implementation and monitoring. As more engineered solutions come online, B.C. will build an accounting framework by 2025 to define how other types of NET projects may impact emissions reductions, and how they can be brought into the inventory's scope. This will ensure they're evaluated on a lifecycle basis so we don't adopt technologies that ultimately require more materials and energy, and produce more GHGs, than what they're capturing and storing.

Once we're able to reliably quantify the impacts of NETs, we will clarify their role in carbon offsets. We will also advocate for international collaboration to ensure national inventories can account for NETs consistently.

Investing in research, development and deployment

As noted in the industry pathway, B.C. will develop a comprehensive provincial approach to carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS) technologies, leveraging supports such as the federal investment tax credit for CCUS. We'll also consider additional grants and incentives for research and development, pilot projects and commercial scale deployment.

Some of this support will be delivered through the new B.C. Centre for Innovation and Clean Energy. Its mandate is to bring together innovators, industry, academics and government to accelerate the commercialization and scale-up of B.C. based, clean energy technologies. We will also assess the need for new provincial tools to encourage private-sector investment in NETs. And we will assess the potential of research developed through the University of British Columbia and University of Victoria to mineralize CO₂ from the atmosphere to store it in rock and in other materials.



CHAPTER 3: NEXT STEPS AND IMPLEMENTATION

The CleanBC Roadmap to 2030 is designed to be a living document, to be revisited and updated as we move forward to ensure we stay on track to meet our targets. In the months ahead, we will engage with partners and stakeholders to work out the details of major new measures and find the best ways to put them into practice.

Many of the actions in this Roadmap will expand and accelerate CleanBC policies and programs already in place. Others will require close monitoring and adjustments as we learn from experience. Where policies are working, we'll act quickly to ramp up our efforts. Where they're not as effective, we'll change course, in close collaboration with affected sectors.

As we chart our progress, we will continue to provide detailed reporting to the public through the annual [Climate Change Accountability Report](#), which includes progress indicators for CleanBC programs. In future years, we will also report on the following indicators specific to the Roadmap:

- Market share of technologies, reflecting the extent to which low-emission solutions are being adopted
- Cost of transformation for each sector
- Workforce and skills readiness, reflecting our capacity to adopt new approaches
- Economic and social opportunities, pointing to important co-benefits such as reducing inequality and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

The work ahead will be challenging. Transforming British Columbia's economy will require determination, particularly as many of these changes will be made in less than a decade. Achieving our targets will demand an unprecedented level of commitment. It will also offer unprecedented opportunities for the future as we work towards net zero by 2050.

Successful implementation of this plan will require a focused, all of government approach. To support this, the Premier has instructed all Ministers, via mandate letters, to ensure their work continues to achieve CleanBC's goals.

Business and industry will have new opportunities to innovate and build on the CleanBC actions and supports, as well as our global reputation as a place for environmental, social and governance investments and net-zero focused business. Local governments will have new opportunities to build more liveable, compact and energy-efficient communities. Indigenous peoples will have new opportunities to advance their self-determination and participate more fully in every sector of our economy. And everyone in B.C. will have the opportunity to look forward to a cleaner, better future.

We're building a British Columbia where no one's left behind; where innovation drives new advances and keeps us competitive; where we all enjoy improvements in our quality of life and prosper along with – not at the expense of – our natural environment. Meeting our climate targets and building a cleaner economy is fundamental to making this future a reality.

APPENDICES

Roadmap to 2030 Greenhouse Gas Reductions by Initiative

Economy-Wide Initiatives

Increase the price of carbon pollution	Meet or exceed the federal benchmark of \$170 by 2030 Revise industrial carbon pricing in 2023
Reduction of GHGs in 2030 for Economy-Wide Initiatives	
Subtotal 2.4	

Low Carbon Energy

Enhance the Low Carbon Fuel Standard	Increase the carbon intensity reduction requirement Expand to include marine and aviation fuel Double production capacity for made-in-B.C. renewable fuels to 1.3bn litres
Increase benefits of electrification	Implement 100% Clean Electricity Delivery Standard
Reduce emissions from natural gas	New GHG cap for natural gas utilities with a variety of compliance options
Reduction of GHGs in 2030 for Low Carbon Energy	
Subtotal 5.0	

Transportation

Accelerate zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) law	By 2030, ZEVs will account for 90% of all new light-duty vehicle sales in the province New ZEV targets for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles to be developed in alignment with California
Reduce light-duty vehicle travel	Reduce distances travelled by vehicle by 25% relative to 2020 Encourage increase in mode shift to walking, cycling and transit to 30% by 2030
Reduce goods movement emissions	Reduce the energy intensity of goods movement by 10% relative to 2020
Reduction of GHGs in 2030 for Transportation	
Subtotal 4.9	

Buildings

New carbon pollution standard in BC Building Code	Carbon pollution standards introduced for new buildings in 2024, with zero-carbon new construction by 2030
Highest efficiency standards	After 2030, all new space and water heating equipment sold and installed in B.C. will be at least 100% efficient (i.e. electric resistance heating, heat pumps, and hybrid electric heat pump-gas systems)
Reduction of GHGs in 2030 for Buildings	
Subtotal 1.3	

Industry

Enhance CleanBC Program for Industry	Enhance industry program to reduce GHGs and support a strong economy
Reduce methane emissions	Near elimination of methane emissions by 2035 in oil and gas, mining, industrial wood waste and other sectors
Make new industrial operations 'net-zero ready'	New large industrial development to submit plans to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 and show how they align with interim 2030 and 2040 targets
Reduce oil and gas sector emissions	Implement programs and policies so that oil and gas emissions are reduced in line with sectoral targets (reduction of 33-38% by 2030)
Reduction of GHGs in 2030 for Industry	
Subtotal 2.6	

Other Measures Including: reducing agricultural emissions, supporting compact and resilient communities, and aligning with federal, municipal and Crown Corporation plans.

Reduction of GHGs in 2030 for Other Measures		Subtotal 0.9
<i>Note: Individual pathway reductions do not add up to the totals because of interaction effects between policies that target the same emissions</i>		
Roadmap to 2030		16.2 MtCO ₂ e
CleanBC Phase 1		10.5 MtCO ₂ e
Total GHG MtCO₂e reduced by 2030		26.7 MtCO₂e
The legislated target for 2030 is 39.4 MtCO ₂ e (or a reduction of 26.3 MtCO ₂ e from a 2007 baseline), which we are exceeding by 0.4 MtCO ₂ e.		

Roadmap Portfolio of Measures



- Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries
- Buildings
- Industry/Oil and Gas
- Forest Bioeconomy
- Negative Emissions Technologies
- Personal Travel
- Low Carbon Energy
- Commercial Transportation
- Electricity
- Circular Economy
- Communities

The Roadmap is an iterative document subject to change on the basis of emerging technologies and changing social, economic and business environments.



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our nature. our power. our future.



Roadmap to 2030

CleanBC.gov.bc.ca

No. B23-01
May 1, 2023

20%-Better Energy Efficiency & Zero Carbon Step Code British Columbia Building Code 2018 - Revision 5

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide information about the Revision 5 changes to the British Columbia Building Code 2018 (BCBC) regarding energy efficiency and the introduction of voluntary requirements for greenhouse gas reduction. This bulletin also provides information about how these changes may involve or affect local government bylaws.

20%-Better Energy Efficiency

To meet CleanBC's goal of net-zero energy ready new construction by 2032, the BCBC will gradually increase energy efficiency requirements. As of May 1, 2023, the first incremental change to the BCBC requires new construction to be 20% more energy efficient.

Performance-based Approach

Effective May 1, 2023, most new buildings will be required to comply with the energy efficiency requirements of the BC Energy Step Code. The BC Energy Step Code's performance-based energy efficiency approach requires that a building's designed performance be evaluated through whole-building energy modelling and on-site airtightness testing to validate how the building's design and construction meets performance targets for the desired 'Step' of the BC Energy Step Code.

Effective May 1, 2023, the lower Steps in Article 9.36.6.3. for Part 9 buildings and Step 1 in Article 10.2.3.3. for Part 3 buildings will be marked as 'reserved' in Division B of the BCBC and are no longer be applicable to new construction.

Local authorities will continue to have the ability to adopt Step 4 or higher of the BC Energy Step Code for Part 9 buildings, and Step 3 or higher for Part 3 buildings. However, it will no longer be necessary for local authorities to adopt by bylaw either the Step 3 standard for Part 9 buildings or the Step 2 standard for Part 3 as these standards will become universally applicable province-wide as the new minimum acceptable standard for compliance with the BCBC.

Prescriptive Approach

As of May 1, 2023, the prescriptive values for energy efficiency in the BCBC will increase, targeting an improvement of 20%. These prescriptive requirements are applicable to Part 9 buildings not within the scope of the BC Energy Step Code such as Part 9 non-residential and some mixed-use buildings. Under the prescriptive approach, buildings must meet specific requirements for insulation, windows, and other equipment. This approach focuses on individual assemblies or pieces of equipment, rather than the performance of the whole building as a system.

On a temporary basis, the Building Act General Regulation will allow local authorities to permit the prescriptive approach to be used for those Part 9 buildings that the BC Energy Step Code would otherwise apply to, for example, single-family homes. This may be necessary in rural and remote areas of the province where access to energy modelling and airtightness testing services is limited or impractical.

Where a local authority chooses to allow for compliance with the prescriptive requirements, they may not restrict builders from voluntarily complying with the performance requirements of Step 3, Step 4, or Step 5, as an acceptable alternative to the prescriptive requirements.

However, where a local authority requires compliance with Step 4 or Step 5 for Part 9 buildings, builders may not use the prescriptive requirements and must satisfy the performance requirements of the BC Energy Step Code (energy modelling and airtightness testing), with the exception of log homes.

Bylaw Required to Accept the Prescriptive Approach

Acceptance of the prescriptive approach for Part 9 buildings to which the BC Energy Step Code applies must be done by a bylaw in relation to the conservation of energy. No bylaw is required for those Part 9 buildings to which the BC Energy Step Code does not apply like Part 9 non-residential and some mixed-use commercial buildings.

Local authorities may adopt a specific bylaw to accept the prescriptive requirements in Subsections 9.36.2 to 9.36.4., Division B, of the BCBC or amend an existing bylaw such as a building bylaw. Local authorities should seek legal advice to determine how best to amend bylaws to achieve their desired policy intent, within the limitations established by relevant legislation (e.g. *Building Act*).

Unless a bylaw to accept the prescriptive approach has been adopted, the BCBC requires the performance approach to be followed for Part 9 buildings.

Log Homes

A definition of “log homes” has been added to the BCBC (See Sentence 9, Division B, Article 9.36.1.2.) to describe homes where the exterior vertical walls primarily consist of structural log members.

When the regulatory amendments to the BCBC come into effect on May 1, 2023, log homes will have the option of complying with the BC Energy Step Code but will also have several available compliance paths under the prescriptive approach. (See Sentence 7 in Article 9.36.1.3., Division B, BC Code.) Local authorities do not need to adopt a bylaw to accept the prescriptive approach for log homes and must not limit acceptance of log homes to the performance approach only.

Further information on the changes to the BCBC for energy efficiency can be found in Information Bulletin No. B23-02.

Zero Carbon Step Code

Previous iterations of the BCBC contained energy efficiency requirements without directly addressing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Amendments to Division B, Parts 9 and 10 of the BCBC will add new optional technical building requirements for the reduction of GHG emissions. These requirements, commonly referred to as the Zero Carbon Step Code, come into force on May 1, 2023.

Technical requirements for GHG emissions have been added to the BCBC using a tiered approach, similar to the BC Energy Step Code. Local authorities have the discretion to determine which of the levels, if any, will apply in their jurisdiction, to further decide in which areas the level or levels will apply, and under what conditions or circumstances. Local authorities must adopt all elements of the selected level(s) and are not able to select individual elements from one or more of the levels.

The Zero Carbon Step Code has four levels of increasing stringency for Part 9 and Part 10 buildings. The first level of the Zero Carbon Step Code is called EL-1 ('Measure-Only') as it only requires measurement of a building's emissions. EL-2 is the next level and will likely require decarbonization of either space heating or domestic hot water systems. The next level is EL-3 which will require decarbonization of both space heating and domestic hot water systems. EL-4 is the fourth and final level and indicates that the operation of the is as close to zero emissions as possible.

Initially, the Zero Carbon Step Code requirements will be voluntary. The CleanBC Roadmap to 2030 commits to requiring increasingly stringent emission requirements for new buildings in 2024 and 2027. In 2030 the BCBC will require all new buildings to be zero carbon.

Further information on the Zero Carbon Step Code is available in Information Bulletin No. B23-03.

Other Authorities for the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

It is not the intent to restrict the ability of local authorities to establish incentives and other voluntary requirements for GHG emissions in buildings or impede other relevant authorities in other legislation, particularly, the authorities for development permit areas for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in ss. 491(9) of the *Local Government Act*, as well as s. 53(2)(c) of the *Community Charter* and s. 298(2)(c) of the *Local Government Act* which provide local governments with the authority to regulate with respect to the reduction of GHG emissions. It is recommended that all local governments with bylaw requirements regarding GHG emissions review any technical requirements to ensure they are in keeping with these authorities.

Technical requirements in bylaws that are outside the scope of these authorities may be affected by section 5 of the Building Act. Adding technical requirements to the BCBC for GHG emissions and amending the Building Act General Regulation to limit the extent to which these matters are 'unrestricted', may mean that local building requirements no longer have the force of law. It is recommended that legal advice be sought as necessary.

Application to Existing Buildings

It can be difficult to determine what requirements in the BCBC should apply when an existing building is being altered. To address these challenges, the Province is supporting the National Research Council's development of a code that will address alterations to existing buildings. Anticipated for release in 2024, this code will help to provide guidance to owners, designers, local governments, and building officials.

The Energy and Zero Carbon Step Codes were developed for new buildings. Division A of the BCBC discusses alterations to existing buildings and options for applying the requirements of the BC Building Code to existing buildings.

Discretion and judgement must be exercised by designers and enforcement officials when applying the acceptable solutions in Division B to the alteration to an existing building as described in Division A. Each alteration to each existing building requires unique consideration. As outlined in Division A, it is up to the local governments that administer and enforce the BCBC to determine what is appropriate and practical on a case-by-case basis.

More Information

The Building Act and Building Act General Regulation are available online at [BC Laws](#).

Other Links

- Ministry website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/construction-industry/building-codes-standards>
- Free online access to the [BC Building Code](#) and the [BC Fire Code](#) is available on the BC publications [website](#).

Contact the Building and Safety Standards Branch

- **General** inquiries can be sent to building.safety@gov.bc.ca

Contact the Local Authority

- Local authority contact information is available online at <http://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/directories>.

The Building and Safety Standards Branch does not enforce compliance with the BC Code. Local authorities are authorized to enforce the BC Code through the Local Government Act and Community Charter.



City of
Courtenay

ZOOM Window Space

Zero Carbon Step Code Implementation

Presented by:
Paul Preston, City of Courtenay
14th February, Council meeting

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

1. Council Motion
2. Background
3. Discussion
4. Rationale
5. Recommend Option

Council Motion

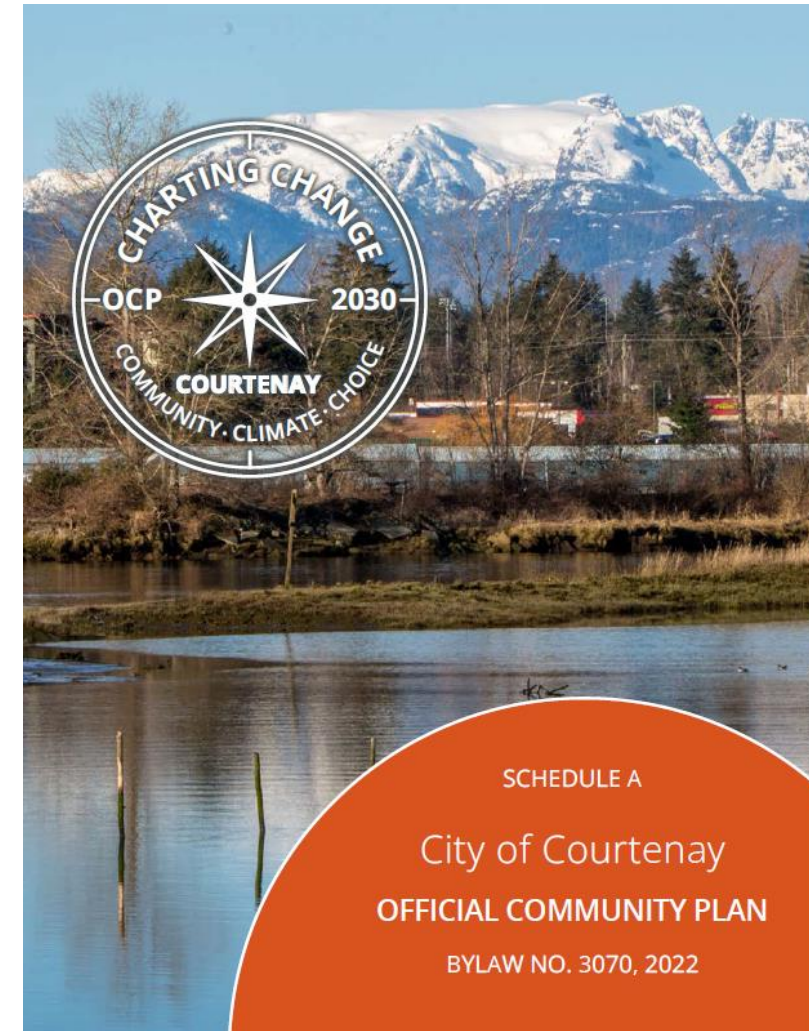
“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT pursuant to policies BL6 and BL7 of Courtenay’s OCP, staff prepare a report outlining options for implementing the Zero Carbon Step Code in order to meet the City's 2030 emissions reduction target.”

BACKGROUND

Policy BL 6

Advocate to and support the Province in amending the BC Building Code and other related policies to:

- a. Regulate carbon pollution for new buildings as soon possible and no later than 2030 in relation to decarbonizing heat and energy sources
- b. Regulate embodied energy of building materials and construction practices including demolition
- c. Enhance universal building accessibility requirements



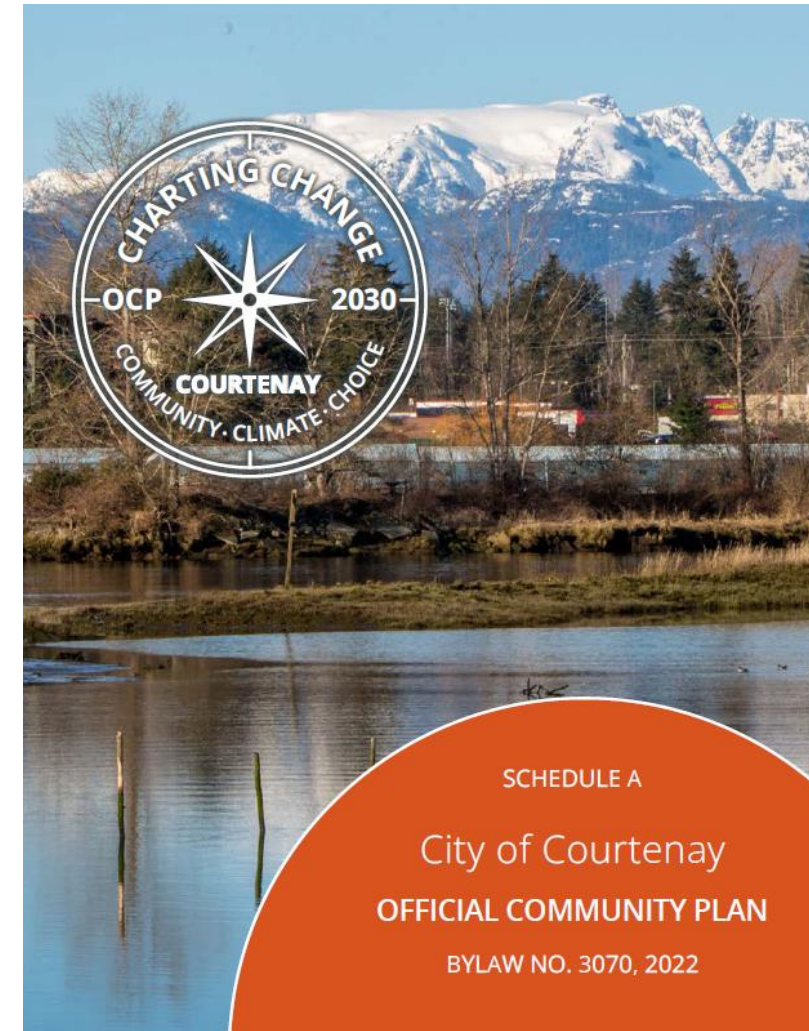
BACKGROUND

Policy BL 7

Review and update immediately relevant building, zoning, and development permitting policies upon and new legislative authorities that support policies within BL 6

Policy BL 4

Accelerate adoption of the BC Energy Step Code to be one step ahead of minimum standards



On May 1 2023, the Province updated the BC Building Code

ZOOM Window Space



Increased Energy Efficiency



A 20% increase in energy efficiency above the 2018 Building Code.



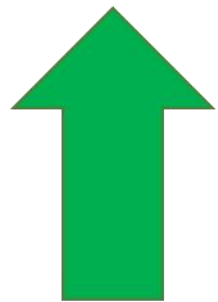
Reducing Carbon Emissions



Voluntary carbon limits for Part 3 and Part 9 construction

On January 1st, 2024, the City of Courtenay Building Bylaw 3114 came into effect

- This addressed BL 4 requiring one step higher than what the BC Building Code requires and contributes to the reduction in GHG emissions



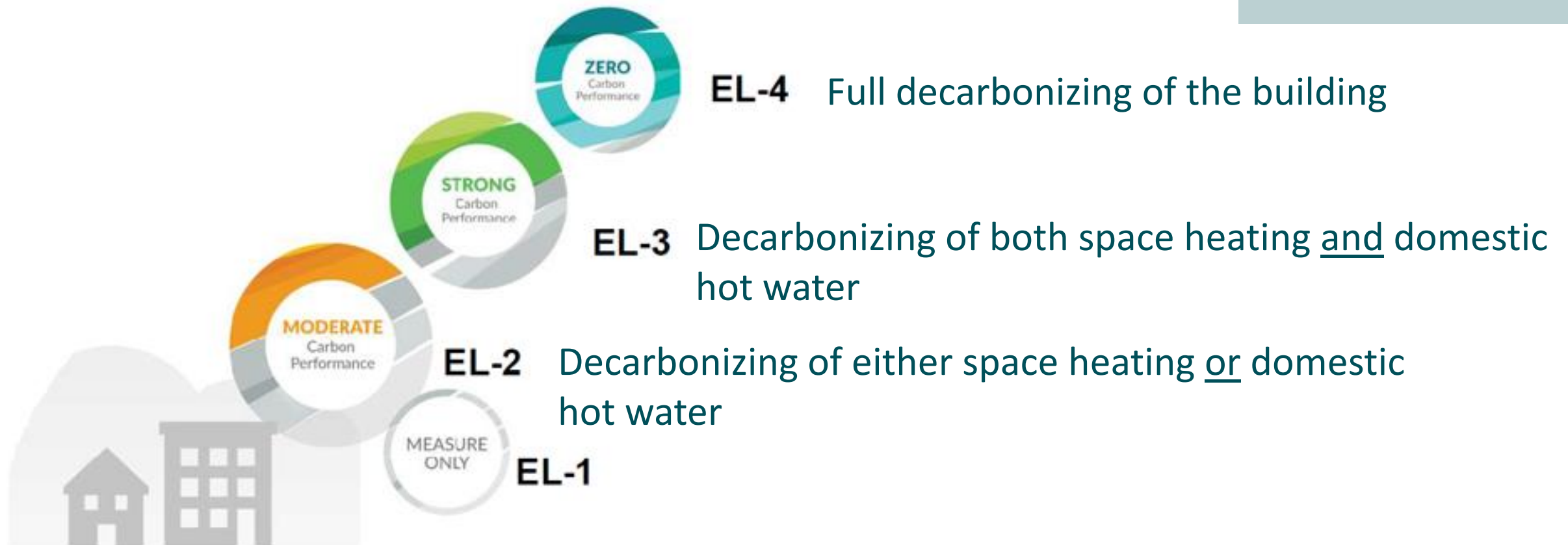
A 40% increase in energy efficiency above the 2018 Building Code.



Increased Energy Efficiency

Local Governments now have the option to regulate carbon requirements

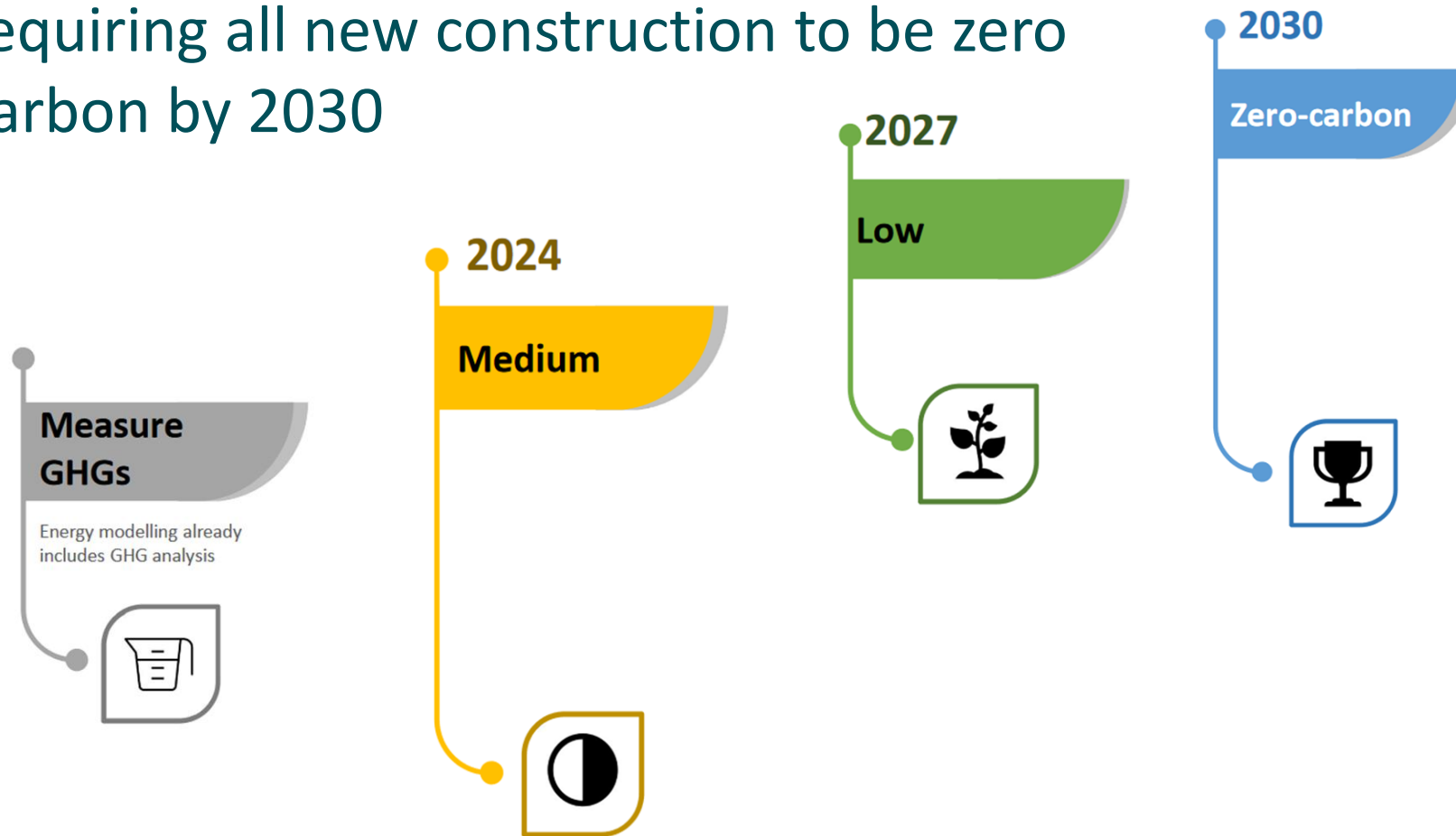
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Potential Provincial Timeline for BC-Wide Requirements

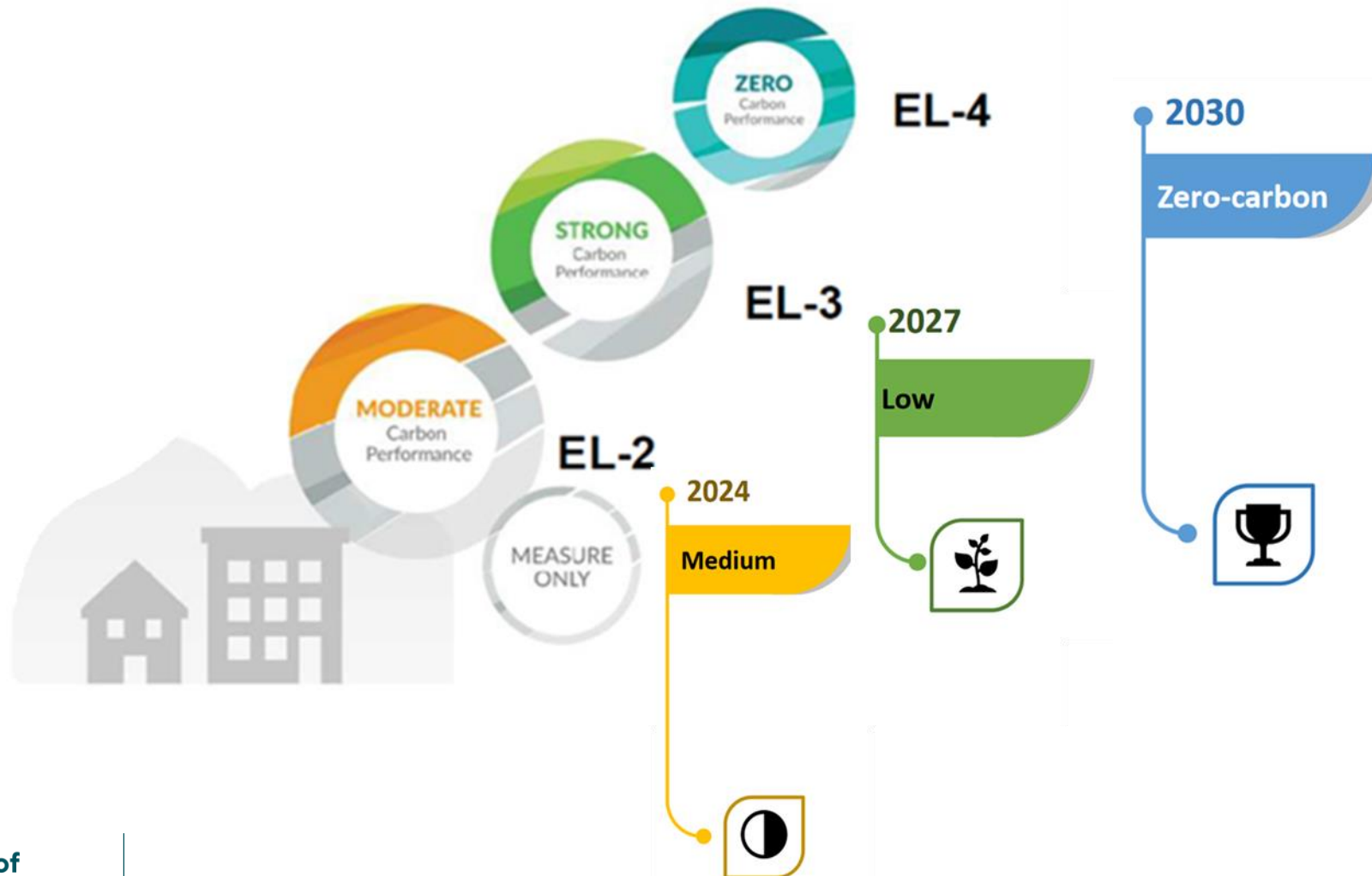
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CleanBC Roadmap to 2030 commits to requiring all new construction to be zero carbon by 2030



Alignment of the CleanBC Road Map with the ZCSC Emission Levels

ZOOM Window Space



DISCUSSION

Harmonize with the CleanBC Road Map Strategy

- No timelines for EL in the ZCSC
- Aligns with BL 6 and BL 7
- Staff recommend this approach

Staff engagement with the Development industry and Community to inform of the changes

- Processes from Nanaimo, Victoria and Saanich
- Processes were under RDN and CRD
- Delegated staff in workplan

DISCUSSION

Establish an alternate accelerated ZCSC implementation

- Faster than CleanBC Road Map

Comparison Tables on Energy Step Code and ZCSC

- Courtenay is the leader on Energy Step Code with new building bylaw
- Nanaimo, Saanich and Victoria opted for higher EL and energy step code as per BC Building code regulations

Consideration of 2024 work plan and new housing regulations

- Budget for consultation

Rationale

- Currently BC Building Code has no EL requirements
- ZCSC has no regulated timelines
- One step higher than the BC Building Code would be EL 2 with BL 4
- Following CleanBC achieves reduction of GHG's and establishes the City one step higher than BC Building Code aligns with BL 6
- Engagement with the development industry and community is focused on inform and educate on the Zero Carbon Step Code
- Provides time for the development community to adapt and prepare
- Allows time to understand the current BC Hydro service capacity to support the Zero Carbon Step Code EL 3 and EL 4
- Staff can revisit the acceleration to EL 3 and EL 4 in 2025 with more information regarding BC Hydro capacity and engage with the Industry

RECOMMENDED OPTION

That Council adopt the Provincial Zero Carbon Step Code; and
That Council direct staff to amend “Building Bylaw No.3114 “ to include the Zero Carbon Performance Levels in accordance with the timelines established in the CleanBC Road Map for all applicable Part 3 and Part 9 buildings starting with EL2 in 2024 and EL3 in 2027 and EL 4 in 2030; and
Direct staff to engage with the development industry and community to inform on the Zero Carbon Step Code and its mandates.



Business Recruitment and Retention Service Agreement Proposal

2024 - 2026

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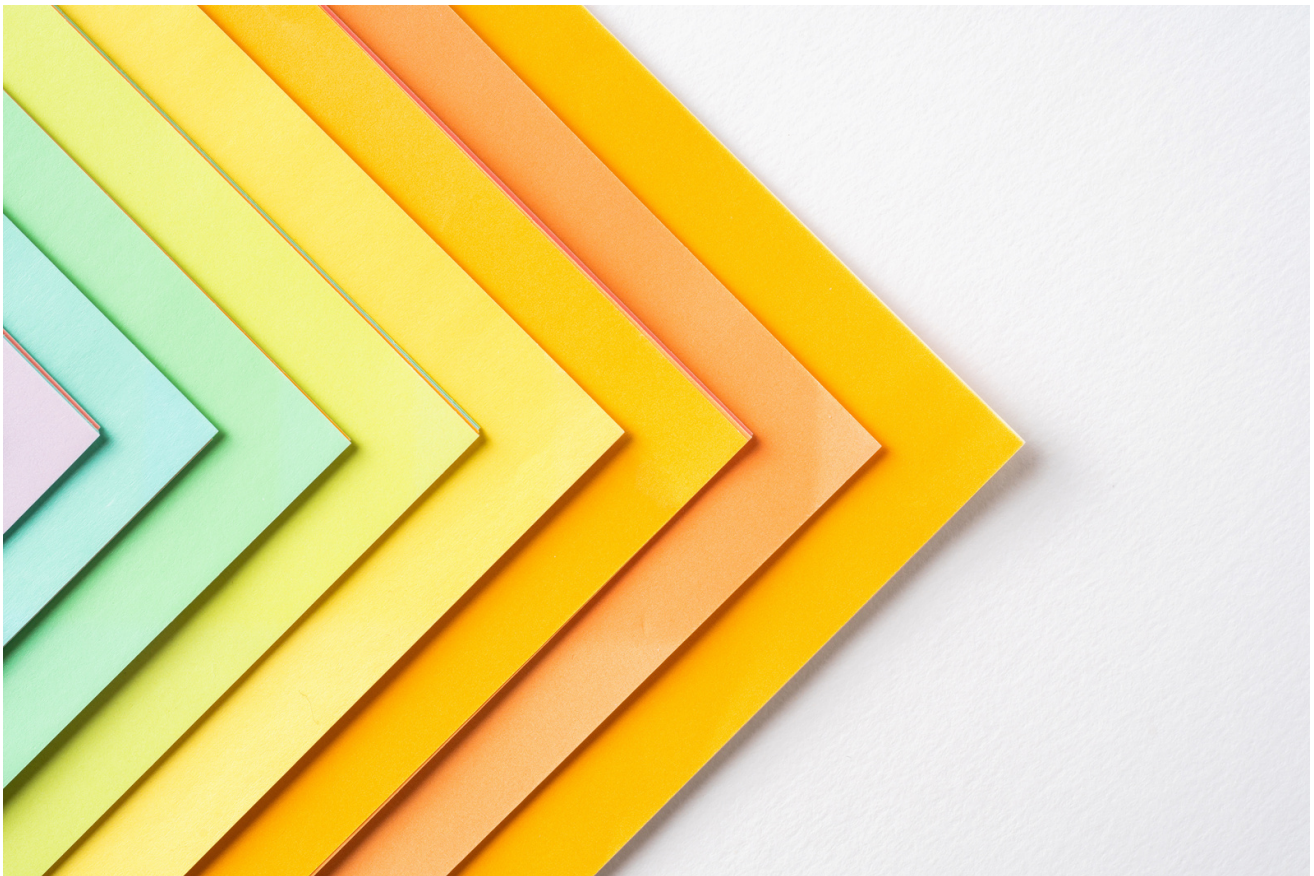
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INTRODUCTION

The following proposal outlines a comprehensive three-year plan for the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce to develop and implement a Business Recruitment and Retention Program in collaboration with municipalities of Courtenay and Comox.

This program aims to foster economic growth and vitality in the region by acting on the current needs of the business community. To gain insight, we will be seeking a snapshot of current business conditions and identifying challenges and opportunities.

We will do so by consulting with business leaders, community, arts and service groups and form a comprehensive poll to gather data. Then, analyzing this data on current business conditions and making recommendations for action. The action plan will respond to stated needs of our business community and continue until 2026, with regular reporting to you, our funding partners.



PROJECT PHASES

Phase 1: Engagement and Consultation (Month 1)

Goal: Build strong community support for the Business Recruitment and Retention Program.

1. Consulting with Business Leaders and Stakeholders:

- Identify key business leaders, stakeholders, and partners.
- Schedule meetings and workshops to gather insights and input.

Discuss program objectives and benefits with participants.

2. Engage Arts and Service Groups:

- Meet with local arts and service groups to discuss potential collaboration.
- Seek endorsement and support for the program.
- Develop partnerships to amplify program reach.
- Follow-up to report near project completion

Phase 2: Data Collection and Analysis (Months 2-4)

Goal: Collect relevant data to understand the current business environment in Courtenay and Comox.

1. Polling Business Owners:

- Design and administer surveys to business owners in the region.
- Gather data on challenges, opportunities, and business needs.
- Ensure a representative sample is surveyed.

2. Data Analysis and Theme Exploration:

- Analyze collected data to identify key themes and trends.
- Categorize business concerns and needs.
- Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to validate findings.

Phase 3: Recommendations and Reporting (Month 5)

Goal: Translate gathered data into actionable recommendations for the program.

1. Identifying Needs and Opportunities:

- Collaborate with a team of experts to analyze data and identify business needs and opportunities.

- Develop a comprehensive list of recommendations.

2. Distillation into Actionable Recommendations:

- Organize findings into a concise, clear, and actionable report.
- Develop a prioritized list of recommendations and strategies.
- Ensure recommendations align with the needs and desires of the local business community.

PROJECT PHASES

3. Reporting to Participants:

- Organize a meeting to present the findings and recommendations to business owners, municipal leaders, and community members.
- Gather feedback and input to fine-tune the recommendations.

Phase 4: Action - Implementation Plan (Month 6-36)

Goal: The second segment of the Business Recruitment and Retention Program involves putting the insights gained from the data collection and analysis into action. This 2.75-year plan is designed to address key themes identified in polling and aligns with both the Comox Valley Chamber's Strategic Plan and the Municipalities' Official Community Plan. The plan includes various components to support and grow the local business community. This phase contains expected components and will be updated based on data analysis.

Phase 4: Implementation (Expected Components)

Component 1: Online Resources Library (Months 6-8)

Goal: Create a comprehensive online resource library on the Comox Valley Chamber's website.

1. Content Development:
 - o Develop a collection of resources, guides, and tools for businesses.
 - o Cover topics related to business operations, financing, marketing, and more.
2. Website Integration:
 - o Create a dedicated section on the Chamber's website.
 - o Ensure easy navigation and user-friendly design.
3. Regular Updates:
 - o Commit to regular updates and additions to keep content relevant.

Component 2: Entrepreneurial Support (Months 8-36)

Goal: Provide support for entrepreneurs, fostering their growth and success.

1. One-on-One Mentoring and Coaching Groups:
 - o Pair experienced mentors with entrepreneurs seeking guidance.
 - o Organize coaching groups to facilitate peer learning and support.
2. Specialty Workshops with Expert Speakers:
 - o Schedule workshops on various business topics.
 - o Invite experts as guest speakers to share insights and knowledge.

PROJECT PHASES

Component 3: Networking Events (Months 6-36)

Goal: Strengthen connections within the local business community.

1. Networking Events:
 - Organize regular networking events, both in-person and virtually.
 - Facilitate opportunities for businesses to connect, collaborate, and learn from each other.

Component 4: Small Business Training and Start-up Advice (Months 8-36)

Goal: Offer training and advice to small businesses and startups.

1. Training Workshops:
 - Conduct workshops on essential business skills.
 - Cover topics such as business planning, marketing, staff retention, management skills, and financial management.

Component 5: Recruitment and Awareness Campaign (Months 8-36)

Goal: Promote the Comox Valley as an ideal location for new businesses, staff, and remote workers.

1. Consult with supporting organizations such as Experience Comox Valley, BDC, CFIB, Provincial Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation, Real Estate organizations and others
 - Develop an understanding of local business leakage and opportunities.
 - Launch a marketing campaign to highlight the region's benefits.
 - Partner when possible to amplify our message.

Component 6: Wellness Events (Months 6-36)

Goal: Enhance work-life balance and well-being for business professionals.

1. Business Walk-n-Talk or Business Yoga:
 - Organize weekly unique wellness events combining physical activity with topical business information and coaching.

Component 7: Workforce Support (Months 8-36)

Goal: Support the local workforce by collaborating with the Immigration Welcome Centre and North Island College.

- Newcomers in the Workforce:
 - Collaborate with the local Immigrant Welcome group to provide support integrating newcomers into the workforce.
- Support for NIC Students upon entering the workforce:
 - Work with NIC to strengthen the connection between the business community.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY (Throughout)

1. Utilize the Comox Valley Chamber's information channels (newsletter, website, social media) to regularly update the community on program developments.
2. Collaborate with the Municipalities' communication channels to reach a wider audience and engage residents.
3. Utilize local news agencies, both using press releases and purchased ads according to the Chamber of Commerce Bylaws to ensure a fair and equitable allocation of resources.
4. Conduct Business Walks throughout the municipalities that engage both Chamber staff and City/Town Council. These walks will happen during the initial engagement and polling phase as well as annually throughout the project.

CONSULTANT CONTRACTING STRATEGY (Throughout)

Through a transparent Request For Proposals process in accordance with the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce Bylaws, we will seek consultants to carry out the data collection, analysis and reporting work (phase 1-3) as well as the awareness and recruitment campaign (phase 4).

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT & KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS

Alignment with the Chamber:

By implementing this plan, the Business Recruitment and Retention Program will take a proactive approach in addressing the needs and concerns of the local business community. It aligns with the Chamber's and Municipalities' long-term goals and aims to foster a thriving, inclusive, and vibrant business environment in Courtenay and Comox.

To align the proposed Business Recruitment and Retention Program with the Comox Valley Chamber's Strategic Plan for 2023-2026, we can highlight how the program supports the Chamber's vision, mission, core values, and key performance areas:

Vision:

The Business Recruitment and Retention Program directly aligns with the Chamber's vision of being an innovative and trusted business organization that contributes to the Comox Valley's diverse economic strength. By fostering economic growth and offering support to local businesses, the program serves to influence decision-makers and engage the community positively.

Mission:

The program directly fulfills the Chamber's mission of fostering a positive and welcoming business environment. It provides leadership, connections, advocacy, and valuable services that create a prosperous economy by addressing the needs and concerns of local businesses.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Chamber is to lead, connect, and champion business to ensure the Comox Valley is thriving. The Business Recruitment and Retention Program contributes to this.

The Chamber's Core Values:

1. Community: The program celebrates and amplifies members' success by addressing the challenges faced by the business community.
2. Member Focus: We are committed to providing optimal value to its members through various components of the program, ensuring quality, addressing diverse needs, and empowering members with resources.
3. Leadership: The program's advocacy for business retention and expansion aligns with the Chamber's role as a policy leader and voice of business in the region.
4. Inclusivity: The program represents diverse businesses and treats all fairly, equally, and without bias, contributing to a thriving and inclusive business environment.

Key Performance Areas (Goals):

The program directly supports several of the Chamber's key performance areas:

Goal 1: Grow and Sustain Membership: By enhancing the value proposition and member services, the program helps retain existing members and attract new ones.

Goal 2: Advocate for an Improved Economic Environment: The program's advocacy efforts align with elevating the Chamber's position as the voice of business in the Comox Valley.

Goal 4: Establish the Chamber as an Agile and Progressive Organization: The program's digital components, such as the online resources library and digital marketing strategy, contribute to operational excellence.

By incorporating these points into the program's documentation, it will be evident that the Business Recruitment and Retention Program is not only a standalone initiative but an integral part of the Chamber's strategic approach to fostering economic growth in the Comox Valley.

ALIGNMENT WITH COURTENAY'S OCP:

The proposed Business Recruitment and Retention Program can be closely aligned with the City of Courtenay Official Community Plan (OCP) for 2023-2026. This alignment is critical to ensure the program supports the long-term vision, environmental responsibility, social responsibility, and regional coordination outlined in the OCP. Here's how the program aligns with the OCP objectives and policies:

Objective 1: Business Retention, Development, and Investment

LE 1: The program looks for ways to support the expansion of green, low-carbon economic development by fostering sustainable business practices, reducing carbon footprints, and promoting climate resilience.

LE 2: The program aligns with the concept of "buy-local" by connecting businesses in Courtenay and Comox, promoting local products, and fostering community support for local businesses.

LE 4: The program actively promotes arts and culture, local food processing, and other value-added businesses, enhancing the community's economic diversity.

LE 5: The program encourages the collaboration of businesses to utilize resources more efficiently, fostering eco-industrial networks and sustainable industrial land development.

Objective 2: Local Economic Development Opportunities

LE 7: The program collaborates with the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce, business organizations, and neighboring jurisdictions, ensuring that the program is regionally coordinated and supports broader economic development strategies.

LE 8: The program identifies and acknowledges its role in the delivery of economic development services in the region.

Objective 3: Municipal Regulations and Services

LE 11: The program supports non-traditional light industrial and service commercial land uses that accommodate emerging business trends, thus being responsive to evolving business needs.

LE 12: The program encourages investment and business development in Town and Neighbourhood Centres, aligning with the OCP's focus on intensification and mixed-use development.

LE 14: The program liaises with senior governments and the business community to identify barriers, streamline application processes, and improve business infrastructure.

LE 15: The program works toward consistent regulatory standards and encourages data sharing and best practices within the local business community.

Objective 4: People-Centered Economic Development

LE 17: The program recognizes the importance of affordable housing and childcare in supporting people-centered economic development, ensuring that social policies are integrated with economic policies.

LE 18: The program emphasizes data-driven and performance-based planning, aligning with the OCP's focus on workforce planning and labor market forecasting.

LE 19: The program aligns with the exploration of holistic economic development frameworks, integrating ecological, social, and economic outcomes in its strategies.

By aligning with the City of Courtenay OCP, the Business Recruitment and Retention Program not only addresses the immediate needs of the business community but also contributes to the long-term economic, environmental, and social well-being of Courtenay and the Comox Valley.

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

Possible challenges and strategies for Program delivery:

1. Data Collection: Ensuring a high response rate from business owners during the polling phase may be challenging. Strategies such as incentives and community engagement will be crucial.
2. Community Buy-In: Gaining support from arts and service groups and ensuring they actively contribute to the program may require dedicated effort in relationship building and communication, although our current community connections in these areas are strong.
3. Resource Allocation: Managing the budget and ensuring that expenses are effectively utilized is a key challenge. Our organization has a monthly budget-to-actuals check-in, and our financials are overseen by a bookkeeper, treasurer and Board of Directors to ensure we stay on track. We will make a financial reporting plan with the municipalities that meets your needs.
4. Changing Business Environment: External factors, such as economic conditions and policy changes, may impact the program's recommendations and the local business landscape. Flexibility will be necessary to adapt to changing circumstances.

PROJECT BUDGET

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

ADVOCACY & FUNDING INDEPENDENCE

The Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce acknowledges that its mission involves both advancing the interests of our members and the business community, as well as executing the Business Recruitment and Retention Program in collaboration with the municipalities of Courtenay and Comox. The Chamber is committed to maintaining the highest standards of independence and integrity in carrying out both functions.

To ensure transparency and accountability, the Chamber seeks to separate its advocacy role from the funding request associated with the Business Recruitment and Retention Program. Specifically:

1. Funding Request Independence: The funding request to the municipalities for the Business Recruitment and Retention Program shall be tied solely to the work and activities defined within the scope of the program, as outlined in this proposal. Funding shall not be contingent upon or affected by the Chamber's advocacy efforts on any challenging or controversial issues.

2. Advocacy Freedom: The Chamber reserves the right to advocate on behalf of its members and the local business community when it deems necessary. This includes addressing challenging or controversial issues that may arise in the best interest of our constituents. The Chamber's advocacy efforts will remain separate and independent from the funding request for the Business Recruitment and Retention Program.

By separating the funding request for the program from the Chamber's advocacy activities, we aim to ensure that the program's objectives are met while allowing the Chamber to fulfill its broader mission of advocating for the business community without the risk of losing funding for this specific project. This separation reinforces our commitment to transparency, accountability, and the best interests of our members and the broader community.



MONITORING PROGRESS AND FUNDING AGILITY

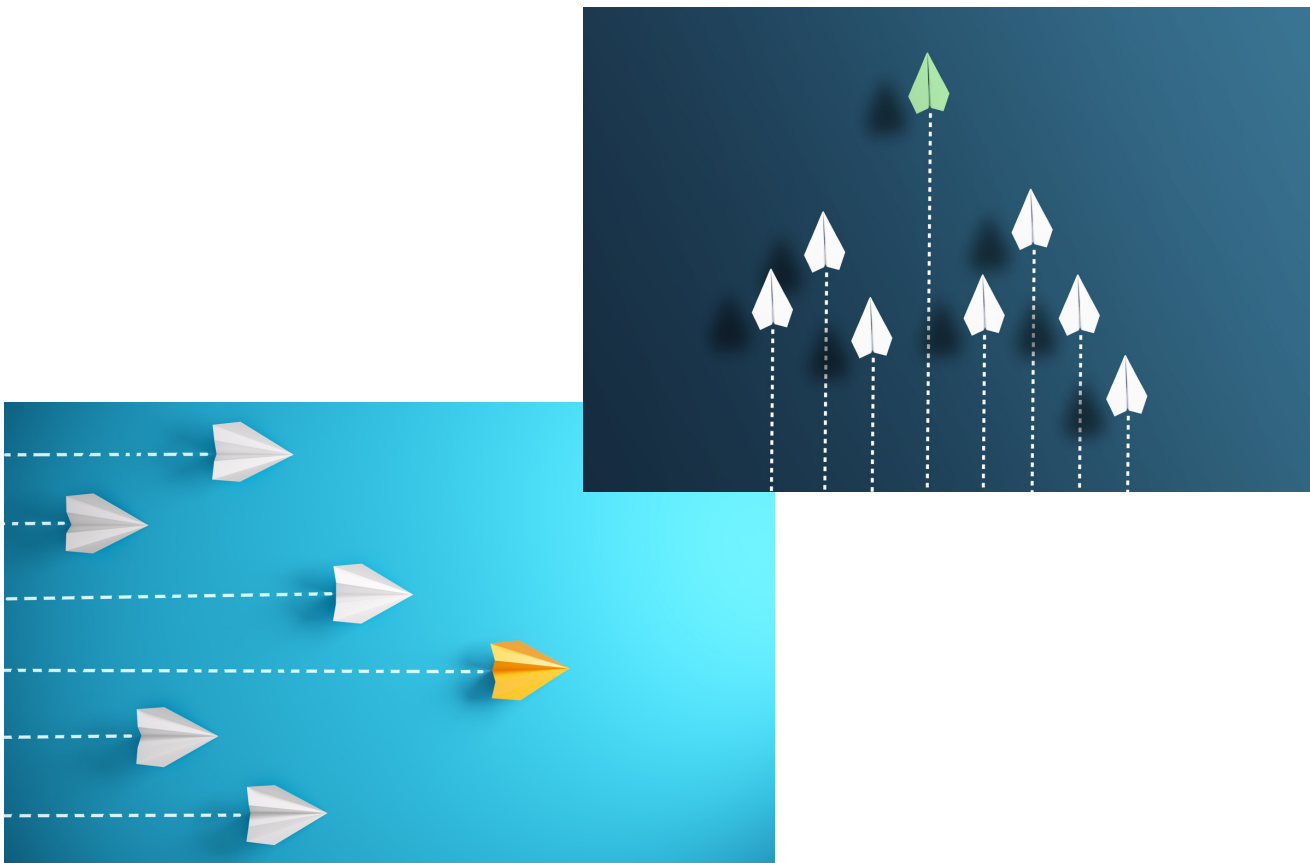
1. Monitoring Progress: In the spirit of transparency and accountability, the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce commits to conducting bi-annual check-ins with the municipalities. These check-ins will provide a detailed overview of the Business Recruitment and Retention Program's progress, sharing achieved milestones, addressing challenges, and discussing any necessary adjustments to the plan based on emerging insights or unforeseen circumstances.

2. Adaptive Approach: Recognizing the dynamic nature of economic landscapes and the potential for unforeseen developments, the Chamber reserves the right to adapt the Business Recruitment and Retention Program during its execution. Should new information arise or circumstances change, adjustments may be proposed to ensure the program remains responsive to the evolving needs of the business community.

3. Funding Agility: In the event that program modifications require additional financial resources, the Chamber commits to approaching the municipalities for budget adjustments. The Chamber will work collaboratively with program funders, ensuring that any proposed budget increases align with their protocols, checks, and balances. This collaborative approach aims to secure consensus and support, acknowledging the importance of proper financial oversight and decision-making processes within the funding framework. This commitment to regular check-ins and funding adaptability reinforces the Chamber's dedication to achieving the program's objectives while maintaining open communication and collaboration with program funders throughout the project's lifecycle.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this proposal outlines a structured three-year plan to develop a Business Recruitment and Retention Program. Based on polling data received in Phase 1, the expected components in Phase 4 may change. We will complete an action plan that responds to the stated needs of the business community, and will do so in consultation with our funding partners. By following the outlined phases, timeline, budget, and addressing potential challenges, the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce can work collaboratively with municipal leaders to enhance economic prosperity in Courtenay and Comox. We are happy to discuss the proposal with you directly.





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BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

Service Proposal

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Challenges and
Strategies

5

Project Budget

6

Advocacy and
Funding
Independence

7

Monitoring
Progress and
Funding Agility

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

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

2024-2026

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

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

Project Phases

Phase 1: Engagement and Consultation (Month 1)

Phase 2: Data Collection and Analysis (Months 2-4)

Phase 3: Recommendations and Reporting (Month 5)

Phase 4: Action - Implementation Plan (Months 6-36)

- Consult & Engage
- Poll & Look For Themes
- Identify Needs and Opportunities
- Prioritize Actions and Strategies
- Report and Fine-Tune
- Align and Implement



Implementation

Months 6-36.

We will put the insights gained from the data collection and analysis into action.

This 2.75-year plan is designed to address key themes identified in polling and align with both The Chamber and Municipalities' strategic plans. The plan includes various components to support and grow the local business community.

Expected Components

Component 1: Online Resources Library (Months 6-8)

Goal: Create a comprehensive online resource library on the Comox Valley Chamber's website.

Component 2: Entrepreneurial Support (Months 8-36)

Goal: Provide support for entrepreneurs, fostering their growth and success.

Component 3: Networking Events (Months 6-36)

Goal: Strengthen connections within the local business community.

Component 4: Small Business Training and Start-up Advice (Months 8-36)

Goal: Offer training and advice to small businesses and startups.

Component 5: Recruitment and Awareness Campaign (Months 8-36)

Goal: Promote the Comox Valley as an ideal location for new businesses, staff, and remote workers.

Component 6: Wellness Events (Months 6-36)

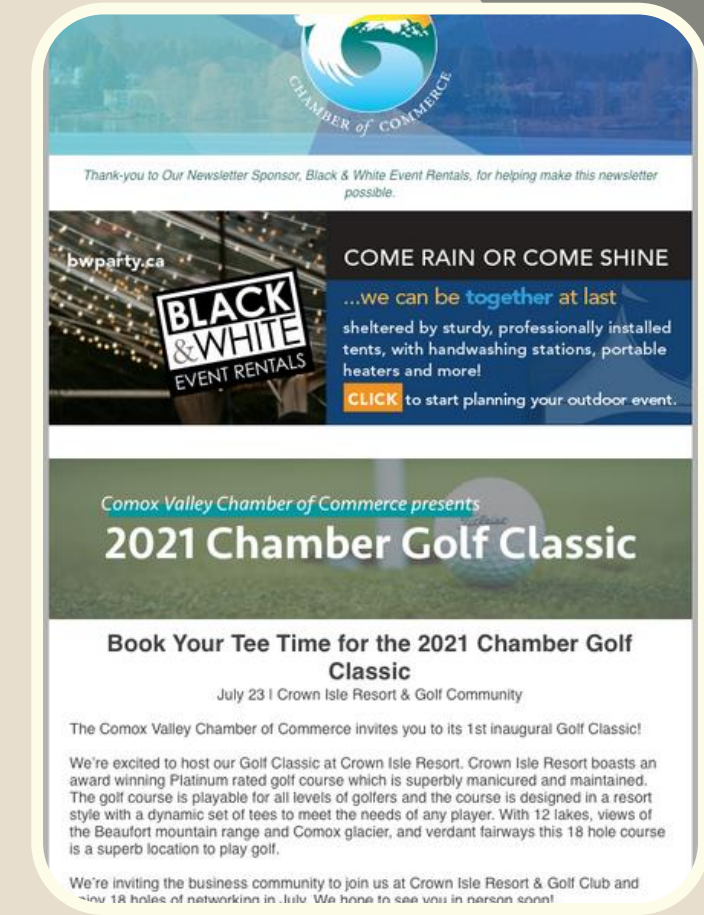
Goal: Enhance work-life balance and well-being for business professionals.

Component 7: Workforce Support (Months 8-36)

Goal: Support the local workforce by collaborating with the Immigration Welcome Centre, North Island College, and others.

Communication Strategy

1. Utilize the Comox Valley Chamber's information channels (newsletter, website, social media) to regularly update the community on program developments.
2. Collaborate with the Municipalities' communication channels to reach a wider audience and engage residents.
3. Utilize local news agencies, both using press releases and purchased ads according to the Chamber of Commerce Bylaws to ensure a fair and equitable allocation of resources.
4. Conduct Business Walks throughout the municipalities that engage both Chamber staff and City/Town Council.



Through a transparent Request For Proposals process in accordance with the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce Bylaws, we will seek consultants to carry out the data collection, analysis and reporting work (phase 1-3) as well as the awareness and recruitment campaign (phase 4).

Strategic Alignment

The Chamber's Core Values:

- 1. Community:** The program celebrates and amplifies members' success by addressing the challenges faced by the business community.
- 2. Member Focus:** Various components of the program deliver value, ensuring quality, addressing diverse needs, and equally empowering members and non-members with resources.
- 3. Leadership:** The program's advocacy for business retention and expansion aligns with the Chamber's role as a policy leader and voice of business in the region.
- 4. Inclusivity:** The program represents diverse businesses and treats all fairly, equally, and without bias, contributing to a thriving and inclusive business environment.

1. Data Collection: Ensuring a high response rate from business owners during the polling phase may be challenging. Strategies such as incentives and community engagement will be crucial.

2. Community Buy-In: Gaining support from arts and service groups and ensuring they actively contribute to the program may require dedicated effort in relationship building and communication, although our current community connections in these areas are strong.

Challenges and Strategies

3. Resource Allocation: Managing the budget and ensuring that expenses are effectively utilized is a key challenge. Our organization has a monthly budget-to-actuals check-in, and our financials are overseen by a bookkeeper, treasurer and Board of Directors to ensure we stay on track. We will make a financial reporting plan with you that meets your needs.

4. Changing Business Environment: External factors, such as economic conditions and policy changes, may impact the program's recommendations and the local business landscape. Flexibility will be necessary to adapt to changing circumstances.

PROJECT BUDGET

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Advocacy and Funding Independence

To ensure transparency and accountability, the Chamber seeks to separate its advocacy role from the funding request associated with the Business Recruitment and Retention Program. Specifically:

1. Funding Request Independence: The funding request to the municipalities for the Business Recruitment and Retention Program shall be tied solely to the work and activities defined within the scope of the program, as outlined in this proposal. Funding shall not be contingent upon or affected by the Chamber's advocacy efforts on any challenging or controversial issues.

2. Advocacy Freedom: The Chamber reserves the right to advocate on behalf of its members and the local business community when it deems necessary. This includes addressing challenging or controversial issues that may arise in the best interest of our constituents. The Chamber's advocacy efforts will remain separate and independent from the funding request for the Business Recruitment and Retention Program.



Monitoring Progress and Funding Agility

- **Accountability:** Bi-annual check-ins with you will provide a detailed overview of progress, milestones, challenges, and discussing any necessary adjustments to the plan.

2. **Adaptive Approach:** Should new information arise or circumstances change, adjustments may be proposed to ensure the program remains responsive to the evolving needs of the business community.

3. **Funding Agility:** If program modifications require additional financial resources, the Chamber will work collaboratively with program funders, ensuring that any proposed budget increases align with your protocols, checks, and balances. We acknowledge the importance of proper financial oversight and decision-making processes within the funding framework.



Conclusion and Questions

This proposal outlines a structured three-year plan to develop a Business Retention and Expansion Program.

We will complete an action plan that responds to the stated needs of the business community, and will do so in consultation with our funding partners.

By following the outlined phases, timeline, budget, and addressing potential challenges, the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce will work collaboratively with you, our municipal leaders to enhance economic prosperity in Courtenay and Comox.

www.comoxvalleychamber.com
executivedirector@comoxvalleychamber.com

Comox Valley Intercultural Celebration

March 16th 7PM
@ The Big House



Presented by:
BRAZILLIAN CULTURAL
FOUNDATION
&



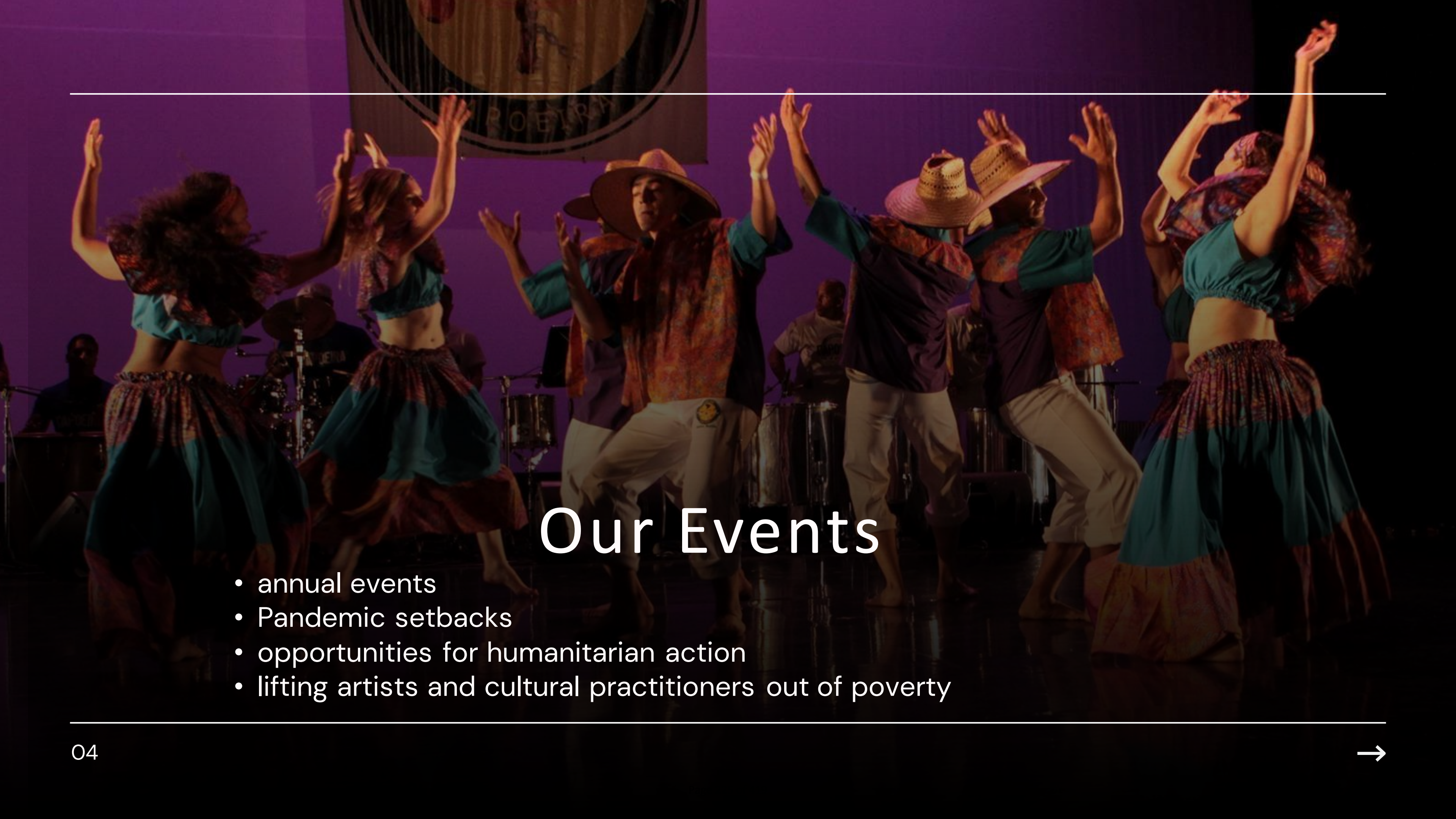
KUMUGWE
CULTURAL SOCIETY



Brazilian Cultural Foundation

- Not for Profit
- promotes Brazilian and Afro-Brazilian Culture
- Teaching, performing and events
- Facilitates transformation of lives and communities
- funds teachers and international guest performers
- humanitarian aspects
- helps artists elevate from poverty
- opportunities for travel
- annual event





Our Events

- annual events
- Pandemic setbacks
- opportunities for humanitarian action
- lifting artists and cultural practitioners out of poverty

Intercultural Celebration

- integration of local indigenous culture and Brazilian indigenous culture.
- intercultural exchange to help all cultures become aware of each other and respect each other.
- Free entrance for the community to witness and engage.
- symposium to exchange ideas surrounding the benefits of culture and to discuss the survival of indigenous culture.
- connecting and comparing our stories of colonization.



Our Cultural Leaders



Mestre Barrao
Capoeira Master
Recife Brazil



Andy Everson
Artist and Kumugwe
Cultural Society
• K'òmox Nation



**Prof. Aurinha de
Jesus**
Afro-Brazilian
Dance
• Recife Brazil



Mestre Cocoroca
Capoeira Master
• Rio de Janeiro
Brazil



Mestre Testa
Capoeira Master
Victoria BC
• Merville, BC
Canada



Estimated Budget



Artist Fees

We strive to compensate artists a fair wage for their expertise, knowledge and life experience.



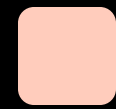
Accommodation

We seek to create partnerships with local accommodation providers



Food

We will ensure special guests are well nourished and provide all food locally.



Other

Komox hall Venue, audio tech , Local Video/Photographer, Marketing and advertising



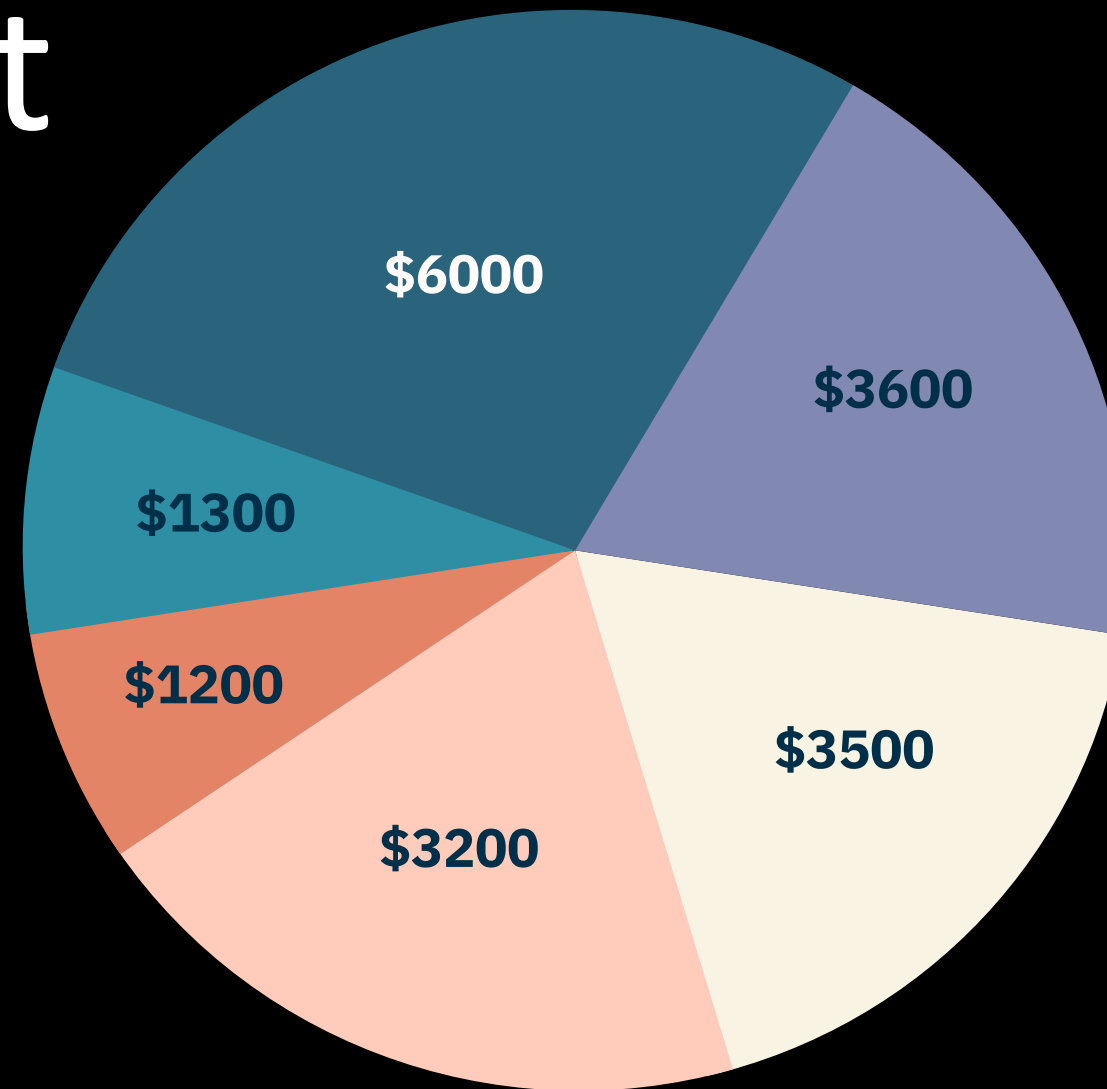
Travel

International and local travel costs of special guests including gas and ferry costs.



Administration

We believe in fair payments for professional administrative hours put towards promotion of arts and culture.



*Funding has been sourced through CVRD general grant as well as private sponsorship to cover up to 60% of our expenses so far.

Our Ask

\$5000

Funds from the City of Courtenay would go towards:

- feeding and housing the cultural leaders
- Rental of Komox Hall for feeding of guests and rehearsal space
- Accommodations and transportation





Thank you!



CONNECT
EDUCATE
GROW
RESPOND

COMMUNITY SUBSTANCE USE STRATEGY

PHASE TWO

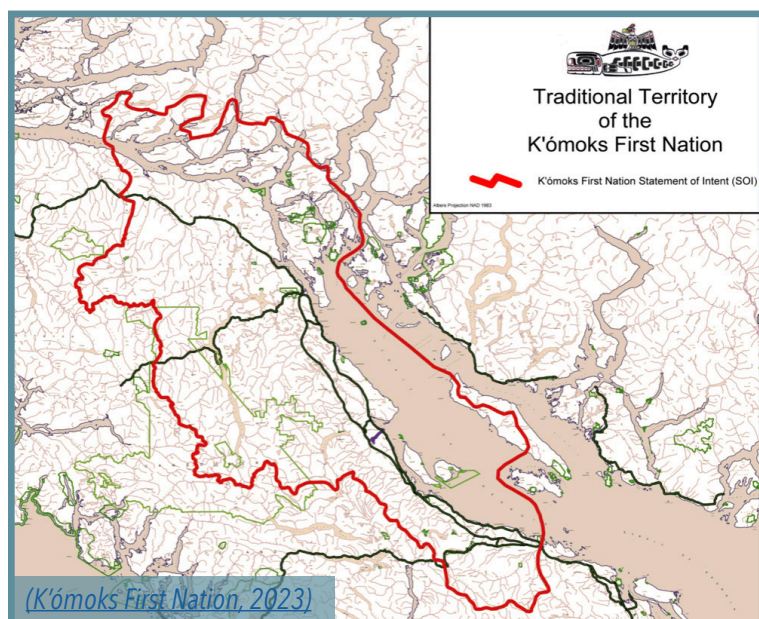
REPORT

DRAFT

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This report encompasses an area that is on the unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation. The area is now colonially known as the Comox Valley and includes the municipalities of the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, and Village of Cumberland as well as three Electoral Areas (A, B and C), the K'ómoks First Nation and Islands Trust. All those involved in this work acknowledge the truth about ongoing harms caused by colonization to the health and wellness of First Nation, Métis and Inuit people. We are grateful to be living on the unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land, and commit to continuing the journey towards reconciliation.

“For thousands of years Indigenous people occupied the shoreline of eastern Vancouver Island in a place referred to as “the land of plenty”. The people called K'ómoks today referred to themselves as Sahtloot, Sasitla, leeksun and Puntledge. They lived in Salmon River, Quinsam and Campbell Rivers, Quadra Island, Kye Bay, Comox Harbour and estuary, Baynes Sound, and many other locations throughout the territory.



“Oral histories and archaeology describe a rich and bountiful relationship between the K'ómoks and the Land of Plenty. Salmon, shellfish, herring, deer, elk, seal, cod, rockfish, geese, duck, and a plethora of berries and plant foods filled the tummies of young and old alike. The harvest, preparation and cultivation of local resources were appropriate to the environment, resource, and spiritual beliefs. Fish weirs, duck nets, berry picking techniques and clothing design met the needs of the K'ómoks, and for generations provided variety, utility, and a sense of cultural uniqueness. Mask dances and rhythmic songs filled the winter nights and throughout the seasons. Property was distributed to guests in potlatches and elaborate naming ceremonies honoured the youth, leaders, and elders of the communities.

Following contact with Europeans, northern groups started a southerly move into K'ómoks territory. A period of conflict displaced the K'ómoks southward to their relatives, the Puntledge. Followed by a period of colonial policy and practices, the K'ómoks families endured hardship and loss of land, resources, and cultural connection. Modern leaders are striving to reclaim cultural expression and relationship with the “land of plenty”. (retrieved [K'ómoks First Nation website](#), 2023).

PEER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work would not be possible without the selfless sharing of peer voices. We walk alongside, honour and appreciate those with lived and living experience. They are the experts who must be involved in decisions that impact them.

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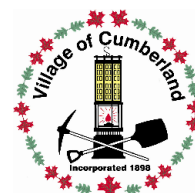
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NOTE TO READER: [Walking Together: Towards a Stronger, More Integrated Substance Use Support Network in the Comox Valley \(Walk With Me, 2023\)](#) is complementary to this report and together both reports form the full picture of the Comox Valley Substance Use Strategy Phase Two learning and recommendations. Please read the Walking Together report along with this Strategy report.

CONTRIBUTOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This report is the result of the collective effort of the organizations and individuals on the Comox Valley Community Substance Use Strategy Committee, its working group members and peers, the Walk With Me (WWM) Research Team, the Comox Valley Community Health Network and its funders City of Courtenay, Village of Cumberland, Comox Valley Regional District, SPARC BC, Island Health, Walk With Me and Comox Valley Community Foundation.



PHASE TWO REPORT SUMMARY

The term substance in this report refers to all mood altering substances such as, but not limited to, alcohol, tobacco/vaping, nicotine, cannabis, illicit drugs, prescription drugs, medicinal substances, inhalants, and solvents.



The Comox Valley Substance Use Strategy Committee (Committee) that was formed in Phase One led the development of Phase Two Strategy development. The Committee is made up of a multi-sectoral group of local government representatives, peers, community members and community organizations from across the region. A commitment to centering peers in the Strategy development was continued by partnering with the Walk With Me team who did a gaps and strengths analysis of the Substance Use Support Network in the Comox Valley.

Comox Valley Substance Use Support Network is the network of organizations and projects/initiatives working to support People Who Use Substances in the Comox Valley. This definition includes organizations whose work is rooted in harm reduction, recovery, health, and mental health services, as well as in the “upstream” areas that have impact on the substance use ecology, including housing, policing, education, and others” (Walk With Me, 2023, pg.12)

The Committee has worked to examine power imbalances, uncover systemic biases and create culturally safe spaces as members travel on this learning journey. This examination and continued learning is part of the ongoing work to create and implement a regional substance use strategy. Learning about the culture of individuals and communities allows us to respect their unique care needs and connect them to cultural supports. Culture is healing and can be considered prevention, harm reduction and treatment at different points in a person’s substance use journey.

Poverty, lack of affordable housing, history of trauma, stigma and discrimination, classism, racism, gender/sexual diversity discrimination, and colonization are root causes that can contribute to substance use and create additional barriers to health for individuals and ultimately impact community health. Historically, substance use policies and practices have had a disproportionately negative impact on racialized people and First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, as well as people facing poverty and/or lack of housing. Additionally, there are social inequities and gender differences that affect people’s experience with substance use services and supports.

These truths inform the continuing development of the Strategy that aims to use an equity lens in policy development and practice to create a more equitable system of substance use support within our community.

PHASE ONE RECOMMENDATION	PHASE TWO ACTION
Present Phase 1 Report to all local government councils	Delegations to local government councils twice
Request all local governments collaborate to fund Phase 2	\$140,000 in funding secured for Phase 2 and 3
Act on lived experience of people who use substances	Partnered with Walk With Me (WWM) to hear the lived experience of Peers
System gap and strength analysis of substance use support network	WWM community engagement and research to produce Walking Together Towards a Stronger, More Integrated Substance Use Support Network in the Comox Valley: Gaps and Strengths Analysis
Ongoing involvement and leadership from peers and elders/traditional knowledge keepers.	WWM research was co-led by peers and an elder Strategy committee included peers and Indigenous leaders of organizations
Form a CV Substance Use Collaborative to coordinate recommendation implementation	Relationships have been developed, Collaborative first met in June 2023 and meetings are being held monthly
Collaborative become partner of the Community Health Network	Collaborative has just begun to meet so this partnership has not evolved yet
Align work of the Collaborative with intersecting work in the Regional Poverty Assessment and Reduction Plan	Some engagement in the Collective Impact process to align substance use strategy with poverty reduction
Ongoing Data Collection and review	Ongoing

PHASE TWO RECOMMENDATIONS

WALKING TOGETHER REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS (WALK WITH ME)

Note: Please read Chapter 6 in the [Walking Together Report](#)

- 1 Create and implement medical detox service in the Comox Valley
- 2 Create and implement a recovery-based supportive housing service
- 3 Expand managed alcohol program services
- 4 Expand safer supply services
- 5 Relocate and expand overdose prevention site (OPS) and services
- 6 Pursue Improvements in opioid agonist therapy (OAT) delivery
- 7 Pursue asSeries of networking improvements
- 8 Create a services hub
- 9 Pursue service and transportation improvements for remote places, and places without strong transit systems (Hornby and Denman Islands, Cumberland, and others)
- 10 Address the need for culturally safe services
- 11 Work to reduce/eliminate stigma in the system

SUBSTANCE USE STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS (COMMITTEE)

Note: Recommendations #12 and 13 are overarching recommendations and apply to all other recommendations and work of the Collaborative.

- 12** Actively engage and support peers to be involved in every aspect of planning and implementation of the recommendations in the Strategy.
- 13** Actively practice cultural safety and humility, anti-racism; anti-queer-phobia; anti-ableism, anti-classism and anti-agism and ensure that Cultural Safety principles are enacted in implementation of all Strategy Actions.
- 14** Comox Valley Substance Use Collaborative will provide oversight and leadership to Implement Phase Three and ongoing recommendations.
- 15** Update and increase substance use awareness programs for youth and their families.
- 16** Increase awareness about substance use and access to substance use services specifically for seniors
- 17** Launch a project that focuses on including business owners and employers as part of the conversation on substance use and harm reduction.
- 18** Develop or review existing municipal bylaws and policies related to alcohol and cannabis selling establishments to reduce negative impacts to community health, safety, and livability. Work with municipalities to obtain the necessary data.
- 19** Actively advocate to Federal and Provincial governments for an easily accessible safer supply of drugs
- 20** Implement a Peer Assisted Care Team (PACT) in the Comox Valley
- 21** Advocate for more non-market affordable housing for all ages and circumstances.

ONGOING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMUNITY SUBSTANCE USE STRATEGY PHASE ONE REPORT

- 22** Act on lived experience of people who use substances, their families and the people who support them in the design and implementation of policies, services, changes to existing services, and as qualitative evidence that supports action in our community response to substance use.
- 23** Engage more intensively with members and organizations from key priority groups such as youth, Indigenous, spiritual and religious, community organizations (e.g., Rotary, Indigenous, and 2SLGBTQIA).
- 24** Leverage existing political will in the community to advocate for organizational commitment (e.g., coordination, funding and staffing) from service providers (e.g., VIHA, AVI, John Howard Society, etc.) and stakeholders (e.g., RCMP, SD71) for ongoing implementation of the strategy actions.
- 25** Advocate for peer delivered services and paid positions within all organizations for people with lived/living experience.
- 26** Secure commitment of key partners & regional stakeholders to apply for provincial and national funding when available. Seek endorsement letters from key partners.

- 27 Establish ongoing data sharing agreements between the Comox Valley Substance Use Collaborative and local data collectors, including agency program and service evaluation data (e.g., number of individuals who access service, number of naloxone kits distributed, demographic data).
- 28 Advocate for ongoing provincial and regional collection of data on social determinants about substance use (e.g., why people use substances, social determinants and how they contributed to death or drug poisoning, etc.).
- 29 Increase collection and reporting of data around access to services & service impact and data on the benefits of substance use.
- 30 Innovate ways to collaborate across government, academia and community agencies on collection of data.

While the Phase Two Strategy work was being done there were people and organizations continuing to work on responses to substance use and health in the community. As a result many of the recommendations have some emerging work being done and this work will need to be built upon in action planning. For example:

- March 9, 2023 - the Comox Strathcona Regional Hospital District Board approved a memorandum of understanding with Island Health that supports the development of a Community Health Services Hub located in the Comox Valley.
- July 7, 2023 - the Province of BC announced funding for a Peer Assisted Care Team in the Comox Valley
- The Community Action Team (CAT) is supporting the initiation of a peer- run Overdose Prevention Site
- The Community Action Team (CAT) is part of a multi-CAT Safer Supply Working Group through Health Quality BC that has recently published the [CAT Safer Supply Project Tool Kit](#) that will assist with local, provincial and federal advocacy for safer supply

TOWARDS A STRONG COMOX VALLEY SUBSTANCE USE SUPPORT NETWORK

The most consistent message heard in the Committee community engagement and the WWM conversations was that the system is siloed and in all areas there is a need to listen to each other, work together, try new things and be bold. The intent of the Strategy is that good work already being done in many areas in the community will be brought together to form a highly functioning Substance Use Support Network and where there are gaps new supports will be developed.

All of the thirty recommendations listed in this report require a coordinated effort that puts people who use substances at the centre and organizational differences aside. Putting people who are disproportionately affected by substance use due to social inequities, gender differences, racism, anti-queer-phobia, classism, ageism and ableism along with people who use and need substance use supports at the centre of planning for system change is critical. Through engaging in conversations, listening to all perspectives, developing strong relationships, creating actions and pursuing funding significant system change can and will happen.

VISION, MISSION, BELIEF STATEMENTS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The vision, mission, belief statements and guiding principles guide the work and actions being undertaken on the Strategy, are ever evolving and can be updated as necessary.

VISION

Comox Valley is a safer, healthier place that improves the lives, abilities, and health of all community members, including all diversities and generations.

MISSION

Work together as a community to develop and implement a fair and equitable plan to reduce substance-related harms, including deaths, in the Comox Valley.



BELIEF STATEMENTS (ALL EQUALLY IMPORTANT!)

- 1** We believe people have a great capacity to change and transform with support and information.
- 2** We believe people have a right to know and understand both the harms and benefits of substance use.
- 3** We believe that substance use is part of our lives and our communities, and we are all responsible personally and collectively to minimize harm.
- 4** We believe that most people use substances. Those who use substances come from all economic backgrounds and include people of all genders, abilities, disabilities, cultures, and races.
- 5** We believe that people use substances in a variety of ways including therapeutic, safe, and problematic. Substance use can be recurring and cyclical.
- 6** We believe that people have a right to use substances and we do not discriminate against anyone for current or past substance use.
- 7** We believe that Indigenous ways of being and knowing are valuable and lead to different ways of viewing substance use that we can learn from.
- 8** We believe community members are not all equal in terms of power and privilege so do not have the same access to health and support.
- 9** We believe people should have access to housing, culturally appropriate treatment, and recovery options when they are ready for them.
- 10** We believe it is necessary to acknowledge that Canada's colonial history has led to substance use policies and laws (e.g prohibition) founded on system-based racism.

11 We believe stigma and racism are deeply embedded in institutions, agencies, and cultural norms, and impact distribution of wealth, poverty, access to resources and services, experiences of inclusion/exclusion and ultimately impact health outcomes.

12 We believe that we live in systems (schools, families, communities, etc.) where many people face restrictions, oppression, and discrimination. These systemic pressures influence our ability to thrive.

13 We believe that substance use has historically been understood as a legal (criminal) and/or moral (bad decisions) issue. This has led to stigmatization, overdose epidemics and disproportionate incarceration rates.

14 We believe that substance use can be a result of intersecting and overlapping social determinants of health (housing, poverty, social inclusion, education, etc.). Understanding the intersections and improving social determinants of health will have a positive impact on substance use and will create healthier communities.

15 We believe that substance use can be an adaptive survival tool to cope with trauma and can also expose people to trauma.

16 We believe a history of trauma and ongoing exposure to trauma is closely linked to harmful substance use.

17 We believe substance use is a health and social issue that requires social support and public policy responses to focus on meeting people's basic human needs.

18 We believe substance use must be approached from systems and person-centred perspectives. We acknowledge that people are often harmed because of systemic constraints - examples include the criminalization of individual use, lack of safe supply, prescribing practices, etc., and not just individual decisions.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

COMPASSION AND RESPECT

We have compassion for all people with whom we interact including people affected by substances and are mindful and respectful of differing perspectives.

INCLUSION

We welcome the participation of everyone in the Comox Valley and we actively seek out participation of people with lived/living experience of substances.

DIVERSITY

We embrace diversity and listen to the unique needs of the varied people, cultures, and communities in our region.

CONNECTION, COLLABORATION AND SHARING

We nurture relationships, connect people to each other, promote a culture of participation and collaborate across organizations and sectors. Together we are better.

LEARNING

We share knowledge, listen to each other, explore new ideas and generate new understanding and solutions to create a regional substance use strategy to strengthen our community.

INNOVATION

We strive to find new and better ways to support health and wellness in our community.

CULTURAL SAFETY & CULTURAL HUMILITY

We promote emotionally, spiritually, physically, and culturally safe environments and are open to everyone's individual identity.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We are responsible for the resources entrusted to us and strive for effective and efficient solutions and initiatives.

EQUITY

We recognize inequity affects health and strive to reduce social, political, and financial inequities.

ANTI-RACISM

We recognize that substance use and health are deeply affected by racism and that addressing racism directly, with strength, knowledge, resources and education is the only way to ensure that the multiple barriers to racial equality in Canada are removed.

ANTI-STIGMATIZING LANGUAGE

We are committed to the use of language that does not stigmatize people who experience substances.

PLAIN LANGUAGE

We are committed to the use of plain language so that our communication is as accessible and meaningful as possible to everyone.

CONSENSUS DECISION- MAKING

We make decisions based on consensus. The model of consensus decision-making we use can be found [here](#).

INTRODUCTION

In 2002, under the guidance and leadership of the City of Courtenay, various stakeholders came together to develop a drug strategy committee. The committee contributed significantly to educating people in the Comox Valley about substance use and the need to make health-focused choices. In October 2019, the City of Courtenay asked the Comox Valley Community Health Network (Network) to broaden the scope and membership of the existing drug strategy committee to develop a regional substance use strategy for the Comox Valley.

The Comox Valley Substance Use Strategy Committee (Committee) formed in Phase One led the development of Phase Two Strategy development. The Committee is made up of a multi-sectoral group of local government representatives, peers, community members and community organizations from across the region. A commitment to centering peers in the Strategy development was continued by partnering with the Walk With Me team who did a gaps and strengths analysis of the substance use support network in the Comox Valley. In June 2023, the Committee transitioned to a Collaborative to provide ongoing oversight of the implementation of the Strategy.

The Committee uses inclusive and non-stigmatizing language. To use inclusive language, an understanding of stigma and the negative connotation of language that comes with it is necessary. To shift language, it is helpful to focus on person-first language - language that acknowledges someone as a person before describing their personal attributes or health conditions (Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, 2019). This means saying "person who uses substances" rather than "druggie" or "addict" which reflects a judgement. In addition to people-first language, inclusive language acknowledges substance use as a health issue and promotes the person's capacity for recovery (BC Centre for Disease Control, 2017).

The Comox Valley is home to many diverse cultures including First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples as well as European, Asian, South and South East Asian, Middle Eastern and many more settlers. Cultural safety work needs to be centered with an anti-colonial & anti-racist lens that invites a conversation and challenges power structures.

Colonialism in the healthcare system can lead to First Nations, Métis and Inuit people being stigmatized and discriminated against resulting in negative impacts on their health and wellness outcomes. In order to consider cultural safety in a strategy supporting those who use substances, an understanding of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action # 18-24 (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015) related to mental health and substance use is needed.

Cultural safety and humility learning journeys help to break the cycle and can ensure that health is a human right for all. The First Nations Health Authority defines cultural safety as "an outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the healthcare system. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe when receiving health care." Cultural humility as "a process of self-reflection to understand personal and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust. Cultural humility involves humbly acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another's experience" ([First Nations Health Authority, 2016 pg.4 and 6](#)).

PHASE TWO WORK

During Phase Two of the Strategy development the Immediately/As Soon As Possible Recommendations from the Community Substance Use Strategy Phase One report were implemented. The Ongoing Actions in that report are longer term and will continue to be implemented in subsequent work. A summary of the Phase Two actions include:

PHASE ONE RECOMMENDATION	PHASE TWO ACTION
Present Phase 1 Report to all local government councils	Delegations to local government councils twice
Request all local governments collaborate to fund Phase 2	\$140,000 in funding secured for Phase 2 and 3
Act on lived experience of people who use substances	Partnered with Walk With Me (WWM) to hear the lived experience of Peers
System gap and strength analysis of substance use support network	WWM community engagement and research to produce Walking Together Towards a Stronger, More Integrated Substance Use Support Network in the Comox Valley: Gaps and Strengths Analysis
Ongoing involvement and leadership from peers and elders/traditional knowledge keepers.	WWM research was co-led by peers and an elder Strategy committee included peers and Indigenous leaders of organizations
Form a CV Substance Use Collaborative to coordinate recommendation implementation	Relationships have been developed, Collaborative first met in June 2023 and meetings are being held monthly
Collaborative become partner of the Community Health Network	Collaborative has just begun to meet so this partnership has not evolved yet
Align work of the Collaborative with intersecting work in the Regional Poverty Assessment and Reduction Plan	Some engagement in the Collective Impact process to align substance use strategy with poverty reduction
Ongoing Data Collection and review	Ongoing

SYSTEMS GAP ANALYSIS

The Committee partnered with the Walk With Me (WWM) team to do a gaps and strengths analysis of the Comox Valley substance use supports and services or the Substance Use Support Network.

Comox Valley Substance Use Support Network is the network of organizations and projects/ initiatives working to support People Who Use Substances in the Comox Valley. This definition includes organizations whose work is rooted in harm reduction, recovery, health, and mental health services, as well as in the “upstream” areas that have impact on the substance use ecology, including housing, policing, education, and others” (Walk With Me, 2023, pg.12)

The Walk with Me team hosted a series of facilitated conversations with peers and service providers to gather information about gaps and strengths in the current system. Peer participants were invited to draw/map/speak about their experiences in the past two years with substance use services and support in the community. A survey was circulated for people who had tried to access or used services or supports in the last two years. The survey results complemented the conversation data and provided another snapshot of people's experiences. Fifty-nine peers participated in eight facilitated conversations and fifty-one surveys were returned.

In the service provider conversations participants were asked to identify strong relationships between services as well as relationships they thought could be strengthened. Twenty-five service providers participated in eight facilitated conversations. All the conversation participants were asked to identify substance use services and support gaps, strengths and potential solutions. See Chapter 4 in the [Walking Together Report](#) for a full description of the conversation methodology.

The Walk With Me team analysed the data and developed the WWM Recommendations in this report. See Chapter 5 in the [Walking Together Report](#) for a full description of the analysis which includes the voices of the participants in the research that are very powerful.

The Committee also developed recommendations based on the community engagement that occurred in Phase One and learning in Phase Two.

FORMATION OF COMOX VALLEY SUBSTANCE USE COLLABORATIVE

The Network is facilitating the development of the Strategy and this facilitation will come to an end after Phase Three. There is a need for an ongoing structure to oversee the implementation, monitoring and updating of the Strategy to meet the community's needs going forward. This necessitates the formation of the Collaborative with a local substance use agency taking on the leadership of the Collaborative by the end of Phase Three.

The first meeting of the Collaborative, a multi-sectoral structure including funders and decision-makers, occurred in June 2023. Twenty one people, including peers, service providers from organizations working with Indigenous people, people who use substances, youth, seniors, municipal staff and elected officials, school district staff, First Nation Health Authority and Island Health attended the meeting.

The meeting focused on an orientation to the intent of the Collaborative, discussion about frameworks for collaboration, initial orientation and relationship building ideas and continuing to create a safe space for peers to participate. Many members of the original Strategy Committee are continuing on the Collaborative and new members have been engaged. The Collaborative will operate with slightly revised belief statements and guiding principles and continue to centre peers and anti-racism, cultural safety and humility, and equity in its ongoing Strategy work.

Once fully established, the Collaborative will become one of the community partners of the Network to further collaborate across health and social priorities in the community. As a partner of the Comox Valley Community Health Network, the Substance Use Collaborative will become engaged with other Network partners in the Collective Impact work on intersecting community issues related to Poverty Reduction in the Comox Valley. The Comox Valley [Regional Housing Needs Assessment](#) was completed in 2020 and the Comox Valley [Regional Poverty Reduction Strategy](#) was released in the fall of 2021. Both reports overlap and intersect with the root causes of substance use and many of the barriers that face people who use substances. Participating in implementing them to address housing and poverty will also inform the Strategy.

ONGOING DATA COLLECTION AND REVIEW

A table of ongoing data to be collected with potential data sources is in progress for future use. Data sharing agreements are being drafted and conversations with some of the local data collectors (Island Health, RCMP, North Island College, municipalities) have begun regarding data they collect and how to approach sharing data.

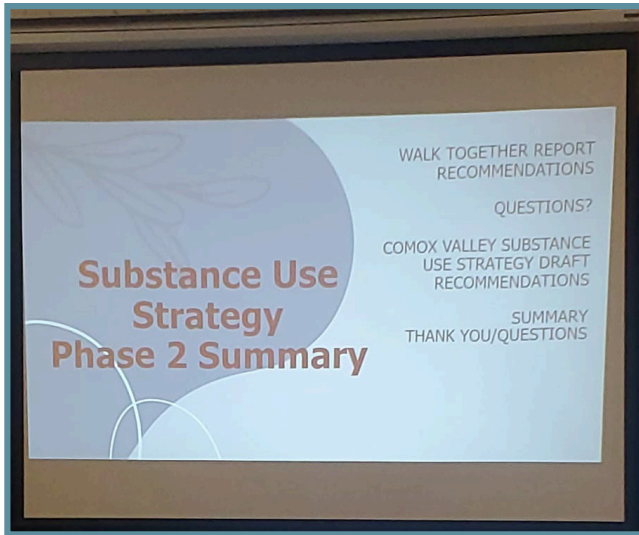
On May 15, 2023, the Comox Valley Community Foundation launched the Comox Valley's [Vital Signs Data Hub](#), a newly created website that will centralize over 70 regional data indicators related to the Comox Valley and its people. It is a platform that can be updated regularly so it has the potential to provide access to data more quickly. It will be useful as a source of data for the Strategy going forward as some of the data indicators are relevant to substance use.

The [McCreary Centre Society Foundation](#) completed the BC Adolescent Health Survey (BCAHS) in the spring of 2023 in the Comox Valley and the results will be published in late 2023. The BCAHS is a province-wide survey administered every five years to youth in Grade 7 to 12. It provides an evidence base of youth health trends, emerging issues, and risk and protective factors for healthy development. The survey includes questions related to youth drug and alcohol use.

These sources will be useful to continuously update data in Phase Three.

PHASE THREE LAUNCH EVENT

Over 40 people attended the launch event hosted by the Committee and Walk With Me team. The attendees were service providers, local elected officials, community members, peers, and Indigenous persons/organizations. The event included a presentation from Len Pierre, Coast Salish from Katzie (kate-zee) First Nation, Traditional Knowledge Keeper, educator, consultant, and social activist. After the presentation two local community members told their stories and then the Walk With Me team and the Coordinator reviewed the Phase Two recommendations and introduced Phase Three.



FRAMEWORKS TO ADDRESS SUBSTANCE USE

In keeping with the commitment to honour Indigenous ways of knowing and being, and creating cultural safe practices to address substance use, both Indigenous and colonial substance use frameworks may be used to guide this work. As actions are developed, the intent is that all perspectives are considered and honoured.

INDIGENOUS HARM REDUCTION PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE MODEL

“The Indigenous Wellness Program at First Nations Health Authority developed Indigenous Harm reduction principles and practices to host conversations regarding addictions and harm reduction. Indigenous harm reduction is a process of integrating cultural knowledge and values into the strategies and services associated with the work of harm reduction. Indigenous knowledge systems are strongly connected to spirituality, holism and the natural environment. Therefore, a learning model reflecting animal teachings and values was struck to support sensitive conversations around addictions and harm reduction through an Indigenous lens.” ([First Nations Health Authority](#))

THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES USE CULTURAL REPRESENTATION FROM FOUR PROMINENT ANIMALS HERE IN BC. EACH ANIMAL IS REPRESENTED BY SYMBOLISM, A HEALING PRINCIPLE, AND COMPARATIVE HARM REDUCTION STRATEGIES:



THE WOLF

- A symbol of relationships and care.
- Healing requires working together as one heart and one mind.
- This representation is associated with harm reduction principles that emphasize the importance of building relationships with people who use substances. An example of carrying out this work might look like providing outreach services.



THE EAGLE

- A symbol of knowledge and wisdom.
- Healing requires time, patience, and reflection.
- This means acknowledging that wellness is a journey instead of a destination. It aligns with the harm reduction principle that support may take many ongoing opportunities. It also means that in our professional work practice we take the time to reflect on our own emotions and allow room for patience in our engagements with people who are using substances.



THE BEAR

- A symbol of strength and protection.
- Healing is embedded in culture and tradition.
- This principle celebrates a strength-based approach in working with harm reduction. This also recognizes culture and tradition as intergenerational strengths that are methods of harm reduction on their own.



THE RAVEN

- A symbol of identity and transformation.
- Healing requires knowing who you are and accepting who you were.
- This healing principle acknowledges that the path to wellness is a journey that encompasses the exploration of identity and that mistakes will be made along the way. We do not need to carry the burdens of past, as they transform us when we learn from them.

WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS HARM REDUCTION: LEARNING COMPONENTS

THE WOLF: RELATIONSHIPS AND CARE

- Outreach services for people who do not access site based services: food, safer smoking/injecting kits, condoms, etc.
- Services are human-centred - inclusive, caring, and trauma-informed.
- Strategies and services are based on a foundation of cultural safety and humility.
- Acknowledging family relationships, community, Nation, and land.
- Understanding the impact of cultural oppression, intergenerational trauma, land-loss, and current social, environmental, and economic realities.

THE EAGLE: KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

- Strategies and services are trauma-informed.
- Support individuals and communities wherever they are at in their wellness journey.
- Recognize that stigma and shame are factors that need to be taken into consideration and addressed.
- Supporting strategies and services that are evidence-based.

THE BEAR: STRENGTH AND PROTECTION

- Strategies and services are wellness focused and holistic in nature.
- Incorporate Indigenous beliefs, values, and practices: medicinal plants, ceremony, Elder consultation etc.
- Incorporate Elders and cultural people to guide and participate in the initiatives.

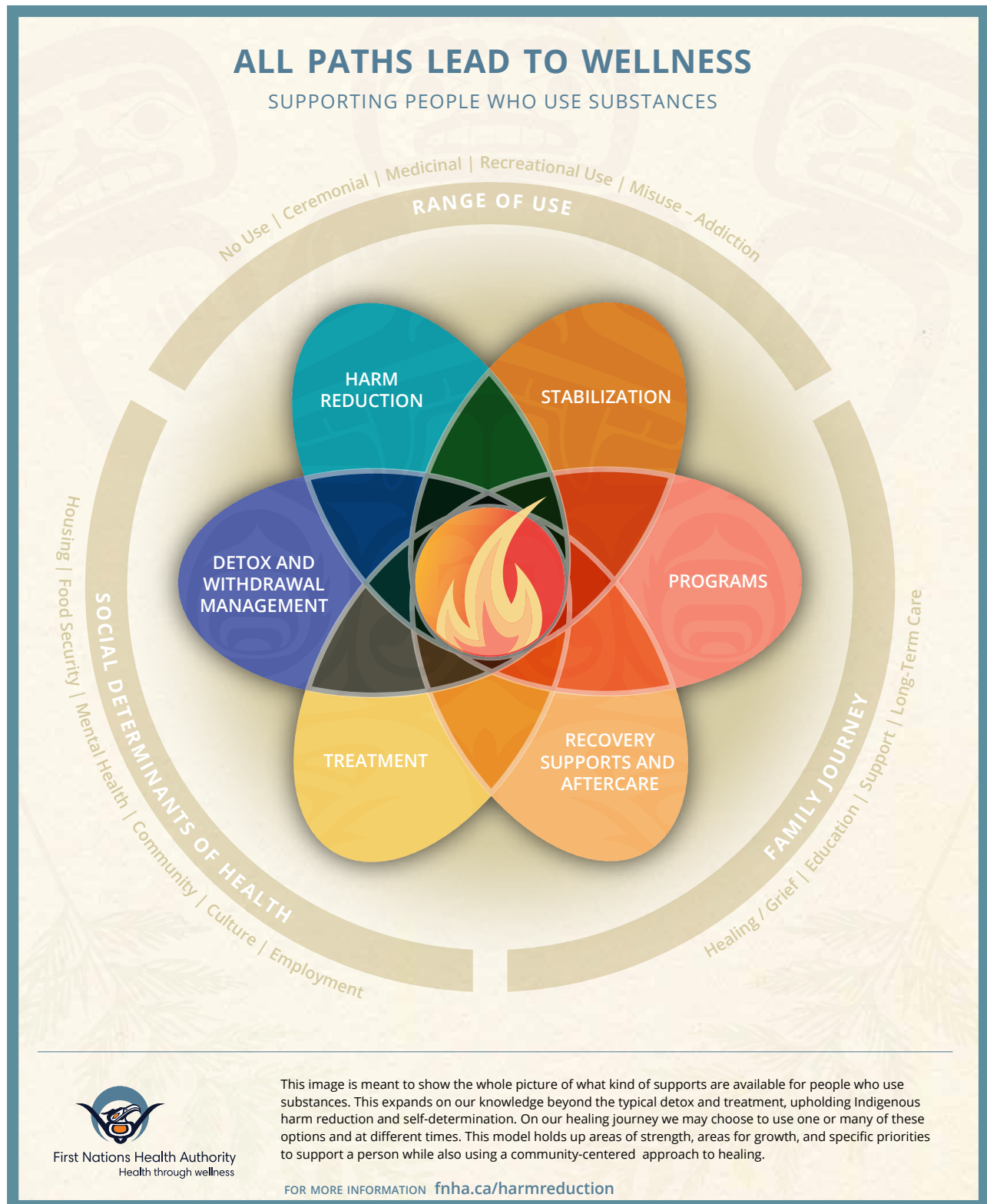
THE RAVEN: IDENTITY AND TRANSFORMATION

- View addiction as a health and social issue, not a moral or criminal issue that can result in complex personal health and social consequence, involvement with the law and premature death.

Source (with Permission): [First Nations Health Authority](#)

ALL PATHS LEAD TO WELLNESS MODEL

The First Nations Health Authority has developed a model to support people who use alcohol and other substances wherever they are on their healing journey. Support is offered in a variety of ways including learning new skills and tools to promote growth and connection. People can access services that meet their needs from any of the spokes at any time. The All Paths Lead to Wellness approach is fluid and interactive, while holding up areas of strength and areas for growth.



Source (with Permission): [First Nations Health Authority](https://www.fnha.ca/)

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION: RESPONDING TO THE TOXIC DRUG CRISIS

The Toxic Drug Crisis has disproportionately affected Indigenous people and the First Nations Health Authority has developed a Framework For Action: Responding to the Toxic Drug Crisis for First Nations that everyone can learn from.

A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION: RESPONDING TO THE TOXIC DRUG CRISIS FOR FIRST NATIONS

A Framework for Action: Responding to the toxic drug crisis for First Nations captures a system-wide response to slow and stop toxic drug death. The Framework for Action is focused on the most urgent goal of preventing deaths while also supporting First Nations broader mental health and wellness goals. Slowing and stopping toxic drug death is a shared responsibility, this Framework for Action is guided by Reciprocal Accountability and underpinned by our teachings of cultural safety.

Implementation will be supported by continuous efforts to improve real-time data from communities and health data sources. The four goals are:

- 1) Prevent people who experience drug poisoning from dying
- 2) Keep people safer when using
- 3) Create an accessible range of treatment options
- 4) Support people on their healing journey

SUPPORT PEOPLE ON THEIR HEALING JOURNEY

- Focus on aftercare by: increasing consistency of services that support healing from trauma; proactively removing impediments to access; and supporting consistent pathways and linkages across service providers. Examine gaps in treatment centres in Fraser and Vancouver Coastal regions.
- Develop and resource comprehensive pain management approaches which include non-pharmacological options.
- Long-term: Build and enhance social and emotional resilience and connection with culture (i.e. access to counseling, Elders and cultural activities, health promotion activities).

CREATE AN ACCESSIBLE RANGE OF TREATMENT OPTIONS

- Access to injectable opioid agonist therapy (hydromorphone).
- Indigenous specific treatment beds.
- Ensure wrap-around support (cultural, counselling, other) for all treatment options.
- Expand mobile treatment/detox options.
- Improve follow-up after drug poisoning and discharge.
- Expand telehealth options.
- Increase OAT services in community and rural settings.
- Expand substance use and pain management supports in primary care settings.
- Expand cultural based (including on-the-land) treatment options.

KEEP PEOPLE SAFER WHEN USING

- Prevent diversion from prescribed opioids to tainted street drugs.
- Increase number of and usage of Safe Consumption Sites.
- Implement drug checking opportunities.
- Public Education about risk.

PREVENT PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE DRUG POISONING FROM DYING

- Access to naloxone & knowledge of how to administer.
- Reduce stigma and mitigate risk for people using alone.
- Improve community-911 linkage.
- Increase awareness of Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act.
- Ensure services are culturally safe and trauma-informed.



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fnha.ca/harmreduction

Source (with Permission): [First Nations Health Authority](#)

FOUR PILLARS MODEL

In the Four Pillars Model, the following are included: Health Promotion and Prevention, Harm Reduction, Treatment, and Community Safety (moving away from the criminal and negative connotation associated with “enforcement”).

Health Promotion and Prevention

Health Promotion practices include addressing the social determinants of health or root causes of substance use and encouraging healthy behaviours, supportive environments, and healthy public policies. Health promotion and prevention education focuses on people’s innate resilience and strengths so they can be the primary drivers of their health. Doing this within a social justice and health equity lens encourages healthy public policy. Prevention supports upstream approaches to help prevent people from starting or engaging in potentially harmful substance use. It also includes educating people to be aware of the potential harms associated with substance use.

Harm Reduction

Harm reduction is an all-encompassing supportive approach that provides support no matter where a person is on the continuum and does not judge the individual(s) who use substances. The aim is to keep people safe and minimize death, disease and injury from the potential harms of substance use behaviour. Taking a harm reduction approach does not increase substance use and people are more likely to start treatment when a harm reduction approach is used. The evidence shows it works and has many benefits for people who use substances, their families and our communities (BC Centre for Disease Control, 2021).

Treatment

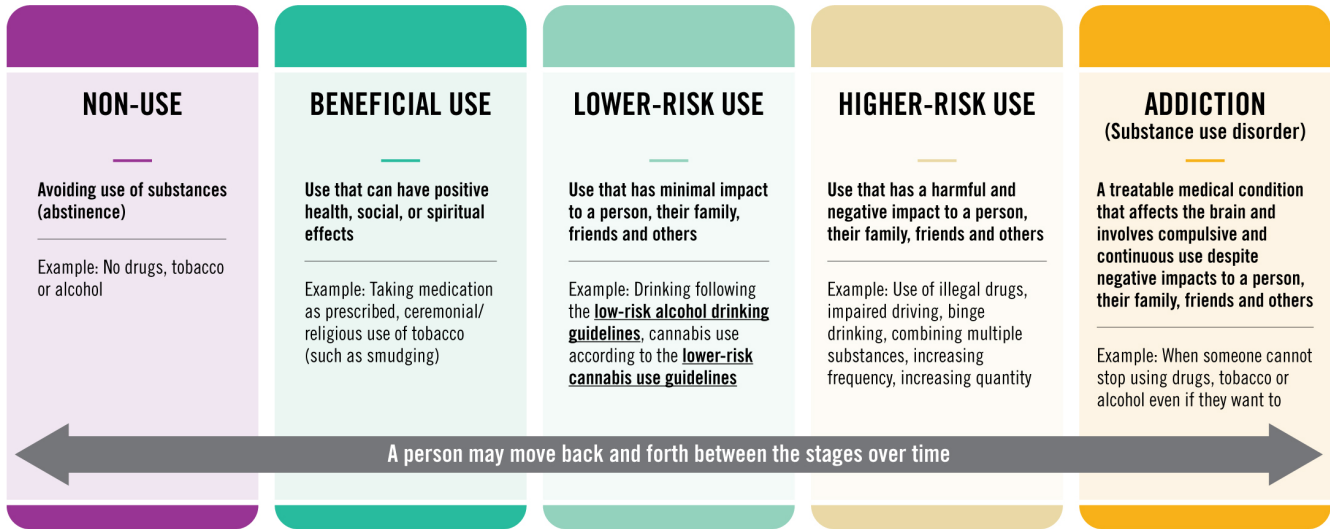
Treatment may include outpatient or inpatient services and includes shifting to an integrated wrap-around approach that prevents gaps in services while supporting people who use substances. Treatment options are recommended to be organized to support unique needs like youth and Indigenous people who need age-appropriate and culturally safe options. A foundation of successful treatment that always needs to be considered is supportive housing (Macpherson, 2001). Housing helps people who use substances to find stability first, so they can then choose and access treatment services that work for them.

Community Safety

The community safety pillar recognizes the need for peace, public order, and safety. It works to ensure everyone in the community is safe, including people who use substances and those with lived/living experience. This creates a shift from punishing and criminalizing to working together towards safer and more inclusive practices for all.

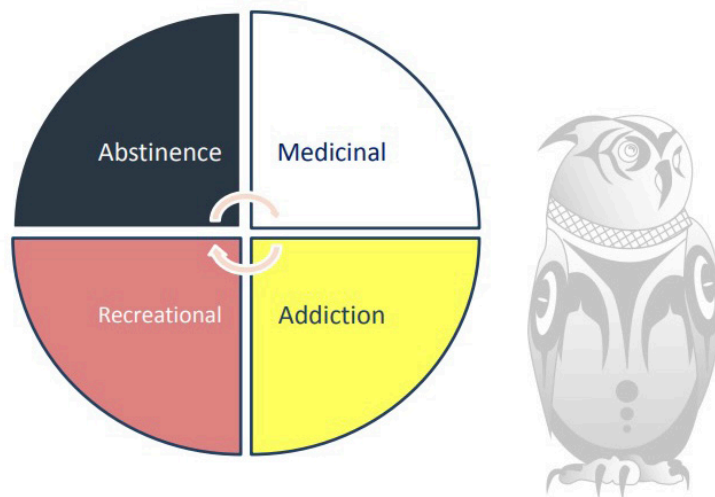
TRAUMA, SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH

The term substance in this report refers to all substances such as but not limited to alcohol, tobacco/vaping, cannabis, illicit drugs, prescription drugs, medicinal substances, inhalants, and solvents. Substance use exists on a spectrum from beneficial use to chronic dependence or substance use harms. See Chapter 2 and 3 of the [Walking Together Report](#) for an in depth discussion of substance use and different substances used.



Source: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/about-substance-use.html#s1>

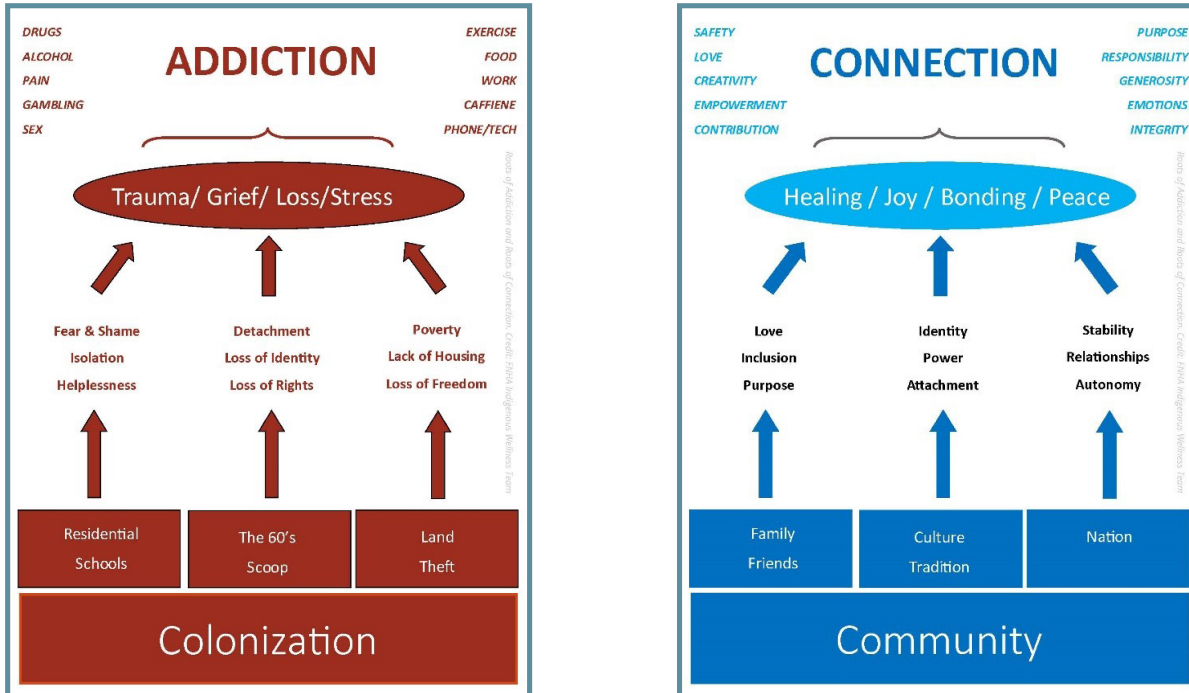
Many Indigenous people view substance use through a different lens. One example is the graphic below that describes four relationships that people have with substances: Abstinence, Medicinal, Recreational and Addiction and that they exist in a circle.



Source with permission:
[Len Pierre consulting](#), 2023

Harms from substance use are not a moral failing of the individual. One may develop harmful substance use due to a history of substance use in their family, negative events that happen in their childhood (Adverse Childhood Experiences/ACES), trauma, stress, isolation, changes to the brain or using substances early in life.

Johann Hari (Chasing the Scream, 2015) argues that “the opposite of addiction is not sobriety, the opposite of addiction is connection” and Dr.Gabor Maté, renowned expert on substance use and addictions, calls for a compassionate approach toward substance use, whether in ourselves or in others. Dr. Maté believes that the source of “problematic substance use is not to be found in genes but in the early childhood environment” (<https://drgabormate.com/addiction/>). Similarly, the First Nations Health Authority Indigenous Wellness Team created the Roots of Addiction and Roots of Connection graphics. All of this work leads us to looking for ways to connect with compassion to people who use substances and not shame or stigmatize.



Roots of Addiction and Roots of Connection. Credit: First Nation Health Authority Indigenous Wellness Team
 Source with permission: [First Nations Health Authority](https://www.fnha.ca/)

Concurrent mental health challenges and harmful substance use occur when someone experiences mental health challenges and uses substances like alcohol, nicotine or other drugs in ways that cause harm (Canadian Mental Health Association, 2018). When this occurs, mental health challenges can increase substance use harms (e.g. increased substance use might occur to help people cope with anxiety) or conversely, alcohol and other drugs can increase the symptoms of a mental health challenge. People who experience both mental health and substance use challenges at the same time often must go to one service for mental health treatment and another service for substance use treatment (CMHA, 2018) and sometimes services are not connected at all. Best practices on supporting people with intersecting mental health and substance use challenges can be found in the [Trauma Informed Practice Guide](#) (2013).

Trauma-informed practice means integrating an understanding of trauma into all levels of care and avoiding re-traumatization or minimizing the individual’s experiences of trauma. Trauma-informed practice is an overall way of working, rather than a specific set of techniques or strategies. There is no formula. Providing trauma-informed care means recognizing that some people will need more support and different types of support than others. Practitioners also adopt a strength-based approach and recognize that human beings are resilient and resourceful, and much of their healing happens outside of formal treatment services ([Trauma Informed Practice Guide](#), 2013). Trauma-informed care and practice also recognizes each person’s unique need to feel emotionally and physically safe.

Some promising practices for intersecting mental health and substance use challenges are emerging in British Columbia. One example is the [Red Fish Healing Centre for Mental Health and Addiction](#) located on [səmiqʷəʔelə](#) land in Coquitlam. The centre treats people across the province who live with the most severe, complex substance use and mental health challenges. As most of the clients have experienced trauma that plays a role in their illness and experiences with the mental health care system, the facility has been designed to help people feel comfortable and safe. For example there are quiet indoor and outdoor spaces, including therapeutic and medicinal gardens; shared spaces for art, music and recreation therapy and a therapeutic kitchen that helps people learn life skills, such as preparing meals. Staff at the centre practice within a person-centred, strengths-based approach with a strong belief of hope in the face of complex mental health and substance use challenges. They focus on peoples' strengths rather than solely on their symptoms and problems and treat people using a whole-person approach, addressing substance use, mental illness, chronic health conditions, triggers, histories of trauma and more within one integrated care plan. Care is evidence-based, which means it is informed by research, and trauma-informed, meaning they work to ensure that people feel safe, secure and supported throughout their time in treatment.

The [Abbotsford Community Hub Centre \(abbotsfordhub.org\)](#) is another promising practice in British Columbia that provides multiple services in the community under one roof for easier access to support for people. Established in 2018, the Hub Centre delivers integrated services through inter-agency partners providing people-centred, accessible, quality health, housing, social supports and community services in a welcoming environment.

CURRENT LANDSCAPE IN CANADA AND BRITISH COLUMBIA

Internationally and nationally there has been a growing consensus on the importance of addressing mental health and substance use challenges. There is an increasing body of literature around the impacts of social and health inequities on population and individual mental health and substance use. As a result, all levels of government have begun to acknowledge social and health inequities and prioritize, support and fund issues related to substance use and mental health.

In Canada, significant work has been led by The Mental Health Commission of Canada, the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, and the Canadian Mental Health Association in collaboration with Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada. This collaboration has led to the establishment of the Mental Health Strategy for Canada (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2012) and a Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy (Health Canada, 2018). These two strategies provide a framework and guidance for action and funding for regional and provincial mental health and substance use interventions and policies.

Many leaders in drug policy in Canada have been successful in advocating for substance use and mental health policy change in British Columbia. As a result, over the last few years, the Province of British Columbia has dedicated significant resources towards mental health and substance use. The BC government established a stand-alone Ministry responsible for Mental Health and Addictions along with developing a renewed 10-year strategy for mental health and substance use. The tragic experience of the toxic drug supply and ensuing drug poisoning deaths in BC has led to many legal, social and economic initiatives around substances. Most notably, the province has advocated for cannabis reform, safe injection sites, safe supply and an expanded scope of practice for medical professionals including [prescribing rights for registered nurses](#).

In 2019, BC's Provincial Health Officer released [Stopping the Harm; Decriminalization of People Who Use Drugs in BC](#) that calls for systemic harm reduction action within the province's health system using a public health harm reduction and human-rights-orientated approach. In 2020, the BC government supported the call to the Federal government from the Canadian Association of Police Chiefs to decriminalize the possession of small amounts of controlled substances in order to address substance use and the stigma attached to it through a health lens rather than a criminal lens.



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Decriminalization: The Facts

What you need to know



Beginning on Jan. 31, 2023, **possession of small amounts of certain illegal drugs will be decriminalized** in British Columbia. There is a lot of misinformation about what drug decriminalization is and what it isn't. Here are some facts.

What is Decriminalization?

Applies to adults 18+	Includes opioids (heroin and fentanyl), cocaine (powder or crack), methamphetamine (meth) and MDMA (ecstasy)	NO arrests or seizures for personal possession under the threshold
Police will provide resource cards with information on supports and will make voluntary referrals	2.5g cumulative threshold with police discretion above	NO fines, tickets or other administrative sanctions
Culturally safe approaches for Indigenous Peoples, including First Nations living in rural/remote areas	Robust police training and monitoring and evaluation framework	NO mandatory treatment or diversion

What WILL decriminalization do?

- ✓ Reduce stigma, shame and fear. People who are using drugs need support and not judgment.
- ✓ Decriminalization will allow people to be more open about their use and help to ensure they are connected and cared for. This care and connection can support open conversations on options for healing.
- ✓ Reduce the risk of toxic drug poisoning and save lives and relationships.
- ✓ There will be continued engagement with communities about how decriminalization will be implemented at home.
- ✓ Make substance use and the toxic drug crisis a public health issue and not a criminal one. This means there will be no criminal record with the associated stigma and legal issues it creates when trying to establish a future life.



What WON'T decriminalization do?

- ✗ Enable substance use – without decriminalization people will still use but in an unsafe and unsupported way.
- ✗ Legalize substances – trafficking and producing stays illegal.
- ✗ Override First Nations self-determination – Nations will still be able to decide what works for them on their own land.

Visit our Decriminalization Q&A to learn more

www.fnha.ca/harmreduction

Decriminalization, under the controlled drugs and substances act, came into effect in BC on January 31, 2023 as a three year pilot project. Decriminalization allows for personal possession of a small amount of substances while selling or trafficking drugs remains illegal. As part of this pilot project, police in British Columbia are mandated to provide information and voluntary referral to health care, harm reduction and treatment support. Where supports are in place and accessible, decriminalization is intended to be a humane and valuable approach to decrease harms due to substance use. There is no evidence from other countries around the world that decriminalization increases drug use. What it does do is help reduce arrests, criminal charges, convictions and stigma related to a health issue.

However, there remain concerns that while decriminalizing drug use is a good first step the Act has limitations. The daily threshold of cumulative possession of drugs that is approved for the pilot project is significantly lower than what the BC government requested and what drug user groups identify as appropriate considering current drug use trends. Therefore, the daily threshold is not enough to stop toxic drug deaths. The Act is also limited in terms of the substances that are included for decriminalization; for example, it does not include Benzodiazepines which are commonly found in street drugs and are resistant to Narcan. Decriminalization will be positive for many people who are harmed daily by criminalizing a health issue. However, in order to save lives this step forward must be accompanied by greater accessibility to safer pharmaceutical alternatives to what is available through the toxic unregulated drug market.

Political will, in conjunction with ongoing efforts at the provincial, national and international levels, provides an opportune time for system-wide policy, service and practice reform.

CURRENT LANDSCAPE IN COMOX VALLEY

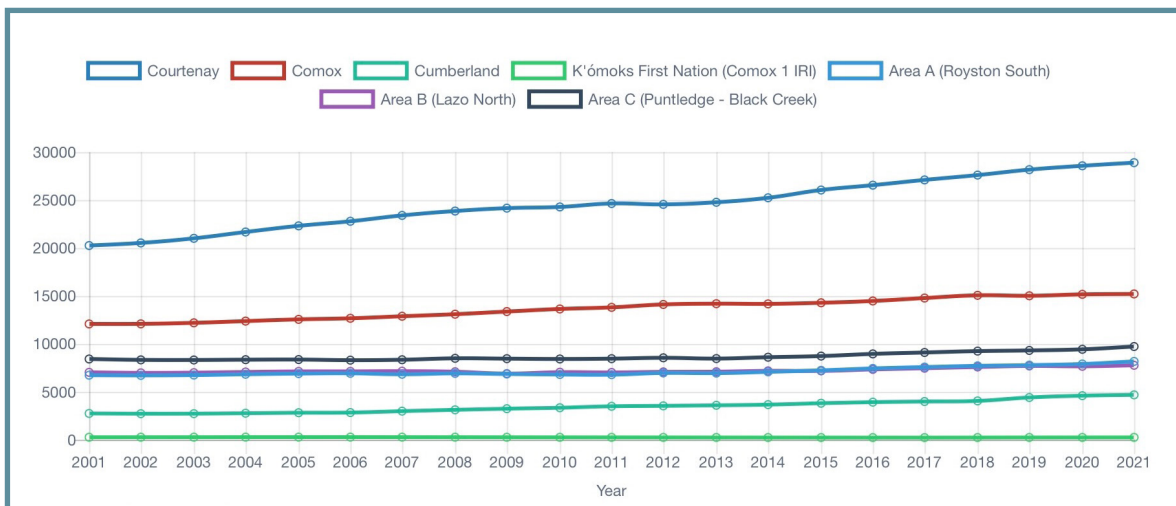
A significant amount of data was reviewed and collated in the first phase of the Strategy work. The data report that accompanied the Community Substance Use Strategy Phase One Appendices and Data Report can be reviewed [here](#).

The last Island Health Local Health Area Profiles contain data up to 2019 so are no more recent than what is in the Phase One data report. Another Local Area Profile may be published soon and that data could be used to implement recommendations and will be reported on in Phase Three Report. As the Strategy evolves and community data changes, data collection and review will need to be an ongoing activity in the community.

Updated data on Comox Valley population growth, median age, toxic drug supply crisis including effects on Indigenous people, alcohol consumption, daily smoking, perceived stress, and liquor and Cannabis establishments have been included below as part of Phase Two.

Population Growth

The Comox Valley Region is undergoing significant growth as the population of the region increased 8.9% from 66,527 in 2016 to 72,445 in 2021 and is projected to increase to a population of 80,000 by 2035.



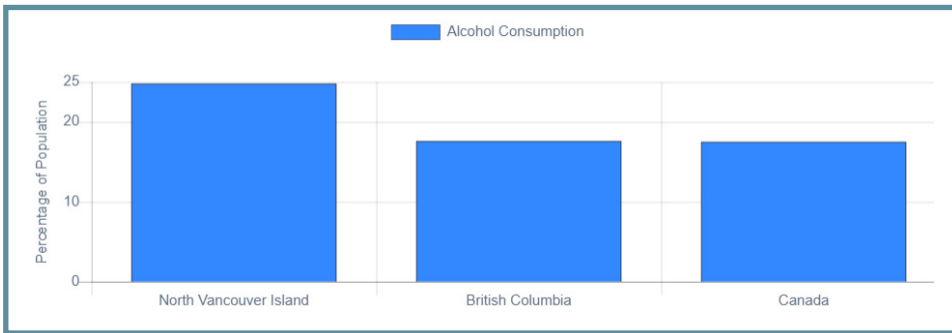
Source: ([Vital Signs Data Hub, 2023](#))

Median Age

The median age in the Comox Valley increased from 41.2 years in the 2001 census to 51.7 years in the 2021 census. This is an increase to the median age of over 10 years in a span of 20 years and has implications for change in the community. ([Vital Signs Data Hub, 2023](#)) This aging of the population in the Comox Valley aligns with the need for more substance use services for seniors.

Alcohol Consumption

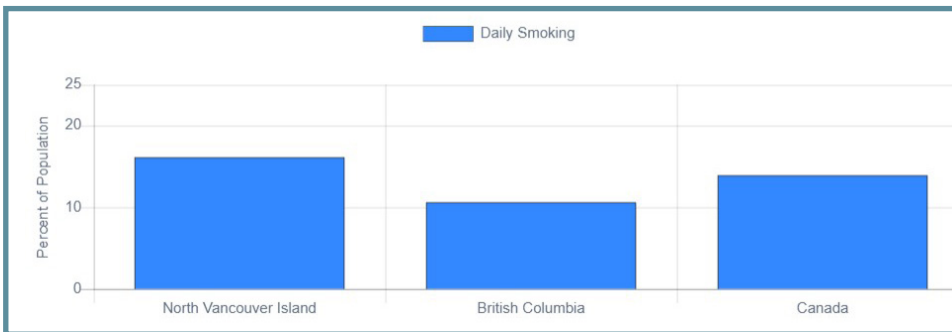
Heavy drinking refers to men aged 12 or older, who reported having 5 or more drinks, or women aged 12 or over, who reported having 4 or more drinks, on one occasion, at least once a month in the past year. In 2019/20, in North Vancouver Island 24.8% of the population aged 12 years and older report heavy regular alcohol consumption. This is higher than the alcohol consumption in British Columbia (17.6%) or Canada (17.5%).



Source: ([Vital Signs Data Hub, 2023](#))

Daily Smoking

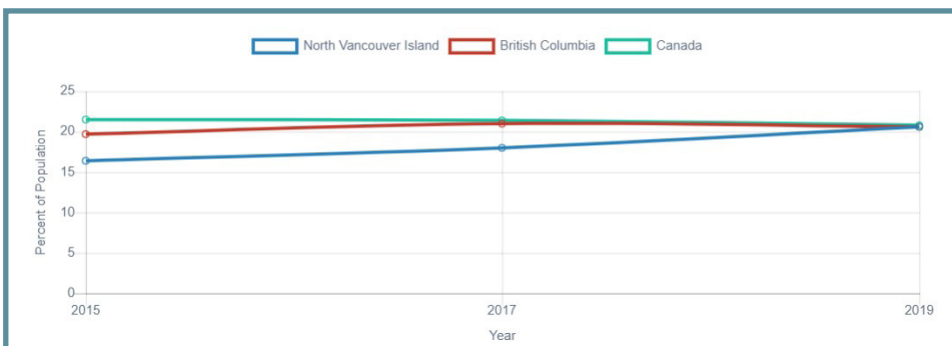
Daily smoker refers to men and females, age 12 or older, who reported smoking cigarettes every day. In 2019/20 in North Vancouver Island 16.1% of the population 12 and older were daily smokers, higher than in British Columbia (10.6%) or Canada (13.9%). This does not include vaping.



Source: ([Vital Signs Data Hub, 2023](#))

Perceived Life Stress

Perceived life stress refers to the amount of stress in the person's life, on most days, as perceived by the person or, in the case of proxy response, by the person responding. From 2015 to 2019 the rate of people, aged 12 and over, who perceived stress on most days in North Vancouver Island increased from 16.4% to 20.6%, a larger increase than in British Columbia (19.7%-20.6%). In Canada the rate went down from 21.5% in 2015 to 20.8% in 2019.



Source: ([Vital Signs Data Hub, 2023](#))

Liquor Licensed Establishments

The British Columbia Government issues 3 types of liquor licences for establishments:

- 1 FOOD PRIMARY LICENCE**
for selling liquor by the glass at businesses (restaurants) where the primary purpose is to serve food.
- 2 LIQUOR PRIMARY LICENCE**
for selling liquor by the glass at businesses where the primary purpose is to sell liquor (bars, as well as stadiums, theatres, etc.) as well as other businesses that wish to serve liquor as an additional service to their primary business (spas, salons, art galleries, etc).
- 3 MANUFACTURER LICENCE**
for making liquor at a winery, brewery or distillery. Manufacturers can also apply to add a lounge endorsement to their licence.

In the Comox Valley there are:

62 Food Primary licences: (1 Black Creek, 17 Comox, 39 Courtenay, 4 Cumberland)

29 Liquor primary licences: (2 Black Creek, 8 Comox, 17 Courtenay, 2 Cumberland)

11 Manufacturing Licences: (4 Comox, 6 Courtenay, 1 Cumberland)

In addition there are:

16 licensed retail stores (3 Comox, 7 Courtenay, 2 Cumberland, 1 Denman Island, 2 Hornby Island, 1 Black Creek)

4 licensed UBrew/UVin establishments (1 Comox and 3 Courtenay)

Source: [BC Government](#)

While all these establishments are licensed by the provincial government, municipalities have a role to play in the sale and consumption of alcohol that is set out in the Liquor Control and Licensing Act. Municipalities can set local by-laws and policies to guide the community impacts and operations of liquor-related businesses. For example municipalities can establish hours of operation, noise restrictions, good neighbour agreements, size of establishments and proximity to other liquor-related businesses, taking into consideration the impact the establishment may have on the community health, safety and livability.

Cannabis Retail Outlets

In the Comox Valley there are a total of 11 Cannabis licensed outlets (3 in Comox, 1 in Cumberland and 7 in Courtenay). Again while these outlets are licensed by the provincial government, municipalities have a role to play in the sale and consumption of Cannabis. Source: [BC Government](#)

Toxic Drug Poisoning Crisis

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 global pandemic. The restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic heightened the oppression many people in the Comox Valley were already experiencing. People who already faced racism, discrimination, marginalization, violence, exclusion and abuse were disproportionately affected at the height of the pandemic. Oppression continues to be heightened and the toxic drug poisoning deaths continue to climb as the COVID-19 restrictions lessen.

In April 2023, BC's Chief Coroner reported that the drug toxicity is a "crisis of incomprehensible scale" as she announced that the lives lost between January and March of 2023 represented the second-highest total ever recorded in the first three months of a year since B.C. declared a public health emergency in 2016 (BCTV news 2023).

Some of the findings provincially in the BC Coroners Provincial Summary of Unintentional Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths (2023) are:

- 197 suspected unregulated drug deaths in March 2023 and 177 in February 2023. The March numbers represent a 9% increase over March 2022 (181) and an 11% increase over Feb 2023
- Number of unregulated drug deaths in March 2023 equates to about 6.4 deaths per day in BC
- Between January 1 and March 21 2023, Northern Vancouver Island (includes Comox Valley) was one of the highest Health Service Delivery Areas with the highest rates of unregulated drug deaths in the province
- Between January 1 and March 31 2023 71% of those dying were 30 to 59 years of age and 77% of those dying were male
- Between January 1 and Mar 31 2023 84% of deaths occurred inside (47% in private residences, 36% in other inside residences) and 15% occurred outside in vehicles, sidewalks, streets, parks. 2 deaths occurred at Overdose Prevention Sites.
- There is no indication that prescribed safe supply is contributing to unregulated drug deaths.

The common misconception that most people losing their lives are unhoused is not substantiated in the data nor is there evidence that access to safe places to use or access to safer supply of prescribed drugs is contributing to toxic drug deaths.

In the Comox Valley:

13 people died due to toxic drug poisoning in 2020.

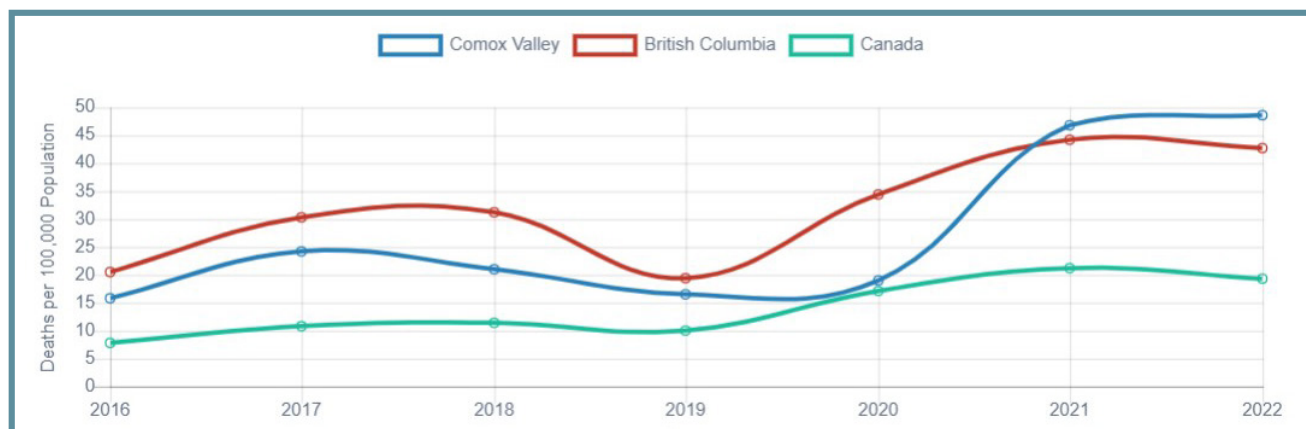
35 people lost their lives to toxic drug poisoning in 2021, an alarming and very sad increase over 2020

37 lives were lost to toxic drugs in 2022

This is a total of **85** preventable deaths in our community in 3 years.

Source: BC Coroners Service (2023)

Between 2016 and 2022 the deaths per 100,000 people in the Comox Valley rose from 15 to 46.1, a larger increase than in either British Columbia or in Canada.



Source: (Vital Signs Data Hub, 2023)

The incidence of toxic drug poisonings amongst Indigenous people and in particular Indigenous women in 2022 is very disturbing. Available data for British Columbia for 2022 indicate that:

FIRST NATIONS AND THE TOXIC DRUG POISONING CRISIS IN BC

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2022

Harm reduction efforts are saving lives but drug toxicity continues at record high levels affecting First Nation families and communities across BC



TOXIC DRUG POISONING DEATHS

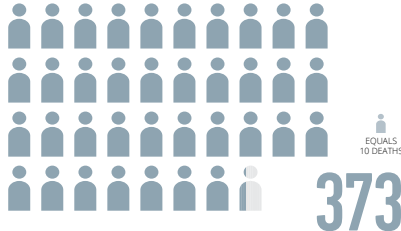
NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO DIED OF TOXIC DRUG POISONING

6.3%

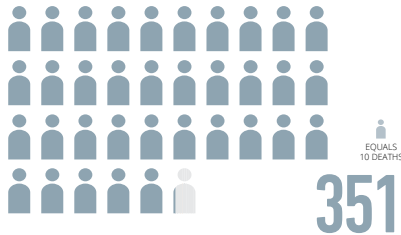


Increase in toxic drug poisoning deaths, compared to the same period in 2021.

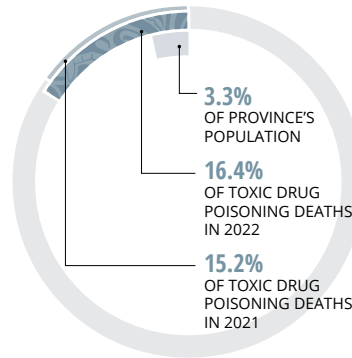
2022



2021



FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY REPRESENTED IN TOXIC DRUG POISONING DEATHS



RATE OF TOXIC DRUG POISONING DEATH

5.9 x

First Nations people died at 5.9 times the rate of other BC residents in 2022. This number was 5.4 in 2021

11.2 x

First Nations women died at 11.2 times the rate of other female BC residents in 2022

4.7 x

First Nations men died at 4.7 times the rate of other male BC residents in 2022

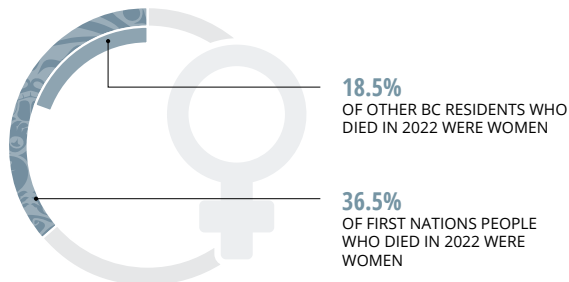
2022

DEATHS OF FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE BY GENDER



Indigenous people who are not recognized as having First Nations status under the Indian Act are not represented in our toxic drug data. Additionally, two-spirit, transgender, non-binary, intersex, and gender diverse people may be identified by the biological sex assigned at birth, and therefore misidentified in the toxic drug data. The FNHA is committed to working with provincial partners towards meaningful, systemic change that will make more inclusive data collection possible. Data are collected as of March 2023 and are subject to change.

FIRST NATIONS WOMEN EXPERIENCE VERY HIGH RATES OF TOXIC DRUG POISONING DEATH



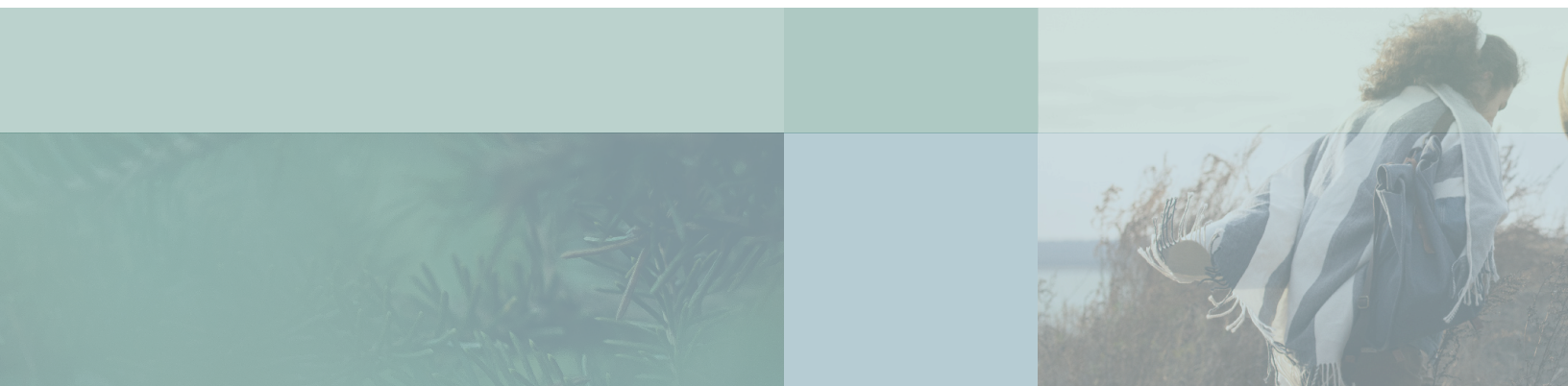
The FNHA gratefully acknowledges the health partners that make this data available: BC Centre for Disease Control, BC Coroners Service, BC Emergency Health Services, and the BC Ministry of Health. You may find this information distressing. Cultural support is available at Tsow Tun Le Lum Society. Call 1-888-403-3123 (toll-free) or visit www.tsowtunlelum.org

Source (with Permission): [First Nations Health Authority](https://www.fnha.ca/)

This data clearly shows why this Strategy needs to be developed within a framework of cultural safety and cultural humility while addressing social inequities across all social determinants of health.

The disparity in responses between the COVID-19 pandemic and the toxic drug poisoning crisis, by all levels of government, dramatically illustrates the stigma and discrimination that shapes policy responses to people who use illicit drugs. The common misconception that a person's substance use is a direct result of their own behaviour, and decisions influences attitudes about the value and appropriateness of publicly funded solutions to the illicit drug toxicity crisis contribute to this disparity (Committee on the Science of Changing Behavioral Health Social Norms, 2016).

Continued high rates of alcohol consumption and daily smoking along with the numbers, locations and hours of liquor and cannabis establishments, the toxic drug crisis and increased perceived life stress all indicate the need for increased substance use and mental health support. These indicators are likely related to intersecting factors such as the ongoing effects of the pandemic and inflation with accompanying higher costs of food and housing. The effect of these ongoing social and economic changes require a coordinated community response to improve individual and community health.



COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE: RECOMMENDATIONS

Together, the recommendations from the research conversations facilitated by the Walk With Me team and recommendations developed by the Committee form the actions to be taken up in Phase Three of the Strategy. Also brought forward here are the ongoing recommendations from Phase One that continue to be relevant.

The recommendations are extensive and broad. The work of Phase Three is to decide what recommendations to start with and then decide who needs to be involved to plan and implement actions to achieve the recommendation. The complete recommendations include a role for coordinating entity or entities to facilitate bringing key people together, suggestions for who could be at a planning table for each recommendation and some key questions to start the discussion about each recommendation. These suggestions are intended as a starting point and can be expanded on. The Collaborative will oversee this work and review the makeup of table membership and the key questions to make sure they are inclusive. Listed here are the broad recommendations. The complete recommendations with supporting suggestions are in Appendix A.

WALKING TOGETHER REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS (WALK WITH ME)

Note: Please read Chapter 6 in the [Walking Together Report](#)

1. Create and implement medical detox service in the Comox Valley
2. Create and implement a recovery-based supportive housing service
3. Expand managed alcohol program services
4. Expand safer supply services
5. Relocate and expand overdose prevention site (OPS) and services
6. Pursue Improvements in opioid agonist therapy (OAT) delivery
7. Pursue a series of networking improvements
8. Create a services hub
9. Pursue service and transportation improvements for remote places, and places without strong transit systems (Hornby and Denman Islands, Cumberland, and others)
10. Address the need for culturally safe services
11. Work to reduce/eliminate stigma in the system

SUBSTANCE USE STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS (COMMITTEE)

Note: Recommendations #12 and 13 are overarching recommendations and apply to all other recommendations and work of the Collaborative.

12. Actively engage and support peers to be involved in every aspect of planning and implementation of the recommendations in the Strategy.
13. Actively practice cultural safety and humility, anti-racism; anti-queer-phobia; anti-ableism, anti-classism and anti-agism and ensure that Cultural Safety principles are enacted in implementation of all Strategy Actions.
14. Comox Valley Substance Use Collaborative will provide oversight and leadership to Implement Phase Three and ongoing recommendations.
15. Update and increase substance use awareness programs for youth and their families.
16. Increase awareness about substance use and access to substance use services specifically for seniors
17. Launch a project that focuses on including business owners and employers as part of the conversation on substance use and harm reduction.
18. Develop or review existing municipal bylaws and policies related to alcohol and cannabis selling establishments to reduce negative impacts to community health, safety, and livability. Work with municipalities to obtain the necessary data.
19. Actively advocate to Federal and Provincial governments for an easily accessible safer supply of drugs
20. Implement a Peer Assisted Care Team (PACT) in the Comox Valley
21. Advocate for more non-market affordable housing for all ages and circumstances.

ONGOING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMUNITY SUBSTANCE USE STRATEGY PHASE ONE REPORT

22. Act on lived experience of people who use substances, their families and the people who support them in the design and implementation of policies, services, changes to existing services, and as qualitative evidence that supports action in our community response to substance use.
23. Engage more intensively with members and organizations from key priority groups such as youth, Indigenous, spiritual and religious, community organizations (e.g., Rotary, Indigenous, and 2SLGBTQIA).
24. Leverage existing political will in the community to advocate for organizational commitment (e.g., coordination, funding and staffing) from service providers (e.g., VIHA, AVI, John Howard Society, etc.) and stakeholders (e.g., RCMP, SD71) for ongoing implementation of the strategy actions.
25. Advocate for peer delivered services and paid positions within all organizations for people with lived/living experience.
26. Secure commitment of key partners & regional stakeholders to apply for provincial and national funding when available. Seek endorsement letters from key partners.
27. Establish ongoing data sharing agreements between the Comox Valley Substance Use Collaborative and local data collectors, including agency program and service evaluation data (e.g., number of individuals who access service, number of naloxone kits distributed, demographic data).
28. Advocate for ongoing provincial and regional collection of data on social determinants about substance use (e.g., why people use substances, social determinants and how they contributed to death or drug poisoning, etc.).
29. Increase collection and reporting of data around access to services & service impact and data on the benefits of substance use.
30. Innovate ways to collaborate across government, academia and community agencies on collection of data.

While the Phase Two Strategy work was being done there were people and organizations continuing to work on responses to substance use and health in the community. As a result many of the recommendations have some emerging work being done and this work will need to be built upon in action planning. For example:

- March 9, 2023 - the Comox Strathcona Regional Hospital District Board approved a memorandum of understanding with Island Health that supports the development of a Community Health Services Hub located in the Comox Valley.
- July 7, 2023 - the Province of BC announced funding for a Peer Assisted Care Team in the Comox Valley
- The Community Action Team (CAT) is supporting the initiation of a peer- run Overdose Prevention Site
- The Community Action Team (CAT) is part of a multi-CAT Safer Supply Working Group through Health Quality BC that has recently published the [CAT Safer Supply Project Tool Kit](#) that will assist with local, provincial and federal advocacy for safer supply

TOWARDS A STRONG COMOX VALLEY SUBSTANCE USE SUPPORT NETWORK

The most consistent message heard in the Committee community engagement and the WWM conversations was that the system is siloed and in all areas there is a need to listen to each other, work together, try new things and be bold. The intent of the Strategy is that good work already being done in many areas in the community will be brought together to form a highly functioning Substance Use Support Network and where there are gaps new supports will be developed.

All of the thirty recommendations listed in this report require a coordinated effort that puts people who use substances at the centre and organizational differences aside. Putting people who are disproportionately affected by substance use due to social inequities, gender differences, racism, anti-queer-phobia, classism, ageism and ableism along with people who use and need substance use supports at the centre of planning for system change is critical. Through engaging in conversations, listening to all perspectives, developing strong relationships, creating actions and pursuing funding significant system change can and will happen.

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APPENDIX

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLLABORATIVE AND ACTION TABLES

WALKING TOGETHER REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Create and implement Medical Detox Service in the Comox Valley

Key to this table: Island Health, Comox Valley Transition Society, Comox Valley Recovery Centre, community recovery and harm reduction service providers, addictions medicine physicians, Medical Health Officer, local governments, peers, Indigenous voices.

Acknowledging: The damage enacted by the lack of an established local medical detox service, including the damage suffered by Peers in transitioning to and from an out-of-town service, and the harms produced through the extensive wait-times in place for Peers to access this service, we recommend a coordinating entity to bring together key players to chart a direction forward.

Key questions include:

- How many medical detox beds are needed?
- How will these be funded?
- How can immediate, low barrier, on-demand medical detox be made available to people seeking this service (including options for people who smoke)?
- How can the barrier of long referral wait-times be reduced?
- How can the gap in transition from medical detox to social detox be closed?
- Is there potential to implement a stronger medical detox program at the Comox Valley Hospital?
- How might a wider “hub” of community services integrate medical detox options?
- Stakeholders should aim to produce concrete results (i.e.: detox beds with low-barrier entry) within as short a time frame as possible.

2. Create and implement a Recovery-based Supportive Housing Service

Key to this table: Island Health, Comox Valley Transition Society, Comox Valley Recovery Centre, community recovery and harm reduction service providers, Dawn to Dawn Action on Homelessness Society, addictions medicine Physicians, Medical Health Officer, local government, peers, Indigenous voices, funders (i.e.: BC Housing and others)

Acknowledging: The lack of Supportive Housing in the Comox Valley, and the damage suffered by Peers who are cycling through patterns of medical and social detox without a sufficient transitional housing option to stabilize their progress, we recommend a coordinating entity bring together key players to chart a direction forward.

Key questions include:

- How many supportive housing units are needed (now and projecting into the future)?
- Who will these units be funded?
- How long should supportive housing be provided to those needing it?
- Should Recovery-based supportive housing be developed as a stand-alone entity with links to medical and social detox programs?
- Should supportive housing include social detox programs? And/or, should supportive housing be developed as part of a multi-staged subsidized treatment program or centre (i.e.: a program that includes medical/social detox and supportive housing as 3-stage components of a live-in residential program)?
- How will people be transitioned into and out of supportive housing towards long-term housing?
- What services and support infrastructures should be integrated into a supportive housing initiative?
- What models should be used for supportive housing (i.e.: Group- Based? Family-Centred? Farm-Based? Culturally Driven? Tiny Home Village?)
- How might supportive housing options integrate within a wider “hub” of community services?
- Stakeholders should aim to produce a series of supportive housing units that address the service needs of people in Recovery.

3. Expand Managed Alcohol Program Services

Key to this table: Island Health, Comox Valley Hospital, AVI Health and Community Services, community harm reduction service providers, addictions medicine physicians, Medical Health Officer, local governments, peers, Indigenous voices, funders.

Acknowledging: The important role Managed Alcohol Programs play both in enabling inpatient care, and in helping to stabilize alcohol use in the community, we recommend a coordinating entity to bring together key players to chart a direction forward.

Key questions include:

- How can patients help lead in establishing their dosing norms?
- How can Managed Alcohol Programs be developed in accordance with a Patient-led approach?
- How can Managed Alcohol Programs be developed in-hospital and in-community?
- How can acute care, long-term care, supportive housing, outpatient, community, NGOs, and others collaborate to develop a Managed Alcohol Program that serves the entire Comox Valley?
- What services and support infrastructures should be integrated into a Managed Alcohol Program initiative?
- How can this model be funded?
- Stakeholders should aim to produce tangible results (i.e.: an expanded Managed Alcohol Program) in short order.

4. Expand Safer Supply Services

Key to this table: AVI Health and Community Services, Island Health, community harm reduction service providers, addictions medicine physicians, local governments, Medical Health Officer, peers, Indigenous voices, funders.

Acknowledging: The important role Safer Supply programs play in reducing reliance on toxic drugs, and in helping to stabilize use, we recommend a coordinating entity to bring together key players to chart a direction forward.

Key questions include:

- How can our community support the Safer Supply work that AVI Health and Community Services is providing in the Comox Valley?
- How can this program, under AVI's direction, be expanded to meet community needs?
- What services and support infrastructures should be integrated into an expanded Safer Supply program?
- How can this expansion be funded?
- This work should aim to produce tangible results (i.e.: an expanded Safer Supply program) that honours and builds on the pioneering work being done by AVI Health and Community Services.

5. Relocate and Expand Overdose Prevention Site (OPS) and Services

Key to this table: Island Health, AVI Health and Community Services, local governments, community harm reduction service providers, Medical Health Officer, peers, Indigenous voices, funders.

Acknowledging: The important role OPS Services play in reducing reliance on toxic drugs, and helping to stabilize use, we recommend a coordinating entity to bring together key players to chart a direction forward.

Key questions include:

- Where should OPS services be located? (i.e.: closer to services like Connect and Travelodge? In community? At the Comox Valley Hospital?)
- How might the hours of OPS be expanded?
- How might inhalation services be included?
- What additional services and support infrastructures should be integrated into an OPS program?
- How might this expansion be funded?
- This work should aim to produce tangible results (i.e.: an expanded/ relocated OPS Service).

6. Pursue Improvements in Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT) Delivery

Key to this table: Comox Valley Transition Society / The Lodge / College of Pharmacists of BC, local OAT providing pharmacists, community harm reduction service providers, Medical Health Officer, peers, Indigenous voices, funders.

Acknowledging: The important role OAT programs play in stabilizing substance use, and the need to ensure availability of OAT services and support staff who can witness OAT consumption, we recommend a coordinating entity to bring together key players to chart a direction forward.

Key questions include:

- How can barriers to OAT witnessing be reduced?
- How can the responsibility for OAT supervision be addressed in such a way as to honour, and utilize the strong links at-play between Community Service Providers and Peers while still maintaining safety in providing OAT supervision responsibly?
- How might we attract more OAT providers to the Comox Valley?
- Should the College of Pharmacists of BC be approached for changes to OAT witnessing protocols?
- This work should aim to produce changes in regulations, leading to stronger OAT delivery practices in the Valley.

7. Pursue a Series of Network Improvements

Key to this table: entire service network, peers, Indigenous voices.

Acknowledging: A series of improvements has been identified as necessary to make our care network run more effectively, we recommend that a coordinating entity bring together network stakeholders throughout the system to chart a direction forward.

Key questions include:

- How can agencies work together efficiently and collaboratively?
- How can an inter-agency communication and client data-sharing system be developed in such a way as to give Peers power over their information? Who will be responsible for the consent process, and how will it work? Is such a system worth recommending? (i.e. do the benefits to Peers of having a system that shares their data with multiple providers thereby allowing for a streamlining of services outweigh the potential risks associated with a loss of privacy in relation to personal data)?
- How can Island Health and community providers work together respectfully, and with clarity around roles and responsibilities?
- How can Peers become involved on front-line navigation and leadership levels in shaping the development of the Network?
- This work should aim to produce tangible changes in the communication channels, effectiveness, and efficiency of our system, and should work to address the power imbalances expressed between Island Health and community Service Providers—creating a stronger network of collaboration.

8. Create a Services Hub

Key to this table: entire service network, peers, Indigenous voices, funders, local governments

Acknowledging: The value of a single point of access centre that provides: primary care, addictions medicine care, mental health care, access to a wide range of community services including medical and social detox, Peer navigators, employment opportunities, and others, we recommend a coordinating entity to bring together network stakeholders throughout the system to chart a direction forward.

Key questions include:

- How can such a centre be designed, developed, and built?
- How can a strategically beneficial group of services be brought together in the centre?
- What partnerships are needed to make such a centre happen?
- What funding sources can be utilized to make such a centre happen?
- This work should aim to produce a brick and mortar services centre designed to provide an amalgamation of services in one place, and access to navigators who can link clients to a wide range of services both inside and outside of the building.

9. Pursue Service and Transportation improvements for Remote Places, and Places Without Strong Transit Systems (Hornby and Denman Islands, Cumberland, and others)

Key to this table: Hornby and Denman Community Health Care Society, City of Cumberland, BC Transit/Comox Valley, Wheels for Wellness, Island Health, Medical Health Officer, peers, Indigenous voices, funders.

Acknowledging: The difficulties involved in the transportation of Peers from the more remote regions of the Comox Valley to in-town services, we recommend that a coordinating entity bring together key players to chart a direction forward.

A key question is:

- What do improvements in both service delivery and transportation to services look like for Peers in these regions?
- This work should aim to produce results that include stronger Harm Reduction and Recovery program delivery in remote places within the Comox Valley, and stronger transportation systems that support the linkages between Peers and in town services.

10. Address the Need for Culturally Safe Services

Key to this table: Elders/Knowledge Keepers, Indigenous organizations, Indigenous peers and leaders, service providers, K'ómoks First Nation, Island Health

Acknowledging: The need expressed for culturally safe services, we recommend a coordinating entity bring together key players to chart a direction forward.

Key questions include:

- How can Cultural Safety principles be brought into existing services?
- What new services are needed that honour the teachings of Cultural Leaders, and show respect for Indigenous ways of knowing and healing?
- This work should be guided by local Elders/Knowledge Keepers and should honour territory and teachings.

11. Work to Reduce/Eliminate Stigma in the System

Key to this table: entire service provider network, peers, local governments

Acknowledging: The expressed need to develop services that are safe for Peers, and that are premised upon an atmosphere of respect, we recommend a coordinating entity to bring together key players to chart a direction forward.

Key questions include:

- How can anti-stigma training be included in the work of our network and its constituent organizations?
- What education, information and/or staff development programs are needed within the Service Provider Network to reduce/eliminate stigma?
- How can service providers work together across the network to advance this work
- This work should be guided by local Peer leaders

SUBSTANCE USE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Note: Recommendations #12 and 13 are overarching recommendations and apply to all other recommendations and work of the Collaborative.

12. Actively engage and support peers to be involved in every aspect of planning and implementation of the recommendations in the Strategy.

Key players at this table: First Nations, Métis and Inuit voices, peers, Substance Use Strategy Collaborative members and Collaborative action planning table members.

Acknowledging: Peers are the experts about the realities of substance use and the inequities that arise when accessing services due to the stigma of substance use. We recommend peers be involved in all planning and actions related to the Strategy and that their involvement include decision-making, leadership and access to paid employment where possible.

Key questions include:

- How will the Collaborative honour the previous Strategy Committee's commitment to peer, First Nations, Métis and Inuit voices and the voices of people traditionally not heard in substance use planning initiatives?
- What actions are being taken to create safe spaces so peers to feel comfortable and safe?
- How are peers supported to be involved in decision making and leadership roles?
- Would considering a [Lived Experience Circle on Substance Use](#) and a Peer Navigator Program be an option to ensure peers are fully involved in solutions for substance use system change?

13. Actively practice cultural safety and humility, anti-racism, anti-queer phobia, anti-ableism, anti-classism and anti-agism in the implementation of Strategy actions.

Key players at this table: First Nations, Métis and Inuit voices, people of colour, black people, gender/sexuality diverse people, people with disabilities, peers, newcomers/immigrants, entire service network, Island Health, First Nations Health Authority, K'òmoks First Nation Health Services, Immigrant Welcome Centre, PRIDE Comox Valley, Division of Family Practice/Primary Care Network, Community Action Team.

Acknowledging: There are social inequities and gender differences that result in discrimination of people who use substances as well as a lack of equitable substance use services, we recommend equity priority groups are brought together with other key players to plan a future direction.

Key questions include:

- How will practices of cultural safety and cultural humility, anti-racism, anti-queer phobia, anti-ableism, anti-classism and anti-agism be included in the work of planning and implementing actions?
- How are cultural safety principles enacted throughout all Strategy actions as they are developed?
- How are people who experience inequity in our community heard and included in the development of actions and implementation of the Strategy?
- Is an equity lens or equitable approach being used when creating policy or new practices to address substance use?
- How are the social determinants of health being addressed in the development of actions and implementation of the strategy?

14. Comox Valley Substance Use Collaborative will provide oversight and leadership to Implement Phase Three and ongoing recommendations.

Key players at this table: entire service network including First Nations and Métis specific services, peers, First Nations, Métis and Inuit voices, equity priority groups, funders, local government, Island Health, First Nation Health Authority, K'òmoks First Nation Health Services, Division of Family Practice/Primary Care Network.

Acknowledging: That creating action and breaking down silos in response to recommendations requires an ongoing coordinated effort across the Comox Valley. We recommend that the CV Substance Use Collaborative act as the coordinating entity to begin this work in Phase Three.

Key questions include:

- How will the Collaborative review, discuss, understand, and match their actions to the foundational Vision, Mission, Belief Statement and Guiding Principles of the Strategy?
- What initial and ongoing education and workshops will the Collaborative do together so everyone is grounded in the foundations of the Strategy?
- Has the Collaborative developed a peer support plan that is being enacted?
- Has the Collaborative developed a resiliency and well-being plan for its members and the substance use network so people are “held up” and supported in a good way as they do this work that is, at times, stressful and difficult?
- How will the Collaborative be structured to be inclusive and function with action tables?
- How can the recommendations be prioritized? What recommendations need to be worked on first?
- How will action tables of the key players for the recommendations be formed and utilized?
- How will decision-makers and funders work with peers, equity priority groups, Indigenous people and substance use services to plan and fund actions?
- How will Collaborative ensure that data agreements are in place and are collected ongoing as data is made available so action tables have “real-time” data to work with while planning and implementing recommendations?
- Where will the Collaborative be housed and supported after Phase Three and how will funding be procured to ensure the sustainability of the Collaborative?

15. Update and increase substance use awareness programs for youth and their families

Key players at this table: Youth, First Nations, Métis and Inuit voices, Comox Valley School District, LINC (City of Courtenay Recreation), John Howard Society (The Station and The Foundry), Island Health, First Nation Health Authority, Island Health Child and Youth Mental Health Services, Pride Comox Valley, K'òmoks First Nation Health Services, Sasamans Society, Indigenous Women's Sharing Society/Unbroken Chain, Division of Family Practice/Primary Care Network

Acknowledging: That youth often go to peers to learn about substances and substance use as they find many adults supporting them “out of touch”, we recommend a coordinating entity to bring together key players to plan a direction forward.

Key questions include:

- How are ideas from First Nations, Métis and Inuit youth, Immigrant youth, gender/sexuality diverse youth, youth with disabilities being included at the planning table for this recommendation and actions?
- How could a school-based youth council to talk about substance use be formed?
- How can an educated peer-based model of substance use education with more real-life examples be implemented to build on the informal process of peer information already happening?
- How can evidence-based education for parents on topics such as trauma, resiliency, emotional connection to youth, and how to support youth to prevent or delay substance use be implemented?
- How can integrated education on harm reduction (drugs, alcohol, smoking, vaping), life skills, safer sex, youth mental health be implemented?
- Can more harm reduction services be implemented within schools in partnership with community agencies providing harm reduction?
- How can youth be engaged in prevention initiatives related to the effects of tobacco, e-cigarettes, cannabis and vaping?

16. Increase Awareness about substance use and access to substance use services specifically for seniors

Key players at this table: Seniors (including immigrants/newcomer seniors, gender/sexuality diverse seniors, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Elders and seniors of colour; seniors serving organizations, Island Health, Community Resource Networks (CV), First Nation Health Authority, K'òmoks First Nation Health Services, Pride Comox Valley, Indigenous Women's Sharing Society/Unbroken Chain, Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry Society, Division of Family Practice/Primary Care Network

Acknowledging: That the number of seniors living in the Comox valley is increasing and it is difficult for seniors to move beyond the stigma associated with substance use to seek support. When they do seek support, access to substance use services for seniors are limited. We recommend a coordinating entity to bring together key players to plan a direction forward.

Key questions include:

- How are seniors from equity priority groups (see recommendation #13) included at the planning table for this recommendation and action?
- What are the current best practices to provide substance use public awareness, education and services for seniors?
- How can an anti-stigma public awareness campaign about substance use directed at seniors be developed?
- What are key messages to be included in a public awareness campaign directed at seniors that helps them understand using substances is not a personal failing and gives them permission to seek support?
- What are gaps and strengths in current substance use service for seniors?
- How can services to seniors be coordinated with existing community services for seniors?
- What education is needed for service providers and community agencies to approach seniors about substance use?

17. Launch a project that focuses on including business owners and employers as part of the conversation on substance use and harm reduction

Key players at this table: Peers, First Nations, Métis and Inuit voices, Chamber of Commerce, municipal business associations, entire service provider network, including First Nation and Métis service organizations, local governments including school district, Comox Valley Community Justice Centre, Island Health, First Nations Health Authority

Acknowledging: The business community and employers are affected by substance use in the community and that they need to be involved in conversations, education sessions and creating solutions, we recommend that a coordinating entity bring together key players to plan a direction forward.

Key questions include:

- How are people from equity-priority groups (see recommendation #13) being included at the planning table for this recommendation and action?
- How are businesses and employers affected by substance use in our community?
- How can the business community and employers be engaged to address substance use in the community?
- What are some solutions so businesses and people who use substances are both heard and accommodated?
- What kind of educational/awareness programs are businesses and employers interested in?
- How can the business community and employers be engaged in addressing stigma towards people who use substances in our community. A source of ideas might be [EACH+EVERY \(eachandevery.org\)](http://eachandevery.org)
- How could this work aim to produce accurate information and more respect, understanding and relationships between businesses and people who use substances

18. Develop or review existing municipal bylaws and policies related to alcohol and cannabis sales and selling establishments to reduce negative impacts to community health, safety and livability

Key players at this table: Local governments, peers, Chamber of Commerce, cannabis outlet operators; liquor store operators, liquor serving establishment operators, citizens, youth, Indigenous and Metis voices, Island Health, First Nations Health Authority, K'òmoks First Nation Health Services

Acknowledging: That municipalities can set local by-laws and policies to guide such things as hours of operation, size of establishments and proximity to other liquor-related businesses in consideration of the impacts on community health, safety and livability, we recommend that a coordinating entity bring together key players to plan a direction forward.

Key questions include:

- What impact or potential impacts do liquor and cannabis establishments have on the health, safety and livability of a community?
- What current municipal by-laws and policies guide liquor and cannabis establishments?
- How can the Collaborative work with local municipalities to get data about sales and locations of liquor and cannabis establishments by municipality so there is good local data to support review and development of municipal by-laws?
- How many liquor selling or serving establishments need to be in any area?
- How close should liquor and cannabis establishments be to each other?
- What are consistent, reasonable hours for selling and serving liquor?
- Are there areas of the region that should not have liquor or cannabis establishments nearby?
- What are local government processes for liquor or cannabis establishments to apply for permits or variances - are they clear and fair?

19. Actively Advocate to Federal and Provincial governments for an easily accessible safer supply of drugs

Key players at this table: Peers, Community Action Team, local governments including school district, Comox Valley MLA and MP, local advocates (eg Moms Stop the Harm), AVI Health and Community Services, First Nations, Métis and Inuit voices, Indigenous Women's Sharing Society/Unbroken Chain, Division of Family Practice/Primary Care Network; local Opiate Antagonist Treatment (OAT) providing pharmacists.

Acknowledging: The decriminalization pilot project in BC has the potential to reinforce that substance use is a health issue and reduce stigma and marginalization towards people who use substances. As it will not decrease the make-up of an increasingly more toxic unregulated drug supply, sustained advocacy is needed. We recommend that a coordinating entity bring together key players to plan a direction going forward.

Key questions include:

- How are people from equity priority groups (see recommendation #13) who use the toxic unregulated drug supply included at the planning table for this recommendation and action?
- Who needs to be included in a sustained advocacy campaign?
- What needs to be included in a sustained advocacy campaign?
- What are the important messages to include in a campaign?
- What changes in legislation are needed to increase a safer supply of drugs?
- What services/supports need to be in place to support an accessible safe supply of drugs?
- What do peers consider an accessible safer supply of drugs?
- What are a variety of options to provide a safer supply of drugs so people using substances have a choice depending on their health and social needs?

20. Implement a Peer Assisted Care Team (PACT) in the Comox Valley

Key players at this table: Peers, First Nations, Métis and Inuit voices, local governments, MLA, Medical Health Officer, Island Health, First Nations Health Authority, Division of Family Practice/Primary Care Network, Community Action Team (CAT), Homeless Response Team, harm reduction service providers, peer support providers; AVI Health and Community Services, Indigenous Women's Sharing Society/Unbroken Chain, Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry Society, K'òmoks First Nation Health Services

Acknowledging: People having a mental health crisis in the community are best supported by a Peer Assisted Care Team (PACT) of a trained peer and a mental health professional that shifts care during a crisis to a community-based, client-centered, trauma-informed response. We recommend that a coordinating entity bring together key players to chart a direction forward.

Key questions include:

- How are people from equity-priority groups (see recommendation #13) being included at the planning table for this recommendation and action?
- Is there an Agency that could oversee the operation of a PACT?
- How could a PACT operate in the Comox Valley?
- How will a PACT be integrated with other outreach services?
- How will a PACT be funded?
- How will the community know how to reach the PACT when needed?
- How will Peers and Indigenous and Metis people be integrated into the PACT?
- How will the impact of a PACT be measured?

21. Advocate more non-market affordable housing for all ages and circumstances

Key players at this table: Peers, Indigenous and Metis voices, local governments, housing providers, Coalition to End Homelessness, MLA, MP, BC Housing, developers, modular home developers; housing support service providers.

Acknowledging: A supply of available, non-market affordable housing is an important first step to address substance use, as stable housing facilitates access to prevention, harm reduction and treatment. We recommend a coordinating entity to bring together key players to chart a direction forward.

Key questions include:

- How are people from equity-priority groups (see recommendation #13) being included at the planning table for this recommendation and action?
- How can local governments create and adopt a definition of housing affordability for the region similar to what has recently been done in the Municipality of Saanich?
- What needs to be included in a comprehensive plan to increase low income and low barrier housing and support quickly?
- How can land be found for affordable housing?
- How can local governments support low income affordable housing through by-law and policy changes?
- What non-traditional forms of housing can be considered (e.g. Tiny home communities built to support specific needs including for people who use substance, people in recovery, youth, LGBTQ2S+, and female)
- What can be done to address community concerns about some housing projects?
- How can awareness be promoted about all forms of housing and address discrimination in communities?



WALKING TOGETHER

TOWARDS A STRONGER, MORE
INTEGRATED SUBSTANCE USE SUPPORT
NETWORK IN THE COMOX VALLEY

Gaps and Strengths Analysis

MARCH 2023

With Gratitude to our Partners:



And Funders:



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ETHICS STATEMENT

For the research described in this work, human research ethics approval was obtained from Thompson Rivers University's Office of Research Ethics.

ABSTRACT

The Comox Valley, as with many communities in BC, is being hit with a series of compounding crises including (but not limited to): a global pandemic that has produced new levels of social isolation; a toxic drug supply that is causing fatalities at unprecedented rates; and a housing affordability/income disparity crisis that leaves many in our community underhoused and living in poverty. In the midst of these crises substance use-related harms are increasing. This research investigates the state of the Comox Valley's Substance Use Support Network through a Gaps and Strengths analysis. It calls upon stakeholders in the community (Service Providers, Peers, Local Government, Community Members) to come together to build on strengths, fill gaps, and create a comprehensive care continuum in support of people who use substances.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We recognize and humbly acknowledge our place on the unceded, traditional territory of the K'ómoks Peoples. We give respect to this land and to those who have been its caretakers since time immemorial.

DEDICATION

This piece is dedicated to those who shared their stories and insights with courage, and to those whose lives have been lost. We honour all whose names have been spoken in memory—whose stories continue to compel us forward in pursuit of transformation. We honour you, and think about you often—especially when we walk.

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LIST OF KEY TERMS

Benzodiazepines	A class of depressant drugs sometimes used for treatment of anxiety; when combined with other drugs, can increase toxicity and propensity for fatality.
Fentanyl	A synthetic opiate, approximately 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin.
MAP	Managed Alcohol Program: a program providing a regular dose of alcohol to individuals with alcohol addiction.
Naloxone	A medication that rapidly reverses the effects of a drug poisoning by opioids.
OAT	Opioid Agonist Therapy: treatment for addiction to opioid drugs such as heroin, oxycodone, hydromorphone, fentanyl, and Percocet. The therapy involves, often, taking opioid agonists methadone (Methadose) or buprenorphine (Suboxone). These medications work to prevent withdrawal and reduce cravings for opioid drugs.
OPS	Overdose Prevention Site: designated sites where drug consumption is witnessed, leading to immediate response in the event of a toxic drug poisoning.
Peer	In this report, people located in the Comox Valley who currently use, or have used, substances, and who have attempted to access substance use support services over the past two years.
Safer Supply	A practice that allows prescribers to give access to maintenance doses of pharmaceutical alternatives to unregulated toxic substances, within a Harm Reduction paradigm.

1

INTRODUCTION: ABOUT THIS REPORT

“Walking Together” is a research and community engagement initiative several years in the making, that investigates the network of services and supports available to People Who Use Substances (Peers) in the Comox Valley. The report aims to:

- Investigate the state of the Substance Use Support Network in the Comox Valley, shining light on strengths and gaps within this system;
- Produce recommendations leading to the strengthening of this network and to improvements in local service delivery for Peers;
- Raise awareness of endogenous assets that can mobilize towards developing stronger support networks;
- Create opportunities for long-term network-strengthening activities that enable sustained learning and growth.

This report is authored by Walk With Me—a Community-engaged research initiative housed by Comox Valley Art Gallery in partnership with Thompson Rivers University, Vancouver Island University, and North Island College.¹ The Walk With Me team (which includes researchers, Peers, Elders/ Knowledge Keepers, and Outreach Workers)

has collaborated with the Comox Valley Community Health Network’s Substance Use Strategy Comitee and AVI Health and Community Services to release this report.

Our work consolidates insights gathered from research sessions and presents resulting recommendations. Adhering to the practice of “nothing about us without us,” our team’s Peer researchers and Elder were involved in every stage of data collection and analysis. This work builds on two recent reports: *Walk With Me Policy Report—Comox Valley (2021)*¹ and the Comox Valley Community Substance Use Strategy Committee’s *Phase One Report (2021)*.² Together these reports present a comprehensive set of considerations and insights related to substance use in the Comox Valley.

Our analysis begins in Chapter 2 with a discussion of the term “substance use” and with an exploration of the ways in which Substance Use Disorder is—in Western and Canadian culture and political frameworks—socially conceived, understood, and discussed. In Chapter 3 we speak to the relevance of this exploration: illuminating key societal, national, provincial, and local trends related to different types of substance use and their impacts. In Chapter 4 we speak to the methodologies we used for this report, setting the stage for Chapter 5, Findings, in

¹ The original title for CVAG’s work with Thompson Rivers University was: Cultural Mapping the Opioid Crisis in Kamloops and Comox Valley, BC. The title “Walk With Me” serves as a branch of this larger project. The scope of this Comox Valley-specific project has been altered to examine the Valley’s substance use network at-large, including (but not limited to) opioid-based support networks.

which we explore the gaps and strengths evident within the Comox Valley's Substance Use Support Network. In Chapter 6 we present recommendations for strengthening these frameworks. Chapter 7 concludes with a summary of our work and findings.

This report is of relevance to anyone who uses substances in the Comox Valley, participates in these networks, and/or makes decisions related to policy, procedure and funding related to these networks. It is also of relevance to anyone wishing to learn more about the ways in which the Comox Valley Substance Use Support Network functions in this community. By exploring the state of our existing Substance Use Support Network, and by making a series of recommendations, we pursue a vision for community wellness in which people who use substances are supported, included, and valued as members of our community.

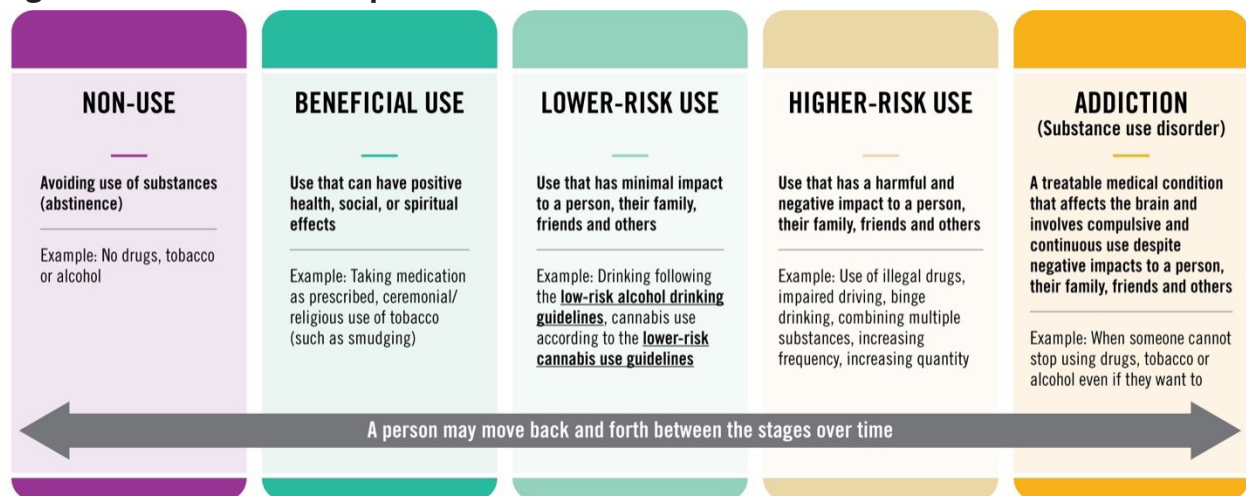
2 CONTEXT

In this chapter, we explore the questions: “What is substance use?” and “How do we think about the role of Substance Use Support Networks?” Here we discuss various ways of understanding Substance Use Disorder through criminal justice, health, and ecological perspectives. We explore the terms “Harm Reduction” and “Recovery,” and argue for a support network model in which both types of services are valued as part of a wider care continuum. Our work address notions of “Stigma” and “Cultural Safety” as they exist within this continuum and points to methods for stigma reduction and Cultural Safety enhancement. As a whole, this chapter brings attention to the dominant perspectives, debate, and available data that inform our current Substance Use Support Network, and suggests ways in which this knowledge can inform systems change.

2.1. What is Substance Use?

“Substance use” refers in this report to the use of drugs and/or alcohol and includes substances such as “cigarettes, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, inhalants and solvents.”³ Substance use changes the way we feel; it is deeply embedded in our culturally-constructed habits and has served many different purposes throughout history: “to celebrate successes, help deal with grief and sadness, to mark rites of passage such as graduations and weddings and seek spiritual insight.”⁴ Substance use can be beneficial and can have positive health, social or spiritual impacts (see Figure 1). Substance use can also entail a level of risk and potential harm. Potential risks and harms vary with substances and their use-context. For instance, much of tobacco’s chronic

Figure 1: Substance Use Spectrum



⁶Figure produced by Government of Canada:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/about-problematic-substance-use.html>

harms stem from inhalation of smoke rather than from the drug itself.⁵ Harm related to consumption of alcohol can be associated with the place and patterns associated with its use: for example, increased harms associated with drinking and driving. In many instances, harms stem from the composition of substances and their physiological impact. The rise in potency and toxicity within the unregulated drug market in recent years is producing extreme risk for people who use these substances.

A subset of those who use substances are unable to control their use and can be said to have a Substance Use Disorder (SUD). According to the Canadian Government, this term refers to a “treatable medical condition that affects the brain and involves compulsive and continuous use [of substances] despite negative impacts to a person, their family, friends and others.”⁷ Approximately 21 percent of the Canadian population is projected to struggle with SUD at some point in their lifetime.⁸ Substance Use Disorders can range in severity from mild to severe.

While not all people who access Substance Use Support Networks identify as having SUD, many do. When substance use is uncontrolled and damaging to a person’s life and relationships, support networks are needed. These networks help those who suffer from SUD to regain balance and control. This can look like stabilization of use (i.e. Managed Alcohol Programs, vaping, Opioid Agonist Therapies, Safer Supply), reduction or removal of reliance on substances (i.e. medical detox, social detox, Alcoholics Anonymous, group therapy, and others), and/or the fulfillment of core human needs which when left unaddressed can lead to a loss of other supports that can feed back into SUD (i.e. housing, family stability, cultural inclusion, mental health supports, and others). A complex array of factors, including social, biological, and systemic feed into SUD.^{9, 10}

While SUD impacts people on all levels of the socioeconomic spectrum, a robust literature documents higher rates of SUD amongst people with low socioeconomic status.^{11, 12, 13} Stressors associated with poverty impact an individual’s capacity to control and manage substance use. Further, certain demographics—including Indigenous people, and men aged 19–59, with strong representation from those working in trades^{14, 15, 16}—are disproportionately represented in SUD-related mortality statistics. These statistics draw attention to the ways in which SUD is a product of complex realities involving colonization and racism. They also point to the role that workplace/societal cultures and parameters play in exacerbating SUD. For many, SUD is shrouded in stigma and shame, leading to a reluctance to seek help.

Given these multiple and complex contributing factors and demographics, we advocate for a nuanced spectrum of support—one that holds capacity to address the unique and varied needs and situations of individuals suffering from SUD. The supports that are needed within this spectrum include Harm Reduction and Recovery-based approaches,¹⁷ and also cultural approaches, in addition to supports that address fundamental human needs. Each of these approaches exists within a spectrum of care.¹⁸ When this spectrum of care functions properly, this Substance Use Support Network should meet people where they are at: addressing an individual’s unique needs as evident in a particular moment in time.¹⁹

2.2. How do We Think About Substance Use Support Networks?

Through histories of cultural bias, colonization, and government-lead and funded campaigns of shame and stigma, SUD and associated frameworks of support

occupy a place of deviance and criminality in popular imagination and culture. Canada's history during the first two decades of the twentieth century is shaped, in part, by the attempts of provinces, one after another, to criminalize production and consumption of alcohol. In the end, total prohibition proved unenforceable and contributed to new, lucrative, and dangerous forms of organized crime.²⁰ The influence of this temperance movement continues today in the persistence of "provincial liquor control boards, restrictions on advertising, and strict rules governing places where alcohol is served."²¹ Similar restrictions are in-place in relation to cannabis since being legislated by the *Cannabis Act* in 2018.²²

The legal framework for Canada's drug control policy was established in the early 1900's—the *Opium Act* and its amendments, which came into force in the early 1900's, listed a range of opiate and stimulant substances as prohibited.²³ In 1969, the Pierre Trudeau Government's Commission of Inquiry into the Non-Medical Use of Drugs recommended a medical, rather than criminal, approach to drug legislation. Unfortunately and in response to the findings of the commission, the government's desire to favour production of criminality over evidence-based solutions became zealous.²⁴ The War on Drugs rhetoric and legislation championed by the Reagan administration in the United States in the 1980's was taken up in turn by the Mulroney administration in Canada—in the 1987 *Action on Drug Abuse: Canada's Drug Strategy*, which provided significant funding for drug enforcement.²⁵ In 2007 The Harper Government released the *National Anti-Drug Strategy*, a report that provisioned heavy-handed reliance on law enforcement which exacerbated rather than remediated Canada's drug use issues.²⁷

Drug enforcement policy in Canada has also been used to control immigrant and racialized communities. Federal drug-based legislation throughout the 20th century was

"often based on moral judgments about specific groups of people and the drugs they were using," rather than on "scientific assessments of their potential for harm."²⁸ These laws enforced government sanctioned systemic forms of anti-Black, anti-Indigenous and anti-immigrant racism. They increased police and government capacity to criminalize racialized individuals which aided in stripping away their human rights.

In recent years, various levels of government have moved to position SUD as a health, rather than criminal justice, issue. Calls for decriminalization of small amounts of personal possession of unregulated substances have come from the Canada's Chiefs of Police, from BC's Premiers, BC's Medical Health Officer, and from Mayors and Councils. On January 31, 2023, legislation came into force in BC that decriminalized personal possession of small amounts of certain formerly unregulated drugs.²⁹ BC has also introduced limited Safer Supply programs, which although slow to roll out, are important mechanisms in combatting the toxicity of the drug market.³⁰

Substance use-related societal issues involve a history of complex relationships including substance use legislation and enforcement on one hand, and structural/ societal forms of racism, stigmatization, and discrimination on another. Moves to both legalize and decriminalize substances today represent progressive responses rooted in evidence-based public health models of legislation. These moves facilitate a balance and management of substance use, and they recognize SUD as a disease rather than a moral, cultural, or criminal failing.

2.3. SUD from an Ecological Lens

Substance use is increasingly understood as an ecological phenomenon—a part of a large system and network of interrelated factors.

Here, SUD is considered not only as a disease but as a symptom of a diseased society—one in which communities are losing capacity to create meaning and belonging for their members. Substance use fills a gap created by the absence of inclusion, belonging, and hope for a better future.

Social determinants of health comprise important considerations within an ecological model. This model recognizes factors related to race, income, education, access to healthy food, and many other variables (and risk factors) that can contribute to SUD.³¹ An ecological framework views strengthening support networks as essential to reduce substance use related harms: to mitigate the imbalances in systems that discriminate against people who face significant health determinant injustice. From an ecological perspective, communities grappling with SUD need to strengthen their support networks. To make this change, the spaces and services that present as opportunities for change and improvement must position themselves as spaces and services that promote inclusion, belonging, and hope for the future.

This report, which examines the Comox Valley's Substance Use Support Network, springs from an ecological grounding. We ask how the entities supporting People Who Use Substances in the Valley are working together and within a wider support and community ecology. We look at strengths at-play within this network and at ways in which it can be strengthened.

2.4. Harm Reduction

Health and ecological paradigms alike see Harm Reduction as a key component of a restorative framework designed to counter and reverse rising mortality rates and improve quality of life for Peers. Harm Reduction is defined in this report as an “evidence-based, client-centred approach that seeks to reduce the health and social harms associated with addiction and

substance use, without necessarily requiring Peers from abstaining or stopping.”³² This approach includes a series of practices that give Peers options for minimizing harms through non-coercive and non-judgmental strategies. Countering the myth that Harm Reduction “enables” substance use, a growing body of research links Harm Reduction activities with a higher uptake in treatment with no observable growth in usage.³³ Harm Reduction strategies have also been proven to reduce crime and produce stronger health outcomes for Peers.³⁴ While Canada's history of punitive substance use policy magnifies the harms associated with substance use, Harm Reduction seeks to restore dignity and respect to Peers, and to create supportive frameworks through which individual and communal healing can occur.

Health agencies play an important role in advancing or undermining Harm Reduction principles. Research identifies cultures of stigma prevalent throughout British Columbia's health system which contribute to “poorer quality of care and health outcomes”: *In Plain Sight*, a report released by Métis Nation British Columbia,³⁵ demonstrates that anti-Indigenous racism is systemically embedded within BC's health system and is linked with stereotyping behaviour, in which for instance, Indigenous clients are frequently labelled as drug-seeking, “less worthy of care,” “bad parents,” “frequent flyers” (presumed to be misusing or over-using the health system), and “less capable.” Additional research accomplished by Walk With Me³⁶ provides vivid examples in which Peers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, persistently receive sub-standard care and are stigmatized while engaged in the health care system—especially within acute care settings. Work is needed to counter these realities by embedding Harm Reduction principles into our care systems and into the philosophies that underpin how our care systems operate.

2.5. Recovery

The term “Recovery” has at times been juxtaposed against the term “Harm Reduction”—particularly in North America where (unlike in Europe) abstinence has historically played a more central role in substance use treatment practices.³⁷ Recovery, in our use of the term, refers to a way of addressing SUD through abstinence from (rather than stabilization of) substance use.³⁸ While for many years Harm Reduction and Recovery have been framed as polar opposites, in which debates were waged arguing the value of either Harm Reduction or Recovery, many now see this juxtaposition as a false dichotomy. Evidence has shown both approaches as important facets within a comprehensive care continuum.^{39, 40, 41, 42} Many with SUD move between Recovery and Harm Reduction services at various points in their wellness journey—an important reality to consider when seeking to strengthen the substance use network at-large.

2.6. Stigma

Within health systems, stigmatization occurs on multiple levels simultaneously, including “intrapersonal (i.e. self-stigma), interpersonal (i.e. relations with others), and structural (i.e. discriminatory and/or exclusionary policies, laws, and systems).”⁴³ If a health system fails to adopt Harm Reduction principles, it can reinforce realities of self-stigma, reduce client willingness to access or pursue help, and perpetuate systemic forms of discrimination, such as through poor quality care standards and a lack of appropriate resource provision.^{44, 45} Alternatively, health systems that adopt a Harm Reduction philosophy and practice signal the intent to counter stigmatizing realities and enable those at the heart of the crisis to access inclusive care. BC’s Provincial Health Officer, in a widely celebrated report, *Stopping the Harm: Decriminalization of people who use drugs in BC*, calls for a systemic Harm Reduction push within the province’s health systems

using a “public health Harm Reduction and human-rights-oriented approach.”⁴⁶ This call has been taken up, to various degrees, by provincial health agencies,⁴⁷ and also by the Walk With Me research team which sees the pursuit of Harm Reduction as an important step forward in reversing the rapid rise in substance use mortality.

Island Health, one of BC’s five regional health authorities, released its first Harm Reduction Policy in the summer of 2022. This policy is the second (after Vancouver Coastal Health) to be released among BC’s health authorities, and it marks a progressive step forward as it formally commits Island Health and its staff to a stance that minimizes “negative health, social and legal impacts associated with...unregulated and regulated substance use, substance use policies, and laws that criminalize People Who Use Drugs.”⁴⁸ The policy’s release is one step of many in the development of systems change.

2.7. Cultural Safety

The practice of Cultural Safety is promoted within health and care systems to combat realities rooted in stigma, racism and colonization. First Nations Health Authority defines Cultural Safety as “an outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the health care system.” Cultural Safety pursues “an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe when receiving health care.”⁴⁹ Cultural Safety recognizes the colonizing histories embedded within established health systems and the ways in which these systems have historically excluded, marginalized, and abused Indigenous peoples. In recent years, numerous health institutions, including the BC Ministry of Health, BC Regional Health Authorities, BC Coroner’s Service, and BC Regulators, have formally committed to the development of Cultural Safety principles.⁵⁰ These principles can support health systems in better-serving First Nations clients and

challenge the systemic judgements held by systems against People Who Use Substances while recognizing and honouring the humanity of those seeking care.

2.8. Summary

In this chapter, we described the complexity of the terrain in which the Substance Use Support Network is positioned. In what follows, we delve further into existing research which shows how Substance Use Disorders associated with particular substance use consumption trends, related to alcohol, tobacco and cannabis and unregulated drugs, have been addressed on a socio-political level in Canada, BC, and in North Vancouver Island communities.

3

RELEVANCE

We are living in a moment of crisis and change. Social, political, legal, and cultural attitudes towards how our society understands substance use are shifting—though many feel the rate of change is incommensurate with the urgency demanded by the crisis. As our state of crisis worsens, and as people increasingly experience loss and trauma associated with SUD first-hand, the gaps and strengths in our communities' capacities for response become increasingly apparent. These gaps present opportunities for change.

In what follows, we present current data and research related to each of the following four substances use categories—alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, and unregulated drugs (categories for which there exists a level of publicly available local data). Here we show how change is occurring through legislative and community reform—speaking to national, provincial, and local trends.

3.1. Alcohol

Data tells a clear story of escalating alcohol consumption and harm in BC. The University of Victoria's Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research (CISUR) offers two powerful tools for tracking and analyzing change, including a Per-Capita Alcohol Consumption (PCA) trend analyzer tool covering 2002 to 2021,⁵¹ and an Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) trend analyzer tool that describes premature death and hospitalization in the Province from 2007 to 2019.⁵² Between 2002

to 2021, per-capita alcohol consumption in BC increased from approximately 8.2L of pure alcohol to 9.2L per-year. Across the province, alcohol consumption spiked with the COVID 19 Pandemic.^{53, 54, 55} Vancouver Island Health Authority (Island Health) has moved from 8.9L to 11.7L, the second highest Provincial Health Authority average for alcohol consumption in the province, a rate consistently above Northern Health (10.7L in 2021) and beneath Interior Health (13.6L in 2021).

We know consumption of alcohol has associated harms. The Comox Valley Local Health Area (CV), where our work in this report is situated, experienced some of the highest reported rates of alcohol related hospitalization in all of BC in 2019 (412.7/100,000, up from 271.9/100,000 in 2015)—a rate that has spiked in tandem with the rest of Vancouver Island. Notably in Northern Vancouver Island, in communities adjacent to the Comox Valley, alcohol-related hospitalization is occurring at absolutely alarming rates: almost double the rate of the Comox Valley—well above Northern and Interior BC which hold much higher average alcohol related harm rates than the rest of the Province's Health Authorities.⁵⁶ In neighbouring communities towards Tofino and above Campbell River, there is an extreme and escalating alcohol consumption and associated harm crisis underway.

While increasing alcohol consumption and accompanying negative consequences are unfolding in BC, the Federal Canadian Centre

on Substance Use and Addictions (CCSUA) released new guidelines in January 2023 that promote the health benefits of abstinence from alcohol. This represents a radical shift from their previous guidelines. Researchers from CCSUA now suggest there are elevated health risks for people consuming more than two standard glasses a week—an unprecedented claim.⁵⁷ Prior guidelines, only a decade old, recommended less than 10 and 15 drinks per week for women and men respectively to avoid long-term negative health outcomes. Authorities now stand behind substantial studies that refute all ideas that drinking can or should be linked to health benefits.⁵⁸ There is also a growing push to attach the kind of cancer-risk labels to alcoholic beverages that are now seen on cigarette packages, and a Bill is currently before Canadian Parliament to affect this change.^{59, 60}

3.2. Tobacco

A different situation is playing out with tobacco consumption—tobacco-related morbidity rates in BC, Canada, and North America have declined marginally or held steady over the past decade,⁶¹ and the pandemic does not appear to have significantly altered associated death and hospitalization trends in BC.⁶² However, in the Comox Valley, rates of death and hospitalization remain higher than BC's average⁶³ and, as in the rest of the nation, tobacco-related illnesses remain the leading preventable cause of illness and premature death by a considerably wide margin.⁶⁴

3.3 Cannabis

In contrast to tobacco, much has changed regarding the use of cannabis. There has been a dramatic reduction in the harms caused by criminalization of cannabis use. The national legalization of cannabis in Canada in 2018 correlates to a reduction in harm caused by the criminal justice system

for this substance.^{65, 66}

When mandatory penalties for possession were still being enforced in 2014, Canadian police were dealing with a cannabis-related and “criminal” incident every 9 minutes.⁶⁷ The cost of prohibition was in the billions.⁶⁸ The legalization of cannabis has allowed for significant refocus of resources away from criminalization and towards other social concerns. Legalization started with an election promise from the federal Liberal party which took office in 2015 and moved quickly to implement this change. While cannabis associated crime has seen “drastic reduction,”⁶⁹ preliminary findings suggest that there are weak if any links between legalization and observable changes with respect to hospitalization, mortality, and illness related to cannabis consumption.⁷⁰

Though a great deal of new studies are forthcoming detailing how cannabis influences health,⁷¹ data regarding mortality is difficult to untangle. We can however observe that in BC, the number of cannabis offences dropped from 17,723 in 2012 to only 8 in 2021 (a drop attributable, perhaps, to legalization through the *Cannabis Act* where illegal non-sanctioned cannabis activities were targeted as a result).⁷² Further, the total number of drug offences in the Comox Valley fell by over 50% from 371 in 2012 to 159 in 2020.⁷³ When considering cannabis use and all observable social harm data, we see that the act of removing cannabis from the criminal justice system correlates to a reduction in crime and with few if any observable changes in health-outcomes so far.⁷⁴

3.4. Illicit Drugs

In contrast to the situation with cannabis, the unregulated and criminalized toxic drug trade has produced a dramatically increased number of hospitalizations, premature deaths, and deaths since 2014, and its impact is not declining in BC.^{75, 76, 77} In April

2016 BC's Health Officer declared a public health emergency due in part to the high toxicity of fentanyl in the illicit drug supply. Over 11,390 lives have been lost in BC to the crisis between 2016 and 2022, including over 141 in the Comox Valley.⁷⁸ Toxic drug related deaths in the Comox Valley have risen dramatically in recent years—from 11 in 2016 to 37 in 2022.⁷⁹

Decriminalization of illicit street drugs has begun but with far less urgency and speed than the move to regulate cannabis. On January 31st, 2023, Health Canada provided BC with an exemption to the federal *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* for three years that allows adults to possess very small amounts of opioids, crack and powder cocaine, methamphetamine, and MDMA without criminal charges or seizure.⁸⁰ If possession is discovered, individuals are to be supported in reaching out for health and social services for addictions, mental health, and recovery when requested.⁸¹ Even as this small change represents a “too little” and “too late” allowance, and looks nothing like the legalization process accomplished through the *Cannabis Act*,⁸² it does mark significant change and an opportunity to expand the measure through continued advocacy and social pressure.

Since 2016, the Province has responded to the toxic drug poisoning crisis by advancing public education, implementing targeted information campaigns, increasing access to trauma and mental health counseling, increasing access to opioid agonist therapies, distributing naloxone kits, increasing toxicological testing of drugs, expanding Harm Reduction services (i.e. establishing toxic drug death prevention services and expanding supervised consumption sites), developing a ministry focused on mental health and addictions, and recently, taking a first small step towards decriminalization. Some of these efforts are substantive, and before the pandemic arose, the data suggests these efforts may have been

working to reduce harm; however, while harm has increased through the COVID-19 pandemic, the pandemic has also shown us what real health emergency mobilization looks like. Reflecting on the government's deployment of public health resources in response to the pandemic, which has claimed far fewer lives than the toxic drug poisoning crisis in BC (less than half),^{83,84} it is difficult to locate—apart from prejudice, stigma, red-tape, and complaints of complexity—what exactly is preventing more rapid and better supported systemic change. Opportunities exist to build consensus and effect evidence-based decisions: federally, provincially, regionally, and locally in the Comox Valley. We can lead the way.

3.5. Summary

Above-average (within the province) and generally increasing morbidity with respect to all substance use in the Comox Valley speaks to our community's need to strengthen local networks of care and belonging in relation to People Who Use Substances. Evidence points to the need for radical action to support people seeking balance in their relationship with substances. The pursuit of a strong network of care and support services for People Who Use Substances is not only a local impulse locally, but a growing and deep field of social concern and exploration for society within the context of multiple evolving crises (i.e. housing, public health, and environmental loss).

Harm Reduction, as a movement unfolding within our current economic and environmental climate, and as a response to compounding layers of crisis, is allowing communities like ours to take stock of the ways in which we provide substance use supports and mobilize rapid change.

4 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, we outline the techniques and strategies we've used to gather data and speak to the research processes and practices we used to develop our recommendations. This chapter sets the stage for Chapter 5, Findings, where we take readers through a series of insights provided by research participants, and Chapter 6, Recommendations, where we consolidate our understanding into actionable goals.

4.1. Definition of "Substance Use Support Network"

In this report, we define the "Comox Valley Substance Use Support Network" broadly as the network of organizations and projects/initiatives working to support People Who Use Substances in the Comox Valley. This definition includes organizations whose work is rooted in Harm Reduction, Recovery, health and mental health services, as well as in the "upstream" areas that have impact on the substance use ecology, including housing, policing, education, and others. When recruiting research participants, we asked community groups to self-identify whether (or not) their services/organizational activities exist as part of this network.

4.2. Definition of "Peers"

The use and intended meaning of the term "Peers" is highly contextualized. In this report, we use "Peers" to signify people located in the Comox Valley who currently use, or have used, substances, and who

have attempted to access substance use support services over the past two years. In literature and generally in Harm Reduction discourse, "Peers" can describe People With Lived and Living Experience (PWLLE) of crisis (homelessness, poverty, SUD and more). Calls for and inclusion of "Peers" in power structures, in the context of "nothing about us without us," are about the value, humanity, skills, professionalism, ethics, lived insight, knowledge, and capacities that Peers can uniquely supply for fostering change. The term "Peer" is not mutually exclusive: a Peer may also be a front-line worker, for example, or an Indigenous Traditional Knowledge Keeper.

4.3. Definition of "Cultural Mapping"

Our research practice uses "cultural mapping" as its core methodology. This methodology was developed and brought into research contexts by Indigenous communities and community development proponents in the 1990's and early 2000's.^{85,86} Cultural mapping involves deep storytelling and insight-sharing with the aim to produce group-based insights and recommendations. To produce our report, we hosted 16 cultural mapping sessions with small groups. In total, 59 Peers and 25 Service Providers from the Comox Valley participated. Within these sessions, the Walk With Me team, consisting of Community-Engaged Researchers, Elders/Knowledge Keepers, Peers, and Outreach Workers, supported groups of participants

to share their insights through cultural mapping during Peer/Service Provider sessions. To elicit engagement and response to our questions, in each session we brought groups through the following steps:

1. Groups were recruited through public calls for participation, through existing community relationships held by the Walk With Me team and collaborating organizations, and through snowball sampling (referral of participants by other participants).
2. Participants were informed about the nature of the project and engaged in a comprehensive ethics and consent process approved through Thompson Rivers University's Research Ethics Board following Tri-Council research oversight. Groups were supported through Cultural Safety practices and inclusion of Elders/Knowledge Keepers, Peers, and Outreach Workers in session. Participants were offered food and were provided honoraria for their time.
3. Groups were then taken through a draw-talk protocol where they were invited to draw/map particular aspects of the Substance Use Support Network and their experience of it and to speak on-record if they desired to the insights they shared on paper. Peers were asked to share their insights related to the strengths and gaps in the system as they had experienced these over the past two years. Service Providers were asked to share insights related to the "strong" relationships between Service Provider entities and relationships they felt could be strengthened. Both Service Providers and Peers were invited to speak to their insights related to "strengths," "gaps," and "potential solutions."
4. After the mapping exercises, groups were led through semi-structured focus-group interviews where the research team

asked participants to speak more deeply to the maps and visual concepts they had shared.

5. To produce the report, we synthesized and cross-referenced the pool of data we gathered using NVivo qualitative software, which was used to code participant insights and locate aggregate nodes of consensus. We also moved through second-stage consent checking (member checking) to ensure participants were comfortable with how their voices appear in this report.
6. Finally, we invited research participants and partners to review and provide feedback and critique a preliminary draft of the report before integrating their suggestions, proofing, and releasing the public copy.

4.4. Public Survey

Complementing the cultural mapping process, our team issued a public survey and recruited Peers in the Comox Valley to participate. The survey contained a range of questions related to the Substance Use Support Network in the Comox Valley (see Appendix A). The Survey received 51 responses. This data presents yet another snapshot of substance use networks in the Comox Valley.

4.5. Participant Demographics

The following participants were involved in this work:

Peers

Peers were involved with both the cultural mapping focus group research sessions and also the public survey dimensions of this research. 59 Comox Valley Peers participated in cultural mapping sessions in the Spring of 2022. Of these, 31 elected to fill out

our optional demographics form. Of these individuals, 16% were under 30, 55% were between 30 and 60, 6% were over 60, and 22% did not supply their age. 39% identified as female, 58% as male, and 3% did not provide identification. 26% were housed, 58% were living outside, 19% were in a tent or outdoor shelter, and 3% were unlisted. 26% of individuals were employed, 61% were unemployed, and 13% did not respond. 6% described their heritage as Indigenous. For the public survey, 51 Comox Valley Peers participated in the Fall of 2022. The majority of respondents fell between the ages of 30–60 representing 75% of those who answered. 11% of the respondents were young people under the age of 30, and 4% were over 60 years of age. There was a near equal division between those who identified as male and those who identified as female. Of the 51 respondents, slightly more than half (57%) described themselves as unhoused or precariously housed at the time of completing the survey. Approximately 50% of those who responded identified as being BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour), with 27% self-identifying as Indigenous, 10% identifying as Black, and 12% identifying as a Person of Colour.

the public survey results and the ranked priorities for systems change that Service Providers offered. We utilized the survey and visual outputs to test and confirm our findings. These tools helped us consider areas of alignment and misalignment across a variety of sessions.

Substance Use Service Providers

24 representatives of Service Providers participated in cultural mapping group sessions hosted in the Fall of 2022. 33% participants were from Island Health, 13% municipal representatives, 50% were from community support organizations, and 4% were physicians.

4.6. Analysis

The Walk With Me team analyzed the qualitative results from the above methods by transcribing audio-recorded conversations, analyzing these using NVivo coding software, and by integrating map drawn insights from Peer sessions. Additional quantitative tools were used to consider

5 FINDINGS

The following section reviews key findings emerging from our research—grounded in our team’s understanding of the insights shared by participants and in available current data. We support our findings with select first-person insights from our dialogues with Peers and Service Providers. We ask the reader to hold these insights and those who gave their voices to this process with respect. We acknowledge that the act of speaking to these issues can be difficult. We honour the voices of those who contributed to this process with the intent to make change.

5.1. Systems Gaps

The following section speaks to gaps identified by Peers and Service Providers in relation to our local Substance Use Support Network in the Comox Valley. Here, we underscore the areas that are in need of significant attention to strengthen our local care network. Following our analysis of gaps, we move into a second analysis of strengths—areas of the system that are working and could be developed further.

5.1.1. Enormity of Loss

We begin by sharing a sense of the enormity of the loss that Peers in this community shared with our team. Peers spoke to the high death toll they are experiencing in particular as a result of alcohol and drug-related harms:

I’ve lost probably 100 friends in the last three years.

(Rick Berdaru)

I’ve seen people die. Right, my good friend died because of fucking ignorance. I’m sorry for swearing. But that’s what I gotta say.

(De-identified participant #1)

We’ve lost what 20...20 friends in the last two, three years? Yeah, a lot. Yeah, I quit counting.

(Jo Moore)

Six months ago, I lost my brother who’s 39 to a fentanyl overdose. And I’ve been struggling with it myself for 5 years now. Since I lost my father, my uncle, my kids, my land.

(Chris Bowie)

The reality of this loss impacts Service Providers and Peers alike:

I became just completely overwhelmed by the amount of loss and deaths, and it was just so frustrating to witness this every day and people that you work with every single day watching their lives spiraling due to the toxicity in the supply...it just seemed to amplify year by year and get worse...

(Galen Rigter—AVI, Outreach)

Peers brought home the magnitude and immediacy of loss they were experiencing to our research team. As we sat and listened to what Peers had to share, many were actively remembering and honouring loved ones who had recently passed:

Lost my sister last week at the age of 35. She had 2 children who are teenagers now.

(Julia)

Just can't seem to stop praying for a friend of mine that just passed away a couple of days ago. I think most of us knew him. Died in the hospital in his sleep. So that was a blessing for him I guess because he was really sick. Anyway, I would like to just have everybody say a prayer for him in your minds, you know.

(Mike)

Witnessing the grief and trauma many Peers experience on a near daily basis was a stark reminder of the need for concentrated efforts towards meaningful change. In one

session, participants collectively dedicated their voices and what they shared with us to the memory of someone they had lost that week, recognizing that systems change was needed to prevent deaths such as his and that this report would work towards that end.

5.1.2 Stigma in the System

Alongside issues related to loss, Peers and Service Providers both spoke to the prevalence of substance use stigma within our local healthcare systems. Both Peers and Service Providers felt stigma takes many forms in our network. Some spoke to the ways in which stigma made them feel unacknowledged and unseen: **“ambulance, cops...the way people treat us—we’re not invisible.”** (*De-identified Participant #1*) Others spoke to the ways in which Service Providers prejudice, pigeonhole, and essentialize Peers:

You could be clean for 20 years, and when you go into the hospital, they treat you just like, you know, [you] crawled out of an alley somewhere, and you haven’t touched anything for decades. Anything judgmental is ridiculous.

(De-identified participant #2)

This stigma-based judgement can, according to many, be long-standing and pervasive. A number of Peers reported that once a label of substance use has been applied in the health system, it is difficult to remove.

Peers identified the propensity of some workers within the Comox Valley Substance Use Support Network to identify SUD as an individual failing rather than a structural issue and social responsibility. When health care workers gloss over the role that social

determinants (as reviewed in Chapter 2) and life circumstances (such as trauma) play in generating substance use related harm, health care workers in turn cause harm:

I don't think [health care workers] should see it as "we're doing it to ourselves." I just I hate that. The way that they treat us, especially in hospitals.

(Jenna Johnson)

In one Peer's story, stigma took the form of a lack of urgency on the part of Service Providers to afford lifesaving care within a moment of intense personal crisis:

My friend decided to do a shot in the passenger seat, and I pulled out of the liquor store and headed back towards home...I drove up to the hospital; there was a couple cops in the emergency room. I kind of parked off to the side, and ran in and I said, "you have to come, like, my friend's overdosed. He's blue at this point. He's dead"...They said, "Oh yeah? Bring him in." Yeah. I said, "He's fucking dead in the car." Like, come on. They walk out there with a wheelchair. And they say, "Okay, put him in." And then they...they want me to get him out of the car and put him in the wheelchair. There was no fucking rush. There was no—it didn't even matter [to them]. It was like, "Just let him fucking die, he's just another junkie, whatever."

(De-identified participant #3)

This harrowing story relays a fundamental lack of regard, on the part of a Service Provider, for the life and humanity of someone who needed emergency help after substance use.

Some identified yet another form of stigma in the practice of Service Providers requiring or seeking "war stories"—stories filled with details of traumatic and extreme suffering and loss—to provide Peers with access to the services they request or in fact require:

It's like this contest of suffering. Like, if you're not completely at rock bottom and in your worst possible place in your life...you won't get the help that you deserve. And I don't think that's fair...in that you're forced to relive that deficit story over and over. And just to get heard, you need to end up in a psych ward or...[to] have just terrible, terrible things happen to you. And to me, that's super unjust. Yeah.

(Galen Rigter—AVI, Outreach)

The requirement that Peers tell and re-tell their war stories to gain access to services was seen by several service providers as a structural embodiment of stigma:

People will come here and tell their story. And then we're supposed to say, "You need to go next door, make an appointment with their intake nurse." And then they have [to tell] the story [all over] again. So that's another barrier.

(De-identified participant #11)

Others spoke to the system's propensity to deny services based on religious bias:

[The treatment facility I attended] was based on...it was Catholic or Christian, a Christian place. And I don't know why [there was no follow up]...it's only in my opinion [that there was no follow up] because I didn't get baptized: when my 90 days was up, they dropped me off in an alley with my bags. No nothing. No. And the whole time I was there, it wasn't: "Have you looked for housing? Have you checked a newspaper? Can I give you a ride anywhere? Can I do anything?" It was completely the program, and no bridge to anything positive after—no housing, no. But the second girl in there got baptized, and they gave her the house that they lived in. They bought a new house and gave her that house. And the third girl in there, she got baptized, and she got help. So that was just another form of stigma, but in a religious aspect.

(De-identified participant #4)

One Service Provider positioned religious bias as having deep and historic roots within the Comox Valley's systems of care, specifically within the Hospital:

I've...noticed a huge difference between Campbell River and Courteney [hospitals]. And...the deciding factor is [that the Comox Valley Hospital] was [formerly] St. Joseph's. So

it was, you know, a Catholic based hospital for a long time. And I think that held them back...they should be on the same page, Comox Valley and Campbell River; [they've] both [been] open for five years; they should be at the same place. But I think the...past experiences of that administration, and the beliefs of that hospital...have held back the learnings and the opportunities that should be there, especially for the community that needs it so desperately.

(De-identified participant #12)

While the religious affiliation of programs and care systems do not influence stigmatization by default, and while there exists a wide degree of variance in the approaches taken to substance use within faith-based care systems, these insights above show how deep-seated values cultivated through religious affiliation can play a role in dissuading or preventing Peers from accessing services. This is particularly true for Peers that do not subscribe to program beliefs that are integrated into and promoted within service delivery. These insights also underscore how systems of care can be deeply entwined within the "spirit" of institutions and the values and assumptions they espouse.

Peers flagged the need for Peer-based education of Service Provides and systems change leaders as one of many necessary ingredients for destigmatizing care. By improving comprehension of the needs and humanity of people struggling with Substance Use Disorder, Peers are able to promote a more a humanistic understanding of, and enlightened approach to, the crisis:

Education [is needed], not with the focus on changing someone's mind, but enlightening them.

(De-identified participant #10)

Let's hope that something good comes from awareness. More people aware.

(De-identified participant #4)

We're not invisible. And that's the biggest thing...our voice and our concerns, right...they have to be heard.

(De-identified participant #1)

My solution? Put us in charge. Give us a say. Believe in [us]. Listen...we aren't going away. I'm not, anyway...

(De-identified participant #4)

Here we see, then, a profound need for systems change leading to a reduction/elimination of stigma on intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural levels. The same call (and identification of stigma and service gaps) is reflected in the personal maps made by Peers, as in Figures 2 and 3. We also see a call for Peers in enabling this change by providing the education necessary to humanize care, and by increasing awareness of the different contexts and life circumstances that are entwined with the emergent crises we face as a community.

Figure 2: Peer Map

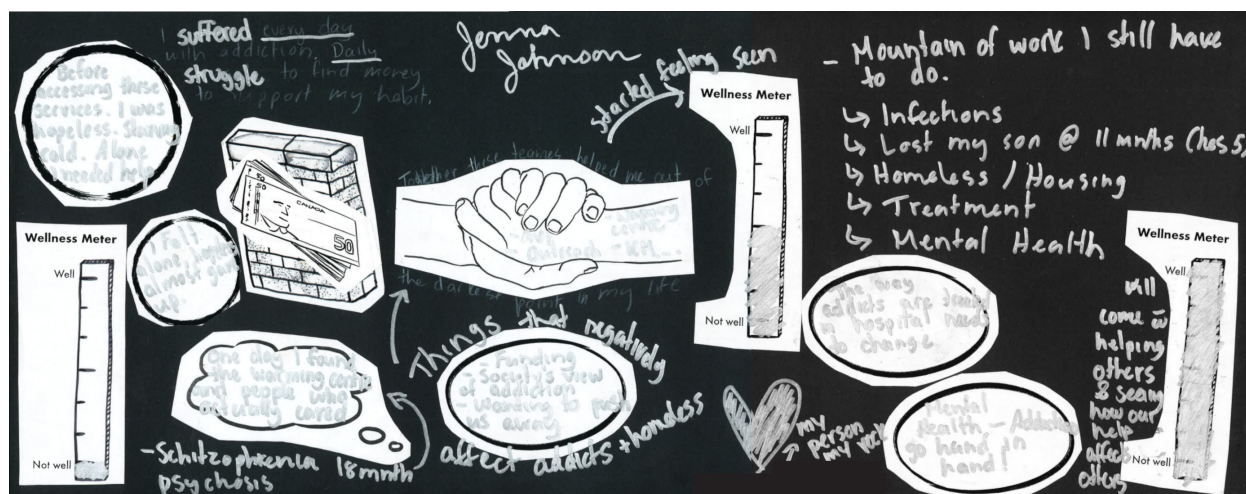
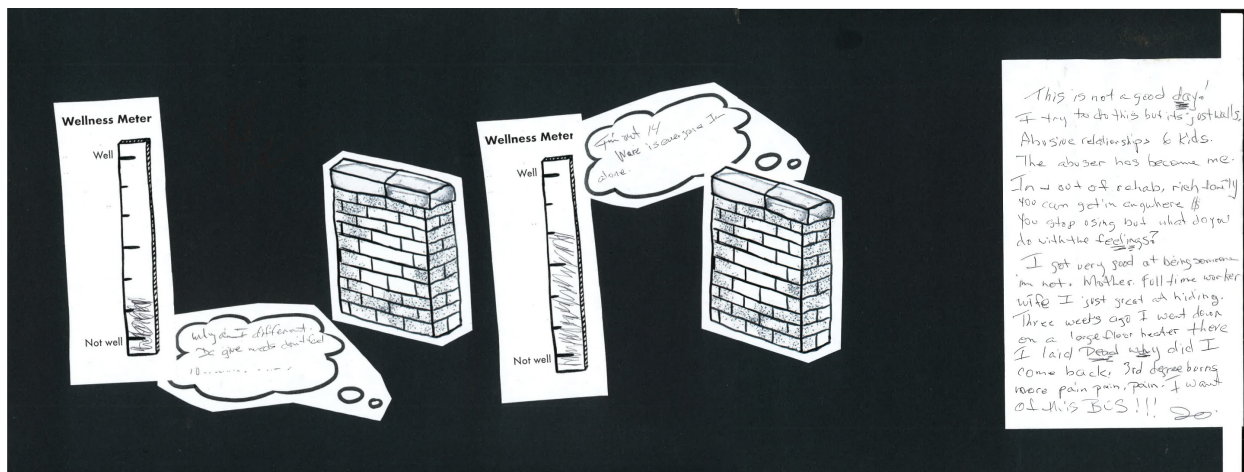


Figure 3: Peer Map



5.1.3 Gaps in Recovery Services

Both Service Providers and Peers spoke to gaps in Recovery and Harm Reduction care systems in the Comox Valley. We define a “Recovery” system as one focusing on reducing and/or eliminating reliance on substances (i.e. moving towards abstinence). We define a Harm Reduction system as one designed to support safe use of substances (i.e. Managed Alcohol Programs, Opioid Agonist Therapy, Overdose Prevention Sites, Safe Supply). In what follows, we illustrate the gaps identified by Peers and Service Providers in our local Harm Reduction and Recovery systems.

Recovery models often include a three-phased approach. The phases are often tailored to individual need and often include the following elements:

- a. reducing reliance on substances, often through medical intervention, often over a period of one or two weeks (Medical Detox).
- b. stabilizing use or absence of use over a period of weeks or months (often up to 90 days) (Social Detox).

- c. maintaining this new level of substance use or sobriety over a long period of time, often years (through Supportive Housing, or other forms of long-term care).⁸⁷

Unique and individualized tactics often enhance and/or compliment these phases. Community and Recovery support networks (i.e. Alcoholics Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, cultural learning and engagement, community integration and more) play critical roles. While each person’s recovery method is unique, many established and evidence-based methods use these critical building blocks within the Recovery process. For some substances (such as alcohol) medical and managed detox can be essential, as rapid unmanaged withdrawal presents significant physical risks. Individuals often struggle to make progress on their recovery goals when these pieces are not in place and working together.

Within the Comox Valley’s Substance Use Support Network, research participants identified two key gaps in our local Recovery continuum:

Recovery Gap 1: Lack of local medical detox services

Peers and Service Providers identified a significant (and fundamental) gap in the lack of available medical detox services in the Comox Valley. Although social detox services are available, including at Comox Valley Recovery Centre (CVRC) and Amethyst House, in many cases these services are inaccessible unless an individual has first undertaken medical detox. While research participants acknowledge that the Comox Valley Hospital provides some level of medical detox, those who have accessed this service (or have referred clients) report that the detoxification was often a secondary outcome of patients having been admitted for other primary health concerns. One Outreach Worker observes:

[Clients] have [had] to invent something that's wrong with them other than the need to detox just to get...detox for a couple of days. People go to the hospital, feigning injury, you know, complaining about various ailments that may or may not exist in their body, just so that they can remain in hospital while they test them for whatever it is that they've identified.

(Galen Rigter—AVI, Outreach)

Aside from the hospital, Peers seeking medical detox are often referred to facilities in neighbouring cities, notably to Island Health's Clearview Community Medical Detox Centre in Nanaimo. But according to one Service Provider, Peers may need to be referred by a Mental Health and Substance Use Counsellor—a process that is **"difficult because [clients] have to drop in with Mental Health [and Substance Use], or**

phone, and then they have to call back and get an intake appointment" (*Eva Hemmerich—Comox Valley Addictions Clinic, Doctor*), a process which can according to a number of participants, can take up to six weeks.

Given this scenario, it is no wonder that wait times for entry to medical detox represent a prohibitive barrier to service for Peers. Wait times can range from two to three months and even more, taking into account the time between MHSU referral and intake to the detox facility. This prolonged wait time dissuades Peers from accessing the service in many instances. We heard from both Peers and Service Providers that the window in which someone becomes and remains open to medical detox is small—a matter of days, hours, and sometimes minutes. In what follows, Peers speak to the overwhelming challenge of accessing non-local medical detox options under these conditions:

I tried [accessing detox]. I talked to one of the workers about it, but it's quite a process; you're put on the list. It takes weeks.

(De-identified participant #5)

[Detox] just doesn't happen fast enough. It's very dragged out, and it's like, by the time you get it, you don't want it, or, you know, you're not ready. And it's like, that desire to get better can change really quick, so it should be...quicker to get help.

(De-identified participant #6)

I can't access treatment fast enough. It's always a three or four month wait. And if I still have my phone, it's a different number by [the time they try to reach me].

(De-identified participant #7)

Further, Peers can be dissuaded by additional barriers to accessing medical detox or starting treatment, including the requirement that clients cease smoking while detoxing from alcohol and/or drugs:

I tried that detox center down in Nanaimo...Yeah, I lasted four days there. They won't let you smoke. Which, you know... I'm not here to quit smoking. I'm here to quit drinking.

(Rick Berdaru)

According to several Peers and Service Providers, the transportation needed to access medical detox presents a yet another barrier:

We're asking [clients] to somehow get to Nanaimo safely...intake on their own. There's nobody going down there with them. Maybe they're using Wheels for Wellness, maybe they're taking the InterLink bus...[They] do a week...they're still pretty shaky when they leave at one week. Now [they] need to get back to the community...to intake into CVRC or Amethyst...That's huge, right? That's a big big ask.

(De-identified participant #14).

The travel can be a huge barrier. You know, especially for someone who's maybe using opiates, and they sort of have transportation down if it's Wheels for Wellness, but that becomes a bit of a scenario for a volunteer to potentially have to reverse an overdose.

(De-identified participant #18)

For some, the transition from medical detox in Nanaimo to social detox/treatment in the Comox Valley involves significant risks, especially when services do not align. Outreach Workers expressed frustration to us at having no way of "holding" people in the gap that can appear when they know the potentially challenging conditions in which clients are currently living while they are actively seeking detox away from that environment:

I can say..."hold that thought... stay here for three days"... [because] this person is reaching out right now. And [I can also say]..."too bad, wait a week or two weeks or three weeks, go back and live with all your friends" [in the environment in which substance use is supported].

*(Danny O'leary—
Island Health, OPS)*

Other Service Providers did identify that concerted efforts are made by staff at Clearview and local social detox facilities (CVRC/Amethyst House) to link medical and social detox services:

“ Oftentimes Clearview can be quite...good. If we tell them that someone has a bed CVRC on this date, they will do what we call, “bed Tetris.” You know, shuffle people around to make a bed available one week prior so that people will have that medical detox piece in time for their social detox... They’ve been quite accommodating in my experience. But again...the transportation, even sometimes getting down there for people and the fact that Clearview does not allow cigarette smoking on site..., these are a lot of the folks who are going into medical detox for alcohol use disorder, right? And cigarette smoking just goes so closely hand in hand, especially I find with the older population. It’s such a deterrent for people; they just won’t go because they can’t smoke. ”

(De-identified participant #13)

Here we begin to see a picture of the stress points involved in connecting people with what is often the very first step in a person’s recovery journey. For people who smoke, there are additional barriers to recovery.

Interestingly, several Service Providers report that “back door channels” permit some clients to access medical detox more directly by bypassing the required MHSU referral (those who spoke about these channels did not want to be identified). How these back-door channels work, and how they are sustained, remains a mystery. Facing significant systemic barriers, some working within the system are, apparently, finding ways to manufacture unique pathways to recovery for the benefit of their clients. It is distressing to observe that people in need of help require such channels in the first place, and to also recognize that they are not open to everyone.

One final incidental finding demonstrated a contrast in understanding of “detox” between Peers and Service Providers. Our team conducted a word cloud query in NVIVO, where the coded “detox” section was searched to identify secondary 3+ character words connected to this term. This query displays up to 100 words in varying font sizes, where frequently occurring words

are in larger fonts (the more frequent, the larger the word). The same query was run separately in Peer and Service Provider data files. Our team discovered a different set of concepts to be associated with each category’s use of this term. As shown in Figure 4, Peers tended to use this term in association with emotive words like “alone,” “depressed,” “demoralizing,” “trying,” “barrier,” and “ghost.” Service Providers tended to use this term in a more clinical context, associated with words like “management,” “appointment,” “admitted,” “allowing,” “diagnosis,” and “decision.” These differences highlight ways in which the experience of detox can be understood in radically different ways. It points to an opportunity, perhaps, to bridge a gap in service provider understanding, so that the human impact and experience of detox are understood on a deeper level.

Impact

Beyond an understanding of the importance of a streamlined and rapidly accessible local medical detox service, it is important to understand the impact that the absence of such a service can have within lives of Peers seeking support. The following story, told by a Peer trying to help a friend access medical detox, demonstrates how frustrating the process of seeking help can be for those for whom “back doors” are unavailable:

“ A friend of mine had gotten kicked out of CVRC [Comox Valley Recovery Centre]. He had relapsed...He was in Nanaimo...I drove down there to pick him up and bring him back up here. And on the drive up, so within the span of, I guess, two hours, he first called the hospital here in the Comox Valley, to see about being able to detox there because he needed to detox. And the nurse there actually said...“I don’t know, you have to call Mental Health Substance Use.” And so he called Mental Health Substance Use...and they said to “call the hospital,” and there was kind of this back and forth...We call back the hospital, got somebody else. And they said, “No, there’s no detox here. You have to call Clearview in Nanaimo.” He did call Clearview. The lady there again said, “I don’t really know; it’s about two weeks, approximately two weeks, before we can take you,” and so that was kind of that. He called CVRC to ask if he could get back in because he’d only been out for a couple of days. And they said, “No...you’re gonna have to get back on the list to...re-apply, but there’s people ahead of you now.” So they wouldn’t take him. And at that point, I think he felt like he had exhausted those options. So he phoned the shelter just to try and get a place to stay for the night because that was the most immediate thing that needed to happen. And so we call the shelter, and they said, “if you get here by...” I think it was, “four o’clock.” And it was 3:30. And we weren’t going to make it. So he had nowhere to stay for that night. We got into town; it was maybe 5:30. We went to the Travelodge, which was the place to maybe get a place to stay for that night. And, I actually can’t remember why...I guess they didn’t have space. They didn’t have a room available. And that was it. ”

(Sophia Katsanikakis)

In this account, we see described a series of barriers that prevent an individual from engaging with medical detox, which in turn prevents them from entering other stages of treatment. A significant number of these barriers would be removed or reduced through the provision of a local medical detox centre in the Comox Valley—one large enough to accommodate Peers in the moment they express need for help. Comprehensive integration of medical and social detox would remove further barriers, reducing gaps that prevent people from immediately entering social detox after medical detox.

Recovery Gap 2: Lack of Supportive Housing/Long-Term Care

The transition from social detox/treatment to Recovery-based housing represents another key gap in our local provision of support. Peers and Service Providers both spoke to the profound absence of Supportive Housing in the Comox Valley which is currently restricted to the options available through social detox (often limited to 90 days) and to the limited 6-bed, 6 month, Supportive Housing option available through CVRC for those who have finished their social detox programs. The absence of Supportive Housing feeds a cycle in which Peers regularly engage with detox and treatment but are released without better provision for next steps to recovery, leading to relapse and often re-engagement with detox and treatment:

You get the revolving door, right? Or just they relapse, then they come back, and then they relapse, and they come back because there's nowhere... there's nowhere for them to go once they complete their, you know, maximum 90 days. Yeah.

(De-identified participant #13)

It's always been known that [when] you need to get somebody into a program they're there for 90 days if they're lucky. And then they just get turned loose. And they go back to what they know because they don't have the support system.

(De-identified participant #10)

I think one of the biggest challenges is that we have people who have come [in], whether it's been through supportive Recovery, a residential program or even, you know, at the Travelodge, who have said [to us], "I don't want to use anymore." And our only option coming out of Amethyst House sometimes is the Junction, which is really not helpful for somebody who's made that decision... There's just no dry place or a place where you can continue Recovery on limited income.

(Heather Ney—Transition Society, Director)

Other than second stage through CVRC...We have nothing. There's nothing in the Valley that's Recovery-based housing.

(De-identified participant #13)

The larger housing crisis also exacerbates the cycle of relapse and recovery. Many research participants spoke to problems obtaining long-term stable housing:

I'm homeless due to addiction; I managed to stay clean for a year there, and then finding housing has been a real, real issue...seems damn near impossible to find any kind of housing. That makes it especially hard. A bit of a struggle right now.

(De-identified participant #5)

I'm amazed [at rent prices]. Like \$1,000 and over [a month], half the people can't afford that.

(De-identified participant #8)

Especially the clients that...are on such a minimal fiscal string that they've got basically the bare minimum and how they're meant to afford places that are \$1500-\$1600, just at the bottom end, yeah. When what they get is like \$1,400 for the PWD or whatever...it is not that much.

(De-identified participant #11)

For people who are living unhoused, processes of detox and recovery can be especially trying.

We're talking about gaps, what a huge gap for our folks when they're in the hospital [or coming out of Recovery program]...like we all know, right? Where are they going to go? What are they going to do?

(De-identified participant #22)

It's incredibly disheartening to see somebody work so hard...for their Recovery for three months with us...put their all into it, and then [be] discharged to the shelter. Not like the shelter isn't great...But when somebody's worked so hard for their Recovery to have nowhere to go afterwards...it is heartbreaking.

(De-identified participant #15)

Apparently, past initiatives have considered a Supportive Housing facility within the Comox Valley:

About 8 years ago, a past coordinator for the CVRC was working on starting 2nd stage housing...They wanted to build a house right across from CVRC...The clients could go there and work or school or volunteer. This fell through, and nothing was started. There's money somewhere; we can do this.

*(Danny O'leary—
Island Health, OPS)*

While people in active substance use have some housing options available, including Travelodge and the Junction, people pursuing abstinence see a need for "dry" housing where they are supported in this aim.

Ideas for Supportive Housing

Service Providers expressed no shortage of ideas for what such a facility could look like. Some spoke to the importance of a "group/family" environment—underscoring this environment as an important component of

Recovery:

I would like to see us going back to providing more Supportive Housing in the form of smaller group homes that provide a sense of community and family as well as being mindful that those sharing these homes have similar goals, for example having group homes for people whose goal is abstinence and others for people who are wanting Harm Reduction... more interested in Harm Reduction.

*(Jennifer Coulombe—
Island Health, MHSU Researcher)*

We see ourselves as family... We think of ourselves as family. And on reserves, the families are very tight-knit. Big families live in small houses... That's part of it, the housing piece. Grandparents, mothers, fathers and children all live in one house. So everyone is impacted [by an individual's Substance Use Disorder], and everyone in the family has a role to play in Recovery. How do you break a destructive routine if that routine is still going on with family members when you return from treatment?

*(Barb Whyte—Elder/
Traditional Knowledge Keeper)*

Beyond cultivating group housing, some participants spoke to the importance of involving family members throughout treatment and Supportive Housing in the Recovery journey.

I think that the family model is really important because it's about changing habits. [When family members are involved], individuals have a support system when they return home after Recovery.

*(Barb Whyte—Elder/
Traditional Knowledge Keeper)*

One Participant cited the Kackaamin Family Development Centre in Port Alberni⁸⁸ as a notable example of family-based care centre—a non-profit that self-identifies as one of three Indigenous family treatment programs in Canada. The centre was seen by this participant as innovative in its understanding of addiction as a family and community construct and in its foundational reliance on Nuuchah-nulth values to direct and hold its work.

Several Service Providers also spoke to the potentials that farm models afford Supportive Housing:

Family models were seen as especially relevant within Indigenous treatment contexts:

My dream would be to have a farm where people requiring housing could live and contribute while learning new skills in a supportive environment. It is important that future decisions are made with a climate change lens while strengthening local food security.

*(Jennifer Coulombe —
Island Health, MHSU Researcher)*

The farm model, which often includes social enterprise and work experience components (i.e. through the cultivation and selling of farm produce and artisan goods at markets), is growing in BC. Examples include the Port Alberni Shelter Society's Shelter Farm,⁸⁹ and the Mustard Seed's Hope Farm Healing Centre.⁹⁰ The implementation of Port Alberni's Shelter Farm was inspired in-part by an internationally renowned Recovery farm in Italy called SanPadrignano—a treatment centre involving a 3–4 year live-in experience in which residents “learn to overcome hardships through honesty, commitment, respect for themselves and for others, and by developing solidarity and interpersonal skills.”⁹¹ The centre professes a 72% Recovery rate; residents do not pay for their stay on the farm—they are afforded room and board, work full-time and donate their labour to the upkeep of the program and facility. A 2019 article written by Port Alberni's former Mayor, John Douglas titled *Addiction and Therapeutic Recovery Models “Working Towards a Solution,”* considers this model and its implications in detail.⁹²

A number of Comox Valley Service Providers feel that a Recovery facility (whether based on a Farm model or otherwise) should be located at a distance from the city centre, in a place where the substance use scene is less accessible. To help break cycles of SUD, many thought it important to offer an environment

in which new behaviours and cycles could develop and new forms of resilience could grow.

It is worth noting, as well, an emerging trend in BC (and beyond) to establish tiny home villages in BC (and beyond) for transitional housing. Though research participants did not explicitly identify this concept in our study, some BC municipalities are advancing these solutions. Duncan, Port Alberni (in process),⁹³ and Victoria⁹⁴ already have examples of these villages. Some villages are developed explicitly to support Recovery,⁹⁵ while in other cases they are developed to provide housing and services for unhoused populations at-large. Tiny home villages are one of many potential strategies that can help address the need for Supportive Housing.

Clearly there exists an urgent need to bolster both the “front-end” of the continuum (medical detox services) and the “back-end” (Supportive Housing). Without initiatives to improve and create these life-saving services, the Comox Valley Substance Use Support Network will continue to cycle people through potentially endless and expensive processes that involve minimal prospects for success. By failing to provide local medical detox and adequate quantities of Supportive Housing, we are setting people up to fail.

Alternative Recovery Pathway— Privatized Services

Alternatives exist to the public system of Recovery-based care we have just described. Several Peers spoke to their experiences accessing privatized Recovery services such as Edgewood Treatment Centre (Nanaimo) or Cedars (Cobble Hill). Privatized systems often offer a broad spectrum of Recovery-related supports that bring medical detox, social detox, treatment, and Supportive Housing together (a model that could be considered within the Comox Valley's public services sector). However, access to privatized

services often come at an enormous cost. As one Peer notes: **“you have to have like \$40,000 sitting around”** (*De-identified participant #21*). Some feel the privatization of treatment and Recovery facilities creates problems in its own right:

[Privatized Facilities] just run like a business. They don't care about the people who are in rehab...Counselors are constantly leaving because they're like, "I'm not actually here to help people anymore. I'm here to just make people feel like they're being helped. So we can get them in and out of the door so we can get more money." And that's fucked up.

(De-identified participant #21)

This focus on financial gain can wreak havoc with the lives of those accessing these systems:

[While in a privatized Recovery centre], I was encouraged to sell my house...“Was my life worth saving? You need to sell your house, you need to sell your cars. You need...” It was all about money all the time... “Looks like you're coming up to the end; we really think you need another three months. Well...can't afford three months? Do you have a house? Do you have a car?” We were encouraged constantly, all the time, to sell our shit in order to stay longer...And it was all about, like, “You're worth saving. You're worth it.”

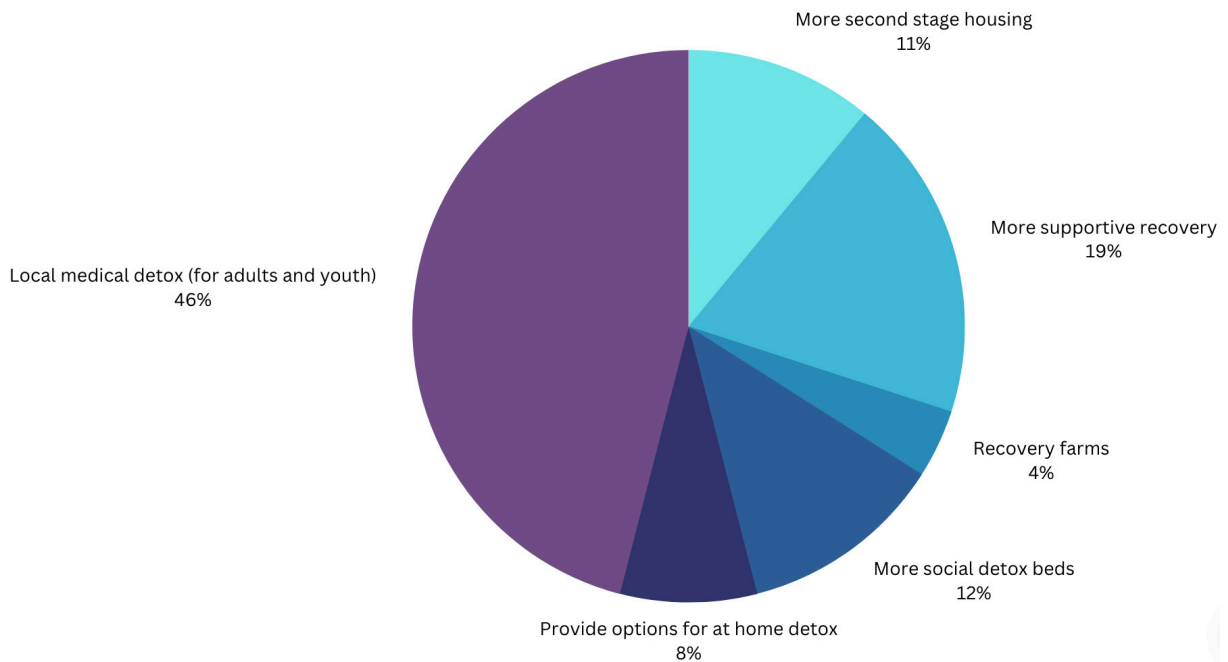
(De-identified participant #22)

Not only can privatized services be prohibitively expensive, but their commercial mandates can potentially dehumanize those who access them. While commercial treatment centres may in some cases offer a more cohesive Recovery experience, they clearly come with significant drawbacks and are financially out-of-reach for many.

Summary

In this section we examined a consistent and sustained call made by Peers and Service Providers to fill key gaps in the provision of medical detox and Supportive Housing. Additionally, both groups reported that more work is required to reduce and/or eliminate stigma in the care system at-large—a move that will allow Peers to access services without being shamed or dehumanized. Figure 5, which shows the most urgently-needed solutions selected by service providers across sessions, identifies many of these same gaps and associated solutions, and provides additional support to our gaps analysis. Overall we see significant gaps in the Recovery services system that require urgent attention.

Figure 5: Most Urgently Needed Recovery-Based Solutions Selected by Service Providers Across Sessions



5.1.4 Gaps in Harm Reduction Services

Thus far, we have considered key gaps in Recovery services in the Comox Valley. Again, Recovery and Harm Reduction can occupy points on a spectrum and operate within a wide continuum of potential care. In what follows, we consider gaps in Harm Reduction provision in the Comox Valley.

Our work begins by exploring key gaps that our research participants reported in relation to Managed Alcohol Programs and Safer Supply programs within the Comox Valley. We then look at additional gaps that they flagged in relation to Overdose Prevention Sites and Opioid Agonist Therapy provision. This Harm Reduction analysis, as well as the analysis we've just presented related to Recovery care, will feed into Section 5.1.5, where we zoom out further to explore key gaps in the continuum of care at-large.

Harm Reduction Gap 1: Managed Alcohol Programs

An emerging Harm Reduction tool utilized by health agencies throughout the province involves stabilizing alcohol-based substance use through the prescription of alcohol (in the case of alcohol use disorder). In Island Health, this program is called iMAP (individualized managed alcohol plan). Through this program, Peers are prescribed a maintenance dose of alcohol that attempts to both avoid intoxication and manage cravings. Island Health has, through the COVID-19 pandemic, moved to develop this program across multiple sites, and is working to refine the scope of the program and services. The program, intended to eventually be offered in multiple settings within and outside of Island Health (i.e. acute care, long-term care, Supportive Housing, outpatient, community, NGOs, and others), is in its early days. Work is

needed, according to Island Health, to roll iMAP out within multiple communities and within multiple facets of community.⁹⁶

Several Service Providers spoke to their desire for a more significant and rapidly implemented Managed Alcohol Program in the Comox Valley. These providers (who have asked not to be quoted) spoke to the limited reach and impact of this program and to the need to ensure an adequate dosage level is achieved in prescribing in order to meet client needs.

Harm Reduction Gap 2: Safer Supply and Opioid Agonist Therapy

Peers and Service Providers also expressed additional need for Safer Supply programs. In a landmark move in 2021, the Province of BC released a prescribed Safer Supply policy, the first province in Canada to introduce this public health measure.⁹⁷ This policy allows prescribers to give access to maintenance doses of certain unregulated drugs. The policy is designed to reduce client reliance on the toxic drug supply and to be of benefit to individuals using unregulated substances throughout BC. According to the Province:

Once fully implemented, People Who Use Drugs and who are at high risk of dying from the toxic illicit drug supply will be able to access alternatives covered by Pharmacare, including a range of opioids and stimulants as determined by programs and prescribers.⁹⁸

Despite this landmark move, the roll-out of Safer Supply programs has been slow, especially in small communities that lack prescribers with capacity to do this work.

In 2022 the Comox Valley and Campbell River offices of AVI Health and Community Services—a Harm Reduction-based NGO—

began working on a Safer Supply program entitled Regulated Access to Drugs (RAD) to provide Safer Supply options to a designated group of clients. This program is a **“federally funded, flexible, community-based Safer Supply project...the goal of which is to save and affirm the lives of People Who Use Drugs by providing safer pharmaceutical alternatives to the currently toxic supply created by criminalization”** (*Galen Rigter—AVI, Outreach*). The program is staffed by registered nurses, physicians and Outreach Workers, and involves **“observed dosing of transdermal fentanyl patches and sublingual tablets at the program site”** (*Galen Rigter—AVI, Outreach*). While the program is in its infancy, and while it is client-centred and enables participants to create their own wellness goals, initial results are promising:

“ Participants have shared stories of how the program has impacted how they feel about themselves. The freedom of having the option to access Safe Supply instead of doing actions that put people at risk in order to feel well, is in itself, a massive shift in a person’s physical and mental well being. The obsessive pursuit of having enough money or credit on the street to stave off the feelings of withdrawal and/or pain to simply function day to day can be overwhelming. Participants have said that they no longer have to sneak around, constantly putting themselves at risk to maintain a minimum level of pain relief/withdrawal symptoms. [Some participants have reported] improvements in physical ailments such as sleep disorders, stomach/digestion issues, vein care, respiratory problems, abscesses, and mobility. [Other participants have] been positively impacted by the reduction of Benzodiazepine use by accessing Safe Supply versus illicit supply. For many, the presence of Benzo’s in the street supply has negatively impacted people in many ways; physical dependence, periods of blackouts/lost time with loss of personal belongings related to these episodes...The program has given a new sense of hope for some and is helping people set goals to better themselves. ”

(Galen Rigter—AVI, Outreach)

In spite of the seemingly positive role the RAD program is playing in the lives of Peers, it is important to note that the program falls short of meeting demand within the Comox Valley.

“ From a capacity standpoint, the RAD program falls short of meeting the overall need in the North Island. We have lengthy waitlists to onboard participants, and as the information of the program reaches a larger population we can expect even more demand for access. The only solution for this is to be generously re-funded [as current funding is provided only until July, 2023] and staffed for expansion. While we are grateful to now be able to provide this service to the public, it’s safe to say that we are late to the starting gate. We have lost many people from preventable deaths while we have waited for these services to be funded. Other, larger communities have seen the benefits of Safe Supply for years, and it falls on both the provincial and federal governments to provide funding to further expand and support Safe Supply programs especially in smaller communities, Indigenous communities, anywhere where people are at risk from a toxic drug supply or who are impacted by chronic pain and opioid use disorder. ”

(Galen Rigter—AVI, Outreach)

Work is urgently needed to expand services in prescription services for both Managed Alcohol and Safer Supply programs and to educate and support prescribers in understanding and working with clients to administer correct dosage, and to make these services widely available. The failure to move quickly to establish and strengthen these services will perpetuate service gaps that keep people engaged in dangerous high levels of substance use harms.

Harm Reduction Gap 3: Continuum of Care

Additional Harm Reduction improvements were recommended by Peers and Service Providers alike—notably, related to OPS (Overdose Prevention Site) location, hours and services; also to the regulations surrounding Opioid Agonist Therapy provision. These improvements are as follows:

Re-constitution of Overdose Prevention Sites (OPS):

Currently, the Comox Valley has one OPS site in downtown Courtenay—located on the outskirts of the downtown core (several blocks away from 5th Street, and run out of an Island Health clinical facility). Several Service Providers view the location as problematic. They feel the clinical setting and lack of visibility sees the service underutilized. A more central site in the downtown core, in a space offering a community support component, is needed:

When the OPS was first set up here...I noticed and seen firsthand that the location wasn't the greatest. Why this location and not at the junction or at the Travelodge?

*(Danny O'leary—
Island Health, OPS)*

If we would [position the OPS] near Connect, you know, just a bit more downtown...in that area. It'd be, yeah, it'd be so much busier and just easier for people to access.

(De-identified participant #11)

Several Service Providers recommend the development of an OPS site at the Comox Valley hospital which would allow people to continue using services in hospital without having to leave for maintenance doses of drugs. This would also provide an access point for Peers wanting support in daily witnessing (someone close by to monitor for overdose events).

This suggestion is not without precedent. In 2018, St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver opened an OPS on site (first Peer-run, and later nurse-run). This move was groundbreaking in allowing patients with opioid use disorder to remain in care for the duration of their treatment while also providing OPS services to the community surrounding the Hospital.⁹⁹

One Service Provider recommended developing a Peer-run OPS:

What would ultimately be fantastic is a Peer-run OPS that is actually funded and supported by Island health. So it doesn't have to be that very formal clinical setting like we have.

*(Shari Dunnet—
Comox Valley CAT)*

Expansion of OPS Hours

Peers and Service Providers told us that after-hour OPS Services are needed. The current OPS site operates during the day with service from 9:30 to 3:30pm on weekdays or from 10am to 2pm on weekends.¹⁰⁰ This leaves Peers with less safe options for substance use when the OPS is closed (between 18 and 20 hours a day depending).

Addition of Inhalation to OPS Services

Numerous Service Providers spoke to the need for safe inhalation OPS services in the Valley. Given that inhalation is frequently used for intake of drugs, the absence of this service represents a major gap in service provision:

If we can get inhalation that would be key. Because obviously, I keep hearing from our users that people aren't injecting as much. Now it's all inhalation.

(De-identified participant #11)

Several Service Providers note that Island Health does appear to be moving towards adding these services to the existing slate in the Comox Valley. However, it is unclear when this move will occur.

Review of OAT Witnessing Guidelines

Several Service Providers spoke to the hurdles they encounter in facilitating Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT)—in particular, at the Travelodge—a hotel used, in part, for transitional housing. Staff working at the Travelodge spoke to the ways in which changes to OAT delivery requirements, developed by the College of Pharmacists of BC, impact their practice:

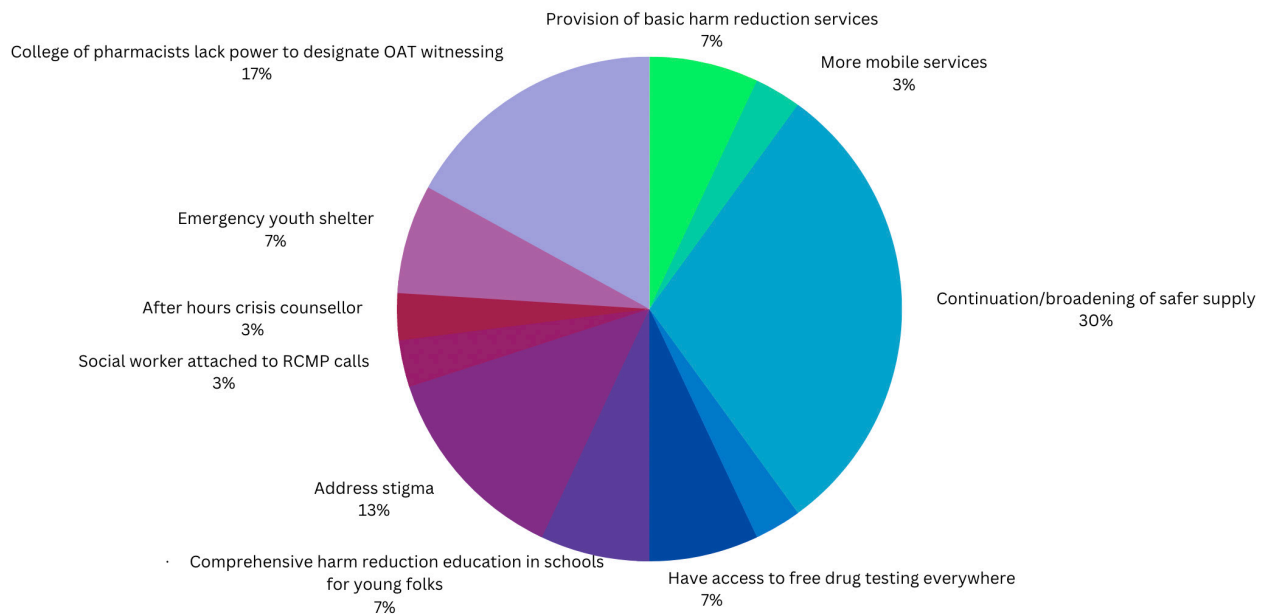
At the Travelodge, we were giving people their OAT, and then the pharmacies were given a note that we could no longer witness OAT. And [the role of witnessing] was... given to a new pharmacy in town. And so that was such a stressful time. Because prescriptions were everywhere. [Previously] we had it totally under control. We knew what we were doing. We had the night staff anyway...When we were witnessing, we were able to provide that [service] anytime of the day...Now if [clients are] not there at 9am, or whatever it is, they lose it for the day... So if that person misses their OAT, they don't get their OAT for the day...So now these folks are falling off their OAT.

(De-identified participant #16)

This comment shows how changes in regulation, such as those made by the College of Pharmacists of BC regarding OAT provision, can have significant impact on the capacity of clients to adhere to a care plan. This story also underscores the importance of empowering community Service Providers, those most directly connected to the lives of clients, with responsibilities that they can reasonably undertake in relation to the provision of OAT and other related services. The absence of such empowerment produces increased barriers to stabilize substance use for Peers. Work is needed to lobby the College of Pharmacists for changes to this procedure.

Figure 6, which shows the most urgently needed solutions selected by service providers across sessions, identifies many of these same gaps and associated solutions.

Figure 6: Most Urgently Needed Harm Reduction-Based Solutions Selected by Service Providers Across Sessions



5.1.5 Gaps in the System at-Large

Beyond gaps in Recovery and Harm Reduction services, Service Providers identify the following fragmentation within the Comox Valley's care system at-large, and they describe the need to develop and coordinate full-spectrum wrap-around services designed to increase accessibility and ease of engagement for clients:

There is a huge, huge need for more comprehensive mental health and substance use services. And I don't mean [just within] Island Health, but a broad spectrum from like, super, super Harm Reduction (broad range of Safer Supply and [an anti-stigma environment where it is] totally okay to get high because it feels good) to abstinence...[to]...detox and treatment and all of those things in between. And [services] accessible in various points in the community, whether that's at a hybrid model, like inside or through hospital or at-home detox.

(De-identified participant #17)

Systems Gap 1: Need for Culturally Safe Services

Several Service Providers flagged a need to develop a stronger and more culturally rooted Harm Reduction and Recovery support system within the Comox Valley's systems of care. This includes facilitation of meaningful land-based practices and connections:

I'm thinking specifically of...an Indigenous person and really [someone] you know [who] connects with their culture as a healing modality. What's available to the person unfortunately [are] institutional modalities of treatment. So in an ideal world...we live in such a beautiful landscape. And we have this, there's this amazing resource of nature around us as a healing modality. And so connecting to the land as a solution. Breaking outside. Go outside because that's, I think [that's] where the human spirit...really becomes one.

(De-identified participant #18)

Systems Gap 2: Need for Better Coordination of Services

Some participants spoke to the need for the development of a "map" that would provide access to the range of services available **"not just within Island Health, but [within] all the other different services."** Apparently, this gap is now in the process of being filled:

[Eureka Place is] actually working on a resource guide... maybe it's not a hub where people can go physically, but it's a hub where if somebody is looking for some kind of support, they have it laid out simply to be like, "Okay, this is the kind of support I'm looking for, here are the places that I can go to," without getting confused.

(Jason Lee John Kirsch—Eureka, Member Support Worker)

Systems Gap 3: Need for Peer Navigators

In connection with this "map" of Substance Use Support Network Service Providers, research participants identified a strong need for Outreach Workers, preferably Peers, to help connect and guide clients through the local system of care services:

We talk about like, you know, having like a patient advocate or somebody who has a kind of a holder of all that information of how the system works with the Peer.

(De-identified participant #13)

I think in a dream world, there'd be like a Peer in Emerge [Emergency Department] that could support people.

(De-identified participant #18)

Not just the Emerg but rotating through the hospital. For the in-patients. Yeah, that's huge...To be able to support people admitted.

(Eva Hemmerich—Comox Valley Addictions Clinic, Doctor)

I think it would be great if there was more understanding of the value of [Peer advocates] ... it's so valuable to have somebody who's walked in your shoes... it means something ... you feel them there, they get things, you don't have to explain everything, and it has so much value.

(Shari Dunnet—Comox Valley CAT)

Many participants felt that Peers were well-placed to be in front-line “navigation” and “connection” roles. Our team also identified the need for Peers to be integrated and on-boarded into leadership and administrative roles as these bodies often set the conditions under which front-line services operate.

Systems Gap 4: Need for a Hub

Building on the theme of “coordination,” a number of Service Providers envisioned developing a physical “hub” site that would provide a broad range of coordinated substance use-related services under a single roof:

It would be great if we provided a lower barrier Rapid Access Clinic for those interested in OAT, so they can walk in and obtain treatment right away and you can support people where they are at in that moment.

(Jennifer Coulombe—Island Health, MHSU Researcher)

One provider spoke to the “hub” model in-place at Insite (a supervised injection site in Vancouver) that could be taken up in the Comox Valley:

You walk in, and it's like, you know, a Peer-run kind of entry. There's a supervised injection site/consumption site. So some folks come in with whatever they get off like the street, some people can access their Safer Supply there. And then they can use supervised; they consume on site. And then there's a chill space, Peer-run. And then if they are wanting to connect with detox, it's upstairs. So it's really...meeting people in the moment. Because...really, when those moments happen...(and we've seen historically at AVI many, many times, you know, that's that moment, but... getting somebody connected? It's such a small window). And there's often not something available...I don't know how it plays out in reality at Insite, maybe there is a bit of a wait, but the theory is that people can access right away.

(De-identified participant #17)

Such a vision already exists, apparently, in the historic efforts of Service Providers in the Valley:

There was very serious intensive work done in this community around developing like a coordinated, access point for all of the various services in the Valley. And ultimately, what came of that was nothing—because people realize there’s no funding for it, and nobody can add that on to what they’re already trying to do.

(De-identified participant #17)

Based on this evidence, more capacity, resources, and coordination are needed within the Service Provider network to create a hub and physical centre.

The above suggestions point to ways forward to achieve “in the moment” provision of services. They show a need for greater coordination amongst providers, and for developing a comprehensive wrap-around system of care that is less bureaucratic and overwhelming than the one currently in place. Work is needed to connect and make our community’s fragmented system of care more “whole” and “comprehensive.”

Systems Gap 5: Need for Shared Data and Communication Systems

On a practical front, some Service Providers indicated a desire for secure data systems that enable client health information to be shared across the spectrum of care.

It’d be great if we had like some kind of easy, breezy communication...information sharing...like a streamline information sharing so that you can talk to people more easily, without needing to be so meta about it.

(Participant #19)

We have an internal Island Health charting program that we use, and a lot of our... mental health and substance use teams use it...but pharmacists don’t have access to it, and the hospital doesn’t use it. [And] community partners...don’t use it either.

(De-identified participant #13)

The Comox Valley Hospital does...most of their charting on paper, which makes it really difficult for other Island Health agencies or teams to access any information once our people go into hospital we have no... it’s like they fall into a black hole. So it’s can be quite difficult to get information.

(De-identified participant #14)

While such a system may indeed improve efficiencies (and help mitigate having to tell war stories again and again as described in 5.2.1 in this report), any move towards this goal should, in our view, be balanced against the responsibility each Service Provider has to hold client data and confidentiality “in a good way.” Our experience tells us that not all Peers will want their information to be

accessible to all agencies. Should this agenda move forward, we advise the inclusion of Peers in conversations about how such a system would work, and how it could best serve People Who Use Substances.

Systems Gap 6: Need to Address Remote Access

According to Service Providers located on Hornby Island, Denman Island, and in Cumberland, work is needed to address barriers to service access for these more remote communities. These locations suffer from inadequate Harm Reduction and/or Recovery services in different ways; it is worth noting that Hornby and Denman Island have the highest rates of childhood and adult poverty in the Comox Valley¹⁰¹:

[Other than Comox Valley Street Outreach, and Caravan which] come up [to Cumberland] once in a while but [have] no connection [to the] Village office or other service providers in town that I know of...we really have zero services...in the Village itself, and zero Service Providers... including dedicated police. We have Island Health operating out of, I think it's called the Health Center. It's the Cumberland Lodge. And there is a pharmacy, there used to be a lab, but it's been closed. But...there's nothing for mental health or addictions at all...So essentially, those people get pushed out of our community.

(Vickey Brown—Councilor now Mayor, Cumberland)

I would say Harm Reduction is...just not taught enough [on Denman and Hornby]. Like, it's just not...the young people aren't getting educated. I'm usually...the first one to talk about it. So there's no Harm Reduction outreach for kids in school...It doesn't need to be in schools, but everything happens in schools.

(De-identified participant #19)

Service Providers working in Cumberland and on Hornby and Denman Islands spoke to difficulties they have in transporting Peers to and from services in-town:

Because we have a number of [Cumberland] youth who come and access services and groups and whatnot, where we're running into huge challenges for them is the busses trying to get home after [going] to Cumberland. So we're using staff or just transporting them back and forth. But I was really, really shocked at how much of a barrier the transit system to Cumberland is for young people to access services.

(Angie Prescott—John Howard)

Normally, I don't work on Fridays, because there's no school that day, but there's been two of the last four Fridays, where our adult MHSU worker has done incredible work locally to get a person ready to go somewhere... and there's no driver and the person...can't just have a volunteer with them. They need someone with more experience. And so I drove to town those two Fridays; that's normally my day off with my kids.

(Meredith McEvoy—Program Manager, Adult Mental Health and Substance Use, Hornby & Denman Community Health Care Society)

Here, then, we see flagged a need for more mental health and addiction services in these remote communities, and for transportation solutions to be developed that enable Peers from these remote communities to access in-town services.

Systems Gap 7: Need to Address Tensions in our Ecology of Care

During our sessions with Peers and Service Providers, it became clear that tensions and power imbalances exist within our local Service Provider ecology. We identified a need to disrupt these dynamics and to create space for coordination and collaboration amongst diverse entities. In particular, tension was seen to exist between Island Health and Community providers (a discrepancy flagged by a number of Community Providers across multiple sessions). This tension was tied, according to some, to wage differentials—to the fact that Island Health staff are perceived to be better-paid than staff in community service organizations (though in many cases, workers

in Island Health were seen to be trained in community). It was tied as well to a type of elitism associated with Island Health staff seen to negatively impact the capacity of the service network at large to function (participants providing these insights opted not to be quoted). When asked to elaborate, one community worker described this elitism as involving, in part, a sense of protectionism:

There is like this, almost like protectionism that happens around, you know, these are our clients and our people, and they sort of do this little bit. So it doesn't feel as collaborative as sometimes I might like it to be.

(De-identified participant #18)

Another community provider noted that the tension **"impacts clients more than it impacts us."** *(De-identified participant #15)* When asked to elaborate, this Service Provider observed that these tensions have very real impacts on clients' lives:

When we're spending time fighting with each other around who's supposed to do what, and who's the leader of what, and what we're supposed to do, and who's the boss of who, clients are waiting to be served. And that's frustrating. Because in the end of the day...I don't care what somebody else thinks of me, or [who thinks they are] better than me or not; I'm quite happy in what I do and where I'm at...What bothers me is the people waiting for service while we're going back and forth on who is supposed to do what...let's just do it. Let's just work together. We're serving the same population of people, literally the same people. So let's just serve them.

(De-identified participant #15)

Further, community providers spoke to Island Health's limited capacity, due to its operation as a large institution, to tailor services to meet individual needs: **"I think a strength for community services is that we have more flexibility than [Island Health]...I recognize the constraints that Island Health has put upon themselves."** *(De-identified participant #10)* This attribute of flexibility represents a contrast to the rigidity of Island Health's processes—and can be an additional cause for stress.

Peers also spoke to these tensions, referencing them in relation to the care system as a whole:

One of the biggest problems I see today is that when you got multiple groups and multiple people and multiple, you got Island Health working...with the ICMT team...and then the ACT team and all these different teams that start up because they don't like the way that the other team works or the other team has guidelines that the other team doesn't believe, you know, it's not right. Like, it's essentially just a battle for money in that way, because now you guys are just battling for the funding to do the helping. You know, it's like..."Pick Me Pick Me"..."I/we can help the best"...and it's gross.

(De-identified participant #9)

These observations are eye-opening. They call for a leveling of hierarchies of power in substance use support work, and for an elevation of cultures of collaboration and collective innovation. In particular, work is needed to bring Island Health and Community providers together in respectful conversation to carve out more streamlined pathways for the benefit of clients—outside the urgency of client service provision.

You know, I feel like we need to come together more and support each other...in a positive way.

*(Diana Merten—
Transition Society, Outreach)*

If we could just work a little bit closely together to serve the population of people that we serve, we could do a lot better.

(De-identified participant #15)

Given histories of power dynamics and discrepancies, it may be valuable to bring in third-party entities to facilitate dialogue and planning—with the aim of creating new collaborations and pathways forward.

Systems Gap 8: Need / Opportunity to Boost Cross-Sector Collaboration

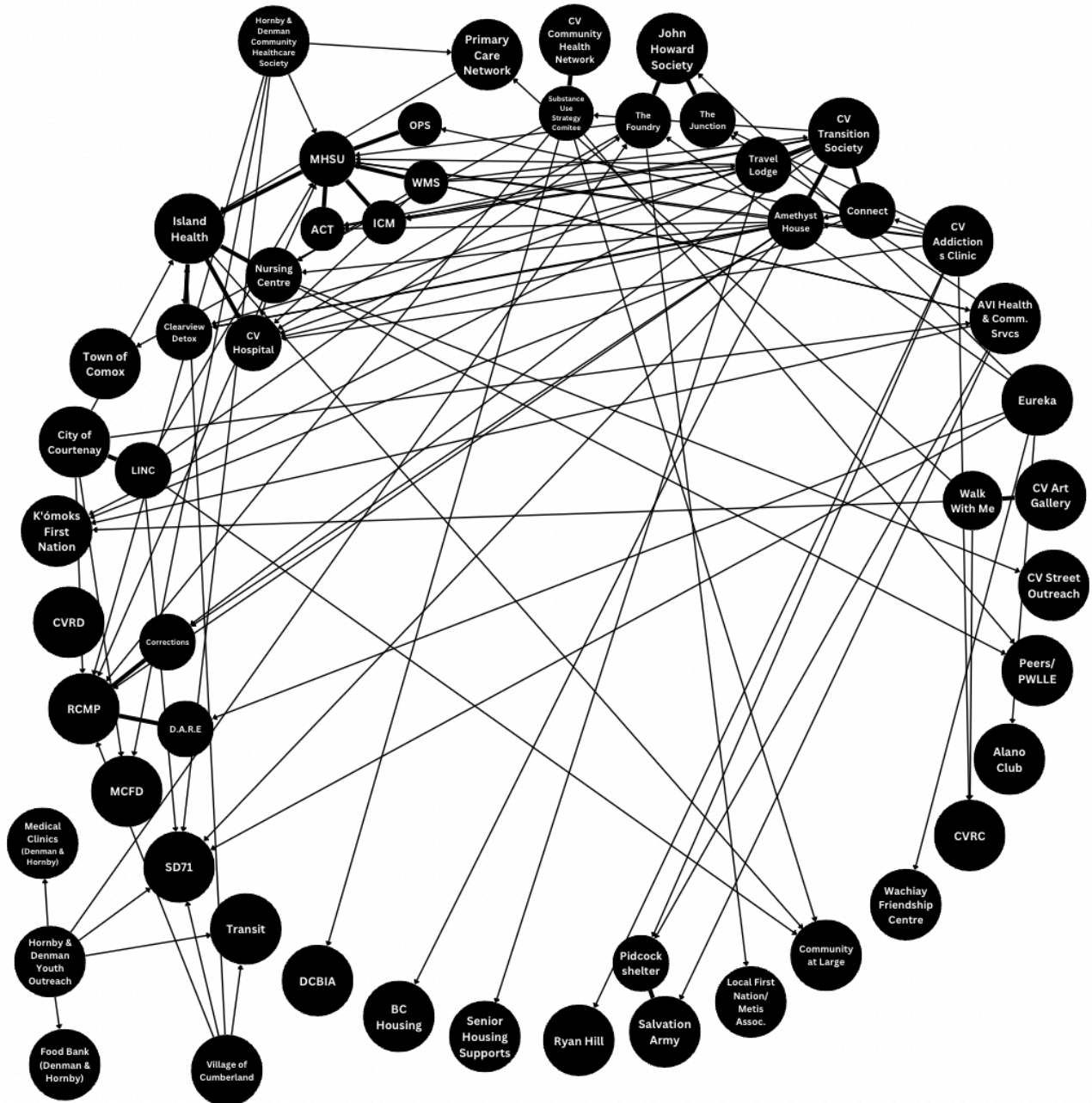
In seeking to better-understand the web of connections at-play within the local Substance Use Support Network, we asked Service Providers, as part of the cultural mapping process, to identify up to five “strong connections” at-play between a particular organization, project or initiative with which each individual participant was affiliated, and up to five “connections that could be strengthened”. Figure 7 draws attention to “connections that could be strengthened” (strong connections” are identified in Section 5.2). It is worth noting that participants could, if desired, identify a particular connection as both “strong” and “could be strengthened” (i.e. could express the desire for strong connections to be further strengthened).

In analyzing this figure, we note, first, the flurry of “could be strengthened” lines running between Island Health services and non-profit entities such as John Howard Society, CV Transition Society and AVI Health and Community Services. This flurry, it seems, speaks to a desire from both sides for greater connection between Island Health and key community-based service infrastructures. We note, as well, the desire expressed by a number of participants for stronger connections to be developed with SD71, RCMP, K’ómoks First Nation,

Clearview, North Island Hospital and Island Health Mental Health and Substance Use (the top-six identified connections). We find interesting the range of identities and mandates represented within this group.

From these observations, we see a need and opportunity to both develop stronger Island Health / Community Service Agency connections, and to develop connections with entities not always seen as “dominant players” within the substance use ecology. This second point speaks, it seems, to a need to recognize change-potential as stemming from multiple, and often unexpected, places.

Figure 7: Connections That Could be Strengthened—Service Providers



Primary Care Network (2)
 Substance Use Strategy Committee (1)
 John Howard (1)
 Foundry (3)
 Junction (2)
 CVTS (1)
 Travel Lodge (1)
 Amethyst House (2)
 Connect (1)
 AVI (2)
 CVSO (1)
 Peers/PWLL (2)
 Community at Large (3)

Local First Nation/ Metis Assoc. (1)
 Wachiay (1)
 Alano Club (1)
 CVRC (2)
 Salvation Army (1)
 Pidcock Shelter (2)
 Ryan Hill (1)
 Dawn to Dawn (1)
 BC Housing (1)
 BIA (1)
 Transit (2)
SD71 (6)
 MCFD (2)

RCMP (6)
 D.A.R.E (1)
 Corrections (2)
K'ómoks First Nation (4)
 Comox (1)
 Island Health (2)
Clearview Detox (4)
North Island Hospital (7)
 Nursing Centre (2)
MHSU (8)
 ICM (1)
 ACT (3)
 OPS (1)

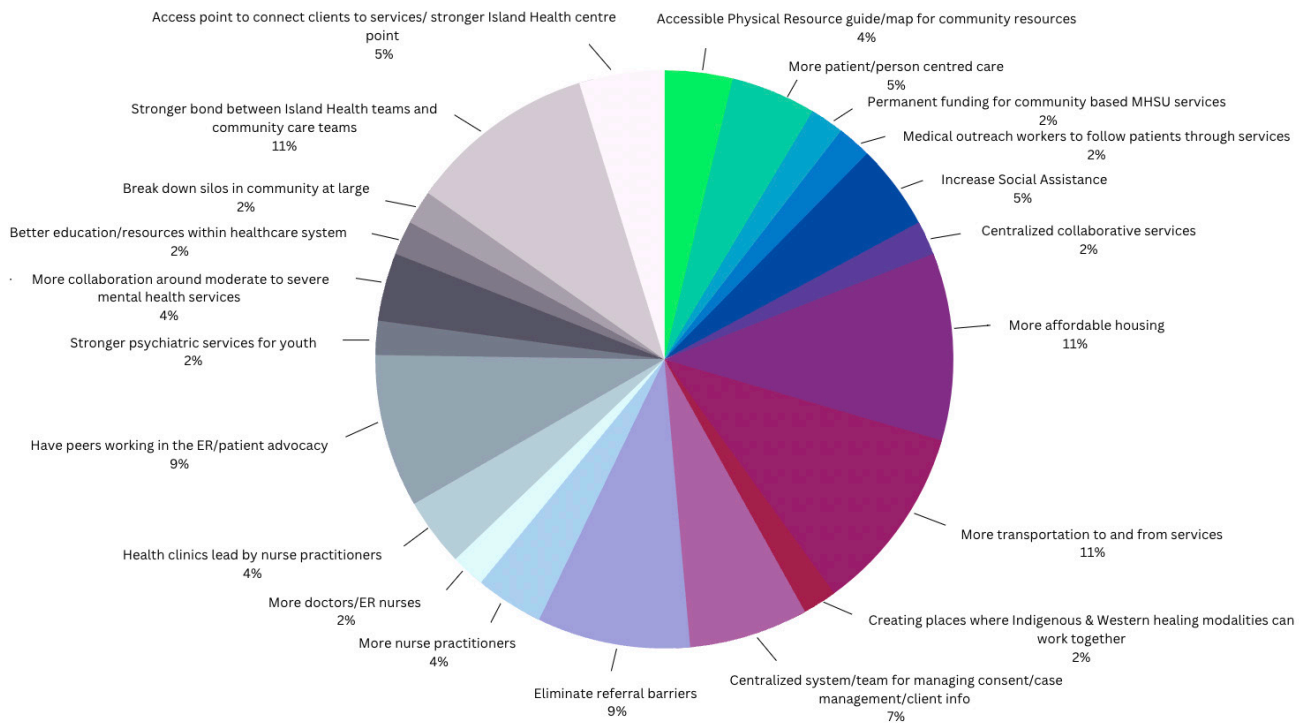
Summary

This section illuminates key service gaps in the Comox Valley Substance Use Support Network as identified by Peers and Service Providers. Included here is a need to create a local medical detox centre, develop Supportive Housing options, bolster Managed Alcohol Programs and Safer Supply programs, create a services hub, expand and re-position OPS services, expand delivery options for OAT services, ensure the existence of Culturally Safe services, strengthen services and transportation for remote communities, and enhance connectivity and collaboration between

Service Providers—especially between Island Health and Community groups. Figure 8 which identifies the highest-rated urgently needed “systems-based” solutions selected by service providers across sessions, identifies many of these same gaps and associated solutions.

Closing these gaps will require concerted effort and investment. This said, the urgency of this moment, and the alternative posed by a broken system, which involves a tremendous human and fiscal cost, demands of us that we do this work now. We must come together to repair our fragmented systems and create new and collaborative ways forward.

Figure 8: Most Urgently Needed Systems-Based Solutions Selected by Service Providers Across Sessions



5.2. Systems Strengths

In what follows, we switch our focus from “systems gaps” to look at “systems strengths.” These we present to encourage continued support and development of “things that are working well.” This section is significantly shorter than the “gaps analysis,” which is an anticipated outcome given the pressure our community is under to find new ways forward amid multiple crises. It often feels as if we are trying to mend the holes in our figurative boat instead of acknowledging the wind in the sails that moves us forward. We sometimes forget to recognize that some of our boat remains intact. We need to honour and investigate the parts of the support system that are functioning.

We wish to acknowledge the mapping work of the Comox Valley Community Action Team (CAT), which recently undertook a community conversation that looked at gaps and strengths in the community of services. In this entity’s work, a long list of organizations and initiatives were identified as representing strengths within our network (see Appendix B). This list, as well as the list of service organizations identified in the Comox Valley Community Health Network’s Substance Use Strategy’s *Phase One Report*,¹⁰² speak to a breadth and diversity of support services that are working together in the Comox Valley as part of the Substance Use Support Network.

Many research participants spoke to a potential for innovation through collaboration in our network despite the tensions identified in this report between some Service Provider groups. For some, innovation potential stems from a supportive political and community climate:

I do feel like we actually could have some shifts happen here. We do have some great people and all kinds of positions. And as I said, I think having the elected officials that are understanding this at a quite a solid level is huge as well. So, yeah, I actually have a fair amount of hope that things can improve here.

*(Shari Dunnet—
Comox Valley, CAT)*

Many of the people and organizations in this network are working from a heart-based commitment and perspective, which is a strength:

At the community-based services level, just...there’s so many amazing people. And we develop personal relationships. These are people with big hearts, you know.

(Meredith McEvoy—Program Manager, Adult Mental Health and Substance Use, Hornby & Denman Community Health Care Society)

I think in smaller communities...people get more creative to try and do as much as they can with...smaller resources...but in a way, it’s a good thing.

(De-identified participant #10)

We are willing to...think outside the box. Yeah, just doing what needs to get done.

(De-identified participant #18)

One Service Provider spoke to the energetic advocacy and visioning power at-play within this community:

This community, at least I can say...has shown incredible capacity to come together to vision together. And to like, get loud and noisy and make things happen. You have some really, really, like strong spicy advocates out there who will like take on if they hear politicians are in town, like they show up and they make sure they're heard. And yeah, we put some really amazing champions in our community that know how to make things happen, and they're not the people you would think they are.

(Angie Prescott—John Howard)

These words convey an opening, unique to this moment, in which there exists a significant amount of both political and community will to find solutions and pathways forward. We understand the Comox Valley as well positioned within our region to make change.

Peer engagement in system

A number of examples were given of the empathy, compassion and solidarity through Peer engagement that are being fostered within our existing network:

Social detox and CVRC...yeah, like every guy that's in there, and maybe they're there for a week, three weeks a month, six months in or whatever, right? This mixture of guys. They're all so empathetic and compassionate to that person coming in. They'll say, "We felt just like you did, you know, a few months ago, it'll get better." And the person says "Yeah, you're right." They know. And they hang in there, because they're not alone.

*(Danny O'leary—
Island Health, OPS)*

So we've got another team. It's called the IHOST, which is our outreach support team. And they're just so they're new team, but they're just employing four Peers. Yeah, huge because how are we supposed to fix the problem without you know, the insight of the people that are living it.

(De-identified participant #11)

Again, Peers [are working] on the front lines [through] Comox Valley Street Outreach, Community Cares [Peer Outreach]. Definitely the new IHOST team.

*(Shari Dunnet—
Comox Valley CAT)*

Peer involvement in the Comox Valley care network has increased in recent years—a trend many Peers recognize as significant.

Indigenous-led Harm Reduction

Several providers pointed to the significant number of Indigenous organizations and Elders involved in the Substance Use Support Network as a core strength:

Like IWSS, and their program Unbroken Chain, and Sassaman Society....Wachiay. Yeah, of course. So there's many more organizations that were mentioned, as well as Elders, I think Elders actually are a huge strength. We've had more Elders involved in our events we've put on and some very important learnings, and I just think Elders have a really great, great place for helping in this on a really deep level.

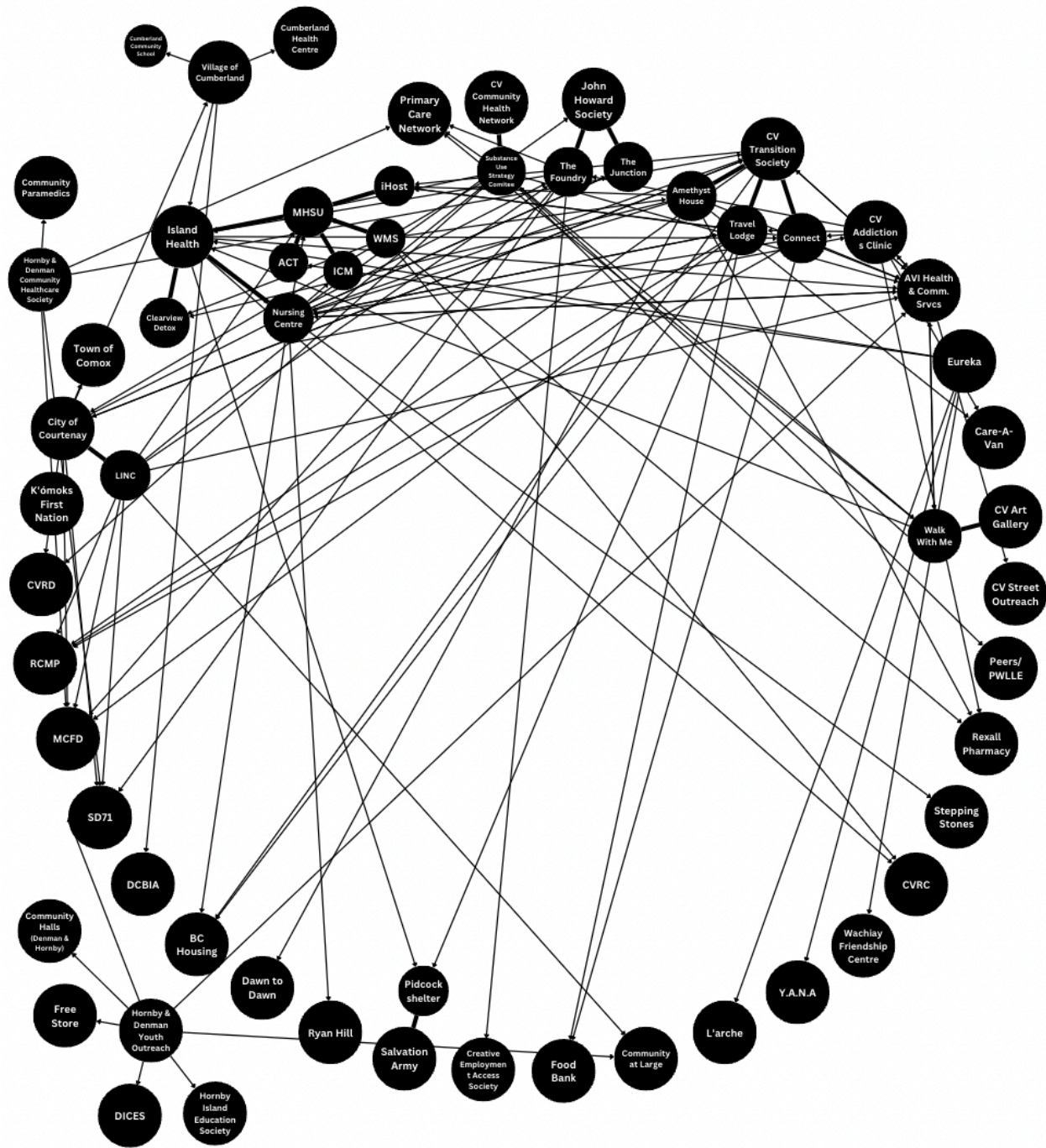
*(Shari Dunnet—
Comox Valley CAT)*

many of these connections are seen both as strong, and as needing to be strengthened). Also interesting are the organizations/entities identified in this process for whom a high number of strong relationships was identified, including: AVI, Island Health, Nursing Centre, CVTS, MCFD and Primary Care Network. Within this group, in comparison to the most-identified group outlined in Figure 7, we see, perhaps, a more obvious connectivity between entities working in traditionally-acknowledged substance use fields. We see fewer "unconventional" connections identified (as in the highly tagged organizations/identified in Figure 7). This juxtaposition recognizes, perhaps, a need to both honour and build on existing Island Health/ Community partnerships (through organizations that have been working in substance use frameworks for many years), while at the same time leaving room for unconventional players to have agency. Sometimes, it seems, powerful change potentials can come from the periphery.

Strength in Island Health/ Community Connections

Another set of strengths can be found in the "strong connections" identified by service providers as part of our cultural mapping process. As a sequel to the "connections that could be strengthened" (see Figure 7), we present Figure 9, which shows the connections Service Providers identified as strong (again, by identifying a particular organization, project or initiative with which an individual participant was affiliated, and up to five "connections considered strong" between this entity and other organizations/projects or initiatives). Interesting to note, again, was the flurry of "strong connection" lines indicated between Island Health and community service agencies, including John Howard Society, CV Transition Society and AVI (as a similar level of activity between these exists in Figure 7, it appears that

Figure 9: Strong Connections—Service Providers



Primary Care Network

- (4)
- SUSC (2)
- John Howard (1)
- Foundry (3)
- Junction (1)
- CVTS (4)**
- Travel Lodge (2)
- Amethyst House (1)
- Connect (2)
- L'Arche (1)

- Y.A.N.A (1)
- Care-A-Van (2)
- Walk With Me (2)
- CVSO (1)
- Peers/PWLE (1)
- Community at Large (2)
- Wachiay (1)
- Creative Employment Access Society (1)
- Food Bank (2)
- Rexall (3)
- Stepping Stones (1)

- CVRC (2)
- Pidcock Shelter (2)
- Ryan Hill (1)
- Dawn to Dawn (1)
- BC Housing (3)
- BIA (1)
- SD71 (5)**
- MCFD (5)**
- RCMP (4)**
- CVRD (2)
- Comox (1)

- Courtenay (2)
- CV Addictions Clinic (2)
- AVI (7)**
- Island Health (4)**
- VIHA (2)
- Clearview Detox (2)
- Nursing Centre (4)**
- MHSU (3)
- iHost (4)
- ICM (1)
- ACT (1)

The Foundry Centre as a Collaborative Model

Our team observed that the Foundry Centre represents an excellent model and collaborative success story for the Comox Valley. New to our community, beginning in 2022, the Foundry established a youth-based service centre offering “young people 12–24 access to mental health and substance use support, primary care, Peer support and social services.”¹⁰³ Foundry spaces exist in a number of BC communities—the Comox Valley space, hosted by the John Howard Society of North Island, “unites multiple

partner organizations to address the health and wellness needs of young people...” and serves as an innovative collaborative model.¹⁰⁴

As a model, we were struck by the Foundry’s capacity to bring together and leverage partnerships. The story of the Foundry’s development is useful for envisioning the type of multi-agency, multi-sectoral collaboration that holds relevance for our community as we work to create new pathways forward towards collaborative models for adults, as well as youth, in the Comox Valley:

“ [The Foundry] came out of a Comox Valley table, identifying that this community needed a...response to the mental health and substance use and general health needs of young people. And so John Howard North Island, which also operates Foundry in Campbell River, stepped forward to be the lead agency. We competed with 45 other communities around the province. And we’re one of six communities selected...This community successfully opened a foundry back in June. So we’re fairly new. Having said that, I mean, I think part of the reason our community was selected was because of some of the strong relationships that we have...I’ve spent the last 19 years working in Youth Justice, Youth Mental Health, Youth Substance Use. And so in order for us to make Foundry work...we have really strong partnership with the Ministry for Children and Family Development, both with our partners in Child Youth Mental Health, as well as our partners in guardianship and protection and adoption and your services. We have a really strong relationship with the School District. The School District has welcomed our programs into the schools in what I feel as a somewhat progressive way...The schools have also been extremely generous in finding space for us to be able to have some of our substance use counselors be on site, a regular morning, afternoon or full day, a week so that we can reduce barriers for people accessing services...The Primary Care Network and Division of Family Practice...we now have nine physicians...providing primary care at Foundry...[including] addictions medicine specialists...we have psychiatry...that super low barrier, high access supported wraparound programming is great. ”

(Angie Prescott—John Howard)

“ We’ve started a relationship with Island Health and public health. So the sexual health clinic is running out of Foundry Tuesdays and Thursday afternoons, which has just been lovely to have them in there...because their public health nurses are also in our schools. It’s a really awesome bridging...they’re seeing young people in the schools; they can also speak to them about like, hey, “like have you been to Foundry and I’m there Tuesday, why don’t you pop in and see me?”...And then Creative Employment Access Society actually have guest staff. They have staff who are youth employment specialists who are working full time at a foundry, helping offer our Foundry Works programs so that young people can come in and have access to support and implementation. So those are just some of the great relationships and partnerships, we’re trying to put our...energy towards. ”

(Angie Prescott—John Howard)

Apart from the Foundry, John Howard Society also operates a “second stage supported Recovery housing program for youth in the Comox Valley” called Level Up:

So we have a 10 bed facility. So five of the beds are funded through ministry of family development, those are for young people who are transitioning out of ministry care into youth agreements. The other five beds are funded by Island Health, and there are second stage supported Recovery...So we went to Island Health...And just kind of put it on their radar... kept saying: “Hey, I’ve got these five beds that could be used, like, here we go.” And so then as soon as the money was available through the province, [Island Health] was able to say, “Okay, we know what we want it for in the Valley. We’ve got this opportunity to have these five beds.”

(Angie Prescott—John Howard)

Several insights emerge by recognizing the gains that Foundry and Level Up have accomplished. First, we see the power of deep and long-standing inter-sectoral relationships—between community service entities (i.e. John Howard Society), government (i.e. Ministers), Island Health, school districts, physicians, mental health workers, employment agencies, and others in creating a model that works for youth in this community. This story details significant “social capital” and the “coming together” of diverse entities to accomplish a shared vision. We also see value in the way a hub provides many services to youth in a single place. As a model, the Foundry may not translate easily into the world of adult substance use services. John Howard staff working to develop the Foundry observe that developing collaborative services and transition environments for older youth (those closer to adulthood) is more difficult:

[We’re] not finding that those relationships, those invitations, those opportunities are happening as seamlessly as they did with some of our youth serving partners.

(Angie Prescott—John Howard)

This comment may suggest increased levels of stigma at-play in adult service provision and populations than in youth. Further, the model described above has notable limits:

We are not intended to be providing services for moderate to severe presentation with mental health...So we're going to be resourcing, we're going to be supporting with basic in-the-moment needs...We don't have capacity to do that sort of treatment and intervention at that moderate to severe level—that that still belongs with our folks at the hospital...at the Wellness Center...at adult mental health.

(Angie Prescott—John Howard)

Recognizing these limits, we were inspired by many components of this model. We believe models of deep-rooted connection and relationship-building are key to building capacity and bringing multi-sectoral collaborative projects of this nature together.

Endogenous Wisdom

Our team observed substantial endogenous wisdom and innovative ideas that are held in our community of care. We already have a plethora of very experienced experts, ideas, models, and change-initiatives that, combined with creative dialogue and collaborative good will, could rapidly inform a stronger system of support. Our next key task, it seems, is to collectively activate these ideas and engage in processes of radical collaboration.

5.3. Summary

As a whole, the full picture of strengths and gaps documented here describe a significantly broken system—one that is perpetually failing Peers that seek help. Our Recovery systems lack sufficient medical detox and Supportive Housing. Our Harm Reduction systems lack appropriate and sufficient Managed Alcohol, Safer Supply, OPS, and OAT services. Stigma is prevalent within our system, and Cultural Safety supports need improvement. Evidence shows that our system is providing much less than the “bare minimum”, and as a result, Peers are falling through the cracks.

This said, numerous strengths are evident within the Substance Use Support Network—endogenous assets that grow to usher in a new and stronger network. We recognize the links identified between this network and our forward-thinking local political landscape. The Comox Valley is developing strong Peer engagement practices, enhancing Indigenous representation within the network, and has demonstrable innovative collaborative change models and ideas. If we chose, we can leverage these assets to “move the dial forward” in filling gaps.

6

RECOMMENDATIONS/ WALKING TOGETHER

We've titled our recommendations section to echo our report's call to action: "Walking Together." If there were one recommendation we heard that encompasses and transcends all others, it would be this: the need to walk together. We must step out of our silos. We must mend our broken system. This work can and will only happen when we start working creatively, imaginatively, and compassionately, together.

In each of the following recommendations, we draw on our research findings to point to areas where coordinated efforts can help achieve tangible goals. A coordinating entity and role (or multiple coordinating entities/roles) are needed to do this work. Whether this role is accomplished by a consultant, research group, community circle / collaborative, or some combination thereof, those coordinating must favour collective action and have:

1. A deep commitment to working relationally across community and service lines;
2. A strong and deep knowledge of the local substance use continuum and support network;
3. The capacity to facilitate conversations that leads to direct and immanent change-modelling in a strategic and action-oriented way.

This role also requires a commitment to eliminating stigma and adhering to Cultural

Safety principals. Peers must be included as leaders in this work (including as coordinating entities). It is important that this entity (or entities) continue with this work until the identified gaps have been filled.

The following questions are central to this work:

- How can we reduce gaps in services as a community?
- How can we reduce deaths and stigma and improve quality of life for People Who Use Substances?
- How can we bring our collective knowledge together to create systems innovations and change?

We also ask: **who is responsible to make this change?** At the local community level, evidence shows that the harms associated with substance use are worsening. This reality involves a complex set of variables which necessitate a multi-faceted response. Given this reality, any meaningful solution will require leaders, organizations, community groups, and individuals to work together towards common ends.

Change agents include: leaders of local community service organizations, managers and front-line workers at Island Health; Peer groups working in the Comox Valley area; Indigenous leaders; politicians and staff from Courtenay, Comox, Cumberland, Comox Valley Regional District and K'ómoks

First Nation; community downstream and upstream Service Providers (i.e. housing, mental health supports, education); local RCMP; and Peers—including their family members and allies. We believe that many more actors exist who will self-identify as having change agency after reading this report.

In the following section, we outline the primary recommendations stemming from our research. While we identify actors who are responsible for making change, we also acknowledge the limits of our understanding related to the jurisdiction and potential involvement of local, provincial, and federal systems and agencies. We ask those with power within these systems to engage as creative, willing, and collaborative partners—imagining ways in which their agency can be applied towards the development of solutions.

1

Create and Implement Medical Detox Service in the Comox Valley

Key to this table: Island Health, Comox Valley Transition Society, Comox Valley Recovery Centre, Community Recovery and Harm Reduction Service Providers, Addictions Medicine Physicians, Medical Health Officer, Local Government, Peers, Indigenous Voices.

Acknowledging: The damage enacted by the lack of an established local medical detox service, including the damage suffered by Peers in transitioning to and from an out-of-town service, and the harms produced through the extensive wait-times in place for Peers to access this service, we recommend a coordinating entity to bring together key players to chart a direction forward. Key questions include:

How many medical detox beds are needed?

How will these be funded?

How can immediate, low barrier, on-demand medical detox be made available to people seeking this service (including options for people who smoke)?

How can the barrier of long referral wait-times be reduced?

How can the gap in transition from medical detox to social detox be closed?

Is there potential to implement a stronger medical detox program at the Comox Valley Hospital?

How can a wider “hub” of community services integrate medical detox options?

Stakeholders should aim to produce concrete results (i.e: detox beds with low-barrier entry) within as short a time frame as possible.

2 Create and Implement a Recovery-Based Supportive Housing Service

Key to this table: Island Health, Comox Valley Transition Society, Comox Valley Recovery Centre, Community Recovery and Harm Reduction Service Providers, Dawn to Dawn Action on Homelessness Society, Addictions Medicine Physicians, Medical Health Officer, Local Government, Peers, Indigenous Voices, Funders (i.e. BC Housing and others).

Acknowledging: The lack of Supportive Housing in the Comox Valley, and the damage suffered by Peers who are cycling through patterns of medical and social detox without a sufficient transitional housing option to stabilize their progress, we recommend a coordinating entity bring together key players to chart a direction forward. Key questions include:

How many Supportive Housing units are needed (now and in projecting into the future)?

How will these units be funded?

How long should Supportive Housing be provided to those needing it?

Should Recovery-based Supportive Housing be developed as a stand-alone entity with links to medical and social detox programs?

Should Supportive Housing include social detox programs? And/or, should Supportive Housing be developed as part of a multi-staged subsidized treatment program or centre (i.e. a program that includes medical/social detox and Supportive Housing as 3-stage components of a live-in residential program)?

How will people be transitioned into and out of Supportive Housing towards long-term housing?

What services and support infrastructures should be integrated into a Supportive Housing initiative?

What models should be used for Supportive Housing (i.e. Group-Based? Family-Centred? Farm-Based? Culturally Driven? Tiny Home Village?)

How might Supportive Housing options integrate within a wider “hub” of community services?

Stakeholders should aim to produce Supportive Housing units that address the service needs of people in Recovery.

3

Expand Managed Alcohol Program Services

Key to this table: Island Health, Comox Valley Hospital, AVI Health and Community Services, Community Harm Reduction Service Providers, Addictions Medicine Physicians, Medical Health Officer, Local Government, Peers, Indigenous Voices, Funders.

Acknowledging: The important role Managed Alcohol Programs play both in enabling inpatient care, and in helping to stabilize alcohol use in community, we recommend a coordinating entity to bring together key players to chart a direction forward. Key questions include:

How can patients help inform their dosing norms?

How can Managed Alcohol Programs be developed in accordance with a Patient-led approach?

How can Managed Alcohol Programs be developed in-hospital and in-community?

How can acute care, long-term care, Supportive Housing, outpatient, community, NGOs, and others collaborate to develop a Managed Alcohol Program that serves the entire Comox Valley?

What services and support infrastructures should be integrated into a Managed Alcohol Program initiative?

How can this model be funded?

Stakeholders should aim to produce tangible results (i.e. an expanded Managed Alcohol Program) in short order.

4 Expand Safer Supply Services

Key to this table: AVI Health and Community Services, Island Health, Community Harm Reduction Service Providers, Addictions Medicine Physicians, Local Government, Medical Health Officer, Peers, Indigenous Voices, Funders.

Acknowledging: The important role Safer Supply programs play in reducing reliance on toxic drugs, and in helping to stabilize use, we recommend a coordinating entity to bring together key players to chart a direction forward. Key questions include:

How can our community support the Safer Supply work that AVI Health and Community Services is providing in the Comox Valley?

How can this program, under AVI's direction, be expanded to meet community need?

What services and support infrastructures should be integrated into an expanded Safer Supply program?

How can this expansion be funded?

This work should aim to produce tangible results (i.e. an expanded Safer Supply program) that honours and builds on the pioneering work being done by AVI Health and Community Services.

5

Relocate and Expand Overdose Prevention Site (OPS) and Services

Key to this table: Island Health, AVI Health and Community Services, Local Government, Community Harm Reduction Service Providers, Medical Health Officer, Peers, Indigenous Voices, Funders.

Acknowledging: The important role OPS Services play in reducing reliance on toxic drugs, and helping to stabilize use, we recommend a coordinating entity to bring together key players to chart a direction forward. Key questions include:

Where should OPS services be located? (i.e. closer to services like Connect and Travelodge? In community? At the Comox Valley Hospital?)

How might the hours of OPS be expanded?

How might inhalation services be included?

What additional services and support infrastructures should be integrated into an OPS program?

How might this expansion be funded?

This work should aim to produce tangible results (i.e. an expanded/ relocated OPS Service).

6

Pursue Improvements in Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT) Delivery

Key to this table: Comox Valley Transition Society / Travelodge, College of Pharmacists of BC, Local OAT providing pharmacists, Community Harm Reduction Service Providers, Medical Health Officer, Peers, Indigenous Voices, Funders.

Acknowledging: The important role OAT programs play in stabilizing substance use, and the need to ensure availability of OAT services and support staff who can witness OAT consumption, we recommend a coordinating entity to bring together key players to chart a direction forward. Key questions include:

How can barriers to OAT witnessing be reduced?

How can the responsibility for OAT supervision be addressed in such a way as to honour and utilize the strong links at-play between Community Service Providers and Peers while still maintaining safety in providing OAT supervision responsibly?

How might we attract more OAT providers to the Comox Valley?

Should the College of Pharmacists of BC be approached for changes to OAT witnessing protocols?

This work should aim to produce changes, leading to more comprehensive and accessible OAT delivery practices in the Valley.

7

Pursue a Series of Network Improvements

Key to this table: Entire Service Network, Peers, Indigenous Voices.

Acknowledging: A series of improvements has been identified as necessary to make our care network run more effectively, we recommend that a coordinating entity bring together network stakeholders throughout the system to chart a direction forward. Key questions include:

How can agencies work together efficiently and collaboratively leading to better coordination of services?

How can an inter-agency communication and client data-sharing system be developed in such a way as to give Peers power over their information? Who will be responsible for the consent process, and how will it work? Is such a system worth recommending? (i.e. do the benefits to Peers of having a system that shares their data with multiple providers thereby allowing for a streamlining of services outweigh the potential risks associated with a loss of privacy in relation to personal data)?

How can Island Health and community providers work together respectfully, and with clarity around roles and responsibilities?

How can Peers become involved on front-line navigation and leadership levels in shaping the development of the Network?

This work should aim to produce tangible changes in the communication channels, effectiveness and efficiency of our system, and should work to address the power imbalances expressed between Island Health and community Service Providers—creating a stronger network of collaboration.

8

Create a Services Hub

Key to this table: Entire Service Network, Peers, Indigenous Voices, Funders, Local Government.

Acknowledging: The value of a single point of access centre that provides primary care, addictions medicine care, mental health care, access to a wide range of community services including medical and social detox, Peer Navigators, employment opportunities, and others, we recommend a coordinating entity to bring together network stakeholders throughout the system to chart a direction forward. Key questions include:

How can such a centre be designed, developed and built?

How can a strategically beneficial group of services be brought together in the centre?

What partnerships are needed to make such a centre happen?

What funding sources can be utilized to make such a centre happen?

This work should aim to produce a brick and mortar services centre designed to provide an amalgamation of services in one place, and access to navigators who can link clients to a wide range of services both inside and outside of the building.

9 Pursue Service and Transportation Improvements for Remote Places, and Places Without Strong Transit Systems (Hornby and Denman Islands, Cumberland, and Others)

Key to this table: Hornby and Denman Community Health Care Society, City of Cumberland, BC Transit/Comox Valley, Wheels for Wellness, Island Health, Medical Health Officer, Peers, Indigenous Voices, Funders.

Acknowledging: The difficulties involved in the transportation of Peers from the more remote regions of the Comox Valley to in-town services, we recommend that a coordinating entity bring together key players to chart a direction forward. A key question is as follows:

What do improvements in both service delivery and transportation look like for Peers in these regions?

This work should aim to produce results that include stronger Harm Reduction and Recovery program delivery in remote places within the Comox Valley, and stronger transportation systems that support the linkages between Peers and in town services.

10 Address the Need for Culturally Safe Services

Key to this table: Elders/Knowledge Keepers, Indigenous Organizations, Indigenous Peers and Leaders, Service Providers, K'ómoks First Nation, Island Health.

Acknowledging: The need expressed for culturally safe services, we recommend a coordinating entity bring together key players to chart a direction forward. Key questions include:

How can Cultural Safety principles be brought into existing services?

What new services are needed that honour the teachings of Cultural Leaders and show respect for Indigenous ways of knowing and healing?

This work should be guided by local Elders/Knowledge Keepers and should honour territory and teachings.

11 Work to Reduce/Eliminate Stigma in the System

Key to this table: Entire Service Provider Network, Peers, Local Government.

Acknowledging: The expressed need to develop services that are safe for Peers, and that are premised upon an atmosphere of respect, we recommend a coordinating entity to bring together key players to chart a direction forward. Key questions include:

How can anti-stigma training be included in the work of our Service Provider Network and its constituent organizations?

What education, information and/or staff development programs are needed within the Service Provider Network to reduce/eliminate stigma?

How can Service Providers work together across the network to advance this work?

This work should be guided by local Peer leaders.

Summary:

These recommendations provide pathways forward, and together create a framework for further dialogue leading to action. The dialogues called for in this slate are urgent and necessary to advance the effectiveness of our Substance Use Support Network. By working through these conversations, and by pursuing the necessary collaborations, relationships, funding, and actions to make the recommendations a reality, we believe a significant systems shift can happen.

7 CONCLUSION

We live in a time of crisis, wherein multiple and compounding forces are contributing to the fragmentation of our communities. In the midst of these crises, substance use-related harms are growing. Work is urgently needed to shore up our Substance Use Support Network—to strengthen our continuum of care and by extension, our community's capacity for wellness.

There are many reasons why we must take action now. From a human rights standpoint, the act of strengthening our Substance Use Support Network is important to our shared humanity and in our ability to function as a community. This act is also important from an efficiency standpoint, as countless dollars are expended within a system that is not functioning well. By spending money to create strong health and wellness outcomes, we can repair the leaks in our boat, and can begin to chart our way forward.

The time to act is now. Our existing Substance Use Support Network, broken as it is, has strong political allies, strong Peer engagement, and a pool of creative thinkers with a wealth of experience that could be innovatively applied. In moving forward, we need to work together, dream big, and make transformative change happen. We must stop working in silos and begin to think of each of our organizations as parts of a whole. Walking together we are stronger.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Survey

Objectives

To enhance our comprehension of substance use in the Comox Valley, we offered an anonymous survey for data collection in addition to other methods. We recognize the sensitivity and need for confidentiality that surrounds this largely stigmatized dimension of life for PWLLE of substance use, and through our survey, we invited participants to anonymously respond to a questionnaire using an online platform. The data presented within this section represents the experiences of 51 people actively using substances in the Comox Valley who responded to a range of questions focusing on types of substances used and access to addictions and social services within the Comox Valley in terms of specific services accessed, frequency of access, and quality of services received.

Findings

Respondent Demographics

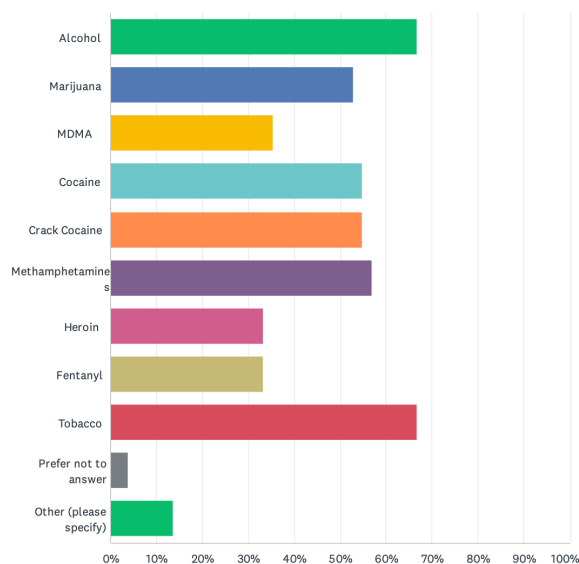
The majority of respondents fell between the ages of 30–60 representing 74.5% of those who answered. Approximately 11% of the respondents were youth under the age of 30, and approximately 4% were over 60 years of age. There was a near equal division between those who identified as male and those who identified as female. Of the 51 respondents more than half (56.87%) described themselves as unhoused or precariously

housed at the time of completing the survey. Approximately 50% of those who responded identified as being BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour), with 27.45% of that self-identifying as Indigenous, 9.8% identifying as Black, and 11.76% identifying as a Person of Colour.

Substance Usage Responses

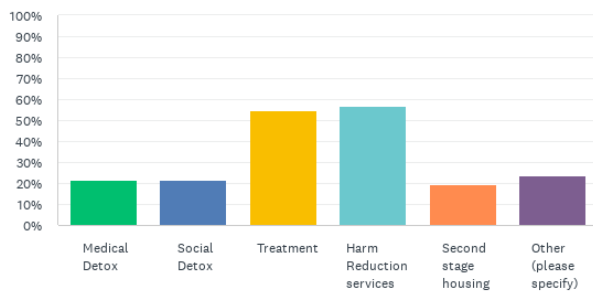
In terms of the specific substances used as reported by survey respondents as being used in the past two years, there were 9 substances primarily identified.

Chart 1. Substance Use Over Past Two Years



As the chart indicates, the substances with the highest reported use are alcohol and tobacco which are both government regulated. This reporting is supported by available data on hospitalization rates and deaths in Comox Valley. The first and highest reported illicit substances being used are methamphetamines, at nearly 57% of all respondents reporting use. Our findings also support the claim that our sample uses many different substances in a simultaneous or overlapping manner. Both cocaine and crack cocaine showed frequent use with approximately 55% people reporting. Heroin, Fentanyl and MDMA have slightly lower percentages of reported use, each at approximately 35% of respondents reporting use. It is notable that aggregate Province wide data from the BC Coroner’s Service suggests that fentanyl deaths are far outpacing other substances—even if reported use fentanyl may be lower than the use of other drugs in our survey results.

Chart 2. Substance Use Services Accessed in the last two years

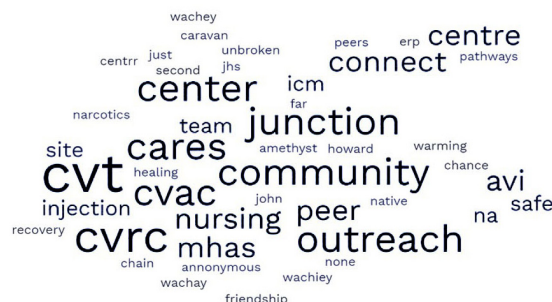


More than half of the respondents have attempted to access treatment and Harm Reduction services over the past two years. When asked to consider one service at a time, the majority of respondents (81.63%) indicated that they were able to access the service on their first attempt to do so. Of the approximately 16.33% of respondents who indicated that they were unable to access the

service they attempted, there were varied reasons for why this was the case. One respondent noted “no room for me,” where others mentioned housing precarity or a lack of desire to quit using substances.

In terms of specific services accessed in the Comox Valley in the past two years, respondents reported a wide range of services. Question 13 asked the question “What service provider have you approached for help?” and invited respondents to focus on one service provider at a time. In terms of frequency of services approached, Comox Valley Transition Society (CVTS), AVI Health and Community Services, Mental Health and Addiction Services (MHAS), Comox Valley Addiction Centre (CVAC), Comox Valley Recovery Centre, and Narcotics/Alcoholics Anonymous (NA/AA) were among the top reported services approached with more than 5 respondents naming one of these service providers. The CVTS, has several services housed under its umbrella which explains why it received the highest reported frequency of approaches at 19 respondents in total. As a model for frequency of access and use, we note that the CVTS operates like a hub—with the kind of centralized substance use service provision we suggest the Comox Valley should pursue whenever possible. Following closely behind CVTS with 12 respondents having reporting are MHAS and NA/AA, with 7 respondents and AVI with 6 respondents reporting.

Chart 3. Word Cloud of Service Organizations Approached in the Comox Valley Over the Past Two Years



In Question 14, we asked respondents to answer, “Which service did you try to access?” As illustrated in the word cloud above the most repeated answers include treatment, housing and Harm Reduction as the primary services that were accessed through the above-mentioned service providers. There is strong correlation between these findings from our survey participants, people who are using substances in the Comox Valley, and the top priorities for action that our service providers identified in our focus groups with them. Many services fall under the category of treatment and are offered by multiple service providers in the Valley. CVTS houses many programs under its service provision umbrella which includes Amethyst House, a withdrawal and recovery house that was reported as being accessed by 6 respondents in total. Additionally, the CVRC was reported as being accessed by 11 respondents over the past two years. In terms of housing, CVTS provides services through the Connect Warming Centre, reported by 11 respondents, and Lilli House, a women’s transitional house reported by 1 respondent. In terms of Harm Reduction services, AVI was reported by 7 respondents and Unbroken Chain was mentioned by 5 respondents.

Chart 4. Word Cloud of Specific Services Accessed Through Substance use Service Providers



Respondent Evaluations of Services Accessed

In terms of overall ratings of helpfulness of each service identified within the survey, 41.67% of respondents felt that they found

their services super helpful, 33.33% said the services were very helpful, 16.67% said the services were somewhat helpful, and approximately 13% said that the services were not helpful. Of those who stated that the services were not helpful, we invited an explanation. One participant offered:

It would have been, but there was an issue where the first counselling I was I assigned to, we connected well and I felt comfortable so when she said I could call in again and request her I trusted that. The office then sabotaged that from happening and I withdrew service requests.

Another spoke of being disqualified from accessing group therapies because they received individual counselling services through First Nations Health Authority:

I was unable to use their services which would have been beneficial to me and my recovery. I could not join because I had counseling through FNHA so I did not need an individual counselor through mental health which excluded me from these group therapies.

Furthermore, the durational range of time between expressed need for the service and actual delivery of service was between: immediate service access, to weeks, months, over a year, and finally to never gaining access after trying. Of the 48 respondents, 21 said that they received access to services almost immediately or within week. 15 said within weeks to under 3 months. 5 said between 3 months and 1 year. 3 reported over a 1 year, and 3 reported that they still had not received access since expressing a need for services.

Strengths of Services Provided

When asked in Question 19 about what parts of the service worked, respondents shared a range of responses, with many stating that the services were optimal in their totality. While others spoke about more specific aspects of the services—mentioning the general ability to connect and gain support from staff through counselling and group therapy—others spoke about receiving housing as a result of the services accessed as being the best part of the service, unsurprisingly. Those satisfied cited safe supplies, knowledgeable staff, and overall improvement of health, such as described by one respondent, **“My health has improved—stability—nutrition. I can start my life.”**

Weaknesses of Services Provided

In Question 20, we asked the respondents to tell us about the parts of the services that were not working for them. Of the 49 respondents to answer this question, almost half stated that there was nothing to report and that the services worked as well and as they expected. Of those who did respond that parts of the service that did not work, some common themes included: time/hours and availability of services and program rules as in the example provided by one respondent:

We are not allowed guests at night. We have to apply to have guests pre-approved each time. No guests after 7pm–8am Staff only check on people if requested.

Recommendations for Changes to Services

In Question 21, we asked respondents to expand upon the weaknesses in service delivery they identified to make suggestions

about what they would change about how the services they accessed could work. It was our hope to gain some understanding about the potential gaps that exist within the substance use service provision in the Comox Valley. Of the 48 people who answered, 18 responded with no recommended changes needed. However, there were several notable suggestions. Approximately 10 respondents requested an increase the hours and availability for services offered. Other recommendations included increasing staffing and funding for services, improvements to client care and relationship building with staff, housing access and services pertaining to securing safe and affordable housing, and coordination between service providers to create better wraparound services and connections, as identified by this respondent who said:

It would help if the nursing centre worked or coordinated to other agencies in order to find support for the prescriptions they provide.

In Question 22 we asked if service users felt sufficiently connected to the next relevant service following their experience, to which the majority of respondents indicated that they did, indeed, feel their needs were met. However, several respondents also indicated that the services were not adequately connected. One person mentioned not having appointments scheduled close enough together and another indicated a lack of support to connect with adequate financial assistance. Furthermore, one respondent said they had to do their own research to connect with other services as they were not supported to do this.

Limitations

It is important to consider the limitations of this survey questionnaire as a data collection method and to view its findings within the context of all the research methods we

have used to make recommendations in this report. As respondents were invited to participate and offered an honoraria, it is possible that some responded with the simplest possible answers, and their evaluations of the services described in our survey should be understood in this light. Respondents were invited to reflect on each service individually and only 5 of 48 respondents took the opportunity to reflect upon more than one substance use service. It is difficult to capture the full context of each respondents' answer through this questionnaire, and this is why we conducted in-person cultural mapping groups with People Who Use Drugs in the Comox Valley to understand the larger picture of the substance use services gaps and strengths.

Conclusions

This questionnaire offers a glimpse into the ongoing substance use strategies within the Comox Valley, and in examining this data set in exclusion from our other methods, we were left with questions that are considered in the body of the report:

1. What barriers do service providers face if and when they attempt to work and collaborate together to provide a more seamless experience for substance use services users?
2. Why is it so difficult to access housing for PWLLE in the Comox Valley?
3. How can we improve program hours and availability for substance use services in the Comox Valley?

APPENDIX B

This Asset Map was produced by the Comox Valley Community Action Team (CAT) in November 2021. The CAT brings together a diverse range of community stakeholders as a team focused on developing and implementing local action-oriented strategies to respond to the needs of those most at risk, prevent further toxic drug poisoning deaths, reduce stigma, and better coordinate access to supports, treatment, Harm Reduction and recovery services for people in our community who use substances and their families. Through the course of three CAT meetings, 40 individuals involved in the CAT (including Peers, Service providers, Indigenous organizations, local Health Authorities, local elected officials, family members and others), participated in small group conversations to identify the strengths and weakness in our local community support systems. This list shares the strengths identified in these conversations. It has been amended to exclude personal names.

Note: Several of the items identified as strengths were also identified as weaknesses and vice versa.

November 2021 Comox Valley Community Action Team (CAT) Strong Local Organizations and Initiatives Asset List

Public and Government Institutions

- Government
 - Supportive Elected Government Representatives—Local, Provincial, and Federal
 - Mayor and Council, CVRD, MLA, MP
 - K'ómoks First Nation

- Island Health
 - Mental Health and Substance Use (MHSU)
 - Public Health
 - Nursing Centre
 - Hospital, Addictions Medicine Department
 - Intensive Case Management Team (ICM)
 - Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACT)
 - Overdose Prevention Site (currently located at Island Health, previously at AVI Health & Community Services)

- Resources/Initiatives
 - Ambulance
 - Drug Alerts (multiple agencies: Island Health/AVI)
 - Naloxone Kits (MHSU and other local distributors)
 - Income Assistance Outreach
 - Physicians who participate in Outreach (Travelodge and Connect)
 - Mail-in drug testing
 - Nasal Naloxone access (free for Indigenous, First Nations)
 - Take-home testing strips (through Island Health, FNHA and peer project/outreach)
 - Local advocates for decriminalization

- Shared Services
 - Withdrawal Management
 - Primary Care Network
 - Peer Experts (within agencies, within CAT, and on frontlines)
- Education
 - North Island College
 - Nursing Programs
 - Overdose Response Training
 - Comox Valley Lifelong Learning Centre (computer access, literacy support)
 - School District Nurses

Community Organizations and Initiatives

- Community Action Team (CAT)
- Comox Valley Street Outreach (with support from the CAT and AVI)
- Substance Use Strategy Committee
- Walk With Me
- Connect Warming Centre
- AVI Health and Community Services
 - AVI Outreach Team (*note: federal funding contract ended March 2022, this team not currently funded)
- Moms Stop the Harm
- Comox Valley Transition Society
- Comox Valley Additions Clinic
- Comox Valley Family Services Association
- Homelessness Response Team meetings and Frontline Check-ins
- John Howard
 - The Junction
 - The Foundry (at time of asset mapping, The Foundry was soon to open)
- Care-a-Van
- Hornby & Denman Community Health Care Society
- Comox Valley Helping Hands
- Food Bank
- Sunday Station
- Soup Kitchen/St. George's
- St John the Divine
- Travelodge Team

Indigenous/First Nations Institutions and Supports

- Kómoks First Nation (KFN)
- Unbroken Chain, Youth Outreach
- Wachiay Friendship Centre
- Kwakiutl District Council (KDC Health)
- Indigenous Women's Sharing Society (IWSS)
- Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry (UIWONA)

- Sassaman Society
- First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)
- Indigenous Wellness Advocates (PCN)
- KUU-US Crisis Line Society
- MIKI'SWI Métis Association
- Cultural Ceremonies, Knowledge, Teaching, Elders
- Cultural Safety

Communication Technologies

- Brave & Lifeguard apps
- 1-888# (virtual safe consumption) 24/7 LOVE
- Testing strips (*only semi-reliable)
- Zoom meetings/networking
- Social media campaigns (CV Street Outreach, Unbroken Chain, etc.)

Businesses

- Comox Valley Dodge Dealership

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The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Staff Report

To: Council
From: Adam Langenmaier – Director of Finance
Subject: Budget Development and Spending Priorities

File No.: 1700-20
Date: February 28, 2024

PURPOSE:

To provide Council with information from the online budget engagement that ran October 23 to November 22 2023, and to provide information on a proposal to guide the next 3-years of budget engagement.

BACKGROUND:

During the 2023-2027 Financial Planning process, engagement was limited due to the timing of the financial plan presentation and the municipal elections. Through the 2023 process Council recognized the limitations and, consistent with the City's strategic priorities, provided feedback that taking steps to broadly engage the community on the financial plan was a critical. For the 2024 Financial Plan the City has moved the engagement process online through a budget engagement tool called Balancing Act. Residents are presented with many options on revenue and services of the City that they can choose to increase or decrease. Respondents must provide a balanced budget they simply cannot reduce all taxes and increase all services.

Along with the shift to online budget engagement, staff are presenting a plan to try and build more interest in the budgeting process. In keeping with Council's desire to engage broadly with the community, the attached plan will increase input opportunities with respect to the annual and five-year financial plan which is guided by the City's adopted strategic priorities and continues to deliver essential services to properties and residents in Courtenay.

DISCUSSION:

Simulation Design

The budget simulation was designed around the 2023 Financial Plan. This includes both revenue and expenditures for the General and Utility Funds. Additionally, specific proposals were placed before residents to consider:

- Should the City increase Recreation Fees to pay for Recreation Services?
- Should the City increase Building Permit Fees to offset review and issuing costs?
- Should the City hire additional Bylaw Officers?
- Should the City save money for future capital projects and Reduce Reliance on Debt?

Budgets were grouped by functional area (i.e. Public Safety, Recreation) and respondents could increase or decrease revenue and expenditure allocations at the department level. Prior to submitting their budget, they needed to balance the budget (revenue greater or equal to expenditures).

Link to the 2024 Financial Plan simulation:

<https://courtenay.abalancingact.com/FP2024?preview=691d9dbcb60ec49709fbfba24fd8035>

Results

The engagement efforts for the 2024 Financial Plan were somewhat successful and substantially improved participation over prior years. As noted in the engagement analytics below, the budget simulation garnered a total of 842 unique viewings, averaging over 6 minutes per engagement. This equates to a total of 85 hours of budget engagement and exploration of revenue and expenditures scenarios.

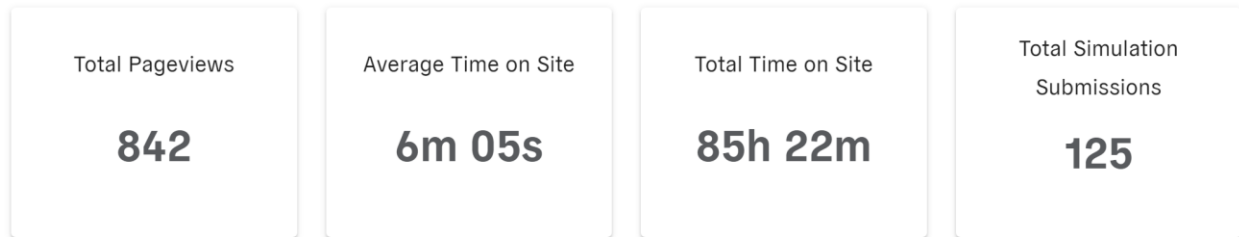


Figure 1: Simulation viewing statistics.

A total of 125 individuals submitted their budget for the City to learn about their preferences and comments on the 2024 Financial Plan. Although 125 submissions seems like a low figure, we must consider how much interest was generated by the prior year's budget engagement. An additional benefit that to this approach was the active engagement through the balance budget tool as opposed to previous passive engagement. Attending and listening to a budget presentation in person is not active engagement as there is limited ability to provide feedback. Historically budget presentations have not been well attended, with only a handful of people attending. If there were 10 attendees this would have resulted in 20 hours of engagement assuming a 2-hour presentation. Online budget engagement provided 85 hours of active engagement where residents had the opportunity to provide direct feedback moving the engagement from an informative approach to a more engaging approach.

Below is a link to the results of these submission in a budget visualization report:

<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiNDQxNWY5NzltMTkwOS00MzlhLWFjNDItYjg3MzMyZTJIN2EylwiwIDCI6IjRjOTc4NDhkLWZiZTctNDA1MS05Zjc4LWVvYjUxY2JjZmZhYyIsImMiOiZ9>

This information link will be made available on the City's website in the 2024 to 2028 Financial Plan area.

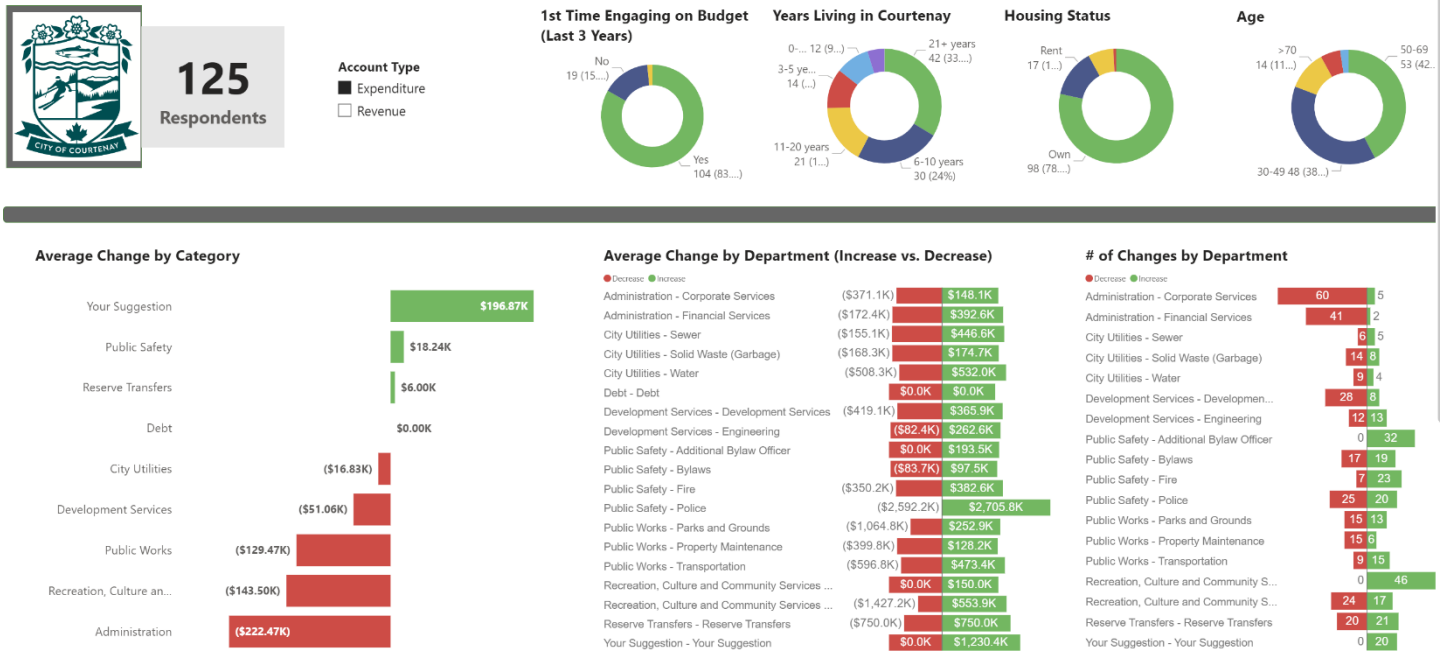
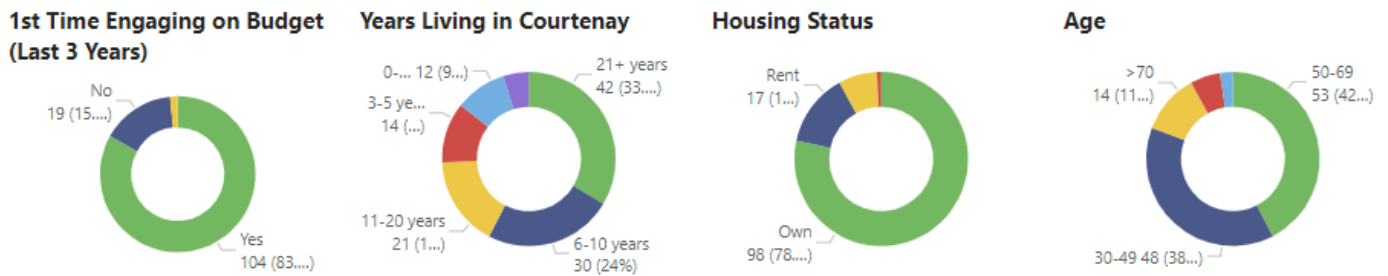


Figure 2: Screenshot of 2024 Financial Plan Simulation Results.

The top row the visualisation provides details on the four questions asked (voluntarily) regarding:

- Is this the 1st time engaged with the City of Courtenay on the Budget in the last 3 years
 - 83% of respondents answered yes
- How many years you have lived in Courtenay
 - 34% - 21 years or more
 - 24% - 6-10 years
- Housing status (own, rent or other)
 - 79% own their homes
 - 7.2% did not respond
- Age
 - 42% - 50-69 years
 - 38% - 30-49 years

By clicking any one of these questions you are able to see these different groups responses to the budget simulation.



Average Change by Category – This summarizes the total average change in a given category, this includes those who increase and decrease the category.

Average Change by Department (Increase vs. Decrease) – This summarises the average change for those who selected an increase or decrease it is not the average of both increase and decrease.

of Changes by Department – This summarizes the number of times a person selected a decrease or increase, it does not calculate the amount it simply quantifies the number of increase/decrease survey results.

Average Change by Category

The average change by category summarizes the total average change in a given category. Overall, the expenditure category with the highest average increase in funding was the Your Suggestion comment field. This was followed by increases in Public Safety funding and Reserve Transfers. The expenditure categories with highest average decrease in funding was City Administration followed by Recreation, Culture and Community Services and Public Works.

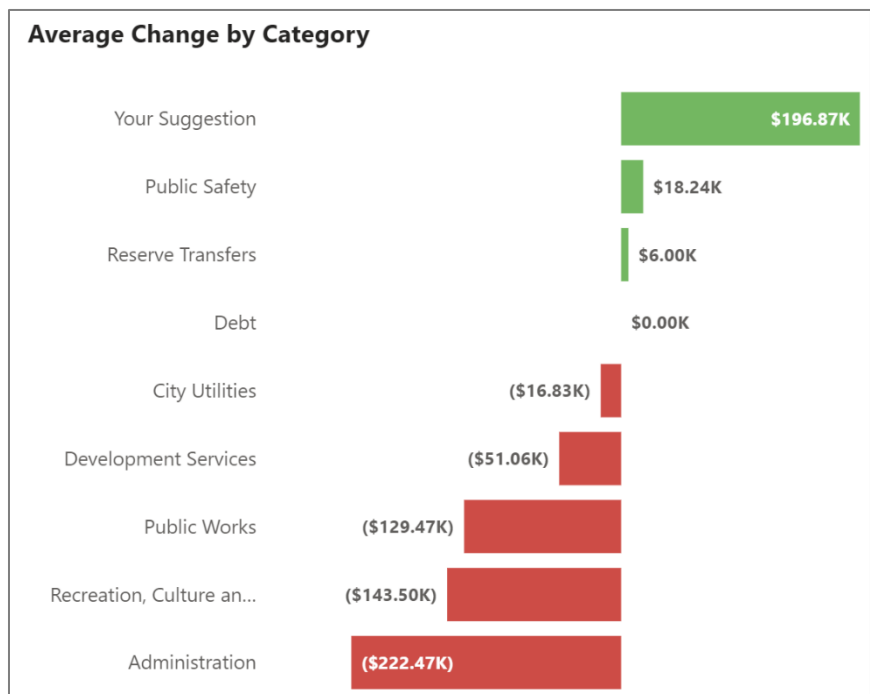


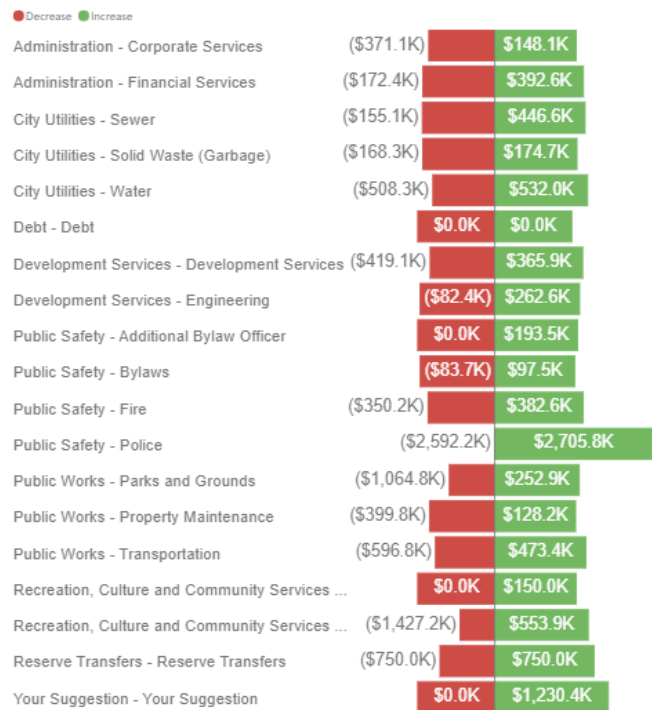
Figure 3: Average Change by Category

Average Change by Department

The average change by department summarizes the average increase and decrease (separately) by department. This is not an average of increase and decrease, it better shows the desires of respondents. At the department level, the highest average increase in funding was Police at \$2.7M. This was followed by increases in your suggestion, Recreation Culture and Community Services and the water utility. The expenditure categories with highest average decrease in funding was Police at \$2.6M, Recreation Culture and Community Services, Parks and Grounds.

Figure 4: Average Change by Department/Division

Average Change by Department (Increase vs. Decrease)



Property Taxes

Property taxes are the highest revenue source for the City of Courtenay and the most visible tax for most residents. Respondents were provided the option of increasing or decreasing property taxes to balance the budget and shown the implications on the average-valued home for making each one percent change in tax revenue collected.

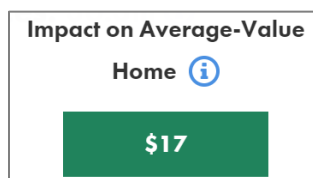


Figure 5: Impact on Average-Value Home example of a 1% increase in property taxes (\$311,450 in additional revenue). Screenshot from the simulation.

Overall, most respondents decided to keep the property tax collection amount flat (84 respondents), followed by 24 respondents electing to increase property taxes and 19 respondents decreasing property taxes.

The budget simulation requires that you submit a balanced budget, therefore, reductions in property taxes will likely lead to reductions in expenditures in department budgets. For respondents decreasing property taxes, the highest average decrease was in the Police Department budget (\$1.17M) followed by Recreation, Culture and Community Services (\$865K).

For respondents increasing property taxes, the highest average increase in budget was the Police Department (\$1.53M) followed by an increase in Reserve Transfers to save money for future capital projects and reduce reliance on debt (\$125K).

This divided yet similar result highlights that within the responses the solution around Police funding is polarized. People are willing to increase taxation to fund more policing while others are willing to decrease taxation and will achieve this through reduced police funding.

Below is a table showing the differences of average changes based upon property tax response (increase, decrease or no change).

Decrease in property taxation – 19 people selected a decrease in property taxation would change costs in the following areas:

Increase Spending	Decrease Spending
Bylaw Services	Policing
New recreation services	Recreation Culture and Community Service
Fire protection	Reserve transfers

Increase in property taxation – 24 People selected an increase in property taxation would change costs in the following areas:

Increase Spending	Decrease Spending
Policing	Corporate Services
Your suggestions (mixed)	Financial Services
Fire protection	Property maintenance

No change to property taxation – 82 People who selected to not change taxation but a indicated a redistribution of existing expenses across the following areas:

Increase Spending	Decrease Spending
Additional bylaw office	Policing
Your suggestions (mixed)	Corporate Services
New recreation services	Parks and Grounds

AVERAGE CHANGE BY DEPARTMENT BASED UPON PROPERTY TAX DECISION				
<i>Property Taxes is Courtenay's primary method of revenue collection (47.1%). This table looks at the changes made in relation to the property tax rate determined by the simulation respondent.</i>				
	Decrease Property Taxes	Increase Property Taxes	No Change to Property Taxes	All Respondents
RESPONDENTS	19	24	82	125
REVENUE	(114,379) ▼	302,006 ▲	7,354 ▼	45,424
Building Permit Fees	82,895 ▲	51,042 ▲	25,610 ▼	39,200
Development Services (Rev)	-	-	-	-
Increase/Decrease Property Taxes	(1,376,937)	2,867,935	-	341,349
Other Revenue	-	-	-	-
Property Taxation	-	-	-	-
Recreation	94,991 ▲	7,337 ▼	4,026 ▼	18,488
Recreation Fees	55,263 ▲	93,750 ▲	43,902 ▼	55,200
Sewer (Rev)	-	-	-	-
Solid Waste (Garbage) (Rev)	-	-	-	-
Water (Rev)	-	-	-	-
EXPENDITURES	(142,595) ▼	143,042 ▲	(36,284) ▼	(18,012)
Additional Bylaw Officer	32,158 ▼	103,542 ▲	37,756 ▼	49,536
Bylaws	11,839 ▲	25,283 ▲	(4,912) ▼	3,432
Corporate Services	(297,865) ▼	(99,173) ▲	(164,481) ▲	(172,216)
Debt	-	-	-	-
Development Services	(144,341) ▼	(5,494) ▲	(72,357) ▼	(70,461)
Engineering	27,466 ▲	11,778 ▼	19,755 ▲	19,396
Financial Services	(89,119) ▼	(38,855) ▲	(44,591) ▲	(50,258)
Fire	65,952 ▲	107,829 ▲	30,563 ▼	50,777
New Recreation Services	55,263 ▲	93,750 ▲	43,902 ▼	55,200
Parks and grounds	(91,598) ▲	12,892 ▲	(137,249) ▼	(101,483)
Police	(1,169,409) ▼	1,532,450 ▲	(307,910) ▼	(85,509)
Property maintenance	(114,221) ▼	(9,042) ▲	(34,646) ▲	(41,825)
Recreation, Culture and Community Services	(864,828) ▼	52,666 ▲	(117,920) ▲	(198,698)
Reserve Transfers	(118,421) ▼	125,000 ▲	-	6,000
Sewer	24,482 ▲	(7,753) ▼	12,480 ▲	10,420
Solid Waste (Garbage)	(36,058) ▼	13,702 ▲	(7,352) ▲	(7,673)
Transportation	(40,726) ▼	47,414 ▲	16,653 ▲	13,837
Water	(78,393) ▼	(4,433) ▲	(10,380) ▲	(19,576)
Your Suggestion	118,517 ▼	756,250 ▲	51,301 ▼	196,868
Total	(132,865)	197,858	(21,236)	3,862

- Reduced** by more than 2 times the average
- Reduced** by more than 5 times the average
- Increased** by more than 2 times the average
- Increased** by more than 5 times the average

These variations in average department changes demonstrate the trade-offs necessary when revenue is increased or decreased. Additionally, it shows that some residents support property tax increases and the areas where they support additional funding being invested.

Comments

Although quantitative data is valuable as it can be cut, split, divided, categorised, qualitative data can be very helpful in providing context to the numbers. **Appendix A – Summary of Budget Engagement Comments** – Contains summarized comments from the budget survey.

The first section captures the following:

- What do you like best about Courtenay?
- What can Courtenay do better?

The second section captures department specific comments. These comments were recorded in the body of the survey and would be related to a specific department in question in that section of the survey.

The final section captures “Your Suggestions” component captured in the survey. This section provided an opportunity to provide a comment on what was being suggested and then adding an estimated cost for the suggestion.

Themes from the comments focused on the following:

- Access to nature and a small-town feeling
- Concerns regarding homelessness, and housing affordability
- The desire for pickle ball courts
- Community engagement
- Water usage, water meters, water conservation
- Administrative spending and the desire to keep budget changes near inflation.

Summary

Engagement is a multi-year process, with this year being the start. The information we receive back through this kind of public input, along with the financial resources required to deliver on Council’s 2021-2026 Strategic Priorities and funds required to deliver Core Service are all combined to develop the Annual Financial Plan and 5-Year Financial Plan. As an initial step in an amended engagement approach to the City’s financial planning, there are a number of specific areas included in the proposed 2024 Annual Financial Plan and 2024-2028 Financial plans reflecting this public process which include:

- Addressing public safety – the addition of the 4th bylaw office, sustained RCMP funding (31.4 members), RCMP foot patrols
- Access to nature – the development of McPhee Meadows
- Recreation Culture and Community Service - Pickleball facility review
- Affordable housing – Development Special projects to update, Zoning bylaw, DCC/ACC bylaw, Harmston local area plan and impacts of Bill 44
- Transportation – Public Works Safe Active School special project, Pedestrian, cycling, and pavement renewal program, Traffic Signal controller renewal projects

- Property taxation and affordability – Proposed usage of prior year surplus to reduce current year taxation.

Future Budget Engagement

In conducting this simulation, we found a group of community members are interested in learning more about the budget and sharing their perspectives with the City of Courtenay. A total of 37 respondents indicated they would like to participate in future budget focus groups. This is a strategy the City is considering to further provide residents additional opportunities to learn about the budget and promote constructive dialogue on City funding opportunities and challenges.

The results of this simulation activity can be viewed as one aspect of community feedback in the budget process. Consideration must be given to the detail on the questions being asked in the survey and the overall understanding of City operations as they are not always fully understood by the public. The aggregate results of survey provide valuable information that can be used by City Council, City Administration and Departments in considering the provision of services and how they are perceived by the community.

Appendix B – 3-Year Engagement Plan provides details on the engagement plans for 2025 through 2027. The engagement plan continues with online methods and moves to include more functionality from different online tools along with bringing the in-person offerings back but in a more focused method. The current year engagement is our first step on our engagement journey with the goal to improve quantity and quality of engagement over following years. Beginning in the fall of 2025 a report on Financial Planning Engagement will be presented to Council for receipt and direction.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

No direct policy impact from information provided however feedback from budget engagement will help influence and inform future Financial Plans.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

No direct financial impact from information provided, however feedback from budget engagement will help influence and inform future Financial Plans.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

Limited Administrative impacts as financial Planning is part of the Finance departments core duties.

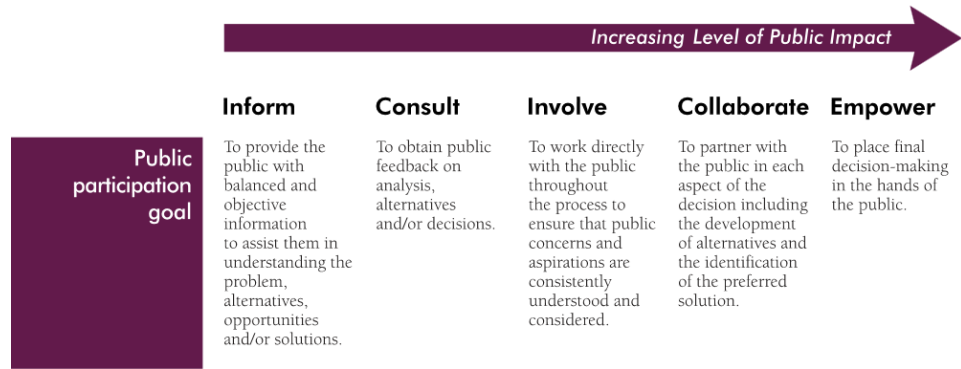
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

This initiative addresses the following cardinal directions:

COURTENAY WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FUTURE by being more thoughtful, strategic, and efficient in all resources that we use whether it be land, energy, or public infrastructure, to ensure that actions deliver on multiple goals of fiscal responsibility, economic resilience, social equity, and ecological health.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

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



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OPTIONS:

1. THAT Council receive report for information.
2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Appendix A – Summary of Budget Engagement Comments
- Appendix B – 3-Year Engagement Plan

Prepared by: Adam Langenmaier, BBA, CPA, CA Director of Finance
 Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)

Appendix A - Summary of Budget Engagement Comments

The following is a summary of comments left from three sections of the budget engagement. The total number comments received was the equivalent of 27 pages. The comments have been broken down into the following areas:

- What do you like best about Courtenay and what can Courtenay do better?
- Department specific comments, these comments were recorded in the body of the survey and would be related to a specific department in question in that section of the survey.
- Your suggestions, in the survey there was an opportunity to provide “your suggestions” this section required a comment on what was being suggested and then adding an estimated cost for the suggestion.

Summary of What do you like best about Courtenay and What can Courtenay do better

Overall, the comments express a mix of positive and negative sentiments about Courtenay. Here are some key themes:

Positive Aspects:

1. Access to Nature: Many appreciate the natural surroundings, parks, trails, and outdoor recreation opportunities.
2. Small Town Feel: Some value the small-town vibe and community closeness that Courtenay has maintained.
3. Cultural and Recreational Opportunities: Residents appreciate the variety of cultural and recreational services, local businesses, and downtown ambiance.
4. Proximity to Outdoor Amenities: The location is praised for its proximity to outdoor amenities, such as beaches, mountains, and recreational activities.

Concerns and Areas for Improvement:

1. Homelessness and Safety: There are recurring concerns about homelessness, safety issues in downtown areas, and the impact on the community's atmosphere.
2. Housing Affordability: Many comments highlight the need for more affordable housing and criticize current housing policies, including opposition to new rental developments.
3. Traffic and Infrastructure: Some residents express dissatisfaction with traffic flow, the need for more roads or a third bridge, and concerns about road and bridge maintenance.
4. City Management and Decision-Making: Criticisms include inefficient city management, perceived overspending on certain projects like bike lanes, and a call for better fiscal planning.

Specific Requests and Suggestions:

1. Indoor Pickleball Facility: There is a noticeable demand for more pickleball facilities, with suggestions for indoor courts.
2. Public Safety: Residents emphasize the importance of public safety and suggest increased policing and enforcement of bylaws.
3. Homelessness Solutions: Calls for practical solutions to address homelessness, including designated facilities away from downtown areas.
4. Community Engagement: Some comments express frustration with a perceived lack of responsiveness from city officials and a desire for more community input.

It's important to note that opinions vary, and these summaries capture a range of sentiments expressed by the community.

A summary of Department Comments

The comments can be summarized into several key themes:

1. **Housing and Social Services:**

- Build emergency, social, and coop housing, committing to a specific number of units per year.
- Support drug rehab and mental health over-policing, incorporating emergency services.
- Improve cold weather shelters and ensure safety in specific areas.
- Provide spaces for the unhoused, support safe bike lanes, and enhance pedestrian-friendly infrastructure.
- Advocate for free or affordable recreation for children.
- Work with neighboring regions, considering amalgamation for long-term benefits.

2. **Financial Management:**

- Avoid budget expansion beyond inflation rates.
- Allocate remaining funds towards addressing homelessness.
- Propose free rehabilitation services, including a rural farm for rehab and a mental health facility.

3. **Critique on Current Spending:**

- Oppose spending on bike lanes and traffic calming, suggesting a focus on infrastructure and road repairs.
- Question the high budget for city utilities, calling for cost reductions and efficiency improvements.
- Criticize the allocation of funds for administrative purposes, suggesting salary freezes and expense cuts.
- Express concerns about high property taxes and the need for responsible spending.

4. **Community Services and Recreation:**

- Advocate for additional community justice workers and criticize spending on bylaw enforcement.
- Suggest using surplus funds for a safe injection site.
- Call for fair wages and benefits for casual employees running recreation programs.
- Emphasize the importance of social planning over parks and trails during times of financial strain.

5. **Development and Permitting:**

- Propose minor increases in development permit fees for faster processing.
- Oppose building permit fees, suggesting free permits for longer waiting periods.
- Suggest increasing the number of permits issued rather than increasing costs.
- Express concerns about the current length and cost of the permitting process.

6. **Property Taxes and Revenue:**

- Oppose property tax increases beyond inflation rates.
- Suggest raising property taxes by a specific percentage and taxing churches, abandoned lots, and slumlords.
- Propose increasing dog licensing fees and introducing a fuel surcharge on specific heating sources.

7. **Recreation Fees and Facilities:**

- Express concerns about the affordability of recreational opportunities due to fee increases.
- Advocate for plans and facilities related to pickleball, emphasizing the sport's popularity.
- Call for a break-even operation in recreation services and user-pay principles.

8. **Water Usage and Fees:**
 - Discuss the political unpopularity of water meters but suggest increased fees for installation preparation.
 - Highlight the need for water conservation and equitable charging based on usage.
9. **Emergency Services:**
 - Advocate for more funds towards emergency services, particularly fire and police.
10. **Debt Management:**
 - Propose paying off existing debt before saving more, considering interest rates.
11. **Solid Waste Management:**
 - Criticize the new garbage collection system and suggest alternatives.
 - Propose increasing efforts to educate the public on recycling.
12. **Transportation:**
 - Advocate for increased biking infrastructure.
 - Express concerns about current transit services, suggesting improvements and more frequent services.
13. **Public Works and Water Management:**
 - Suggest cutting spending on water during droughts and issuing fines for water waste.
 - Recommend less spending on managers and more on necessary equipment and qualified staff in public works.

A summary of Your suggestions

The comments express a range of concerns and suggestions for improving various aspects of the community in Courtenay. Here's a summary:

1. **Housing Initiatives:**
 - Build emergency, social, and cooperative housing, committing to a specific number of units annually.
 - Support drug rehab and mental health services over policing.
 - Provide safe spaces for the unhoused to set up tents or park trailers.
 - Work on plans to avoid flooding and improve cold weather shelters.
2. **Transportation and Infrastructure:**
 - Build safe bike lanes, enhance pedestrian and bike-friendly areas, and improve public transit safety for all ages.
 - Consider amalgamating with neighboring areas for more efficient governance and resource allocation.
 - Increase parkland, especially along the water, and encourage tree planting in residential areas.
 - Address garbage bin size issues and prioritize infrastructure maintenance.
3. **Budget and Spending:**
 - Avoid budget expansions beyond inflation rates and allocate resources wisely.
 - Redirect funds from certain areas (e.g., special interest groups) to essential infrastructure and road repairs.
 - Explore cost-effective measures, like volunteer involvement, to accomplish community tasks.
4. **Social and Recreational Facilities:**
 - Provide free or low-cost recreation for children.
 - Build future recreation centers near schools and accessible by public transportation, walking, and biking.

- Consider funding for a safe injection site, community justice workers, and mental health facilities.
5. **Specific Recreational Requests:**
 - Allocate funds for permanent pickleball courts, indoor tennis facilities, and a dedicated dog park.
 - Support more spending on biking infrastructure and sporting facilities.
 6. **Concerns about Administration and Spending:**
 - Express concern about administrative costs and suggest decreasing overhead.
 - Call for fiscal responsibility, avoiding unnecessary expenses and focusing on essential services.
 - Criticize perceived overspending on certain initiatives, suggesting a re-evaluation of priorities.
 7. **Community Engagement and Transparency:**
 - Address the need for better communication and transparency, ensuring surveys work on all smartphone operating systems.
 - Call for visible progress on issues like homelessness and downtown safety.
 8. **Social and Cultural Investments:**
 - Allocate funds for indigenous staff support, art and cultural placemaking, food forests, and community gardens.
 9. **Economic Development:**
 - Encourage faster and easier residential building approvals to increase housing supply and attract new residents.
 10. **Taxation and Financial Management:**
 - Advocate for responsible financial management, lower taxes, and affordability for residents.
 - Suggest exploring revenue-generating ideas, like creating a housing authority similar to Whistler's model.

In summary, the comments reflect a diverse set of opinions and suggestions, emphasizing the importance of housing, transportation, budget allocation, and community well-being.

CITY OF COURTENAY

3-Year Engagement Plan (2025-2027)

Dec 2023

This document outlines a three-year engagement plan for the City of Courtenay. The strategies employed in this document will guide the engagement activities for city staff. The plan emphasizes Courtenay's internal and external engagement efforts as the City builds a culture of engagement with the public and staff.

3-YEAR ENGAGEMENT GOALS

1. **ENGAGE** - Increase community engagement in the budget process.
 - a. Increase number of residents engaging in the budget.
 - b. Increase the diversity of respondents (age, housing status, etc.) to include underrepresented residents.
2. **EDUCATE** – Increase comprehension of the city budget and city investments.
 - a. Focus on the transparency and access to information.
 - b. Increase understanding of city decisions and the tradeoffs under consideration.
3. **LISTEN** - Understand from our residents what we are doing well, where we can improve, as well as expectations on service levels.
 - a. Foster interdepartmental communication on the budget and awareness of organizational needs.

STAKEHOLDERS

Four levels of stakeholders are key to Courtenay's community engagement success: Staff, City Administration, City Council and the Public. Each group currently has different intersection points with the budget and in organizational decision-making. To achieve the identified engagement goals over the next three years, various strategies are presented to **ENGAGE** and **EDUCATE** community members on the budget and **LISTEN** to their values, feedback, and ideas to improve operational plans and the wellbeing of Courtenay.



TIMELINE

Budget Year	Y1: 2025	Y2: 2026	Y3: 2027
Engagement Impact	IMPLEMENT	INTEGRATE	CONSULT
Stakeholder Focus	City Administration Public	City Council Staff Public	Staff Public

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES



YEAR 1: IMPLEMENT

Public engagement is a journey not a destination

Objective: Continue implementing community engagement strategies while building a culture of community engagement.

Internal Focus: Finance continues to introduce the organization to engagement tools and practices. City Manager to support engagement values and process changes.

External Focus: Online budget engagement with residents.

Strategies	Expected Outcomes	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage Courtenay residents through a budget simulation (SIMULATE) of the City's 2024 Financial Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase community engagement in the budget process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on the demographic variables to understand multiple resident perspectives on the budget Incorporate scenario questions to gauge expectations for service levels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide residents a Taxpayer Receipt for the City's Adopted budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase awareness of the value of City services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize the property tax estimator to demonstrate value per property tax investment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a simulation (SIMULATE) of the Adopted budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase resident awareness of the City adopted budget 	





YEAR 2: INTEGRATE

Bring more chairs to the table

Objective: Realign the budgeting process to integrate community engagement strategies.

Internal Focus: City Manager and Finance continue cultivating the value of engagement in the organization by including City Council and staff in the process.

External Focus: Online and in-person budget engagement with residents.

Strategies	Expected Outcomes	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When developing the FY 26 budget calendar, schedule community and Council engagements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutionalize new budget engagement touchpoints. Increase discussion of service delivery budget allocations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set aside sufficient time to engage stakeholders, analyze and communicate findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage Courtenay residents on community priorities with PRIORITIZE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to practice of surveying the community on service prioritization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hybrid data collection on responses: (1) online and/or (2) meeting mode Strategic planning sets the priorities for consideration Plan for how departments can gather these data year-round
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage City Council on budget priorities with PRIORITIZE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop consensus on City priorities. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have staff provide options for service enhancements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have data available on expected cost and perceived benefit for service level changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include in scenario questions in SIMULATE budgets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage Courtenay residents through a budget simulation (SIMULATE) of the City's 2025 Financial Plan or the 2026 proposed budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase community engagement in the budget process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting mode engagements build empathy and a shared notion of public interest Utilize scenario questions to determine expected levels of service and value for services provided
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide residents a TAXPAYER RECEIPT for the City's Adopted budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase awareness of the value of City services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize the property tax estimator to demonstrate value per property tax investment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a simulation (SIMULATE) of the Adopted budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase resident awareness of the City adopted budget 	





YEAR 3: CONSULT

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

Objective: Design the budget process to consult staff, City Council and the Community in developing the annual budget.

Internal Focus: City Manager and Budgeting and Reporting continue cultivating the value of engagement in the organization by including City Council and staff in the process.

External Focus: Online and in-person budget engagement with residents.

Strategies	Expected Outcomes	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage Courtenay residents on community priorities with PRIORITIZE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to practice of surveying the community on service prioritization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hybrid data collection on responses: (1) online and (2) meeting mode
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage City Council on budget priorities with PRIORITIZE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop consensus on City priorities 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have staff provide options for service enhancements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have data available on expected cost and perceived benefit for service level changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include in scenario questions in SIMULATE budgets Evaluate department measures for ROI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage Staff through a budget simulation (SIMULATE) on potential City investments prior to the Preliminary Budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultivate organizational empathy Explore cross-departmental solutions (innovative vs. incremental budgeting) Increase budget awareness and internal consensus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening is a cornerstone of engagement. Cultivate this value in all decision-making systems. Address root and systemic issues and explore inter-agency collaborations Public engagement starts and ends with line staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage Courtenay residents through a budget simulation (SIMULATE) of the City's 2026 Financial Plan or the 2027 proposed budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase community engagement in the budget process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting mode engagements build empathy and a shared notion of public interest Utilize scenario questions to determine expected levels of service and value for services provided
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide residents a TAXPAYER RECEIPT for the City's Adopted budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase awareness of the value of City services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize the property tax estimator to demonstrate value per property tax investment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a simulation (SIMULATE) of the Adopted budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase resident awareness of the City adopted budget 	





The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Staff Report

To: Council
From: City Manager (CAO)
Subject: 2024-2028 General Fund Financial Plan

File No.: 1705-20/1715-20
Date: February 28, 2024

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider the 2024-2028 General Fund Financial Plan and give direction to staff to prepare the 2024-2028 Consolidated Financial Plan Bylaw.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The 2024-2028 General Fund Financial Plan includes \$57.5M in total revenue the majority coming from taxation \$34.65M (\$31.1M 2023), \$49.9M in operating expenditures, \$1.35M (\$1.31M-2023) in debt payments, and \$5.1M (\$4.1M-2023) in contribution to various reserves. The Capital Financial Plan includes \$23.7M (\$18.8M-2023) in capital expenditures.

The budget for 2024 includes a recommended increase of \$3,479,500 (\$3,139,557-2023) in municipal property taxation to cover the operating, capital and debt costs.

The average value of a single residential dwelling in Courtenay is \$708,400 (\$716,077-2023), a decrease of 1.2% (+14.3%-2023). The assessed value for an average business increased by 4.0% (8.4%-2023). The impact of the property tax and utility change to the average single residential dwelling is approximately \$370 (\$252-2023).

BACKGROUND:

Consideration and approval of a five-year financial plan is an annual requirement under the Community Charter. The proposed 2024-2028 General Fund Financial Plan including the Capital plan defines and seeks Council approval for the service priorities, operating and capital budget for each City department for the current year, and the next four years.

This report focuses on the General Operating and Capital Budget. The Water, Sewer, Solid waste financial plans have been presented and endorsed by Council on January 24, 2024. This report seeks Councils endorsement and direction for staff to prepare the 2024-2028 Consolidated Financial Plan bylaw. The 2024-2028 Consolidated Financial Plan combines the General, Water, Sewer, Solid waste and Capital plans into one unified financial plan and provides ultimate approval of spending.

DISCUSSION:

The Financial Plan and Tax Rate Bylaw is one of the most important public documents a local government produces, as it establishes the government's spending and taxation authority. It is Council's primary policy document and establishes explicit service priorities. As an operation guide, it identifies departments that are responsible for achieving the service priorities and are accountable for spending. It is also a communication tool that strives to make all of the foregoing transparent to public officials and residents alike.

The 2024-2028 General Fund Financial Plan has been developed collaboratively following the City's Asset Management Bylaw 2981, adopted in December, 2019.

2024 General Operating Fund

Similar to the Water and Sewer Budgets, the 2024 General Operating Budget was prepared from departmental submissions as well as consideration of multiple external sources, cost drivers and spending patterns. The General Operating Revenues and Expenditures were evaluated on the basis of public acceptance, sustainable delivery, corporate risk, financial risk and staff capacity.

Cost Drivers

Various internal and external cost drivers have an impact on the different departmental budgets. The main cost drivers are: Consumer Price Index (CPI), municipal policing contract and contractual salary and wage increases.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)

The average CPI increase for the Province of British Columbia as at December 2023 was 3.9% (6.9% in 2022). Increased CPI has driven costs up throughout all operations as CPI impacts all goods and services purchased by the City. Budget 2024 is seeing the impacts of high inflation for the past two years. We are no longer anticipating rising costs, we are seeing increased costs in all of our purchases through 2023 thus impacting budgets for 2024.

RCMP

RCMP contract cost continues to rise as the single member cost for the 2024 RCMP year is \$237,000 (\$220,900 in 2023). Member costs have increased by 7.3% (4.3% in 2023) over the prior year, and costs have increased by 12% since 2022. These cost increases do not represent a change in the number of members which has been consistent at 31.4 for the past several years. These cost changes are limited to RCMP members and does not include the civilian component. As in prior years, the City has a force strength authorization of 31.4 but funds 29.4 positions as historical actual staffing levels have not reached above 29.4.

For 2024 the City is reducing current year tax funded positions by one, bringing the funded positions to 28.4. This is to ensure the City does not over tax for RCMP services as staffing levels have not reached 28.4. If RCMP staffing levels increase to over 28.4 the City can rely on prior years savings in the RCMP to fund the additional members.

The City not only pays for RCMP members as part of the overall municipal policing contract, it is responsible for a share of the operating costs of the RCMP detachment. These costs include the civilian support members employed through the RCMP, along with Municipal staff that work alongside the civilian members.

Contractual Salary, Wage and Benefit Increases

This cost driver reflects the impact relating to annual contractual salary and wage increases for unionized staff, exempt staff and Volunteer Firefighters. An increase in salary or wage proportionally impacts benefit costs and employer's payroll contributions, both of which also have increased contribution rates and limits over 2023 levels. The CUPE collective agreement wage increase for 2024 is 2%. 2024 is the final year of the CUPE contract and the City will have to go through the collective bargaining process. Exempt compensation was reviewed in 2022 and recommendations have carried through to 2023 and 2024.

General Operating Expenses

The proposed General Operating Expenses Budget totals \$43.1M, an increase of \$3.8M, which represents a 9.5% (5.6%-2023) increase. Table 1 illustrates the budget by department from 2023 to 2024. The detailed expenses by department are provided in

Table 1: General Operating Expenses by Department

Department	2023	2024	\$ Change	% Change
CAO OFFICE EXPENSES	661,300	756,400	95,100	14.4%
CORPORATE SERVICES EXPENSES	5,100,500	6,259,100	1,158,600	22.7%
FIRE EXPENSES	2,726,700	3,305,000	578,300	21.2%
POLICE EXPENSES	8,416,200	8,625,800	209,600	2.5%
ENGINEERING EXPENSES	1,157,900	1,196,100	38,200	3.3%
PUBLIC WORKS EXPENSES	9,879,800	11,096,600	1,216,800	12.3%
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES EXPENSES	2,637,000	2,510,500	(126,500)	-4.8%
RCCS EXPENSES	6,315,700	6,629,700	314,000	5.0%
FINANCIAL SERVICES EXPENSES	2,454,000	2,726,600	272,600	11.1%
	39,349,100	43,105,800	3,756,700	9.5%

Each departments revenue and expenses are presented showing a series of columns that provide additional detail to the change in given revenue or expense.

Base budget - This is the starting point, it has any one-time items from the prior year removed and should represent normalized base for the given budget line.

Inflation – This column captures the inflation related changes to the budget, also if reallocation occurred between budget lines it would be captured in the inflation column. For example, with Fire, the cost of uniforms has increased, this cost increase will be reflected in inflation.

Service Level Impact – This column represents the change to the budget as a result of a service level change or an item that has some form of control or direction to respond. For example, the Fire department is adding a training officer assistant position, this expense is a result of a service level change.

Growth – This column represents the change to the budget as a result of more occurrences or growth of the budgets service area. For example, the Fire department has responded to 1,432 calls in 2023 versus 1,202 calls in 2022, as a result, the cost attributed to additional responses will be shown in the growth column.

One-Time Items – This column represents the identified one-time projects or items that require funding but will not be reoccurring every year, thus the budget will return to its base figure in the following year. The majority of one-time items have been captured in special projects.

Carry Forward – This column represents items identified and budgeted in the prior year but not yet completed. The budget will be carried forward to the current year and funding will be taken from the prior year surplus as to not tax twice for the item.

City Manager (CAO) Office

	2023	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2023	2024	BUDGET
	AMENDED	BASE	INFLATION	SERVICE LEVEL	GROWTH	ONE-TIME	CARRY	2. Finance	INCREASE
ACCT	BUDGET	BUDGET		IMPACTS		ITEMS	FORWARD	BUDGET	(DECREASE)
CAO Office									
CAO OFFICE EXPENSES	661,300	561,300	22,300	(2,000)	4,800		170,000	756,400	95,100
CAO OFFICE - SPECIAL PROJECTS						100,000		100,000	100,000
Total CAO Office	661,300	561,300	22,300	(2,000)	4,800	100,000	170,000	856,400	195,100

CAO Office expenses mainly comprised of consulting fees, legal fees, and wages. Carry forward items are unspent legal and consulting fees. Special project funds support development of reconciliation action plan.

Corporate Services

	2023	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2023	2024	BUDGET
	AMENDED	BASE	INFLATION	SERVICE LEVEL	GROWTH	ONE-TIME	CARRY	2. Finance	INCREASE
ACCT	BUDGET	BUDGET		IMPACTS		ITEMS	FORWARD	BUDGET	(DECREASE)
CAO Office	661,300	561,300	22,300	(2,000)	4,800	100,000	170,000	856,400	195,100
Corporate Services									
CORPORATE SERVICES REVENUE									
Revenues									
IT & GIS REVENUE	(30,000)	(30,000)						(30,000)	
Animal Control / Bylaw Enforcement	(9,100)	(9,100)						(9,100)	
Parking	(5,000)	(5,000)						(5,000)	
Cemetery	(179,000)	(179,000)						(179,000)	
Total Revenues	(223,100)	(223,100)						(223,100)	
Total CORPORATE SERVICES REVENUE	(223,100)	(223,100)						(223,100)	
CORPORATE SERVICES EXPENSES									
GENERAL GOVERNMENT - Corporate Services									
Information Technology	1,357,300	1,326,500	25,100	8,000	107,800	68,000	34,000	1,569,400	212,100
Corporate Services	837,600	697,600	(256,200)	192,400	(24,500)	80,000		689,300	(148,300)
Human Resources	714,100	714,100	93,800	270,700	18,100	1,500	16,000	1,114,200	400,100
Corporate Communications	491,100	491,100	15,000	170,900		22,000		699,000	207,900
GIS	289,700	289,700	9,800					299,500	9,800
Occupational Health & Safety	241,100	241,100	(7,200)	(61,200)	(13,000)			159,700	(81,400)
Total GENERAL GOVERNMENT - Corporate Services	3,930,900	3,760,100	(119,700)	580,800	88,400	171,500	50,000	4,531,100	600,200
GENERAL GOVERNMENT - Legislative Services									
Legislative Admin			267,300	20,200	39,500	7,000		334,000	334,000
City Council	516,800	516,800	20,400	(7,000)	51,900		8,000	590,100	73,300
Elections	26,000	26,000	900					26,900	900
Cemetery Admin	90,700	90,700	2,200		(1,900)			91,000	300
Cemetery Products for Resale	13,000	13,000						13,000	
Total GENERAL GOVERNMENT - Legislative Services	646,500	646,500	290,800	13,200	89,500	7,000	8,000	1,055,000	408,500
OTHER PROTECTIVE SERVICES									
Bylaw Enforcement	442,300	442,300	134,800	9,600	5,400			592,100	149,800
Animal Control	80,800	80,800	100					80,900	100
Total OTHER PROTECTIVE SERVICES	523,100	523,100	134,900	9,600	5,400			673,000	149,900
Total CORPORATE SERVICES EXPENSES	5,100,500	4,929,700	306,000	603,600	183,300	178,500	58,000	6,259,100	1,158,600
CORPORATE SERVICES EXPENSES - SPECIAL PROJECTS	50,500					347,000	50,500	397,500	347,000

Corporate Services is responsible for the following areas:

Information Technology – majority of expense increase is attributed to growth in the area, IT demands continue to grow as the City uses more and more technology. One-time costs are associated with the planned transition to Office 365.

Corporate Services –In the prior year this area contained the legislative administration group but for 2024 legislative administration group has been shown in their own area. The remaining expense represents the director, support staff and property service agent position. Other expense includes one-time funding for parks signage for the Parks Control Bylaw.

Human Resources – Expense increases are related to increasing positions to full time and the addition of an HR Manager. Other expense increases are related to legal fees, new building lease costs and City-wide training offerings.

Communications – Expense increases are related to an additional communication staff person and increasing the overtime budget to better reflect actual costs. Other expense increases are related to funding towards an online engagement platform, increased internal training for recently implemented brand standards, website content and media readiness. Further one-time items are related to in person popup engagement event supplies (tent, banners, tables, vests and give away materials).

Legislative Admin – This area was contained within Corporate Services in the past but has been broken out into its own area to better show expenses.

City Council – Expense increases are mainly due to rising travel costs but also attributed to increases in Council Remuneration and the new benefit package.

Bylaw Enforcement – Expense increases attributable to new bylaw department clerk that will provide support to Corporate services and Bylaw. Further expense increases are attributed to the anticipated costs associated with 7 day per week service.

Fire Protection

	2023	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2023	2024	BUDGET
	AMENDED	BASE	INFLATION	SERVICE LEVEL	GROWTH	ONE-TIME	CARRY	2. Finance	INCREASE
ACCT	BUDGET	BUDGET		IMPACTS		ITEMS	FORWARD	BUDGET	(DECREASE)
Fire Protection Services									
FIRE REVENUE									
FIRE REVENUE									
Fire Revenues	(522,100)	(522,100)	(238,400)					(760,500)	(238,400)
Total FIRE REVENUE	(522,100)	(522,100)	(238,400)					(760,500)	(238,400)
Total FIRE REVENUE	(522,100)	(522,100)	(238,400)					(760,500)	(238,400)
FIRE EXPENSES									
Fire Protection									
Fire Administrative Services	155,700	80,700	1,700		4,800			87,200	(68,500)
Fire Full Time Exempt	1,009,900	1,009,900	64,100	115,200				1,189,200	179,300
Fire Volunteer Costs	845,500	845,500	21,900	72,900	110,000			1,050,300	204,800
Fire Fighting Equipment	229,500	229,500	4,400		30,000		30,200	294,100	64,600
Fire Training	81,800	81,800	1,700		47,500			131,000	49,200
Fire Hydrant Rental	62,000	62,000	1,200	1,300	135,500			200,000	138,000
Fire Prevention Program	12,400	12,400	300					12,700	300
Total Fire Protection	2,396,800	2,321,800	95,300	189,400	327,800		30,200	2,964,500	567,700
Fire Fleet	117,900	110,900	5,100		4,000			120,000	2,100
Emergency Programs	212,000	212,000	500			5,000	3,000	220,500	8,500
Total FIRE EXPENSES	2,726,700	2,644,700	100,900	189,400	331,800	5,000	33,200	3,305,000	578,300
Total Fire Protection Services	2,204,600	2,122,600	(137,500)	189,400	331,800	5,000	33,200	2,544,500	339,900

Revenue

Fire protection revenue increased mainly due to the renewed Courtenay Fire Protection District agreement completed in 2023 for the years 2024-2028. This agreement provides fire protection based on fees related to the cost of operating the fire service.

Expense

Fire expense increase over the prior year are attributed to wages as a result of a new training officer assistant and the growth in wages related to more calls for service. Fire Department responses have increased from 806 in 2019 to 1455 in 2023, which represents an 80.5% increase over the five-year period. Fire fighter wage expense (within volunteer costs) for 2023 was \$470K, however the budget for 2023 was \$365K. For 2024 with the additional \$110K will bring this budget up to \$473K which better represents the actual cost of service.

Hydrant rental expense has increased substantially over the prior year, this was in relation to the water rate review that determined that the City was not adequately applying internal charges for the maintenance and operations of the fire hydrants. The increase in expense will be reflected by an increase in revenue in the water fund.

Police

	2023	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2023	2024	BUDGET
	AMENDED	BASE	INFLATION	SERVICE LEVEL	GROWTH	ONE-TIME	CARRY	2. Finance	INCREASE
ACCT	BUDGET	BUDGET		IMPACTS		ITEMS	FORWARD	BUDGET	(DECREASE)
Police									
POLICE REVENUE	(115,500)	(115,500)						(115,500)	
POLICE EXPENSES									
Police Admin & Other	316,800	316,800	(88,000)					228,800	(88,000)
Police Protection Services									
RCMP Municipal Employees	688,600	688,600	12,900	45,000	18,100			764,600	76,000
Contracted Services	7,410,800	7,410,800	221,600					7,632,400	221,600
Total Police Protection Services	8,099,400	8,099,400	234,500	45,000	18,100			8,397,000	297,600
Total POLICE EXPENSES	8,416,200	8,416,200	146,500	45,000	18,100			8,625,800	209,600
Total Police	8,300,700	8,300,700	146,500	45,000	18,100			8,510,300	209,600

The policing budget is based on July 12, 2023 Council’s approval in principle, for the City’s 2024/2025 RCMP contract which includes 31.4 members. The contracted service expense has increased less in prior years due to the choice to fund 28.4 members in the current year. Historically the city has assumed a 2-member vacancy however for 2024 the City is increasing this assumption to a 3-member vacancy. This increase to the assumed vacancy will reduce the tax burden on residents. The RCMP only bill the City based on the number of members working for a given period, with recent recruitment challenges and various leaves actual member strength has been reduced below 28.4. In the event that RCMP member strength increases the City has adequate surplus and reserves to fund the additional members if needed.

The 2023 downtown foot patrols are set to return for 2024 during late spring to early fall as activity is typically increased in the downtown area.

Policing Services are partly funded by Gaming funds of \$475,000 (\$442,000-2023), Traffic Fine revenues of \$272,000 (\$272,000-2023), and Police Contingency Reserve \$250,000 (\$250,000-2023). The balance is funded from general tax revenue \$7.6M (\$7.3-2023) which represents 22% of total property taxation.

Engineering

	2023	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2023	2024	BUDGET
	AMENDED	BASE	INFLATION	SERVICE LEVEL	GROWTH	ONE-TIME	CARRY	2. Finance	INCREASE
ACCT	BUDGET	BUDGET		IMPACTS		ITEMS	FORWARD	BUDGET	(DECREASE)
Engineering Services									
ENGINEERING EXPENSES									
Engineering Administration									
Engineering Admin	564,300	564,300	55,900	60,600	6,100			686,900	122,600
Engineering Consulting	116,100	100,000		25,000				125,000	8,900
Sustainability Planning	39,300	27,600	5,500					33,100	(6,200)
Total Engineering Administration	719,700	691,900	61,400	85,600	6,100			845,000	125,300
Asset Management									
Asset Mgmt - Admin	290,000	290,000	12,200		(66,800)			235,400	(54,600)
Condition Assessments	125,100	80,100	36,600		(25,000)			91,700	(33,400)
Asset Mgmt - General	23,100	23,100	900					24,000	900
Total Asset Management	438,200	393,200	49,700		(91,800)			351,100	(87,100)
Total ENGINEERING EXPENSES	1,157,900	1,085,100	111,100	85,600	(85,700)			1,196,100	38,200
ENGINEERING EXPENSES - SPECIAL PROJECTS									
Engineering SPECIAL PROJECTS	367,500					779,000	132,000	911,000	543,500
Total ENGINEERING EXPENSES - SPECIAL P	367,500					779,000	132,000	911,000	543,500
Total Engineering Services	1,525,400	1,085,100	111,100	85,600	(85,700)	779,000	132,000	2,107,100	581,700

Engineering expense increase is attributed to the addition of an engineering technologist required to deliver the increased capital plan over the next 5 years. Portions of this technologist wages are attributed to the Water and Sewer funds.

Engineering Special Projects

Identified funding for the Integrated Rainwater Management Plan includes finalization early this year, and funding for recommended works.

The Flood Management Plan is proceeding the same, and is due to be presented to Council early this year, and also includes funding for recommended works.

The Corporate Climate Action Plan will update the Climate Plan that was developed in 2009. It will identify projects and policies needed to achieve the provincial climate targets, and the local climate targets highlighted in the OCP.

Local Government Climate Action Plan (LGCAP) Future Implementation Projects includes funding to action recommendations from the Corporate Climate Action Plan, which are yet to be completed.

Project description	2024 Proposed Budget
Integrated Rainwater Mgmt Plan	\$ 162,000
Flood Mgmt & Dyke Replacemt Study	\$ 130,000
Corporate Climate Action Plan	\$ 200,000
CVRD Home Energy Navigator Program	\$ 50,000
Bridge Building Demolition	\$ 100,000
LGCAP Future Implementation Projects	\$ 269,000
	\$ 911,000

Public Works Services (Operational Services)

	2023	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2023	2024	BUDGET
	AMENDED	BASE	INFLATION	SERVICE LEVEL	GROWTH	ONE-TIME	CARRY	2. Finance	INCREASE
ACCT	BUDGET	BUDGET		IMPACTS		ITEMS	FORWARD	BUDGET	(DECREASE)
Public Works Services									
PUBLIC WORKS - ADMINISTRATION									
PW - Admin	575,400	575,400	14,000		(24,700)			564,700	(10,700)
PW - Operations	(234,000)	(234,000)	13,600	49,500	32,000			(138,900)	95,100
PW - Allocation	(351,500)	(351,500)	(3,800)					(355,300)	(3,800)
Total PUBLIC WORKS - ADMINISTRATION	(10,100)	(10,100)	23,800	49,500	7,300			70,500	80,600
PUBLIC WORKS - TRANSPORTATION SERVICES									
Transportation Services	3,882,800	3,964,300	128,000	14,000	366,700	20,000		4,493,000	610,200
Garbage Collection	149,600	149,600	1,600		24,600			175,800	26,200
PUBLIC WORKS - TRANSPORTATION SPECIAL PROJECTS						125,000		125,000	125,000
Total PUBLIC WORKS - TRANSPORTATION SERVICES	4,032,400	4,113,900	129,600	14,000	391,300	145,000		4,793,800	761,400
PUBLIC WORKS - PROPERTY MAINTENANCE									
Property Maintenance Admin	245,900	245,900	12,300		(12,700)			245,500	(400)
City Hall & PW Buildings Maintenance	212,000	212,000	9,500		6,000	12,000	23,800	263,300	51,300
Firehall Buildings Maintenance	123,200	123,200	4,100		(1,000)	6,500		132,800	9,600
Parks - Property Maintenance	141,500	141,500	29,600		(10,000)			161,100	19,600
Recreation Facilities - Property Maintenance	688,900	688,900	22,500		(500)	17,000		727,900	39,000
Cultural Facilities - Property Maintenance	224,200	215,700	4,400		500	45,700		266,300	42,100
Miscellaneous Buildings Maintenance	94,900	82,900	4,700		(1,400)			86,200	(8,700)
Property for Development	45,600	45,600	2,000		(10,300)			37,300	(8,300)
PUBLIC WORKS - PROPERTY MAINTENANCE SPECIAL PROJ						18,000		18,000	18,000
Total PUBLIC WORKS - PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,776,200	1,755,700	89,100		(29,400)	99,200	23,800	1,938,400	162,200
PUBLIC WORKS - PARKS AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE									
Parks Administration	336,400	336,400	13,200	(2,000)	5,000			352,600	16,200
Parks Operations	2,745,300	2,755,300	23,900	36,000	59,700	65,000		2,939,900	194,600
Recreation Facilities - Grounds Maintenance	29,600	29,600	600		(3,000)			27,200	(2,400)
Cultural Facilities - Grounds Maintenance	6,900	6,900	100					7,000	100
Other Facilities - Grounds Maintenance	51,000	51,000	900		(2,000)			49,900	(1,100)
Cemetery	317,800	317,800	4,300		21,500			343,600	25,800
Total PUBLIC WORKS - PARKS AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	3,487,000	3,497,000	43,000	34,000	81,200	65,000		3,720,200	233,200
PUBLIC WORKS - STORM WATER COLLECTION									
Storm Water Collection	594,300	594,300	30,200		(50,800)			573,700	(20,600)
Total PUBLIC WORKS - STORM WATER COLLECTION	594,300	594,300	30,200		(50,800)			573,700	(20,600)
Total Public Works Services	9,879,800	9,950,800	315,700	97,500	399,600	309,200	23,800	11,096,600	1,216,800

Public Works Services (Operational Services) is responsible for the following areas:

Administration – Expense increases are related to a year over year increase in service level demands for the provision of Urban Issues services (~\$50k). Additional funding increases are due to an increase in administrative coverage, Occupational Health and Safety requirements and cost recovery drivers related to an increase on BC one call demand.

Transportation Services (Public Works Services) – The vast majority of change within the transportation division is directly attributed to the way that the fleet vehicle costing is being allocated. Starting in 2024 all Fleet costs have been shifted from a parent or holding GL to the service level GLs; thus, allowing for transparency of costs for service - relative to each service delivery model. Lines and Signs saw a significant increase in contracted services funding (\$160K) as a result of a new contract for the provision of the City’s longitudinal and transvers road marking (paint) works which includes higher quality paint product that should reduce future maintenance. Snow and Ice Control Services also increased (\$75k) to match trending services levels demands, with the remainder (\$179K) falling to the aforementioned reallocation of fleet costs. Traffic Studies is also up (\$20K) in response to Council direction to deliver an annual speed reader program.

Property Maintenance (Civic Properties Services) – Expense increase across the Civic Properties Division nets out to just over \$81k. These increased vary in terms of impact s many are considered one-time expenditures. City Hall will see a onetime expense (\$12k) for exterior siding repairs. The Fire Hall is similar

in that regard (\$6k) in purchased services and the Rec Facilities (\$12K) for HVAC repairs/modifications. The Library will see that larger net impact (\$46K) as a result of exterior siding repair/replacement.

Parks and Ground (Parks Services) – Again, the vast majority of change within the Parks Services division is directly attributed to fleet vehicle cost allocations. Starting in 2024 all fleet costs have been shifted from a parent or holding GL to the service level GLs; thus, allowing for transparency of costs for service - relative to each service delivery model. Expense increase in the Parks Services Division are emerging in several ways; One-time spends (\$65k); trail enhancement/repaving and tennis/pickle ball court maintenance. Staffing Conversion (\$36k); seasonal conversion to FTE, and Services Level Demands (\$30k); reactive tree care.

Development Services

	2023	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2023	2024	BUDGET
	AMENDED	BASE	INFLATION	SERVICE LEVEL	GROWTH	ONE-TIME	CARRY	2. Finance	INCREASE
ACCT	BUDGET	BUDGET	IMPACTS			ITEMS	FORWARD	BUDGET	(DECREASE)
Development Services									
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REVENUE									
Development Services Revenues									
Building Inspection	(1,680,300)	(1,680,300)			382,300			(1,298,000)	382,300
Business Licencing					(297,700)			(297,700)	(297,700)
Planning & Zoning	(154,700)	(154,700)			4,000			(150,700)	4,000
Subdivision and Development Servicing	(22,000)	(22,000)						(22,000)	
Community & Sustainability						(75,000)		(75,000)	(75,000)
Total Development Services Revenues	(1,857,000)	(1,857,000)			88,600	(75,000)		(1,843,400)	13,600
Total DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REVENUE	(1,857,000)	(1,857,000)			88,600	(75,000)		(1,843,400)	13,600
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES EXPENSES									
Development Services Expenses									
Building Inspections	732,000	732,000	(2,300)		(57,600)			672,100	(59,900)
Business Licencing					85,600			85,600	85,600
Planning & Zoning	775,700	775,700	27,300		77,900	5,000		885,900	110,200
Subdivision & Development Servicing	665,900	665,900	7,600		(250,000)			423,500	(242,400)
Community & Sustainability	443,500	258,500	4,400	75,000	(160,000)	85,400	175,000	438,300	(5,200)
Heritage Committee	19,900	5,100						5,100	(14,800)
Total Development Services Expenses	2,637,000	2,437,200	37,000	75,000	(304,100)	90,400	175,000	2,510,500	(126,500)
Total DEVELOPMENT SERVICES EXPENSES	2,637,000	2,437,200	37,000	75,000	(304,100)	90,400	175,000	2,510,500	(126,500)
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES EXPENSES - SPECIAL PROJECTS									
Development Services Special Projects						885,000	35,000	920,000	920,000
Total DEVELOPMENT SERVICES EXPENSES - SP						885,000	35,000	920,000	920,000
Total Development Services	780,000	580,200	37,000	75,000	(215,500)	900,400	210,000	1,587,100	807,100

Development Services Revenue

The majority of revenue earned in Development Services is attributed to Building Inspection Fees. These fees are related to the volume of construction in a given year and as a result are subject to variability due to external forces. New for 2024 is the Business Licencing sub-department, in prior years this function was held within Building Inspection. By breaking business licencing out we can better see revenue and expense for this specific area. Building inspection revenue is expected to be slightly lower than in 2023 however the majority of the \$382K reduction is due to the reallocation of business licencing revenue to its own sub department.

Community & Sustainability revenue of \$75,000 represents 50% of the Complete Communities Grant anticipated to be received in 2024 to fund the Harmston and other Local area plan work.

Development Services Expenses

Building Inspection and Business licencing have been separated, the change in expense is attributed to a clerk position being moved.

Planning and Zoning expenses have increased due to consulting fees in anticipation of changes to the Province of BC's Bill 44.

Subdivision & Development Servicing and Community & Sustainability have seen changes due to the removal of special projects from operating accounts. Other changes include adding reoccurring funding for consulting fees within both areas to support to meet capacity needs.

Development Services Special Projects

Project description	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
	Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget
Bylaw Update- Building Bylaw	\$ 25,000				
Bylaw Update- Zoning Bylaw	\$ 250,000				\$ 150,000
Bylaw Update-Business Licence Bylaw	\$ 25,000				
Bylaw Update- DCC/ACC	\$ 250,000				\$ 250,000
Bylaw Update- Sub&Dev Bylaw	\$ 100,000				
Bylaw Update- OCP	\$ 120,000			\$ 250,000	
Harmston Local Area Plan	\$ 150,000				
	\$ 920,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 250,000	\$ 400,000

The majority of special projects in Development Services are funded through grants \$435,000 and reserves \$400,000 with only \$85,000 coming from surplus. The Local Government Housing Initiative funds are being applied to assist with the Zoning bylaw update, Deferred Development Cost Charge / Amenity Cost Charge bylaw update and the OCP Bylaw update / implementation. Other grant funds include the remainder of the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program (CARIP). As identified earlier Complete Communities Grant is being applied to the Harmston and other local area plans.

Recreation, Culture and Community Services (RCCS)

	2023	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2023	2024	BUDGET
	AMENDED	BASE	INFLATION	SERVICE LEVEL	GROWTH	ONE-TIME	CARRY	2. Finance	INCREASE
ACCT	BUDGET	BUDGET		IMPACTS		ITEMS	FORWARD	BUDGET	(DECREASE)
Recreation, Culture and Community Services									
RCCS REVENUE									
Recreation Administration Revenue	(26,000)	(26,000)						(26,000)	
Recreation Programs Revenue	(1,457,700)	(1,457,700)	(8,000)	600	(90,400)			(1,555,500)	(97,800)
Recreation Operations Revenue	(717,900)	(717,900)	(2,500)	12,500	(17,100)			(725,000)	(7,100)
Total RCCS REVENUE	(2,201,600)	(2,201,600)	(10,500)	13,100	(107,500)			(2,306,500)	(104,900)
RCCS EXPENSES									
Recreation Administration Expenses									
RCCS Admin	1,441,500	1,433,000	(16,800)	38,400	(15,800)		(5,500)	1,433,300	(8,200)
Community Substance Use Strategy	15,000	15,000						15,000	
Cultural Consulting / Strategic Services					25,000			25,000	25,000
Cultural Services - Sid Williams Theatre	279,200	276,700	5,600		(25,000)			257,300	(21,900)
Cultural Services - Museum	187,100	184,600	5,900		(25,000)			165,500	(21,600)
Cultural Services - CV Art Gallery	85,600	83,100	1,200		(25,000)			59,300	(26,300)
Cultural Services - Comox Valley Arts Council	84,700	82,200	1,200		(25,000)			58,400	(26,300)
Total Recreation Administration Expenses	2,093,100	2,074,600	(2,900)	38,400	(90,800)		(5,500)	2,013,800	(79,300)
Recreation Programs Expenses									
Adults Programs	472,000	472,000	27,500		(67,000)			432,500	(39,500)
Childrens Programs	485,800	485,800	13,800	91,100	(51,800)			538,900	53,100
Youth Programs	277,300	277,300	12,500		16,600			306,400	29,100
Adapted Programs	269,900	269,900	10,600	600	3,000			284,100	14,200
Summer Programs	259,500	259,500	10,500		10,500			280,500	21,000
Preschool Programs	120,000	120,000	40,600		146,800			307,400	187,400
Programs Special Events					15,800			15,800	15,800
Total Recreation Programs Expenses	1,884,500	1,884,500	115,500	91,700	73,900			2,165,600	281,100
Recreation Operations Expenses									
Lewis Centre Operations	1,179,600	1,179,600	19,600		97,400			1,296,600	117,000
Wellness Centre	102,800	102,800	7,400		2,000			112,200	9,400
Filberg Operations	647,500	647,500	12,800		(31,200)			629,100	(18,400)
Pool Operations	231,200	231,200	22,600		(59,200)			194,600	(36,600)
Youth Centre Operations	42,400	42,400	800					43,200	800
Native Sons Operations	23,200	23,200	2,600		200			26,000	2,800
July 1 Special Event	69,900	69,900	1,300	20,000	9,100			100,300	30,400
Operations Special Events	41,500	41,500		5,000	1,800			48,300	6,800
Total Recreation Operations Expenses	2,338,100	2,338,100	67,100	25,000	20,100			2,450,300	112,200
Total RCCS EXPENSES	6,315,700	6,297,200	179,700	155,100	3,200		(5,500)	6,629,700	314,000
RCCS EXPENSES - SPECIAL PROJECTS									
Total Recreation, Culture and Community Services	4,114,100	4,095,600	169,200	168,200	(104,300)	170,000	110,000	4,603,200	489,100

Recreation, Culture, and Community Services Revenue

Recreation, Culture, and Community Services revenue comes from program and admission fees for Courtenay Recreation programs and facilities, in addition to a substantial portion of revenue driven by facility rentals, mostly at the Florence Filberg Centre and Native Sons Hall. Additional small revenue sources include grants. Facility rentals increased substantially in 2023 and have returned to pre-COVID levels. Recreation program and admission revenues continue to recover from the pandemic and while increased over prior years have not yet returned to pre-COVID levels. Revenues are projected to increase over prior years and include the removal of approximately \$30,000 in program admissions in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool.

Recreation, Culture, and Community Services Administration includes salaries and benefits for all RCCS exempt staff; advertising, insurance, bank fees, and other administration costs; consultant funding to support RCCS and Parks planning projects such as the parkland acquisition strategy; and tax funded portion of contributions to the City’s four cultural partners. Expense decreases are due to a reallocation of cultural facility feasibility budgets from the operating budget to RCCS special projects budget (\$75,000). Changes in the RCCS Admin budget are due to:

- a) elimination of an Assistant Manager position to fund additional program supervisory roles in Recreation Programming; and

- b) the addition of a Parks and Recreation Planning resource to support the delivery of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan as per the Implementation Strategy.

Recreation Programs shows a fluctuation in expenses due to the changing demands in recreation programs. Decreased expenses in instructor costs correlate with decreased revenue projections in program areas that are slower to recover from the pandemic. Increase expenses are the result of an organizational restructuring to enable the creation of additional program supervisor roles, including the creation of a Community Youth Development Supervisor position (net impact of \$60,000), as well as increased wages due to the provincial Early Child Education (ECE) wage enhancement subsidy received. Wages and benefits were increased to achieve the 2022 Living Wage of \$20.26 per hour, with impacts across Recreation Programs and Operations budgets (\$30,000).

Recreation Operations expenses are projecting minimal increases due to inflation costs associated with wages and benefits. Expense increases are being proposed to support the July 1 Canada Day event and Simms Concert events (\$25,000). All other expense adjustments are due to reallocations.

Recreation, Culture, and Community Services Special Projects

Project description	2024	2025	2026
	Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget
Community Service Development Framework	\$ 110,000		
Cultural Facility Feasibility Planning	\$ 75,000		
Filberg facility Feasibility Study	\$ 75,000		
Lewis Facility Feasibility Study	\$ -		\$ 100,000
Special Events & Hosting Policy		\$ 50,000	
Recreation Needs Assessment		\$ 75,000	
Cozy Corner carpet replacement	\$ 20,000		
	\$ 280,000	\$ 125,000	\$ 100,000

In addition to ongoing RCCS planning and operational work, RCCS will initiate the development of a Community and Social Development Framework in 2024 (\$110,000). Budgets for cultural facility feasibility studies have been reallocated from the Recreation Administration budget to special projects (\$75,000).

Financial Services

	2023	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2023	2024	BUDGET
	AMENDED	BASE	INFLATION	SERVICE LEVEL	GROWTH	ONE-TIME	CARRY	2. Finance	INCREASE
ACCT	BUDGET	BUDGET	IMPACTS			ITEMS	FORWARD	BUDGET	(DECREASE)
Financial Services									
FINANCIAL SERVICES EXPENSES									
Financial Services									
Finance	1,864,100	1,843,600	158,100			20,000		2,021,700	157,600
Purchasing	351,500	351,500	18,400		(14,000)			355,900	4,400
Business Performance	124,100	124,100	7,000	116,500				247,600	123,500
Stores	114,300	114,300	(1,600)		(11,300)			101,400	(12,900)
Total Financial Services	2,454,000	2,433,500	181,900	116,500	(25,300)	20,000		2,726,600	272,600
Total FINANCIAL SERVICES EXPENSES	2,454,000	2,433,500	181,900	116,500	(25,300)	20,000		2,726,600	272,600
Total Financial Services	2,454,000	2,433,500	181,900	116,500	(25,300)	20,000		2,726,600	272,600

Financial Services expense increase can be attributed to additional casual coverage to ensure continuity of service along with a proposed budget analyst position. The budget analyst will become a key in the annual

financial planning process and relieving some budget pressure from the Business performance function that has slowly taken on more of the budget work and drifted away from the key business performance duties. One time expense is for the replacement of City halls mail folding and stuffing machine.

Capital

The 2024 – 2028 General Capital Plan has been optimized to a scope and scale that recognizes the City’s capacity to realistically complete the planned capital projects within existing staff and financial capacity, and with priority given to finalize the in-progress projects.

As summarized in the table below, the financial plan includes a total of \$23,771,700 (\$11,258,300 - 2022) in projected capital expenditures for 2024. Projects are funded from a variety of taxation, reserves, grants, developer contributions, prior year unexpended funds and prior years surplus.

Fund	Strategic Responsibility	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total 2024-2028 Budget
		Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget	
General	Engineering	13,750,700	24,082,500	4,346,200	12,434,000	5,367,000	59,980,400
	Public Works	5,429,100	4,668,000	3,941,000	12,919,000	2,455,000	29,412,100
	General Government	3,228,300	170,000	95,000	95,000	245,000	3,833,300
	Fire Department	525,900	90,000	945,000	1,200,000		2,760,900
	Recreation & Culture	837,700	870,000	1,275,000	1,280,000	1,195,000	5,457,700
General Total		23,771,700	29,880,500	10,602,200	27,928,000	9,262,000	101,444,400

Major Capital Projects

6th Street Pedestrian Bridge - \$6.57M

The 6th St Bridge project will provide a connection across the Courtenay river for people who walk, run or roll. The bridge will connect from the bottom of 6th Street to Simms Millennium Park. Design work is now complete but construction requires a confirmation of funding to proceed. The project is funded as follows:

- Grants - \$2.5M;
- Reserve - \$2.57M which includes \$1M from the Growing Communities Fund; and
- Debt – \$1.5M.

East Courtenay Fire Hall - \$2M (2024), \$22M (2025)

Planning for a new fire hall in East Courtenay is underway. Courtenay Firehall #2 will be located on the site of the existing training grounds at 220 Waters Place. The City of Courtenay is expected to grow by more than 4,500 residents, and 2,900 homes, by 2031. This location is at the heart of the expected growth and provides ample space for on-going training and multiple trucks. Detailed Design is planned for 2024 with construction to follow. The project is funded as follows:

- Reserve - \$2M – Growing Communities Fund; and
- Debt - \$22M.

Anderton Dike Remediation - \$2M (2024), \$6.7M (2027)

The Anderton Dike Remediation project has been split into two main portions, pre-work (2024-2027) and then the major work of dike remediation set for 2027. The pre-work is expected to be completed over the next few years and is set to be funded by debt. The rationale for this is it is expected that the work will take time to see appropriate approvals and the ability to seek funding (debt) early in the process will aid in the

ability to deliver the pre-work portion of the project. The remediation work will be seeking grant funding, but at this time it is not confirmed, nor is the final value of the project. The project is funded as follows:

- Debt \$2M – 2024; and
- Grant \$6.7M – 2027, to be confirmed.

Pedestrian, Cycling and Pavement Renewal Program - \$1.53M

The pedestrian cycling and pavement renewal program encompasses most pavement renewal projects for the given year. Specific major pavement renewal projects will be identified separately in the capital plan. The renewal program is separate from the regular operational patching and pothole maintenance. The project is funded as follows:

- Grants - \$1.3M – Canadian Community Building Fund (Gas Tax / Community Works Fund); and
- General Revenue - \$235,000.

McPhee Meadows - \$1.46M (2024), \$2.6M (2026)

McPhee Meadows is located on the south bank of the Puntledge River near downtown Courtenay. The land was donated to the City of Courtenay and Nature Trust BC by the late Robert George McPhee following his passing in 2010. The donation was part of the Federal Ecological Gift program and as a requirement of this program must maintain biodiversity and environmental heritage features such as rivers, riparian areas, trees, and eagle nests. Mr. McPhee's vision was to maintain the property as a public wetland park in a natural state and preserve an existing apple orchard and several other trees with heritage values. The project is funded as follows:

- Reserve - \$1.46M – Including \$1M from Growing Communities Fund (2024); and
- Debt - \$2.6M (2026).

Lake Trail Multi Use Path - \$1.4M

The Lake Trail Multi-Use Pathway Project will connect Lake Trail School and Arden Elementary with bike lanes on each side of the road as well as a separated, accessible multi-use walkway. The project will increase safety along the corridor and encourage more families to choose walking or cycling as a viable option for commuting to and from school. The Project has seen cost escalations from prior years estimation of \$950,000, the City is directly funding 51% of the project. The project is funded as follows:

- Grants - \$500,000;
- CVRD Contribution - \$186,000;
- Reserves - \$475,000; and
- General Revenue - \$239,000.

Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool - \$350,000

The Courtenay and District Memorial Pool will undergo immediately required repair work as a result of condition assessments and leak detection work completed in 2023. A facility options and feasibility analysis will also be initiated to assess options for the future of the outdoor pool at its current location including repair, renovation, and full renewal considerations. The project is funded as follows:

- CVRD Recreation Commission Grant Function - \$350,000

Pickleball Courts - \$350,000

The City of Courtenay will undertake a Court Usage study to inform the development of permanent, outdoor pickleball courts. Based on the results of the study, the City would initiate planning and construction of permanent, outdoor pickleball courts in partnership with local community agencies. The project is funded as follows:

- Reserve - \$250,000 – Growing Communities Fund
- 3rd Party Contribution - \$100,000

Bill Moore and Harmston Park Plans - \$150,000 (2024), \$750,000 (2025)

As per the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Implementation Strategy, park plans will be conducted for both Bill Moore and Harmston Park in 2024. The Harmston Park plan will be done in collaboration with Development Services and the Harmston Local Area Plan process. Both park plans, through community engagement, will set a vision and direction for the future of the parks to ensure they meet the needs of the local community as well as broader City objectives, especially those articulated in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Implementation of the park plans are budgeted in subsequent years (2025 and 2026). This project is funded as follows:

- Reserve - \$150,000 – Growing Communities Fund (2024)
- Reserve - \$500,000 – Growing Communities Fund (2025)
- Reserve - \$250,000 – Parks Amenity Reserve (2025)

Transfers to Reserves

Contributions are made every year to various reserves, such as the Machinery and Equipment, the New Works and the Infrastructure Renewal Reserves. These reserves provide funding for future capital projects and in some cases operating projects. The use of reserves for capital projects can help offset borrowing that might be needed for larger projects and it also contributes to smoothing of annual tax levy.

Reserve transfers can be broken into two groups, externally funded and internally funded. Externally funded reserves come from specific external funding sources like Community Building fund, traffic fine revenue and LGCAP funds. Internally funded reserve contributions come the City’s own source of funds. The table below outlines planned reserve contributions.

General Reserve Contributions	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
External Contributions						
Community-Building Fund (Gas Tax)	\$ 1,130,000	\$ 1,130,000	\$ 1,130,000	\$ 1,130,000	\$ 1,130,000	\$ 1,130,000
Police Contingency	272,000	273,000	274,000	275,000	276,000	277,000
LGCAP	173,000	173,000				
	\$ 1,575,000	\$ 1,576,000	\$ 1,404,000	\$ 1,405,000	\$ 1,406,000	\$ 1,407,000
Internal Contributions						
Machinery and Equipment	\$ 850,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,150,000	\$ 1,275,000	\$ 1,400,000	\$ 1,525,000
New Works and Equipment	480,000	480,000	505,000	530,000	555,000	580,000
Sustainable Infrastructure (SIIP 1.5%)	-	468,000	976,000	1,527,000	2,125,000	2,773,000
Infrastructure (From Gaming)	320,000	320,000	320,000	320,000	320,000	320,000
Infrastructure (From Taxation)	136,300	218,200	228,900	320,000	320,000	320,000
	\$ 1,786,300	\$ 2,486,200	\$ 3,179,900	\$ 3,972,000	\$ 4,720,000	\$ 5,518,000
Total General Reserve Contributions	\$ 3,361,300	\$ 4,062,200	\$ 4,583,900	\$ 5,377,000	\$ 6,126,000	\$ 6,925,000
\$ Change from prior year		\$ 700,900	\$ 521,700	\$ 793,100	\$ 749,000	\$ 799,000
% Change from prior year		21%	13%	17%	14%	13%

The City’s reserve transfers are growing over the next five years by about \$750,000 annually. The majority of this growth is due to the SIIP (Sustainable Infrastructure Investment Plan) which is equivalent to a cumulative 1.5% of prior years tax revenue being contributed to reserve, increase annually for a 10-year period. This increased contribution will help substantially fund the currently infrastructure funding gap. The next growth area is in the machinery and equipment reserve, these contributions are increasing to adequately fund the rising cost of machinery and equipment. Historical contributions have been fixed at \$850,000 however an analysis of equipment life and remaining life was completed along with a replacement schedule which determined that given current contributions rates the reserve would not be able to sustain existing equipment at realistic replacement cycles.

General Revenue

Property Taxation

Property taxation is the City’s main method of revenue generation representing just under 50% of overall revenue. Property taxation relies on property value assessment and the property tax rate to determine the tax levied on a given property. Property tax can be considered a wealth tax as is it not tied to annual earnings such as income. The property assessment can be considered as a proxy to determine one’s ability to pay, with the theory that if you own a high value property you should have the means to pay a larger share of the overall property tax burden.

When comparing property taxation from community to community you cannot simply look at the property tax rate. The tax rate is only one component of the property tax calculation, the other component being property assessment. Property taxes are calculated by taking the tax rate multiplied by the property value. Since property assessment is different from community to community you again can’t simply take a \$500,000 property in one community and compare to a \$500,000 property in Courtenay as the basis of average assessment could be different. For example, a \$500,000 home in Courtenay is not far below the average value while a \$500,000 home in Victoria well below average, therefor if we were to compare Courtenay’s tax rate to Victoria it would appear as if Courtenay is charging substantially higher property taxes. The only method to reasonably compare property taxes between communities is seeking out the taxes charged on the average home.

Property Taxes – Market and Non-Market Change

Property tax rates and property assessment must move in relation with each other to ensure smooth changes in taxation. It would not be reasonable for the City to have a static tax rate while assessed values are fluctuating, the result of this would be property tax changes that are directly linked with assessment value change. Looking at historical assessment change if a static tax rate were used we could see a 3.49% tax change for 2021 followed by a 29.63% in 2022. Market change is the change property assessment from year to year of an existing property. To alleviate this issue municipalities, adjust the tax to levy the desired property tax and smooth out the volatility that assessment changes can bring.

Market Value Change

Market Change %								
Class	Class Name	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
1	Residential	15.08%	3.30%	3.49%	29.63%	12.90%	-1.61%	62.8%
2	Utilities	28.17%	7.19%	0.14%	11.68%	10.74%	3.46%	61.4%
3	Supportive housing	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.0%
5	Light Industry	17.15%	4.16%	0.74%	15.86%	9.65%	8.16%	55.7%
6	Commercial	7.34%	7.01%	-3.51%	10.26%	5.88%	3.93%	30.9%
8	Recreational	3.61%	8.56%	1.94%	0.00%	3.50%	23.83%	41.4%
9	Farm	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	6.96%	0.00%	10.35%	17.3%

From 2019 to 2024 residential properties increase in value by 62.8% whereas commercial properties increased 30.9% over the same period.

Non-market change (NMC) is the assessment growth as a result of new construction or property class change. For example, if a large commercial property is developed into housing, we would see a reduction in the commercial property class and an increase to the residential property class. NMC varies from year to year and is dependent on construction and development activity.

Non Market Change %

Class	Class Name	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
1	Residential	2.95%	3.39%	2.94%	3.91%	1.74%	1.67%	16.6%
2	Utilities	0.00%	0.00%	-11.10%	0.00%	0.00%	-0.18%	-11.3%
3	Supportive housing	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.0%
5	Light Industry	0.06%	13.40%	0.00%	0.00%	0.35%	11.45%	25.3%
6	Commercial	0.70%	0.67%	0.36%	-0.07%	1.08%	0.47%	3.2%
8	Recreational	0.00%	7.27%	0.00%	-35.97%	23.38%	1.32%	-4.0%
9	Farm	-10.75%	1.38%	0.55%	0.00%	-0.06%	-8.49%	-17.4%

Historically the City has seen reasonably consistent NMC in the residential class from a high of 3.91% (2022) to a low of 1.67% (2024). Some municipalities treat the taxation revenue attributed to NMC differently and place these “new” funds into reserves as they are receiving taxation money on a property for the first time. Historically the City of Courtenay does not treat NMC revenue differently as it simply becomes part of the annual property tax requisition and in turn reduces the impact of the annual change taxation on existing property owners.

Non Market Change New Taxation Value

Class	Class Name	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
1	Residential	\$ 406,989.12	\$ 542,241.23	\$ 497,483.58	\$ 536,916.88	\$ 309,855.54	\$ 380,278.19
6	Commercial	58,614.64	59,555.45	35,621.24	6,057.78	107,054.11	53,491.82
	Total	\$ 465,603.76	\$ 601,796.67	\$ 533,104.82	\$ 530,859.10	\$ 416,909.65	\$ 433,770.01
	Portion of Tax Levy	1.9%	2.4%	2.0%	1.9%	1.3%	1.3%

Notice that 2020 has the largest NMC new tax value (\$601,796) representing an increase in taxation equivalent to a 2.4%. Looking to the Non-Market Change % table, 2022 has the largest percentage increase at 3.91% but since the change was all in the residential class and there was a decrease in the commercial class the change in tax revenue was lower than 2020. Only residential and commercial classes shown as all other classes contribute small amounts to NMC tax revenue.

Property Taxes – Tax Burden

The property tax burden is a method of looking at which property class carries what portion of the overall property tax burden for the given year. Courtenay sees in 2024, 65.7% of the tax burden being carried by the residential class and 33.7% carried by the commercial class. By analyzing tax burden alongside the NMC and the annual changes in taxation we can determine if the tax burden is reasonable. All other classes represent a combined <1% of the tax burden.

Tax Burden

Class	Class Name	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
1	Residential	63.9%	64.5%	65.0%	65.3%	65.4%	65.7%
2	Utilities	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
3	Supportive housing	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
5	Light Industry	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
6	Commercial	35.4%	34.8%	34.4%	34.2%	34.0%	33.7%
8	Recreational	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
9	Farm	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Property tax burden has been slowly shifting towards residential class however this shift has not been through conscious Council direction, it has been caused by larger growth in the volume and value of the residential class overall. The larger growth in residential class is made evident by the NMC of 16.6% from 2019 through 2024 compared to the 3.2% growth in commercial for the same period. Further, looking at the change in assessment distribution, the residential class has grown from 85.5% to 89.1% of the total value of the property tax roll.

Assessment Distribution

Class	Class Name	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
1	Residential	85.5%	85.5%	86.6%	88.7%	89.4%	89.1%
2	Utilities	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
3	Supportive housing	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
5	Light Industry	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
6	Commercial	14.2%	14.2%	13.1%	11.0%	10.4%	10.7%
8	Recreational	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
9	Farm	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Looking at the distribution of assessment, which compares total assessed value of a given class to the total combine assessment of all classes, is a useful piece of information when comparing communities to one another as the commercial and industrial classes typically bring in significantly more tax revenue per dollar of assessed value which impacts the residential taxation amounts. Courtenay has seen growth in the residential class of 3.6% over 6 years and when compared to the change in tax burden it would appear the burden is also following this trend although at a slower rate. One must still consider that assessment distribution is impacted by the large market changes that have occurred in the residential class over the past several years, so it is not reasonable to expect a 1:1 change in assessment distribution and tax burden.

Property Taxes – Assessment Distribution - Residential

As noted above for the past several years the City has seen at times significant market value increase in its residential property class however this has come to a stop for 2024. The average residential property is now valued at \$708,400 this is down by 1.2% from 2023 value of \$716,077 which is was up by 12.8% over 2022 value of \$627,852. The average home can have a market value percentage that differs from the overall market value change. Note in 2024 overall market value change was -1.5% while average value changed by -1.2%, this is caused by the various types of properties that are constructed year to year along with the sale prices/demand for different types of housing.

Property Assessment Interval	# of Properties	%	Cumulative %
\$1-\$250K	566	5%	5%
\$250K-\$500K	2,814	23%	28%
\$500-\$750K	4,229	35%	63%
\$750K-\$1M	2,898	24%	87%
\$1M-\$1.25M	1,038	9%	95%
\$1.25M-\$1.5M	392	3%	98%
\$1.5M-\$1.75M	91	1%	99%
\$1.75M-\$2M	35	0%	99%
>\$2M	77	1%	100%
	12,140		

5% of the residential properties have a value between \$1 and \$250,000, some examples of these properties on the lower end of the value scale are modular homes that sit upon rented pads, or some smaller and older condos. When we look to the \$500,000 to \$750,000 interval we see that this group represents 35% of all properties which is the single largest group, furthermore we can see that 63% of all properties are valued at \$750,000 or below. The sum of properties value above \$1.25M represents about the same number of properties valued below \$250,000.

Property Taxes – Assessment Distribution - Commercial

Comparatively to the City’s residential properties, commercial properties have not seen the same volatility in market value change over the past several years. The average commercial property is now valued at \$1,050,034 (\$1,009,868-2023) this is up by 4.0% from 2023. The average value commercial property can have a market value percentage that differs from the overall market value change. Note in 2024 overall market value change was 2.9% while average value changed by 4.0%, this is caused by the various types of properties that are constructed year to year along with the sale prices/demand for different types of properties.

The table below takes the City’s 878 regular commercial properties and breaks them into groups based on their value. A standard interval was not used due to the concentration of properties in lower than \$1M and the properties above \$10M.

2023 Commercial Assessment						Cumulative		
Interval	# of Folios	%	Cumulative %	Assessment	%	%	Average Value	Average Tax
0-500,000	470	53.5%	53.5%	\$ 122,822,993	12.1%	12.1%	\$ 261,000	\$ 2,905
500,001 - 1,000,000	197	22.4%	76.0%	\$ 137,857,300	13.5%	25.6%	\$ 700,000	\$ 7,790
1,000,001 - 1,500,000	81	9.2%	85.2%	\$ 95,954,000	9.4%	35.0%	\$ 1,185,000	\$ 13,188
1,500,001 - 2,000,000	36	4.1%	89.3%	\$ 61,471,800	6.0%	41.1%	\$ 1,708,000	\$ 19,009
2,000,001 - 3,000,000	41	4.7%	94.0%	\$ 100,631,900	9.9%	51.0%	\$ 2,454,000	\$ 27,311
3,000,001 - 4,000,000	16	1.8%	95.8%	\$ 55,542,200	5.5%	56.4%	\$ 3,471,000	\$ 38,629
4,000,001 - 5,000,000	13	1.5%	97.3%	\$ 58,941,200	5.8%	62.2%	\$ 4,534,000	\$ 50,459
5,000,001 - 10,000,000	13	1.5%	98.7%	\$ 85,937,000	8.4%	70.6%	\$ 6,611,000	\$ 73,574
>10,000,001	11	1.3%	100.0%	\$ 298,771,000	29.4%	100.0%	\$ 27,161,000	\$ 302,277

Note information is based on 2023 assessment, overall change to 2024 will not substantially change the commercial assessment intervals. 53.5% of properties have a value between \$1 and \$500,000, however these properties only represent 12.1% of the total commercial assessment. When we look to the \$500,000

to \$2M interval we see that this group represents 89.3% of all properties and accounts for 41.1% of total assessment. Looking to the \$10M+ valued properties we see that 11 properties makeup 1.3% of the total number of commercial properties, however these properties represent 29.4% of the total assessed value. These high value commercial properties include the likes of the Driftwood Mall, the Walmart Best Buy Complex, Costco and Superstore, these properties are not representative of the same commercial properties found downtown. The majority downtown commercial properties fall into the \$2M and lower valu. The average tax on a commercial property represents the municipal taxation only, to give an idea of what commercial taxation is. Note that the average tax excludes utilities and taxes for other taxing authorities (RD, HD, School).

Property Taxes – Ownership Composition

By analyzing the annual Home Owner Grants (HOG) claimed each year the City can approximate some ownership trends and details. Although this analysis is not perfect it can be useful to look at year over year to identify community trends. The HOG is a grant that can be claimed on your principal residence, this means that you cannot claim a HOG for a rental house or a secondary dwelling, such as a vacation home. A home owner in BC is only permitted to claim 1 HOG even if they own multiple properties. Within the HOG program there is the regular stream \$770 or the enhanced \$1,045 which is available to owners over 65, veterans or those with specific disabilities. Given these criteria we are able to determine if a home is a principal residence and if the owner’s age is over/under 65. Note the number of HOG’s that fall under the veteran or disability category are very few and would not have a significant impact on the overall data.

Home Owner Grants	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Regular	51.1%	50.4%	49.7%	49.1%	48.0%
Enhanced	48.9%	49.6%	50.3%	50.9%	52.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Notice that between 2019 and 2023 the number of regular HOG’s claimed fell from 51.1% down to 48.0%, this change could signal that the age of home owners is increasing as fewer under 65 HOG’s being processed. This could also indicate that Courtenay is an attractive place to retire, or that we are seeing more intergenerational living arrangements with the parents claiming the HOG.

The provincial statistical information for HOG’s is only available to 2018 however in this year Courtenay was slightly above the provincial average of 41% of HOG’s being claimed for 65 years plus. Qualicum Beach and Parksville had 73% and 65% of 2018 HOG’s being claimed for 65 years plus which put them into the 3rd and 4th position in BC. Alternatively, Pemberton and Fort St. John had 10% and 16% of HOG’s claimed for 65 years plus putting them in the lowest position in BC.

Property Taxes – Comparable Communities

How does taxation in Courtenay compare to other municipalities? The table below was taken from information available through BC Local Government Statistics Schedule 704 – Taxes & Charges on a Representative House. The data takes an average home per community and all the property taxes, utilities and other fees for all taxing authorities. By doing this we can have a better compare property taxes from municipality to municipality.

Comparable Communities 2022			Comparable Communities 2023		
Municipality	Population		Municipality	Population	
	2021	Property Tax		2021	Property Tax
White Rock	21,939	\$ 8,034	White Rock	21,939	\$ 8,453
Port Moody	33,535	\$ 7,501	Port Moody	33,535	\$ 8,032
Squamish	23,819	\$ 6,294	Squamish	23,819	\$ 6,357
West Kelowna	36,078	\$ 6,000	West Kelowna	36,078	\$ 6,305
Langley	28,963	\$ 5,375	Langley	28,963	\$ 5,955
Campbell River	35,519	\$ 4,870	Campbell River	35,519	\$ 5,251
Penticton	36,885	\$ 4,608	Penticton	36,885	\$ 4,951
Courtenay	28,420	\$ 4,508	Courtenay	28,420	\$ 4,920
North Cowichan	31,990	\$ 4,301	North Cowichan	31,990	\$ 4,649
Cranbrook	20,499	\$ 4,284	Cranbrook	20,499	\$ 4,497
Salmon Arm	19,432	\$ 4,228	Salmon Arm	19,432	\$ 4,458
Fort St. John	21,465	\$ 2,964	Fort St. John	21,465	\$ 3,210

The table above compares the 12 communities that are closest in population size to Courtenay and their municipal taxation on a representative house for 2022 and 2023. Courtenay is on the low end of taxation, the two communities that tax lower both have industrial tax bases. Fort St. John received substantial funding (\$25.9M) through BC’s Peace River Agreement which distributed \$50M annually between municipalities and regional districts in the South Peace. Fort St. John also is service center for the area resulting in substantial commercial assessment. 2023 data is used as information is not yet available for 2024.

When looking at other comparable communities listed Port Moody, Salmon Arm, Fort St. John, and North Cowichan all have an industrial tax base which provides substantially more property tax revenue than residential or even commercial properties. Industrial tax rates for these municipalities range from a low of 28.000 per \$1,000 to 67.630 per \$1,000, to put this in perspective the 2023 residential tax rate for Courtenay was 2.3329 per \$1,000 and the commercial rate was 10.0879 per \$1,000.

Courtenay is an affordable place to own a home from a property taxation perspective. The downside of this is Courtenay will always comparatively seem like its property taxation increase percentage is larger as our base property taxation is substantially lower than many of the comparable communities. A 5% property tax change in White Rock (\$423) is substantially different than a 5% property tax change in Courtenay (\$246).

Non-Market Change and Supplementary Adjustments

Based on the latest 2024 Non-Market Change report provided by BC Assessment, the City is expecting to receive \$444,759 in additional taxation revenue from new construction (all property classes) which represents a 1.43% increase over prior years taxation. The additional revenue from new construction is cumulative and used to support the cost of new City infrastructure, services and labour necessary to operate and maintain existing levels of service relative to the growth.

Property Taxes – 2024 Tax Change

To balance the 2024 budget the City requires \$36,525,500 of funding, if this comes 100% from taxation it would represent a 17.2% or \$5,355,000 increase over 2023 property tax. The large increase is still caused by the use of alternative funding sources to taxation for the past several years to balance the budget

(COVID-19 Safe Restart Funds, prior year surplus). To offset this large tax increase it is recommended that the City relies on prior year surplus of \$1,875,500 (\$1,399,500 to fund special projects and \$536,000 as general use to reduce taxation increase) and current year NCM to close the required tax funded gap to \$3.034M or 9.7%.

A taxation increase of \$3.034M would bring total tax revenue to \$34,650,000 for 2024. Given the historically low taxation increase over the past several years it is recommended that Council maintain similar tax increase for 2024 as approved in 2023 to maintain current service levels. The discretionary tax increase recommendation for 2024 is 9.7%. The table below breaks down the proposed method if bring the tax increase down from 17.2% to 9.7%.

	\$ Tax Change	% Tax Change
Revenue Required	\$ 5,355,000	17.2%
Special Projects funded from surplus	(1,339,500)	-4.4%
General use of surplus	(536,000)	-1.7%
Non-market Change	(444,759)	-1.4%
Property Taxation	(3,034,741)	-9.7%
Shortfall	\$ -	0.0%

The table below outlines the 2024-2028 taxation change along with projected reliance on prior year surplus.

Taxation and Surplus 2024-2028						
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Revenue Req.		\$ 36,525,500	\$ 39,350,000	\$ 41,609,400	\$ 44,426,200	\$ 46,721,200
Change from PY		5,355,000	2,824,500	2,259,400	2,816,800	2,295,000
% Change		17.2%	7.7%	5.7%	6.8%	5.2%
Alternative Funding	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Surplus - Special Projects	\$ -	\$ 1,339,500	\$ 125,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 400,000
Surplus - General	\$ 1,429,300	536,000	1,407,000	933,000	534,000	135,000
Total Alternative Funding	\$ 1,429,300	\$ 1,875,500	\$ 1,532,000	\$ 1,033,000	\$ 784,000	\$ 535,000
Tax Required	\$ 31,195,000	\$ 34,650,000	\$ 37,818,000	\$ 40,576,400	\$ 43,642,200	\$ 46,186,200
Property Taxation	\$ 31,170,500	\$ 34,650,000	\$ 37,818,000	\$ 40,576,400	\$ 43,642,200	\$ 46,186,200
Discretionary Change	\$ 2,720,895	\$ 3,034,741	\$ 2,768,000	\$ 2,358,400	\$ 2,665,800	\$ 2,144,000
NMC Est 2024+	418,662	444,759	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000
Total Change	\$ 3,139,557	\$ 3,479,500	\$ 3,168,000	\$ 2,758,400	\$ 3,065,800	\$ 2,544,000
% Discretionary Change	9.7%	9.7%	8.0%	6.2%	6.6%	4.9%
Average SRD	\$ 1,670.54	\$ 1,833.18	\$ 1,979.63	\$ 2,103.08	\$ 2,241.25	\$ 2,351.35
Variable tax only	Change	\$ 162.64	\$ 146.44	\$ 123.45	\$ 138.17	\$ 110.11

The financial plan is based on this scenario, notice the revenue required annually on the first row is relatively stable. 2024 sees the utilization of \$1.875M of prior year surplus, however this is the single largest utilization over the 5 years. The plan is set to use a total of \$5.7M of prior year surplus and should leave \$7.6M available in 2028, this reduced reliance on prior year surplus will provide more flexibility to

adapt and absorb unforeseen changes. It is financially prudent to maintain some surplus funds however consideration must be given to ensure appropriate balances maintained.

The total property tax change required from 2023 is \$3,479,500 however as noted above the expected non-market change taxation contribution is \$444,759 which reduced the discretionary tax increase down to \$3,034,741 which is the equivalent of a 9.7% tax increase.

The taxation only impact on an average home is an increase of \$162.64 for total Courtenay property taxation only of \$1,833.18. Once we consider utility changes, frontage tax and property tax the all increase is \$370.12 which is equivalent to 11.6%.

Average Residential Dwelling

Details on the average single residential dwelling all-inclusive change is detailed below.

Average Residential Dwelling					
	2023	2024	\$ Change	% Change	
Average Value	\$ 716,077	\$ 708,400	-\$ 7,677	-1.2%	
General Tax rate	2.3329	2.5987	0.2658	11.1%	
General Tax	\$ 1,670.54	\$ 1,840.89	\$ 170.36	10.2%	
Total Variable tax	\$ 1,670.54	\$ 1,840.89	\$ 170.36	10.2%	
Utilities					
	2023	2024	\$ Change	% Change	
Water User fee	\$ 536.82	\$ 560.98	\$ 24.16	4.5%	
Water Frontage*	\$ 127.49	\$ 133.16	\$ 5.68	4.5%	
Sewer User fee	\$ 398.76	\$ 438.64	\$ 39.88	10.0%	
Sewer Frontage*	\$ 223.54	\$ 233.58	\$ 10.04	4.5%	
Solid Waste	\$ 237.50	\$ 357.50	\$ 120.00	50.5%	
Total Utilities	\$ 1,524.11	\$ 1,723.86	\$ 199.76	13.1%	
Total Property Charges	\$ 3,194.64	\$ 3,564.76	\$ 370.12	11.6%	

The table provides the detail on the tax and utility impacts on an average residential dwelling. For 2024 the solid waste fee is seeing the largest percentage change as the City is in transition to the new shared solid waste service. The total property charges for an average home in 2024 is \$3,564.76.

Note that the general tax is showing an increase of 10.2% this is due to the slightly smaller reduction in average value of -1.2% vs the overall reduction class 1 residential assessment of -1.5%. If your individual home changes value differently to the overall change the taxation impact will differ.

Average Commercial Property

The taxation only impact on an average commercial property is an increase of \$1,134.73 for a total of \$11,685.93. It is not feasible to provide an all-in tax and utility change for commercial properties as their utility billings can differ significantly depending on the type and use of property.

Average Commercial Property				
	2023	2024	\$ Change	% Change
Assessment \$	\$ 1,015,926,893	\$ 1,050,033,931	\$ 34,107,038	3.4%
# Folios (improved)	1,006	1,000	(6)	-0.6%
Average Assessed Value	\$ 1,009,868	\$ 1,050,034	\$ 40,166	4.0%
General Tax rate	10.4481	11.1291	0.6810	6.5%
General Tax \$	\$ 10,551.20	\$ 11,685.93	\$ 1,134.73	10.8%

Note that the general tax is showing an increase of 10.8% this is due to the larger increase in average value 4.0 % compared to the overall change in the assessment in the commercial class 3.4%. If an individual property changes value differently to the overall change the taxation impact will differ.

Property Taxation by Class

The property tax increase is applied equally to most property classes however past practices have led to reduced taxation burden on two classes of property that should be carrying more of the burden. Class 2 – Utilities and Class 8 - Recreation have benefited from lower taxation for several years, however when comparing property tax burden amount in other communities these classes carry substantially more property tax burden than they do in Courtenay. The table below outlines property tax change by class.

Class	Discretionary Tax Change %	Assessment Change %	Current year tax rate	NMC Levy	Current year total levy	Prior year tax levy	\$ Change	% Change
1 Residential	9.70%	-1.5%	2.5987	\$ 380,278	\$ 22,747,938	\$ 20,404,343	\$ 2,343,595	11.5%
2 Utilities	25.0%	3.5%	22.9296	131	76,982	61,690	15,292	24.8%
3 Supportive Housing	0.0%	0.0%	2.5987	-	-	-	-	0.0%
5 Light Industry	9.70%	7.8%	9.5319	11,200	116,637	96,116	20,521	21.4%
6 Commercial	9.70%	3.0%	11.1291	53,492	11,685,889	10,614,493	1,071,396	10.1%
8 Recreational	25.0%	1.0%	3.5898	241	18,701	14,768	3,933	26.6%
9 Farm	9.70%	4.2%	2.7739	321	3,853	3,590	263	7.3%
Total			55.1516	\$ 444,759	\$ 34,650,000	\$ 31,195,000	\$ 3,455,000	11.1%

Note the 9.7% increase for residential, light industry, commercial and farm class properties is consistent which provides a fair distribution of the change in tax for 2024. The utility class has a legislated maximum tax rate of 40.000 per \$1,000 of assessment or 2.5x Class 6 tax rate, the majority of BC Municipalities are at the maximum for Class 2. Courtenay will reach a rate of 22.9296, well below the legislated maximum. In 2022 the City’s Class 2 tax had reached its minimum after a steady decline to 16.8132 compared to 25.3419 in 2018. A 25% increase to the class 2 tax rate will bring the rate up to 22.9296 for 2024. It is not reasonable to bring this rate up too quickly and it will take about 3 years to re-reach the prescribed and normal maximum of 40.000.

There are a very limited number of recreation properties that fall within the municipal boundaries however all of these properties operate as a commercial enterprise and therefore should be taxed at similar rates of other commercial enterprises found in Class 6. Recreation properties historically were taxed at the residential tax rate 2.3302 -2023. Starting in 2023 an annual increase of 25% per year will result in taxation equity to class 6 – Commercial in about 7 years.

Gaming Funds

As a host local government of a gaming facility, the City receives a 10% share of the net gaming revenue every year, which may be used for “any purpose within their legal authority”. As a result of the COVID-19

pandemic, the local casino has been closed between March 2020 and July 2021. The operations at the local casino have now resumed and revenues have returned to near pre-pandemic levels.

Revenue is budgeted at \$1,250,000 based on historical performance (prior to COVID-19). As at December 31, 2023, the gaming fund has an unaudited balance of \$1,920,043 (\$1,950,643-2022). Past practice has been to maintain a minimum of one year of revenue in the fund. Given the uncertainty of the past few years some projects have been delayed and some spending has not been fully utilized resulting in a fund balance greater than held in the past.

Distribution: Major Categories		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Estimated Annual Revenue		1,250,000	1,250,000	1,250,000	1,250,000	1,250,000
Support Downtown Arts and Culture	Annual Grants:					
	CV Art Gallery	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000
	Ctny & Dist Historical Society	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
	Sid Williams Theatre Society	105,000	105,000	105,000	105,000	105,000
	Downtown cultural events	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
	225,000	225,000	225,000	225,000	225,000	
Council Initiatives & Projects	Feb 19, 2019 Resolution - LUSH Community Garden Annual Grant	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
	Annual Grants-in-Aid	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
	Management Fee to Comox Valley Community Foundation for Annual Grants-in-Aid program	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
	Other Council Initiatives/Projects	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
	KFN Guardian Program	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
	162,500	162,500	162,500	162,500	162,500	
Public Safety / Security	RCMP Contract Funding for 2 members	475,000	473,000	490,000	507,000	517,100
Infrastructure Works	Annual Provision to Infrastructure Reserve	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
	Infrastructure Levy Reduction (Approx 1% + 0.5% in 2022)	220,000	220,000	220,000	220,000	220,000
		320,000	320,000	320,000	320,000	320,000
Total Annual Distribution		1,182,500	1,180,500	1,197,500	1,214,500	1,224,600
Projected Gaming Fund Balance		1,987,543	2,057,043	2,040,043	2,092,543	2,065,443

Note that the Recreation, Culture, and Community Services Administration budget holds the tax funded portion of contributions to Arts and Culture service partners (CV Art Gallery, Courtney & District Historical Society and the Sid Williams Theatre Society). Gaming funds identified above are in addition to the taxation funded supports to these groups.

Borrowing

The General Fund financial plan contains three capital projects that are funded in part by borrowing for 2024. The total reliance on debt funding for the general capital plan is \$5,426,000. The table below outlines planned debt funded projects over the next 5 years.

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026</u>	<u>2027</u>	<u>2028</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>New Debt</u>						
Strategic Land Acquisition	2,176,000					2,176,000
6th St Bridge Multi-Use Active Transportation Bridge	1,500,000					1,500,000
Anderton Dike Remediation	1,750,000			1,821,690		3,571,690
Ryan Road sidewalk Sandwich to Braidwood				2,000,000		2,000,000
Cousins Ave upgrades				1,000,000		1,000,000
Braidwood Road Design - Storm & Road					1,750,000	1,750,000
Park Design and Development McPhee Meadows - Phase 1			2,598,000			2,598,000
FIRE - New Satellite Firehall		22,000,000				22,000,000
Consolidated Municipal Building				10,000,000		10,000,000
						-
Total New Debt	5,426,000	22,000,000	2,598,000	14,821,690	1,750,000	46,595,690

The City's 2022 debt capacity utilization was 10.8%; this represents annual debt servicing costs of \$1,589,356 of the \$14,718,465 annual limit. Debt servicing costs include the annual principal and interest payments of a given loan. Total debt servicing costs are set to rise to \$1,785,900 for 2024 which is well within the City's borrowing limit as utilization will move up to 12.1%.

Borrowing is the principal source of funding for several large projects included in the General Fund Capital Plan, for a total of \$67.4 million over the next 5 years. The City will be using an estimated 35% of its allowable debt servicing capacity by the end of 2028 which also includes the new debt for Water and Sewer projects over the next 5 years (respectively \$800K and \$20M).

As at December 31, 2023 the City had \$10,419,070 (\$11,880,552 -2022) of outstanding long-term debt. All long-term debt has fixed interest rates for the initial 10-years and then 5-year terms that renew up to the maximum 30-year amortization period.

Debt – Comparable Communities

The table below compares long-term debt as at December 31, 2022 of other similar sized communities. 2022 data is used as that is what is available from BCStatistics.

Comparable Communities Long-Term Debt		
	Population	
Municipality	2021	Debt 2022
Squamish	23,819	\$ 37,870,346
North Cowichan	31,990	36,840,235
Fort St. John	21,465	34,097,151
West Kelowna	36,078	32,588,625
Cranbrook	20,499	24,410,038
Port Moody	33,535	22,956,326
Salmon Arm	19,432	21,634,358
White Rock	21,939	21,250,543
Penticton	36,885	20,767,185
Courtenay	28,420	11,880,552
Campbell River	35,519	9,812,720
Langley	28,963	7,500,000

The comparable fire communities selected are the same communities as used for taxation comparison. It is notable that Fort St. John and North Cowichan both of which have lower taxation than Courtenay fall in the

top 3 communities with total debt. Squamish has seen substantial growth since 2010, this is made evident by the 22.2% population increase from 2016 to 2021. This fast growth could be a contributing factor to its high debt level as increases in capacity for services was likely demanded.

Assuming an interest rate of 5% and an amortization period of 30 years the City has the capacity to take on about an additional \$191,000,000 in long term debt. While it is not recommended, it does demonstrate that the City has capacity to take on substantially more debt if needed.

Short-term capital borrowing is available for municipalities up to a total of \$50 per capita, which represents approximately \$1.42 million for the City of Courtenay. The City has no current plans to access short term capital borrowing.

Debt Servicing Costs

The table below outlines the anticipated debt servicing costs over the next 5 years assuming all debt is taken in the year approved.

Debt Servicing Costs						
Principal	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	
General	\$ 781,400	\$ 812,100	\$ 1,510,500	\$ 1,528,300	\$ 1,732,500	
Water	20,100	20,100	20,100	-	27,700	
Sewer	185,400	393,200	601,100	692,800	867,900	
Total	\$ 986,900	\$ 1,225,400	\$ 2,131,700	\$ 2,221,100	\$ 2,628,100	
Interest	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	
General	\$ 567,500	\$ 1,176,700	\$ 1,781,600	\$ 2,189,600	\$ 2,560,900	
Water	9,200	9,200	4,600	20,000	40,000	
Sewer	222,300	522,300	744,500	941,700	1,066,700	
Total	\$ 799,000	\$ 1,708,200	\$ 2,530,700	\$ 3,151,300	\$ 3,667,600	
Total	\$ 1,785,900	\$ 2,933,600	\$ 4,662,400	\$ 5,372,400	\$ 6,295,700	

The large increase in debt servicing costs in 2026 is due to the East Side Firehall project (\$24M) funded by \$22M in debt. The interest as a percentage of total debt servicing cost is growing over the years, this is due to new debt being taking on at assumed higher interest rates than in the past. For the past several years, interest rates have been at historically low levels, however the interest rate environment has changed. The 2023 fall MFA rate of 4.97% has not been as high since the fall of 2008 (5.15%) and spring of 2009 (4.90%) these two rates are outlier as rates have not consistently been over 4.97% since spring 2003.

On a 20-year loan the interest rate must be 3.45% to archive a 50/50 split between annual principal and interest payments. If interest rates go below 3.45% then the interest portion of the loan payment will be lower. On a 30-year loan the rate must be 1.86%. Note that all borrowing is through the Municipal Finance Authority which does not make profit from municipal lending and if profit is realized it is return to the municipalities through actuarial adjustments. Currently the estimated actuarial adjustment on a 20-year loan results in a 31% reduction in the total principal to be repaid.

Summary

The 2024-2028 General Fund Financial plan provides maintained service levels with specific enhancements that are aligned with the City of Courtenay’s strategic priorities. The plan balances the recognition of the need for revenue through the required 17.2% tax increase however lowering the impact to the proposed 9.7%. The extensive list of capital and special projects clearly identifies that there is a tremendous amount of work to be completed over the next 5 years. The City is in a fair financial state given the ambitions work ahead, and challenges that will likely persist include continued inflation and the hard-labour market.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

Section 165 of the Community Charter requires a municipality to have a five-year financial plan adopted annually prior to May 15 each year.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The 2024-2028 General Fund Financial plan will set spending and revenue for the general fund. Once endorsed by Council it will be consolidated with the Water and Sewer Funds to form the 2024-2028 Consolidated Financial Plan bylaw. The Bylaw will be presented to Council for ultimate authorization prior to the statutory May 15th deadline.

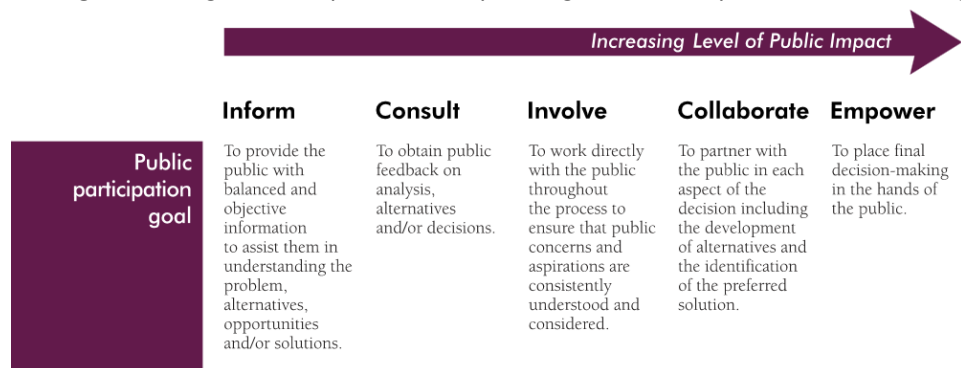
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

This initiative addresses the following cardinal directions:

COURTENAY WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FUTURE by being more thoughtful, strategic, and efficient in all resources that we use whether it be land, energy, or public infrastructure, to ensure that actions deliver on multiple goals of fiscal responsibility, economic resilience, social equity, and ecological health.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Staff has consulted and involved the public the public based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation through the *Budget Development and Spending Priorities report* and online budget engagement tool:



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From a public consultation perspective, the Financial Plan presented, includes information gathered through the online budget development and spending priorities tool (“Balancing Act” – Online Budget Simulator) as well as information gathered through the 2023 Resident Survey – “Your Courtenay, Your Voice”. The public engagement and input gathered through these processes provides the background to assist in the development of the five-year financial plan addressing cost drivers such as inflation, meet legislative changes, 2022-2026 Council Strategic Priorities, and delivery the City’s core services.

OPTIONS:

1. THAT Council approve the 2024-2028 General Fund Financial Plan as presented and direct staff to prepare the 2024-2028 Consolidated Financial Plan bylaw.
2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2024-2028 General Fund Financial Plan
2. 2024-2028 General Fund Capital Plan
3. 2024 General Fund Capital Project Funding
4. 2024-2028 Special Projects

Prepared by: Adam Langenmaier BBA, CPA, CA, Director of Finance, Chief Financial Officer

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

2024-2028 General Fund Financial Plan													
	2023	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2023	2024	BUDGET	2025	2026	2027	2028
	AMENDED	BASE	INFLATION	SERVICE LEVEL	GROWTH	ONE-TIME	CARRY	2. Finance Review	INCREASE	BUDGET	BUDGET	BUDGET	BUDGET
ACCT	BUDGET	BUDGET		IMPACTS		ITEMS	FORWARD	BUDGET	(DECREASE)				
CAO Office													
CAO OFFICE EXPENSES													
CAO Office	661,300	561,300	22,300	(2,000)	4,800		170,000	756,400	95,100	611,500	640,000	670,200	703,700
Total CAO OFFICE EXPENSES	661,300	561,300	22,300	(2,000)	4,800		170,000	756,400	95,100	611,500	640,000	670,200	703,700
CAO OFFICE - SPECIAL PROJECTS													
CAO Office - Special Projects						100,000		100,000	100,000				
Total CAO OFFICE - SPECIAL PROJECTS						100,000		100,000	100,000				
Total CAO Office	661,300	561,300	22,300	(2,000)	4,800	100,000	170,000	856,400	195,100	611,500	640,000	670,200	703,700
Corporate Services													
CORPORATE SERVICES REVENUE													
Revenues	(223,100)	(223,100)						(223,100)		(223,100)	(223,100)	(223,100)	(223,100)
Total CORPORATE SERVICES REVENUE	(223,100)	(223,100)						(223,100)		(223,100)	(223,100)	(223,100)	(223,100)
CORPORATE SERVICES EXPENSES													
GENERAL GOVERNMENT - Corporate Services	3,930,900	3,760,100	(119,700)	580,800	88,400	171,500	50,000	4,531,100	600,200	4,338,300	4,493,400	4,664,600	4,771,400
GENERAL GOVERNMENT - Legislative Services	646,500	646,500	290,800	13,200	89,500	7,000	8,000	1,055,000	408,500	1,157,200	1,303,700	1,276,100	1,314,700
OTHER PROTECTIVE SERVICES	523,100	523,100	134,900	9,600	5,400			673,000	149,900	755,300	785,700	820,600	859,600
Total CORPORATE SERVICES EXPENSES	5,100,500	4,929,700	306,000	603,600	183,300	178,500	58,000	6,259,100	1,158,600	6,250,800	6,582,800	6,761,300	6,945,700
CORPORATE SERVICES EXPENSES - SPECIAL PROJECTS													
GENERAL GOVERNMENT - Corp Services Special Projects	50,500						297,000	347,500	297,000				
GENERAL GOVERNMENT - Legislative Services Special Projects							50,000	50,000	50,000				
Total CORPORATE SERVICES EXPENSES - SPECIAL PROJECTS	50,500						347,000	397,500	347,000				
Total Corporate Services	4,927,900	4,706,600	306,000	603,600	183,300	525,500	108,500	6,433,500	1,505,600	6,027,700	6,359,700	6,538,200	6,722,600
Fire Protection Services													
FIRE REVENUE													
FIRE REVENUE	(522,100)	(522,100)	(238,400)					(760,500)	(238,400)	(816,400)	(876,300)	(941,000)	(1,010,500)
Total FIRE REVENUE	(522,100)	(522,100)	(238,400)					(760,500)	(238,400)	(816,400)	(876,300)	(941,000)	(1,010,500)
FIRE EXPENSES													
Fire Protection	2,396,800	2,321,800	95,300	189,400	327,800		30,200	2,964,500	567,700	3,251,900	3,502,400	3,862,200	3,946,000
Fire Fleet	117,900	110,900	5,100		4,000			120,000	2,100	115,800	115,800	115,400	117,300
Emergency Programs	212,000	212,000	500			5,000	3,000	220,500	8,500	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,300
Total FIRE EXPENSES	2,726,700	2,644,700	100,900	189,400	331,800	5,000	33,200	3,305,000	578,300	3,382,700	3,633,200	3,992,600	4,078,600
Total Fire Protection Services	2,204,600	2,122,600	(137,500)	189,400	331,800	5,000	33,200	2,544,500	339,900	2,566,300	2,756,900	3,051,600	3,068,100
Police													
POLICE REVENUE													
Police Protection Revenues	(115,500)	(115,500)						(115,500)		(115,500)	(115,500)	(115,500)	(115,500)
Total POLICE REVENUE	(115,500)	(115,500)						(115,500)		(115,500)	(115,500)	(115,500)	(115,500)
POLICE EXPENSES													
Police Admin & Other	316,800	316,800	(88,000)					228,800	(88,000)	319,700	319,700	322,700	329,100
Police Protection Services	8,099,400	8,099,400	234,500	45,000	18,100			8,397,000	297,600	8,529,300	8,730,200	8,949,700	9,193,600
Total POLICE EXPENSES	8,416,200	8,416,200	146,500	45,000	18,100			8,625,800	209,600	8,849,000	9,049,900	9,272,400	9,522,700
Total Police	8,300,700	8,300,700	146,500	45,000	18,100			8,510,300	209,600	8,733,500	8,934,400	9,156,900	9,407,200
Engineering Services													
ENGINEERING EXPENSES													
Engineering Administration	719,700	691,900	61,400	85,600	6,100			845,000	125,300	875,600	915,300	935,700	977,600
Asset Management	438,200	393,200	49,700		(91,800)			351,100	(87,100)	367,300	356,300	335,600	346,900
Total ENGINEERING EXPENSES	1,157,900	1,085,100	111,100	85,600	(85,700)			1,196,100	38,200	1,242,900	1,271,600	1,271,300	1,324,500
ENGINEERING EXPENSES - SPECIAL PROJECTS													
Engineering SPECIAL PROJECTS	367,500					779,000	132,000	911,000	543,500				
Total ENGINEERING EXPENSES - SPECIAL PROJECTS	367,500					779,000	132,000	911,000	543,500				
Total Engineering Services	1,525,400	1,085,100	111,100	85,600	(85,700)	779,000	132,000	2,107,100	581,700	1,242,900	1,271,600	1,271,300	1,324,500
Public Works Services													
PUBLIC WORKS - ADMINISTRATION													
PW - Admin	575,400	575,400	14,000		(24,700)			564,700	(10,700)	576,400	592,100	606,500	625,800
PW - Operations	(234,000)	(234,000)	13,600	49,500	32,000			(138,900)	95,100	(123,500)	(117,800)	(117,800)	(126,700)
PW - Allocation	(351,500)	(351,500)	(3,800)					(355,300)	(3,800)	(360,400)	(364,300)	(367,200)	(374,600)

2024-2028 General Fund Financial Plan													
	2023	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2023	2024	BUDGET	2025	2026	2027	2028
	AMENDED	BASE	INFLATION	SERVICE LEVEL	GROWTH	ONE-TIME	CARRY	2. Finance Review	INCREASE	BUDGET	BUDGET	BUDGET	BUDGET
ACCT	BUDGET	BUDGET		IMPACTS		ITEMS	FORWARD	BUDGET	(DECREASE)				
Total PUBLIC WORKS - ADMINISTRATION	(10,100)	(10,100)	23,800	49,500	7,300			70,500	80,600	92,500	110,000	121,500	124,500
PUBLIC WORKS - TRANSPORTATION SERVICES													
Transportation Services	3,882,800	3,964,300	128,000	14,000	366,700	20,000		4,493,000	610,200	4,324,700	4,367,300	4,386,700	4,443,400
Garbage Collection	149,600	149,600	1,600		24,600			175,800	26,200	153,900	155,500	155,500	158,700
PUBLIC WORKS - TRANSPORTATION SPECIAL PROJECTS						125,000		125,000	125,000				
Total PUBLIC WORKS - TRANSPORTATION SERVICES	4,032,400	4,113,900	129,600	14,000	391,300	145,000		4,793,800	761,400	4,478,600	4,522,800	4,542,200	4,602,100
PUBLIC WORKS - PROPERTY MAINTENANCE													
Property Maintenance Admin	245,900	245,900	12,300		(12,700)			245,500	(400)	259,800	266,100	272,100	280,300
City Hall & PW Buildings Maintenance	212,000	212,000	9,500		6,000	12,000	23,800	263,300	51,300	222,900	225,100	226,200	230,300
Firehall Buildings Maintenance	123,200	123,200	4,100		(1,000)	6,500		132,800	9,600	121,200	121,200	121,200	122,800
Parks - Property Maintenance	141,500	141,500	29,600		(10,000)			161,100	19,600	130,200	130,700	130,700	132,300
Recreation Facilities - Property Maintenance	688,900	688,900	22,500		(500)	17,000		727,900	39,000	700,000	705,100	705,100	715,600
Cultural Facilities - Property Maintenance	224,200	215,700	4,400		500	45,700		266,300	42,100	220,700	221,700	221,700	224,100
Miscellaneous Buildings Maintenance	94,900	82,900	4,700		(1,400)			86,200	(8,700)	85,700	86,400	86,400	87,400
Property for Development	45,600	45,600	2,000		(10,300)			37,300	(8,300)	37,100	37,100	37,100	37,600
PUBLIC WORKS - PROPERTY MAINTENANCE SPECIAL PROJECTS						18,000		18,000	18,000				
Total PUBLIC WORKS - PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,776,200	1,755,700	89,100		(29,400)	99,200	23,800	1,938,400	162,200	1,777,600	1,793,400	1,800,500	1,830,400
PUBLIC WORKS - PARKS AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE													
Parks Administration	336,400	336,400	13,200	(2,000)	5,000			352,600	16,200	356,500	365,200	371,800	382,700
Parks Operations	2,745,300	2,755,300	23,900	36,000	59,700	65,000		2,939,900	194,600	2,857,800	2,907,800	2,901,700	2,975,200
Recreation Facilities - Grounds Maintenance	29,600	29,600	600		(3,000)			27,200	(2,400)	30,300	30,700	30,700	31,200
Cultural Facilities - Grounds Maintenance	6,900	6,900	100					7,000	100	6,900	6,900	6,900	6,900
Other Facilities - Grounds Maintenance	51,000	51,000	900		(2,000)			49,900	(1,100)	52,700	53,500	53,500	54,400
Cemetery	317,800	317,800	4,300		21,500			343,600	25,800	327,500	332,500	332,500	339,100
Total PUBLIC WORKS - PARKS AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	3,487,000	3,497,000	43,000	34,000	81,200	65,000		3,720,200	233,200	3,631,700	3,696,600	3,697,100	3,789,500
PUBLIC WORKS - STORM WATER COLLECTION													
Storm Water Collection	594,300	594,300	30,200		(50,800)			573,700	(20,600)	669,900	658,400	661,600	675,800
Total PUBLIC WORKS - STORM WATER COLLECTION	594,300	594,300	30,200		(50,800)			573,700	(20,600)	669,900	658,400	661,600	675,800
Total Public Works Services	9,879,800	9,950,800	315,700	97,500	399,600	309,200	23,800	11,096,600	1,216,800	10,650,300	10,781,200	10,822,900	11,022,300
Development Services													
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REVENUE													
Development Services Revenues	(1,857,000)	(1,857,000)			88,600	(75,000)		(1,843,400)	13,600	(1,618,400)	(1,618,400)	(1,718,400)	(1,718,400)
Total DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REVENUE	(1,857,000)	(1,857,000)			88,600	(75,000)		(1,843,400)	13,600	(1,618,400)	(1,618,400)	(1,718,400)	(1,718,400)
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES EXPENSES													
Development Services Expenses	2,637,000	2,437,200	37,000	75,000	(304,100)	90,400	175,000	2,510,500	(126,500)	2,496,800	2,576,400	2,678,700	2,788,600
Total DEVELOPMENT SERVICES EXPENSES	2,637,000	2,437,200	37,000	75,000	(304,100)	90,400	175,000	2,510,500	(126,500)	2,496,800	2,576,400	2,678,700	2,788,600
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES EXPENSES - SPECIAL PROJECTS													
Development Services Special Projects						885,000	35,000	920,000	920,000			250,000	400,000
Total DEVELOPMENT SERVICES EXPENSES - SPECIAL PROJECTS						885,000	35,000	920,000	920,000			250,000	400,000
Total Development Services	780,000	580,200	37,000	75,000	(215,500)	900,400	210,000	1,587,100	807,100	878,400	958,000	1,210,300	1,470,200
Recreation, Culture and Community Services													
RCCS REVENUE													
Recreation Administration Revenue	(26,000)	(26,000)						(26,000)		(26,000)	(26,100)	(26,200)	(26,700)
Recreation Programs Revenue	(1,457,700)	(1,457,700)	(8,000)	600	(90,400)			(1,555,500)	(97,800)	(1,585,400)	(1,621,300)	(1,652,800)	(1,686,100)
Recreation Operations Revenue	(717,900)	(717,900)	(2,500)	12,500	(17,100)			(725,000)	(7,100)	(743,300)	(763,300)	(782,100)	(799,700)
Total RCCS REVENUE	(2,201,600)	(2,201,600)	(10,500)	13,100	(107,500)			(2,306,500)	(104,900)	(2,354,700)	(2,410,700)	(2,461,100)	(2,512,500)
RCCS EXPENSES													
Recreation Administration Expenses	2,093,100	2,074,600	(2,900)	38,400	(90,800)		(5,500)	2,013,800	(79,300)	2,130,800	2,194,500	2,262,000	2,231,900
Recreation Programs Expenses	1,884,500	1,884,500	115,500	91,700	73,900			2,165,600	281,100	2,241,700	2,305,600	2,349,200	2,396,200
Recreation Operations Expenses	2,338,100	2,338,100	67,100	25,000	20,100			2,450,300	112,200	2,480,600	2,529,600	2,694,100	2,760,800
Total RCCS EXPENSES	6,315,700	6,297,200	179,700	155,100	3,200		(5,500)	6,629,700	314,000	6,853,100	7,029,700	7,305,300	7,388,900
RCCS EXPENSES - SPECIAL PROJECTS													
Recreation Administration Special Projects						170,000	110,000	280,000	280,000	125,000	100,000		
Total RCCS EXPENSES - SPECIAL PROJECTS						170,000	110,000	280,000	280,000	125,000	100,000		
Total Recreation, Culture and Community Services	4,114,100	4,095,600	169,200	168,200	(104,300)	170,000	104,500	4,603,200	489,100	4,623,400	4,719,000	4,844,200	4,876,400

2024-2028 General Fund Financial Plan

2024-2028 General Fund Financial Plan													
	2023	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2023	2024	BUDGET	2025	2026	2027	2028
	AMENDED	BASE	INFLATION	SERVICE LEVEL	GROWTH	ONE-TIME	CARRY	2. Finance Review	INCREASE	BUDGET	BUDGET	BUDGET	BUDGET
ACCT	BUDGET	BUDGET		IMPACTS		ITEMS	FORWARD	BUDGET	(DECREASE)				
Financial Services													
FINANCIAL SERVICES EXPENSES													
Financial Services	2,454,000	2,433,500	181,900	116,500	(25,300)	20,000		2,726,600	272,600	2,780,000	2,878,100	2,968,600	3,078,800
Total FINANCIAL SERVICES EXPENSES	2,454,000	2,433,500	181,900	116,500	(25,300)	20,000		2,726,600	272,600	2,780,000	2,878,100	2,968,600	3,078,800
Total Financial Services	2,454,000	2,433,500	181,900	116,500	(25,300)	20,000		2,726,600	272,600	2,780,000	2,878,100	2,968,600	3,078,800
Fiscal & Other													
FISCAL & OTHER REVENUES													
TAXATION	(32,094,800)	(32,094,800)	(3,022,600)		(348,300)			(35,465,700)	(3,370,900)	(38,633,700)	(41,392,100)	(44,457,900)	(47,001,900)
GENERAL REVENUE	(3,181,700)	(3,181,700)	(1,235,500)			(608,000)		(5,025,200)	(1,843,500)	(4,335,500)	(3,836,500)	(3,837,500)	(3,345,000)
TAXES COLLECTED FOR OTHER GOVERNMENTS	(24,702,700)	(24,702,700)	(309,800)	(60,000)				(25,072,500)	(369,800)	(25,140,200)	(25,214,200)	(25,290,200)	(25,368,200)
OTHER REVENUE	(5,149,700)	(1,071,400)	(981,500)		(16,000)	(3,431,300)	(982,000)	(6,482,200)	(1,332,500)	(3,535,800)	(3,011,000)	(2,780,000)	(2,562,000)
Total FISCAL & OTHER REVENUES	(65,128,900)	(61,050,600)	(5,549,400)	(60,000)	(364,300)	(4,039,300)	(982,000)	(72,045,600)	(6,916,700)	(71,645,200)	(73,453,800)	(76,365,600)	(78,277,100)
FISCAL & OTHER EXPENSES													
Fiscal Services	4,927,000	(362,500)	3,575,600		295,800	2,182,800		5,691,700	764,700	7,873,300	8,415,500	10,016,000	10,238,900
Development Services Other	357,000	357,000	53,000					410,000	53,000	371,400	378,800	378,800	386,400
Miscellaneous	147,100	147,100	(1,000)					146,100	(1,000)	146,300	146,400	146,400	148,900
Transfer of Taxes Collected	24,849,200	24,849,200	309,800	60,000	(146,500)			25,072,500	223,300	25,140,200	25,214,200	25,290,200	25,829,100
Total FISCAL & OTHER EXPENSES	30,280,300	24,990,800	3,937,400	60,000	149,300	2,182,800		31,320,300	1,040,000	33,531,200	34,154,900	35,831,400	36,603,300
Total Fiscal & Other	(34,848,600)	(36,059,800)	(1,612,000)		(215,000)	(1,856,500)	(982,000)	(40,725,300)	(5,876,700)	(38,114,000)	(39,298,900)	(40,534,200)	(41,673,800)
Gaming													
GAMING REVENUE													
Gaming Revenue	(1,285,600)	(1,250,000)	(75,000)			(90,500)		(1,415,500)	(129,900)	(1,394,400)	(1,502,500)	(1,519,500)	(1,543,500)
Total GAMING REVENUE	(1,285,600)	(1,250,000)	(75,000)			(90,500)		(1,415,500)	(129,900)	(1,394,400)	(1,502,500)	(1,519,500)	(1,543,500)
GAMING EXPENSES													
Gaming Expenses	1,285,600	1,285,600		15,000	114,900			1,415,500	129,900	1,394,400	1,502,500	1,519,500	1,543,500
Total GAMING EXPENSES	1,285,600	1,285,600		15,000	114,900			1,415,500	129,900	1,394,400	1,502,500	1,519,500	1,543,500
Total Gaming		35,600	(75,000)	15,000	114,900	(90,500)							
(Surplus) / Deficit	\$ -	(2,508,200)	(763,700)	1,801,400	773,300	697,200		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

2024-2028 GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PLAN

Strategic Responsibility	Project description	2024 Proposed Budget	2025 Proposed Budget	2026 Proposed Budget	2027 Proposed Budget	2028 Proposed Budget	Total 2024-2028 Budget
Engineering	6th St Bridge Multi-Use Active Transportation Bridge	6,565,000					6,565,000
	Anderdon Dike Remediation	2,000,000	-	-	6,747,000		8,747,000
	FIRE - New Satellite Firehall	2,000,000	22,000,000				24,000,000
	Park Design and Development McPhee Meadows - Phase 1	1,466,500	-	-			1,466,500
	Lake Trail Multi-Use Pathway Construction	1,400,000					1,400,000
	MEMORIAL POOL - Major Pool Repairs	200,000	250,000	1,000,000	-		1,450,000
	Traffic - Signal Controller Renewal Program	75,000	750,000	375,000	375,000	375,000	1,950,000
	Crosswalk Island Highway at Beachwood road	30,000					30,000
	Tunner Drive Multi-Use Pathway	14,200					14,200
	Lerwick traffic improvement - Malahat to Macdonald				150,000		150,000
	Storm Drainage - 13 St - Burgess to Willemar Storm Reconstruction				14,000	871,000	885,000
	Braidwood Road Design - Storm & Road				30,000	3,250,000	3,280,000
	Renewable Energy options	-	800,000				800,000
	Park Design and Development McPhee Meadows - Phase 2	-	282,500	2,598,000			2,880,500
	Cousins Avenue Upgrades			178,200	2,338,500		2,516,700
	Major Road Cons - 13 St - Burgess to Willemar Road Reconstruction				14,000	871,000	885,000
	Ryan Road sidewalk Sandwick to Braidwood	-	-	195,000	2,765,500		2,960,500
Engineering Total		13,750,700	24,082,500	4,346,200	12,434,000	5,367,000	59,980,400
Fire Department	FIRE DEPT - Rescue Tools	500,000					500,000
	FIRE DEPT - Light Vehicles	25,900	90,000	945,000			1,060,900
	FIRE DEPT - Replacement Truck (pumper 2027)				1,200,000		1,200,000
Fire Department Total		525,900	90,000	945,000	1,200,000		2,760,900
General Government Services	Strategic Land Acquisition	2,898,000					2,898,000
	Server Replacement	120,000	60,000			150,000	330,000
	Budget Software	76,000					76,000
	New softwares (Future IT Projects)	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	250,000
	Tempest Calls For Services	33,300					33,300
	Photocopiers	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	150,000
	Large Format Plotter	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	75,000
	Scada Cloud Server / Backup	6,000					6,000
	Electronic Records Management System (EDRMS)		15,000				15,000
General Government Services Total		3,228,300	170,000	95,000	95,000	245,000	3,833,300
Public Works	Pedestrian, Cycling and Pavement Renewal Program	1,535,000	1,249,000	1,307,000	1,400,000	1,400,000	6,891,000
	Misc Playground (1 replacement every second year)	916,400	120,000	30,000	220,000	30,000	1,316,400
	LINC Youth Centre - Roof Replacement	400,000					400,000
	Cycling Network Plan Improvements Implementation	359,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	1,359,000
	Fleet Management - PWS - Heavy Vehicles/Equip	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	1,500,000
	Fleet Management - PWS - Light Vehicles/Equip	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	1,500,000
	PWS - Telus Site - Administrative Bldg. Roof Replacement	250,000					250,000
	Lewis Centre - Vern Nicols Floor	200,000					200,000
	Museum - Hydraulic Freight Elevator replacement	180,000					180,000
	Small Tool Electrification	100,000					100,000
	CEMETERY - Niche Wall Design/Development	80,000		140,000			220,000
	Flood Protection - Tiger Dam (Aqua Dam Replacement)	75,000					75,000
	Speed Reduction Implementation	74,000	74,000	74,000	74,000	74,000	370,000
	Renovation of City Hall - Foyer area and Council Chamber	65,000					65,000
	MEMORIAL POOL - Mech/Electric Upgrades Heat/Chemical	60,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	220,000
	Traffic Signal Equipment - Spare (emergent) Controller/Cabinet	50,000	-	-	-	-	50,000
	PWS - Backup Power System Admin Building	50,000					50,000
	Consolidated Municipal Building	50,000		500,000	10,000,000		10,550,000
	MEMORIAL POOL - VIHA Infrastructure Upgrades	50,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	210,000
	Public Works Locker Room Buildings	45,000					45,000
	Bill Moore Lawn Bowling Deck Replacement	45,000					45,000
	CEMETERY - Landscape Additions	40,000					40,000
	MEMORIAL POOL - Repair Cracks Main Pool	40,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	21,000	121,000
	Lagoon Walkway Lookouts - Roof Replacement	37,000					37,000
	Pedestrian Bridges replacement program	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000		140,000
	Sign Shop - Digital Printer	30,000					30,000
	Gateway Signage - "Courtenay Welcomes You"	22,000	25,000				47,000
	Simms Park Thai Pavilion Roof Replacement	16,000					16,000
	Fire Hall - HVAC and Roof Replacement	13,500	585,000				598,500
	Art Gallery - HVAC and Roof Replacement	11,200	800,000				811,200
	Lewis Centre - Squash Court Wall Replacement		110,000	110,000			220,000
	CEMETERY - Irrigation/Drainage			10,000			10,000
	CEMETERY - Lawn Crypts		120,000		240,000		360,000
	LEWIS CENTRE - MPR Hall Floor renewal			75,000			75,000
	Lewis Centre - Squash Court Floor Replacement		80,000	80,000			160,000
	CEMETERY - Cemetery General Work		60,000				60,000
	Woodcote - Irrigation System Replacement			80,000			80,000
	PWS - Telus Site Renovation - Administrative Bldg.	-	120,000				120,000
	Bill Moore - Irrigation System Replacement	-	150,000				150,000
	FILBERG CENTRE - Conference Hall floor renewal			100,000			100,000
	NATIVE SONS HALL - Grand Hall floor renewal			90,000			90,000
	Lewis Centre - Roof Replacement			550,000			550,000

2024-2028 GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PLAN

Strategic Responsibility	Project description	2024 Proposed Budget	2025 Proposed Budget	2026 Proposed Budget	2027 Proposed Budget	2028 Proposed Budget	Total 2024-2028 Budget
Public Works Total		5,429,100	4,668,000	3,941,000	12,919,000	2,455,000	29,412,100
Recreation & Culture	Playing courts	350,000					350,000
	Park Improvements	100,000					100,000
	Park Plan and Development Harmston Park	75,000	750,000				825,000
	Park Plan & Development for Bill Moore	75,000		1,000,000			1,075,000
	YOUTH CENTRE - Freestanding Sign & Exterior Facia Sign	60,000					60,000
	Partners in Parks program	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	250,000
	MEMORIAL POOL - Infrastructure Assessment	50,000					50,000
	LEWIS CENTRE - Equipments	45,000	50,000	55,000	60,000	65,000	275,000
	SID THEATRE - Future year estimation	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000
	Totem Pole Installation at the Airpark	12,700					12,700
	Park Master Plan - placeholder for future initiatives				500,000	500,000	1,000,000
	Dog parks (x2, one on each side of town)			50,000	50,000		100,000
	Park Plan for Air Park, Rotary Park, Marina					60,000	60,000
	Park Plan & Development for Lewis Park			100,000	500,000		600,000
	Park Plan and Development for Puntledge Park				100,000	500,000	600,000
Recreation & Culture Total		837,700	870,000	1,275,000	1,280,000	1,195,000	5,457,700
Grand Total		23,771,700	29,880,500	10,602,200	27,928,000	9,262,000	101,444,400

2024 General Fund Capital Project Funding

Capital amounts shown below may not have Carry Forwards fully reflected. An update will be done after Year End.

Strategic Responsibility	Project description	2024 Proposed Budget	2024 General Revenues	2024 Reserves	2024 Reserve for Future Expenditures	2024 Fed / Prov Funding	2024 Gas Tax Fed Grant	2024 CVRD Grant	2024 Other Contributions	2024 Debt	
Engineering	6th St Bridge Multi-Use Active Transportation Bridge	6,565,000		2,518,100		44,700				1,500,000	
	Anderton Dike Remediation	2,000,000				250,000				1,750,000	
	FIRE - New Satellite Firehall	2,000,000		2,000,000						-	
	Park Design and Development McPhee Meadows - Phase 1	1,466,500		1,466,500							
	Lake Trail Multi-Use Pathway Construction	1,400,000	239,000	250,000		225,000	500,000				
	MEMORIAL POOL - Major Pool Repairs	200,000						186,000	200,000		
	Traffic - Signal Controller Renewal Program	75,000		75,000							
	Crosswalk Island Highway at Beachwood road	30,000	30,000								
	Turner Drive Multi-Use Pathway	14,200				14,200					
	Lerwick traffic improvement - Malahat to Macdonald										
	Storm Drainage - 13 St - Burgess to Willemar Storm Reconstruction										
	Ryan Road sidewalk Sandwick to Braidwood	-									
	Engineering Total		13,750,700	269,000	6,309,600	533,900	3,002,200		386,000		3,250,000
	Fire Department	FIRE DEPT - Rescue Tools	500,000		500,000						
FIRE DEPT - Light Vehicles		25,900		25,900							
Fire Department Total		525,900		525,900							
General Government Services	Strategic Land Acquisition	2,898,000		722,000						2,176,000	
	Server Replacement	120,000		120,000							
	Budget Software	76,000		76,000							
	New softwares (Future IT Projects)	50,000		50,000							
	Tempest Calls For Services	33,300		33,300							
	Photocopiers	30,000		30,000							
	Large Format Plotter	15,000		15,000							
	Scada Cloud Server / Backup	6,000		6,000							
General Government Services Total		3,228,300		1,052,300						2,176,000	
Public Works	Pedestrian, Cycling and Pavement Renewal Program	1,535,000	235,000				1,300,000				
	Misc Playground (1 replacement every second year)	916,400		916,400							
	LINC Youth Centre - Roof Replacement	400,000		400,000							
	Cycling Network Plan Improvements Implementation	359,000	50,000			109,000		200,000			
	Fleet Management - PWS - Heavy Vehicles/Equip	300,000		300,000							
	Fleet Management - PWS - Light Vehicles/Equip	300,000		300,000							
	PWS - Telus Site - Administrative Bldg. Roof Replacement	250,000	250,000								
	Lewis Centre - Vern Nicols Floor	200,000	200,000								
	Museum - Hydraulic Freight Elevator replacement	180,000		180,000							
	Small Tool Electrification	100,000		100,000							
	CEMETERY - Niche Wall Design/Development	80,000						80,000			
	Flood Protection - Tiger Dam (Aqua Dam Replacement)	75,000	37,500				37,500				
	Speed Reduction Implementation	74,000	74,000								
	Renovation of City Hall - Foyer area and Council Chamber	65,000		65,000							
	MEMORIAL POOL - Mech/Electric Upgrades Heat/Chemical	60,000							60,000		
	Traffic Signal Equipment - Spare (emergent) Controller/Cabinet	50,000	50,000								
	PWS - Backup Power System Admin Building	50,000		50,000							
	Consolidated Municipal Building	50,000		50,000							
	MEMORIAL POOL - VIHA Infrastructure Upgrades	50,000							50,000		
	Public Works Locker Room Buildings	45,000	45,000								
	Bill Moore Lawn Bowling Deck Replacement	45,000	45,000								
	CEMETERY - Landscape Additions	40,000								40,000	
	MEMORIAL POOL - Repair Cracks Main Pool	40,000								40,000	
	Lagoon Walkway Lookouts - Roof Replacement	37,000		37,000							
	Pedestrian Bridges replacement program	35,000	35,000								
	Sign Shop - Digital Printer	30,000		30,000							
	Gateway Signage - "Courtenay Welcomes You"	22,000	22,000								
	Simms Park Thai Pavilion Roof Replacement	16,000	16,000								
Fire Hall - HVAC and Roof Replacement	13,500	13,500									
Public Works Total		5,429,100	1,073,000	2,428,400	120,200	37,500	1,500,000	270,000			
Recreation & Culture	Playing courts	350,000		250,000						100,000	
	Park Improvements	100,000		100,000							
	Park Plan and Development Harmston Park	75,000		75,000							
	Park Plan & Development for Bill Moore	75,000		75,000							
	YOUTH CENTRE - Freestanding Sign & Exterior Facia Sign	60,000				60,000					
	Partners in Parks program	50,000				50,000					
	MEMORIAL POOL - Infrastructure Assessment	50,000							50,000		
	LEWIS CENTRE - Equipments	45,000		45,000							
	SID THEATRE - Future year estimation	20,000		20,000							
	Totem Pole Installation at the Airpark	12,700				12,700					
Recreation & Culture Total		837,700	-	565,000	122,700			50,000	100,000		
(blank)	(blank)										
(blank) Total											
Grand Total		23,771,700	1,342,000	10,881,200	776,800	3,039,700	1,500,000	706,000	100,000	5,426,000	

2024-2028 SPECIAL PROJECTS

Project description	2024 Proposed Budget	2025 Proposed Budget	2026 Proposed Budget	2027 Proposed Budget	2028 Proposed Budget
Reconciliation Action Plan	\$ 100,000				
	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Community Service Development Framework	\$ 110,000				
Cultural Facility Feasibility Planning	\$ 75,000				
Filberg facility Feasibility Study	\$ 75,000				
Lewis Facility Feasibility Study	\$ -		\$ 100,000		
Special Events & Hosting Policy		\$ 50,000			
Recreation Needs Assessment		\$ 75,000			
Cozy Corner carpet replacement	\$ 20,000				
	\$ 280,000	\$ 125,000	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ -
Community Safety Office	\$ 50,000				
City Website	\$ 172,000				
Engagement Strategy	\$ 75,000				
Privacy Management Framework	\$ 50,000				
Anti-Racism Strategy	\$ 50,500				
	\$ 397,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Integrated Rainwater Mgmt Plan	\$ 162,000				
Flood Mgmt & Dyke Replacemt Study	\$ 130,000				
Corporate Climate Action Plan	\$ 200,000				
CVRD Home Energy Navigator Program	\$ 50,000				
Bridge Building Demolition	\$ 100,000				
LGCAP Future Implementation Projects	\$ 269,000				
	\$ 911,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Anderton Garage Demolition	\$ 18,000				
Safe Active Schools Program	\$ 75,000				
Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL)	\$ 50,000				
	\$ 143,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Bylaw Update- Building Bylaw	\$ 25,000				
Bylaw Update- Zoning Bylaw	\$ 250,000				\$ 150,000
Bylaw Update-Business Licence Bylaw	\$ 25,000				
Bylaw Update- DCC/ACC	\$ 250,000				\$ 250,000
Bylaw Update- Sub&Dev Bylaw	\$ 100,000				
Bylaw Update- OCP	\$ 120,000			\$ 250,000	
Harmston Local Area Plan	\$ 150,000				
	\$ 920,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 250,000	\$ 400,000
	\$ 2,751,500	\$ 125,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 400,000