

# Strategic priorities 2023–2026 draft

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**City of  
Courtenay**

[courtenay.ca](http://courtenay.ca)

The City of Courtenay respectfully acknowledges that the lands to which these strategic priorities apply are on the unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.



**City of  
Courtenay**



### **Why We Make Land Acknowledgments**

Acknowledging human relationships to place is an ancient Indigenous practice that continues today. In the spirit of reconciliation, the City of Courtenay makes this land acknowledgment to raise awareness of ongoing Indigenous presence and land rights in the territory that includes and encompasses Courtenay. It invites us – a settler government – to reflect on how we might be perpetuating colonial processes that are ongoing and from which we have benefited, as well as the changes we will make to honour the Indigenous peoples and their lands that we inhabit.

Council is pleased to present the 2023–2026 strategic priorities for the City of Courtenay.

This plan was developed over several months following the fall 2022 municipal election by our new Council working closely with City of Courtenay staff.

The plan is purposefully aligned with the new City of Courtenay Official Community Plan and its four cardinal directions: climate action, reconciliation, equity, and community well-being.

The strategic priorities are structured around the OCP cardinal directions and eight themes to ensure the priorities Council sets are aligned with the community's vision and aspirations for the city.

This plan is Council's commitment to implementing the OCP. It's also the City's road map to ensure we are delivering the services and programs our residents want and expect.

Council looks forward to working on behalf of Courtenay residents over the next four years to deliver services and shape the future of this amazing city.

*City of Courtenay Council*



Mayor Bob Wells (*center front*)

Councillors (*left to right, back to front*)

Wendy Morin, Will Cole-Hamilton, Doug Hillian, Melanie McCollum,  
David Frisch, Evan Jolicoeur



Shaped by extensive public input, the City of Courtenay has developed numerous guiding documents that, together, provide the foundation for the delivery of all City services and programs and set the long-term path for the community, including the recently completed Official Community Plan (OCP).

The plan translates the vision of the OCP into a clear framework of projects and initiatives for City staff.

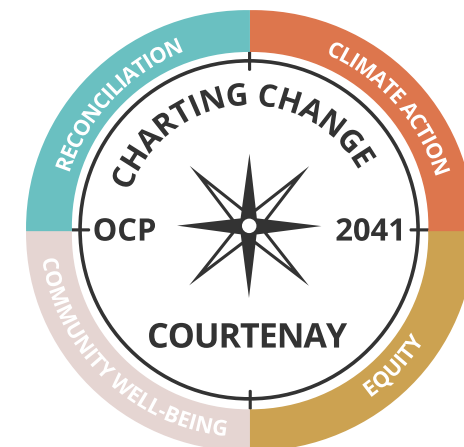
From the numerous policies and actions contained within the guiding documents, Council sets strategic priorities for their term. These priorities guide department work plans, the five-year financial plan, and annual budgets. Outcomes are reported annually in the City of Courtenay's annual report, which offers an opportunity for evaluation and further work plan refinement each year.

The diagram shows the connections between the OCP, Council's strategic priorities, department work plans, the five-year financial plan, and the annual report.

Working together, the work of Council and staff will be coordinated and focused on the community's vision for the City of Courtenay.

## Courtenay is responsible for the future, supporting a high quality of life with a low-carbon footprint for all.

The following vision describes what we want Courtenay to be in the future. It embodies the values, priorities, and aspirations of the community. It charts the course for development of policies, guidelines, and actions, and is strengthened by the “cardinal directions” and goals described elsewhere in Part A of this plan.



**WE PROTECT THE NATURAL SPACES** we love and upon which our lives depend.

**WE ARE A CITY FOR ALL PEOPLE**, created for and by residents with diverse identities, experiences, and aspirations. We are a city for being together in community.

**WE ARE ALSO A CITY OF CHOICE**, in which residents have options across the city for homes, amenities, destinations, jobs and business, transportation, and spaces for gathering with friends, families, neighbours, and people not yet known to us.

**WE WILL REACH NET-ZERO EMISSIONS BY 2050**, doing our part to address the climate crisis head-on while also preparing for its impacts. Our commitment to a safe climate is not just an environmental one; by taking action on and preparing for climate change, we achieve many co-benefits that make Courtenay a great community to call home.

**COURTENAY WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FUTURE** by being more thoughtful, strategic, and efficient in all resources that we use, whether land, energy, or public infrastructure, to ensure that actions deliver on multiple goals of fiscal responsibility, economic resilience, social equity, and ecological health.

Land is valued as a precious resource

Housing choices for all

Strong neighbourhoods

Functional transportation choices

More space for and time in nature

Love for local culture and places

A city for everyone

Economic success emerges from community values and place

Investing in relationships

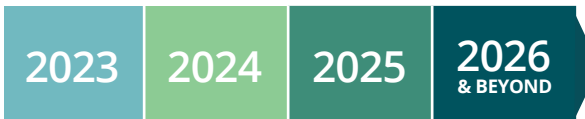
Council priorities are sorted along OCP themes, with additional categories for: good governance, organizational well-being and sustainability, public safety, and financial sustainability.

## Streets and transportation

Prioritizing walking, wheeling, cycling, and transit modes of transportation – and integrating them with land use and urban form – are the greatest steps Courtenay can take to support mobility in the community and reduce the amount of energy used in the transportation system, the greatest source of Courtenay's GHG emissions.



Develop traffic calming policies, plans, and an implementation strategy for pedestrian safety, speed limits (residential/school/playground), and active transportation options.



Advocate with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTI) to address congestion and improvements (17th Street intersections/bypass, Ryan Corridor, and Cliffe Avenue pedestrian crossings).



6th Street Bridge  
• Construction of multi-modal link



Implement parking restrictions and ticketing policies.

Implement new bylaw adjudication program.



## Buildings and landscape

As existing buildings are renovated or redeveloped, and new buildings meet efficiency and performance standards, Courtenay's buildings will become increasingly accessible, electric, healthy, and affordable to operate, while reflecting Courtenay's character, identity, and sense of place.



Update Subdivision Servicing Bylaw  
 • Include provisions for offsite frontage improvements

**Complete** ✓

Update Development Cost Charges (DCC) Bylaw

2024

2025

Develop Amenity Cost Charge (ACC) Bylaw

2024

2025

Develop short-term rental policy

2026

Update Zoning Bylaw to address OCP and provincial legislation

2024

2025

2026

Develop a local area plan for the Harmston Avenue Civic Precinct

2024

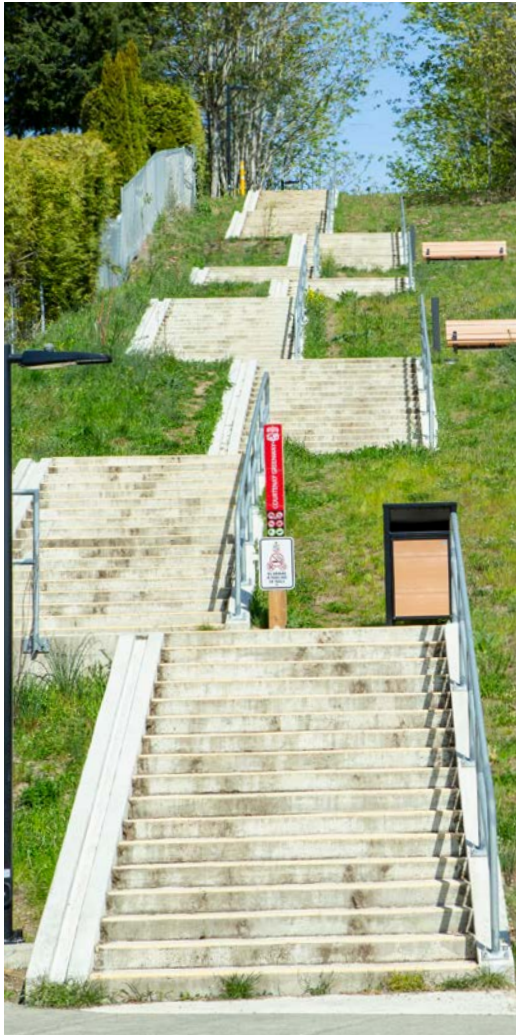
2025

2026

Update Official Community Plan to address new provincial legislation

2025

## Buildings and landscape *con't*



Downtown Vitalization Action Plan  
(Downtown Local Area Plan - DLAP)

- Review and evaluate downtown development incentives
- Harmston Avenue Civic Precinct planning
- Implement Duncan Commons/Downtown Courtenay Playbook, 5th Street staging/phasing
- Review and update downtown land use regulations and bylaws for consistency with OCP
- Prepare an options analysis to improve Cliffe Avenue and 5th Street Intersection pedestrian facilities
- Harmston Park plan

Review and update land use regulations and bylaws for consistency with OCP

	2024	2025
	2024	2025
	2024	2025
	2024	2025
Ongoing >		
	2025	2026
	2025	2026
	2025	2026



## Affordable housing

More than a roof over one's head, adequate housing is a fundamental human right in Canada and an important social determinant of health. It impacts the community's ability to attract and retain employees and sustain a vibrant economy.

Advocate to the Province for funding to develop housing: affordable housing, shelters, supportive housing, and social housing.

2024

2025

2026  
& BEYOND

Courtenay homelessness initiatives: temporary day services, belongings storage, temporary housing initiatives, and the Winter Shelter Strategy.

2024

2025

2026  
& BEYOND

Review potential of City property for partnerships with BC Housing and non-profit housing partners.

Complete ✓



## Natural environment

Nature-based solutions in the form of protecting, restoring, and managing natural and semi-natural ecosystems to slow and adapt to climate change are at the heart of Courtenay's approach to caring for the natural environment.

Develop and implement a strategy for parkland acquisition (parks and open spaces land acquisition).		2025	2026
Promote and communicate the Urban Forest Strategy and Tree Protection Bylaw. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake review of Tree Protection Bylaw.</li> </ul>	2024	2025	
Include climate change lens in staff reports.			2026
Update Corporate Climate Action Plan.	2024	2025	
Include carbon budget in municipal operations and purchasing.			2027 & BEYOND

## Parks and recreation

The parks, trails, and recreation system of programs and indoor and outdoor facilities is, at its heart, an opportunity for connectivity — whether that be to each other, the natural world, K'ómoks First Nation history and practices, how we get around, or the ecosystems across the city and region.



Florence Filberg Centre needs assessment and capital improvements		2025		
Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool: Needs assessment, options analysis, capital improvements	2024	2025	2026	
Lewis Centre needs assessment and capital improvements			2026 & BEYOND	
Parks and Recreation Master Plan implementation strategy – park development		2025	2026	2027
Bill Moore Park		2025	2026	2027
New pickleball court		2025	2026	
Harmston Park Plan (DLAP)		2025	2026	
McPhee Meadows	Ongoing >			

## Parks and recreation *con't*



Sport Allocation Policy and implementation (regional collaboration)	2024	2025		
Recreation Strategic Plan: review recreation programs and engage with the community on current and future needs and changing demographics.		2025	2026	
Parks and Public Spaces Regulation Bylaw <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication plan and implementation plan</li> </ul>		2025	2026	
Recreation Facility Rental Policy (safe and inclusive access)			2025	
Implement memorial bench program			2025	2026



## Municipal infrastructure

While traditional municipal infrastructure – such as underground pipes and treatment facilities – is often hidden from public view, it is a complex system that forms a vital part of Courtenay’s urban environment, contributing to the health, sustainability, and fiscal success of the community.

Phased accessibility audit of public facilities

- Phase 1: complete accessibility audit
- Phase 2: develop accessibility plan
- Phase 3: capital improvement implementation policy



## Regional collaborations

Through partnerships with neighbouring governments and agencies, the City collaborates on housing, transportation, solid waste, utilities, and emergency planning to support coordinated regional solutions that benefit Courtenay residents and the broader Comox Valley.



CVRD Regional Growth Strategy Technical Advisory Committee

- RGS review process
- Regional housing initiatives
- Infrastructure planning

2025

2026

CVRD regional housing initiatives

2024  
& BEYOND

CVRD Liquid Waste Management Plan

2023

2024

2025

2026

CVRD Water Master Plan

2023

2024

2025

2026

CVRD Sewer Conveyance

2023

2024

2025

2026

CVRD Solid Waste Organics Diversion

2023

2024

2025

2026

Courtenay/CVRD air quality initiatives

2023

2024

2025

2026

CVRD regional parks function

2023

2024

2025

2026

## Regional collaborations *con't*



CVRD Comox Valley Transit

2025

2026

Regional active transportation initiatives

Ongoing >

Comox Valley Emergency Program

Ongoing >

Island Corridor Foundation corridor planning

2024

2025

2026

CVRD Reconciliation Advisory Roundtable

2023  
& BEYOND



## Social Infrastructure

Social infrastructure is made up of foundational services and networks that support local quality of life. These services respond to the basic needs of communities and help promote equity, stability, and social well-being.



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

2024  
& BEYOND

Develop measures and criteria to track progress for the OCP's four cardinal directions: reconciliation, community well-being, equity, and climate action.

2027  
& BEYOND

Participate in discussions on regional childcare space development and explore incentives to support the creation of childcare spaces.

Complete ✓

Continue working with community agencies that deliver day services. Explore the City's role in the provision of social support services, including the future of the Connect Centre.

Complete ✓

Gender equity in washrooms and menstrual equity

2024

2025



## Arts, culture, and heritage

Culture is the representation of who we are. It speaks to our values from the past and present, our traditions, and our expressions. Arts, culture, and heritage help re-frame and engage with important social topics such as climate change, reconciliation, and equity, and provide creative and safe opportunities to explore our complex and changing world.

Complete Strategic Cultural Plan

2023

2024

2025-2027  
& BEYOND

Implement Strategic Cultural Plan: this strategic objective will consist of multiple strategic actions and initiatives and will be expanded in future if the Cultural Strategic Plan is adopted by Council. Includes the following items in 2024–2026/27:

- Public art policy
- Cultural facility feasibility studies and capital plan
- Funding model, including grant program
- Special events and hosting policy



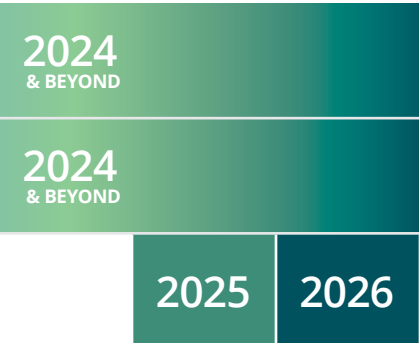
## Food systems

A food secure community is one in which everyone has access to food that is affordable, culturally preferable, nutritious, and safe.

Continue to engage with the agricultural community and the Food Policy Council to identify needs and support relevant OCP policies.

Identify roles for the City in the delivery of food security as outlined in the OCP.

Continue to support community gardens and other small-scale food production spaces.





## Local economy

The City of Courtenay is committed to creating the physical conditions for a high quality of life and economic success. Attractive communities attract businesses. The most attractive places for the next generation of workers will have a thriving downtown core, inclusive neighbourhoods with a strong sense of place, a wide range of housing and recreational options, a vibrant arts and culture scene, and an openness to and celebration of cultural and population diversity.

Identify appropriate roles and responsibilities for the City in the delivery of economic development services in the region.

Collaborate with partners on economic development initiatives.

2024

2025

2026

2027

Ongoing >



## Good governance

Good governance is at the very heart of the work of the City of Courtenay, ensuring public engagement, transparency, equity and inclusion, effectiveness and efficiency, and accountability.



Develop an assignment and tracking system for public inquiries.

**Complete** ✓

Council members will engage the community directly to promote City strategic priorities and actions through Council committee appointments, event attendance, and resident contact.

**Ongoing** >

Increase community engagement for all segments of the community: complete communication strategy, community survey, and community engagement strategy.

**Complete** ✓

Review operations and terms of reference for City committees.

2025

2026

Develop a land strategy for acquisition, devolution, and disposal of property, including an inventory of all City folios over 400 m<sup>2</sup>.

2025

2026

Review and streamline development processes and set targets for application processing times.

2025

2026

Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan.

**Ongoing** >

## Good governance *con't*



Privacy framework (new legislative requirement)

2026

Routine Transaction Bylaw / Delegation of Authority

2026

Enhance and improve recreation risk management through the following policy development and implementation:

2024

2025

2026

- Child Protection Policy
- Recreation Code of Conduct
- Program Risk Management Guidelines and Policy

Council Code of Conduct

Complete ✓

## Public safety

Public safety allows citizens and businesses to perceive the city as a safe place to work, live, and play. It also means the City and citizens are prepared for emergencies and resilient in the face of them.



East Side Fire Hall	2023	2024	2025	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update design and consider potential partnerships</li> <li>• Construction</li> </ul>				2026
Long term staffing plan for Fire Services	2023	2024	2025	
RCMP service analysis			2025	2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial and HR implications</li> </ul>				
Partner with RCMP to communicate public safety initiatives and priority policing activities			2025	
Promote a broad view and perspective on community safety issues to include Protective Services, RCMP, Fire Services, and Bylaw Enforcement to address community priorities in the areas of pedestrian safety, traffic planning, and open space regulation:			2025	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bylaw reviews and updates</li> <li>• Regulation and design of public spaces</li> <li>• Accessibility and safety</li> </ul>				
Build capacity for emergency planning and local response		2024	2025	



## Organizational well-being and sustainability

The City of Courtenay organization must be strong and sustainable to deliver the services and programs residents and businesses expect. It must be an employer of choice attracting top talent in the sector.

Enhance the City's website to improve accessibility, navigation, and ease of use for residents and businesses.

Adopt a Public Notice Bylaw to modernize how required notices are shared across multiple communication channels.

Complete ✓

Complete ✓



## Financial sustainability

The long-term financial health of the City is central to ensuring services, facilities, and infrastructure will be secure for current and future generations. Long-term asset management and financial planning are essential to the financial sustainability of the City.

Advocate for review of small business taxes and a differentiated tax rate.

Ongoing >

Review city financial processes.

Ongoing >

Review fees, charges, and fines.

	2024	2025	2026
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