

# Strategic Priorities 2023-2026



CITY OF  
**COURTENAY**





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.



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### **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*)

Councilors (*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.

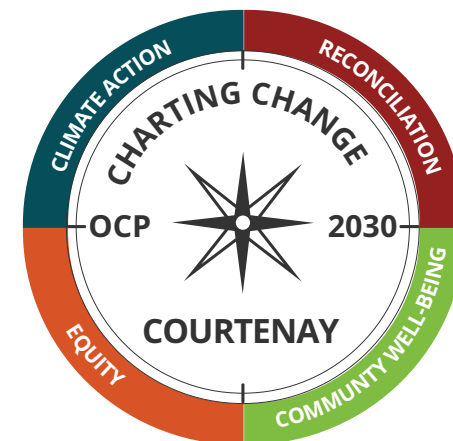
From the numerous policies and actions contained within, Council sets strategic priorities for their term contained within the guiding documents, Council sets direct department work plans, the five-year financial plan, and annual budgets. Outcomes are reported annually in the City of Courtenay’s annual 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, 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 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 all 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 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.

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 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 supporting mobility in the community and reducing the amount of energy used in the transportation system, the greatest source of Courtenay's GHG emissions.



Traffic calming plans

- Develop traffic calming plans, related policies, and specific implementation when and where, speed limits, school zones, cycling education/awareness.
- Implementation of traffic calming plans.

2023

2024

2025

2026  
& BEYOND

Update cycling network plan and implementation strategy

2023

Advocate for work with Ministry of Transport Infrastructure on bypass and 17th intersection congestion & improvements.

2023

Review City's approach to parking standards downtown

- Parking restrictions and ticketing
- Bylaw Enforcement Policy review and update

2023

Dingwall stairs construction: pedestrian and cycling network improvement

2023

## Streets and Transportation *Con't*



6th Street Bridge

- Design and funding
- Construction

Implement new bylaw adjudication program

Improve Cliffe Avenue and 5th Street intersection pedestrian facilities

Plan and implement bike parking and secure storage

	2023		
	2024		
	2024	2025	
	2024	2025	
	2024	2025	





## 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 Bylaw, including offsite frontage improvements	2023	2024		
Update Development Cost Charges (DCC) Bylaw	2023	2024		
Develop a short-term rental policy	2023	2024		
Update Zoning Bylaw - review maximum building heights	2023	2024	2025	
Support investment and redevelopment in downtown core: Review and evaluate Downtown development incentives e.g. fast tracking/density bonuses/DCC		2024	2025	
Develop a local area plan for Harmston Avenue Civic Precinct		2024	2025	
Implement Duncan Commons/Downtown Courtenay Playbook, 5th Street staging/phasing			2025	2026 & BEYOND
Review and update land use regulations and bylaws for consistency with OCP	ONGOING			



## 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.

Explore approaches to develop affordable housing

- Clarify municipal role in housing affordability
- Develop strategy for housing amenity fund
- Review potential of city property for housing partnerships with BC Housing

2023	2024	2025
2023	2024	2025
2023	2024	2025
2023	2024	2025
	2024	2025

Explore creation of a housing authority (non-market housing & Co-op housing)







## 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 is at the heart of Courtenay's approach to the caring for the natural environment.

Develop and implement a strategy for parkland acquisition

2023	2024
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Promote and communicate the Urban Forest Strategy & Tree Protection Bylaw and review Bylaw

2024	2025
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Integrate climate change commitment into our governance work

2023	2024	2025
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- Include climate change lens in staff reports
- Update Corporate Climate Action Plan

2023
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- Include carbon budget in municipal operations and purchasing

2024	2025
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## Parks and Recreation

The parks, trails and recreational 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, in how we get around, or through the ecosystems across the city and region.



Provision of public amenities through development (requirements for parks, trees, accessible benches, and public art)	2023		
Advocate to the Province for new DCC eligibility for recreation and emergency services	2023		
Optimize active public spaces to respond to density increases and increased park use		2024	2025
Evaluate impact of Leisure for Everyone Accessibility Program (LEAP)		2024	2025
Complete recreation facilities need assessments and capital improvements	ONGOING		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Florence Filberg Centre</li> <li>• Courtenay &amp; District Memorial Outdoor Pool</li> <li>• Lewis Centre</li> </ul>		2024	2025
Review recreation programs and engage with community on current and future needs, changing demographics	ONGOING		2026 & BEYOND





### Municipal Infrastructure

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

- Continued regional collaboration:
- Regional Growth Strategy
  - Liquid Waste Management Plan
  - South Sewer Conveyance
  - Organics/solid waste
  - Air quality
  - Regional parks

**ONGOING**

Complete accessibility audit of public facilities and develop implementation policy for capital improvements.

<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
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Continue implementing water conservation measures; Review and update Watersmart Action Plan.

<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
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## Social Infrastructure

Social infrastructure is made up of foundational services and networks that support local quality of life. They are provided in response to the basic needs of communities and to provide more equity, stability, and social well-being.



Participate in discussion on regional childcare space development, and explore incentives to support development of childcare spaces.

2023

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

2023

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

2023

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

2023

2024

Social Infrastructure:

- Identify roles for the City in the delivery of social infrastructure outlined in the OCP
- Implementation plan for delivery of social infrastructure

2023

2024

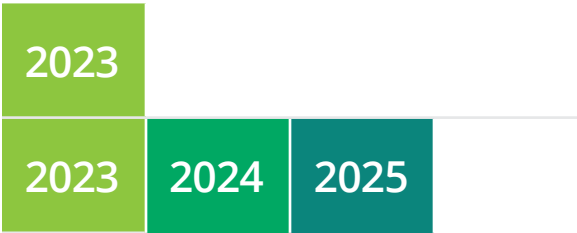




### Arts, Culture, and Heritage

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 on important social topics such as climate change, reconciliation and equity, and provide for creative and safe opportunities to explore our complex and changing world.

- Strategic Cultural Plan
  - Complete Strategic Cultural Plan
  - Implement Strategic Cultural Plan.





## Food Systems

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

Engage with Agricultural Community and Food Policy Council to identify needs and support relevant OCP policies.

2023

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

2024

2025

Develop a policy for community gardens and other small scale food production spaces, identify community partners to support community garden projects.

2024

2025







## Local Economy

The City of Courtenay is committed to creating the physical conditions for high quality of life and economic success. Attractive communities attract businesses. The most attractive places for the next generation of workers must 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 and celebration of cultural and population diversity.

Explore a business attraction and retention service.

2023

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

2023

2024

Review City processes that may be barriers to economic development.

2023

2024

Identify actions Courtenay is taking to attract new industries into the community.

2024

2025

Complete a Community Economic Development Analysis, including community engagement and review of land availability.

2024

2025

2026  
& BEYOND





## 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 enquiries	2023		
Establish an OCP Implementation Townhall Forum	2023		
Explore procurement practices to include a social equity lens, reconciliation for contracted services, and climate change factors.	2023		
Hold Council open houses in community locations.	2023		
Increase community engagement for all segments of the community: complete communication strategy, community survey, and community engagement strategy.	2023	2024	
Review operations and terms of reference for City committees	2023	2024	
Develop a land strategy for acquisition, devolution, and disposal of property, including inventory of all City folios over 400 m2	2023	2024	



## Good Governance *Con't*



Review and streamline development process and set targets for application processing times

2023

2024

Develop a Reconciliation Framework.

ONGOING

Continue building partnerships with key agencies

ONGOING

- Strengthen relationship with the RCMP and enhance police and crime data reporting

2023

- Establish regular meetings for Council with the development community

2023

- Explore and establish a partnership approach with School District No. 71 on topics of mutual interest such as active school travel planning, traffic planning, community use of schools, shared facilities, climate action, reconciliation, child care and youth engagement.

2023

2024

2025

2026  
& BEYOND

- Hold regular City and School District trustee meeting(s) for partnerships and shared interests/goals

ONGOING

- Include School District No. 71, 19 Wing Comox, and other significant Comox Valley employers in housing discussions

ONGOING





## 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			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update design and consider potential partnerships</li> </ul>	2023		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction</li> </ul>			2025
Long term staffing plan for Fire Services	2023	2024	2025
Hold a conversation about developing a broad view of community safety to include protective services, RCMP, fire services, bylaw enforcement, pedestrian safety, traffic planning.		2024	
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 Courtenay citizens and businesses expect. It must be an employer of choice attracting top talent in the sector.

Ensure capacity to accommodate big change resulting from direct and indirect impacts to our community.

Research and consult on Speculation Tax.

2023

2023





### 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.

Ensure capacity to accommodate big change.

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

- Review City Financial processes
- Review the Terms of Reference for the Finance Select Committee
  - Review Fees, Charges and Fines
  - Develop and implement a budget engagement plan

