



COMOX VALLEY SUBSTANCE USE STRATEGY PHASE 2 FINAL REPORT

Presentation to Courtenay City Council

September 27, 2023



“We respectfully acknowledge that the land on which we work, play and live is the Unceded (stolen) traditional territory of the K'òmoks First Nation, traditional keepers of this land. We thank them and their ancestors for the stewardship of the land, animals and waterways.”

Acknowledgements

- Our collective voices make up the Substance Use Strategy Collaborative.
- We thank everyone who has given of their time, expertise and passion to this project. We acknowledge the voices of Indigenous peoples helping to guide our way.
- We acknowledge the input from those with lived/living experience, we thank them for their knowledge and sharing.
- We thank Walk With Me for being a valued partner in this Phase 2 work.

Background – How We Started

- 2002 – Drug Strategy Committee formed under the guidance and leadership of the City of Courtenay
- 2019 - City of Courtenay asked Network to broaden scope and membership of existing drug strategy committee to develop a regional substance use strategy (Strategy) for the Comox Valley.
- November 2021 – Phase One Report released
- Today reporting on Phase Two
- City of Courtenay provided \$30,000 in funding for Phase One and another 30,000 for Phase Two

Our Approach

- Ongoing in-depth examination of power imbalances to uncover systemic biases and create culturally safe spaces.
- Continued research, consultation and attention to root causes that contribute to substance use (e.g., poverty, lack of affordable housing, history of trauma, stigma and discrimination, classism, racism, gender/sexual diversity discrimination, and colonization)
- Active involvement, (including decision-making), of peers, First Nation Elders/traditional knowledge keepers
- Ongoing active involvement of local governments and community organizations

Definitions:

Substance:

- 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.*" (Phase Two Substance Use Strategy Report, 2023)

Definitions:

Comox Valley Substance Use Network:

- Refers to *"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 the "Upstream" areas that have Impact on the substance use ecology including housing, policing, education and others"*. (Walking Together Report, 2023)

Phase 2 Milestone Summary

- **Finance** - \$140,000 in funding secured for Phase 2 and 3 (\$100,000 from local governments and \$40,000 from grants).
- **Personnel** –Hired Strategy Coordinator for Phase 2 and contract renewed for phase 3
- **Community** -Substance use system gap and strength analysis completed (Walking Together Report)
- **Twenty-one recommendations** to be worked on in in Phase 3 to create a strong Substance Use Support Network in the Comox Valley
- **Community** - Substance Use Collaborative formed - First meeting June 2023
- **Reporting** - Phase 2 Report Completed
- **Community Stakeholders** -Phase 3 Launch event May 2023

Walking Together Report Recommendations

- 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.

Walking Together Report Recommendations

- 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

- 12. Actively engage and support peers to be involved in every aspect of planning and implementation of the recommendation 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 parents.
- 16. Increase awareness about substance use and access to substance use services specifically for seniors

Substance Use Strategy Recommendations

- 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 to more non-market affordable housing for all ages and circumstances

Action Tables DRAFT– Substance Use Strategy 2023



Our Funders

SPARC BC

Walk With Me

Comox Valley Regional District

Village of Cumberland

City of Courtenay

Comox Valley Community Foundation

Comox Valley Community Health Network

Thank you for your support!

The Ask:

- \$15.000 in funding for next year (it is our understanding the Council committed to this in the last budget year)
- Participate in/support recommendation implementation
- Participate in Collaborative and relevant Action Tables



COMOX VALLEY
**COMMUNITY
HEALTH
NETWORK**

Thank you, we would be happy to take your questions...

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@CVCHEALTHNETWORK**