

City of Courtenay

Strategic Plan 2009-2011

November 2009

Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Vision
3. Mission
4. Values
5. Context trends
6. Goals
 - Economic development
 - Environment and parks
 - Community facilities
 - Transportation
 - Housing
 - Water, wastewater and solid waste
 - Regional partnership

Introduction

This document outlines the strategic action plan for the City of Courtenay for 2009-2011.

It was created through a working session of Mayor and Council and senior staff in March 2009 to provide focus and priorities for action for this term. Seven issue areas were identified as highest priority and a set of goals created for each including (in no particular order):

1. Economic development
2. Environment and parks
3. Community facilities
4. Transportation
5. Housing
6. Water, wastewater and solid waste
7. Regional partnership

While Council and staff will continue to address the full range of issues that arise in the management of the City, this strategic plan highlights key challenges that Council feels must be dealt with and goals that need to be accomplished.

While the scope of the Strategic Plan is significant, its implementation is focused entirely within the limits of local government jurisdiction – including policies, regulations, influence and education.

Vision

All effective action leads toward a vision. The vision for the City of Courtenay held by Mayor and Council includes the following:

- **Economically:** *Courtenay will be an innovative and vibrant City, as the primary area of commerce in the Comox Valley, where people desire to live and businesses want to grow and invest.*
 - **Socially:** *We aspire to be a community that works together to provide opportunities and excellent infrastructure and services.*
 - **Environmentally:** *Courtenay will continue to be an area of diverse, expanding parklands, natural areas and agricultural lands.*
 - **Culturally:** *As a City, we will be a leader in arts and culture, promote educational opportunities and care about the health, well-being and safety of our citizens, businesses and environment.*
 - **Governance:** *As a City government, we will be, proactive, accountable, open, effective and fiscally responsible.*
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Mission

The mission of the City of Courtenay is:

- **To fulfill its responsibilities** under the Local Government Act to set policies, regulations and make decisions to ensure that the City is well-governed and that its civic assets are well-managed;
- **To effectively lobby** and influence other levels of government and stakeholders with respect to Courtenay's interests: and
- **To educate and inspire** the residents of Courtenay to participate in and support efforts to make Courtenay a great place to live.

Roles

City Council and staff see the following as their role in achieving the vision and mission:

- **To provide core local government services** to the community in an accessible and effective manner;
- **To be fiscally responsible** and accountable in all decisions, with a commitment to being careful stewards of public monies;
- **To lead** the community in building and implementing a vision of the Courtenay as a great place to live, work and do business;
- **To listen** to the citizens of Courtenay about their ideas, needs and dreams as the foundation for decision making;
- **To consider, discuss and educate** residents and stakeholders on the full scope of social, economic, environmental and governance issues related to any decision and the long term well-being of Courtenay;
- **To be strategic** in their considerations of all decisions, considering both short and long term needs and priorities;
- **To make decisions** in a fair, just and wise manner;
- **To support** the community in its work to make the city and their neighbourhoods safer and better places to live;
- **To encourage** residents and businesses to work together in helping Courtenay reach its potential;
- **To build cooperative relationships** with other agencies, stakeholders and levels of government to achieve the City's goals in the most efficient manner;
- **To look after Courtenay's best overall interests** in all dealings with other governments, businesses or institutions; and
- **To be accountable** for promises and decisions that Council makes.

Values

The following values will inform dialogue and decisions as they arise throughout this term:

- **Sustainability** – We believe that decisions we make today need to enhance the health and long-term well-being of our community and region for the next century;
- **Environmental health** – We believe that we are stewards of our local ecosystems and that we need to ensure that environmental health is maintained in everything we do;
- **Economic prosperity and responsibility** – We believe in facilitating progressive economic activity in our region to provide jobs and business opportunities;
- **Inclusive community health** – We believe in working with senior governments and other stakeholders to ensure everyone in Courtenay has access to what they need to live a healthy life;
- **Cultural vitality** – We believe in promoting the arts and cultural activity and identity of the City as a key element in the vitality and quality of life;
- **A regional vision** – We believe that we are all residents of the Comox Valley and that as the largest City, we need to take the lead in building cooperative working relationships with the other jurisdictions and communities in the Valley;
- **Informed decisions** – We acknowledge that many decisions that must be made are challenging and that therefore they must be informed by technical and community information prior to making the decision.
- **Transparency and accountability** – We believe in being transparent in our discussions and decisions; and
- **Dialogue** – We believe that decisions are best made after dialogue with stakeholders who will be affected by our decisions.

Context

The 2009-2011 term will include many important challenges for Courtenay and all decisions and initiatives must be made with the following trends in mind:

- **Economics** – The global economy is in a recession and it will have a wide number of impacts on the region and the City of Courtenay;
- **Growth** – The City and region are attractive places to live and growth continues, including through proposed developments of very significant scales throughout the region. Many are calling for a significant intensification of growth within Courtenay’s existing neighbourhoods to reduce the need to grow on the edges.
- **Aging infrastructure** – The infrastructure in the region is aging and needs upgrading, replacing and expanding to meet the projected needs. The cost of these infrastructure upgrades is significant.
- **Demographic needs** – The demography of Courtenay continues to evolve with a growing % of the population in semi or full retirement. This trend will impact the needs for services, accessibility and other issues.
- **Social challenges** – All cities struggle with various social challenges and Courtenay faces these as well, including homelessness, crime and others.
- **Housing costs** – The cost of housing continues to be a concern, particularly for seniors and young families.
- **Climate change** – Significant changes in both the climate and in government regulations are foreseen and the City of Courtenay’s commitment to reducing its emissions will impact many areas of the City;
- **“Going green”** – Governments, businesses, stakeholders and citizens around the world have awoken to the need to be sustainable and environmentally friendly and the trend and expectations in all areas is to “go green” and increase environmental performance.
- **Energy** – The world’s conventional oil reserves are waning and a significant shift is underway over the next several years to other sources of energy, thereby raising the cost of energy and the local business opportunities associated with energy.
- **Water** – Existing water supplies in communities across Vancouver Island are under stress and with continued growth, watersheds need to be protected and water resources conserved.
- **Environment** – Ecosystems across the world are under stress from impacts from human activity and protection, conservation and enhancement initiatives will grow significantly.

- **Expectations** – The movement of many urbanites to smaller communities is bringing raised expectations for services and other things in these smaller communities.
- **Regional partnerships** – The challenges and solutions to many issues for any small city lie in regional patterns of transportation, environmental systems, social behaviour, facilities, and economic development. As such, regional partnerships will be key to solving many of the challenges we face in the next decades.
- **Transportation** – Mobility demands will continue to increase but the impact of mobility will need to decrease which will lead to the growth of many transportation alternatives and the need and expectations to address these will grow as well.

The following outlines key goals for the City of Courtenay to pursue in the 2009-2011 term:

1. Economic development

The City of Courtenay has limited jurisdiction over issues that stimulate economic development, however within their jurisdiction, resources and ability to influence other stakeholders, the following outlines key economic development goals:

1. Increase the diversity and sustainability of the City's economy
2. Attract and promote advanced and progressive businesses in the clean, green economy
3. Enhance the reputation of the City and the Comox Valley as a place to invest and do business
4. Enhance regional cooperation in promoting economic development
5. Be fiscally responsible in managing taxation and expenditure levels
6. Place a priority on supporting sectors where the Comox Valley has a competitive advantage

2. Environment and Parks

1. Develop and implement environmental protection and enhancement plans that address both local and global environmental issues
2. Promote ongoing work to acquire land and develop parks
3. Develop or update plans and strategies to support an excellent supply of high quality park space in the City

3. Community facilities

1. Work to build a strong sense of community spirit and commitment to the well-being of all residents of Courtenay
2. Take a leadership position in the development of a regional facilities strategy to address priorities, location, and equitable financing across the Valley, and thereby to streamline recreational services across the Valley
3. Enhance the cultural facilities and vitality in the City
4. Enhance the sports and recreation infrastructure in the City
5. Enhance facilities that meet the needs of seniors
6. Promote the development of sustainable buildings for all civic facilities
7. Develop necessary facilities to promote the safety of City residents

4. Transportation

1. Develop and update transportation plans to meet the City's social, economic and environmental goals
2. Develop an Active Transportation Strategy for the City to promote walking and cycling
3. Promote the further development of transit services throughout the City and the region
4. Continue to work to strategically to add road capacity where absolutely necessary, in the context of a commitment to reduce emissions, reduce vehicle use and to become more sustainable

5. Pursue innovative street and intersection design standards for the City
6. Develop financial strategies to promote sustainable transportation alternatives and infrastructure renewal

5. Housing

1. Develop effective housing plans and tools to address the City's housing needs
2. Develop strategies to promote infill development in existing areas in the City
3. Develop strategies to address issues of homelessness and the need for low income housing in the City
4. Develop financial strategies to support the meeting of housing needs

6. Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste

1. Support the completion and commence implementation of the regional water and wastewater management plans
2. Promote the conservation of water and the reduction of environmental impact on watersheds and waterways
3. Promote a sustainable water supply strategy and develop the necessary infrastructure to meet water and wastewater objectives
4. Promote a sustainable wastewater collection and treatment system and develop wastewater reduction plans and the necessary infrastructure to meet wastewater objectives
5. Promote education and dialogue on water-related issues in the City and across the region
6. Promote and support initiatives on education related to rivers, water courses, wetlands and storm drainage systems
7. Promote recycling in the city to divert waste from the land fill

7. Regional Cooperation

1. Take a proactive leadership role in building and maintaining a strong regional partnership in addressing issues that are central to a sustainable and well-functioning region
2. Work with regional partners to establish an effective regional growth strategy that meets Courtenay's interests and supports the region's sustainability goals
3. Develop effective strategies for sharing services and cost-sharing protocols amongst regional partners for infrastructure and facilities that benefit residents of the entire region
4. Promote public engagement, education and participation in discussion and decisions on key regional issues