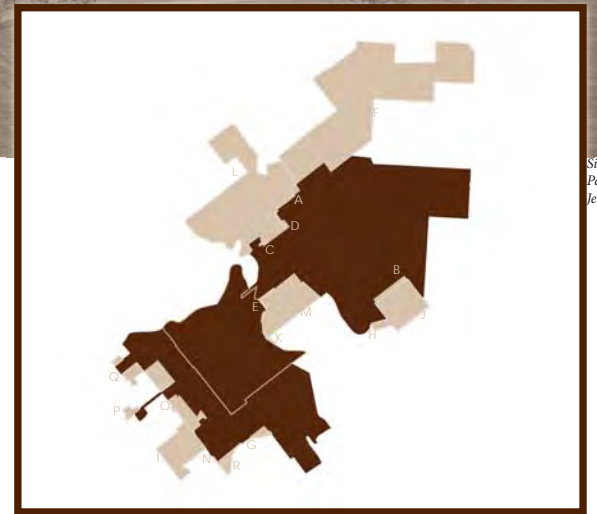


A walk through time... 1996-2005

A Variety of Experiences. While "Big Box" stores – Walmart and Home Depot – arrive, Courtenay gains public buildings that enhance its civic life. A new Public Library and Fire Hall, a rejuvenated Sid Williams Theatre, the Courtenay & District Museum now in the refurbished 1924 Post Office building, together with the 2010 renovation of the Native Sons Hall and the 2011 renovation of City Hall, maintain downtown as the heart of Courtenay.



Simms Millennium Park| Boomer Jerritt

Population: 18,304 (in 2001)

Map: Dark brown areas represent the City boundary as it was in 1995. Lighter shaded areas show areas that were added to the City between 1996 and 2005.

THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY: CHANGES TO DOWNTOWN COURTENAY



Sarah Kerr

The library was built on the original site of the Comox Valley Creamery (1901 - 1980). The Creamery was a prominent landmark in the city and played a central role in Courtenay's early economic and social development. The architecture and extensive use of wood throughout the exterior and interior, including use of wood shingles, in the construction of the library, was designed to be a reminder of the forestry sector, which has played a pivotal role in the development of the community.



A new fire hall and training tower were constructed when the city purchased a block of residential property at 650 Cumberland Rd. This is bounded by Grieve Ave., 10th St., Lewis Ave., and Cumberland Rd. The fire hall is a 2 storey building. The main floor is comprised of a 3 bay drive-through apparatus area housing 6 pieces of fire fighting apparatus, radio control centre, fire fighting equipment storage & shop, as well as administrative offices and a fully equipped fitness room. The second floor provides training and recreational space. The training tower is a 3 storey building adjacent to the Fire Hall.



The former Courtenay Fire Hall was completely renovated and upgraded to provide a location for Comox Valley Art Gallery. The first floor has the gallery and gift shop. The second floor provides space for offices and meeting rooms for other Arts & Cultural organizations.



The former Post Office and Federal Govt. building was purchased through a partnership of the Courtenay District Historical Society and the City of Courtenay. It was completely renovated as the new home of the Courtenay & District Museum. The building is utilized to the fullest, including the basement and two floors. The original exterior appearance remains largely unchanged, while the interior provides a fully modern facility to display the historic pictures, artifacts and stories of the District. It is also the Palaeontology Centre, housing the nearly complete fossilized remains of an Elasmosaur, discovered along the Puntledge River.

INLAND ISLAND HIGHWAY & COMOX VALLEY PARKWAY

Courtenay and the north island had long been connected to Victoria and the south by the old Island Highway, largely a 2-lane road which slowed down commercial and private traffic alike. A major 4-lane Inland Highway was proposed for the island to ease the situation, and in 1999 it reached the Comox Valley near Cumberland, and continued north to Campbell River. The 29th Street Connector (the Comox Valley Parkway) became Courtenay's 4-lane link to the new highway, which now took the heavy traffic, and those with appointments and deadlines, away from the scenic, leisurely Island Highway route.



TOP LEFT: New Totems at Lewis Park.
TOP RIGHT: Comox Valley Parkway & 29th Street Connector.
BOTTOM LEFT: Interior Renovation of Sid Williams Theatre.
BOTTOM RIGHT: Rotary Water Park

BOUNDARY EXTENSIONS & A SHIFTING RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

This decade saw multiple extensions to the boundary of the city. Twenty one parcels of land – some very small – extended Courtenay to the north, south, east and west. At the same time the shopping landscape also began to change. In 2001, the development permit was issued for the Walmart shopping complex at the south end of Cliffe Avenue after a prolonged public campaign in opposition. This was the first 'Big Box' store in our community. Other changes to the retail landscape included the shopping centre anchored by Safeway at Cliffe Avenue and 17th Street, built in 2002. This decade also marks commercial expansion on the east side of the city with Home Depot receiving its development permit in 2003 for its present location at the corner of Ryan Road and Lerwick Road.

NEW RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Recreational opportunities for local residents continued to expand. In 1996 a new park honouring the late Mayor Bill Moore was dedicated. Both Bill and his twin brother were baseball players during the years of intense rivalry between Cumberland and Courtenay. The new park had fields for baseball and football as well as a new facility for lawn bowling. Also during this decade a second ice rink was added to the Sports Centre and a second Aquatic Centre was built at the North Island College site.

Simms Park opened on July 1st, 2000. The idea to celebrate the Millennium began three years earlier. The City suggested that the land donated by former Mayor Charles Simms could be developed into a park. With the support of the community, and substantial donations from the Vancouver

Foundation, BC Hydro and the Pacific Salmon Foundation, the steering committee began planning to develop the vacant land adjacent to the 5th Street Bridge and the Courtenay Slough. With the support of the Rotary Clubs, the Soroptomists Club, the Knights of Columbus, ICBC and a number of construction firms who donated their services, the Park became another jewel along the Courtenay River.

Other notable changes included Ducks Unlimited purchasing the Farquarson Farms property to provide fields for migrating birds, and the Fish and Game Club moved from Rod and Gun Avenue to their new larger facility at Comox Lake.



In 2005, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Rotary International, the Courtenay Rotary Club erected a covered pavilion which was a multi level stage that could be used for concerts and musical performances. The pavilion reflected the style of the small gazebo given to the City of Courtenay by Suphanburi her sister-city in Thailand.

