



Citizen's OCP Exploration Workbook

An individual, family or small (physically distancing) group guided discussion workbook for sharing ideas about how Courtenay should grow over the next 10 years and beyond

Part of the public engagement toolkit for the Courtenay Official Community Plan 2030 update

www.courtenay.ca/OCPupdate

Welcome! These challenging and changing times benefit from your perspectives and ideas to make Courtenay better now and in the future.

Thank you for taking the time to share your valuable input into Courtenay's Official Community Plan (OCP). The OCP will guide how Courtenay grows and changes over the next 10 years. The OCP update was already underway when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. The update is continuing with modifications to project timeline and consultation plan to accommodate public health measures. Your input is more valuable than ever as we create a shared vision for Courtenay!

This Workbook is designed to be used by individuals, in family or physically distancing small group settings to guide a discussion and ideas to share in the OCP 2030 update process. Anyone who has a relationship to Courtenay is welcome to take part in the consultation. Always follow official health guidelines when interacting with others.

How is the OCP influenced by the pandemic?

The pandemic is forcing us to live in different ways, one of the biggest of which is staying put and living local. Local places, infrastructure, services and amenities is exactly what the OCP is all about.

What you value, experience, and wish to see for Courtenay now, before or after the pandemic are all valuable insights that we hope you will share. There is much uncertainty about how long the effects of the pandemic will be felt and what specifically that means for Courtenay's future.

A comprehensive vision informed by planning principles and priority projects for Courtenay will serve as a valuable guide post as we make community decisions whatever the future may bring.

While not explicitly a pandemic recovery plan, the OCP can include ideas and policies to direct recovery efforts.

How does the Workbook work?

Complete the 5 steps in the Workbook (described on page 6) and use it to guide your thoughts. The questions are open ended and there are no wrong answers.

The Workbook has been designed to allow for public feedback in a time of physical distancing. But it's also a tool to think critically and creatively about the kind of community you want Courtenay to be.

If you have a small group of people you've already relaxed physically distance measures with, use the Workbook as something to do together. With some assistance, children may enjoy exploring concepts about their wider community with their family. Getting involved in community planning is a great democratic habit to develop at any age.

As a bonus, participating in the Workbook will prepare you even better for other future consultation activities on the OCP!



Use this guide to share what's important to you!

Wait, there's more - watch planning films and contribute to a virtual tour!

A number of short planning "Films for Thought" are provided on the project webpage:

www.courtenay.ca/OCPupdate

Explore topics such as the history and considerations of urban planning, what makes for a happy city, how to incorporate green infrastructure, and how the management of community assets is at the core of what local governments do. Watch them to get ideas or start a discussion!



You can also add to and participate in a virtual tour of the city by using the online OCP StoryMap to share photos and comments about specific locations in Courtenay.

It's as easy as snap-comment-upload if you're out and about, or you can upload photos from your home computer. The more people participate, the more there will be to virtually experience! Please submit your completed Workbook so we can learn from you You could win a \$100 gift card to a downtown business of your choice!

Ways to FILL IN your Workbook

Typed option: Download the Workbook, save on your computer, type in all your responses, save again and submit.

Hand written option: Print the Workbook, hand write your responses and submit.

Ways to SUBMIT your Workbook

By mail: Development Services, City of Courtenay 830 Cliffe Ave., Courtenay BC V9N 2J7

By email: Send saved file, photos or scanned pages to: planning@courtenay.ca

Questions? Contact us at planning@courtenay.ca or 250 703 4839



Deadline September 15, 2020 Use the summer to explore your community!

Stay informed and up to date

Physical distancing makes traditional consultation methods like public meetings harder, but other tools are being developed like this one. Stay tuned for more opportunities to be involved throughout the OCP update.



The best way to stay informed on the OCP update is to sign up for the e-newsletter at www.courtenay.ca/OCPupdate

Background Information

Why engage?

The overarching purpose of this engagement process is to develop a shared vision by opening up a conversation with citizens and stakeholders about the future of Courtenay within the parameters of an OCP's scope and jurisdiction.

This collective conversation happens in a variety of venues and across multiple formats and media. When shared with the City, your ideas help how Courtenay changes into the future.

You can use the Workbook to explore questions about Courtenay, whether on your own, with your family, neighbours virtually, or anyone you may be physically distancing with.

What is an Official Community Plan (OCP)?

An Official Community Plan (OCP) is a local goverment policy document that influences how people live, work, shop, play, and move around the community. An OCP is one of the most powerful tools a local government has to manage change in a way that helps a community meet its goals.

At its heart, an OCP is about land use and growth management. This means that it dictates the location, type, and intensity of different uses, including for homes, businesses and services, industry, agriculture, public facilities, and parks and open space. It also provides direction for transportation, natural area protection, infrastructure, affordable and rental housing.

The OCP must be created with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adapting to climate change. Fortunately, planning concepts that reduce GHGs can make for more livable and efficient communities as well.



Our downtown and the neighbourhoods in which we live, including the homes we build, places we shop, and the parks in which we play

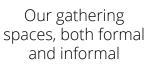


Our transportation choices, whether it's walking or cycling, taking transit, or driving



Our community character







Protection of our ecological and agricultural areas



Our pocket books, including how much it costs us to pay for City services such as sewers and roads

We're learning in real time what kinds of public infrastructure and services are important in times of a pandemic. Share your thoughts so we can incorporate these considerations into all the aspects of our community identified here.

A Snapshot of the Courtenay OCP Project Process

The OCP update will take place over six phases (below), culminating in a final Plan for adoption by City Council in spring 2021.*

CITY OF COURTENAY OCP PLANNING PROCESS: REVISED DUE TO PANDEMIC We are here!

	weare	nere:				
01	02	03	04	05	06	*Timelines are subject to change due to the evolving situation of the pandemic.
AUG - JAN 2020	FEB - JUL 2020	JUL - SEPT 2020	FALL 2020		2021	Zersie – Dulau
INITIATION, WORK PLANNING, BACKGROUND REVIEW	EXPLORING GROWTH OPTIONS	DRAFT PLAN POLICIES	INTENSIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD CONSULTATIONS	FINALIZE THE PLAN	DELIVER THE PLAN	Zoning Bylaw update immediately following OCP adoption
Phase 1 Engagement	Phase 2 Engagement	Phase 3 Engagement	Phase 4 Engagement	Phase 5 Engagement	Phase 6 Engagement	
Public Launch, Website, Community Advisory Committee Meetings, Stakeholder Interviews, Staff	(Any engagement after mid-March hosted virtually) Community Advisory Committee Meetings, Survey, and Workshops	(All likely hosted virtually) Interviews, Stakeholder Workshops, Community Advisory Committee	*Proposed Neighbourhood Workshops, Walkshops, Survey, Community Advisory Committee	*Proposed Open House, Community Advisory Committee Workshop, Staff Meetings	*Proposed Public Hearing, Council Report	Never miss a step by signing up for the OCP e-newsletter: www.courtenay.ca/ OCPupdate

The City of Courtenay respectfully acknowledges that we are located within the unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation. Engaging with First Nations, other local jurisdictions, agencies, organizations and stakeholders is an important part of the OCP update.

Meetings, Staff

Meetings

Meetings, Staff

Meetings

Workshops

Additional insights are also provided by locals who sit on the OCP Advisory Committee. Topics represented on the Advisory Committee include: Environmental Stewardship Organizations, Development Industry, Business Community, Economic Development, Health and Social Services including Housing, Arts and Culture, Youth and Seniors.

5 Simple Steps to Complete the Workbook

1

Organize

Consider if anyone might be interested in participating in completing a Workbook with you, subject to public health official physical distancing advice. You can print and hand write your responses, or type right in the Workbook (don't forget to save!). If you print, we advise that you print double sided and 'flip' on the short edge.



Prepare and "Meet"

Pick a way to "meet" to discuss together. Or meet virtually! Depending on if and how you're "meeting", prepare by having access to the Workbook either in print or electronic form. This Workbook contains maps. For the maps, we highly recommend that you use the companion online OCP StoryMap to zoom and navigate "over" Courtenay while completing the Workbook. If you use the StoryMap, then you'll need a computer (or mobile device) as well at the "meeting", or you can decide to take photos at a later date.



Discuss

Stay on topic and make sure everyone has the chance to contribute. Using this Workbook as a guide, discuss each of the questions, and refer to the information provided in the Workbook as needed. Identify a note-taker, and capture important points on separate note paper. Summarize the group's top ideas for each question in this Workbook.



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Submit

Mail or email your completed Workbook to the City of Courtenay. If you're using the OCP StoryMap to show your mapped ideas, your photos and comments are uploaded when using that application.

All project materials including this OCP Workbook and the OCP StoryMap are available at:

www.courtenay.ca/OCPupdate

City's Review

We will incorporate the input from your Workbook (and StoryMap) into our feedback summary, which will be used to develop ongoing concepts for the OCP.



Continue to participate!

Other engagement activities will follow. An onling survey will be available in July and fingers crossed that we can hold neighbourhood meetings in the Fall 2020 to see everyone's input on display, and to comment on new concepts for the updated OCP. Neighbourhood meetings are tentatively scheduled, subject to public health official advice.

Tell Us About You!

Sharing information about yourself helps the City understand who in the community is represented in this consultation process. Neither your personal information nor your Workbook or StoryMap responses will not be shared and your responses will remain confidential.

How many people are participating? It's totally ok if it's just you! If you're part of a group, organization, or a family, would you like to share your name?

If you'd like to designate a contact, who will that be? Please include a name and email address or phone number so we can follow up with any ideas that we may wish to discuss further.

What is your relationship to Courtenay? Check all that apply for all those participating in this Workbook:

Resident	Student	Retiree	Other? Please describe:
Business owner	Visitor	Employee and/or working professional	
What is your age or ((Optional)	the age range of participa	Did you (or one of you in the group) attend the OCP Ideas Fair on February 19, 2020?	
			Yes No

Is there anything else you want to say about you or your group?

Where We Stand Today

Before we cast our minds forward to the future and create a vision for Courtenay, we need to understand where we stand today. The City of Courtenay has undertaken background technical research, identifying existing conditions for:

- Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
- Population and demographics
- Jobs

- Housing
- Regional context Land use and urban form

- Streets and movement
- Environment and ecology
- Human-made infrastructure

Although this technical analysis was conducted prior to the pandemic the findings remain relevant now and post-pandemic.





Growth has become less efficient over time



The climate crisis has arrived in Courtenay



Transportation is the largest challenge and the greatest opportunity to lowering GHGs



Land use policy is climate policy, is public health policy, is social policy



Downtown is beloved. It's urban form can inspire other parts of the City



The city has access and choice, but not in every neighbourhood



Local ecology offers both unique character and the vital services of nature



Courtenay's people are at the heart of this OCP's success

Looking for more information?

For maps, graphics, and more background information on each of these observations, please view the "Phase 1 OCP Background Research Report", and more resources at: www.courtenay.ca/OCPupdate

What We've Heard So Far

The technical information summarized in the Phase 1 OCP Background Research Report was presented to the public on February 19, 2020 at an all day Ideas Fair. Residents and stakeholders shared their views, hopes and fears for Courtenay's future through a variety of engagement activities.

The full Ideas Fair engagement report can be viewed at: www.courtenay.ca/OCPupdate. Highlights of what we heard are summarized here.

More housing choices are needed

More housing types and tenures dispersed in key servicable locations throughout Courtenay are supported by the community. More options can support affordability, aging in place and lower GHGs.

Future growth ought to be compact

Growing 'up and not out' was a common theme to be more efficient and support more transportation options. The pandemic is showing the importance and need for personal space, including outdoor space, which can be designed into infill areas and moderate density.

People places and gathering spaces will continue to be important

In a time of physical distancing, it may be hard to imagine ever gathering the way we used to. But it's a common human value to appreciate 'people places' and so the question will be around how to make these places meaningful and safe. Whether restricting travel for climate or health reasons, more time spent close to home will require delightful and functional public spaces more than ever.



Natural assets are widely cherished and must be protected

Access to the outdoors right in our neighbourhoods has long been part of Courtenay's identity. The pandemic is showing how important natural areas are, especially close to home. Valuing nature is also important for climate change planning.

Transportation planning and urban form should focus on walking, cycling and transit

People want more mobility options and fewer cars. In particular many people said they would walk more if amenities were a 5-10 minute walk. The pandemic has shown that people will walk and cycle more when given the opportunity. Now the infrastructure has to catch up.

Tackling Climate Change involves many strategies

From the ones listed above, to retrofits to conserve energy, renewable private and public energy systems, electric vehicle charging stations, and more green infrastructure. Climate adaptation thoughts centre around food security and flood, rainwater management and restored ripiarian areas.

Your turn :) Cast your mind forward...

Cast your mind forward 10-20 years into the future... COVID-19 is behind us, we've learned valuable lessons, the economy is transitioning to carbon neutrality, the root causes of social challenges like poverty and addictions are being targeted, the Comox Valley is a high quality place to live. **Imagine a Courtenay that is beautiful, prosperous, healthy, equitable, and carbon neutral...**

Please consider: What does your life look like there? In what kind of housing do you live? • How do you move around the city and your neighbourhood? What kind of destinations. services, and amenities do you use? • Where and how do you connect with your neighbours and social networks? • Where and how do you work? • Where do you play and relax? • How and where do you connect with the natural world? • Are there any thoughts you have now that you wouldn't have pre-pandemic?



Your Hopes...



Whether Courtenay is changing due to the pandemic, climate change, or demographics we can be sure that change is part of our community. Change can be hard, but it can also mean opportunity.

. and Fears

What are your greatest hopes about how Courtenay could change over time?

What are your greatest fears about how Courtenay could change over time?

Map it! Show us where you think the following places are located, and tell us why you chose those locations on the pages following the map.

Two ways to Map it!:

- 1. Physically draw on the map on the next page; OR
- 2. It is highly recommended that the online OCP StoryMap be used to allow for you to see an aerial image, zoom and navigate through Courtenay to help identify the places below and see what others have to say!

Access the StoryMap at: www.courtenay.ca/OCPupdate



Heart of Courtenay

Where is the single biggest heart in all of Courtenay? Please choose just one location.



Neighbourhood Hearts and Boundaries

Some neighbourhoods have their own smaller hearts. Where are they? You can choose several locations.

How do you know when you've left your neighbourhood and entered another? Draw where you feel the edges of your neighbourhood (drawing neighbourhood boundaries not available with the online OCP StoryMap).



Assets and Special Places

Where are the most special places in Courtenay? Where are Courtenay's best attributes and what are they? If you're having trouble thinking of some, think about where you take visitors.

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Places Requiring Improvement

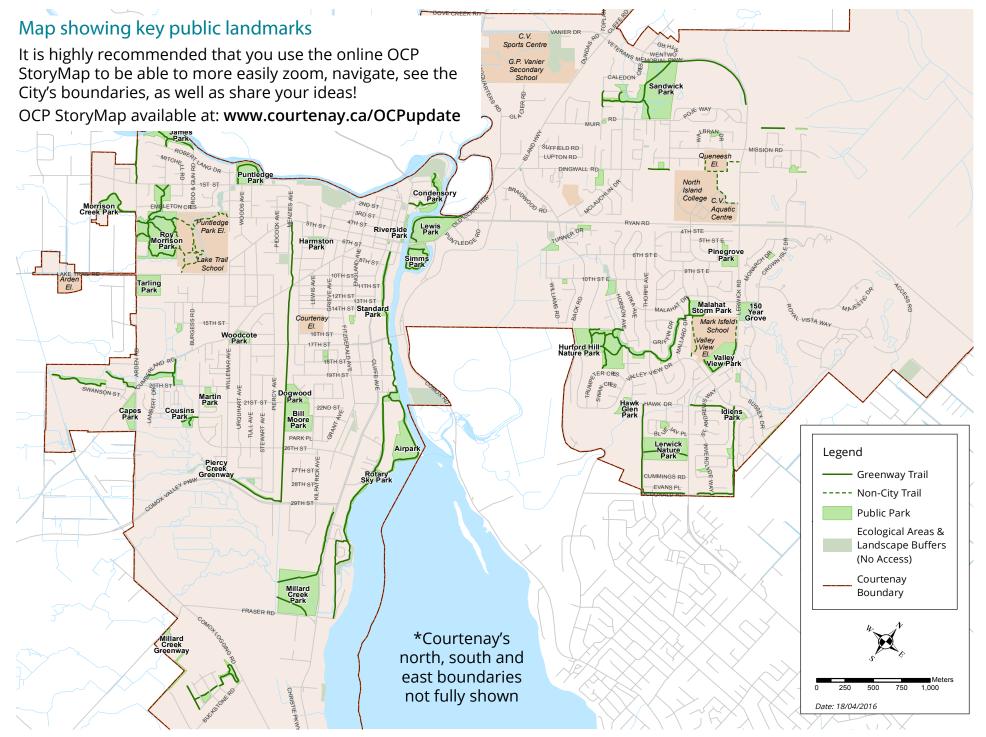
Which places need improvement? Could be somewhere that feels unsafe, is a barrier to mobility, is ugly or could just be better.

Your Big Idea!

Do you have a big idea for the future of Courtenay? Where is it? Don't be shy!

Seeing your neighbourhood with new eyes?

COVID-19 has turned life upside down for so many in our community. New needs, routines and daily habits are changing how we use our neighbourhood, services and amenities, transportation network and public spaces. If you're discovering new things about your neighbourhood that you feel is important to planning for the future, those are the insights we're looking for! Please share :)



Why did you choose these locations?

If you're using the online OCP StoryMap, your online StoryMap information will not link to these responses below. That's ok though as your descriptions still add valuable insight into what is important across many people.

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Assets and Special Places:	Heart of Courtenay:
Δ	
Places Requiring Improvement:	Neighbourhood Hearts:
4	

As we think about how we manage growth and change in the places that we know...

What aspects of Courtenay should remain the same? What do you cherish that must be protected? It can be things at the City level or right on your street. What aspects of Courtenay should change? What must be improved?

Have lots to say? No problem!

- If you're typing, the type-boxes allow for 'scrolling' so you can add more than the size of the text box.
- If you're hand writing, feel free to print extra pages.



Transportation is a key factor in how we grow...

Courtenay is car dependent

Approximately 85% of all trips in Courtenay are taken by a private vehicle. This number is high relative to both British Columbia as a whole, and other similar sized communities in the province. Car dependency is a major challenge that must be overcome because shifting to more transportaiton choices offers numerous cobenefits including GHG emission reductions, daily exercise, more room for community charater, street life and community vibrancy, personal affordability and reducing tax-paid transportation costs (e.g. roads). Physical distancing will need to be factored into any option, but it can be done as is being shown around the world.

Transportation is the largest contributor to our local GHG emissions

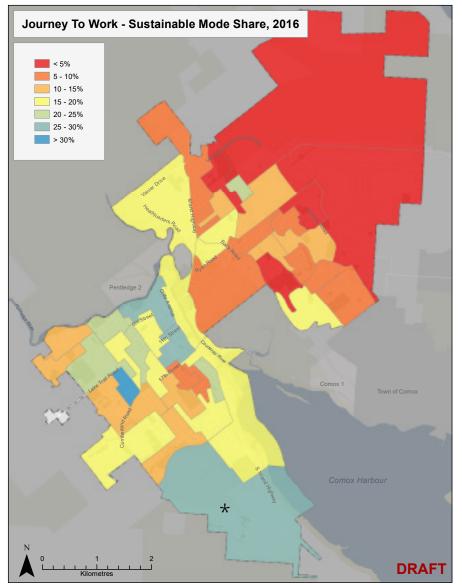
Transportation amounts to 59% of total annual emissions in Courtenay. Approximately half of this value is a result of personal vehicle travel; the other half is from commercial vehicle travel.

Transportation choices vary across the city

The map presents the "sustainable mode share" – or the proportion of residents who travel to work by walking, cycling and transit – for different areas of the city. The higher the number, the more people who use these modes.

The map reveals how residents in older and more centrally located areas of the city are more likely to walk, cycle, and take transit compared with residents in newer, more suburban areas.

The Comox Valley Transit Future Plan is being refreshed this year to confirm transit priorities as the valley grows. To learn more visit: www.bctransit.com/comox-valley/transit-future Anecdotal evidence suggests that more people are walking and biking during the pandemic. Are you?



*This area will require further investigation to better understand why it has is a relatively high sustainable mode share.

...and a huge Opportunity when planned with Land Use







Land Use Mix

Land use mix helps create distinct, vibrant neighbourhoods that support businesses and offer housing and transportation choice.

Connectivity

Connectivity refers to the degree to which a street network allows travelers to travel directly from point A to point B.

Density

Density refers to the number of people, homes, or jobs within a given area. The pandemic is emphasizing the importance of maintaining adequate personal space at home and in community. Striking the right balance between the need for space and the benefits of compact living can be achieved through thoughtful urban design guidelines informed by public input.

Land use is one of the most powerful ways in which municipalities can reduce emissions because it can drive housing options, transportation behaviour, and economic growth.

While local governments cannot regulate vehicle emission standards, through land use policy they have direct control over the degree to which travel by foot, bicycle, and transit are viable options. Land use – the type, location, and intensity of residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and other land-based activities – is a primary factor of transportation behaviour.

Land use affects housing, transportation and the economy through three main facets: land use mix, density and connectivity.

The impact of a diverse, connected and compact land use mix



More walking, fewer GHG emissions and more health benefits

Residents living near multiple and diverse shops also generally make more frequent and shorter shopping trips, and more by walking. This means that land use mix is important in reducing GHG emissions.



A stronger sense of community

Research also shows that a higher land use mix translates into a stronger sense of community, where residents are more likely to know their neighbours, participate politically, trust others, and form community networks. The pandemic is showing just how important a sense of community is to quality of life including helping each other.

A Land Use primer for Courtenay

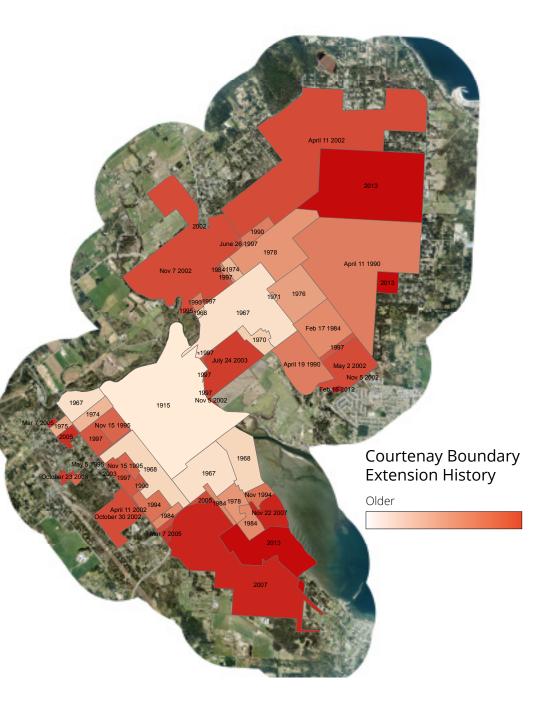
Courtenay's physical growth is expanding faster than its population growth.

Since the City of Courtenay was incorporated in 1915, physical growth has steadily become less efficient over time. Within about a half century, Courtenay roughly doubled in size. During the following half century, physical growth was far more significant, with the city more than tripling in size. This was not only due to population growth, but to a lower density pattern.

While central areas are more compact, newer areas – including low-density single detached neighbourhoods and large format commercial areas – have expanded at the city's periphery in recent decades. There is a general trend from "urban" to "suburban", which influences everything from transportation patterns to infrastructure costs.

The physical growth of a city impacts its success.

Managing the physical expansion of a city has a tremendous impact on a community. A more compact urban form, in which growth is carefully managed and concentrated in existing urban areas, can help a community meet goals that include transportation choices, natural area protection, and more efficient service delivery. This can have major implications for property taxes, expecially as public infrastructure ages and requires maintenance and replacement.



Central areas provide plenty of choice, but outlying areas do not.

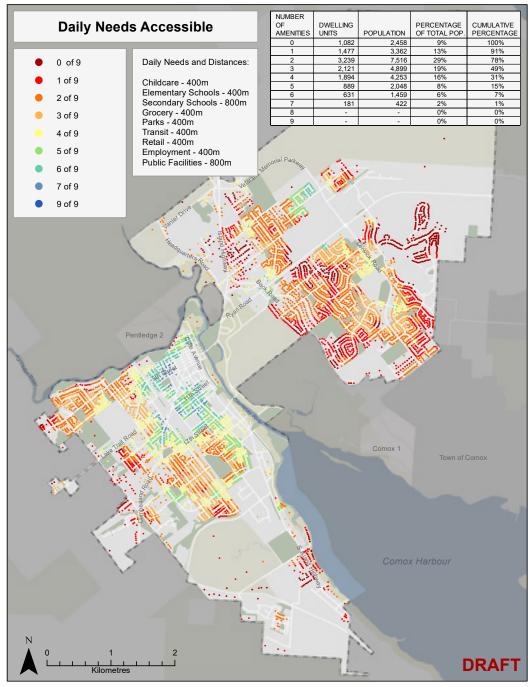
Courtenay is rich with cultural, recreational, commercial, educational, and employment destinations. This richness of access exists at a city level, however it is currently not extended to all neighbourhoods, particularly in newer areas. In other words, the city is "complete" but many of its neighbourhoods are not.

Households are relatively small, yet homes are relatively large. Choices for different types of housing vary across the city.

The average Courtenay household size of 2.1 people is low compared to the rest of the province. Almost three quarters of the population live in either 1 or 2 person households, and yet over half of the homes are singledetached households.

"Aging in place" – or having the option of staying in one's neighbourhood throughout different life stagesrequires that different housing types be available. This is especially important in communities like Courtenay, which have aging populations. In fact, the proportion of people over the age of 65 is expected to quadruple in the next 20 years.

Multi-unit homes such as apartments and rowhouses / townhouses are distributed in a range of neighbourhoods, however they are more prevalent in West Courtenay and in the multi-unit area along Braidwood Rd between Ryan Rd and North Island Hwy.



Your turn! Let's put the pieces together...

Approximately 4,500 new residents are expected to arrive or be born in Courtenay by 2031 with an additional 3,500 by 2051. This translates in to approximately 3,000 new housing units needed by 2031 and an additional 1,800 by 2051.

How should we manage this growth? Remember, living local could become a new normal which can be a good thing if we really love where we live. What changes in Courtenay would help you love where you live?

What do we need more of at the City level as our community grows?

What about right in your neighbourhood? What could you use more of? (if you're in a group, it's ok if you live in different neighbourhoods) What do we need less of as our community grows?

Thinking of your neighbourhood, are there things that could change to make it awesome?

Thinking specifically of urban form, what ideas do you have about creating more density, land use diversity, connectivity and character?

Do you have thoughts on services needed, where? Think of businesses, recreational facilities and transit (assuming that all COVID-19 safety measures are in place)

Thoughts on housing diversity? What kind, needed where?

Thoughts walking and cycling? What would make it easier? New routes or ways to change the street?

What about how everything looks and feels? What elements are important to make good character and aesthetics in your point of view?

Responding to two crises: Climate Action & Pandemic Recovery

In 2019 Courtenay Council declared a Climate Crisis along with hundreds of other communities around the world. It is estimated that 1 in 10 people on the planet live in a community that has made such a declaration.

Now the world is facing another crisis - the COVID-19 pandemic.

Actions to improve community wellbeing while lessening environmental impact and stimulating economic recovery for everyone is the challenge of our times. Both crises show that all nations are in this together, and that the actions of individuals matter a great deal

Responding to these crises is new territory, but with challenge comes opportunity too. Identifying strategic actions that mutually respond to local environmental, public health and economic challenges will be key to Courtenay's resilience now and in the future.

What are your thoughts on what we in Courtenay can and should do to respond to each of these crises? As a community and as individuals? What are the most critical climate actions that are needed locally? Feel free to include both climate mitigation and adaptation actions. What are the most critical pandemic recovery actions that are needed locally?

Additional challenge or an opportunity?

Are there any actions that you would consider are critical for both climate action and pandemic recovery?

What are factors for success that would make Courtenay more resilient, regardless the challenge?

*Mini Gloassary

Climate mitigation approaches avoid contributing to climate change by reducing GHG emissions, or recapture carbon in carbon sinks using vegetation, soil restoration, and/or technological storage.

Climate adaptation approaches respond to the impacts of climate change such as rising sea level, more and warmer precipitation in the winter, and drier, hotter summers.

Resilient in the context of a community is the ability for the community to respond to, withstand and recover from adverse situations and still retain basic function, structure and identity. Because communities are complex systems, being resilient requires the input and actions of many.

While not explicitly a pandemic recovery plan, the OCP can include ideas and policies to direct recovery efforts.

Thank you for taking the extra time, attention, and care to share your insights and ideas for the future of Courtenay. The comments you provided will be used to inform ongoing concepts that will form the basis of the updated OCP.

Don't forget, you can take photos and share them on the OCP StoryMap all summer long!

Your input is greatly valued – please stay involved! Please visit: www.courtenay.ca/OCPupdate

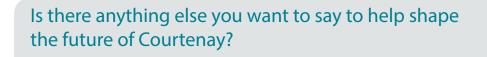








Your Big Idea: do you have one? Let's hear it!



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