

SUMMARY



City of Courtenay OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN SUMMARY

JANUARY 2022

To access the full draft OCP, background studies,
and participate in consultation,
visit: www.courtenay.ca/OCPUupdate

The City of Courtenay respectfully acknowledges that the lands to which this OCP apply are on the Unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

WHY DO 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.



VISION

Courtenay is responsible for the future,
supporting high quality of life with a
low-carbon footprint for all.

Full OCP Vision stated on page 22 of the OCP

GOALS

Investing in relationships

Economic success emerges from
community values & place

Love for local places

Housing choices for all

Functional transportation choices

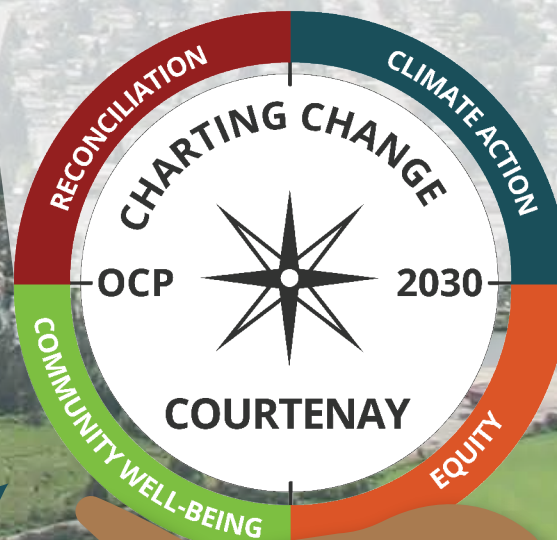
Land is valued as a precious resource

More space and time in nature

Strong neighbourhoods

A City for everyone

Guided by the four
cardinal directions,
the **OCP GOALS**
provide markers as
the community
moves toward it's
vision.



A **COMPASS** has been used as the visual identity for the OCP development process as it serves as a tool to navigate through change. It helps orient us to where we stand today, and provides direction to where we want to be moving.

CARDINAL DIRECTIONS

The world is changing, and the OCP has been created to respond to the great challenges and opportunities of our time. A compass has been used to as the visual identity for the OCP process, with the understanding that this plan is a tool to navigate through change.

1 RECONCILIATION

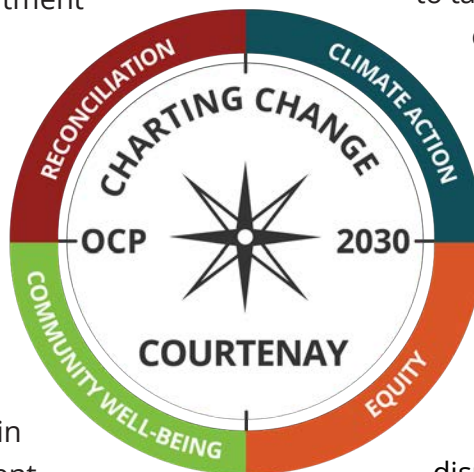
The City commits to incorporating Indigenous perspectives into its work and decision-making process, and to providing equitable and inclusive services that benefit Indigenous peoples. The City will seek guidance from Indigenous partners in how to make this commitment a reality.

2 CLIMATE ACTION

Courtenay is responding to this call to action. The City has committed to achieving a 45% reduction in community-wide GHG emissions (from 2016 level) by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050. This OCP includes strategies, actions, and measures to reduce emissions to target levels while saving on energy costs and improving quality of life for Courtenay residents.

3 COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

This OCP accounts for the diverse and complex ways in which the urban environment impacts well-being. It takes a systems-based approach to well-being, considering the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of individuals and communities, and the ecosystems of which we are all a part.



4 EQUITY

This OCP challenges some traditional planning practices that can result in policies, programs, and regulations that disproportionately impact and stymie the progress of some equity-priority groups. Through policies on topics ranging from affordable housing to public participation, this OCP applies an equity lens and seeks to honour the lived experiences of all of Courtenay's peoples.

WHAT IS AN OCP?

An Official Community Plan (OCP) is a city-wide 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 municipality has to manage change in a way that helps a community meet its goals.

HOW DOES AN OCP IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY



Our gathering spaces, both formal and informal



Our community character



Protection of our ecological and agricultural areas



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 – which in turn affects our health



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

HOW THIS OCP CAME TOGETHER

Since 2019 the City of Courtenay has been working with hundreds of residents, stakeholders, agencies, and the K'ómoks First Nation to identify community priorities for the future.

The City thanks all participants who contributed their voices, values, and ideas to the process.

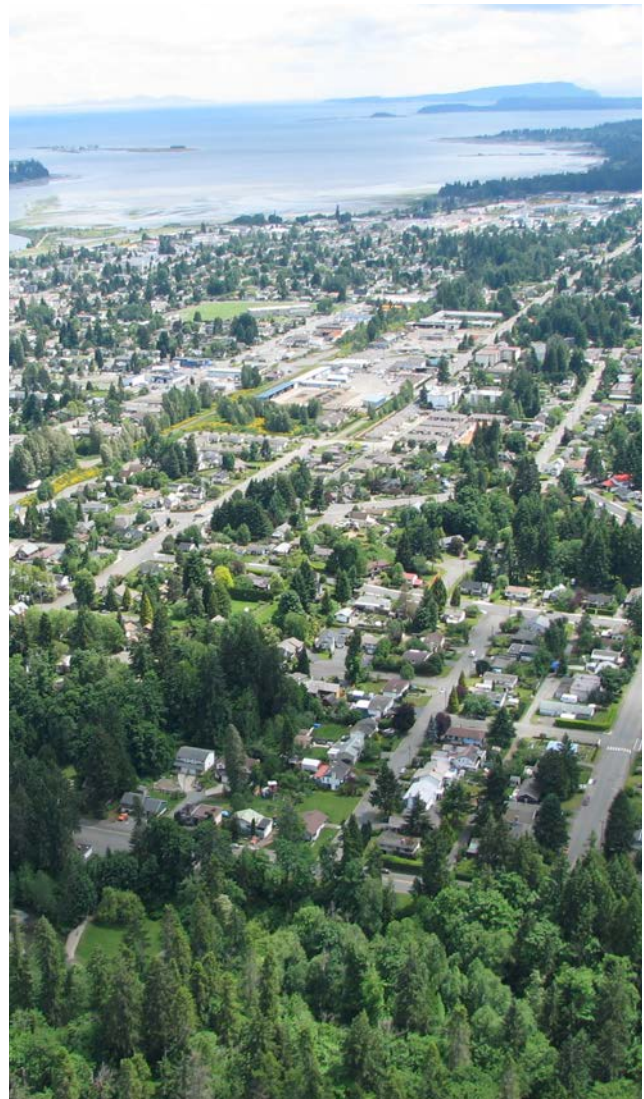
WHAT WILL THIS OCP DO?

At its heart, the OCP is about land use and growth management. This means that it dictates the location, type, and intensity of different uses. These uses include 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, and greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

As of the last available census, Courtenay's population was 25,595. This OCP will guide development and change as Courtenay reaches its projected populations of 30,085 by 2031.

It also provides a longer term vision and several strategies for the City as it is projected to grow to 32,502 people by 2052. The OCP planning time-frame is until 2030, however if Courtenay grows more quickly, the OCP may need to be updated before then.

PLEASE NOTE: Statistics Canada released the first of seven schedules of 2021 census data on February 9, 2022 (basic population and dwelling counts). More detailed 2021 census data will be released throughout 2022. The census indicates Courtenay is growing more rapidly than projected. The research and modelling used to inform the OCP's growth strategy have been calibrated to accommodate a population of 4500 more residents. The OCP will be edited to reflect that the OCP time horizon will depend on how quickly Courtenay's population grows by the additional 4500 more residents.



KEY FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDERS

The OCP process has been ongoing for more than two years, and engagement with the community, stakeholders, and partners has been paramount in shaping the plan.

These are some of the key themes we heard:

- **Reconciliation** is very important
- **Social equity** is very important
- Wide range of **housing choices** needed
- Land use planning should promote **compact growth**
- **Natural assets** are widely cherished, provide important services, and must be protected and restored
- Transportation planning and urban form should focus on people **walking, cycling, and taking transit**
- People places, gathering spaces, and **sense of community** are important
- Tackling **climate change** involves many concurrent strategies and delivers many co-benefits
- **Integrated approaches** are needed to be effective in community actions on a variety of topics
- Strong desire for **ongoing community dialogue** and stakeholder collaboration



Two policy foundations are presented here to provide context and understanding on the policy connections in the OCP thematic policy chapters.

POLICY FOUNDATION: QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality of life is influenced by a broad range of personal, social, economic, and environmental conditions in which we grow, live, work, and age. It is defined as the standard of health, comfort, and happiness experienced by an individual or group.¹

To understand the connection that policies that Courtenay can enact to support high quality of life for everyone, the social determinants of health framework is presented here. Social determinants of health are the non-medical

factors that influence individual and collective health outcomes and research suggests that they are collectively essential to one's health, and by extension their quality of life.

The OCP has direct and indirect influence on a number of these factors that affect one's quality of life. For example, the OCP directs policy on Courtenay's mobility network to support active lifestyles, choice and affordability; supports the creation of sufficient and affordable housing; includes land uses to support employment opportunities, a vibrant economy, and public spaces to promote social connections;

promotes accessibility to municipal services; and safeguards a healthy environment.

This systems-based approach to understanding individual and community health and quality of life was used in developing the full suite of policies throughout the OCP. This ensures that policy proposals deliver on multiple outcomes.



¹ www.lexico.com, Oxford Languages

The social determinants of health (presented here) have a strong influence on quality of life.

POLICY FOUNDATION: A LOW-CARBON COMMUNITY

High quality of life for the entire community must be achieved with a shrinking and eventually eliminated carbon footprint by 2050. To understand the influence that policies Courtenay can enact to support a low-carbon pathway, energy and emissions modelling was performed for the OCP.

Cities are estimated to be responsible for 70% of global emissions. This means that local governments and their communities everywhere have important roles to play in directly controlling or influencing emissions production. The OCP includes policies that are formulated based on modelling of Courtenay's total community energy use and emissions production over the next 30 years.

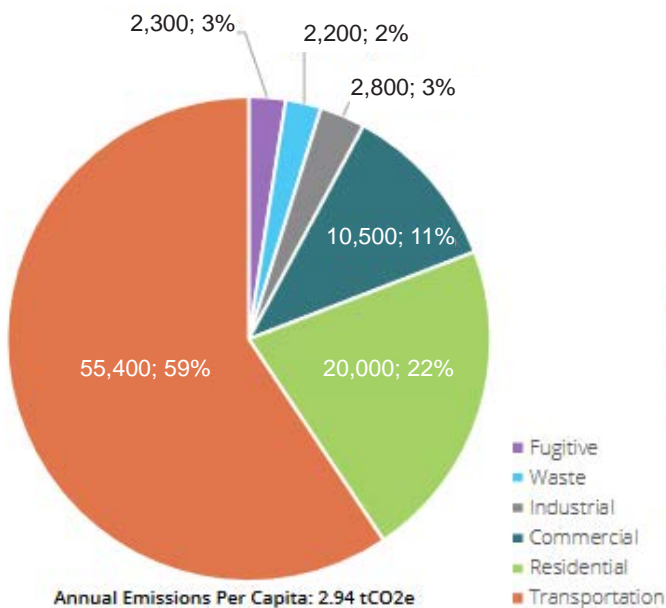
Emission sources that local governments have influence over are transportation, buildings, operations, solid waste and land uses.

Courtenay's total community emissions in 2016 were 93,200 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e).

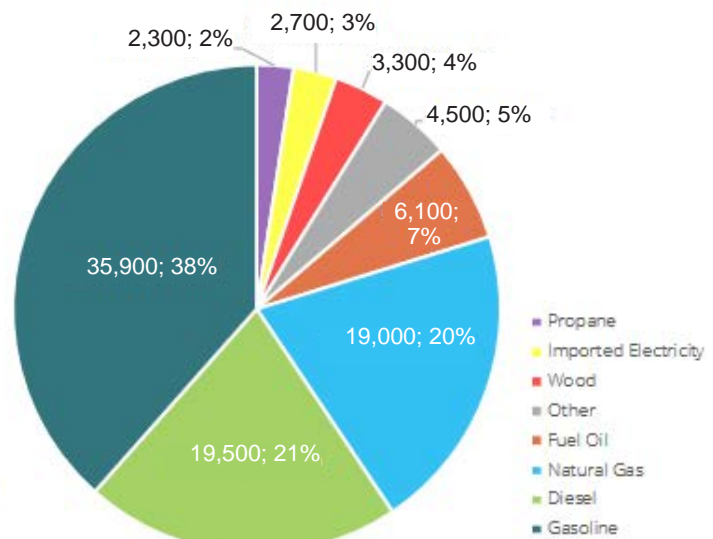
Transportation accounts for 59% of Courtenay's emissions, and is thus the area in which most change must occur. As explored throughout Part B, land use and urban form play a vital role in reducing transportation-related emissions.

The ideal approach to reducing emissions is to:

- **First, avoid or reduce energy demand as much as possible;**
- **Second, improve energy efficiency; and**
- **Third, switch energy supplies to low-carbon sources.**



Courtenay Emissions By Sector for Baseline Year 2016.
Source: Sustainability Solutions Group, 2020.



Courtenay Emissions By Source for Baseline Year 2016.
Source: Sustainability Solutions Group, 2020.

Dozens of policies on a range of community planning topics are presented in the draft OCP in order to support the OCP vision of a high quality of life with a low-carbon footprint for all. Read the objectives for each policy theme in the following pages or access the full draft OCP to review all the policy proposals: www.courtenay.ca/OCPupdate

LAND USE OBJECTIVES

- LU1 The majority of community growth is strategically guided into growth centres to support more 10-minute neighbourhoods
- LU2 Moderate infill development occurs across the entire city outside of growth centres
- LU3 Sub-area planning provides more direction on growth
- LU4 Municipal infrastructure planning and investments align with the urban framework concept
- LU5 New growth takes place within the existing city boundary

Land use policy is about more than the land use itself, because land use decisions influence numerous other aspects of our daily lives as well as other components of cities. These include the transportation network, municipal services, the economy, and the natural environment. How a community is structured informs future opportunities, and constraints, in the pursuit of community goals and ultimate vision.

Key interdependent land use and urban form strategies lay the physical foundation for a city that is responsible for the future:

- Mixing land uses
- Increasing densities
- Supporting high-quality urban form & design

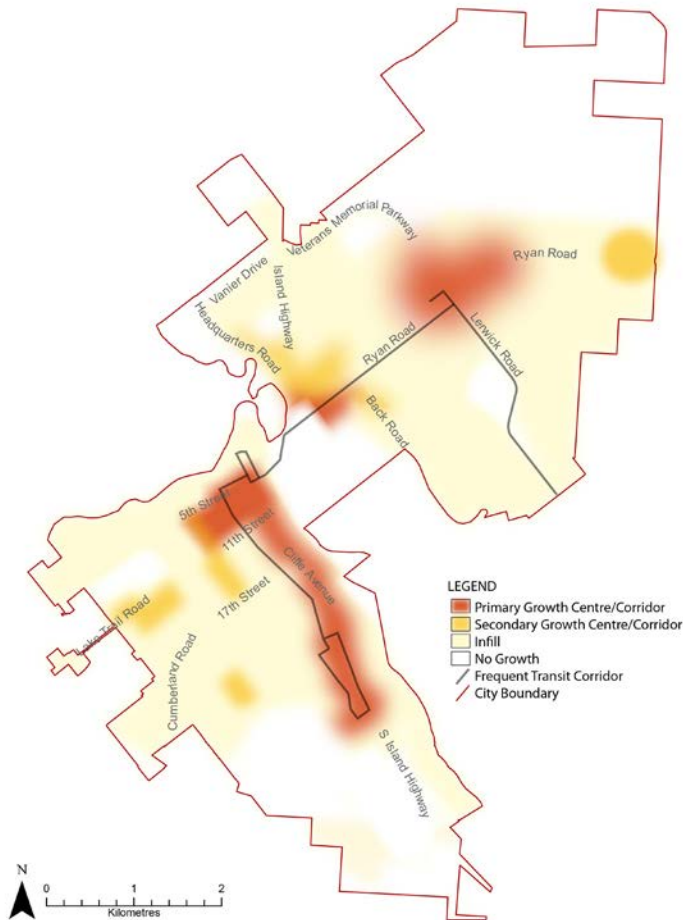
Following these land use strategies helps deliver on a number of benefits to a community's success:

- Community character
- Housing choices
- Transportation choices
- Protection of agricultural land & natural environment
- Sustainable servicing
- Municipal finances and taxes

LEARN MORE IN THE FULL DRAFT OF THE OCP

Courtenay's Urban Growth Framework Concept

The strategy for managing Courtenay's growth is to build upon and strengthen existing nodes and corridors within existing neighbourhoods across the city by guiding the majority of future growth toward a series of identified distinct and connected mixed use areas. This growth concept is expected to direct growth over the next 10 years, after which new centres will have to be identified to plan for and manage growth in accordance with the Regional Growth Strategy, best management practice, and community input. If Courtenay grows more quickly than expected, the OCP may need to be updated before 2030.



Primary Growth Locations: Town Centres and Urban Corridor

These areas are activity centres in the city and will continue to attract the highest densities in Courtenay in the form of new multi-residential buildings and a wide variety of commercial uses such as offices, retail stores, and large-format shopping (in centres outside the downtown). The primary growth locations are reflected in the Downtown, Town Centre, and Urban Corridor land use designations.

Secondary Growth Locations: Neighbourhood Centres and Multi-Residential

These areas include or are in close proximity to existing community and commercial services within established neighbourhoods. The development opportunity within these areas will largely be redevelopment opportunities from lower density to higher density or from a single use today to a mixed use in the future. These areas will accommodate medium-density residential development up to four storeys with small-scale neighbourhood commercial uses and community services within the neighbourhood centres.

Outside of Growth Locations: Infill Areas

These areas include all lower-density residential zones throughout the city, often referred to as single residential. Today some neighbourhoods of Courtenay within these areas are permitted a secondary residence, while others are not. In support of the growth strategy, infill development will be permitted throughout Courtenay in the form secondary suites and duplexes and detached secondary residences. Multi-residential will be supported along the Frequent Transit Network.

Learn more about specific land use designations in the draft OCP.



A photograph of a suburban street scene. In the foreground, a man wearing a black cycling jersey, blue shorts, a black helmet, and sunglasses is riding a black mountain bike. To his left, a yellow and black child bike trailer is being pulled. Further back on the sidewalk, another person is riding a bicycle, and a small child is walking. The street is paved with asphalt and has a white crosswalk. In the background, there are houses with green lawns and trees under a clear blue sky. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

STREETS AND TRANSPORTATION

OBJECTIVES

- ST1. 30% of trips are by walking, cycling, and transit by 2030
- ST2. Transportation investments prioritize walking, cycling, and transit
- ST3. Street standards include attention to safety, accessibility, and comfort at the pedestrian scale
- ST4. Excess existing road space is repurposed to support public life and green infrastructure
- ST5. Zero emissions, electrified transportation is supported and increasingly the norm
- ST6. The amount of land dedicated to parking is minimized
- ST7. Parking standards reflect electric vehicle and cycling needs
- ST8. New development integrates multi-modal transportation network planning into site design
- ST9. Educational programs to support transit use, walking, cycling, and car sharing are widely available
- ST10. Opportunities for innovation in transportation are explored
- ST11. The City shows corporate leadership in the City's fleet and on City properties



BUILDINGS AND LANDSCAPE

OBJECTIVES

- BL1. Municipal buildings and site design demonstrate high energy and water efficiency, net-zero emissions, and energy production
- BL2. New private buildings are highly energy, and water efficient, perform at a net-zero emissions standard and produce energy
- BL3. Living landscape elements are incorporated for water and energy conservation purposes
- BL4. The design of new buildings integrate with neighbourhood character, showcase Indigenous designs, and are universally accessible
- BL5. Existing buildings are upgraded for high energy and water efficiency, net-zero emissions, and renewable energy production
- BL6. Innovation in building energy, water, and materials performance is encouraged



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

OBJECTIVES

- AH1. Partnership approaches are in place to deliver and manage non- or below-market housing
- AH2. The City continues to actively support the creation of non-market housing
- AH3. The City provides incentives to create below-market housing
- AH4. A variety of housing options are permitted and positively integrated in all neighbourhoods
- AH5. No net loss of rental housing
- AH6. Development application approval processes are streamlined, transparent, and easy to understand



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

OBJECTIVES

- NE1. Remaining sensitive ecosystems are protected; lost or degraded sensitive ecosystems are restored
- NE2. The K'ómoks Estuary is 'kept living' (Q'waq'wala7owkw) and environmental, Indigenous, subsistence and recreational values are protected and restored
- NE3. Courtenay's air, water, and soil are clean
- NE4. The urban forest is healthy and growing towards a 34-40% canopy cover target
- NE5. Development practices meet ecosystem health and site adaptive design objectives
- NE6. Information and opportunities are in place for the wider community to play an active role in the protection, restoration, and stewardship of the natural environment



PARKS AND RECREATION

OBJECTIVES

- PR1. Parkland in the form of natural areas, open spaces, and outdoor recreation is of sufficient amounts, is well-connected, equitably distributed, and is of high quality to enhance livability throughout the city
- PR2. Recreation amenities, services, and programming are expanded and enhanced to support increased health, wellness, and social connections for all residents
- PR3. Parks, greenways, and streets are better integrated to create a seamless and enjoyable active transportation system
- PR4. The parks and recreation system exemplifies leadership in reconciliation, climate action, equity, and community well-being through its service, programs, and partnerships
- PR5. Partnerships are in place to achieve parks and recreation objectives



MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE

OBJECTIVES

- MI 1. Infrastructure and services are resilient to risks and impacts of climate change
- MI 2. Infrastructure investments are guided by a multiple bottom line decision-making approach: this means energy efficient, fiscally responsible, equitably distributed, sustainable levels of service that protect public health, safety, and the environment
- MI 3. Natural and engineered forms of green infrastructure are integrated to manage rainwater resources, protect water and air quality, maintain ecosystem function, provide flood control, and address and adapt to climate impacts
- MI 4. Solid waste, potable water, sanitary sewer and rain and stormwater infrastructure life-cycle costs are minimized by increasing conservation actions and reducing or delaying the need to develop new infrastructure capacity
- MI 5. Third party utility providers such as energy and communications utilities are low carbon and reliable



SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

OBJECTIVES

- SI1. All Courtenay residents experience equitable access to services
- SI2. Coordinated, inclusionary, and systems-based responses are in place to address evolving complex social issues
- SI3. Physical spaces are designed with the needs for social connection and accessibility in mind
- SI4. Neighbourhood and community development-based organizing are leveraged as a source of community capacity and resilience



ARTS, CULTURE, AND HERITAGE

OBJECTIVES

- ACH1. Residents and visitors know they are in K'ómoks First Nation territory by the prominent tangible and intangible celebration of their culture and heritage
- ACH2. Local art, culture and heritage, including natural heritage, are showcased throughout Courtenay
- ACH3. Courtenay has a reputation as the regional centre for arts and culture
- ACH4. Community cultural and heritage assets are identified, preserved, and celebrated
- ACH5. Identities expressed in the public realm and cultural programming are representative of Courtenay and the region
- ACH6. Community access and participation in arts and culture is strong and widespread



FOOD SYSTEMS

OBJECTIVES

- FS1. All residents have access to affordable, healthy, and local food outlets
- FS2. Residents have access to food growing opportunities
- FS3. Lands supporting traditional foods are protected and traditional practices are celebrated
- FS4. Agricultural lands are protected and are compatible with urban uses
- FS5. Food processing, warehousing, and distribution activities are permitted in urban areas of Courtenay
- FS6. Food security actions are regionally coordinated



LOCAL ECONOMY

OBJECTIVES

- LE1. Business retention, development, and investment are increasingly green, low-carbon, climate resilient, and equity-responsive
- LE2. Local economic development opportunities are regionally coordinated
- LE3. Municipal regulations and services are supportive of economic development within the long-term vision of environmental and social responsibility
- LE4. People are at the heart of local economic development and are able to access adequate supports to participate in the economy.

THE OCP IS A COLLECTIVE VISION AND IT IS A COLLECTIVE ACTION. ITS IMPLEMENTATION WILL BE A COLLECTIVE JOURNEY.

The OCP is a facilitative policy instrument that provides both direction for the City of Courtenay as well as identifies where collaboration and support by other sectors are needed to achieve stated objectives.

Key relationships will require investment and nurturing to turn Courtenay's vision into reality:

- **Between the City of Courtenay and K'ómoks First Nation** to cooperate on topics of mutual interest.
- **With developers**, to promote and support developments that contribute to Courtenay's vision of growth.
- **Intergovernmental relations:** local, provincial, and federal.

- **Partnerships** with neighbouring jurisdictions, other levels of government, stakeholders, academic institutions, and with private and non-profit organizations.
- **With community** through the use of appropriate participatory engagement approaches that provide residents and stakeholders with opportunities for public input.

CITY OF COURTENAY IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

As a highest level policy instrument, the OCP cannot predict the exact sequencing of actions that are outside of the City's direct control, nor should it provide detailed costing for all actions that will occur over a 10 year timeframe. Many implementation actions will require further investigation, consultation, and resourcing.

Priority implementation actions are proposed to provide a foundation for and enable a number of other actions identified in the OCP. These are:

List of Implementation Priorities

	Action	Intended Outcome
1	Develop a corporate OCP implementation, monitoring, and reporting administrative structure and procedure to implement the OCP. i. Include decision-making support mechanisms that balance and ensure multiple goals are being considered and incorporated into capital planning.	OCP policy guides all City of Courtenay activities across all departments. This includes establishing indicators of OCP outcomes, staff resourcing and establishing decision-making support mechanisms. This includes ensuring climate adaptation is incorporated into all City activities.
2	Update the Municipal Climate Action Plan	City of Courtenay shows demonstrative climate action leadership in all corporate activities.
3	Create a Reconciliation Framework	City of Courtenay shows demonstrative reconciliation leadership in all corporate activities
4	Develop a Local Area Plan for Harmston Avenue Civic Precinct.	A clear vision and development goals for public and private lands support public and private investment in the downtown. Neighbourhood engagement processes are piloted and evaluated for application in other Local Area Plans.

	Action	Intended Outcome
5	Identify roles for the City in the delivery of: i. social infrastructure ii. local economic development iii. food security	City of Courtenay identifies appropriate roles and resourcing required to advance policies within each of these policy themes.
6	Explore and establish a partnership approach with School District 71 (SD71) on topics of mutual interest.	City of Courtenay has a strong working relationship with SD71 to advance topics of mutual interest such as active transportation programs, community schools, shared park facilities, climate action and reconciliation.
7	Update key land use regulatory tools to reflect the OCP: i. Zoning Bylaw ii. Building Bylaw iii. Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw iv. Flood Management Strategy & Flood Management Bylaw v. Development Cost Charges vi. Affordable Housing Policy	City of Courtenay land use regulations collectively ensure development enacts the OCP vision. i. Zoning Bylaw update will be in two phases. First phase at time of OCP adoption will: • Allow for secondary suites; • Include Electric Vehicle parking requirements; • Include Development Permit Area Guidelines. ii. Building Bylaw Step Code requirements will be phased in 2023 and 2025.
8	Create development application support system/tools to assist in navigating land development process with an emphasis on supporting affordable housing.	Development approvals that align with the OCP and meet regulatory requirements are streamlined, transparent, and easy to understand.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION TOOLS:

Development Permit Areas are proposed to continue to provide an implementation-oriented framework to ensure that development decisions support the OCP. Developments for infill development and large buildings will have to meet form and character requirements, and developments proposed for near environmentally sensitive areas, near agricultural lands, or on steep slopes will be required to obtain a permit prior to development, or demonstrate that their development meets all requirements.

Community Amenity Contribution policies are also included in the draft OCP to provide guidance on priorities community amenities when Mayor and Council are considering approving rezoning applications.

INTEGRATION OF THE OCP INTO THE CITY OF COURTENAY'S BUDGETING AND ACTIVITIES WILL BE AN ONGOING INCREMENTAL ACTIVITY THAT WILL TAKE PLACE OVER THE NEXT DECADE.

