



OCP Project Process

How Can You Get Involved?

Developing a Shared Vision

The overarching purpose of this engagement process is to open up a conversation with citizens about the future of Courtenay – within the parameters of an OCP’s scope and jurisdiction – to develop a vision and set of directions to guide change into the future.

Project Process

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

Residents are invited and encouraged to participate throughout this process. Stay tuned for community events, surveys, and more opportunities to be involved throughout the OCP review and update! The best way to stay informed is to sign up for the e-newsletter at www.courtenay.ca/OCPupdate

We are here!



	NOV - FEB 2020	FEB - APR 2020	APR - JUN 2020	JUL - NOV 2020	DEC - APR 2021
PROJECT PHASE	PROJECT LAUNCH	CITY-WIDE VISION AND GROWTH SCENARIOS	NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING	DRAFT PLAN	FINAL PLAN
	Learn about the project and how you can get involved. Tell us about your early priorities and ideas.	Tell us about your vision and goals. Work with us to create different scenarios for tackling the climate crisis and achieving our vision/goals.	Provide input on the scenarios and emerging concepts of the Plan. Tell us what this means for your neighbourhood.	Provide input on the draft Plan. Work with us on refining it.	Review the final Plan.
ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES	Public Launch, Website, Advisory Committee Meetings, Stakeholder Interviews	Advisory Committee Meetings, Survey, Pop-Ups, Roadshow, and Workshops	Neighbourhood Workshops, Walkshops, Interviews, Advisory Committee Meetings	Survey, Advisory Committee Workshop, Open House	Public Hearing, Council Report

MASTER PLAN AND BYLAW UPDATES,
INCLUDING ZONING BYLAW IMMEDIATELY
FOLLOWING OCP ADOPTION



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What We've Learned So Far

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 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

Emerging Themes



The climate crisis has arrived in Courtenay



Transportation is the largest challenge and the greatest opportunity



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



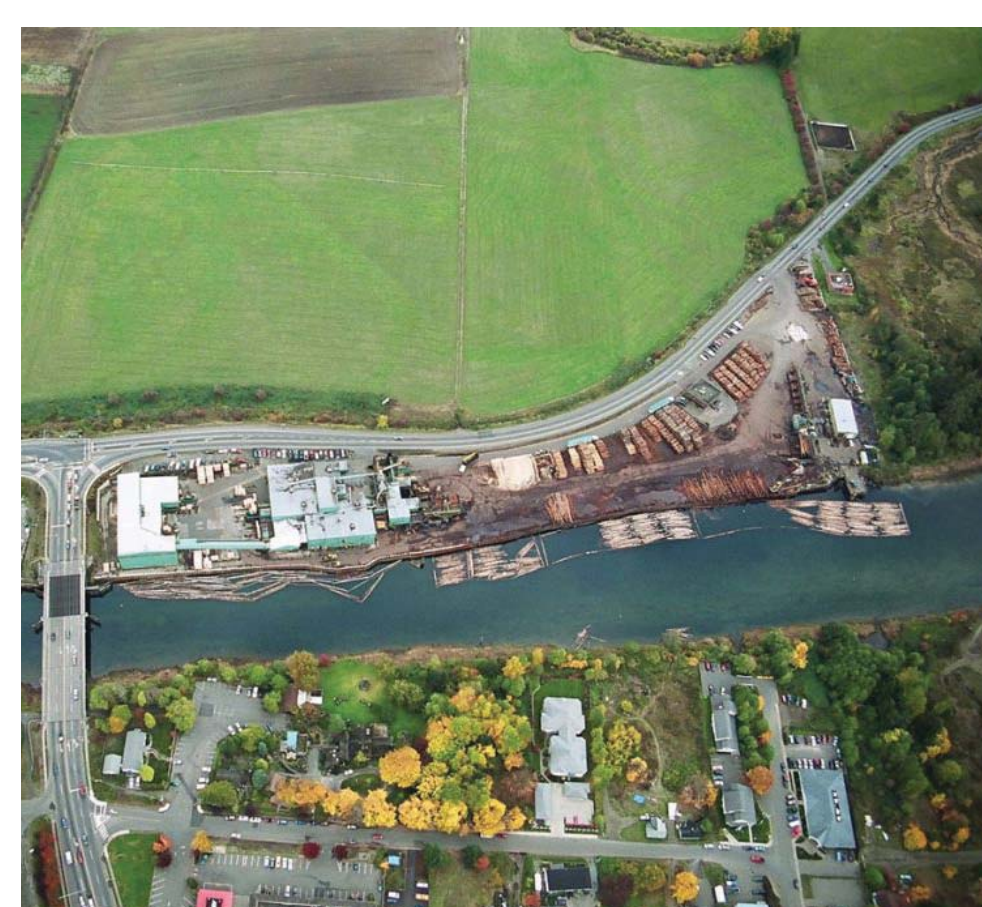
Growth has become less efficient over time



Downtown is a strength and a precedent



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

Local Expertise

Additional insights are presented on other panels, courtesy of Courtenay residents who sit on the Advisory Committee for this OCP process. 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/young adult representation and Seniors/older adult representation.



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The Climate Crisis Has Arrived in Courtenay



Along with the rest of the world, Courtenay is facing a climate crisis

As we are seeing around the world, climate change is no longer an abstract thing. It's right here, right now. With a projected increase of 1.5 degrees Celsius in the Comox Valley by 2050, Courtenay can expect to experience higher flood frequency, salination of agricultural soils due to sea level rise, more summer droughts due to decreased snowpack, increased wildfire risks, and more.



Courtenay is at a crossroads

Courtenay is a great place to make a home, raise a family, and enjoy the golden years. We want to keep our quality of life for our children and for generations to come. To do that, we need to be realistic about the changes that are needed. While climate change is an unprecedented problem, it is one that can be solved.



A climate lens for the OCP

The OCP is being developed with a climate lens, prioritizing actions that include both mitigation (efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (efforts to prepare for the changes that are coming). This work will be part of a broader aim to achieve an ambitious GHG reduction target. To demonstrate a commitment to local climate action, the City of Courtenay is a signatory to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.

Some Good News!

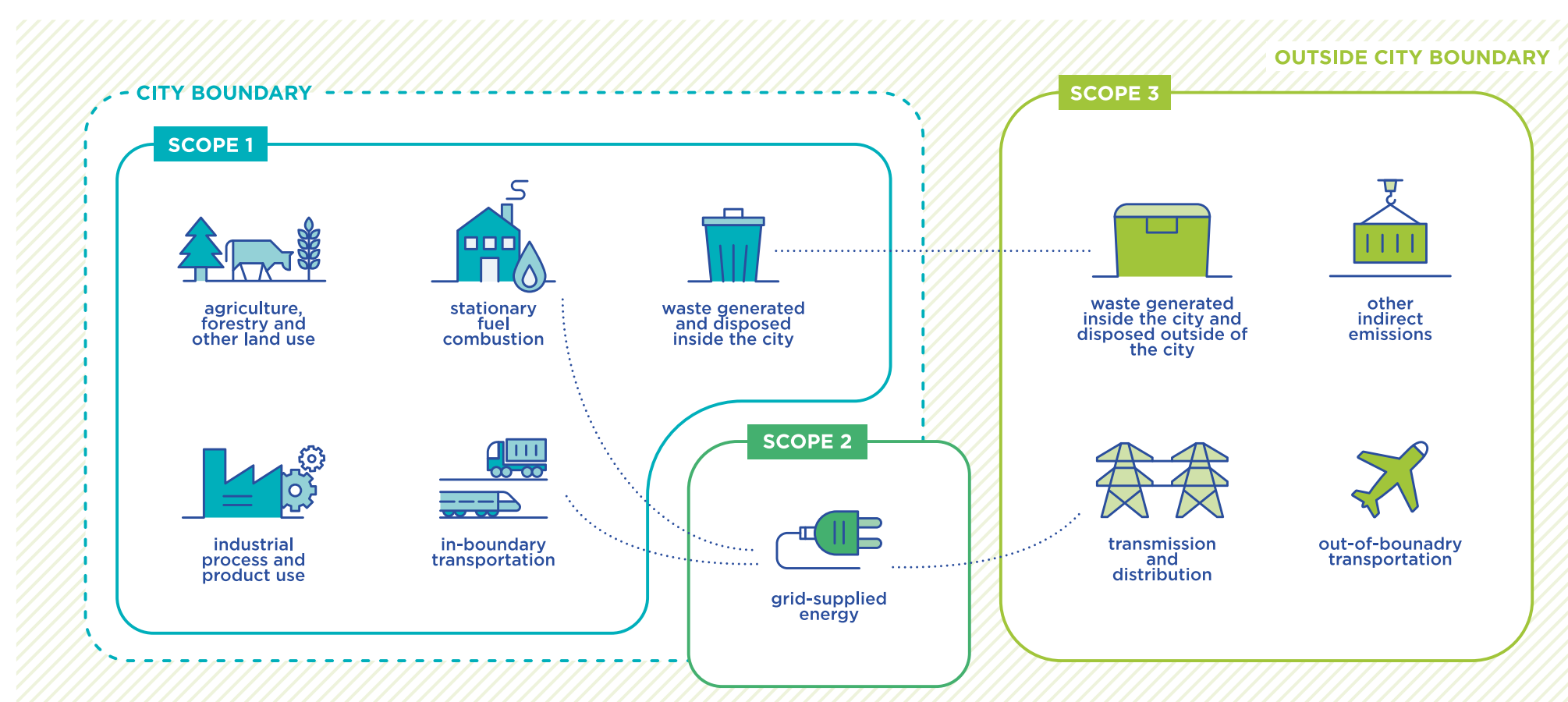
Courtenay's annual per capita emissions are 2.9 tonnes.

While we still have far to go to get to net zero, current emissions in Courtenay are significantly lower than Canada's annual per capita emissions, which are 19.5 tonnes. Courtenay's relatively high performance is due in part to a cleaner electricity grid, and the use of electricity – rather than natural gas – for home heating.

This means that Courtenay is well positioned to lead the way and further demonstrate success in moving toward net zero. Further, there are many other benefits associated with tackling the climate crisis. Many of the actions that can be taken to reduce GHG emissions, are actions that will also improve quality of life, community wellbeing, and more efficient service delivery.



The volume of a tonne of greenhouse gas emissions is about equal to a two-storey high sphere.



GPC Emissions Scopes as They Relate to Geographic and Inventory Boundaries. Source: Consumption-Based Inventories of C40 Cities.



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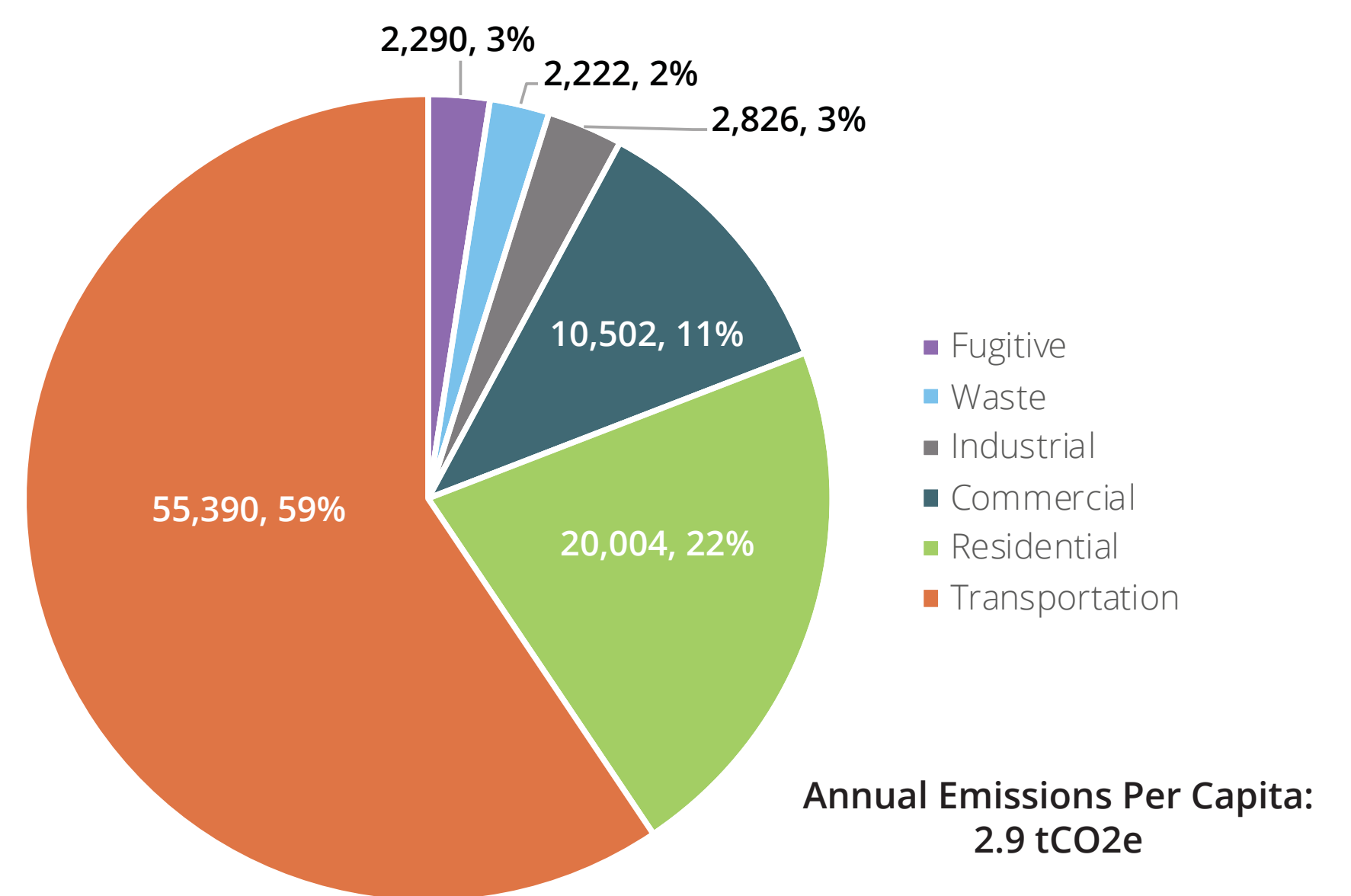


Transportation is the Largest Challenge and the Greatest Opportunity

Transportation is the largest contributor to our local GHG emissions

As shown in the graph, **transportation amounts to 59% of total annual emissions in Courtenay**. Approximately half of this value is a result of personal vehicle travel, and the other half is a result of commercial vehicle travel.

Courtenay Emissions By Sector for Baseline Year 2016.



Courtenay is car dependent

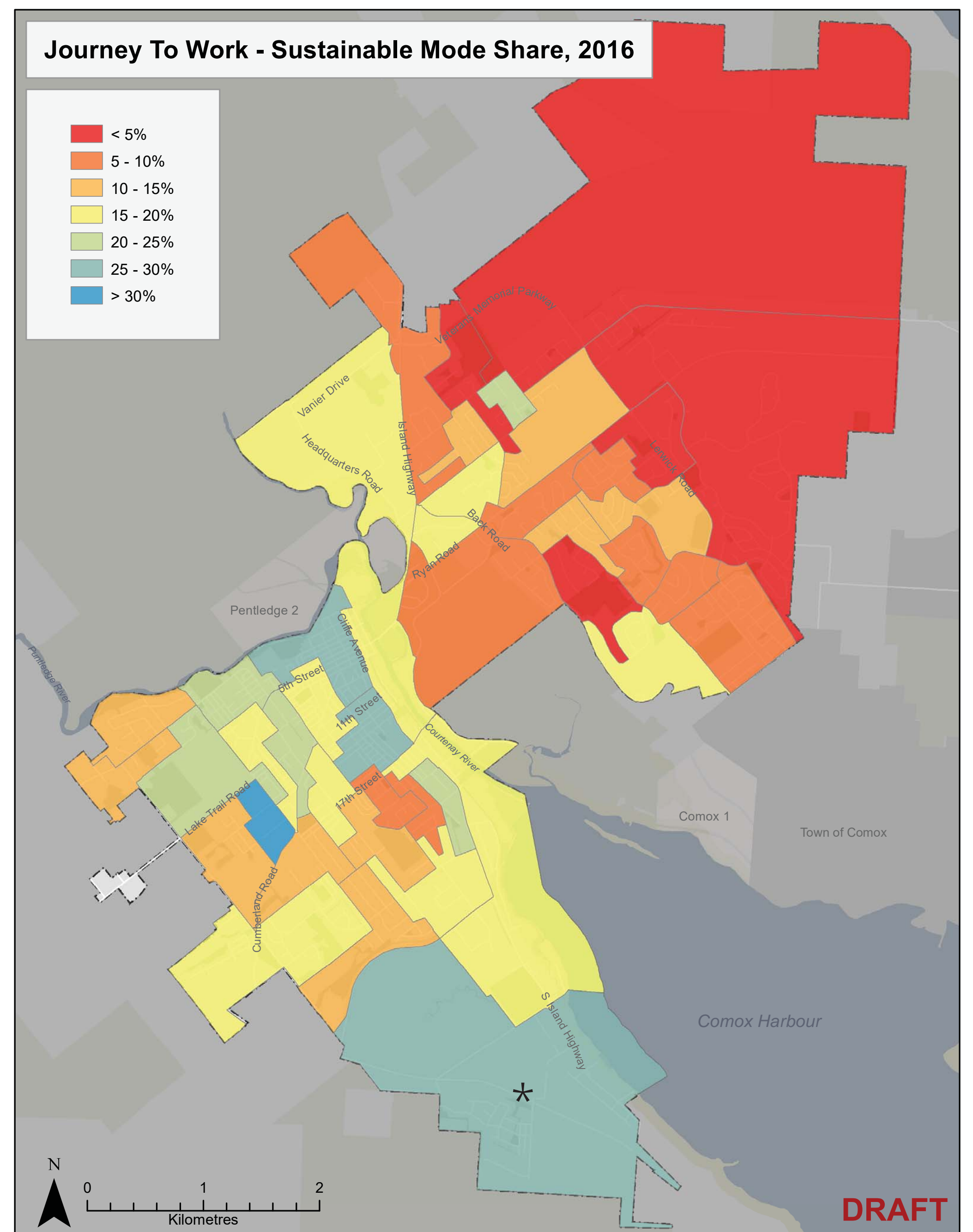
Approximately 85% of all trips in Courtenay are taken by a private vehicle. This number is high relative to both British Columbia as a whole, and other similar sized communities in the province. While car dependency is a major challenge that must be overcome, shifting to active modes and transit offers opportunities for not only GHG emission reductions, but also for individual and community health, street life and community vibrancy, providing transportation choices and reducing transportation costs, and more.

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. This process is being led by BC Transit and the Comox Valley Regional District. Stay tuned for consultation opportunities, and to learn more visit: www.bctransit.com/comox-valley/transit-future.



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



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Land Use Policy is Climate Policy



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.

Transportation is the largest contributor to GHG emissions in Courtenay, and in most other B.C. municipalities. While local governments cannot regulate vehicle emission standards, they have direct control over the degree to which residents travel by foot, bicycle, and transit through land use policy. **Land use – or the type, location, and intensity of residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and other land-based activities – is a primary driver of transportation behaviour.**

Land use effects housing, transportation and the economy through three main facets: land use mix, density and connectivity. These themes will be explored in greater detail in the following panels.

Land Use Mix

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

Density

Density refers to the number of people, homes, or jobs within a given area.

Connectivity

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



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Land Use Policy is Climate Policy

Land Use Mix

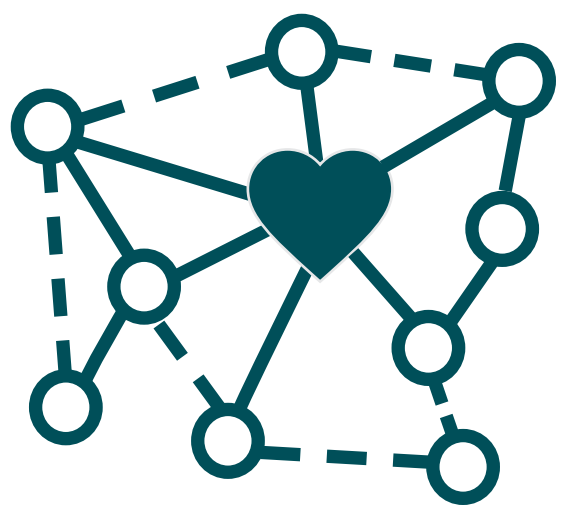
Land use mix helps create distinct, vibrant neighbourhoods that support businesses and offer housing and transportation choice (which reduces greenhouse gas emissions).

The impact of a diverse land use mix



More Walking and Less GHG Emissions

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.

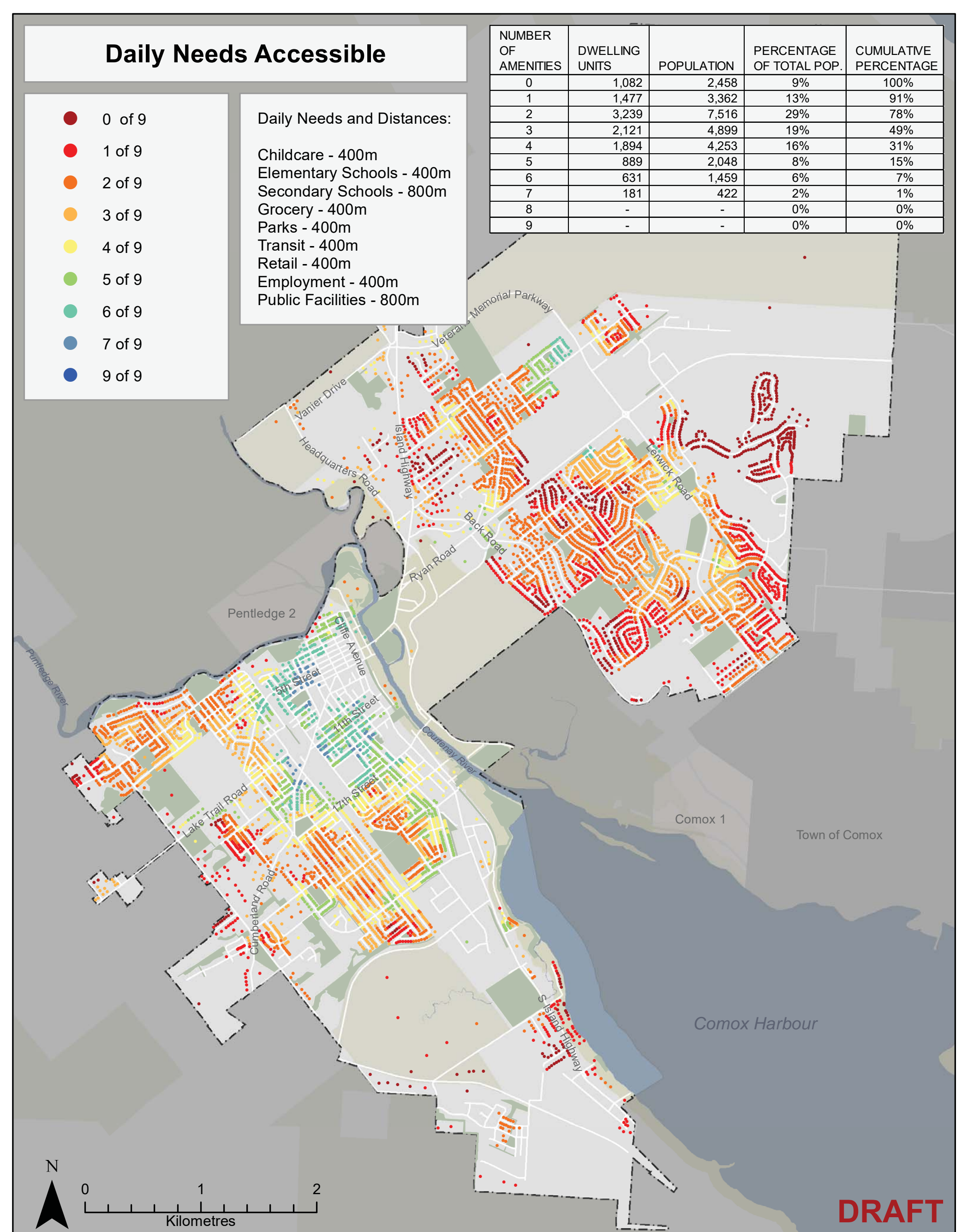


A Stronger Sense of Community

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.

Access to diverse destinations vary across Courtenay

Studies shown that people are much less likely to choose to walk as a mode of travel if the destination is more than 5-10 minutes away. The map on this panel illustrates access to important destinations throughout Courtenay. They reveal that the downtown core along with other older areas of the city provide more access than the newer areas, particularly those that are single use (i.e. almost exclusively residential) neighbourhoods.



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Land Use Policy is Climate Policy

Densities

Density refers to the number of people, homes, or jobs within a given area. Higher residential densities – or compact areas with a relatively high number of homes – can result in a number of benefits including those outlined in green.

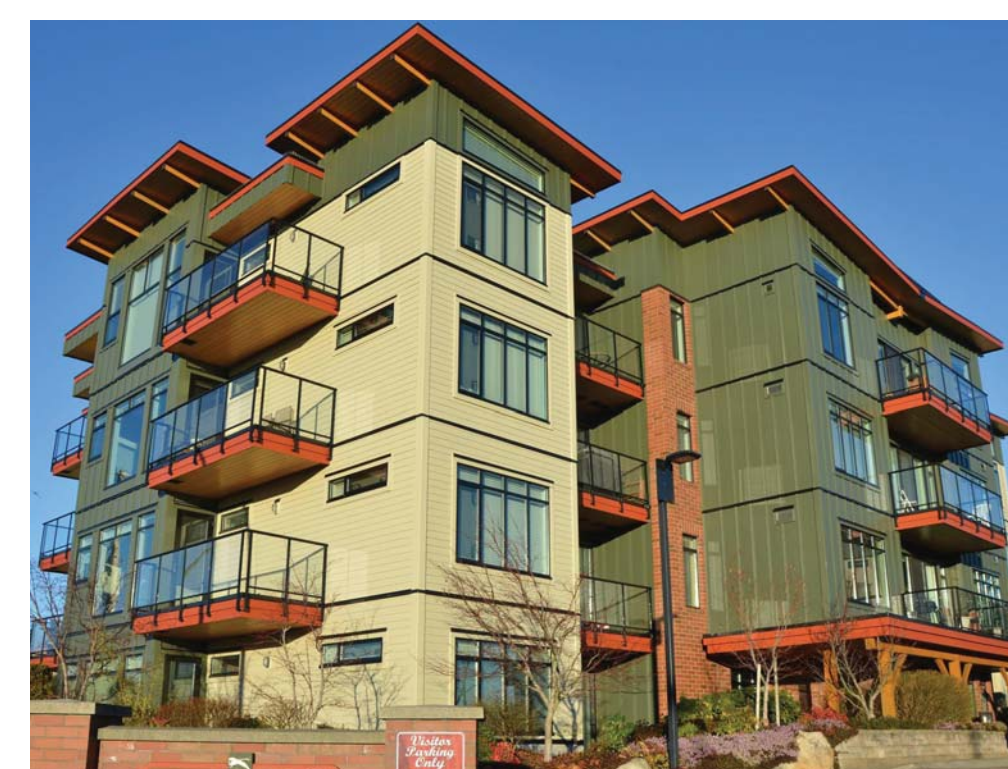
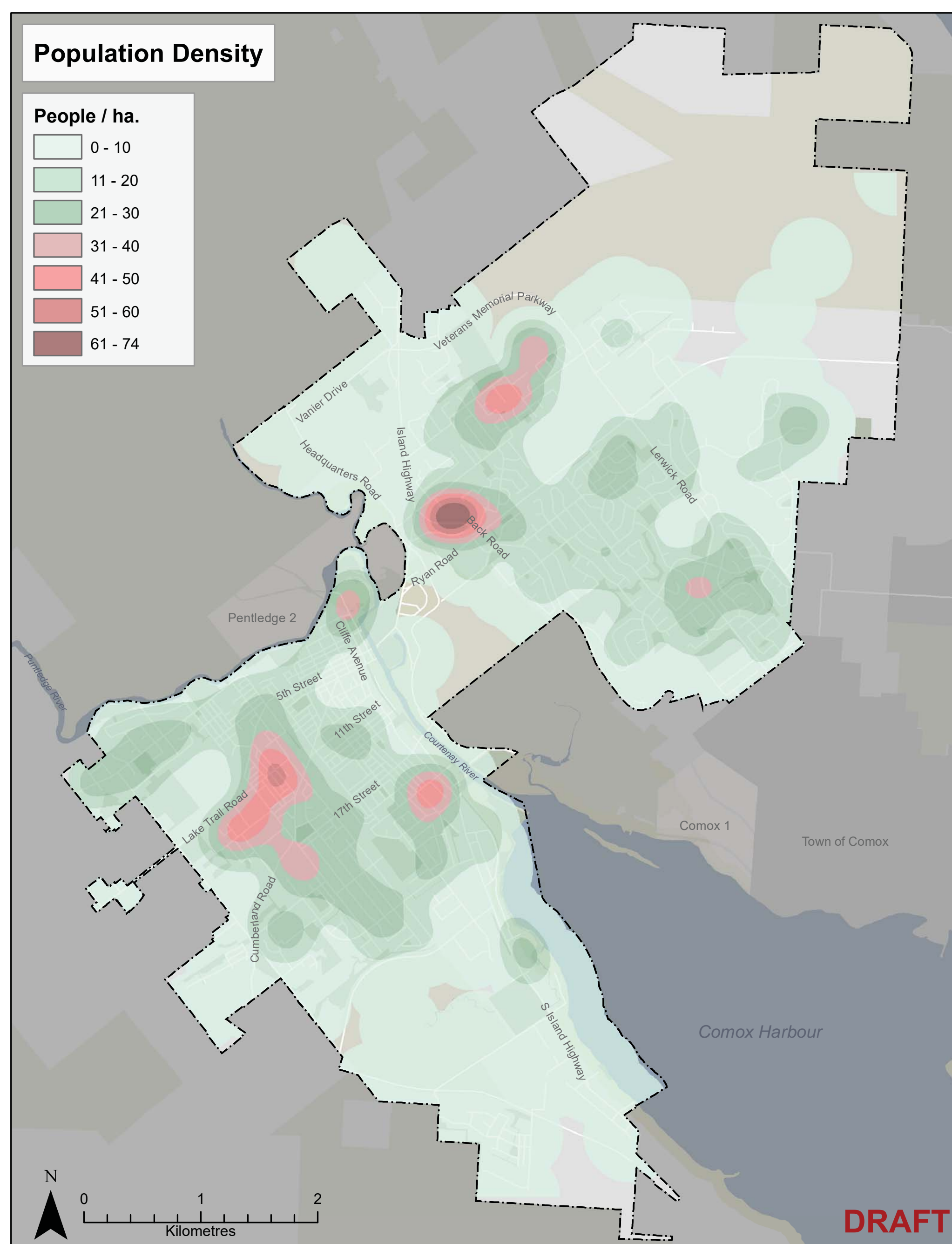
- Energy Savings
- Lower Cost of Municipal Infrastructure
- Greater Housing Choices
- Vibrant Street Life
- More Trips by Foot, Bike and Transit + Closer Access to Services
- Reduced Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Population densities are fairly low in Courtenay

Research shows that residential densities needs to exceed approximately 32 people per hectare before even a minor shift away from predominant vehicle use is seen.

The population density map on this panel reveals that **most areas (shown in green) do not have residential densities that are considered walkable or supportive of frequent transit service**, which partly explains why most trips in Courtenay are taken by car.

Many of these residential densities are also insufficient to create the number of customers needed to support neighbourhood-serving businesses like cafés and small-scale grocers, which in turn influences access to amenities, street life, and overall vitality.



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Land Use Policy is Climate Policy

Connectivity

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

Connected streets support walking, cycling, and transit

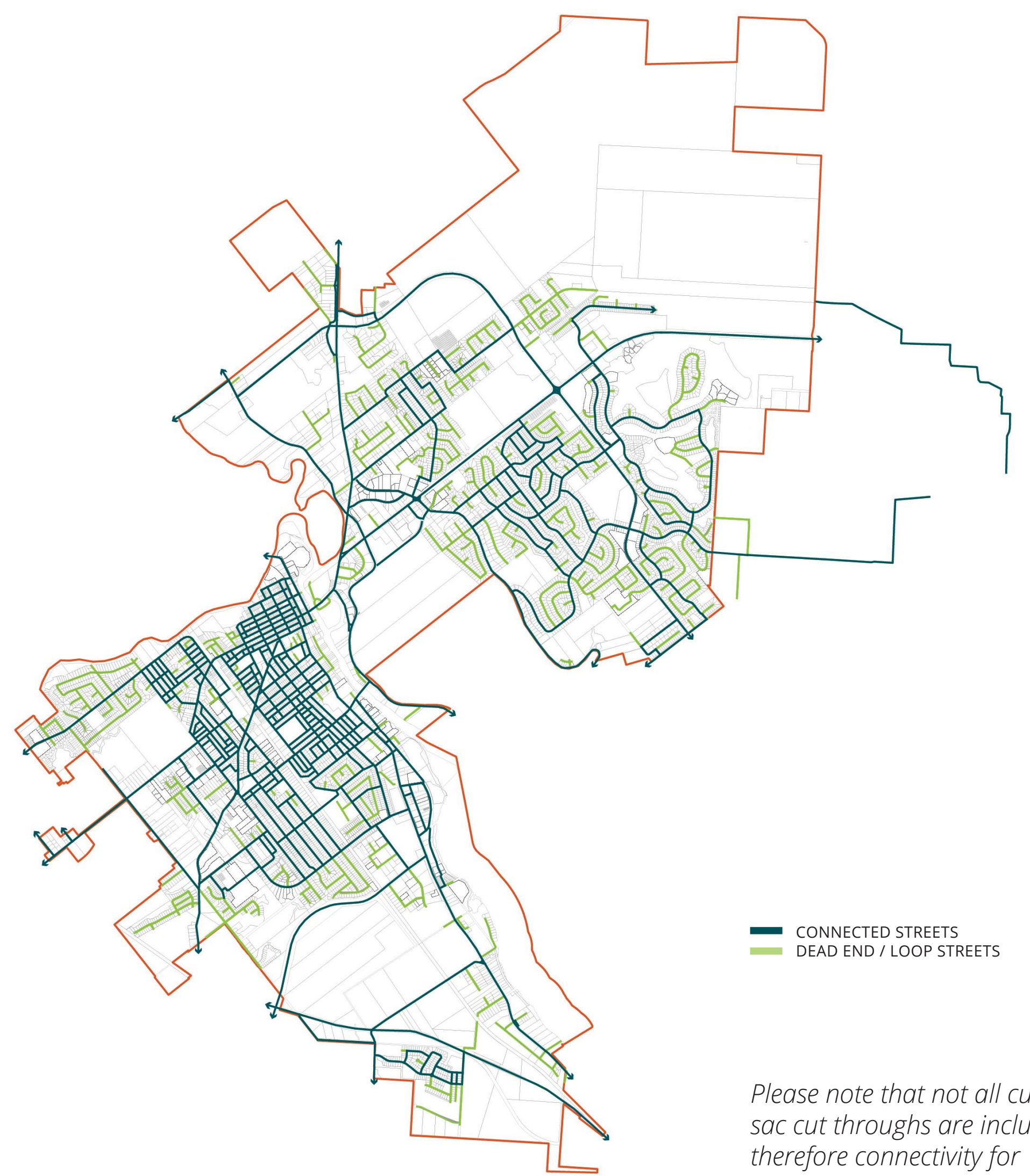
Connectivity is one of the most important factors in determining whether people choose to walk, which in turn supports transit. Connected streets provide direct and multiple route options throughout an area, while “dead end” and “loop” or cul-de-sac streets do not. The map to the right visualizes Courtenay’s connected and dead end/loop streets.

Courtenay’s older areas are better connected than the city’s newer areas

Courtenay’s downtown and older areas have a traditional, small block, grid pattern that was common in the early 20th century. These small blocks are well connected and provide many options for travel by many different modes.

In comparison, street patterns in areas that were developed toward the end of the 20th century and in the 21st century, have larger blocks and curvilinear streets, with less connectivity.

The street pattern diagrams on this panel illustrate the significant difference between “crow-fly” distance and actual street network distance (i.e. which is actual travel distance) in well connected and poorly connected areas.



Please note that not all cul-de-sac cut throughs are included, therefore connectivity for pedestrians may be higher than shown. Nevertheless, a street grid pattern significantly increases clarity in navigation and supports walking.

Below are three examples of street patterns with varying levels of connectivity. Each circle’s radius represents a five minute (400 metre) walk between two locations, while the green solid line shows the actual distance required to travel.



5th Street

5 mins



Moray Ave

7 mins



Perth Place

14 mins



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Growth Has Become Less Efficient Over Time

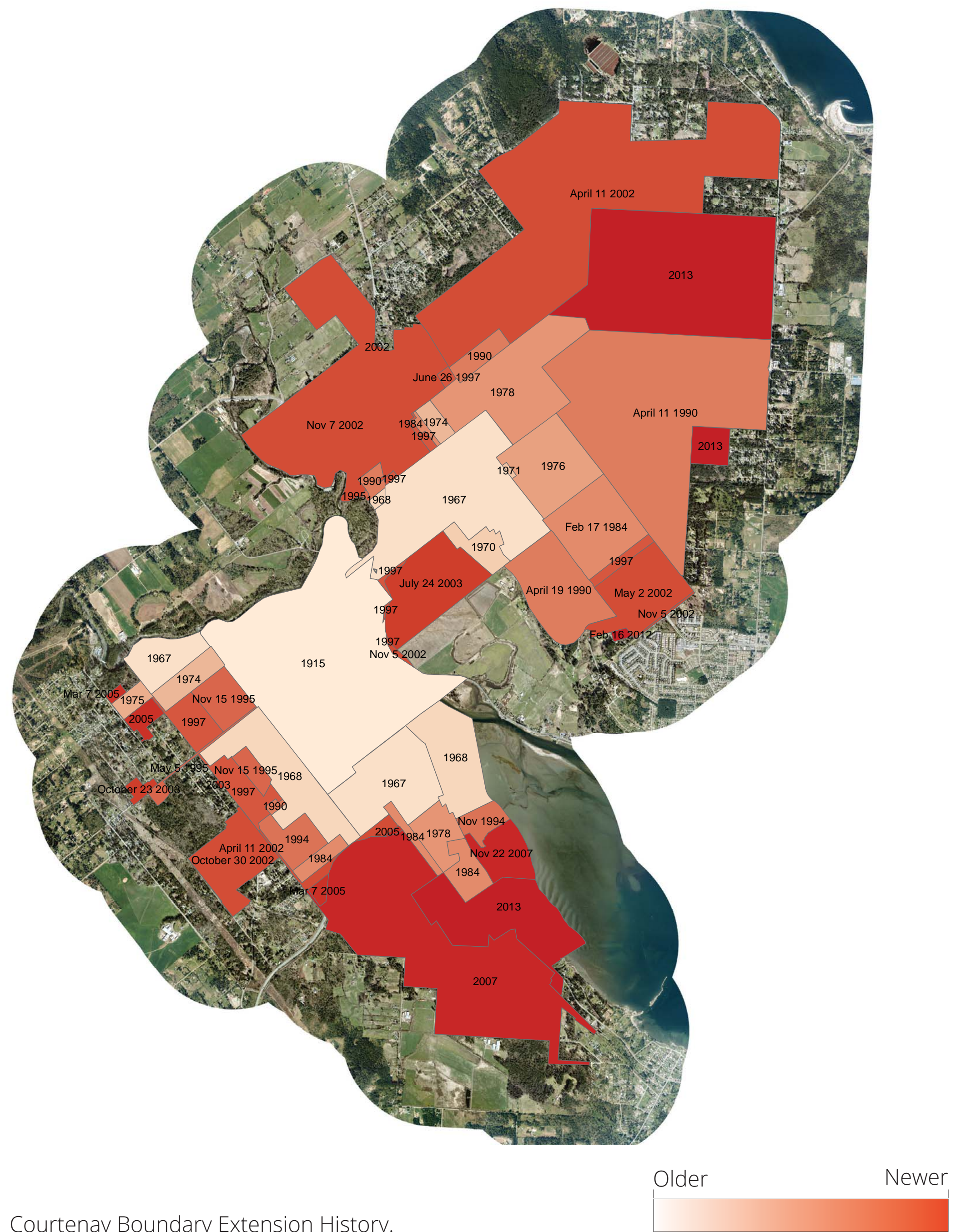
Courtenay's physical growth is expanding faster than its population growth

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 in nature, 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.



Courtenay shown within the larger region. For more information on the Regional Growth Strategy, see panels presented by the Comox Valley Regional District.

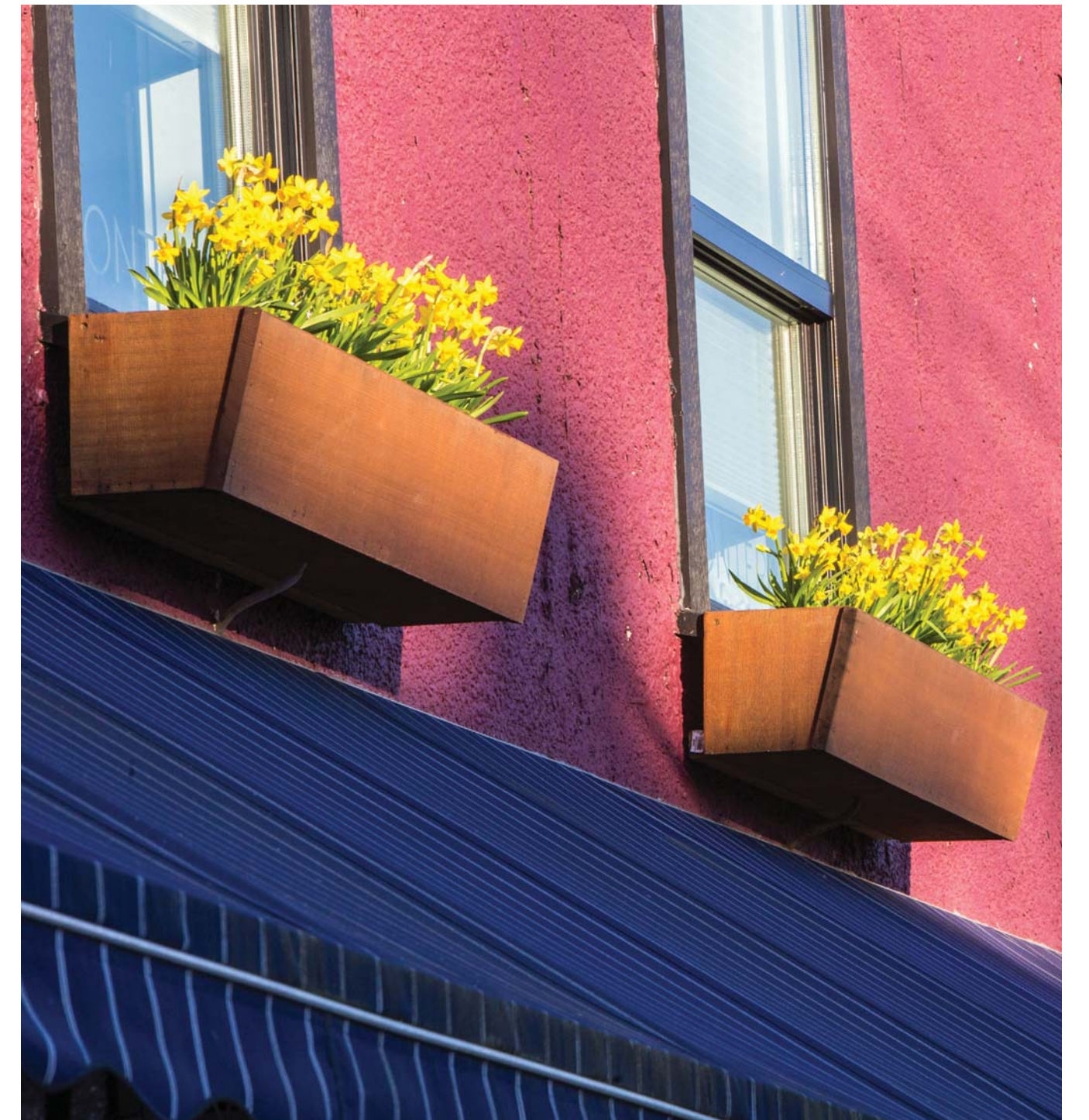


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Downtown Is a Strength And a Precedent

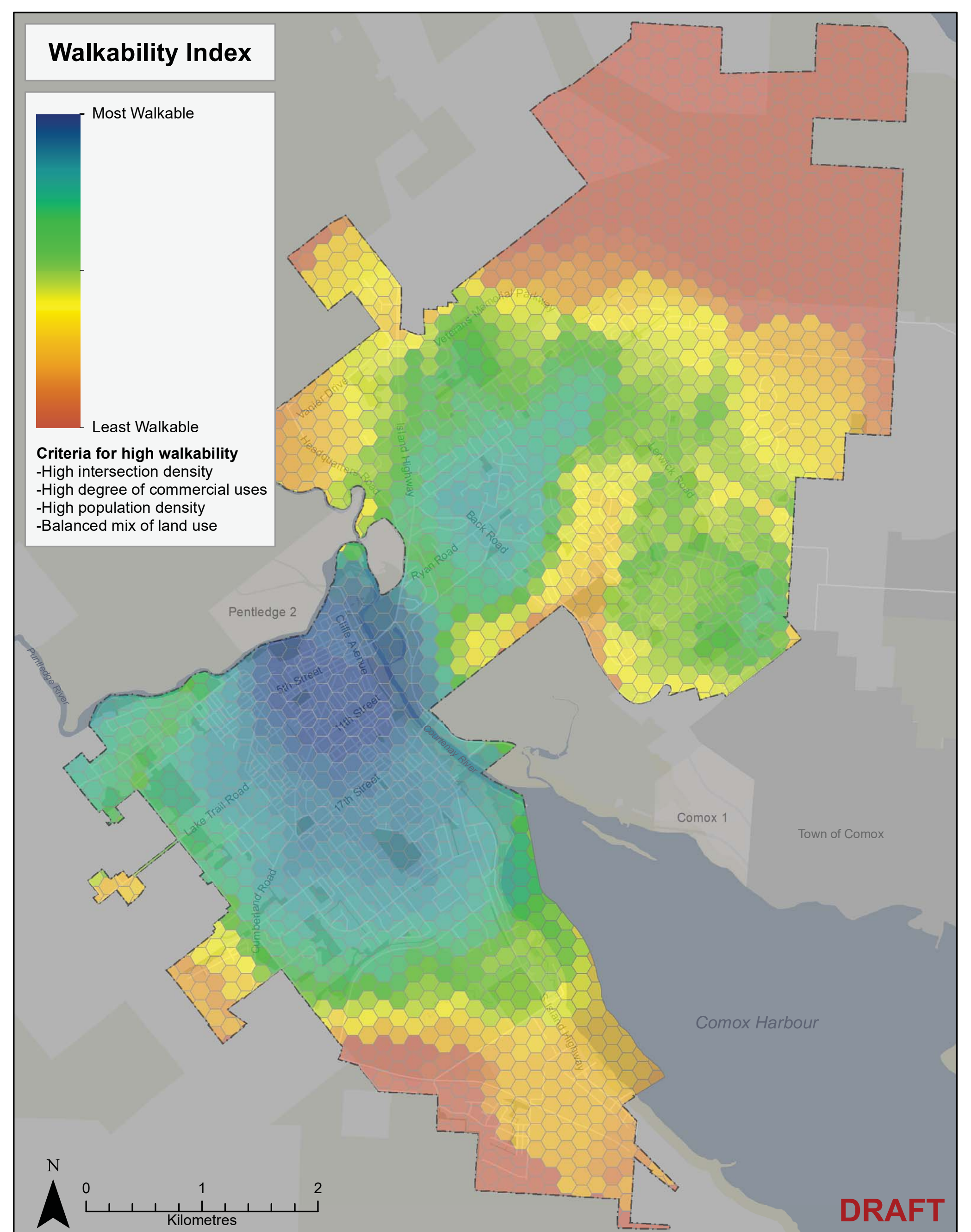


Downtown is a success story that can inspire future planning in Courtenay

Downtown is a successful anchor and heart in Courtenay. It is walkable and distinct, and fosters public life and a unique sense of place and identity. The way it has been designed and used – and continues to be used – demonstrates that this type of urban form can thrive in Courtenay.

Downtown and its surrounding area is the most walkable part of Courtenay

Downtown has all the right ingredients of urban form to make it walkable. It is surrounded by relatively higher amounts of population density, which provide a strong base of customers and workers to support businesses. It has a mix of uses and destinations, including plenty of retail stores that help meet daily needs. It has a well-connected street network, making it easy to get around on foot. It also has a delightful character that encourages residents to linger and spend time in the area.



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The City Has Access and Choice, But Not in Every Neighbourhood

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

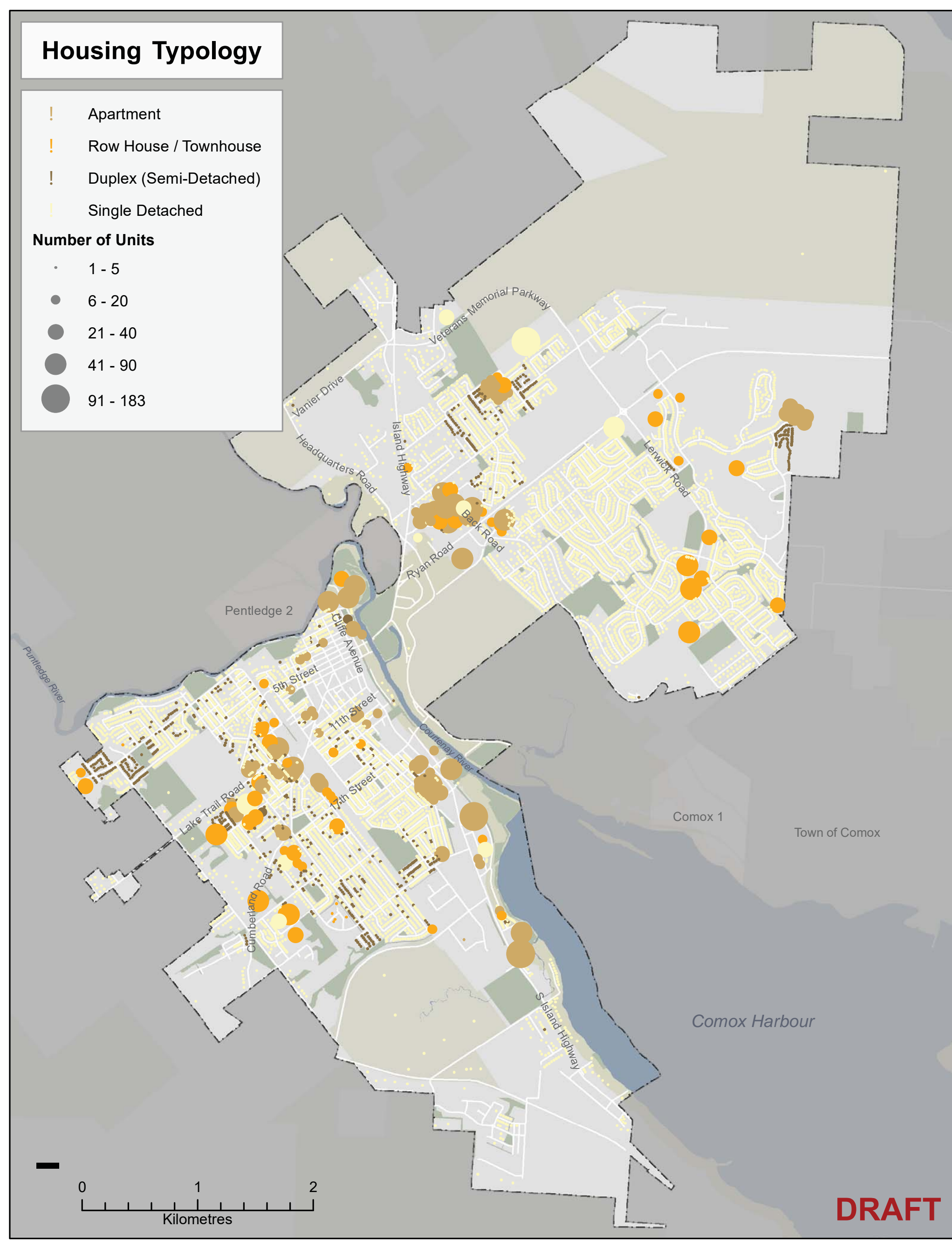
Courtenay is rich with cultural, recreational, commercial, educational, and employment destinations. This richness of access exists at a city level, however it is currently not extended to all neighbourhoods, particularly in newer areas. In other words, **the city is “complete” but many of its neighbourhoods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

Households are relatively small in Courtenay, 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 single-detached households.

“Aging in place” – or having the option of staying in one’s neighbourhood throughout different life stages– requires 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 Road between Ryan Road and North Island Highway



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Local Ecology Offers Unique Character and the Vital Services of Nature



Time Immemorial

Since Time Immemorial, the K'ómoks First Nation has stewarded and cared for the lands and waters that make up Courtenay today. Their language and spiritual practices are tied to the lands, waters, and resources that are found in the K'ómoks area.

Ecology shapes this place

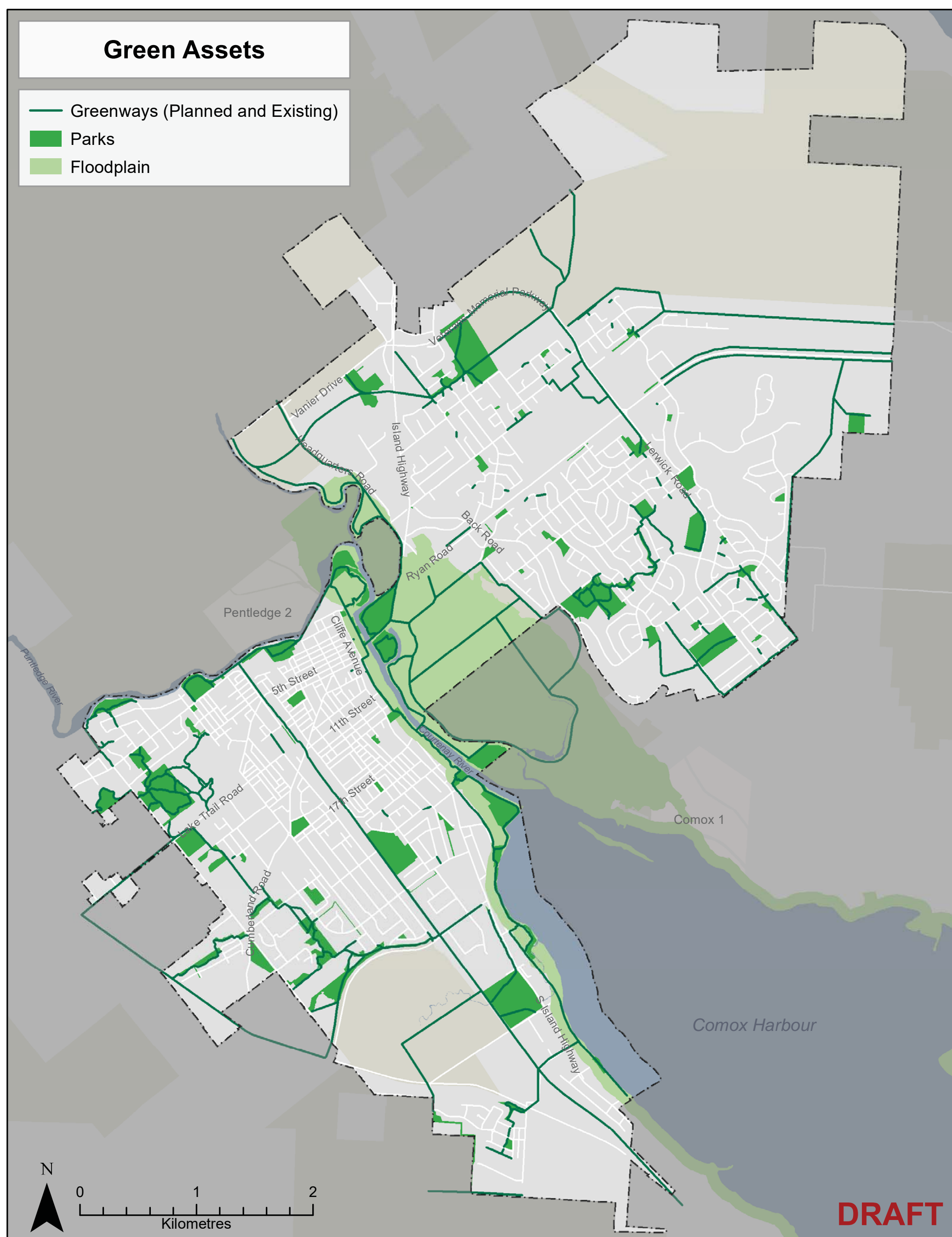
While all cities form a part of broader bioregions, it is rare for local ecologies to shape the character of a community to the extent they do in Courtenay. Whether it's the role of the river in shaping European settlement history, or the stunning views, or the location of the city at one of the province's most important estuaries, the ecological systems of which Courtenay is a part are highly visible and character-defining.

Residents enjoy excellent access to green spaces in Courtenay

Along with City parks, these areas provide residents exceptional access to green and blue spaces – which have intrinsic and recreational value – while at the same time providing habitat to other beings and free services of nature such as flood relief. This panel's map illustrates Courtenay's greenways, parks and floodplain. Courtenay's green spaces and ecological areas comprise a truly special and vital asset, and will play an important role in helping the city adapt to a changing climate.

We all live in a watershed and within the urban forest

Community growth options that design with nature in mind are not only nice to have, they are increasingly becoming necessary in a rapidly changing environment. As we grow, we must consider how to maintain, and even restore, watershed health, and grow our urban forest. Our natural environment not only provides services for us, but is a strong part of our community's identity and reason why people move here and love to call Courtenay home.



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Courtenay's People are at the Heart of This OCP's Success

We all have to do our part!

Courtenay is home to many passionate, dedicated individuals who want to see positive change in their community. Achieving ambitious emissions reduction targets **will require a collective effort from everyone.**



And we're only just beginning...



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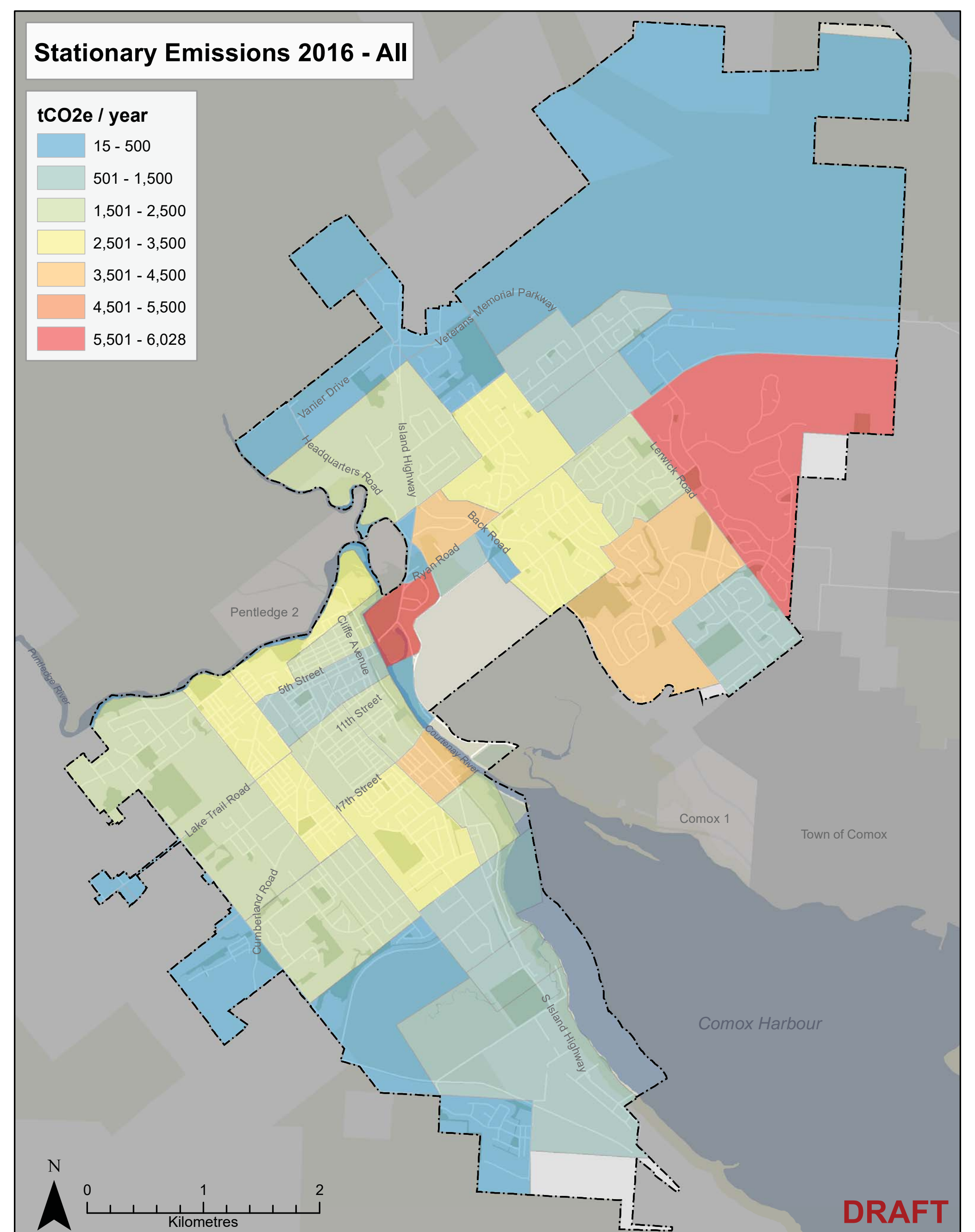
Coming to a neighbourhood near you in April – June: workshops, walkshops, discussions and more. We hope you see you there!

Over the next phase, we'll also be continuing our data analyses to ensure we have all the necessary information to host informed conversations. As a sneak peek, check out a work-in-progress stationary emissions map of Courtenay below.

Do you know a friend or family member who couldn't make it today?

Please let them know that an online survey will be coming in March and we'd love to hear from them – we want everyone to know about this plan!

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



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