



## STAFF REPORT

**To:** Council

**File No.:** 6480-00

**From:** Chief Administrative Officer

**Date:** January 17, 2022

**Subject:** Official Community Plan (OCP) – Official Consultation and Public Review of the Draft

### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of key aspects and policies contained within the Draft Official Community Plan and inform Council that staff is conducting an official consultation with the identified stakeholders alongside public engagement of the first full draft Official Community Plan (OCP) with members of the community including community key stakeholder groups and organizations.

### POLICY ANALYSIS:

- An update of the Official Community Plan identified as 2019-2022 Council Strategic Priority.
- **The Local Government Act Part 14, Division 4 – Official Community Plan Section 475 (1):** During the development of an official community plan, or the repeal or amendment of an official community plan, the proposing local government must receive and endorse a plan to provide one or more opportunities it considers appropriate for consultation with persons, organizations and authorities it considers will be affected.
- Consultation and drafting of Official Community Plan policies has been undertaken in accordance with the direction from the May 11, 2020 staff report “Official Community Plan (OCP) – Consultation Requirements”.

### CAO RECOMMENDATION:

THAT based on the January 17, 2022 Staff Report “Official Community Plan (OCP) – Official Consultation and Public Review of the Draft,” Council supports staff to proceed with the official consultation and review process with the stakeholders as well as members of the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Geoff Garbutt, M.Pl, MCIP, RPP  
Chief Administrative Officer

### BACKGROUND:

The primary objective of the official consultation and public review is to provide an opportunity for stakeholders and members of the public to review the complete draft and seek inputs for further improvement of the draft. It is also to encourage community-wide dialogues with respect to the policy proposals prior to the final bylaw adoption.

The OCP update project has been underway since fall of 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic was declared early in the process and key staffing changes in the last year significantly affected the project timeline. Despite the fact that the project was delayed for several months, the major milestones of the project have been completed in order of the intended sequence.

The draft plan has been developed through background research, GHG modeling, land use planning exercises, extensive public consultations with stakeholders and members of the community in the earlier phases. To date, the members of the Advisory Committee have contributed tremendous amount of time and effort in reviewing and evaluating policies, while providing technical expertise as representatives of the focused areas. Staff acknowledge and express sincere gratitude for their contribution.

The project is at phase 5. The OCP bylaw will be presented to Council for consideration of readings will follow in Phase 6 and will be immediately followed by a statutory public hearing. It is anticipated that the bylaw will be considered for adoption is expected in June 2022.

**Phase 1** (August 2019 – January 2020): Background research.

**Phase 2** (February – September 2020): Ideas Fair, online public survey, City-wide vision and growth scenarios development exercise.

**Phase 3** (October – November 2020): Targeted neighbourhood planning, ‘walkshop’, and stakeholder sessions.

**Phase 4** (December 2020 – December 2021): Draft Plan, policy analysis and formulation, stakeholder consultations.

**Phase 5** (January – April 2022): OCP Bylaw Consultation – Public, Stakeholder and Agency.

**Phase 6** (May – July 2022): OCP Bylaw adoption process.

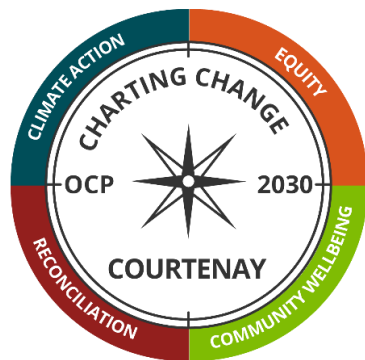
## DISCUSSION:

### Highlights of the Draft OCP

The proposed draft is a comprehensive update of the current OCP. It includes a new vision, goals, growth management and land use policies, implementation policies, and updated maps. Through extensive public consultation and research, the draft has been crafted to help foster a vibrant community in the next decades. Key points of the new OCP are below:

#### 1. New Visual Identity of a Compass

The compass is imprinted with the four ‘cardinal directions’ of reconciliation, climate action, equity, and community well-being, all of which serve as lenses embedded throughout the Plan policies, and provide focus to ensure Courtenay’s values guide actions whatever the decision may be. Council directed that climate action and reconciliation guide the development of the OCP. In addition, equity and community well-being emerged as important values through the consultation process as did climate action and reconciliation.



#### 2. New Vision

A new plan vision has been created. The visioning section also includes a capstone statement to capture the essence and direction of the Plan.

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

**3. Net Zero Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 2050**

Informed by community energy and emissions modelling, related policies are sought to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, while 45% reduction in emissions from 2016 levels by 2030. GHG modelling indicates that the greatest gains to community-wide carbon reductions are through the transportation and buildings sectors and therefore there are a number of community planning policies that centre on multi-modal transportation, green buildings, and compact, efficient, high-quality forms of urban development which are also considered good community planning practice.

**4. Updated Regional Context Statement**

Aligns directly with the Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) of focusing growth within the Municipal Areas (of which Courtenay is one); and within the Municipal Areas creating complete, compact and connected forms of high quality urban development. The urban physical framework and land use designations support the RGS directions and Part – B Managing Growth section of the OCP clearly identifies that municipal boundary extensions are not generally supported over the life of this Plan.

**5. New Land Use Concept and Urban Physical Framework**

The draft plan proposes to focus on supporting developments within areas where services are provided and discourage municipal boundary extension unless it supports local job creation. Informed by a growth modelling and land use planning exercise, an urban physical framework consists of several focused primary and secondary growth centres identified within the City boundary to support a number of higher density mix-used developments. The land use strategy also identifies lower density residential areas eligible for gentle infill development, while supporting much higher and denser development along major corridors and traditional commercial zones.

**6. New Land Use Designations**

Based on the New Land Use Concept and Urban Physical Framework, the new land use designations and policies are established. The proposed draft provides a map and descriptions of each land use designation in Part C.

The land use designation is particularly important as to guide particular forms and character of future development in specific areas as well as to inform future Zoning Bylaw updates. The process and proposed changes are to be discussed in the future stage.

Table: Proposed Land Use Designation & Descriptions

Proposed Land Use Designations	Description
<b>Downtown</b>	The downtown is intended to function as the local, city-wide, and regional centre of cultural, civic, culinary, economic, and public life with the widest range of activities and attraction for residents and visitors, day and night, throughout the year.
<b>Town Centre &amp; Urban Corridor</b>	The two Town Centres are intended to be primary focus areas of commercial and residential densities outside the downtown. These areas will support a mix of uses that include a variety of higher-density housing choices as well as regional retail destinations.
<b>Neighbourhood Centre</b>	These areas include smaller-scale mixed-use areas than Town Centres that include a diversity of destinations and housing choices.
<b>Multi-Residential</b>	Multi-residential lands are located between Town Centres and surrounding Urban Residential Neighbourhoods, which include

	parts of Back Road, Dingwall Road, and Headquarters Road. They provide additional residential density in proximity to a mix of uses and act as transitional areas between higher-activity mixed-use commercial areas and urban residential neighbourhoods.
<b>Urban Residential</b>	These neighbourhood areas are largely residential neighbourhoods comprised mainly of ground-oriented single detached residential buildings. “Gentle infill” will be permitted in such areas in the form of an additional secondary residence.
<b>Service Commercial</b>	These are specific parcels that are currently zoned for larger format commercial uses, including big-box, and that fall outside of Town Centres and Urban Corridors. They allow for the sale to the general public of goods that may require on-site storage to support the business’ operation.
<b>Institutional</b>	These civic and institutional uses encompass educational facilities, health-care facilities, religious institutions, utilities, and agencies with limited accessory uses.
<b>Light Industrial</b>	Light industrial uses and employment lands accommodate a mix of light manufacturing, processing, warehousing, and distribution, and support the diversification of the City’s economy.
<b>Parks and Recreation</b>	Parks, trails, recreation facilities, and natural areas with limited accessory uses.
<b>Agricultural</b>	Agricultural lands which may or may not be within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).
<b>Future Growth</b>	Lands within the city designated for future urban development, due to their existing low density, limited transportation access, limited municipal services, and distance from growth centres.

**7. Rescinding of the Current Local Area Plans (LAPs)**

Most local plan areas have either been built out or nearing completion. Therefore, the new OCP proposes to rescind the existing LAPs with exception of the Arden Corridor Local Area Plan. In the draft OCP, updated planning vision and goals and relevant policies for the plan areas are included in the land use section. The Arden Corridor Local Area Plan will be updated in alignment with the other land use policies and its Environmental Development Permit Area guidelines in the LAP will be merged into the general environmental permit area guidelines in the Zoning Bylaw.

**8. New Thematic Policy Areas and Highlights**

a. Streets and Transportation

- Reevaluate street space to support good urban design and green infrastructure
- Support zero emissions through improvement of active transportation modes such as enhanced bicycle infrastructure, safe pedestrian environment, and electrified transportation
- Improve connectivity between neighbourhoods & major destinations
- Support more accessible and efficient public transit system

b. Buildings and Landscape

- Acceleration of the BC Energy Step Code
- Require enhanced energy & water efficiency for projects that require a rezoning or development permit

- c. Affordable Housing
  - Permit two dwelling units in all residential zones
  - Support ‘missing middle’ low rise and ground oriented developments in traditionally single family zones
  - Consider incentive package for rental housing development
  - Increase accessibility for all ages and abilities
  
- d. Natural Environment
  - Establish clean air, water and soil quality standards and measures
  - Protect the existing natural environment
  - Consider enhanced nature restoration and preservation
  - Support education, engagement and hands on efforts to nurture a culture of conservation
  
- e. Parks and Recreation
  - Create better connectivity of parks and trails to allow for seamless connections
  - Provide variety of park types and amenities to respond to the needs of diverse residents
  - Continue to improve recreation programming, facilities and distribution of venues to meet diverse needs and demands
  
- f. Municipal Infrastructure
  - Build infrastructure more resilient to risks and impacts of climate change
  - Integrate natural and engineered forms of green infrastructure to manage rainwater, provide improved flood control, and adapt to climate change.
  
- g. Social Infrastructure
  - Recognize the role that one’s social determinants of health, such as childhood experiences and access to housing, education, sufficient income and nutrition have on wider social outcomes
  - Support programs and high quality public spaces in all neighbourhoods to promote social connectedness
  
- h. Arts, Culture, and Heritage
  - Support regional partnerships
  - Incorporate creative and heritage expressions that reflect the diverse identities and contributions of the community
  - Encourage Indigenous expression in architecture, public spaces, community art and culture
  - Promote awareness and conservation of the heritage of Courtenay
  
- i. Food Systems
  - Support urban agriculture and related activities
  - Encourage land uses that support the food economy
  
- j. Local Economy
  - Support business retention, development and investment
  - Coordinate local economic development opportunities
  - Provide municipal regulations and services that are supportive of local economic development

**9. Development Permit Area (DPA) guidelines in the Zoning Bylaw**

In the draft OCP, Development Permit Area guidelines are proposed to be included in the Zoning Bylaw. This approach is new to Courtenay though it is becoming a common approach amongst local governments. While the LGA allows that the guidelines be enshrined in either the OCP or Zoning Bylaw, there are a number of advantages to including the guidelines in the Zoning Bylaw. Most notably, development permit area guidelines are by nature a development application and evaluation tool. DPA guidelines ensure the desired form and character of new development, the appropriate protection of the environment including farmland, and the prevention of hazardous conditions. They function most effectively when aligned with regulations such as permitted uses, setbacks, densities, massing, and parking within the Zoning Bylaw when evaluating new development applications. In addition, this mechanism will provide clarity in the development permit approval process for both the City and applicants.

This mechanism would potentially reduce conflicts between applicants and neighbouring property owners. It would also allow the City to enforce the guidelines more efficiently when the guideline is contravened.

**10. Consolidation of Development Permit Area (DPA) categories.**

The draft OCP proposes to consolidate DPA categories to reflect the needs and achieve the desired developments in each area. Farm protection DPA is proposed to be included in the draft. The following table highlights the differences in the DPA designations between the current and proposed draft OCP:

Table: DPA category comparison

Current DP Areas	Proposed DP Areas
Downtown	<b>Commercial, Industrial, Mixed-use and Multi-Residential</b>
Commercial	
Shopping Centre	
Industrial	
Multi-Residential	
Multi-Residential Building Above 3 Storeys	
Intensive Residential	<b>Intensive Residential</b>
Old Orchard and Area	
Duplex, Carriage House and Secondary Residential	
Environmental	<b>Environmental</b>
Arden Corridor Environmental	
South Courtenay	<b>(Rescinded)</b>
	<b>Farmland Hazardous</b>

**11. An Updated Implementation Section**

Implementation section is a critical part of the document. This section begins with Courtenay’s future low-carbon pathway to acknowledge community-wide actions that will deliver the greatest

GHG emission reductions. The draft calls for the City's leadership and key actions to help reduce carbon emissions in its operation and service delivery. Also identified, is the need for improved community education, engagement and partnerships to ensure community focused development.

Policies in the Development Application Tools section provide information on the legislative requirements and the City's expectation toward plan implementation. It includes Development Approval Information Areas, Community Amenity Contribution and the Development Permit Area designations.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Bylaw process has been accounted for within the 2020-2021 financial plans and no additional professional consulting service fees are required. Other project related costs such as plan advertisement or final documentation are considered in the 2022 department operational budget proposal. The proposed total budget for advertisement is \$3,000 in 2022.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:**

Approximately 500 hours of staff time is anticipated to conduct the official consultation, review of feedbacks and public comments, survey analysis and evaluation, revision of the draft, meetings and reporting, prior to the first bylaw reading.

#### **ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no asset management implications at this stage.

#### **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:**

##### **We support diversity in housing and reasoned land use planning**

- Complete an update of the City's OCP and Zoning Bylaws

- **AREA OF CONTROL:** The policy, works and programming matters that fall within Council's jurisdictional authority to act
- ▲ **AREA OF INFLUENCE:** Matters that fall within shared or agreed jurisdiction between Council and another government or party
- **AREA OF CONCERN:** Matters of interest that are outside Council's jurisdictional authority to act

#### **OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN REFERENCE:**

Comprehensive update of the current Official Community Plan.

#### **REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY REFERENCE:**

Section 447 of the Local Government Act requires that a Regional Context Statement be included within the OCP that specifically identifies the relationship between the OCP and the Comox Valley Regional District's Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) and how the OCP will be made consistent with the RGS.

Draft Regional Context Statement is included in the Part B – Managing Growth section of the draft OCP. Proposed policies in the draft OCP well align with policies within the Regional Growth Strategy. A detailed policy analysis of policy consistency between the two growth management tools is in the Appendix.

The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) will be conducting a full review of the draft OCP and will provide comments and guidance during the review period. Should the CVRD identify that the draft OCP aligns with the Regional Growth Strategy's vision, goals and policies, the Board will provide a letter of support for the City before the adoption of the bylaw.

## **CITIZEN/PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

### **Legislative Consultation Requirement**

Pursuant to section 475 of the *Local Government Act*, local governments are required to one or more opportunities it considers appropriate for consultation with persons, organizations and authorities it considers will be affected during the development of an official community plan. Accordingly, based on the May 11, 2020 staff report “Official Community Plan (OCP) – Consultation Requirements”, Council adopted a resolution as follows:

- (1) That Council give consideration to the requirements of Section 475 of the *Local Government Act*;
- (2) That Council direct staff to consult with:
  - a. Comox Valley Regional District;
  - b. Town of Comox;
  - c. Village of Cumberland;
  - d. K’ómoks First Nation;
  - e. School District No. 71;
  - f. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure;
  - g. Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy;
  - h. Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource and Operations, and Rural Development;
  - i. Department of Fisheries and Oceans; and
  - j. Island Health
- (3) That consultation with K’ómoks First Nation include no less than two meetings between K’ómoks Chief and Council and City Council in addition to referral of a draft copy of the OCP with sixty (60) days for written comment prior to bylaw adoption;
- (4) That Council direct City staff to engage in regular meetings with staff from K’ómoks First Nation throughout the development of the OCP; and
- (5) That consultation with the Laich-Kwil-Tach Council of Chiefs, the Wei Wai Kum/Kwiakah First Nations and the Homalco Indian Band occur through a notice of the OCP review process and referral of a draft copy of the OCP with sixty (60) days for written comment prior to bylaw adoption.

All the stakeholders listed above will have an opportunity to review the draft and provide comments with respect to the draft OCP for 60 days.

Courtenay Council and K’ómoks First Nation Chief and Council have formally met three times during the development of the draft and had opportunity to mutually learn about the OCP update and contents. However, staff are prepared to provide additional study session(s) with K’ómoks First Nation during this phase as necessary.

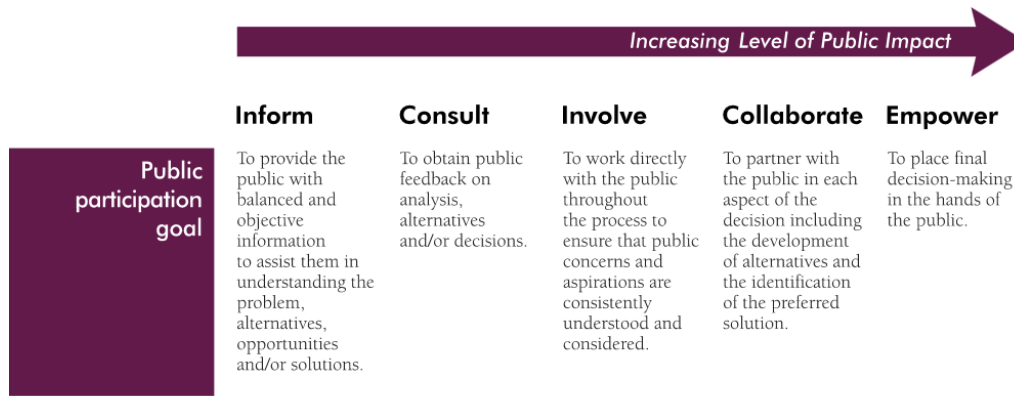
### **Community Consultation**

In this phase of public engagement, staff will primarily “Consult” the community including individual citizens, stakeholders and official referral bodies with respect to the proposed vision, goals, and policy directions of the Plan. Staff will evaluate all feedback from the public as well as the stakeholders and make necessary changes as required before the final draft plan is brought forward to Council for formal bylaw adoption in the final phase. Staff will be available for inquiries regarding the draft plan.

The City will consult with the public based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

[http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/IAP2%20Spectrum\\_vertical.pdf](http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/IAP2%20Spectrum_vertical.pdf)





Staff will engage with members of the community including community key stakeholder groups and organizations as listed in the **Attachment No. 1** during the consultation period. Public engagement plan and methodologies are below.

**Public Online Survey**

An online survey platform has been developed. It will be available to members of the public on the City’s website ([www.courtenay.ca/ocpupdate](http://www.courtenay.ca/ocpupdate)). The survey provides a unique opportunity to learn more about the draft and provide comments. All members of the community are strongly encouraged to participate.

**Online Public Meeting**

Staff is not intending to hold an in-person open house event at this time following the Provincial health restriction. Alternatively, staff is holding an online public meeting that allows participants to ask questions to staff directly regarding the draft plan or related matters. The meeting is tentatively planned in early February. Details will be posted later date.

**Key Stakeholders’ Meeting**

Staff will hold topic specific online meetings with key stakeholders (e.g. local development industry and home builders, the Chambers of Commerce) on a request basis to discuss draft policies in focused areas. Staff will coordinate with key stakeholders and set up meetings. Development industry has not provided comments to the draft. Staff hope to connect with the industry to make necessary improvements.

**Community Stakeholders**

All community stakeholders (**Attachment No. 1**) will be notified and given an opportunity to comment.

**Engagement Panel**

A series of poster boards will be produced to showcase key highlights of the draft plan. These panels are to be displayed at community facilities or the College to provide an opportunity for the public to learn about the draft plan. These poster boards will also be available in digital format on the City’s project website page.

**Supplemental Documents**

All documents including executive summary and consultant’s reports are also provided on the City’s website and available for review.

**Social Media and Newspaper Advertisement**

Staff will use social media and newspaper advertisements to promote the draft plan review opportunity, encourage members of the public to participate in the survey, and inform event schedules.

### OCP Advisory Committee

Members of the Committee have been proactive during the development of the draft and are supportive of the outcome. Their role as technical expertise of the focused areas are now complete. Members are strongly encouraged to participate in the promotion of the draft plan and dialogue with the public. Also, they are encouraged to join the online public meeting or key stakeholder meetings. The Committee intends to submit a report to Council along with staff report and make a short presentation at the 1<sup>st</sup> Bylaw Reading.

### General Inquiries

Staff are available to respond to inquiries from members of the public by phone or email or virtual meeting platforms such as ZOOM.

### OPTIONS:

- OPTION 1: That Council support staff to proceed with the official consultation with the stakeholders and members of the public. **(Recommended)**
- OPTION 2: That Council defer making a decision at this time and request staff to provide further information
- OPTION 3: That Council not support the process

Prepared by:



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Reviewed by:



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Concurrence by:



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Chief Administrative Officer

### ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment No.1:** List of Community Stakeholders  
**Attachment No.2:** Draft Official Community Plan

***Attachment No.1: List of Community Stakeholders***

- 1 Accessibility Advisory Committee
- 2 Agriculture Land Commission
- 3 BC Healthy Communities
- 4 BC Hydro
- 5 BC Transit
- 6 Beaufort Association
- 7 Breathe Clean Air Comox Valley
- 8 Canadian Forces Base Comox
- 9 Canadian Home Builders Association - Vancouver Island
- 10 Coalition to End Homelessness
- 11 Coastal Douglas Fir and Associated Ecosystems Community Partnership
- 12 Community Drug Strategy Committee
- 13 Comox Airport
- 14 Comox Valley Art Gallery
- 15 Comox Valley Better at Home
- 16 Comox Valley Citizens on Patrol
- 17 Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness
- 18 Comox Valley Community Action Team (CAT) - Overdose Response
- 19 Comox Valley Community Foundation
- 20 Comox Valley Community Health Network
- 21 Comox Valley Community Justice Society
- 22 Comox Valley Conservation Partnership/Land Trust
- 23 Comox Valley Creative Employment Society
- 24 Comox Valley Cycling Coalition
- 25 Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative
- 26 Comox Valley EV Association
- 27 Comox Valley Family Services Association
- 28 Comox Valley Farmers Market Association
- 29 Comox Valley Harbour Authority
- 30 Comox Valley Head Injury Society
- 31 Comox Valley Kin Club
- 32 Comox Valley Lifelong Learning Centre
- 33 Comox Valley Monarch Lions
- 34 Comox Valley Monarch Lions Club
- 35 Comox Valley Multicultural and Immigrant Support Society
- 36 Comox Valley Nurses for Health and the Environment
- 37 Comox Valley Pride
- 38 Comox Valley Road Runners
- 39 Comox Valley Senior Support Society
- 40 Comox Valley Social Planning Society
- 41 Comox Youth Climate Committee

- 42 Courtenay and District Museum and Palaeontology Centre
- 43 Courtenay Marina Society
- 44 Courtenay Rotary Club
- 45 Evergreen Club and Courtenay Recreation Association
- 46 First Nations Health Authority
- 47 Food Policy Council
- 48 Fortis
- 49 Glacier View Lodge
- 50 Heritage Advisory Commission
- 51 Immigrant Welcome Centre
- 52 John Howard Society
- 53 Kiwanis Club of Courtenay
- 54 Lake Trail Community Education Society
- 55 Lead for Child Care Planning
- 56 Local Developers and Home Builders
- 57 Manufactured home 55+ year park resident
- 58 Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries
- 59 Nature Conservancy
- 60 North Island College- Comox Valley campus
- 61 Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
- 62 Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC
- 63 RCMP
- 64 Residents of Headquarters Road Neighbourhood
- 65 Rotary Club of Comox Valley
- 66 Rotary Club of Courtenay
- 67 Strathcona Sunrise Rotary Club
- 68 Vancouver Island Regional Library
- 69 Wetlands Institute
- 70 Youth and Ecological Restoration

**Attachment No.2:** Draft Official Community Plan