



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

## STAFF REPORT

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**To:** Council  
**From:** Chief Administrative Officer  
**Subject:** Parks and Recreation Master Plan Adoption

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**File No.:** 07710-20 P&R MP

**Date:** September 30, 2019

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### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to present the final draft of the parks and recreation master plan to Council for adoption.

### CAO RECOMMENDATIONS:

That based on the September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019 staff report “Parks and Recreation Master Plan Adoption”, Council adopt OPTION 1 and approve the final draft of the master plan as presented.

Respectfully submitted,

David Allen, BES, CLGEM, SCLGM  
Chief Administrative Officer

### BACKGROUND:

The development of the parks and recreation master plan has been a multi-year process that has involved many key steps. These steps include:

- In 2016 Urban Systems was engaged to develop the master plan.
- The park assets were inventoried and mapped. Thousands of data points were collected along with the condition of trails, parks, furnishings, buildings, sports fields, and playgrounds. This work was then used as a foundation for the next phases.
- The condition of each asset was assessed with a rating based on the National Asset Management Strategy (NAMS) methodology.
- The analysis phase included the identification of trail gaps, the quantity of parks in various classifications, as well as recreation programs and services.
- The compiled information was presented to the public through focus groups, an online survey and public open houses. The results of the analysis and community feedback were tabulated over the winter of 2017/2018, analysed and informed the draft plan.
- A draft plan was released in December of 2018 for public feedback.
- At the April 29, 2019 council meeting, Council reviewed the public feedback received and directed staff to include the requested changes into the master plan text. Staff incorporated the changes into the master plan and now present this final draft for adoption by Council.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Parks and Recreation master plan was designed to be an aspirational document. Some recommendations are for definitive action such as the construction of trail where gaps exist. Other recommendations are less concrete, calling for further study, community consultation on issues or operational considerations moving forward. It was determined that the implementation plan would be a separate document that would show the cost implications of key recommendations. This document is being drafted.

When adopted, the master plan will inform the following processes:

- Capital planning and the Asset Management Working Group
- Parks and recreation staff decision making
- The preparation of the official community plan
- Overlapping issues in other strategic documents

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The master plan is a guiding document that doesn't commit the City to the financial implications of implementation. Initiatives will be addressed through one of the following methods:

- Established by Council as a strategic priority
- Risk, asset or infrastructure issues will be evaluated by the Asset Management Working Group and proposed to Council with other similar initiatives.
- New items or service level changes will be proposed to Council through the budget process.

The implementation plan is a separate document that will identify the priority of each recommendation and the relative cost.

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:**

The Recreation and Cultural Services Department has managed the development of this document and will work with Council to implement any approved recommendations. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission will also make recommendations on initiatives and will report to council as needed.

**ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS:**

Master plans provide guidance to Council and recommendations to the CAO through the Asset Management Working Group. First, they outline existing services at a point in time. Then through public interactions, identify future Level of Service aspirations and the implications of meeting any Level of Service changes Council may choose to adopt. These decisions can then be used to inform alterations to organization-wide long-term financial plans necessary to meet the full lifecycle costs of new or upgraded capital assets needed to meet these changes (such lifecycle costs include: capital planning, design, construction, acquisition plus the operation, maintenance, renewal and disposal of the assets).

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:**

The following strategic priorities will apply:

**We focus on organizational and governance excellence**

- Support and encourage initiatives to improve efficiencies
- Recognize staff capacity is a finite resource and support staff training and development
- Communicate appropriately with our community in all decisions we make
- Responsibly provide services at levels which the people we serve are willing to pay

### **We proactively plan and invest in our natural and built environment**

- Focus on asset management for sustainable service delivery
- ▲ Look for regional infrastructure solutions for shared services
- ▲ Continue to support Arts and Culture

### **We continually invest in our key relationships**

- Value and recognize the importance of our volunteers
- Consider effective ways to engage with and partner for the health and safety of the community
- ▲ Support improving accessibility to all City services

- **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:**

The OCP identifies the following vision:

*The vision for the City of Courtenay is for a City that is unique and different from other communities. It is to become the most liveable community in the province. It can be expressed as having:*

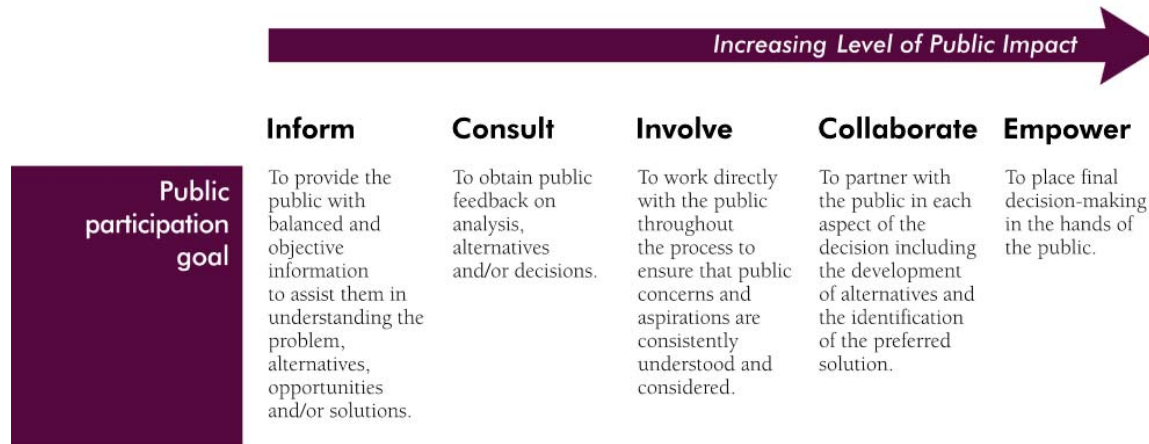
- *an inclusive, open and caring community*
- *commitment to continued excellence*
- *a strong downtown*
- *the ability to ensure a high level of aesthetic and architectural design*
- *a reputation as the premier regional centre for arts and culture*
- *balance and ability to lead growth and the provision of services*
- *a role to be the centre of commerce for the Comox Valley*
- *an expanding parks, natural areas and greenways system*
- *a strategy to lead in environmental protection*
- *commitment to serve youth and seniors*
- *support for a viable agricultural economy and ensure the protection of agricultural Lands*

**REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY REFERENCE:**

No specific reference

**CITIZEN/PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

Staff have **consulted** with the community through the engagement processes identified above as identified in the *IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation*.



**OPTIONS:**

1. Council approve the final draft of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan as presented.
2. Council refer the Parks and Recreation Master Plan back to staff for further consideration or consultation.
3. Council refer this matter to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission for advice.

Prepared by:

Dave Snider *MBCSLA*  
 Director of Recreation and Cultural Services

Attachments:

1. Parks and Recreation Master Plan



# PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN



CITY OF  
**COURTENAY**



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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## **CONSULTANTS**

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GDH Solutions



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this project was to prepare a 10-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan that will provide a framework for decisions related to parks and recreation land, facilities, amenities, programs, and resources for the City of Courtenay. This will enable Council and staff to plan for the future and to guide new development with consideration for parks and recreation.


Obtaining the input of City residents was a key objective of this planning process. Multiple methods of community engagement were used and resulted in 1,038 community input contact points. Generally, participation in parks and recreation activities is high, and residents are satisfied with most parks, facilities and services. The greatest improvements wanted for parks and outdoor recreation are more trails for walking and cycling, more pickleball courts, and an off-leash dog park. For indoor recreation, interest was highest for more pickleball courts, more program opportunities, and more fitness room space.

The following is the vision statement for parks and recreation based on community input:

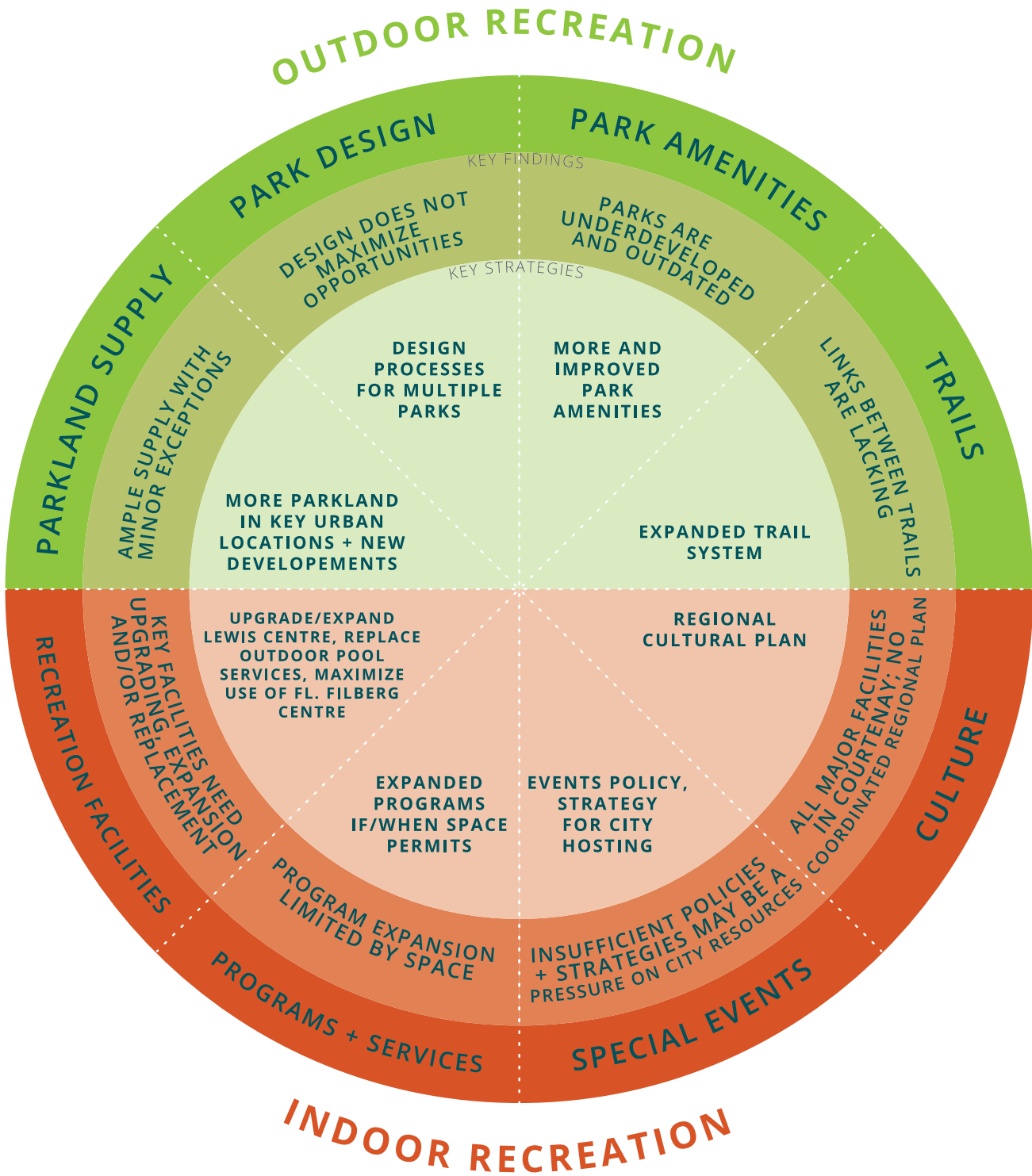


*Parks and recreation in Courtenay support a healthy, engaged, and inclusive community with a high quality of life. Key features are the diverse parks, interconnected trails for all ages and abilities, natural areas throughout the City, and multi-use and accessible spaces for indoor and outdoor recreation. The City is forward-thinking and addresses trends and emerging needs in parks and recreation.*

The following are the goals for parks and recreation based on community input:

- Improve connectivity
  - Foster a healthy and active community
  - Provide access for all
  - Protect and enhance beauty
  - Protect and enhance the environment
  - Connect parks and recreation with culture
  - Enhance communication and partnerships
  - Practice sound financial management
- 

The following illustrates the key findings and strategies of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

The City of Courtenay's previous Parks and Open Space Master Plan was completed in 1994. Since that time much has changed. The City has experienced significant growth, which is continuing, and leisure patterns and interests have evolved. Parks and recreation are of great interest to residents and visitors. Courtenay also has a thriving arts and culture scene.

The purpose of this project was to prepare a 10-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan that will provide a framework for decisions related to parks and recreation land, facilities, parks, amenities, programs, and resources for the City of Courtenay. This will enable Council and staff to plan for the future and to guide new development with consideration for parks and recreation.

Parks and recreation offer many benefits that are environmental, social, economic and personal (health and spiritual). This Master Plan will help the City achieve the goals in its Official Community Plan (OCP) of being "unique" and the "most livable community in the province".

Courtenay is the geographic heart of the Comox Valley, and as such many of the broader valley residents access the parks and recreation opportunities here. Although the services are financially supported largely by the tax revenues of Courtenay, other valley residents are patrons and must be considered in this master plan. The plan accordingly respects the valley-wide context in relation to parks and recreation services.



# 1.2 PROJECT PROCESS

Obtaining the input of City residents was a key objective of this planning process. The City focused on completing an asset inventory in 2016, followed by preliminary analysis, prior to launching a comprehensive community engagement process in the fall of 2017. The community will be invited to review a draft master plan before it is completed to confirm it is consistent with the input provided. During the engagement, there were 1,038 community input contact points.



## 1.3 GUIDE TO THIS DOCUMENT

The figure on the following page illustrates the framework of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which also guides the order of this document.

The first sections provide the background for the Master Plan:

- Section 1.4** Community Overview
- Section 1.5** Community Input
- Section 1.6** Trends and Best Practices
- Section 1.7** Benefits and Frameworks

**Section 2** Guiding Statements provides the guiding framework.

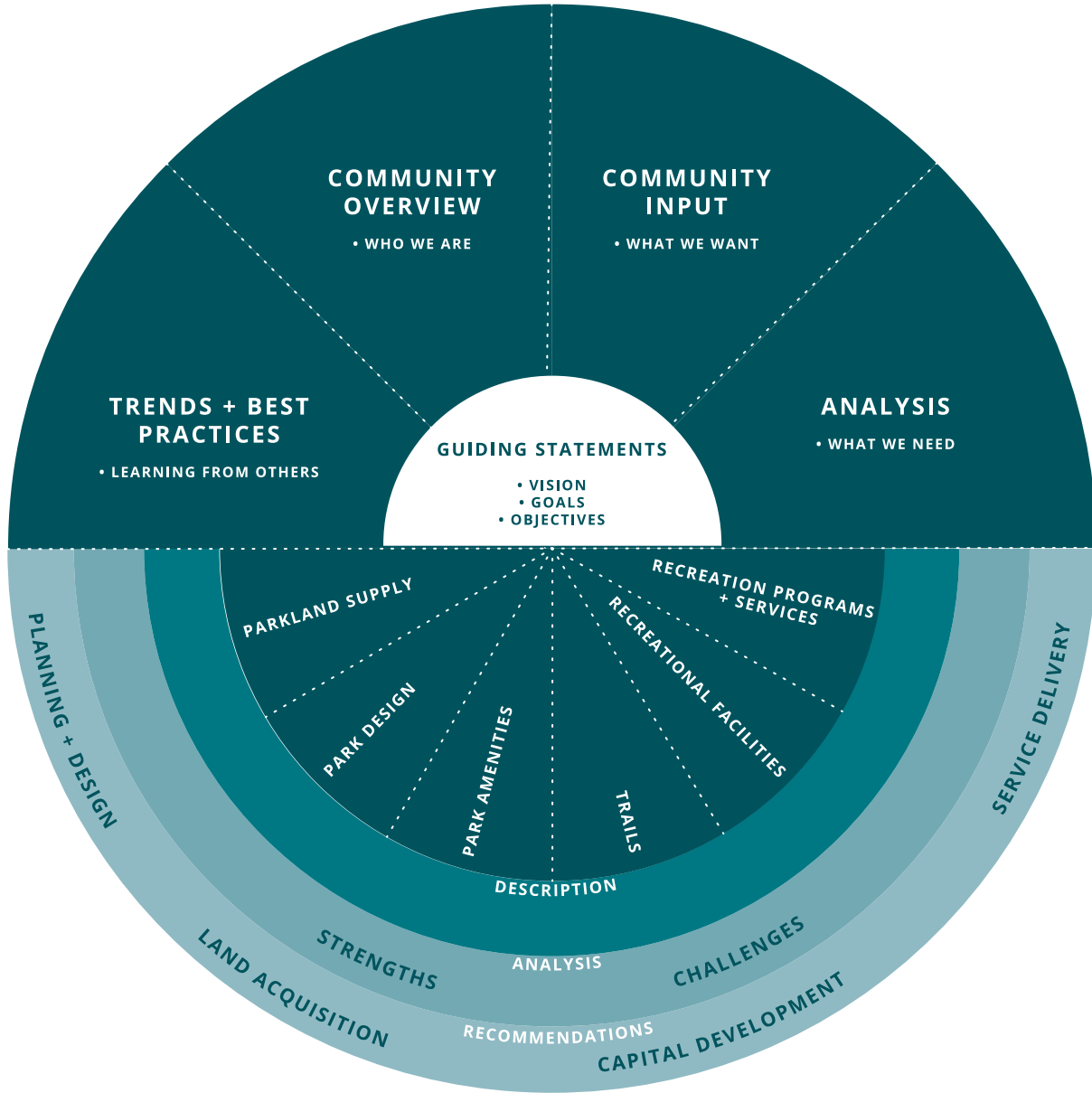
**Sections 3** and **4** include description, analysis, key community input, and recommendations related to the master plan topics (parkland supply through to culture). The recommendations are provided under the following subheadings in relation to how they will be implemented:

- Planning and Design
- Land Acquisition
- Capital Development

**Section 5** Implementation provides more detail on the City's resources, and the next steps.



FIGURE 1.1 PRMP FRAMEWORK

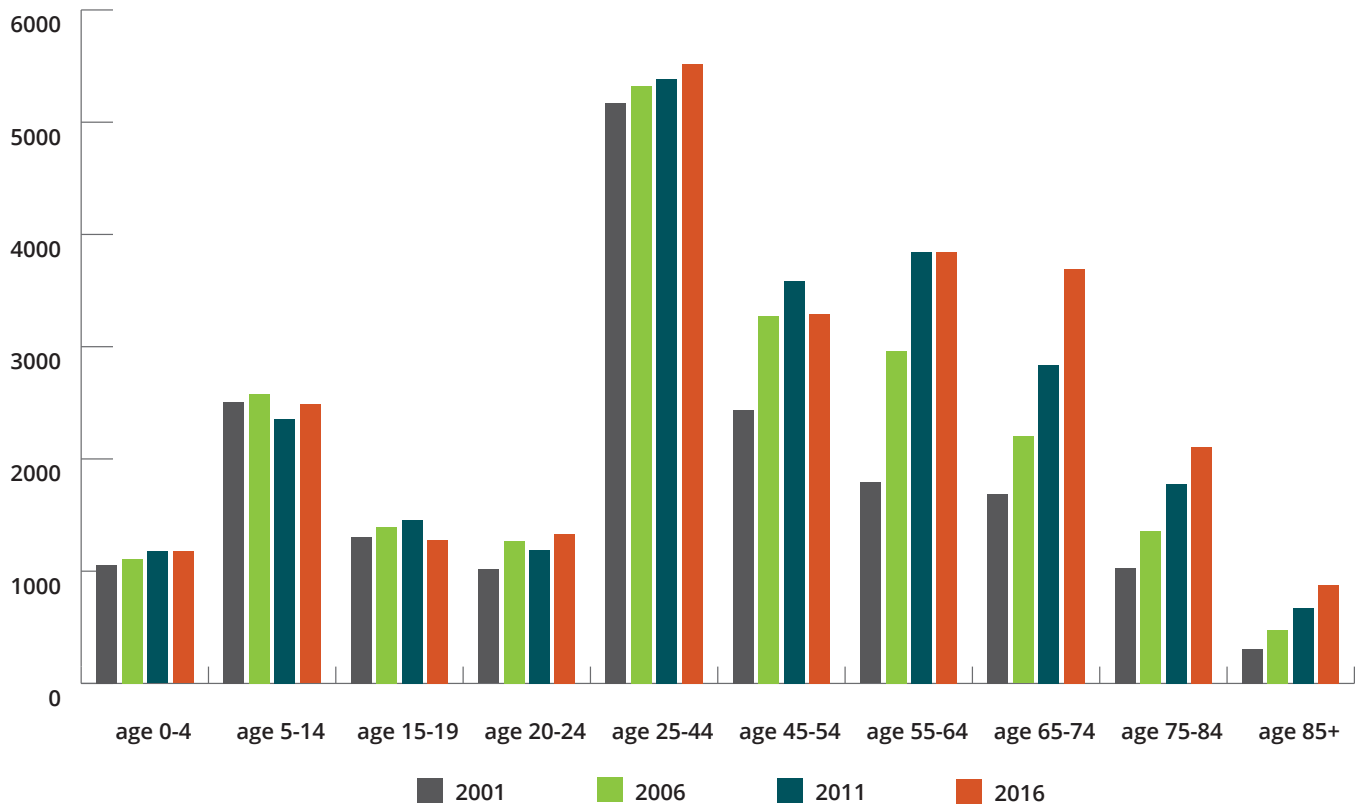


## 1.4 COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

The City of Courtenay’s population at the end of 2016 was 25,599. Courtenay’s demographics have significant implications in relation to the delivery of recreation services (Appendix B). The following are the highlights:

- The aging population makes it particularly important to address age-friendly community principles such as accessibility and wayfinding, and to provide facilities and programs of interest to older age groups, e.g., pickleball, accessible trails
- The lower median income and high number of people relying on income from pensions may pose barriers to participation, affecting the public’s ability to pay for recreation services; this may increase the demand for good access to parks and low- or no-cost and recreation offerings

**FIGURE 1.2 POPULATION CHANGE BY AGE CLASS 2001 TO 2016**



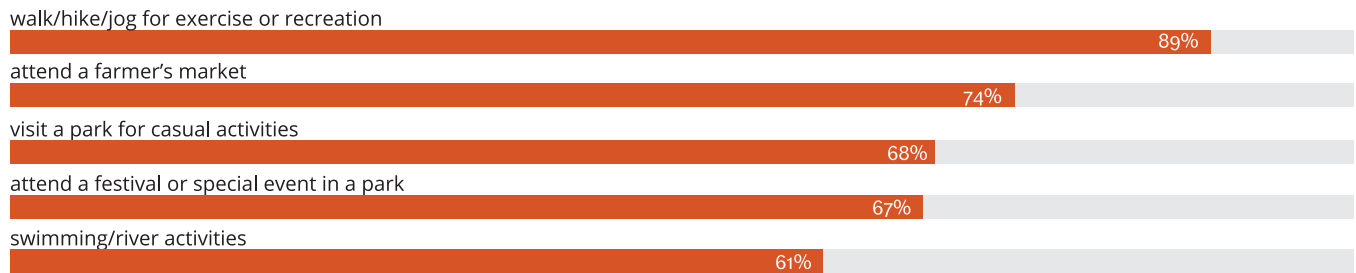
SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA CENSUS SUBDIVISION DATA (2001, 2006, 2011, 2016)

# 1.5 COMMUNITY INPUT

The online community survey provides an understanding the interests, needs, and preferences of Courtenay and Comox Valley residents, and it is particularly relevant due to the high participation rate of 903 completed surveys. The following is a summary of the key findings of the survey (see Appendix C and the respective report sections for more information).

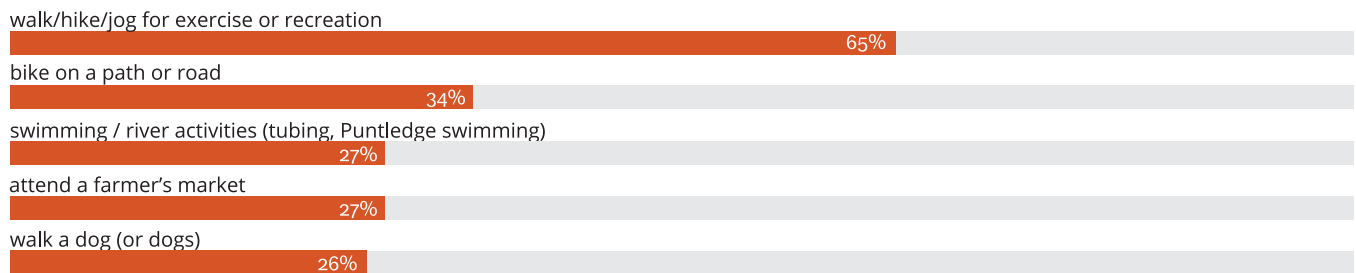
## Outdoor Recreation

THE FIVE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES WITH THE HIGHEST PARTICIPATION AMONG RESPONDENT HOUSEHOLDS WERE:



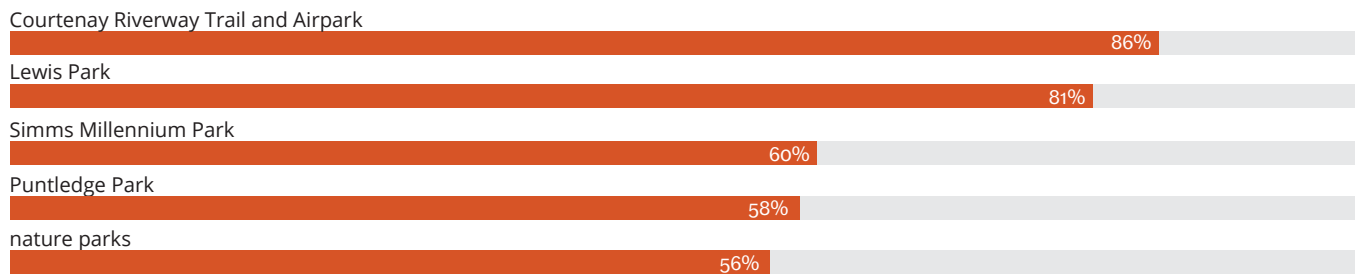
Read as - 89% of survey respondents had someone in their household who participated in "walk/hike/jog for exercise or recreation" within the previous year

RESPONDENTS IDENTIFIED THE MOST IMPORTANT OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES AS:



Read as - 65% of survey respondents indicated that "walk/hike/jog for exercise or recreation" is one of the most important activities to them

THE MOST VISITED PARKS/TRAILS WERE:



Read as - 86% of survey respondents had someone in their household visit the "Courtenay Riverway Trail and Airpark" within the previous year

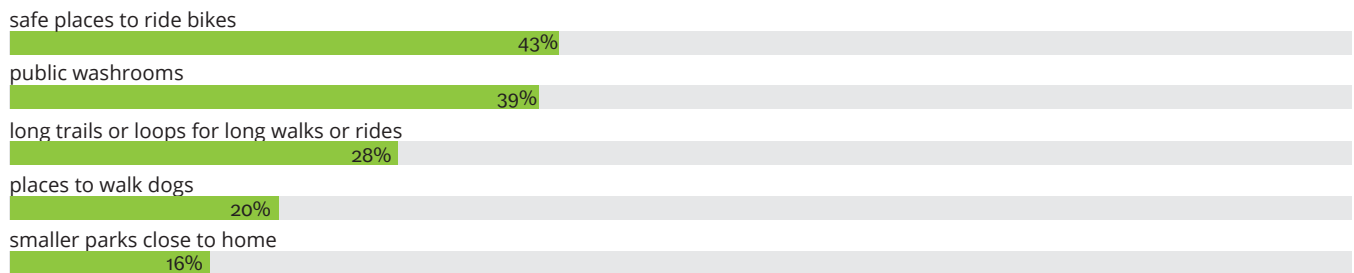


OVERALL SATISFACTION LEVELS FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION WERE HIGHEST FOR:



Read as - 73% of survey respondents were satisfied with the "maintenance of trails"

THE HIGHEST DISSATISFACTION WAS INDICATED FOR:



Read as - 43% of survey respondents were dissatisfied with "safe places to ride bikes"

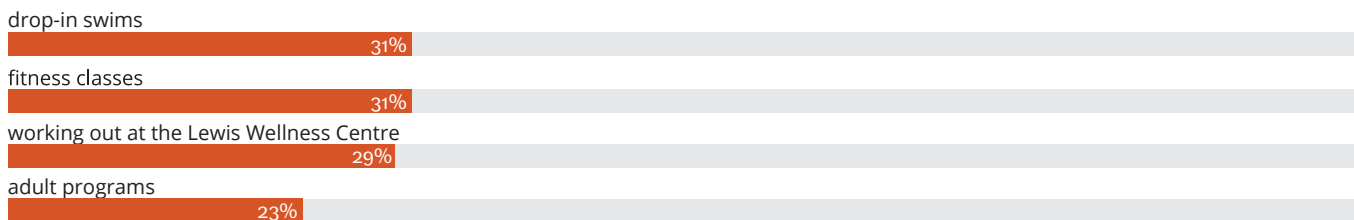
WHEN ASKED WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE IMPROVED, THE MOST COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED FOR:



Read as - 65 survey respondents wrote comments about "more routes for walking and cycling" as a suggestion for improvements

### Indoor Recreation

THE FIVE RECREATION PROGRAMS WITH THE HIGHEST PARTICIPATION AMONG RESPONDENT HOUSEHOLDS INCLUDED:



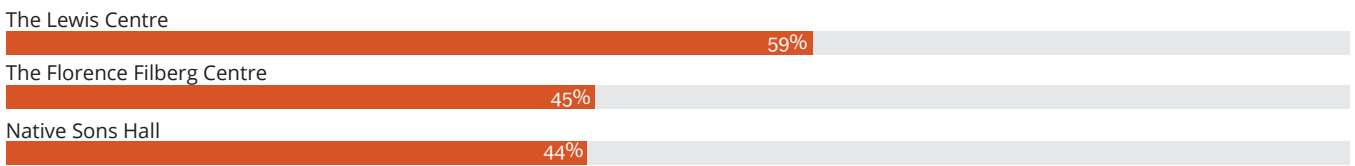
Read as - 45% of survey respondents had someone in their household who participated in "outdoor festivals and events" within the previous year

OVERALL SATISFACTION LEVELS FOR RECREATION PROGRAMS WERE HIGHEST FOR:



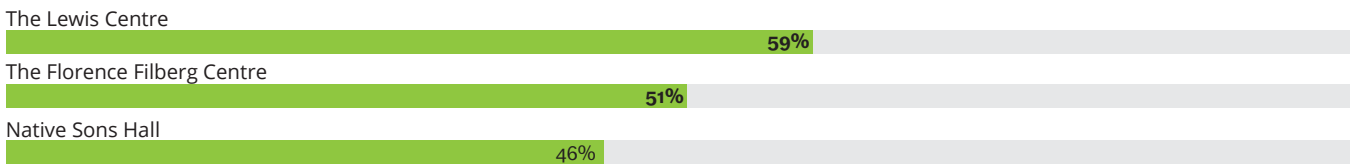
Read as - 48% of survey respondents were satisfied with "outdoor festivals and events"

RESPONDENTS MOST FREQUENTLY ATTENDED ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS HOSTED AT:



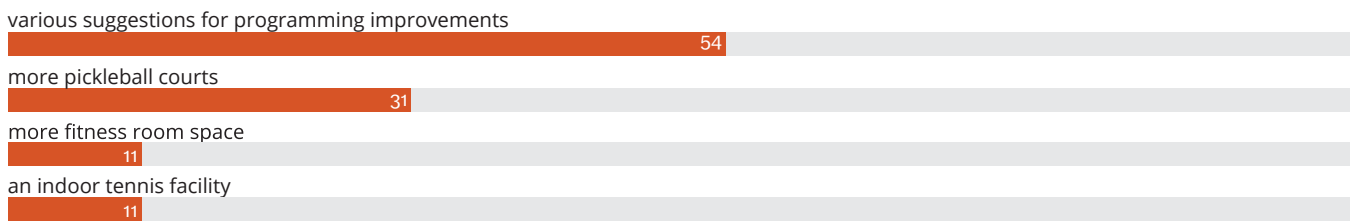
Read as - 59% of survey respondents had someone in their household attend an activity or program hosted at "The Lewis Centre" within the previous year

SATISFACTION LEVELS FOR INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES WERE HIGHEST FOR:



Read as - 59% of survey respondents were satisfied with the facilities at "The Lewis Centre"

WHEN ASKED WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE IMPROVED, THE MOST COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED FOR:



Read as - 54 survey respondents wrote comments about "programming improvements"



## Key Community Input

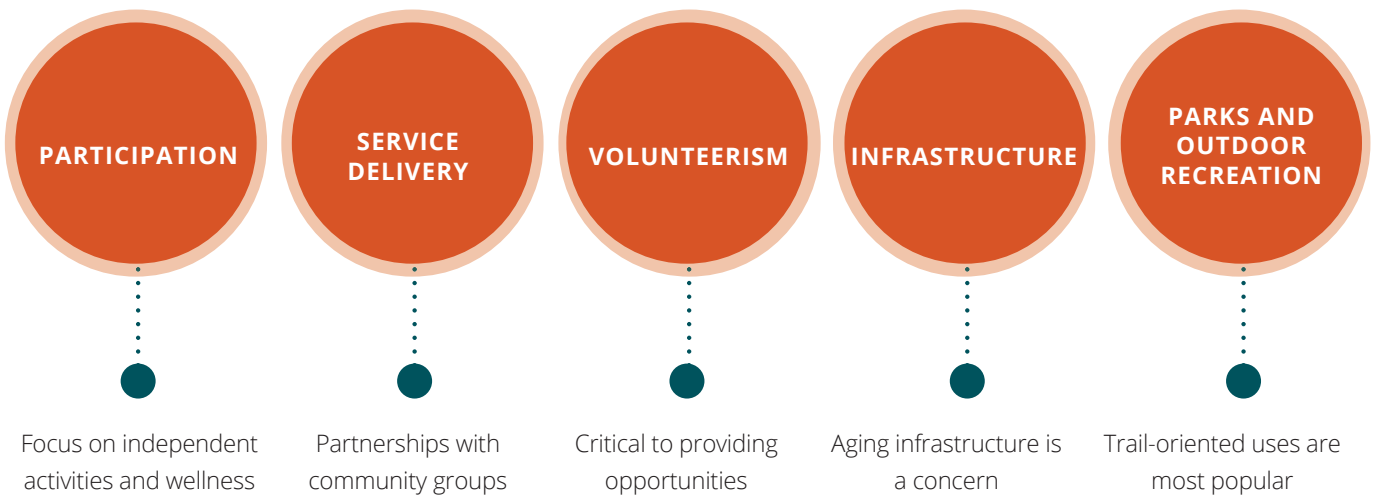
In Sections 3 and 4, key community input identifies the following for each topic:

- Participation, satisfaction, and priority responses from the community survey applicable to the topic
- Comments on the topic from the community survey received by the highest numbers of respondents
- Themes from focus group participants relevant to the topic



## 1.6 PARKS AND RECREATION TRENDS

Parks and recreation activities, infrastructure and participation are constantly changing in response to broader societal trends. Appendix D provides a synthesis of some of the current provincial trends, of which the following are some highlights:



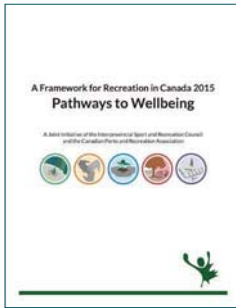
## 1.7 BENEFITS OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Numerous national, provincial and municipal organizations have been engaged in research regarding the benefits of parks and recreation (Appendix E). The benefits of parks and recreation also fit within the framework of sustainability. The following are some examples of this:



## 1.8 RECREATION FRAMEWORKS

Frameworks for recreation and sport in Canada have been shifting the focus to ensuring that opportunities are available for all residents through all skill levels (Appendix F).



*The Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 - Pathways to Wellbeing*


*BC's Policy on Sport and Physical Activity - Sport Branch Policy Framework*



## 2. GUIDING STATEMENTS

### 2.1 OCP VISION

To set the context for the PRMP vision, the following is the City's vision in the OCP.



*The vision for the City of Courtenay is for a City that is unique and different from other communities. It is to become the most liveable community in the province. It can be expressed as having:*

- *an inclusive, open and caring community*
- *commitment to continued excellence*
- *a strong downtown*
- *the ability to ensure a high level of aesthetic and architectural design*
- *a reputation as the premier regional centre for arts and culture*
- *balance and ability to lead growth and the provision of services*
- *a role to be the centre of commerce for the Comox Valley*
- *an expanding parks, natural areas and greenways system*
- *a strategy to lead in environmental protection*
- *commitment to serve youth and seniors*
- *support for a viable agricultural economy and ensure the protection of agricultural Lands*

Much of the OCP vision is relevant to parks and recreation.

“ Make the Valley very accessible for cyclists as a mode of transport—to work, to the store and recreationally.” —*Survey respondent*

## 2.2 PARKS AND RECREATION VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The vision, goals and objectives for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan are a synthesis of the input received in focus groups and the other community input:

### Vision



*Parks and recreation in Courtenay support a healthy, engaged, and inclusive community with a high quality of life. Key features are the diverse parks, interconnected trails for all ages and abilities, natural areas throughout the City, and multi-use and accessible spaces for indoor and outdoor recreation. The City is forward-thinking and addresses trends and emerging needs in parks and recreation.*

### Goals and Objectives

The goals are in orange text below, followed by the objectives for each:

#### IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY

- Establish a system of trails with connections to parks, recreation and culture facilities, commercial areas, schools, and surrounding areas
- Provide access for walking and cycling to all parts of the City
- Improve accessibility to parks and community facilities with transit
- Link the trail system with the active transportation network that serves pedestrians, cyclists and others
- Improve public access to and along the river

#### FOSTER A HEALTHY AND ACTIVE COMMUNITY

- Focus on self-directed opportunities to meet needs and increase participation
- Offer diverse programs, including the introduction of physical activity to children and adults
- Link recreation with public health through sharing of information and opportunities
- Provide opportunities to increase participation, such as year-round outdoor activities
- Provide access to nature for all residents



**PROVIDE ACCESS FOR ALL**

- Provide access to parks, facilities and programs for all ages, abilities, genders, and cultures
- Create awareness of opportunities for involvement in recreation
- Make affordable programs available based on need
- Recognize the specific needs of all age groups, including children, youth, and older seniors
- Provide equitable access for all users
- Accommodate growing and emerging recreation activities and changing demographics

**PROTECT AND ENHANCE BEAUTY**

- Enhance the beauty of the community with features such as trees, art, and viewpoints
- Make downtown more liveable with outdoor parks and gathering spaces
- Work on retaining the safe, small-town character of the community
- Retain maintenance standards to keep parks and trails in good condition

**PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENT**

- Acquire and protect significant ecological assets within parks and link these together
- Plan for climate change by considering ecological services and designing to mitigate potential risks
- Focus efforts on protecting and enhancing the river, creeks, estuary, and riparian areas
- Balance recreation access and environmental management

**CONNECT PARKS AND RECREATION WITH CULTURE**

- Integrate culture into parks and recreation planning, design and programs
- Increase the Indigenous and multi-cultural aspects of programs
- Recognize downtown as a cultural centre
- Consider social, environmental and economic sustainability in the design of parks and facilities

**ENHANCE COMMUNICATION AND PARTNERSHIPS**

- Cultivate partnerships with government, including K'omoks First Nation, private sector and non-profit groups in provision of services
- Improve promotion of programs
- Help to develop leadership through volunteerism
- Enhance community development by supporting parks and recreation groups
- Undertake community engagement on projects and initiatives of interest to residents
- Collaborate with other jurisdictions in the Comox Valley on planning, programming, and funding of services that are regional in scope

**PRACTICE SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

- Maximize efficiencies in the use of existing facilities, parks and trails
- Manage fiscal resources to balance needs, budgets, affordability, and the public's willingness to pay
- Implement asset management to support sustainable service levels
- Make funding parks and recreation a priority based on the social, environmental and economic benefits derived

## 3. OUTDOOR RECREATION

### 3.1 PARKLAND SUPPLY

#### KEY FINDING

The City has an ample supply of parkland, especially considering the school sites, linear corridors, and large natural parks.

#### KEY STRATEGY

Focus parkland acquisition on a few locations to support population growth.

#### Parkland Classification

The classification of parks and open spaces can help to provide an understanding of the various roles of parkland, which can be a useful planning and management tool (Figure 3.1, Map 1 and Appendix A). The following is the proposed classification system for parkland in the City of Courtenay. Some parks are difficult to classify because they fit into more than one definition. In those cases, the most appropriate category is selected based on park use. Suggested minimum sizes are provided for community and neighbourhood parks; community input will be sought on this in the next phase of work, with examples provided.



FIGURE 3.1 CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

TYPE	SIZE	PURPOSE/CONSIDERATION	PARKS
<b>Community Parks</b>	Ideally a minimum of 1.0 ha, current range is 0.3 to 7.2 ha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destination parks that serve residents from the entire City and beyond</li> <li>• Help to form the visual, physical and social focus of the community</li> <li>• Offer natural features and/or built facilities, cultural features and other opportunities</li> <li>• Include amenities such as shelters, signs, washrooms, trails, boat launches and parking lots</li> <li>• Diverse activities - picnics, special events, sports, play areas, recreation</li> </ul>	Bill Moore Park, Lewis Park, Marina Park, Martin Park, Puntledge Park, Riverside Park, Rotary Sky Park, Simms Millennium Park, Standard Park, Valley View Park, Woodcote Park
<b>Neighbourhood Parks</b>	Ideally a minimum of 0.2 hectares, current range is 0.1 to 13.7 ha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally serve the catchment area of or similar to that of an elementary school</li> <li>• Form the visual, physical and social focus of a neighbourhood</li> <li>• Typically include play equipment, pathways, open grass, and seating; may also include other recreation and athletic amenities</li> <li>• Usually accessed by walking and do not require parking lots</li> <li>• Some newer neighbourhood parks are undeveloped, and may include natural features like environmentally sensitive areas</li> </ul>	Cooper Park, Galloway Park, Harmston Park, Hawk Glen Park, Hebrides Crescent Park, Hobson Park, Idiens Park, Inverclyde Park, Krebs Park, Knights of Columbus Park, Malcom Morrison Sr. Park, Maple Park, Monarch Park, Pinegrove Park, Walbran Park, Sunrise Rotary Park, Sussex Park and Trumpeter Glen Park, Upper Ridge Park



FIGURE 3.1 (CONT'D)

TYPE	SIZE	PURPOSE/CONSIDERATION	PARKS
<b>Natural Parks</b>	Typically large, but can be smaller, current range is 0.1 ha to 13.7 ha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dominated by natural features such as forests and watercourses, often including environmentally sensitive areas</li> <li>• Recreational use usually includes trail uses and nature appreciation</li> <li>• Amenities may include parking lots, signs, trails, gathering areas, and washrooms that support public access and use</li> <li>• Some lands with environmentally sensitive natural features have been acquired through legislation from higher levels of government</li> </ul>	Air Park, Bear James Park, Capes Park, Condensory Park, Cottonwood Community Garden, Cruikshank Avenue Park, Cousins Park, Crown Isle 150 Year Grove Park, Dogwood Park, Hurford Hill Park, Lawrence Burns Park, Lerwick Park, McPhee Park, Millard Park, Morrison Park, Morrison Creek Park, Piercy Creek Park, Sandwick Park, Vanier Park, Tarling Park, Second Street Park (parks at 13 <sup>th</sup> Street and Ronson Road are under development)
<b>Linear Parks</b>	Variable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrow corridors for the purpose of supporting a trail</li> <li>• May have some amenities such as benches, staging areas, signs and planting</li> <li>• Some may be designated through the development process as “highway” for pedestrian passage in the future</li> </ul>	Arden Park, Courtenay Riverway, Green Belt Park, Millard Creek Greenway, South of City Park, Valley View Trail
<b>Greenspaces</b>	Variable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consists of stormwater ponds, small grassed / treed properties, boulevards, and other green space that does not support a significant amount of use</li> <li>• Do not have significant amenities or trails</li> <li>• Contribute to the visual character of the community</li> <li>• Stormwater ponds have specific maintenance requirements and can serve environmental purposes</li> </ul>	Blue Jay Park, Crown Isle Park, Cruikshank Park, First Street Park, Fitzgerald Park, Lower Ridge Park, Malahat Storm Park, Muir – McLaughlin Park

“ I would like to see smaller neighbourhood parks that you can walk to and sit and enjoy the outdoors” –*Survey respondent*

FIGURE 3.2: PARKLAND SUPPLY

PARK TYPE	COUNT	AREA (HA)
Community Parks	11	31.4
Neighbourhood Parks	24	13.3
Linear Corridor	31	17.9
Natural Parks	28	110.7
Greenspace	9	9.6
<b>Total City Parks</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>182.9</b>

OTHER RECREATION LANDS	COUNT	AREA (HA)
School Sites (no buildings)	9	60.1
Crown Land	3	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>65.1</b>

OTHER LANDS WITH PARK VALUES	AREA (HA)
Harmston Park	1.15
Fields Sawmill	3.40
Hollyhock Marsh	3.96
The Nature Trust of BC: Millard Creek	5.88
<b>Total</b>	<b>14.39</b>

### Other Lands with Park Values

Land managed by other jurisdictions can also contribute to the overall parkland values, as follows;

- **School Sites** – this includes the green space portion of public school sites (school buildings and parking lots are excluded). These sites are included because the land usually has park values, though the inventory is considered separately from the park system because school sites are not under the jurisdiction of the City.
- **Harmston Park** – although called a park and used as a park, this site of a previous school is now owned by the City; it is not designated or zoned as park.
- **Kus-kus-sum (former Fields Sawmill)** – site is to be purchased by Project Watershed and K’ómoks First Nation (KFN), pending successful fund-raising, and restored to a wetland; City would manage the site in partnership with KFN
- **Hollyhock Marsh** – this provincially-owned marsh has important environmental values; it is adjacent to the Kus-kus-sum site and will be linked with the restoration of that property

Courtenay has 103 municipally owned parks covering 183 hectares (ha) (Figure 3.2 and Map 1). With the addition of school sites (excluding the buildings and parking lots) and Crown land, there are 243 hectares of parks and open space available for public access and use in Courtenay.

### **Parkland Supply Analysis**

In this section, the parkland supply is analyzed using three different methods. Many municipalities use population-based standards to calculate and plan their supply of parkland. The additional analyses of area-based supply and spatial distribution can increase the understanding of parkland supply and needs for future parks.

Standards are controversial, with some believing that the quantitative approach detracts from a qualitative consideration of parks and recognition that conditions are unique in every municipality. In BC, even where standards are not embraced for their inherent value, they are often used to assist in the calculation of park development cost charges (DCCs).

In many jurisdictions, parkland supply standards are used as a guideline, rather than a definitive requirement. Park supply standards can be applied in a flexible manner to ensure that a full range of park types is available to all residents. They also enable a community to measure their supply over time, and to compare themselves with other communities.

### **Population-based Analysis**

Population-based parkland supply is typically calculated on the more active types of parkland such as community and neighbourhood parks, excluding natural parks and greenspace. Linear parks are added into the active parkland supply where they support high levels of use, which is the case in Courtenay. Figure 3.3 illustrates the existing supply of active parkland in relation to population. The current supply of active parkland, including linear parks and not including school grounds, is 2.41 ha/1,000 population. If the City were not to acquire any additional parkland despite annual population increases of 1.5%, the active parkland supply would drop to about 2.06 ha/1,000 population by 2027. While school sites add to the active parkland supply in many cases, the City does not have control over these sites and most are unavailable for community use during school hours.

FIGURE 3.3 POPULATION-BASED PARKLAND SUPPLY

PARKLAND SUPPLY (HA/1,000 POP)			
Park Type	City Parkland Area (ha)	2017 Population 25,982 (ha / 1,000)	2027 Population 30,362 (ha / 1,000)
Community Parks	31.4	1.21	1.03
Neighbourhood Parks	13.3	0.51	0.44
Linear Parks	17.9	0.69	0.59
<b>Sub-Total</b>			
School Sites (no buildings)	60.1	2.31	1.98
Crown Land	5.0	0.19	0.16
<b>Total</b>	<b>122.7</b>		

Of the five communities reviewed as part of the benchmarking analysis, the average active parkland supply was 2.65 ha/1,000 population, but it is difficult to make comparisons since the size, context and quality of parkland differs greatly among those communities (Figure 3.4). Squamish’s very high parkland supply likely includes natural parks in its destination/city-wide park category. The average parkland supply of the communities other than Squamish is 1.76 ha/1,000. Of those with parkland supply standards, the standards for total active parkland range from 1.2 ha/1,000 to 6.0 ha/1,000 population. In Courtenay’s 1994 Parks and Open Space Master Plan, an active parkland standard of 3.5 ha/1,000 population was recommended, but this included a broader range of parkland than the parks identified as active parks in this Master Plan.

Courtenay’s active parkland supply was a moderate 1.76 ha/1,000 population in 2011 (used as the benchmarking comparison year and not including linear parks for a more direct comparison with the other communities)<sup>1</sup>. City residents also benefit from having access to Seal Bay Park just outside City limits, though many municipalities in BC similarly have access to parks outside their boundaries.

For many years, the Canadian standard for supply of active parkland was 4 ha/1,000 population. With trends towards increasing density, especially within downtown cores, reliance on population-based standards of supply have been decreasing (Figure 3.4). Municipalities with smaller land areas, which are mostly built out, cannot meet the traditional supply standards due to the high land values and lack of available undeveloped land. As of 2005, when the BCRPA conducted a review of all municipalities in BC, the provincial average was 2.51 ha/1,000 population.

1. The 2011 calculation of parkland supply is based on current parkland for all communities, so in all cases the actual supply in 2011 was lower if population increased from 2011 to 2016.

**FIGURE 3.4: POPULATION-BASED PARKLAND SUPPLY COMPARISONS**  
(ALL UNITS ARE HA/1,000 POPULATION FOR THE 2011 POPULATION)

CLASSIFICATION	COURTENAY (2011)	CAMPBELL RIVER	LANGFORD	SQUAMISH	MISSION	WEST KELOWNA	AVERAGE OF BENCHMARKING COMMUNITIES (NOT INCLUDING COURTENAY)	PROVINCIAL AVERAGE (2005)
Destination / City-Wide (ha)	X	X	0.02	3.41	0.47	X	0.99	1.04
Community (ha)	1.3	1.31	0.52	2.10	1.01	1.48	1.73	0.8
Neighbourhood (ha)	0.45	0.21	0.1	0.69	0.62	1.29	0.35	0.67
Total active parkland supply (ha/1000 population)	1.76	1.53	0.65	6.2	2.10	2.78	2.65	2.51
Parkland Supply Standard (ha/1000)	X	X	X	1.2	3.47	6.0	3.56	X

Courtenay's OCP (2005) calculated all of the City's parkland in relation to population to arrive at the 5.6 ha/1,000 supply. The 1994 Parks and Open Space Master Plan calculated the supply of all City parkland to be 5.25 ha/1,000. The current parkland supply by that measure, excluding school sites and Crown land, is 7.0 ha/1,000 population.

### Area-based Parkland Supply

**FIGURE 3.5: AREA-BASED PARKLAND SUPPLY**

PARK TYPE	AREA (HA)	% TOTAL AREA
Community Parks	31.4	1.0%
Neighbourhood Parks	13.3	0.4%
Linear Parks	17.9	0.5%
Natural Parks	110.7	3.4%
Greenspace	9.6	0.3%
Total City Parks	182.9	5.6%
School Sites (no buildings)	60.1	1.8%
Crown Land	5.0	0.2%
Total	243.0	7.2%
Provincial Target (comparison)		12.0%

Another way of measuring parkland supply is in relation to land area. Some municipalities have targets of having 12% or so of their total land area occupied by protected areas, consistent with provincial standards. This measure typically includes open space, natural areas, and parks managed by other municipal, provincial and federal governments. Figure 3.5 illustrates the



parkland supply by area. Courtenay, with 7.4% of its 3,369 ha land base in parks and protected areas, has a relatively low amount of parkland for this measure. This is partly due to some fairly extensive areas of undeveloped land and a lack of parks of other jurisdictions within City boundaries.

### Parkland Distribution Analysis

The third way to analyze parkland supply is by spatial distribution, or the distance residents have to walk to access a park. Map 2 illustrates the approximate walking distances to parks in Courtenay. These are approximate measurements because the distances are measured in straight lines, whereas walking routes typically follow sidewalks and roads. Walking routes may also encounter slopes or other barriers that affect walking speeds or times. The City's main slopes are indicated on the map.

Ideally, every resident would have 5-minute walking access (400 m) to a neighbourhood park and/or 10- minute walking access (800 m) to a community park. Parks under 0.2 hectares are shown with a reduced service area (100 m) since such parks only service residents within the immediate vicinity.

The distribution of community and neighbourhood parks, and school sites, is variable for different parts of the City (Map 2), especially between the east and west sides of the City. The pattern of distribution is as follows:

- **Community Parks** – Courtenay's 11 community parks are better distributed on the west side than the east side, where many residential areas are not within a 10-minute walk of a community park. On the west side, the access to parks is adequate, but the loss of any land currently used as park could leave a gap in supply.
- **Neighbourhood Parks** – There are 22 neighbourhood parks in Courtenay, with better distribution on the east side of the City than on the west side. On the west side of the City, and the south-east portion of the east side, residents without nearby neighbourhood parks are served by community parks. The most significant gaps are on the north-west and north-east portions of the east side of the City, where a few neighbourhoods lack walking access to community and neighbourhood parks. In some locations, school sites help to serve these needs.
- **School Sites** – There are nine school sites well distributed throughout residential neighbourhoods in the City. The southern half of the west side of the City has no school sites, but school sites make a significant contribution to park access in the northern half of the west side of the City (downtown).

Based on the analysis, the following are locations where more neighbourhood parks are needed to provide better access to existing residents and to serve future populations (Map 2).

### **EAST COURTENAY**

1. The area west of Island Highway North is slated for future development and will need a neighbourhood park to serve that population.
2. The area northwest of Sandwick Park is slated for future development and will need a neighbourhood park to serve that population.\*
3. The area north of Ryan Road near the east edge of Park is slated for future development and will need neighbourhood parks to serve that population.
4. The area north of Ryan Road and west of the college is slated for future development and will need a neighbourhood park to serve that population.\*
5. The neighbourhood south of Ryan Road and west of Cowichan Avenue is lacking active parks. Pinegrove Park is identified as a neighbourhood park, and needs some improvements to function as one. Malahat Storm also has opportunities for improvement. Should opportunities arise through redevelopment, another park is proposed west of Pinegrove Park.
6. The portion of Crown Isle between Kensington Crescent and Birkshire Boulevard is still to be developed. A park in this location would help to serve future residents and existing residents to the north who currently lack good access to active parks.
7. The residential areas along Williams Road lack active parks. Expanding Trumpeter Glen Park to make it more accessible to the community with better pathway connections would help address this gap.

“ I would like to see parks be used as opportunities to educate the public about the natural environment and their ability to contribute to it. More parks are needed downtown in general, including children’s play. ” –*Survey respondent*

**WEST COURTENAY**

1. The downtown core lacks a neighbourhood park and urban gathering spaces. \*New public spaces associated with 5th Street may help to address this, as supported by the Downtown Playbook.
2. Developing a portion of the “Harmston Park” site as a neighbourhood park would help to meet parkland needs in this area with increasing density.\*
3. A park is proposed near the west of downtown near 5th Street and the current terminus of the Rotary Trail as this will become a key hub of major trails.
4. The area south of Arden Road Park is slated for future development and will need a neighbourhood park to serve that population.
5. A new park with play and recreation opportunities along the Courtenay Riverway south of Rotary Skypark could help to support the high level of use anticipated along this corridor by existing and future residents and visitors.
6. The west part of Buckstone is slated for future development and will need a neighbourhood park to serve that population.
7. The east part of Buckstone is slated for future development and will need a neighbourhood park to serve that population.

**\* areas with an asterisk are also noted in the 2005 OCP as areas for parkland acquisition**

**Zoning of Parkland**

Courtenay does not have a zone for parks, and the Zoning Bylaw states that “Parks, playgrounds and municipal utilities may be located in any zone.” Approximately 94% of the parkland in Courtenay is zoned as Public Assembly PA-2 or PA-3. Most of the remaining 6% of parkland has Residential (4.6%), Comprehensive Development (0.7%), Institutional (0.1%) or Mixed-Use zoning (0.1%). Many parks have multiple zones, including small portions of park (“slivers”) that have no listed zoning. Many municipalities prefer all of their parks to be zoned so they are easily identifiable as parkland. This is seen as a protective measure for parkland, especially when it may be threatened by sale or conversion to other uses.

## Summary of Strengths and Challenges

### STRENGTHS

Overall active parkland supply in relation to population is reasonable

Waterfront parks have particularly high values

Walking distances to parks are acceptable in most areas of City

The east side of the City has a good distribution of neighbourhood parks

School sites help to fill in the gaps in access to active parkland across the City

### CHALLENGES

The downtown core is lacking municipal parks

The City would benefit from more waterfront parks due to their values for connectivity, nature experiences, and community identity

Some neighbourhoods lack walking access to active parkland

Some neighbourhoods have less active parkland than others

The east side of the City has a poor distribution of community parks

The west side of the city has a poor distribution of neighbourhood parks

## Key Community Input on Parkland Supply

### THE MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES

visited a park for casual activities such as eating lunch, playing catch



nature appreciation, bird watching or wildlife viewing,



*Read as - 68% of survey respondents indicated that "visiting a park for casual activities" is one of the most important activities to them*

### THE MOST VISITED PARKS PER THE COMMUNITY SURVEY WERE

Courtenay Riverway Trail and Airpark



Lewis Park



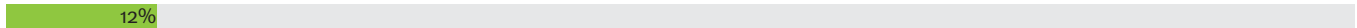
*Read as - 86% of survey respondents had someone in their household visit the "Courtenay Riverway Trail and Airpark" within the previous year*

### SATISFACTION WITH NATURAL PARKLAND

satisfied



dissatisfied



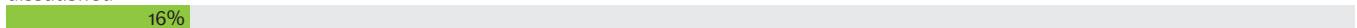
*Read as - 71% of survey respondents were satisfied with "natural parkland"*

### SATISFACTION WITH SMALLER PARKS CLOSE TO WHERE YOU LIVE

satisfied



dissatisfied



*Read as - 63% of survey respondents were satisfied with "smaller parks"*

- Eight community survey respondents requested more natural parkland, four requested more parks and green spaces, and four requested more greenspace downtown
- Suggestions from focus groups included setting priorities for parkland acquisition, and having more developed parkland and natural areas



## Parkland Supply Recommendations

The following are proposed recommendations for parkland supply and acquisition in Courtenay.

### PLANNING AND DESIGN

- 3.1.1 Establish the following as guidelines for acquisition of active parkland – community parks 1.2 ha/1,000 population and neighbourhood parks 0.5 ha/1,000 population.
- 3.1.2 Establish the following guidelines for acquiring community and neighbourhood parks in new developments:
  - Site community and neighbourhood parks so that one type or the other will be within 400 metres of most residents, with community parks ideally located within 800 metres of most residents
  - Use the minimum sizes of 1 ha for community parks and 0.2 ha for neighbourhood parks
  - Locate community and neighbourhood parks next to schools where possible
  - Locate community and neighbourhood parks next to natural areas where synergies will benefit users
  - Lay out community and neighbourhood parks to include trails that provide continuous connections through the development (off-street if possible using rights-of-way between dead-end roads, cul-de-sacs, etc.), with links to external trails to parks, schools and other destinations
  - For trail routes that are for pedestrian use only, acquire a minimum corridor width of 6 metres where possible to allow for some green space adjacent to the trail
  - Locate community and neighbourhood parks with pedestrian access from all four sides if possible
  - Locate community and neighbourhood parks with significant street frontage to a local or collector road on at least one side
  - Include and protect existing trees within parks where possible
- 3.1.3 In neighbourhoods that are deficient in active parkland where new parkland cannot be acquired, explore opportunities to add play areas, benches, and other neighbourhood park amenities, based on resident interest, within linear parks and greenspace.
- 3.1.4 Amend existing bylaws to require trail connections within developments to be designated as “highway” instead of linear parks, except where the trail is located within a significant green space that offers park values.

3.1.5 Establish a zone for Parks in the Zoning Bylaw, and zone all new parks accordingly, except for the linear connections designated as highway.

- Consider zoning existing parks into a Parks zone as well

### **LAND ACQUISITION**

3.1.6 Pursue acquisition of new or expanded community parks, neighbourhood park, and linear parks in the existing developed area to improve walking access to parks and interconnected trails, and to provide additional amenities, as opportunities may arise for property acquisition or as part of redevelopment, with a focus on the following locations:

- land needed to connect the trail system per section 5.3 Trails and Map 3
- neighbourhoods lacking good walking distances to parks per section 4.1 and Map 2
- parks that would benefit from expansion, e.g., Rotary Skypark

3.1.7 Encourage developers to provide for parks that meet the needs of future residents:

- Encourage developers of larger projects to provide parkland that meets the recommendations in this section 3.1
- Accept suitable land for parks per this section or cash-in-lieu from developers of smaller projects

3.1.8 Establish future natural parks on the basis of the following criteria, consistent with the OCP:

- representative of Courtenay's natural diversity, wildlife or plant protection
- to protect wildlife and riparian resources and enhance habitat connectivity, especially along riparian corridors
- ability to support a variety of outdoor recreation activities including walking, cycling, swimming, picnicking, bird and wildlife watching
- presence of viewpoints and vista appreciation
- equitable distribution of open space to all parts of the City
- current status in terms of ownership and zoning
- opportunities for acquisition, including cost of the land, willingness of the owner to sell, community interest in the area, and availability of funding sources
- protection of donated land for environmental/cultural/heritage values through park dedication and covenants

- 3.1.9 Identify potential park sites for disposition, gauge neighbourhood interest in these sites, and conduct a cost/benefit analysis related to disposition of these sites in exchange for acquisition of higher value parkland.
- 3.1.10 Should any schools close in the future or become available for new uses, work with the School District to explore opportunities for retaining and acquiring the open space components of these properties as City parks.

## 3.2 PARK DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

### KEY FINDING

The City has some parks in outstanding locations, but they have not been designed to maximize opportunities.

### KEY STRATEGY

Conduct design processes and undertake improvements for many of the City's parks.





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## Description

This section assesses the overall condition of existing parks, and identifies strengths and challenges for each park. Amenities within parks are reviewed in section 3.3. The following is a summary of the design of Courtenay's parks by type:

**Community Parks** – Courtenay's 12 developed community parks are well used and provide a diverse range of amenities. Many of these parks are in attractive settings. Some of these parks would benefit from improvements to meet evolving interests and to upgrade aging infrastructure.

**Neighbourhood Parks** – The City's 22 neighbourhood parks are highly variable. Some of the older neighbourhood parks function well as play and social spaces. Some neighbourhood parks in newer developments such as Crown Isle have limited accessibility, paths, play areas and gathering spaces. Some neighbourhood parks contain minimal or no amenities.

**Linear Parks** – The City has several clusters of linear parks. The most extensive and connected include the Valley View Greenway and Courtenay Riverway. Other linear parks that could be connected to each other or to other parkland include those at Arden Road and Cumberland and 20<sup>th</sup> Street.


**Natural Parks** – Courtenay has 22 natural parks. These provide outstanding opportunities to experience nature, but many do not have plans for their trail systems, amenities, nature interpretation, or management of resources.

**Greenspace** – There are multiple open spaces that do not support a significant amount of active use, three of which are around a hectare or larger. These are primarily treed lots and stormwater infiltration areas, and several are difficult to access. Some of these spaces could contribute to the supply of neighbourhood parks if they were improved with amenities and connected to the sidewalk network and trail system.

**School Sites** – School sites are also in variable conditions. Some school sites function as the park space within neighbourhoods, but the School District has limited funding for site improvements and maintenance. Facilities are typically better where PACs have become involved in fund-raising for new amenities.

## Analysis

Many of Courtenay's parks have the potential to be exceptional places. An analysis and planning based on a broader vision for how these parks can meet the community's needs can provide the City with an improved parks system. This section provides an analysis of and identifies opportunities for existing parks, including those that would benefit from having a Park Plan.



### COMMUNITY PARKS

PARK	DESCRIPTION / STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
Bill Moore Park	<p>Large park with overlapping football and ball diamonds, concession, field lighting, clubhouse, lawn bowling, playground and washrooms</p> <p>Has space for additional recreation amenities</p>	<p>Poorly designed, resulting in leftover spaces between sports fields, sloped area limits uses, parking lot bisects the park</p> <p>Rapidly deteriorating underground infrastructure, e.g., irrigation and drainage</p>
Crown Isle Park	<p>Located in a growing area of the City where there are no other existing parks</p>	<p>Currently undeveloped and isolated</p>
Lewis Park	<p>Popular park with many amenities including a concession, three ball diamonds, tennis courts, skate park, washrooms, outdoor stage, horseshoe pits, field adjacent to Lewis Centre and outdoor pool, wading pool and water park, destination for tubing from Puntledge Park</p>	<p>Various issues include overlapping outfields, one ball diamond oriented towards sun, some amenities need upgrades or improvements (incl. spray park, tennis courts), river infrastructure needs upgrades, horseshoe pitch not well used, stage location has challenges, insufficient parking</p> <p>This site suffers from ground settlement and regular flooding during the winter season</p>
Marina Park	<p>A small, riverside park along the Riverway with boat launch</p>	<p>Open space area cut off from marina, informal watercraft storage, Rhododendron gardens</p>
Martin Park	<p>Contains open, unprogrammed space with mature trees, a lacrosse box with bleachers, washrooms and a ball diamond</p>	<p>Park entry dominated by parking and boards of arena</p> <p>Used for pickleball but surface cracks are a concern</p>
Puntledge Park	<p>Popular destination with exceptional natural features, a playground and washrooms; launch point for tubing; site of annual kayak gathering</p>	<p>Infrastructure needs renewal; walkway and bridge limit accessibility; access to the river is challenging</p>
Riverside Park	<p>Central, riverfront location, washrooms, outdoor exercise equipment, proximity to 5<sup>th</sup> Street improvements</p>	<p>Small size, river infrastructure needs upgrades, washrooms disconnected from park, poor physical and visual connection to river (hedge along edge)</p>
Rotary Sky Park	<p>Unique and fairly new accessible playground, seaside location, large trees, one portable toilet, and connection to Riverway</p> <p>Destination park for residents and visitors</p>	<p>Small size and sloped terrain limit opportunities for major new development</p> <p>Park would benefit from more gathering space and a permanent toilet</p>

Simms Millennium Park	Large, partly forested riverside park with trails, covered outdoor stage and washrooms	Some security concerns with BBQ area and pavilion that are increasingly used by those experiencing homelessness, boat launch not well known or used
Standard Park	Riverfront park with large trees, benches, two volleyball courts; washroom, well-used as hub for the Mile of Flowers and as connection to Riverway	User group would like more volleyball courts and lights on courts, picnic space not sufficient for the gatherings
Valley View Park	Large park with three ball diamonds overlapping sports fields, soccer club, washrooms and showers, large skate park; adjacent to largest elementary and high schools  Fields could support more use based on field construction/maintenance and booking data	Limited trees
Woodcote Park	Sports field with soccer nets and small bleachers, washrooms, and a playground  Central location, large enough for additional amenities  Fields could support more use based on field construction/maintenance and booking data	Relatively few amenities, lack of trees

**NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS**

Courtenay’s neighbourhood parks are grouped for analysis according to similarities in their characteristics, challenges and opportunities.

PARK	DESCRIPTION / STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
Trumpeter Glen Park, Knights of Columbus Park, Idiens Park, Sunrise Park, Cooper Park, Maple Park, Malcolm-Morrison Sr. Park, Krebs/Larsen Park, Galloway Park, Hawk Glen Park	These parks satisfy the requirements of a neighbourhood park	There is no guidance on what should replace playground equipment that is aging or removed
Walbran Park, Monarch Park, Ashwood Park, Hebrides Park, Cenotaph Park, Sussex Park, Harmston Park	Serve largely as places for community mailboxes with mowed grass  May contain some benches or picnic areas	Lack amenities such as play equipment and trails

Hobson Park, Inverclyde Park, Elderberry Park	Partially or largely forested	Lack amenities such seating / picnic areas or need upgrades to play equipment
Cliffe & 5 <sup>th</sup> Park	This pocket plaza is a central, treed area that is across from another small urban plaza	Plaza amenities may not reflect the importance of this downtown space
Cottonwood Community Garden	Former community garden, pathway, benches	Currently overgrown and unused, challenges with use by those experiencing homelessness

“ We should really focus on our waterfront as a seawall for commuters to and from Courtenay and Comox walking and cycling” -*Survey respondent*

**LINEAR PARKS**

PARK	DESCRIPTION / STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
Courtenay Riverway, Arden Road, Cumberland & 20th, Rosewall Buffer Park, Hawk Greenway, Idiens Greenway, Crown Isle Greenway	These parks satisfy the requirements of a linear park	Tree decline is difficult to address due to access issues Dumping and trespassing by neighbours
26th Buffer Park, Ryan Road and Cowichan Avenue, Crown Isle the Rise, Ryan Road and Crown Isle Blvd	Corridors of parkland through developments	These parks lack trail amenities
Rotary Trail	Trail amenities are nearby on E & N	There are not sidewalks connecting to the Rotary Trail on all streets
Valley View Greenway	Trail corridor is well-used, including by kids going to school	Tree stability and erosion concerns, issues with creek and culverts, not well maintained

There are some existing linear parks that would not be accepted as park in the future, e.g., Rosewall Buffer Park, 26th Buffer Park. These are examples of parks that should either be incorporated within a private lot (e.g., where the main purpose is a tree buffer for the land use), or designated as highway (where the primary purpose is to accommodate a connecting trail). An evaluation of the costs versus benefits on these corridors could help guide consideration of disposition or repurposing where appropriate.

**NATURAL AREAS**

Natural Areas are grouped into two categories - those that function like a park and those that are more like protected environmentally sensitive areas. Natural areas that perform like parks, with looped trails, signs and other amenities, are analyzed below:

PARK	DESCRIPTION / STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
Hurford Hill Nature Park, Lerwick Nature Park, Vanier Nature Park, Sandwick Park, Millard Creek Park, Roy Morrison Park, Condensory Park	Large forested areas with existing trails that could serve multiple neighbourhoods throughout the City  Comox Valley Land Trust has covenants and ongoing initiatives in Vanier Nature Park, Sandwick Park and Hurford Hill Nature Park	Vanier Nature Park contains invasive species such as ivy and blackberry (other parks may also)  All of these parks have unmapped informal trails  Guiding documents like park management plans may be lacking
Air Park	An intertidal stormwater pond along the Courtenay Riverway; has a trail and shelter with interpretive signage	Parts of the trail experience winter wash-outs and erosion  Asphalt heaving is an ongoing concern  Walkway is used as a transportation corridor for mobility scooters so it needs a smooth surface  Low-flying planes and potential accidents due to these aircraft are a concern
Bear James Park, Capes Park, Morrison Creek Park, 13 <sup>th</sup> Street Park, Cousins Park, Dogwood Park, Millard Creek Park and Condensory Park	Forested areas located adjacent to trail network  Capes Park is next to a historic homesite that has tourist accommodations	Not many trails in these parks  Some parks such as Capes Park have unmapped trails
Tarling Park (Tarling Antique Machinery Park is future name per land title)	Forested park, contains an old homesite, machinery, and arbour with unique character	Homesite appears neglected  Intent of donation to display antique machinery for the public is not fulfilled
McPhee Meadows	Large, riverfront location with great potential	Access is currently restricted and flooding occurs  Lack of vision, plan and design  Undeveloped and unfunded
Crown Isle 150-yr Grove	Prominent location on Lerwick Road within the Crown Isle community	Site is intended to regularly flood as wetland habitat

Natural Areas that perform like protected environmentally sensitive areas are described below:

PARK	DESCRIPTION / STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
Piercy Creek Greenway, Cruikshank Ave Park, Hunt & Tunner Park, Lawrence Burns Park, Capes Park, Ronson Road	Large parks with many large trees	Lack trails and proper connections to surrounding neighbourhoods, sidewalks and bike lanes

“ Any opportunity to squeeze in some greenspace is welcome.” –*Survey respondent*

### GREENSPACES

Courtenay's largest greenspaces that have potential to offer recreation values are analyzed here.

PARK	DESCRIPTION / STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Lower Ridge Park, Malahat Storm Park, Muir-McLauchlin Park and Blue Jay Park	Have good access and some trails, Muir-McLauchlin Park is primarily made up of stormwater ponds, the primary function of Malahat Storm Park and Lower Ridge Park is stormwater management	Few amenities	Would benefit from having amenities such as benches to encourage use
Cruikshank Park		Inaccessible, location lacks neighbourhood park access	Would benefit from being better connected to surrounding neighbourhoods and North Island College lands, which could happen with a hillside trail linkage  Could offer neighbourhood park amenities
Fitzgerald Park, First Street Park		Inaccessible	Would benefit from having a trail or being better connected to trail system
Tunner Park	Fenced, largely a drainage channel	Very dense vegetation	Would benefit from a trail and some vegetation thinning

## Key Community Input on Park Design

The community was not asked for comments on specific parks, but some comments were provided as follows:

- add a community garden to Riverside Park
- improve access to a “wild area and wild swimming spot” on the Puntledge River at Lewis Park
- open McPhee Meadows for public access
- redesign Lewis Park
- Improve Harmston Park, considering a dog off-leash area and a playground

## Park Design Recommendations

The following are proposed recommendations for park design.

Park Plan – plan for the design of parks, including new amenities, through a full community engagement process

Park Management Plan – plan for natural parks that focuses on the protection and management of natural resources, including for parks where the City may not be the guardian

## PLANNING AND DESIGN

### 3.2.1 Apply the design guidelines below to the design of new and upgraded parks.

- Use universal design principles to welcome all park visitors, including some pathway loops that are fully accessible in City-wide parks, and other parks where possible
- Encourage parks to include gathering places, with seating and spaces appropriate for picnics and group activities according to the type and size of the park
- For parks that include parking areas, design the parking efficiently, minimize the amount of hard (or gravel) surface, and keep the parking as close to the perimeter of the park as possible
- For large parking lots, include trees, planting and rain gardens during upgrading projects or new construction
- Plant trees in parks to the degree possible for shade and as a contribution to the urban forest
- Use Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, balancing these with the need to protect and enhance habitats
- Provide seating in all parks with significant levels of use

- 
- Design parks with the goal of increasing creativity and interest, e.g., more interactive play environments and equipment, allow children to experience more nature in parks, and provide options for all ages of children, youth and adults
  - Explore opportunities to integrate outdoor exercise equipment in or near playgrounds in community parks
  - When planning and designing new parks, consider life cycle cost analysis and water and energy consumption
  - Design parks with consideration for protection and enhancement of environmental resources and include rainwater/stormwater infiltration where possible
  - Celebrate local artists in parks, with more public art such as murals, mosaics, and sculptures

**Universal Design** involves designing spaces so that they can be used by the widest range of people possible. Universal Design evolved from Accessible Design, a design process that addresses the needs of people with disabilities. Universal Design goes further by recognizing that there is a wide spectrum of human abilities. Everyone, even the most able-bodied person, passes through childhood, periods of temporary illness, injury and old age. By designing for this human diversity, we can create things that will be easier for all people to use. Universal Design makes places safer, easier and more convenient for everyone.

### 3.2.2 Conduct Park Plans using the process below:

- Inform the relevant City residents of the process and consult with and involve those interested in each park; for Community Parks, inform the entire City; for Neighbourhood Parks, inform those within the catchment; for all parks, inform stakeholders
- Conduct thorough site inventory and analysis, including potential environmental, archaeological, geotechnical, and transportation analyses depending on the location
- Obtain input from park users and stakeholders on their patterns of use, interests, needs, etc.
- Conduct focus group sessions to discuss park strengths, challenges, vision, objectives, and potential recommendations
- Prepare a park vision, objectives and program of amenities and activities (could include options)
- Prepare optional park concept plans



- Obtain community input on the park concept plan options
- Prepare a draft Park Plan and obtain input
- Prepare final Park Plan

Parks identified as needing plans are listed below:

PARK	CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLANNING
Bill Moore Park / Dogwood Park	Consider an off-leash dog area on the slope or adjacent to Rotary Trail, and courts for basketball, beach volleyball
Lewis Park	Consider multiple uses and spaces including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an improved event space, potentially relocating the stage</li> <li>• looped trails and improving pedestrian connections to the river as part of dike upgrades</li> <li>• tubing destination amenities</li> <li>• outdoor skatepark</li> <li>• naturalizing and regrading a portion of the park to accommodate stormwater and flood water</li> <li>• relocating some of the sports facilities to other parks (especially tennis courts that are costly to maintain in a floodplain)</li> </ul>
Puntledge Park	Improve the transition between the open space and the riverfront, and consider amenities for larger numbers of visitors, more picnic facilities, an improved launch area, amenities for tubing, and upgraded pedestrian paths with looped trails (including the foot bridge)
McPhee Meadows	Prepare a Park Plan that will establish this as a community park, including consultation with the donor family. Analyze and plan site to include park amenities and trail connections
Harmston Park	If this is dedicated as a park, identify the amenities desired by the surrounding neighbourhood as a basis for planning

**3.2.3 Prepare Park Management Plans for natural areas using the process below:**

- Inform the relevant City residents of the process and consult with and involve those interested in each park; for major Natural Areas, inform the entire City; for other Natural Areas, inform stakeholders
- Work with Comox Valley Land Trust on parks where they have interests
- Conduct an inventory of natural resources
- Prepare strategies for vegetation management, including weed/invasive species control and potential native planting

- Plan for natural corridors within and between parks to provide connectivity for wildlife where possible
- Identify trail systems and supporting infrastructure to provide varied and interesting experiences to visitors while protecting environmentally sensitive areas and features
- Consider other amenities the park could support without negative environmental impacts
- Protect and enhance fisheries values in riparian areas
- Establish interpretive programs, including signs, online resources, and activities where applicable

Parks identified as needing Park Management Plans are listed below:

PARK	CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLANNING
Hurford Hill Nature Park	Consider the open, grassy space for a disc golf course
Lerwick Nature Park	Formalize pathways and manage vegetation based on best arboricultural practices
Vanier Nature Park	Consider enhancement and protection of this Garry Oak forest
Sandwich Park	Consider a perimeter path Formalize pathways and manage vegetation based on best arboricultural practices
Millard Creek Park	Establish pathways and manage vegetation based on best arboricultural practices
Condensory Park	Establish pathways and manage vegetation based on best arboricultural practices
Crown Isle 150-yr Grove	Consult with the community on a vision and design for this space

3.2.4 Crown Isle Park – Assess future needs depending on the development proposed in the surrounding area.

- Consider community or neighbourhood park development, or disposition of all or a portion of the site



**CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT**

3.2.5 Work on improving community parks as opportunities arise.

- Parks identified for potential improvements are listed below:

PARK	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS
Bill Moore Park / Dogwood Park	Phased implementation of Park Plan
Lewis Park	Phased implementation of Park Plan
Puntledge Park	Phased implementation of Park Plan
McPhee Meadows	Phased implementation of Park Plan
Harmston Park	Phased implementation of Park Plan
Marina Park	Consider formalizing the watercraft storage
Martin Park	Consider improving the park entry, adding more paths, and improve the courts for pickleball and lacrosse use
Riverside Park	Consider improving access to the waterfront as part of dike upgrades, and consider new uses that could further animate the park, e.g., riverfront trail, community gardens
Rotary Skypark	If the park can be expanded, consider additional amenities and gathering places so the park can serve a larger role along the Courtenay Riverway
Simms Millennium Park	If a pedestrian bridge on 6th Street is built, improve trail connections and review the viability of a boat launch near the bridge  Upgrade the park to improve its capacity and functioning for special events, potentially through partnership or grant contributions
Standard Park	Consider lighting the volleyball courts and expanded gathering spaces, with picnic shelters and/or BBQ areas
Valley View Park	Consider more perimeter tree planting and looped paths Consider pickleball courts
Woodcote Park	Consider tree planting, a perimeter pathway, seating, and amenities desired by the neighbourhood

3.2.6 Work on improving neighbourhood parks as opportunities arise.

- Parks identified for potential improvements are listed below

PARK	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS
Walbran Park Monarch Park Ashwood Park Hebrides Park Cenotaph Park Sussex Park Harmston Park	Introduce park amenities such as seating / picnic areas and play equipment
Hobson Park Inverclyde Park Cottonwood Community Garden Elderberry Park	Improve park amenities such as seating / picnic areas and upgrade play equipment
Cliffe & 5th Park	Add a well-marked street crossing and clear linkages to the Courtenay Riverway through the City-owned "Bridge" building



3.2.7 Work on improving natural areas and green spaces in collaboration with partners as opportunities arise.

- Parks identified for potential improvements are listed below

PARK	CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLANNING
Hurford Hill Nature Park	Per Park Management Plan
Lerwick Nature Park	Per Park Management Plan
Vanier Nature Park	Per Park Management Plan
Sandwick Park	Per Park Management Plan
Millard Creek Park	Per Park Management Plan
Condensory Park	Per Park Management Plan
Crown Isle 150-yr Grove	Per Park Management Plan
Air Park Bear James Park Capes Park Morrison Creek Park 13th Street Park Cousins Park Dogwood Park Condensory Park Piercy Creek Greenway Cruikshank Ave Park Hunt & Tunner Park Lawrence Burns Park Ronson Road	Improve parks with more looping trails and connections to the City trail system
Tarling Antique Machinery Park	Work with community organizations to establish the site to be used in perpetuity as a museum and museum park, as land title documents require
Lower Ridge Park Malahat Storm Park Muir-McLauchlin Park Blue Jay Park	Add amenities such as benches to encourage more use

### 3.3 PARK AMENITIES

#### KEY FINDING

The City has some excellent park amenities, but in general the parks are underdeveloped with outdated infrastructure and some popular amenities lacking.

#### KEY STRATEGY

Focus efforts on adding and improving amenities in the City's parks.

#### Description

This section includes a review of the recreation amenities in parks throughout Courtenay (except for trails that are discussed in section 3.4, and the outdoor pools in section 5.0), and an analysis of their strengths and challenges in relation to trends.

In the summer of 2016, condition assessments were conducted for many of Courtenay's park amenities, and that information forms the basis for most of this analysis (Map 3). Assets were rated according to the following scale:

RANK	DESCRIPTION OF CONDITION
1	Very Good Condition – only normal maintenance required
2	Minor Defects Only – minor maintenance required (5%)
3	Maintenance Required to Return to Accepted Level of Service – Significant maintenance required (10-20%)
4	Requires Renewal – Significant renewal / upgrade required (20 – 40%)
5	Asset Unserviceable – Over 50% of asset requires replacement

The most common score was 3. The following table describes the locations of the various amenities and a summary of their condition (numbers in brackets in the Location column indicate the number of amenities, where this is more than one). Where original condition assessments were not available, City operations staff provided input.

AMENITY	LOCATIONS	CONDITION SUMMARY
Ball Diamonds	Bill Moore Park (2), Martin Park, Lewis Park (3), Valley View Park (3)	Valley View Park diamonds rated 2 Lewis Park rated 4 (floodplain, poor construction) Bill Moore Park rated 3.5 (drainage issue limits early season play)
Basketball	Bill Moore Park (half court in parking lot), Hobson Park, Krebs Park, Lewis Park, Maple Park, Martin Park, Trumpeter Glen Park, Woodcote Park, LINC Youth Centre, Sandwich Park (half court)	Court at Hobson Park was rated 4 No basketball courts were rated 5 out of 5
Benches	There were 83 benches across the City included in the 2016 Condition Assessment	11 benches were rated 1 13 benches were rated 4 No benches were rated 5 out of 5
Concessions	Bill Moore Park, Lewis Park, Valley View Park	Concessions were in good shape in Bill Moore Park and Valley View Park (likely 3), but rough shape in Lewis Park (likely 5)
Community Gardens	6 <sup>th</sup> Street and Harmston, plus multiple community gardens on school sites	Rated 3 Under contract for management
Disc Golf	Only available in Comox	
Fitness Area	Riverside Park	Rated 4 and 5, weathering, components are missing with some equipment ready for renewal
Horseshoe Pitch	Lewis Park	Considered a 4, more maintenance would raise it to 3
Kayak / Canoe Launches / Docks	Courtenay Marina Park, Simms Millennium Park	
Lawn Bowling	Bill Moore Park	Building was rated 1 Turf was rated 3.5, more maintenance would raise it to 2
Marina	Courtenay Marina Park	
Playgrounds	Bill Moore Park, Cooper Park, Galloway Park, Hawk Glen, Hobson Park, Idiens Park, Krebs Park, Knights of Columbus, Lewis Park, Malcolm Morrison Sr. Park, Rotary Sky Park, Martin Park, Puntledge Park, Sandwich Park, Simms Millennium Park, Sunrise Rotary Park, Trumpeter Glen Park, Woodcote Park	Sunrise Park, Puntledge, and The Ridge play equipment were rated 1 Galloway, Malcom Morrison, Martin, Sandwich, Simms Millenium, Sussex were rated 2 Idiens, Rotary Sky Park were rated 2.5 Bill Moore, Cooper, Hawk Glen, Krebs, Maple were rated 3 Knights of Columbus (Tunner), Lewis, Woodcote were rated 3.5 Trumpeter Glen was rated 4 Hobson was rated 5

Picnic Areas	Bill Moore Park, Galloway Park, Hawk Glen Park, Hobson Park, Idiens Park, Krebs Park, Knights of Columbus Park, Lewis Park, Malcolm Morrison Sr. Park, Maple Park, Martin Park, Pinegrove Park, Puntledge Park, Riverside Park, Simms Millenium Park, Sunrise Rotary Park, Standard Park, Trumpeter Glen Park, Walbran Park	
Skate Parks	Lewis Park, Valley View Park, (LINC Centre indoor skatepark is in section 6.0)	Lewis Park Skate Park was outdated and in poor condition, rating of 5 Valley View was rated 2
Sports Fields	Bill Moore Park, Lewis Park, Valley View Park (2 are City, 1 is School District with a management agreement with City), Woodcote Park, Martin Park, Vanier (George P) Secondary synthetic turf	Valley View Park fields were rated 2 Woodcote and Martin were rated 2.5 Bill Moore Park was rated 3.5 Lewis Park was rated 4
Sports Courts	Martin Park	Rated 3.5, will require renewal due to increased use by pickleball
Spray Park	Lewis Park	Rated 3 Facility was getting older
Tennis Courts	Lewis Park (4)	Rated 4, rough condition, subsidence causing cracks in courts, fences in poor condition, fly balls go into courts in this location
Volleyball Courts	Lewis Park (grass), Standard Park (2) (sand)	Rated 2, good condition
Washrooms	Lewis Park, Rotary Sky Park, Martin Park, Puntledge Park, Riverside Park, Simms Millennium Park, Standard Park	The washrooms in Lewis Park and Puntledge Park were rated 3

## Analysis

This section includes commentary on the park amenities. Input received from the community is also included.

### **PLAYGROUNDS, SPRAY PARKS AND OUTDOOR FITNESS AREAS**

Courtenay has play structures distributed across the City. There is a wide variation in the type and condition of the play equipment. Trends in playgrounds are to incorporate more creative play elements and nature. These are sometimes called “natural” playgrounds, and there is increasing literature on the importance of higher risk play environments to help children understand



challenges, build self-esteem, and develop ways of cooperating with each other. It is also beneficial for families to have access to picnic tables, benches and shade trees near play structures.

The City's spray park at Lewis Park is popular. Trends in spray parks are to use thematic pieces that are unique to the community, to provide distinct spaces and play elements for toddlers, to use recirculating water systems, and to incorporate benches and platforms for adults and children taking breaks.

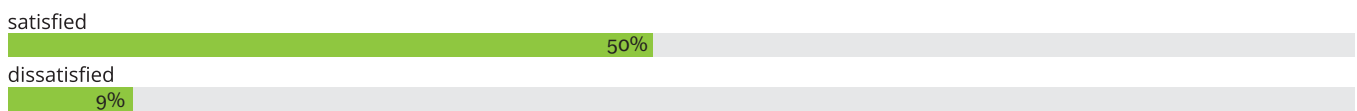
The one set of outdoor fitness equipment is located in Riverside Park, and it is well used; however, its condition has deteriorated. If the City wishes to consider more exercise equipment, it typically works best in locations with high public use or close to a recreation centre where instructors can direct participants on how to use the equipment. Another trend is to incorporate single pieces of fitness equipment within or near playgrounds to offer multi-generational opportunities.

### Community Input on Playgrounds, Spray Parks and Outdoor Fitness Areas



Read as - 45% of survey respondents had someone in their household "visit a playground or spray park" within the previous year

### SATISFACTION FOR PLAYGROUNDS AND SPRAY PARKS



Read as - 50% of survey respondents were satisfied with "playgrounds and spray parks"

- Multiple community survey respondents requested more playgrounds (14), replacement of deteriorating playground equipment (12), and better and more accessible playgrounds; Puntledge Park was mentioned multiple times for playground upgrading; comments were also made about upgrading school playgrounds
- Focus group participants requested more creative playgrounds, and outdoor play areas and natural spaces near child care centres and preschools
- The following are locations mentioned in the survey for new or better playgrounds
  - Crown Isle area
  - Harmston Park
  - Mission Road Area
  - Costco area
  - Lower Valley View (e.g., Hawk and Hobson).
  - Corner of 5th and England (vacant lot)
  - Trumpeter Glen and Hobson park
  - Hawk Glenn

### **SPORTS FIELDS AND BALL DIAMONDS**

The City has some good fields, which are complemented by good fields at the high schools and smaller, less-used fields at the elementary and middle schools. GP Vanier Secondary School has a synthetic turf field that is heavily used. Some of the sports user groups in Courtenay have requested additional synthetic turf fields. There is a wide range in the supply of these fields in other communities; in the Fraser Valley, there is approximately 1 field/31,000 population. The trend is to locate these fields at high school as their use can be maximized by supporting student use during school hours and community use at other times.

This project did not include a detailed analysis of the use of sports fields and ball diamonds. A high-level overview shows fairly high participation in soccer and slopitch. Other field sports include football, baseball, lacrosse, ultimate, and a small amount of field hockey.

The following are some of the patterns of use of the sports fields based on review of typical weekly schedules for park and school fields in March, May, July and October:

- the synthetic turf field at Vanier is used heavily in March, May and October, with lower use in the summer
- Bill Moore, Lewis, and Valley View are used consistently in the evenings in May and October
- Isfeld Secondary and Queneesh Elementary are used consistently in the evenings in May, July and October
- Most of the evening use is scheduled Monday to Thursday only
- Weekend bookings of fields are low
- There are few bookings at Woodcote, Martin, and the other elementary schools; Woodcote is a good sports field in a central West Courtenay location

There may be opportunities to schedule more use of existing fields if groups are willing to adjust their schedules. There may also be opportunities to improve some of the fields so they can support more use. Once the use of fields is maximized, with respect for field condition, the City may need to provide new sports fields and ball diamonds to support population growth.

## Key Community Input on Sports Fields and Ball Diamonds

played sports on outdoor fields such as soccer, rugby

20%

*Read as - 20% of survey respondents had someone in their household "play sports on outdoor fields" within the previous year*

### SATISFACTION

satisfied

40%

dissatisfied

8%

*Read as - 40% of survey respondents were satisfied with "sports fields and ball diamonds"*

- Survey respondents requested more multi-use fields (9) available for rugby and soccer with lights, commented on sun angle and drainage issues with the ball diamond at Lewis Park, and requested access to washrooms and change rooms at the Vanier synthetic turf field
- More baseball diamonds were requested (4)
- Focus group participants had similar requests, including a ballfield complex, rugby field with clubhouse, and an additional multi-purpose synthetic field with lights

## COURTS

Courtenay has four tennis courts, located in Lewis Park, and they are shifting and cracking as they are built over a landfill site and they are within the floodplain. Whereas tennis participation had been declining a decade and more ago, it is experiencing a resurgence in many communities.

Pickleball is extremely popular, particularly among older adults. Courtenay has no dedicated outdoor pickleball courts and pickleball is currently played outdoors in the sports court (lacrosse



box) at Martin Park and on the practice tennis court at Lewis Park (indoor use is in section 6.0). With Courtenay's population and demographics, it would be appropriate to consider some pickleball courts, potentially developed in partnership with pickleball players.

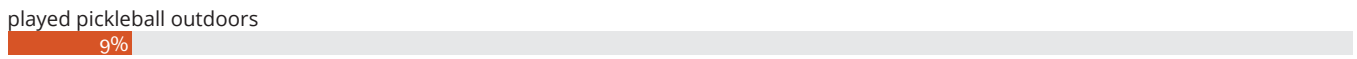
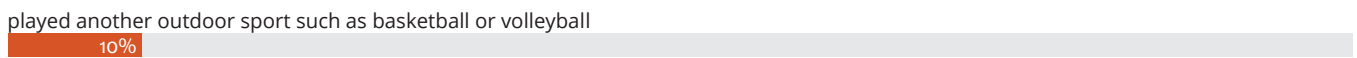
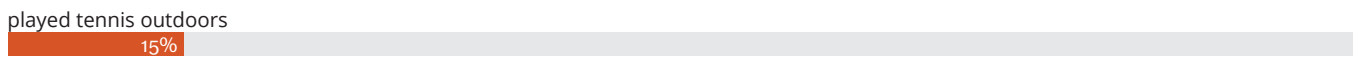
While in some communities, tennis and pickleball players negotiate in competition with each other, this is usually where tennis courts have had pickleball lines added to them or where tennis courts have been converted to pickleball courts. In other communities, especially where new courts are being planned, tennis and pickleball players have found that they share many interests and infrastructure needs. There are numerous people who play both sports, and even more who transition from tennis to pickleball.

The only sports court is in Martin Park and this court is also used for lacrosse and pickleball. This court is aging and the surface is not level. Sports courts are being built in many communities because of their ability to support a variety of activities, including toddlers on tricycles or learning to bike, basketball, roller hockey, and ball hockey. In some cases, lacrosse boxes are also built as multi-use courts.

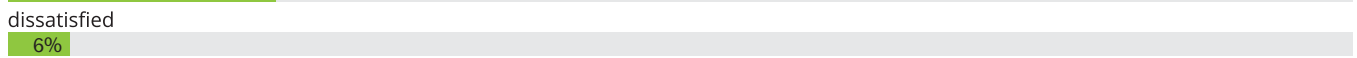
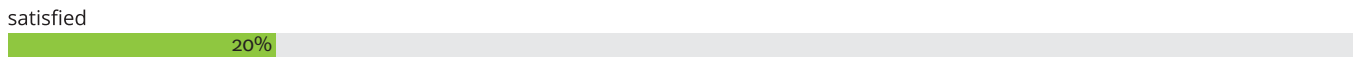
Sand volleyball is popular in the City, and there are requests from players for additional volleyball courts. There may be suitable space for courts in Bill Moore Park.

### Key Community Input on Courts

#### SATISFACTION FOR OUTDOOR BASKETBALL AND VOLLEYBALL COURTS



*Read as - 15% of survey respondents had someone in their household who "played tennis outdoors" within the previous year*



*Read as - 20% of survey respondents were satisfied with "outdoor basketball and volleyball courts"*

- Survey respondents had high satisfaction for outdoor tennis courts
- Survey respondents were equally split between those satisfied and unsatisfied with outdoor pickleball courts
- Many survey respondents wrote comments requesting more pickleball courts (65) and more tennis courts (28), with some requesting more sand volleyball courts (9)
- More specific comments by community survey respondents included needs for tennis court resurfacing, better outdoor pickleball courts, and opinions for and against shared tennis/pickleball courts
- Focus group participants had similar requests

### COMMUNITY GARDENS

There are currently three community gardens in Courtenay. The garden at 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Harmston is operated by a local community organization; it was granted a five-year land-use agreement in 2014. Two other community gardens operate on School District sites at Lake Trail Secondary and Courtenay Elementary. Community gardens are typically most successful in residential areas with small lots and multi-family developments where residents do not have space for their own gardens. Despite this, these gardens can be important socially and can be popular in traditional residential areas.

Community gardens enhance the food security and resilience of a city, with important social, environmental and economic roles. They also provide important social spaces where community members can gather outside, interact and stay active. Community gardens are one component of urban agriculture that can also include community-based food production and community kitchen programs, where community groups work together to produce food on public land. Another option is a program in which individual residents register to develop and maintain their own garden plot.

Underused urban open space can be ideal for community gardens, , boulevards, road bulges, or planting areas in parks or around civic buildings. Alternatively, shared harvesting can take place on private lands and residential backyard gardens. Some infrastructure is required for gardening, such as garden boxes, raised planters, tool sheds, and access to running water. Additional amenities that can enhance gardening spaces include benches, shade trees and picnic shelters. In most municipalities, community gardening and other forms of urban agriculture are organized and promoted by volunteer groups. It will therefore be up to local groups to determine the interest for more community gardens in Courtenay. Potential locations include Bill Moore Park and Cottonwood Community Garden (which is not currently an operational community garden).

## Key Community Input on Community Gardens

gardened in a community garden

5%

*Read as - 5% of survey respondents had someone in their household who "gardened in a community garden" within the previous year*

- Community survey respondents in West Courtenay placed much higher importance on community gardens
- One survey respondent indicated that LUSH is seeking more locations for community gardens
- Focus group respondents requested more community gardens plus other forms of urban agriculture, e.g., orchards, gardens, farmers' markets (including one downtown)

### DOG OFF-LEASH AREAS

Courtenay does not have any dog off-leash areas, but receives requests for them. Owning dogs provides many social and health benefits to people; it is also a challenge to manage dogs within parks. With the growing populations of humans and dogs, conflicts among park users with and without dogs have increased. These circumstances are typically addressed through the provision of a range of dog-related amenities and dog management strategies.

There is a trend towards providing different types of dog off-leash areas within communities and providing these within walking distance of as many residents as possible. The types of dog amenities can include destination dog parks, off-leash trails, water access for dogs, open unfenced grass areas, smaller fenced parks or exercise areas, and small dog relief areas near multi-unit buildings. Providing adequate opportunities for dog owners and a clear and communicated dog management strategy can help to reduce the conflicts associated with dogs in parks.

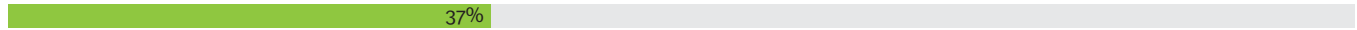
There is research showing that dogs can have significant negative effects due to trampling of vegetation within several metres of paths through natural areas. Most communities that allow dogs off-leash on trails locate these in the least environmentally sensitive locations, and provide alternate trails where dogs must be on-leash. The potential for off-leash trails in natural areas in Courtenay will need to be determined through park planning processes.

There are several dog off-leash areas just outside City e.g., Exhibition Grounds, Goose Spit, Cumberland.

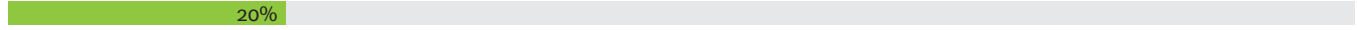
## Key Community Input on Dog Off-leash Areas

### SATISFACTION FOR PLACES TO WALK DOGS

satisfied

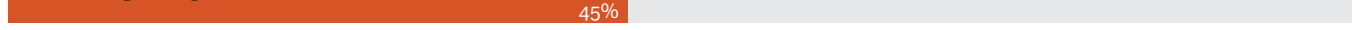


dissatisfied

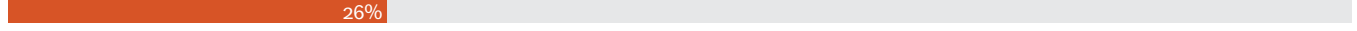


*Read as - 37% of survey respondents were satisfied with "places to walk dogs"*

walked a dog or dogs



among the most important activity



*Read as - 45% of survey respondents had someone in their household who "walked a dog or dogs" within the previous year*

- Many survey respondents wrote comments requesting an off-leash dog park (34) or two
- Focus groups echoed this request plus more enforcement of dog regulations

## PICNIC FACILITIES, SHELTERS AND BENCHES

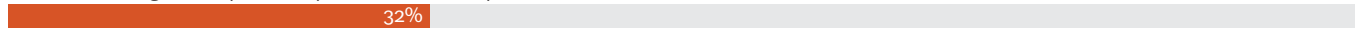
Courtenay has an abundance of areas that support picnicking. Picnicking is an accessible, low-cost activity that can bring people together for high quality social and recreation experiences. The City will need to upgrade these sites as needed, and to determine the level of infrastructure suitable for each picnic site, ranging from one picnic table to covered structures and BBQ facilities.

Benches improve the accessibility and enjoyment of existing parks and trails, especially when placed in attractive locations, near playground and other amenities, and under shade trees. As the population grows and use increases, more benches will be needed.

## Key Community Input on Picnic Facilities, Shelters and Benches

- Some survey respondents and focus group participants suggested more picnic tables and picnic areas in parks and along trails

attended an organized picnic or private event in a park



*Read as - 32% of survey respondents had someone in their household who "attended an organized picnic or private event in a park" within the previous year*

## WASHROOMS AND CONCESSIONS

There are washrooms in seven of Courtenay's parks. Washrooms in parks have become challenging to manage as they are often targets of vandalism and inappropriate uses. On the other hand, they are critical to public enjoyment of parks and trails. Various security systems and styles of washrooms have been developed to address these challenges. Residents also requested access to water fountains.

Three of the City's parks have concessions, and the one in Lewis Park is at the end of its lifespan. Concessions can be successful in parks where there is significant use for extended periods. Otherwise, it is difficult to justify this level of infrastructure. Municipalities rarely run concessions as a service; rather most concessions are leased to third-party operators, or there are agreements with non-profit groups. Some community groups rent concessions and others obtain access at no cost as they use them as fund-raisers. As concessions age, many municipalities are looking at food trucks instead, as these can be deployed as needed without any ongoing costs.

## Key Community Input on Washrooms and Concessions

### SATISFACTION WITH PUBLIC WASHROOMS

satisfied

30%

dissatisfied

39%

*Read as - 30% of survey respondents were satisfied with "public washrooms"*

- Many survey respondents wrote comments requesting more washrooms in parks and along trails (11), and improved maintenance of washrooms (6), with specific suggestions including provision of personal hygiene items (e.g., hand sanitizer, paper towels), keeping washrooms open year-round, and accessible washrooms
- Focus group participants had similar comments and suggested improving existing washrooms





**INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RIVER ACTIVITIES**

River activities, particularly swimming and tubing in the Puntledge River, are unique activities that are extremely popular in Courtenay.

**Key Community Input on Infrastructure for River Activities**



*Read as - 68% of survey respondents had someone in their household who "participated in river activities" within the previous year*

**SATISFACTION FOR SWIMMING/WATER ACTIVITIES**



*Read as - 71% of survey respondents were satisfied with "swimming/water activities"*

**SATISFACTION WITH ACCESS TO THE RIVER FOR LAUNCHING WATERCRAFT**



*Read as - 32% of survey respondents were satisfied with "access to the river"*

- Focus group participants suggesting more infrastructure for tubing and naturalizing river edges

**SKATE PARKS AND BIKE SKILLS PARKS**

Courtenay has two outdoor skate parks, one at Lewis Centre and the other at Valley View Park, where maintenance is shared with Comox. There is also an indoor skatepark at the LINC Youth Centre. There are no mountain bike skills parks in Courtenay, though the skateparks are used by bikers. The Village of Cumberland has excellent facilities for mountain bike skills, which serve the major regional needs.

Some communities are developing youth-oriented parks that combine multiple amenities such as skate parks, bike skills, basketball, loop paths and meeting places all at one location. Another trend is to integrate some small skate features and/or neighbourhood-level bike skills area within parks for beginners. It is best to work with local youth to identify their interests.

## Key Community Input on Skate Parks and Bike Skills Areas

participated in skateboarding

9%

*Read as - 9% of survey respondents had someone in their household who "participated in skateboarding" within the previous year*

- Survey respondents had high satisfaction for skate parks for those who answered the question
- Three community survey respondents suggested a skate park in West Courtenay, as transit to existing skate parks was identified as an issue, and another skate park was also suggested in a focus group

### DISC GOLF

Disc golf is a popular activity, and courses are usually initiated by local players. There are disc golf courses in Comox and Cumberland, but none in Courtenay.

## Key Community Input on Disc Golf

- Some survey respondents and focus group participants expressed interest in a disc golf course in Courtenay

### HORSESHOES

There is one horseshoe pitch in Lewis Park. It is in substandard condition and it does not receive much use.

## Key Community Input on Horseshoes

- 1% of survey respondent households participated in horseshoes
- No comments were made on horseshoes

“ I would love to see better connectivity between the parks, such as designated bike routes or paths.”  
*–Survey respondent*

## Summary of Strengths and Challenges

### STRENGTHS

Courtenay has a significant number of playgrounds

There is a wide variety of amenities throughout the City

Community parks are mostly large and have capacity for multiple activities and amenities

### CHALLENGES

Some of the playgrounds have minimal equipment, some are aging, and few have innovative, creative designs

Some amenities are in need of upgrading and more creativity, e.g., playgrounds

There is a deficiency of some amenities at this time, e.g., dog off-leash areas

More amenities will be needed to serve the growing population

## Park Amenity Recommendations

### PLANNING AND DESIGN

3.3.1 Establish replacement cycles for park amenities as part of asset management, with the following as general guidelines:

- 10 - 15 years for playgrounds depending on their age and quality of construction
- 8 - 12 years for spray parks

3.3.2 Explore opportunities to collaborate with the School District on school site improvement projects that can also serve the community such as the following:

- playground projects
- another field upgrade, with options including another synthetic turf field with lights

3.3.3 Work with others in the region to explore potential locations for new sports amenities including the following:

- a ball diamond complex
- another synthetic turf field with lights
- pickleball courts

- 
- 3.3.4 Explore opportunities for sports field users to expand their hours of use, e.g., to Friday evening and weekends.
- 3.3.5 Establish a new location for tennis, pickleball, and/or shared tennis/pickleball courts.
- potential location in Martin Park
- 3.3.6 Consider adding lights to sand volleyball courts at Standard Park and providing additional courts, potentially at Bill Moore Park.
- 3.3.7 Support groups interested in developing more community gardens.
- Help them to identify appropriate locations, and provide assistance as needed
- 3.3.8 Work with youth to identify needs related to youth parks, e.g., a skate park in West Courtenay, a neighbourhood level bike skills park.
- 3.3.9 If a group is interested in developing a disc golf course, work with them to identify an appropriate location and provide assistance as needed.
- Consider Hurford Hill Nature Park as a potential location in consultation with the Nature Trust
- 3.3.10 Consult with horseshoe players on a plan for removing the horseshoe pitch from Lewis Park.
- Determine if a smaller horseshoe amenity would be used there or in another location

### **CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT**

Many of the capital development recommendations are captured in section 3.2. The following are recommendations that are not related to specific parks:

- 3.3.11 Add and upgrade the following amenities as part of park development:
- an average of one playground annually
  - outdoor exercise equipment on the east side of Courtenay
  - more or better sports fields as the population grows in collaboration with other jurisdictions in the Comox Valley
  - pickleball and tennis courts
  - additional sand volleyball courts

- two dog off-leash areas, one on each side of the City
- more picnic tables and benches in parks and along trails
- upgrade existing washrooms as needed, and provide more washrooms as a high priority, including washrooms in all community parks, and spaced a maximum of 4 kilometres apart along multi-use trails as a general guideline; provide water fountains at washrooms that have water services
- skate park and/or add bike skills or other youth amenities as determined through consultation with youth
- support urban agriculture including community gardens and edible plant gardens in designated areas

## 3.4 TRAILS

### KEY FINDING

The City has extremely popular trails that are highly valued by the community, but links between the trails are lacking.

### KEY STRATEGY

Expand the trail system to achieve more connectivity.

### Description

The City has 35 kilometres (km) of mapped trails that include multi-use trails (paved or compacted gravel) and nature trails (gravel, dirt and grass surfaces) (Map 3). The multi-use trails, which are the City's signature trails, consist of the Valley View Greenway (2.7 km), the Courtenay Riverway (5.2 km), and the E & N Rail / Rotary Trail (2.5 km). A 172 km network of sidewalks complements the trails in the more urban areas.

The Valley View Greenway links Hurford Hill Nature Park with Valley View Elementary School and Mark R. Isfeld Secondary School. This trail system is contained within a linear park and is well connected to surrounding sidewalks and cul-de-sacs. There are some unstable trees and erosion issues along the trail due to bank erosion and culvert – stream interactions.

The Courtenay Riverway runs alongside the Courtenay River and Estuary from close to the south border of the City to 6th Street downtown. This is a highly-valued trail that links numerous community, neighbourhood and linear parks.

The E & N Rail / Rotary Trail runs north-west to south-east and bisects the west side of Courtenay from 29th Street to 5th Street. The railway tracks along this corridor remain, and a trail has been established beside them. A design concept for this trail's staging areas was recently completed to help make access points more inviting. The station house is owned by the Island Corridor Foundation.

A regional trail system connects Courtenay to other parts of the Comox Valley. The Royston Seaside Trail connects the south end of the City to Royston. The One Spot Trail extends from the north end of the City along Condensory Road towards Wildwood Interpretive Forest and Tsolum Spirit Park. Seal Bay Park has extensive trails north of the City boundary.

## Analysis

### *TRAIL GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES*

The trails are great assets to Courtenay, and they are well used. The main challenge is a lack of connectivity between the various trail sections. Although the City has several extensive north-south trail connections on the west side, there are limited east-west connections in that part of the City. The east side has less connectivity in general.

Some short trail connections through developments, such as connections between cul-de-sacs, have historically been designated as parks. Since these serve mainly transportation objectives and may not have park values per se, the City would like to move towards designating these as "highways". This will enable these trail connections to be in addition to the 5% parkland dedication or cash in lieu.

There is potential to connect the multiple existing trails by adding connector trail segments. A connected trail system offers many benefits related to recreation, health and active transportation. The following are some of the factors that influence the opportunities and challenges related to additional trail development.

#### **New Development**

- Courtenay is growing as more retirees and young families move to the City. Existing neighbourhoods are expanding, and new neighbourhoods are being developed. This provides an opportunity for the City to require the planning and construction of new connecting trail systems by land developers.

### Connecting West Courtenay to East Courtenay

- There are two bridges that connect the two sides of the City over the Courtenay River. It is challenging to cross these bridges as part of a trail experience. The main connection is over the 5<sup>th</sup> Street bridge, which has very narrow pedestrian walkways. The area east of the bridge contains two of the City's most well-used parks and a light industrial area with inconsistent sidewalks. Good connections from these two parks to the east communities are lacking. The Highway 19A bridge is 850 metres south and does not connect to any trails on the east side. The key opportunity in this area is to connect people from the trails on the west side of the river up to Lawrence Burns Park. New connections through this area will need to navigate the light industrial area, arterial roads, slopes, river channels and privately held farm lands.
- One way to improve the connection between the east and west sides of the City would be to build bridges that connect through Simms Park. One proposed bridge would lead into Simms Park from the base of 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Other bridges leading east out of Simms Park are made challenging by the Courtenay Slough Harbour. Because of the harbour, the slough is listed as a federal navigable water, so a new bridge over the slough would need to include a mechanism for raising the bridge to allow boats passage, adding significant costs. The backchannel also requires dredging to maintain access to the dock. If the harbour was relocated, building a bridge in this location would be easier and less costly.

### Puntledge River Connection

- There are four major parks along the Puntledge River, which remain largely unconnected by the trail system. Connecting Bear James Park, Puntledge Park, McPhee Meadows and Condensory Park would be a logical way to connect this side of the City and to provide a unique amenity that would complement the Courtenay Riverway. However, much of the land between these parks is privately held, and there is little space to construct a new pathway along the steep and unstable river bank. Connecting these parks along the river would be an ambitious long-term goal. In the meantime, there are opportunities to improve wayfinding and sidewalks between these parks.

In Phase 1 of this project, 22 gaps were identified for on-site investigations of their opportunities and challenges (Parks, Recreation and Culture Analysis, 2017). The gaps were defined as important locations where improvements would greatly enhance connectivity.

Through consideration of community input, available resources, and integration with the City's Master Transportation Plan (being updated concurrently with this plan), 15 locations were identified as trail development priorities (Map 3 and Figure 3.6).

FIGURE 3.6: PROPOSED NEW AND IMPROVED TRAILS

	PROPOSED NEW AND IMPROVED TRAILS	PHASING	RATIONALE	LAND OWNERSHIP TYPES	APPROXIMATE DISTANCE (METRES)
1	Dingwall Hill and Connection to North Island College	Short	Connect Dingwall Road to Cruikshank Park and North Island College, high community interest, could be a popular staircase for fitness training as well as access	City land - Right of Way and Park	175
2	Valley View Greenway - Upper	Long	Existing trail needs improvement	City Park	480
3	Valley View Greenway - Lower	Short	Existing trail needs significant improvement	City Park	845
4	Lawrence Burns Park to Courtenay River	Medium	Connection needed between the east and west portions of the city, connecting parks and trails	Right of Way/Park, Private Land, Road Corridor	940
5	Lewis Park, North Entrance	Long	Better crossings and sidewalks needed to the north end of Lewis Park	Right of Way/Park, Road Corridor	115
6	Simms Park to West Courtenay	Medium	Improvement needed to the connection east from Simms Park to the 5th Street Bridge	Right of Way/Park, Private Land, Road Corridor	360
7	Anderton Avenue to 5th Street Bridge	Long	Improvements needed along Anderton Avenue and along the Courtenay Riverfront	Right of Way/Park	520
8	5th Street Bridge	Medium	Improvement needed to non-motorized access across the 5th Street bridge	Right of Way/Park	100
9	6th Street Pedestrian Bridge	Long	Pedestrian bridge over the Courtenay River at the east end of 6th Street would provide an attractive alternative to 5 <sup>th</sup> Street	Right of Way/Park	95
10	Rotary Trail to Puntledge River	Short	Connecting the Rotary Trail north to the Puntledge River and existing and future parks and trails along the river would be a major asset to the community	Right of Way/Park, Private Land, Road Corridor	160
11	Cumberland Road to Krebs/Larsen Park	Long	Trail would improve north-south neighbourhood connectivity along the western side of the City and links to parks	Right of Way/Park, Private Land, Road Corridor	485



FIGURE 3.6: PROPOSED NEW AND IMPROVED TRAILS (CONT)

	PROPOSED NEW AND IMPROVED TRAILS	PHASING	RATIONALE	LAND OWNERSHIP TYPES	APPROXIMATE DISTANCE (METRES)
12	Cumberland Road	Long	Intersection needs upgrading to improve connections to the surrounding neighbourhoods	Road Corridor	45
13	29th Street	Long	Improving 29 <sup>th</sup> Street would help to connect the Rotary Trail and the Courtenay Riverway	Right of Way/Park, Road Corridor	470
14	Extension of Courtenay Riverway south to Beechwood	Short	Courtenay Riverway is very important to the community, need to close gap to regional district trail	Right of Way/Park	410
15	Extension of Courtenay Riverway south to regional district trail	Medium	Courtenay Riverway is very important to the community, need to close gap to regional district trail	Right of Way/Park, Private Land	590

Opportunities to increase connectivity within the Courtenay trail network were categorized by land ownership type, as this has a significant influence on implementation. The four types of land ownership categories are described below.

**RIGHT OF WAY/PARK**

These trails pass through existing parkland or rights-of-way (ROWs). ROWs were identified using the City’s parcel data. Trails located within a park or ROW provide the best opportunities for increasing trail connectivity. Trails create minimal disturbance and do not restrict access to utility structures along the ROW. Undeveloped ROWs present opportunities to plan trails if new roads or utilities are built.

**PRIVATE LAND**

These trail connections run through privately owned parcels. Trails on private land may be possible through negotiations with the land owner; otherwise, these trails can be viewed as long-term aspirations to be implemented if/when development occurs or if the City wishes to acquire the land or easements.

### LAND TO BE DEVELOPED

Some trails are being built adjacent to and through new developments. Additional trail connections will be added by developers as these areas expand. The City's park planners coordinate new connections through developing neighbourhoods with the Development Services Department.

### ROAD CORRIDOR

Road corridor connections are proposed next to existing roads. Proposed connections within the road corridor are intended to improve the user experience through added sidewalks, shoulder improvements or new trail construction separated from the road surface.

**FIGURE 3.7: TRAIL LAND OWNERSHIP CATEGORY**

LOCATION TYPE	TOTAL LENGTH OF EXISTING TRAILS	TOTAL LENGTH OF PROPOSED TRAILS
Right-of-way/Park	36.11 km	17.64 km
Private land	2.52 km	16.31 km
Land to be Developed	2.69 km	4.93 km
Road Corridor	3.26 km	6.39 km

### Draft Trail Standards

Courtenay does not currently have standards to guide trail construction in parks, though there are standards for private developments in the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw. Preliminary standards for three trail types are described and illustrated below:



**CRITERIA**

**Location:** Key downtown connections

**Amount of Use:** High

**Type of Use:** Walking, jogging, cycling, wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, roller blades, maintenance vehicles (optional)

**Surface:** Paved, usually with special paving, e.g., pavers, stamped concrete or stamped asphalt (could also be an elevated walkway)

**Accessibility:** Universal accessibility throughout, provide at least 1m width smooth surface for wheelchairs

**Trail width:** 3 metres or more

**Clear width:** 4 metres minimum

**Clear height:** 2.4 metres

**Corridor width:** 7 metres minimum

**Longitudinal Slope:** typically 5% with short ramps to 8%

**Note:** multi-use trail is the same as in the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw



#### CRITERIA

**Location:** Community or neighbourhood connectors, parks secondary routes, regional connectors in non-urban areas

**Amount of Use:** Moderate

**Type of Use:** Walking, jogging, cycling, wheelchairs (where possible), walkers (where possible), maintenance vehicles (optional)

**Surface:** Asphalt or well compacted gravel or other granular material

**Accessibility:** Universal accessibility where possible

**Trail width:** 1.5-3 metres

**Clear width:** 2-4 metres

**Clear height:** 2.4 metres

**Corridor width:** 7 metres minimum

**Longitudinal Slope:** typically 8% with short ramps to 12%

NATURE TRAIL



**CRITERIA**

**Location:** Natural areas – non-urban or parks

**Amount of Use:** Low to moderate

**Type of Use:** Walking, jogging, mountain biking

**Surface:** Compacted mineral soil

**Accessibility:** Beginner to advanced trail user groups

**Trail width:** 0.5-3 metres

**Clear width:** 2 metres minimum

**Clear height:** 2.4 metres

**Corridor width:** N/A

**Longitudinal Slope:** 20% maximum

### Courtenay Riverway

The Courtenay Riverway through downtown is a particularly important trail in the City. The flood protection infrastructure adjacent to Riverside Park needs upgrading and there is an excellent opportunity to improve the park as part of these upgrades. Riverside Park could be part of the Courtenay Riverway connecting 5<sup>th</sup> Street with Condensory Park.

### Summary of Strengths and Challenges

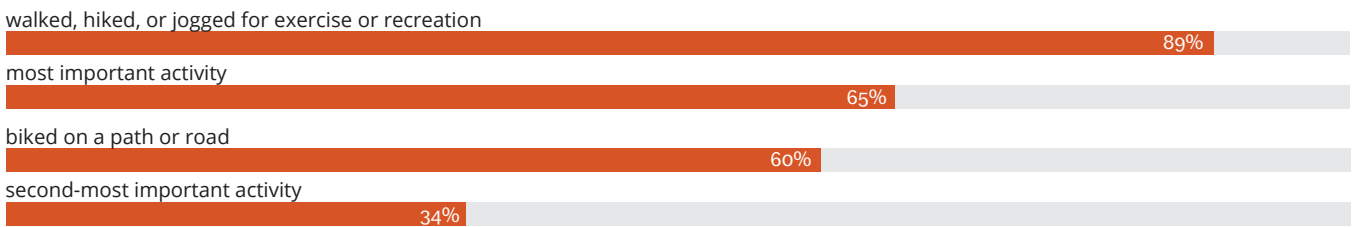
#### STRENGTHS

Courtenay has multiple trails that are highly valued and well used

#### CHALLENGES

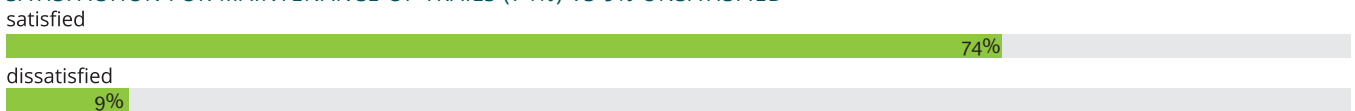
Connectivity is lacking between trail segments, particularly on the east side of Courtenay

### Key Community Input on Trails



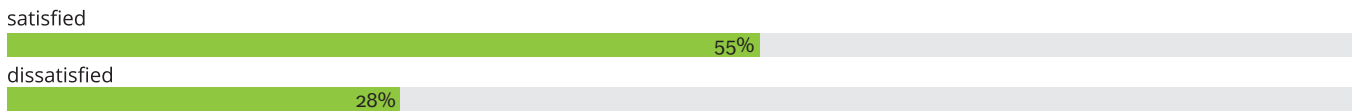
Read as - 89% of survey respondents had someone in their household who “walked, hiked, or jogged for exercise or recreation” within the previous year

#### SATISFACTION FOR MAINTENANCE OF TRAILS (74%) VS 9% UNSATISFIED



Read as - 74% of survey respondents were satisfied with the “maintenance of trails”

#### SATISFACTION FOR LONG TRAILS OR LOOP TRAILS FOR LONG WALKS OR RIDES



Read as - 55% of survey respondents were satisfied with “long trails or loop trails”

#### SATISFACTION WITH SAFE PLACES TO RIDE BIKES



Read as - 30% of survey respondents were satisfied with “safe places to ride bikes”

- Many survey respondents requested more routes for walking and cycling (65), greater trail connectivity in the City and region (26), and a movement towards becoming a more bike-friendly community (17)
- Trails to Comox, trails along the E and N and river, and a pedestrian/cycle river crossing were mentioned frequently by community survey respondents
- Focus group participants requested non-vehicular bridges, good crosswalks, more winter maintenance of trails, and bike/trail infrastructure, e.g., bike racks and lockers

## Trail Recommendations

### PLANNING AND DESIGN

- 3.4.1 Coordinate among City departments to plan for connectivity of pedestrian and bicycle networks and extension of key corridors.
  - Link trail networks with major parks and recreation facilities, shopping areas, schools, and other destinations in the City
  - Link trails within the City to existing and future trails in surrounding jurisdictions
  - Include trails in other City projects where possible, e.g., road improvements
  - Use existing informal trails on public land, wide shoulders, and low-traffic roads as interim routes until mapped routes become available or feasible
  - Establish a continuous trail along the waterfronts where possible
  - Use trails to help provide safe routes to schools
- 3.4.2 Work with other jurisdictions in the Comox Valley on major trail networks to achieve active transportation, recreation and tourism opportunities.
- 3.4.3 Identify needs for trails through major new development projects.
  - Identify if there is an existing informal trail or a proposed trail in this master plan
  - If there is, work with the developer to identify a route through the development for the trail, ideally through parkland separate from the road system; second choice would be a trail along a wide boulevard adjacent to a road
- 3.4.4 Conduct a detailed study of all linear parks to determine needs for trail upgrades, new infrastructure, or land disposition as appropriate.

### LAND ACQUISITION

- 3.4.5 Strive to acquire sufficient corridor widths for Linear Parks, beyond the minimums where possible, to provide a trail user experience befitting the trail.
- 3.4.6 Apply the design guidelines below to the design of new and upgraded trails:
- Adopt trail standards similar to those shown in this section and incorporate them into the Subdivision Development Standards and other documents as applicable:
  - Route trails through natural areas where possible
  - Design trails to be accessible where possible
  - Connect trails to sidewalks and bike lanes with appropriate accessible let downs
  - Provide switchback trails on slopes instead of or in addition to stairs where possible, especially in the urban area, to accommodate all users
  - Use CPTED principles, balancing these with the need to protect and enhance habitats
  - Provide seating along multi-use trails
  - Design trails with consideration for protection and enhancement of environmental resources and include rainwater/stormwater infiltration where possible
  - Identify locations for trailheads and staging areas, and provide infrastructure to suit the location, e.g., kiosk, sign, waste receptacles, dog bag dispensers, parking
  - Recognize mountain biking as a trail use and incorporate it into trail planning and management

### CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

- 3.4.7 Continue improving and expanding trails per Figure 3.6.
- Add trails within parks as required to connect gaps in the trail network.
  - Valley View Greenway – Conduct restoration work, including tree management, to improve creek stability and park safety, avoiding impacts of culverts on fish.
- 3.4.8 Add infrastructure along these linear parks as use increases, e.g., signs, benches, waste bins – including but not limited to, Courtenay Riverway, Arden Road, Cumberland & 20th, Hawk Greenway, Idiens Greenway, Crown Isle Greenway.





## 4. INDOOR RECREATION

### 4.1 INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

#### KEY FINDING

The City has popular and highly-used facilities; three of the City's key facilities need upgrading, expansion and/or replacement.

#### KEY STRATEGY

Explore opportunities for upgrading and expanding Lewis Centre, replacing the services of the outdoor pool, and maximizing use and addressing parking concerns at the Florence Filberg Centre and the Lewis Centre.



## Description

Courtenay's recreation facilities are well documented on the City website and brochure, where there is information on room sizes, photographs of the spaces, facility hours, rental rates and virtual tours. Bookings are made by contacting the facility by phone or email. The following is a brief overview of the facilities:

### **LEWIS CENTRE**

The Lewis Centre is a large community centre (40,504 sq. ft.) with many indoor spaces of varying sizes. It also includes two smaller buildings on the grounds, the Salish and Tsolum buildings, and an outdoor swimming pool and wading pool. The outdoor stage, skate park, and the Rotary water park in Lewis Park are also associated with the Lewis Centre. The following are the key facilities that are part of the Lewis Centre:

#### **Community Centre**

- Two gymnasiums
- Wellness Centre (fitness, 4,000 sq. ft., includes a TRX area)
- Squash courts (4)
- Squash Viewing Gallery
- Nursery/pre-school room
- Craft rooms (2)
- Meeting rooms
- Activity rooms
- Administrative Offices and reception

#### **Salish and Tsolum Buildings**

- Small stand-alone buildings on the Lewis Centre site
- Both buildings are suitable for community meetings and small events

### **COURTENAY & DISTRICT MEMORIAL OUTDOOR POOL**

- 30 metre pool
- Wading pool
- Support buildings

### **FLORENCE FILBERG CENTRE**

The Florence Filberg Centre is a multi-use facility (20,913 sq. ft.) that features larger spaces for weddings, conferences, seminars and special events. It includes the following spaces:

- Conference Hall - 6,000 square feet - seating capacity 400, theatre capacity 500, stage
- Rotary Hall - 3,000 square feet for dances, larger meetings, events
- Evergreen Lounge - large meeting space with kitchen access
- Craft Room - for activities and meetings
- Soroptimist Lounge – boardroom-style meeting room
- Two fully equipped commercial kitchens

### **LINC YOUTH CENTRE**

The LINC Youth Centre (8,772 sq. ft.) is used for drop-in and registered youth programs and can also be rented for parties and events. It includes the following:

- Indoor skatepark
- Large games room with a kitchen and computer area
- Multi-purpose room
- Digital Arts Lab
- Concession
- Outdoor basketball court
- Office rental tenant

### **NATIVE SONS HALL**

The historic Native Sons Hall is the largest free-span log building in Canada, with 15,513 sq. ft. on two levels. It was originally built as Courtenay's Recreation Centre in 1928. A portion of the building is universally accessible and there is parking for those with disabilities. Centrally located close to the Filberg Centre and the Sid Williams Theatre, the Native Sons Hall includes the following:

- The Grand Hall - a 4,000 square foot space for weddings, concerts and events with capacity for 300
- Lodge Room, Dining Room, and Parlour Room all on the lower level are mid-size rooms good for meetings, special events and programs
- Upper commercial kitchen and large kitchen on lower level

## **REGIONAL FACILITIES**

The facilities in Courtenay are supplemented by a good balance of facilities in the Comox Valley. Arenas and indoor pools are provided by the Regional District at the Aquatic Centre and the Sports Centre (with a pool, wellness centre, plus two arenas). The Regional District also owns the Curling Centre, leased and operated by the Comox Valley Curling Club. The Town of Comox has a Community Centre, which has a fitness studio, gymnasium, multi-purpose hall, and meeting rooms. The Canadian Air Force Base -19 Wing has a fitness and community centre including a pool and a single-pad ice arena. The Village of Cumberland has a Recreation Centre with a fitness studio, gymnasium, climbing wall and racquet courts.

### **Facilities Analysis**

The City's recreation facilities are well maintained and well used. The detailed facility booking schedules confirm the high level of use of the Lewis Centre, Native Sons Hall, and the Florence Filberg Centre, although the hours booked at the Lewis Centre and Native Sons Hall were somewhat less in 2017 than 2016. The Filberg Centre showed a 10 % increase in hours of use. The Facility Use Hours are shown for the three facilities by spaces used for 2016 and 2017 in the attached spreadsheet.

There is cross-jurisdictional cooperation (among the Regional District, Courtenay, Cumberland and Comox), in that there is no duplication of major facilities, specifically arenas and indoor pools.

### **LEWIS CENTRE**

The Lewis Centre appears to be at capacity during the "high demand" time slots, generally mornings and evenings on weekdays, and weekends all day. There is little or no opportunity to expand programs during these peak periods due to space constraints. The level of use at the Lewis Centre decreased about one percent overall from 2016 to 2017. The main reduction in use was in two areas of the facility – the multipurpose rooms A and B and craft room B. Both these spaces are in the old section of the Centre, which has no air conditioning.

A key challenge is the parking lot, which is too small for the facility, and it also serves the park, the Salish and Tsolum Buildings, and the outdoor pool. The Salish and Tsolum buildings are located in the

park behind the Lewis Centre. The Salish building was constructed circa 1940; if it is to be retained, it needs new windows and repair/replacement of the floor, log columns and wood framing. The Tsolum building was constructed circa 1950; if it is to be retained, it needs new windows and repair/replacement of trims, flashing, floor beams, and rear door. A building assessment report was unable to provide the useful service life remaining for either building.

The number of entrances and exits in the Lewis Centre make it extremely difficult to monitor and control use of the facility, causing concerns for participants and staff. Unauthorized persons have entered the building causing disruptions to the point that patrons are uncomfortable, and some are reluctant to use the facility.

The lack of air conditioning in the older sections of the building results in discomfort for the users; this leads to the opening of windows and doors, which in turn contributes to the access concerns. The older section of the Lewis Centre includes the gymnasium, multipurpose rooms A and B, four squash courts, two craft rooms, the meeting room, administrative area, washrooms, storage and mechanical areas, along with connecting corridors. The heat in the summer prohibits the use of the program spaces listed, resulting in potential revenue loss and limiting the facility from fulfilling its intended levels of service.



### ***COURTENAY AND DISTRICT MEMORIAL POOL***

The 30 metre, six-lane outdoor pool is located in Lewis Park; it is open from May to September and shares the parking lot with the Lewis Centre. The pool has a lift for those with accessibility issues. There is a wading pool and water park next to the pool, which is free for all users.

The outdoor pool is almost 70 years old and is at the end of its useful life. It needs extensive repairs, maintenance and significant renovation or replacement in the near future. The close proximity of the pool to the river, which frequently floods, is an ongoing problem. The City has undertaken a facility condition assessment on the pool and the change room building, which identified a number of issues including rot and mould in many of the building walls, as well as cracks in the pool basin and on the deck. The cost of annual repairs and maintenance is significant. As the parking lot is shared with the Lewis Centre and the park, parking is an issue for pool users.

This is a very popular facility within the region, offering swimming lessons throughout the summer, with support from the regional district. It is home to the Blue Devils Swim Club. The drop-in admissions for the pool increased by about 20 % from 2016 to 2017. The programming of the pool is discussed in the Recreation Programs section of this master plan.

### ***FLORENCE FILBERG CENTRE***

The Filberg Centre is very well used; the use increased in 2017 with 22,345 hours booked versus 20,554 hours in 2016. The increase was in all areas of the building, except for the Soroptimist Lounge.



The Conference Hall, Rotary Hall, Evergreen Lounge and Games Room in the Florence Filberg Centre all have noise issues. An acoustic assessment was conducted by BKL Acoustic Consultants and recommendations were provided for improvements. Storage space also appears to be an issue at the Florence Filberg Centre; a proposed enclosure on the outer deck could help to relieve the storage challenge.

The parking at the Filberg Centre is often an issue, in that no spots are available for people visiting the facility. In addition to serving the Filberg, the parking lots are used for the trail system, park, theatre, and the museum. At popular times, the number of parking spots is inadequate.

**LINC YOUTH CENTRE**

This is a popular and well-used facility for youth ages 10 to 18. This unique facility is a tremendous asset for the City of Courtenay, and it also serves teens living in the Regional District. The LINC provides a safe space for at-risk youth and a comfortable, diverse recreational space for all youth. Participation numbers increased in 2017 to 8,290 visits, compared to 7,414 visits in 2016 and 6,057 visits in 2015.

The centre is located on floodplain lands, which can be an issue during high water conditions. There has been feedback from regular users that a larger street section in the skatepark would allow for greater participation. The LINC also needs a better HVAC system and improved WiFi.

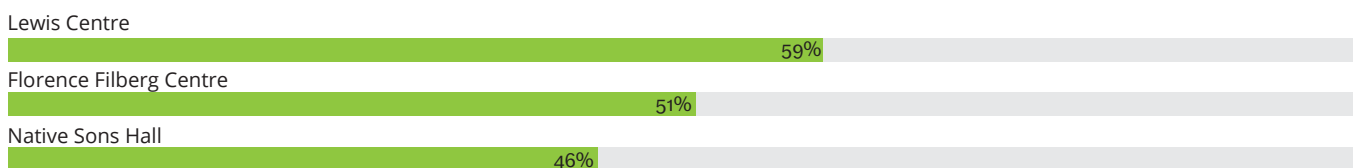
**NATIVE SONS HALL**

The historical significance and heritage value along with the number and variety of rooms in this hall make it a valuable City asset. This facility is very well used for programs such as seniors’ fitness classes, drumming, and community events. It has been well maintained and updated; however, it is not fully accessible.

The bookings for the Native Sons Hall decreased from 9,313 hours in 2016 to 8,453 hours in 2017. The reductions were primarily in the Grand Hall, the Lower Level and the Upper Kitchen.

**Key Community Input on Recreation Facilities**

SATISFACTION LEVELS FOR INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES



Read as - 59% of survey respondents were satisfied with "The Lewis Centre"

- Respondents indicated that more and/or better indoor recreation facilities is of the highest indoor priority to respondents, and the second priority is more and/or better fitness/sports programs or activities
- When asked what they would like to see improved, the most comments were received for: more indoor pickleball courts (31), various suggestions for programming improvements (54), more fitness room space (11), an indoor tennis facility (11), and more TRX space, equipment and classes
- 46% were satisfied with the maintenance of the facilities, with a 5% level of dissatisfaction
- Focus group participants recommended that parking challenges and social issues at facilities be resolved

#### SATISFACTION WITH THE LEWIS CENTRE

satisfied

59%

dissatisfied

7%

*Read as - 59% of survey respondents were satisfied with "The Lewis Centre"*

- Community survey respondents had the following comments about the Lewis Centre:
  - The TRX space is too small for the demand
  - A new yoga studio in is needed (with warm, wood floors, where bare feet are appropriate)
  - The cooling system needs upgrading in the old portion of the facility – the squash courts are far too hot
- Focus group participants recommended an expansion to the Lewis Centre, specifically a larger wellness and TRX area, a yoga room, a dedicated room for dance, and offices
- Focus group also recommended that the Salish and Tsolum buildings be renovated

#### COMMENTS ON OUTDOOR POOL

- Community survey comments included that the pool is a great facility, and that it has poor maintenance, no mats in changerooms, and poor condition of washrooms
- Focus groups suggested renovating the pool

#### SATISFACTION WITH FILBERG CENTRE

satisfied

51%

*Read as - 51% of survey respondents were satisfied with "The Filberg Centre"*

- Residents without children reported a higher level of satisfaction with the Filberg Centre
- Focus group participants recommended an expansion to the Filberg Centre to accommodate the social and recreational needs of the growing seniors' population; they suggested buying the adjacent land for future expansion

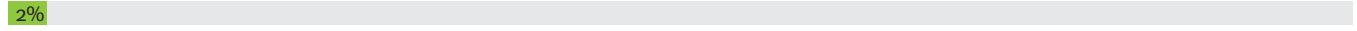


SATISFACTION WITH THE LINC YOUTH CENTRE

satisfied



dissatisfied

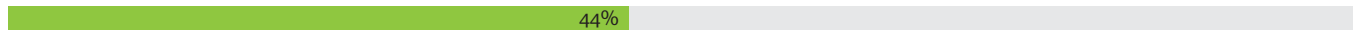


Read as - 11% of survey respondents were satisfied with "The Linc Youth Centre"

- The focus group recommended repairing the air conditioning and providing better WiFi
- A larger indoor skate park was suggested in the survey comments

SATISFACTION WITH THE NATIVE SONS HALL

satisfied



dissatisfied



Read as - 44% of survey respondents were satisfied with "The Native Sons Hall"



## Summary of Strengths and Challenges

### STRENGTHS

Facilities are well maintained and well used

The three major indoor facilities each offer a variety and complementary spaces

The City's recreation facilities are centrally located and close to the downtown core

The facilities benefit from synergies with the parks and trails

The arenas and pools under the CVRD's jurisdiction are complementary facilities

The outdoor pool is extremely popular with all ages, and is home to the summer swim club – the Comox Valley Blue Devils

There is a high level of cooperation among the senior staff at the CVRD, Courtenay and Comox

### CHALLENGES

City cannot meet demands for more and expanded programs due to lack of facility space at the Lewis Centre; the areas in most demand are fitness/active programs for older adults

Programs cannot always be offered in the most appropriate spaces for the specific program needs; gymnastics and trampoline have the largest waitlists but require large, high ceiling spaces

The method of tracking hours booked in the facilities does not link to numbers of participants in each time slot, only the activity, making it difficult to analyze use

Outdoor pool is aging and will need to be replaced, removed, or relocated

Design of Lewis Centre, specifically the number of entrances and exits creates security issues

A new HVAC system is required in the old portion of the Lewis Centre

Issues with acoustics in Filberg Centre and in some areas of the Lewis Centre

Filberg Centre appears to be at capacity

Parking is insufficient at the Lewis Centre and at times at the Filberg Centre

The Salish and Tsolum buildings are in very poor physical condition

Lack of adequate number of large gyms for pickleball

There is demand for a regional indoor tennis centre

## Facility Recommendations

### *PLANNING AND DESIGN*

- 4.1.1 Undertake a security analysis for the Lewis Centre.
- 4.1.2 Conduct a long-range facility needs analysis for the future expansion of the Lewis Centre.
- Reduce the entry points to the Lewis Centre, ensuring that any entrance(s) are supervised by a staffed control desk (based on results of the security analysis).
  - Conduct the study with consideration for or concurrent with a master plan for all of Lewis Park, addressing the outdoor pool site and parking.
  - Plan for the replacement of the spaces currently provided by the Tsolum and Salish buildings.
  - Consider the expansion of spaces that accommodate fitness and physical activity based on the high registrations and waitlists for these types of programs.
  - Determine future space needs based on demographics, participation trends, other facilities in the region, and community input.
  - Review accessibility of facilities and seek funding to improve accessibility where needed.
- 4.1.3 Plan for the short-term operation and long-term replacement of the outdoor pool with a communications and engagement process:
- Provide information to the community regarding the age and condition of the outdoor pool, the challenges of the location, and the extensive maintenance and capital improvement costs, and indicate that its maximum lifespan is three more years and that a study will be undertaken to identify options for replacing pool activities
  - Undertake a feasibility study for replacing outdoor pool activities including the following:
    - options to accommodate summer swim activities in CVRD pools on a temporary and/or long-term basis
    - options for a future outdoor aquatic facility in a new location, including the type of facility and cost implications, taking into consideration trends in aquatic participation and new types of outdoor facilities
    - potential locations in the City and region that can accommodate an outdoor aquatic facility
  - Consult with the community regarding the options identified in the feasibility study.

- 
- 4.1.4 Review the possible expansion of the Florence Filberg Centre.
- Consider program needs, the Evergreen Club's activities and other aging infrastructure.
- 4.1.5 Undertake a parking study for the Florence Filberg Centre.
- Consider use by surrounding parks, recreation, and arts culture facilities.
- 4.1.6 Collaborate with the CVRD, Comox and Cumberland to identify opportunities for new sports facilities, including accommodation of indoor pickleball court needs.
- 4.1.7 Support the CVRD in exploring opportunities and options for a possible indoor tennis facility in partnership with the Comox Valley Tennis Club, the Regional District, Comox, and the private sector.
- 4.1.8 Revise the current method of collecting data on spaces and hours used in the facilities, to allow for easier correlation with numbers of participants and demands for specific spaces.

#### **CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1.9 Provide air conditioning in the old section of the Lewis Centre as a high priority.
- 4.1.10 Review and fix WiFi and HVAC issues at the LINC.
- Explore options for an expansion to street section of the indoor skatepark at the LINC.
- 4.1.11 Upgrade and expand the Lewis Centre over time, including the parking area, with the potential support of grants and/or partnerships.
- 4.1.12 Partner with regional partners in the development of indoor facilities for pickleball and tennis as opportunities arise.

## 4.2 PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

### KEY FINDING

The City offers diverse programs that are well attended; the community is continuing to grow but program expansion is limited by the availability of appropriate space.

### KEY STRATEGY

Expand programs if and when more space becomes available.

### Description

The following sections describe the many recreation programs offered by the City of Courtenay. There are support services required to market, fund and deliver these programs; these support services are also described below.

### PROGRAMS

The City of Courtenay delivers a wide variety of recreation programs at the Lewis Centre, Florence Filberg Centre, LINC Youth Centre, Native Sons Hall, and the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool. Programs are offered for all ages, from newborns to older adults, including adapted programs for adults with disabilities. There are also many opportunities for “drop-in” participation.

Programs and services for the early years are offered with and without parent participation. The City runs a licensed Pre-school Program for 3 to 5-year olds at the Lewis Centre, five mornings a week (for either 2 or 3 days per week). Currently the morning programs are full, with a waitlist, and an afternoon Tuesday/Thursday class was added in the fall of 2017.

The City also offers a variety of recreation programs for pre-schoolers with and without parent participation. These include ballet, gymnastics, arts and crafts, soccer, and music. In the fall of 2017, there were 201 registered pre-school children.

Children's programs for ages 6 to 12 are available in art, music, dance, martial arts, cooking, gymnastics, aerial arts, and sports, including skateboarding. Many specialty classes are also offered for children, such as Eco Arts, Jedi training, and Hip Hop. For example in fall 2017, there were 641 registered participants with 95 children on the waitlist. The drop-in number for sports programs in 2017 was 2,132.

Programs and informal activities are offered for youth, ages 8 to 18, both at the LINC and at the Lewis Centre. These include registered programs, such as guitar lessons, cooking and crafts, as well as many drop-in activities at LINC such as games room, skateboarding, and media nights. Participation rates at the LINC have increased steadily year over year with more than 8,000 visits in 2017. The Wellness Centre is open to youth over the ages of 13 (with adult) and 15 (no adult during attendant hours).

Activities for adults (16 and over) are offered in crafts, music, dance, martial arts, badminton, pickleball, and other special interest activities. These programs had 622 registered participants, with 16 on the waitlists, in the fall of 2017.

The Wellness Centre's programs and services provide opportunities for drop-in visits and many types of instructional fitness classes. These classes include TRX, spin, Yoga, Zumba, stretch and strength, and boot camps. These fitness programs had 501 registered adults (including 55+) and 100 on the waitlists in fall of 2017. The size of the waitlists for these program shows the high level of interest in physical activities. The Wellness Centre hosted 46,964 drop-in visits in 2017, down from the 49,740 visits in 2016.



.....

Many of the fitness programs are listed as suitable for older adults. The City does not currently offer a senior's discount but gives a discount to Evergreen Club members.

The City offers "adapted" and "inclusive" programming for adults. This program is now known as Adapted Programs for Adults with Disabilities. These programs were attended by 279 registered participants, plus 28 on the waitlist (in the fall 2017 session). A total of 78 Adapted Programs were offered in 2016. These numbers reflect participation in pre-registered programs only; drop-in and special event programming is also very popular, but the numbers have not been recorded to date.

The City has an extensive Recreation Access program, which is available for low income Courtenay residents. The goal of the program is to provide healthy lifestyle opportunities to residents of Courtenay who live below the Statistics Canada low-income threshold. This program is supported by a City policy and administered through the Recreation and Culture Department with Recreation Access coupon books. Between 631 and 812 membership passes have been issued each year. The subsidy value of these passes has been as much as \$49,000 annually.


In the summer (May to September), the City operates the outdoor pool, offering swimming lessons for all ages and abilities. Other programs include lifeguard training, aquacise, open swims, and pool rentals for birthday parties and other events. Attendance in 2017 was 6,450 for recreational swimming, with 536 children, youth and adults participating in aquatic lessons. In addition, there were numerous rentals.

The City operates summer camp programs for children and youth as well as many specialized programs such as "Lego Camp", babysitting training, theatre games, and hip hop. In the summer of 2017, 1,693 children and youth were registered in summer programs, with an additional 96 on waitlists.

Preschool programs are offered during the summer months, including music, art, dance and a variety of "adventures". There were 139 participants in the summer of 2017.

#### **Program Registration and Waitlists**

The program registration information for each season of 2016 and 2017 was compared and graphed (Figure 4.1). This includes the registration numbers and corresponding revenue of all recreation programs offered by the City, including the outdoor pool programs. Appendix C shows the data for each session.



**FIGURE 4.1: PROGRAM REGISTRATION AND REVENUE 2016 AND 2017**



Registration in programs overall declined in 2017 compared to 2016. In 2016 there were a total of 11,162 registrations, whereas in 2017 there were 10,686, a reduction of 476. The revenue was down by \$9,517 overall. The registration numbers and the revenue include the pool lessons.

There were 1009 people on the waiting lists in 2016 and 910 in 2017. These numbers indicate that the waitlists are about 10 percent of the total registrations.

**Outdoor Pool Information**

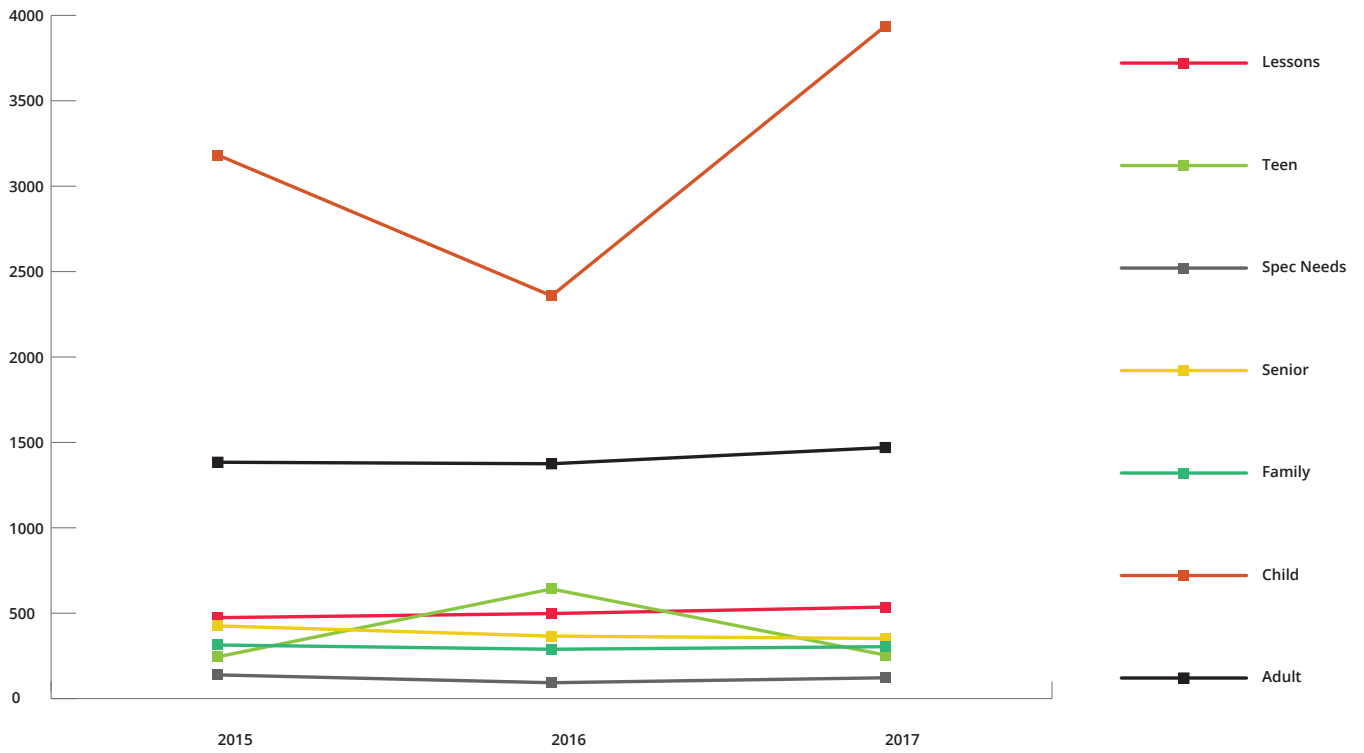
Figure 4.2 shows the attendance for drop-in swims and lessons for 2015, 2016 and 2017.

Among the three years, teen attendance at the pool spiked in 2015, and child attendance dropped. The numbers for “lessons” are the number of registered sessions, not the total attendance at the lessons. Excluded from these figures are the total swim lesson attendance, use by the swim club, and other rentals. The revenue does not include the lessons or rentals.

Apart from the teen and child anomalies the pool attendance overall dropped in 2016 and increased significantly in 2017. The increase in overall drop-in swims in 2017 over 2016 was about 25%. Lessons increased year over year from 474 registered participants in 2015 to 536 registrations in 2017.



FIGURE 4.2: ATTENDANCE FOR SWIM DROP-INS AND LESSONS 2005 TO 2017



“The outdoor pool is a great summertime asset. I hope the City will continue to maintain it.” —Survey respondent

POOL ATTENDANCE AND REVENUE			
	2015	2016	2017
Adult	1384	1375	1470
Child	3182	2358	3937
Family	314	289	304
Senior	426	366	352
Spec Needs	139	93	122
Teen	245	642	255
Lessons	474	498	536
Total	5690	5123	6440
Revenue	\$18,112.37	\$16,319.22	\$18,182.19

### Evergreen Club

The Evergreen Club is a club of the Courtenay Recreational Association (CRA) and provides leisure activities for those 55 years of age and older. The Evergreen Club (EG) has a website, publishes monthly newsletters, and promotes programs offered by the City that cater to their demographic. These programs are offered at a discounted rate to EG members. It is understood that many members enroll to obtain an Evergreen discount at City facilities, since the City does not offer a senior's discount. The Evergreen Club membership exceeds 2,000 annually and operates a food service in the Florence Filberg Centre, and they organize trips, social activities, events, and support over 40 smaller activity clubs. The funds collected at club activities and events are retained by the CRA, as are the profits from the kitchen operations. The City and the CRA are developing a licence-to-occupy and a management agreement for the lower floor of the Florence Filberg Centre. The CRA also operates the Building Friendships program (with Community Living BC) for supports to clients with developmental disabilities.

### MARKETING

The City's website is excellent and easily navigable for recreation and culture information. It is a good source of information for residents. The Recreation Guide is available online, and the department uses social media (Facebook and Twitter), as well as the local newspaper and the LINC newsletter and calendar, to promote specific programs and events.

“ The Lewis Centre staff have always been extremely friendly and professional to me. As a 'low income' person who utilizes the 'rec access' coupons, I have always been treated well by City staff.” —*Survey respondent*

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The Recreation Guide is a brochure printed four times per year as part of a larger brochure covering the CVRD, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, and Courtenay. It is distributed by the local newspaper to every household and through community centres in the municipalities and the regional district.

### **BYLAWS AND POLICIES**

The City has very few Council-approved bylaws and policies that apply to recreation. The Special Events Bylaw approved in 2005 is one that affects various departments including recreation.

The Policy for Recreation Access Program, Policy # 8000.00.01, was developed to “ensure that all residents of the City of Courtenay have access to programs and services provided by Courtenay Recreation to assist in the development of healthy lifestyles”. The objectives of this policy are to provide access to services and programs regardless of residents’ ability to pay. This policy has been implemented through Recreation Access Coupon Books.

### **PROCEDURES**

The Department has processes in place, including forms such as: Youth Council application, Volunteer application, Recreation Access Program (RAP) application, Program proposal form, Program Registration form, and a Facility Request form. The City uses program evaluation forms, printed copies and on-line surveys to collect input on the programs.

### **FEES AND CHARGES**

The recreation fees and charges are included in the City of Courtenay’s Fees and Charges Bylaw. The department lists rental rates for each facility, which are incorporated into the City Bylaw. Program fees are not usually included in City bylaws, although some municipalities do include guidelines on how program fees are to be calculated. The analysis section includes a comparison of fees and charges with comparable municipalities in BC.

### **BUDGETS**

The operating and capital budgets for the delivery of recreation services are divided between two departments. The Recreation and Cultural Services Department has responsibility for the recreation programs and services (operations) within the facilities. The Public Works Department looks after maintenance and repairs, grounds maintenance, utilities and insurance for the facilities.



The subsidy levels for recreation programs and facilities, based on the City's General Financial Operating Plan using 2015 actuals, are in Appendix C. A subsidy level, by facility, was calculated using the current categories and allocation of charges and revenues. Because administrative costs are not allocated to each of the facilities, the subsidy costs are not completely accurate. The subsidies varied from 13 % for the Native Sons Hall to 74% for the Youth Centre. It is not unusual for municipalities to highly subsidize programs for youth.

To enable calculation of more accurate subsidy levels, the accounting methods would need to allocate charges to the appropriate program, facility, or space within the facility. Then fees and charges could be reviewed in relation to the costs of delivering specific programs or services, which would enable selection of the preferred approach to the service delivery.

### **Analysis of Programs and Services**

#### **PROGRAMS**

The programs in the Lewis Centre, Florence Filberg Centre, Native Sons Hall and the LINC Youth Centre are well attended. The attendance reflects satisfaction with programs as confirmed by community engagement; there is demand for more programs in some categories and time slots as outlined below.

The large number of participants and the size of the waitlist (100 for 2017 fall session) supports the expansion of programs in fitness and physical activity. The most popular programs with waitlists



are Yoga (Hatha, gentle, 55+), TRX, Body Blast, and Spin for adults and 55+, and Tai Chi. There is an interest/demand for additional TRX programs from 5 to 7 pm and for 55+ TRX programs from 9 am to noon. The current space and equipment allocated to these activities would need to be increased to accommodate this demand. The reduction in the number of “drop-ins” in the Wellness Centre from 2016 to 2017 may be a result of crowded conditions during peak times.

There is also an interest in more gymnastics and circus and aerial programs for children, as well as adapted and integrated programs for children and youth with special needs. The gymnastics and trampoline classes for children had the largest waitlists with over 230 children on waitlists in 2017.

The licensed pre-school program, known as “Cozy Corner Preschool” has experienced regular growth over the past three years, with numbers increasing from 345 registered children in 2015 to 414 in 2017. The addition of an afternoon Tuesday and Thursday session in 2017 contributed 23 of the new participants.

Service levels for recreation programs have been frozen since 2016. This along with limited facility space have prohibited the expansion of programs. Community growth along with the response to current offerings show that program expansion is viable if physical space was available.

### **MARKETING**

The publication and distribution of a joint Recreation Guide with the regional district, Comox and Cumberland is cost effective and reaches a broad audience. This enables residents of all of the jurisdictions to access recreation opportunities of interest to them. In the future it may make sense to reduce the number of printed copies and distribution costs by eliminating the door-to-door delivery, based on community interest in online vs hard copies.

The Recreation and Cultural Services Department makes excellent use of the City's website to promote their programs, activities and events, with seasonal calendars and information on the facilities and parks available online. The department also makes effective use of Facebook, twitter, newspaper ads, press releases and radio ads to provide current information on programs and activities in recreation facilities and parks.

### FEES AND CHARGES

A benchmarking review was conducted on user fees for outdoor pools, squash courts and multipurpose rooms (Figure 4.3). It appears that the City's rental rates for a multi-purpose room are low at \$28 per hour with the average comparable being \$33.99, though it is difficult to compare facility rental rates as there are many variables. There were few comparables for squash courts; however, Courtenay's squash fees are lower than some of the other locations, particularly Campbell River. There may be opportunities to increase these fees based on a larger review of operating costs and revenues using more accurate cost allocation information.

**FIGURE 4.3: FEE COMPARISON**    CY – CITY    DM – DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

User Fees, in \$	Public Swim (Outdoor)		Pool Rental Hourly	Squash Court Rental		Large Multipurpose Room Rental per hour (half or whole hall)	
Community							
Courtenay (CY)	Child (10 y.o.)	2.00	120.00	Child (10 y.o.)	4.00	Large (50+ people)	28.00
	Adult	4.00		Adult	6.00	Small (20-50 people)	16.00
	Family	10.00					
Fort St. John (CY)	Child (10 y.o.)	N/A	N/A	Child (10 y.o.)	N/A	Large (50+ people)	32.75
	Adult			Adult		Small (20-50 people)	N/A
	Family						
Campbell River (CY)	Child (10 y.o.)	1.50	89.00	Child (10 y.o.)	11.00	Large (50+ people)	48.00
	Adult	4.00		Adult	14.00	Small (20-50 people)	31.00
	Family	7.00					
Port Moody	Child (10 y.o.)	2.80	N/A	Child (10 y.o.)	N/A	Large (50+ people)	38.35
	Adult	4.55		Adult		Small (20-50 people)	16.45
	Family	N/A					
Squamish (DM)	Child (10 y.o.)	N/A	N/A	Child (10 y.o.)	N/A	Large (50+ people)	N/A
	Adult			Adult	10.00	Small (20-50 people)	12.62
	Family						
Mission	Child (10 y.o.)	N/A	N/A	Child (10 y.o.)	3.15	Large (50+ people)	37.25
	Adult			Adult	5.62	Small (20-50 people)	73.95
	Family						
West Kelowna	Child (10 y.o.)	N/A	N/A	Child (10 y.o.)	N/A	Large (50+ people)	16.80
	Adult			Adult		Small (20-50 people)	11.48
	Family						
Oliver	Child	3.33	104.30	Child (10 y.o.)	N/A	Large (50+ people)	36.78
	Adult	4.37		Adult	N/A	Small (20-50 people)	20.34
Vancouver	Child	2.95	331.00	Child	N/A	Large (50+ people)	N/A
	Adult	5.86		Adult	13.67	Small (20-50 people)	N/A
<b>Averages (excluding Courtenay)</b>	Child (10 y.o.)	2.15	174.77	Child (10 y.o.)	7.08	Large (50+ people)	33.99
	Adult	4.70		Adult	9.87	Small (20-50 people)	25.98
	Family	7.00					

Program and rental fees appear to be comparable with those of the other municipalities in the Comox Valley. The regional district primarily offers programs relating to arenas, pools and fitness/wellness centres, so their fees were not included. It is difficult to compare program fees among jurisdictions as the content of the programs and the number of classes vary. Courtenay's practice of indicating the number of sessions associated with the cost in the brochure (e.g., \$84/12) is beneficial for participants and for comparative purposes.

The approach to setting fees and charges is generally based on one of three approaches, or a combination of these approaches:

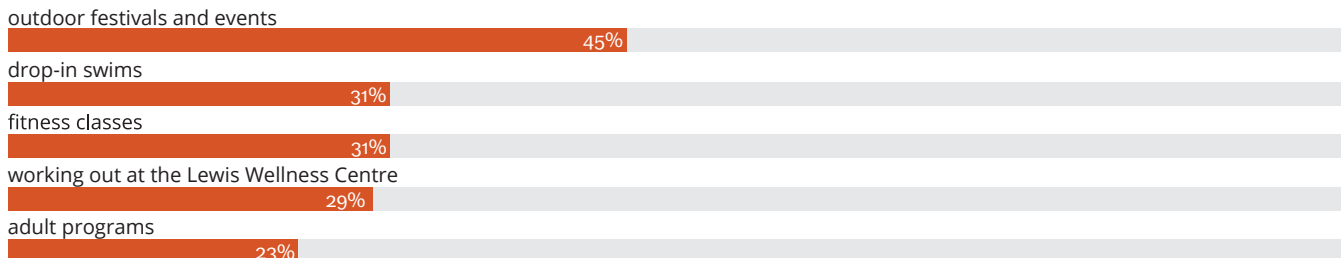
- Cost-Based Approaches - assume that public recreation services have a benefit to the community and require a level of investment. A percentage or formula is used to recover some portion of the cost to offer these services, even though costs vary and therefore the subsidy levels and cost to the users vary.
- Benefits or Values-Based Approaches - are based on the assumption that some services have more public value than others, e.g., services for children and youth.
- Market-Based Approaches - assume that public services should be priced in the same manner as private sector services or programs, whereby the fees are based on what the market will bear or what the competition is charging. If the fees do not cover costs, plus a profit, the service will not continue to be provided.

Municipalities generally use a combination of the "cost-based" and "benefits-based" approaches. The approach is generally set out in the municipal Fees and Charges Policy and Bylaw.

It is difficult to provide an accurate comparison of program fees and subsidy levels due to the number of variables including categories of programs, participant to instructor ratios, operating cost calculations, administrative costs, amortization costs, types of facilities, as well as the preferred approach by individual municipalities. The City of Courtenay does not have a comprehensive policy to guide decision-making in setting fees and charges for programs and services in parks, recreation and culture.

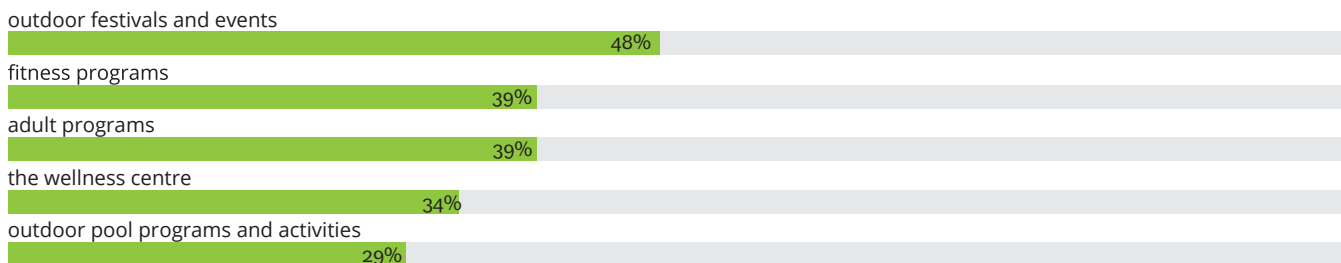
### Key Community Input on Programs and Services

THE FIVE RECREATION PROGRAMS WITH THE HIGHEST PARTICIPATION PER THE COMMUNITY SURVEY WERE:



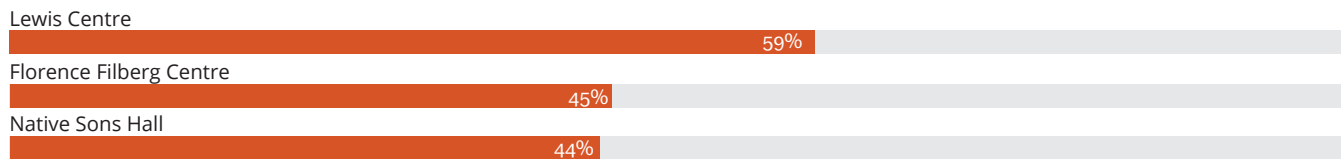
*Read as - 45% of survey respondents had someone in their household who participated in "outdoor festivals and events" within the previous year*

### SATISFACTION LEVELS FOR RECREATION PROGRAMS



*Read as - 48% of survey respondents were satisfied with "outdoor festivals and events"*

### MOST FREQUENTLY ATTENDED ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS PER THE COMMUNITY SURVEY WERE AT:



*Read as - 59% of survey respondents had someone in their household visit "The Lewis Centre" within the previous year*

- Focus groups participants recommended proactive mental health programming, youth programs developed by youth, and adapted programs for under 18 years
- Focus groups recommend that City programs not compete with private sector programs
- Focus groups also recommended a Comox Valley-wide recreation pass, additional partnerships for program delivery, and an improved registration system



## Summary of Strengths and Challenges

### STRENGTHS

Wide variety of programs offered for all age categories

Staff work hard to meet existing needs and emerging trends

The City's gymnastics and trampoline programs for children are extremely popular; this is somewhat unique as many municipalities do not offer these programs.

Fitness programs and working out are among the top activities

There are multiple programs offered for adults with developmental disabilities

The Recreation Access program provides healthy lifestyle opportunities for Courtenay residents who live below Statistics Canada low income thresholds

The programs in Courtenay are supplemented by programs operated by the CVRD and programs in Comox and Courtenay

### CHALLENGES

Staff are not permitted to expand the level of services due to budget constraints

The use of the Florence Filberg Centre for rentals as a priority over City programs does not allow for registered programs

Insufficient options for working families for adult and children's programs

City cannot meet demands for more and expanded programs in the area of adult fitness, specifically 55+; there is no additional, appropriate facility space available during popular program times (mornings and 5 to 7 pm)

Insufficient policies, bylaws and procedures, e.g., for fees and charges, facility allocation, rationale for approach to setting of fees and charges

The data collected by Recreation administration on participation rates, facility bookings and revenue is not structured for ease of analysis (necessary for continuous improvement)

Participants find it too costly and inconvenient to pay different fees and require different passes to use the recreation facilities throughout the region

## Programs and Services Recommendations

### *PLANNING AND DESIGN*

- 4.2.1 Prepare a comprehensive policy to guide decision-making in setting fees and charges for all programs and services in parks, recreation and culture.
- Include in the policy Council-approved subsidy level targets for various categories, such as age, type of activity, and consider costs to run the program and facility space, and other relevant variables.



- 4.2.2 Review programs regularly in terms of content, timing, and instructors, to ensure they are meeting the needs of participants and are the best use of the space, considering some of the requests during this process such as:
- priority on active programs for older adults and popular programs for children and youth
  - fitness classes on weekends, later in evenings, and early mornings
  - children’s activities later in afternoon or early evening
  - more diversity in adult programming
  - more arts and culture programs
  - additional “drop-in” programs for children in winter months
- 4.2.3 Work with the CVRD to determine the feasibility of a “one pass” system for programs and facility access in City and Regional District Facilities.
- Investigate options to include Comox and Courtenay in a one-pass option
  - Consider a pilot project to test viability
- 4.2.4 Review opportunities to offer more lower or no-cost activities.
- 4.2.5 Work with the School District to increase access to school facilities after hours for community uses and City programs.
- 4.2.6 Work with community agencies to take programs out to community locations.
- 4.2.7 Pursue partnerships with non-profit and private sector organizations to expand sport and physical activity options, and expand recreation opportunities for all residents.

“ If there were more pickleball courts, I would play more. Pickleball is an amazing way for the older generation to get involved with staying fit.” — *Survey respondent*

## 4.3 SPECIAL EVENTS

### KEY FINDING

The City has many events year-round that support community identity and spirit; insufficient policies and strategies for events may be affecting the ability to adequately support significant events.

### KEY STRATEGY

Prepare an Events Policy and a strategy for City hosting of events.

### Description

The City of Courtenay directly provides a number of events, both indoors and outdoors, and for all age groups. The City has a Special Events By-law, but no Special Events Policy. There is a staff position that oversees the coordination of events along with facility operations. The staff work closely with volunteers to stage the events. Most of the annual events are hosted at the Lewis Centre and Lewis Park, and include the following:

#### Halloween Parade & Party

- Lewis Centre – October 31, up to 4 staff and approximately 15 volunteers set up and run games in the gym and multipurpose room partnering with the Downtown Business Association
- Event includes a costume parade downtown, while local children collect treats from downtown merchants; there is also a costume contest and promotional material handed out by recreation staff

#### LINC Haunted House

- The week leading up to Halloween, set up by 30 youth volunteers coordinated by the youth programmer, operating from 4:30 PM until 9 PM daily

#### Children's Christmas Party

- First Sunday of December - with an entertainer and Santa who gives away candy canes and mandarins to the children with pictures taken; there is also a craft fair provided throughout the program (by LINC)

### Family Day Celebrations

- Celebration has grown over the past few years and has evolved into a major event with activities and programs at the Lewis Centre

### Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

- Annual dinner at which Council acknowledges partner organizations and key community volunteers

### Springtime Promenade

- One of the marquee events typically at the end of March from 11:00 AM to 12:15 PM at Simms Park with arts and craft activities provided free to families; music, registration table, strolls around the park following the Easter bunny, photos with the bunny, and goodie bags give-away; there are about 120 participants in the parade, plus spectators

### Father's Day Kite Fly

- One of the longer running events whereby City partners with a variety of businesses in the community; event is free and located at Goose Spit in Comox; prizes are given away for 9 categories selected by volunteer judges

### Simms Concert Series

- Simms Park concerts include shows from mid-June to August of local musical talent that provide free entertainment; some of the larger concerts draw as many as 2,000 spectators, with the average attendance being around 500



### July 1st Celebrations

- The City of Courtenay oversees the implementation of the Canada Day celebrations through one dedicated staff member who works with an advisory team of dedicated volunteers and one City Councillor; Courtenay budgets \$50,000 for the event through gaming funds with an additional \$2,500 from the Celebrate Canada Grant; the event is supported by a large number of very dedicated long-term volunteers and partnerships; approximate attendance is 12,000

### Pooch-A-Poolooza

- On Labour Day weekend, on the pool's last day, the Pooch-A-Poolooza event runs in partnership with a number of local pet businesses and provides dogs the opportunity to swim in the outdoor pool from 11 AM to 2 PM (with vaccination papers required for admission); admission is \$5.00 and funds go to the local BC SPCA



There are many additional events operated within the Comox Valley, particularly the population centres - the Town of Comox, and the Village of Cumberland. Events are also offered by a number of community associations and businesses. Each of the three municipalities hosts a large valley-wide event each year. The coordination of Nautical days (Comox), Canada Day (Courtenay), and Foggy Mountain Fall Fair (Cumberland) among three municipalities is working well.

Additional events are run by community organizations and the private sector. Some are only renting space in a facility or park, and others are supported by City staff, such as street closures provided by Public Works. These events include the Farmer's Market, Market Days and Friday Night Markets, Christmas Market, Music Fest, the Comox Rotary children's educational event, the Terry Fox Run, and the Seafood Festival.

### **Analysis**

The community appears to be very satisfied with the current events, as indicated in the survey and in the attendance levels. The Canada Day Celebration has been particularly successful and was recently revamped. Staff regularly evaluate events and provide post-event reports outlining attendance, positive features and challenges as well as solutions and recommendations for improvements.

The number of events supported by the City is impressive, but may be putting a strain on the available staff and financial resources. The biggest gap is "boots on the ground" just prior to, during, and after the events. The set-up, take-down, and parking control are examples of where more support is needed by staff and/or volunteers.

The facilities and parks used for events are generally good, with some problems arising when there are particularly large numbers at concerts in Simms Park. The Simms Park venue is not designed to handle very large concerts - the pavilion is in a poor location for late afternoon/early evening concerts (setting sun in eyes of audience), parking is inadequate, and there is insufficient lighting.

The Lewis Park stage/pavilion is not used for City events; however, it is used for community rentals such as the Spirit Fair Festival. Parking is an issue, as the parking lot serves the Lewis Centre as well as the outdoor pool.

There is no Special Events Policy in place at this time. A policy would help guide many aspects of organizing and staging events, including booking policies, priorities for use of space, capacities of parks and facilities, commercial restrictions, fees and charges, applicable bylaws to be considered, alcohol restrictions etc.

Some of these topics are addressed in various documents or are based on historical practice.

### Key Community Input on Events

- 67% attended a festival or special event in a park, and this was among the most important activities for 22% of respondents
- 74% of survey respondent households attended a farmers' market, and this was among the most important activities for 27% of respondents
- Focus group participants recommended partnerships to leverage funds for events, and the creation of a Community Events Council

### Summary of Strengths and Challenges

#### STRENGTHS

Events are very popular and have a high satisfaction level

There is cooperation in the scheduling of large events

Events have positive economic and social impacts

There are many events with numerous organizing groups

#### CHALLENGES

The large numbers of events put a strain on staff resources particularly in the summer

Large events can have negative impacts on facilities (indoors or outdoors) and regular users

The City has no Special Events policy

There are challenges staging large events at Simms Park



## Special Event Recommendations

### *PLANNING AND DESIGN*

- 4.3.1 Prepare a strategy for City hosting and supporting of events, including the following tasks in the process of preparing the strategy:
- Consult with community event organizers and key stakeholders
  - Prepare a vision and objectives for events hosted and supported by the City
  - Review the number, size, and location of each of the City's special events
  - Determine impacts of events on the community (tourism, satisfaction of residents, social impacts, etc.)
  - Identify the facilities that are suitable for different types and scales of events, considering the impacts of events on facilities (indoors and outdoors) including wear and tear, regular program cancellations, closure of area to public use, etc.
  - Consider the geographic range of participants and collaborate with other valley jurisdictions on a strategy for event hosting
  - Establish a process for planning events and allocating City resources
  - Review options for additional financial partnerships and sponsorships
  - Identify criteria to guide the hosting of new/additional events by the City
- 4.3.2 Prepare a comprehensive Special Events Policy based on the event strategy, with the following components:
- Establish roles and responsibilities for City departments and divisions including Recreation, Parks, Public Works, Communications for hosting and supporting events
  - Update policies and procedures for the staging of events held within the City
  - Incorporate fees and charges
  - Include regulatory requirements
  - Guide marketing practices for events

### *CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT*

Suggestions to improve Simms Park for event hosting are in recommendation 3.2.5.

## 4.4 CULTURE

### KEY FINDING

The City has a vibrant culture scene and all of the major cultural facilities in the valley; however, there is no coordinated regional plan for cultural services and funding.

### KEY STRATEGY

Collaborate with the other valley jurisdictions, including K'ómoks First Nation, on a Regional Cultural Plan.

### Description

This is not a “culture” plan per se; however, there are important interactions among culture, recreation and parks. This section reviews culture at a high level as it is relevant to parks and recreation. Separate City studies will focus specifically on culture.

For thousands of years, Indigenous people occupied the shoreline of eastern Vancouver Island in a place referred to as “the land of plenty”. This Land of Plenty stretched from what is known today as Kelsey Bay south to Hornby and Denman Island and included the watershed and estuary of the Puntledge River. The people called K'ómoks First Nation have an oral history and archaeology that describe a rich and bountiful relationship between the K'ómoks and the Land of Plenty.

Courtenay has a robust arts and culture community. As a result, residents enjoy a good balance of cultural facilities and multiple opportunities for participation in programs and events. Culture opportunities are highly interrelated with recreation facilities and services through the many arts programs offered by the Recreation Division at City facilities.

The City's arts and culture infrastructure includes the Comox Valley Art Gallery, the Courtenay and District Museum & Paleontology Centre, and the 550-seat Sid Williams Theatre. The City of Courtenay provides financial and in-kind support to the arts and culture organizations in the form of direct operating grants as well as providing facility space, repairs and maintenance. The arts and culture organizations use the City-owned buildings under a management agreement and a license to occupy.

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The City's Recreation and Cultural Services Department also offers a variety of arts-related programming in their recreation facilities including the following:

- For preschool children – creative art activities, music (percussion, movement)
- For children and youth – arts and crafts, learn to draw, dance (ballet, tap, jazz, hip hop etc.), mixed media, painting techniques, sewing, clay sculpting, stained glass, musical theatre, acting
- For adults and seniors– painting (oil & acrylic), water colour painting, drawing, printmaking, jewellery, clay works, stained glass, music – guitar, drumming, harmonica, dance (ballet, line, Zumba, modern), acting (drama), quilting, sewing

The following is a brief description of the three major arts and culture facilities and organizations located in Courtenay.

### **COMOX VALLEY ART GALLERY**

The Comox Valley Art Gallery (CVAG) is a “public art gallery featuring contemporary, experimental and applied art by regional, national and international artists presenting contemporary art issues and practices” (mandate statement). It is one of four professional art galleries on Vancouver Island. The CVAG is an independent public gallery run by a non-profit society.

The gallery is located in a municipally-owned building, the former Courtenay Fire Hall, now called the Centre for the Arts. The art gallery occupies the main floor and lower level of the building, and the Comox Valley Community Arts Council (CVCAC) also has offices in the building. The art gallery space includes an extensive gift shop with a large selection of high quality arts, crafts and artwork, sourced from over 100 artists. The Gallery runs a number of programs, including the Education and Outreach Program, the Art Exhibition Program, the Youth Engagement Program, and Creative Residencies.

Funding for the CVAG is a combination of national, provincial, regional district, City of Courtenay, gift shop and other revenues, fund-raising, and private donations. The 2017 audited financial figures indicate that the City spent \$65,000 for gaming grant support and \$52,192 on maintenance and repairs, utilities and insurance (this amount covers the operating costs for the entire building occupied by the art gallery).

### ***COURTENAY AND DISTRICT MUSEUM & PALEONTOLOGY CENTRE***

The Courtenay and District Museum was established in 1961 as a non-profit organization with the mandate to collect, preserve and interpret the natural and cultural heritage of the Comox Valley region. The museum, which continues to be operated by a non-profit society, is located in the former post office, which has undergone extensive renovations. The Museum Society transferred the ownership of the building to the City and leases it back.

The discovery of unique fossils in 1988, which turned out to be the first Elasmosaur recorded in British Columbia, resulted in big changes to the museum. Throughout the year, the museum offers on-site and outdoor programming suitable for all age groups, as well as a series of changing exhibitions.

The Courtney and District Museum receives funding from the federal, provincial, regional, and municipal levels of government. They also obtain revenues from the gift shop, heritage/ vacation property, tours, lectures, and donations. The City of Courtenay makes by far the largest contribution. The City's 2017 unaudited financial statements show the level of support for the museum included a \$127,500 operating grant, \$50,000 gaming grant, plus \$76,520 actual expenses in repairs and maintenance, utilities and insurance. The contribution by the CVRD was \$9,625.

### ***SID WILLIAMS THEATRE***

The Sid Williams Theatre was built as a "movie house" in 1935. The new Civic Theatre was opened after extensive renovations in 1971, and was named the Sid Williams Civic Theatre in 1984, after the much-loved local actor and comedian. The theatre continues to be owned by the City and is operated by the Sid Williams Theatre Society. The mandate of the Society is "the stimulation and enhancement of artistic, cultural and recreation activities in the Comox Valley and surrounding regions through its operation of the Sid Williams Theatre".

The 500-seat Sid Williams Theatre is the only full-service/fully-staffed professional performance space (with full ticketing services) in the Comox Valley, and the theatre society is the only professional multi-disciplinary year-round performing-arts presenting organization in the region. The performing arts community is very active. The patron base is 42,000 people with 42% from Courtenay and 40% from Comox.

The theatre society received funding from the City of Courtenay for management services (\$181,600) as well as City Gaming Contribution grants of about \$105,000. They also received funding from the Town of Comox (\$20,000) and from the CVRD (\$17,500). The City of Courtenay further supported the theatre with expenditures of \$106,373 (in 2017 unaudited financial statements) for maintenance, insurance

and utilities. The society also receives some funding from the federal and provincial governments. They generate revenue from ticket sales, facility rentals, a concession, events and sponsorships.

## Analysis

The arts and culture facilities and programs are a major contributor to the quality of life in the City of Courtenay and the entire region. Although the City directly provides art and culture opportunities through their programs at the recreation facilities and through the Evergreen Club, a “higher level” experience of the arts is available through the Art Gallery, Museum, Theatre, and various cultural agencies in the region.

Despite the significant support provided by the City of Courtenay there is no overall framework for the allocation of cultural grants. Regular ongoing funding continues to be an issue for arts organizations.

All the arts and cultural services based in Courtenay serve the larger region. A report for the Comox Valley Regional District in 2011 by Jennifer Wilson proposed a funding framework. That framework has not been implemented; however, the CVRD does currently provide some grants to the cultural institutions in Courtenay. The Town of Comox and the Village of Cumberland do not provide substantial or sustainable funding to the arts and culture organizations.

The Allocating Recreation Grants report (Wilson) recommended a blended approach to the grants program, whereby new programs, services and special events that support regional goals and deliver benefits to the entire region receive funding from the CVRD. The three major cultural institutions currently receive grants from the CVRD. This is an area that requires further discussion with the CVRD.



### Key Community Input on Culture

- Although there were no specific survey questions on culture, survey participants commented on the need for voice, theatre and creative writing programs, more and different dance programs for adults, affordable arts and crafts programs, mixed media, jewellery, quilting, and photography
- Focus group participants recommended that the arts be enhanced through a public art program and the development of an “arts specific” space
- Focus group participants recommended that culture be integrated into parks and recreation promotions and that the K’omoks First Nation be more involved to raise the Indigenous profile



## Summary of Strengths and Challenges

### STRENGTHS

Courtenay has multiple culture facilities that serve the region

The theatre, art gallery and museum all receive grant funding from the City of Courtenay and the CVRD

Centre for the Arts is an excellent concept that was intended to be for arts purposes and compatible uses; CVAG and the CVCAC are seeking other potential locations to supplement the existing space for the arts

Art gallery programs and events are highly varied and well attended

The museum has excellent displays, programs and attendance

The theatre is unique in the region, serving the community well

There are many bookings and attendance is high at the theatre

The CVCAC makes a significant contribution to arts and culture in the Comox Valley and has coordinated several mural art projects in the City

Museum has a Palaeontology section, which is a unique advantage over other museums

### CHALLENGES

There is no municipal/regional cultural plan that identifies potential funding models, management agreements, capital campaigns, and facility needs

There is no policy in place regarding the funding mechanisms

The mixed use in the Centre for the Arts building has resulted in insufficient space to meet the needs of the Art Gallery and the CVCAC

The Art Gallery is interested in expanding their exhibition space

The lack of regular ongoing funding is a major challenge for the museum

Challenges in the 80-year-old converted movie theatre include not enough lobby space (a challenge for persons with disabilities) and a small stage with outdated under-stage hydraulics and no fly system/ over stage hydraulics; theatre is currently understaffed and having difficulty filling positions

There has been no feasibility study to review options for the theatre within the overall context of arts in the Comox Valley

The CVCAC is challenged to meet current roles with the available resources

There is no Mural Art Policy in place to guide future projects

Museum lacks collection storage space and has issues of vandalism and public sanitation behind the facility

## Recommendations for Culture

### PLANNING AND DESIGN

- 4.4.1 Support the development of a Cultural Master Plan led by the Comox Valley Regional District, to include the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, K'ómoks First Nation, and Village of Cumberland; this Plan is to provide strategic direction for the future and include the following:
- Facility condition reviews and recommendations for facility renewal
  - Operating models and policies
  - Partnerships
  - Funding models
  - Strategies for incorporating cultural offerings through the recreation programs of the partner organizations
- 4.4.2 Undertake a facility utilization study for the building housing the Art Gallery.



“Keep up the good work. Love living in the Comox Valley and being able to participate recreationally both indoor and out for free or at a reasonable rate.” —*Survey respondent*




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## 5. NEXT STEPS

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan will be implemented in phases. The proposed phasing of the recommendations in this plan will be based on community priorities and Council's Strategic Priorities, combined with costs, existing and potential budgets, and other factors. The next step in this process will be to prepare an implementation plan that identifies the proposed phases and relative costs.

The Master Plan is a guiding document for the provision of facilities and services. It does not commit the City to any project nor limit future opportunities.

Implementation will require work at multiple levels by City staff and partners. The following are potential strategies for implementation within the various categories of recommendations:

- Planning and Design
    - Coordinated work among City departments
    - Support for efforts by community groups
    - Inform other City documents such as the OCP revision, Urban Forest Strategy, Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw, and future park master plans
  - Land Acquisition
    - Coordinated work among City departments
    - Negotiations through the development process
    - Development Cost Charges
    - Partnerships with other jurisdictions, including K'ómoks First Nation, and non-profit groups
    - Collaboration with School District
    - Encouraging and supporting bequests
  - Capital Development
    - Identification of projects that can be covered by Development Cost Charges and those that may be amenity contributions by developers
    - Establishment of use of Capital Reserves based on annual budgets
    - Tracking of opportunities and preparing applications for grants
    - Partnerships with potential sponsors, P3 projects, and other jurisdictions
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# Appendix A: Relevant Documents and Initiatives

There are numerous City documents that provide context for the PRC Master Plan. The most relevant ones are described in this section.

## **City of Courtenay Official Community Plan**

Courtenay's Official Community Plan (OCP) (2005) provides a vision for making the City the most liveable community in the province, and it supports an expanding system of parks, natural areas and greenways. The OCP provides a foundation for this vision with strategies on several themes relevant to the PRC Master Plan, including the following:

- Balanced growth – create neighbourhoods close to recreation
- A system of recreational greenways – work to have Courtenay recognized as a community that is friendly to pedestrians and cyclists; maintain and protect existing wildlife corridors
- Parks and publicly accessible, natural open space – identify and protect key areas that have the potential for future use as parks or open space
- Guidelines for sustainable development – design with nature, emphasize sustainability, enhance natural beauty, protect wildlife habitat, and support agriculture in the valley
- Adopt “smart growth” principles – foster alternative means of transportation and walkable neighbourhoods
- Community participation – develop a strong sense of community through social programming and through physical design and planning; bolster community spirit and volunteerism

The OCP includes goals and policies for Downtown, Commercial, Industrial, Residential, Agricultural, Parks and Open Space, Recreation and other land uses. The OCP notes that in 2005 the City had 5.6 hectares of parkland per 1,000 people compared to 1.97 hectares per 1,000 in 1994. Parks and Open Spaces are classified into Community Parks (larger than 2 ha), Neighbourhood Parks (less than 2 ha) and Special Use Parks (greenways, buffer strips, storm retention, wildlife and decorative areas).

There are 12 greenways identified in the OCP and 32 linear parks per this Master Plan. Therefore, the definition of linear park is broader than the OCP greenway definition.

Some of the goals of Parks and Open Space are to continue the development of the system of parks and recreation facilities, reinforce the public waterfront, acquire and protect environmentally sensitive areas, and to develop a strong community image through park development. Policies to guide the development of new parkland, the City's greenways and the Courtenay Riverway are also provided. The OCP identifies six high priority areas for acquiring additional neighbourhood parks, all of which are still relevant recommendations and included in Section 3.1 of this Master Plan.

### **City of Courtenay Strategic Priorities 2018 - 2018**

Courtenay City Council has formally adopted 25 strategic priorities that are reviewed annually. The 2016 - 2018 priorities are organized into six strategic themes:

- We actively pursue vibrant economic growth
- We proactively plan and invest in our natural and built environment
- We value multi-modal transportation in our community
- We support diversity in housing and reasoned land use planning
- We focus on organizational and governance excellence
- We invest in our key relationships

### **Connecting Courtenay Cycling Network Plan**

This plan identifies future routes, standards, and projects for improving Courtenay's cycling network.

### **Downtown Courtenay Playbook: A Partnership Action Plan**

In 2015 and 2016, the City conducted a Downtown Forum and Design Charrette, in collaboration with the Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Association, Chamber of Commerce, staff from neighbouring local governments, and students from the Vancouver Island University Master of Community Planning program. The resulting playbook summarizes a community vision for downtown revitalization, along with the goals, principles, strategic tools, and policies for implementing that vision. One of the five goals resulting from the public process was "celebrate and connect to the rivers", supported by new pedestrian and cycling-friendly bridges across the Courtenay River at locations such as 5<sup>th</sup> Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Considerable attention was given to completing the Riverway Pathway and improving connections to Condensory Trail, the Puntledge River and One Spot Trail.

## Courtenay Parks and Open Space Master Plan

The 1994 Parks and Open Space Master Plan established a framework for the provision of parks and open space for the City. The plan provided a parks classification, measurements of population-based parkland supply, and suggested supply standards to achieve through the acquisition of 11 new parks. Since the plan was produced, the City has made considerable progress towards improving the parks and trails network based on the plan's recommendations.

## Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy

This document is important as it relates to the integration of parks and recreation opportunities within the region. The purpose of the Regional Growth Strategy (2010) is to assist in making decisions regarding growth, change and development within the Regional District. In the section on managing growth, the strategy includes several goals, objectives and policies that are in alignment with the OCP and relevant to the PRC Master Plan, including the following:

- Goal 2: *Ecosystems, natural areas and parks* – protect and enhance the natural environment and ecological connections and systems
- Goal 4: *Transportation* – develop an efficient and affordable multi-modal transportation network that connects Core Settlement Areas and designated Town Centres, and links the Comox Valley to neighbouring communities and regions
- Goal 6: *Food systems* – support a high quality of life through the protection and enhancement of community health, safety and well-being
- Goal 8: *Climate Change* – minimize regional greenhouse gas emissions and plan for adaptation

## Comox Valley Sustainability Strategy

In 2010, elected officials, staff and the public from the City of Courtenay, Comox Valley Regional District, Village of Cumberland, and Comox Valley Regional District participated in a joint initiative to foster collaboration and influence policy-making regarding sustainability at both the regional and local scales. The strategy lays out sustainable community development goals and objectives in eight areas, including Ecosystems, Natural Areas and Parks. In the section on Ecosystems, Natural Areas and Parks, it recommends that all citizens have access to recreational opportunities and widespread access to a variety of recreational parks and greenways. Specific actions are listed and prioritized, along with the community, education and government organizations that should be involved in implementing them.

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## City of Courtenay 25 Year Vision for Multi-Modal Transportation

In 2014, Courtenay produced a vision for multi-modal transportation that included a network of greenways and complete streets that would provide key mobility connections between mixed-use development nodes throughout the City. The conceptual greenway network proposed in the Vision includes trails and on-street routes that connect existing parks and priority park acquisition areas.

## Park Asset Management Inventory

Between June 27th and July 7th of 2016, Courtenay conducted a field inventory of park assets within the City. Over eight days, assessments were performed for 1,765 unique features that range from benches and signs to sport fields and playground equipment. In total, 119 parks, trails and greenways within the City of Courtenay were visited. The asset condition rankings were incorporated into a Parks, Recreation and Culture Analysis.

## City Asset Management Policy

In 2015, Courtenay adopted the Asset Management Policy. Asset management provides a framework for supporting long-term service delivery. The information provided in the Parks, Recreation and Culture Analysis and the final Parks and Recreation Master Plan will help formulate the long-term Asset Management Plans for the parks and recreation assets. This will include the establishment of levels of service, for activities and programs considering service risks and the condition of assets.

## Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw

This bylaw, updated in 2018, regulates the subdivision and development of land within the City of Courtenay, and outlines standards for works and services. The bylaw includes standards for detention ponds, sidewalks, and trees.

## Projects in Progress

A number of projects currently underway will also be relevant to the PRC Master Plan; these are described below.

- ***Urban Forest Strategy***

A draft of this strategy was completed in April 2019. The draft Urban Forest Strategy, which included community engagement and analysis of the tree canopy, establishes a vision, goals, strategies and actions for protecting and enhancing Courtenay's urban forests.

- ***Integrated Rainwater Management Plan***

The City of Courtenay is developing a community-wide management plan that will guide how we manage rainwater. The Integrated Rainwater Management Plan (IRMP) will help shape our community as it grows, in an environmentally respectful and sustainable manner. The IRMP will help Courtenay manage the systems and processes of our community's built infrastructure such as underground stormwater utilities, as well as natural assets such as wetlands and rivers.

- ***5th Street Complete Street Pilot Project***

The 5th Street Complete Street Pilot Project included a substantial overhaul of above-ground and below-ground infrastructure on 5th Street between Fitzgerald and Menzies Avenues. The project significantly improves walking and cycling infrastructure in the area. Along with new landscaping, other improvements include innovative stormwater management through the installation of rain gardens throughout the corridor. The project was funded through the federal Gas Tax Fund, under the Strategic Priorities Fund - Local Roads, Bridges and Active Transportation category.

### **Future Project**

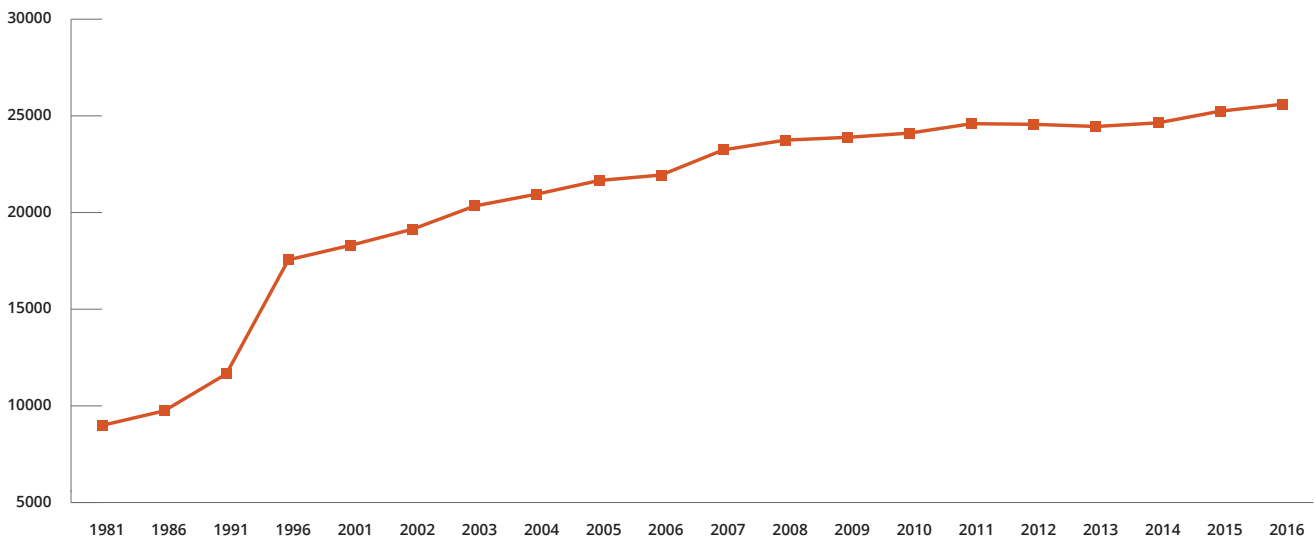
The City is planning to undertake a Municipal Natural Assets Initiative (MNAI). The initiative will involve identifying, valuing and accounting for natural assets in the City's financial planning and asset management programs and developing leading-edge, sustainable and climate resilient infrastructure. Parks are natural assets that can contain aquifers, forests, streams, riparian areas and foreshores; these can provide municipalities with vital services equivalent to those from many engineered assets. Some natural assets serve multiple purposes. For example, parks may reduce flooding risks, provide recreational benefits, and they can be managed to maximize several objectives.

# Appendix B: Community Overview

## Existing Population, Age and Household Sizes

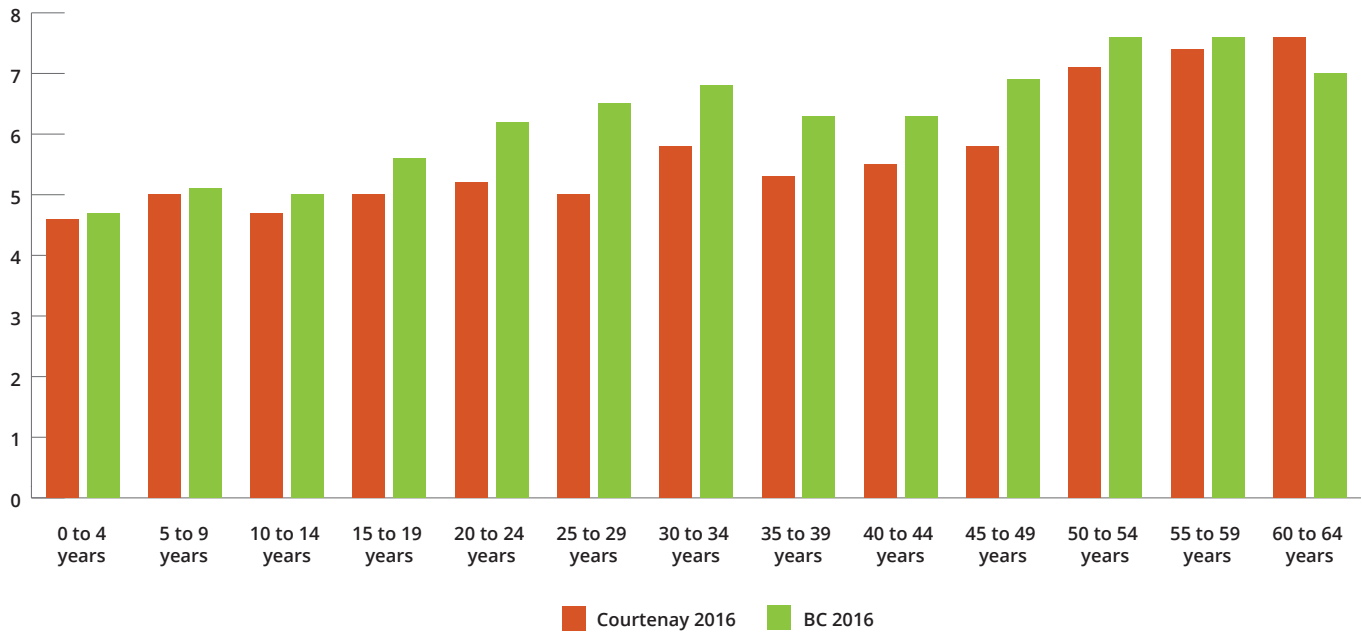
The City of Courtenay's population at the end of 2016 was 25,599 (Figure 2.1). Courtenay has experienced variable growth rates over the last 35 years. Between 2001 and 2006, the City had the tenth highest growth rate in BC at 19.9%, and the third highest of municipalities over 5,000 population (BC Stats). The BC average during this time was 5.3%. After 2006, population growth was slower, but in the period from 2011 to 2016 the growth rate was 5.7%, greater than the Comox Valley Regional District's growth rate of 4.7% for the same period.

**FIGURE A.1: CITY POPULATION 1981 TO 2016**  
 SOURCE: COURTENAY OCP (2005), STATISTICS CANADA CENSUS SUBDIVISION DATA (2016), BC STATS (2015)



Courtenay’s population is aging (Figure 2.2). The 2016 census recorded the median age of Courtenay at 48.3 years, an increase from 46.5 in 2011. This is higher than the provincial median age of 43.0 and the national median age of 41.2. There are higher percentages of adults in Courtenay over the age of 60, and lower proportions aged 0 to 59 than there are in the rest of the province.

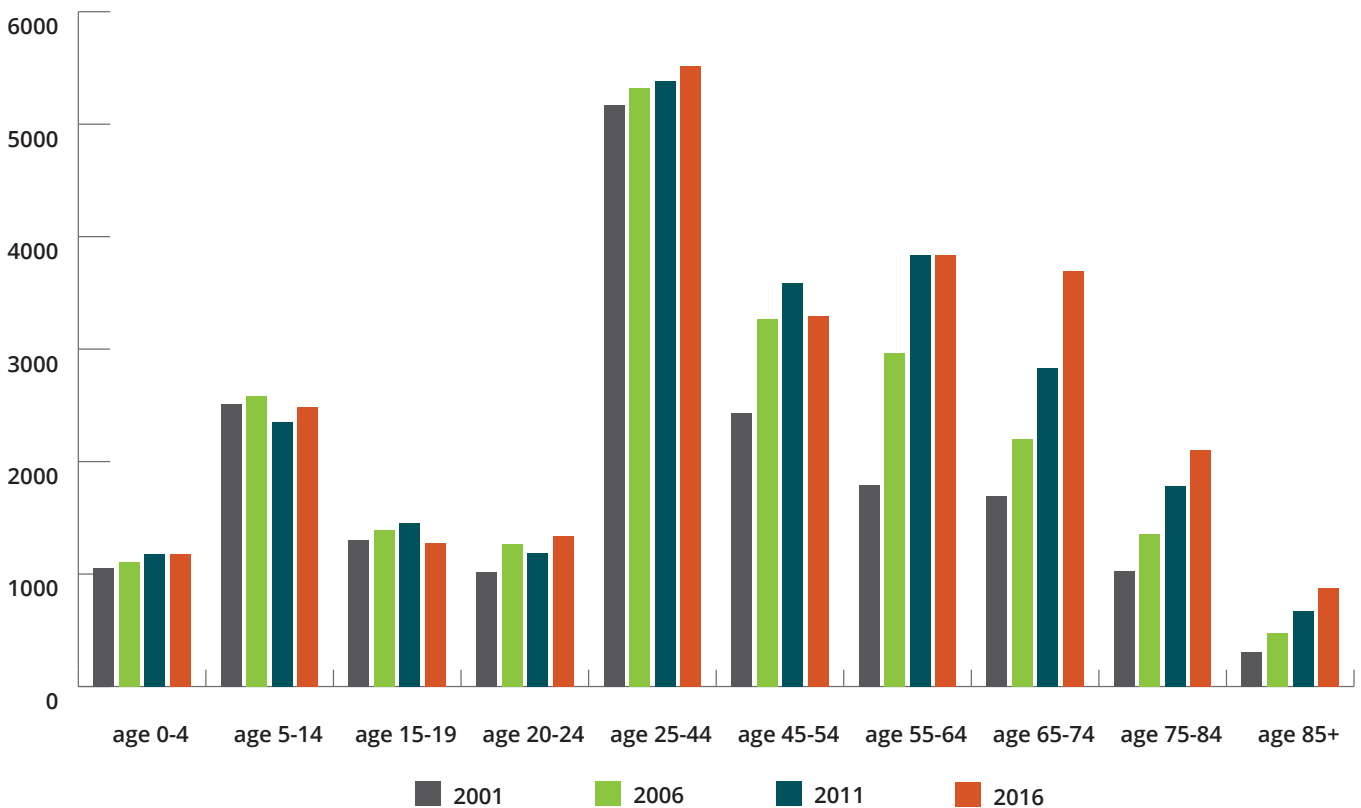
**FIGURE A.2: AGE COMPARISONS COURTENAY AND PROVINCE 2016**  
 SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA CENSUS SUBDIVISION DATA (2016)





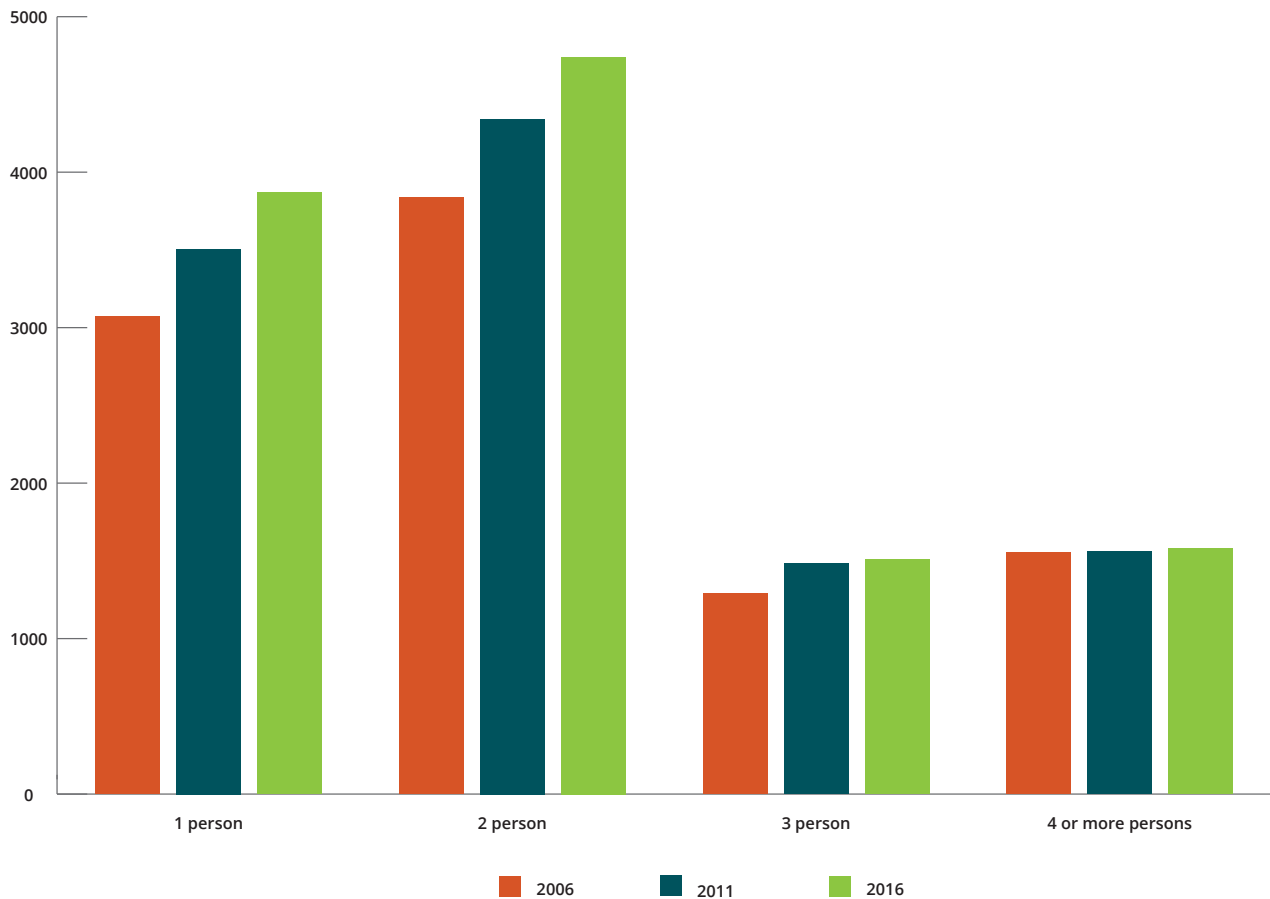
Courtenay's demographics are changing significantly with respect to the age distribution (Figure 2.3). Generally the trend shows very small population increases for all of the age classes up to age 44. The older age groups increased significantly with the most dramatic increases in population for adults aged 85 and older (189%), adults aged 65 to 74 (119%) and adults aged 55 to 64 (115%).

**FIGURE A.3: POPULATION CHANGE BY AGE CLASS 2001 TO 2016**  
 SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA CENSUS SUBDIVISION DATA (2001, 2006, 2011, 2016)



The average persons per household in 2016 was 2.1 (Figure 2.4), a slight decrease from 2.2 in 2006. The most growth between 2006 and 2016 occurred within smaller households. This is likely related to the aging population, as older residents typically live in smaller households.

**FIGURE A.4: HOUSEHOLD SIZE 2006, 2011, 2016**  
 SOURCE: DATA FROM STATISTICS CANADA CENSUS SUBDIVISION DATA (2006, 2011, 2016)



**Ethnicity**

Courtenay had about the same percentage of people speaking English and French as their first language in 2016 (89% and 2% respectively) as in 2011 (89% and 3% respectively). Of the 8% of people in 2016 whose first language was a non-official language, German, Cantonese and Vietnamese were the most common first languages. Five census respondents in Courtenay spoke each of the following as their first language: Cree, Inuktitut, Comox, Salish languages, and Kwakiutl (Kwak’wala).

**Population Trends**

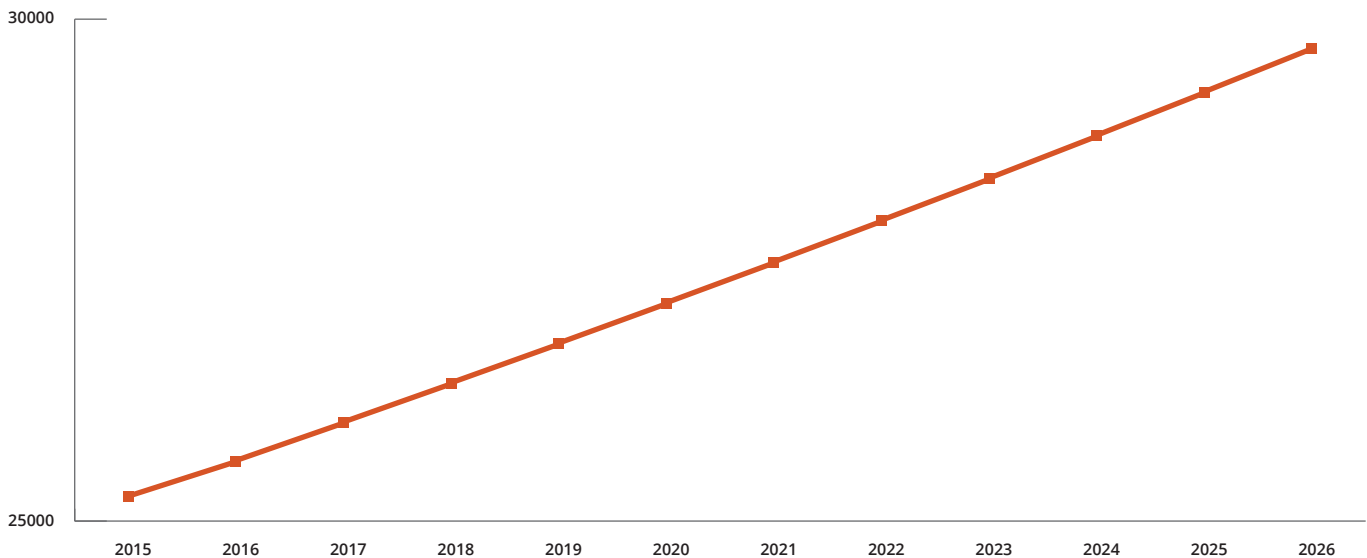
Population projections are based on past population trends and current population characteristics. Though not an exact science, population projections are an essential tool to guide decision-making about the future needs of a community. Population growth requires new housing, City services, and other amenities such as parks and recreation.

Courtenay’s population at the end of 2016 was estimated at 25,599. According to the calculations for the DCC bylaw, the City is anticipating an annual growth rate of 1.5%. Applying the 1.5% average growth rate from 2016 to 2026 will result in an estimated population of 29,709 in 2026 (Figure 2.5). This estimated 2026 population is an increase of 4,110 from the 2016 population estimate of 25,599.

Residential growth in Courtenay is occurring primarily in the following suburban edges of the City:

- North and northeast Courtenay in the Crown Isle and Crown Isle on the Rise developments respectively
- South Courtenay in The Ridge development close to Upper and Lower Ridge Park
- Southwest Courtenay in proximity to Arden Road

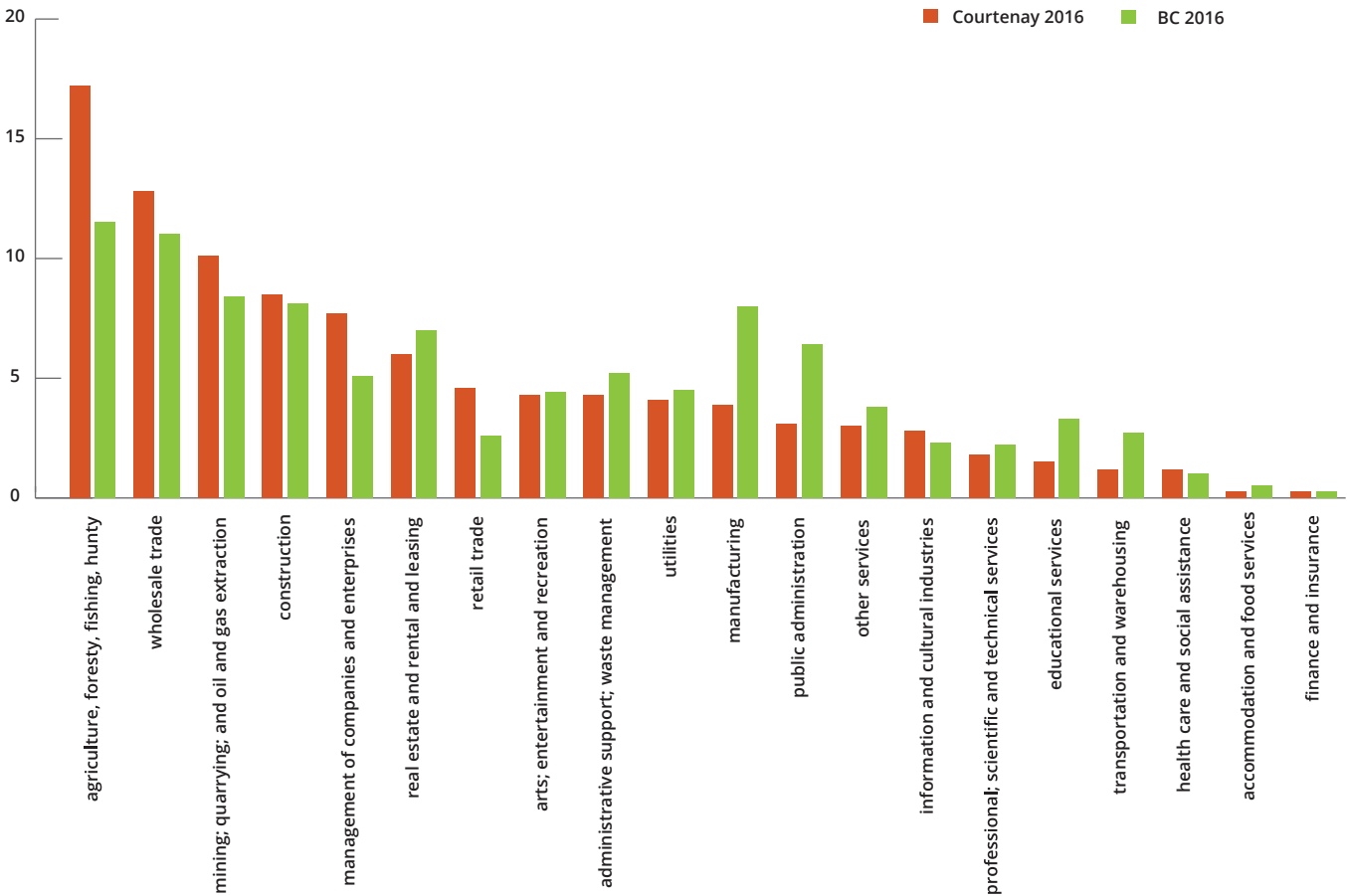
**FIGURE A.5: POPULATION PROJECTION 2015 TO 2026**  
 SOURCE: DATA UPDATED FROM ROLLO AND ASSOCIATES, 2016



### Employment and Income

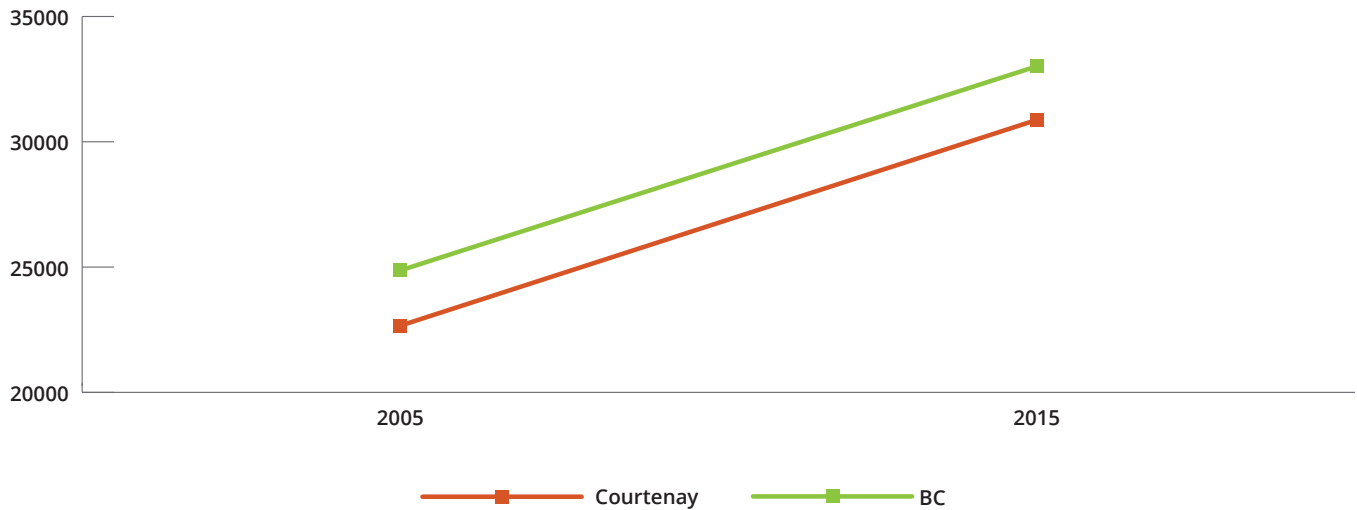
As of 2016, Courtenay's labour force includes: agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (17.2%); wholesale trade (12.8%); mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction (10.1%); and construction (8.5%) sectors (Figure 2.6). The largest percentage of the labour force in both Courtenay and BC work in these four sectors.

**FIGURE A.6: LABOUR FORCE BY INDUSTRY 2016 FOR COURTENAY AND BC**  
 SOURCE: DATA FROM STATISTICS CANADA CENSUS SUBDIVISION DATA (2016)



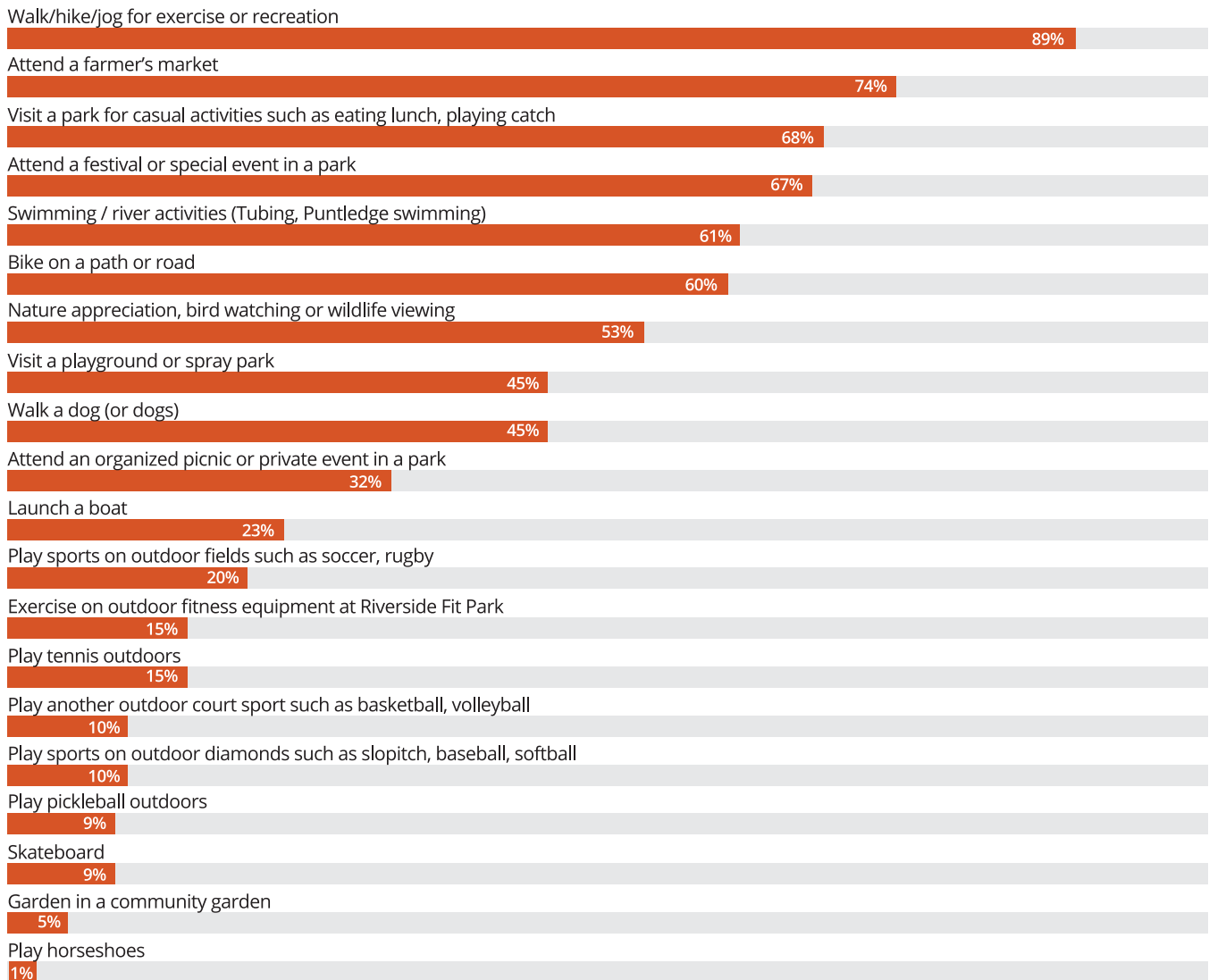
The median annual income for individuals in Courtenay is lower than the BC median (Figure 2.7). Median income for households in Courtenay grew from \$57,463 in 2005 to \$69,995 in 2015. In 2015, 27.9% of total income in Courtenay was from pensions, compared to 12.7% for BC.

**FIGURE A.7: COURTENAY AND BC MEDIAN INDIVIDUAL INCOME**  
*SOURCE: DATA FROM STATISTICS CANADA CENSUS SUBDIVISION DATA (2016)*

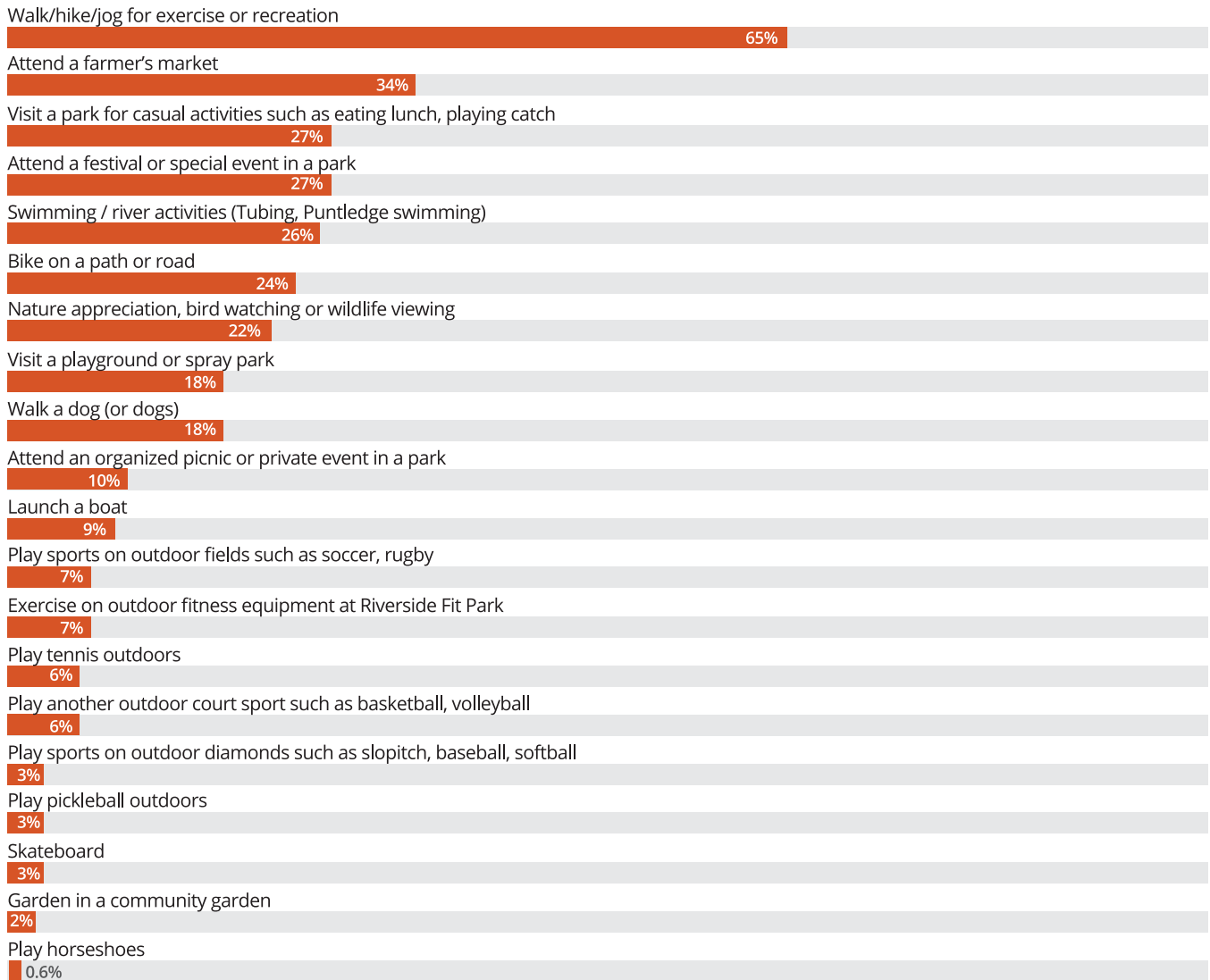


# Appendix C: Community Survey Input

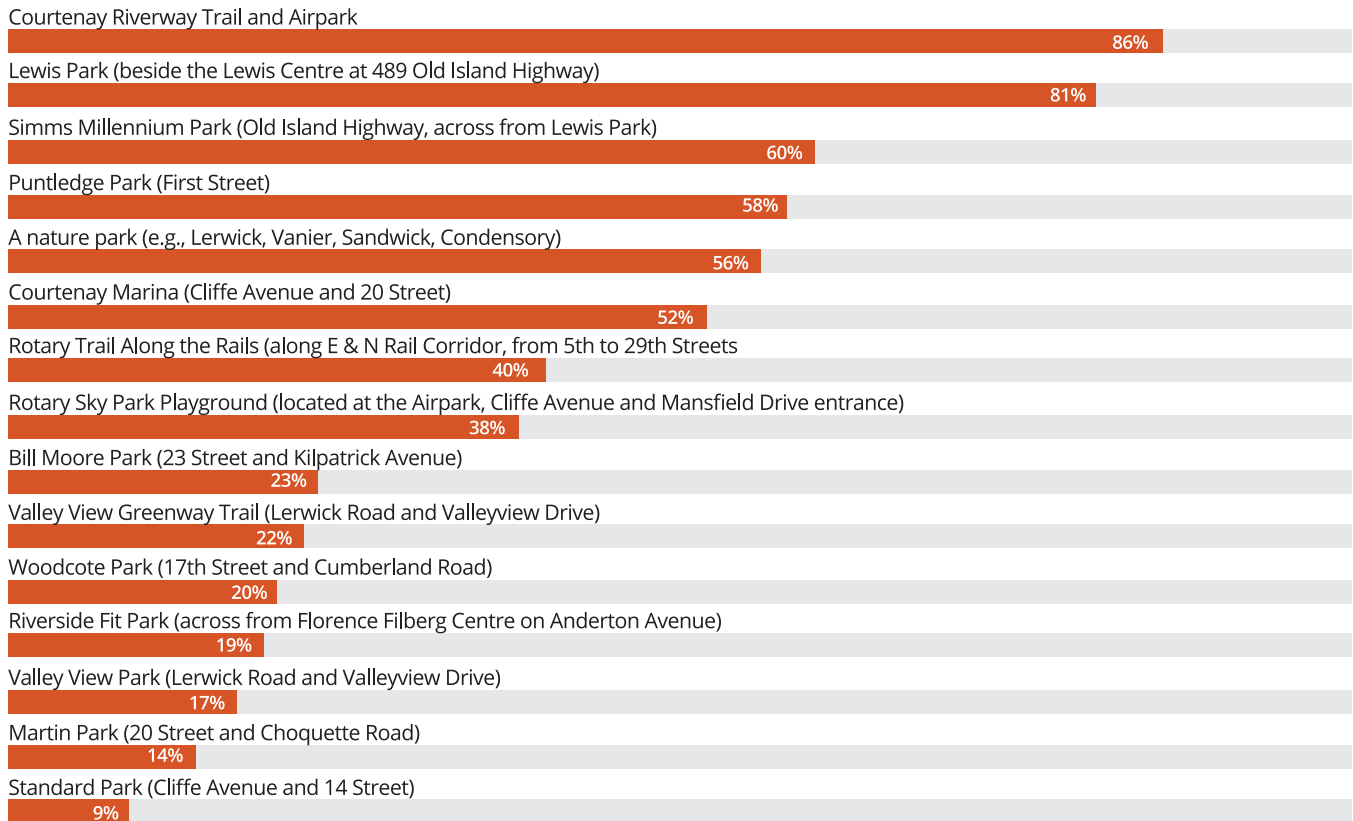
## Question 1a: Did you or anyone else in your household participate in any of the following outdoor activities at a City of Courtenay park during the past year?



**Question 2: Of these outdoor activities, which are most important to you? (Please choose around two or three activities)**

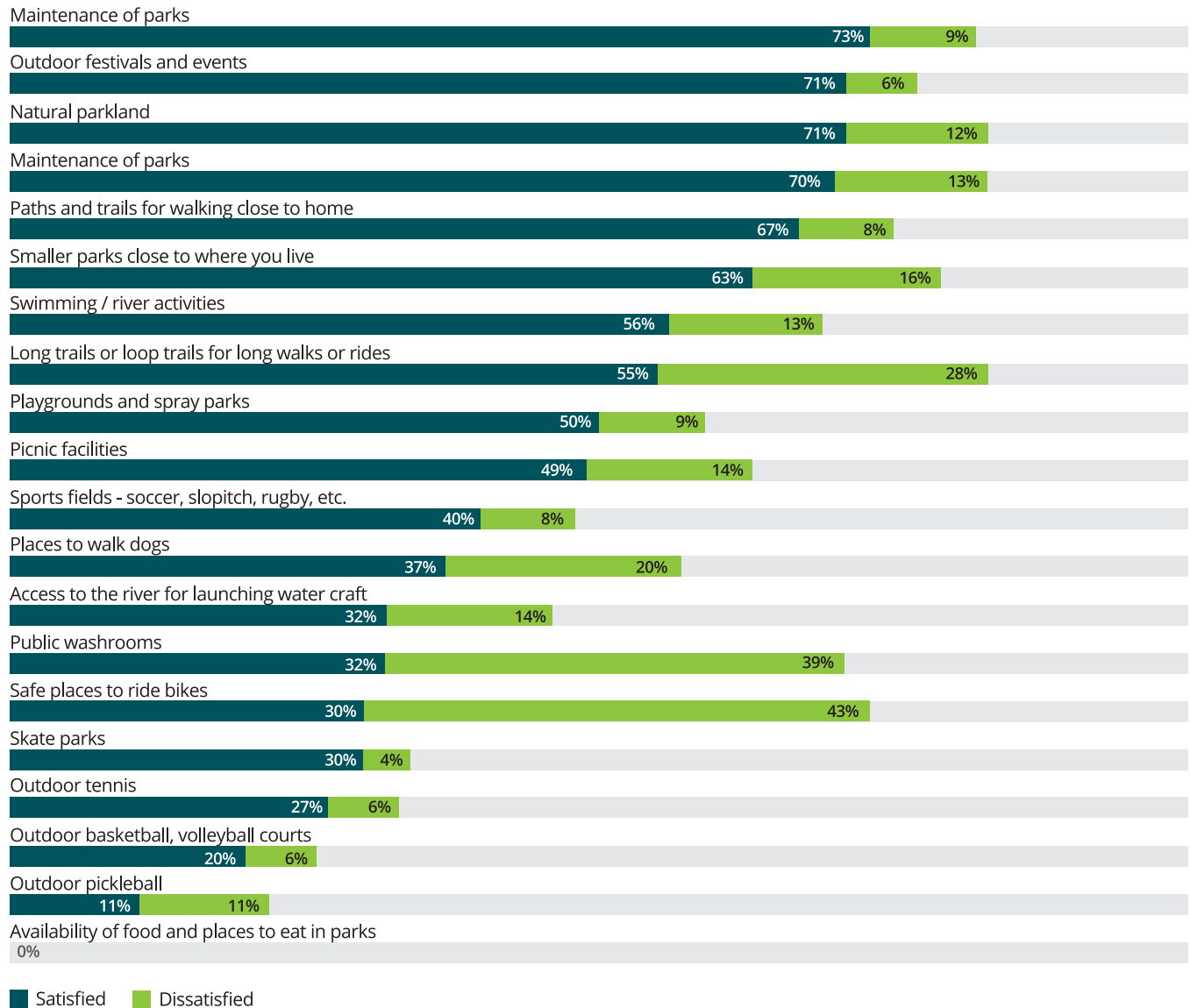


**Question 3: In the past year, did you or anyone in your household visit any of these parks or trails for any reason (park use, playground, walking, playing sports, eat lunch in a park, etc.)?**

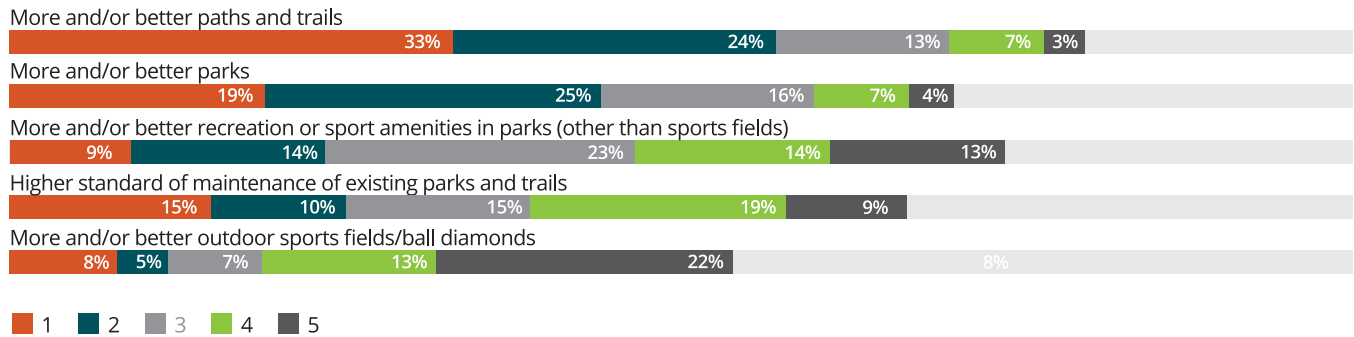




**Question 4: What is your level of satisfaction with each of the following (satisfied, neither satisfied or dissatisfied, dissatisfied, or not sure)? When answering please consider quality, location, access, and if there are enough opportunities.**



**Question 5: Which of the following potential priorities for outdoor recreation are most important to you?**



**Question 6: Please tell us what specific improvements or additions to outdoor recreation are needed and where they are needed (if applicable). If you think they're fine as they are, feel free to tell us more.**

**MULTI-USE TRAILS**

- More routes that allow for walking and cycling (65)
- Create a trail system connecting parks and key areas in the city (26)

**OFF-LEASH DOG AREAS**

- Need an off-leash dog park (34)

**SPORTS FIELDS AND COURTS**

- More pickleball courts (50)
- More tennis courts (28)
- More beach volleyball courts (9)
- More multi-use turf fields (9)
- More baseball diamonds (4)

**PLAYGROUNDS**

- Need more playgrounds (14)
- Replace deteriorating playground equipment (12)
- Better maintenance of playground areas (3)

**OUTDOOR POOL**

- Outdoor pool facilities need to be renovated (6)
- Maintenance to the outdoor pool needs improvement (i.e. appearance and cleanliness) (4)
- Extend operating season for the outdoor pool (2)

**PUBLIC WASHROOMS**

- More washrooms in parks and along trails (11)
- Improve maintenance of washrooms (6)
- Provide personal hygiene items (e.g., hand sanitizer, paper towels) at washrooms (3)
- Keep washrooms open year-round (3)
- Provide washrooms that are accessible for all

users (2)

**PICNIC FACILITIES**

- More picnic tables in parks (4)
- More places to enjoy a picnic (e.g., along trails) (4)

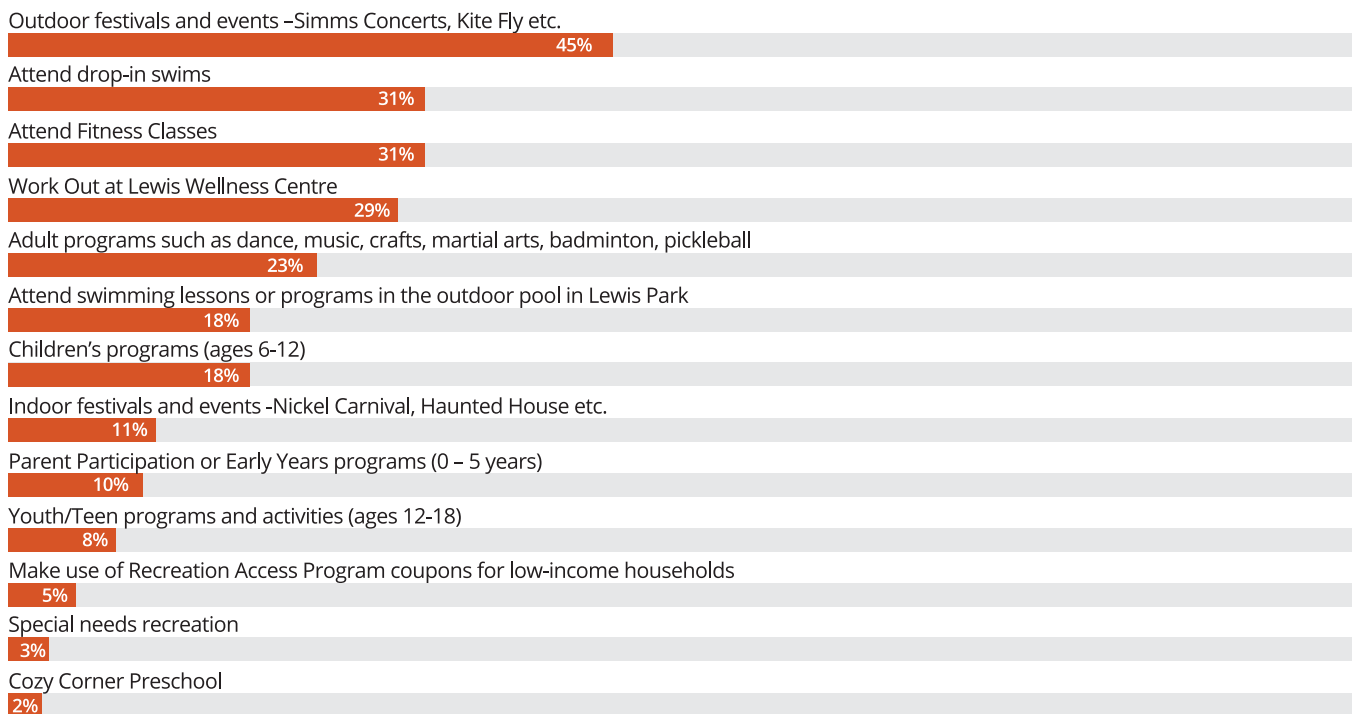
**NATURAL AREAS**

- More natural areas for recreational enjoyment and wildlife conservation (5)

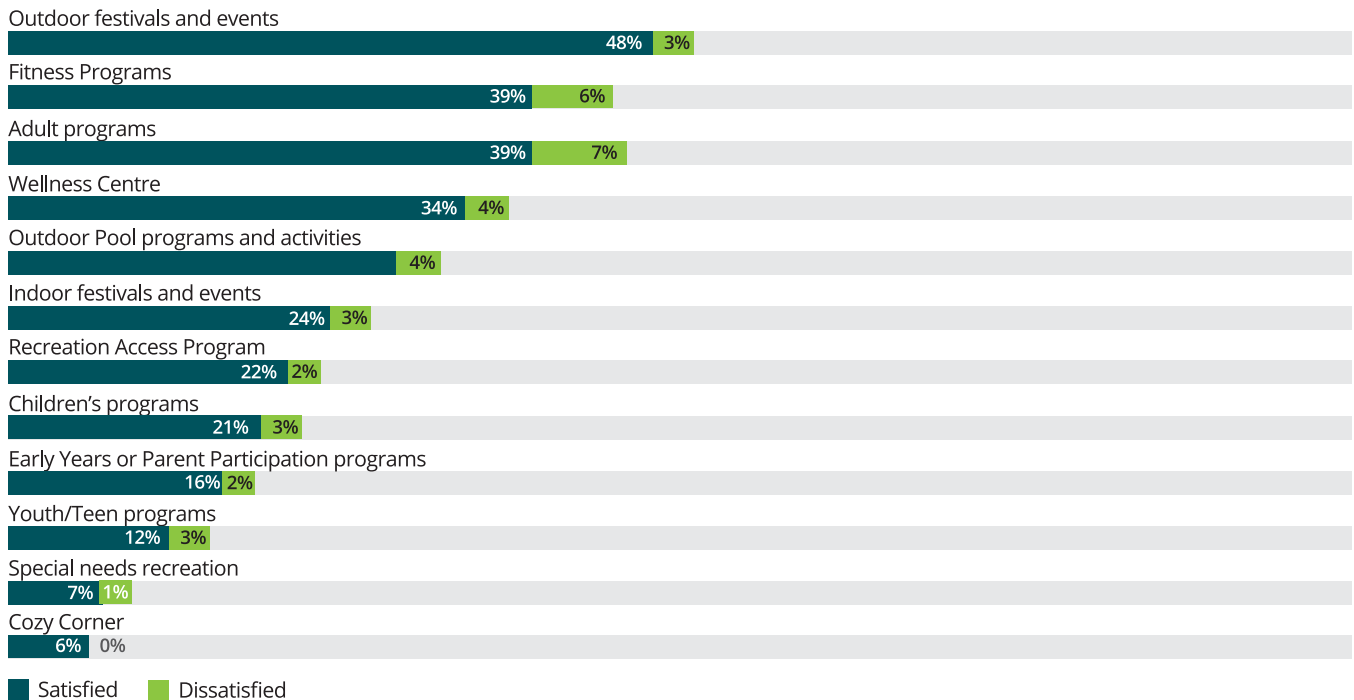
**SKATEPARKS**

- Construct a skatepark in West Courtenay (2)

**Question 7: Did you or anyone in your household participate in any of the following recreation programs offered by the City of Courtenay during the past year?**



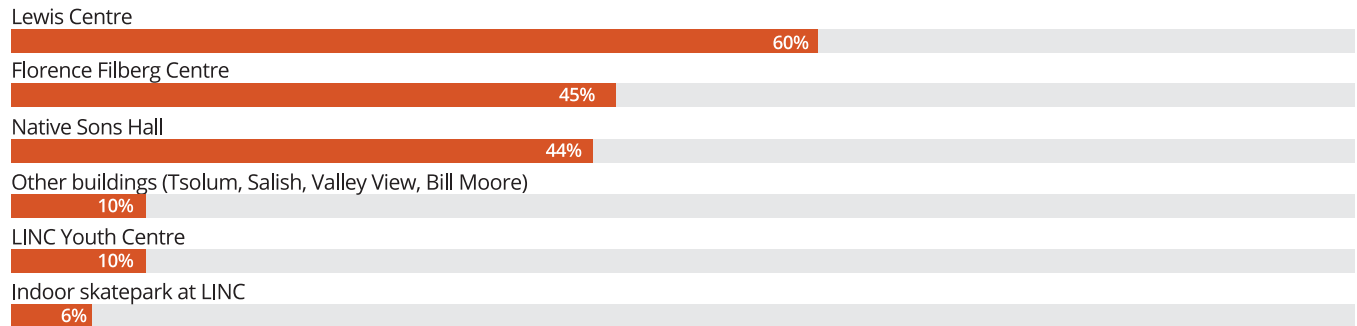
**Question 8: What is your level of satisfaction with each of the following recreation programs or activities offered by the City of Courtenay?**



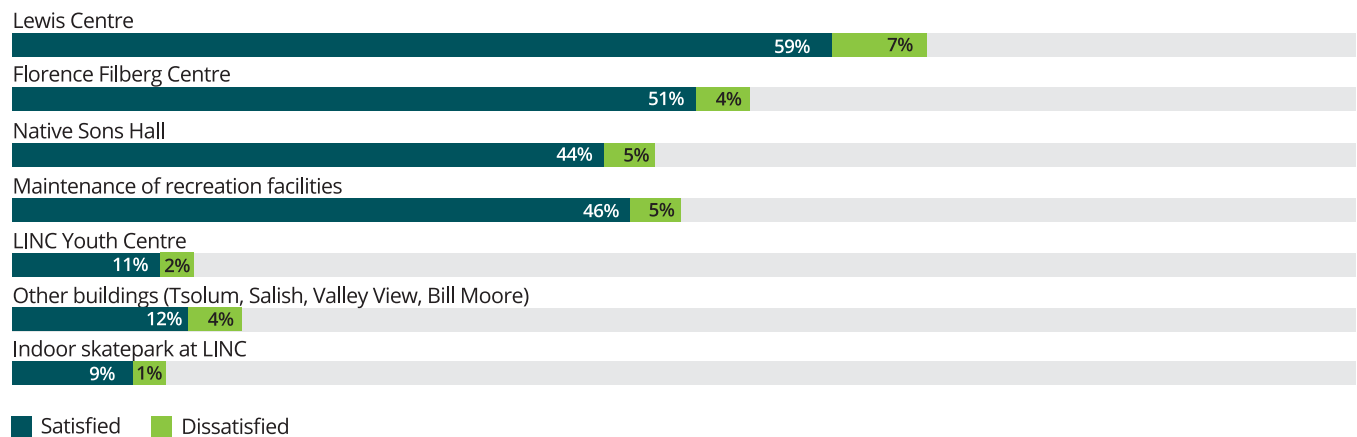
**Question 9: Are there any age groups for which programs are insufficient or lacking? Check as many as apply.**



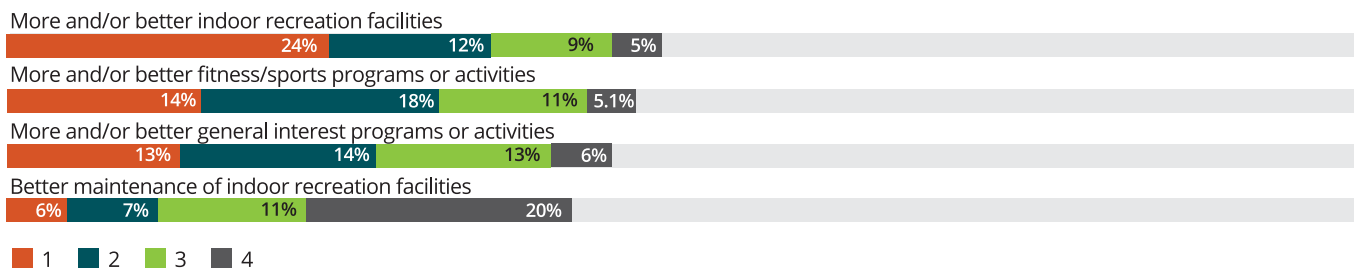
**Question 10: Did you or anyone in your household participate in City of Courtenay recreation activities or programs or attend special activities at any of the following facilities in the past year?**



**Question 11: What is your level of satisfaction with each of the following? Please consider quality, location, and if there are enough opportunities.**



**Question 12: Please rank your priorities for recreation improvements from the choices below.**



**Question 13: Please tell us what specific recreation improvements or additions are needed and where they are needed (if applicable). If you think they're fine as they are, please tell us more.**

**PICKLEBALL COURTS**

- More pickleball courts are needed (31)

**GYM SPACE**

- More fitness room space (11)
- More fitness equipment (5)

**INDOOR TENNIS**

- Need an indoor tennis facility (11)

**AQUATICS**

- Need another indoor swimming pool (9)
- Swimming lessons fill up too quickly (2)
- Swimming pool and facilities maintenance (i.e. showers) is poor (2)

**YOGA PROGRAMMING AND FACILITIES**

- A studio dedicated for yoga use only (9)

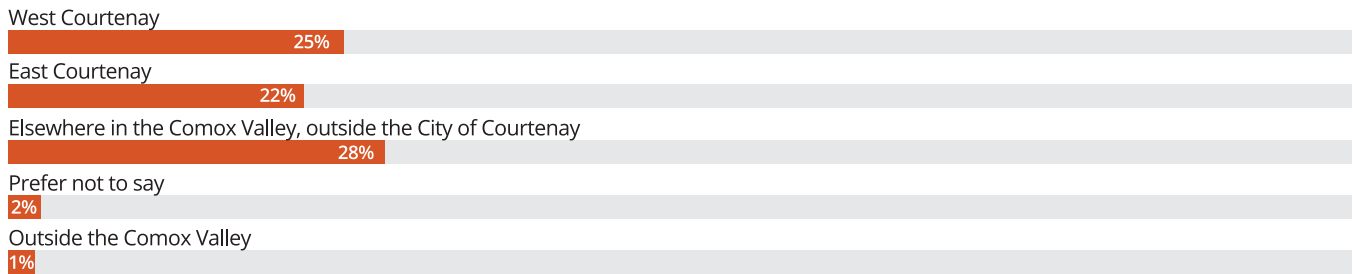
**INDOOR FIELD RECREATION FACILITIES**

- Indoor multi-purpose space for soccer, field hockey, rugby, etc. (6)

**PROGRAMMING**

- There are not enough classes offered for each program, which makes the registration process stressful (12)
- There are particularly not enough classes or facilities for the TRX program (6)
- More options are needed for the seniors' fitness programming (4)
- The Lewis Centre offers a good variety of programs (12)
- The scheduling of class times is inconvenient, especially for those who work regular office hours during weekdays (i.e., evenings, weekends, early mornings) (11)
- Arts and skills-based programs aside from fitness recreation should be incorporated into programming for all ages (e.g., theatre, cooking, dancing, wildlife, woodworking) (8)
- More options for drop-in programs are needed (6)
- Programs should be offered at more affordable rates (6)
- The registration process is difficult and lacks flexibility due to the in-person or phone sign-up requirement (5)
- More programming options for youth/teens (5)

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their place of residence. A total of 25% of survey respondents reside in West Courtenay and 22% in East Courtenay, while the highest number of respondents reside elsewhere in the Comox Valley, outside the City of Courtenay (28%).

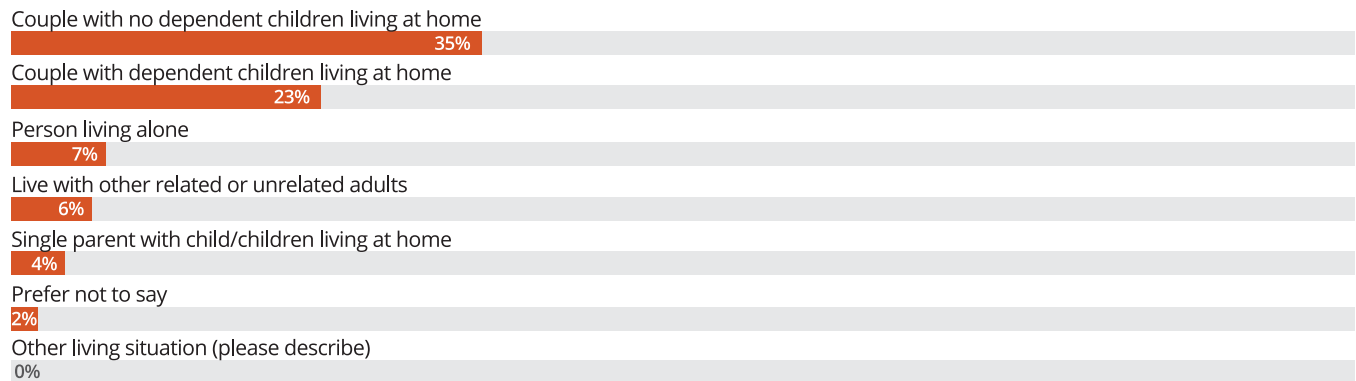


Respondents were provided with six different age ranges and were asked to indicate to which age range they belong. Most respondents indicated that they are between 30 and 44 years old (26%), followed by 60 to 74 (22%) and 45 to 59 (21%). The graph below shows the age distribution in relation to the age distribution of Courtenay's population.



■ Number of Respondents      ■ Courtenay Population

Survey respondents were asked to specify their household composition. A large number of respondents indicated that they are part of a couple with no dependent children living at home (35%). This was followed by couples with dependent children living at home (23%).



Survey respondents who indicated they have dependents residing in their household were asked to specify the age bracket of the children. Most indicated that the dependents are between the age of 6 and 12 years old (43%), followed by 5 years or under (31%).





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# Appendix D: Parks And Recreation Trends

Parks and recreation activities, infrastructure and participation are constantly changing in response to broader societal trends. The following is a synthesis of some of the current provincial trends related to parks, recreation, and culture, selected for their relevance to Courtenay.

## Participation

- Participation levels are higher in BC than in other provinces
- Aging population with a wide range of “55+” interests in “aging actively”
- Walking, cycling, swimming, and attending events are particularly popular
- Unstructured, informal, spontaneous activities are increasing in popularity
- Physical activity levels are decreasing across North America and obesity is increasingly common
- People are incorporating lifestyle and wellness activities into daily routines
- Financial barriers limit participation in some activities and programs, which has led to many municipalities offering programs to reduce costs for low income participants

## Service Delivery

- Recreation is frequently offered through a community development approach, in which community groups offer programs with support from the municipality, e.g., swimming lessons, sports leagues, arts programs
  - Municipalities are aligning with provincial and national strategic initiatives, e.g., Framework for Recreation in Canada
  - Partnerships are being used to optimize opportunities
  - Flexible program times and formats are popular
  - Family-centred activities help family schedules and opportunities
  - Numerous organizations are working together to address social concerns, such as vandalism, inclusion, and affordability
- 

## Volunteerism

- Volunteers are critical to the provision of recreation opportunities
- British Columbians of all ages volunteer
- Volunteer trends are shifting and it is becoming harder for some groups to attract and retain volunteers

## Infrastructure

- Aging infrastructure is a concern
- Multi-use and flexible spaces provide more opportunities and benefits
- Some newer facilities are integrating indoor and outdoor environments
- More focus is placed on ensuring physical accessibility through universal design
- Various tools are being used to support financial sustainability, including revenue-generating spaces
- Social amenities are being used to enhance user experiences

## Parks and Outdoor Recreation

- Trail-oriented uses have the highest and most frequent participation in most communities
- Opportunities to experience nature are expected by residents, and nature interpretation is integrated into parks and trails
- Dog walking is highly popular, and various types of off-leash amenities are being offered
- Play areas are being designed as play environments that incorporate nature
- Activities increasing in popularity include disc golf, urban agriculture and lacrosse
- Participation is increasing in “active transportation”, especially biking
- There are challenges related to parkland supply with increasing population and density

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# Appendix E: Benefits of Parks and Recreation

Numerous national, provincial and municipal organizations have been engaged in research regarding the benefits of parks and recreation. The “benefits” approach is a highly effective framework for planning and promoting services because it emphasizes that there are both direct and indirect benefits to the community from investing in parks, recreation and culture facilities, programs, activities and special events.

The direct benefits accrue to those who participate in terms of healthy and active lifestyles, social and family connections, positive behaviours, a sense of competence, and disease prevention, among others. There are indirect benefits to the community as a whole, even for those who do not participate. This stems from the enhanced vibrancy of the community, strengthened social fabric, healthier business community, more employment opportunities, more local goods to be purchased, and enhanced tourism assets.

Active people lead healthier lives and have stronger connections to their communities. A powerful case exists that investment in recreation infrastructure is a preventative approach to health and social well-being that offsets spending on reactive infrastructure such as hospitals and correctional institutions.

At the national level, the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) has an online resource that collects data to support the following eight benefits of parks and recreation ([www.benefitshub.ca](http://www.benefitshub.ca)). The Leisure Information Network updates the benefits information on behalf of CPRA. This resource identifies that the work and services provided through parks and recreation:

- Are essential to personal health and well-being
  - Provide the key to balanced human development
  - Provide a foundation for quality of life
  - Reduce self-destructive and anti-social behaviour
  - Build strong families and healthy communities
  - Reduce health care, social service and police/justice costs
  - Are a significant economic generator
  - Provide green spaces that are essential to environmental and ecological well-being, for the survival of natural species, the environmental responsibility and stewardship by humans and creating a sense of place
- 

.....

The benefits of parks and recreation also fit within the framework of sustainability. The following are some examples of this:

### **Environmental Benefits of Parks and Recreation**

- Protection of habitat, biodiversity and ecological integrity in parks and open space
- Environmental education and stewardship
- Pollution abatement and cooling of air and water, mostly from trees and soil
- Rainwater management
- Climate change adaptation, including mitigation of extreme weather events
- Parks with forests act as carbon sinks


### **Social Benefits of Parks and Recreation**

- Contribution to community pride and identity
- Stronger social networks and community connectedness
- Physical, psychological and spiritual health and well-being
- Support for play as a critical element in learning and child development
- Connecting people with nature, which has proven health benefits
- Development of community leaders
- Parks can be used to preserve and promote heritage and culture

### **Economic Benefits of Parks and Recreation**

- Increased property values
- Increased viability of adjacent commercial areas
- Attraction of residents and businesses to the community
- Contribution to tourism opportunities
- Reduced costs in criminal justice and health care systems
- Recreation, fitness, sport, arts, culture, parks, and open spaces are significant employment generators

### **Personal Benefits of Parks and Recreation**

- Helps extend life expectancy (active living, sport, fitness)
  - Contributes to mental health and well-being
  - Reduces obesity, resulting in many health benefits
  - Enhances overall physical and emotional health and improves quality of life
  - Combats diabetes and osteoporosis and helps reduce risk of coronary heart disease
  - Contributes to academic success and provides exceptional opportunities for lifelong learning
- 

# Appendix F: Recreation Frameworks

Frameworks for recreation and sport in Canada have been shifting the focus for how municipalities plan facilities and offer services. These are described below.

The *Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015—Pathways to Wellbeing* was created to articulate a renewed vision for recreation and to establish shared goals and values for recreation providers. The document has been endorsed by the federal government and provincial governments, as well as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA), and provincial and territorial recreation associations.

The *Framework* was prepared to guide decision-making, planning, resource allocation, and the development of strategies, policies, programs, and performance metrics. As such, it is a valuable tool to support the alignment of municipal parks and recreation master plans with broader goals for recreation. Each of the goals is based on extensive research, reflecting how recreation can improve individual and community health and well-being and provide a high quality of life for all Canadians.

The *Framework* sets out the following vision and goals:

*We envision a Canada in which everyone is engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation experiences that foster individual wellbeing, community wellbeing, and the wellbeing of our natural and built environments.*



## Goal 1: Active Living

Foster active living through physical recreation.



## Goal 2: Inclusion and Access

Increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation.



## Goal 3: Connecting People and Nature

Help people connect to nature through recreation.



## Goal 4: Supportive Environments

Ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and build strong, caring communities.



## Goal 5: Recreation Capacity

Ensure the continued growth and sustainability of the recreation field.

*BC's Policy on Sport and Physical Activity – Sport Branch Policy Framework*, often referred to as *Sport for Life*, is another framework that is relevant to parks and recreation planning. It provides a position statement, and provides all sport organizations that are recognized under Sport Canada and BC Sport an approved governance structure, including policies and regulations for their sport. This has a significant role in how facilities are designed, allocated and used to deliver “Learn-to” programs that support sport in general. The Canadian Sport for Life model for municipalities focuses on incorporating physical literacy into recreation programming and providing a continuum of life-long physical activity.

## Appendix G: List of Parks

PARK NAME	AREA (HECTARES)
<b>Community Park</b>	
Bill Moore Park	5.66
Courtenay Marina Park	0.93
Lewis Park	7.19
Martin Park	1.49
Puntledge Park	4.04
Riverside Park	0.34
Rotary Skypark	1.10
Simms Millennium Park	4.01
Standard Park	0.88
Valley View Park	4.21
Woodcote Park	1.57
<b>Neighbourhood</b>	
Ashwood Park	0.09
Cenotaph Park	0.02
Cliffe & 5th	0.02
Cooper Park	0.27
Cottonwood Community Garden	0.20
Elderberry Park	0.45
Galloway Park	0.17
Hawk Glen Park	1.39
Hebrides Park	0.44
Hobson Park	0.86
Hobson Park	0.48
Idiens Park	1.41
Inverclyde Park	0.23
Knights of Columbus Park	0.40
Krebs/Larsen Park	0.27

PARK NAME	AREA (HECTARES)
Malcolm-Morrison Sr. Park	2.21
Maple Park	0.31
Monarch Park	0.21
Pinegrove Park	1.93
Sunrise Park	0.81
Sussex Park	0.23
Trumpeter Glen Park	0.14
Upper Ridge Park	0.48
Walbran Park	0.27
<b>Natural</b>	
13th Street	1.71
Air Park	5.90
Bear James Park	2.79
Capes Park	2.35
Condensory Park	1.94
Condensory Park	3.22
Cousins Park	4.11
Cousins Park	1.67
Crown Isle Park 150 Year Grove	2.05
Cruikshank Ave Park	0.10
Dogwood Park	2.32
Hunt & Tunner	0.33
Hurford Hill Nature Park	10.74
Lawrence Burns Park	0.63
Lerwick Nature Park	7.58
McPhee Meadows	4.58
Millard Creek Park	13.70
Morrison Creek Park	2.77
Piercy Creek Greenway	0.60
Piercy Creek Greenway	4.41
Piercy Creek Greenway	0.21
Piercy Creek Greenway	0.59
Ronson Road	0.61
Roy Morrison Park	13.05
Sandwick Park	12.96
Sandwick Park	0.70



PARK NAME	AREA (HECTARES)
Tarling Park	3.65
Vanier Nature Park	5.40
<b>Linear</b>	
26th Buffer Park	0.52
Anderton & 1st	0.05
Arden Road	2.31
Arden Road	0.07
Buckstone Greenway	0.25
Courtenay Riverway	3.34
Courtenay Riverway	1.20
Crown Isle Greenway	0.10
Crown Isle Greenway	0.10
Crown Isle Greenway	0.10
Crown Isle the Rise	0.58
Cumberland & 20th	1.56
Green Belt Park	0.57
Hawk Greenway	0.05
Hawk Greenway	0.17
Hawk Greenway	0.15
Hawk Greenway	0.13
Idiens Greenway	0.11
Idiens Way and Suffolk Crescent	0.26
Idiens Way and Suffolk Crescent	0.03
Millard Creek Greenway	1.60
Ridge Greenway	0.07
Rosewall Buffer Park	0.36
Rotary Trail	0.19
Rotary Trail	0.11
Ryan Road and Cowichan Avenue	0.18
Ryan Road and Cowichan Avenue	0.01
Ryan Road and Crown Isle Blvd	0.23
South of City Park	0.57
Tater Place	0.05
Valley View Greenway	2.87
<b>Greenspace</b>	
Blue Jay Park	0.38
Crown Isle Park	2.28

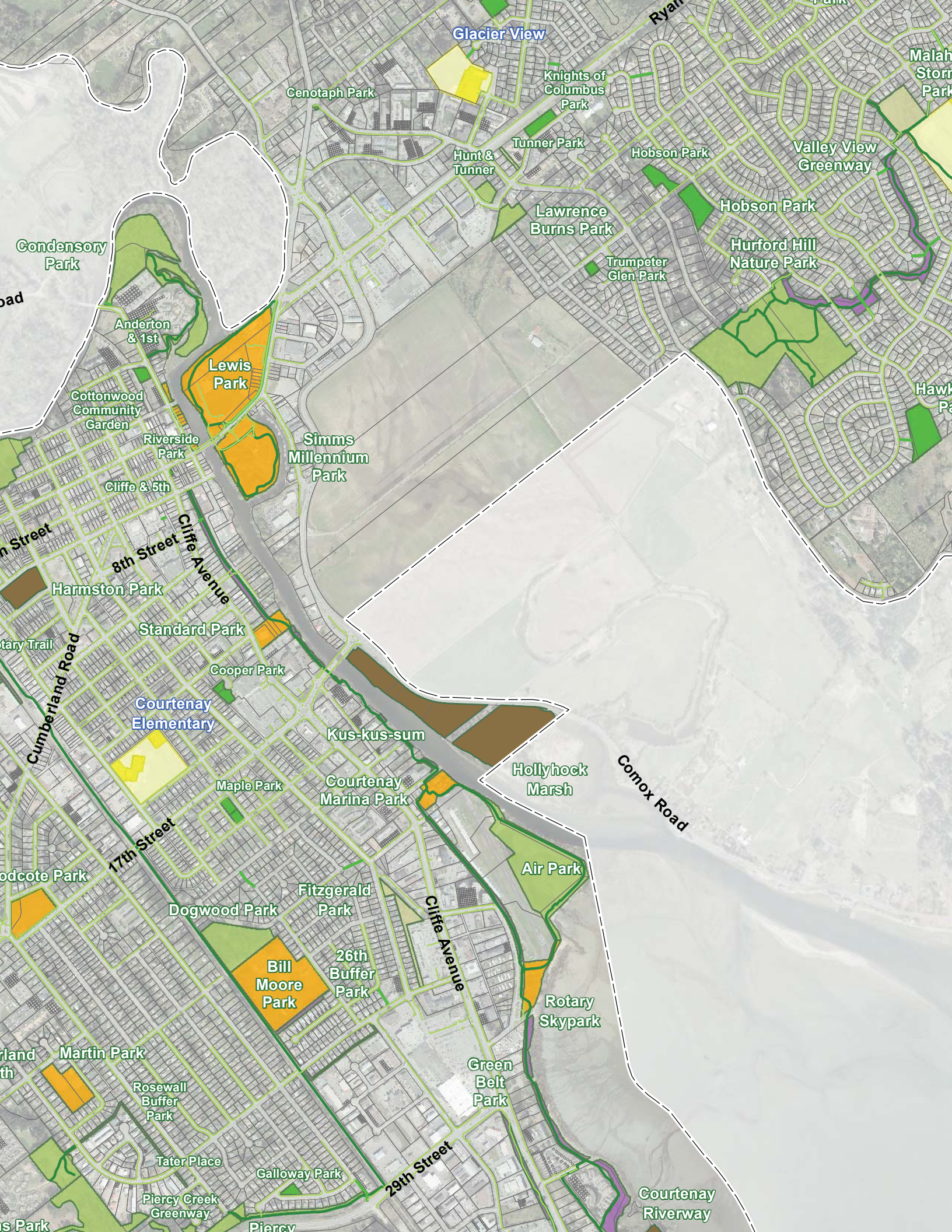
<b>PARK NAME</b>	<b>AREA (HECTARES)</b>
Cruikshank Park	0.28
First Street Park	0.10
Fitzgerald Park	0.86
Lower Ridge Park	1.19
Malahat Storm Park	1.71
Muir/McLauchlin Park	2.73
Tunner Park	0.10
<b>Crown Land</b>	
Crown Land	3.96
Second Street Park	0.80
Willemar Park	0.19
<b>CVRD</b>	
Seal Bay Park	0.41
<b>Other Lands with Park Values</b>	
Kus-kus-sum	3.40
Harmston Park	1.15
Hollyhock Marsh	3.96
The Nature Trust of BC: Millard Creek	5.88

# Appendix I: Recreation Data

<b>COURTENAY REGISTRATION INFORMATION BY SEASON FOR 2016 AND 2017</b>			
	<b>Total Registrations</b>	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Waitlist</b>
Winter 2016	2,580	\$187,825.80	300
Spring 2016	2,382	\$192,117.35	174
Summer 2016	3,443	\$304,075.33	278
Fall 2016	2,757	\$200,174.05	257
Winter 2017	2,357	\$179,583.54	236
Spring 2017	2,366	\$198,174.96	195
Summer 2017	3,390	\$289,832.54	213
Fall 2017	2,573	\$207,084.16	266

## SUBSIDY LEVELS FOR RECREATION PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

City of Courtenay Program & Operations Analysis							Based on 2015 Actuals
Facility / Program	Revenue		Expenses		Net Cost		Subsidy
	Facility	Total	Facility	Total	Facility	Total	
Recreation Admin	\$ 25,140.00		\$ 436,724.00		\$ 411,584.00		
Total Admin		\$ 25,140.00		\$ 436,724.00		\$ 411,584.00	94.24%
Lewis Centre							
- Nursery	\$ 57,418.00		\$ 52,682.00		\$ (4,736.00)		
- Childrens programs	\$ 367,438.00		\$ 484,317.00		\$ 116,879.00		
- Operations	\$ 281,937.00		\$ 1,028,747.00		\$ 746,810.00		
- Public works	\$ -		\$ 201,876.00		\$ 201,876.00		
Total Lewis Centre		\$ 706,793.00		\$ 1,767,622.00		\$ 1,060,829.00	60.01%
Youth Centre							
- Programs & operations	\$ 59,720.00		\$ 182,825.00		\$ 123,105.00		
- Public works	\$ -		\$ 54,522.00		\$ 54,522.00		
Total Youth Centre		\$ 59,720.00		\$ 237,347.00		\$ 177,627.00	74.84%
Filberg Centre							
- Programs	\$ 365,685.00		\$ 366,731.00		\$ 1,046.00		
- Operations	\$ 175,193.00		\$ 516,229.00		\$ 341,036.00		
- Public works	\$ -		\$ 222,158.00		\$ 222,158.00		
Total Filberg Centre		\$ 540,878.00		\$ 1,105,118.00		\$ 564,240.00	51.06%
Pool							
- Programs & operations	\$ 106,828.00		\$ 123,873.00		\$ 17,045.00		
- Public works	\$ -		\$ 81,166.00		\$ 81,166.00		
Total Pool		\$ 106,828.00		\$ 205,039.00		\$ 98,211.00	47.90%
Native Sons Hall							
- Programs	\$ 56,614.00		\$ 4,972.00		\$ (51,642.00)		
- Public works	\$ -		\$ 60,100.00		\$ 60,100.00		
Total Native Sons Hall		\$ 56,614.00		\$ 65,072.00		\$ 8,458.00	13.00%
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 1,495,973.00</b>		<b>\$ 3,816,922.00</b>		<b>\$ 2,320,949.00</b>	<b>60.81%</b>



Glacier View

Cenotaph Park

Knights of Columbus Park

Tunner Park

Hobson Park

Valley View Greenway

Condensory Park

Hunt & Tunner

Lawrence Burns Park

Hobson Park

Hurford Hill Nature Park

Anderton & 1st

Lewis Park

Cottonwood Community Garden

Riverside Park

Simms Millennium Park

Cliffe & 5th

Cliffe Avenue

Harmston Park

Standard Park

Cooper Park

Courtenay Elementary

Kus-kus-sum

Hollyhock Marsh

Courtenay Marina Park

Maple Park

Air Park

17th Street

Dogwood Park

Fitzgerald Park

Bill Moore Park

26th Buffer Park

Cliffe Avenue

Rotary Skypark

Comox Road

Martin Park

Rosewall Buffer Park

Green Belt Park

Piercy Creek Greenway

Galloway Park

29th Street

Courtenay Riverway



**Expansion of Trumpeter Glen Park**

**Formalize all or a portion of "Harmston Park"**

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12

Glacier View

Malahat Storm Park

Genotaph Park

Tunner Park

Knights of Columbus Park

Valley View Greenway

Condensory Park

Hunt & Tunner

Lawrence Burns Park

Hobson Park

Valley View Elementary / Mark R. I. Second

Anderton & 1st

Riverside Park

Lewis Park

Simms Millennium Park

Hurford Hill Nature Park

Trumpeter Glen Park

Cottonwood Community Garden

Cliffe & 5th

Harmston Park

Harmston Park

Formalize all or a portion of "Harmston Park"

Cooper Park

Standard Park

Kus-kus-sum

Courtenay Elementary

17th Street

Hollyhock Marsh

Courtenay Marina Park

Air Park

Cumberland Road

Maple Park

Woodcote Park

Dogwood Park

Fitzgerald Park

Bill Moore Park

26th Buffer Park

Rotary Skypark

Cliffe Avenue

Martin Park

Rosewall Buffer Park

Tater Place

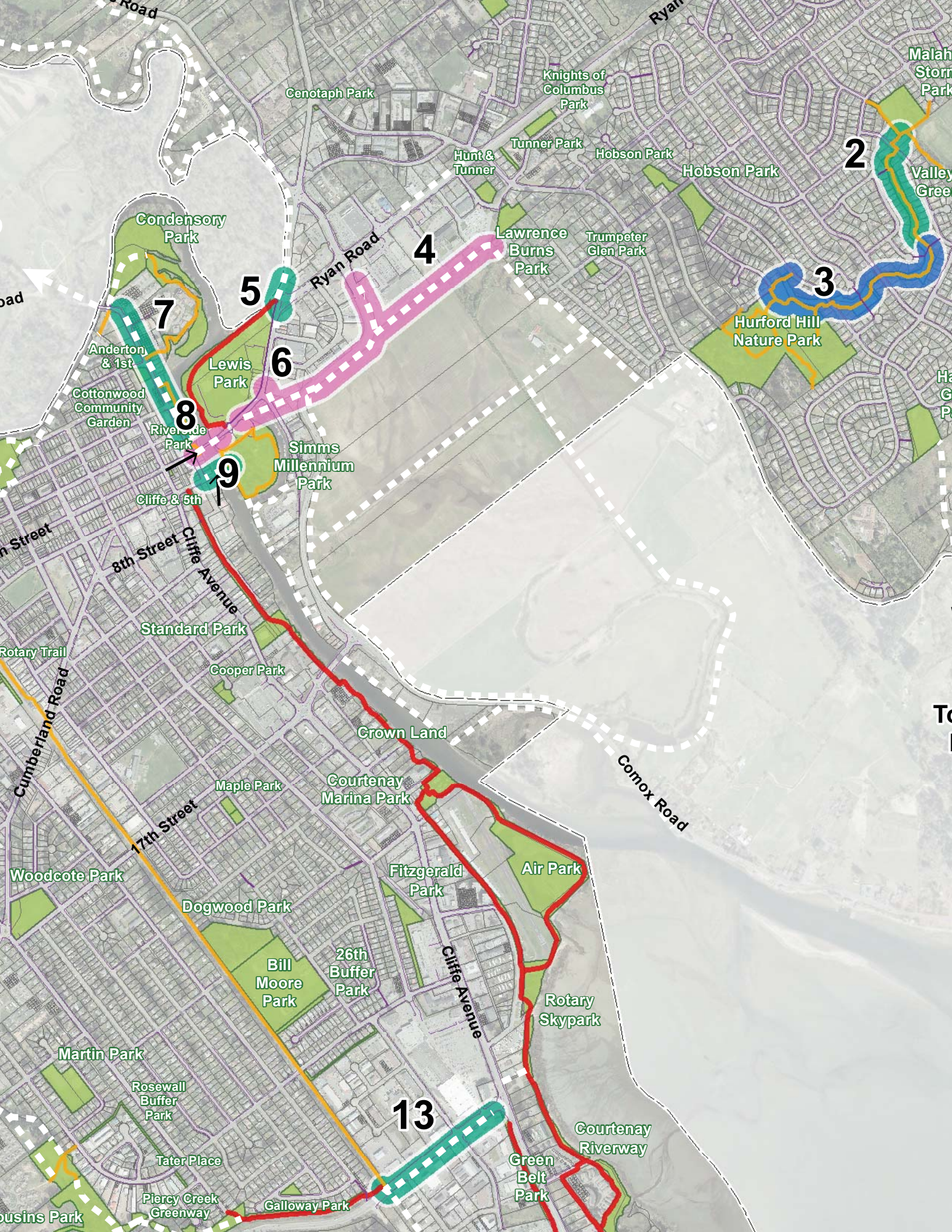
Galloway Park

29th Street

Green Belt Park

Courtenay Riverway

is Park



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Cenotaph Park

Knights of Columbus Park

Tunner Park

Hobson Park

Hobson Park

Condensory Park

Lawrence Burns Park

Trumpeter Glen Park

Hurford Hill Nature Park

Lewis Park

Simms Millennium Park

Riverside Park

Standard Park

Cooper Park

Crown Land

Courtenay Marina Park

Maple Park

Fitzgerald Park

Air Park

Dogwood Park

Bill Moore Park

26th Buffer Park

Rotary Skypark

Martin Park

Rosewall Buffer Park

Tater Place

Piercy Creek Greenway

Galloway Park

Green Belt Park

Courtenay Riverway

Ryan Road

8th Street  
Cliffe Avenue

17th Street

Cliffe Avenue

Comox Road

Cumberland Road

8th Street

Woodcote Park

Bousins Park

Malah Storn Park

Valley Green

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To

