



City of Courtenay

**OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN
DRAFT VISION AND GOALS**

AUGUST 2020



**A vision for
the future of
Courtenay.**

**Climate Action,
Community, and
Choice in a Time of
Change:**

**A City Responsible
for the Future.**

VISION

The world is changing, and with it so will Courtenay.

We will reach net zero emissions by 2050, doing our part to address the climate crisis head-on, while also preparing for its impacts. Our commitment to a safe climate is not just an environmental one; by taking action on and preparing for climate change we achieve many co-benefits that make Courtenay a great community to call home.

Courtenay will be responsible for the future by being more thoughtful, strategic, and efficient in all resources that we use whether it be land, energy or public infrastructure, to ensure that actions deliver on multiple goals of economic resilience, social equity and ecological health.

We protect the natural spaces and life sources we love and upon which our lives depend.

We are a city for all people, created for and by residents with diverse identities, experiences, and aspirations. We are a city for being together in community.

We are also a city of choice, in which residents have options across the city for homes, amenities, destinations, jobs and business, transportation, and spaces for gathering with friends, families, neighbours, and people not yet known to us.

Being responsible means recognizing that uncertainties are part of our future, and that our best strategy is to invest in individual, neighbourhood and community wide resilience. For Courtenay, this means we safeguard the unique qualities of our city that we cherish, we work in partnership across silos, and we remain open to new ways of being and doing in order to respond creatively to our changing world.

GOALS

1. Land is a Valued as a Precious Resource
2. Housing Choices for All
3. Strong Neighbourhoods
4. Functional Transportation Choices
5. More Space for and Time in Nature
6. Love for Local Places
7. A City for Everyone
8. Economic Success Emerges from Community Values and Place
9. Investing in Relationships

1. Land is Valued As a Precious Resource

Land is finite, and the way we use it influences how our community looks, feels, functions and serves. These qualities affect everything from human health to greenhouse gas emissions. Every land use decision we make today will affect the well-being and sustainability of generations to come. *Land in Courtenay will be treated as the precious resource that it is, with all future growth being focused within the city's existing footprint, and where residents can go about much of their daily lives with a reduced carbon footprint.*

2. Housing Choices for All

Equitable cities offer a range of housing choices for all, regardless of where we're at in our lives. This means that there is sufficient affordable and attainable housing of a variety of sizes, configurations and tenures spread throughout Courtenay's neighbourhoods so that we don't have to move if our life changes. We know we need more housing for singles, larger rental housing units for families, seniors supported housing, social and emergency housing, housing for multiple generations under one roof or on one property, and housing that accommodates a variety of cultural preferences. New housing should be in close proximity to daily amenities, connected by convenient transit and active transportation networks. *Courtenay will enable housing choices in all neighbourhoods of the city in which all residents have access to homes that are affordable, healthy, green, and appropriate for diverse needs, life stages and aspirations.*

3. Strong Neighbourhoods

Courtenay is not all the same, nor should it be. Neighbourhoods are our home base and when designed well should be unique and able to support daily needs for exercise, play, learning, childcare, gardening, grocery shopping, socializing, celebrating, and more. The coronavirus pandemic has reinforced the importance of community at the neighbourhood level, with neighbours looking out for neighbours, and the value of local open space and amenities taking on new meaning. *The City of Courtenay will collaborate with its neighbourhoods by working with residents to identify and invest in the desired qualities and amenities to protect and strengthen so that community life at this scale is functional, delightful and meaningful.*

4. Functional Transportation Choices

When it comes to how we get around Courtenay, there are options. Each should be convenient and safe to allow for individuals to select the right transportation fit for the trip. What transportation modes are planned for influences the character of our community, our individual pocket books, the City budget, the environment and whether we can get around on our own steam and get some exercise in the process. For much of Courtenay's recent history the car has been the primary mode of transportation. Now is the time to re-balance Courtenay's transportation system to provide a more functional spectrum of options. *By prioritizing active and public modes of transportation, Courtenay becomes a city that is experienced at the pace and scale of a person traveling on their own power, more similar to how cities used to feel. This in turn supports street life, active living, neighbourliness, low impact on the environment, health, and economic vitality.*

5. More Space for and Time in Nature

Courtenay is characterized by its connection to rivers, the estuary, and many natural spaces. We love being in them, many of us having moved here to be closer to them. They are the foundation of our community identity, offer natural beauty, mental respite and inherent value as the source of all life. They also protect against floods, sequester carbon emissions, and clean the air we breathe and water we drink. *Natural assets will be recognized as powerful allies in climate action and essential to citizen quality of life and will therefore be protected, reclaimed, and expanded throughout Courtenay. Nature will be invited in to our neighbourhoods by making space for it, increasing opportunity for residents to recharge and connect. From the scale of regional biodiversity corridors to individual trees, raingardens and yards, our natural assets will be a visible and celebrated part of Courtenay's identity.*

6. Love for Local Places

It's human nature to care for the things we love and love of place is no different. How our community looks, feels, reflects our culture and identities can have a powerful influence on how we feel about our community and our place within in it. Our collective values are silently encoded in our built environment and public spaces. Our renowned natural backdrop forms the basis of place making, ripe with opportunity to layer in cultural expressions of art, heritage and distinct Courtenay identity including of and with indigenous peoples. Our public spaces, our roads, plazas, parks and community buildings, as well as new development, can all be designed with the intention of instilling who is Courtenay and our love of this place. They can be designed to promote community to come together, even if we have to stay physically a part, whether with neighbours or strangers. These intentions can help to create a strong sense of belonging, meaning and even trust. *Spaces that spark public life in the downtown, in neighbourhood hearts, and throughout the city will be strengthened and grown in Courtenay.*

7. A City for Everyone

Cities are for everyone, yet rarely do they equitably meet needs or reflect the identities of the variety of their citizens. Historically cities have been developed in response to politics, economic realities, and cultural values of the time, often on unceded territory. Rarely is a city, including Courtenay, intentionally designed to meet the goals of the community in all its diversity. We understand now that in this process of how cities come to be that certain populations and activities are negatively impacted or underserved while others are privileged. Being responsible to our future means considering the perspectives of all citizens and ensuring their voices and lives are reflected in decisions. *Courtenay will place equity at the heart of planning and design, so that everyone – including racialized people, newcomers, LBGTQ2, women, persons with disabilities, children, youth and elders – are equal participants in the city and in city building. This will mean asking questions about which voices are missing, and making efforts to engage everyone.*

8. Economic Success Emerges from Community Values and Place

In a global market where ideas, investment and talent can flow across borders, unique and high quality of life community assets are essential to local economic development. Courtenay, and the wider region, have enviable work/life balance and lifestyle opportunities that are recognized as being key factors in attracting and retaining the next generation of entrepreneurs and skilled talent. The most attractive places for this next generation include a thriving downtown core, a wide range of housing options, a strong arts and culture scene and are open to population diversity. Specific economic development opportunities for Courtenay include attracting the creative class, technological innovation, supports to aging in place, tourism asset development, green construction, sustainable material development and the local food economy. *Economic success will be viewed holistically through the intersecting dimensions of environmental, social and economic systems. Courtenay will invest in the foundational conditions for high quality of life including unique and delightful public places including streets, housing choices for all, parks and recreational opportunities, a clean and protected environment, investment-ready lands and progressive municipal government services*

9. Investing in Relationships

The people of Courtenay - citizens, business owners, community organizers – are our greatest asset. Because communities are complex systems, our resilience and ability to act on ambitious yet necessary aspirations like net zero emissions depend on the input and actions of many working towards a common vision. The OCP provides a starting point, not a finish line, and a commitment to working together towards our vision. To realize this commitment, new avenues for working in partnership across a variety of sectors will need to be established such as neighbourhood associations, committees of Council, and citizen's assemblies. *Courtenay will value the contributions of citizens, nurturing and practicing a culture of involvement in local government decisions by creating new avenues for community participation and action.*

