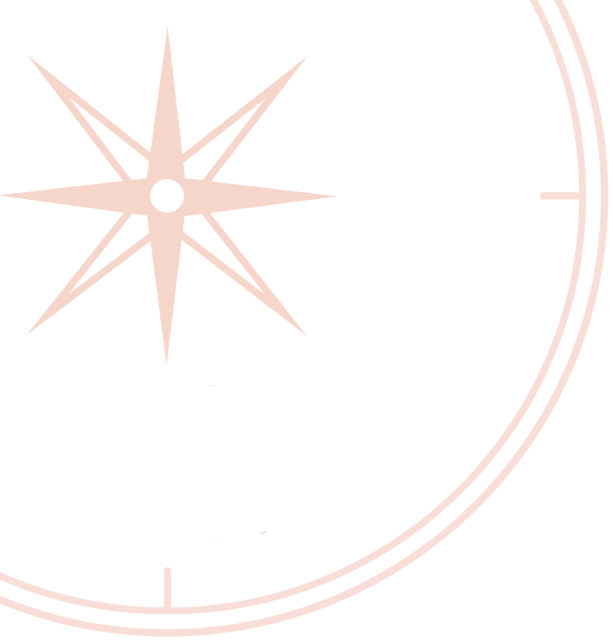




# City of Courtenay

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN  
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY (DRAFT)

SEPTEMBER 2020



DRAFT



CITY OF  
**COURTENAY**



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# SUMMARY



# SUMMARY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2020 over 50 stakeholder organizations representing a wide range of community and agency interests were invited to attend a series of eight virtual brainstorming sessions on themes that connected to the emerging OCP goal statements on topics of community priority: efficient use of land, housing choices for all, strong neighbourhoods, transportation choices, access to nature, love of place, a city for everyone, economic viability and relationship building.

Across the eight thematic sessions, a number of observations were made:

- Climate change is a widespread concern but some interests include climate considerations more core to their work than others.
- The pandemic changes the way we view the future individually and collectively. Many negative impacts. However it is also an opportunity to talk about things more openly, break down silos, do things differently, value what is critically important, and build back better.
- Integrated approaches are needed to be effective in community actions on a variety of topics. This includes forging new partnership models across jurisdictions, community stakeholders, individuals.
- Social equity considerations and concerns are voiced loudly across a variety of themes.
- Planning for climate action has many public health co-benefits, and vice-versa, particularly in the domains of access to nature, active travel and sense of belonging.
- The natural environment is a beloved Courtenay asset to use, work with and accommodate.

## HIGHLIGHTS WITHIN EACH THEMATIC SECTION

Within each thematic section, the following themes emerged:

### Community Wide Land Use Concept

- Strong understanding amongst stakeholders of connection between land use decisions and transportation option viability.
- Widespread support for gentle infill such as secondary suites and secondary dwellings in existing low density residential neighbourhoods.
- Many stakeholders identified strong support, citing the benefits of Smart Growth principles.
- The role of local government anticipated to be re-evaluated in light of pandemic and shrinking economies and sources of revenue.

### Transportation Spectrum

- Transit is hard to make work well in smaller communities, however the Comox Valley is one of the best performers in its size class. Increased residential and mixed use densities are key.
- Owning a car is expensive to the individual/household, a luxury not all can afford. Car-oriented infrastructure is also expensive and inefficient to supply from a stressed property tax base. In a climate friendly community every effort, City budgetary alignments, should be made to reduce automobile dependency.
- Shifting modes to transit, cycling and walking all require that attention be paid to urban and street design (the public realm) to promote safe and people friendly environments: connected sidewalks, dedicated cycling routes, safe crossings, street trees, benches and pedestrian scaled environments.

### Housing Choices for All

- Desire for more diversity of housing options, variety in unit size, type and price

## HIGHLIGHTS WITHIN EACH THEMATIC SECTION

point and to see development approvals streamlined for the development we want.

- NIMBYism is an issue for many development proposals, especially affordable housing. The OCP should set clear guidance to provide public expectations.
- Concern with increasing cost of all types of housing therefore all the more important to offsetting green building with other cost savings for buyers such as locations and density.
- Innovation in housing provision is needed to battle with housing unaffordability.
- Many different stakeholders mentioned tiny homes. Discussion is nuanced depending on model: stratas, subdivisions, small lots, mobile home park, cost of land, as secondary dwellings in front or back yards. More national and regional discussions are needed, but many felt has a larger role in Courtenay.

### Local Economic Development

- Finding the right role for the City of Courtenay is the task at hand.
- Work of the CV Economic Recovery Task Force recognized. Appreciation that childcare is the number one issue for economic recovery, which links to gender equity considerations.
- Recognized the importance of addressing these issues regionally. Working in collaboration across jurisdictions, with partners, and/or revisiting the regional governance study.
- Internet access is an essential service to a number of economic sectors: those working from home due to pandemic, home occupation, goods distribution, performing artists.
- The community has a strong arts and culture community, but it is at risk due to the pandemic.
- Investing in local agriculture is viewed as a climate and pandemic economic recovery opportunity, however local

farmers need access to capital to scale up their productions, invest in technology.

- Flexibility and adaptability are needed in all aspects of economic activity.

### Love for Local Places

- A place making task is to ask: “How do we describe Courtenay and where it’s going?” A direction is needed to permeate to all city actions to operationalize Courtenay’s identity. OCPs outlast Council terms. Branding and marketing of the OCP is needed to ensure its vision lasts.
- Strong sense of community helps create vibrant neighbourhoods and build social capital, recognized as an essential part of community development especially in light of the pandemic.
- Feeling that our public spaces are underperforming, both streets as places for public life as well as parks. Public spaces must be accessible, welcoming to the most vulnerable.
- Wayfinding and interpretive signage, highly visual mapping, art, landscaping, pedestrian prominence, car free streets, and enhancing the multi-functionality of communal gathering spaces (indoors and out) are felt to be modest investments that can go a long way to instilling community pride, attachment and sense of belonging.

### Supporting Basic Needs

- The poorer you are, the harder it is to deal with the fall out whatever form that may take. Climate change increases vulnerability, has disproportionate impacts. Like Covid.
- Major issues in our community are around accessibility, daycare, supporting vulnerable families working through ministry processes, linking to healthy community programs (e.g. food support), supporting young parents, community based victim services, mental health. Yet

## (CONTINUED)

without a healthy environment the other community health priorities are for nothing.

- Recognition that there is stigma and divisiveness on topics related to basic needs, poverty, addiction, community safety, as there is with climate change and Covid. Must commit to cut through divisiveness to be creative, find solutions. Need less moralistic and a more public health/science approach.
- Partnership, promotion and education, and capacity building are crucial to increase community's awareness of social and environmental issues and take further actions.

### Enhancing Quality of Life

- Recognition that quality of life means different things to different people based on their circumstance and interests. For some meeting basic needs of food, shelter, health care is the primary need, for others it is more about natural environment, leisure and quality of experiences or sense of belonging, safety, and inclusiveness.
- Helping the most vulnerable meet their basic needs must be part of all quality of life efforts, within the wider goal of climate action.
- Quality attributes: Our community's (regional) size is great. Not too large to feel large city stressful, but not so small that we're lacking in anything. Overall friendly and safe feeling. Outdoor and recreation living oriented with key natural assets such as the estuary. Easy to integrate into the community through all the community organizations.
- Many good small businesses and support for local businesses.
- Threats to quality of life: growth that changes our community, affordable living, employment and education opportunities for families, family physicians, childcare access including early childhood education, disregard for the land/water connection, air and water quality.
- Covid has highlighted the need for more local government policy on health and wellness.

### A City for Everyone

- A significant equity consideration for local governments is about creating structural supports to help folks to access the same services, in a different way based on their needs whether it be universal design, age-friendly or gender considerations.
- Must find sincere intentional ways to include people who are the most impacted by City decisions, including better framing of why the decisions are important to those people. Relationship building is key to this topic - working with the groups on the ground. Need to go where they are.
- We do not have a good shared understanding even amongst service providers of who we are not hearing from. Better understanding of this needed.





# **PART 1**

# **BACKGROUND**



# 1.0 BACKGROUND

## 1.1 FORMAT & TOPICS OF SESSIONS

The City of Courtenay held eight thematic virtual brainstorming sessions with community stakeholders to learn more about the perspectives of community organizations, agencies, authorities and specific stakeholder interests on the climate lens of Courtenay's Official Community Plan (OCP) and community topics. The themes were:

- Community wide land use concept (nodes, neighbourhoods, green/blue networks, low density areas)
- Transportation spectrum (network, priority projects, active mode promotion)
- Housing Choices for all (market and non-market)
- Local economic development (with emphasis on the role of local government)
- Love for local places (place making, culture and urban design)
- Supporting basic needs (food security, poverty reduction, community safety, addictions)
- Enhancing quality of life (community health, recreation)
- A City for Everyone (equity-seeking considerations, how to include more voices, on-going engagement)

Three additional topics were identified for further stakeholder discussion in the fall to build on the information above and target implementation concepts as pertains specifically to land use:

- Inter-governmental collaboration
- Land development (incentivizing, design standards, process)
- Ecological protection and design with nature (Environmental Development Permit guidelines, design standards, process)

## 1.2 EMERGING GOALS OF THE OCP

The thematic topics were designed to reflect the emerging goals of the OCP:

- Land is Valued as a Precious Resource
- Housing Choices for All
- Strong Neighbourhoods
- Functional Transportation Choices
- More Space for and Time in Nature
- Love for Local Places
- A City for Everyone
- Economic Success that Emerges from Community Values and Place
- Investing in Relationships

The sessions occurred the week of July 27 with a session each in the morning and afternoon. Each session was two hours, began with an orientation to the project, the emerging vision, goal statements and land use growth node proposal, and posed similar questions to the different assemblies of stakeholders. Stakeholders were welcomed to attend as many sessions that they felt connected to their interests. All OCP Advisory Committee members were invited. The sessions were recorded for internal and Advisory Committee use for those who could not attend.



## **PART 2**

# **HIGHLIGHTS ACROSS THEMES**



## 2.0 HIGHLIGHTS ACROSS THEMES

### 2.1 CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is a widespread concern but some interests include climate considerations more core to their work than others.

No stakeholder in attendance indicated that the topic is not of concern. A wide variety of terms were used to describe stakeholder perspectives on climate change from terrifying and inevitable to responsibility and opportunity to do things differently. Organizations working on environmental, food security, public health, and the building association all cited climate as core considerations to their work. Those working with equity seeking groups recognized that climate change will disproportionately impact vulnerable populations and are concerned, but did not indicate climate being as core to their duties as the aforementioned stakeholders. On the topic of land development and housing affordability, climate action is viewed as additional layering of regulatory and technological standards that make development and housing less affordable.

### 2.2 COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The pandemic changes the way we view the future individually and collectively. Many negative impacts. It is an opportunity to talk about things more openly, break down silos, do things differently, value what is critically important, and build back better.

Many stakeholders indicated hopefulness in being able to steer pandemic recovery efforts towards climate friendly, socially equitable and wider sustainable society outcomes. Many acknowledged that reevaluation of societal priorities was needed prior to the pandemic to genuinely support environmental and social justice. While the uncertainty of the pandemic on economic recovery and personal finances remains high, many stakeholders felt that our community has a strong base of creative and resourceful individuals and organizations that can work towards the drafted OCP goals with dedication and coordination. Stakeholders expect in the future more public attention on food security, personal involvement in growing and procuring local nutritious food, simpler lifestyles, personal and public health and more awareness for societal inequities and increased attention on the most vulnerable. This being said, some stakeholders were also aware that the pandemic could result in a significant constriction of local government services, thus reinforcing the need to work in effective collaboration.

## 2.3 INTEGRATED APPROACHES

Integrated approaches are needed to be effective in community actions on a variety of topics. This includes forging new partnership models across jurisdictions, community stakeholders, individuals.

When asked what the City can do to support their work, a variety of stakeholders cited the need to work in partnership, collaboratively, across jurisdictional boundaries, beyond traditional silos to frame and address evolving community issues as the systems that they are. This means examining upstream assumptions of policy options to strike at the root of complex problems, and working with and building networks with a wide variety of players to best understand and respond to these roots. Strong coalitions and relationships were cited as being essential to getting the attention of funders such as senior governments and to understand where limited local government resources can best be leveraged. A number of stakeholders indicated appreciation for the virtual brainstorming sessions in that it afforded them an opportunity to hear from a variety of perspectives, and that such forums are valuable at gaining 'temperature checks' on community issues, fostering relationships and fine tuning policy as it evolves.

## 2.4 SOCIAL EQUITY

Social equity considerations and concerns are voiced loudly across a variety of themes.

No thematic stakeholder session failed to acknowledge social inequities as a core community challenge, one that has been laid bare by the pandemic, and increasing responsibility of local governments. Stakeholders who work in the domains of social equity, disabilities, family services, mental health, addictions, substance abuse and food security are eager to establish or strengthen relationships with the City to bring their knowledge and capacity to City decisions. The need to hear from those with these experiences was raised, including increased inclusionary intention to public consultation processes. The need to dedicate local government resources to these topics to work in a more coordinated and integrated way was acknowledged by some, referencing the desire for a social planner function at the regional level. Dedicated staff attention is viewed as being essential to affordable housing in particular as some stakeholders observed that the communities who take the time to build relationships with senior governments are the ones that get funding.



## 2.5 HEALTH BENEFITS

Planning for climate action has many public health co-benefits, and vice-versa, particularly in the domains of access to nature, active travel and sense of belonging.

Beyond health practitioners and advocates, a wide variety of stakeholders recognized this link and acknowledged that the Comox Valley is rich in recreational and natural amenities, arts and culture, community activities, social justice, environmental advocacy and organizing all of which are important to quality of life and can support lower environmental footprints. More access to nature, the ability to walk, bike and wheel safely and pleasantly, and the ability to get involved in community are attributes that make up Courtenay's identity and could be better marketed to instill local pride, anchor neighbourhoods and attract residents of similar values.

## 2.6 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The natural environment is a beloved Courtenay asset to use, work with and accommodate.

Through alternative design standards, place making efforts, better understanding and stronger protection measures, most stakeholders saw the need to move from talking of designing with nature to genuinely embracing the concept at the City through dedicated implementation. This includes not only at the landscape or watershed scale, but also at the human scale where residents can experience nature in the form of wildlife or urban trees. For example, street trees were mentioned a number of times to improve street design and comfort to encourage walking. Courtenay is recognized as having invested in access to nature and parks, and could improve by enhancing connectivity, integrating with the transportation system and investing in parks amenities such as benches, shade, public art and programming.



## **PART 3**

# **THEMATIC SUMMARIES**



## 3.0 THEMATIC SUMMARIES

### 3.1 COMMUNITY WIDE LAND USE CONCEPT

- No concerns raised about the nodal approach to growth concentration as shown in the draft land use growth concept. Many stakeholders identified strong support, citing the benefits of Smart Growth principles: Add value to existing areas through infill, intensification and mutually beneficial interaction between land uses; Create mixed uses and vibrant commercial centres; protect undeveloped and rural areas from sprawling development to support environmental goals, prudent fiscal and asset management and community vibrancy.
- Strong understanding amongst stakeholders between land use decisions and transportation option viability (e.g. active modes and transit).
- Real and perceived tension between increased environmental standards (site development and building construction) and affordability identified by affordable housing providers, development and construction industries and associations. Through concerted effort, in education and practice the industry is responding to meet the energy efficiency targets. It was recommended for local government to consider the recommendations made in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs September 2019 Development Approvals Process Review Report.
- Widespread support for gentle infill such as secondary suites and secondary dwellings in existing low density residential neighbourhoods.
- Understanding by many that across the board, local natural systems are experiencing negative impacts that threatens their viability particularly as pertains to watershed health.
- Nature and green spaces regarded as unifying and connecting features across the city's landscape important to achieving a number of goals: protection of natural heritage and biodiversity, supportive of active travel, necessary for mental, physical health and recreation and an asset around which to highlight neighbourhood character. Praise for Municipal Natural Asset Initiative (MNAI) listed by those who have had direct experience with it.
- The role of local government anticipated to be re-evaluated in light of pandemic and shrinking economies and taxation. Some stakeholders pointed out that some activities are enabling and require limited resources beyond staff capacity (e.g. permitting more secondary suites) whereas more specialized programs and functions that require capacity and revenue were questioned by some as being viable in the long term.
- Identifying ways to improve development application processes so community values are proactively communicated and applicant's proposals are expeditiously reviewed remains of interest.
- Flooding identified as a key land use constraint to be considered critically in this climate friendly work.

“If neighbourhoods can work for kids, they should be able to work for everyone.” (School Board Trustee, and OCP Advisory Committee (social and community health rep))

“Greenspace is a unifying feature of our community and culture. Better programmed and larger pieces of green must come with increased density. While more community engagement and larger budgets are needed.”

(CV Arts and OCP Advisory Committee (arts and culture rep))

“We all want more and more, but individually want to pay less and less. We will have to reduce expectations, especially with the pandemic.” (CV Development and Construction Association)

## 3.2 TRANSPORTATION SPECTRUM

- Need to provide a full range of transportation options. Get in the habit of matching right fit for the trip.
  - The land use, population size and growth realities of a small urban community within a rural regional district are challenges to transit viability. Transit is an effective transportation option when it's convenient, frequent and comfortable. In our context frequency and network distribution are limited. Density is required to support transit, but it will take time as it's also a behavioural shift.
  - It is noteworthy that our region performs one of the best in BC for a community its size.
  - In the Comox Valley a relatively quick return to transit has occurred after the initial lockdown of the pandemic. The return is greater in smaller communities as transit is less a choice in those areas, and more a necessity for many. In larger communities transit is used for many discretionary trips and those trips have not rebounded.
  - To get people on the bus, there has to be a commitment to growing the service and dis-incentivizing and divesting from car-oriented infrastructure. There are a number of hidden subsidies that support private automobile ownership and these should be focused on the targeted low carbon and active transportation modes.
  - The average Canadian family spends \$8,000/year to own and operate a vehicle. To support affordability and re-allocate scarce resources, question was raised on how to support households to 'shed a vehicle'. Discussion around shifting the spending narrative from private expense to public expense, make the stronger public investment through higher short term taxes to create more transportation options, thereby reducing the need for a private vehicle, thus reducing private expenses.
  - Transit requires attention be paid to urban and street design to promote people friendly environments: sidewalks, safe crossings, street trees, benches and pedestrian scaled environments.
  - The biggest barrier to more cycling is safe infrastructure. Impression that the valley is rapidly becoming a cycling-positive community as evidenced by the CV Cycling Coalition traffic counts, bike sales and more cultural awareness of and support for cycling.
  - More attention needs to be paid to small personal electric vehicles such as scooters. More electric vehicle charging stations needed at this scale.
  - High traffic multi-use trails are becoming conflict zones between pedestrians and cyclists (e.g. the airpark). This is an indicator that there is a need for more pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.
  - Island Health remains committed to topics of climate change and healthy built environments, even in light of the pandemic attention.
  - The City has an opportunity to actively promote active forms of transportation during the 5th street bridge rehabilitation to support longer term behavioural shift.
  - From an equity perspective, some people do not have the option of a private vehicle and therefore alternative modes are not about choice. The messaging and urgency of providing those alternative modes then is different than when targeting audiences who can afford private auto(s) and thus persuading to consider other choices. Different needs, marketing and messaging.
- “The health department has been promoting daily physical activity for years. Active transportation, to daily destinations and local recreation are the big opportunity to build in co-benefits of health and environment.” (Island Health)
- “We're experiencing the start of a culture shift here - we are becoming more of a cycling-positive community. Cycling was already growing as a commuter and recreational option and the pandemic has served to accelerate that shift.” (CV Cycling Coalition)
- “Busses are expensive, but so are roads and parking lots so it's about perspective.” (CVRD transit)



### 3.3 HOUSING CHOICES FOR ALL

- Desire for more diversity of housing options, variety in unit size, type and price point.
- Desire to see development approvals streamlined for the development we want. E.g. expedite approvals in the identified draft growth nodes.
- Concern with cost of green building. Therefore all the more important to offsetting green building with other cost savings for buyers such as locations and density. Expensive houses that are centrally located can use walkability or mass transit to offset costs of living.
- Essential to maintain affordability of housing through housing agreements and publically owned and/or subsidized housing. An increased role for government (although many stakeholders recognize this is primarily a role for senior governments), and stronger roles and partnerships with non-profit providers.
- Recognition that there is a political window of opportunity to seize in that the federal and provincial governments are allocating resources to housing now more than in recent memory. To capitalize on this opportunity, lines of communication need to be clear and strong relationships need to be in place between City, non-profits and senior governments.
- Observation that attitudes towards housing is different as we age. Young people see as an equity builder, which is not the same goal for older people. More holistic view of housing more appropriate than housing as a commodity.
- Concern that homeowners of new building stock are disproportionately paying for what the entire community benefits from when increased regulation is added. Position that additional community costs should be borne by the wider community tax base.
- Home occupation, live-work spaces important to sectors such as artist community, and to wider economic sectors in time of pandemic.
- The Home Builders Association is looking at how to increase investment in higher Step Code steps following the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) model (Alberta and US). Investment in energy efficiency paid off through property taxes. Third party holds debt.
  - Secondary suites supported by stakeholders.
  - NIMBYism is an issue for many housing proposals, especially affordable housing. The OCP should set clear guidance to provide public expectations.
  - Many different groups mentioned tiny homes. Discussion is nuanced depending on model: stratas, subdivisions, small lots, mobile home park, cost of land, as secondary dwellings in front or back yards. Needs more local discussion but many felt has a role in Courtenay.

“I personally worked on the Casa Loma Senior’s Village. It started as apartments, then became congregated care and I learned firsthand how complicated and expensive that offering is. Complex care is not a product that the private sector finds attractive to invest in.” (CV Development and Construction Association)

“We wish to explore housing subsidization from a communal standpoint. There are many Scandinavian examples to draw upon. Must consider housing costs more holistically.” (CV Social Planning Society).

“Housing is a major stabilizing factor to vulnerable people.” (Indigenous Women’s Sharing Society)

### 3.4 LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Group recognized the work of the CV Economic Recovery Task Force and was interested to learn more from that emerging work to consider in the OCP. E.g. understood that childcare is the number one issue for economic recovery, which links to gender equity considerations. Also acknowledged that women on average earn less than men.
- Recognized the importance of addressing these issues regionally. Value in taking a temperature check and revisiting the regional governance study was discussed by a number of stakeholders.
- Discussed need to rid the 'economic growth mindset' and to reconcile the circular economy with local economy and globalization. Pandemic is forcing this to some extent.
- Finding the right role for local governments is the task at hand. Economic development is not an internal duty of City of Courtenay, however City plays an important role through land use designation, property class taxation, providing basic services that can support the economy and focusing on quality of life to be attractive to economic investment.
- In pursuit of climate friendly ambitious goals, discussed the importance of being clear on what kinds of businesses we want/don't want. Need to ensure that to earn within the green economy is not to commit to poverty. Need to work with those trapped within sunset industries. Desire to see re-training opportunities here, more partnerships with higher education.
- Internet access, bandwidth a key issue to economic viability and is limited. Those working from home due to pandemic, home occupation, goods distribution and performing artists particularly affected.
- Investing in local agriculture is viewed as a climate and pandemic economic recovery opportunity, however local farmers need access to capital to scale up their productions, invest in technology.
- From the downtown business improvement association, there is support for more housing and making the downtown a more delightful place to be. Views on parking vs. pedestrian use of space is still however divided.
- With increase in covid government spending, there's a fear of how that will impact GST and PST.
- While not core to the economic development discussion, group shared a variety of observations that waste could be better managed from a variety of economic sectors (automotive, industrial, and the wider public).

“There is concern over living beyond our boundaries, beyond our limits. Circular economy and social procurement are directions we want to go.” (CV Chamber of Commerce)

“The City could lead by example in social procurement and documenting their good practices for others to learn.” (OCP Advisory Committee (social and community health rep))

“The City could assist with commercial kitchen amenities to support start-up agricultural businesses.” (Ministry of Agriculture)

### 3.5 LOVE FOR LOCAL PLACES

- Recognized that a place making task is “How do we describe Courtenay and where it’s going?” A direction is needed to permeate all the way down to all city actions and infrastructure. OCPs outlast Council terms. Group recognized that branding and marketing of the OCP is needed to ensure its vision lasts.
  - Consensus amongst group that nature is a major draw and at the core of Courtenay’s appeal. However, with growth and development comes pressure on that identity and those assets. Feeling that citizen expectations of what development will be supported should be stated to provide clarity and maintain identity.
  - Support for bodies such as neighbourhood associations to provide this role in communicating neighbourhood expectations, networking and building social capital. People make the neighbourhoods so need to find ways to support people (e.g. small grants, competitions, increased collaborative roles with City).
  - A need to orient newcomers to who Courtenay is. Place making can silently communicate this.
  - Feeling that our public spaces are underperforming, both streets as places for public life as well as parks. Public spaces must be accessible, welcoming to the most vulnerable.
  - Desire to see more collaborative approaches with the school district (e.g. community schools).
  - Wayfinding and interpretive signage, highly visual mapping, art, landscaping, pedestrian prominence, car free streets, and enhancing the multi-functionality of communal gathering spaces (indoors and out) are felt to be modest investments that can go a long way to instilling community pride, attachment and sense of belonging.
  - Acknowledged that with strong identity and pride comes investment from the community. Belief that legacy donations should be re-considered for a variety of community place making initiatives, from benches to acquiring nature reserves. Interest from the group in the Park Acquisition Fund model similar to the CVRD.
  - Observed the pros and cons of ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ approaches to place making. Want to maintain a vision (top-down) while allowing for individual expression and interventions (bottom-up). Recognition that this is also a regional discussion as we have a regional identity.
  - Place making is very important for youth. They like to be slightly out of view, covered outdoor spaces (classrooms) are needed, therapeutic work is effective outdoors with these supports. Public art. However, youth also need opportunities to stay in the community (housing and employment). The ability to stay is part of place making. The ability to take root, build relationships.
  - Neighbourhoods should highlight their ecological assets – watersheds are a natural fit, are vital, this is not a new concept, could foster wider stewardship ethic. People in a climate friendly community should know what watershed they live in.
  - Place making recognized as a reconciliation opportunity.
  - Role for CV Arts fee for service contract to provide consulting and content for place making goals.
- “The Arts can provide an antidote to anxiety. Artists and the creative community as a whole can assist with climate interpretation, connectivity and sense-making in a world that sometimes doesn’t make sense.” (CV Arts and OCP Advisory Committee (arts and culture rep))
- “We shouldn’t be afraid to use this word ‘love’ in this work. And to build on the affection and depth of commitment when we’re trying to get engagement.” (OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair))
- “Place making may look like luxuries but post pandemic will be a greater necessity.”(CV Social Planning Society)



### 3.6 SUPPORTING BASIC NEEDS

- The poorer you are, the harder it is to deal with the fall out whatever form that may take. Climate change increases vulnerability, has disproportionate impacts. Like covid.
- Major issues in our community are around accessibility, daycare, supporting vulnerable families working through ministry processes, linking to healthy community programs (e.g. food support), supporting young parents, community based victim services, mental health. Yet without a healthy environment the other community health priorities are for nothing.
- Recognition that there is stigma and divisiveness on topics related to basic needs, poverty, addiction, community safety, as there is with climate change and covid. Must commit to cut through divisiveness to be creative, find solutions. Need less moralistic and a more public health/science approach. Safe supply, drug testing, safe places to use are needed.
- There could be more modest green jobs through pandemic recovery – clean up, planting – that would benefit low income people looking for work.
- Alternative transportation and density can help those living in poverty and substance abuse. Transportation is a challenge for those living in poverty and those with disabilities.
- Have to find a way of marrying low costs with climate action otherwise we're excluding poor people out of this process.
- Arts community can assist in these heavy topics of navigating harm reduction, community health, victim support. Partnership potential.
- Local governments need to ask better questions – root causes. Poverty reduction work is forthcoming. Need to find the correct role for local governments.
- Food security is about access to nutritional food, not just filling bellies. Food systems are tied into climate change. A source of GHGs, but can also become carbon sinks when managed properly.
- Lack of funds and dedication to these issues of meeting basic needs locally is an issue. Some stakeholders have been advocating for a social planning function at the regional level for decades.
- Praise for the Community Foundation's quick deployment of funds to target covid specific needs initially. Good way to channel funds.
- Dismay at lack of basic hygiene services for homeless. A desire to support these most basic of needs. Can be built to be energy and water efficient, an example to the wider community.
- Silo-ing is a concern. Need for more collaboration and integration. Need to find more horizontal ways of working together.
- CV Resilience Network is emerging to look at climate change action in a coordinated way, similar to the CV Housing Coalition. Desire to see also collaboration on the locally developed Sustainable Development Goals scorecard.

“Families with limited means often have a lower environmental footprint. Those living in excess could learn from those with less.” (CV Family Services Association)

“We have an opportunity to support locally grown and highly nutritious food with low ghg emitting food systems. There is such a high cultural interest in growing food right now, and this contributes to place-making and the ‘Courtenay-ness of Courtenay.’” (CV Food Policy Council)

“Addressing poverty reduces public health costs, correctional costs. Systemic approaches can save money.” (CV Drug Strategy Committee)

“We're learning through covid just how critical the food supply is. Food supply is threatened by climate change too. The amount of food we're growing locally has been decreasing drastically over time. The ALR is not being optimized to grow food.” (Ministry of Agriculture)

### 3.7 ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE

- Recognition that quality of life means different things to different people based on their circumstance and interests. For some meeting basic needs of food, shelter, health care is the primary need, for others it is more about leisure and quality of experiences. Helping the most vulnerable meet their basic needs must be part of all quality of life efforts, within the wider goal of climate action.
- Quality attributes: Our community's (regional) size is great. Not too large to feel large city stressful, but not so small that we're lacking in anything. Overall friendly and safe feeling. Outdoor and recreation living oriented with key natural assets such as the estuary (part of the global Important Bird Area network). Easy to integrate into the community through all the community organizations, so many groups. Many good small businesses, and support for local businesses.
- Threats to quality of life: growth that changes our community, affordable living, employment and education opportunities for families, family physicians, childcare access including early childhood education, disregard for the land/water connection, air and water quality.
- Social Determinants of Health as the upstream focus for looking at quality of life. Many stakeholders have awareness of these determinants and their systemic value.
- Covid has highlighted the need for more local government policy on health and wellness.
- Healing attributes of nature acknowledged, not just nice to have or beautiful, but vital to our own health. Must be walkable, accessible, for everyone. This theme has emerged across all topics.
- Quality of life should expand to include other species. When we take a nature lens, we become more sensitive to natural cycles, to migration and local habitat, builds eco-literacy. Migratory birds in particular link us to global systems - to our responsibility to these birds and the others who are protecting lands and waters beyond our borders.
- Spirituality is an important aspect of quality of life. Churches hold significant lands. Partnership potential.
- Belonging, sense of self, and pride in community are all things that arts and culture can help facilitate. CV Arts has been working for years towards a Community Arts Centre which could contribute to quality of life goals: a place to gather, build a sense of belonging, zero barrier, non-judgmental, creative space.
- Regional collaboration and between partners enhances quality of life as there are many volunteering to make the valley a better place. Coordinating together makes each more effective and reduces duplicated efforts. Our jurisdictional boundaries are viewed by some as threats to coordinated action on community issues.

“Quality of life means asking how we can make it easy for all people to be healthy, including a sense of belonging. This means feeling free from stigma, discrimination, and everyone is seen as a valuable member regardless of their income, race, culture, ability or disability, gender, substance use or misuse.” (CV Community Health Network and OCP Advisory Committee (social and community health rep)).

“Artists and the arts are essential to everyone's life. Think about the fact that we engage with arts and culture at some level everywhere we go, everything we do. The clothes we wear, the building we go into, the music on the radio, the things we watch, even the ability to manipulate a conversation via this virtual technology was created by someone who was thinking just a little outside the box.” (CV Arts)

### 3.8 A CITY FOR EVERYONE

- Must find sincere intentional ways to include people who are the most impacted by City decisions, including better framing of why the decisions are important to those people.
- Group recognized we do not have a good shared understanding even amongst service providers of who we are not hearing from. Better understanding of this needed.
- Need a resolution or commitment to include the equity approach in all City decisions and to move away from a top-down approach to developing policies and programs. For example, people with lived experience are the experts on homelessness. These follow participatory action research approaches which is an approach Island Health uses in their work.
- Relationship building is key to this topic - working with the groups on the ground. Need to go where they are. Being isolated at home makes engaging hard. But can build on the local networks to help draw out hard to reach voices. Trust and relationship building and using local knowledge to engage.
- A significant equity consideration for local governments is about creating structural supports to help folks to access the same services, in a different way based on their needs whether it be universal design, age-friendly or gender considerations.
- The regional Housing Needs Assessment recognized as a project that made successful efforts to blended quantitative and qualitative data (voices).
- The CVRD is looking at a data 'dashboard' to assist with data driven decision making. Could look to also include qualitative data to communicate these views.
- Must include hard and soft data. Must ask the right questions of the data - what is happening to who.
- Many recognized the value of the virtual sessions themselves as valuable for wider community discussion as well. That sharing perspectives is a way of breaking down discrimination, of healing, of drawing more people in. Felt that these conversations can be

soft but powerful and that efforts should be made to continue, expand and deepen them.

“We can build on the covid acts of kindness, build a community of care, inspiring support.” (CV Community Health Network and OCP Advisory Committee social and community health rep)).

“Having the time to volunteer and participating in these processes is a privilege. We need to make this opportunity more widely available to others. Financial compensation may need to be used in some instances to get those voices to the table.” (CV Community Health Network and OCP Advisory Committee social and community health rep)).



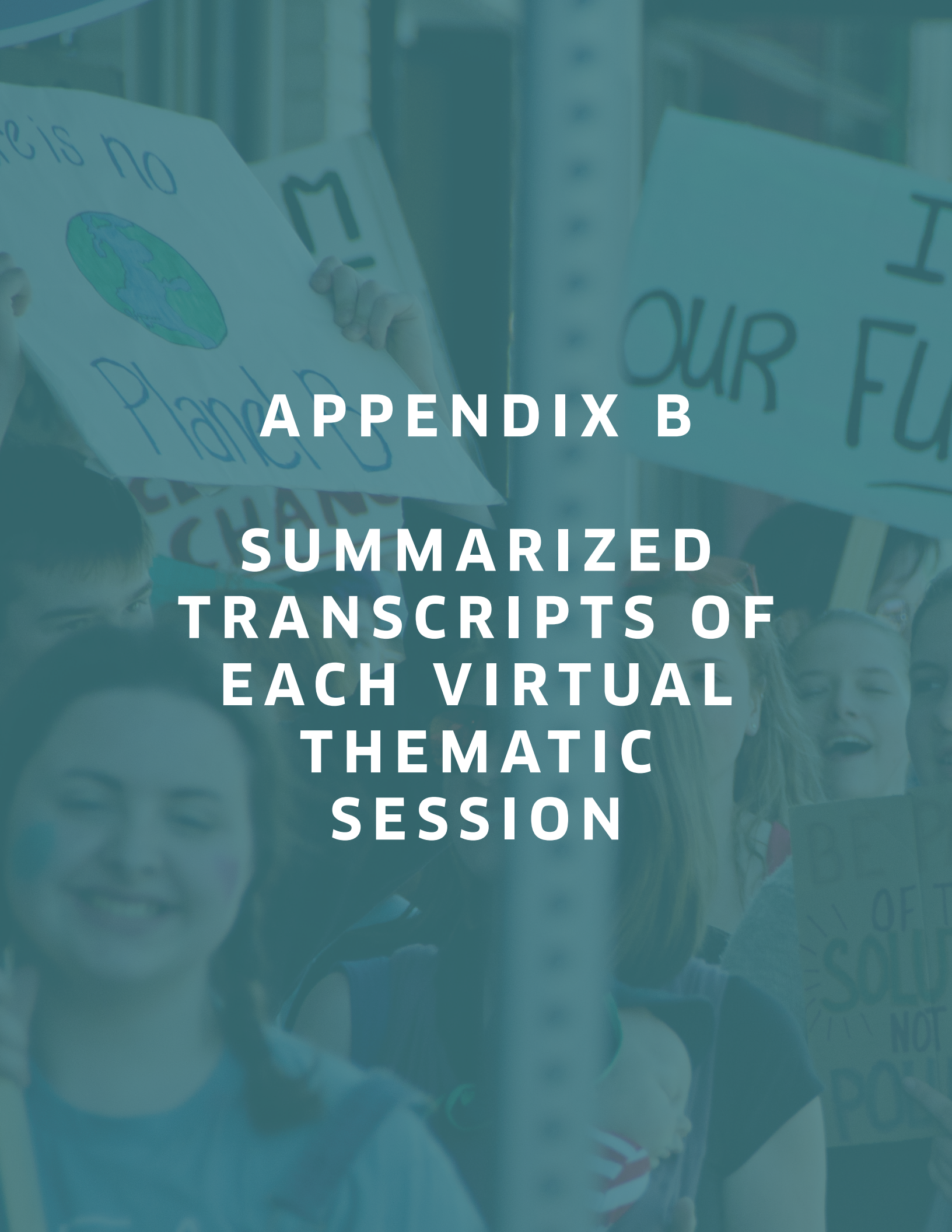
# APPENDIX A

## LIST OF ATTENDEES FOR EACH THEMATIC SECTION

Topic	Attending
<p><b>1. Community wide land use concept (Nodes, neighbourhoods, green/blue networks, low density areas)</b></p> <p>Monday July 27 10am - noon</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Betty Tate, CV Coalition to End Homelessness</li> <li>2. Kerriann Coady, Canadian Home Builders Association</li> <li>3. David Stapley, CV Conservation Partnership</li> <li>4. Norm Carruthers, OCP Advisory Committee (economic rep + chair)</li> <li>5. Dylan Thiessen, CVRD, Planner</li> <li>6. Ian Moul, Brooklyn Creek Watershed Society</li> <li>7. Murray Presley, CV Development and Construction Association</li> <li>8. Bill Heidrick, Project Watershed</li> <li>9. Ella Derby, Island Health, Environmental Health Officer</li> <li>10. Jade Yehia, Island Health, Healthy Built Environment Consultant</li> <li>11. Karin Albert, Cumberland, Planner</li> <li>12. Don Ferguson, CV Arts and OCP Advisory Committee (arts and culture)</li> <li>13. Zach Haige, CV Food Policy Council</li> <li>14. Caroline Heim, Tsolum River Restoration Society</li> <li>15. Jan Gemmell, Morrison Creek Watershed Stewards</li> <li>16. Isha Matous-Gibbs, CV Community Health Network</li> <li>17. Marvin Kamenz, Senior planner, Comox</li> <li>18. Sheena Campbell, OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep)</li> <li>19. Tanis Gower, OCP Advisory Committee (environment rep)</li> <li>20. Betty Donaldson, OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair)</li> <li>21. Sheila McDonnell, OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep)</li> </ol>
<p><b>2. The transportation spectrum (network, priority projects, active mode promotion)</b></p> <p>Monday July 27 2-4pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adrianna McMullen, BC Transit</li> <li>2. Mike Zbarsky, CVRD, Transit</li> <li>3. Lindsay Jamieson-Powell, CV Head Injury Society</li> <li>4. Kathryn Clouston, Morrison Creek Watershed Stewards</li> <li>5. Mike Keohane, CV Cycling Coalition</li> <li>6. Tree Murdock, SD71, Operations assistant</li> <li>7. Ella Derby, Island Health, Environmental Health Officer</li> <li>8. Jade Yehia, Island Health, Healthy Built Environment Consultant</li> <li>9. Sheena Campbell, OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep)</li> <li>10. Betty Donaldson, OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair)</li> </ol>
<p><b>3. Housing choices for all (market and non-market housing)</b></p> <p>Tuesday July 28 9-11am</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lieutenant-Colonel Andrea Dawe, 19 Wing</li> <li>2. Murray Presley, CV Development and Construction Association</li> <li>3. James Taylor, Glacier View Lodge</li> <li>4. Pam Munroe, CV Social Planning Society</li> <li>5. Dylan Thiessen, CVRD, Planner 1</li> <li>6. Patti Alvarado, Indigenous Women's Sharing Society</li> <li>7. Heather Ney, CV Transition Society, Executive Director</li> <li>8. Betty Tate, CV Coalition to End Homelessness</li> <li>9. Kerriann Coady, Canadian Home Builders Association</li> <li>10. Lindsay Jamieson-Powell, CV Head Injury Society</li> <li>11. Don Ferguson, CV Arts and OCP Advisory Committee (arts and culture)</li> <li>12. Tom Dishlevoy, OCP Advisory Committee (development rep)</li> </ol>
<p><b>4. Local Economic Development (with emphasis on the role of local government)</b></p> <p>Tuesday July 28 2-4pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Catherine Thompson, Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Association</li> <li>2. Jill Hatfield, Ministry of Agriculture agrologist</li> <li>3. Norm Carruthers, OCP Advisory Committee (economic rep + chair)</li> <li>4. Isha Matous-Gibbs, CV Community Health Network</li> <li>5. Dianne Hawkins, Chamber of Commerce, Advisory Committee (business rep)</li> <li>6. Kera McHugh, CV Arts</li> <li>7. Zack Haigh, CV Food Policy Council</li> </ol>



Topic	Attending
<p><b>5. Love for local places (place making, culture and urban design)</b></p> <p>Wednesday July 29 10am - noon</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pam Munroe, CV Social Planning Society</li> <li>2. Meleana Searle, Cumberland, Planner</li> <li>3. Don Ferguson, CV Arts and OCP Advisory Committee (arts and culture rep)</li> <li>4. Dylan Thiessen, CVRD, Planner 1</li> <li>5. Erin Nowak, CV Conservation Partnership and OCP Advisory Committee (environment rep)</li> <li>6. Pat Sloan, Project Watershed</li> <li>7. Norm Carruthers, OCP Advisory Committee (economic rep + chair)</li> </ol>
<p><b>6. Supporting basic needs (food security, poverty reduction, community safety, addictions)</b></p> <p>Wednesday July 29 2-4pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pam Munroe, CV Social Planning Society</li> <li>2. Reed Bailey, Ministry of Agriculture planner</li> <li>3. Lisa Iverson, CV Family Services Association</li> <li>4. Angie Prescott, John Howard Society</li> <li>5. Dallas Stevenson, CV Arts</li> <li>6. Lindsay Jamieson-Powell, CV Head Injury Society</li> <li>7. Alana Mullaly, CVRD Planner</li> <li>8. Heather Ney, CV Transition Society, Executive Director</li> <li>9. Sam Sommers, CV Drug Strategy Committee</li> <li>10. Maurita Prato, CV Food Policy Council</li> <li>11. Betty Donaldson, OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair)</li> <li>12. Lindsay McGinn, CV Community Health Network and OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep)</li> <li>13. Kris Anderson, Comox Valley Better at Home (written submission)</li> </ol>
<p><b>7. Enhancing quality of life (community health, recreation)</b></p> <p>Thursday July 30 10am - noon</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lieutenant-Colonel Andrea Dawe, 19 Wing</li> <li>2. Mary Crowley, Courtenay Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee</li> <li>3. Lawrence Vea, President, CV Cycling Coalition</li> <li>4. Lisa Iverson, CV Family Services Association</li> <li>5. Pat Sloan, Project Watershed</li> <li>6. Kera McHugh, CV Arts</li> <li>7. Anne McLeod, Immigrant Welcome Centre</li> <li>8. Robyn Holme, CVRD Planner</li> <li>9. Krista Kaptein, Comox Valley Naturalist Society, Birders Group</li> <li>10. Kathryn Clouston, Morrison Creek Streamkeepers</li> <li>11. Betty Donaldson, OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair)</li> <li>12. Lindsay McGinn, CV Community Health Network and OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep)</li> <li>13. Sheena Campbell, OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep)</li> </ol>
<p><b>8. A City for Everyone (equity-seeking considerations, how to include more voices, on-going engagement)</b></p> <p>Thursday July 30 2-4pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Betty Donaldson, OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep+ deputy chair)</li> <li>2. Lindsay McGinn, CV Community Health Network and OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep)</li> <li>3. Sheena Campbell, OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep)</li> <li>4. Lisa Iverson, CV Family Services Association</li> <li>5. Megan Klammer, Island Health, Clinical Nurse aging</li> <li>6. Dallas Stevenson, CV Arts</li> <li>7. Robyn Holme, CVRD Planner</li> </ol>

A group of young people, likely students, are participating in a climate protest. They are holding various signs with messages such as "There is no Planet B", "OUR FUTURE", and "SOLUTIONS NOT POLICY". The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal filter, and the text is centered in white, bold, uppercase letters.

**APPENDIX B**

**SUMMARIZED  
TRANSCRIPTS OF  
EACH VIRTUAL  
THEMATIC  
SESSION**



## Session 1 – Community wide land use concept (Nodes, neighbourhoods, green/blue networks, low density areas)

### *Question 1: exploring the climate lens*

SD71 trustee and OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep):

- The climate lens is a chance for a new way of doing things, utilizing best management practices
- Means walkable neighbourhoods, coordinating housing with schools, public health. If neighbourhoods can work for kids, they should be able to work for everyone.
- Codes and zoning has to create a level playing field for builders.
- One of the strategies to increase housing affordability is to get housing out of the speculative market. That can be by making public land available- could also be by buying housing units and upgrading for management as social housing rentals. Need to remember these aren't expenses- they are assets - mortgages at excellent rates through MFA and paid by rents. Ultimately can be sold back into market if not needed.
- I'm a fan of Memoranda of Understanding. SD71 could turn over school ground, playground management to municipalities for round the year use as parks.
- There are alternatives to hydro dams - opportunity for wind farm at top of hill- Mark Isfeld site?

OCP Advisory Committee (economic rep + chair):

- Means beyond triple bottom lines – we're discovering there are more bottom lines.
- Glad that governments are forcing us to work on this (e.g. the provincial GHG target requirement in OCPs).
- A chance to re-define economic development, more inclusive than the past.

CVRD - planning:

- Climate change– terrifying. Difficult and multi-faceted.
- E.g. Oceanside, means sea-level rise.

Vancouver Island chapter of Canadian Homebuilders Association:

- Climate change is a chance for innovation. E.g the step code
- However, a balance between environment and housing affordability is the challenge.
- Education to the industry has proven successful through the Canadian Home Builders Association.
- North and South Island had different concerns. In the North we noticed a fear of step code, so we brought in energy advisors and building scientists and that was successful at reducing that fear. Was inexpensive approach. Noticed older builders are less motivated to change practices.

CV Housing Coalition:

- Concerned about affordability across a spectrum (not just homelessness).
- Climate change means an opportunity to connect health, social issues.
- Cited the example of New York City recently coming under fire for the unintended consequences of green retrofit programs leading to further inequity:  
<https://www.eenews.net/stories/1063616513>

CV Conservation Partnership:

- Environmentally Sensitive Areas are climate friendly, they are areas of carbon sequestration: wetlands and foreshore sequester as well as forests.
- Very supportive of sustainable land use concepts shown so far in the land use structure plan. Smart growth.

- Concerned with the terminology 'Land is precious' for the goal statement. That could mean different things to different people (e.g. the way it is meant for the OCP, or to a private land owner – can make \$\$).
- Protecting and expanding the green infrastructure network is critical. Look to the MNAI work (flooding, drinking water).
- Density and affordability can go hand in hand.
- Climate justice, equity, must be part of climate action.
- The City's role is to put in the policy and regulatory framework and the market/industry will change once they understand the expectations. The City waffles too much on what is required and so a high standard is not driving the change.

CV Arts and OCP Advisory Committee (arts and culture rep):

- Artists are generally lower income, higher sensitivities.
- Feel that images of density may change due to pandemic. This will affect affordable housing, public transportation, which will be harder on artists.
- How do artists communicate climate change is our question as much as how arts are affected by climate change.
- Public art is how we wish to communicate.
- Green space is a unifying feature. Better, larger pieces of green must come with density. More programming needed, more parks budget.

Island Health:

- Looking at preventative approaches, active transportation.
- Pandemic is consuming time now, but there is a nexus point right now too – co-benefits around both climate action and pandemic (e.g. active transportation, access to green spaces, heat risks)

CV Development and Construction Association:

- Increased housing costs, unsustainable increase in property taxes,
- We all want more and more, but individually want to pay less and less. Will have to reduce expectations, especially with the pandemic.

Morrison Creek Streamkeepers:

- Climate will affect water quality and quantity and timing, temperature. Major concern.
- Opportunity of protecting riparian areas, of tree growth, natural spaces for human use – all good for climate and ecology.
- Maintaining health to Morrison Creek is so critical given its year round water, Species at Risk Act (SARA) species.

OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair):

- Extreme weather affects seniors. Isolates them (if weather prevents from getting out), harder on their bodies.
- Lack of benches, supports to being outside. E.g. no benches at mall currently, limits quality of life for those who depend on those social interactions.
- Concern of being inside too much.
- We have a lot of parks, but we don't have a lot of beautiful parks. More beautiful programmed neighbourhood parks could be particularly valuable to seniors.
- Let's re-consider the bench donation program again, consider where specifically to put the benches (flow of transportation, under shade)

Brooklyn Creek Streamkeepers:

- Community living within constraints of the local environment is the way.

- Healthy functioning watersheds is the critical first step to a healthy community. What if we asked in every decision – how does this affect the salmon?

CV Food policy council:

- Climate destabilization is a big concern. Variable growing conditions, adequate water (already have water shortages – Tsolum), increasing flooding, drought, pollinator timing,
- Smaller agriculture producers don't have capacity to adjust to climatic changes.

Cumberland - planning:

- Responsibility as a municipality and profession.
- Transportation being the large GHGs allows us to start with ourselves first – how do we get to work, including as city workers. This could include allowing working from home, fleet (can we right size, do without a vehicle?, EV, e-bikes). Would like staff transportation choices as part of corporate GHG accounting.
- Cumberland's OCP is being reviewed next year.

Comox - planning:

- Their OCP is around transit supportive densities.
- If you really want to make a shift, you have to not only provide the alternative transportation, you have to also restrict vehicles. BC Transit was adamant of this. E.g. too much parking incentivizes parking.

Project Watershed:

- Climate change has coloured everything Project Watershed does, from restoration to carbon sequestration, flood mitigation and sea level rise in the estuary in particular which are subject to tides.
- It's unfortunate we can't be doing this land use visioning exercise at the landscape regional level. Each local government and KFN is doing work in isolation. Nature Without Borders (document) – nature doesn't recognize jurisdictional boundaries. Need more collaboration.
- Municipal Asset Natural Initiative. Hugely important. Would be ideal if regional. IRMP has MNAI potential, hope it still includes

CV Community Health Network:

- Food security huge ongoing issue
- Agriculture is responsible for 24% of GHGs, all the more reason to lower transportation needs of, producing locally. As well as resilience/supply disruption reason.
- People are already suffering from mental health, poverty, addictions, which affects their capacity to deal with climate changes.
- The healthier and happier people are, the more capacity they have to contribute to community issues like climate change.
- Personally work in the automotive industry. Perspective that this sector vilified for problems, which signals to me that the positive is we don't have a large polluting industry.

Tsolum River Restoration Society:

- Lack of water in summer, increasing temperature. Flooding in winter.
- More seals than salmon in the lower Courtenay River.

North Island College (written submission):

- Climate change is debilitating. The actions taken to address climate change to date have not been sufficient to curb the crisis. We have reached the point where we've altered the planet in a way that can't be changed.
- As community leaders, we need to put the climate lens on all of our decisions moving forward in order to reduce the damage to the planet.



**Question 2: Exploring stakeholder priorities and actions**

**CVRD - planning:**

- Our issues are flooding, transportation (low density rural areas), internet connectivity (all the more important during COVID for livelihood, connection, consultation).

**CV Housing coalition:**

- Affordable housing requires subsidization unfortunately. So many cannot afford based on market alone.
- Land is needed – the City can help with that.
- The senior governments are putting more \$ into this at present.
- The communities that seem to be getting the funds are those who are actively cultivating relationships with BC Housing, getting on their radar.
- In neighbourhoods, there shouldn't be too much clustering of subsidized housing. It should be mixed into neighbourhoods to promote diverse communities.

**OCP Advisory Committee (economic rep + chair):**

- I'm not sure there is a societal appreciation for how the world has changed. This is needed.
- We have been blessed to have the choices and discretion that we have enjoyed these past decades. We may now be entering a time with less choice and discretion, more similar to older eras. We can't have all the things we want. Some services may no longer be possible.
- Government may need to evaluate what business it should be getting out of.
- The City can help change people's expectations. Can paint a picture of the options, set the framework (e.g. the OCP).

**CV Conservation Partnership:**

- The business as usual is the biggest challenge. It is the default. Change is hard. We need clear direction to move out of that inertia.
- Local governments should play a role in education. Take the Bonny Henry approach – she treats us as intelligent, lays out the options and consequences. We could do this with the long term cost of different growth patterns.
- Some quick wins: allow secondary residences everywhere (even if we do require the owner live there); EV charging stations; partnerships to leverage outside funds.

**Vancouver Island chapter of Canadian Homebuilders Association:**

- Streamlining municipal processes is a priority.
- Providing a diverse housing supply is a priority. More to help people age in place. There is an over and undersupply of housing of different forms.
- Buyers in surveys do overwhelmingly support lower density ground oriented development, but this includes townhomes.
- Recommended for local government to consider the recommendations made in the Development Approvals Process Review Report ([https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/local-governments/planning-land-use/dapr\\_2019\\_report.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/local-governments/planning-land-use/dapr_2019_report.pdf))

**SD71 trustee and OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep):**

- Breaking down silos is a priority. School districts have land, could help with housing, food. They have facilities, could help provide community amenities. A mind-shift is needed on the role of schools in our communities.

**CV Arts and OCP Advisory Committee (arts and culture rep):**

- Affordable housing is the key issue.
- From surviving to thriving.
- More access to markets for artists, bricks and mortar, helping get their product online.

## City of Courtenay OCP Update

### Stakeholder Brainstorming Findings – notes from virtual sessions July 27-30 2020

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- Climate migrants moving around. E.g the Okanagan, people are moving because of wildfire season.

#### OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair):

- Would like City to identify where the seniors are, and what the qualities of the parks are in those vicinities.
- Benches in the ESAs that so many seniors have worked to protect (e.g. acknowledgement to the significant number of streamkeepers here)
- Pandemic – shows intergenerational use of spaces, parks need to accommodate all of these.
- A lot of our green spaces are not ones we wish to go to. Would like to do assessments of their use and understand how to improve use. (post occupancy evaluation)
- Pet cemeteries needed

#### Brooklyn Creek Streamkeepers

- Issues: Development that re-engineers and subdues the natural systems of a watershed; That private land ownership allows one to make decision in isolation of surrounding lands.
- Barriers: That humans are separate to the natural world, and that the dollar prevails
- Work on building a level of trust between all groups –developers, streamkeepers, community, council. We seem to always start on the wrong foot when engaging. The project is already laid out and we come with what are viewed as demands.

#### Island Health:

- Drinking water, supply and quality, affecting food supply
- Pandemic is their priority – keeping people safe
- Emerging diseases – food borne outbreaks, ticks longer season
- CDC doing work around wildfire/air quality and urban heat – linkages of these issues to population health.
- City can: Drought resistant plans, fire resistant plans, air quality.
- Don't forget, these physical health issues affect mental health.

#### Morrison Creek Streamkeepers:

- Land clearing is an issue, whether it be for resource use, rural estates, or urban.
- In this creek most of the urban development has already occurred, much too close to creek.
- Balancing private/economic interests with the wider collective
- Made a presentation to Council re: 30m Riparian Area Regulation (RAR) buffer – City can meet or beat the RAR minimum and wish to see the full 30m.
- City can better manage flooding, pollutants into water.
- City can educate, more at front counter.

#### CV Development and Construction Association:

- Concern over increased regulation and taxes increases cost of housing.
- Look at recent history: property tax increases have exceeded the cost of living.
- Household budget 101: can't do everything, local government has to reconcile this.
- City's role- should functions be contracted out? (e.g. parks could be to landscapers, City could do oversight)

#### Tsolum River Restoration Society:

- Issues: Loss of riparian
- Barriers: lack of community awareness on what we can do to improve habitat
- City help: making use of partners, including contracting.

#### CV Food policy Council:

- Issues: Access to market and labour (foreign temporary workers). Labour has affected our growing season during the pandemic.
- Barriers: Affordable housing that is geared towards farmers (e.g. ALR restrictions). Seasonal housing in the City?
- Aggregation facility needed (dry storage, refrigeration, distribution hub) – City can support through zoning and/or as a landowner.

**Project Watershed:**

- Stream degradation (loss of proper functioning condition) and hard surfacing of landscape (faster runoff, more pollution concentrating), including hard armoring of banks.
- City could: enforceable bylaws, uses water balance model, MNAI – full bore, managed retreat from floodplain and restricting development in floodplain.

**OCP Advisory Committee (environment rep):**

- I'm really keen on Integrated Rainwater Management Plan (IRMP). Development can even improve stream function.
- Biggest barrier will be to change development norms. New practices are not more expensive but require a change in mindset and practice.

**Cumberland - planning:**

- Limited capacity. Their Council wishes much to be done.
- Green spaces can be and are a key focus, including stormwater. Cumulative impacts need to be better presented (and understood) to Council. "At some point you have to draw the line to protect the natural assets. That's our focus – protect what we have."

**CV Community Health Network:**

- Sharing resources amongst partners.
- Organization policies on topics, sharing with partners, organizational domino effect (e.g. anti-racism).
- Knowing who to consult with, access, those with expertise. We have much to offer here.
- Students are really critical.
- Biggest issues; Food security, affordability of farm land, seniors/age friendly/universal design.
- City can: diverse housing, not just affordable focus, all kinds needed.

**North Island College (written submission):**

- NIC's goals are always about student success, and the downstream impact that has on our communities.
- Affordable housing is a barrier – NIC is hoping to address this with our Student Housing proposal to the Province.
- Provincial funding levels for Community Colleges is always a barrier for small, community Colleges like NIC.
- The city could help by supporting NIC's student housing proposal.

***Question 3: local ideas for climate action and preparedness, including linking to pandemic recovery***

**SD71 trustee and OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep):**

- Pandemic highlighted so many community issues: isolation; home support for seniors; homeless extra vulnerable; food security; wider inequity. The community support on the other hand was amazing.
- We could design in community support through multi-use facilities. E.g. community amenities can include community kitchens, rooms to rent for meeting, not just recreational facilities.



## City of Courtenay OCP Update

### Stakeholder Brainstorming Findings – notes from virtual sessions July 27-30 2020

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- Emergency planning means we need to rely on each other, more social capital dimension to be included. Neighbourhood associations would be valuable to help pull these ideas together.

#### CV Housing Coalition:

- Need – build housing.
- The OCP is at the opportune time (taking advantage of pandemic recovery)
- More communal green spaces, including gardens. Don't all need as much personal green space.

#### OCP Advisory Committee (economic rep + chair):

- Lots of little things could be done (e.g. gardens), but we need the OCP to set the expectations and framework for a just, sustainable society. The OCP can then identify what cultural changes are needed, what the regulatory framework will be, and what the low hanging actions are.
- We're on the verge of coming to terms with the role of local government. Some activities may fall of the plate due to lack of resources. E.g. expectations around consultation.

#### CV Conservation Partnership:

- What we can do: density; green space; partnerships (city is not alone); better regulations; strategic actions that enable others to do activities and/or don't cost much (secondary suites and EV stations).

#### Vancouver Island chapter of Canadian Homebuilders Association:

- We're looking at PACE-structure type programs for municipalities to take on debt to bring buildings up to step code 5, and have paid over property tax cycle. (PACE = Property Assessed Clean Energy)

#### Not sure who said:

- Could the City owning its own energy utility system be a financing stream? The OCP could be an opportunity to open the door to this kind of concept.
- More regional collaboration and fewer turf was needed. E.g. a regional park that only the electoral area pays for.
- There are so much cross over issues between jurisdictions – collaboration is the key.

#### Island Health:

- Making linkages between climate change and health: education campaigns, connecting in with IH communications, leverage the spotlight of the OCP.
- Pandemic synergies, economic co-benefits: help make those connections to people.
- Positives: people spending more time outdoors locally, quieter streets, housing the homeless.
- Victoria example: place making grants – resilient neighbourhoods. Small projects, but locally empowering. E.g. emergency hub sites (e.g. chalkboard, charging station, bench). Well received. Small sums. Community libraries.

#### CV Development and Construction Association:

- Reviewing additional regulations in the proposal stage to tweak to make less costly. E.g. We opposed tree bylaw because would increase cost of each lot. We appreciate that we were able to review the bylaw, but didn't get all changes we asked for. Someone has to pay for this – the new owner will have to pay for this.
- Think through the full cost of decisions – who is benefiting, who is paying.
- Reducing costs is a pandemic recovery strategy.

#### OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair):

- Educating the newcomers. They often stick together. They do not seem to connect to and understand our longer-timer concerns. Could the City assist with multi-faceted orientation to newcomers to key land considerations. Where can we put our money into avoiding repeating mistakes – good way of investing.

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- No more big busses, seniors won't wait at a bus stop, can't last the long rides, more targeted shuttles better.
- Do most KFN people live in Courtenay? If they are interested, they would be wonderful orienteers. KFN not just being called upon for opening events.

#### Morrison Creek Streamkeepers:

- Done mapping and flow measuring to understand the asset better, to protect better.
- Ongoing education, continued advocating with the City for nature.
- Pandemic synergies: Homeless camping in Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs). Solving homelessness can reduce pressure on greenspaces.
- More people accessing parks = increased management, especially if nature parks.
- Shared understanding opportunity.

#### Brooklyn Creek Streamkeepers:

- Community engagement and education: If residents can connect with their local landscape, they can connect with wider world.
- Pandemic synergy: from the world, down to our scale, similar to climate change, only we're actually having to deal with the pandemic. Opportunity for true local resiliency.

#### CV Arts and OCP Advisory Committee (arts and culture rep):

- Arts Council just signed on to a 3-year fee for service contract with the City. Assisting City in developing arts/culture lens to work. Now have a pulse to City. Essential to have those creatives in these discussions.
- Think of all decisions – how does it affect the arts. (similar to the salmon)
- A need for a public art bylaw/policy. Posing questions in the public realm. Fits well with all the support for greenspaces.
- If Courtenay developed such a bylaw, it would be the first in the region, an example.
- Where is the indigenous perspective? Equity perspectives? We're not very diverse on this panel.

#### Tsolum River Restoration Society:

- Could measure water use to ensure sufficient flows. Gets close to running dry. Provincial responsibility, however they're overwhelmed. Local groups can get attention, is happening, is slow process. City can get involved by advocating.
- Rain gardens /barrels – for education, to attenuate flows.
- Challenge of managing across boundaries.

#### CV Food Policy Council:

- Working collaboratively. We're all in this together.
- Trying to access senior government funding to access technology to help mitigate against climate change. E.g. retention ponds on agricultural land.
- Urban edible landscaping – needs partners though e.g. especially around harvest time. Private and public land.
- Farm stands/ urban chickens can put less pressure on existing agricultural land.

#### CV Community Health Network:

- Costly to monitor all waterways. A nexus of monitoring-education-enforcement-collaboration would be a wonderful program. Could we pilot? Local groups working with province to create consistent monitoring programs (e.g. the RD Nanaimo's watershed monitoring program – training).
- Neighbourly connections so key. Little local infrastructures to support that needed.

#### Cumberland - planning:

- Flexible work spaces.

- Courtenay is doing a great job on a lot of policies and plans. Sometimes one needs to advocate for the work we're already doing. (e.g. urban forest plan).

North Island College (written submission):

- More bike lanes to support cycling, and ways to make public transit more viable than it currently is. Any way we can get people out of their vehicles will help with climate change.
- We are all going to have to get used to a different world. Government's will have less money given all they have spent fighting COVID. We'll need to work together to create synergies because there won't be government funding available to assist organizations with recovery.

DRAFT



## Session 2 – Transportation spectrum (network, priority projects, active mode promotion)

### Question 1: Exploring the climate lens

#### CV Cycling Coalition:

- Climate change is an opportunity for alternative modes of transportation.
- Safe routes are the biggest barriers to cycling. There are different levels of comfort and risk. Infrastructure should accommodate the most vulnerable.

#### CVRD - transit:

- Climate change is complex and uncertain.
- Transit could increase and therefore decrease community GHGs, but in reality this is a small amount. CVRD performs one of the best in BC for a community its size, but even its increase is still very small.
- To get people on the bus, there has to be a dedicated commitment to growing the service.

#### OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair):

- Large buses are a much different experience than small buses in terms of experience to older individuals. Can feel disorienting. The long routes can be challenging for seniors who may not be able to wait that long without a washroom, waiting for the bus also an issue.
- The driver's license test is terrifying as people age, a loss of a license is a loss of independence.
- More attention should be paid to small personal electric vehicles such as scooters.
- Multiuse trails can be conflict zones between pedestrians and cyclists.
- Surprised there are not tests for cyclists. Licensing would be beneficial for identifying violators.
- Carpooling was much more popular in Alberta than it is here. I have wondered why.

#### BC Transit:

- Climate change is mitigatable.
- A high volume of modal shift is needed. Not just about carbon, but energy and materials required to get us around.
- Transit requires people friendly environments such as friendly sidewalks, safe crossings, and pedestrian scaled environments achieved through intentional urban design.
- Need to find ways to make the bus the 'winner' option.
- How to reduce time on the bus? Separated lanes? People need to not see bus sitting in traffic for it to appeal.
- Having our bus hours disappear into increased congestion is disheartening.
- Accommodating strollers and wheelchairs on our buses can be very important. This is one advantage that the larger buses have over the smaller ones.

#### CV Head Injury Society:

- Head injuries are an invisible disability. They are clearly a vulnerable population. People who do not realize they are interacting with someone with a head injury can become frustrated at their expectations of the individual's capabilities. Head injuries are highly diverse.
- Transportation is a major issue for people with head injuries. Many cannot drive and so much rely on alternative modes of transportation. An individual with a head injury can 'use up' all their energy just getting to and waiting for the bus. Shorter bus routes are also good for people with head injuries, like with seniors.

#### Island Health:

- Climate change is overwhelming and can feel hopeless but is an opportunity to do things differently. Must try to look at the positive as change is and can happen. The pandemic is providing some of that hope for change.
- The health department has been promoting daily physical activity for years. It's hard to get people to fit it in. Working from home can make people more sedentary. Active transportation, to daily destinations and local recreation are the big opportunity to build in co-benefits of health and environment.
- IH is seeing more issues with drinking water, water restrictions, food supply, air quality, heat advisories, wildfire— all affected by climate change.
- Island Health working with 10 communities across the island conducting adaptation planning with ICLEI. We're also working with the BC Centre for Disease Control to access quantitative data on Wildfire Smoke, Extreme Heat, and Population Health linkages. More to come... on other parameters.
- Have to make the healthy choice the easy choice, in your backyard is what we're looking for. Burning calories instead of fuel.

Morrison Creek Streamkeepers:

- Climate change is devastating to water, fish, creeks. Watering cycles changing. Losing glacier. Must change business as usual otherwise we're in deep trouble. Water is key to everything.
- Glacier was bigger 5 years ago.
- Need to follow through on the changes we say we'll make. Lots of talk, no action. This is the discouraging part. We can reduce GHGs AND result in greater personal health and happiness. E.g. if we provide infrastructure to provide this – the rail-trail is better than walking on hot pavement.
- Need to protect natural assets from development. Provide an ever growing essential service. Not just carbon – water too. We know natural assets are important, but we continue to destroy them everywhere, making the problem worse.
- We become vulnerable by not implementing the new way of doing things, lessons learned from valuing natural assets.

OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep):

- Climate change is happening, I can see it in the glacier. But also opportunity. Pandemic has resulted in GHG reductions. I felt hope for first time in a long time seeing that we could make changes.
- Insurance companies are becoming more restrictive in what they're insuring, due to climate change.

**Question 2: Exploring stakeholder priorities and actions**

BC Transit:

- We're seeing a verbal priority to transit, but action and funding does not match. We do recognize that transit is a big ticket item, but requires that upfront investment to make it functional for more.
- In the Comox Valley we are seeing quite quick return to transit after the initial lockdown of the pandemic. The return is greater in smaller communities as transit is less a choice in those areas, and more a necessity for many. In larger communities transit is used for many discretionary trips and those trips have not rebounded.

CV Cycling Coalition:

- Have seen a surge in interest – before the pandemic but has been accelerated during.

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- We conduct cycling counts to prove this.
- The biggest barrier to more cycling is infrastructure.
- City Council is very supportive of cycling – City staff, are coming along.
- Coordinating across the regional district is a goal, can be challenging.
- We're experiencing a culture shift here – we are becoming a cycling-positive community. That has changed since the past.
- Watch out for cycling congestion on desirable routes – the airpark.

#### CVRD – Transit:

- Attracting riders is our goal.
- Busses are expensive, but so are roads and parking lots so it's about perspective.
- The biggest barrier to more bussing is driving is too easy. How can the City support transit? Make driving more difficult. There are a lot of hidden subsidies that support personal automobiles, the subsidies should be shifted to support the modes we say we want.
- Congestion on the multi paths is a signal that more of that infrastructure is needed. We do for cars, should do for other modes.
- The Anderton/Ryan node – very little transit. Concerned about that.
- The province is committing to a fully electric bus fleet by 2040.
- There are a range of sizes of buses. People often ask for these. They are being used. Electric buses may allow for more sizes.

#### OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair):

- Electric mobility devices are on the rise. E.g. jazzy chairs.
- City can help by providing more infrastructure for these devices and charging stations.

#### CV Head Injury Society:

- How City can help: Educate staff of this invisible disability. It's a wider societal issue.
- Monetary barrier to taking transit.

#### OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep):

- To walk more we could use more street level design considerations. Urban forest for example. The heat!

#### Island Health:

- The pandemic is consuming a lot of energy and attention right now. However, Island Health is working on our annual plan to accommodate pandemic and yet climate change remains as a priority so there is public health support on climate action. A magazine is coming! We know that climate change will exasperate public health problems, particularly around heat and respiratory health. Co-benefits of prevention are the strategy. Active transportation, access to restorative nature nearby are critical.
- Nexus of pandemic, climate, black lives matter and health is on the national health priority. Synergistic action is what's needed in such complex interconnected topics.
- Recognize that we need robust health data to understand these intersections better. Public health data shows episodic nature of climate change health issues (fire, air quality). Data also collected on car crashes.

#### Morrison Creek Streamkeepers:

- Protecting and preserving natural assets, make available to people, and reducing GHGs are the priorities.
- The natural assets are key to mitigating heat effects. I can't even walk my dog on sidewalks, hurts my dog's paws.



- Being overly active – cycling – during heat advisories is not advisable. The natural assets help to reduce this risk.
- Nature parks inherently support physical distancing. People come from all around to access Morrison Creek and Puntledge Park. This neighbourhood is one of the few city neighbourhoods that has this infrastructure. People shouldn't have to drive to access such places.
- Connectivity of green infrastructure – regional and within Courtenay.
- Budgets have to be aligned to integrate green infrastructure in all actions. E.g. vegetation should not be the afterthought, but rather the aspect around which to design.
- Bus is too slow for me. It comes past my house, but it's hourly. I cycle, or walk. The new green street and paths make me feel safer when cycling. Lots of bad drivers in the valley.

**Question 3: Local ideas for climate action and preparedness, including linking to pandemic recovery**

Morrison Creek Streamkeepers:

- Education and outreach, advocating for protection of natural assets, making connections of human health and nature is what we do.
- Restoration and acquisition of natural assets are the pandemic recovery opportunity. Hundreds of thousands of dollars come into the valley every year to acquire, restore and manage these assets.
- The environmental movement in the valley is very connected on each other's work.
- A barrier: the lag between the damages occurring to the land and our ability to respond. E.g. referrals. Instead of doing damage to natural assets, then having to repair them, we should be avoiding the damage in the first place. This can help avoid problems. The Riverside Lane project occurring right now is a better process as Project Watershed has been brought in earlier to discuss values right from the beginning. More collaborative input before designs have been invested in is the goal. It would be nice to have more time for referrals as well as we're volunteers and are not experts at all the materials provided, and it takes time.
- Ottawa is an example of greenways being planned from the beginning, and it works.

Island Health:

- We also receive referrals, but we're a micro-team within the larger organization and often need more time.
- IH wants to be a health cheerleader, in this OCP process. Health is an easy argument, especially now due to pandemic.
- We can help with communications. Healthy built environment, health, climate change topic is coming up in an upcoming IH magazine.
- We can support the health networks. They're doing amazing work on Sustainable Development Goals. What an asset for the region! There is a lot of great work in the valley – we'd like to help make the linkages to public to assist with implementation.
- Public health and community planning is not a new thing. Early origins together 100 years ago. Great to see the professions aligning again.
- Places of reprieve are so important. Courtenay's core is car-centric. Active modes should not be in busy car corridors – should be in greenways.

CV Cycling Coalition:

- 6<sup>th</sup> st bridge is a priority.
- East-west Courtenay connector is a priority. 17 groups support (are collecting support).
- Barriers: old school approach to cycling infrastructure design.

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- Glacier View study looked at transportation and aging.
- What the City can do: can really promote active forms of transportation during the 5<sup>th</sup> street bridge rehabilitation.

#### CV Head Injury Society:

- Synergies of climate and pandemic: encouraging to stay home, encouraging to walk and bike.
- Equity considerations, public education, needed of this invisible disability.

#### OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair):

- Electrical plug-ins needed for small electric mobility devices. Available at neighbourhood 'hub' facilities. We need mobility infrastructure that will propel us into the future.
- Need to understand the competing uses of trails.
- Could we tweak traffic flows during peak times? E.g. alternating one way lanes on 17<sup>th</sup> st bridge?
- We need to experiment with flows of movement and less investment on large infrastructure projects.

#### CVRD – Transit:

- Density hubs supported from transit perspective. Need higher transit service to density cores.
- Let's not forget that a vehicle costs the average Canadian family \$8,000/year to own and operate. To support affordability and re-allocate scarce resources, could we shift the focus to 'shedding a vehicle' per household? Could we shift the spending narrative from private expense to public expense", make the stronger public investment through higher short term taxes to create more transportation options, thereby reducing the need for a private vehicle, thus reducing private expenses?

#### BC Transit:

- Recovery efforts – 'shedding a vehicle' to help save personal finances.
- Route 1 – frequent transit network (initiated in 2017) is working well.

#### OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep):

- Need to provide a full range of transportation options. Matching right fit for the trip.
- Could there be some coordination with economic opportunities? E.g. party bus? Tailored to be more destination/experience specific?
- Drivers need to be incentivized or taxed to change their behavior. There's been no shift away from the love of the personal vehicle. We may recognize there's a climate crisis, but that doesn't mean we're collectively acting on it.

#### OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair):

- Many people retire after 60. That's 30 years of transportation remaining. That's a transportation problem. We're going to keep moving until we're in our beds.
- Seniors love taking activity specific buses (e.g. to the Theatre, tours).
- Many seniors hold on to vehicle as part of identity.
- We have car rallies that support cars. This is a mindset shift – quit celebrating the automobile.
- Bus ads seem valuable. Visualize and market the senior's transportation options.

#### General discussion:

- Observation from an equity perspective, some people do not have the option of a private vehicle and therefore alternative modes are not about choice. The messaging and urgency of providing those alternative modes then is different from targeting audiences who can afford private auto(s) and persuading to consider other choices. Different needs, marketing and messaging.

## Session 3 – Housing choices for all (market and non-market)

### Question 1: Exploring the climate lens

#### 19-Wing:

- The military's perspective on climate change is national. We work in many different provinces, see the issue being taken differently in each.
- Climate action can add more cost to housing, that is a concern.
- Important to plan for different housing needs.
- Important to consider the aesthetics of housing. E.g. Campbell River's condos along the highway look shabby, detract from the natural beauty.

#### CV Development and Construction Association:

- Climate change is important. We're interested in what rules and regulations will be placed on the housing market in order to respond to climate action.
- We all want affordable housing, the question is how to do it.
- I personally worked on the Casa Loma seniors village. It started as apartments, then became congregated care and I learned first hand how nuanced and expensive that offering is. Complex care is not a product that the private sector finds attractive to invest in.

#### OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair):

- Climate change is extreme and abrupt.
- Creates physical pressure on housing – wear and tear, damage, maintenance. An issue for seniors.

#### Glacier View Lodge:

- We're considering climate action within the exploration of concepts to develop more complex care facilities.
- 39 acre property, stormwater management a major consideration, environmentally sensitive areas, tree protection, wish to have highly efficient and low impact development design. Can't afford high operating costs, so want energy and maintenance to be low. Working on proformas for concept design.

#### CVRD – planning:

- Climate change to the CVRD means floodplains, drought and impact on the ALR.
- The CVRD affirms the Regional Growth Strategy and jurisdictional role as 'stewards of the environment'.

#### CV Social Planning Society:

- Climate change is inevitable and impacts the social determinants of health.
- View that all housing in a community is affordable to someone (who has enough money), therefore subsidized housing is what is of particular interest.
- We wish to explore housing subsidization from a communal standpoint. There are many Scandinavian examples to draw upon. Must consider housing costs more holistically.
- \$7,000 per person/month in complex care is not affordable.
- Need modern, attractive housing in a natural setting. This format can render support services more efficient/affordable.

#### CV Transition Society:

- Climate change is challenging and frustrating.

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- Some climate requirements seem they are preventing affordable housing from being built. We work with BC Housing, the cost implications of efficiency are making it difficult. Feels that attention to climate is creating delays to actions I feel are more important.

CV Head Injury Society:

- Climate change is scary.

Vancouver Island chapter of Canadian Homebuilders Association:

- Climate change is layered.
- Our role is to find a way to bridge climate and affordability goals.
- Across the island there are very different understandings and interest in the topic of climate change. There is fear on this topic in the Comox Valley. We're focusing our education on achieving higher step code standards, at a lower cost. Energy efficiency measures shouldn't be prohibitively expensive to a new home if careful attention is paid to orientation and design.
- We exist regionally, provincially, nationally and we're talking about this at all levels.
- Just as we know we can't continue to make a car with faulty breaks, we know we need to change the way we build housing.

CV Housing Coalition:

- Climate change is complex.
- I'm personally extremely committed to making a difference. Climate change is a social justice issue – already it is disproportionately impacting people who are least able to manage it. Some of us are more impacted than others.
- There are also unintended consequences (e.g. unaffordability). The OCP needs a plan for how to deliver non-market housing. Cited this NYC example:  
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/policy-can-clash-with-affordable-housing/>
- Really glad we're having this conversation, and having it in a connected way as we have to figure out this balance.

Indigenous Women's Sharing Society:

- Climate change is a crisis. Concern of impact climate change will have on marginalized people, as the pandemic has shown. Concern how will impact future generations. What will life be like to our children in the next 40 years?
- Climate change is really impacting indigenous communities.

OCP Advisory Committee (development rep):

- Climate change is affecting the building code in a big way. Major changes technically, but not socially. Within next few years we'll be building net-zero buildings.
- The OCP needs a much stronger social impetus.
- It's taken so long to adopt what we already know. Frustrating. We know many answers to the questions this OCP is asking, but we're not changing. Too often climate action remains a choice that people don't take when presented as an option. Too many projects are not high performing.
- Governments are good for startup grants but not for ongoing maintenance. That probably is a local subsidy.
- In Vienna over 50% of their housing stock is owned publicly, with all the related benefits to affordability.

CV Arts and OCP Advisory Committee (arts and culture rep):



- We can look at offsetting green building with locations and density. Expensive houses that are centrally located can use walkability or mass transit to offset costs of living, Green architecture will be out of reach for most for a long time unless it's subsidized by local authorities so we need to look at other cost savings for buyers.
- In my experience when you try and incentivize a developer to build a percentage of their suites as affordable they tend to just make micro suites and call them "affordable". Also they need to make sure the suite stays low income, because if it's not the first owner could sell it in 5 years at market value. That may mean a role for government.
- Other examples: <https://www.businessinsider.com/tiny-home-village-for-homeless-veterans-calgary-canada-2019-11>

**Question 2: Exploring stakeholder priorities and actions**

19-Wing:

- The military is characterized as a transient community: Need affordable and available housing, different sizes, smaller needed, particularly for the private-junior officers.
- There is not sufficient dedicated military housing, although some apartment complexes being built there are 48 still on the waitlist. Base housing is the most affordable due to its fixed cost.
- There used to be programs federally to subsidize housing for military people in higher cost areas, such as here. However that became politically unpopular and is not likely to be policy revisited.

CV Development and Construction Association:

- Interesting dynamic of the military presence, putting pressure on rental housing. Interesting that the program no longer exists for federal subsidy.
- Concerned of increase regulation – who pays for this? New homeowners generally paying for what the entire community benefits from. Additional community costs should be borne by the wider community tax base.
- May need to reduce expectations of what government can deliver as resources become ever scarcer.

CVRD – planning:

- Looking at availability of housing as well as affordability. Looking to expand rentals in the electoral areas.

Glacier View Lodge:

- Appropriate housing is our goal, not just affordable.
- The view on housing is different as we age. Young people see as an equity builder, which is not the same goal for older people.
- Lines of communication need to be clear to make collaborative endeavors such as complex care housing occur. It's an opportune time for all levels of government to be aligning.

CV Social Planning Society:

- We have been advocating for a social planner function for some time. This could help coordinate work on social equity, affordable housing, poverty. Should be at the Regional District level, possibly even part time to begin.

OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair):

- Strengths: we have the proposed density plan. We have an opportunity to build a collective of distinct neighbourhoods.

- Could we have different taxation mechanisms for different areas? Local Service areas?  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/finance/requisition-taxation/local-government-taxation/local-area-service-taxes>
- As a senior I'm realizing that I may have to move away from this community that I love if I can't find specialized seniors affordable housing.
- How can we streamline development approvals for the development we want? Building in the community hubs should be made easier than elsewhere.

CV Arts and OCP Advisory Committee (arts and culture rep):

- Affordable housing, aging in place are our biggest issues.
- Affordability of separate studio space for artists is an issue as well, and yet we love their contribution to vibrant communities.
- Place making, dual-use spaces important zoning considerations.

Vancouver Island Home Builders Association:

- Step code education has been the focus of our education.
- Some subsidies from utilities and governments to support.
- Demonstration net zero home in the Comox Valley – fairly affordable (\$400,000). Won awards.
- PACE-type program being looked at to increase the investment in steps (investment in energy efficiency paid off through property taxes. Third party holds debt. Based off of Property Assessed Clean Energy programs popular in Alberta, US (PACE)).
- Langford is a good example for incentivizing lower cost housing. Inclusionary zoning incentivized by waiving DCCs. <https://www.langford.ca/EN/meta/city-hall/affordable-housing-program.html>
- Kamloops has a developers affordable housing 'package':  
<https://www.kamloops.ca/sites/default/files/docs/homes-businesses/16-kamloopsaffordablehousingdeveloperspackage.pdf>
- Many other communities offer cash incentives.

Indigenous Women's Sharing Society:

- Housing is a major stabilizing factor to vulnerable people. Climate will create a number of new conditions.
- Role is to advocate for housing for those underserved.
- City can help: support tiny homes, co-op housing, grass-root initiatives, beyond affordable homeownership.
- Need to include First Nations communities and elders in these conversations.

CV Transition Society:

- Support for tiny homes.
- Have worked to bring 19 non-market units online with a local developer. Have experienced the extreme frustration the developer communicated in working with the City – dis-incentivizing the developer to continue developing.
- Need to open doors, not put up barriers, to those wishing to work with non-profits.
- NIMBYism is an issue. Not sure where all these challenges we face fit into an OCP.

CV Housing Coalition:

- Submitted a list, briefly summarized here: tiny homes, not having to re-zone for secondary dwellings.
- Works on the continuum – anyone can experience homelessness. Need a diversity of housing.
- Pandemic opportunity – there is federal and provincial funding. There has to be strong relationships with the local government, at staff-staff levels, in order to access these.

- Other communities are getting those projects because they're investing in these relationships. The coalition is frustrated in the valley as a whole for not investing in these relationships. City is doing best locally working with the coalition, but overall we could do better.

**Question 3: Local ideas for climate action and preparedness, including linking to pandemic recovery**

OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair):

- Let's build on the unique neighbourhood attributes.
- Pandemic shows that we're using the outdoors more, sees more kindness. Let's build this into our neighbourhoods.

19-Wing:

- Recovery opportunity: incredible to see how quickly we can adapt. Seeing it with scheduling in the workforce, standardization of PPEs, caring for each other.
- Many in the military live here because we love it. Now we'll have to spend more time here. A real 'love of local places' opportunity.

CV Development and Construction Association:

- Concern of flooding. Wondering of opportunity to dam the Tsolum to alleviate flooding in the lowest reaches, while providing for more freshwater in the agricultural areas.

CVRD – Planning:

- The CVRD is updating the floodplain construction bylaw.
- Zoning bylaw changes permitting domestic agriculture in all zones, and a secondary dwelling on nearly all lots.

Glacier View Lodge:

- Density and the pandemic is of interest. "I believe the pandemic makes a stronger case for density, public spaces and good connectivity – livability of our communities."
- Tangential thought to affordability – more in ride services instead of transit? (later shared article on Innisfil ON example, that did have negative unintended consequences:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2019/jul/16/the-innisfil-experiment-the-town-that-replaced-public-transit-with-uber>)

CV Social Planning Society:

- I'm shocked of the missed opportunity of new subdivisions for solar energy. E.g. a new neighbouring one with many south facing roofline opportunities. Not a single solar panel.
- Pandemic predictions: essential services will expand to include local farmers. Universal basic income is needed. These will assist with making housing more affordable for the most vulnerable.

General discussion:

- The multiple 'codes of climate change' are occurring simultaneously: building code, floodplain, stormwater management.

CV Arts and OCP Advisory Committee (arts and culture rep):

- The discussion around tiny homes is nuanced. Are we talking about stratas, subdivisions, small lots too, is it like a mobile home park, do you own the land, what about them in someone's front or back yard? You can build a small house, but if the land is expensive, then it's not affordable housing.
- Questions post-pandemic: How are we looking at density? We need wider sidewalks, smaller streets, closed streets, more access to green space, but still need to work within pre built right of ways. What are the impacts on urban planning and architecture where things need to be



spread out and cleaner (History: more green space movement after Spanish flu, post-modern architecture following arts and crafts in order to be more easily cleaned).

CV Housing Coalition:

- We've been looking at Tiny homes, and we recognize there are provincial code restrictions (windows, staircases).
- An example to look to is the military providing tiny home projects for veterans (<https://www.businessinsider.com/tiny-home-village-for-homeless-veterans-calgary-canada-2019-11>)

Vancouver Island Canadian Homebuilders Association:

- Victoria area we've talked about tiny homes quite a bit, not so much here. Stairs are an issue to be sure.
- Tiny homes on ALR is an area of exploration.
- Carriage homes – can be quite expensive to build. Can also be valuable housing, but not supported.
- Feels there is quite a bit of resistance to tiny homes, from neighbourhoods.

OCP Advisory Committee (development rep):

- Back to my thought on frustration. We've known what we can do for years now. E.g. worked on "Garry Corner" in Richmond that we did 25 years ago. One property converted into 12 single family homes using strata ownership. Garry St. and Railway Avenue in Steveston. Accolades for more density, but not foreign concept.
- Smaller townhome developments can be designed with neighbourhood character. Comes to political will to support these projects.
- We're lucky that we're 20 years behind as we can see what others have learned from.
- With our economies taking a big hit, we will certainly not be able to continue to invest in expensive municipal infrastructure (roads, sewers, water, etc.).
- In our Living City Challenge re-design of the Comox Valley we put a small local park on every city block (which would minimize: physical interaction of neighbors, distance to recreation, etc.).
- Questions post-pandemic: Are we converting all of our large commercial office buildings into live-work studios? Are we widening our sidewalks, narrowing our streets, reducing our need to travel dramatically? Are we abandoning transit?

CV Transition Society:

- Housing for all is our approach, but we're seeing the particular impact to the most vulnerable so that's where we focus. This is affecting the entire community as we're in a scramble to house vulnerable people due to pandemic. Our approach has been ad-hoc, not ideal.
- Need to collaborate local governments with senior governments opportunity-funding.

Indigenous Women's Sharing Society:

- Would like to focus more on youth engagement as this is impacting their future. Need to support youth to prepare for the climate changes ahead. This includes housing.

## Session 4 – Local economic development (with emphasis on the role of local government)

Mayor Wells provided a summary of highlights of what was being discussed at the evolving Comox Valley Economic Recovery Task Force:

- The CVRD's Covid-19 Renewal Framework provides helpful guidance:  
<https://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/renewal>
- The Task Force is broken into sectors. Tasked with developing ideas, looking for quick wins. Different sectors have different timelines and concerns. Lots of opportunities, ability to talk about things more freely. E.g. the 6<sup>th</sup> st. bridge
- We know we have 500 units of market multi-family housing coming online in Courtenay – at the construction phase. Many are rental.
- 400+ multi-family units are in pre-application stage. Many seniors units. Much density is occurring here.
- We've learned that daycare is the number one local economic recovery piece.

***This session did not include breakouts and the conversation flowed more fluidly between the three questions therefore perspectives to all three questions are listed in the bullets below (Question 1: Exploring the climate lens Question 2: Exploring stakeholder priorities and actions and Question 3: Local ideas for climate action and preparedness, including linking to pandemic recovery):***

OCP Advisory Committee (economic rep + chair):

- Smaller footprints are needed – of everything.
- Working from home creates social changes. The 9-5 is dead. Flexibility is the factor to design around.
- The sustainability of local governments comes into question when we realize that people may not be able to pay their property taxes. The property tax revenue stream for local governments is not sustainable. In Courtenay there are no major industry tax generators. New funding opportunities are what are needed for local governments.
- Should be clear on what kinds of businesses we want/don't want.
- Diversity/equity lens is what we should be looking at all OCP issues through.
- The OCP is limited because it is a City of Courtenay product but if we are to have a stronger local economy, we must be looking at our natural economic area - ie the Comox Valley as a whole. I think the City has to take a leadership role in moving to a regionally focused local government structure.

OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair):

- Climate change means increased costs, individually and collectively.
- Gender based lens should be brought to City budget. CV Economic Development Society should hear this too.
- Women make on average \$14,000/year less than men in the Comox Valley.
- Women are impacted by Covid more.
- Believe I've observed quite a change in grocery stores. People really are reading labels and location before purchase.

- Need to ensure that to earn within the Green economy is not to commit to poverty. Many people are earning good incomes. Perhaps the City and the Chamber could facilitate that dialogue for those trapped within the sunset industries.
- Canadians are over-governed. Need to re-think approaches to working on recovery and problems in general.
- Seems that it would be a very good time to take a temperature check on the question of more regional collaboration such as the governance review.
- Are big box stores contributing to the community? To its life and vitality? If not, do we need as many of them?
- I hope the City will consider pop up arts and culture shops. Stores in empty store front areas. Surely there must be formulae that effectively work for everyone ie rents, rentals, taxes etc.

CV Food Policy Council:

- Climate change is impending.
- Working from home means needing better broadband valley wide. This is a problem.
- 95% of food comes off island. There has been an increase in local demand, but also a decrease in local labour.
- Access to water (especially within the Tsolum watershed) is a limitation.
- There is a desire to scale up production amongst local farmers, but costs land and infrastructure, capital investment that farmers don't have.
- Ageing farmers is an issue.
- Crop life cycles are changing due the climate. This can be very problematic.
- Re-localizing agriculture is a covid and climate economic recovery opportunity.
- In order for farmers to expand their production, they require investment in technology. E.g. smart irrigation (also a climate adaptation technology).
- Urban areas are important as aggregation and distribution centres of food. These land uses need to be permitted.
- Indigenous food sovereignty very important.
- Environmental impact of food needs to be re-examined.
- Institutional food procurement are opportunities.
- Food recovery is essential. Some communities are making food waste illegal.

CV Chamber of Commerce:

- Was born and raised in the Comox Valley, in an agricultural setting. Strong personal support for food security. Remembers when the valley was mostly self-sufficient in food.
- Concern over living beyond our boundaries, beyond our limits. Circular economy and social procurement are directions we want to go.
- Maintaining a work place culture in the absence of 'going to work' is another factor.
- Climate change is affecting businesses, but if they're more circular economy based then they adapt better.
- If one ever wants to talk regional collaboration, was on the regional governance review committee for 4 years. Has all the past signatures for a petition to the provincial government to conduct a governance review regionally.
- We have to realize that if we're not intentionally making things easy, we're actually creating barriers.
- Seniors are having trouble transitioning with new technology. This is challenging during online covid world.
- Chamber has a policy on waste reclamation.



OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep):

- Need to rid the growth mindset. How to we reconcile the circular economy with globalization? Pandemic is forcing this to some extent.
- Working from home is not equitable for all. The home may be crowded, unsafe.
- Role of City: Could lead by example. Through social procurement, documenting their good practices.
- Expecting immigrants from climate change.

Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Association:

- The businesses that survive are the ones that adapt. For covid or climate. But many businesses are in survival mode.
- Our businesses are trying to focus more on experiences and quality over quantity of goods.
- Feeling they're paying a lot of tax, but not receiving proportionate value.
- Recycling – we could be doing much better.
- There is support for more housing and making the downtown a more delightful place to be. Parking vs. pedestrian use of space is still divided in the downtown.

CV Community Health Network:

- Gender aspect of economic recovery is important.
- Ensure we're not forgetting blue collar perspective. The automotive industry locally provides 15% of employment. How to ensure they're not being vilified as transitioning to climate initiatives.
- Good waste management from auto industry is a challenge.
- Retraining is an opportunity. EVs and the college opportunity?
- How can we avoid being overly reliant beyond our borders? How far beyond our borders?
- With increase in covid government spending, there's a fear of how that will impact GST and PST.
- City can help: Fast tracking day care licensing, allow in all zones. On healthy communities: Providing shade on sidewalks and playgrounds.
- OCP should include the social determinants of health as a lens (systemic). Lots of materials on PlanH website. <https://planh.ca/>

Ministry of Agriculture:

- Climate change is an opportunity.
- Climate change is affecting crop cycles, ability to grow new crops, not grow others.
- New ways of marketing are required during covid. Online especially (back to internet service needed).
- Labour is the big factor. It is a generational thing – not experienced by young people today; are unskilled.
- An uptick in local protein (meat) has been observed during covid.
- Some crops are lower in demand because people are growing them at home.
- City is the major service area for agricultural equipment, etc.
- Livestock and urban living is always a tension point – good design and planning required to mitigate. Lots of resources on this from the Ministry. Trails, buffers, access.
- The City could assist with commercial kitchen amenities to support start-up agricultural businesses.

CV Arts:

- Climate change is a reason to be cautiously hopeful.
- People are going more self-sufficient - look at what this opportunity for more time (and the initial panic about being cut off from supply) has done for personal gardening.

- Internet access, bandwidth a key issue to economic viability. Performing artists need stable live streaming.
- Covid is extra difficult for introverts. Introverts are common in the arts community.
- Arts can provide an antidote to anxiety. Art can assist with climate interpretation, sense-making in a world that doesn't make sense.
- Place-making, more human spaces the opportunity for the OCP. Are also very interested to pursue partnerships to help bring an Arts & Culture lens to more aspects of the OCP and RGS.
- The lack of exhibit space for our local artists is a major issue in the arts and culture community... one that we have not yet been able to solve, mainly due to economic factors. We hope to be able to address it soon - many things are afoot.
- Fostering communication at the regional level would be very helpful to all the community groups that must work across jurisdictions. It is draining on our resources.
- The barriers to economic recovery are wide and varied.
- The City has improved its position on arts and culture drastically in the past few years.
- A regional identity (amalgamation) would be favoured. Would make community organizing more feasible.
- 5000-6000 working artists in the Comox Valley. They did not earn \$1.2M this past year due to Covid.

General discussion on managing waste:

- Friends who work at large retailers in town have all commented how their companies handle returns (from couches to pool tables and everything in between). With some regularity, larger items are destroyed by staff and sent to local waste centres. There may be an opportunity for the City to have a strengthened solid waste plan that prohibits the destruction of functional products being tossed into the dump. This could lengthen the lifespan of our local dump.
- Much waste. As an event organizer it is always heartbreaking to be disallowed to pass on excess supplies to places like the foodbank or care-a-van, etc.
- Food recovery example in Victoria: <https://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/residents/climate-change/waste-reduction/food-waste.html>
- Individual consumers have very little education or places to get rid of chemicals.
- Negative impacts on processing metals (such as toxins from smelting) and water demand for washing ink out of paper. Many issues with our waste management streams. Public education from the dump and recycling to clarify myths and link local individual actions to larger environmental actions, goals and outcomes would be a neat city or regional district project

## Session 5 - Love for local places (place making, culture and urban design)

*This session did not include breakouts and the conversation flowed more fluidly between the three questions therefore perspectives to all three questions are listed in the bullets below (Question 1: Exploring the climate lens Question 2: Exploring stakeholder priorities and actions and Question 3: Local ideas for climate action and preparedness, including linking to pandemic recovery):*

OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair):

- Climate change is extreme shifts. A quote: “We say we love flowers and yet we pluck them, we say we love trees and yet we cut them down. And people still wonder why some are afraid when told they are loved.”
- We shouldn't be afraid to use this word 'love' in this work. And to build on the affection and depth of commitment when we're trying to get engagement.
- If we love our neighbourhoods, let's not abuse them.
- People are cleaning up their areas, the estuary as example. Have seen this improve over time. Don't see the drug dealing and the garbage the way I used to.
- With people staycationing due to Covid, or due to economic downturn, we have an opportunity to highlight all that Courtenay does have to offer. The 'What's On Digest' doesn't capture all that we offer, we look boring but we're not. We could offer short films of who we are to help orient new comers as well. We have so much to offer and feature. This is easy to do to market our identity. Corporations are doing this, we can too.
- More signage would be valuable to connect people to place, wayfinding but also interpretive.
- The estuary (now 'condo lane') is a major place making opportunity and the kus kus sum project to restore a part of it.
- An exhibit at the CVAG this spring showed a map of Manitoba, drawn by an indigenous chief. He drew the water boundaries, not the land ones. A different perspective.
- The Mile of Flowers is a place making initiative that is locally beloved. More community engagements that involve people are the practice of place making.
- Are there underutilized/un-programmed public land that could be restored to nature?
- Seniors may be interested in leaving legacy donations, especially if they feel invested to place.
- We should identify places that are not working (feel unsafe, unpleasant) and brainstorm how to improve with the community. E.g. behind Walmart has lots of litter. Could the company be motivated to take ownership over these areas?
- Simms park attracts many youth near the BBQ pits. Is there a place for public art? Could youth be involved in clean ups, student volunteer credit?
- Seniors need benches or they can't go out for a walk.

Cumberland - planning:

- Climate change means a need to become resilient.
- In Cumberland major place making features are our community forest and the mountain biking culture. The Cumberland Community Forest Society has invested in a narrative of place making and it works.
- Access to safe-outdoor spaces during Covid is so important to the community. Not everyone has the ability to spend time outside at their own residence (if they have one). The more outdoor spaces and places the more ability to safely distance. Contributing to better mental health and feelings of belonging.

- There can be room for ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ approaches to place making. Community grants for the bottom up that fits within a city vision.
- Many small ways community can contribute. Covid is about pedestrianization.

CV Conservation Partnership and OCP Advisory Committee (environment rep):

- Climate change – is happening, has been for a while. Rainfall/drought patterns. Stressing of ecosystems, become marginalized.
- We are gathering, but could use, more local data.
- Interested in how nature is impacting neighbourhoods. The future is unpredictable. Utilizing natural assets, hybridizing into our communities, is the way of the future. Nature is a unifier of multiple goals. Neighbourhoods should centre around their ecological assets – watersheds are a natural fit, are vital, this is not a new concept, could foster wider stewardship ethic. Many people don’t even know which watershed they’re located within!
- Courtenay’s growth is so rapid, like many communities. We’re attractive, nature is part of that attractive. We’re becoming overwhelmed by the pace of change.
- Development is defining our neighbourhoods rather than nature which is what drew us here in the first place. We should be defining what we want out of new development.
- Am looking forward to the neighbourhood sessions to hear more from residents about ‘what qualities brought one here in the first place’.
- The Partnership accepts legacy donation programs.
- A park acquisition fund for the City is needed, to create a dedicated funding stream for neighbourhood specific goals. Legacy funds could be funneled to it. The Regional District has such a fund, Courtenay should have one too.
- Campbell River has some great historical city signage with very little vandalism.
- What is KFN’s role? They have so much to share of their history and interpretation if they are interested.
- Mapping/visual tool that is easily accessible, educative to the public must be developed to help residents make sense of their place.

OCP Advisory Committee (economic rep + chair):

- Climate change means ownership. For the City to take, and also to push back on people.
- For placemaking, we need to be encouraged to clean up local areas. Infrastructure is needed to do this, but also little community grants.
- A sense of scale of the neighbourhood is different here than say in Calgary where a new neighbourhood of 5,000-10,000 people is rolled out at once. Feels we may need a threshold of people to create a level of pride. Because we’re smaller we can adopt a spirit of love of our areas, our watersheds, not necessarily naming neighbourhoods. We have the opportunity to incorporate small interventions everywhere, take more active ownership (e.g. cutting blackberries).
- In Calgary, new developments must be supported by the Community Associations. What if here we required that new developments must be supported by our local environmental associations?

OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep):

- Climate change evokes the image of the glacier to me. I can see it shrinking. The name Queneesh is part of our identity. We are losing our sacred place.
- Place making is super important for youth. They like to be slightly out of view, covered outdoor spaces (classrooms) are needed, therapeutic work is effective outdoors with these supports.



Public art. Youth could be interested in participating in design charettes to design these features in public spaces.

- It's difficult to engage youth because hard to engage in the present. They're feeling a real lack of the future.
- Would be great to find a way to keep young people in the valley. Employment. Many are wanting to make their homes here.
- Ability to stay is part of place making. The ability to take root, building relationships.
- Places and street names are an opportunity to indigenize and support reconciliation.
- Social planning is really lacking. I know resources are few, but these issues are so important. These are preventative investments.
- If we're serious about climate change, there has to be boundaries. We have to have the ability to say no when development is damaging. I've heard repeatedly the importance of nature. We're here because of outside, not because of inside. Let's then commit to this. Give the say to the streamkeepers like the Calgary community associations.
- People make the neighbourhoods. Small grants, neighbourhood competitions help bring this out.
- Think of the most vulnerable person – can they access this place? Mobility, children's safety, perception of safety.

CV Social Planning Society:

- Climate change is inevitable.
- All governments need to be working together on climate.
- Land use is one of the biggest topics for climate action. More control is needed over development in order to support climate action goals. Just because someone has purchased land and expects to develop should not be the reason it gets developed.
- On the topic of litter clean up – it is not getting better in west Courtenay. There are drug houses in our area of west Courtenay, they look like landfills, police often around. These affect neighbourhood character. How to find ways to help these residents to love where they live?
- Debts and inflation will increase during this pandemic. I personally feel they should, because there are more important things like universal basic income. But municipalities are more limited in how they can raise funds, therefore we're going to have to push senior governments to make the investment.
- Place making may look like luxuries but post pandemic will be a greater necessity.

CV Arts and OCP Advisory Committee (arts and culture rep):

- Climate change action has been distracted. Can't separate climate action from Covid. Feels that we're living in reaction mode only. Day to day. Feels that wind was taken out of our sails.
- For placemaking, the arts plays a major role. For gatherings, this community and these offerings are devastated.
- Parks cost a lot more money than people think when they need to meet municipal standards. Benches are \$2,500 each, play grounds are dozens of thousands of dollars. Maintenance is part of the cost.
- Boundaries between communities is abrupt (signage, street cleaning). Is there a regional vision to show coherence of identity? We have municipal boundaries, but do we need cultural boundaries across these jurisdictions?
- Can legacy donation move beyond the "bench" model?

- CV Arts and the museum have recently created a 3-year 'fee for service' contract with the City. This allows for opportunity for City to contract services for arts and culture content. Could we create video-diaries? Not overly expensive.
- We could approach this conversation of place-making as either 'top-down' or 'bottom-up'. Have the City systematically make investments in public spaces according to a large plan vs. 'City Repair' grassroots approach. (<https://cityrepair.org/>). Build it and they will come Vs. if they come will they build it.
- Pros and cons of each. Too many small hamlets and interventions may not feel of anything larger. But City making decisions, setting a tone could take a long time.
- Covid means for placemaking – walkability, larger sidewalks, closed streets to cars.
- How can the arts community help ring the bells of environmental goals? Why aren't the environmental goals happening?
- How do we describe Courtenay and where it's going? A direction is needed to permeate all the way down to all city actions. OCPs outlast Council terms. What branding and marketing of the OCP is needed to ensure this vision lasts?

DRAFT

## Session 6 - Supporting basic needs (food security, poverty reduction, community safety, addictions)

### Question 1: Exploring the climate lens

#### CV Arts:

- Climate change is critical. The arts community can offer awareness building on this issue.
- CV Arts supports wellbeing, connectivity, gathering spaces and activities.

#### Ministry of Agriculture:

- Climate change action feels futile at times. It's real, it's happening. Big communities are the big contributors, we're a drop in the bucket. Adaptation is the real focus.

#### CV Social Planning Society:

- Climate change is negative. We have to adapt. The only thing we can do is local so this is where action must be taken. Local agriculture is a major opportunity for adaptation.

#### CV Family Services Association:

- Climate change is proving that abuse of natural resources costs us, takes money to deal with.
- Families with limited means have the lowest environmental footprints. Those living in excess could learn from those with less.

#### John Howard Society:

- Climate change is impactful.
- The John Howard Society works with youth on health and substance abuse issues.

#### CV Community Health Network and OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep):

- Climate change is disproportionate. Different communities, parts of the world, are being affected differently. Consequences of climate change affect the social determinants of health which are disproportionate for the following groups: women, people living in poverty, already marginalized, people of colour, elderly, people with disabilities. Covid is an indicator of these disproportionalities.
- We recognize the importance of a healthy environment. Our network is frustrated that action is not happening quick enough. We know that if climate change isn't addressed, the other community health priorities are for nothing.

#### CV Head Injury Society:

- Climate change is challenging because it's happening.
- People need to live within their means with that. It's hard for people with limited means and capacities to deal with the changes. Climate conscious decisions seem to be more expensive. Can't afford the lower carbon food, can't afford high efficiency modern housing. Have to find a way of marrying low costs with climate action otherwise we're excluding such people out of this process.
- Affordable housing as defined by BC Housing is not affordable for those on PwD (Persons with Disability rate), 90% of rates go to that.

#### CVRD – planning:

- Climate change is happening. I hear it framed as something that's going to happen in the future, but it's now.
- Local governments have an obligation to incorporate climate lens into all that we do. It's a moral imperative. The public turns to local government to take action even though so many of these things are outside of our legal jurisdiction. Local government has to find a way to respond even when it feels hard and new.

CV Drug Strategy Committee:

- Climate change is a crisis and there is denial around it. Like with opioid crisis and covid, there is a lot of denial, it is a fractious issue. We need to find a way to cut through the divisiveness to realize that there is an opportunity to be creative and find positive solutions.
- The poorer you are, the harder it will be to deal with the fall out whatever form that may take.
- Electricity is expensive, is often the thing that puts someone over the edge to not being able to pay the bills, become homeless. It's more expensive when we don't build for efficiency. I've worked with many clients that live without electricity.
- Witnessed when the bottle depot was closed down to covid that many people are not accessing even welfare as bottle returns are their only source of income.
- Those in poverty are very good at reusing items. We could learn from this. Re-selling items can be an important source of income.
- How are we in the Comox Valley providing so few bathrooms and water during this time of pandemic, and beyond? One tap was available in the entire community initially – the one at the community garden. We need to support basic needs, we can build these to be environmentally friendly while meeting basic needs.

CV Food Policy Council:

- Climate change is a scary global challenge. It's in motion, so many emissions have already been released we can't control that.
- Through a lot of collaboration we are achieving a lot: hot meal program, good food box.
- Food security is about access to nutritional food, not just filling bellies. It's a huge disservice to not understand this is about quality not just quantity.
- Food systems are so tied into climate change. Industrial food systems are heavy GHG contributors. But when done well, food systems (soil) can be a sink for carbon.
- We have opportunity locally to build local low carbon nutritious food. There is a cultural interest in growing food right now.
- Food waste is a contributor of GHGs.
- Agriculture and forestry can work together – wider healthy ecosystems.

***Question 2: Exploring stakeholder priorities and actions***

CV Arts:

- We're building in a focus on wellness into our work. Looking for alternative ways to share, create identity, gather. These are critical to the wellness of artists and the wider community.

Ministry of Agriculture:

- Abuse of the land is at the heart of these issues.
- A major challenge with agriculture is people who live near it not appreciating what type of experience that is (noise, odor, dust, etc.).
- Local governments can limit the 'home plate' of development to restrict the amount of area used for driveways, home, etc. on agricultural land.

CV Social Planning Society:

- Lack of funds and dedication to these issues of meeting basic needs locally is an issue. Have been advocating for a social planning function at the RD for decades.
- The Accessibility Committee is looking for a home at the RD level.
- Basic living income is a must.

CV Family Services Association:



- The Association is client driven and its future is currently being determined.
- Major issues are around accessibility, daycare, supporting families working through ministry processes, linking to healthy community programs (e.g. food support), supporting young parents, community based victim services.
- We're seeing an increase in victim referral services during covid. More men are reporting abuse as well as women.
- The Association has the potential to increase services but would need to expand the physical space.
- The Community Foundation's quick deployment of funds was so helpful at getting baby formula out during the pandemic. This was a very effective way to funnel funds.

**John Howard Society:**

- Works to assist youth getting access to addictions or other therapeutic treatment, supportive housing for when they're back. Youth have to leave to access treatment. Would be ideal if they can stay with good supportive recovery programs to reintegrate into their community.
- Glad to see the Drug Strategy committee getting some more attention.
- Neighbourhood recovery, neighbourhood processes can be supportive to these vulnerable individuals who need to be part of their communities.
- Home is not safe for everyone. During the pandemic we saw youth lose their support network (accessing showers, food, safe place to be), which included school.
- Mental health challenges are increasing for youth.

**CV Arts:**

- Arts community can assist in these heavy topics of navigating harm reduction, community health, victim support. There is partnership potential here.

**Ministry of Agriculture:**

- We're learning through covid just how critical the food supply is. Food supply is threatened by climate change too. The amount of food we're growing locally has been decreasing drastically over time. The ALR is not being optimized to grow food.

**CV Drug Strategy Committee:**

- There is a cultural lack of awareness of substance use, including alcohol. A parallel to lack of awareness also of environmental abuse.
- The stigma of substance abuse makes it difficult to have a productive public dialog about the services needed. We need a less moralistic and a more public health approach.
- There are more people dying of opioid addictions than covid. Safe supply, drug testing, safe places to use are needed.
- The City can assist with awareness on these issues, through the CV Drug Strategy Committee.
- There could be more green jobs – clean up, planting – these would benefit low income people looking for work.
- Alternative transportation and density can help those living in poverty and substance abuse. Transportation is a challenge for those living in poverty.
- It's not just poor people who have addictions.
- If when addressing poverty issues we put a green lens on that work, it's a way to begin to show creativity and models to show the rest of the community.

**CV Food Policy Council:**

- Economic and educational barriers to healthy food access.
- There needs to be an understanding of the true cost of cheap food: life expectancy cost, society, environmental cost. And at the same time the real benefit of nutritious local food.

- Covid is showing an increase need of food.
- People working in food systems have been undervalued for decades. In the spectrum of cost of living, cost of housing is increasing, and food being valued less. Healthy food and secure housing need to go together.
- The City could adopt true cost accounting frameworks when making decisions. Could assist with institutional purchasing local food policies. Lots of appetite for urban agriculture policies, especially around placemaking topic. In Victoria they provided veggie starts to people this year. Buy local campaigning, food aggregation/distribution centres, curb side composting. Many ways the City can assist.

**CV Community Health Network and OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep):**

- Climate change can lead to dislocation – both physical and psychological. Dislocation can increase substance use. We see this during the pandemic – alcohol consumption going up and opioid deaths.
- If we think of social inclusion and sense of belonging, these can help with root of issues. Our work focuses on discrimination and stigma. The City can assist in setting a tone of inclusion and include a lens on all policies, put people at the centre, ensuring hearing from all the people, the vulnerable.
- The work of Lewis Centre and Connect Centre are good examples of relationships between City and community groups. More of this type of approach needed, more training for staff and Council to keep these approaches on the forefront.
- If we're meeting the needs of the most vulnerable, we're likely meeting the needs of those who have more resources.

**CVRD – planning:**

- Local governments often say that the biggest challenges are lack of political will and resources. I don't think we suffer from a lack of political will now. As we know a lot of folks were doing this type of work at the sides of our desk, and now we can bring this more centrally. As planners we're generalists in that we know a little bit about a lot of things. Now that we have the mandate to connect to more subject experts to work on these issues, we can make traction. So grateful.
- The OCP is an opportunity to think like a region. The RGS is an underutilized tool. I'm seeing that we in all jurisdictions are coming together. This is hopeful work.
- Accessing marginalized voices, getting people to engage in general, is still very challenging. We're making progress, but need to do more. Community partners are essential to this.
- Local governments need to ask better questions – root causes. Poverty reduction work is forthcoming. Need to find the correct role for local governments. We can't be all things, shouldn't be. How can we enable others so we can all be our best selves in this work?

**Comox Valley Better at Home: (written submission)**

- Biggest issues: insufficient income and affordable/safe housing.
- Barriers to achieving: lack of action by federal government to increase rates for old age pension (OAP) and guaranteed income supplement (GIS). The current rates are so far below even a basic 'livable wage'.
- How can City help: It would be helpful for all levels of government (and community groups) to collaborate with others across the province/country to press the federal government to substantially raise the rates of OAP and GIS.

***Question 3: Local ideas for climate action and preparedness, including linking to pandemic recovery***

## City of Courtenay OCP Update

### Stakeholder Brainstorming Findings – notes from virtual sessions July 27-30 2020

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#### CV Family Services:

- The pandemic offers a chance to come together, better integrate our services, and offer better support to clients.

#### CV Arts:

- We're a powerful community.
- We need basic operational funds.
- Forums like this really help with partnerships, allow for temperature checks on issues.
- Arts Council is surprisingly digital. Can provide support to others.

#### OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair):

- Silo-ing is a concern. I hear a need for more collaboration and integration. Need to find more horizontal ways of working together.
- Wasting of food in stores is a silo.

#### CV Drug Strategy Committee:

- Have been working with Canadian Drug Policy Coalition, learning about drug policy for BC. This is a systems change topic, similar to environment. <https://www.drugpolicy.ca/>
- Has been doing more dialog with the community on modest drinking. It's not just about addiction, but substance use.
- CV Arts sits on our committee now, Community Health Network – have drastically increased the variety of perspectives and partners on this topic.
- I don't think the Drug Strategy Committee has incorporated a green lens to our work yet. We can do that. Ties in naturally with systems thinking, finding the root of complex issues.
- Use of UBCM to make resolutions – we can work with our elected officials to advocate. E.g. asking for a minimum guaranteed income.
- Because the Comox Valley is such a creative community, I think if we start to adopt a norm of putting a green lens on things to create creative ideas, I think there is so much we can be doing. The bottom line is moving soon while we still can. Who knows how long we'll have political support.
- Addressing poverty reduces public health costs, correctional costs. Systemic approaches can save money.

#### CVRD – planning:

- Regional poverty reduction strategy funding has been secured. Work will begin this fall.
- Looking to find the actions that produce co-benefits and saying yes to those initiatives.
- Mapping of our coastline has just concluded. This will inform adaptation/flood decisions. There are a lot of vulnerable folks in housing along the coast.

#### CV Head Injury Society:

- Partnerships are our key strategy, with other agencies to provide best, seamless service to clients. People with head injuries often have other needs, therefore our group relies on partnerships with other service organizations. If City could be part of this work, that could make our collective efforts even more powerful.

#### John Howard Society:

- Some silver linings have come out of the pandemic: virtual access to services makes more accessible to many, reduced transportation barriers, can see more clients in a day, with more supports more people could participate in these ways.
- The Comox Valley will be receiving a "Foundry" <https://foundrybc.ca/expansion2020/> (peer support, social support, substance and mental supports, medicine).
- Are looking for a location. Community engagement will be forthcoming.

- A partnership with the arts community would be amazing.

CV Community Health Network and OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep):

- CV Resilience Network is emerging to look at climate change action in a coordinated way.
- We're conducting a Sustainable Development Goals scorecard, we would appreciate more collaboration on that to share data.
- We held community conversations 'Where do we go from here' to learn about how we as a community are experiencing covid, and wider resiliency.
- We are striving to include more voices. We're not expert at, but we need to keep this as a goal.

CV Food Policy Council:

- Love that I'm hearing a lot around collaboration, systems thinking, upstream approach.
- Covid proved that collaboration is necessary, and that it works. We're providing 1000 meals per week around the valley and we couldn't do that without collaboration. There is in-kind support, local donations, emergency grants.
- LUSH Valley wishes to continue to develop its role as an aggregation and distribution role of local food out to agencies.
- We have a real sweetspot of local food being a local economic driver as well as providing that nutritious food that we need.
- Community gardens, involving people in the local food system, entry level, is about supporting community wellbeing. "The wellbeing aspects of being in a healthy food system growing environment should not be understated."
- Getting out of siloed thinking that local governments has been shoved into will be imperative to finding creative solutions that are actually addressing the root causes.

Ministry of Agriculture:

- City can promote local food, permit and promote farmers markets.



## Session 7 - Enhancing quality of life (community health, recreation)

*This session did not include breakouts and the conversation flowed more fluidly between the three questions therefore perspectives to all three questions are listed in the bullets below. Note that the questions also deviated slightly from previous questions (Question 1: Exploring quality of life in Courtenay, Question 2: Exploring threats to quality of life, and Question 3: Ideas for increasing quality of life and climate action and preparedness, including linking to pandemic recovery):*

19-Wing:

- So many in the military are so happy to be posted here.
- What contributes to quality of life? The size is great. Not too large to feel large city stressful, but not so small that we're lacking in anything. Overall very friendly. Outdoor living oriented. Easy to integrate into the community through all the community organizations, so many groups. Many good small businesses, and support for local businesses. Military is welcomed here, we don't receive that type of reception everywhere.
- Threats to quality of life include growth that changes our community, affordable living, employment and education opportunities for families, family physicians including for veterans who desire to retire here, childcare access including early childhood education.
- We feel the unique identity of the Comox Valley, there is much diversity here which is a strength.
- We should celebrate all this diversity as it offers so much for anyone.

CVRD – planning:

- The regional district's quality of life goals are similar to Courtenay's: complete communities, protect the rural land base, local food security, multi-modal transportation (conducting gap analysis now), lowering GHGs and adapting, addressing coastal flooding, environmental stewardship. A real opportunity for alignment right now between Courtenay and the RD.
- Covid highlighted the need for more policy on health and wellness.
- Threats: A lack of collaboration. Hard to tackle complex community topics jurisdiction by jurisdiction. Many issues are regional.

Project Watershed:

- The estuary is a key focus of project watershed. The estuary is a key contributor to local quality of life. City of Courtenay is of central importance to the estuary. Important to remember the role of the Courtenay River, the biggest source of water into the estuary and all the people living and recreating within its watershed. Climate change is threatening key aspects of our identity: warmer water will shift ecological cycles, affect salmon and bird viability.
- What contributes to quality of life: a local ecology that includes humans.
- Threats to quality of life: disregard for the land/water connection. Runoff, water quality. Recreational access to environmental areas if not managed.
- Needs: raingardens for water quality and beautification, like the complete streets project. Stream water quality monitoring. Education of access into environmental areas to ensure their protection. Restoring lost streams. Municipal Natural Asset Initiative.
- Strongly support the hub of developments.
- After years of working in river licensing I know that damming rivers is never the answer. Better to let the land flood, managed retreat.

Courtenay Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee:

- Quality of life includes physical, cognitive, spiritual. Parks and rec needs to be accessible and affordable for all. Need more programming/development of our parks, more nature areas. Need to be able to walk to nature, not drive to. Need more gathering spaces. Need ability to walk/cycle without going on the roads. The connectivity is poor in this regard. Need housing that sees the 'whole person', mixed uses, services and social housing. Need access to doctors. Addictions is an issue.
- Could we be partnering with school districts to access their lands for parks and rec use?
- The pandemic is showing the importance of nature as a healing attribute in our communities, and the interest in growing one's own food, self-sufficiency. Need to see the systems within systems otherwise there can be negative unintended consequences.

Immigrant Welcome Centre:

- Quality of life means feeling safe and hopeful. Hopeful includes access to housing, appropriate employment, utilizes immigrants' skill sets, not survival jobs. There are so many contributions and skills newcomers can make. Safe includes access and inclusion. Everything from how a newcomer is welcomed at City Hall, to learning how to access services they may be unfamiliar with, to be willing to hire someone who's name you may not know how to pronounce.
- Our qualities: we have a lot going on, are vibrant. But there can be challenges for new immigrants – connecting to groups, transportation. They want to get involved.
- We as an organization are investing more in virtual services. Language, tech, economic layered barriers is what we need to consider. Virtual can be more efficient, less need to travel so it's worth investing in.
- Churches and faith groups are often the portal to the larger community for newcomers. They have a large role to play.

CV Family Services Association:

- Quality of life for some is back to basics: essential needs of nutritious food, clothing, shelter. Essential needs depends on sustainable use of resources. This is where environment and poverty connect. We have to be protecting our land and water and thinking where our food comes from. Should include a right to mental and physical health supports. Inclusion, diversity and awareness is connected to accessible education, discovery and allows for every member to have valued input into society. When these pieces in place, diversity thrives. Celebrating, exploring and thriving while having fun. We have such a great natural base of assets to build from.
- Covid has given a chance to talk about issues more openly.

CV Cycling Coalition:

- Courtenay's quality of life: fairly safe community, a myriad of recreation, a retired population, e-bike revolution, the bike shops can't keep in stock!
- Need for: safe cycling infrastructure, pedestrians too, that is connected – that's our main goal. Cooperation of all the jurisdictions. We didn't get the Dike Rd cycling infrastructure because couldn't work together.
- Can offer safe education for new cyclists.
- Our boundaries are our threat to coordinated action.

CV Arts:

- Artists and the arts are essential to everyone's life. If we think about the fact that we engage with arts and culture at some level everywhere we go, everything we do. Whether it be just using the clothes we've put on have been designed have been created by someone, the buildings have been designed and created by someone, the music on the radio, the things we

watch, even the ability to manipulate a conversation via this virtual technology was created by someone who was thinking just a little outside the box.

- We are blessed to be in a community where we have between 5,000 – 7,000 active creative across all the spectrum of creativity. But we don't have a cultural plan as of yet.
- We're really excited by the advancements we've made with the City of Courtenay but the multi-governmental aspect of the valley is very challenging. Cultural plan can help with place making, and with small details like the Puntledge park pedestrian bridge brouhaha. Arts first lens can help ensure this creativity is layered in from the start.
- Making our streets more accessible, more thoughtful, usable, available takes creativity, thoughtfulness and intention and that's what creatives can assist with.
- Belonging, sense of self, and pride in community are all things that Arts & Culture can help facilitate. Working on a Community Arts Centre which could contribute to all these goals: a place to gather, build a sense of belonging, zero barrier, non-judgmental create space.
- The arts are the purveyors of quality of life.
- Threats to quality of life: Silos and lack of regionalization. The needs of vulnerable people need to be put first.

CV Nature:

- Quality of life should expand to include other species. We all can agree nature is important, but if we took on a nature lens, we would ask: what do other species need? We have to learn more then about the environment. Birds are a good doorway into this question: They visit urban areas, are moving around, many birders. We're in an Important Bird Area. When you ask what for example what birds need you become more sensitive to natural cycles, to migration and local habitat, builds eco-literacy. When we take a nature lens, for example when we ask what birds need, we become aware of our local role in a global system, we contribute to the efforts of other countries working on this, our responsibility to these birds who travel well beyond our borders.

CV Community Health Network and OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep):

- Social Determinants of Health as the upstream focus for looking at quality of life. Look them up! <https://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/public-health-topics/social-determinants-of-health/>
- Quality of life means asking how we can make easy for all people to be healthy, including a sense of belonging. This means feeling free from stigma, discrimination, and everyone is seen as a valuable member regardless of their income, race, culture, ability or disability, gender, substance use or abuse.
- Belonging means actively engage all voices in these processes, the vulnerable. Let's not forget that volunteering is a privilege.
- Courtenay's quality of life assets: access to nature, partnerships between staff and community groups. We can build on the covid acts of kindness, build a community of care, inspiring support.

Morrison Creek Streamkeepers:

- I'm ex-military. Moved here for the quality of life.
- Good shopping, lots to do, good size. Research is showing the importance of our accessible nature. When covid hit, I could still do my nature activities. Nature didn't stop for covid and there was comfort in that.
- The threat to our quality of life is that we're destroying some of the things that brought us here.
- Positive trends include: Regional collaboration increasing, genuinely attempting to value nature (Municipal Natural Asset Initiative) – need to continue this, just the tip of the iceberg.

OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair):

- Quality of life means balance of work and leisure. Spiritual and health. Nature is the greatest church but don't forget actual churches as well. Faith based communities are still very important to many people's quality of life. Are churches underutilized assets? Are located throughout the community. Would they be interested in exploring alternative models? (e.g. selling land, re-locating to rental locations, renting out to community arts centre?)
- Positives here: Kayaking at my doorstep, walking to amenities, size, love the diversity.
- Threats: Too many jurisdictional fractions, not streamlining is needed, working more and through community groups is needed. Not enough specialized housing as I age, I'm thinking of moving. There is little focus here on the end of life services, planning has to catch up.

OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep):

- Quality of life must start with basic needs being met. This includes the freedom to live without fear. Institutions can create fear.
- Our municipal structure is a threat to our quality of life. If the inability to work well or efficiently across jurisdictional borders is a barrier to advancing our higher goals, we should call it out.
- Other threats: air quality (seniors, immune compromised). This can dictate what one does in a day – leaving the house or not.

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## Session 8 - A City for Everyone (equity-seeking considerations, how to include more voices, on-going engagement)

*This session did not include breakouts and the conversation was framed more generally around relationship building within the community, and between the City and residents, how to include more voices, and Courtenay's equity-seeking considerations:*

*To prompt discussion staff shared the Provincial Health Services Authority recently released community health profile for Courtenay, with an emphasis on the spatially linked equity-seeking data referred to as the "Canadian Index of Multiple Deprivation":  
[communityhealth.phsa.ca/CHSAHealthProfiles/CHSAHealthReport/Courtenay](http://communityhealth.phsa.ca/CHSAHealthProfiles/CHSAHealthReport/Courtenay)*

CV Family Services Association:

- Silos between our different areas of work, between different community members. More than ever I'm pleased that I'm here and I want to be part of this process.
- Wish to ensure we're diligent of our First Nation's partners. We have work to do here.

CV Community Health Network and OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep):

- Shared a graphic on equity vs equality: <http://www.theinclusionsolution.me/equity-vs-equality-eliminating-opportunity-gaps-education/>
- This work means including people who are the most impacted by City decisions, including better framing of why the decisions are important.
- We need a resolution or commitment to include the equity approach and to move away from a top-down approach to developing policies and programs. People with lived experience are the experts on homelessness.
- Having the time to volunteer and participating in these processes is a privilege. We need to make this opportunity more widely available to others. Financial compensation may need to be used in some instances to get those voices to the table.
- Relationship building is the key to this topic – working with the groups on the ground.
- The Comox Valley Community Health Network will be hosting more community virtual conversations on a number of topics related to 'what has just happened'?

Island Health:

- Has experience with compensation for participation.
- Participatory Action Research approach to her work. An example is the patient's voices network (clients and residents informing policy and programs).
- Being isolated at home makes engaging hard – covid making more difficult. But can build on the local networks to help draw out hard to reach voices. Trust and relationship building and using local knowledge to engage.
- Can look at more local IH data cross-sectional analysis on seniors, workforce, population, gender, mental health, trauma (crime, injuries).
- There is stigma on aging. Age-friendly community planning is an excellent step to reducing that stigma. Anxiety and depression are the largest manifestation in our aging population.

CVRD – planning:

- There are opportunities tap into the projects at play to layer in this consideration. E.g. the regional poverty reduction strategy underway is project that must include voices of those affected by poverty.

- The regional Housing Needs Assessment was a project that blended quantitative and qualitative data (voices).
- The CVRD is looking at a data 'dashboard' to assist with data driven decision making. Could look to also include qualitative data to communicate these views.

OCP Advisory Committee (community health and social rep):

- A significant equity consideration for local governments is about creating structural supports to help folks to access the same services, in a different way based on their needs whether it be universal design, age-friendly or gender considerations.
- In the USA they have Title 9 which ensures the same funding goes to women sports as men's to create gender equitable opportunities.
- Need to go to where the people are (Aids Vancouver Island, St George's Church). The neighbourhood engagement sessions are the opportunity to invite those people in.
- Other communities could work with their networks to ask our questions. Capitalize on their trust.

OCP Advisory Committee (seniors rep + deputy chair):

- Have worked on equity issues for much of my professional research career. Equity is about fairness, it is not equality or diversity. Gender underlies equity issues.
- Gender based budgeting a must.
- Must include hard and soft data. Must ask the right questions of the data – what is happening to what.
- Gender issues: Daycare is number one issue to local economic recovery.
- We can use these virtual sessions as community discussion tools. Sharing perspective of a way of healing. Need funding for these soft powerful conversations. Keep up this great work.

