

The Built Environment shapes our Community's Character

We all know when we're in places that are delightful and make us want to spend time in them. A community's or neighbourhood's look and feel and what makes it memorable and distinct are part of its **character**.

Character elements include building spacing and massing, use and density, landscaping, architectural treatments and public art. Public realm treatments such as streets, plazas, public facilities and parks can also contribute (or detract) from a community's character. These built structures and layouts are referred to as the **Built Environment**.



Greenfield & Infill Development

Greenfield Development refers to developing large areas to an urban or suburban standard that are previously in a natural or agricultural state, often on the periphery of the community. While **Infill Development** occurs within lands within the built-up area of a community to make more efficient use of land. Supporting more infill development is an important consideration of this OCP.



This image is an example of infill development currently being constructed in Courtenay at 680 5th Street. 20 units of townhomes within 5 separate buildings that resemble single family homes.

Some Notes About: ZONING

Community land use goals adopted in the OCP will inform revisions to the Courtenay Zoning Bylaw.

The **Zoning Bylaw** establishes what land uses may occur where and at what densities, how big a lot can be, where development can occur on a property, what setbacks and yards are required, the height and overall massing of structures, number of structures, if landscaping and open space are required (in commercial or multi-family zones), and parking requirements. Zoning Bylaw requirements strongly influence Community Character.

Look for opportunities to get involved in the Zoning Bylaw review in 2021 which will follow adoption of the OCP.



Below, an example of a land use transect showing how zoning can be used to transition from rural to urban environments.
Modified image from: *Neighbourhoods, Proximity to Daily Needs, & Walkability in Form-Based Codes*, 2014
Masters Thesis by Evan Evangelopoulos, Faculty of California Polytechnic State University.

Floodplain

An area of land adjacent to a stream, river, estuary or ocean which experiences flooding during periods of high flow and/or tides. Avoiding further development in the Floodplain is an important consideration of the OCP, especially because floodplain levels will increase due to sea level rise.



Eco Assets & Ecosystem Services

Eco-assets are natural assets such as lakes, rivers, wetlands, aquifers, mountains, forests, riparian areas, estuaries and salt marshes. These features have considerable economic value and **provide goods and services** such as water purification, soil stabilization and fertility, food production and recreation.

Eco-assets and their services are increasingly being recognized as critical to effectively responding to Climate Change. Incorporating them in municipal planning together with human-built infrastructure – roads, water distribution, buildings and parks – contributes to a more healthy, desirable, and resilient community.

Locally, the CV Land Trust and Conservation Partnership created a short film on these concepts at: projectwatershed.ca/eecoassets

GLOSSARY & KEY CONCEPTS OF COMMUNITY PLANNING



Affordable Housing

The technical definition is housing which costs 30% or less of a household's gross annual income. (Rent or mortgage plus taxes and including minimum down payment).

However, an individual's and community's housing needs are diverse and change over time. Affordability of housing considers also the availability and accessibility to the type of housing that an individual needs at a particular time in their life.



The circular 'wheelhouse' of housing above is borrowed from the City of Kelowna's Healthy Housing Strategy. Generally shown as a linear continuum of housing, the wheelhouse better reflects the reality that people may move across categories throughout their lives and that home ownership is not the end goal for all residents.

The Multiple Modes of Transportation

There are many transportation choices, or modes, available to Courtenay. **Multi-modal** refers to the range of options which include currently: vehicle (including an electric vehicle), public transit, taxi, walking, cycling (including electric bike) and even skateboarding or inline skating (are we missing any?).

Human powered forms of transportation are called **active modes** and those with low carbon footprints are called **sustainable modes**.

Walkability is a measure of how friendly an area is to walking. Factors influencing walkability include the presence or absence and quality of footpaths, sidewalks or other pedestrian rights-of-ways, traffic and road conditions, land use patterns, building accessibility, and safety, among others. It's essential to consider **accessibility** to all users, especially those with particular mobility needs, when planning for transportation options.



Some Notes About:

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change refers to significant changes in global temperature, precipitation, wind patterns, storm frequency and severity, and other measures of climate that occur over time. It has now been established that extreme climate changes within the last half century are the result of rising levels of **carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases (GHGs)** in the Earth's atmosphere from the burning of fossil fuels.

Actions that combat and respond to Climate Change are often categorized as mitigation or adaptation activities. **Climate Mitigation** approaches reduce GHG emissions or re-capture carbon in **carbon sinks** using vegetation, soil restoration, and/or technological storage.

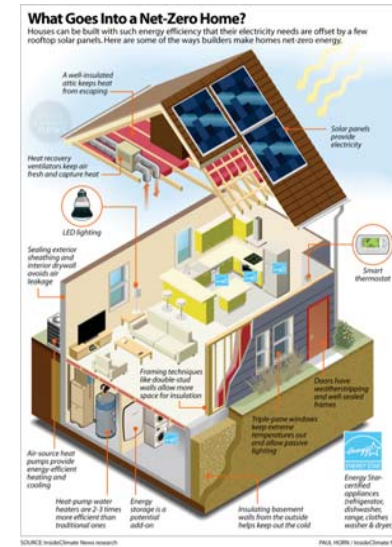
Climate Adaptation approaches are required because some degree of climate change is inevitable due to existing excessive GHGs in the atmosphere.

Adaptation considerations for Courtenay include: rising sea level, more and warmer precipitation in the winter, and drier, hotter summers. These changes will have implications for infrastructure, transportation, agriculture, economic trade, public health and ecosystem stability.

Scientists and governments around the world now recognize that to avoid catastrophic runaway climate change, **societies must become Carbon Neutral within the next thirty years.** This means having a Net Zero carbon footprint by balancing GHG emissions with Climate Mitigation actions and GHG sinks.



BC Building Energy Step Code & Net Zero Buildings



The new BC Building Code is a performance-based regulation that requires that enhanced energy efficiency standards, or 'steps', be met over time.

By 2032 all new construction in BC will be required to be Net Zero Ready. Net Zero buildings produce as much clean energy as they consume and are highly efficient.

Food Security

Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods and an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.

Regional Growth Strategy

The Comox Valley's regional growth plan adopted by the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD). It directs long-term planning for Courtenay, Comox, Cumberland and the unincorporated Electoral Areas (A, B & C), although each community must create more implementation detail through their corresponding OCP. It is a commitment made by municipalities and regional districts to collaborate and ensure sustainable growth management by taking into account shared services, our unique natural environment and available resources.

GLOSSARY & KEY CONCEPTS OF COMMUNITY PLANNING

