

Planning & Development Services

Branch Overview 2026

Comox Valley
REGIONAL DISTRICT

Branch Strategic Plan

The Planning & Development Services Branch has a diverse portfolio including **building and bylaw services, long range planning and sustainability, development planning, transit and facilities, and community development and resilience.**

The Planning & Development Branch Strategic Operational Plan (Branch Plan) is guided by the Board's Strategic Plan, and sets the vision, values, mandate, goals and objectives for the Branch. The Branch Plan is an internal roadmap for building a sustainable, responsive and high-performing branch. It focuses on how the Branch prioritizes work, coordinates across the organization, improves systems, and supports the people who deliver planning and development services.

The Branch Plan is designed to help ensure that Board direction is translated into realistic, well-resourced work plans.

Branch Vision

The CVRD Planning and Development Branch demonstrates excellent leadership in service delivery through its' commitment to providing outstanding, responsive and innovative public services to achieve the CVRD Board's Vision.

Branch Values



Collaborative



Service-Driven



Sustainable



Inclusive



Accountable

Branch Mandate

Ensuring the development of a safe, healthy and resilient region by

- Delivering high quality timely programs and services through a committed team of professional employees
- Administering, implementing and enforcing regulations, by-laws and policies
- Informing, educating and guiding the public
- Providing data and information to assist decision makers
- Formulating economic, social, infrastructure, environmental and other development plans and programs
- Co-ordinating planning and development activities internally and with our member communities and partners
- Collaborating with the public to build our communities
- Effectively utilizing resources

Key Plans & Strategies



Regional Growth Strategy (RGS)

What Is It: Adopted in 2010, the RGS is a shared vision for the entire region through eight goal areas.

What does it do: Gives long range, regional planning direction for policies, plans and projects.



Rural Official Community Plan (OCP)

What Is It: Planning framework for the CVRD's electoral areas.

What does it do: Sets development direction and designates land use categories with specific policies/ objectives for each use.



Regional Climate Action Strategy (CAS)

What Is It: Region-wide framework for responding to climate change.

What does it do: Identifies coordinated mitigation, adaptation, and resilience actions to reduce emissions and protect people and places.



Corporate Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP)

What Is It: Roadmap for reducing energy use and greenhouse-gas emissions from CVRD's operations.

What does it do: Establishes required actions and investments to achieve 50% reduction in corporate emissions below 2019 levels by 2030, net-zero by 2050.



Comox Valley Transit Future Action Plan

What Is It: Joint BC Transit and CVRD plan that sets a long-term vision and priorities for a regional transit network.

What does it do: Guides decisions on future transit service, infrastructure, and investment.



Active Transportation Network Plan (ATNP)

What Is It: Framework for developing a connected, safe, accessible, and convenient network for human-powered travel across the region.

What does it do: Identifies routes, facility design, priority projects, etc. for enhancing active transportation.

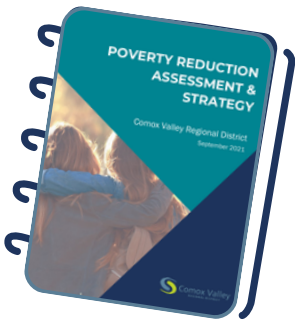
Key Plans & Strategies



Comox Valley Agricultural Plan

What Is It: Finalized in December 2024, the plan aims to strengthen local agricultural and agri-food economy.

What does it do: Identifies 21 recommended actions on regional agricultural priorities.



Poverty Reduction Assessment & Strategy

What Is It: Partnership-based framework for understanding poverty and advancing regional action to reduce it.

What does it do: Identifies collective, equity-centred actions and priorities.

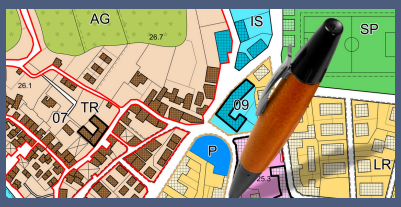


Comox Valley Tourism Strategy

What Is It: Regional strategy adopted in 2025 to steward sustainable tourism development.

What does it do: Guides coordinated actions related to economic resiliency, visitor infrastructure, collaboration, and year-round visitor experiences.

Bylaws & Regulations



Zoning Bylaw No. 520

Regulates how land and buildings can be used and developed within the CVRD's electoral areas.



Building Bylaw No. 681

Governs construction, demolition, and development to ensure building code and regulatory compliance.



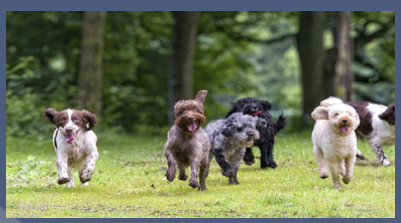
Flood Hazard Bylaw No. 890

Regulates the siting and construction of buildings and structures in land designated as floodplain.



Bylaw No. 1971

Regulates use and sale of fireworks.



Bylaw No. 100

Provides for the impounding and licensing of animals.



Bylaw No. 377

Regulates and prohibits unsightly premises, nuisances and noise.











Long Range Planning & Sustainability

Overview

The Long Range Planning and Sustainability department provides:

- Strategic planning policy development, including major projects or amendments to the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), Official Community Plan (OCP), Local Area Plans (LAP) and other strategic initiatives;
- Project management, planning, coordination and implementation of sustainability and climate change projects and initiatives;
- Public engagement and consultation activities and collaboration with municipal and provincial staff, First Nations and rights holders, and internal/external partners on key projects and policy initiatives;
- Data analysis, policy review, technical studies and research on emerging land use and planning matters such as housing, active transportation, natural hazards, and climate change initiatives in order to provide recommendations on regional growth;
- Grant writing and applications to seek out funding to support the CVRD's policy initiatives and long-range planning priorities;
- Strategic support and collaboration with other departments including Parks, Emergency Management, Strategic Initiatives and Liquid Waste Planning.

Team Structure

Manager of Long Range Planning & Sustainability

Planner II

Planner I

Department Funding

Service 512

Regional Growth Strategy (regional service, except Denman & Hornby)

Service 503

Planning Policy (electoral area service, except Denman & Hornby)

Grants

Some project funding comes from Provincial or other successful grant applications

Key Department Work (2026)



Community Heritage Register
Tool to identify properties and integrate heritage conservation into land use planning and decisions.



Regional Climate Action Strategy
Based on extensive engagement with municipalities and community partners, the strategy identifies high-impact climate actions for mitigation, adaptation, and resilience.



qapoje Park
LRPS- initiated coastal resilience and park revitalization project in Electoral Area B (grant funded)



Flood Hazard Bylaw
Regulatory bylaw to apply 2021 coastal flood hazard mapping, clarify development requirements and minimize impacts due to projected flood events.



Saratoga Beach Local Area Plan
Plan to guide growth, housing, servicing, transportation, environmental protection and community character in the Saratoga Beach settlement node over the next 5 - 10 years.



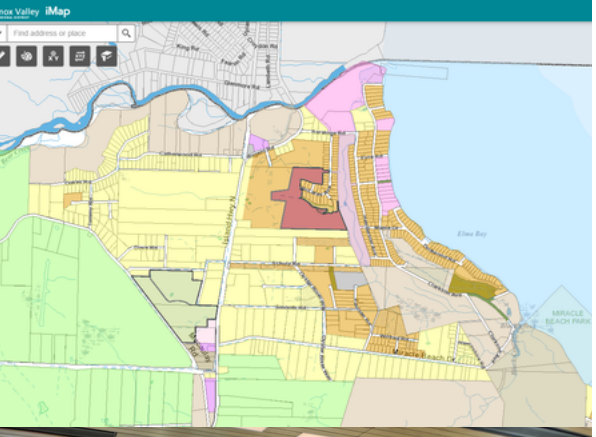
K'ómoks Estuary Flood Resilience Strategy
Collaborative project to improve flood resilience along the K'ómoks Estuary (grant funded).

Upcoming Priorities (2027 -)

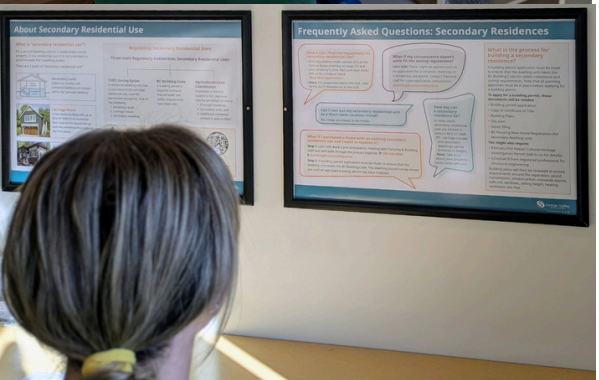
- **Pélxwikw / Goose Spit Climate Resiliency Project (grant funded)**
- **Royston Road Multi-Use Path (grant funded)**
- **Royston Viewing Platform**
- **Local Government Climate Action Program (grant funded)**











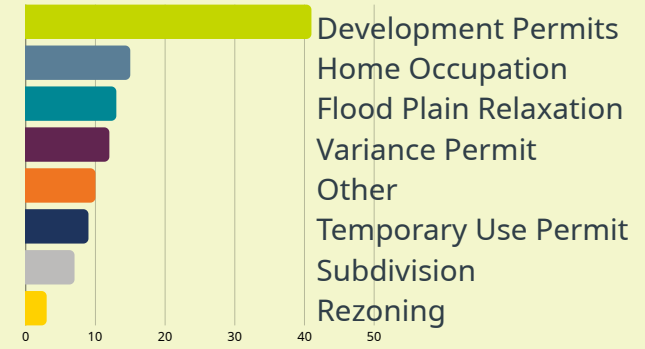
Development Planning

Overview

The Development Planning Department provides:

- Planning application advice and pre-application meetings for property owners and applicants;
- Review and processing of rezoning, Official Community Plan amendment, development permit, development variance permit, temporary use permit, floodplain exemption, home occupation and Board of Variance applications;
- Review of subdivision and land-use referrals;
- Public notice, staff reports, recommendations and presentations for the Advisory Planning Commissions, Electoral Areas Services Committee and CVRD Board.

2026 by the numbers (year to date)



104
Pre-application meetings

143
Committee Presentations

107
Planning applications

Team Structure

- Manager of Development Planning
- Planning Services Coordinator
- Senior Planner
- Planner II
- Planner Is

Department Funding

Service 500
Planning Service (electoral area service, except Denman & Hornby)

Permit Fees
Planning application fees vary based on type

Other
Revenue such as periodic senior government grants

Key Department Work (2026)



Planning Fees, Procedures and Delegation Bylaw
Updated procedures, fees and public notice requirements to make planning applications clearer and more consistent.



Service improvements
Clarified and consistent processes to help applicants understand requirements, submit complete applications and inform residents.



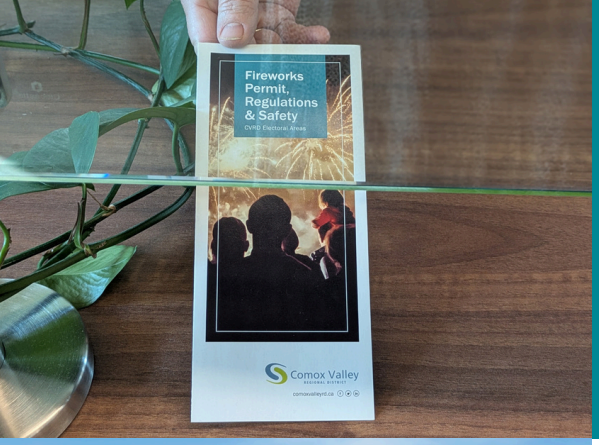
Cityworks Permits, Licensing and Land Implementation *(in progress)*
New digital system for managing applications by bringing proposals, plans, documents, fees, comments and decisions into one place for tracking, coordination and access to information.



Planning Application Review
Ongoing review of land-use applications, permits, variances, and referrals to support well-informed Board decisions. Includes applicant meetings, site visits, staff reports and application process support.

Upcoming Priorities (2027 -)

- **Implement Cityworks for application tracking, records and communication;**
- **Early coordination with K'ómoks First Nation, agencies and CVRD departments;**
- **Enhance public information and pre-application service so applicants understand requirements earlier**
- **Foundational studies to support RGS/ OCP reviews**



Bylaw Services







Overview

The Bylaw Services department provides:

- Enforcement of compliance with CVRD bylaws through education and issuance of warning and offence tickets pursuant to the CVRD ticketing bylaws;
- Evidence gathering and necessary documentation for effective enforcement of CVRD bylaws, and attendance at court hearings as required;
- Regular patrols of CVRD parks, and communicating with the general public about CVRD bylaws (education focus);
- Correspondence to complainants, alleged offenders, and public and government agencies.

2026 by the numbers (year to date)

233
Files opened/ actioned

105
Tickets issued

18
Adjudication hearings

26
Payment hearings (Provincial Court)

5
Legal action files in progress

Check out the Good Neighbour Guide for CVRD bylaws, contact information and common inquires)

Team Structure

Senior Manager of Building and Bylaw Compliance

Bylaw Compliance Coordinator

Bylaw Compliance Officers

Seasonal Bylaw Officer

Department Funding

Service 502 — Bylaw Enforcement Service

Service 291 — Electoral Areas Bylaw Enforcement Service

Service 299 — Denman & Hornby Islands Bylaw Enforcement Service

Key Department Work (2026)



Strategic communications project. This guide was developed to provide an overview of key bylaws referenced by residents, focusing on neighbourly actions. It covers a range of topics (e.g. property maintenance, noise, and pet ownership).



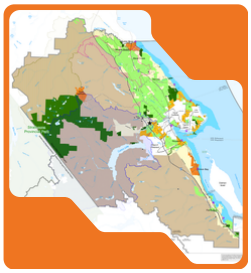
Feasibility study completed for an animal control service on Denman and Hornby Island. Study included significant public engagement and option evaluation, proposed a Tier 2 service level and assent vote process.



Animal Control



Unsightly Premises/ Nuisance Properties



Land Use/ Zoning



Noise Control

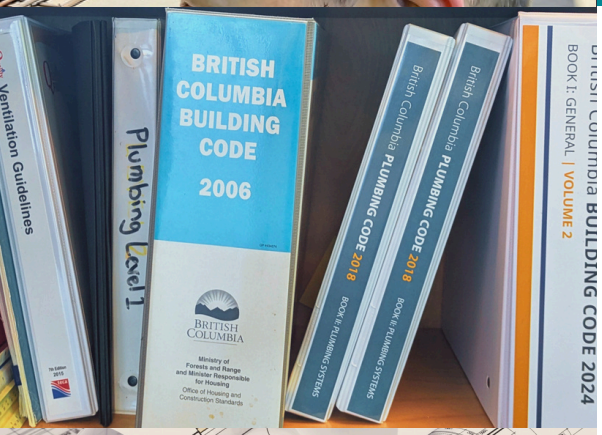
Upcoming Priorities (2027 -)

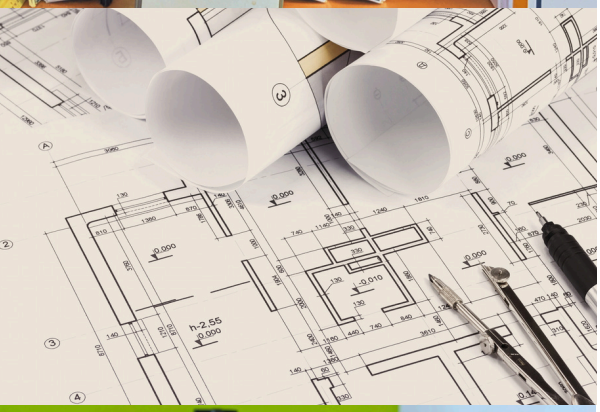
- **Implement Cityworks for receiving online complaints/reports, administration progress on all bylaw files, tracking of enforcement and Provincial Court requirements;**
- **Implementation of Animal Control Service for Denman and Hornby Islands pending approval;**
- **Increased support to water services for patrols, complaint tracking and enforcement as required.**

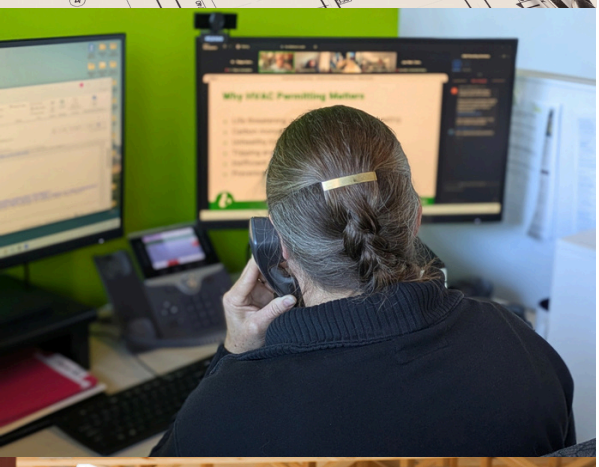


Providing enforcement support services to other CVRD departments including **Water, Parks, and Waste Management**











Building Services

Overview

The Building Services department provides:

Front-line customer service on all matters relating to building construction and inspection, including archive searches;

Review of documents including plans, certificates, and reports to ensure compliance;

Oversight to ensure all work is undertaken in accordance with the BC Building Code, provincial regulations and CVRD bylaws, tracking building information for BC Assessment;

Complete site inspections for projects including plumbing, footing, drainage, framing, insulation, etc. and complex buildings.

2026 by the numbers (year to date)

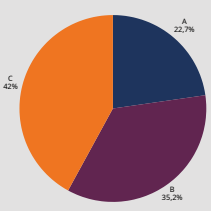
1025
Inspections completed

275
Archive research requests

176
Building Permits issued

58
New single family dwellings

Area A: 23%
Area B: 35%
Area C: 42%



Team Structure

- Manager of Building Services
- Building Services Coordinator
- Senior Development Technicians
- Building Inspectors

Department Funding

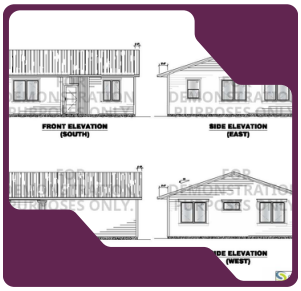
Service 285

Building Inspection Service (electoral area service, except Denman & Hornby)

Permit Fees

Building application fees vary based on type (cost recovery)

Key Department Work (2026)



Pre-Approved Secondary Dwelling Plans
Free building plans aligned with zoning and building requirements, to reduce review time and upfront costs.



Building on Mount Washington
Updated building info package including communications materials and website update, residential mailout and development permit clarifications.



Zero-Carbon Step Code Implementation
Accelerated adoption of the Zero Carbon Step Code to advance CVRD greenhouse gas reduction goals.



Online Appointment Booking System
New system to allow applicants to make an appointment to meet with a staff person through easy online portal.



Service Delivery Review
Project to improve Building service delivery, including a public Client Satisfaction Survey and creating a new Building Services coordinator position.



Cityworks Digital Building Permit Software *(in progress)*
Implement new digital software to streamline applications through a public-facing portal, improve collaboration with other departments, and strengthen communication with the public.

Upcoming Priorities (2027 -)

- **Implement Cityworks Digital Building Permit system;**
- **Building Bylaw updates and housekeeping;**
- **Adoption of Energy Level 3 Zero Carbon Step Code (January)**
- **Launching quarterly Builders E-Newsletter**
- **Review archive research request procedure**



Transit and Facilities









Overview

The Transit and Facilities department provides:

Public transit and handyDART service (with BC Transit) throughout the Comox Valley, including establishing service levels, schedules and routing, future transit priorities and plans, fares, budgets and key regional transit infrastructure as well as communication and outreach efforts.

Management and oversight of the CVRD corporate fleet including policy development, vehicle acquisition and disposal, repairs and maintenance as well as strategic initiatives such as transitioning to zero emissions vehicles and asset management.

Management and oversight of the CVRD corporate offices including renovations, repairs and maintenance, budgeting, asset management and day to day operations.

Delivery of CVRD's corporate climate response including policies, programs, funding as well as planning, implementation and support of decarbonization projects involving corporate facilities, fleet and equipment

Oversight of electoral area streetlighting services including budgeting and liaising with BC Hydro for maintenance and repairs of leased lights, as well as direct maintenance of CVRD owned lights.

Regional shared micromobility program (Evolve) and support of active regional transportation initiatives.

Team Structure

- Manager of Transit and Facilities
- Corporate Climate Response Coordinator
- Transport and Facilities Coordinator

Department Funding

Service 780
Transit (plus bus fare revenue and Provincial cost share

Service 710 - 750
Street lighting

Grants
Senior Government transit grants

Key Department Work (2026)



Micromobility
Extended Evolve program to 2029, added electric scooters, expanded parking network, Inclusive Mobility Program.



Transit Infrastructure
Completed construction of transit exchanges at North Island College and Downtown Comox as well as transit queue-jump projects.



Transit Fares
Implementation of new transit fare structure and programs to support low-income residents.



Transit Service
Expanded service to West Courtenay, Food Bank, Farmers Market and Sports Centre/Vanier, added transit and handyDART services on some Sundays, holidays, and peak times.



Corporate GHG Reductions
Supported decarbonization at key facilities, renovation of the Comox Valley Aquatic Centre, implementing green building features at the Union Bay Firehall, energy studies and designs, and securing grant funding.

Upcoming/ Ongoing Priorities (2027 -)

- **Complete construction of transit exchanges in Downtown and South Courtenay, and at Oyster River, as well as queue-jump projects.**
- **Undertake transit service changes to operationalize new exchanges, remove service added during sewer conveyance project, and address on-time performance.**
- **Update 2022 Transit Future Action Plan to determine priorities and optimize service.**
- **Initiate decarbonization renovations of Comox Valey Sports Centre and Harmston Office, advance studies and designs at other facilities, secure low carbon fuel supply.**











Community Development & Resilience

Overview

The Community Development & Resilience department provides:

- Relationship building and community partnership management & development
- Social, Agriculture, and Tourism Sector engagement, support and development
- Strategic Planning and Implementation – internal and external collaboration and policy development
- Resident engagement related to community well-being, inclusion, and systems change
- Program and project management, research and data analysis

Key Department Work (2026)



Community Partnerships
Policy Implementation, Comox Valley Community Health Network, Comox Valley Situation Table (both grant funded)



NEW & Expanded
5-Year Regional Municipal Regional District Tax Strategic Business Plan

Team Structure

- Community Development & Resilience Manager
- Agricultural Planning Coordinator
- Social Planning Coordinator

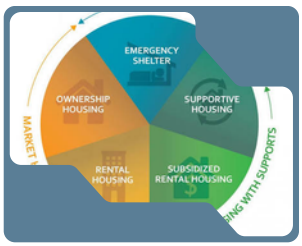
Department Funding

- **Service 512** — Regional Growth Strategy
- **Service 451** — Homelessness Supports Service
- **Service 503** — Planning policy
- **Service 500** — Planning Service

Key Department Work (2026)



Homelessness Supports Service
Grant Program & Service Delivery, Policy 52 Review



Community Homelessness Plan
Engagement and final draft development



Comox Valley Poverty Data Walk Project
With Community Health Network



Poverty Reduction Plan
With Community Health Network

experience comox valley

Comox Valley Tourism Service

- **Service 550** — Regional Tourism
- **Municipal Regional District Tax** — Visitor-paid
- **Grants** — Provincial grants
- Tourism Development Coordinator (Contracted)

2026 by the numbers (year to date)

$255K
Awarded in homelessness support services grants

12.5K+
Visitors assisted at the Visitor Centre & mobile info kiosks

$50K
Grants awarded for local tourism events & experiences



Upcoming Priorities (2027 -)

- **Community Homelessness Plan Finalization & Implementation**
- **HSS Grants Intake and Adjudication Process**
- **Agricultural Sector Resource Portal**
- **MRDT OAP Policy Implementation**
- **Online accommodators' platform; Resident Sentiment Survey; Expanded Events & Experience grant program; Visitor Ambassador Program**

Collaboration

Regional Partners

- City of Courtenay
- Town of Comox
- Village of Cumberland
- K'omoks First Nation

Provincial

- MOTT
- Ministry of Agriculture
- VIHA
- ALC
- School District/Comox Valley Schools

Technical Organizations

- BC Transit
- BCAA/Evolve
- BC Housing
- BOABC
- LTSA
- Technical Safety BC
- BC Assessment

Federal

- DND/ CFB
- CMHC
- Statistics Canada

Community Groups

- Project Watershed
- Community Associations