

Table APX-2 Alignment with CVRD Regional Growth Strategy Growth Management Policies

Related RGS Growth Management Policies OCP Growth Management and Land Use Policies

Development within Core Settlement Areas

Municipal Areas are a type of Core Settlement Area defined by the boundaries of the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, and Village of Cumberland. A minimum of 90 percent of the growth within the Comox Valley will be directed to Core Settlement Areas, in order to promote the efficient use of land and public infrastructure, provide densities supportive of alternative transportation choices, and achieve environmental benefits resulting from compact growth.

Additionally, directing growth to Core Settlement Areas will limit sprawl and curtail urban encroachment into Rural Areas, working landscapes, and natural areas. The strategy for managing Courtenay's growth is to build upon, strengthen, and connect existing successful nodes and corridors within existing neighbourhoods across the city by guiding the majority of future growth toward a series of identified distinct and connected higher–density mixed-use areas and corridors along the Frequent Transit Network

Future growth is focused within existing Courtenay boundaries. The large majority of future residential and commercial growth is focused in Town Centres/Corridors and Neighbourhood Centres to support compact growth, prevent urban encroachment on natural and rural areas, optimize infrastructure efficiency, and enable an increasing proportion of residents to meet their daily needs by walking, cycling, and transit.

Outside of Town Centres and Neighbourhood Centres, modest growth is permitted to further support compact growth and improve housing choices for a greater diversity of residents.

Related RGS Growth Management Policies

OCP Growth Management and Land Use Policies

Town Centres

Town Centres are to be identified within all Core Settlement Areas. These areas are to be developed as walkable and complete communities, providing for the broadest range of housing, employment, and commercial uses.

Town Centres should support transit-oriented development through the establishment of minimum densities, in the range of 100–150 combined residents and jobs per hectare with a reduced minimum of 75 combined residents and jobs per hectare for ground-oriented housing, within OCPs.

Town Centre & Urban Corridor designations are established within the OCP as the areas of the Downtown, Lower Ryan Centre, Upper Ryan Centre, and Cliffe Avenue Corridor. Land uses in these areas include higher-density residential and diverse commercial uses, including the tallest residential buildings in the city. With projected future growth, the densities in these areas will meet, exceed, or move toward the target densities of 100–150 residents and jobs per hectare, building on existing densities of homes and jobs.

Neighbourhood Centres are also established within the OCP. They will include lower densities and range of uses than the Town Centres, but will form an important function in the growth framework of a series of connected neighbourhood hubs.

Other land use and transportation policies, as well as development permit area guidelines prioritize walking, cycling, and transit use by: improving the quality of the pedestrian realm; and providing safe and efficient access to cycling infrastructure and amenities, and transit service.

Identification of Settlement Expansion Areas within OCPs

Settlement Expansion Areas shall be identified within the official community plan of the Municipal Area intending to incorporate it. Such official community plans shall contain policies for Settlement Expansion Areas consistent with specific policies contained in the RGS pertaining to servicing and requirement of local area plans.

The OCP does not identify any Settlement Expansion Areas to be included into the City within the time horizon of this Plan. The growth strategy is to first intensify uses within the existing Town Centres and Corridor, Neighbourhood Centres, and wider urban residential areas rather than expanding Courtenay's boundaries.

 Table APX-3
 Alignment with CVRD Regional Growth Strategy Policy Areas

 $Wherever\ numbers\ are\ listed\ next\ to\ OCP\ objectives,\ the\ numbers\ refer\ to\ the\ objective\ number\ in\ the\ thematic\ chapter.$

RGS Policy Goals by Policy Area	OCP Policy Objectives by Policy Area
Housing Ensure a diversity of housing options to meet evolving demographics and needs.	One of the OCP goals is Housing Choices for All. This topic is addressed primarily within the Affordable Housing policy chapter. Stated policies are designed to encourage and support the development of a wide range of housing options. Particular attention is given to increasing affordable housing supply that appropriately responds to the regional Housing Needs Assessment within the context of a changing, and aging, population. The City continues to collect, monitor, and analyze local housing trends and take necessary actions in partner with neighbouring jurisdictions and community partners. The objectives for this policy area are:
	 A variety of housing options are permitted and positively integrated in all neighbourhoods.
	2. No net loss of rental housing.
	3. New non-market housing is actively pursued and supported.
	4. Incentives are in place to create below-market housing.
	5. Partnership approaches are in place to deliver and manage non- or below-market housing.
	6. Development application approval processes are streamlined, transparent, and easy to understand.

OCP Policy Objectives by Policy Area

Ecosystems, Natural Areas and Parks

Protect, steward, and enhance the natural environment and ecological connections and systems. One of the OCP goals is More Space for and Time in Nature. This topic is addressed across a number of OCP chapters including the Natural Environment chapter, Parks and Recreation chapter, green infrastructure approaches within the Municipal Infrastructure and Streets and Transportation chapters, as well as the Environment Development Permit Area guidelines. These chapters include a range of policies that respond to protecting remaining critical habitat, stewarding ecological assets across public and private lands, restoring ecosystems and connectivity corridors, valuing ecological assets, and investing in green infrastructure to provide public services. Select policy objectives that meet these goals include:

Natural Environment chapter:

- 1. Remaining sensitive ecosystems are protected; lost or degraded sensitive ecosystems are restored.
- 2. The K'ómoks Estuary is 'kept living' (Q'waq'wala7owkw) and environmental, Indigenous, subsistence and recreational values are protected and restored.
- 3. Courtenay's air, water, and soil are clean.
- 4. The urban forest is healthy and growing towards a 34-40% canopy cover target.
- 5. Development practices meet ecosystem health and site adaptive design objectives.
- 6. Information and opportunities are in place for the wider community to play an active role in the protection, restoration, and stewardship of the natural environment.

Parks and Recreation chapter:

- Parkland in the form of natural areas, open spaces, and outdoor recreation is of sufficient amounts, is well-connected, equitably distributed, and is of high quality to enhance livability throughout the city.
- 5. Partnerships are in place to achieve parks and recreation objectives.

Municipal Infrastructure chapter:

3. Natural and engineered forms of *green infrastructure* are integrated to manage rainwater resources, protect water and air quality, maintain ecosystem function, provide flood control, and address and adapt to climate impacts.

Streets and Transportation chapter:

4. Excess existing road space is repurposed to support public life, active travel, and green infrastructure.

OCP Policy Objectives by Policy Area

Local Economic Development

Achieve a sustainable, resilient, and dynamic local economy that supports Comox Valley businesses and the region's entrepreneurial spirit.

One of the OCP goals is Economic Success Emerges from Community Values and Place. This topic is addressed primarily by the OCP Managing Growth policies and Land Use designations which support the land use employment opportunities within Town Centres and other employment lands throughout the City.

The Local Economy chapter includes more specific policies that recognize the City's primary role in local economic development is to create the physical conditions for high quality of life and economic success through responsible management of public assets and sustainable levels of high-quality service delivery. The chapter also recognizes the importance of supporting key sectors within the local economy such as low-carbon construction and building retrofitting industry and value-added, community-based businesses such as arts and culture, local food processing, specialty forest products, and other value-added product manufacturing. The specific objectives for this policy area are:

- 1. Business retention, development, and investment are increasingly green, low carbon, climate resilient, and equity-responsive.
- 2. Local economic development opportunities are regionally coordinated.
- 3. Municipal regulations and services are supportive of economic development within the overall long-term vision of environmental and social responsibility.
- 4. People are at the heart of local economic development and are able to access adequate supports to participate in the economy.

OCP Policy Objectives by Policy Area

Transportation

Develop an accessible, efficient and affordable *multi-modal transportation network* that connects Core Settlement Areas and designated Town Centres, and links the Comox Valley to neighbouring communities and regions.

One of the OCP goals is Functional Transportation Choices. This topic is also addressed primarily by the OCP Managing Growth policies and Land Use designations which support the compact, mixed-use, complete community type of growth management policies identified in the RGS. The growth modelling exercise explicitly evaluated the ideal locations for new *infill* development to support transit supportive densities, maximize '10-minute' walking neighbourhoods, and acknowledges transportation as the most significant contributor to local GHG emissions.

The Streets and Transportation chapter includes more specific policies to reduce dependency on automobiles, boost active mobility and transit use, regard streets as first and foremost places for people, reduce the amount of land dedicated to parking, and provide charging infrastructure to support the mainstreaming of electric vehicles. The specific objectives for this policy area are:

- 1. 30% of trips are by walking, cycling, and transit by 2030.
- 2. Transportation investments prioritize walking, cycling, and transit.
- 3. Street standards include attention to safety, accessibility, and comfort at the pedestrian scale.
- 4. Excess existing road space is repurposed to support public life, active travel, and green infrastructure.
- 5. Zero emissions, electrified transportation is supported and increasingly the norm.
- 6. The amount of land dedicated to parking is minimized.
- 7. Parking standards reflect electric vehicle and cycling needs.
- 8. New development integrates multi-modal transportation network planning into site design.
- 9. Educational programs to support transit use, walking, cycling, and car sharing are widely available.
- 10. Opportunities for innovation in transportation are explored.
- 11. The City shows corporate leadership in the City's fleet and on City properties.

Parks and greenways will also form an important part of the active transportation network as is identified as an objective in the Parks and Recreation chapter.

OCP Policy Objectives by Policy Area

Infrastructure

Provide affordable, effective, and efficient services and infrastructure that conserves the land, water, and energy resources.

The topic of sustainable service delivery is addressed principally through the Managing Growth policies and Land Use designations which affirm that compact and contained community growth is responsible fiscal municipal Asset Management practice. The OCP chapter on Municipal Infrastructure contains a number of specific policies to direct the investment and renewal of municipal infrastructure services that achieve multiple community objectives.

Additionally, the topic of low carbon, energy and water efficient buildings and landscape are addressed in the Buildings and Landscape chapter. Related policies ensure energy and water conservation will be designed into new developments and that the City will exemplify leadership in its facilities as a source of public awareness and technical demonstration. The specific objectives for these policy areas are:

Municipal Infrastructure:

- 1. Infrastructure and services are resilient to risks and impacts of climate change.
- 2. Infrastructure investments are guided by a multiple bottom line decision-making approach: this means energy efficient, fiscally responsible, equitably distributed, sustainable levels of service that protect public health, safety, and the environment.
- 3. Natural and engineered forms of *green infrastructure* are integrated to manage rainwater resources, protect water and air quality, maintain ecosystem function, provide flood control, and address and adapt to climate impacts.
- 4. Solid waste, potable water, sanitary sewer and rain and stormwater infrastructure life-cycle costs are minimized by increasing conservation actions and reducing the need to develop new infrastructure capacity.
- 5. Third party utility providers such as energy and communications utilities are low-carbon and reliable.

Buildings and Landscape:

- 1. Existing buildings are upgraded for high energy and water efficiency, net-zero emissions, and renewable energy production.
- 2. New buildings are highly energy and water efficient, perform at net-zero emissions standard and produce renewable energy.
- 3. Living landscape elements are incorporated for water, energy, and biodiversity purposes.
- 4. The designs of new buildings complement neighbourhood character.
- 5. Innovation in building performance, accessibility, and construction waste diversion is encouraged.
- 6. Municipal buildings and site design demonstrate leadership in building performance, accessibility, and design.

OCP Policy Objectives by Policy Area

Food Systems

Support and enhance the agricultural and aquaculture sectors and increase local food security.

The OCP contains a chapter on Food Systems which is a new addition to Courtenay's focus policy areas. This addition has been included to recognize the important land use considerations of a viable local food system. Policies are designed to support more food production, education, and promotion throughout the city and surrounding lands in order to contribute to regional food security and as an economic development opportunity. The K'ómoks Estuary is also acknowledged as an important subsistence and aquaculture resource for the K'ómoks First Nation.

Most significantly, however, is the emphasis on delaying Courtenay boundary extensions through the Managing Growth policies. This will reduce pressure on surrounding rural and agricultural lands for urban development. The specific objectives for this policy area are:

Food Systems chapter:

- 1. All residents have access to affordable, healthy, culturally appropriate, and local food outlets within walking distance, including food access services and programs when needed
- 2. All residents have access to food growing opportunities within walking distance.
- 3. Lands supporting traditional foods are protected and traditional practices are celebrated.
- 4. Agricultural lands are protected and are compatible with urban uses.
- 5. Food processing, warehousing, and distribution activities are permitted in urban areas of Courtenay.
- 6. Food security actions are regionally coordinated.

Natural Environment chapter:

2. The K'ómoks Estuary is 'kept living' (Q'waq'wala7owkw) and environmental, indigenous, subsistence, and recreational values are protected and restored.

OCP Policy Objectives by Policy Area

Public Health and Safety

Support a high quality of life through the protection and enhancement of community health, safety, and well-being. Community well-being is a cardinal direction of the OCP which recognizes the *social determinants of health* as a guiding and systemic framework for understanding individual and public health outcomes and intervention approaches. As such, the topic of public health and safety is embedded throughout all of the OCP policy chapters by ensuring safe air, water and soil quality standards, promoting safe and convenient active transportation opportunities to support active lifestyles, ensuring adequate access to high-quality outdoor and indoor open spaces and recreational amenities for physical and mental health, promoting access to food growing opportunities and food programs, and ensuring adequate *affordable housing* for all residents.

Equity is another cardinal direction of the OCP in recognition that some traditional planning practices have resulted in policies, programs, and regulations that disproportionately impact and stymie the progress of some groups of people, thereby affecting their health, safety, and wellbeing. Therefore, the OCP strives to ensure that equity considerations are embedded in all municipal regulations and service delivery.

The chapter on Social Infrastructure addresses most specifically *equity-priority* considerations and needs within Courtenay with supportive policies and the following objectives:

- 1. All Courtenay residents experience equitable access to services.
- 2. Coordinated, inclusionary, and systems-based responses are in place to address evolving complex social issues.
- 3. Physical spaces are designed with the needs for social connection and accessibility in mind.
- 4. Neighbourhood and community development-based organizing are leveraged as a source of community capacity and resilience.

Climate Change

Minimize regional greenhouse gas emissions and plan for adaptation.

With the Courtenay City Council declaration of a Climate Crisis in 2019, the OCP was directed to consider climate change mitigation and adaptation at all stages of its development. A net-zero GHG target by 2050 was later adopted to guide the policy proposals. Therefore GHG modelling and policies to achieve net-zero has been considered in all policies that either directly or indirectly influence Courtenay's community-wide emissions. Climate adaptation is another critical consideration of the OCP, although one that will require further detailed work to standardize climate adaptation measures into all City services, infrastructure, and emergency responses.

Given that a climate lens is fundamentally embedded into the OCP, objectives, and policies that advance climate action and prepare for climate change are considered and included in all the policy areas identified above.