

Comox Valley Regional District Airshed Roundtable

Roundtable Meeting #4

June 24th, 2021, 1:00pm
Zoom online platform



Land Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge that the land we gather on is on the Unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.



Agenda

- Welcome (5 min)
- Steering Committee update (5 min)
- Roundtable process update (10 min)
- Working group presentations (60 min)
- Break (5 min)
- Round of feedback (60)
- Closing and next steps (5 min)

As we have limited time together, you will notice us being strict on time.

We are asking everyone to write any questions or comments using the chat today.

If you need support using the chat let us know!



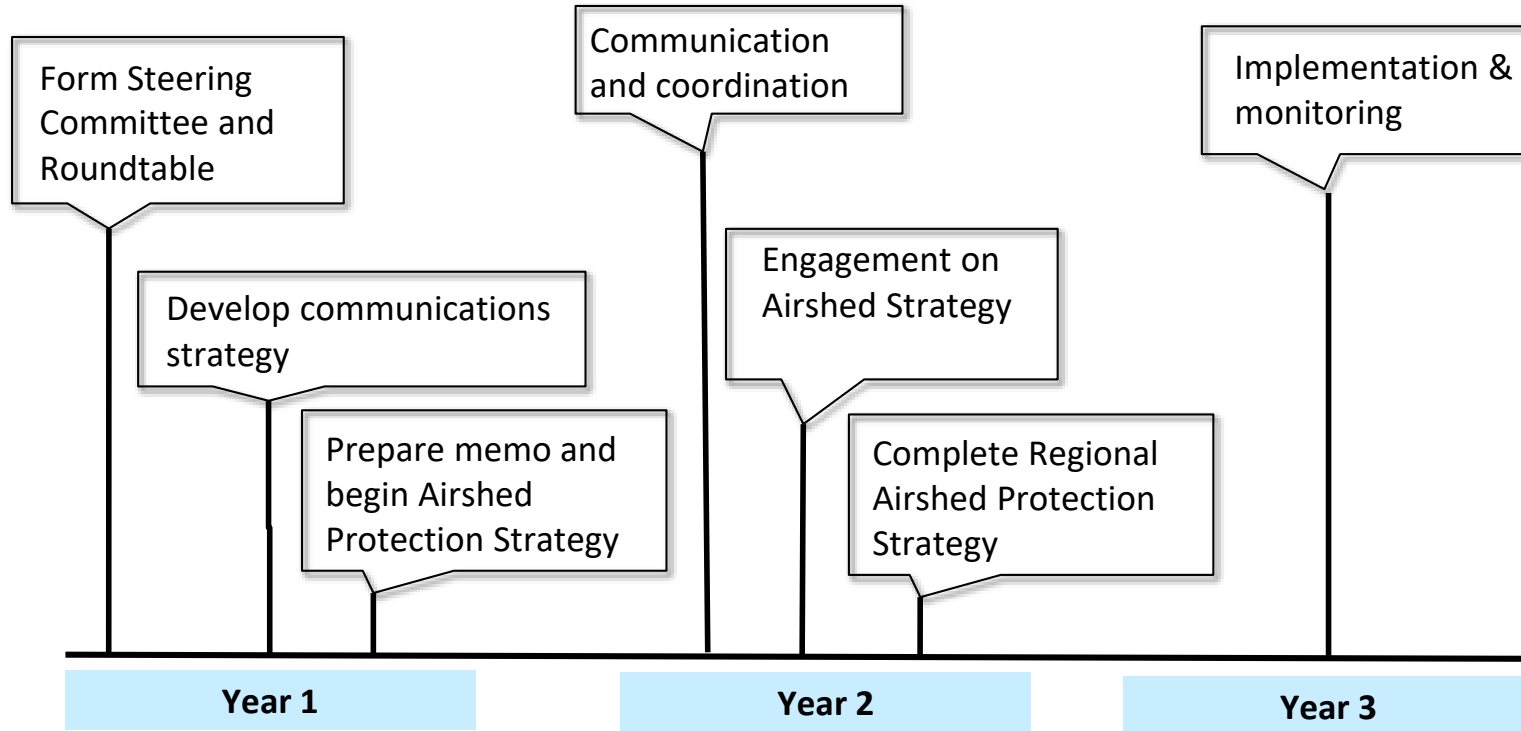
Steering committee update

- Two meetings held since last Roundtable: April and June
- Review and confirm draft strategy elements
 - Reviewed and confirmed proposed changes to Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles based on Roundtable input
 - Ready to move forward with strategies and actions
 - Roundtable to conduct final review of Vision, Goals, Guiding Principles in Fall before seeking broader public input
- Process update – Working Groups
 - Establish three Working Groups composed of Roundtable members that volunteered, with diverse representation
 - Opportunity to harness deeper input from Roundtable expertise to recommend actions to the whole Roundtable
 - At least one Steering Committee representative who will report back to Roundtable
- Engagement on strategy development
 - Confirmed intent to conduct public input survey in fall on the draft strategy
 - Outreach to vulnerable populations will be valuable, look to Roundtable membership to support linkage and distribution
- Working session on Goal 2
 - Initial brainstorm of opportunities and actions for Goal 2: Effective coordination of our efforts
 - To be completed in summer and discussed with Roundtable in fall

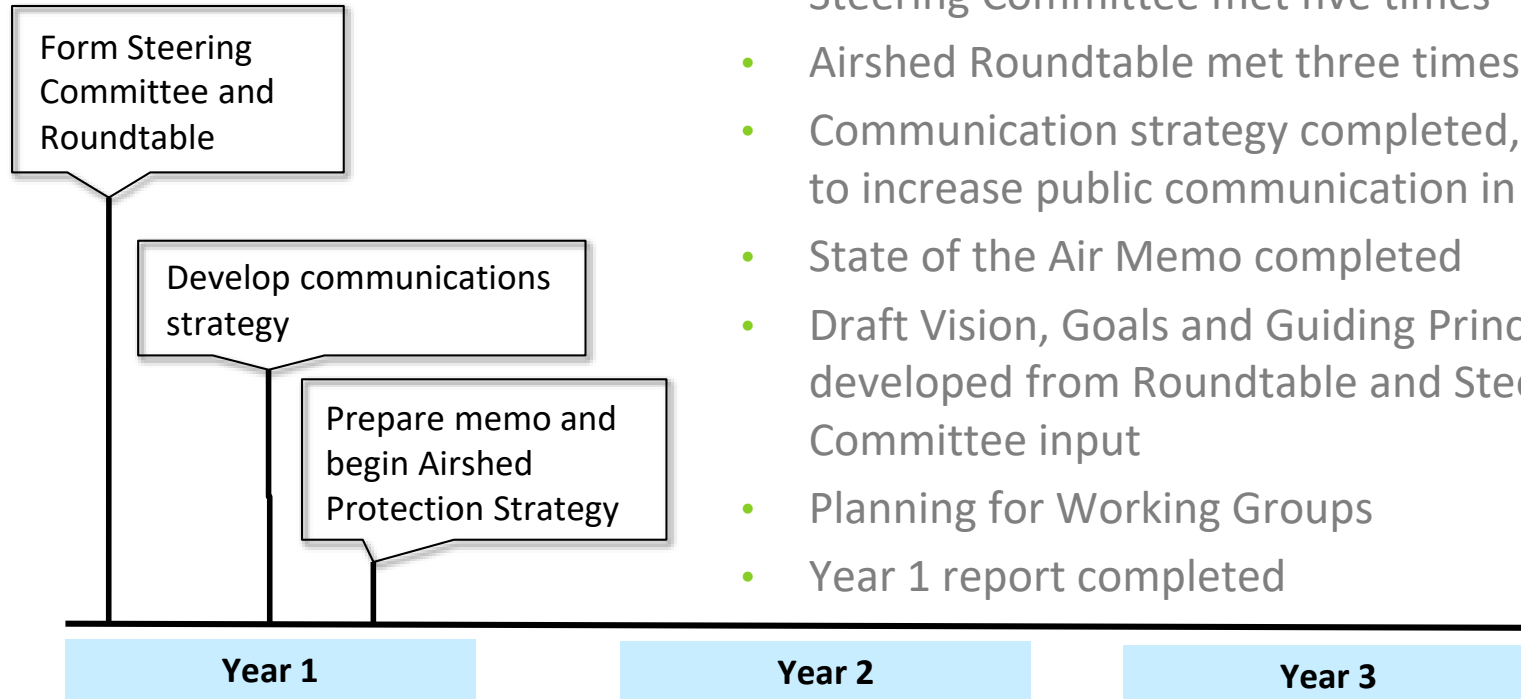


Airshed Roundtable process update

Project process



Project process

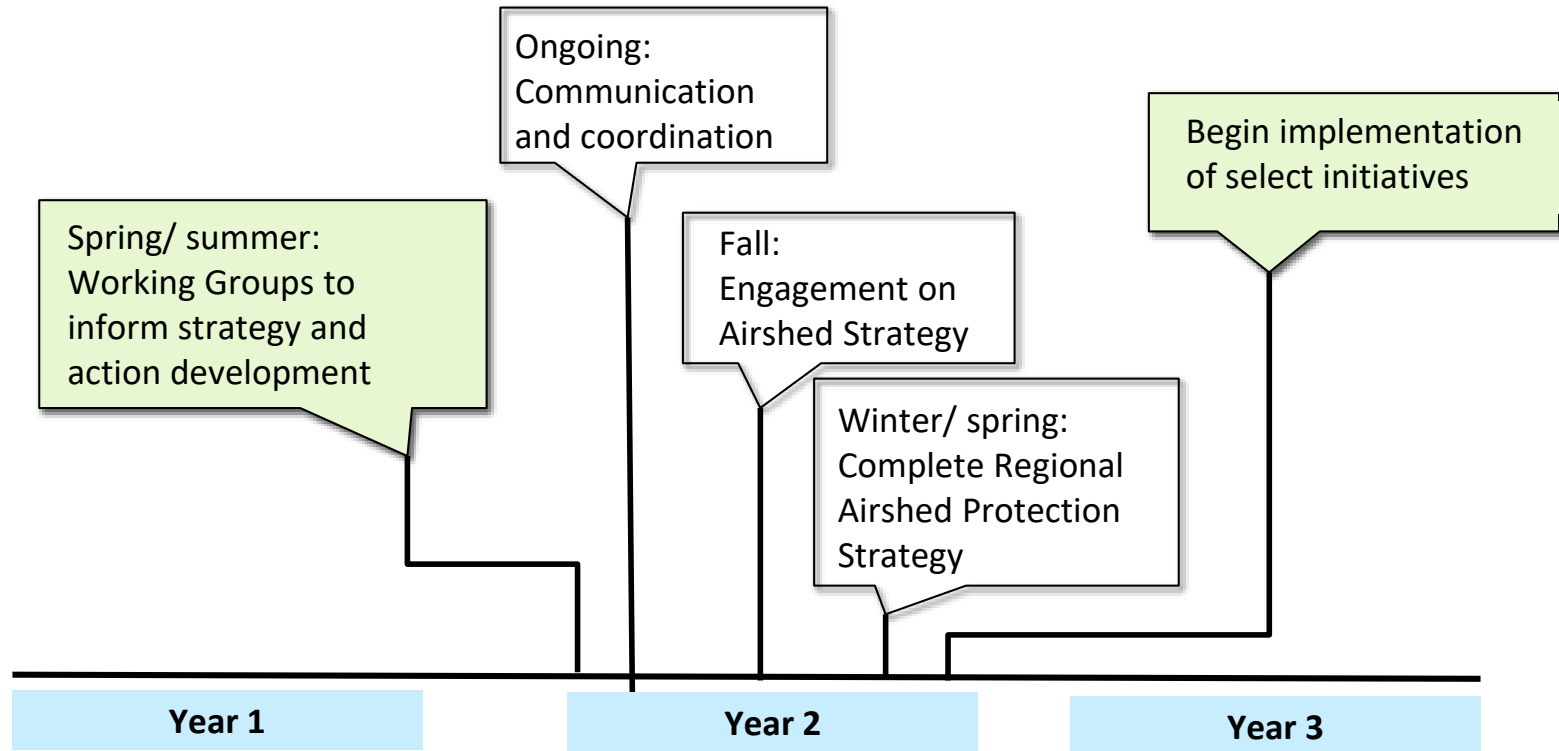


Year 1 key outcomes:

- Steering Committee met five times
- Airshed Roundtable met three times
- Communication strategy completed, with plan to increase public communication in Year 2
- State of the Air Memo completed
- Draft Vision, Goals and Guiding Principles developed from Roundtable and Steering Committee input
- Planning for Working Groups
- Year 1 report completed



Project process: Year 2



Year 2: Key initiatives planned

- Strategy development:
 - Working groups complete recommendations on proposed strategies / actions
 - Steering committee complete recommendations on proposed strategies / actions for Goal 2
 - Roundtable review draft strategy elements
 - Public survey on draft strategy
 - Finalize strategy
- Communication, coordination, public outreach:
 - Launch CVRD Connect website
 - Share documents, meeting presentations and outcomes with Roundtable via Sync file sharing
- Begin implementation of select initiatives



Developing the airshed protection strategy

Working Group Update

Working Group Purpose

- Three working groups identified from Airshed Roundtable members
 - 1A. Reduce emissions from existing residential wood-burning appliances
 - 1B. Transition away from biomass space heating systems
 - 1C. Eliminate burning of yard waste in residential neighbourhoods
 - + 1D. Promote and advocate for alternatives to open burning outside of residential neighbourhoods
- WG Meetings 1 and 2: Work together to develop preliminary recommended actions to meet the identified Goal
- Roundtable meeting: Present preliminary action ideas back to the whole Airshed Roundtable for discussion
- WG Meeting 3: Review and refine actions based on feedback, and identify implementation steps



Overarching Challenges

- **Awareness:** Lack of awareness of health impacts of wood smoke, and of links between wood smoke and climate change, including misinformation
- **Acceptance:** Strong cultural practice of burning that is difficult to change
- **Access:** Lack of access to or knowledge of alternatives
- **Economic:** Expensive to switch heating systems; costs of health impacts not counted
- **Regulatory:** Complex, unclear authority or resource intensive to enforce
- **Data:** Limits on data about geographic variations in pollution levels over time in the region, with just one permanent monitor; lack of data on types of woodstoves being used



Working groups 1 and 2: Wood-burning appliances context

Context:

- 38% of respondents use wood stoves (2018 CVRD Home Heating Survey)
 - 75% of would like to change their heating source; some plan to continue to use wood stoves
- Wood smoke (space heating & open burning) main source of PM_{2.5} in Comox Valley
- Poor air quality mostly during cold season: more wood burning and less venting

Existing education / incentives:

- CVRD Wood Smoke Reduction Program includes educational video, print materials, radio
- Local non-profit groups provide substantial information through newsletters, online, events
- Provincial programs with local top-ups to replace old woodstoves, upgrade to heat pumps

Regulation:

- Provincial regulation requires only the sale of certified woodstoves in BC
- Local municipal bylaws do not allow woodstoves to be installed in new construction



Working group 1:

Reduce emissions from existing residential wood-burning appliances

Opportunities:

Data:

- Collect data on number of wood stoves operating / type of wood stoves (brand, certified, year manufactured) / decommissioned wood stoves

Education:

- Develop outreach strategy to communicate health impacts of wood smoke
- Develop effective strategies to support clean burning education

Regulatory:

- Develop local bylaws to ban burning during times of poor air quality
- Develop opacity regulations and complaint mechanism with penalties
- Explore local bylaw options for regulating the wood supply
- Require all wood stoves to have an operating permit



Working group 2, part 1:

Transition away from biomass space heating systems

Goal:

- Proposed change: remove “in residential neighbourhoods” from goal; instead, focus actions on residential areas where appropriate (e.g. regulatory actions)

Opportunities:

Data:

- Collect data on number of wood stoves operating / type of wood stoves (brand, certified, year manufactured) / decommissioned wood stoves [also WG #1]

Education:

- Develop outreach strategy to communicate health impacts of wood smoke [also WG #1]
- Provide information on space heating options, including emissions and costs; focus on heat pumps as clean alternatives



Working group 2, part 2:

Transition away from biomass space heating systems

Opportunities, cont'd:

Incentives:

- Target incentives toward lower-income homes
- Add new incentives to remove or decommission wood stoves (without requirement to buy)

Regulatory:

- Develop local bylaws to phase out woodstoves, focusing on populated areas where residences are closer together (e.g. all residential zones in municipal boundaries and some residential neighbourhoods in the CVRD electoral areas)



Working group 3: Open burning context

Yard waste in residential areas

- Occurs close to homes = higher risk of exposure to PM2.5
- Smaller portion of annual PM2.5
- Baseline regulations in provincial OBSCR
- Municipalities and regional districts can adopt additional smoke control measures in bylaw if able to enforce
- Courtenay, Comox, Cumberland have bylaws

Open burning outside of residential areas

- Generally occurs further from homes
- Larger portion of annual PM2.5
- Large forest operations: required to abate piles due to risk of fires; two operations under West Coast Fuel-Smoke Management Plan; burn on select days in fall with good venting
- Woodlots: also burn to abate risk of fire; regulated provincially under OBSCR
- Land clearing: generally greener material, producing more smoke



Working group 3, part 1:

Eliminate burning of yard waste in residential neighbourhoods

Opportunities:

Education:

- Communicate the impact of backyard burning on neighbours
- Provide information on composting, chipping and other alternatives to burning

Programs / incentives:

- Expand current chipping program to include smoke control mandate
- Offer an exchange to incentivize participation in chipping program (e.g. chippings for compost)

Regulatory:

- Conduct full bylaw review and update for alignment across the region, as appropriate
 - NOTE: CVRD staff are currently compiling and comparing all existing bylaws as starting point
- Advocate to the Province and UBCM to continue funding for chipping and align with air quality objectives



Working group 3, part 2:

Promote and advocate for alternatives to open burning outside of residential neighbourhoods

Opportunities:

Advocacy:

- Develop a toolkit for local governments to advocate for higher utilization of fibre to reduce burning
- Advocacy to province to create stable funding source for managing wood debris

Regulatory:

- Review local bylaws for alignment and create toolkit with opportunities/ recommendations to enhance



Roundtable Round



Everyone has 90 seconds to share feedback for the Working Groups – if you have additional feedback please use the chat or email us after the meeting



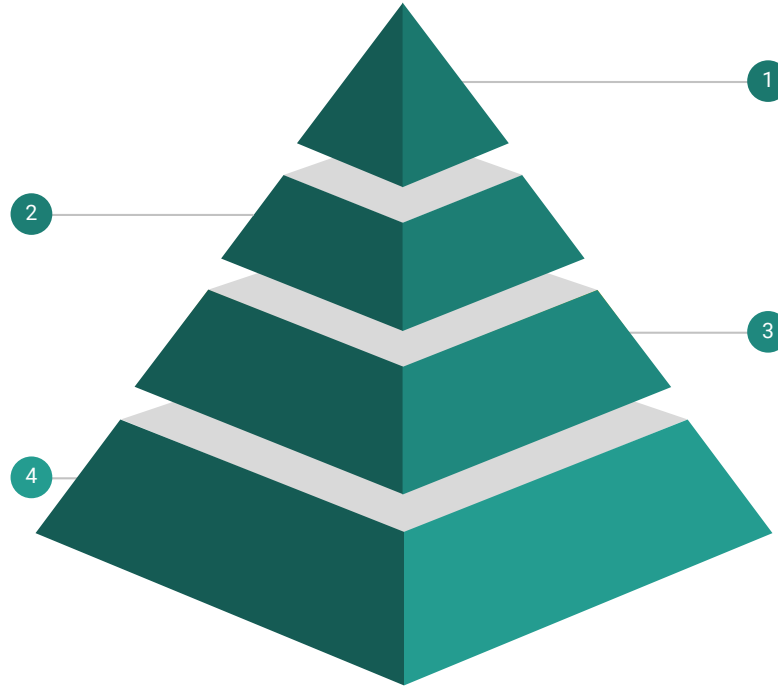
Next steps

Goals and strategies

- The “How”
- What you are going to achieve
- The strategies to pursue goals

Implementation and reporting

- How we will track progress
- What we will do to stay on / get back on track



Vision

- The “Why”
- Key changes you want to see
- Values most important to you

Action plan

- The “What”
- Specific actions
- Identifies champions and timeframes



Next steps

- July: Working Groups to meet for third time
 - Discuss and incorporate Roundtable input
 - Refine actions, identify lead / champion
 - Discuss how to monitor goals
- August: Preliminary drafting of Airshed Protection Strategy
- September 23rd: Next Roundtable meeting
 - Review draft strategy elements – vision, goals, guiding principles and initial actions
- Fall: Public input on draft strategy



Thank you!

