



# Comox News

April 2009

*The Town of Comox Community Newsletter*

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## Comox Green Team

The Town of Comox has recently established a Green Team to provide recommendations to Council on how Town operations could possibly be made more environmentally responsible.

Evidence shows that increasing greenhouse gas emissions are having an effect on the climate, and the Town of Comox has signed on to a Climate Action Charter Agreement with the Provincial government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible.

Specifically, the Green Team will be responding to the conditions established in the Climate Action Charter Agreement:



- ♦ to become carbon neutral with respect to Town operations by 2012,
- ♦ to measure and report on the Town's greenhouse gas emissions profile, and
- ♦ to create complete, compact, more energy efficient rural and urban communities

The Green Team consists of two Comox Council members plus three citizen appointees, as follows:

Ray Crossley, Councillor  
 Marcia Turner, Councillor  
 Mark Kelsey, Citizen  
 Ian Moul, Citizen  
 Wendy Prothero, Citizen

Councillor Ray Crossley is Chair of the Green Team.

## Comox Recreation joins Town



As of January 1 of this year, Comox Recreation became the Recreation Department of the Town of Comox. For the past few years, Comox Recreation has been operating as a separate entity led by the Comox Recreation Commission and funded mainly by the Town of Comox.

The Comox Recreation Department takes a proactive role in ensuring that residents

are provided with recreational programs and services that are relevant, inclusive, affordable and sustainable. Please take time to read through their monthly newsletters and quarterly brochures, or drop by the Comox Recreation Centre at 1855 Noel Avenue. Hopefully you'll find a program of your liking.

**Welcome back to all of the staff!**

## Comox welcomes car co-op vehicle



The Co-operative Auto Network is a not-for-profit organization that provides clients affordable access to a vehicle for business or personal use. Clients **do not** pay the car's purchasing price, insurance expense, maintenance, BCAA coverage, or **gas!** Rather, drivers sign-up for a low fee membership and pay an hourly rate when using the vehicle.

The Co-operative Auto Network has partnered with the 'Mandira By The Sea' development at 1829 Beaufort Avenue to offer a car sharing opportunity for Comox residents and businesses. In fact, the Town of Comox is the first municipality in BC to take advantage of a car share opportunity for business travel use!

The vehicle is a 2009 Toyota Matrix, and available to be used by any business or individual registered as a client. The vehicle is currently located in the Port Augusta municipal parking lot (across the street from Toscanos Restaurant).

Car sharing helps to reduce air pollution, congestion, automobile noise, and parking pressures by reducing the number of vehicles on the street. It allows people to drive less and when they do drive, they do so in a well maintained vehicle.

Please contact The Co-operative Auto Network at (604) 685-1393 or online at [www.cooperativeauto.net](http://www.cooperativeauto.net) if you or your company would like more information on the benefits of car sharing or becoming a registered user of the 2009 Matrix.

## Beaufort Avenue/Ellis Street reconstruction

Construction is currently underway to rebuild portions of Beaufort Avenue and Ellis Streets. Beaufort Avenue between Church and Ellis Streets will have sanitary

and storm pipes replaced and sidewalk installed on both the north and south sides. In addition, Beaufort Avenue will be resurfaced along this portion. Ellis

## New gymnastics facility

Last year, the Town received authorization from electors to borrow \$450,000 for a new gymnastics facility at the Comox Recreation Centre.

In addition, the Town received a grant of \$330,000 from the Provincial government to go towards this project.

The 8,000 square foot gymnasium, used primarily for gymnastics training, is nearing completion.

The gymnasium addition is the first step in the Town's larger expansion plans for the Comox Recreation Centre.

## Brooklyn Creek enhancement project

The Town of Comox, in partnership with the Brooklyn Creek Streamkeepers Society, is once again preparing to conduct restorative works along the lower reaches of Brooklyn Creek.

The much needed stream channel enhancements, which began last summer, have been targeting areas that have been adversely impacted by erosion and encroachment. The project, expected to begin this summer, will include

fish habitat, spawning channel and pedestrian trail upgrades. Native trees and shrubs will also be planted in the riparian areas.

There has been a long history of stewardship within the Brooklyn Creek watershed and the Town of Comox has had the pleasure of partnering with dedicated groups like the Brooklyn Creek Watershed Society and local Rotary clubs.



Street between Beaufort and Comox Avenues will have sidewalk installed along the east side of the road as well as the sanitary and storm pipes replaced.

In addition, the intersection at Ellis Street and Beaufort Avenue will be reconfigured. Total project cost is \$457,000.

## Water use compared to consumption



In 2008, Comox purchased over 2.5 million cubic metres (2.5 billion litres) of water from the Comox Valley Regional District. That makes the Town's average daily water use nearly 530 litres of water per person per day for 2008. Looking at monthly volumes, it seems that much of the water use is not consumed by people but rather used outside our homes. For example, consumption per person per day was 1,150 litres in July 2008 compared to 320 litres in February 2008.

Average water consumption in the Town (again 530 litres per person per day for 2008) is higher than most of BC (at 490 litres), which in turn is higher than the Canadian averages (467 litres for communities without meters and 266 litres for those with meters). This, in turn, is still higher than most of the rest of the developed world.

The Regional District has exceeded its water licence limit three times in recent years, meaning something needs to be done. Water metering is one of several tools available to help reduce water consumption, and is perhaps the most effective single one we could use. Water conservation efforts are a high priority for Comox, and we are taking steps to plan for a universal water metering program.

The Regional District, as part of its 'waterwise' education campaign under its Better Choices, Better Future banner, has scheduled an open house to discuss all aspects of our water system (including quantity and quality of water used, as well as our water source). **The open house will be held on June 11<sup>th</sup> at the Florence Filberg Centre in Courtenay.** Please mark your calendars and consider attending.

In the meantime, what else can you do? You can listen to the local media or visit our website ([www.comox.ca](http://www.comox.ca)) if you are unsure what watering stage we are at and what water use is restricted within that stage. You can also repair broken plumbing fixtures to stop drips and leaks, and you can be careful about all the water you use.

## Anderton Road improvements

Anderton Road between Noel and Bolt Avenues will have storm and sanitary pipes replaced. Work on the \$344,000 project now underway will extend to May 31, 2009.

This work is a continuation of that done last year along Anderton between Comox and Noel Avenues. Sidewalk will also be added on the west side of Anderton.

## Council Strategic Plan 2009 – 2013

Council has adopted its Strategic Plan for the five-year period, 2009 – 2013. Over the next five years, Council will focus effort on three main areas: Sustainable Infrastructure,

Sustainability and Livability, and Good Governance.

The Strategic Plan is available at Town Hall, or on our website at [www.comox.ca](http://www.comox.ca).

## Totem in traffic circle

The Town of Comox has commissioned British Columbia native artist Calvin Hunt to carve a twenty foot totem pole depicting the local First Nation's legend of Queneesh (the white whale).

The mythical Queneesh, as legend has it, was said to have saved the ancient peoples of Comox from threatening floods. It appeared to them in the form of a white whale when the glacier began to move. The legend of Queneesh remains to this day a strong reminder of the importance of cultural lore in First

Nations' communities.

The totem pole contains the carvings of a whale, a human guardian spirit holding a canoe and an eagle. The ornately carved back of the totem contains a representation of the ancient salmon weirs that are still evident along the foreshore in the Comox Valley.

The type of totem that is being carved is unique in that it does not have a front and back face; rather, it is carved on all sides to 'face' in any direction.

The totem will be erected as the focal point of the newly constructed Knight Road traffic circle.



*Some of the images from the new totem*



## Town of Comox

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Glenn Westendorp  
Public Works Superintendent

Dave Durrant  
Recreation Director

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### Council

Paul Ives  
Mayor

Russ Arnott  
Councillor

Ray Crossley  
Councillor

Patti Fletcher  
Councillor

Ken Grant  
Councillor

Tom Grant  
Councillor

Marcia Turner  
Councillor

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We're on the Web!

See us at:  
[www.comox.ca](http://www.comox.ca)

## Construction of accessory buildings

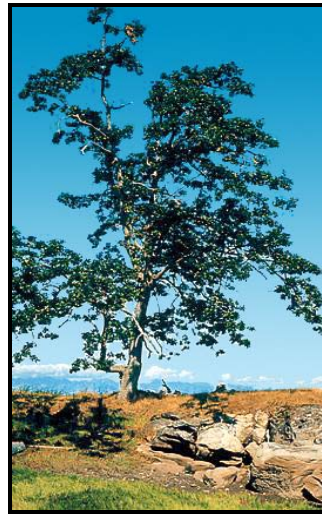
If you are thinking about building or installing a shed, workshop, garage or any other type of detached accessory building on your property, then there are a few things that you should keep in mind.

The first thing you should know is that a Building Permit is required for the installation or construction of any size shed or other accessory building on your property. There is no minimum size where a permit is not required. Bearing that in mind, the size of building that is required to meet the construction requirements of the BC Building Code is a building greater than 10 square metres or approximately 100 square feet in area. What this means is that you can build a shed that is 10ft by 10ft or 8ft by 12ft, for example, and construct it on blocks or a slab without having to provide a foundation that meets the Building Code.

The second thing that you need to know is that all proposed buildings, big or small, must be constructed

to meet applicable Zoning Bylaw requirements. You will need to consider things such as the location of the building on the lot, setback distances to your property lines, statutory rights of way, and the maximum size and height of your proposed building. It might sound complicated, but it's really not that bad.

The third thing you should know is that there are no silly questions. Building and Planning Department staff would be happy to help you out if you're considering a building project. Feel free to give us a call at 250 339-2259!



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## Notices

### Bylaw Enforcement

The Town's Bylaw Enforcement Officer is once again reminding residents to please not ride bicycles on sidewalks. In addition, he has received a fair number of calls lately regarding dog owners not picking up after their dogs. There are many dog stations in and around Town parks, and it would be appreciated if residents would use them when required.

### Tax Notices

Tax notices will be mailed out soon. If you have not received your tax notice by May 31, please contact the office. More information on your property tax and utility rates will be provided with your tax notice.

### Stage 3 Watering Restriction

Please be advised that Stage 3 Watering Restrictions are now in effect until April 30, 2009. For more, see our website.

## Garry Oak in Town

The Comox Valley is the northern limit of Garry oak habitat on Vancouver Island.

Last September, the Town hosted an evening presentation by the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team. Residents were able to learn about this unique natural habitat that is found in the Comox Valley, including the Lazo-Point Holmes area of Comox.

Council highlighted the event by planting three Garry oak trees near the southwest corner of the Lancaster subdivision bordering McDonald Road. These trees were provided by Streamside Native Plants, a local nursery specializing in plants native to coastal BC.

Planting indigenous species from your own geographic area is an important factor in both plant survival under local conditions and the maintenance of populations that are naturally adapted to this region.

To learn more about Garry oaks, see [www.goert.ca](http://www.goert.ca).

## Grants received

The Town has been fortunate to have received a number of government grants recently:

- \$375,000 through Towns for Tomorrow for additional sidewalks and bus shelters in Town;
- \$49,350 through Local Motion for road widening and a cycling lane along Guthrie Road; and
- \$30,000 through Trees for Tomorrow for reforestation initiative in McDonald Park area.

*This newsletter is a result of Council's initiative to increase communication with residents. If you have any comments or suggestions, or would like to see anything in particular in upcoming editions, please contact us.*