



# Comox News

January 2012

*The Town of Comox Community Newsletter*

## Town of Comox election results



*From left to right, Councillor Swift, Councillor Fletcher, Councillor Ken Grant, Mayor Ives, Councillor Tom Grant, Councillor Price and Councillor MacKinnon (photo Spencer Anderson, CV Echo)*

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Voter turnout continued to be strong in the Town, with just over 41% of eligible voters casting ballots in the municipal election last November. This compared with an average turnout of approximately 29% for all municipalities in BC.

This year, we used the newly renovated recreation centre for the advanced

voting days, which seemed to result in a larger number of advanced voters. Those using the vote by mail opportunity was also up over 2008. Both of these factors resulted in less line ups on general voting day, so please keep these alternative opportunities in mind for the next election.

Congratulations to the new Council, who will be in office for the period December 2011 to December 2014. Our thanks go to Russ Arnott and Marcia Turner for serving on Council during the past three years, and we welcome new Council members Barbara Price and Maureen Swift.

## Guthrie Road overlay

Last year, a second layer of pavement was added to Guthrie Road between McDonald and Aspen Roads. Also included in this project was the installation of bike lanes along both sides of Guthrie Road. This year, the Town will

continue with phase 2 of this project, which will be to add the second layer of pavement along Guthrie between Aspen and Anderton Roads. This \$690,000 phase will also include bike lanes along both sides of Guthrie.

In 2013, the final phase will be to add a second layer of pavement, as well as sidewalks and bike lanes, between Anderton and Linshart Roads.

## New training building at Fire Station



Comox Fire Rescue is currently developing a new storage and training building with an expected completion date this fall. The project is jointly funded by the Town of Comox and the Comox Fire Protection District, with free labour being supplied by our firefighters.

The storage purpose of this building will be to house our two fire department trailers, which are currently stored outside, and to also house our 1948 antique fire truck which is currently stored in the old fire station on Gladstone Street.

The second floor of this building will be used for training which will include many props and scenarios designed towards victim rescue. This training is currently being done in our old fire station. Once completed the new building will be a great asset to our fire department and will make the old fire station on Gladstone Avenue surplus. The old station is co-owned by the Town of Comox and the Comox Fire Protection District.

The new building will also further enhance the Comox Fire Training Centre which is already rated as one of the best in the province. Local firefighters, as well as firefighters from elsewhere on the Island and in the province, can come to Comox to enhance their firefighting skills. The Comox Fire Training Centre is partnered with the Justice Institute of BC to deliver several different courses in Comox.

## Traffic and pedestrian safety

Last year, the Town commissioned a study (the Town of Comox Traffic Study, 2011) that focused on intersection assessments and improvements, as well as improvements to alternative transportation modes such as pedestrian, cycling and

transit. The study concluded that the majority of roads and intersections in the Town are currently operating at expected ranges and capacities, with few recommended improvements in the short term. A few upgrades were

## 2012 property assessment values

BC Assessment has mailed its 2012 Property Assessment Notices to all property owners. If you haven't received your Notice, please contact BC Assessment directly (250-338-8112) or go to their website [www.bccassessment.ca](http://www.bccassessment.ca). At the website, you can obtain your 2012 Assessed Value and/or compare it to other similar properties.

For 2012, the typical Comox property had a decrease in the assessed value of buildings that was slightly more than offset by an increase in land values. This resulted in an average value for single family homes in Comox of \$358,201 in 2012, up by 2.28% from \$350,229 in 2011. The average residential strata property (condominiums and patio homes) rose by less than 1%. For commercial property, the majority of assessed values in Comox either went down very slightly or were unchanged from 2011, resulting in no change in the average assessed value.

Your 2012 property taxes will depend on the municipal tax rates for 2012

(which will be set in May). The key to understanding how your assessments will affect your property taxes in 2012 is to compare the percentage change in your own assessed values to the average change for your class of property. For example, if you own a single family home and your overall assessed value increased by more than 2.28% (the average change in assessed value of all single family homes in Comox), then your total taxes will increase by more than any increase in municipal tax rates for 2012. If your overall assessment rose by less than 2.28%, then your total taxes will increase by less than any increase in municipal tax rates (they may even decrease).



recommended for the longer term (up to 20 years). The study also noted that the potential for cycling in the Town is significant and identified measures to take in order to provide a better cycling environment. Suggestions

for improving the pedestrian network were also noted, as were suggestions for improved transit.

For more information, see <http://comox.ca/online/documents/engineering-documents/>.

## Inflow and infiltration

Sanitary sewer flows are typically made up of all household and commercial wastewater. “Inflow and infiltration” refers to non sanitary sewer-related water, such as rainwater and ground water, entering into the sanitary sewer system. Inflow occurs when building roof drains, perimeter drains or sump pumps are mistakenly connected to the sanitary sewer system rather than the storm system.

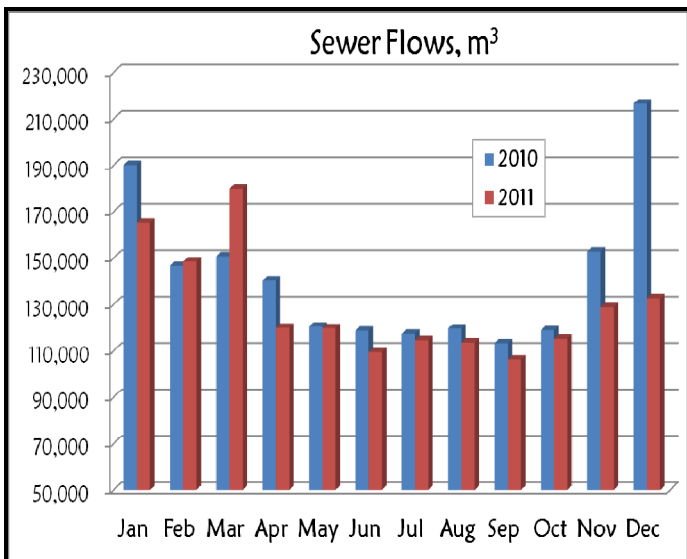
Infiltration occurs through cracks and loose connections in the lines.

As all of the waste water in the sanitary sewer system must be treated, inflow and infiltration results in unnecessary treatment and, ultimately, increased cost to residents. As a result, the Town has been working on reducing the inflow and infiltration to its sanitary sewer lines over the past several years.

The extent of the problem can be seen from the graph showing actual sewer flows

in Comox for 2010 and 2011. While we would expect sewer flows to be more or less even throughout the year, this is clearly not the case as actual flows are in fact significantly higher in the rainy, winter months. This excess water in the winter means that we pay significantly more than we would otherwise have to (since we pay on a volume basis).

In order to address inflow, Public Works crews have been metering and measuring flows at various points in order to try to determine whether inflow is occurring. Other methods we are using include putting a camera into the lines to view the rate of flow (sewer flows occur in bursts, while rainfall inflow will be constant) and doing smoke tests. In order to address infiltration, public works crews have been sealing cracks, connections and gaskets to tighten up the system.



## Ambulance service in Comox



You may have noticed an ambulance parked at Comox Town Hall during the past year. Having an ambulance located in Comox has been a Council initiative for some time, and in January of 2011, agreement was reached between the BC Ambulance Service and the Town of Comox to set up a day-post operation in Comox. The Town has agreed to provide office space for ambulance attendants, as well as parking and power for the vehicle. The operation was

initially a 6-month trial to see if there could be an improvement in service delivery for Comox calls.

Results after the 6-month trial showed that there was an improvement in response time, on average, of about 2 minutes per call, which is significant when dealing with life or death situations. Based on these results, the day-post program has been continued in Comox, while work continues to find a better, indoor location to park the vehicle.

## Enhanced building permit processing program

In November of last year, the Town implemented a fast-track building permit approval process for single family homes. The Town heard from the building community that they wished processing times for building permits to be shortened. As a result, the Town’s new fast-track program prioritizes applications that include

both necessary related approvals and a statement documenting the building plan’s conformance to Town bylaws. The first two building permit applications processed under this new program were approved in less than a day.

## Town of Comox

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Gord Schreiner  
Fire Chief

Glenn Westendorp  
Public Works Superintendent

Jim Stevenson  
Recreation Manager

### Council

Paul Ives  
Mayor

Patti Fletcher  
Councillor

Ken Grant  
Councillor

Tom Grant  
Councillor

Hugh MacKinnon  
Councillor

Barbara Price  
Councillor

Maureen Swift  
Councillor

We're on the Web!

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

## Urban Forest Management Plan

The Town of Comox is in the process of developing an urban forest management plan that will identify urban trees and forests on public property, and outline proper arboricultural techniques and management practices to ensure their long term aesthetic and environmental benefits can be enjoyed by the community. Beyond shade and beauty, urban trees and forests also have practical benefits and a real monetary value. Unlike some other public infrastructure, properly planted and maintained trees increase in value over time. An urban forest management plan is an essential tool for protecting this valuable community resource. It is an action plan that gives municipal agencies detailed information, recommendations, and resources needed to effectively and proactively manage public trees.

## Notices

### Business licence renewal

Business licences must be renewed each year your business is operating in the Town. Business licence fees for 2012 can be paid at any time after January 31, 2012.

### Dog Licences

Just a reminder that all dogs in the Town must have a valid dog licence, which must be renewed each year. Dog licences can be purchased anytime at Town hall or at the SPCA on Ryan Road.

### School Zones

The Town would like to remind parents that school zones are very busy areas during times that parents are dropping off and picking up

students, and can be unsafe if the following parking and driving practices are not adhered to:

#### No parking

- on sidewalks or boulevards
- in front of or within 5 metres of fire hydrants
- across or within 6 metres of crosswalks
- across or within 6 metres of intersections and public entranceways
- in loading zones or bus zones, except as permitted by sign
- across or within 2 metres of private driveways
- within 6 metres of stop signs

**Maximum speed limit of 30 kilometres**

**No U-turns where specifically prohibited by sign**

## Looking for winning designs



The Comox BIA, in conjunction with the CV Record, is sponsoring a contest for artists to create a design for the street banners and a design for a new logo for the BIA. The winners of each category will receive \$500, lots of recognition, and the honour of seeing their talent displayed.

Edd Moyes, Chair of the BIA Marketing Committee says, "Street banners are an important part of creating an inviting and attractive Downtown - the difference between drab and delightful. And the banners are an ideal way to feature local talent." Moyes continues, "we want our new logo to be attractive, simple, memorable, and symbolic of Comox.

Designs are to be submitted to [edd@blackfinpub.com](mailto:edd@blackfinpub.com) between February 15 and 29. Contest details can be found at [www.comoxbythesea.com](http://www.comoxbythesea.com) and click on Calendar of Events.

The Comox BIA Board is comprised of:

Pres. - Tia Otter

(Otters Kitchen Cove),

Vice Pres.- Gillian Holmes  
(Clothing By Design),

Treasurer - Glen Welin  
(Scotia Bank),

Edd Moyes (Black Fin Pub),

Helen Doheny (Provison Acct.),

Vaughn Smith (Curves),

Mike Trimble (Woofy's),

Heather Kerr (Island Treasures),

Dan Kyle (Nearly New Books),

Tiffany Iles (Comox Mall),

Ex-Officio: Councillor Ken Grant,

Legion - Ernie Mills,

Coordinator – Kathy Penner.