



# Town of Comox

Marina Improvement Project



# WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

DRAFT August 2025



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Comox has received funding from the Provincial government under the Provincial Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program (REDIP). Funding to the Town is to develop economic opportunities, creating growth through new or improved infrastructure, supporting new jobs and longer term economic sustainability for the community.

The program aims to encourage increased economic capacity building, economic diversification, resilience, clean economy opportunities, and infrastructure development. The Town has successfully secured funds for the construction of new marine based economic infrastructure and implementation of economic services, and marine operations related to diversification in rural communities such as the Town of Comox, resulting in new, upgraded and/or preserved local economic assets. The Town will continue to receive feedback until November 15 and this Draft Report will be finalized at that time.

### Potential Marina Improvement Components:

- New Signage on marina fingers and enabling public access to ramps
- Moorage relocations (/ Ambulance. Emergency response, Sailing club, SAAR,)
- Construction and installation of expanded / widening of main dock
- Installation of water and power lines where required Removal of 1 or both grids /Custom Environmental Spill response and monitoring
- Connecting the boardwalk to the East / Decking improvement where required
- New SUP/Kayak/Canoe launch
- Improvements to signage/seating/fish cleaning, and viewpoint beside boat ramp
- Realignment of existing ramp dock to middle of boat launch to increase safety & efficiency via 2-way traffic
- Possible new ramp connecting from existing west side piling to existing sidewalk
- New Marina Website including Moorage Reservations and booking Systems

### Comox Marina Development Overview



#### New Floating Buildings

Construction of commercial structures on water



#### Boardwalk and Docks

Expansion of pedestrian and boat access areas



#### Moorage Realignment

Reorganization of boat parking to accommodate various durations



#### Wait List Reduction

Efforts to decrease waiting times for marina services



#### Job Creation

Generation of new employment opportunities in the marine sector



#### Environmental Oversight

Implementation of measures to protect and monitor the marine environment



#### Economic Growth

Strategies to ensure long-term financial stability and growth

## INTRODUCTION

While the Town has some level of jurisdiction along its waterfront boundaries, it's recognized that both Federal and Provincial governments, K'ómoks First Nation, and a portion of Comox Valley Regional District Area B, alongside a host of external stakeholders, entities and waterfront private landowners, waterfront walkway users must be considered. A multi-faceted coastal tourism industry has emerged over time in Comox with the early establishment of the Harbour Authority and the creation of a safe harbour for the commercial fishing fleet. Marine services in the form of both recreational and commercial operations continue to grow and evolve as customer and operating environments change.

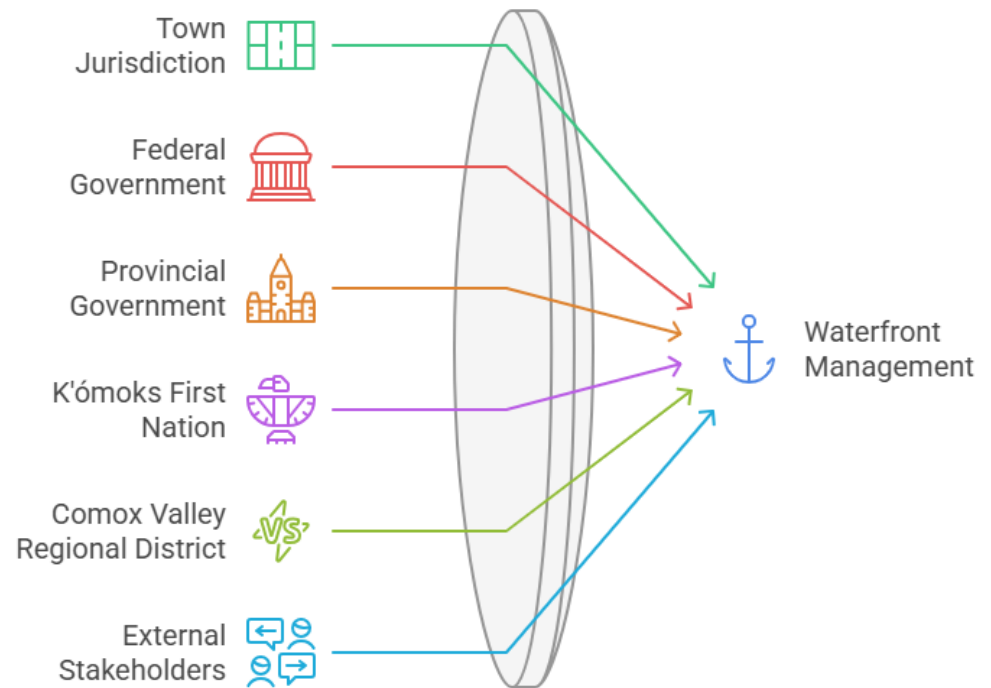
Marine-based growth in the town reflects both private and public sector initiatives. While many opportunities are possible, there are structural obstacles and impediments to growth, business services, residential satisfaction, and visitor capacity posed by the configuration of current infrastructure: DND Wharf, Harbour Authority, Town Marina, gas dock, private Comox Valley Marina, and on- water assets such as breakwaters, dock placement and orientation of the marinas.

The historic importance of the Town's marine gateway along with air access - via Harbour Air, creates a tremendous asset for the Town. The marine gateway supports the Town's entrepreneurial residents, businesses, community organizations, livability, and visitation. Establishing long-term planning for improvements, new commercial space and amenities on the water along the entire length of the Town's waterfront can be supported by the convergence of:

- Sustainable infrastructure enhancement plans.
- Addition of vibrant commercial activity that leverages competitively advantageous infrastructure while adding non-residential assessment that improves Town finances.
- Development of community amenities (e.g. beautification, paths, community animation via actions like events or a market).
- Management and mitigation of marine-based climate change impacts.
- Environmental stewardship.

Existing plans and initiatives underscore the importance of the waterfront to civic life and economy. There is a need to integrate various plans into a more singular, focused, prioritized plan of sustained action that recognizes this importance and embraces further potential.

### Collaborative Waterfront Governance





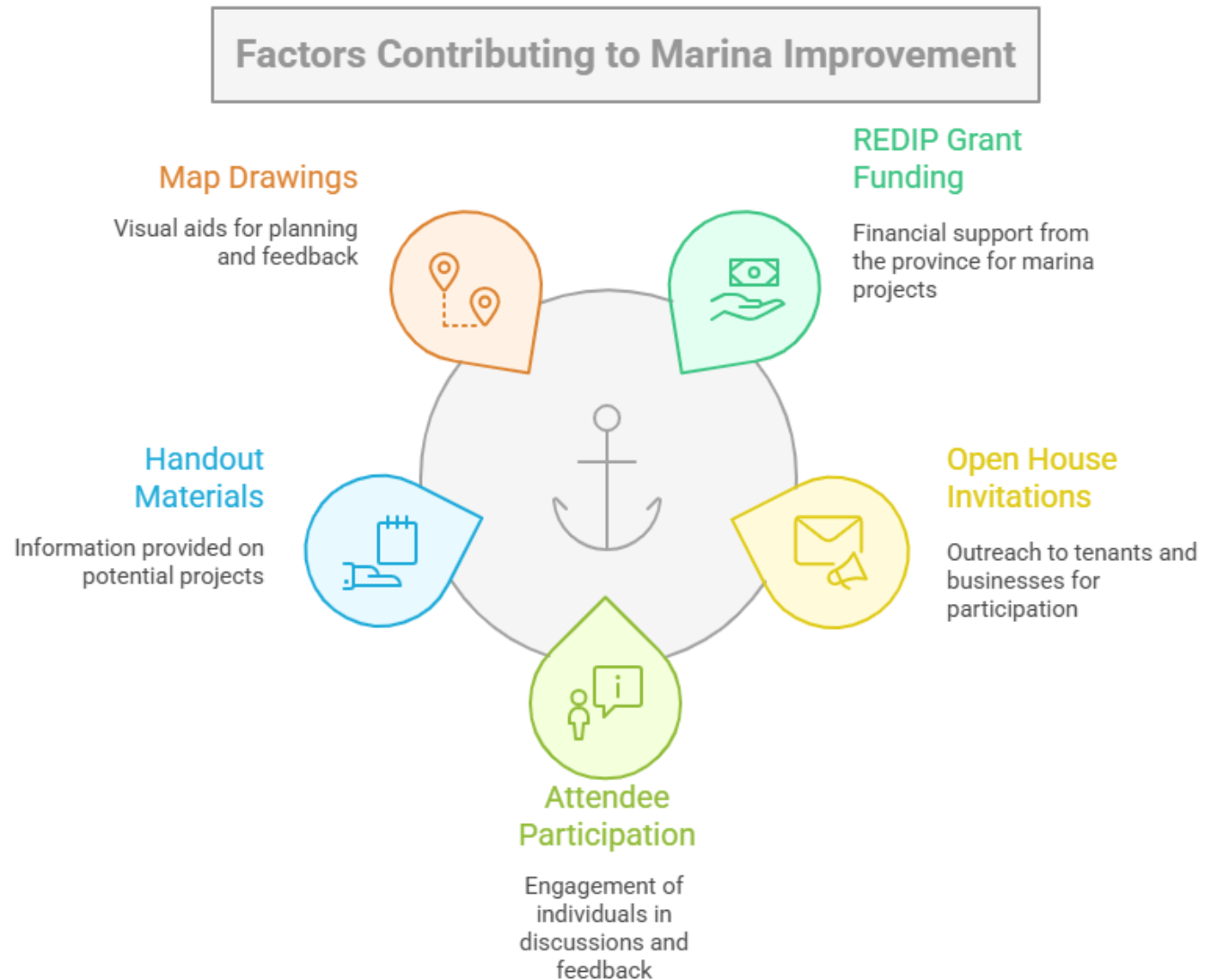
## TOWN OF COMOX MARINA UPDATES & IMPROVMENTS OPEN HOUSE – June 13, 2025

The Town of Comox held an Open House in the Genoa Sail Building to provide information on potential improvement projects that may be part of the Provincial REDIP Grant funding the town has received to ensure that the marina and marina park continues to be an economic driver for public and business into the future.

Open House invites were sent through Town moorage tenants lists, posters, and direct invites via the Towns Wharfingers staff. Additionally, the Downtown Comox Business Improvement Association circulated the invite to over 150 downtown stores and business. Approximately 73 individuals attended the open house including Senior Staff from the Town of Comox. The session went from 10:30 am – 1:30 PM, with a handouts regarding the various potential projects that the Town is considering within the context of future improvements and additions to the marina and marina boardwalks. Attendees came and went as needed as they completed review of the materials and provided input.

Attendees were provided with handouts describing all potential projects as take aways and three separate preliminary map drawings for planning, discussions and feedback purposes as follows:

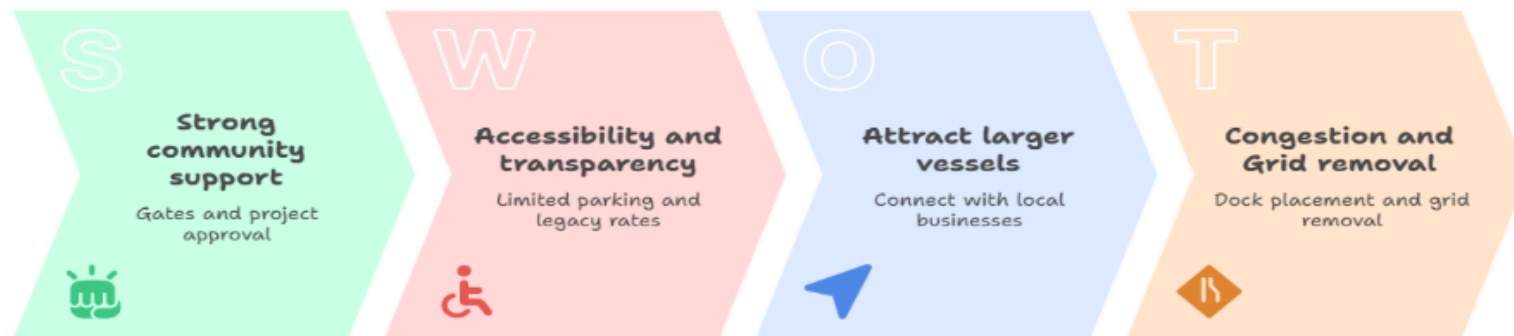
1. Plan View - Existing Marina with Aerial Underlay - all potential projects identified in **Red** including rough bathometric contours, soundings and property boundary assumptions
2. Existing Boat layout and dimensions
3. Optimized Boat layout – 1



## TOWN OF COMOX MARINA UPDATES & IMPROVEMENTS OPEN HOUSE – June 13, 2025

The Open House was designed for casual discussion and vs a prescribed format. Coffee was provided and staff and the facilitators provided answers to questions when asked. The Towns CAO provided details on process and answered various questions for attendees including confirmation that the Town is proceeding to update and modernize the ramp gates, add additional security cameras on the main doc, add safety signage for the fingers and enable public, tourists and guests that have booked fishing or water-based tours to access the main doc. The opening of the main gates to public drew strong opinions and feedback both in support and opposed to the decision to provide public access. In support it was acknowledged that many marinas on the Island and coast have publicly accessible docks. Those opposed to this change were primarily concerned with safety, theft and damage to their vessels.

### Marina Project SWOT Analysis



- Looks great I agree with the project
- Consider options for wheelchair accessibility
- Dredge by the Government dock / causeway and put commercial buildings there.
- If Grid is removed, please save the lower one.
- Non-moving boats - if no usage in a year consider raising fees, and either use, sell or remove
- Consider boat protection on the boat launch dock
- Strongly support gates on the fingers - very important and worth the cost
- Legacy mooring rates need to go. Make closer to private, where rates have increased 30% . Town should not subsidize the marina and have the Town rate payers cover the difference.
- Addition of a swimming or fishing dock may create congestion if in the marina (Note this was not anticipated to be in the marina proper)
- Greater transparency is required. (from the Town as it relates to changes in the marina
- No parking means no customers in marina park/marina
- Consider improving access and facilities to support larger visiting vessels and using the marina connect with local business
- Please consider a few parking spaces for boaters use - some jobs require a high tide to move stuff or a boat owner pass to park for

## CONTEXT AND ENGAGEMENT

**Town of Comox Economic Development & Downtown Plan** - Over recent years, the Town has worked to ensure the long-term viability of the marina, the upland buildings, marina park and amenities enabling safe and public access to the marina for residents, tourists and marina users and moorage holders. Throughout the ongoing improvements, the Town has ensured significant engagement sessions and opportunities for providing input related to the importance and future of the marina and marina park for future generations. A short summary of engagement, feedback over the last few years that Town council has received regarding ongoing support for the future of the Marina follows:

1. Comox Economic Development Strategy – included focused Marina discovery workshops with key community leaders, and a set of topic- specific focus groups targeted at the marina - Marina Opportunities Focus Groups -Feb 2024 with 42 registered attendees.
2. Downtown-specific engagement included two Downtown planning workshops, and extensive interaction with the Comox BIA. With 90 small business and public attendees, the top priority amenity within the core was the Marina and Marina Park n=90 total
3. A well-responded community survey, two meetings with Council, staff meetings, and an Economic Development Summit held with community leaders in April 2024. Key themes emerged from feedback received from all of these events and activities, including:
  - A general desire to make economic development progress, including job creating actions.
  - The value of resident quality of life: downtown; marina; airports.
  - A primary emphasis on the downtown that includes the waterfront and marinas and further public investment in the downtown / waterfront.

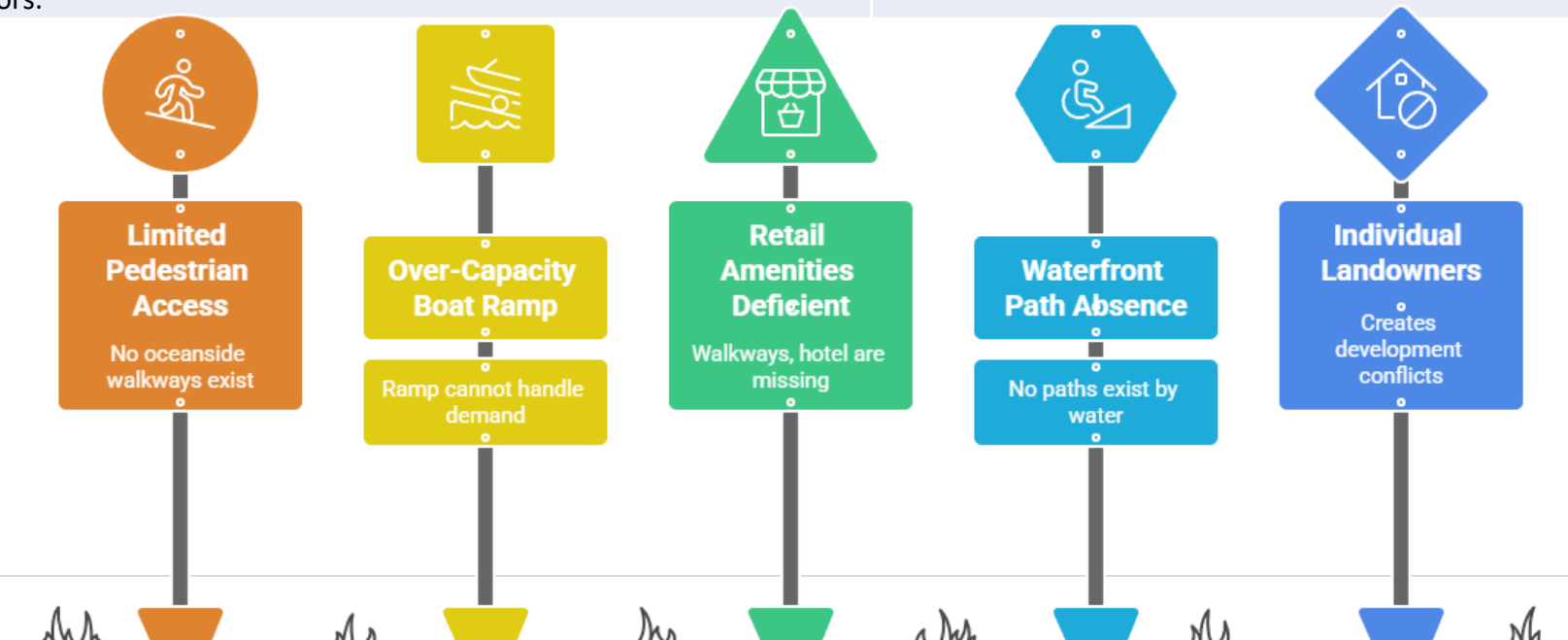


## Opportunities

New commercial spaces, boardwalk along the government wharf similar to Longsdale Quay - Pedestrian walkway along the waterfront  
Connecting Port Augusta Park to Filberg Park and Goose Spit through a boardwalk on the water.  
Ocean based market. Four season market.  
Transient marine tourism attraction. Marine industry near seaplane terminal. Area for development around Harbour Air.  
Beach water access for activities beyond boating such as a walkway, swimming, kayaking, stand up boarding, and places for kids.  
Climate, views, and proximity to the ocean.  
Create a pedestrian main street and link in marina parks and goose spit.  
Inter-island water and air transport/water taxi.  
Increased waterfront development.  
Activate the current buildings in Marina Park: convert sail building to commercial/ add more commercial uses.  
Providing new commercial space and increased transient moorage for visitors.

## Constraints

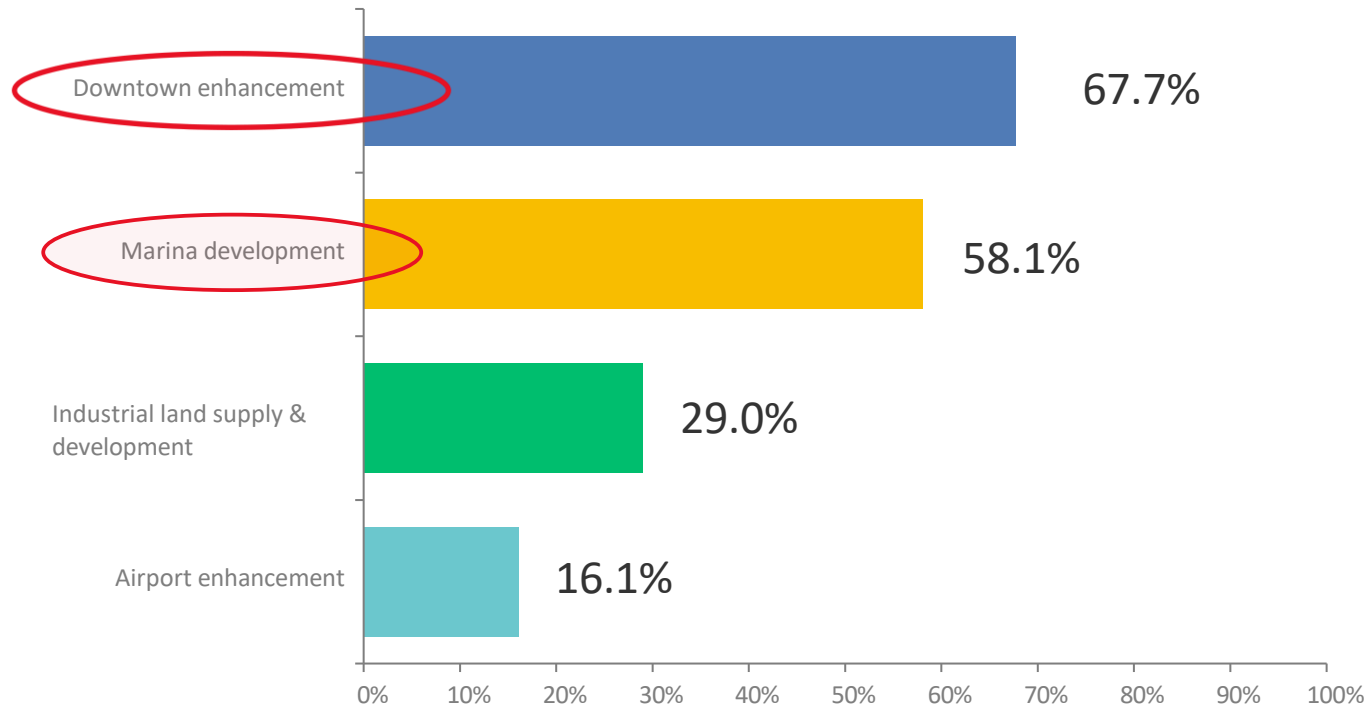
Lack of oceanside pedestrian walkways. Boat ramp over-capacity.  
Lack of retail amenities such as walkways and a boutique hotel. Lack of walking paths by the water.  
Individual landowners along the waterfront. Marina parking areas need to be used.  
Lack of a comprehensive Marine Master Plan with associated, prioritized infrastructure.





**Q38: (Towns Survey) Of the following infrastructure foundations in Comox, where do you think a Comox Economic Development Strategy should prioritize actions? (choose up to two)**

**Downtown, Marina / Marina Park including waterfront had strong support from the public during the Town's economic development engagement survey. The Town's Marina improvement project and successful provincial grant funding was in part due to the support for the waterfront and marina a significant lifestyle amenity and economic driver:**



## What BIG IDEAS should lead our Downtown Enhancement Action Plan? Town Marina and Marina Park Priorities

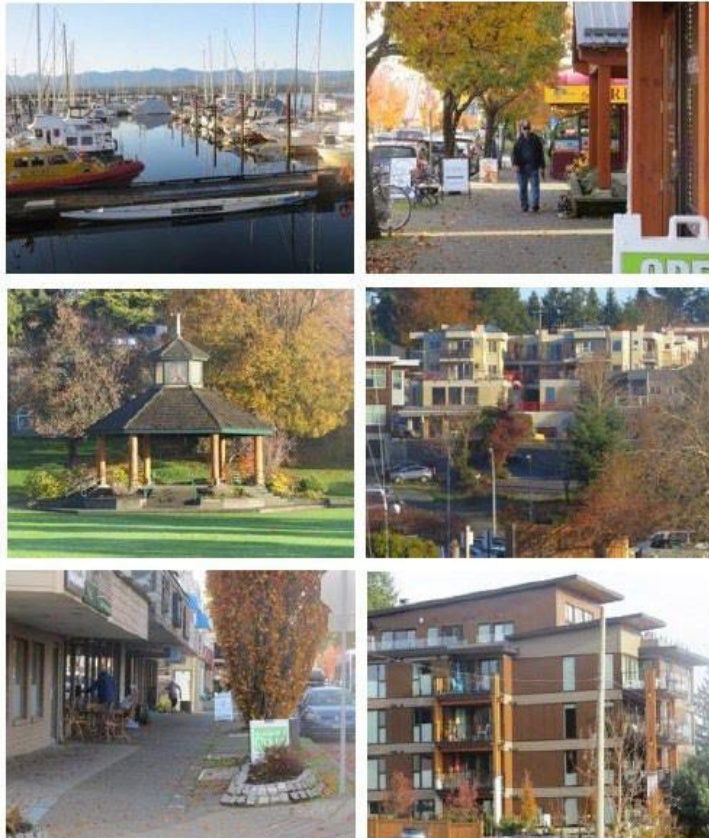
1. Pedestrian-only Mainstreet
2. Town Hall above golf club house
3. Build seawall and walkways
4. Joint venture Legion property redevelopment
5. Optimize town-owned properties / best use - e.g. hotel/condo former Town Hall
6. New OCP (more investment-enabling)
7. Golf course conversion - park & recreation
8. Better marina connectivity to downtown
9. Professionals 2+ floors and/or "professional building"
10. Marina Walking/biking pathway connectivity to downtown
11. Vacant lot development - Port Augusta Comox Ave.
12. Marine tourism (boaters, business)
13. Marketing
14. Visualize key development opportunities
15. Consistent hours of operation
16. More retail
17. Gathering place
18. Densification
19. Hotel
20. Destination marina (economy/industry, connectivity, park activation)
21. Farmers / fish market
22. One-way streets
23. Barn on Lorne Hotel site
24. Diversified beach water access (e.g. kayak)
25. Golf club house mixed use
26. Daylight existing creeks
27. Active transportation links to golf course (an in it)
28. Be brave
29. Authentic town square
30. Downtown entertainment venue – evening
31. Unique public transit
32. Flexibly-pedestrian Mainstreet
33. Multi-use holistic buildings (e.g. caretaker units)

Workshop 1 brainstorming

DOWNTOWN  
WORKSHOP 1

# COMOX DOWNTOWN ENHANCEMENT ACTION PLAN

Shaping a greater downtown destination by the sea



REPORT Draft 3: April 4, 2024

Straw poll –  
top choices:  
Economic  
Development  
Summit

33 brainstormed ideas generated in Workshop 1 were further distilled into 9 “Big Moves” and then prioritized in a subsequent Economic Development Summit.

DOWNTOWN  
WORKSHOP 2 &  
ECONOMIC SUMMIT

## 9 BIG MOVES

- 4 **1. Organize for Success** - more support from various organizations in a group effort referred to as the Comox Downtown Action Partnership.
- 7 **2. Greater Downtown Approach** - links the enhanced “Golf Course Park” with the Marina seaside amenities in addition to Main Street (Comox Avenue). “Park your vehicle once approach”. New meeting place - Town Square.
- 1 **3. Town Square Meeting Place** – Comox Ave and Port Augusta St.
- 2 **4. Comox Avenue “Street Alive” Program** – events program, flex street block, bulges for traffic calming, parking patios, extend mid-block sidewalks.
- 7 **5. Golf Course Public Recreational Asset** – exterior trail loop, Town park/parking south end, extend Buena Vista Ave.
- 14 **6. Marinas Areas and Waterfront** - connections to Seawall Walkway, pedestrian connection to Fisherman’s Wharf extended pier, extend waterfront walkways and non-motorized boat launches, redevelop privately-owned parcel W of Marina Park, Harbour Air terminal.
- 1 **7. Civic Centre** – mixed-use Town office and residential (4 storey), pathway/park. N side Beaufort Ave.
- 9 **8. Residential Mixed-Use Intensification** – 4-6 storeys west of Comox Ave, Legion Hall, C and W Beaufort Ave.
- 8 **9. Business Retention & Recruitment** - retain, expand, and recruit specific businesses.

Workshop 2 prioritization



# Where does Comox shine...what makes you proud of your community?



When asked about what makes Comox “Shine” Residents and Business in the Town of Comox a significant amount of responses focused on the Towns position on the waterfront, and marine experiences.

When you move around Comox, what do you see that we could enhance? (be as specific as possible)

connection-between-highstreet-and-waterfront  
on-site-parking-facing-out-to-the-street townsquare  
bike lanes commercial-marina float-plane-terminal  
waterfront-trails high restaurants  
yqq-lands lunch places risers seawall  
animation rest spots allow edge-of-golf-course  
marina-parking-lot marine-services downtown  
sidewalks places of interest traffic-flow  
police-presence



# COMOX MARINA COMMERCIAL FLOAT BUILDING CONCEPTUAL DRAWING

