



## British Columbia Community Profile...

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# Courtenay

### Overview

The City of Courtenay is located in the north central region of Vancouver Island amidst a beautiful agricultural landscape. Named after a local river, it is the urban centre of the Comox Valley and is home to one of the most charming downtown streetscapes on Vancouver Island. As one of Canada's fastest growing communities, Courtenay offers a wide range of services and amenities. Its location in one of Canada's finest four season playgrounds creates opportunities for outdoor activities galore including swimming, boating, fishing, golfing, skiing and sailing.

### Accessibility

The Comox Valley is accessible by highway, as well as bus, rail and air service. Regular flights can be accessed through the local Comox Valley Regional Airport, which is served by three major airlines. The nearest major centre is Nanaimo, 107 km (approx. 75 minutes) to the south. Victoria, the provincial capital, is 220 km (2 3/4 hours) to the south by road. Frequent ferry service to the British Columbia mainland is offered through both Nanaimo and Victoria.

### History

The name Comox is derived from the Kwakwaka'wakw Indian word Komuckway, meaning "place of plenty", a reference to the abundant game and berries in the Comox Valley. European settlers adapted the name to Komoux, then finally to Comox.

A group of non-native settlers were sent into the Comox Valley in 1862 by the Hudson's Bay Company to farm the land. With the discovery of coal in the area, the population grew. The Port of Comox was founded in the mid 1800s on the slopes of the Comox Peninsula. Comox's sister city was laid out in 1891 and named after the Courtenay River.





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### Economy

The Comox Valley, including the City of Courtenay, the Town of Comox and the Village of Cumberland, is known for its ability to weather economic downturns. The service sector provides the majority of employment here including the retail industry, a large public service component anchored by CFB (Canadian Forces Base) Comox, construction and a growing year round hospitality and tourism industry featuring skiing in the winter and golf and fishing year round. The primary industries of forestry, fishing, mining and agriculture also play a role in the economy.

### Population Profile

The population of Courtenay is 21,940, with a median age of 38.6 compared to 38.4 for the province as a whole. It is part of a total catchment area population of 58,000.

### Climate

The Comox Valley enjoys short, mild winters and warm, dry summers. Weather systems that bring heavier rainfall and storms generally pass over enroute to British Columbia's mainland. The average summer temperature ranges from 12 to 23 degrees Celsius, while the average winter temperature ranges from 0 to 5 degrees. The area receives an average of 1100 mm of rain and 74 cm of snow each year.

### Housing

The average cost of a single-family home in Courtenay is \$320,000. A two-bedroom apartment rents for approximately \$700 per month.

### Education/Daycare

There are 10 elementary, 4 middle and 3 high schools in the Courtenay/Comox area as well as a variety of daycare services for young children. Post secondary education is available at the beautiful 64-acre Comox Valley campus of North Island College located in Courtenay. The Comox Valley Campus offers university transfer, applied science, developmental, trades and technology, and general interest programs.



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### Recreation

The Comox Valley offers residents a wide variety of recreational facilities, including recreation centres, playing fields, 7 golf courses, tennis courts, biking trails, parks and an aquatic centre. In addition, a variety of service clubs and fraternal organizations are active here.

Outdoor enthusiasts will find a wealth of recreational opportunities, including skiing, rock climbing, kayaking, mountain biking, windsurfing, boating, salt and freshwater fishing and scuba diving. 31 km west of Courtenay is beautiful Mt. Washington, offering the largest ski area on Vancouver Island with superb downhill skiing, as well as cross-country skiing and snowboarding.

### Culture

This area is well known for its artistic community, boasting the highest per-capita concentration of artists in Canada. Over 550 artists and crafts-people make their home in the valley. Their products include native crafts, pottery, stained glass, fine arts, and woven materials. There are also performance artists and musicians here. Cultural facilities include several art galleries and four theatres.

The refurbished Sid Williams Theatre in Courtenay recently won a facility excellence award from the B.C. Recreation and Parks Association, and it has played host to such well-known names as Rita MacNeil, the Waifs and Prairie Oyster as well as many local productions.

During the summer the area hosts the Comox Valley Youth Music Centre in which students and faculty come from all over the province to participate.

### Services & Amenities

Courtenay is the urban centre of the Comox Valley offering its residents a wide range of services and amenities including a local transit system, grocery stores, banks, clothing stores, specialty shops, pharmacies, hardware stores, numerous restaurants, a movie theatre, a library and postal services. From May to October, residents enjoy shopping at the local farmer's market, which features organic produce, freshly baked goods and more. High speed Internet service is available.

Over thirty churches and other places of worship are located in the Comox Valley serving the Alliance, Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Christian Reformed, Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Congregational, Episcopal, Evangelical, Gospel, Lutheran, Mennonite, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Seventh Day Adventist, Unitarian, and other faiths.

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### Health Authority

Courtenay is located within the North Island Health Region of the Vancouver Island Health Authority. Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) provides healthcare services that include acute care facilities, mental health & addictions, environmental and public health, home, and community care. For comprehensive information on Vancouver Island Health Authority, visit their website (see Internet References below).

### Internet References

*BritishColumbia.com*

<http://www.britishcolumbia.com/regions>

*Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce*

<http://www.comoxvalleychamber.com>

*Tourism Vancouver Island*

<http://www.islands.bc.ca>

*Vancouver Island Health*

<http://www.viha.ca>

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