

DELEGATION REQUEST

:

Name(s) of person(s) speaking: Twila Skinner

Organization Information

Organization you are representing: Comox Valley Farmers' Market

Primary purpose of the organization: Farmers Market

Number of members: 100

Contact name: Twila Skinner

Meeting Details

Subject matter:

Discuss possibilities for bus loop to Exhibition Grounds and location options for farmers' market

Specific request of the regional district, if any (i.e. letter of support, funding):

Requested meeting date: January 11, 2022

Comox Valley Regional District Board Meeting

January 11, 2022

770 Harmston Avenue, Courtenay, BC



Who/What/When/Where/Why of the Comox Valley Farmers Market:

We have been growing, making, baking, raising and wild harvesting fresh local and nutritionally dense food for the Comox Valley and beyond since 1992
(We turn 30 in May!)

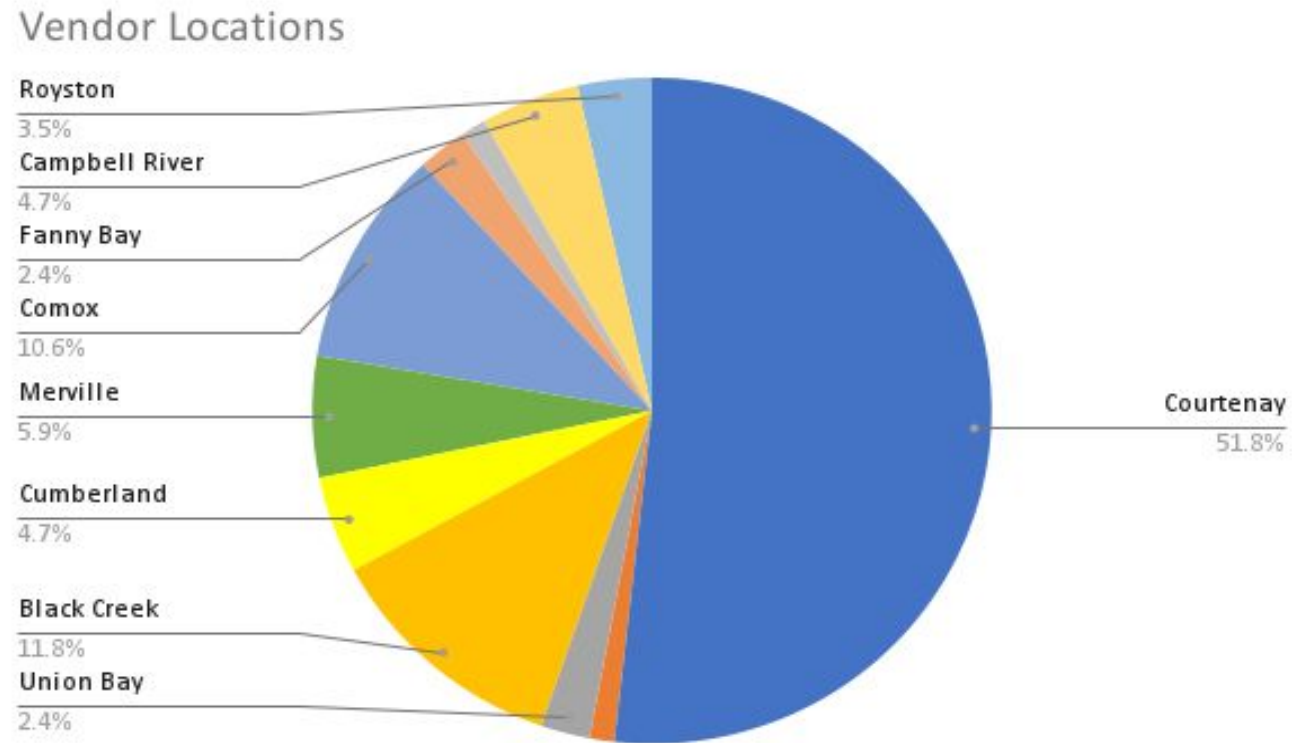
Our mandate is to:

- To Promote the economic health of the local farm and food community
- To provide quality locally grown farm products
- To educate the community on agriculture issues
- To promote and support local agriculture



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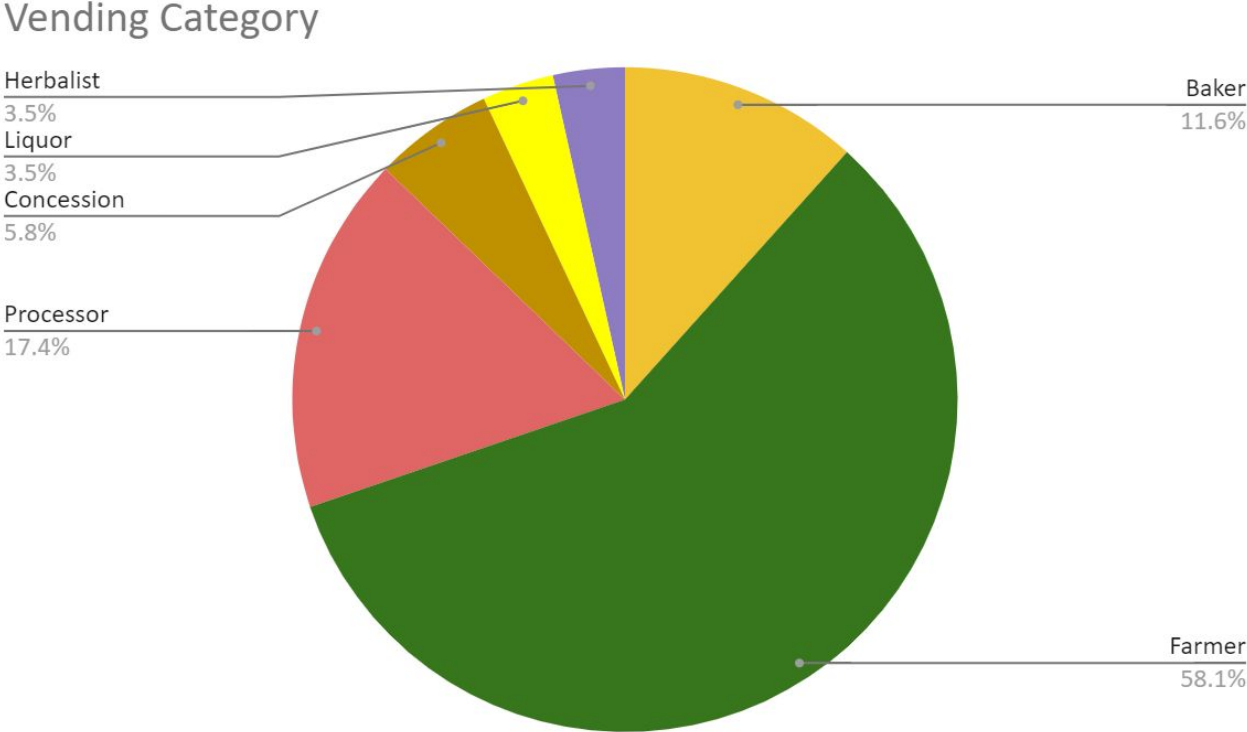
Although our catchment area (CVRD/SRD) goes from Sayward in the North, Fanny Bay in the South, Cortes Island in the East and Kyuquot to the West, the bulk of our vendors (~90%) are within a ~20 Km radius of the CV Exhibition Grounds while the remaining ~10% are within less than a ~50km radius



Based on 2021 Membership



We are a food only (outside of a couple of soap/body care products and value-added agriculture products (ex: bees wax, candles)) Farmers' Market with an emphasis on farmers and fishers (~ 60% farmers/fishers)



Based on 2021 Membership



There are currently 3 markets operated by the CVFMA including:

- Saturdays Year Round
- Sundays in Cumberland
- Wednesdays in Downtown Courtenay



Sundays: June –September in Cumberland



Saturdays: Oct –April at Natives Sons Hall



Saturdays: April to Oct at CV Exhibition Grounds



Wednesdays: June –September in Downtown Courtenay



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Customer Numbers and Economic Benefits to Comox Valley

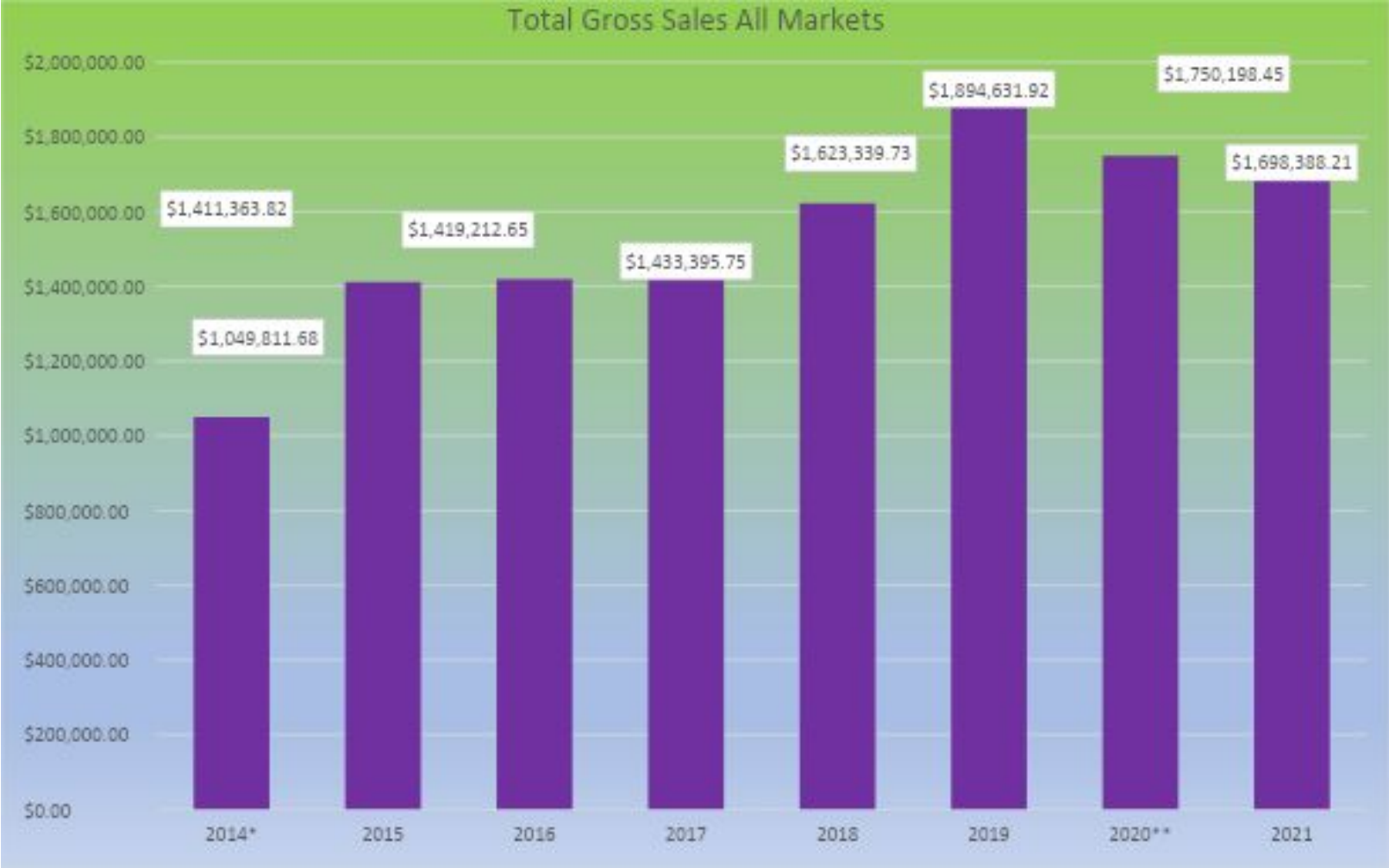
Customer attendance has been steadily increasing over the years. Prior to COVID-19 we had ~3000-3500 customers over a 4-hour period in the height of our Saturday Summer Market Season.

Over the last two years, as a direct result of COVID-19 /PHO Orders, these numbers have decreased to ~ 1900 in 2020 and ~2400 in 2021

Despite the decrease in customers, sales have remained strong



Since 2014 we have been keeping track of vendor gross sales (ie direct customer sales).



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*Gross Sales Data collection began in April 2014

**Online Store Started on April 3, 2020

What are the economic benefits of the Farmers' Market to the Comox Valley?

Economic benefits, which can include direct, indirect, and some induced effects, are measured in terms of revenue (\$), output (\$), and employment (jobs).*

Some examples:

1. Direct- customers purchasing product directly from vendors
2. Indirect- vendors purchasing product from other vendors to make their product, vendors purchasing seed, feed and ingredients etc from store in the Comox Valley; employment (1 Full-time staff; 1 part-time staff (planned for 2022); 1 seasonal staff)

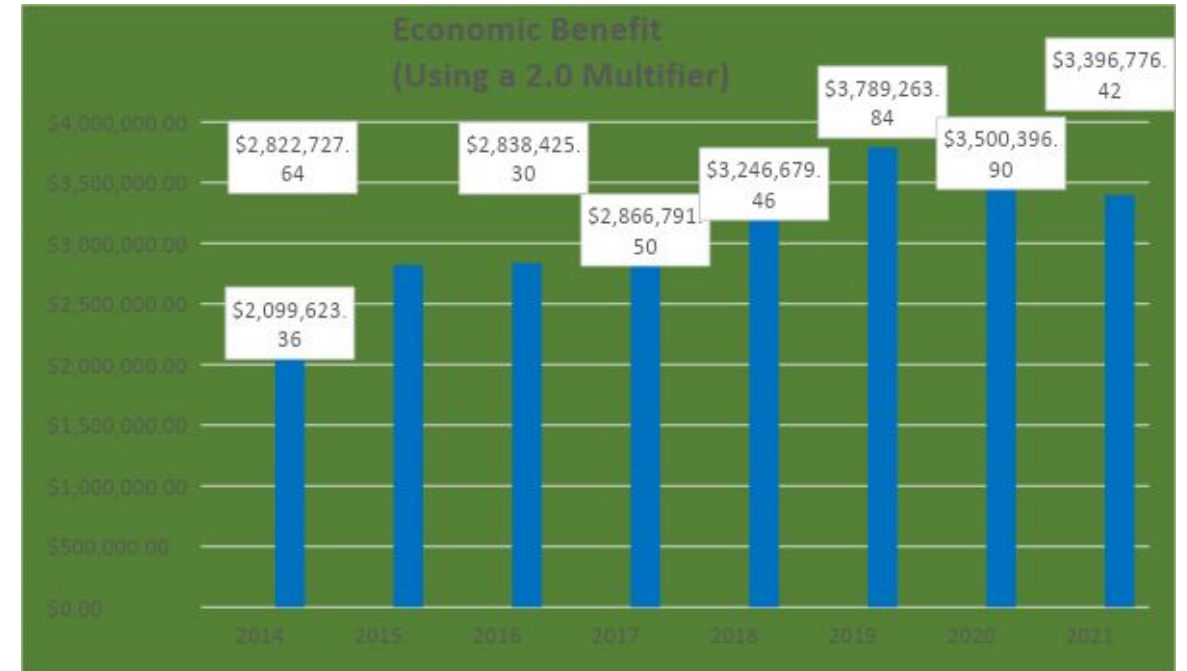
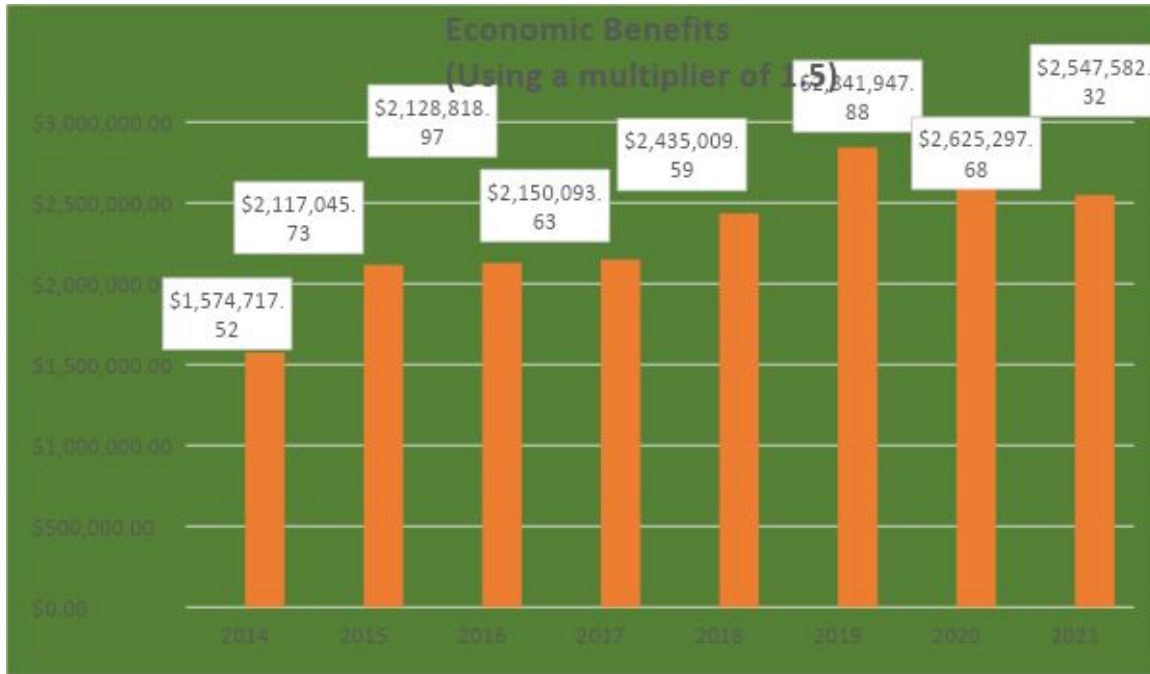
*Economic and Social Benefits Assessment Final Report Comox Valley Farmers' Market (Saturday), Prepared by: David J. Connell, PhD MCIP Anna Melnik, MA, October 2012



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The number used for multipliers for farmers' markets varies, ranging from 1.21 to 3.0. A multiplier of 2.0 is commonly used for convenience. *

~\$3,000,000/year



*Economic and Social Benefits Assessment Final Report Comox Valley Farmers' Market (Saturday), Prepared by: David J. Connell, PhD MCIP Anna Melnik, MA, October 2012



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We participate in the BC Association of Farmers' Markets Nutrition Coupon Program which feeds more than 150 families and seniors over a 16-week period and provides them with access to fresh locally produced vegetables, fruit, nuts, dairy, eggs and meat and fish.

Our Community Partners, Healthy Families and Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry focus on supporting families with children under 6 years of age and seniors. In addition, they also partner with School District 71, Immigrant Welcome Centre, the Wachiay Friendship Centre's and Maple Pool Campground.



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In 2021 this program provided ~\$45 000 in coupons to residents of Courtenay and Comox

We also run a similar but smaller program in Cumberland



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Since 2018 we have partnered with Lush Valley on their Farm Gleaning Program.

The purpose of this program is to increase the impact of local growers by supporting members of our community who often lack access to fresh healthy food, while promoting local food production, and reducing food waste.

Through this program ~4000 lbs of fresh fruit and vegetables that would have otherwise been composted or thrown out was redistributed.

This food used in their Hot Meal Program, Good Food Box and various meal kits that were then distributed to 15 social service agency partners including tenants at BC Housings Washington Inn, members of the Komoks First Nation, Students and Food Bank Recipients.



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Transportation to the Comox Valley Farmers' Market

The Comox Valley Farmers' Market has been located at the CV Exhibition Grounds for 30 years. This location has many amenities necessary to run a successful market including access to power and water, washroom facilities, parking (including accessible parking) etc

The one thing that is lacking is suitable public transportation during market hours.



Transportation (or lack of) impacts food security



Photo Credit: <https://www.bctransit.com/about/fleet>

“Transportation is a major barrier both to people trying to access food programs such as hampers, soup kitchens, food banks, farmer’s markets, and grocery stores due to poorly serviced bus routes, physical challenges, and other restrictions to accessing transportation. For local food producers, delivery is often not an option, and many social service agencies do not have the time, staff or vehicles to pick up produce. “

Food Security, Poverty, Housing And The Local Food System- closing the loop in the Comox Valley by: Maurita Prato and Andrea Cupelli, 2019



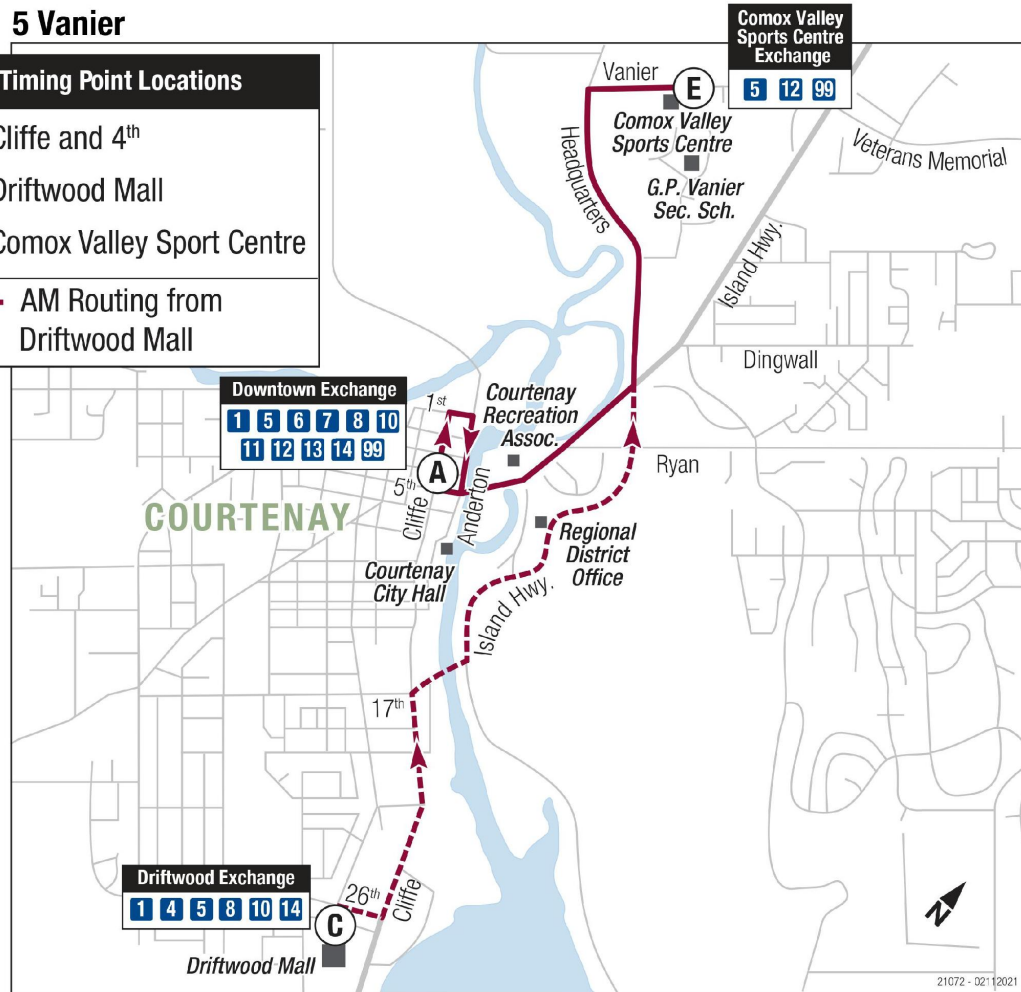
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Timing Point Locations

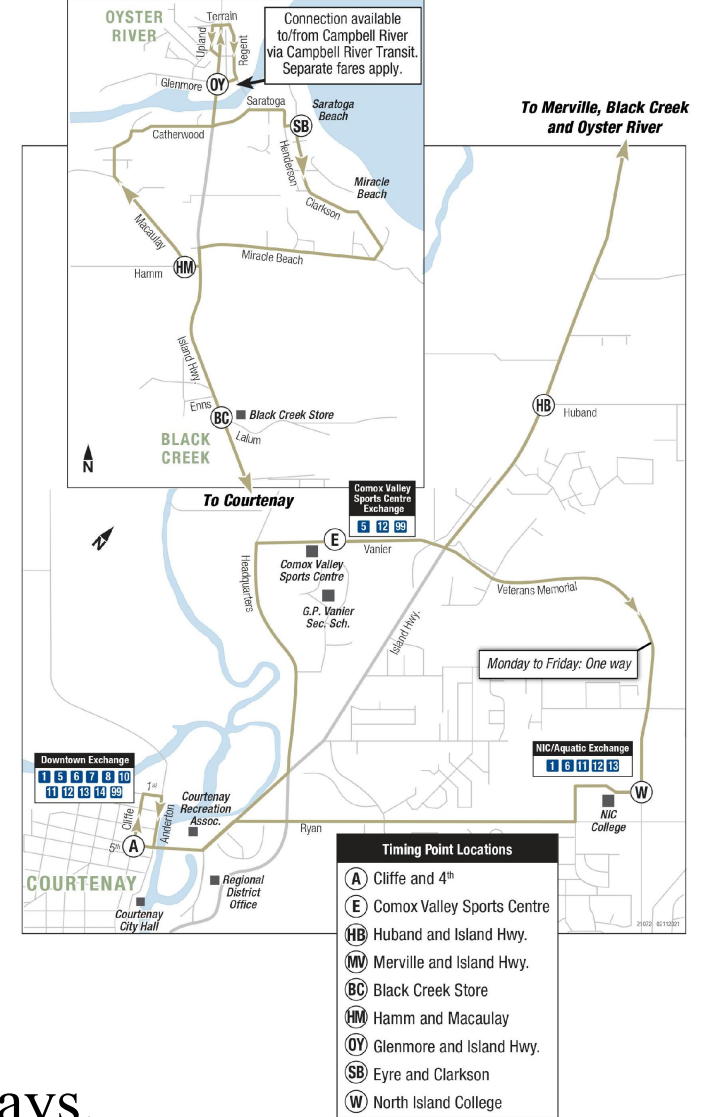
- (A)** Cliffe and 4th
- (C)** Driftwood Mall
- (E)** Comox Valley Sport Centre

--- AM Routing from Driftwood Mall



Nearest bus stop (CV Sports Center or just North of Cassa Loma Seniors Village) to the Farmers' Market is ~1km

12 Oyster River/Downtown



Only 2 Bus Routes that pass by the Exhibition Grounds on Saturdays.
(There are stops near Ryan Rd and Island Highway. It is an ~2 KM walk to the market from these stops)



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Direction - TO COMOX VALLEY SPORTS CENTRE AND
G.P. VANIER SECONDARY

Schedule Info

Weekday Schedule		Saturday Schedule
ROUTE VIA	DOWNTOWN: CLIFFE AT 4TH ST	COMOX VALLEY SPORTS CTR & GP VANIER SEC
5	3:15 PM	3:25 PM

Direction - TO DOWNTOWN COURTENAY

Schedule Info

Weekday Schedule		Saturday Schedule
ROUTE VIA	COMOX VALLEY SPORTS CTR & GP VANIER SEC	DOWNTOWN: CLIFFE AT 4TH ST
5	3:25 PM	3:36 PM

Arrives and departs **AFTER** the market is over



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Direction - TO OYSTER RIVER (CAMPBELL RIVER TRANSIT CONNECTIONS)

[change direction](#)

Schedule Info

Weekday Schedule **Saturday Schedule** [Print Schedule](#) [Printing Tips](#)

TRIP NOTES
E - Transfer at Oyster River for connection to-from Campbell River. Additional fare applies unless using a Dual Pass. Contact Campbell River Transit at 250-287-7433 for schedule information.

ROUTE VIA	TRIP NOTES	DOWNTOWN: CLIFFE AT 4TH ST	COMOX VALLEY SPORTS CTR & GP VANIER SEC	ISLAND HWY AT HUBAND	MERVILLE: ISLAND HWY AT SACKVILLE	BLACK CREEK STORE	HAMM MACA
12	E	11:35 AM	11:45 AM	11:47 AM	11:55 AM	12:02 PM	12:04
12	E	5:34 PM	5:45 PM	5:47 PM	5:55 PM	6:02 PM	6:04

Direction - TO COURTENAY

[change direction](#)

Schedule Info

Weekday Schedule **Saturday Schedule** [Print Schedule](#) [Printing Tips](#)

TRIP NOTES
E - Transfer at Oyster River for connection to-from Campbell River. Additional fare applies unless using a Dual Pass. Contact Campbell River Transit at 250-287-7433 for schedule information.

TRIP NOTES	OYSTER RIVER: GLENMORE AT ISLAND HWY	SARATOGA BEACH: EYRE AT CLARKSON	BLACK CREEK STORE	MERVILLE: ISLAND HWY AT SACKVILLE	ISLAND HWY AT HUBAND	COMOX VALLEY SPORTS CTR & GP VANIER SEC
E	12:17 PM	12:23 PM	12:32 PM	12:39 PM	12:47 PM	12:51 PM
E	6:17 PM	6:23 PM	6:32 PM	6:39 PM	6:47 PM	6:51 PM

Arrives between 11:40-11:45 AM at the bus stop followed by ~1 km (10–12-minute) walk; departs 12:51-12:55 PM at the bus stop preceded by ~1 km (10–12-minute) walk

Although in theory this give a customer ~ 40 minutes to shop at the market; the closer to the end of market, the less product selection. Some products such as eggs, berries, bread, salad greens, vegetables etc are sold out.



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In addition to some of our Nutrition Coupon Program Participants, there are other individuals some of which have indicated to us that they would like to attend the market but do not have transportation available.

We have customers that attend our Saturday Market when it is located at the Native Sons Hall (across from a bus loop) but are unable to attend the market when it moves to the CV Exhibition Grounds.



Why do we need a more robust bus route at the CV Exhibition Grounds

- Groceries can be heavy and awkward to carry for long distances (especially with mobility issues or with stroller and kids for example)
- Many residents don't have access to transportation or access to reliable transportation
- Individuals with mobility issues may be unable to walk the ~1km from the bus stop to the Market and back again
- The current timing for buses does not allow customers to access the market during the times when there is the greatest selection of product
- The current schedule does not allow for any flexibility in times to arrive at the market to participate in food literacy/educational events such as Food Fest



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- It would help reduce vehicle traffic and street parking
- A more robust bus loop to the Exhibition Grounds, specifically on weekends would not only benefit the Comox Valley Farmers' Market, but other events such as Music Fest, Rib Fest , Fall Fair, craft fairs etc



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What we would like to see

The Farmers' Market is an important ingredient in the Comox Valley's economy, food system and community. Not only is it a place to purchase fresh local and nutritionally dense foods, it is a weekly free family-oriented event where families and individuals can engage social connection. It is a place where people come together for laughter, fellowship, food, and fun. The area surrounding the market has other outdoor activities such as walking/hiking trails, swimming and more.

To align with Active Comox Valley indicatives and to help break down barriers to Food Security in the Comox Valley we would like to see consultation and collaboration between user groups to have regular bus services (Buses service every ½ hour or 1 hour) to the CV Exhibition Grounds from June to September/October

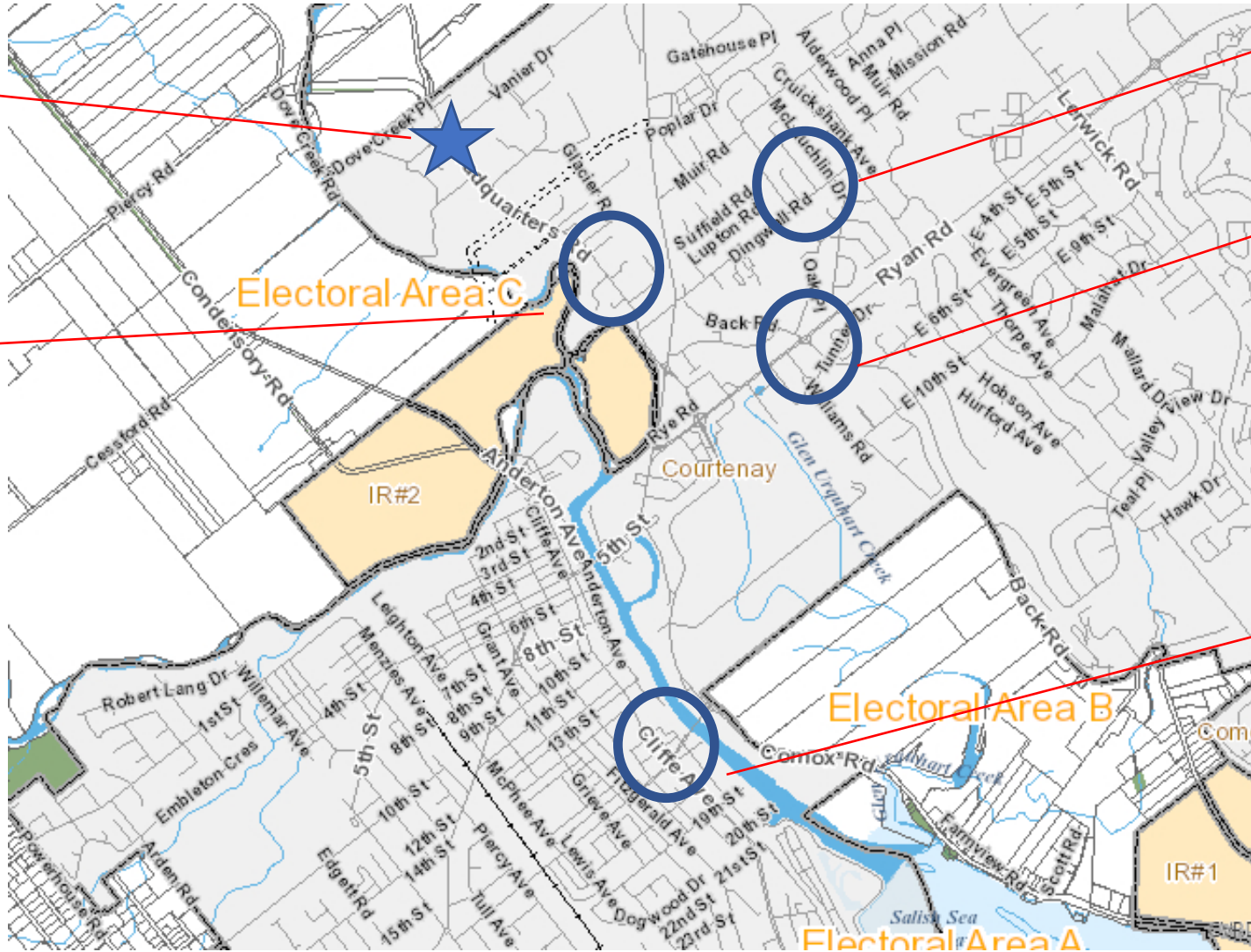


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Where are some potential bus stop location?

Farmers' Market

Maple Pool/
Cassa Loma



Dingwal
1

Back Rd/Ryan
Rd

Cliffe/17th



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Year-Round Location

We have outgrown the Native Sons Hall and need to find a more suitable location where we can be in one place throughout the year



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Thank you

Questions?



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