

Located on the east coast of central Vancouver Island, the City of Courtenay is a culturally diverse city of approximately 22,500 people. Located within the traditional lands of the K'ómoks First Nation in the heart of the Comox Valley, Courtenay is a vibrant and unique city which has retained its quaint and friendly 'small town' atmosphere offering big city shops, galleries, eateries and much more.

Derek Richmond is the Manager of Engineering for the City of Courtenay. The City wanted to be able to provide a higher level of service to clients including the private sector, developers and the public at large. Some areas that required focus were accessibility of data, speed of turnaround for data requests, comparisons, ease of sharing of information and overall accuracy.

"One of our goals was to get our GIS up to speed with the rest of the world in terms of technology," states Derek Richmond. "Both the engineering and planning groups for the city recognized the need for additional tools to assist in meeting our collective objectives including public service expectations. Mapping is the language that both engineering and planning understand and we needed a common GIS."



Derek, the project manager for this initiative, works closely with the City's Information Technology Division on this initiative. A member of ICIS since 2008, the municipality applied for a CivicSpatial grant from ICIS at the beginning for 2009. With funding granted and combined with local government funding, the team was able to purchase two critical pieces of hardware, a permanent digital monument or RTK and a GPS unit..



With these tools in place the project of mapping over 12,000 land parcels is a work in progress and will continue through 2010. "Ultimately, we want to start tying land title information to services and other layers of information," says Derek.

"We are confident that these efforts will lead to improvements in land use planning, by-law enforcement, building inspections, administration & finance, emergency planning & service and much more."



The City expects a significant improvement in the accuracy of their GIS data. Having access to the accurate location of various infrastructure types – like Water mains for example – will help with inventory monitoring. As well, the improvement in accuracy will help with planning scenarios and will enable the municipality to share data cross boundaries because they are now using a common language.

"We are already realizing an improvement in productivity through the sharing of data. Instead of fielding requests for data from public utilities, these requests now go directly through to ICIS," remarks Derek Richmond. "I'm sure that this has also resulted in productivity improvements on their side too."

*"The common language and the spirit of collaboration at the heart of our ICIS relationship has become an essential element to our efforts. 2010 will see continued improvement of the City of Courtenay's cadastral fabric."*