

Tom Yates

From: Island Coastal Economic Trust <info@islandcoastaltrust.ca>
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Cortes Island Outdoor Pavilion Will Invigorate Village Commons

Locally built timber-frame structure to create space for community events and gatherings



Cortes Island residents will make effective use of a four season, common outdoor gathering area.

Photo courtesy of Marcin Chady

COURTENAY, 24 April 2023 – The Cortes Island Community Foundation has embarked on a new project to build a Central Covered Pavilion as part of a larger effort to enhance accessibility, vibrancy, and walkability in the Village of Manson’s Landing, with funding support through Island Coastal Economic Trust’s Community Placemaking program.

The new four-season, common outdoor gathering place is one outcome of a larger Village Commons Site Concept Plan, completed by the Cortes Community Economic Development Association (CCEDA) in 2021. The Plan involved extensive feedback, visioning, and consultation with local stakeholders who expressed a clear desire for a vibrant permanent outdoor gathering space where people can gather and partake in events and programs year-round.

“We are so excited to see this beautiful new project come to life, as it will allow us to host events, share food, be physically active, and connect with others,” says Manda Aufochs-Gillespie, Executive Director of Cortes Island Community Foundation. “We are confident the structure will be appreciated by residents and visitors and that it will have a huge impact on community well-being and help with post-pandemic business renewal.”

The new timber-frame structure, built using local wood products and employing local craftspeople, would be the first (and only) public outdoor structure supporting outdoor gatherings anywhere on Cortes Island. Located on 2.6 acres of commercially zoned vacant land, in the heart of Cortes Island’s largest community and commercial centre (Manson’s Landing), the Central Covered Pavilion will also support patrons of the nearby Vending Boardwalk and the year-round neighbouring Manson’s Hall Farmer’s Market.

“We chose this location because it’s in the heart of our community’s village centre and accessible by foot to our Seniors Village, the Cortes Island School, the Manson’s grocery stores, the Friday Market, and the future Rainbow Ridge housing project,” says Manda. “As we saw during the pandemic we need more

outdoor covered spaces that can be used any time of the year. We are an island alive with community groups and culture... but often lacking the spaces to make coming together easy. We believe this Pavilion and Welcome Pole will be just the beginning of creating the infrastructure for year-round vibrancy.”



Concept design of the project. Photo courtesy of CCEDA

The Village Commons aims to add to the sense of community and connection by providing much-needed additional commercial space for local entrepreneurs. The new Pavilion will provide value-added to local vendors with the expansion and revitalization of the Manson’s Landing core with this covered space. Other Site Plan features include the Vendor Market Place and Welcome Pole Courtyard, which alongside the Pavilion form “Phase 1” of the current development efforts. A Village Commons Working Group, that includes representatives of CCEDA, local First Nations, the neighbouring South Cortes Community Association and the Cortes Housing Society and others will guide this project.

“We are honoured to support this collaborative project that will encourage and foster a stronger sense of community among residents of Cortes Island and further entice visitors into the area,” says Island Coastal Economic Trust CEO

Brodie Guy. "This project is a great example of using local resources and craftsmanship to build a structure that will further showcase the wide variety of events and talent in the community, while building upon the Island's already inspiring and creative reputation."

"This type of community and resident-focused enhancement provides an increased sense of community and pride of place. Coming out of the pandemic, there is a renewed sense of people wanting to gather and find a central space in which to do so. I am thrilled to see this project moving forward and know it will benefit both residents and visitors alike," says Brian Cant, Acting President & CEO, 4VI.

"This new pavilion will give both the residents and visitors of Manson's Landing a new space to enjoy while they explore all the great businesses and local amenities that the Village has to offer," said Michele Babchuk, MLA for the North Island. "By using local wood and employing local builders, the project will highlight the resources and skills that Cortes Island residents can be proud of, and I am so pleased that community partners were able to join ICET and bring this project to life."

The Cortes Island Community Foundation will receive \$50,000 and is supported through a collaborative funding arrangement between the Island Coastal Economic Trust and the Targeted Regional Tourism Development Initiative (through 4VI). The Community Placemaking program provides one-stop funding support of up to 100% of project costs to stimulate and promote vitality in downtowns, Main Streets and business districts across the region.

The project is set to get underway shortly.

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About Island Coastal Economic Trust

Founded by the Province of British Columbia in 2006, the Island Coastal Economic Trust works to build a sustainable and resilient coastal economy in reciprocal relationships with First Nations, municipalities, and regional districts across Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, and islands and inlets from the Salish Sea to Cape Caution. Serving over half a million residents, we partner with communities in the development and financing of their economic infrastructure and diversification efforts through our unique structure that is led by, and accountable to, communities.

Since our inception, Island Coastal Economic Trust has approved more than \$59 million to economic development initiatives that have attracted over \$322 million in new investment to our region. These investments have created over 2,750 permanent jobs, and countless positive impacts, across the coast.

Island Coastal Economic Trust acknowledges that we work for communities across the ancestral and unceded territories of the Kwakwaka'wakw, Nuučaan̓uł, Éy7á7juuthem, Ligwilda'xw, Pəntl'áč, She shashishalhem, Skwxwú7mesh, Hul'q'umi'num', diitiidʔaatx, SENĆOŦEN, Lekwungen, and T'Sou-ke speaking peoples

Media Contacts

Brodie Guy

CEO

Island Coastal Economic Trust

brodie@islandcoastaltrust.ca

250-871-7797

Manda Aufochs-Gillespie

Executive Director

Cortes Island Community Foundation

manda@cortesfoundation.ca

604-417-6888



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Our mailing address is:

#108 - 501 4th Street
Courtenay, BC V9N 1H3

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