



STAFF REPORT TO COMMITTEE

MEETING TYPE & DATE: Special Electoral Area Services Committee of March 26, 2026
FROM: LAND USE SERVICES - Community Planning
SUBJECT: Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw
FILE: 3900-30 4710

PURPOSE/INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to introduce the draft Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw (CZB), applicable to all electoral areas.

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION

That it be recommended to the Board:

1. That a public hearing not be held for:
 - a. CVRD Bylaw No. 4710 – Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw for the Electoral Areas, 2026;
 - b. CVRD Bylaw No. 4716 – South Cowichan Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Removal of Upland Zones Amendment), 2026;
 - c. CVRD Bylaw No. 4717 – Electoral Area G – Saltair/Gulf Islands Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Removal of Upland Zones Amendment), 2026;
 - d. CVRD Bylaw No. 4718 – Electoral Area H – North Oyster/Diamond Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Removal of Upland Zones Amendment), 2026; and
 - e. That notice be given in accordance with Section 467 of the *Local Government Act*.
2. That the following bylaws be considered for first reading:
 - a. CVRD Bylaw No. 4710 – Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw for the Electoral Areas, 2026;
 - b. CVRD Bylaw No. 4716 – South Cowichan Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Removal of Upland Zones Amendment), 2026;
 - c. CVRD Bylaw No. 4717 – Electoral Area G – Saltair/Gulf Islands Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Removal of Upland Zones Amendment), 2026;
 - d. CVRD Bylaw No. 4718 – Electoral Area H – North Oyster/Diamond Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Removal of Upland Zones Amendment), 2026; and
3. That a summary of input from First Nations, referral agencies, and the public, and any recommended bylaw amendments, be provided to the Electoral Area Services Committee prior to consideration of second reading of CVRD Bylaw Nos. 4710, 4716, 4717, and 4718.

BACKGROUND

The CVRD currently administers ten zoning bylaws across its nine electoral areas, inclusive of more than 350 different zones. One bylaw applies only to development permit areas, Electoral

Areas A and C share a zoning bylaw, and Electoral Area D has two separate zoning bylaws – one applicable to marine areas and the other to upland areas.

The CZB project was initiated to address this complexity. For the first time, the CZB will establish a single zoning bylaw applicable to all CVRD electoral areas, consolidating and modernizing regulations to implement the policies of the new Official Community Plan (OCP), adopted in November 2025. This consolidation is intended to simplify the zoning framework, improve consistency across the region, and provide a foundation for more efficient administration and future amendments.

- Attachment A – Draft CVRD Bylaw No. 4710 - Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw for the Electoral Areas, 2026
- Attachment B – Draft CVRD Bylaw No. 4710 - Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw for the Electoral Areas, 2026, Schedule A – Electoral Area Zoning Map
Note: Due to the size of the document, Schedule A – Electoral Area Zoning Map” is available for viewing and download as a PDF on the PlanYourCowichan CZB webpage: <https://www.planyourcowichan.ca/35281/widgets/145085/documents/166185>
- Attachment C - CZB Zone Concordance by Electoral Area
- See interactive web map to check zones by parcel (top right-hand side - <https://www.planyourcowichan.ca/zoning-bylaw-project>)

The authority to create land use regulations is derived from the *Local Government Act*, including provisions for zoning (s. 479), residential rental tenure (s. 481.1), minimum parcel frontage (s. 512), subdivision for a relative’s residence (s. 514), runoff control (s. 523), floodplain regulations (s. 524), off-street parking and loading (s. 525), and signage regulation (s. 526). Additional authority is provided under the Community Charter, including the enclosure of swimming pools (s. 63(d)) and regulation of trailer courts, manufactured home parks, and camping grounds (s. 63(e)).

Marine Zoning Bylaws

Updating marine zoning is not within the scope of Phase 1 (current phase) of the CZB project and will instead be considered as part of a future Phase 2. Modernization of marine zoning is contingent on completion of the Province of British Columbia’s Coastal Marine Strategy and subsequent amendments to the Official Community Plan to incorporate policies for CVRD marine areas.

Work on the Coastal Marine Strategy has been ongoing with the Province for several years and involves coordination across multiple jurisdictions as well as consultation with First Nations. Subject to completion of a marine plan and its incorporation into the OCP, staff would bring forward a proposed project scope and Communications and Engagement Plan for the Board’s consideration. This work could take several years to initiate and complete.

During Phase 1, portions of existing bylaws that regulate marine areas will be maintained to ensure continuity. The following actions are proposed:

1. South Cowichan Zoning Bylaw: Upland zones for Electoral Areas A and C will be removed from the text and maps, leaving marine zones intact (see Attachment D).

2. Marine Zoning Bylaw for Electoral Area D: marine portions of Area D remain under Zoning Bylaw No. 1015, which will remain unchanged following CZB adoption.
3. Electoral Area G Zoning Bylaw No. 2524: Upland zones will be removed from the text and map, retaining only zones that apply to marine water surfaces (see Attachment E).
4. Electoral Area H Zoning Bylaw No. 1020: Upland zones will be removed from the text and map, leaving only marine zones intact (see Attachment F).

Other Land Use Bylaws

Several individual land use bylaws have been incorporated into the CZB and, following its adoption, it is recommended that they be repealed. These include:

- Cowichan Valley Regional District Mobile Home Park Bylaw No. 275, 1976;
- Cowichan Valley Regional District Off-street Parking Bylaw No. 1001, 1986;
- Cowichan Valley Regional District Sign Bylaw No. 1095, 1987; and,
- Cowichan Valley Regional District Campsite Standards Bylaw No. 1520, 1993.

Consolidating these bylaws and incorporating general landscape standards into the CZB streamlines the regulatory framework, updates outdated regulations and enhances usability.

CZB Referrals

Following publication of the agenda for the March 26, 2026 Special EASC meeting to consider the draft CZB, referral packages were distributed to the following agencies and First Nations. This timing was intended to allow adequate opportunity for each agency to review the draft bylaw, assess its implications, provide considered feedback, and enable staff to incorporate any relevant comments into the CZB prior to its consideration.

- Agricultural Land Commission
- Alberni Clayoquot Regional District
- BC Transit
- Capital Regional District
- City of Duncan
- Cowichan Valley School District No. 79
- Islands Trust
- Municipality of North Cowichan
- Island Health
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food
- Ministry of Forests
- Ministry of Transportation and Transit
- Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
- Nanaimo Ladysmith School District No. 68
- Nanaimo Airport Commission
- Regional District of Nanaimo
- Town of Ladysmith
- Town of Lake Cowichan
- Cowichan Tribes
- Ditidaht First Nation
- Halalt First Nation
- Lyackson First Nation
- Malahat Nation
- Pacheedaht First Nation
- Pauquachin First Nation
- Penelakut Tribe
- Stz'uminus First Nation
- Ts'uubaa-asatx
- Braithwaite Estates Improvement District
- Cobble Hill Improvement District
- Cowichan Bay Improvement District
- Cowichan Bay Waterworks District
- Diamond Improvement District
- Meredith Road Improvement District
- Mill Bay Fire Improvement District
- Mill Bay Waterworks
- Oceanview Improvement District
- Shawnigan Improvement District
- Sunset Improvement District

- Sylvania Improvement District
- Wace Creek Improvement District

ANALYSIS

CZB Zone Consolidation and OCP Concordance

The CZB has been developed to implement the policy direction of the OCP.

The proposed zones align the zoning framework with the OCP land use designations and policy objectives and provide clear and consistent regulations to guide future development and land use within the electoral areas.

The CZB is comprised of 36 standard zones and 33 Comprehensive Development (CD) zones.

- See Attachment A – Draft CVRD Bylaw No. 4710 - Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw for the Electoral Areas, 2026
- See Attachment B – Draft CVRD Bylaw No. 4710 - Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw for the Electoral Areas, 2026, Schedule A – Electoral Area Zoning Map.

The table below summarizes the proposed standard CZB zones, their corresponding OCP designations, and the approximate number of existing zones consolidated into each. Because some existing zones currently apply to multiple parcels with different OCP designations, they may be distributed across more than one CZB zone. For example, parcels currently zoned P-1 (Parks and Institutional) may now be placed in either a Parks zone or an Institutional zone in the CZB, depending on the applicable OCP designation. Additional details on zone consolidation are provided in Attachment F – Zone Consolidation.

OCP Designation	Code	Zone	Approx. Number of Existing Zones Consolidated
Agricultural	A-1	Agricultural ALR Zone	75
Agricultural	A-2	Agriculture Resource Zone	27
Forestry & Resources	F-1	Forest Resource Zone	42
Large Lot Rural	RR-1	Rural Residential 1 Zone	13
	RC-1	River Corridor Residential 1 Zone	4
Small Lot Rural	RR-2	Rural Residential 2 Zone	55
Country Suburban	RR-3	Rural Residential 3 Zone	14
Large Lot Residential	R-1	Residential 1 Zone	44
	R-2	Residential 2 Zone	46
	R-4	Residential 4 Zone	3 (consolidation split with Compact Lot Suburban designation)
Medium Lot Suburban	R-5	Residential 5 Zone	9
	R-3	Residential 3 Zone	17
Compact Lot Suburban	R-4	Residential 4 Zone	3 (consolidation split with Medium Lot Suburban designation)

Village Residential	RM-1	Multi-Unit Residential 1 Zone	28
Village Core	RM-2	Multi-Unit Residential 2 Zone	8
	RM-3	Multi-Unit Residential 3 Zone	0 (no parcels over 60 units/ha in density)
Village Commercial	C-1	Village Commercial Zone	27
General Commercial Service Commercial	C-2	General Commercial Zone	27
	C-3	Service Commercial Zone	9
Mixed-Employment	C-4	Mixed Commercial Zone	8
Tourist Commercial	C-5	Tourist Commercial Zone	18
Crossroads Commercial	n/a	n/a	0 (no parcels within this designation)
Light Industrial	I-1	Light Industrial Zone	5
General Industrial	I-2	General Industrial Zone	10
	I-3	General Industrial Zone	12
	I-4	Heavy Industrial Zone	5
	I-5	Storage Industrial Zone	4
	I-6	Aggregate Industrial Zone	6
	I-7	Auto Recycling Industrial Zone	1
Parks & Open Space	P-1	Parks Zone	93
Institutional	P-2	Institutional Zone	15
	P-3	Private School Institutional Zone	7
Infrastructure	U-1	Utility Zone	8
	T-1	Transportation Zone	10
Water	W-3	Freshwater Recreation Zone	11
	W-4	Freshwater Conservation Zone	17
	W-5	Freshwater Marina Zone	2
	W-6	Freshwater Limited Zone	2

Comprehensive Development (CD) Zones

Many CD zones currently included in existing zoning bylaws have been carried forward into the CZB. These zones have been updated to ensure that the language, formatting, and organization of their regulations are consistent with the broader CZB framework. In addition, several new CD zones have been introduced to address unique circumstances where existing zones applied to a single parcel. By consolidating these one-off zones into CD zones, the CZB provides a clearer, more consistent, and more administrable zoning framework for parcels with unique or site-specific conditions. In addition to CD zones, other existing zones with minor, site-specific variations have been incorporated into standard CZB zones through site-specific use tables.

Site-Specific Use Tables

In addition to CD zones, some existing zones contained parcel-specific regulations or variations that differ from the standard requirements of the corresponding CZB zone. These unique provisions have been retained in the new bylaw through site-specific use tables within the general CZB zones. This approach allows the CZB to consolidate the zoning framework while preserving important site-specific rules, ensuring consistency and clarity for administration and landowners.

Lawful Non-Conforming Uses

An objective for developing the CZB is to avoid creating unintended lawful non-conforming uses. This could occur if the existing zoning bylaws, being replaced with the CZB, except in marine areas, permit uses that are not permitted in the new bylaw. While some lawful non-conformities may occur where directed by OCP policy, efforts have been made to ensure that any such instances are unintentional and policy-driven. The OCP provides the primary policy framework guiding the CZB. The public engagement process identified in the endorsed Project Charter will provide an opportunity to confirm that existing lawful uses and regulations have been appropriately carried forward.

Overview of CZB Structure

Clarity and useability of the regulations have been prioritized in the CZB. The bylaw is organized in a structured format intended to improve readability and ease of administration.

- Parts 1-3 address the title, application, administration, and definitions;
- Part 4 sets out general regulations that may apply across multiple zones, addressing commonly regulated uses and standards such as accessory buildings and structures, home-based businesses, landscaping and screening, and other site regulations. Consolidating these provisions in one section reduces duplication and improves consistency across applicable zones;
- Part 5 establishes subdivision regulations;
- Part 6 establishes the zones and summarizes the zoning framework. Tables identify the OCP designation associated with each zone, the zone code and name, and the intended purpose of the zone. This format provides a clear overview of how the zoning framework aligns with OCP land use designations;
- Parts 7-13 contain the zone-specific regulations, organized by land use category, including: agricultural and forest resource zones, residential zones, commercial zones, industrial zones, parks and institutional zones, water zones and comprehensive development zones. Within each zone category, summary tables of permitted uses are provided, followed by detailed regulations for each individual zone; and
- Parts 14-16 address specialize regulations, including manufactured home parks, parking and loading regulations, and signage regulations. The bylaw concludes with Part 17 pertaining to force and effect.

Charts, tables, and diagrams are used throughout the bylaw to present regulatory standards in a clear and accessible format and to assist with interpretation and consistent application. This structure is intended to support both public understanding and efficient administration of the zoning regulations.

Summary

The draft Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw provides a unified, modernized framework for all CVRD electoral areas. It consolidated over 350 existing zones into 69 zones (including both standard and CD zones), incorporates site-specific provisions where applicable, and aligns regulations with the new OCP.

Public engagement will help further inform the bylaw's consideration. This process, involving community members, stakeholders, and Advisory Planning Commissions, as well as referral agencies and First Nations, will support advancement of the bylaw in a structured and transparent manner, while maintaining alignment with policy objectives and consideration of existing lawful uses.

OPTIONS

Option 2:

That it be recommended to the Board:

That the draft Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw be referred back to staff for further revision prior to reconsideration by the EASC, with specific attention to the following issues *[list]*.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The 2026 budget for Function 325 includes costs associated with the CZB project as outlined in the current project charter.

COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS

Consistent with the approved project charter.

STRATEGIC/BUSINESS PLAN CONSIDERATIONS

Consistent with the 2023-2026 CVRD Corporate Strategic Plan "Modernize and Enhance CVRD Development Services".

Submitted by: L. Wright, MCRP, RPP, MCIP, Planning Coordinator
Concurrence: M. Tippet, MRM, RPP, MCIP, Manager, Community Planning Division
Concurrence: A. Kjerulf, MCP, RPP, MCIP, General Manager, Land Use Services
Department

Reviewed for form and content and approved for submission to the Committee:

Resolution:

Financial Considerations:

Corporate Officer

Chief Financial Officer

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Draft CVRD Bylaw No. 4710 - Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw for the Electoral Areas, 2026

Attachment B – Draft CVRD Bylaw No. 4710 - Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw for the Electoral Areas, 2026, Schedule A – Electoral Area Zoning Map

(<https://www.planyourcowichan.ca/35281/widgets/145085/documents/166185>)

Attachment C – CZB Zone Concordance by Electoral Area

Attachment D – CVRD Bylaw No. 4716 – South Cowichan Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Removal of Upland Zones Amendment), 2026

Attachment E – CVRD Bylaw No. 4717 – Electoral Area G – Saltair/Gulf Islands Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Removal of Upland Zones Amendment), 2026

Attachment F – CVRD Bylaw No. 4718 Electoral Area H – North Oyster/Diamond Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Removal of Upland Zones Amendment), 2026