
Proposed zoning Bylaw

From legislativeservices <legislativeservices@cvrld.bc.ca>

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To legislativeservices <legislativeservices@cvrld.bc.ca>

From: Brent Taylor [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2026 8:43 AM

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Subject: Proposed zoning Bylaw

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It has come to my attention that you are considering a new omnibus zoning bylaw for the Cowichan Valley that will have a significant impact on every property and every citizen in the CVRD. I went looking for the proposed document and could not find anything about it on the main CVRD website. I eventually was directed to a separate web site where the information is located. Maybe I am just getting old and am challenged by newer ways of presenting information, but I found the manner in which the information is presented to be very cumbersome and difficult to follow. I did eventually figure out what is being proposed for my property, but it was not easy.

I was then shocked to see that the zoning document is about 400 pages long. That in itself is absurd and a mark of over regulation. I am a seasoned professional that has been involved in aspects of land development for well over 40 years and I have worked with OCPs and Zoning bylaws all around the province throughout my career. In the past few years, I have been seeing a trend towards over regulation by local government (and to be fair by the province) that has resulted in land owners innocently running afoul of new regulations. People believe that when they buy land it is theirs to use freely within reasonable bounds that are defined by a few bylaws and statutes. Instead, they are finding that they receive a visit from an overly aggressive bylaw enforcement officer who takes them to task for not conforming to bylaws that the land owners had no idea had changed or even existed. The requirement to obtain a development permit is the most common offense but once the bylaw enforcement officer gets involved every aspect of the use of the property is subject to inspection. These land owners are baffled and end up reaching out to various professionals such as lawyers, land surveyors and biologist. The impact on the local community is devastating. Neighbours are pitched against each other because the bylaw enforcement officer likes to say that they are involved because of a complaint by a neighbour but can't say who. Many tens of thousands of dollars are spent by the land owner trying to understand what they have done wrong and then trying to appease the bylaw enforcement officer. While it is a growth industry for the professionals it is a tragedy for land owners and community in general.

It is over regulation in bylaws that is driving this unrest in communities and the proposed bylaw reaches new heights in being a vehicle to pit neighbour against neighbour. Who benefits from a bylaw such as being proposed? Not the land owners. Not the community. Not you the politicians because your future is spending all your time addressing development variance permit, rezoning requests and complaints about your staff. The few members of staff that are promoting this may benefit or think they will but in reality all that will happen is their time will be spent listening to a very disgruntled community. Bylaw enforcement officers may see benefit but you will need to increase that part of the staff many fold in order to police and enforce such a massive bylaw.

The CVRD used to be a very special community. Land owners had some freedom but not too much freedom. Staff used to be helpful and positive. It used to be a pleasure to live and work in this community. In the past few years, with some changes in staff and changes in regulation, it has become the worst place in BC that I have experienced to own land and to live. I sincerely encourage you as the Directors of this community and as the representatives of the citizens to pause and truly consider what is needed in terms of regulation to find a balance between environmental health and freedom for the citizens.

The reality of life is that it is easy to overreact and, for whatever the reasons may be, go from under regulation to over regulation. Neither is the right answer and it takes good leadership to find the balance. A concept known as Right Touch Regulation was developed some years ago in the UK and has gained international attention. It is a straightforward approach to finding the right balance. I would encourage you to invest 10 minutes of your time to review the material that is available at [Right-touch regulation | PSA](#). The principles are easy to read and understand. Applying these principles to zoning in the CVRD would be the right thing to do.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email.

Brent Taylor