
FW: Concerns regarding proposed Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw

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From: Lindsay Richards [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 28, 2026 4:45 PM
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Subject: Concerns regarding proposed Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw

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Good Afternoon,

I am writing to express my concern and opposition to the proposed CVRD comprehensive zoning bylaw. As a longtime resident of the Cowichan Valley, I believe many aspects of the proposed bylaw are antithetical to the community values which make the Valley an attractive place to live and work. As a young professional working with my wife toward purchasing our first home, we already face many challenges in the current economic and political climate. If passed, the proposed zoning bylaw would force us to reconsider whether home ownership in the Cowichan Valley will be able to provide a reliable future for our family.

While I recognize many of the topics which have driven public discourse in recent days such as fence height restrictions and a prohibition on storing non-functional vehicles outdoors are already on the books in the current zoning bylaws, and I see the value of unifying them, the current approach is not acceptable. In particular, the recommendations from staff to proceed without a public hearing when so many in the community are concerned about this bylaw is deeply troubling.

I am also concerned by the contents of the proposed bylaw. Most critically, section 2.2. (3) states:

"Any use of land, or of a building or structure not expressly permitted in this Bylaw, or in the regulations applicable to a specific zone under this Bylaw, is prohibited".

This line means that any edge-cases not considered in the bylaw would automatically be a violation. It also puts the onus on a property owner to prove they are *not* breaking any bylaws, as opposed to the CVRD being required to prove they are. To me, this feels dangerously like "guilty until proven innocent", which I hope we all agree is not a good thing.

There are several other sections which, while they might make sense in dense urban areas, are equally applied to rural residential and other zones. When applied to rural areas, these restrictions would fundamentally erode the community principles which much of the Valley is built on. In particular:

- The prohibition on roosters, limit on "backyard" henkeeping (and extremely specific coop requirements), and prohibition of processing one's own birds at home.
- The 8-hour limit on food trucks. This is particularly concerning given how many semi-permanent food trucks serve as community gathering spots in many communities.
- The parcel size restrictions for equestrian centres. These would effectively prevent anyone with a small farm from boarding their friends' horses, and deeply harm the equestrian community.
- Throughout the bylaw, "external storage" is prohibited in many ways, for many categories of items. This simply doesn't make sense in a rural community where many people require a stockpile of spare materials for property maintenance, etc. and such materials are usually completely out of sight on larger parcels.

There are many other examples, and some parts of the draft bylaw also seem contradictory. For example, section 4.19.12, discussing home businesses states:

*"The home-based business use **may involve an automobile service shop**, excluding the painting and bodywork of vehicles, subject to the following regulations:..."*

However, right after that, section 4.19.14 states:

*"The following uses, or any similar use, are **expressly prohibited** as home-based business uses, and include, but are not limited to:*

(a) Automobile recycling and salvage yard

(b) Automobile sales and rentals

(c) Automobile workshop..."

Sloppy wording such as this will create ambiguity and could lead to severe fallout for small business owners who are trying their best to follow the bylaws.

Overall, the draft bylaw reads as if it was never reviewed by anyone who has lived outside of a city. If adopted as-is, it will certainly lead to an erosion of the community values which make the CVRD an attractive place to live and work. I hope you will urge all on Council to reconsider this draft and open meaningful public engagement to ensure that the new zoning bylaws will truly reflect the values of our community, not just a select few.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Richards
Exploration Scientist,
Walkabout Exploration

