

Summary of Public Comments to Draft Lake Windermere Official Community Plan

The draft Lake Windermere Official Community Plan (OCP) was presented to the public at an Open House on June 9, 2019 and kicked off a public comment period which was open until July 10, 2019.

Feedback on the draft Lake Windermere OCP was collected via an online engagement platform, e-mail and hard copy submissions. Copies of the feedback received can be viewed at the end of the summary document. Please note that some of the feedback received contained personal information, which has been redacted to protect personal privacy.

Feedback received during the public comment period came in three forms: Comments submitted on the engage web portal, personalized letters/emails and a stock e-mail automatically generated from a Wildsight web page.

The most significant issue of public concern were residential policies dealing with the Grizzly Ridge Properties west of the District of Invermere, with the vast majority of submissions opposing development at that location.

The automatically generated stock letter states that better protections for the west side of Lake Windermere are required and lists concerns related to the lack of community need for lower density rural development vs. infill development such as secondary suites, potential impacts to grasslands and the agricultural land base, development within wildlife corridors and mountain goat habitat. The letter asks that the plan include policies that:

- Address housing needs for non-homeowners (renters), the emerging workforce and families;
- strongly discourage development in grassland ecosystems and identify how development will result in no net loss of the existing grasslands;
- do not support fragmentation or parcelization of agricultural lands and required developers to undertake a robust process including an agricultural consultation and public review and consultation;
- do not allow intensive development in wildlife corridors and place greater value on biodiversity by leaving wildlife corridors and habitat untouched by development; and
- recognize the significance of the southern Mountain Goat population by prohibiting development in Mountain Goat habitat.

Other concerns with potential development of lands on the west side of Lake Windermere are the loss of existing recreational trails on the private land, potential impact to groundwater, increased community greenhouse gas emissions, decreased ecosystem function and increased traffic impacts.

A handful of submissions did express explicit support for development of rural acreages west of the District of Invermere.

There is a great deal of public desire to support more affordable housing options such as secondary suites in the plan area.

Some comments related to the language used in the document, particularly the Environmentally Sensitive Area development permit language. There is a desire to see stronger language and place a higher threshold for private property owners to achieve should their plans overlap an identified environmentally sensitive area.

There is a desire for commercial and light industrial development to have higher standards for building aesthetics, landscaping and screening than what is currently seen in the community. Several submissions stated concern with the visual impact that storage-based businesses currently have and expressed a desire to not see any more of this type of development in the key commercial areas.

Many submissions commented on various aspects of Lake Windermere, including the impact of watercraft on the shoreline ecosystem and on enjoyment of the lake by non-motorized craft. Protecting the lake and wetland on the south of Lake Windermere from development impacts in order to sustain an important bird habitat was expressed. Support for public accesses to Lake Windermere being identified and protected in perpetuity was also a topic of public comment.

Next Steps

Comments received will inform revisions to the draft Lake Windermere OCP. The updated draft will be reviewed with the Lake Windermere OCP Advisory Group and posted online for the public prior to being presented to the RDEK Board of Directors. As part of the bylaw adoption process, there will be an opportunity for the public to make final comments at a public hearing.