

From: Bill McGowan [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 15, 2025 10:53 AM
To: Building Inspections <inspections@lakecowichan.ca>
Subject: Zoning changes

Subject: Request for Consideration to Amend 1.5m Garage Setback Requirement – Trails Edge, Lake Cowichan

Dear Alex,

I'm reaching out regarding the recent zoning bylaw amendment requiring a 1.5-metre setback for garages from the front of the home in the Town of Lake Cowichan.

Two of my clients recently purchased building lots in the Trails Edge development. The first had their building plans reviewed and approved by the developer, and subsequently removed all conditions based on that approval. The second, who is also the builder for the first client, purchased another lot in the same development just yesterday with an **unconditional offer**, relying on the understanding that the original approved plans would also be acceptable for his build.

Unfortunately, it was only after this second purchase that I was made aware — through the listing agent — of the bylaw change that came into effect last November. This setback requirement had not been communicated to the developers and had not been noticed during the plan approvals. It's now creating significant uncertainty for my clients, despite their having acted in good faith based on information available at the time of their purchases.

Given that other new homes in the area were not subject to this requirement, and that the change originated under a previous staff member who is no longer with the Town, I respectfully ask that the Town consider amending or repealing this particular setback requirement. From both a practical and planning perspective, it seems to be inconsistent with past approvals and was not communicated in a way that allowed developers, builders, or purchasers to account for it.

I've been advised by Jennifer Allen of RE/MAX Generation that you are also open to reconsidering this bylaw, and I truly appreciate your time and attention in reviewing this matter.

Please let me know if further information is needed, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Bill McGowan
RE/MAX Island Properties

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: john main [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 15, 2025 9:55 AM
To: Building Inspections <inspections@lakecowichan.ca>
Subject: New housing requirements

To who this may concern,

My name is John Main and I am writing to you today to voice my concerns about the new local by-law changes that have been put in place by the Town of Lake Cowichan. I am a local Business owner, Builder and Developer. My framing company has also framed a big portion of the new construction in the town the last 10 years. We have worked in all the current and existing subdivisions within the town. Our relationship with the town and building department to date has been fantastic. I would guess we have framed 30 houses in this area in the last few years alone. Looking back at all of them we have only had one house that would pass with these new guidelines. This special house was also built on an irregular shaped lot and designed to fit that lot only.

I own property and I have been working on plans for a new build only to find out this change when I went in for permitting, there is no way to redesign this house and I spent 2700\$ on these plans. I was wondering why we did not have a chance to vote on or discuss these new guidelines?

I would like to have some clarification on who made these new changes and some answers or reasoning to back them up, also why no one in the building community was notified before this happened. I strongly believe that this will be a detriment to the building community.

I have been working with the developers of Elk Rd and have done all the framing and concrete work thus far. We were booked in to start framing 2 more of there affordable duplex's next month only to have this stop us dead in our tracks. In a time of uncertainty it

couldn't have come at a worse time for local builders and family's who need local jobs and housing. We are trying our best to build a product that does just that.

If there is a time we could all get together and have a meeting I would be happy to sit down and chat about how this negatively affects everyone from the start to finish. I believe as local tax payers we have a right to know.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

John Main

PH: [REDACTED]

Business Email : [REDACTED]

Invoices/Payables Email : [REDACTED]

From: Beachrock Construction <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 15, 2025 7:42 AM
To: Building Inspections <inspections@lakecowichan.ca>
Subject: R3 Zoning amendment

Good morning Alex,

We are writing you this morning in regards to R3 zoning amendment. We wanted to bring up an idea to see if this could be worked into city planning. As I understand it, the front setback for R3 is 4.5m with residential facade having to be 6.5m in front of garage.

Instead of mandating that all garages be recessed back from front of house, it might make more sense to make it so that the setback can be reduced to 4.5m set from front lot line only if they follow these new regulations. However, if builder maintains a 7.5m set back they could still be allowed to have garage forward of residential.

This would allow for some flexibility in design options.

With the current zoning rule it will make a very large portion of available and commonly used designs unusable. Not to mention greatly reduce the design diversity in these zones. Having the garage forward of the entrance allows for better covered entrances, windbreaks, and added privacy. As builders we cannot see any benefits to this zoning regulation.

Thank you for your consideration.
Adam Ehman

Beachrock Construction
Sent from my iPhone

From: Kirk Young
Sent: Monday, April 14, 2025 10:12 PM
To: Building Inspections
Subject: Setback changes

Hello Alex,

My name is Kirk Young and I have spent the past several years, and invested a significant amount of money, in creating a 10 lot subdivision on Elk Rd. The past year we have begun the process of building it out with duplexes in an attempt to provide lower cost housing for new home buyers in your town. The timing of recent building requirement changes and its application to the configuration of a duplex plan has come right in the middle of building this planned subdivision.

To my knowledge, there was no consideration to any of the builders or developers in town to ask how these changes may affect things moving forward. I am one of these developers, and I am shocked that these new regulations would be put into place with no warning to builders whatsoever.

As our subdivision has been planned out in advance, we now have to scrap the plans that have already been paid for. The new requirements will force us to postpone further construction to attempt to subscribe to these new regulations by completely changing direction in what we are allowed to build. New duplex plans will have to be created. As you know, time and redoing work adds to cost of the end product, which are intended to allow new home buyers into the market at a manageable cost.

Another way that new requirement change applies to our subdivision is one of esthetic continuity. Great consideration has been taken to have our entire subdivision look as though it was built with a plan in mind.

The new setback changes are going to create a disruption in product design, which will in turn change the continuity of the entire subdivision. In talking with Joe Fernandez in the past, I have been lead to believe that this attention to continuity is something that the town is interested in attaining.

In closing, the unforeseen requirement change will cost young homebuyers in your town a great deal more for a similar product that they could purchased yesterday. It is going against the towns interest of having new subdivisions built with pleasing esthetics. And, it

will make further developments and building new homes in your community much more difficult in a time when governments are striving to do the opposite.

Thanks for your attention. I am available for further discussion if needed.

Sincerely, Kirk Young

From: Don Raymond <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, April 14, 2025 9:13 PM
To: Building Inspections <inspections@lakecowichan.ca>
Cc: Kirk Young <[REDACTED]>
Subject: New set back rules

Hey Alex, I just wanted to let you know how these new rules is affecting my construction projects , just lost a presale duplex on my Elk rd subdivision because of the new rules, I have a customer who bought a lot in Trails edge and had picked a plan and they are on a very tight budget and these new rules will cost more than they can afford.. the duplexes I build are low income housing and are affordable housing for first time buyers but these changes will increase the costs approximately \$20,000.00+ per side.. these changes are making my duplex's unaffordable for lower income families and first time buyers. Just trying to design a duplex, house under these new rules is very difficult and costly. I'm hoping the town of lake Cowichan can come to their senses and remove this change to the building code.

Sent from Don Raymond's iPhone

From: Ryan Whitaker <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, April 14, 2025 8:32 PM
To: Building Inspections <inspections@lakecowichan.ca>
Subject: new zoning rule about garages

I am writing this email to relay my frustrations and probably many others with the new R3 zoning requirements that say a garage has to be setback 1.5 meters from the front of the house. This sudden change in rules is coming out of nowhere and if it stands will cause me and others massive financial loss and put me out of work for months. The rule itself makes no sense taking away the choice of designing your house in an economical way that makes sense for the lot that you have acquired. Narrow lots like the ones in Trails Edge limit your design already implementing this makes it a lot harder. I would also add that it doesn't make sense to enforce considering 90% of the existing homes are already built the opposite way.

I own lot 10, 146 Maplewood Rise. I had my final plans done on november 22 2024, to the bylaws that stood in place at that time! Then I was told to get them engineered and I did. Now today when i finally have all the many pieces required to apply for my building permit. I am told that the rules have now changed! I was taken away. I have spent months getting this all ready and the engineering has already put us behind schedule by a month. If you are going to implement a new rule like this there has to be grace period involved of at least 6 months because of the slow nature of building and gathering the requirements needed. IF this new rule stands I will be needing to redesign my whole house plan, re price, have all the contractors re price. have a new energy advisor consultation, new vent letter. Pay for a new plan and pay for new engineering on that new plan. This will cost me 15,000\$ at least. Am I just supposed to throw out the 15,000\$ dollars that I've already spent? Nevermind that me and my partner will be out of work for three months for new plans, new engineering and then waiting for a building permit.

This is unacceptable and life altering for me and my wife please reconsider and at least introduce a grace period or an exemption.

-Ryan and Lauren Whitaker

Date: April 15, 2025

To: Planning and Development Department

Town of Lake Cowichan

P.O. Box 860 Lake Cowichan, BC V0R 2G0

Subject: Concern Regarding New Front Yard Setback Clause for Attached Garages

Dear Planning and Development Department,

I am writing on behalf of [Company Name], a residential developer currently working on a new housing development within the Town of Lake Cowichan. We are reaching out to formally express our concern regarding a recently introduced clause to the front yard setback regulations, which stipulates that an attached garage must be set a minimum of 1.5 meters behind the front face of the home.

This clause presents a significant and unexpected challenge for both our development team and our buyers. A large number of our purchasers have already secured lots and committed to home designs that feature garages either flush with or slightly in front of the

main building face-designs that are consistent with contemporary architectural norms and standard across many new residential developments.

The decision to enforce a 1.5-meter garage setback not only contradicts the approved building scheme we have established, but it also undermines the expectations of homeowners who have invested in the community with a clear understanding of the type of homes being built. This regulation appears to have been introduced without consultation, rationale, or supporting data, and as such, we find it both impractical and without merit.

We respectfully urge the Town of Lake Cowichan to reconsider and reverse this clause to better reflect the realities of current development practices and homeowner expectations. In the interim, we request that exceptions be granted for building permit applications already in process or planned within developments where such design styles have been pre-approved and marketed.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with your team to further discuss this matter and to find a solution that supports both the Town's planning goals and the integrity of ongoing developments.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Jennifer Allen

RE/MAX® Generation