



The Town of Lake Cowichan would like to hear from you!

The Town would like to streamline how some development permits are approved. This change would apply to development permits and minor development variance permits. Council must adopt a bylaw for this purpose.

Council would like to hear your opinion about these proposed changes. The results of this survey will be given to Council for their information when they consider the new bylaw. You can see a copy of the [draft bylaw](#).

Development Permits

Development permits are required for a variety of reasons as outlined in [section 488](#) of the *Local Government Act*. You can find these details in part 6 of the Town's [Official Community Plan](#). Development permits are required before a building permit is issued or a subdivision is approved.

Development permits (DP) are required for the following purposes:

- protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity,
- protection of development from hazardous conditions,
- revitalization of an area in which a commercial use is permitted,
- establishment of objectives for the form and character of intensive residential, commercial, industrial or multi-family residential development, and
- to promote energy conservation, water conservation; the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Development Variance Permits

Development variance permits (DVP) have to do with 'varying' or changing a regulation in the Zoning Bylaw. Some examples of a DVP include when someone wants to build a new house closer to a front lot line or build a home taller than the maximum permitted height or build a taller fence than the bylaw permits. A recent change to the *Local Government Act* gives local governments authority to delegate to staff approval of these minor variances.

This questionnaire asks your opinion about these potential changes.

1. Have you done any development or building in Lake Cowichan?

Yes No If yes, when

a. Within the last 12 months



b. Within the last 2 years

c. Within the last 5 years or more

2. What type of development approval did you seek from the Town? List all that apply.

a. Building permit

b. Development permit

c. Rezoning

d. OCP amendment

e. Subdivision

Delegating Approval

Currently most development applications must be approved by Council (building permits are reviewed and approved by the building inspector, not Council). To speed up the approval process, the Town is proposing that some development applications¹ could be approved by the Director of Planning. The bylaw must include specific criteria and guidelines to guide this decision making. In all cases, an applicant can ask Council to reconsider a decision made by staff.

3. Do you think Council should delegate the approval of some permits staff to speed up approvals?

Yes No

Why? _____

Notice

Currently the Town sends a notice to neighbours within 50 m (164 ft) of a property that is the subject of development permit or development variance permit applications. In many cases, the Town does not receive any comments from neighbours about applications. Issuing these notices takes time and slows down the process which can add costs the applicant. The draft bylaw does not require notices to be sent to neighbours for development permits or minor development variance permits.

4. Do you think a notice should be sent out for

a. All types of development

Yes No

¹ These applications would include development permits and minor development variance permits.



b. Minor development variance permit applications Yes No

c. Only major development, like a multi-family building or new commercial development.
Yes No

Public Hearings

The *Local Government Act* prohibits public hearings for some rezoning applications. The proposed bylaw would require a Public Information Meeting to be held by the developer for rezoning applications and OCP amendments early in the process. This would allow neighbours and community to learn about the application and give their comments early.

5. Do you think an applicant should hold a public information meeting to present their rezoning application to the community? Yes No

Why? _____

Who are you?

6. Tell us about yourself. Do you?

a. Own a home in Lake Cowichan Yes No

b. Rent a home in Lake Cowichan Yes No

c. Build or develop properties in Lake Cowichan Yes No

d. If none of the above, what is your connection to Lake Cowichan?

7. Do you have other comments for Council about development approvals?

Please submit your completed questionnaire to the Town Hall by March 26, 2026.

You can email it to b.reynolds@lakecowichan.ca or drop it off at Town Hall at 39 South Shore Rd.

Date released March 6, 2026

*This questionnaire has been prepared by the
Town of Lake Cowichan Planning Department
39 South Shore Rd, Lake Cowichan, BC*