



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RFP – 2026-01

Density Bonus and Rental Only Zoning Evaluation

Town of Lake Cowichan
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Submission Deadline: March 13, 2026, 12:00 p.m. local time

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1. Introduction

1.2 Purpose

The Town of Lake Cowichan would like to hire a consultant to review current bylaws and market conditions, and to prepare financial feasibility analysis which will inform the preparation of new regulations that encourage and/or incentivize affordable rental housing. The successful proponent will prepare a financial feasibility analysis related to the Town’s existing density bonus program, provide recommendations for possibly establishing a new density bonus program, evaluating the Town’s rental-only districts and providing recommendations for feasible densities for multi-family housing.

This Request for Proposal (“RFP”) seeks bids from a team comprised of land development economists and planners with demonstrated experience in this field, and preferably, with this specific type of analysis.

1.3 Background

The Town of Lake Cowichan is a small lake and riverfront community located west of the Cowichan Region’s larger urban center of Duncan/North Cowichan. 2021 Statistics Canada reveal that the population of the Town was 3,325, a 3% increase from 2016. BC Statistics project a 7% increase by 2026. In 2021, Lake Cowichan’s population made up less than 4% of the region’s population. In 2020 the household median HH income was \$68,000, almost 17% less than the region’s median income. In 2021, Statistics Canada reveal the total number of occupied dwelling units was 1,490, of which, 78% were single family homes. 85% of households are owners and 15% of households are renters.

Recent development has been primarily single-family homes, some with suites and a few duplexes. The anticipated tenure for these units is ownership, not rental.

This project has three components:

1. Evaluate the Town’s current policies and bylaws for Density Bonusing and prepare an analysis of their feasibility, complete a financial analysis to determine the feasibility of expanding the density bonus program consistent with *Local Government Act* and provide related recommendations.
2. Evaluate the Town’s current Rental Only Zoning regulations for their compliance with the *Local Government Act* and complete a financial analysis to determine their feasibility for development of these parcels based on current market conditions and

provide related recommendations that would result in the construction of these rental units.

3. Based on current market conditions in the Town and region, provide recommendations for appropriate densities for multi-family use in the Multi-Unit Residential (R-7) and General Commercial (C-1) zone districts that consider the results of the financial feasibility analysis for density bonuses and/or rental only zoning. The results of this work will form the basis of new regulations for multi-family and mixed-use zone districts.

In undertaking these analyses and providing related recommendations, it is expected that the successful proponent will complete all necessary background research, including determining local construction costs and monthly rents, meeting with Town staff, and conducting a minimum of five interviews with private sector and not-for profit housing developers familiar with and who have developed in the Town of Lake Cowichan.

1.3.1 Density Bonus

The Town of Lake Cowichan's Official Community Plan ("OCP") Section 5.2.1.6 includes density bonus policies and Town of Lake Cowichan Zoning Bylaw Schedule C contains density bonus regulations. These regulations currently only apply to one subdivision due to recent bylaw amendments. Based on the *Local Government Act* Section 482 a feasibility analysis is required to determine if this program or an updated program can result in the provision of affordable and special needs housing units.

The Town would like to explore the viability of a density bonusing scheme that may operate within predetermined density limits (i.e., from a predetermined base density and bonused to a predetermined maximum density) in exchange for affordable housing units.

The Town would like to understand the amount of community benefits that could be required in exchange for the additional density, based on principles of financial viability and reasonable uptake from the development industry.

Local governments must bring existing density bonus bylaws into compliance with legislative amendments by June 30, 2026. The Province has prepared the document [Inclusionary Zoning and Density Bonusing, Comprehensive Guidance](#), to assist in the preparation of feasibility analyses for density bonus and inclusionary zoning provisions. This document shall form the basis of this review.

1.3.2 Residential Rental Tenure Zoning

In 2018, the *Local Government Act* was amended to enable local governments to establish residential rental tenure zoning. In 2024, the Town adopted Zoning Amendment Bylaw 1106-2024 to establish rental only zoning in various zone districts for specific properties as follows:

- Twelve Multi-Unit Residential (R-7) properties require between 25% and 100% of the units to be rental only tenure.
- Five General Commercial (C-1) properties all require 100% of the units to be rental only tenure.
- Five residentially zoned parcels in the R-2, R-3, and R-4 zone districts require between 25% and 100% of the units to be rental only tenure.

These 22 properties are all green field sites. The densities for these properties are the same as all other properties within the same zone districts. This bylaw amendment was adopted with limited analysis related to the feasibility of the potential development of rental only units. This analysis should provide recommendations for integrating rental only zoning with other tools, such as density bonuses to guide the preparation of regulations to facilitate the development of affordable rental housing.

1.3.3 Multi-Family Density

Zoning Bylaw No. 1055 establishes maximum gross density, lot coverage, and height for two zone districts that permit multi-family developments, Multi-Unit Residential (R-7) and General Commercial (C-1) zone districts. However, the bylaw notes that the density, lot coverage and height regulations are conditional upon a zoning amendment to a comprehensive development zone or density bonus amenity. This condition is unenforceable. The Town would like to establish achievable densities for multi-family use zone districts based on market conditions and potentially integrating density bonusing and/or rental only zoning, as well as other tools to achieve more affordable rental housing.

Determining the suitability of the tools requires market and financial analysis and engagement with private sector and not-for profit housing developers

1.4 Deliverables

Scope: The feasibility analysis and recommended affordability measures should be framed within the context of the Town of Lake Cowichan’s housing market and its variety of project types and sizes.

Report(s) that include:

- a. Feasibility analysis and recommendations for density bonus regulations and rental only zoning;
- b. Analysis of the local housing market;
- c. Analysis of Town policy in a provincial and regional context; and
- d. Incorporate perspectives from local developers, realtors, and affordable housing providers.

The financial feasibility analysis must assess up to five different scenarios involving developments that are strata buildings and/or rental buildings, as the affordability regulations may apply to ownership units and rental units.

Based on the financial feasibility analysis, the Town is also seeking recommendations on what specific affordability measures would be most appropriate to require of developers, in relation to each affordability measure allowed for in section 482.7 of the Local Government Act

The financial feasibility analysis and affordability measure recommendations may draw upon the:

- [2024 Town of Lake Cowichan Interim Housing Needs Assessment](#)
- 2021 CVRD Regional Housing Needs Assessment
- [Town of Lake Cowichan Zoning Bylaw 1055-2024](#)
- [Town of Lake Cowichan Official Community Plan Bylaw 1097, 2023](#)
- [Inclusionary Zoning and Density Bonusing, Comprehensive Guidance](#)

Scope and Deliverable

Deliverables: There are three (3) deliverables for this project:

1. A written report that contains the results of the financial feasibility analyses related to density bonusing and rental only zoning, including supporting background information, results of discussions with private developers and affordable housing providers, methods and calculations, and outcomes and recommendations, that addresses the considerations and legal requirements in section 482.9(1) and (2) of the *Local Government Act* and this RFP. Six colour hard copies of the final draft report. The final draft must also be provided in digital format in MS Word and Excel.
2. Detailed and specific recommendations regarding the affordability measures and parameters identified in section 482.7 of the *Local Government Act*.
3. Presentation of the analysis to the Town's Committee of the Whole (i.e. Council).

In undertaking the financial feasibility analysis and determining the affordability measures, it is expected that the successful consultant will complete all necessary background research, including determining local construction costs, meeting with Town staff, and reaching out to and meeting private developers and affordable housing providers.

1.5 Schedule

TASK/DELIVERABLE	TARGET TIMELINES
RFP deadline	March 13, 2026
Consultant selection	March 20, 2026
Kick off meeting / memo to confirm project understanding	March 31, 2026
Draft report	May 30, 2026
Refine draft report based on staff input	June 15, 2026
Present findings to Council	July 28, 2026

2. INSTRUCTIONS TO PROPONENTS

2.1 Submission of Proposals

Electronic submissions are supported and encouraged. Electronic submissions should be sent by email to **b.reynolds@lakecowichan.ca** by the closing date and time: March 13, 2026, **12:00 p.m. local time**. It is recommended that the sender verify receipt of the submission by the Town. The Town is not responsible for email submissions that are not received by the Town by the closing date and time due to technological issues.

Hard copy proposals are also accepted and should be in a sealed envelope, clearly marked with the name and address of the Proponent and the RFP project title. Hard copy submissions should include an electronic copy of all proposal files on a USB drive. The sealed envelope containing the proposal should be addressed to the following:

Town of Lake Cowichan, Planning Department
Attn: Brigid Reynolds, contract planner
39 South Shore Road
Po Box 860
Lake Cowichan, BC V0R 2G0

Proposals should be received on or before the Closing Time and Date of:

Time: **12:00 p.m. local time**

Date: March 13, 2026

It is the Proponent's sole responsibility to ensure its Proposal is received at the address set out above by the Closing Time and Date.

Proponents wishing to make changes to their Proposals after submission but prior to the Closing Time and Date may do so by submitting the revisions by email or hard copy. It is the Proponent's sole responsibility to ensure the revisions are received by the Town prior to the Closing Time and Date.

2.2 Inquiries and Solicitation of Council Members and Staff

All inquiries related to this RFP, whether or not the contract has been awarded, must be directed in writing to the Town Representative named below. Information obtained from any person or source other than the Town Representative may not be relied upon.

Name: Brigid Reynolds **Email:** b.reynolds@lakecowichan.ca

Proponents and their agents will not contact any member of the Town Council or Town staff with respect to this RFP at any time other than the Town Representative named in this RFP.

2.3 RFP Addenda

Addenda to this RFP may be issued prior to closing in response to queries received or at the initiative of the Town. Information contained in RFP addenda is an integral part of the RFP and should be considered by proponents when responding to this RFP. Receipt of Addenda should be acknowledged by the Proponent in the submission.

Proponents finding discrepancies or omissions in the Contract or RFP or having doubts as to the meaning or intent of any provision, should immediately notify the Town Representative named in this document.

2.4 Proponent Representative

Each Proponent should designate one individual to whom any additional information deemed relevant to this RFP may be communicated. This information is to be emailed to the Town Representative noted above.

3.0 GENERAL TERMS OF PROPOSAL

3.1 Proposal Preparation Costs

All expenses incurred by the Proponent in preparation and submission of this Proposal are to be borne by the Proponent, with the express understanding that no claims for reimbursements against the Town will be accepted. The Town shall not be responsible for

any costs involved in or associated with any meetings, discussion or negotiation following submission that could lead to acceptance of the Proposal and award of a contract.

3.2 Proposal Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria listed below.

Stage One – Submission Criteria

Proposals that do not meet all of the criteria may be excluded from further consideration during the evaluation process.

Submission Criteria

The Proposal should be received at the Delivery Location before the Closing Date and Time specified in Section 2.1 – Submission of Proposal. Late Proposals may not be considered.

The Proposal should be dated and signed by a person authorized to sign on behalf of the Proponent.

The Proposal should be no more than 15 pages. Of these, there may be a maximum of 10 pages for the body of the Proposal, and up to 5 pages summarizing the skills and experience of the project team.

Stage Two – Weighted Criteria

The evaluation team will evaluate Proposals that met the submission criteria on the following weighted criteria:

Weighted Criteria	Weight
Experience and Qualifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience conducting land development feasibility analyses - Experience conducting feasibility analyses related to affordable housing - Familiarity with municipal government - Demonstrated ability to meet deadlines - Consultant or consultant team’s qualifications and CVs 	25
Methodology, Approach and Understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrated understanding of the requirements and the deliverables - Clear articulation of what steps will be taken to prepare the deliverables - Acknowledgement of any addenda - Strong plan for communication and coordination with the Town - Presentation of findings to Town staff 	25
Timeline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrated ability to work under tight timelines - Ability to meet the preferred timeframe 	15
References	10

- Two (2) relevant references provided in the format required	
Financial Proposal	25
- Project fee	
- Hourly rate for all individuals on the team	
- Blended hourly rate if applicable	
Total:	100

The Town, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all Proposals whether complete or not;
- Waive any irregularity or insufficiency in the Proposal submitted;
- Not be liable for misunderstandings or errors in the Request for Proposals;
- Issue addenda to the Request for Proposals;
- Contact references provided by the Proponents;
- Retain independent persons or contractors for assistance in evaluating Proposals;
- Request points of clarification to assist the Town in evaluating Proposals;
- Negotiate changes with the successful Proponent; and
- Withdraw the Request for Proposal.

3.3 Proposal Presentation

The Town reserves the right to request one or more of the Proponents, whose submissions are of particular interest to the Town, to make verbal presentations to the Town.

3.4 Proposal Confidentiality and Proprietary Information

All submissions become the property of the Town and will not be returned to the Proponent. The Town will consider all Proposals submitted as confidential but reserves the right to make copies of all Proposals received for its internal review and for review by its financial, accounting, legal, and technical consultants.

Proponents should be aware that the Town is a “public body” as defined in and subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

If a Proponent believes any of the information requested in this RFP and provided by the Proponent is confidential, they must identify it as such and provide a rationale as to why it should not be released under “Freedom of Information” legislation.

The rationale for keeping information confidential under this legislation includes:

- Trade secrets of the Proponent;

- Financial, commercial, scientific or technical information, the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to result in material financial loss or gain or could reasonably be expected to prejudice the competitive position of the Proponent; or
- Information the disclosure of which could be reasonably expected to interfere with contractual or other negotiations of the Proponent.

3.5 Conflict of Interest

A Proponent shall disclose in its Proposal any actual or potential conflicts of interest and existing business relationships it may have with the Town, its elected or appointed officials or employees, and any property ownership direct or indirect in the jurisdiction. The Town may rely on such disclosure.

3.6 Collusion

Except as otherwise specified or as arising by reason of the provision of the contract documents, no person whether natural, or body corporate, other than the Proponent has or will have any interest or share in this Proposal or in the proposed contract which may be completed in respect thereof. There is no collusion or arrangement between the Proponent and any other actual or prospective Proponents in connection with Proposals submitted for this project and the Proponent has no knowledge of the contents of other Proposals and has made no comparison of figures or agreement or arrangement, express or implied, with any other party in connection with the making of the Proposal.

3.7 Litigation

Proponents who, either directly or indirectly through another corporation or entity, have been or are in litigation, or who have served notice with intent to proceed with court action against the Town in connection with any contract for works or services, may be considered ineligible Proponents. Receipt of Proposals from such Proponents may be disqualified from the evaluation process.

3.8 No Contract

This RFP is not a tender or contract and does not commit the Town in any way to select a preferred Proponent. By submitting a Proposal and participating in the process as outlined in this RFP, Proponents expressly agree that no contractual, tort or other legal obligation of any kind is formed under or imposed on the Town by this RFP or submissions prior to the completed execution of a formal written contract.

3.9 Acceptance of Proposal

The acceptance of a Proposal will be made in writing from the Town and will be addressed to the successful Proponent at the address given in the submitted Proposal. Following acceptance and approval to proceed with the Proposal, the Proponent is expected to enter into a contract with the Town to perform the works or services set out and agreed upon in the Proposal.

The agreement that the successful Proponent will be expected to execute with the Town will be prepared by the Town. The agreement attachments will include the entire Request for Proposals, the Proponent's total Proposal submission and any mutually agreed upon modifications, changes or negotiated adjustments. In the event of a conflict between the RFP and the Proponent's submission, the RFP will take precedence.

3.10 Insurance Requirements

The successful applicant shall maintain during the duration of any contract commercial general liability insurance providing for coverage of any losses arising out of or in connection with the provision of services in an amount not less than \$5,000,000.00 per occurrence. The successful applicant shall name the Town as an additional insured.

The successful applicant shall maintain during the duration of any contract errors and omissions insurance in an amount not less than \$1,000,000.00 per occurrence.

The successful applicant shall provide the Town with certificates of insurance confirming the maintenance of the insurance, promptly after a request to do so from the Town.

3.11 Termination at the Town's Discretion

The Town may, in its sole discretion and without reason, terminate a contract upon notice to the successful applicant. If the Town terminates a contract, the successful applicant shall be entitled to be paid for all services satisfactorily performed by them up to the date of such termination. The successful applicant is not entitled to and irrevocably waives and releases the Town from any and all claims for, any damages or compensation for costs incurred, loss of profit or loss of opportunity, directly or indirectly arising out of termination of a contract.

4. PROPOSAL CONTENT

4.1 Proposal Length

Proposals should be a maximum of 10 pages in length including appendices. An additional 5 pages may be included, if desired, to provide a summary of the skills and experience of the project team (no lengthy resumes). This means that proposals should be no more than 15 pages, with only 3 of those pages describing the project team.

4.2 Proponent Contact Information

Proposals must include the full name, address and telephone number of the submitting office of the Proponent and where applicable, the name, address and telephone number of any branch office, affiliate or sub-consultant(s) that will be involved in the Project.

4.3 Personnel

4.3.1 Project Manager

The Proposal must identify the project manager who will be the single point of contact responsible for direct interaction with the Town, including stating their position and professional discipline. The Proposal should describe the work to be performed by the project manager, their qualifications and substantive experience directly related to the proposed Work.

4.3.2 Project Team

The Proposal must list the project team members, including Project roles and responsibilities. Team member qualifications and experience may be summarized in the 3 pages allocated to the project team, if desired.

4.3.2 Sub-Contractors

The Proposal must include the company name of all sub-contractors and sub-consultants proposed to be used in the performance of the Work with a description of the work they would be performing.

The sub-contractors and sub-consultants listed in the Proposal may not be changed without the written consent of the Town. If the Town so requires, the Proponent shall be prepared to confirm to the Town the competence of sub-contractors and sub-consultants prior to acceptance of the Proposal.

4.4 Experience

The Proposal must describe the applicants' experience delivering similar projects. Applicants should highlight their experience with local governments and conducting affordable housing financial analyses.

4.5 Project Approach and Schedule

The Proposal must describe the steps that will be undertaken to complete the deliverables and provide a timeline for doing so.

The Town expects that the financial feasibility analysis will review the types of residential and mixed-use projects that could be subject to the inclusionary housing requirements and will evaluate the feasibility of the affordability measures contained in section 482.7 of the *Local Government Act*.

The Town expects that the financial feasibility analysis will include development of a pro forma model to test the financial feasibility of different types of development in relation to each affordability measure allowed for in section 482.7 of the *Local Government Act*.

The Town expects a written report detailing the respective feasibility of the affordability measures in section 482.7 of the Local Government Act in relation to the different types of development that were considered.

Proposals must describe how communication will be managed through the duration of the project. The Town expects that applicants will provide a presentation to staff when the analysis is complete to review the findings together. The Town will review the draft report and recommendations and will provide comments back to the applicant. The final report and recommendations submitted by the consultant will incorporate Town feedback. The consultant will present the final report and findings to the Town's Committee of the Whole (comprised of all Council members).

The Proposal should list any assumptions regarding the applicant and the Town's respective responsibilities.

4.6 Pricing

The Proposal must include the fee to complete the deliverables. In addition, a schedule of hourly rates should be included to be used in the event of unforeseen extra work.

All prices shall be in Canadian Funds and are to show taxes (if applicable) separately.

4.7 References

The Proposal should provide no less than 2 relevant references, preferably from within the last 5 years. References should be provided in this format:

Reference 1

Name of organization

Contact person

Contact person's title

Contact person's phone
number and email address

Contract start and end dates

Description of similar
project:
