

Sproat Lake Official Community Plan Open House, 26 July 2012 Compiled Comments

Summary:

This open house was attended by approximately 80 people, 72 of whom signed in. Twenty left completed comment sheets at the open house. Another 40 comment sheets were completed at home and subsequently provided to the ACRD. One attendee submitted an annotated copy of sections of the draft OCP, along with photos and suggestions based on researching other communities.

There do not appear to be many concerns with most of the objectives, policies and development permit guidelines in the draft OCP. The major concerns, as anticipated and confirmed by the responses to the questions in the comment sheet, are water-related issues. Residents without direct water frontage (and some with) are evenly split on whether or not they have adequate access to lakes and rivers, the focus being on Sproat Lake. Respondents are also divided on the adequacy of visitors' public access to Sproat Lake and, to a lesser extent, Great Central Lake.

Suggestions included opening up more or all public road-ends that could provide access to the lake and a number of supporters of the concept of creating a new park with a boat launch and other recreational facilities at the west end of the lake, specifically in the Taylor Arm area.

The need for supervision and enforcement were mentioned several times, particularly when dealing with noisy, thoughtless boaters and partiers, boats creating a wake, and campers and partiers leaving garbage behind.

Detailed Responses:

- 1. Do you have any concerns with the suggested minimum lot sizes: 1 ha. with on-site water and sewerage; 0.24 ha. with communal or community water or sewerage; 0.4 ha. for an accessory dwelling unit; 2 ha. for home-based industry?**
 - No, unless it lessens lake water quality.
 - Yes. My lot is .85 acre (just under .4 ha.). I would want to be permitted to have an accessory dwelling unit allowed.
 - Unsure – find these lot sizes difficult to assess.
 - Yes: for all to lots to be able to “perc” for sewage drainage.
 - No. (5 responses)
 - Would there be restriction to home-based industries specific to lake-front properties? We already have a pile-driver on the lake; there seems to be a mess around that property.
 - No – other than #6 comment: Granny-suites on lots allowed, provision to state: not for rental on weekly basis.
 - Policy is fine, but what about enforcement?
 - (Home-based industry) – not on waterfront.
 - I do not agree with 1 ha. minimum with on-site water and sewer. If the soil conditions meet the requirements so as not to pollute, then I think the minimum should be .5 ha.
 - 0.4 ha. for home-based industry as few 2-ha. lots exist at the lake.
 - Yes. I would prefer that allowance for home-based business was decided based on a suitable business plan and its impact on surrounding areas.
 - I don't want any lots sold which are smaller than a 5-acre minimum. Accessory dwelling

- unit on such a plot is ok.
- I assume the suggested minimum lot sizes exclude existing living situations.

2. If you are a Sproat Lake resident without direct water frontage, do you feel that you have adequate access to water (lakes, rivers and creeks)?

Yes 8 responses

No 8 responses

- I access the waterfront from the Faber Road Fire Hall. If they were to remove this public access, then I would have very limited access.
- Too high of a concentration of users near Sproat Lake Park.
- I live on the lake.

3. If no, where do you think additional access would be desirable and appropriate for local residents?

- (Yes) but rights-of-way to the lake should be more open.
- All public lake accesses should be "identified" so that the property owners know their boundaries and the public does, too. Each access should be a clear message and consistent so that there are no surprises for either party and no misinterpretation. If all the accesses are open, it will distribute the amount of traffic throughout the lake. "Identified" – signage for lake access and stakes for the boundaries down to the lake.
- West end of lake (Taylor River)
- The ones that exist might be adequate if made a little more accessible. Not enough designated park/access areas.
- More in Great Central
- Develop public areas, more pedestrian trails.
- (Yes) More access to the lake for non-direct frontage is a good idea.
- I understand that there are public accesses every seven lots or so, but there are largely overgrown and not really useful. It might be possible to reclaim these spots. For them to be of use, however, we would need a wharf or small landing in place.
- Additional access and a second boat launch in the Taylor Arm area.
- All road allowances should be opened up and graveled full length and width.
- Additional access in the Taylor Arm area or Stirling Arm near the water-ski club, including a boat launch, would alleviate the masses using Sproat Lake Park.

4. Do you believe that visitors and tourists to the area have adequate access to the water?

Yes 18 responses

No 11 responses

Don't know 1 response

Yes/No? 1 response

- I don't think so. I try to stay away from their accesses on the weekend, as they seem crowded, noisy and unpleasant.

5. If not, where do you think additional access would be desirable and appropriate for visitors to the area?

- Taylor Arm – boat launching and restrooms; Two Rivers Arm – boat launching and restrooms
- Parks already established around lake on both sides. "Not in residential areas!"

- (Yes) A few more small park areas on Taylor Arm.
- Same as above (all public lake accesses should be identified ...)
- Visitors and tourists, as a generality, may require more space than is available at current access areas. Expansion in non-residential areas for their usage may be of consideration, particularly for factors of usage type, safety, accessibility, vehicle parking space, etc.
- (Yes) On Sproat Lake there are too many disrespectful boaters and houseboaters who drive recklessly, make disruptive noise and there is no enforcement. Put boat launches, beaches, etc., for non-residents away from residential areas.
- Develop Smith Landing/Sproat River/Hector Road area. Develop near pump-house at Stirling Arm end.
- There is not enough access or accommodation to bring people here and keep them here.
- If more access is needed, then I have no problem opening up more, either commercial or parkland or ??? as long as it properly planned and developed, e.g., expand the West Bay or Lakeshore or parks, etc.
- I don't know the area well enough to be sure. But good access with the proper facilities would be beneficial.
- Expand provincial and regional parks on Sproat Lake. These parks require supervision and stewardship.
- See #3 (all road allowances should be opened up). Put picnic tables and port-a-potties out in the summer.
- I often meet tourists searching for lake access for swimming, boating and overnight camping. Our facilities are very limited. Consider reopening site past second bridge and replacing bathroom.
- Expand and supervise the provincial and regional parks. It appears Sproat Lake lacks any kind of supervision.

6. Do you have any additional comments, concerns or questions with regard to the draft revised OCP?

- Water quality of utmost importance. Camping by boat (esp. Two Rivers) – a problem with garbage and human waste. Large boats are a huge soil (shore) erosion problem – limit their size and/or speed. Keep houseboats to a bare minimum – no new ones.
- Concern re “community parks” – regulation of parties and under-age (or any age) drinking. Does the ACRD provide wharves? Need a firm plan for water, sewage, walking and biking trails.
- Yes: with additional lake accesses there should be control (park wardens) to maintain existing rules. Otherwise uncontrolled (nobody having responsibilities) lake areas, in a residential area, become breeding grounds for alcohol and drugs and mayhem.
- Concerned over suites/second units on individual properties specific to lake area, as this will increase density of population, more boats, etc. Will there be any kind of policing or policy set out or information available to homeowners to give to tenants so they understand the vulnerability of our water source and respect of those homeowners that live on the lake re speed or closeness to wharves, etc.
- Require more responsive action to complaints, i.e. noise and short-term rentals and sewage disposal.
- Need stronger/constant policing of bylaw infringements, i.e. noise and rental in residential (areas). More responsive complaint handling required.
- Concerned about multiple-family dwellings on 100' of waterfront. Why 8-10 duplexes per lot (strata) with attendant marinas (too much water traffic)? There is a need for “softer”

upgrading in an area of 1~2 ha. lots. No houseboat/marinas in Weiner Bay (Kleecot Arm) – please enforce current bylaw.

- Appreciate the focus on non-motorized – presumably you mean watercraft. Do not want to hear sea-doo's all day and night. I have concerns about Faber/Dickson Park – people leave bottles, cans, garbage, drinking late at night – should be a way to keep people out after 10 p.m. and garbage clean-up. Prevent people from driving their ATVs into the park! Wharf needs repair and maintenance! Prevent boats from tying up at wharf!
- Would love to see Smith's Landing, end of Faber to Sproat River developed for business use, tourist access.
- I would like to be able to set up a "retreat" close to or on the waterfront that would bring people to the area and provide local services. There is also a lack of walking paths suitable for prams along Faber Road.
- Encouraged by potential to have accessory accommodation.
- I would like to see the following concerns addressed in the goals:
 - 1) Protection of wetlands other than just Sproat Lake. A 15-m buffer is not enough to protect habitat.
 - 2) Cougars are increasingly seen in the area. They should be part of the bear-awareness type of action, i.e. sightings posted on ACRD website.
 - 3) Light industry is a worry if not tightly regulated.
 - 4) More tightly-defined parameters around density/conservation issue.
 - 5) Regulation of logging so that tourism/environmental values are retained, enhanced.
 - 6) Non-extractive forest uses developed.
- I have no problem with public accesses in general, particularly when local residents not directly on the water open up and maintain an access. I DO have a problem with just arbitrarily opening up all access points without having a plan for maintaining and policing these access points. Inevitably, where access points are not controlled or maintained, it draws young people, particularly in summer, who drink and party and have no respect for property or noise bylaws and tend to leave a mess behind. Also, we currently enjoy a low crime rate with very little theft, etc. With people who do not live here accessing the waterfront, they have a full view of neighbourhood yards and property, which also invites theft.

Compare these access points to a park; at least in park there are rules, limited access times, maintenance crews, washroom facilities and the like. Public access points, if arbitrarily opened up, would have none of these.

I live on the water, and the access nearest to us is open, and there is a dock, and all is well-policed and maintained by the neighbourhood. It is a welcome part of our neighbourhood.

Consider who would use the access points. If there are individuals or a group who would like to open and maintain a currently-closed access, by all means, I think they should be allowed. On the other hand, I believe your average family or group is not going to come from town to use an access with no facilities (washroom, boat launch, etc.). It will tend to attract the young mobile crowd which is looking for an unsupervised place to "hang out". Most young people are not a problem – they just want to have fun. But even noise becomes an issue if no rules exist.
- I really believe extended shoulders or sidewalks or trails along Faber and Stirling Arm Drive are essential. Often there are pedestrians, cyclists and cars in both lanes. It is very dangerous. And the cars go so fast. I am disappointed that there will be logging in the areas adjacent to Fossli Park and Two Rivers Arm. I know there are guidelines in place

- that limit the logging activity, but it still seems a shame to log right here.
- Lenwood Rd allowance has an illegal dock. This creates a very undesirable situation for local land owners. Constant drinking of alcohol, inappropriate boat use and behaviour. With no washroom facilities, this threatens our water source for residents. Bylaws, signs and supervision are required. The regional district needs to take leadership as others have around B.C. and create bylaws that govern use of the lake and accesses on the lake. These bylaws then need to be enforced. Bylaws and enforcement of these are needed to regulate lake activity. The increase of boating traffic and the lack of regular patrols by the RCMP gives the public permission to do “anything they want” in and around the lake area. If officers are not available for lake patrol, then have patrol cars at the boat launch early and late in the day, checking boats and drivers. If boaters knew that they would be checked regularly, their behaviour would change. A second boat launch facility would decrease boating density and improve safety and lake access. Many people complain they will not park their cars – boat-trailers outside the park as on a nice day the Sproat Lake boat launch is full.
 - A new highway is needed as a second access to Port. This would greatly increase tourism, access to/from the Comox area and provide a second emergency evacuation route. This highway is key in linking us as a destination within the Pacific Rim. It greatly outweighs the benefits of rail!
Also, as a dragon-boater, we are not open to relocating. Mooring our boats at the West Bay is where we prefer to stay. We moor for free in exchange for maintaining the grounds.
 - I support the expansion and location of highway and tourist commercial uses in the vicinity of the junction of Highway 4 and Lakeshore Road. (Submitted by 36 people.)
 - We need this resource (Sproat Lake Landing) and it would be an asset in the area.
 - As a long-term property owner in the area, I strongly support the development of Sproat Lake Landing rebuilding as proposed.
 - Section 8.0 Commercial Use: Why is Tseshaht Market even mentioned in the Sproat Lake Official Community Plan? The Market is on Indian land and lives by its own rules. Normal rules do not apply to Native lands.
Ban boats with huge wakes. Ban houseboats. Ban noisy boats.
 - A compromise would be to have both policy 8.2.5 and policy 8.2.4 in place for commercial development. Travel concerns are a major issue in area of Highway 4 and Stuart Avenue. Parking in front of Hogs Gone Wild is not supposed to be allowed.
 - I attended meeting and filled out this form. I do have two other comments that I forgot.
 - 1) The above-water exhaust systems of some boats are unbearably loud. They should be banned from the lake.
 - 2) I see a lot of support for business but not for the old West Bay Hotel, now called Sproat Lake Landing. We should all support this venture. It will be wonderful to have a business like this close at hand. It must be encouraged and supported.
 - The presently-existing public access trails between privately-owned properties should be supervised and enforced bylaws. The noise, inappropriate boat use and behaviour affects the entire neighbourhood. A good example is the Lenwood Road allowance where there is a dock which regularly hosts drinking parties that carry on all day well into the evening.