

Lac La Hache Area

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

Open House Documentation

March 9, 2017



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Introduction

The second Open House took place from 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm on March 9, 2017 at the Lac La Hache Community Hall. The Open House began with a welcome to the 31 residents in attendance from Al Richmond, the Area Director. It was followed by a presentation by the lead consultant, Graham Farstad, assisted by Joan Chess. Graham Farstad delivered a PowerPoint presentation providing a summary of the OCP process over the past year, followed by highlights of the draft OCP and ending with a question and answer discussion.

Residents also had the opportunity to review map schedules and the information summarized on the display panels, both before and after the presentation. Participants were encouraged to fill out a survey questionnaire covering all major elements of the OCP, either as a paper copy or online until March 31, 2017. Two Project Team members, a CRD Planning Officer (Francesca Sanna) and the Area Director were available at the Open House to help guide the activity stations and answer questions from participants.

Open House Presentation Materials

Presentation materials consisted of 11 large poster boards plus OCP schedules assembled around the room. All presentation materials as well as the draft OCP text (i.e. Schedule 'A') were also posted on the CRD website. The poster boards covered the following subjects:

- Welcome with a statement of the goals of the Open House
- Project overview and timelines
- Key trends shaping the OCP (e.g. demographic, environmental concerns about lake protection)
- Community Vision and Community Goals
- OCP highlights – First Nations, environmental management, agriculture and resource areas
- OCP highlights – Commercial, industrial, transportation, infrastructure, and parks, recreation & open space
- OCP highlights – Arts, culture and heritage, temporary use permits and monitoring & indicators
- Non-residential designations
- Residential designations and applicable zoning
- Aquatic Development Permit Area with a 15 metre setback for a large majority of the lakeshore with a 30 metre setback for riparian areas containing critical fish habitat based on documentation of endangered species and ecosystems in Schedule 'D'
- Commercial Development Permit Area form and character guidelines

Map schedules consisted of the following (note that Schedule 'A' consists of the OCP text):

- Schedule 'B': Lac La Hache OCP area
- Schedule 'C': Land Use Designations including an enlarged map of the Townsite designations
- Schedule 'D' Endangered Species and Ecosystems

- Schedule 'E' Slope and Drainage Constraint;
- Schedule 'F': Aquatic Habitat Development Permit area
- Schedule 'G': Agricultural Land Reserve areas
- Schedule 'H' Commercial Development Permit area
- Schedule 'I': Major Road Network and Gravel Pit Reserves
- Schedule 'J': Trails Network (not included but to be added)
- Proposed Agricultural Land Reserve exclusions

The residents' feedback is organized by general themes or topics as follows:

Lake Water Quality

Lac La Hache is highly valued and the overall health of the lake is a primary concern. Residents wanted to know when the last time the water had been tested, and was the quality still good. Several years ago, one resident had participated in sampling as a volunteer with the BC Lake Stewardship Society. Residents would like to see testing for water quality along the shoreline (shallower depths). One participant stated that water is more precious than gold.

A question was asked about those who use lake water for their domestic supply, and regulating water and sewer systems. It was noted that provincial agencies regulate individual and community systems, to ensure safe water supplies. Another resident indicated they would like to see using fertilizers or spraying poisons (e.g. weed killers) prohibited for lakeshore properties.

Shoreline Development

Residents wanted to learn about the proposed Aquatic Habitat Development Permit Areas (DPA) and the size of the setbacks for development. During earlier discussions, the local Planning Advisory Committee had recommended a setback of 30 metres. Both the consultant and staff explained that the proposed Aquatic Habitat DP setback has been revised to 15 metres for most lakes and streams. The 30 metres setback is only applicable to fish sensitive area. Also the Area Director asked staff to explain the difference between riparian buffer of 15 metres and the zoning bylaw flood setback requirement of 7.6 metres for lakes/30 metres for creeks and rivers. In addition to the building setback requirement, the Aquatic DPA is a no disturb zone to protect riparian vegetation with no riparian disturbances or removal of vegetation (note that waterfront access is permitted).

A member of the Advisory Committee noted that there are both small and large parcels and indicated a preference for a 30 metre setback for large parcels.

Other participants asked for the actual definition of the lakeshore or edge, as well as that for the riparian area. The natural boundary definition under provincial legislation was noted. (The "natural boundary" means the visible high water mark of any lake, river, stream or other body of water where the presence and action of the water are so common and usual, and so long continued in all ordinary years, as to mark on the soil of the bed of the body of water a character distinct from that of its banks, in vegetation, as well as in the nature of the soil itself.) One participant reminded the open house that Lac La Hache has a small dam at the north end, which makes the water level higher, thus affecting the

definition of the natural boundary for the DPA. It was noted that these DPA setbacks are different than the flood level setbacks.

A question was raised about the CRD's shoreline management strategy from 2004. Is it still in effect, and if so, how does the proposed DPA affect the strategy? Does the strategy need to be revisited as well? CRD staff explained that yes, the strategy is still in place and it is intended to deal with sewage disposal. This policy also deals with riparian protection for 15 metres including registration of a covenant on title. The policy is still in effect and the DPA is modelled on this policy.

ALR Exclusions

A resident expressed concerned about the source of the proposed ALR exclusions. They had not been discussed by the Advisory Committee. Graham Farstad agreed that specific ALR exclusions had not been identified but noted that the proposed changes were intended to complete the exclusions identified in the existing OCP. Most had already been implemented in co-operation with the Agricultural Land Commission. The remaining few properties were intended to identify small properties with very limited agricultural potential as well as several others with limited potential for cultivation (e.g. wetlands) as identified in the Ministry of Agriculture's 2014 Land Use Inventory (updated in 2015). Additional feedback supporting agricultural land was shared with CRD staff after the presentation, when residents were looking at the displays and maps.

Internet Service

The community stated that lack of good internet service was an impediment to economic development and safety (no cell service as soon as a person is outside the highway corridor). A question was raised about the possibility of installing a fibre optic line. Telus is no longer extending rural service. However, ABC Communications has proposed installing a new tower and is working with the CRD to find a location. The Province's recently announced Rural Strategy includes funding for rural broadband service. Residents complimented ABC's current service. As well, residents have Telus mobility phone service, and there are fibre optic connections at the fire hall and community hall. Director Al Richmond provided additional information and offered to organize a meeting on the subject with ABC Communications. Graham Farstad noted that the infrastructure section in the draft OCP have been revised to include new policies concerning telecommunications.

General Development

Residents asked that the land use designations be explained and the links to zoning for residential uses. Can there be two homes on a single parcel with one sewage system? Would the area along Readers Beach be protected or developed? There are nesting sites in the marsh? Readers Beach is part of the Townsite, which has water and sewer services. Graham Farstad explained the OCP designations and their connection to specific zones and Francesca Sanna indicated how the Zoning Bylaw regulates accessory dwellings and proposed changes to incorporate secondary suites and coach houses throughout the CRD. She noted that a coach house is not a separate house; it is a suite above a detached ancillary building such as a garage or a barn.

There was further discussion about sewage services in the Townsite. The last OCP did not consider expanding the service. It's now 20 years later and this OCP process has included more density through items such as secondary suites. What is the current capacity of the sewage system? The number one priority is the health of the lake. Since the existing services are underutilized, it may be time for more discussion about the water and sewer systems (e.g. expansion of service area, redevelopment to accommodate demographic changes).

Cariboo Connector

Concerns were raised about MOTI's Cariboo Connector project and whether the four lane highway would be built through Lac La Hache or if a bypass would be constructed. The community wants to be involved long before any decision is made and construction begins. They want more information and notification about meetings. It's a major topic that needs input from the Advisory Committee. Graham Farstad noted the importance of consultation and reviewed the proposed policies in the draft OCP. Both he and Director Al Richmond indicated they did not anticipate a four lane bypass of Highway 97 around Lac La Hache would occur.

Vacation Home Rentals

Residents asked for the rationale behind the prohibition on vacation rentals of less than 30 days. It is based on a past situation involving five properties, an absentee owner and noisy renters requiring police attendance. There was overall support among those present for the prohibition on vacation rentals.

Others asked if B & B's were still allowed (yes; if the owner is present on the premises). The CRD is also looking at policies to allow secondary suites. A question was asked whether two houses were allowed on one parcel; Francesca Sanna explained that two houses are not allowed at this time in most zones. The zoning bylaw definition for a "two-family dwelling" is not for two separate houses on one lot, it is a "duplex" side by side attached units or units above one another. A secondary suite is not a duplex. The Zoning Bylaw definition is being revised to add duplex in brackets after two-single family dwelling to provide clarity. The proposed bylaw revisions will allow one secondary dwelling on larger property, those being zoned Rural 1 (RR 1) or Resource/Agricultural (RA 1).

Public Access

There was considerable discussion about public access to the lake as most boat launches are private. There is a need for obvious points of access for visitors, which are well-constructed and signed, for boat launching and general access to the shoreline. There should be access right here in the Townsite for tourists (the McKinley Road site was cited as a good location). Residents were advised that a community organization may operate a boat launch. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure approval is needed but funding may be possible through the CRD.

Another question was raised about public access and private docks; i.e. there are private docks at public boat launches. Is there a policy? Two jurisdictions are involved. MOTI regulates the road access but its jurisdiction ends at the high water mark; then it's the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment.

Miscellaneous

There were other several items raised during the discussion:

- Does the OCP mention child care?
- Would solar and wind energy be allowed? Any rules being considered preventing them?
- Are secondary suites only for family members and relatives?

The Open House question and answer session concluded at 8:00 pm, after which residents reviewed the presentation materials and met informally until 8:30 pm.