

PUBLIC HEARING ON OCP REVISION 2015

Issue Background: Density (height and massing) in Land Use Designations

In the Official Community Plan, density (height and massing of a building) is defined by Floor Space Ratio (FSR) range calculations. FSR is the ratio between the floor area for all structures that can be legally constructed on a parcel and the area of the total parcel itself.

Different areas of town have different land-use designations, which have different FSR ranges. These ranges prescribe the housing density desired in a particular part of town.

Changes made to the FSR ranges in the revised OCP

Regarding areas designated Low density residential 1, the OCP Steering Committee unanimously recommended 0.6–0.65. Yet, the Planner has arbitrarily applied a maximum FSR range of 0.6–0.75.

Regarding areas designated Low density residential 2, the OCP Steering Committee unanimously recommended 0.6–0.75. Yet, the Planner has arbitrarily applied a maximum FSR range of 0.75–0.95.

Regarding Medium density residential areas, no change was recommended by the steering committee. Yet, the Planner changed the FSR range to 0.7–1.2 from what it originally was—0.7–1.0. He gives no rationale for this change.

Regarding Residential/Tourist Accommodation **(the highly controversial designation change envisioned for the proposed George hotel and condominium project)** no FSR ranges have been specified. Professional planners confirm that in an area like Gibson's Landing, where village scale and character are important to preserve, a maximum FSR range of 1.2–1.4 is appropriate. The Planner has ignored repeated requests to ensure an FSR range is implemented for this land use designation.

The absence of a specific FSR range for these areas leads to ambiguity and confusion at the very least and a travesty in our Harbour area at worst.

If this issue concerns you, please consider submitting a letter to the formal public hearing process. Submissions must be written and delivered between February 17 and March 10 by the end of the public hearing.

Please feel free to use and adapt the sample letter below.

EXAMPLE LETTER: LAND USE DESIGNATIONS (Density/FSR ranges)

To: mayorandcouncil@gibsons.ca

Re: Land Use Designations in OCP Draft

To Mayor and Council:

I am not convinced that land use designations as defined by Floor Space Ratio ranges in the redrafted OCP represent what the public and the OCP Steering Committee intended. In Low-density residential 1 and 2 areas, in Medium density residential areas, and in Residential/Tourist Accommodation areas, the FSR ranges are inconsistent with the input from citizens and with the duly considered recommendations of the OCP Steering Committee.

I note with particular concern the complete absence of a FSR guideline regarding Residential/Tourist Accommodation. This absence weakens our OCP and will lead to open season on development in Gibsons Landing.

The OCP must provide meaningful guidelines to potential developers, especially in the Harbour area, where a maximum FSR of 1.2–1.4 is appropriate.

Please make the following changes to the draft OCP:

For Low density residential 1, specify the maximum FSR range as 0.6–0.65.

For Low density residential 2, specify the maximum FSR range as 0.6–0.75.

For Medium density residential, specify the maximum FSR range as 0.7–1.0.

For Residential/Tourist Accommodation, specify the maximum FSR range as 1.2–1.4.

Yours sincerely,

I. B. Citizen

Gibsons