



Community Meeting on Proposed Changes to Management of Gorge Waterway is May 5

Date: Wednesday, April 20, 2016

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — The City of Victoria is proposing changes to the management of the Gorge Waterway to enhance the use of the Selkirk Water for recreation, prohibit residential use and the storage of vessels, and address the negative impacts that unregulated marine activities are having on the marine environment and Victoria residents.

The proposed zoning amendment would allow anchoring for a period of up to 48 hours, but not exceeding 72 total hours in a 30-day period. Located northwest of the Selkirk Trestle, the Gorge Waterway is a sheltered area that has become popular for anchoring vessels for storage and residents living aboard their vessels.

The public is invited to attend a community meeting to learn more and provide feedback on the City-initiated proposal to amend the current Gorge Waterway zoning regulations. The community will have an opportunity to view displays, share their thoughts with City staff, and attend a presentation.

WHAT: Gorge Waterway Zoning Amendment Community Meeting
WHEN: Thursday, May 5, 2016 from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. (Presentation at 7 p.m.)
WHERE: Victoria West Community Centre, Gymnasium, 521 Craigflower Road

The proposed approach for short-term anchoring minimizes the current impacts to the environment and residents, while respecting a BC Court of Appeal decision regarding anchoring which suggests that not permitting some anchoring may be viewed as interfering with federal jurisdiction over navigation and shipping.

The City has developed a comprehensive compliance strategy that would move forward once the Gorge Waterway area has been rezoned. Introduction of new zoning regulations would include an initial education and voluntary compliance phase, followed by an enforcement phase. If the rezoning bylaw were introduced in May, education and outreach would follow in June, with the posting of notices on vessels and floating wharves in July and August, and injunctions to remove remaining vessels in September 2016.

Long-term vessel anchoring in the Selkirk Water is not compatible with the land uses in the area and generates several community concerns including the discharge of sewage effluent and garbage from live-aboard vessels; the discharge of fuel and lubricants from unseaworthy vessels; noise and nuisance activities from live-aboard vessel residents; abandonment of unseaworthy vessels and vessel debris; obstruction of the waterway that affects recreational use by the general public; and erosion of the shoreline and riparian areas from occupant access routes.

Those who are unable to attend the meeting are invited to email feedback to bsikstrom@victoria.ca by Friday, May 6, 2016.

Input from the community will inform the preparation of the Gorge Waterway zoning bylaw amendment that will be presented to City Council for consideration. The community will have a further opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed zoning amendment at a public hearing on May 26, 2016. For more information, visit: www.victoria.ca.

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For More Information:

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