

The Citizen's Guide to the Rezoning Process

Be involved in land use changes in your neighbourhood

This guide is to help you understand the rezoning process and how your input can be most valuable in affecting the outcome of the proposal.

What is a rezoning?

The City of Victoria has adopted a number of bylaws that regulate land use and subdivision within the City. The [Official Community Plan](#) provides a long-term vision for growth in the City. The [Zoning Regulation Bylaw](#) is in place to guide and control the use of land and the density and placement of buildings and structures within the City. The *Zoning Regulation Bylaw* regulates both use and density in a manner consistent with the *Official Community Plan* and changes to the existing zoning and related subdivision regulations must be carefully considered.

When a development proposal does not meet the bylaw requirements for use and density as specified in the *Zoning Regulation Bylaw*, a rezoning application is required. In some cases, an application may also trigger an amendment to the *Official Community Plan*.

Involvement in the initial stages

A developer is required to contact the appropriate Community Association Land Use Committee prior to making a formal application with the City and arrange for a community meeting. Notice of this meeting will be sent to all residents and property owners within 100 metres of the application site (or 200 metres if an Official Community Plan amendment is also required). If you are outside this distance, you are still encouraged to participate.

If you have an interest in being involved in the land use decisions, join your Neighbourhood or Community Association. A Neighbourhood or Community Association is in place for all areas of the City. By joining the Association, you get an early chance to review an application. If you do not want to join your Association, you also have the option of attending your Community Association meeting when community meeting notices are sent out. Contact your association for more details on how to get involved. Contact details for the Neighbourhood Associations can be found at [Community Association Land Use Committees | Victoria](#)

The City's rezoning process also requires that the applicant canvass the adjacent neighbours for small lot proposals. For other types of applications, it is the developer's discretion as to the level of additional community involvement they wish to undertake. Many people find it useful to develop a good working relationship with the developer from the initial meeting.

Please note that until a Rezoning Application is formally made with the City, Development Services does not have application information. However, details of a project in the pre-application stage can be obtained from either the developer or from the Neighbourhood or Community Association.

It is important to remember that an application may change from the initial proposal viewed by the neighbourhood association to the application that goes forward to Public Hearing. The changes are generally resulting from review by the public, staff, advisory committees or Council.

The steps to processing an application and opportunity for public involvement

The [Rezoning Information and Application](#) contains a Rezoning Process Flow Chart which shows the sequence of a typical application. The chart shows the developer's responsibility as well as the opportunities for public participation in the rezoning process.

Role of staff

City staff is the first point of contact when an application is made. They can let you know when meetings will take place and the current status of an application. Staff provides professional expertise on evaluating the application and advice to Council.

Role of Council

Council first reviews the application through its Committee of the Whole (COTW). The role of the Committee is to assess the merits of the proposal to determine if the proposal warrants moving forward to a Public Hearing. Committee of the Whole generally meets on the first four Thursdays of each month. Members of the public can attend this meeting but may not make a presentation.

It is at the Public Hearing that City Council adjudicates the public interest, on behalf of the residents of the City of Victoria, and decides to approve or decline the rezoning application. The Public Hearing is held during a regular Council meeting.

Council meetings are held in the Council Chambers of City Hall, usually twice a month. Meeting dates and agendas are posted on the City's web site [Public Meeting Schedule | Victoria](#).

The importance of the Public Hearing

The *Local Government Act* requires that City Council hold a Public Hearing prior to adopting a rezoning bylaw. This is the opportunity for the public to present input for or against the proposal. Written submissions to Mayor and Council can be sent to [Contact Mayor & Council | Victoria](#).

You can view public notices at [Public Notices | Victoria](#).

In order for your written submission to be published on the agenda for the hearing it must be submitted to publichearings@victoria.ca by 2 p.m. on the day of the hearing. At the Public Hearing, you are welcome to make a verbal submission before Mayor and Council if you choose; no advance notice is required.

The most effective submissions are ones that deal with specific issues relating to the development.

Once a Public Hearing is complete, Council members may not hear further representations on the rezoning, either formally or informally, before voting on its approval or rejection. In most cases, the final vote on an application takes place immediately after the Public Hearing.

Notification for the Public Hearing

There are three formal ways the public is notified of a Public Hearing:

- the main project sign on the property will have an updated notice affixed to it
- there will be two ads in the Times Colonist, generally appearing in the Friday and Saturday editions prior to the Public Hearing
- if you are a resident or property owner within 100 metres of the subject property, you will receive notification of the hearing in the mail.

If you'd like more information on current applications, visit the City's [Development Tracker](#).

For More Information:

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