

BERGEN COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POSITION PAPER

On June 4, 2009, approximately 55 - 60 people from the Bergen community met to discuss recreational development in the Bergen area.

Background information was presented by a focus group appointed by the Community Association then a facilitator led the discussion.

Level of density and intensity of impact of different types of recreation were determined to be key concepts. Discussion helped us clarify what we meant by level of density and intensive impact.

We feel that impact is a critical consideration on a case by case basis and on a cumulative basis. It has to be assessed in the context of life in a rural, agricultural community and urban attitudes must not be assumed.

In general, we consider things that place a significant number of people in the area or have a significant impact on the community or the environment "intensive". For example, we think a 50-lot RV park is definitely intensive and would have a significant impact on the environment and the community.

The following 3 key points have the unanimous support of those at the meeting:

1. Any proposed recreational development that would trigger a redesignation from Agricultural use to something else is generally not desirable.

2. An independent, unbiased community impact assessment should form part of any proposed redesignation for recreational use. It would include:

- the number of people being brought into the community,
- the level of integration of people into the community,
- the impact on our roads, services and support facilities,
- the impact on our quality of life
- ways in which our agricultural endeavors and opportunities, both present and future, will be affected.

3. It must also consider a rural view point. For example, levels of traffic, noise or light pollution considered to be intrusive by country residents may be different from those considered intrusive by urban residents. The following types of recreational development might fit in our area, depending on the specifics of any proposals:

- Horse boarding facility and riding stable,
- Small cabin or campground operation (5 or fewer spaces),
- Cultural retreat facility (artists, musicians, writers, etc.),
- Guest ranch, farm vacation facility
- Bed and Breakfast operation
- Eco - tourism facility for nature walks, hiking, etc.
- Small restaurant, especially if it features local produce.

The following 3 points have the general support of those at the meeting:

1. The ASP limits on residential density should apply to any type of recreation that includes a period of residency on the land.
2. Recreational developments that have an intensive impact on the community or the environment are not desirable
3. Recreational developments should employ reserves, land trusts or some other legally enforceable method to prevent development outside the scope of the project determined at the time of redesignation.

We plan to present these points to the County at the June 24th Policies & Priorities meeting. (This committee consists of the full Council & key County staff.)

If you have further input, suggestions, changes, please provide them to:

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Marilyn Halvorson (638-2245 HYPERLINK "<mailto:halatsundre@telus.net>" halatsundre@telus.net), prior to June 20, 2009. Thank you for your help!

You can also find a copy of the above information on the Bergen News website at:
<http://thebergennews.ca/>