

Where Does the Association for the Protection of Rural Metchosin (APRM) Stand on the Issues?

Detached Secondary Suites (Second Houses)

Since incorporation, Metchosin has allowed *ATTACHED* secondary suites on all lots. (It was, and remains, the only CRD municipality to do so). Nevertheless, illegal second houses have been and are being built on as many as 6% of Metchosin properties.¹

Now Council has appointed a committee of volunteers to review this issue. (See metchosin.ca for timetable of meetings and committee agendas).

APRM members strongly support ATTACHED secondary suites.

APRM opposes DETACHED suites because they:

--are not needed. Additional housing can be in ATTACHED suites;

--reduce neighbours' quality of life (wreck views, reduce privacy, increase nuisance as tenants in separate houses are less subject to landowner control);

--harm the environment (lower well water levels, increase impermeable area, destroy habitat, increase challenges of septic disposal);

--increase pressure for unplanned future subdivision/and density increase (especially when estates change hands and during times of hardship);

--boost population over OCP vision (infeasible to ensure owners don't have attached as well as detached suites);

--raise everyone's taxes (to cover public liability for substandard facilities, under-assessments, and, if detached suites are allowed, to pay for extra staff to administer regulations aimed at mitigating if not eliminating the above damages); and

--bring no community benefits that can't be achieved with attached suites.

APRM recommends eliminating *illegal* second houses, with transitional arrangements to avoid hardship to existing tenants.

What Do YOU Think?

Let Council and the Detached Secondary Suite Committee know in writing or in person or by email (mayorandcouncil@metchosin.ca).

¹ Metchosin does not register secondary suites. Hence there are no official statistics on their numbers. On the basis of the Census, BC Assessment, and Multiple Listing Service, it can be inferred that around 25% of Metchosin properties have secondary suites, and perhaps a quarter of those (6% of properties) have second dwellings detached from the principal dwelling. Some (not all) built prior to incorporation in 1984 are "legally non-conforming." Second houses built since 1984 are illegal. This has occurred for many reasons, especially bylaw loopholes, and reluctance by Councils to ensure compliance, and then only sometimes after public complaint.

Metchosin-East Sooke Amalgamation: APRM supports this in principle to give more political weight to rural communities, and more assurance that the region's "green lungs" will remain healthy. In 2008 voters supported a study and public consultation to explore financial implications and administrative arrangements. The Province has not (yet) released the study funds it promised. Another Olympic casualty?

Soil Deposit and Removal Regulations: APRM has made many representations to reduce the adverse environmental impacts of soil removal/deposit, the costs to roads, and nuisance to neighbours. Council has strengthened the bylaws, and improved enforcement to some extent. APRM also recommended clean up of the contaminated soil deposited at Becher Bay (which pollutes Metchosin properties) be included in Treaty negotiations.

Treaty Negotiations: In late 2008, APRM urged the Provincial Government to engage local communities, including Becher Bay, to explore "win-win" improvements over the initial Treaty offer, when it was made. An initial offer was made in 2009. No details have been made public, however, nor has public input been sought.

Excisions from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR): APRM aims to preserve the ALR in Metchosin, and also in contiguous municipalities (Langford), to protect a critical mass in local agriculture, protect potential regional food security, and avoid direct damage to Metchosin (e.g., increased flooding of Bilston Creek, higher traffic).

Farm Assessment Review: APRM made a submission to the provincial Review Committee aimed at ensuring tax status rules properly reflect the realities of small farms. The Panel's recommendations largely meet the concerns APRM (and many others) raised. It is now for the Province to implement the recommendations.

Urban Sprawl West of Sooke (on Ex-TFL Lands): APRM urged CRD and the Province to defend the existing Regional Growth Strategy vision for this area and prevent mass suburban development there as proposed by developers. CRD passed appropriate bylaws, which the courts then overturned. The saga continues!

Village Centre Plan: APRM recommends that the footprint of the Village Centre should be minimised to prevent sprawl and preserve the ALR. Following extensive public consultation, plans now under consideration appear to follow these principles in the main.

For more information, please see our website (aprm.ca), attend one of our regular meetings at Metchosin Community House, third Wednesday of October, November, January, February, March, April, May and June (the latter being the Annual General meeting) and/or contact our President ([Derek Wulff](mailto:Derek.Wulff@shaw.ca) 478-2677 email: derekwulff@shaw.ca) or Resource Chair ([Frank Mitchell](mailto:Frank.Mitchell@shaw.ca) 478-1671, email: fhm@shaw.ca).