

RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF  
**VICTORIA**

**18 May, 2023**

To whom it may concern within the Provincial Government,

**I write to request the transfer of ownership of Victoria Park (PID 207811) and the adjoining green space on the Causeway (PID 462408) from the Province to the Rural Municipality of Victoria. Or, if a transfer of ownership is not possible, a 30-to-50-year long-term lease with more liberal conditions of use than our current lease. This request has been approved by our municipal Council.**

Separate requests for transfer of ownership (for each of the two PIDs in question) were made by the municipality in February 2020. Both requests were declined at the time.

**The municipality's future intended uses of these properties are either:**

- Its continuation as a municipally-managed Recreation and Public Open Space,  
  
or, subject to all required public consultations and approval by Council,
- subdividing and rezoning with the effect that most of the current PID 207811 would be zoned as Light Industrial, to allow the development of aquaculture facilities, while the current recreational facilities and public services would be relocated and improved, and shoreline protections increased.

**Our case for municipal ownership or long-term lease:**

- For many years, the current arrangement (provincial ownership and municipal management) has resulted in a failure by both levels of government to adequately maintain the land and building assets that are present. The cliff face is quite rapidly eroding and the washrooms are in a poor, though functional, state of repair. As the Municipality of Victoria, here 'on the ground', we are deeply aware of the needs of this property, and the patterns of use of this property by residents and visitors alike. Ownership would give both increased motivation and increased administration, enabling us to act on what we know is required for the long-term protection and improvement of the land.
- The Municipality having ownership and therefore more direct decision-making authority over the uses of the site will dramatically improve efficiency in decision-making. Ensuring that those with the greatest stake in the property - local residents and businesses - are engaged in the decision-making process which will result in better outcomes.
- During the busy summer months, Victoria by the Sea serves as a major draw for Island tourism, and there are associated revenue-generating opportunities that the municipality can explore to ensure financial sustainability of the site, should we

acquire ownership, including availability for events or even the establishment of a campground, either publicly or privately owned. The site has a history of being used informally for these and other purposes over many decades, but the current lease agreement restricts use of the site to being a day-use park only. A municipal desire to invest in the future of the park is also dampened given that we lack long-term ownership or control of the property.

- Both the current and previous owners of the aquaculture facility on the adjacent property have long wished to expand its operations. As a Municipality, there is a lot of interest in formally hearing the development proposal and making a clear decision on the matter. However, the facility owners can not make a formal application for rezoning & development requests without the support of the property owner, currently the province. The municipality is enthusiastic to hear these proposals, to conduct the necessary public meetings and to make a clear decision following the processes outlined in our municipal bylaws. Unfortunately, the slow movement resulting from a lack of provincial responsiveness has been frustrating for both the municipality and for the business owners. Should the municipality have ownership of the property, we would initiate a public consultation process immediately, and move through the rezoning, subdivision and development processes required to reach a clear decision. Ending the uncertainty around the future of this property would be a gift to all parties involved.

**A note on erosion management:**

This property comes with a key liability: erosion. We see the speed of erosion on this site as a threat to the province's road and bridge infrastructure on the causeway, as well as contributing to the loss of a very valuable recreation space for residents and tourists alike.

Whether the property continues to be owned by the province or the municipality, we are willing to work with the province, the South Shore Watershed Group, and other experts, to find solutions to this ongoing challenge.

I look forward to hearing a provincial response in a timely manner. We are extremely open to meeting to discuss the issue.

With thanks,

Anna Keenan

**Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)**  
**Rural Municipality of Victoria**

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