



For further information, contact Michael Neill, [mneill@bookmanager.com](mailto:mneill@bookmanager.com) 250-212-3814  
[www.facebook.com/PeopleForThePark](http://www.facebook.com/PeopleForThePark)

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Future natural shoreline between Cedar and Mickle avenues ruined with rip-rap**

"Rip-rap" - rock used to form a foundation for a breakwater or other structure.

The shoreline of five of thirteen city-owned lakefront properties along Abbott and Walnut streets at the foot of Cedar Avenue have been drastically altered by the city with the installation of \$320,000 of rip-rap (large rock deposits) and oversized retaining walls.

This very expensive and unsightly work, which has ruined any potential for public access to the lake, appears to be the foundation for a boardwalk that hundreds of Kelowna residents spoke publicly against at a rally and Public Hearing in 2011.

Although this work has not extended into the seven neighbouring waterfront lots currently up for rezoning, the public charrette that has been tasked with designing a site-plan is mandated to make connections to the neighbouring lands. The obvious and possibly only option charrette participants will have is to extend the rip-rap and retaining walls through the present sandy beach lots, and then approve the construction of an expensive boardwalk possibly along all thirteen properties.

People for the Park advocates have wanted a public bike and walkway at ground level through the park and leave the shoreline as a gentle sloping and natural setting. By comparison, the city recently removed the rip-rap along downtown Stewart Park in order to provide a similar natural setting. The city's official justification for this was, "...creation of riparian area habitat to achieve environmental sustainability objectives along the foreshore."

In May of 2011, the prior city council approved spending up to \$70,000 to repair the existing and much smaller retaining walls that have protected the backyards for decades. Routine maintenance would have prevented erosion. In January 2012, the new council headed by Mayor Walter Gray, boosted the budget to \$150,000. In December 2012 a staggering further \$170,000 was approved in order to perform the so-called repairs. The \$320,000 project was completed in 2013.

People for the Park have spoken with long-term residents living in the immediate area who said they were astounded at the extreme measures taken to repair the retaining walls that are now buried beneath rip-rap with new and substantially higher retaining walls atop.

In the past, the city has refused to include these four lots and the adjacent two road-end beach access lots with the seven lots currently being discussed. They claim that privately owned

properties across Walnut Street need to be included in any future plan for that waterfront area. People for the Park suggests the same logic should apply to the private properties across Abbott Street where the seven waterfront properties are currently under pressure for commercial and residential rezoning. A wider scope would reveal more potential for everyone interested in both park and commercial development and no need for a boardwalk.

For the city to use an excessive amount of taxpayer money and quietly proceed with the destruction of the shoreline is, in the opinion of People for the Park, unethical, irresponsible, arrogant and deceptive.

### Relevant Photos



Above is a portion of the seven lots being considered for rezoning. The shoreline is still natural.



This is a portion of the neighbouring four city-owned lots (not in the plan). The rip-rap and retaining wall is now in place. Below is the 66 foot wide Mickle Avenue park that had no retaining walls (failed or otherwise) but was ruined with rip-rap regardless. The retaining wall in the previous photo can be seen in the background.

