



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Planning Committee
From: Terry Crowe
Manager, Policy Planning
RE: RICHMOND AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY STRATEGY -- FINAL REPORT

To Planning - Mar 18, 2003 & May 21, 2003
Date: February 19, 2003
File: 4050-10

Staff Recommendation

1. That the final draft of the Richmond Agricultural Viability Strategy, dated February 18, 2003, be approved; and
2. That the approved Strategy be widely distributed to build implementation partnerships.

Terry Crowe
Manager, Policy Planning
(4139)

Att. 3

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Staff Report

1.0 Origin

The Richmond Agricultural Viability Strategy (RAVS) was initiated by the City, in partnership with the Richmond Farmers Institute (RFI), to develop a long-range strategy for improving the viability of the farmlands within the City.

Close to 40% of the City's land base is located within the Provincial Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Agriculture is a significant part of Richmond's economy, supported by a moderate climate, and favourable topography and soils.

Yet despite generally favourable conditions, farmers in Richmond are facing tough challenges to maintain agriculture as a viable industry and sustain it for future generations. Pressures on the industry include drainage and irrigation issues, rural-urban conflicts, competing non-farm uses within the ALR, high land values, and competition from new crop varieties and imported products.

The RAVS process has been overseen by a Core Team comprised of representatives from City staff, RFI, Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) and Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF).

The RAVS is a long-term commitment and partnership of the City and agricultural community to strengthen and enhance agricultural viability in Richmond. The strategy identifies initiatives that can be undertaken or coordinated at the local level to create a positive environment and regulatory framework that supports the agricultural sector.

On January 28, 2002, City Council considered a report on the draft RAVS. The following resolution was passed:

“That:

- (1) The draft Richmond Agricultural Viability Strategy (2002) be referred to the public for review;
- (2) The Terms of Reference (as amended by the Committee) for a proposed Agricultural Advisory Committee, be endorsed; and
- (3) Staff be authorized to advertise for nominations and submit names to Council for appointment.”

This report address the Strategy. A separate report will address the proposed Agricultural Advisory Committee.

2.0 Purpose

This report outlines the results of public consultation and presents a final draft of the RAVS, which includes proposed changes in response to public comments. Public information meetings were held in the summer of 2002 to present the draft RAVS to the general public for review and feedback.

3.0 The Richmond Agricultural Advisory Committee

The recommendations regarding the appointment of the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) will be made to Council after the RAVS is endorsed (e.g. early in 2003).

4.0 The Richmond Agricultural Viability (RAVS) Vision and Focus

4.1 Vision

The RAVS vision, which is the foundation for all management plans and recommendations, is:

“The City and the farm...working together for viable agriculture.”

4.2 Plans

The RAVS is comprised of a City-wide Management Plan for Agriculture as well as Nodal Management Plans. The City-wide Plan includes policies for a wide range of issues, including City policies and bylaws, decision-making, services and infrastructure, non-farm uses, parks and recreation, the environment, public education, economic growth and diversification. The Nodal Management Plans provide additional policies that pertain to different areas within the ALR that have area-specific issues.

4.3 Focus

The proposed RAVS:

1. Is aimed at improving and enhancing agricultural viability;
2. Is not intended to take land out of the ALR unless there is a substantial net benefit to agriculture and there has been consultation with agricultural stakeholders;
3. Does not propose taxation changes as such changes would require separate study and review.

5.0 Consultation

5.1 Overview

The RAVS was prepared with extensive public consultation as outlined in the following table:

| Date | Activity (where the RAVS was discussed) |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. November 1999 | RAVS Public Survey initiated - mailed to all land owners the ALR - available at all City community centres, libraries, City Hall - placed on the City Bulletin Board and Web Site. |
| 2. March 7, 2000 | Richmond Farmers Institute (RFI) Annual Meeting (open public meeting) |
| 3. March 27, 2000 | RAVS Survey findings released publicly and placed on the City's Website |
| 4. May 4, 2000 | East Richmond Farmers Workshop (open public meeting) |
| 5. May 25, 2000 | McLennan Farmers Workshop (open public meeting) |
| 6. June 6 2000 | Gilmore Farmers Workshop (open public meeting) |

| Date | Activity (where the RAVS was discussed) |
|--------------------|--|
| 7. Sept 26, 2000 | Focus Group with external agricultural experts |
| 8. Oct 4, 2000 | Focus Group with Richmond farmers |
| 9. Oct 5, 2000 | Focus Group with external agricultural experts |
| 10. March 14, 2001 | RFI Annual Meeting (open public meeting) |
| 11. March 13, 2002 | RFI Annual Meeting (open public meeting) |
| 12. March 21, 2002 | Draft Agricultural Strategy Public Open House (at South Arm Community Centre) |
| 13. April 10, 2002 | Draft Agricultural Strategy Public Open House (at City Hall) |
| 14. June 26, 2002 | Draft Agricultural Strategy Public Open House (at City Hall) |
| | |

5.2 2002 Public Open Houses

A total of 180 people attended the three open houses in 2002. People who attended the open houses were given summaries of the recommendations in the proposed agricultural strategy and invited to submit written comments. A total of 32 written submissions were received.

The draft RAVS was also circulated to the Richmond Health Department and Advisory Committee on the Environment (ACE) for comments.

6.0 **Public Comments on the Proposed RAVS**

The City received numerous comments and suggestions at the Public Open Houses and in the written responses to the RAVS. Reaction ranged from general remarks about the state of farming to remarks about specific recommendations in the proposed RAVS.

This section provides a summary of the key issues that were discussed and highlighted by the public at the open houses. A more detailed account of the public comments pertaining to specific policies and recommendations of the RAVS is contained in **Attachment 1**.

6.1 Agricultural Viability Comments

Concerns were expressed that agriculture is no longer viable in Richmond. They stated that over the years, it has become increasingly difficult to make a living from farming, citing the following factors:

- High costs associated with land, servicing and improvements
- Lack of labour
- Poor produce prices
- Competition from imported goods
- Lack of demand for certain types of produce
- Poor farmland drainage
- Restrictions on spraying, bird control, burning, etc. due to conflicts with urban neighbours
- Lack of access to farmlands
- Speculation, which drives up the cost of farmlands
- Farming is a business. Forcing people to farm their lands will not help to make land viable.
- The financing component is missing (need to consider that farmers' expenses are exceeding income).

Other general comments expressed about farming and the proposed RAVS include:

- "There is nothing new in this RAVS plan. We were told all this years ago."
- Previous commitments for improvements to drainage, servicing and roads were never carried out by the City.
- If agricultural viability is not possible, then the City should not be insisting that farmland be farmed.
- The RAVS is not adaptable to the needs of farmers because the future of farming does not look promising.
- Lands in areas where farming is no longer viable should be removed from the ALR in order to implement the infrastructure and services that are needed in the community.
- Need senior government partnership with the farming community.
- There are different degrees of viability. Need to focus funding on the most promising areas.

6.2 Topics of Support

Positive comments were received about the proposed RAVS. The City was praised for undertaking the study and showing its support for the agricultural community. The RAVS was noted to be comprehensive, sincere and thorough.

There was agreement with the goal to make farming viable, given that lands are protected with the ALR designation.

Positive feedback was expressed for the following ideas and initiatives in the proposed RAVS:

- The creation of an Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC).
- The services and infrastructure strategy to address issues such as drainage and access.
- The public education and awareness strategy.
- The division of the agricultural areas into nodal management sub-areas to address the unique features and conditions of each one.
- Ongoing partnerships and consultation with the farming community.

7.0 Agency Comments on the Proposed RAVS

7.1 Environmental Programs

The City's Environmental Programs Department provided extensive comments on the environmental section of the RAVS. The broad environmental issues for agriculture which are incorporated into the final draft RAVS include:

- A healthy environment (e.g. good water quality) is essential to farming.
- There should be broader acknowledgement of the environment, not just environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs).
- There is insufficient acknowledgement of the potential impacts of agriculture on the environment.
- Objectives should focus on encouraging and supporting "ecological sustainable agriculture".
- The environment and agriculture should not be seen as competing objectives as they are very much inter-related.

The policies in this strategy are aimed at fostering improved communication between the farming community and the City to work together on ESA and environmental issues. There is recognition that in order to address issues, a collaborative and consultative approach involving all relevant stakeholders will be required.

7.2 City's Advisory Committee on the Environment (ACE)

1. ACE supports the principles of the RAVS and supports activities that will assist the economic viability of agricultural land which, at the same time, promote good practices with regard to environmental protection, conservation and sustainability.
2. ACE supports the policies to improve drainage to farmlands and develop drainage plans in consultation with the agricultural community. In developing drainage plans, the following should be kept in mind:
 - Be cautious about reducing the amount of open ditches because they provide habitat value for birds, amphibians and mammals that are part of a healthy ecosystem.
 - Do not install improved drainage facilities without a clear plan and commitment to make good use of the land following this expenditure.
3. ACE supports the concept of a perimeter dyke rather than the mid-island dyke because land in the eastern portion of Richmond is valuable and is to be protected.
4. ACE supports the increased use of signage to promote awareness of agricultural activities to the urban population.
5. ACE suggests:
 - Consider the promotion of Richmond farm produce in local stores, including large chain stores.
 - Explore the role of community colleges for teaching of skills used in farming. Education and training of existing and future agricultural people may aid the industry.

7.3 Richmond Environmental Health Department

1. Although the *Farm Practices Protection Act* offers protection to farmers with respect to normally accepted farm practices, non-farm uses adjacent to farms (e.g. schools, daycares) may restrict farm activities such as pesticide applications.
2. The *Farm Practices Protection Act* does not supercede the *Health Act* in that health takes precedent if a health hazard is identified.
3. Agricultural burning of grass, trees, and bushes needs to be addressed. This has caused safety issues in the past with respect to thick smoke impacting on local traffic routes.
4. There should be some general statement about pesticide use and a philosophy to practice integrated pest management techniques.
5. The maintenance of ditches and sloughs in farm areas is supported as they provide habitat for local flora and fauna.
6. Habitat enhancement such as that which occurred with the airport compensation program should be promoted.

7. On-site sewage disposal may become an issue on specific ALR sites with respect to expansion of buildings.

8.0 Senior Government Agricultural Initiatives

The completion of the RAVS and formation of an AAC for Richmond is timely. Similar initiatives in support of agriculture and continued viability have been occurring at both the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) and the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD).

8.1 Agricultural Land Commission Re-Organization

Broad legislative changes to the structure of the Provincial ALC were made in the past year by the new Provincial Government. New commissioners were appointed to new regional panels to provide more regional response and strengthen the protection of the ALR.

On November 1, 2002, the new *Agricultural Land Commission Act, 2002* and a new *Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation* came into force. Some of the key changes in the new legislation include:

- An expanded list of permitted farm uses in the ALR which local government may regulate but not prohibit. These farm uses include seasonal agri-tourism, horse training and boarding, and the production and/or application of fertilizers, compost and bio-solids for agricultural purposes.
- The extension of authority to local governments, through voluntary delegation agreements, to regulate certain types of ALR subdivision and non-farm uses.
- The replacement of the *Soil Conservation Act* with new provisions in the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* for soil removal and fill placement.

Staff continue to review the implications and will advise Council accordingly.

8.2 Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD)

8.2.1 Economic Strategy for Agriculture

In July 2002, the GVRD completed an Economic Strategy for Agriculture in the Lower Mainland. The report outlines a strategy to address regional problems that are affecting the economic viability of agriculture. It promotes the notion that the long-term preservation of the ALR is more important than short-term production, particularly if production is uneconomical or damages the land.

The vision for agriculture in the GVRD report is:

An economically viable Lower Mainland agriculture industry that is organized, proactive and sustainable over the long term.

Six regional strategic goals and initiatives are identified, namely:

1. Protect the agricultural resource base.
2. Streamline the regulatory process.
3. Ensure the availability of labour at the producer level.
4. Develop supportive agricultural policies and plans.
5. Support an expanded agricultural industry image/communications initiative.
6. Become market oriented and proactive.

8.2.2 *GVRD Sustainable Regional Initiative (SRI) and Review of the Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP)*

The regional SRI, currently underway, promotes improved long term regional sustainability in the social, economic and environmental sectors. It will continue to promote sustainable and viable agriculture. The ideas in the SRI will be used by many regional stakeholders and will also be used as input into an updated LRSP.

8.2.3 *Summary*

The RAVS provides a City policy framework to better complement the above initiatives, including:

- Local initiatives to support regional and Provincial strategies; and
- Harmonizing City bylaws with the new Provincial legislation.

9.0 **Analysis**

9.1 Key Public Issues

From the feedback obtained at the 2002 public open houses and through the questionnaires, the public key areas of concern are:

1. **Agricultural Viability**

Some people expressed concerns that they are being forced to farm land that is no longer viable for agriculture. It was noted that better quality farmlands have been taken out of the ALR and developed for urban uses, leaving less productive farmlands in the ALR.

2. **Drainage**

The issue of drainage improvements was raised by numerous farmers during the public consultation. Drainage is considered as fundamental to agricultural viability. Farmers want to see the City give priority to and follow through on initiatives to improve drainage in the ALR.

3. Farmhouse/Non-Farmhouse Distinction

Recommendation 13 in the RAVS proposes a review of the uses permitted in the AG1 (Agricultural District) zone to better achieve viability and minimize speculation and urban/rural conflicts. It further proposes to review how non-farmhouses can be better discouraged so that farmhouses become the main form of dwelling unit permitted on agricultural land.

Many farmers and property owners objected to the proposed recommendation on the basis that it would violate individual property rights, limit a farmer's use of his/her own land, and be difficult to monitor and enforce.

4. Subdivision

Some farmers wish to be able to subdivide their properties when no longer able to farm themselves. Some want to have the opportunity to keep their houses and allow someone else to take over their farmlands.

5. Pesticides

The issue of improved pesticide management, awareness and education is recognized by all parties.

9.2 Staff Comments on Public Feedback

9.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to indicate how the public's and staff's concerns have been integrated into the revised final draft RAVS.

Please refer to **Attachment 2** (Summary of Changes to the Draft RAVS) for a comprehensive list of amendments and reasons for the change.

The following discussion assists in clarifying the changes that were made.

9.2.2 Viability and the RAVS Rationale

On the issue of agricultural viability, the RAVS is based on the premise that agricultural land is a limited and valuable resource to be protected with a long-term vision, strategy and effort. Agriculture should be supported so that it can become more viable.

Many factors affect agricultural viability, including global competition, consumer preferences, weather, marketing boards, subsidies, farm diversification, property values, land use, subdivision, servicing and environmental quality. A number of these factors are beyond the City's authority, scope and resources.

The City can, however, establish policies and programs that positively influence agricultural viability, including land use, subdivision, servicing and environmental quality. The two essential principles to promote long-term agricultural viability are:

1. Minimize non-farm uses in the ALR because they:
 - Take land out of production.
 - Sterilize more surrounding farmland.
 - Create land use and servicing conflicts.
 - Erode the agricultural land base over time.
2. Minimize subdivision because small lots:
 - Are difficult to farm.
 - Promote urban uses and servicing in the ALR.

Some ongoing initiatives undertaken by the City include:

- Maintaining the current boundaries of the ALR with few changes.
- Limiting non-farm uses and subdivision within the ALR to help preserve farmland and encourage a lot pattern which promotes farming (e.g. consolidation to larger lots).
- Preparing a Master Drainage Plan to identify drainage improvements to the ALR and other parts of the City.
- Exploring dyking improvements that minimize negative impacts on the ALR.
- Preparing sub-area plans to resolve longstanding issues.

For those factors beyond City control, the City advises, encourages and establishes partnerships with other levels of government, agencies, universities and the private sector to involve them in achieving agricultural viability.

9.2.3 Agricultural Advisory Committee

9.2.3.1 General

In undertaking the RAVS, the City is creating a new framework by which agricultural issues will be discussed and addressed in a more comprehensive manner. One of the high priority recommendations of the RAVS is the formation of an Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) for the City of Richmond. This committee, which would mostly consist of farmers, would be central to implementing various aspects of the RAVS.

Council endorsed the formation of the AAC on January 28, 2002. The City has already advertised for and reviewed a list of nominees for the AAC. Once the RAVS is approved by Council, a separate report will be brought forward to recommend appointments to the AAC. Once appointed, the AAC will exist and function as an advisory committee to provide information, options and recommendations to Council and other stakeholders.

The public supports the formation of the AAC.

9.2.3.2 *Committee Composition*

The original proposal for the AAC was for 9 members, made up of 5 members of the Richmond Farmers Institute, 3 members from the general farming community and 1 member from ACE. Planning Committee had recommended that a citizen from the community-at-large be added to the AAC, bringing the total number of members to 10.

Upon review, the RAVS Core Team is now recommending to reduce the total number of AAC members back to 9 in order to keep the committee manageable, facilitate more efficient decision-making, and ensure that agricultural interests are well represented when implementing the RAVS.

In the final draft of the RAVS, it is proposed that the AAC consist of 5 members from the Richmond Farmers Institute, 2 members from the general farming community, 1 member from ACE and 1 citizen from the community-at-large.

9.2.4 *Future Zoning Bylaw Amendments*

There was fear among some farmers and property owners that, if the RAVS was approved by Council, then immediately, the proposed changes to the AG1 zone outlined in the RAVS City Policies and Bylaws Strategy would come into effect and all new non-farm residence uses would be immediately prohibited in the ALR.

In fact, approval of the RAVS will not bring about any immediate changes to the Zoning Bylaw.

The proposed RAVS Policies and Bylaws Strategy identifies potential zoning issues for review and public consultation so that the ALR can be better managed to support and reinforce agricultural viability. The benefits of such a review are that creative solutions can be identified, longstanding issues resolved and viability promoted.

Furthermore, with the formation of the AAC, the proposed zoning review is one of many initiatives that would be considered by the new committee. As well, all changes to the AG1 zone require public hearings before the Zoning Bylaw amendments are finalized. This process ensures that the public is consulted about such proposed changes.

9.2.5 *Nodal Management Plans*

The RAVS proposes that, over time, detailed nodal management plans be prepared to better address specific issues in ALR sub-areas. Ideally, upon the establishment of the ALR in 1974, more specific ALR Area Plans should have been prepared then because the ALR is not a homogeneous area and specific issues and opportunities need to be addressed.

For example, the McLennan 2 area (bounded by Westminster Highway, No. 4 Road, No. 5 Road, and Francis Road) could benefit from a more detailed area plan to address the issue of small lots and unopened road allowances. An area plan could explore creative solutions such as possibly re-plotting the area to create a small area of concentrated urban development, an effective buffer area, and lot consolidation into larger agricultural lots along with the elimination of many unopened road allowances.

It is by supporting the RAVS, the AG1 zoning review, and the preparation of the nodal plans, that long-term progress can best be made.

Some have greeted these ideas positively.

10.0 Options

The following options summarize the alternative ways of managing the ALR:

1. Status Quo Option

This option would continue current practices of ALR management. The question of better determining what kind of place the ALR is to be would not be answered as neither agricultural viability nor urbanization would be clearly chosen. Today's problems would continue to be tomorrow's problems. This option would be chosen if the same results, problems and limited solutions are desired.

2. Urbanization Option

This option would have predominantly non-farm uses (e.g., urban residential, commercial, industrial, recreational and institutional) and related services occur in the ALR. This option would be selected if the goal is to eliminate the ALR and convert it to urban uses.

3. Agricultural Viability Option (Recommended)

This option would enhance support for agricultural viability by having predominantly farming and agriculturally supportive uses and services in the ALR. Non-farm uses would continue to be limited.

This option would be selected if the idea is to protect the resource and to work towards agricultural viability. It would demonstrate municipal leadership in agriculture, best utilize the resource for farming, and promote agricultural uses, complementary services and initiatives. This option would involve addressing urban issues and longstanding urban/rural conflicts in a comprehensive manner and on a sub-area basis through consultation, analysis and review.

11.0 Final Draft RAVS

Staff and the RAVS Core Team recommend Option 3.

Based on Option 3 (Agricultural Viability Option) and in order to address some of the concerns expressed by the public and to clarify certain recommendations, a number of changes and refinements to the earlier draft RAVS are proposed.

A list of the key changes to the draft RAVS and the reasons for doing so are summarized in **Attachment 2**.

A Final Draft of the RAVS is presented in **Attachment 3** for consideration by Planning Committee and by Council.

12.0 Financial Impact

1. None immediately.
2. Implementation of the RAVS will require funding for specific projects on an ongoing basis. The amount of funding would be determined on a year-to-year basis as projects are prioritized and put forward for annual budget consideration. Without funding, the policies in the RAVS will not be implemented.
3. In 2003, \$65,000 is proposed for implementing the RAVS.
4. The Agricultural Advisory Committee will require ongoing annual funding of approximately \$5,000 for support. Because of the importance of the RAVS and the high degree of collaboration and consultation required, this committee's operating budget is, it is suggested, a reasonable expense in the City. The \$5,000 support is proposed for Council's consideration during the 2003 Budget process.

13.0 Conclusion

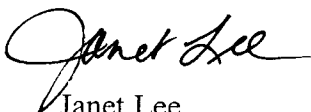
The RAVS is an important milestone in managing the ALR. It is a partnership between the City, agricultural community and other stakeholders.

It is based on reinforcing the Provincial ALR commitment, the GVRD Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP), the City's OCP, sustainability principles and a commitment to do more for agricultural viability. It is aimed at determining how best to achieve agricultural viability.

The RAVS sets the foundation for greater consultation and co-operation with the agricultural community to ensure that farmers' needs are better considered and that negative impacts are eliminated or minimized.

The RAVS proposes to reinforce the premise that the ALR is a place predominantly for farming and to undertake a variety of initiatives over the long term to achieve the goal of enhancing agricultural viability.

It is therefore recommended that the Richmond Agricultural Viability Strategy be approved.



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JL:cas

ATTACHMENT 1:

**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC STRATEGIES OF THE
PROPOSED**

RICHMOND AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY STRATEGY

**Public Comments on Specific Strategies of the Proposed RAVS
(From 2002 Public Open Houses)**

1. RAVS Agricultural Decision-Making Strategy

Purpose

To ensure that Council decisions which are made on a City-wide basis consider the impacts on agriculture and are made in a consultative manner.

Key Components of the Strategy

- Establish an Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) to review and address community agricultural issues.
- Maintain the existing ALR boundary in Richmond.
- Develop and implement an Agricultural Impact Assessment for new projects and proposals.
- Maintain an agricultural data system.

Public Comments

- There was support for the formation of the AAC.
- The voting membership of the AAC does not seem balanced.
- There should be more small lot farmers represented on the AAC and less members of the Richmond Farmers Institute (RFI).

2. RAVS Services and Infrastructure Strategy

Purpose

To meet the needs of the agricultural sector with respect to water, drainage, sewerage and transportation management.

Key Components of the Strategy

- Support the City's Master Drainage Plan and continue the work of the City staff-Farmer Drainage Committee.
- Identify drainage improvements to the ALR and prioritize them.
- Encourage improved communication among established agencies on issues such as drainage and dyke upgrading.
- Review and designate farm travel routes.
- Ensure that the road network supports agriculture.

Public Comments

- Drainage is in major need of improvement in the agricultural areas and is a key priority to maintain viability.
- Scepticism was expressed by some farmers that drainage improvements would not occur (e.g. "We've been promised drainage improvements for the last 20 years and nothing has been done").
- Need to control speeding on roads in agricultural areas and reduce conflicts between agricultural, non-agricultural and recreational traffic.
- Safety concerns arise out of conflicts between different types of traffic in agricultural areas.

3. **RAVS City Policies and Bylaw Strategy**

Purpose

To ensure that City policies and bylaws support the agricultural sector and its viability.

Key Components of the Strategy

- Review Zoning Bylaw regulations and update them.
- In the Zoning Bylaw, distinguish between farmhouses and non-farmhouses and manage them differently.
- Review existing City bylaws to ensure that they are consistent with senior government legislation and regulations.

Public Comments

Recommendation 13, which proposes a review of the current AG1 (Agricultural District) zone, generated the most concern, particularly among farmers and non-farmers in the Gilmore Area. The proposed recommendation suggests that residential uses which are accessory to farm operations (i.e. farmhouses) should be better distinguished from non-farm related residential development and managed differently.

Public comments about this recommendation include the following:

- “Scrap the proposed changes” – there should not be one set of rules for farmhouses and another for non-farmhouses.
- The proposed changes infringe on an individual’s property rights.
- Agricultural areas are already over-regulated, so government should not be adding more restrictions.
- The proposed changes will be difficult and costly to enforce and administer.
- Such negative measures will not promote agriculture viability.
- The proposals may devalue agricultural land. They are not good for small land owners.
- The proposals go beyond ALR provisions which permit one dwelling (of any type) per lot.
- Farmers should be permitted to subdivide their lands in order to make some economic return on their investment.
- Higher costs of land may be directly related to speculators hoping to generate profit through the use of agricultural land for non-farm residential development.
- In order to preserve farmland for the future, speculation will need to be eliminated so that productive farming can be focussed upon.

4. **RAVS Non-Farm Uses and Parks and Recreation Strategy**

Purpose

To ensure that the dominant use in the ALR is viable and sustainable agriculture.

Key Components of the Strategy

- Consolidate smaller parcels into larger ones.
- Limit recreational uses in the ALR.
- Minimize disruption to farmers by recreational uses.
- Limit the development of roads, except where it benefits agriculture.

Public Comments

- The benefit of land consolidation is questionable as lands could get bought up by investors rather than farmers.
- The RAVS should allow “gentleman farmers” on 2 to 5 acre sites to have a nice house and therefore result in a nicer farming community.
- Some farmers are not supportive of trail access through the ALR as it results in damage to crops.
- People are not coming to see the farms. They enjoy the surroundings and then leave the community.
- Should ban hunting in agricultural areas as the City is densely populated.

5. RAVS Agricultural Edge StrategyPurpose

To minimize and address potential conflicts between farm and non-farm neighbours along the rural-urban edges.

Key Components of Strategy

- Develop agricultural edge plans.
- Require buffers for new developments adjacent to ALR.
- Consider restrictive covenants on urban developments adjacent to the ALR to educate urban residents along agricultural edges about the agricultural activities near them.

Public Comments

- Industrial uses make better agricultural neighbours than residential uses.
- Where industrial uses are adjacent to agricultural uses, more attention should be paid to the use of access roads in order to reduce or eliminate potential conflicts between agricultural and industrial traffic.
- The presence of industrial uses near agricultural areas affects the desirability of living on agricultural land.
- Evergreen buffers should be used against industrial areas.
- Urban neighbours should not be forced to create a buffer zone at their expense.
- Restrictions on neighbouring urban properties, such as use of restrictive covenants, could reduce their property values.

6. RAVS Strategy for Agriculture with respect to the Environment and Environmentally Sensitive AreasPurpose

To encourage environmental management on and adjacent to agricultural land that does not impact negatively on normal farm practices.

Key Components of the Strategy

- The farm community, the City and other stakeholders will work together to study, analyze, form options and strategies to better address issues of concern around environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs) and the environment.

- Review City management policies and bylaws to assess the implications for farming and make sure that they are consistent with Provincial and Federal legislation.
- Review ESA's in consultation with farmers.

Public Comments

- ESA's are restrictive to farmers. If they cannot fully utilize their lands, they may not be able to meet the levels of farm profits needs to qualify for lower farm class taxation.

7. RAVS Public Education and Awareness Strategy

Purpose

To provide opportunities for the general public to better understand and support agriculture in their community.

Key Components of the Strategy

- Institute an information program to increase public awareness of agricultural practices (brochures, notices, agricultural signage, etc.).
- Encourage links and partnerships between the agricultural community and the media to facilitate public education and awareness.
- Consider restrictive covenants for properties within or adjacent to the ALR to address issues of conflict.

Public Comments

- There was strong support for educating the public about the local agricultural community and agricultural practices.
- There was concern that using restrictive covenants on neighbouring properties could reduce those property values.

8. RAVS Economic Growth and Diversification Strategy

Purpose

To support economic growth and diversification in the agricultural industry and allow it to remain competitive and responsive.

Key Components of Strategy

- Maximize the amount of agricultural land available for farming by reviewing the feasibility of amalgamating smaller lots to larger ones.
- Encourage farmers to diversify their agricultural operations.
- Develop a "Buy Local" marketing initiative to increase demand for locally grown products.

Public Comments

- There was uncertainty that agricultural support service businesses could be "encouraged" to locate in Richmond, since some have left the City (e.g. blueberry depot).
- There was concern about the reasons why the City would purchase farmland.
- Larger parcels are not necessarily going to encourage farming because it is expensive to buy labour and equipment.

9. RAVS Agricultural Nodal Management Plans

The RAVS identifies 8 sub-areas, or nodes, within the ALR. Each node has unique characteristics and issues. Over the long term, it is proposed that nodal management plans be prepared to address these unique issues and opportunities.

There was a positive response for the concept of nodal management plans. Nodal plans acknowledge that there are differences among parts of the ALR and provide the opportunity to address these differences.

During the Public Open Houses, some localized issues emerged in the following areas:

McLennan 2

The McLennan 2 area is bounded by Westminster Highway on the north, Francis Road on the south, No. 4 Road on the west and No. 5 Road on the east. This area is characterized by small lot holdings and unopened road allowances.

Farmers in this area have the following concerns:

1. Lands were originally intended for urban uses and deemed as small holdings. Owners thought they would have road access and services to their properties as the City grew. Many of the properties are owned by non-farmers who never had any intention of farming their lands.
2. When the ALR was created in the 1970s and these lands were included, there was no compensation to owners. Many owners are still bitter over the inclusion of their properties in the ALR.
3. Properties are difficult to farm because the lots are small, access is poor and the soils are not conducive to a wide range of crops.
4. Properties are taxed as residential because they do not generate enough income to qualify for farm status. Owners feel that they are paying higher taxes while unable to service, access or develop their properties with any viable uses, including farming.

Gilmore

Property owners in the Gilmore area raised concerns about the proposed recommendations to distinguish between farmhouses and non-farmhouses. Some feel that there should be an urban house on every vacant lot (e.g. there are approximately 1,300 vacant lots in the ALR). Others felt that farmers should be able to subdivide their properties and retain one or more houses on their properties. The suggestion that farmhouses on a variety of agricultural lot sizes is preferable over urban residential development was not well-received by some as this was perceived to be too restrictive.

Many of the public comments summarized in sections above on City Policies and Bylaws Strategy were raised by Gilmore area property owners and farmers.

ATTACHMENT 2:
SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO THE DRAFT
RICHMOND AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY STRATEGY

Changes to the Draft RAVS

1. The following **Definitions** were added to the Introduction of the RAVS in order to clarify terminology:
 - The definition of “Agriculture” from the City’s Zoning Bylaw;
 - The definition of “Farm Operation” from the Provincial *Farm Practices Protection Act*;
 - Criteria for farm class taxation, as defined by the B.C. Assessment Authority.
2. The list of **Guiding Principles** was expanded to include the following two new principles:
 - Urban development in the ALR will be minimized.
 - Subdivision in the ALR will be minimized, except where it supports agricultural viability (e.g. diversification, expansion, etc.).
3. The intent of the document has been clarified to indicate that:
 - The purpose of the RAVS is to strengthen and enhance agricultural viability, not to remove lands from the ALR unless there is a substantial net benefit to agriculture and there is consultation with agricultural stakeholders.
 - The RAVS is primarily a community planning strategy (i.e. land use, servicing, environmental, economic development and public awareness), not a taxation strategy. Taxation issues would have to be the subject of further study.
4. **Recommendation 1 c) i)** was amended so that the composition of the proposed Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) consists of a total of 9 voting members (5 members from the Richmond Farmers Institute, 2 members from the general farming community, 1 member from the Advisory Committee on the Environment and 1 member from the community-at-large).

When the draft RAVS was presented to the Planning Committee on January 22, 2002, the AAC was proposed to have 9 voting members (5 from the Richmond Farmers Institute, 3 from the general farming community, 1 from the Advisory Committee on the Environment).

Planning Committee passed a resolution to add a citizen-at-large to the AAC (bringing the total number of voting members to 10).

After careful consideration, the Core Team wishes to maintain the size of the AAC at 9 members, for greater efficiency in decision-making, and to ensure that agricultural interests are adequately represented. The citizen from the community-at-large would be maintained, while the number of members from the general farming community would be reduced from 3 to 2. The number of representatives from the Richmond Farmers Institute would be maintained at 5 as the Institute has been a full partner in the development of the RAVS and has substantial knowledge about agricultural viability issues.

The size and membership of the AAC may be reviewed in the future if necessary.

5. Recommendation 2 was amended to:

“2. Maintain the existing ALR boundary and ALR land base in Richmond, and do not support a change to the ALR boundary or a loss of ALR land unless:

- there is a substantial net benefit to agriculture; and
- the agricultural stakeholders are fully consulted.”

The amendments introduce the concept of “no net loss” of agricultural land to this recommendation. The recommendation re-affirms City policies to preserve and protect the ALR for farming.

6. Recommendation 3 was amended to designate more than one City Staff member as an Agricultural Liaison.

The original recommendation proposed to designate one City Staff Agricultural Liaison. It is noted that different staff have expertise in different areas (e.g. planning, engineering, environment, etc.). Therefore, the recommendation was amended to give the City flexibility in appointing one or more staff members as liaisons to assist or respond to inquiries by the agricultural community.

It was further clarified that the Staff Liaison from the Policy Planning Department would function as the lead Staff Agricultural Liaison (among those appointed from different departments) in order to ensure coordination among departments.

7. Recommendations 13 a) to c) were re-written as follows:

“13. a) Review the current list of uses permitted in the AG1 zone and update it to reflect changes in Provincial legislation and the objectives of achieving agricultural viability.

b) Review the AG1 zoning regulations for residential uses on farms and for non-farm residences in the ALR to determine how to better achieve agricultural viability.

c) Review the non-agricultural uses currently permitted in the AG1 zone to better achieve agricultural viability.”

Recommendation 13 f) was re-written as follows:

f) Review all minimum and maximum property and building setbacks for residences in the ALR to minimize conflicts with adjacent uses.

There are no changes to Recommendations 13 d) and e).

The above changes in 13 a) to c) and f) broaden the scope of the recommendations. The intent of Recommendation 13 is to identify the need to review the AG1 zone and update it to meet the current and changing needs of agriculture.

Such a review process would include consultation with the AAC, the farming community, ALR property owners and the public. Therefore, the recommendations can remain general in the RAVS and be defined in future work.

8. Recommendation 14 was re-written as follows:

“14) Review the roadside stand regulations in Business Regulation Bylaw 7148 and prepare information, options, and recommendations to improve their effectiveness and achieve agricultural viability.”

The proposed change broadens the recommendation so that specific issues and changes to roadside stand regulations may be defined in future work.

In earlier drafts of the RAVS, the bylaw cited in this recommendation was Bylaw 6902. Staff subsequently discovered that Bylaw 6902 was repealed and replaced with Bylaw 7148. The references have been updated accordingly.

9. Recommendation 17 was re-written as follows:

“17) Encourage a cooperative and partnership approach to avoid and address nuisance complaints (e.g. spraying, noise, odour, dust, pesticide application, burning, etc.)”

The above recommendation has been expanded to include dust, pesticide application and burning as nuisances that should be addressed. This is aimed to reduce the potential for complaints from the non-farming community and farmers’ concerns of the need for continued environmentally safe pesticide practices.

10. Recommendations 18 a) and 35 a) were re-written as follows:

“18 a) Review the feasibility of amalgamating smaller lots to larger ones wherever possible;”

“35 a) Review the feasibility of amalgamating smaller lots to larger ones wherever possible. These parcels could then be sold or leased as farmland to farmers.”

The reference to the City purchase of lands to facilitate amalgamation and farming was eliminated. The previous reference left the impression among some people that the City had an agenda to buy up farmland for urban development and future City profit.

As there is no such intent behind the recommendation and there is no certainty that the City will have the resources to purchase farmland for sale or lease to farmers, this reference has been eliminated.

11. **Recommendation 18 d) ii)** was re-written as follows:

“18 d) ii) Work with the agricultural community, equestrian community and recreational community to ensure that recreational uses adjacent to or within the ALR are compatible with farm uses and have a positive benefit to farming.”

The reference to “equestrian community” was added in the above recommendation to clarify the need to involve the equestrian sector when planning for new trails and recreational uses in the ALR.

12. **Recommendation 21 b)** was amended to include “Minimize urban-rural conflicts” as an intent for requiring restrictive covenants on new developments adjacent to the ALR.

13. **Recommendation 36 a)** was re-written as follows:

“36 a) Liaising with support agencies such as BCMAFF, AAFC, GVRD and the LRC to gather information and identify resources to clarify diversification opportunities (e.g. new crop production and development, value-added production, etc.);”

The references to new crop production and development and value-added production have been inserted as examples of diversification opportunities. With the economic viability of traditional primary farming in question, it is reasonable to explore opportunities that would expand the range of activities that could take place on farmlands and assist farmers to add value to their products.

14. **Recommendation 42** was re-written as follows:

“42) Ensure that a “least impact” policy exists to protect farmers from the impacts of the proposed residential development in the London-Princess area:”

The draft RAVS referred to a developing urban area at the southwest edge of the Gilmore area as the “London Lane” residential development. Staff have more commonly referred to this area as “London-Princess” in accordance with established street names in the area. As “London Lane” is also the name of an existing industrial complex in the area, the area reference was amended to “London-Princess” in order to clarify that the policy referred to the area.

15. **Recommendation 50** was re-written as follows:

“50) Maximize the agricultural land available in McLennan 2 for future agricultural uses (see Recommendation 35), including the possibility of replotting the land and/or limited access.”

The McLennan 2 area has many relatively small lots and unopened road allowances. At the public meetings, farmers and property owners discussed the problems facing their area, including the inability to access properties, high taxation, lots that are too small to farm viably, and poor drainage.

In order to resolve some of the issues facing McLennan 2, a range of potential solutions will need to be considered. Potential solutions include, but are not limited, to the following:

1. Providing limited access at appropriate locations to enable interior lots to be farmed.
2. Replotting, in which property owners with inaccessible or undevelopable parcels would be allotted new parcels elsewhere in the area in exchange for their undeveloped parcels. The new parcels would have some form of development potential that property owners could take advantage of, while the undeveloped parcels would be amalgamated to larger parcels for farming.

Prepared by the
Policy Planning Department

ATTACHMENT 3:
THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE
RICHMOND AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY STRATEGY

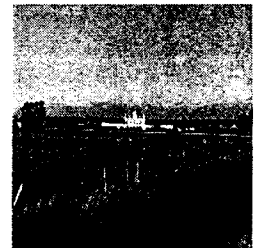
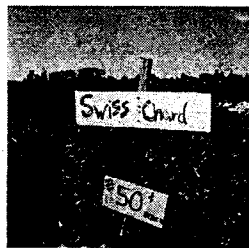
Agricultural

Viability strategy



City of Richmond & Richmond Farmers Institute

February 18, 2003



Acknowledgements

- The Richmond Agricultural Viability Strategy Core Team would like to thank Richmond City Council for its support in making this work on the Richmond Agricultural Viability Strategy (AVS) possible.
- Thanks are also extended to the Investment Agriculture Foundation, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, and the Agricultural Land Commission for their funding and support.
- The Core Team would also like to thank the many members of Richmond City staff, and representatives of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, who took time from their busy schedules to meet with the Core Team and consultants and share their perspectives, wisdom and support.
- Thanks are also extended to the visiting specialists from the University of BC and the agricultural sector who attended the focus sessions and to the farmers who participated in various meetings and who played a large and important role in the development of the AVS. Without their help and support, the AVS would not have been possible.

The Core Team would also like to thank the consultants led by Jack Reams, P.Ag. and including Don Cameron, P.Ag., Aidan Cameron, B.Sc. and Susan Ames, P.Ag., Ph.D. The consultant team performed effectively at all times and assisted the Core Team with the development of this important AVS.

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The Core Team is firmly committed to the future role of agriculture in the City of Richmond and considers the AVS as an important step towards the goal of achieving a viable agricultural industry within the City's boundaries.

Recommendations in the Agricultural Viability Strategy

The Agricultural Viability Strategy (AVS) provides over 60 recommendations designed to:

- Foster and maintain agricultural viability;
- Address the key issues facing the agricultural sector in Richmond;
- Work within the framework of a 2021 vision and guiding principles for the future.

The AVS recommendations appear in the City-Wide Management Plan for Viable Agriculture (Section 3) and the Agricultural Nodal Management Plans (Section 4), and are in numerical order. A complete list of the recommendations, in the same order, can be found in Appendix II.

Acronyms and Key Words Used in the Agricultural Viability Strategy

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| AAC | City Agricultural Advisory Committee (see Recommendation 1) |
| AAFC | Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada |
| AIA | Agricultural Impact Assessment (see Recommendation 4) |
| ALC | Agricultural Land Commission |
| ALR | Agricultural Land Reserve |
| ARDSA | Agricultural Regional Development Subsidiary Agreement |
| BCMAFF | BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries |
| City | City of Richmond |
| Core Team | Richmond Agricultural Viability Strategy Core Team |
| DFO | Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans |
| EC | Environment Canada |
| ESA | Environmentally Sensitive Area |
| FPPA | Farm Practices Protection Act |
| MWALP | BC Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection |
| OCP | Richmond Official Community Plan, Schedule 1, Bylaw 7100 |
| RFI | Richmond Farmers Institute |
| CAL | City Councillor Agricultural Liaison (see Recommendation 3) |
| SAL | City Staff Agricultural Liaison (see Recommendation 3) |

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1. Executive Summary

Agriculture is important in Richmond’s history. Early settlers were attracted to Richmond because of the fertile soils and promise of productive agriculture. While Richmond has since developed into a cosmopolitan City, agriculture remains a very important part of the economy and a major land use.

However, the agricultural sector is one that is at best, misunderstood, and, at worst, frequently ignored by those not directly involved with agriculture. The industry is under pressure to meet the challenges of competing, often in an international marketplace, yet may be hampered by ongoing regulations and marketing difficulties. Often the potential impacts of urban-based decisions on the industry are not studied.

Farmers, too, may have misunderstandings about the intent of decision-makers and other public figures. Sometimes, farmers feel overwhelmed and unable to sustain the constant vigilance needed to avoid being squeezed from their land by increasing urban pressures and conflicts.

The AVS provides a 2021 vision, guiding principles, objectives, and practical strategies for the future growth and viability of the agricultural industry in Richmond

Despite all of these pressures and concerns, the people of the City of Richmond (City), the British Columbia public, and Canadians in general have a genuine “soft spot” for farming and farmers. Often cited as a trustworthy working group, the farmer’s role in keeping food on our tables is admired and appreciated.

Consistent with this community viewpoint, “the City recognizes the importance of agriculture as a food source, an environmental resource, a heritage asset, and an important contributor to the local economy. The City is committed to protecting the supply of agricultural lands and to ensuring the viability of farm operations”.¹

It is to be noted that:

1. The development of this Agricultural Viability Strategy (AVS) is a long-term commitment and partnership of the City and agricultural community to strengthen and enhance agricultural viability in Richmond;
2. The purpose of the AVS is not to remove land from the Agricultural Land Reserve unless there is a substantial net benefit to agriculture and there is consultation with agricultural stakeholders;
3. The AVS is a community planning policy document and does not address taxation issues. While they are related, taxation issues would require separate study because they are complex.

¹ Richmond Official Community Plan Schedule 1, Bylaw 7100 (OCP) p. 16.

2021 Agricultural Viability Strategy Vision

The 2021 vision is:

“The City and the farm...working together for viable agriculture”.

2021 Agricultural Viability Strategy Principles

The following are the guiding principles developed for the AVS:

1. The dominant use of the land in the ALR in Richmond will be for a competitive, diverse and flexible agricultural industry.
2. The stability and integrity of the ALR boundary will be supported and maintained.
3. Agricultural economic growth, innovation, diversification and best practices are the best ways to protect agricultural land in Richmond and to ensure the ongoing viability of agricultural operations.
4. Urban development in the ALR will be minimized.
5. Subdivision in the ALR will be minimized, except where it supports agricultural viability (e.g. diversification, expansion, etc.).
6. Richmond farmers will be provided with the necessary support, services and infrastructure that are required for agricultural viability.
7. Residents of the City of Richmond will be encouraged to learn more about agriculture in their city and to support locally grown agricultural products.
8. Effective and positive communication with the general public and the agricultural sector will be a priority.
9. Decision-making will be coordinated in a consultative manner and will consider all potential impacts on agricultural viability.
10. A sustainable environment will be maintained to provide quality air, water and land which supports and complements farming.

With the development of the 2021 vision and guiding principles for the future of agriculture in Richmond (Section 2.2), over 60 recommendations emerged from this planning process.

“The City and the farm...working together for viable agriculture”.

City-Wide Management Plan

The AVS contains an overall City-Wide Management Plan for Viable Agriculture, with the following strategies identified:

- The **Agricultural Decision Making Strategy** (Section 3.1) provides recommendations for ensuring that decisions made on a city-wide basis promote agricultural viability, consider the impacts on agriculture, and are made in a consultative manner;

- The **Services and Infrastructure Strategy** (Section 3.2) provides recommendations to meet the needs of the agricultural sector with respect to water, drainage, sewerage and transportation management;
- The **City Policies and Bylaws Strategy** (Section 3.3) provides recommendations to ensure that City policies and bylaws support the agricultural sector and the viability of the industry, without imposing unnecessary restrictions;
- The **Non-Farm Uses and Parks and Recreation Strategy** (Section 3.4) provides mechanisms to ensure that the dominant use of the ALR in Richmond is viable and sustainable agriculture;
- The **Agricultural Edge Strategy** (Section 3.5) contains recommendations for planning along rural-urban edges to minimize, and address, potential conflicts between farm and non-farm neighbours;
- The **Strategy for Agriculture with respect to the Environment and Environmentally Sensitive Areas** (Section 3.6) encourages environmental management on, and adjacent to, agricultural land that does not impact negatively on normal farm practices;
- The **Public Education and Awareness Strategy** (Section 3.7) provides opportunities for the general public to better understand the agricultural industry in their community;
- The **Economic Growth and Diversification Strategy** (Section 3.8) supports economic growth and diversification in the agricultural industry to allow it to remain competitive and responsive to changing times.

Nodal Management Plans

In addition to the City-Wide Management Plan, eight separate Agricultural Nodal Management Plans were developed (Section 4). The eight nodes were identified to manage the resources and issues within specific areas and complement the city-wide strategies.

Implementation Strategy

The AVS also includes an Implementation Strategy (See Section 5) to provide direction for the implementation of the many recommendations. Further details for those recommendations that may be implemented in the shorter term are provided in Section 5.2.

One of the most significant recommendations that is considered as a high priority is the creation of a City Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) (See Recommendation 1) and the establishment of City Councillor and Staff Agricultural Liaisons (CAL, SAL), (See Recommendation 3) to work closely with the agricultural community.

City Divisions will be encouraged to implement the strategy and to support the agricultural sector as further development occurs in Richmond.

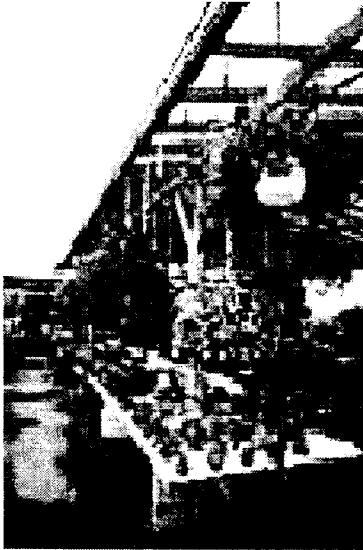
Another key recommendation is the introduction of an Agricultural Impact Assessment process (AIA) (See Recommendation 4) to assess the potential impact of development on the agricultural sector. This process is recommended to ensure that future development, and other initiatives, would not have negative impacts on the capacity to farm in Richmond. In addition, appropriate "agricultural edge" planning is recommended to reduce the impact of activities carried out by both the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors in the City on each other.

There is a sense of optimism that this AVS can make an important contribution to the City and to the farm and non-farm communities living and working together in the area.

Implementation of the AVS is viewed as a critical step in securing a viable agricultural community for the future and increasing the level of economic activity in the agricultural sector. The responsibility to follow through with any and all necessary measures is enormous. Without a comprehensive strategy to guide agricultural planning, the alternative is continued erosion of the agricultural resource base and opportunities for the farming community.

2. Introduction

Agriculture is an important part of the economy and a major land use in the City. With 38% (4,916 hectares or 12,147 acres) of the total land base within the ALR, a moderate climate, and favorable topography and soils, the agricultural sector is a significant engine of the overall City economy. In



1995, Richmond farms earned over \$56 million in revenues².

Richmond's farmers grow and raise a variety of crops, livestock, specialty and niche products, ranging from cranberries and potatoes to beef and dairy cattle, to sheep, flowers and honey.³

Despite the favorable climatic and soil conditions for agriculture, there are many challenges for the industry. Drainage and irrigation issues, rural-urban conflicts, competing non-farm uses within the ALR, high land values, and other issues, put pressure on the industry.

The industry pressures notwithstanding, both rural and urban residents of Richmond have considerable optimism and hopefulness for the future viability of farming in Richmond's ALR. They value the green space provided by a working agricultural industry. They want young people to understand the role that agriculture plays in their community - to be able to see, first hand, how farms work, and where much of their food originates. They want to be able to consume locally grown

produce.⁴ In short, the community understands that farmers are stewards of the land and their presence is a benefit to everyone.

Removal of Land from the ALR

The intent of the AVS is to increase agricultural viability, not to remove lands from the ALR unless there is a significant net benefit to agriculture and there is consultation with agricultural stakeholders.

Taxation

The AVS is primarily a community planning strategy (i.e. land use, servicing, environmental, economic development and public awareness), not a taxation strategy. As taxation is complex, taxation issues would need to be addressed in a separate study.

² City of Richmond Agricultural Profile, January 2002 (Profile), p. 57.

³ Profile, p. ii.

⁴ RAVS Agricultural Survey Report, "Vision Statements", pp. 53-57.

2.1 Definitions

The following definitions are relevant to the AVS:

1. Land Use - “Agriculture” (City of Richmond)

The Richmond Zoning Bylaw defines “Agriculture” as “the use of land for the growing of crops or the raising of livestock.”

Properties that are zoned “Agricultural District (AG1)” are permitted to have the following uses:

- Agriculture
- Keeping & Raising of Animals for Commercial Purposes
- Horticulture
- Peat Extraction & Processing
- Horse Riding Academy
- Roadside Stand (Classes A & B), provided that the operation is clearly ancillary to a permitted agricultural use
- Animal Hospital or Clinic
- Residential, limited to One-Family Dwelling
- Boarding and Lodging, limited to two persons per dwelling unit
- Home Occupation
- Radio & Television Transmission Facilities
- Public Sewage Collection, Treatment and Disposal Facilities
- Accessory Uses, Buildings and Structures, but excluding secondary suites.

Some of the above uses require approval from the Agricultural Land Commission under the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*.

Subject to requirements, farmhouses (as an accessory use on a farm) and non-farm houses are allowed in the AG1-Zone.

2. “Farm Operation” (Farm Practices Protection Act)

In the Provincial *Farm Practices Protection Act*,

“**Farm operation**” means any of the following activities involved in carrying on a farm business:

- a) Growing, producing, raising or keeping animals or plants, including mushrooms, or the primary products of those plants or animals;
- b) Clearing, draining, irrigating or cultivating land;
- c) Using farm machinery, equipment, devices, materials and structures;
- d) Applying fertilizers, manure, pesticides and biological control agents, including by ground and aerial spraying;
- e) Conducting any other agricultural activity on, in or over agricultural land;

and includes

- f) Intensively cultivating in plantations, any
 - (i) Specialty wood crops, or
 - (ii) Specialty fibre crops
 prescribed by the minister;
- g) Conducting turf production
 - (i) Outside of an agricultural land reserve, or
 - (ii) In an agricultural land reserve with the approval under the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* of the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission;
- h) Aquaculture as defined in the *Fisheries Act* if carried on by a person licensed, under Part 3 of that Act, to carry on the business of aquaculture;
- i) Raising or keeping game, within the meaning of the *Game Farm Act*, by a person licensed to do so under that Act;
- j) Raising or keeping fur bearing animals, within the meaning of the *Fur Farm Act*, by a person licensed to do so under that Act;
- k) Processing or direct marketing by a farmer of one or both of
 - (i) The products of a farm owned or operated by the farmer, and
 - (ii) Within limits prescribed by the minister, products not of that farm, to the extent that the processing or marketing of those products is conducted on the farmer's farm;

but does not include

- l) An activity, other than grazing or hay cutting, if the activity constitutes a forest practice as defined in the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*;
- m) Breeding pets or operating a kennel;
- n) Growing, producing, raising or keeping exotic animals, except types of exotic animals prescribed by the minister.

Note: “Minister” means the Provincial Minister responsible for the *Farm Practices Protection Act*.

3. Taxation - “Agriculture”

The B.C. Assessment Authority considers as “farm” class all or part of a parcel of land used for:

- primary agricultural production
- a farmer’s dwelling, or
- the training and boarding of horses when operated in conjunction with horse rearing.

In order to maintain the “farm” class, the farm must meet the following income criteria:

- if land is smaller than 8,000 m² (2 acres), must earn \$10,000 from the sale of primary agricultural products.
- if land is between 8,000 m² (2 acres) and 4 ha (10 acres), \$2,500 must be earned.
- if land is larger than 4 ha (10 acres), \$2,500 plus 5% of the actual value of any farm land in excess of 4 ha (10 acres) must be earned from farming activity on the land.

2.2 Overview of the Planning Process

The development of the AVS is only one phase of a 5-phase project to ensure the viable use of Richmond’s farmland:

Phase 1 involved Council approval to prepare the AVS, finalize the funding, and prepare background documents (Agricultural Profile and Survey Report);

Phase 2 involved a series of Farmers’ Workshops and a Public Open House for public input on issues and opportunities for agriculture in Richmond. There was ongoing research, including partnerships with federal and provincial agencies;

Phase 3 involved hiring the consultant team and developing the AVS;

Phase 4 involves the presentation of the AVS to Council for approval, and setting the stage for implementation;

Phase 5 involves the full implementation of the AVS.

2.3 The Planning Area

The planning area for the AVS is the ALR land within the City of Richmond. (See Figure 1)

2.4 Description and Features of the Planning Area

This section is intended to provide a snapshot of the physical setting and agricultural activity of the planning area. The facts and figures presented are derived from the City’s Agricultural Profile, which should be consulted for more detailed information.

2.4.1 Agriculture in the Planning Area

Richmond has a rich agricultural tradition and history, dating back to pre-European settlement when First Nations people used the cranberry bogs of Lulu Island as a food source.⁵ Farmers in Richmond have made use of the fertile soils and favorable climate to produce a wide variety of crops and livestock, including:

- Berries, such as cranberries, blueberries, raspberries and strawberries;
- Field vegetables, such as potatoes, pumpkins, squash and corn;
- Nursery products;
- Greenhouse production;
- Hens and chickens;
- Beef and dairy cattle;
- Sheep, lambs, llamas and alpacas;
- Equestrian uses and facilities;
- Bees and honey;

⁵ Profile, front cover.

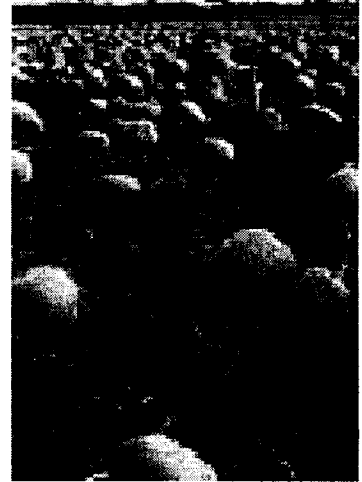
- Tree fruits;
- Organic vegetables and herbs.

2.4.2 Challenges

The main limitations facing the agricultural industry include:

- Biophysical limitations such as excessive wetness of some soils. However, with modest improvements, all of the farmland in Richmond is considered prime;⁶
- Pressure to urbanize;
- Pressure to subdivide;
- Rural-urban conflicts;
- Conflicting land uses and high land values;
- Economic issues;
- Service and infrastructure problems.

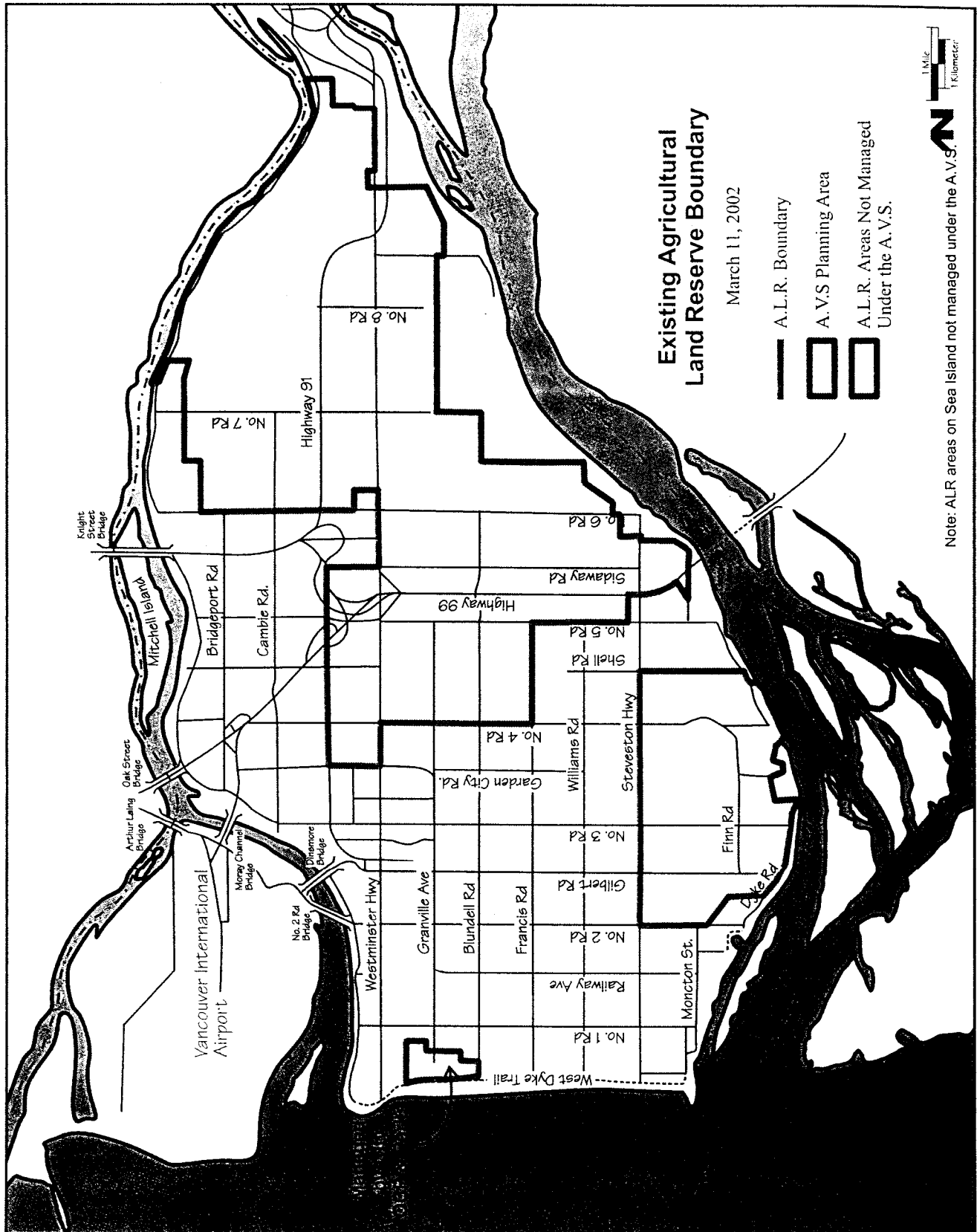
Despite the above limitations, Richmond farms generate over \$56 million in revenues⁷ and contribute significantly to the local and provincial economy.



⁶ Profile, p. 14.

⁷ Profile, p. 57.

Figure 1 – The Planning Area



2.5 Purpose of the Agricultural Viability Strategy

The purpose of this AVS is to provide a 2021 vision and guiding principles, objectives and practical strategies for the future growth and viability of the agricultural sector in the City.

It is envisioned that a Richmond Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) will take the lead role in the implementation of the AVS. As well, the AAC will advise City Council, staff and the community on a wide range of agricultural matters.

The AVS recommendations presented in this document provide a framework towards achieving agricultural viability in Richmond. Each recommendation will be considered in terms of its feasibility and practicality for achieving positive benefits for agriculture. It is acknowledged that other agricultural viability directions not identified in the Strategy may be brought forward and considered for implementation.

The implementation of strategies in the AVS over the long term aims to achieve:

- Favourable and sustainable economic returns for farmers;
- A supportive policy framework and decision-making structure;
- Beneficial servicing and infrastructure;
- Increased encouragement from the community;
- Increased support for Richmond agricultural products;
- Increased awareness and respect for the needs of the agricultural community and the urban community;
- A sustainable environment which provides quality air, water, and land which supports and complements farming;
- A positive outlook to attract more young people to choose to farm; and
- Better working partnerships among important stakeholders.

2.6 2021 Vision and Guiding Principles for the Future

City Corporate Vision

The City’s corporate vision statement is “to be the most appealing, livable, and well-managed community in Canada”⁸. To ensure that this corporate vision is met with respect to agriculture, the City seeks to ensure the viability of farm operations and to protect the supply of agricultural lands.

The City also recognizes the importance of agriculture as a food source, an environmental resource, a heritage asset, and an important contributor to the local economy.⁹

With the City’s corporate vision statement and objectives for agriculture in mind, the Core Team developed the following 2021 vision and guiding principles for agricultural viability in Richmond.

⁸ OCP, p. 3.

⁹ OCP, p. 16.

2021 Vision

“The City and the farm...working together for viable agriculture.”

The vision is the foundation for the AVS. It functions as both the starting point and “measuring stick” for all management plans and recommendations.

2021 Guiding Principles

1. The dominant use of the land in the ALR in Richmond will be for a competitive, diverse and flexible agricultural industry.
2. The stability and integrity of the ALR boundary will be supported and maintained.
3. Agricultural economic growth, innovation, diversification and best practices are the best ways to protect agricultural land in Richmond and to ensure the ongoing viability of agricultural operations.
4. Urban development in the ALR will be minimized.
5. Subdivision in the ALR will be minimized, except where it supports agricultural viability (e.g. diversification, expansion, etc.).
6. Richmond farmers will be provided with the necessary support, services and infrastructure that are required for agricultural viability.
7. Residents of the City of Richmond will be encouraged to learn more about agriculture in their city and to support locally grown agricultural products.
8. Effective and positive communication with the general public and the agricultural sector will be a priority.
9. Decision-making will be coordinated in a consultative manner and will consider all potential impacts on agricultural viability.
10. A sustainable environment will be maintained to provide quality air, water, and land which supports and complements farming.

3. City-Wide Management Plan for Viable Agriculture

The City-Wide Management Plan for Viable Agriculture identifies options and opportunities for enhancing the viability of agriculture.

The management plan contains the following strategies:

- The **Agricultural Decision Making Strategy** (Section 3.1) provides recommendations for ensuring that decisions made on a city-wide basis promote agricultural viability, consider the impacts on agriculture, and are made in a consultative manner;
- The **Services and Infrastructure Strategy** (Section 3.2) provides recommendations to meet the needs of the agricultural sector with respect to water, drainage, sewerage and transportation management;
- The **City Policies and Bylaws Strategy** (Section 3.3) provides recommendations to ensure that City policies and bylaws support the agricultural sector and the viability of the industry, without imposing unnecessary restrictions;
- The **Non-Farm Uses and Parks and Recreation Strategy** (Section 3.4) provides mechanisms to ensure that the dominant use of the ALR in Richmond is viable and sustainable agriculture;
- The **Agricultural Edge Strategy** (Section 3.5) contains recommendations for planning along rural-urban edges to minimize, and address, potential conflicts between farm and non-farm neighbours;
- The **Strategy for Agriculture With Respect to the Environment and Environmentally Sensitive Areas** (Section 3.6) encourages environmental management on, and adjacent to, agricultural land that does not impact negatively on normal farm practices;
- The **Public Education and Awareness Strategy** (Section 3.7) provides opportunities for the general public to better understand the agricultural industry in their community;
- The **Economic Growth and Diversification Strategy** (Section 3.8) supports economic growth and diversification in the agricultural industry to allow it to remain competitive and responsive to changing times.

3.1 Agricultural Decision-Making Strategy

3.1.1 Introduction

Because the general population is mostly removed from direct experience with agriculture and the farm population is declining relative to the growing urban sector, agricultural interests are often inadequately represented in the City’s decision-making processes.

A major goal of the AVS is to provide a framework to ensure that future decision-making recognizes agricultural interests.

It is also critical that farmers be provided with a practical mechanism to promptly access information about the City bylaws, operations, and services that may be necessary to make farm management decisions.

3.1.2 Objectives

To develop and support initiatives which:

- Establish a direct link between Council and the agricultural sector;
- Ensure that decision-making takes place in consultation with the agricultural sector;
- Provide opportunities for improved communication between the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors on agricultural issues;
- Ensure that decisions about agriculture are made using the most current information available;
- Ensure that the impacts on agriculture of all decisions are adequately understood and taken into consideration.

3.1.3 Recommendations

1. Establish a City Agricultural Advisory Committee of Council (AAC).

- a) Have the AAC play the key advisory role in implementing the AVS;
- b) Require all City departments to seek input from the AAC when major departmental initiatives are proposed as part of their planning strategy, where agriculture is affected;
- c) Committee Membership:
 - i) Voting Members:

The Committee shall consist of nine (9) voting members appointed by Council, including:

- Five (5) “farming representatives” chosen from nominations by the Richmond Farmers Institute. A “farming representative” is defined as a farmer who derives a majority of his/her income from farming;
- Two (2) farming representatives from the general agricultural community (nursery, livestock, equestrian, greenhouses, crops, etc.);
- One (1) representative from the Advisory Committee on the Environment; and
- One (1) representative from the community at large.

ii) Committee Advisors (Non-voting Members):

The Committee shall also consist of the following advisors including:

- A City Councillor Agricultural Liaison (CAL);
 - A representative from BCMAFF;
 - A representative from the ALC;
 - A staff member from the Engineering/Public Works Department(s);
 - A staff member from the Urban Development Division (Staff Agricultural Liaison);
 - A staff member from the RCMP; and
 - Others as necessary.
2. Maintain the existing ALR boundary and ALR land base in Richmond, and do not support a change to the ALR boundary or a loss of ALR land unless:
 - there is a substantial net benefit to agriculture; and
 - the agricultural stakeholders are fully consulted.
 3. Designate various City Staff as Agricultural Liaisons (SALs), with the Policy Planning Department Liaison as the lead SAL to ensure coordination.
 - a) Have the CAL/SALs play a key support role in the implementation of the AVS and supporting the AAC;
 - b) Publicize the SALs as people to assist the agricultural sector to access information about City bylaws, operations, and services, address agricultural issues and concerns, and contribute to various agricultural projects;
 - c) Develop a flow chart to facilitate access to information required by the agricultural sector. This flow chart may include information about policies and bylaws, processes involved for planning and development approvals, growth and diversification information, etc.
 4. Introduce an Agricultural Impact Assessment process (AIA).
 - a) Use the AIA for all proposed projects involving land use changes or development:
 - i) Within the ALR;
 - ii) Adjacent to the ALR;
 - iii) Outside the ALR for projects which may have an impact on agriculture, such as transportation corridors, recreational trails, new residential developments, and others.
 - b) Develop criteria, (e.g. drainage/irrigation implications, air quality, noise, transportation and traffic, and others), for the AIA in conjunction with BCMAFF, the ALC, the proposed AAC (see Recommendation 1), and others as appropriate.
 5. Maintain an Agricultural Data System.
 - a) Update and expand the scope of the Agricultural Profile, the Agricultural Land Use Inventory, and the Geographic Information System every three years or sooner to maintain current information about the agricultural sector;

- b) Continue to engage in innovative research partnerships with groups such as Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (BCMAFF), Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), University of British Columbia (UBC), Simon Fraser University (SFU) and others to determine agricultural trends in Richmond;
- c) Monitor changes in the agricultural sector to determine issues of concern and changes in overall viability, using the following possible indicators:
 - i) Indicators which track land use and land availability:
 - Hectares (or acres) of ALR land in Richmond;
 - Hectares (or acres) of ALR land which is Farm Class;
 - Hectares (or acres) of ALR land available for sale or lease.
 - ii) Indicators which track farm viability and the overall health of the agricultural sector:
 - Annual number of applications, approvals and rejections for exclusion of land from the ALR;
 - Annual number of applications, approvals and rejections for non-farm use and subdivision in the ALR;
 - Net Returns from Agriculture;
 - Economic Diversity Index.
- d) Integrate the data into ongoing City operations and decision making wherever possible.

3.2 Services and Infrastructure Strategy

3.2.1 Introduction

The service and infrastructure issues related to improving agriculture include those connected to drainage, irrigation, flood risks, and transportation.

3.2.2 Objectives

To develop and support initiatives which:

- Provide farmers with the necessary support, services and infrastructure required for agricultural viability;
- Ensure that drainage improvements are made for the ALR, in order of priority, based on discussion with the AAC;
- Ensure that servicing and infrastructure projects do not interfere with normal farm practices;
- Ensure that servicing and infrastructure projects are delivered according to specified performance standards, based on discussion with the AAC;
- Ensure that farm vehicles can adequately move between agricultural areas.
- Ensure that drainage, servicing and infrastructure changes are considered in a holistic and comprehensive manner so that the quality of air, land and water is maintained for agricultural viability.

3.2.3 Drainage and Irrigation

Richmond soils do not drain easily and much of the Island is prone to periodic flooding. Adequate drainage is essential to agricultural viability. The City has begun to develop a master drainage plan as a component of the City's Capital Program, and now has a four-year schedule in place to model the water, sewer, drainage and road infrastructure. Agricultural drainage and irrigation systems will be given priority in the modeling schedule.

Once the master drainage plan is in place, solutions can be developed for improving the drainage of agricultural areas that were not covered by the Federal Government's Agricultural Regional Development Subsidiary Agreement (ARDSA) funding program.

Current ditch cleaning also occurs on a four-year cycle. City staff have demonstrated a willingness to address both drainage and ditch-cleaning issues that may arise independently from the regular four-year cycle.

Despite the need for adequate drainage, in the summer months many farms require irrigation. The City serves the irrigation needs of the agricultural sector through much of the same infrastructure it uses for general drainage.

A storm drainage map is shown in Figure 2.

3.2.4 Flood Risks

The primary agent of flooding is the annual swelling of the Fraser River in the spring. Flooding may also be caused by seasonal high tides¹⁰. Richmond is currently surrounded by an unbroken dyke system, much of which is City-maintained. The dykes have been built to a standard designed to handle a tide level expected to be equaled or exceeded once in 200 years, on average. This level of protection may not be sufficient.

During the development of this AVS, considerable discussion was held on the subject of a proposed mid-Island dyke along No. 8 Road. The mid-Island dyke was identified as an option to reduce the potential risk of flooding to the western portion of the City¹¹. The building of the mid-Island dyke would have the following significant impacts on eastern agricultural land and existing agricultural operations:

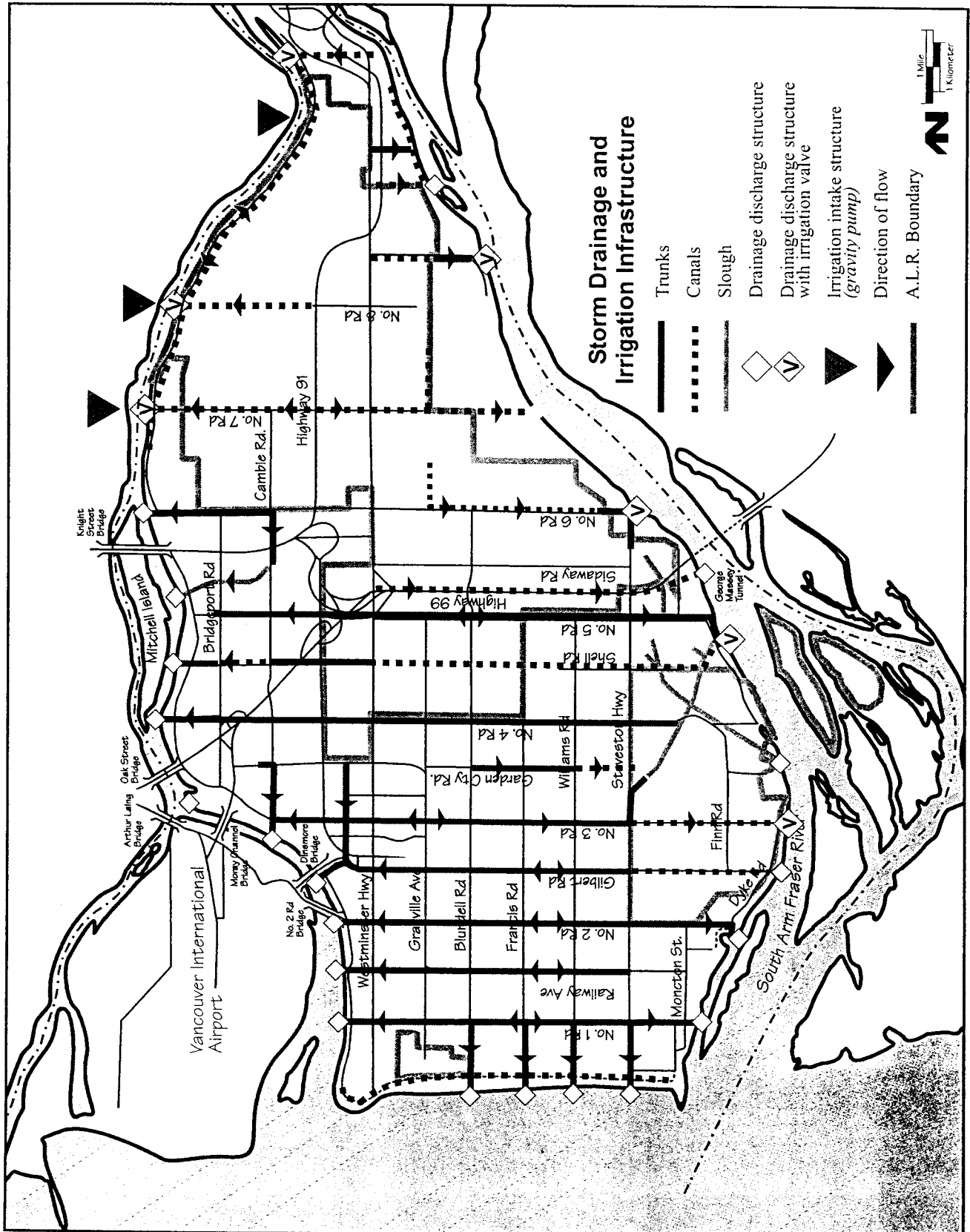
- The dyke would remove land from agricultural production;
- The dyke will bring increased traffic which would interfere with farm traffic and provide further opportunities for vandalism, trespassing, and theft;
- The dyke would make it difficult for farmers to move between parcels where farmers farm on both sides of No. 8 Road;
- The dyke would interfere with the present drainage/pumping system and may cause the adjacent land to rise because of compaction resulting from dyke construction;
- The dyke would have to be built on organic soils requiring extensive amounts of fill and resulting in a wider dyke than if built on mineral soil.

There are alternate ways to address this flood risk, such as improving dyking around the eastern tip of Richmond.

¹⁰ Profile, p. 10.

¹¹ Technical Report Floodplain Management Study, Hay and Company Consultants Inc., November 1989.

Figure 2 - Storm Drainage Map



3.2.5 Transportation

Other servicing and infrastructure issues relate to transportation corridors. Farmers who must move farm equipment and other vehicles between and among different agricultural areas in the City must use City roads. This use may result in increased travel time for farmers because non-farm vehicles also use the roads a great deal. Road use by non-farm vehicles, joined with farm vehicle use, causes frustration for both the agricultural and non-agricultural communities.

3.2.6 Recommendations

6. Encourage regular communication among the agricultural sector and the City, provincial and federal servicing and infrastructure departments by formalizing the City Staff-Farmer Drainage Committee and by establishing terms of reference and involving the agricultural sector, Engineering and Public Works Division, and others as appropriate (e.g. Policy Planning, Environmental Programs, Transportation, etc.).
7. Support the City’s Master Drainage Plan.
 - a) Identify and ensure that drainage improvements to the ALR occur in order of priority and according to ARDSA performance standards;
 - b) Ensure that drainage improvements are considered in a comprehensive manner in consultation with the agricultural community and relevant City departments;
 - c) Encourage sufficient notification to the agricultural sector of ditch-cleaning plans in order to achieve beneficial, effective and timely agricultural drainage;
 - d) Encourage the agricultural sector to cooperate with ditch-cleaning practices by providing appropriate right-of-ways;
 - e) Encourage the agricultural sector to support ditch-sidecasting activity where it does not interfere with normal farm practices and/or agricultural capability of the soils;
 - f) Require the proposed AIA (see Recommendation 4) be completed for all servicing and infrastructure projects.
8. Request the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection to investigate the viability of rebuilding and upgrading the perimeter dyke around the eastern tip of Richmond along the North Arm of the Fraser River, instead of the proposed mid-Island dyke.
9. Review and designate “farm travel” routes for travel between agricultural areas:
 - a) Use recognizable signage to endorse these routes for farm vehicles;
 - b) Review the wording of “Respect Slow Moving Farm Vehicles” signs and consider “Yield To Farm Vehicles”;
 - c) Develop new road design guidelines to ensure that the outermost lane and shoulder in combination have a minimum of 4.3 meters (14 feet) in lateral clearance to accommodate the width of farm vehicles;
 - d) Review options to minimize the impact of farm traffic on non-farm traffic by providing safe turn-offs for farm vehicles on identified agricultural corridors carrying high volumes of traffic.

10. Review Official Community Plan Transportation Policy 4(d)¹² which states "Restrict the development of new major roads in the ALR to avoid jeopardizing farm viability, except for service roads intended to serve adjacent industrial land" to:
- a) Consider removal of the phrase "except for service roads intended to serve adjacent industrial land" to limit future major road development on ALR land that does not serve the viability of agriculture;
 - b) Ensure that a "least impact" policy exists to protect farmers from the impacts of possible transportation corridors through the ALR by:
 - i) Requiring the proposed AIA (see Recommendation 4) be completed for new road projects and that appropriate steps be taken to mitigate potential conflicts;
 - ii) Ensuring that whenever potential negative impacts for agriculture may occur, that adequate compensation and/or viable alternatives are available and fully explored;
 - iii) Placing emphasis on positive benefits of transportation initiatives for farm operations (e.g. improved drainage and access).

¹² OCP, p. 61.

3.3 City Policies and Bylaws Strategy

3.3.1 Introduction

Critical to the development of the AVS is the need to ensure that City policies and bylaws conform to the 2021 AVS vision, guiding principles and objectives. This will be an ongoing challenge for the City because there are often conflicting land use issues that arise. This issue is further made difficult because few people are involved directly with the agricultural sector when compared to the city population as a whole.

Although policies and bylaws can support agricultural viability, the emphasis on communication and dialogue to resolve issues and conflicts is essential for ongoing harmony between the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.

There are numerous examples where bylaws no longer apply, or applicable bylaws are in place but enforcement is difficult or impractical.

3.3.2 Objectives

To develop and support initiatives which:

- Minimize non-farm use in the ALR;
- Minimize subdivision in the ALR;
- Emphasize communication, dialogue and co-operation over legislation and the enforcement of bylaws;
- Monitor City policies and bylaws to ensure that they support agricultural viability;
- Monitor City policies and bylaws to ensure that they conform to the Farm Practices Protection Act (FPPA);
- Emphasize a cooperative and partnership approach in avoiding and addressing nuisance complaints (e.g. spraying, burning, noise, etc.);
- Provide farmers with information about policies and bylaws related to agriculture.

3.3.3 Recommendations

11. Ensure that all proposed City policies and bylaws relating to the agricultural sector and ALR encourage agricultural viability:
 - a) Refer proposed policies and bylaws to the proposed AAC (see Recommendation 1) for comment prior to their adoption;
 - b) Ensure that policies and bylaws, prior to adoption, are subject to the Agricultural Impact Assessment (see Recommendation 4) where appropriate.
12. Ensure that new City bylaws related to agriculture and the ALR are developed with regard to existing bylaws to determine whether changes in enforcement would solve the identified problems.

13. Review Zoning Bylaw 5300 in consultation with the public and prepare information, options and recommendations to improve its effectiveness in supporting agricultural viability. This review includes the following items and other actions not yet identified:
 - a) Review the current list of uses permitted in the AG1 zone and update it to reflect changes in Provincial legislation and the objectives of achieving agricultural viability;
 - b) Review the AG1 zoning regulations for residential uses on farms and for non-farm residences in the ALR to determine how to better achieve agricultural viability;
 - c) Review the non-agricultural uses currently permitted in the AG1 zone to better achieve agricultural viability;
 - d) Review how to better manage building materials, storage and other accessory farm uses;
 - e) Review the current policy on the storage of farm equipment/vehicles related to the farm operation as a principal use (the storage of farm equipment/vehicles is currently an accessory use);
 - f) Review all minimum and maximum property and building setbacks for residences in the ALR to minimize conflicts with adjacent uses.
14. Review the roadside stand regulations in Business Regulation Bylaw 7148 and prepare information, options, and recommendations to improve their effectiveness and achieve agricultural viability.
15. Review existing bylaws, regulations, guidelines and associated operational procedures to ensure that they conform to the FPPA, the Guide for Bylaw Development In Farming Areas and the Local Government Act.
16. Develop an information package for farmers about City agricultural policies and bylaws, and make this package available to the RFI and place it on the City website.
17. Encourage a cooperative and partnership approach to avoid and address nuisance complaints (e.g. spraying, noise, odour, dust, pesticide application, burning, etc.)

3.4 Non-Farm Uses and Parks and Recreation Strategy

3.4.1 Introduction

Despite land being within the ALR, farming may not occur on it. However, farming is the priority use for ALR land and all non-farm uses must be carefully reviewed and considered for their impacts on agriculture and their ability to contribute net benefits to enhance agriculture. It is important that the entire community understand that the agricultural area is a “working farm” landscape.

In Richmond, nearly 40% of the land in the ALR is not used for farming purposes.¹³

Some of the current non-farm uses of ALR land in Richmond include:

- Roads that bring traffic and encourage residential developments;
- Non-farm residential dwellings that remove land from agricultural production and can result in more rural-urban conflicts;
- Filling organic soils for non-agricultural purposes. Fill material is excavated off-site during construction projects. Due to its many origins, fill is variable in terms of its particle size distribution and rock content. Fill material reduces the agricultural potential of land because it has a much lower capability for crop production than the native organic soils. Filled land requires rehabilitation before it can be used for agricultural production. Fill also raises the water table of the surrounding lands, which negatively impacts agricultural production;
- Golf courses and driving ranges. Although golf courses and driving ranges are no longer an acceptable use for ALR land, there are nine such uses currently in place in Richmond’s ALR;
- Parks and recreational trails. The ALR is an especially attractive area for recreational uses due to the expansive green space and unique habitat;
- Recreational equestrian activities. Because no designated trails currently exist, equestrian activities take place on farm roads and in fields, and interfere with normal farm practices;
- Churches and schools in the “Community Institutional District” that have resulted in less land available for agricultural production (see Section 4.3 - McLennan 1).

Some non-farm uses of the ALR may support agriculture, such as farm access roads, farmhouses, and buildings that are accessory uses to farm uses. Also, the regional transportation infrastructure allows farmers to get their agricultural products to market, and provides efficient access for consumers who may purchase farm products directly from the farm gate.

Many of the uses noted above also require an application to the ALC for non-farm use approval.

3.4.2 Objectives

To develop and support initiatives which:

- Ensure that farming is the primary use of ALR land;
- Ensure all existing and any proposed non-farm uses of ALR land support agricultural viability and do not interfere with normal farm practices;
- Direct proposed non-farm uses of ALR land to non-ALR land wherever possible;
- Ensure that any non-farm uses of ALR land occur in designated and/or minimal impact areas and with minimal negative impacts on farming;

¹³ Profile, p. 33.

- Minimize subdivision;
- Ensure that City policies related to parks, transportation, and others support overall agricultural viability.

3.4.3 Recommendations

18. It is recommended that the proposed AAC (see Recommendation 1) review the following non-farm uses of ALR land and prepare information, options and recommendations. This review includes examining the following items and other actions not yet identified:
- a) Review the feasibility of amalgamating smaller lots to larger ones wherever possible;
 - b) Restrict the upgrading of existing roads and development of new roads unless there is a direct or net benefit to farming;
 - c) Discourage the use of fill on organic soils, except for the following agricultural purposes:
 - i) When required to ensure a solid foundation for a farm residence or other structure related to the agricultural operation;
 - ii) To provide a road base for access which benefits agriculture.
 - d) Limit recreational uses of ALR land to:
 - i) Encourage dyke and recreational trails at the perimeter of the ALR;
 - ii) Work with the agricultural community, equestrian community and recreational community to ensure that recreational uses adjacent to or within the ALR are compatible with farm uses and have a positive benefit to farming.
 - e) Ensure that a "least disruption to farmers" policy exists to protect farmers from the impacts of recreational uses by:
 - i) Requiring the proposed AIA (see Recommendation 4) be completed for new recreational uses and that appropriate steps be taken to mitigate potential conflicts;
 - ii) Ensuring that whenever potential negative impacts for agriculture may occur, that adequate compensation and/or viable alternatives are available;
 - iii) Increasing the awareness among equestrian owners about riding on or near private property and public roads and trails, and the impact which horses and riders can have on agricultural land;
 - iv) Preparing over the long term and in partnership with others, agricultural edge plans for recreational uses, dykes and perimeter trails in and adjacent to the ALR;
 - v) Ensuring that suitable facilities (e.g. toilets and garbage cans) are provided to eliminate trespassing and littering on existing recreational trails;
 - vi) Ensuring that no financial costs are incurred by farmers due to recreational trails or activities;
 - vii) Investigating the feasibility of developing an insurance policy and a 'save harmless' policy which would protect farmers from liability and property damage as a result of non-agricultural activities.

3.5 Agricultural Edge Strategy

3.5.1 Introduction

The rural-urban edge is often identified as an area of conflict that may create an overall negative impact on farming.

An agricultural edge plan, tailored to individual rural-urban edges, can be an important tool for mitigating potential and existing conflicts and for maintaining the stability of the agricultural edge. It is important that the agricultural edge plan be tailored to specific situations, and take into consideration the type of conflict or potential conflict, the type of agriculture, the topography and existing land uses.

It must also be noted that although the agricultural edge has the potential for many conflicts, a positive side effect for agriculture may be better access to urban markets¹⁴. Pilot projects involving less intensive agricultural activities (e.g. small lot agriculture, U-pick operations, farm direct marketing, agri-tourism, organic and ecological farming, and allotment gardens) may identify useful applications along an agricultural edge.

Not all rural-urban edges have the same problems.

- *Common complaints from urban residents relate to noises, smells, spraying, and the frustrations caused by slow-moving farm vehicles;*
- *Common complaints from farmers relate to vandalism, theft, damaged equipment, trespassing, and water run-off from adjacent urban development.*

3.5.2 Buffers

A common tool for agricultural edge planning is the buffer. Buffering is currently required by the City for new developments adjacent to the ALR. A buffer is defined as an area of land separating adjacent land uses and managed for the purpose of mitigating specific impacts of one use (e.g. noise, theft, spraying, trespassing, dust) on another use. The land separating the adjacent land uses may be left empty, or in many cases may include buffer elements such as:

- Fences;
- Vegetative or landscaped buffers (trees, hedging, etc.).

While buffers can work well in areas where a new development is being considered, a buffer may not always be a practical solution. Often the only land available for a buffer is on the agricultural side. Historically, limited consideration has been given to where a buffer should be located or who should fund it. Farmers, subjected to negative reactions to their farm practices from urban residents, have often taken the initiative to install buffers.

¹⁴ “Agriculture and Innovation in the Urban Fringe: The Case of Organic Farming in Quebec, Canada”, *Journal of Economic and Social Geography*, volume 90, number 3, 1999, pp. 320-328.

3.5.3 Objectives

To develop and support initiatives which:

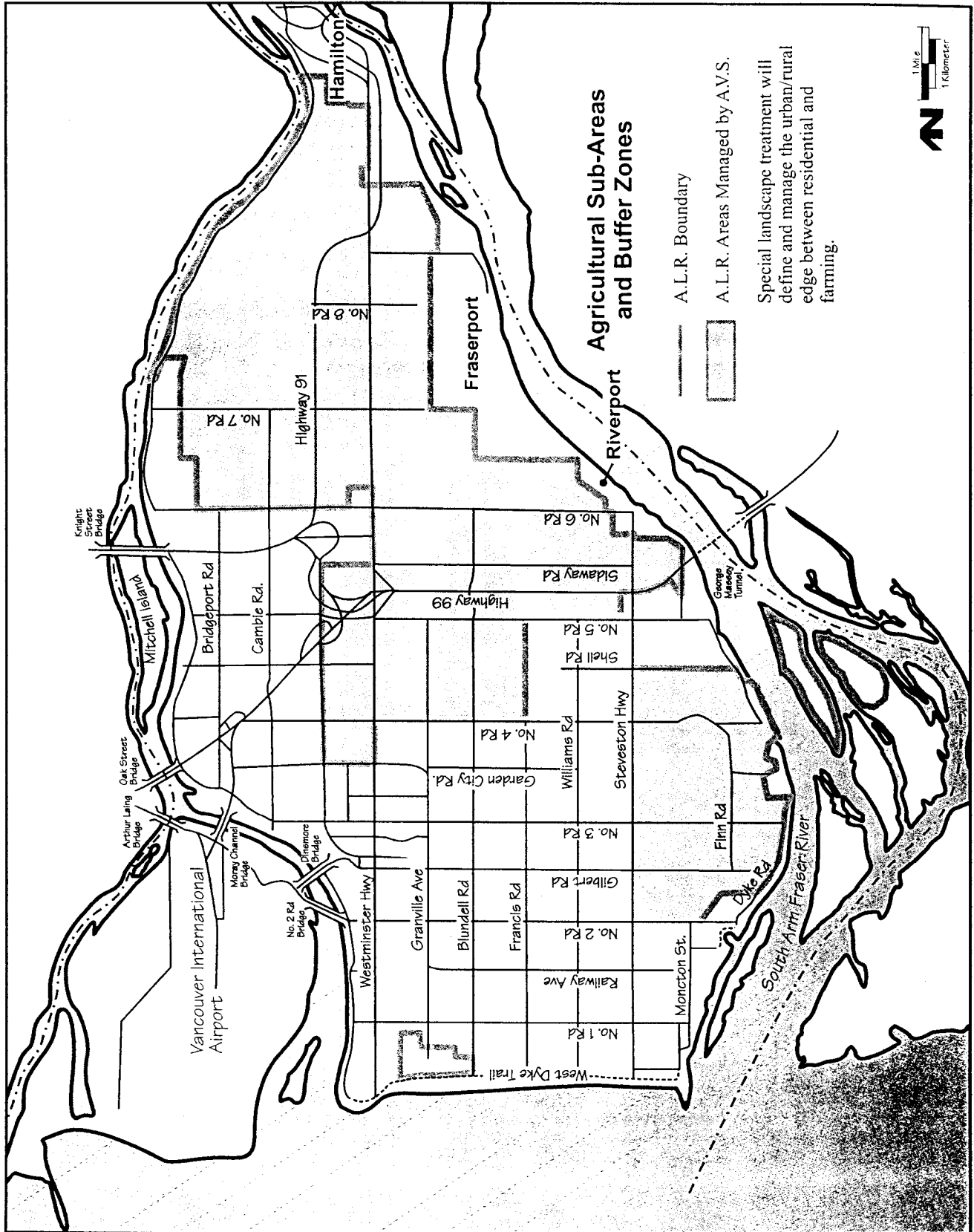
- Recognize the rural-urban edge as a special management area, requiring special farm management and urban development practices and specific agricultural edge plans with specific design requirements;
- Mitigate and/or prevent conflicts between rural and urban land uses;
- Reinforce the integrity and stability of the ALR boundary;
- Ensure that land is not removed from agricultural production in order to accommodate a buffer or any other potential element of an agricultural edge plan;
- Recognize that it is preferable to have compatible land uses (e.g. industrial) adjacent to agricultural land rather than incompatible uses (e.g. residential, schools, etc.);
- Provide residents and developers who live along an agricultural edge with information about agricultural activity in their area;
- Ensure consultation with landowners on both sides of the agricultural edge to avoid and mitigate urban-rural conflicts.

3.5.4 Recommendations

19. Recognize the following areas for agricultural edge planning (see Figure 3):
 - a) The west and north edges of Gilmore;
 - b) The west edge of McLennan 2;
 - c) Behind the outer ring of houses in McLennan 2;
 - d) Shell Road Trail;
 - e) Behind the assembly uses on No. 5 Road;
 - f) North edge of Fraserport Industrial Lands.
20. Develop comprehensive agricultural edge plans for areas, including:
 - a) An inventory of existing and potential uses and conflicts;
 - b) A site-specific management plan with appropriate design guidelines;
 - c) A proposed AIA (see Recommendation 4);
 - d) Consultation with the ALC, BCMAFF, the proposed AAC (see Recommendation 1), and review of relevant resources such as the ALC report "Landscaped Buffer Specifications";
 - e) Consultation with landowners on both sides of the agricultural edge;
 - f) An appropriate time-frame for implementation;
 - g) Mediation to mitigate any conflicts while an agricultural edge plan is being developed, or where buffering is not in place.

21. For new development adjacent to the ALR:
 - a) Require the preparation of an agricultural edge plan, including buffering on the urban side, at the expense of the developer; and
 - b) Require the registration of restrictive covenants, where possible. The intent of the covenant would be to:
 - i) Inform prospective buyers of residential properties of the occurrence of normal farm practices on adjacent farmland (e.g. spraying, noise, odours, dust, pesticide application, burning, etc.); and
 - ii) Minimize urban-rural conflicts.
22. Direct compatible land uses (e.g. industrial) to land adjacent to the ALR in lieu of incompatible uses (e.g. residential, schools), wherever possible to avoid conflicts.
23. Provide the materials developed for the Public Education and Awareness Strategy (Recommendation 30 a) to residents along an agricultural edge to inform them about agriculture in their area.

Figure 3 - Buffer Map



3.6 A Strategy for Agriculture With Respect to the Environment and Environmentally Sensitive Areas

3.6.1 Introduction

Agriculture and adjacent urban development require a quality environment (e.g. good water and soils, etc.). The measures necessary to sustain land, water and air will depend on the crop, livestock commodity, the location of an operation and current and future production practices. A healthy sustainable environmental resource base will support healthy agricultural production and a healthy economy.

Sensitive areas in the ALR (e.g. certain natural areas, certain watercourses), however, present both challenges and opportunities to farmers.

3.6.2 Environmental Guidelines and Requirements for Agriculture

To protect valuable land, water and air resources, the agricultural industry in cooperation with government agencies have launched several initiatives over the last decade including: commodity specific environmental guidelines, the adoption of best agricultural management practices, the development of integrated pest management procedures, and the Partnership Committee on Agriculture and the Environment (i.e. a Federal-Provincial initiative which supports agricultural/environmental enhancements).

Several federal and provincial laws are in place to protect land, water and air from pollution, including pollution from agricultural sources. For instance, The Code of Agricultural Practice for Waste Management under the Waste Management Act describes generally accepted practices for waste management on farms. The purpose of the Environmental Guidelines for agricultural producers in British Columbia is to further specify the requirements of the Code and other pieces of legislation and to provide suggestions for environmentally sound agricultural waste management practices.

Documents have been prepared in cooperation with agricultural producer organizations and government agencies, and are available for specific commodities (e.g. dairy, beef, poultry, horses, berries, field vegetable, greenhouse, nursery). Environmental issues addressed in these guidelines include: housing and waste handling systems, manure storage and application, nutrient management, preservation of soil and water resources and pesticide application.

3.6.3 Environmentally Sensitive Areas

In 1991, the City amended its OCP to define and map Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs). The ESA designation applies to all river shorelines, sloughs, marshes, wetlands, bogs, and major treed areas. Many of the ESAs in Richmond lie within or adjacent to the ALR (see Figure 4).

The City is reviewing its ESA policies and farmers wish to contribute to this process. The review is being undertaken to clarify the inventory of ESAs and their functions.

The current city policy on ESAs does not directly limit agricultural cultivation; farmers may clear areas of ESA for farming purposes. However, the City requires a Development Permit for the subdivision of a lot that contains ESA designation or for structures that encroach into an ESA. This may limit the location of new agricultural buildings, such as barns, on a property. The City's approach to issues involving farms and ESAs is to work on a case by case basis to mitigate the potential impacts to the extent possible without undue hardship to farmers.

3.6.4 Other Regulations

From time to time, a senior level of government may introduce legislative changes that impact the way in which farmlands are managed. As new initiatives are brought forward, the City and farming community are willing to participate in a consultative process to provide input into new legislation or initiatives, in a way that addresses the unique characteristics and conditions of Richmond.

3.6.5 Issues

The presence of ESAs in and adjacent to the ALR has both advantages and disadvantages for farmers.

On the one hand, ESAs offer the following benefits:

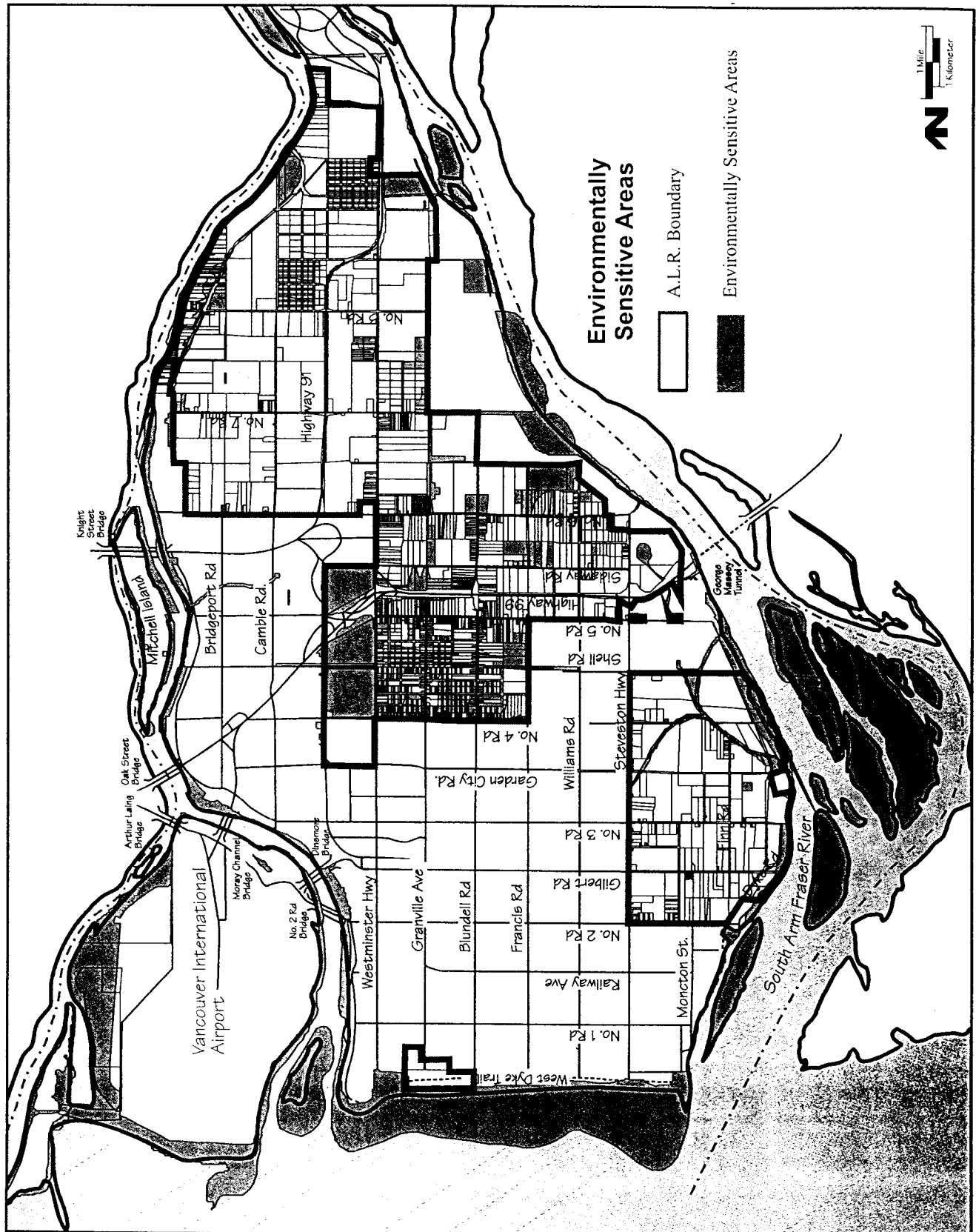
- if located along an urban-rural boundary, ESAs function as natural buffers between agricultural and non-agricultural uses to reduce conflicts.
- along watercourses, the vegetation of ESAs help to filter pollution from all sources.
- may support insects that help to pollinate crops.

However, farmers are concerned that the existence of ESAs adjacent to or within the Agricultural Land Reserve and the related government policies may have an impact on the economic viability of farm operations. The presence of ESAs in and adjacent to agricultural lands raises several land use, servicing and environmental issues for farmers:

- policies regarding drainage and irrigation maintenance in or adjacent to ESAs may create difficulties (e.g. timing, extra costs, conditions, permit refusals, etc.) for farmers to achieve the level of drainage required to efficiently produce crops.
- restrictions or conditions for ESAs imposed on farmers (e.g. land clearing, ditch maintenance) could interfere with normal farm activities.
- ESAs may be a source of weeds, which can potentially contaminate adjacent farm fields.
- ESAs with considerable tree cover provide habitat for bird species. While some species of birds can assist in natural pest control, other species (e.g. starlings, migratory waterfowl) can damage agricultural crops and perennial forage fields.
- ESAs may support insects that are harmful to crops.

The above concerns, when combined with other economic challenges facing agriculture, may hinder efforts to expand and diversify agricultural operations.

Figure 4 – Environmentally Sensitive Areas Map



3.6.6 Objectives

To develop and support initiatives which:

- Allow ESAs and normal farm activities to co-exist to achieve agricultural viability and environmental sustainability.
- Improve communications among the farming community, local and senior governments to:
 - Provide farmers with information about legislation and initiatives that may impact farming practices;
 - Keep all levels of government informed of the farmers' interests, concerns and suggestions.
- Encourage farmers to adopt best management practices to maintain high air, land and water quality.
- Encourage consultation with farmers and consideration of individual circumstances.
- Develop mitigative strategies which address the impact of wildlife on agriculture.

3.6.7 Recommendations

24. The Agricultural Advisory Committee, farming community, City staff and other stakeholders shall work together to study, analyze, form options and strategies to address the following issues of concern around ESAs and the environment, as well as other issues that may arise that are of interest to the farming community:
 - land use
 - drainage, irrigation and ditch maintenance
 - land clearing
 - weed control
 - crop loss due to wildlife and birds
25. Ensure that the management strategies from 24) above allow for "least impact" on agricultural viability and whenever agricultural viability may be impacted, ensure that adequate compensation and/or viable alternatives are available.
26. Review City management policies and bylaws to:
 - a) assess the implications for farming
 - b) work towards consistency and compatibility (where not in conflict with other legislation) with the provisions of the Farm Practices Protection Act and the Guide to Bylaw Development in Farming Areas.
27. Consult with the Agricultural Advisory Committee and the farm community (together with the Advisory Committee on the Environment and other stakeholders) in the review of existing ESAs in the ALR to:
 - a) Refine and clarify the inventory and functions of the existing ESAs.
 - b) Assess the interaction between agriculture and ESAs.
28. Provide information to all farmers related to best management practices and encourage them to adopt beneficial environmental guidelines.
29. Review the work of the Partnership Committee on Agriculture and the Environment and incorporate relevant aspects of their work into farm operations and City policies.

3.7 Public Education and Awareness Strategy

3.7.1 Introduction

While the urban population has grown significantly to its current level of 166,000, the farm population has been steadily declining. Currently in Richmond, there are slightly more than 200 farmers. Nevertheless, this small percentage of people are working on a large proportion of Richmond’s land base (38% of land is within the ALR) and generating over \$56 million in revenues each year¹⁵.

The results of the increase in urban population relative to the farming population are:

- Less awareness among the general population for farming, and its importance as an economic resource, a heritage asset and its relevance to the local community;
- Less understanding of normal farm practices;
- People becoming disconnected from the agricultural process that produces much of their food;
- The “political voice” of farmers declining dramatically. Farmers’ issues may not be given the same weight as urban issues.¹⁶

Many people in Richmond, other areas of the Lower Mainland, and British Columbia in general, believe there is a strong need to raise the awareness of agriculture’s role within the non-agricultural sector. A public that understands the role of agriculture, and is aware of the needs of the industry, will be in a better position to appreciate and support the many contributions of the agricultural sector.

3.7.2 Objectives

To develop and support initiatives which:

- Encourage residents to learn more about agriculture in Richmond and to support locally-grown agricultural products;
- Provide opportunities for communication and consultation between the farm and non-farm communities;
- Ensure that residents who live within, or adjacent to, the ALR are aware of normal farm practices and the FPPA;
- Encourage farmers to continue practicing positive public relations.

¹⁵ Profile, p. 57.

¹⁶ Planning for Agriculture, p. 9-3.

3.7.3 Recommendations

30. Institute an information program to increase public awareness and commitment for agriculture, in consultation with the agricultural community, the Agriculture Awareness Coordinator (BC Agriculture Council), Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation, and others:
- a) Develop appropriate materials to share with all residents (e.g. publications, via the City website) to provide them with information about agricultural activity in their area, including:
 - i) The type of farming in the area;
 - ii) Examples of normal farm practices they may experience;
 - iii) A copy of the BCMAFF publication “The Countryside and You”;
 - iv) A list of appropriate people to direct questions and concerns, such as the proposed SAL (see Recommendation 3), ALC, BCMAFF, AAFC, and others;
 - v) A “Country User Code” to identify appropriate behaviour in agricultural areas.
 - b) Develop an agricultural signage program.
 - i) Place signs along roads used by farm vehicles, along recreational trails, and incorporate signs into agricultural edge planning;
 - ii) Ensure that signage focuses on “positive wording” as opposed to “directives”, such as the following examples:
 - In areas where farm vehicles may be traveling, “*Richmond farmers with slow moving vehicles use these roads too – support your local farm community*”;
 - Where vandalism and trespassing issues occur, “*This crop was planted by a member of your local farm community – please respect the farmer’s livelihood*”;
 - iii) Ensure that all signs are visibly similar, and incorporate the recommended “logo” or visual symbol (Recommendation 37 a).
 - c) Encourage the ALC to develop signs to indicate the location and extent of the ALR. An example may be “*You are now in the Agricultural Land Reserve. Please respect farmland.*”
 - d) Develop a brochure that celebrates the City’s agricultural tradition and history.¹⁷
 - i) In plans and programs, emphasize the relationship between the City’s corporate vision statement (see Section 2.5) and how agriculture helps achieve that vision;
 - ii) Prepare an agricultural calendar that shows key agricultural events in the area, harvest times, etc.
 - e) Encourage linkages and partnerships between the agricultural community and the media to facilitate public education and awareness;
 - f) Create an agricultural business profile to provide information on agriculture as a business opportunity;

¹⁷ PFA, p. 9-6.

- g) Develop an information package for farmers about agricultural policies and bylaws, heritage policies that support the preservation of buildings, lands and methods, and make this package available to the RFI and the public and place it on the City website (see Recommendation 16);
 - h) Explore the opportunities for holding a special event (e.g. Harvest Festival) or regular seasonal activity (e.g. summer weekend Farmer’s Market) to promote local produce and celebrate the City’s agricultural tradition and history.
31. Create opportunities for Council, City staff and others to tour the agricultural lands and learn about the role agriculture plays in the City. The proposed AAC (see Recommendation 1) may facilitate this activity.
 32. It is recommended that the proposed AAC (see Recommendation 1) review the option of introducing a Restrictive Covenant for properties within, and adjacent to, the ALR to address issues of conflict (e.g. noise, odours) related to agricultural uses. Example: Covenant used by City of Surrey for subdivisions bordering the ALR.
 33. Encourage existing farmers to continuously maintain their farm operations to prevent unsightly premises and project a positive public image for agriculture in Richmond.

3.8 Economic Growth and Diversification Strategy

3.8.1 Introduction

Without the ability to make an adequate return on their investment and labour, there will be no incentive for farmers to continue farming in Richmond. Efforts to increase profitability through growth and diversification will support the ongoing efforts of farmers to maintain viable operations.

The following factors influence economic growth of the agricultural industry:

- Inadequate infrastructure for drainage, transportation, etc. (see Section 3.2);
- Over-regulation and conflicting regulations. (See Section 3.3);
- Non-farm uses adjacent to agricultural operations (see Section 3.4);
- Non-farm uses in the ALR;
- Subdivision. Small parcels are less efficient to farm and can limit agricultural options;
- Cost of land. High land costs force farmers into leases;
- Speculation about the future of ALR land. Landowners who speculate for non-farm developments are more likely to lease land to farmers on a short-term basis. Leases that are less than three years in length inhibit a farmer's ability to make long-term agricultural management decisions;
- Absentee landlords. Productive land is kept out of agricultural use when landowners are not available to lease the land to farmers.

3.8.2 Diversification

One way for farmers to increase viability is to diversify their farm operations. Trends in agricultural diversification relate to:

- Expanding types of farming, such as farm markets;
- Innovative products for niche markets, such as herbs and goat milk;
- Certified organic and specialty products;
- Provision of an agricultural experience through agri-tourism.

Some specific examples for diversification are the following:

- Farm direct marketing;
- Farmers' markets;
- Agricultural niche and specialty services, especially those that provide convenient options for purchasing local products (e.g. home or office delivery);
- Community-supported agriculture, by having customers purchase food before it is grown;
- Value-added on-farm processing;
- Growing products for the diverse ethnic community;
- Niche and specialty products such as herbs, goat milk, or organically grown products;
- Consistent labeling of local products to link products with the area where they are grown;
- Linkages with support agencies and businesses, such as encouraging restaurants to utilize cuisine based on local products;
- Agri-tourism such as school tours, farm bed and breakfast locations;
- Crop diversification.

One option for finding new and innovative growth and diversification opportunities is the use of **pilot projects**. Pilot projects can demonstrate value, yet are small, easy to evaluate, and low in risk. Pilot projects, in cooperation with other partners such as the City, BCMAFF, and AAFC, may be effective ways for farmers to diversify their farm operations or try larger-scale initiatives.

3.8.3 Objectives

To develop and support initiatives which:

- Encourage farmers to achieve long-term economic success through growth and diversification;
- Provide opportunities for the Richmond agricultural industry to become a place of agricultural innovation and excellence often using pilot projects;
- Assist farmers to lower production costs where possible (e.g. improve drainage);
- Keep farmers up-to-date and informed about new agricultural opportunities and options for growth and diversification;
- Increase the demand for locally-grown agricultural products;
- Encourage agricultural support services and industry to locate in Richmond;
- Maximize the agricultural land available for agricultural production.

3.8.4 Recommendations

34. Develop a strategy to encourage agricultural support services and social infrastructure (such as agricultural research, agricultural banking and financing, industrial technologies, agricultural marketing, specialized suppliers of agricultural materials and equipment) to locate in Richmond, in cooperation with the agricultural sector, Business Liaison and Development, BCMAFF, and others as appropriate.
35. Maximize the agricultural land available for agricultural uses:
 - a) Review the feasibility of amalgamating smaller lots to larger ones wherever possible. These parcels could then be sold as farmland or leased to farmers;
 - b) Request the Province to review the policies on non-resident land ownership in BC and in other jurisdictions to determine how land owned by non-residents may be more fully farmed;
 - c) Establish guidelines for parcel sizes suitable for farming, including options for smaller parcels of 2 acres or less;
 - d) Encourage longer-term lease opportunities for farmers:
 - i) Discourage non-farm uses of the ALR land (see Recommendation 18);
 - ii) Develop a City-based Agricultural Land Registry to assist farmers to find agricultural land available for leasing.
 - e) Explore the rezoning of selected non-ALR land (currently zoned for light industrial use) to “Light Industrial/Agricultural” to provide for the inclusion of greenhouses as a use and to encourage greenhouse development on non-ALR land wherever possible;
 - f) Encourage non-ALR “multiple-use” industrial buildings that will attract partnerships such as allowing greenhouse development on the tops of some industrial buildings as a possible pilot project.

- g) Review the costs and benefits of selling or leasing the City-owned nursery to local farmers in order to minimize City competition with the agricultural sector.
36. Encourage farmers to diversify their agricultural operations, by:
- a) Liaising with support agencies such as BCMAFF, AAFC, GVRD and the ALC to gather information and identify resources to clarify diversification opportunities (e.g. new crop production and development, value-added production, etc.);
 - b) Encouraging partnerships between farmers and
 - i) Other farmers that haven't been historically involved with the RFI and the proposed AAC;
 - ii) Local businesses and industry, such as the hospitality sector, Chamber of Commerce, and others;
 - iii) City Departments and City agencies, such as Business Liaison and Development, Tourism Richmond, Chamber of Commerce, and others;
 - iv) Provincial and Federal ministries and agencies for projects which may make growth and diversification opportunities more easily attainable;
 - v) Others to carefully locate and manage allotment gardens (community gardens) on agricultural lands.
37. Develop a "Buy Local" marketing initiative to increase demand for locally grown agricultural products, in cooperation with Business Liaison and Development, Tourism Richmond, Chamber of Commerce, the RFI, and others.
- a) Develop a "Taste of Richmond" logo or symbol, to appear on all agricultural communications and signs, and which could also be used by growers to label their products;
 - b) Institute a weekly Farmers' Market in cooperating school yards or other City facilities to increase consumer access to locally grown agricultural products;
 - c) Support local growers by purchasing locally-grown landscape materials and food products for City use wherever possible;
 - d) Identify options to support access to farm direct markets along Steveston Highway where current traffic patterns discourage stopping at farms selling local products;
 - e) Develop a list of local agricultural products and when and where they are available, and circulate the list to local restaurants, ferries, schools and businesses to encourage linkages with Richmond agricultural producers;
38. Undertake a market study project to assist farmers to understand their local Richmond market, with respect to:
- a) Products desired by restaurants, and ethnic, specialty and niche products;
 - b) Expected quality and service features;
 - c) Expected product availability requirements.

39. Encourage new farmers to enter the agricultural sector by:
- a) Creating an agricultural business profile to provide information on agriculture as a business opportunity (see Recommendation 29 f);
 - b) Encouraging retiring farmers to apprentice new ones;
 - c) Investigating and publishing options for new farmers to obtain management skills training from local educational institutions and private trainers; .
 - d) Assisting local young people to find job opportunities in agriculture wherever possible, including co-operative education opportunities with area educational institutions such as Kwantlen University College, University of British Columbia, and area secondary schools.

City Owned Nursery

The City owns its own nursery in order to supply City properties with plants, trees and other vegetation. There is some concern among the agricultural sector that the City’s involvement in its own nursery is not the best way to support farming. It has been suggested that the City review other alternative approaches such as selling or leasing the nursery to local farmers.

40. Review the costs and benefits of selling or leasing the City-owned nursery to local farmers in order to minimize City competition with the agricultural sector.

4. Agricultural Nodal Management Plans

4.1 Introduction and Overview

Agricultural Nodal Management Plans serve to manage the resources and issues within specific areas of the ALR effectively, and in support of viable agriculture.

The Nodal Management Plans are designed to complement the City-Wide Management Plan for Viable Agriculture (see Section 3), by identifying key nodal issues and providing recommendations for the management of those issues. In many cases, reference is made to an earlier recommendation.

Nodal management plans are a way for the City to recognize that not all parts of Richmond's ALR are the same. Different areas require different plans to ensure the long-term goal of maintaining and enhancing the viability of agriculture.

More detailed Agricultural Nodal Management Plans for each node may need to be developed in the future, particularly for McLennan 2 and 3, to further address issues and concerns as they arise.

The nodes have been defined by:

- Soil type;
- Drainage;
- Existing land uses;
- Existing boundaries, such as Highways 91 and 99;
- Parcelization;
- Number of absentee landlords;
- Land-ownership patterns;
- Extent of rural-urban conflicts.

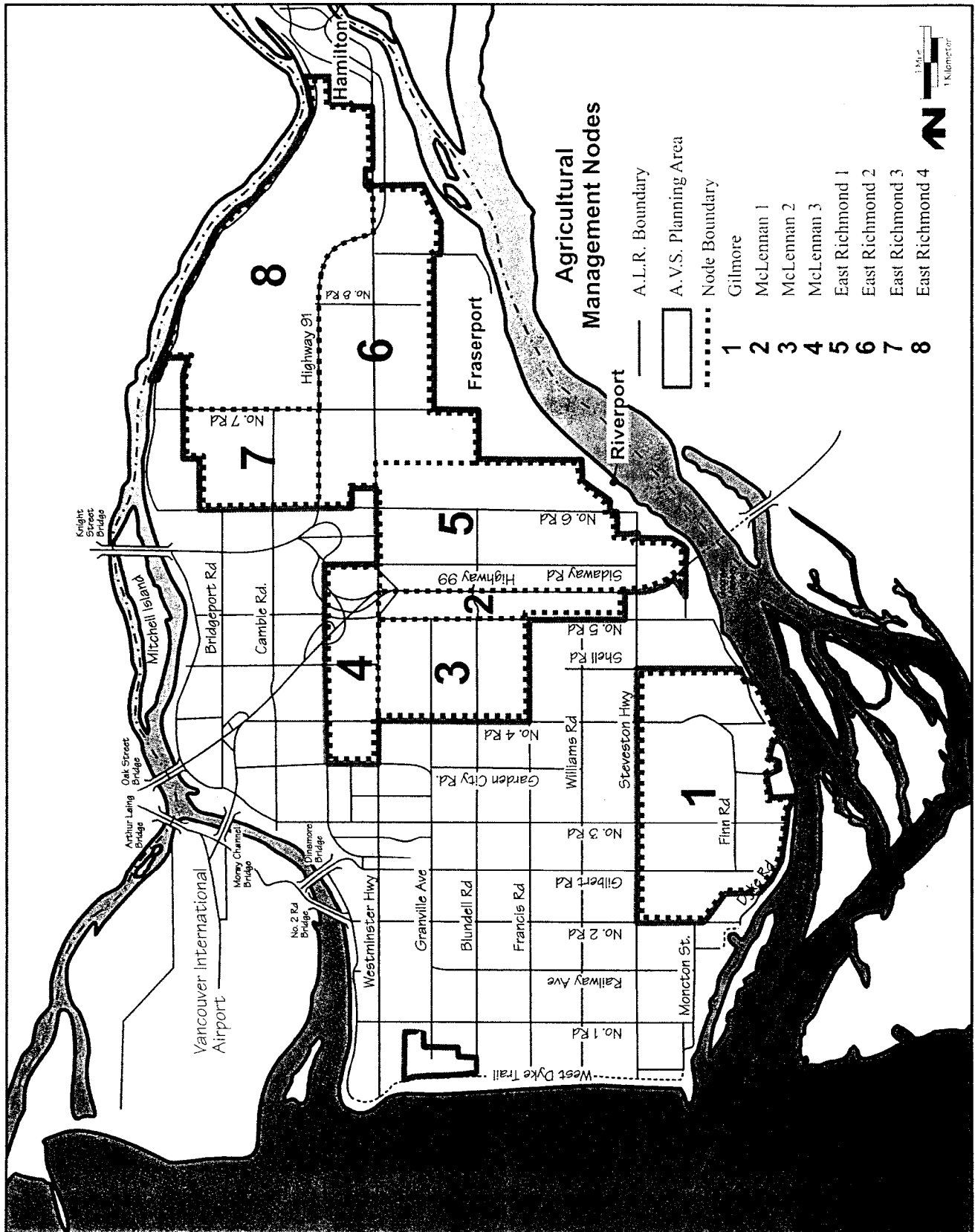
4.1.1 Objectives for the Nodal Management Plans

The intent of the proposed Nodal Management Plans is not to take land out of the ALR, but to develop and support initiatives which:

- Encourage agricultural viability considering unique nodal opportunities and constraints;
- Recognize and respond to node and site-specific issues and concerns;
- Ensure consistency among the Nodal Management Plans and the City-Wide Management Plan for Viable Agriculture.

Figure 5 shows the eight management nodes that have been identified. Where necessary, OCP, Area Plan and Zoning Bylaw amendments would be made to implement a Nodal Management Plan.

Figure 5 - Agricultural Management Nodes



4.2 Gilmore

4.2.1 Introduction

The Gilmore node includes some of Richmond's finest and most economically productive farmland. The Gilmore node is characterized by mineral soils which are productive and suitable for a wide range of crops. Currently, much of the Gilmore node is in intensive agricultural production with a wide variety of crops including mixed vegetables, forage, and some dairy production. There is very little parcelization which increases agricultural viability. Drainage is not as much of a problem in this area as it is in some of the other nodes.

4.2.2 Key Nodal Issues

Issues that must be addressed in this node:

- Non-farm uses such as a growing number of "country estate" style residences making less land available for agricultural use;
- An increasing level of recreational equestrian activity and trails which can interfere with normal farm practices, damage farm land, and generate waste;
- The proposed residential development in the London-Princess area along the southwestern rural-urban edge may cause problems for agricultural operators, due to potential increased traffic and more urban residents resulting in a higher possibility for nuisance complaints and trespassing, vandalism or theft;
- The proposed recreational trail along the southern boundary of Gilmore may result in an increase in trespassing, vandalism and theft of crops;
- Flooding of the northern end of Gilmore due to excess water from the urban area along the northern boundary;
- Speculation that ALR land may be developed for urban uses.

4.2.3 Recommendations

41. Discourage non-farm uses in the ALR land (see Recommendation 18);
42. Ensure that a "least impact" policy exists to protect farmers from the impacts of the proposed residential development in the London-Princess area:
 - a) Require a proposed AIA (see Recommendation 4) be completed and that appropriate steps be taken to mitigate potential conflicts;
 - b) Whenever potential negative impacts for agriculture may occur, ensure that adequate compensation and/or viable alternatives are available;
 - c) Place emphasis on the positive benefits to potential development initiatives for farm operations, e.g. improved drainage;
 - d) Require the development of an agricultural edge plan (see Recommendation 19), including buffering on the urban side of the edge;
 - e) Ensure that new landowners receive materials about agricultural activity in the area (see Recommendation 30).

43. Ensure that a “least impact” policy exists to protect farmers from the impacts of the proposed recreational trail along the southern boundary of Gilmore:
 - a) Require a proposed AIA (see Recommendation 4) be completed and that appropriate steps be taken to mitigate potential conflicts;
 - b) Whenever potential negative impacts for agriculture may occur, ensure that adequate compensation and/or viable alternatives are available;
 - c) Require that a recreation trail plan be prepared;
 - d) Require the development of an agricultural edge plan (see Recommendation 19), including buffering on the urban side of the edge;
 - e) Require that signs be posted along the trail to increase awareness for trail users about how their behaviors may relate to agricultural viability (see Recommendation 30).

44. Identify the specific problem areas for flooding from the urban areas and develop ways to reduce the impacts of flooding, in concert with the City’s current Engineering Capital Plan process and in consultation with other appropriate City Divisions, Departments and Sections and the agricultural community.

4.3 McLennan 1

4.3.1 Introduction

The McLennan 1 node is the ALR land between No. 5 Road and Highway 99, with the upper boundary of the node being Blundell Road. McLennan 1 is characterized by deep (more than 160 cm) organic soils, which are suitable for a wide range of crops, including cranberries, blueberries, vegetables, and annuals. The node also has a high water table. Currently, little agricultural production is taking place, but there are some grazing and nursery operations.

4.3.2 Key Nodal Issues

The major issues in McLennan 1 relate to the "Community Institutional" designation along the No. 5 Road corridor. This OCP land use designation, which came into effect in 1990, allows churches and other assembly uses on the westerly 110 meters of each parcel. Although the land use designation allows for only agricultural uses on the remaining eastern portion (the "backlands") of each parcel, it did not require that farming take place. In 1999 the ALC and the City partnered to review the policy and strategy for this district. Current policy under the Amended No. 5 Road Backlands Policy accepted by Council in March 2000 is more stringent because it requires a farm plan and bonding to proceed with the plan. Farming must occur before non-farm uses (e.g. assembly uses) will be approved.

Issues related to the "Community Institutional District" that must be addressed:

- The "backlands" are generally not in agricultural use (a total of 105.3 acres);
- The presence of the Community Institutional District has set a precedent for non-agricultural land use within the ALR, and this non-agricultural use is clearly visible to road traffic along Highway 99;
- The churches have resulted in an increase in traffic into the area which interferes with agricultural operations;
- Although the land has potential for agriculture, farmers are reluctant to farm the land because of speculation that more churches will be built. This also makes a long-term lease difficult to obtain;
- Existing and new fill introduced will disrupt the regional water table, and have a negative impact on the agricultural capability of adjacent land (see Section 3.4.1);
- The land requires some drainage improvements and landowners are reluctant to invest in drainage if farming is not required.

Issues unrelated to the Community Institutional District, which must be addressed:

- There are many small parcels, which are difficult to farm because of field inefficiencies, increased operating costs, intrusion of non-farm residences, and higher than normal land values;
- Parcels are owned by many different people. This makes it difficult to get a lease covering a land area large enough to farm;
- Some degradation of soils has occurred.

4.3.3 Recommendations

45. Mitigate the issues (Section 4.3.2) associated with the Community Institutional District:
 - a) Review the option of rezoning any land parcels which have not been sold for assembly or other uses to restrict the development of future assembly uses in this area and return land to agricultural production;
 - b) Develop an agricultural edge plan for the area, including potential vegetative buffering behind existing churches to clearly differentiate churches on agricultural land from agricultural uses;
 - c) Survey existing assembly properties to rectify any encroachment beyond the westerly 110 metres (360.9 ft.) of the property;
 - d) Continue to support incentives to encourage farming on the backlands.
46. Encourage farming in McLennan 1, with the understanding that the agricultural edge must be taken into consideration. Opportunities for farming in this node include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Tree farming;
 - Blueberries;
 - Vegetable production, e.g. potatoes, corn, cabbage;
 - Ornamental nursery;
 - Specialty vegetable crops;
 - Organic production;
 - Community or allotment gardens;
 - Hay production.
47. Maximize the agricultural land available for future agricultural uses (see Recommendation 35).

4.4 McLennan 2

4.4.1 Introduction

The McLennan 2 node is the ALR land between No. 4 Road and No. 5 Road, south of Westminster Highway and north of Francis Road. McLennan 2 is characterized by deep (more than 160 cm) organic soils, which are suitable for a wide range of crops, such as cranberries, blueberries, vegetables, and annuals. Much of the node currently used for blueberry production is very productive and this area is the City's main blueberry producing area. There are also several nurseries, greenhouses, and mixed vegetables. McLennan 2 has a high water table.

4.4.2 Key Nodal Issues

Issues that must be addressed in this node:

- Inadequate drainage of organic soils;
- Any fill introduced will disrupt the regional water table, and have a negative impact on the agricultural capability of adjacent land (see Section 3.4.1);
- Highly parcelized land being under-utilized for agricultural production;
- Small lot sizes are creating pressure for non-agricultural use;
- If existing road rights-of-way were opened and new roads were built, non-farm development may occur and future agricultural viability may be threatened;
- There are many absentee landlords and much of this land has been allowed to deteriorate causing the spread of selected crop diseases and weeds onto adjacent lands;
- The proposed widening of Blundell Road will result in increased traffic into the area, thus making it more difficult to farm;
- Pedestrians regularly use the Shell Road Trail, which has impacted farming operations through theft of crops, vandalism and trespassing;
- Urban complaints about normal farm practices, such as spraying, noise and burning hamper farm operations.

4.4.3 Recommendations

48. Ensure that McLennan 2 is considered a priority area for drainage improvements in the City's Master Drainage Plan (see Recommendation 7).
49. Discourage non-farm uses of the ALR land (see Recommendation 18).
50. Maximize the agricultural land available in McLennan 2 for future agricultural uses (see Recommendation 35) including the possibility of replotting the land and/or limited access.
51. Blundell Road is the identified access to Fraserport Industrial Lands:
 - a) Require a proposed AIA (see Recommendation 4) be completed and that appropriate steps be taken to mitigate potential conflicts;

- b) Whenever potential negative impacts for agriculture may occur, ensure that viable alternatives are available and fully explored and that there is either:
- no negative impacts on farming;
 - a net benefit to farming; or
 - adequate compensation.
52. Develop an agricultural edge plan (see Recommendation 19) for the Shell Road Trail, including fencing to prevent vandalism and theft and signage to increase awareness about the impacts of trail users on agricultural viability.
53. Liaise with the RCMP to increase awareness about vandalism, trespassing and theft that occurs on lands bordering Shell Road Trail and request their cooperation for policing the area.

4.5 McLennan 3

4.5.1 Introduction

The McLennan 3 node is four parcels of ALR land:

- Two parcels are owned and managed by the City for the Nature Park;
- One parcel is owned and managed by the Department of National Defence;
- One parcel is owned and managed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

McLennan 3 is characterized by deep (more than 160 cm) organic soils, which are suitable for a wide range of crops. However there is no agricultural production in this area. The node also has a high water table.

4.5.2 Key Nodal Issue

- Land ownership. Because the City and Federal Departments own the four parcels, the land is not available for use by Richmond farmers.
- These parcels are being considered for non-farm uses (e.g. federal decommissioning, a trade and exhibition centre, sports fields, industrial uses, etc.).

4.5.3 Recommendations

54. Identify development options for McLennan 3 parcels which include:

- Having it totally farmed,
- Maximizing benefits to agriculture and farming if used for non-farm land uses,
- Consider City ownership of the land.

4.6 East Richmond 1

4.6.1 Introduction

The East Richmond 1 node is the ALR land between Sidaway and No. 6 Road.

East Richmond 1 is characterized by predominantly deep (more than 160 cm) organic soils, suitable for a wide range of crops, including cranberries, blueberries, mixed vegetables, nurseries, and forage crops. The node also has a high water table. Much of this node is presently in intensive and varied agricultural production, with blueberries, mixed vegetables, greenhouse operations, cranberries, nurseries and forage crops.

4.6.2 Key Nodal Issues

Issues that must be addressed in this node:

- Drainage of the organic soils is inadequate;
- The proposed widening of Blundell Road will result in increased traffic into the area, thus making it more difficult to farm;
- The routing of traffic through the ALR to service the increasing development of the Riverport and the Fraserport Industrial Lands at the south end of this node will result in increased traffic that will interfere with farm vehicles and operations.

4.6.3 Recommendations

55. Ensure that East Richmond 1 is considered a priority area for drainage improvements in the City’s Master Drainage Plan (See Recommendation 7).
56. Ensure that any widening of Blundell Road (see Recommendation 51) results in benefits for farming and has minimal impacts on farming.
57. Ensure that a “least impact” policy exists to protect farmers from the impacts of the increased development of the Riverport and the Fraserport Industrial Lands:
 - a) Require a proposed AIA (see Recommendation 4) be completed and that appropriate steps be taken to mitigate potential conflicts;
 - b) Whenever potential negative impacts for agriculture may occur, ensure that viable alternatives are available and fully explored and that there is either:
 - no negative impacts on farming;
 - a net benefit to farming; or
 - adequate compensation.
 - c) Place emphasis on positive benefits to development initiatives for farm operations, e.g. improved drainage;
 - d) Require the development of an agricultural edge plan (see Recommendation 19), including buffering on the urban side of the edge;
 - e) Review the development strategy for the Fraserport Industrial Lands to find potential linkages with the agricultural industry, and the potential for joint initiatives.

4.7 East Richmond 2

4.7.1 Introduction

The East Richmond 2 node is the ALR land South of Highway 91. This node is characterized by mineral soils which are suitable for a wide range of crops. Currently, much of this node is in intensive agricultural production. Agricultural production includes forage crops, livestock, nurseries, greenhouse operations, mixed vegetables, and some blueberries. This area includes large areas of idle land, landfills, and golf courses.

4.7.2 Key Nodal Issues

Issues that must be addressed in this node:

- Drainage of the soils is inadequate;
- The proposed widening of Blundell Road will result in increased traffic into the area, making it more difficult to farm;
- There are several large parcels of land that are idle at this time.

4.7.3 Recommendations

58. Ensure that East Richmond 2 is considered a priority area for drainage improvements in the City's Master Drainage Plan (see Recommendation 7).
59. Review the proposal to widen Blundell Road (see Recommendation 51).
60. Use any further developments of the industrial areas (Fraserport Lands) as a means to implement drainage improvements.

4.8 East Richmond 3

4.8.1 Introduction

The East Richmond 3 node is the ALR land west of No. 7 Road and north of Highway 91. This node is characterized by mineral soils, which are suitable for a wide range of crops. Much of the node is currently in agricultural production. This area is primarily used for livestock, forage crops, and cranberries. However there is also some mixed vegetable and nursery production.

4.8.2 Key Nodal Issues

- No issues have been identified at this time.

4.8.3 Recommendations

61. Maintain the existing drainage and infrastructure initiatives in this node.

4.9 East Richmond 4

4.9.1 Introduction

The East Richmond 4 node is the ALR land east of No. 7 Road and north of Highway 91. This node is characterized by medium (40-160 cm) to deep (more than 160 cm) organic soils, which are suitable for a wide range of crops such as cranberries, blueberries, vegetables, and annuals. The node has a high water table. Much of the node is currently in intensive agricultural production. Most of the area is dedicated to cranberry production, with some mixed vegetables, livestock, blueberries and greenhouse operations between the railroad track and Dyke Road.

4.9.2 Key Nodal Issues

Issues that must be addressed in this node:

- The soils require water table control in order to provide adequate drainage without over-draining them;
- Irrigation in the summer months may be required;
- The proposed mid-island dyke along No. 8 Road will impact significantly on agricultural production (see Section 3.2.4);
- Existing and new fill will disrupt the regional water table, and have a negative impact on the agricultural capability of adjacent land (see Section 3.4.1).

4.9.3 Recommendations

62. Review the use of fill on organic soils (see Recommendation 18 c).
63. Request the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection to investigate the viability of rebuilding and upgrading the perimeter dyke around the eastern tip of Richmond along the North Arm of the Fraser River, instead of the proposed mid-island dyke.
64. Maintain the existing drainage and infrastructure initiatives in this node.

5. Implementation Strategy

An Implementation Strategy is an important component of any planning process. Commitment to the Implementation Strategy will ensure that the recommendations in the AVS are implemented according to priority.

Successful implementation will require commitment from the City, the AAC, the RFI, ALC, senior governments, agricultural community and the public.

It is recommended that:

- Various City staff be assigned as SALs (see Recommendation 3) to facilitate implementation;
- The RFI consider having a dedicated person responsible for ongoing liaison with the City. The RFI may be better able to maintain a commitment to implementation if a specific person is identified for the task.

Funding support will be necessary for some of the recommendations in the AVS. In cases where funding is required, there may be ways that the City, AAC, RFI, ALC, senior governments, agricultural community stakeholders and the public can reduce costs by involving other partners in the implementation. It may also be feasible to undertake some recommendations on a trial basis through pilot projects, which could also be cost-shared with appropriate partners.

5.1 Monitoring Process

A comprehensive monitoring process, beginning at six months after the adoption of the AVS by Council and evolving to an annual process, is important for ongoing implementation of the recommendations.

Monitoring will serve to:

- Review the progress towards implementing recommendations;
- Determine the effectiveness of the AVS and its impact on agricultural viability;
- Provide motivation and support for the implementation process;
- Provide the opportunity for an AVS update and revision as required.

A recommended monitoring process is as follows:

Review One (Six months after adoption)

- General meeting of the Core Team and the proposed AAC (possibly with the Consultant Team) to review progress to date.

Review Two (One year after adoption)

- The proposed AAC and appropriate City staff (possibly with the Consultant Team) prepare a "Report Card" on implementation to date;
- The proposed AAC and appropriate City staff (possibly with the Consultant Team) to review the "Report Card";
- Update the AVS with changes and revisions as appropriate (possibly with the Consultant Team).

Further reviews should be undertaken annually, or as required, and follow a similar process to Review Two.

5.2 Implementing the Recommendations

This section identifies some key recommendations that can be implemented in the shorter term, and provides details about their implementation, key participants to be involved, and some indications of the results expected from the implementation. The early implementation of some recommendations will be encouraging signals to the agricultural sector.

Recommendation 1) Establish a City Agricultural Advisory Committee of Council (AAC).

| Implementation Detail | Potential Partners | Results Expected |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop AAC terms of reference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAC to advise on day to day issues such as proposed bylaw and OCP amendments and broader initiatives such as agricultural studies and plans; • AAC to play active role in AVS implementation; • AAC to meet monthly, or as required; • Assist AAC with person from City staff or person paid to provide support to committee; • AAC to have committed, effective chair. ✓ Committee Membership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voting Members: The Committee shall consist of nine (9) voting members appointed by Council, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Five (5) "farming representatives" chosen from nominations by the Richmond Farmers Institute. A "farming representative" is defined as a farmer who derives a majority of his/her income from farming; ○ Two (2) farming representatives from the general agricultural community (nursery, livestock, equestrian, greenhouses, crops, etc.); ○ One (1) representative from the Advisory Committee on the Environment ○ One (1) representative from the community at large • Committee Advisors (Non-voting Members): The Committee shall also consist of the following including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A City Councillor Agricultural Liaison; ○ A representative from BCMAFF; ○ A representative from the ALC; ○ A staff member from the Engineering/Public Works Department(s); ○ A staff member from the Urban Development Division; ○ A staff member from the RCMP; and ○ Others as necessary. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Policy Planning Department ✓ RFI | <p>AAC to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on bylaws and OCP amendments; • Advice on applications for development in and adjacent to the ALR • Advice on soil permit applications • Assistance with policy development • Improved agricultural awareness |

Recommendation 3) Designate City Staff Agricultural Liaisons (SALs), with the Policy Planning Department Liaison as the lead SAL to ensure coordination.

| Implementation Detail | Potential Partners | Results Expected |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Publicize the SALs as people to assist the agricultural sector to access information about City Bylaws, operations and services, address agricultural issues and concerns, and contribute to various agricultural projects; ✓ Develop a "flow chart" to facilitate access to information required by the agricultural sector. This "flow chart" may include information about policies and bylaws, processes involved for development approvals, growth and diversification information, etc; ✓ Have the SALs play a key role in Implementation of the AVS. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Policy Planning Department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm community to have a designated place to address issues; • Farm community to have improved relationship with City |

Recommendation 4) Introduce an Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) process.

| Implementation Detail | Potential Partners | Results Expected |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use the AIA for all proposed projects involving land use changes or developments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the ALR; • Adjacent to the ALR; or • Outside the ALR for projects which may have an impact on agriculture. ✓ Examples of where to use the AIA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions with respect to servicing and infrastructure, e.g. transportation corridors; • Decisions with respect to recreational trails; • New or proposed residential developments. ✓ Develop criteria, e.g. drainage/irrigation implications, air quality, noise, transportation and traffic, and others, for the AIA in conjunction with BCMAFF, the ALC, the proposed AAC (See Recommendation 1), and others as appropriate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Policy Planning Department ✓ Other City Divisions / Departments / Sections as required ✓ RFI | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better capacity to assess longer term impacts of decisions on agricultural land and agricultural viability; • Improved communication among City Departments concerning agricultural issues |

Recommendation 5) Maintain an Agricultural Data System.

| Implementation Detail | Potential Partners | Results Expected |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Update and expand the scope of the Agricultural Profile, the Agricultural Land Use Inventory, and the Geographic Information System every three years or sooner to maintain current information about the agricultural sector; ✓ Continue to engage in innovative research partnerships with groups (such as AAFC, BCMAFF and others) to determine agricultural trends in Richmond; ✓ Monitor changes in the agricultural sector to determine issues of concern and changes in overall viability, using the following possible indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicators which track land use and land availability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hectares (or acres) of ALR land in Richmond; ○ Hectares (or acres) of ALR land which is Farm Class; ○ Hectares (or acres) of ALR land available for sale or lease. • Indicators which track farm viability and the overall health of the agricultural sector: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Annual number of applications for exclusion of land from the ALR; ○ Annual number of applications, approvals and rejections for non-farm use and subdivision in the ALR; ○ Net Returns from Agriculture; ○ Economic Diversity Index. ✓ Integrate the data into ongoing City operations and decision-making wherever possible. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Policy Planning Department ✓ RFI ✓ Proposed AAC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved system for monitoring changes in the agricultural sector • Provides information for ensuring implementation of the AVS |

Recommendation 6) Encourage regular communication among the agricultural sector and the City, provincial and federal servicing and infrastructure departments.

| Implementation Detail | Potential Partners | Results Expected |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Formalize the City-Farmer Drainage committee ✓ Establish terms of reference and ensure involvement from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the agricultural sector; • Engineering and Public Works Division. • and others as appropriate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Engineering and Public Works Division ✓ Policy Planning Department ✓ RFI | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved communication between City and farm community with respect to servicing and infrastructure • Improved drainage for the City and agricultural sector. |

Recommendation 7) Support the City’s Master Drainage Plan.

| Implementation Detail | Potential Partners | Results Expected |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identify and ensure drainage improvements to the ALR in order of priority and according to ARDSA performance standards; ✓ Encourage sufficient notification to the agricultural sector of ditch-cleaning plans; ✓ Encourage the agricultural sector to cooperate with ditch-cleaning practices by providing appropriate right-of-ways; ✓ Encourage the agricultural sector to support ditch-sidecasting activity where it does not interfere with normal farm practices and/or agricultural capability of the soils; ✓ Require the proposed AIA (see Recommendation 4) be completed for all servicing and infrastructure projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Engineering and Public Works Division ✓ RFI | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved communication between City and farm community with respect to servicing and infrastructure • Improved drainage for the City and agricultural sector. |

Recommendation 24) The Agricultural Advisory Committee, farming community, City staff and other stakeholders shall work together to study, analyze, form options and strategies to address issues of concern around ESAs and the environment.

| Implementation Detail | Potential Partners | Results Expected |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Issues of concern around ESA's in the ALR that should be addressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use; • Drainage, irrigation and ditch maintenance; • Land clearing; • Weed control; • Crop loss due to wildlife and birds. ✓ Address other issues of concern around ESA's in the ALR and the environment that may arise. ✓ Ensure that management strategies allow for "least impact" on agricultural viability and whenever agricultural viability may be impacted, ensure that adequate compensation and/or viable alternatives are available. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Policy Planning Department ✓ Proposed AAC ✓ City departments and divisions as required ✓ ALC ✓ BCMAFF | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better management of ESAs in Richmond • Improved sensitivity by farmers to importance of environmental issues in ALR |

Recommendation 26) Review City management policies and bylaws.

| Implementation Detail | Potential Partners | Results Expected |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The review to address the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the implications for farming; • Work towards consistency and compatibility (where not in conflict with other legislation) with the provisions of the Farm Practices Protection Act and the Guide to Bylaw Development in Farming Areas. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Policy Planning Department ✓ Proposed AAC ✓ City departments and divisions as required ✓ ALC ✓ BCMAFF | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better management of agricultural lands in Richmond |

Recommendation 27) Consult with the Agricultural Advisory Committee and the farm community (together with the Advisory Committee on the Environment and other stakeholders) in the review of existing ESAs in the ALR.

| Implementation Detail | Potential Partners | Results Expected |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Refine and clarify the inventory and functions of the existing ESAs; ✓ Assess the interaction between agriculture and the ESAs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Policy Planning Department ✓ Proposed AAC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better management of ESAs in Richmond • Improved sensitivity by farmers to importance of environmental issues in ALR |

Recommendation 19) Develop comprehensive agricultural edge plans for areas.

| Implementation Detail | Potential Partners | Results Expected |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Areas for agricultural edge plans are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The west and north edges of Gilmore; • The west edge of McLennan 2; • Behind the outer ring of houses in McLennan 2; • Shell Road Trail; • Behind the assembly uses on No. 5 Road; • North edge of Fraserport Industrial Lands. ✓ Edge plans to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An inventory of existing and potential uses and conflicts; • A site-specific management plan with design guidelines; • A proposed AIA (see Recommendation 4) • Consultation with the ALC, BCMAFF, the proposed AAC, and review of relevant resources; • Consultation with landowners on both sides of the agricultural edge; • An appropriate time-frame for implementation; • Mediation to mitigate any conflicts while an agricultural edge plan is being developed, or where buffering is not in place. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Policy Planning Department ✓ Proposed AAC ✓ Parks and Recreation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved understanding among non-farm community of role of agriculture on ALR • Improved rural urban relations |

Recommendation 13) Review the Zoning Bylaw 5300 and prepare information, options and recommendations to improve its effectiveness. This review includes examining the following items and other actions not yet identified:

| Implementation Detail | Potential Partners | Results Expected |
|---|--|---|
| <p>✓ Review Zoning Bylaw 5300 in consultation with the public and prepare information, options and recommendations to improve its effectiveness in supporting agricultural viability. This review includes the following items and other actions not yet identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the current list of uses permitted in the AG1 zone and update it to reflect changes in Provincial legislation and the objectives of achieving agricultural viability; • Review the AG1 zoning regulations for residential uses on farms and for non-farm residences in the ALR to determine how to better achieve agricultural viability; • Review the non-agricultural uses currently permitted in the AG1 zone to better achieve agricultural viability; • Review how to better manage building materials, storage and other accessory farm uses; • Review the current policy on the storage of farm equipment/vehicles related to the farm operation as a principal use (the storage of farm equipment/vehicles is currently an accessory use); • Review all minimum and maximum property and building setbacks for residences in the ALR to minimize conflicts with adjacent uses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Policy Planning Department ✓ Other City Divisions / Departments / Sections as required ✓ RFI ✓ Agricultural Land Commission ✓ Ministry of Agriculture and Food | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bylaw to more closely reflect commitment to agricultural viability • Bylaw wording to support agricultural sector. |

Recommendation 14) Review the roadside stand regulations in Business Regulation Bylaw 7148 and prepare information, options and recommendations to improve its effectiveness and achieve agricultural viability.

| Implementation Detail | Potential Partners | Results Expected |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review Class C which allows the potential creation of large roadside grocery outlets on ALR land; ✓ Review the requirement for farming a minimum of 20 acres of land in the bylaw which is restrictive and difficult to enforce. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Policy Planning Department ✓ Other City Divisions / Departments / Sections as required | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bylaw to more closely reflect commitment to agricultural viability • Bylaw wording to support agricultural sector. |

Recommendation 18) Review the following non-farm uses of ALR land and prepare information, options and recommendations. This review includes examining the following items and other actions not yet identified:

| Implementation Detail | Potential Partners | Results Expected |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review feasibility of amalgamating smaller lots to larger ones where possible; ✓ Restrict upgrading of existing roads and development of new roads unless there is a direct or net benefit to farming; ✓ Discourage the use of fill on organic soils, except for the following agricultural purposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When required to ensure a solid foundation for a farm residence or other structure related to the agricultural operation; • To provide a road base for access which benefits agriculture; ✓ Limit recreational uses of ALR land: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage dyke and perimeter recreational trails; • Work with agricultural community, equestrian community and recreational community to ensure that recreation uses adjacent to or within the ALR are compatible with farm uses and have positive benefits to farming. ✓ Ensure that a "least disruption to farmers" policy exists to protect farmers from the impacts of recreational uses by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring the proposed AIA (Recommendation 4) be completed for new recreational uses; • Ensuring that whenever potential impacts for agriculture may occur, that adequate compensation and/or viable alternatives are available; • Increasing awareness among equestrian owners about "private property" and public roads and trails, and the impact horses can have on agricultural land; • Preparing agricultural edge plans for recreation uses, dykes and perimeter trails in and adjacent to the ALR; • Ensuring that suitable facilities, e.g. toilets and garbage cans, are provided to eliminate trespassing and littering on existing recreational trails; • Ensuring that no financial costs are incurred by farmers due to recreational trails or activities; • Investigating the feasibility of developing an insurance policy and a "save harmless policy" to protect farmers from liability and property damage as a result of non-agricultural activities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Division ✓ RFI ✓ Proposed AAC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that farming is the primary use of ALR land; • Ensures all existing and proposed non-farm uses of ALR land do not interfere with normal farm practices; • Ensures that City policies related to Parks and Recreation, support overall agricultural viability |

Recommendation 30) Institute an information program to increase public awareness and commitment for agriculture.

| Implementation Detail | Potential Partners | Results Expected |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop appropriate materials to share with all residents to provide them with information about agricultural activity in their area, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The type of farming in the area; • Examples of normal farm practices they may experience; • A copy of the BCMAFF publication "The Countryside and You"; • A list of appropriate people to direct questions and concerns, such as the proposed SAL (see Recommendation 3), ALC, BCMAFF, AAFC, and others; • A "Country User Code" to identify appropriate behaviour in agricultural areas. ✓ Develop an agricultural signage program. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place signs along roads used by farm vehicles, along recreational trails, and incorporate signs into agricultural edge planning; • Ensure that signage focuses on "positive wording" as opposed to "directives", such as the following examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In areas where farm vehicles may be traveling, "Richmond farmers with slow moving vehicles use these roads too – support your local farm community". ○ Where vandalism and trespassing issues occur, "This crop was planted by a member of your local farm community – please respect the farmer's livelihood" • Ensure all signs are visibly similar, and incorporate the recommended "logo" or visual symbol (Recommendation 37 a). ✓ Encourage the ALC to develop signs to indicate the location and extent of the ALR. ✓ Develop a brochure that celebrates the City's agricultural tradition and history. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize the relationship between the City's corporate vision statement (see Section 2.5) and how agriculture helps achieve that vision; • Prepare an agricultural calendar that shows key agricultural events in the area, harvest times, etc. ✓ Encourage linkages between the agricultural community and the media to facilitate public education and awareness; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Proposed AAC ✓ Policy Planning Department ✓ Transportation Department and other City Divisions / Departments / Sections as required ✓ RFI ✓ Other levels of government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved public understanding and awareness of agriculture and its role in the community • Reduced incidence of complaints from farmers about public misuse of ALR land |

continued on next page

| Implementation Detail | Potential Partners | Results Expected |
|---|--------------------|------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Create an agricultural business profile to provide information on agriculture as a business opportunity. ✓ Develop an information package for farmers about agricultural policies and bylaws, and make this package available to the RFI and place it on the City website (see Recommendation 16). ✓ Explore the opportunities to hold a special event or regular seasonal activity to promote local produce and celebrate the City's agricultural tradition and history. | | |

Recommendation 31) Create opportunities for Council, City staff and others to tour the agricultural lands and learn about the role agriculture plays in the City.

| Implementation Detail | Potential Partners | Results Expected |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Prepare appropriate lists of opportunities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Proposed AAC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved understanding and awareness of agriculture and its role in the community among Council and City staff |

Recommendation 37) Develop a "Buy Local" marketing initiative to increase demand for locally grown agricultural products.

| Implementation Detail | Potential Partners | Results Expected |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop a "Taste of Richmond" logo or symbol, to appear on all agricultural communications and signs, and which could also be used by growers to label their products; ✓ Institute a weekly Farmers' Market in cooperating school yards or other city facilities; ✓ Support local growers by purchasing locally-grown landscape materials and food products for City use wherever possible; ✓ Identify options to support access to farm direct markets along Steveston Highway where current traffic patterns discourage stopping at farms selling local products; ✓ Develop a list of local agricultural products and when and where they are available, and circulate the list to local restaurants, ferries, schools and businesses to encourage linkages with Richmond agricultural producers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Business Liaison and Development Section ✓ Tourism Richmond ✓ Policy Planning Department ✓ Transportation Department ✓ RFI | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased economic activity in the agricultural sector • Improved rural urban relationships |

Recommendation 38) Undertake a market study project to assist farmers to understand their local market.

| Implementation Detail | Potential Partners | Results Expected |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Study to include items like the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Products desired by restaurants, and ethnic, specialty and niche products; • Expected quality and service features; • Expected product availability requirements. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Business Liaison and Development Section ✓ Policy Planning Department ✓ RFI | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased options for agricultural viability will result from the study • Higher amounts of revenue may be generated by agricultural sector |

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7. Appendices

- I. Legislative and Policy Context
- II. List of Recommendations

Appendix I. Legislative and Policy Context

This section provides brief summaries of some of the legislative Acts and regulations that have an impact on agriculture in Richmond.

A. Federal Context

1. No Federal Agricultural Viability Policy

There is no integrated Federal vision or comprehensive agricultural and rural development/diversification policy, or program to support agricultural viability in Canada.

2. Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA)

The purpose of the CEPA is to protect the environment and the health of Canadians from toxic substances and other pollutants. CEPA has regulations on many items, including managing toxic substances, clean air and water, controlling and moving waste, and enforcement.

3. Fisheries Act

The Fisheries Act contains regulations pertaining to conservation and protection of fish and fish habitat and prevention of pollution and / or obstruction of any water frequented by fish. The Fisheries Act is administered by DFO.

4. National Farm Building Code

The National Farm Building Code is published by the National Research Council through its Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes. The rationale for having special requirements for farm buildings, as distinct from other buildings, is based on the low occupancy load, the remote location of typical farm structures, or the special nature of the occupancies involved.

B. Provincial Context

1. No Provincial Agricultural Viability Policy

There is no integrated Provincial vision or comprehensive agricultural and rural development/diversification policy, or program to support agricultural viability in British Columbia.

2. Agricultural Land Commission Act (ALCA)

In 1973, the ALC was given the mandate to establish the ALR, in order to (1) preserve agricultural land, (2) encourage the establishment and maintenance of farms, and (3) use the land in the ALR in a manner compatible with agricultural purposes.

Part of the ALC’s mandate is to encourage municipalities to support farm use of agricultural land in their planning and policies. The ALCA ensures that there is a strong linkage between the Act and any plans and bylaws related to the ALR. All plans that apply to ALR land must be consistent with the regulations and orders of the Commission. Any inconsistent element of a plan is of no effect.¹⁸ In addition, subject to the requirements of the ALCA, individuals and government agencies who wish to alter the boundaries of the ALR, subdivide land in the ALR, or use ALR land for non-farm purposes, must obtain the prior approval of the ALC. If this approval is granted, the applicant must still secure approval from the relevant local government.

3. Farm Practices Protection (Right To Farm) Act (FPPA)

This legislation, passed in 1996, offers protection to farmers who use normal and accepted farm practices that are consistent with proper and accepted customs and standards. The legislation was designed to establish a process to manage conflicts between and among neighbours and support farmers through protection from unwarranted nuisance complaints about farming.¹⁹

4. Fish Protection Act

The Fish Protection Act is a cornerstone of the BC Fisheries Strategy. The four objectives of the legislation are:

- To ensure water for fish;
- To protect and restore fish habitat;
- To focus on riparian protection and enhancement;
- To strengthen local environmental planning.

C. Regional Context

1. Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) Livable Region Strategic Plan

The GVRD’s Livable Region Strategic Plan incorporates policies, population and growth targets and maps based on the following four fundamental strategies:

- To protect the Green Zone;
- To build complete communities;
- To achieve a compact metropolitan region;
- To increase transportation choices.

¹⁸ Planning For Agriculture (PFA), p. 7-30.

¹⁹ Strengthening Farming in British Columbia, A Guide to the Implementation of the Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act.

In the GVRD Livable Region Strategic Plan, agriculture within the green zone is recognized as a "working landscape" for agricultural production and an important component to preserve the natural habitat and to increase the overall livability of the region.

The GVRD Board established an Agriculture Advisory Committee in 1992 to advise the Board and other levels of government on agricultural issues and to raise the profile of agriculture in the region.

2. Land Title Act

The Land Title Act is administered by the local approving officer, under the authority of the Solicitor General. The Act has been amended to allow the local approving officer to refuse a subdivision plan if the following apply:

- Inadequate buffers or separation of the development from farming at the time of subdivision would cause unreasonable interference with farming operations;
- The location of highways and highway allowances would unreasonably or unnecessarily increase access to land in the ALR.

3. Local Government Act (formerly the Municipal Act)

A sub-area plan such as this AVS must observe the same content requirements as a broader-based community wide OCP²⁰, with the intent of providing greater focus on issue identification and problem solving as well as providing for broad objectives and a vision for the future.

The Local Government Act contains provisions empowering local governments to adopt farm bylaws and to regulate farm operations subject to the approval of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. Additionally, the Local Government Act states that local governments must not adopt zoning bylaws that prohibit or restrict agriculture unless approved by the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. Particularly important sections of the Local Government Act are those concerned with Agricultural Plan adoption by bylaw.

4. Waste Management Act

The Waste Management Act is the central piece of legislation relating to the disposal of all types of waste in BC. The "Code of Agricultural Practice for Waste Management" regulation provides specific requirements for the handling and storage of agricultural wastes. Farm operations that comply with the Code are exempt from the need to obtain a waste disposal permit under the Waste Management Act.

5. Weed Control Act

The Weed Control Act places responsibility for control of noxious weeds upon occupiers of land. It provides for appointment of inspectors to ensure compliance and, failing that, for a method by which they can control weeds with costs recovered from the occupier. Weed Control Committees may be established by municipal councils to administer the Act within a municipality. This Act is administered on a seasonal basis.

²⁰ PFA, p. 7-30.

D. Municipal Context

1. Richmond Bylaws

The following bylaws have implications for agriculture:

Bylaw 2218: Control of Noxious Weeds and Noxious Weed Seeds

Bylaw 4183: Regulating the Discharge of Firearms

Bylaw 4564: Fire Prevention

Bylaw 5300: Zoning Bylaw

Bylaw 5560: Sign Bylaw

Bylaw 5637: Waterworks and Water Rates

Bylaw 6349: Unsightly Premises

Bylaw 6983: Nuisance Prohibition

Bylaw 6989: Public Health Protection

Bylaw 7016: Annual Property Tax Rates

Bylaw 7137: Animal, Bird and Beekeeping Regulation

Bylaw 7148: Business Regulation

Policies 5006 and 5035 (rescinded and replaced by Amended No. 5 Road Backlands Policy in March 2000)

2. Richmond Official Community Plan (OCP)

An OCP is mandated by British Columbia’s Local Government Act. It is a legal document for planning and managing the City’s social, economic, and physical future. The OCP ensures that land use, services, and the natural environment are managed and coordinated to enhance the well being of the City.

There are several objectives associated with agriculture in the OCP. The two most directly related to agriculture include:

- To “continue to protect all farmlands in the ALR” ;
- To “maintain and enhance agricultural viability and productivity in Richmond”.²¹

Other City objectives relate to transportation, parks, open spaces and trails, services and infrastructure, and development permit guidelines.

The City’s corporate vision as stated in the OCP is “that the City of Richmond be the most appealing, livable, and well-managed community in Canada”. This vision is reflected in the AVS.

²¹ OCP, p 17.

Appendix II. List of Recommendations

Agricultural Decision Making Strategy (Section 3.1)

1. Establish a City Agricultural Advisory Committee of Council (AAC).
 - a) Have the AAC play the key advisory role in implementing the AVS;
 - b) Require all City departments to seek input from the AAC when major departmental initiatives are proposed as part of their planning strategy, where agriculture is affected;
 - c) Committee Membership:
 - i) Voting Members:

The Committee shall consist of nine (9) voting members appointed by Council, including:

 - Five (5) "farming representatives" chosen from nominations by the Richmond Farmers Institute. A "farming representative" is defined as a farmer who derives a majority of his/her income from farming;
 - Two (2) farming representatives from the general agricultural community (nursery, livestock, equestrian, greenhouses, crops, etc.);
 - One (1) representative from the Advisory Committee on the Environment.
 - One (1) representative from the community at large.
 - ii) Committee Advisors (Non-voting Members):

The Committee shall also consist of the following advisors including:

 - A City Councillor Agricultural Liaison (CAL);
 - A representative from BCMAFF;
 - A representative from the ALC;
 - A staff member from the Engineering/Public Works Department(s);
 - A staff member from the Urban Development Division (Staff Agricultural Liaison);
 - A staff member from the RCMP; and
 - Others as necessary.
2. Maintain the existing ALR boundary and the ALR land base in Richmond, and do not support a change to the boundary or a loss of ALR land unless:
 - there is a substantial net benefit to agriculture; and
 - the agricultural stakeholders are fully consulted.
3. Designate various City Staff as Agricultural Liaisons (SALs), with the Policy Planning Department Liaison as the lead SAL to ensure coordination.

- a) Have the CAL/SALs play a key support role in the implementation of the AVS and supporting the AAC;
 - b) Publicize the SALs as people to assist the agricultural sector to access information about City bylaws, operations, and services, address agricultural issues and concerns, and contribute to various agricultural projects;
 - c) Develop a flow chart to facilitate access to information required by the agricultural sector. This flow chart may include information about policies and bylaws, processes involved for planning and development approvals, growth and diversification information, etc.
4. Introduce an Agricultural Impact Assessment process (AIA).
- a) Use the AIA for all proposed projects involving land use changes or development:
 - i) Within the ALR;
 - ii) Adjacent to the ALR;
 - iii) Outside the ALR for projects which may have an impact on agriculture, such as transportation corridors, recreational trails, new residential developments, and others.
 - b) Develop criteria, (e.g. drainage/irrigation implications, air quality, noise, transportation and traffic, and others), for the AIA in conjunction with BCMAFF, the ALC, the proposed AAC (see Recommendation 1), and others as appropriate.
5. Maintain an Agricultural Data System.
- a) Update and expand the scope of the Agricultural Profile, the Agricultural Land Use Inventory, and the Geographic Information System every three years or sooner to maintain current information about the agricultural sector;
 - b) Continue to engage in innovative research partnerships with groups such as Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (BCMAFF), Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), University of British Columbia (UBC), Simon Fraser University (SFU) and others to determine agricultural trends in Richmond;
 - c) Monitor changes in the agricultural sector to determine issues of concern and changes in overall viability, using the following possible indicators:
 - i) Indicators which track land use and land availability:
 - Hectares (or acres) of ALR land in Richmond;
 - Hectares (or acres) of ALR land which is Farm Class;
 - Hectares (or acres) of ALR land available for sale or lease.
 - ii) Indicators which track farm viability and the overall health of the agricultural sector:
 - Annual number of applications, approvals and rejections for exclusion of land from the ALR;
 - Annual number of applications, approvals and rejections for non-farm use and subdivision in the ALR;
 - Net Returns from Agriculture;
 - Economic Diversity Index.

- d) Integrate the data into ongoing City operations and decision making wherever possible.

Services and Infrastructure Strategy (Section 3.2)

6. Encourage regular communication among the agricultural sector and the City, provincial and federal servicing and infrastructure departments by formalizing the City Staff-Farmer Drainage Committee and by establishing terms of reference and involving the agricultural sector, Engineering and Public Works Division, and others as appropriate (e.g. Policy Planning, Environmental Programs, Transportation, etc.).
7. Support the City's Master Drainage Plan.
 - a) Identify and ensure that drainage improvements to the ALR occur in order of priority and according to ARDSA performance standards;
 - b) Ensure that drainage improvements are considered in a comprehensive manner in consultation with the agricultural community and relevant City departments;
 - c) Encourage sufficient notification to the agricultural sector of ditch-cleaning plans in order to achieve beneficial, effective and timely agricultural drainage;
 - d) Encourage the agricultural sector to cooperate with ditch-cleaning practices by providing appropriate right-of-ways;
 - e) Encourage the agricultural sector to support ditch-sidecasting activity where it does not interfere with normal farm practices and/or agricultural capability of the soils;
 - f) Require the proposed AIA (see Recommendation 4) be completed for all servicing and infrastructure projects.
8. Request the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection to investigate the viability of rebuilding and upgrading the perimeter dyke around the eastern tip of Richmond along the North Arm of the Fraser River, instead of the proposed mid-Island dyke.
9. Review and designate "farm travel" routes for travel between agricultural areas:
 - a) Use recognizable signage to endorse these routes for farm vehicles;
 - b) Review the wording of "Respect Slow Moving Farm Vehicles" signs and consider "Yield To Farm Vehicles";
 - c) Develop new road design guidelines to ensure that the outermost lane and shoulder in combination have a minimum of 4.3 meters (14 feet) in lateral clearance to accommodate the width of farm vehicles;
 - d) Review options to minimize the impact of farm traffic on non-farm traffic by providing safe turn-offs for farm vehicles on identified agricultural corridors carrying high volumes of traffic.
10. Review Official Community Plan Transportation Policy 4(d) which states "Restrict the development of new major roads in the ALR to avoid jeopardizing farm viability, except for service roads intended to serve adjacent industrial land" to:
 - a) Consider removal of the phrase "except for service roads intended to serve adjacent industrial land" to limit future major road development on ALR land that does not serve the viability of agriculture;

- b) Ensure that a “least impact” policy exists to protect farmers from the impacts of possible transportation corridors through the ALR by:
 - i) Requiring the proposed AIA (see Recommendation 4) be completed for new road projects and that appropriate steps be taken to mitigate potential conflicts;
 - ii) Ensuring that whenever potential negative impacts for agriculture may occur, that adequate compensation and/or viable alternatives are available and fully explored;
 - iii) Placing emphasis on positive benefits of transportation initiatives for farm operations (e.g. improved drainage and access).

City Policies and Bylaws Strategy (Section 3.3)

11. Ensure that all proposed City policies and bylaws relating to the agricultural sector and ALR encourage agricultural viability:
 - a) Refer proposed policies and bylaws to the proposed AAC (see Recommendation 1) for comment prior to their adoption;
 - b) Ensure that policies and bylaws, prior to adoption, are subject to the Agricultural Impact Assessment (see Recommendation 4) where appropriate.
12. Ensure that new City bylaws related to agriculture and the ALR are developed with regard to existing bylaws to determine whether changes in enforcement would solve the identified problems.
13. Review Zoning Bylaw 5300 in consultation with the public and prepare information, options and recommendations to improve its effectiveness in supporting agricultural viability. This review includes the following items and other actions not yet identified:
 - a) Review the current list of uses permitted in the AG1 zone and update it to reflect changes in Provincial legislation and the objectives of achieving agricultural viability;
 - b) Review the AG1 zoning regulations for residential uses on farms and for non-farm residences in the ALR to determine how to better achieve agricultural viability;
 - c) Review the non-agricultural uses currently permitted in the AG1 zone to better achieve agricultural viability;
 - d) Review how to better manage building materials, storage and other accessory farm uses;
 - e) Review the current policy on the storage of farm equipment/vehicles related to the farm operation as a principal use (the storage of farm equipment/vehicles is currently an accessory use);
 - f) Review all minimum and maximum property and building setbacks for residences in the ALR to minimize conflicts with adjacent uses.
14. Review the roadside stand regulations in Business Regulation Bylaw 7148 and prepare information, options, and recommendations to improve their effectiveness and achieve agricultural viability.
15. Review existing bylaws, regulations, guidelines and associated operational procedures to ensure that they conform to the FPPA, the Guide for Bylaw Development In Farming Areas and the Local Government Act.

16. Develop an information package for farmers about City agricultural policies and bylaws, and make this package available to the RFI and place it on the City website.
17. Encourage a cooperative and partnership approach to avoid and address nuisance complaints (e.g. spraying, noise, odour, dust, pesticide application, burning, etc.)

Non-Farm Uses and Parks and Recreation Strategy (Section 3.4)

18. It is recommended that the proposed AAC (see Recommendation 1) review the following non-farm uses of ALR land and prepare information, options and recommendations. This review includes examining the following items and other actions not yet identified:
 - a) Review the feasibility of amalgamating smaller lots to larger ones wherever possible;
 - b) Restrict the upgrading of existing roads and development of new roads unless there is a direct or net benefit to farming;
 - c) Discourage the use of fill on organic soils, except for the following agricultural purposes:
 - i) When required to ensure a solid foundation for a farm residence or other structure related to the agricultural operation;
 - ii) To provide a road base for access which benefits agriculture.
 - d) Limit recreational uses of ALR land to:
 - i) Encourage dyke and recreational trails at the perimeter of the ALR;
 - ii) Work with the agricultural community, equestrian community and recreational community to ensure that recreational uses adjacent to or within the ALR are compatible with farm uses and have a positive benefit to farming.
 - e) Ensure that a "least disruption to farmers" policy exists to protect farmers from the impacts of recreational uses by:
 - i) Requiring the proposed AIA (see Recommendation 4) be completed for new recreational uses and that appropriate steps be taken to mitigate potential conflicts;
 - ii) Ensuring that whenever potential negative impacts for agriculture may occur, that adequate compensation and/or viable alternatives are available;
 - iii) Increasing the awareness among equestrian owners about riding on or near private property and public roads and trails, and the impact which horses and riders can have on agricultural land;
 - iv) Preparing over the long term and in partnership with others, agricultural edge plans for recreational uses, dykes and perimeter trails in and adjacent to the ALR;
 - v) Ensuring that suitable facilities (e.g. toilets and garbage cans) are provided to eliminate trespassing and littering on existing recreational trails;
 - vi) Ensuring that no financial costs are incurred by farmers due to recreational trails or activities;
 - vii) Investigating the feasibility of developing an insurance policy and a 'save harmless' policy which would protect farmers from liability and property damage as a result of non-agricultural activities.

Agricultural Edge Strategy (Section 3.5)

19. Recognize the following areas for agricultural edge planning (see Figure 3):
 - a) The west and north edges of Gilmore;
 - b) The west edge of McLennan 2;
 - c) Behind the outer ring of houses in McLennan 2;
 - d) Shell Road Trail;
 - e) Behind the assembly uses on No. 5 Road;
 - f) North edge of Fraserport Industrial Lands.
20. Develop comprehensive agricultural edge plans for areas, including:
 - a) An inventory of existing and potential uses and conflicts;
 - b) A site-specific management plan with appropriate design guidelines;
 - c) A proposed AIA (see Recommendation 4);
 - d) Consultation with the ALC, BCMAFF, the proposed AAC (see Recommendation 1), and review of relevant resources such as the ALC report “Landscaped Buffer Specifications”;
 - e) Consultation with landowners on both sides of the agricultural edge;
 - f) An appropriate time-frame for implementation;
 - g) Mediation to mitigate any conflicts while an agricultural edge plan is being developed, or where buffering is not in place.
21. For new development adjacent to the ALR:
 - a) Require the preparation of an agricultural edge plan, including buffering on the urban side, at the expense of the developer;
 - b) Require the registration of restrictive covenants, where possible. The intent of the covenant would be to:
 - i) Inform prospective buyers of residential properties of the occurrence of normal farm practices on adjacent farmland (e.g. spraying, noise, odours, dust, pesticide application, burning, etc.); and
 - ii) Minimize urban-rural conflicts.
22. Direct compatible land uses (e.g. industrial) to land adjacent to the ALR in lieu of incompatible uses (e.g. residential, schools), wherever possible to avoid conflicts.
23. Provide the materials developed for the Public Education and Awareness Strategy (Recommendation 30 a) to residents along an agricultural edge to inform them about agriculture in their area.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas Strategy (Section 3.6)

24. The Agricultural Advisory Committee, farming community, City staff and other stakeholders shall work together to study, analyze, form options and strategies to address the following issues of concern around ESAs and the environment, as well as other issues that may arise that are of interest to the farming community:

- land use;
 - drainage, irrigation and ditch maintenance;
 - land clearing;
 - weed control;
 - crop loss due to wildlife and birds.
25. Ensure that the management strategies from 24) above allow for "least impact" on agricultural viability and whenever agricultural viability may be impacted, ensure that adequate compensation and/or viable alternatives are available.
26. Review City management policies and bylaws to:
- a) assess the implications for farming;
 - b) work towards consistency and compatibility (where not in conflict with other legislation) with the provisions of the Farm Practices Protection Act and the Guide to Bylaw Development in Farming Areas.
27. Consult with the Agricultural Advisory Committee and the farm community (together with the Advisory Committee on the Environment and other stakeholders) in the review of existing ESAs in the ALR to:
- a) Refine and clarify the inventory and functions of the existing ESAs;
 - b) Assess the interaction between agriculture and ESAs.
28. Provide information to all farmers related to best management practices and encourage them to adopt beneficial environmental guidelines.
29. Review the work of the Partnership Committee on Agriculture and the Environment and incorporate relevant aspects of their work into farm operations and City policies.

Public Education and Awareness Strategy (Section 3.7)

30. Institute an information program to increase public awareness and commitment for agriculture, in consultation with the agricultural community, the Agriculture Awareness Coordinator (BC Agriculture Council), Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation, and others:
- a) Develop appropriate materials to share with all residents (e.g. publications, via the City website) to provide them with information about agricultural activity in their area, including:
 - i) The type of farming in the area;
 - ii) Examples of normal farm practices they may experience;
 - iii) A copy of the BCMAFF publication "The Countryside and You";
 - iv) A list of appropriate people to direct questions and concerns, such as the proposed SAL (see Recommendation 3), ALC, BCMAFF, AAFC, and others;
 - v) A "Country User Code" to identify appropriate behaviour in agricultural areas.
 - b) Develop an agricultural signage program.
 - i) Place signs along roads used by farm vehicles, along recreational trails, and incorporate signs into agricultural edge planning;

- ii) Ensure that signage focuses on “positive wording” as opposed to “directives”, such as the following examples:
 - In areas where farm vehicles may be travelling, “*Richmond farmers with slow moving vehicles use these roads too – support your local farm community*”;
 - Where vandalism and trespassing issues occur, “*This crop was planted by a member of your local farm community – please respect the farmer’s livelihood*”.
 - iii) Ensure that all signs are visibly similar, and incorporate the recommended “logo” or visual symbol (Recommendation 37 a).
 - c) Encourage the ALC to develop signs to indicate the location and extent of the ALR. An example may be “*You are now in the Agricultural Land Reserve. Please respect farmland*”;
 - d) Develop a brochure that celebrates the City’s agricultural tradition and history:
 - i) In plans and programs, emphasize the relationship between the City’s corporate vision statement (see Section 2.5) and how agriculture helps achieve that vision;
 - ii) Prepare an agricultural calendar that shows key agricultural events in the area, harvest times, etc.
 - e) Encourage linkages and partnerships between the agricultural community and the media to facilitate public education and awareness;
 - f) Create an agricultural business profile to provide information on agriculture as a business opportunity;
 - g) Develop an information package for farmers about agricultural policies and bylaws, heritage policies that support the preservation of buildings, lands and methods, and make this package available to the RFI and the public and place it on the City website (see Recommendation 16);
 - h) Explore the opportunities for holding a special event (e.g. Harvest Festival) or regular seasonal activity (e.g. summer weekend Farmer’s Market) to promote local produce and celebrate the City’s agricultural tradition and history.
31. Create opportunities for Council, City staff and others to tour the agricultural lands and learn about the role agriculture plays in the City. The proposed AAC (see Recommendation 1) may facilitate this activity.
32. It is recommended that the proposed AAC (see Recommendation 1) review the option of introducing a Restrictive Covenant for properties within, and adjacent to, the ALR to address issues of conflict (e.g. noise, odours) related to agricultural uses. Example: Covenant used by City of Surrey for subdivisions bordering the ALR.
33. Encourage existing farmers to continuously maintain their farm operations to prevent unsightly premises and project a positive public image for agriculture in Richmond.

Economic Growth and Diversification Strategy (Section 3.8)

34. Develop a strategy to encourage agricultural support services and social infrastructure (such as agricultural research, agricultural banking and financing, industrial technologies, agricultural marketing, specialized suppliers of agricultural materials and equipment) to locate in Richmond, in cooperation with the agricultural sector, Business Liaison and Development, BCMAFF, and others as appropriate.
35. Maximize the agricultural land available for agricultural uses:
 - a) Review the feasibility of amalgamating smaller lots to larger ones wherever possible. These parcels could then be sold as farmland or leased to farmers;
 - b) Request the Province to review the policies on non-resident land ownership in BC and in other jurisdictions to determine how land owned by non-residents may be more fully farmed;
 - c) Establish guidelines for parcel sizes suitable for farming, including options for smaller parcels of 2 acres or less;
 - d) Encourage longer-term lease opportunities for farmers:
 - i) Discourage non-farm uses of the ALR land (see Recommendation 18);
 - ii) Develop a City-based Agricultural Land Registry to assist farmers to find agricultural land available for leasing.
 - e) Explore the rezoning of selected non-ALR land (currently zoned for light industrial use) to "Light Industrial/Agricultural" to provide for the inclusion of greenhouses as a use and to encourage greenhouse development on non-ALR land wherever possible;
 - f) Encourage non-ALR "multiple-use" industrial buildings that will attract partnerships such as allowing greenhouse development on the tops of some industrial buildings as a possible pilot project;
 - g) Review the costs and benefits of selling or leasing the City-owned nursery to local farmers in order to minimize City competition with the agricultural sector.
36. Encourage farmers to diversify their agricultural operations, by:
 - a) Liaising with support agencies such as BCMAFF, AAFC, GVRD and the ALC to gather information and identify resources to clarify diversification opportunities (e.g. new crop production and development, value added production, etc.);
 - b) Encouraging partnerships between farmers and:
 - i) Other farmers that haven't been historically involved with the RFI and the proposed AAC;
 - ii) Local businesses and industry, such as the hospitality sector, Chamber of Commerce, and others;
 - iii) City Departments and City agencies, such as Business Liaison and Development, Tourism Richmond, Chamber of Commerce, and others;
 - iv) Provincial and Federal ministries and agencies for projects which may make growth and diversification opportunities more easily attainable;

- v) Others to carefully locate and manage allotment gardens (community gardens) on agricultural lands.
37. Develop a “Buy Local” marketing initiative to increase demand for locally grown agricultural products, in cooperation with Business Liaison and Development, Tourism Richmond, Chamber of Commerce, the RFI, and others:
- a) Develop a “Taste of Richmond” logo or symbol, to appear on all agricultural communications and signs, and which could also be used by growers to label their products;
 - b) Institute a weekly Farmers’ Market in cooperating school yards or other City facilities to increase consumer access to locally grown agricultural products;
 - c) Support local growers by purchasing locally-grown landscape materials and food products for City use wherever possible;
 - d) Identify options to support access to farm direct markets along Steveston Highway where current traffic patterns discourage stopping at farms selling local products;
 - e) Develop a list of local agricultural products and when and where they are available, and circulate the list to local restaurants, ferries, schools and businesses to encourage linkages with Richmond agricultural producers.
38. Undertake a market study project to assist farmers to understand their local Richmond market, with respect to:
- a) Products desired by restaurants, and ethnic, specialty and niche products;
 - b) Expected quality and service features;
 - c) Expected product availability requirements.
39. Encourage new farmers to enter the agricultural sector by:
- a) Creating an agricultural business profile to provide information on agriculture as a business opportunity (see Recommendation 29 f);
 - b) Encouraging retiring farmers to apprentice new ones;
 - c) Investigating and publishing options for new farmers to obtain management skills training from local educational institutions and private trainers;
 - d) Assisting local young people to find job opportunities in agriculture wherever possible, including co-operative education opportunities with area educational institutions such as Kwantlen University College, University of British Columbia, and area secondary schools.
40. Review the costs and benefits of selling or leasing the City-owned nursery to local farmers in order to minimize City competition with the agricultural sector.

Gilmore (Section 4.2)

41. Discourage non-farm uses in the ALR land (see Recommendation 18).
42. Ensure that a "least impact" policy exists to protect farmers from the impacts of the proposed residential development in the London-Princess area:
 - a) Require a proposed AIA (see Recommendation 4) be completed and that appropriate steps be taken to mitigate potential conflicts;
 - b) Whenever potential negative impacts for agriculture may occur, ensure that adequate compensation and/or viable alternatives are available;
 - c) Place emphasis on the positive benefits to potential development initiatives for farm operations, e.g. improved drainage;
 - d) Require the development of an agricultural edge plan (see Recommendation 19), including buffering on the urban side of the edge;
 - e) Ensure that new landowners receive materials about agricultural activity in the area (see Recommendation 30).
43. Ensure that a "least impact" policy exists to protect farmers from the impacts of the proposed recreational trail along the southern boundary of Gilmore:
 - a) Require a proposed AIA (see Recommendation 4) be completed and that appropriate steps be taken to mitigate potential conflicts;
 - b) Whenever potential negative impacts for agriculture may occur, ensure that adequate compensation and/or viable alternatives are available;
 - c) Require that a recreation trail plan be prepared;
 - d) Require the development of an agricultural edge plan (see Recommendation 19), including buffering on the urban side of the edge;
 - e) Require that signs be posted along the trail to increase awareness for trail users about how their behaviors may relate to agricultural viability (see Recommendation 30).
44. Identify the specific problem areas for flooding from the urban areas and develop ways to reduce the impacts of flooding, in concert with the City's current Engineering Capital Plan process and in consultation with other appropriate City Divisions, Departments and Sections and the agricultural community.

McLennan 1 (Section 4.3)

45. Mitigate the issues (Section 4.3.2) associated with the Community Institutional District:
 - a) Review the option of rezoning any land parcels which have not been sold for assembly or other uses to restrict the development of future assembly uses in this area and return land to agricultural production;
 - b) Develop an agricultural edge plan for the area, including potential vegetative buffering behind existing churches to clearly differentiate churches on agricultural land from agricultural uses;

- c) Survey existing assembly properties to rectify any encroachment beyond the westerly 110 metres (360.9 ft.) of the property;
 - d) Continue to support incentives to encourage farming on the backlands.
46. Encourage farming in McLennan 1, with the understanding that the agricultural edge must be taken into consideration. Opportunities for farming in this node include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Tree farming;
 - Blueberries;
 - Vegetable production, e.g. potatoes, corn, cabbage;
 - Ornamental nursery;
 - Specialty vegetable crops;
 - Organic production;
 - Community or allotment gardens;
 - Hay production.
47. Maximize the agricultural land available for future agricultural uses (see Recommendation 35).

McLennan 2 (Section 4.4)

48. Ensure that McLennan 2 is considered a priority area for drainage improvements in the City’s Master Drainage Plan (see Recommendation 7).
49. Discourage non-farm uses of the ALR land (see Recommendation 18).
50. Maximize the agricultural land available in McLennan 2 for future agricultural uses (see Recommendation 35), including the possibility of replotting the land and/or limited access.
51. Blundell Road is the identified access to Fraserport Industrial Lands:
- a) Require a proposed AIA (see Recommendation 4) be completed and that appropriate steps be taken to mitigate potential conflicts;
 - b) Whenever potential negative impacts for agriculture may occur, ensure that viable alternatives are available and fully explored and that there is either:
 - no negative impacts on farming;
 - a net benefit to farming; or
 - adequate compensation.
52. Develop an agricultural edge plan (see Recommendation 19) for the Shell Road Trail, including fencing to prevent vandalism and theft and signage to increase awareness about the impacts of trail users on agricultural viability.
53. Liaise with the RCMP to increase awareness about vandalism, trespassing and theft that occurs on lands bordering Shell Road Trail and request their cooperation for policing the area.

McLennan 3 (Section 4.5)

54. Identify development options for McLennan 3 parcels which include:
- Having it totally farmed;
 - Maximizing benefits to agriculture and farming if used for non-farm land uses;
 - Consider City ownership of the land.

East Richmond 1 (Section 4.6)

55. Ensure that East Richmond 1 is considered a priority area for drainage improvements in the City's Master Drainage Plan (See Recommendation 7).
56. Ensure that any widening of Blundell Road (see Recommendation 51) results in benefits for farming and has minimal impacts on farming.
57. Ensure that a "least impact" policy exists to protect farmers from the impacts of the increased development of the Riverport and the Fraserport Industrial Lands:
- a) Require a proposed AIA (see Recommendation 4) be completed and that appropriate steps be taken to mitigate potential conflicts;
 - b) Whenever potential negative impacts for agriculture may occur, ensure that viable alternatives are available and fully explored and that there is either:
 - no negative impacts on farming;
 - a net benefit to farming; or
 - adequate compensation.
 - c) Place emphasis on positive benefits to development initiatives for farm operations, e.g. improved drainage;
 - d) Require the development of an agricultural edge plan (see Recommendation 19), including buffering on the urban side of the edge;
 - e) Review the development strategy for the Fraserport Industrial Lands to find potential linkages with the agricultural industry, and the potential for joint initiatives.

East Richmond 2 (Section 4.7)

58. Ensure that East Richmond 2 is considered a priority area for drainage improvements in the City's Master Drainage Plan (see Recommendation 7).
59. Review the proposal to widen Blundell Road (see Recommendation 51).
60. Use any further developments of the industrial areas (Fraserport Lands) as a means to implement drainage improvements.

East Richmond 3 (Section 4.8)

61. Maintain the existing drainage and infrastructure initiatives in this node.

East Richmond 4 (Section 4.9)

62. Review the use of fill on organic soils (see Recommendation 18 c).
63. Request the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection to investigate the viability of rebuilding and upgrading the perimeter dyke around the eastern tip of Richmond along the North Arm of the Fraser River, instead of the proposed mid-island dyke.
64. Maintain the existing drainage and infrastructure initiatives in this node.



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Planning Committee

From: Terry Crowe
Manager, Policy Planning

Re: **RICHMOND AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY STRATEGY**
NOTES FROM PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING - MAY 14, 2003

To Planning - May 21, 2003

Date: May 15, 2003

File: 4050-10

Staff Recommendation

That this report be received for information and considered in conjunction with the report regarding approval of the Richmond Agricultural Viability Strategy from the Manager, Policy Planning, dated February 19, 2003.

Terry Crowe
Manager, Policy Planning

Att. 2

FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY

CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER

Staff Report

Origin

On March 18, 2003, Planning Committee passed the following resolution:

“That the final draft of the Richmond Agricultural Viability Strategy, dated February 18, 2003, be referred to staff to:

1. distribute the Strategy to those individuals who attended the public meetings held in 2002; and
2. hold a public meeting at City Hall within the next month in order to clarify the strategy and receive comments.”

Copies of the final draft Richmond Agricultural Viability Strategy (RAVS) and staff report were sent out to over 120 individuals who had signed attendance forms at the previous public meetings. Advertisements were placed in the local newspapers to publicize the meeting to the general public.

The Public Information Meeting was held on May 14, 2003. Approximately 50 people attended the meeting to find out more about the RAVS and clarify any questions they may have about it. This report summarizes the key comments made at the meeting for consideration with the final draft RAVS.

Analysis

This section summarizes the issues and comments that were raised by farmers at the May 14, 2003 meeting. A letter submitted by Mr. John Massot at the meeting is also included as **Attachment 1**. A submission from Mr. Klaus Wiesel is included as **Attachment 2**.

Residential Uses on Farmland

| Comments | Response |
|--|---|
| <p>Some people expressed confusion over the distinction between a farmhouse and a non-farmhouse and why they had to be regulated at all. It was felt that a person who owns farmland with proper access should be entitled to build a house, with the same rights and restrictions as any other property owner. It was commented that since no one can force a property owner to farm the land, enforcement of such restrictions would be difficult.</p> | <p>Staff clarified the difference between the two uses. If land is farmed, the house is a “farmhouse”. If land is not farmed, the house is a “non-farmhouse”. Currently, both types are permitted in the ALR. The RAVS proposes a review to improve agricultural viability.</p> |

| Comments | Response |
|--|---|
| <p>There are cases where a non farmer may wish to purchase farmland, build a house and rent/lease the remaining land to a farmer for productive agriculture. Some thought that this situation is beneficial to farming, even though the landowner and principal resident of the house on the property is not a farmer. People wanted assurance that this flexibility would still be available to owners of farmland.</p> | <p>This situation is currently permitted. The RAVS proposes a review to improve agricultural viability.</p> |
| <p>There was a request to remove the reference to review residential uses in the ALR from the RAVS.</p> | <p>The reference can remain since a review may better clarify and resolve long-standing issues.</p> |
| <p>Some people commented on whether the City examined the flexibility of permitting additional farmhouses on a property to house workers or family members involved in the farm operation.</p> | <p>Additional houses on a farm are currently permitted under certain conditions. The RAVS proposes to continue this policy.</p> |
| <p>There was a question about how assessment rules apply to secondary houses on farm properties.</p> | <p>This is a question and issue for the BC Assessment Authority.</p> |
| <p>There were inquiries about whether setbacks regulating residential uses on agricultural lands would be changed.</p> | <p>The RAVS proposes to review this matter to minimize conflict between adjacent uses.</p> |
| <p>There should not be any design controls for houses on farmlands.</p> | <p>It was clarified that design controls are not contemplated in the RAVS.</p> |
| <p>If a farmer purchased property before the ALR was established and no longer is able to or wishes to farm, they should be permitted to continue to live on the property rather than be forced to farm the land, and pay a farm assessment rate.</p> | <p>This could be considered as part of the proposed review with the BC Assessment Authority and the City.</p> |

McLennan Area

| Comments | Response |
|--|---|
| <p>Since the McLennan Area largely consists of parcels less than 2 acres in size which are exempt from the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission Act, some people felt that the McLennan Area should be removed from the ALR entirely.</p> | <p>The RAVS does not propose the removal of lands from the ALR.</p> |

| Comments | Response |
|---|---|
| There were claims that the McLennan Area was left in the ALR because it was too costly to service for urban uses. | Staff acknowledged the comment. |
| One person remarked that a replotting scheme for the McLennan Area, to consolidate and subdivide lands to achieve better land use, is a good idea but the concept of priorities is missing from the RAVS. A replotting scheme will not benefit farmers unless the infrastructure (i.e. drainage and roads) is improved for farming. | Should the City undertake replotting, this point will be considered in the work program. |
| The development of urban houses and roads to service the urban, non-farm areas of Richmond have had a negative impact on farmlands in the McLennan Area because the water and runoff are directed to farm areas without corresponding improvements to drainage. | This comment will be forwarded to the Engineering Department for consideration in the Master Drainage Plan. |
| Farmland in the McLennan Area has deteriorated because the increased water levels have depleted nutrients from the soil and the wet conditions are not conducive to plant growth. | Staff acknowledged this comment. |
| There was a concern about the impact of the potential Trade and Exhibition Centre on the McLennan Area due to increased traffic resulting from development of the Centre. | <p>If the Trade and Exhibition Centre occurs, traffic impacts would be addressed.</p> <p>It was clarified that any removal of lands from the ALR to develop a Trade and Exhibition Centre would have to exhibit a significant benefit for farming.</p> <p>Development of a Trade and Exhibition Centre does not assume that the McLennan Area will also be excluded from the ALR.</p> |

Drainage

| Comments | Response |
|---|--|
| There are competing interests for drainage that may affect agricultural viability (e.g. keep ditches for farming vs. limit breeding sites for mosquitoes). | This would have to be considered in prioritizing City work programs. |
| The City closed the ditches on Westminster Highway between No. 6 and No. 7 Roads last year. This year, the ditches between No. 7 and No. 8 Roads will be closed. This is not beneficial to farm drainage. | Staff acknowledged this comment and will forward it to the Engineering Department. |

| Comments | Response |
|---|--|
| When the City flushes its watermains, in some cases, the water level exceeds the tops of ditches and results in flooding of farmlands. | Staff acknowledged this comment and will forward it to the Engineering Department. |
| Joe Oeser pointed out that on the south side of Monteith Road (off No. 2 Road), there is much standing ditch water which could be drained by fixing the culvert and bridge on the road. | Staff acknowledged this comment and will forward it to the Engineering Department. |

Administration of the RAVS

| Comments | Response |
|--|--|
| If the City intends to introduce more agricultural regulations, it must also consider providing additional enforcement officers. | This would be considered as implementation of the RAVS gets underway. |
| The RAVS does not identify all the implementation costs. Agricultural viability will be affected by the costs of improvements. | As with other City policy documents, implementation costs are determined incrementally and annually as part of the City's annual budget process. |
| The RAVS recommendations should be prioritized or ranked by importance. | <p>The RAVS identifies several recommendations that are deemed as short-term action priorities.</p> <p>The future Agricultural Advisory Committee will assist in further prioritizing the recommendations in the RAVS as part of implementation.</p> |

Other Comments

| Comments | Response |
|--|---|
| There was an inquiry about whether greenhouses can be built in the City and the permitted density for greenhouses. | <p>Staff clarified that greenhouses are permitted now in the ALR and in the proposed RAVS.</p> <p>The floor area ratio for development of greenhouses in the agricultural zone is 0.6.</p> |
| The RAVS does not seem to address the issue of a permanent ALR boundary. | <p>The RAVS proposes to keep the ALR boundary as is.</p> <p>If the ALR boundary was to change, the RAVS proposes that there be a significant net benefit back to farming in order to offset the loss of farmland.</p> |

| Comments | Response |
|---|---|
| A farmer who breeds and races thoroughbreds expressed concern that his use would not be recognized as a farm activity because the revenue generated by horse racing is not considered as farm income. | The breeding and raising of thoroughbred horses is considered as an agricultural use. The issue of whether it would receive favourable tax rates from income generated is an issue for the BC Assessment Authority. |
| No. 6 Road near the Riverport Entertainment Area is no longer practical for farm vehicles due to the high volume of non-farm traffic and the presence of large ditches on either side of the road. | Staff acknowledged the comment. |
| There was an inquiry about whether there is a difference in the application of the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission Act in Richmond and other municipalities. | There was clarification that the regulations of the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission Act was uniform throughout the Province. |
| There was an inquiry about whether or not the City may purchase any lands in the ALR for parks and trails. | Staff indicated that the Parks Department has just completed a Trails Strategy that identifies trail locations in the ALR. It is uncertain at this point in time whether City land acquisition in the ALR would be required. |
| It is difficult to get farmers to rent or lease small farm parcels. | Staff acknowledged this comment; the issue is outside of the City's jurisdiction. |
| One person asked whether the City has any land available for lease for farming. | Staff are not aware of any City lands that are available for a farmer to lease. |
| Seasonal farm labour is becoming increasingly scarce. | Staff acknowledged the comment; the issue is outside of the City's jurisdiction. |
| Scorch disease is threatening the City's blueberry farms as it kills plants and spreads quickly from farm to farm through aphids. A local farmer on No. 6 Road, Ms. Trudy Peters, invited City Council, staff and the future Agricultural Advisory Committee to visit her farm and witness the devastation of scorch firsthand. | Staff made note of the invitation and will consider it when the Agricultural Advisory Committee is formed. |
| New houses constructed along No. 4 and No. 5 Roads do not have sewer service and consequently, are polluting the ditches. One property owner in the ALR on No. 6 Road requested that he be allowed to hook his house up to the sanitary sewer line on the opposite side of the road. | Staff acknowledged the comments and indicated that there are no plans to install sanitary sewer service in the ALR. The comment will be forwarded to the Engineering Department. |

| Comments | Response |
|--|---|
| <p>One person inquired about whether there were plans to build a connector route between Highway 91 and Knight Street and whether there would be land acquisition in the ALR to achieve this new route.</p> | <p>Staff are not aware that a connector is planned for this location.</p> <p>Staff have since learned that Highway 91 and the interchange with Knight Street belongs to the Ministry of Transportation and there are no plans for further changes in this area.</p> |
| <p>It was suggested that the City study the amount of toxic waste accumulation in Richmond as our high water table is impacted by the amount of waste discharged by surrounding municipalities into the river.</p> | <p>Staff acknowledged the comment and will consider this in RAVS implementation.</p> |

Conclusion

The RAVS outlines the guiding principles and general policy direction regarding agricultural lands in Richmond.

A Public Information Meeting was held on May 14, 2003 in accordance with Planning Committee’s instructions to enable people to have more time to review the final draft RAVS and clarify any questions they may have about it.

Many of the issues and concerns raised throughout the public meetings need to be addressed with the assistance of the proposed Agricultural Advisory Committee and with further public consultation.

It is recommended that the final draft of the RAVS, as outlined in the February 19, 2003 report from the Manager, Policy Planning, be approved.



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 Planner 2
 (4108)

JL:jl

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Report presented at the Public Information Meeting on "RICHMOND AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY STRATEGY".
 Richmond City Hall - May 14, 2003

To the members of the City's Planning Committee:

The final draft of the Richmond Agricultural Viability Strategy and the staff report are interesting.

They contain excellent Objectives and Recommendations towards the preservation of our farmland. My question is: are there real intentions to implement them? Some of us heard of these objectives and recommendations twenty years ago. Not much has resulted to this day.

Now it seems the City is realizing that something should be done if Richmond farmland is going to be preserved for the benefit of future generations, not for the next 20 years but 50 - 100 years from today.

Or are these reports printed to pacify the public at large and then one day it will be declared that farming in Richmond is not viable any more, in spite of being at the heart of a large market? Is it going to be said then that it is time to let farmland in the Agricultural Land Reserve (A.L.R.) open for development? This seems easy if, one day, five of the nine voting members of the City Agricultural Advisory Committee of Council (AAC) would decide to declare that "farming in Richmond is no more viable"? Is this all it would take ?

Farming is hard work, but it is no different from most other businesses or industries as far as viability is concerned: you have good years and you may have bad years too. This is when a business has to adapt, to adjust, to diversify or sell out. Ask the airline industry today, or the people who invested their money in mutual funds three or four years ago? Should they all quit or ask for compensation because the value of their assets went down 30% or 50%?. It is a similar situation for the agriculture industry in Richmond.

The real question is whether farmland in Richmond and the lower mainland should be preserved on a permanent basis for the benefit of future generations? Yes or no.

If the answer to this question is NO, then the A.L.R. has no reason to exist and should be scrapped immediately.

On the other hand, if good productive farmland continues to be depleted at today's rate, then there is a strong possibility that our descendants will be pointing a finger at our generation and ask: "what have you done?"

/.....

Twenty years ago Richmond residents were told that permanent boundaries would be established, with buffer zones, to separate rural areas from urban areas. Where are they?

The current reports are full of good intentions and recommendations to promote preserving farmland. They also contain contradictory statements regarding the word "viability".

Drainage, for exemple, is often mentioned as a priority to "maintain or improve farming viability in Richmond".

For area 6 called "East Richmond 2" the RAVS report says on page 55: "Drainage of the soils is inadequate" followed by Recommendation No58 which reads:
"Ensure that East Richmond 2 is considered a priority area for drainage improvements in the City Master Drainage Plan".

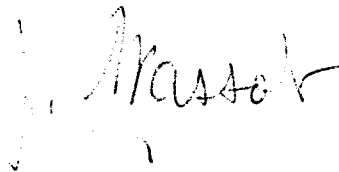
Yet, in this area, the municipal authorities have recently closed a drainage ditch on Westminster Highway between No6 and No 7 Roads. Today they are planning to continue the project by closing the large drainage canal from No 7 Road to No 8 Road.

It is obvious that the closing of these ditches on Westminster Highway, right in the middle of an agricultural area, is in direct contradiction of the overall objectives and recommendations of the Agricultural Viability Strategy's report dated February 18, 2003. Should the remainder of the report be interpreted in a similar fashion?

Regarding the matter of farmland preservation please find, attached to this report, a copy of an article printed in the Richmond Review paper on April 22, 1992.

May these documents which are the views of a former Richmond farmer be helpful to you.

Respectfully submitted,



John Massot

c.c. to:-Greater Vancouver Regional District

-British Columbia Agricultural Land Commission

Are there answers to Terra Nova dilemma?

Editor, The Review:

Much has been said and written about the Terra Nova controversy since the last municipal election of November 1990.

But one may wonder how much of it is dealing fairly and objectively with the overall Terra Nova issue: preservation of farm land for the benefit of future generations.

Some would like to rezone Terra Nova to agricultural use, over and above the decisions of a former municipal council. This is not fair: when a permit is lawfully given, it should be respected and remain valid. If the law, or procedures, relating to such permits are bad, or improper, then one should work to change these first. But not the other way around, which usually ends up being very upsetting, very costly, or both.

Others seem to see nothing better than letting market forces take over every square foot of all Richmond farm lands for building purposes and roads with some ludicrous excuses such as: "let the market decide," "imported farm products are cheaper," "farming is not economical or feasible" (even in soil classes 1, 2 and 3); "you cannot farm next door to residential areas;" "farm land is too expensive", etc...

I cannot agree with either form of action.

If we let the latter happen it is not going to be very long (one, two or three generations at the very most) before we wake up to different realities.

Many parts of the world have recently been confronted with serious problems of air and water pollution, requesting costly actions to be taken for our own survival.

When it comes to our food supply, let us be fully aware that good farm land is disappearing much faster than most of us realize: at the present rate of depletion of a minimum of 1.7 million acres of crop lands per year - most of it lost to residential

developments - the U.S., the largest food producer in the world, would lose the totality of their crop lands of about 400 million acres in just 235 years.

If we do not change what we are presently doing in North America, this is the legacy that we are preparing for our grandchildren.

If first-quality farm lands are not presently preserved in and around populated areas - when alternatives are available on a local or regional basis - it is not, as some would claim, in order to provide "affordable housing." It is simply because we live with a political system which permits windfall profits through rezoning - particularly on farm lands - to developers and land speculators.

As long as these windfall profits are permitted, protection and preservation of farm lands will remain just a dream, an utopia.

Easy money through rezoning is so attractive and so rewarding that many people will do almost anything to jump on the bandwagon where greed breeds more greed. But then many will become upset when their neighbors across the street are successful and they are not.

I am of the opinion that the remaining best farm lands of Richmond should be preserved permanently. But to do this our present council and other politicians at all levels of government should work toward finding ways and means to eliminate windfall profits on land speculation. So far I have not heard nor read much going in that direction.

The council should also stop wasting time - and possibly large amounts of money - trying to return to agricultural use any of the Terra Nova lands which were lawfully rezoned as residential in 1988. Fair is fair.

John Massot,
Richmond

MCLENNAN FARMERS' WORKSHOP MAY 25, 2000

MR. K.D. WIESEL, 10451 GRANVILLE AVENUE, RICHMOND

Agricultural Viability, Major Problem Issues at McLennan Area

1. Residential and light commercial users have been allowed to mix with agriculture in the past 30 years, which reduced and eventually defeated the viability of agriculture.
2. Increase in water table and poor drainage contributed to major crop reduction, i.e. 1968 = 32 tonnes down to 1999 = 15 tonnes.
3. Built up perimeter roads with residential dwellings, which discharge fluids into farmlands, as well as restrict part of farm operations.
4. Restriction of farm operating practices, i.e. spraying, bird control, burning
5. Farm access roads used for large truck refuse dumping
6. Farm roads used for joyriding, 4WD vehicles and off-road motor bikes.
7. Public trespassing and vandalism common in our farm areas, police unable to respond.
8. Cost of production: West Richmond farmlands priced too high to compete with other outlying areas or greenhouse producers.
9. Poor access to markets, processors and suppliers, which have all moved from Richmond to Abbotsford and beyond for economic reasons.
10. Very little produce flexibility due to poor soil conditions, i.e. peat soil plus poor drainage control.
11. The McLennan Area is beyond agricultural viability, for some 15 years now, due to economic reasons and urban encroachment. This was tabled already in 1987 with the City in form of numerous presentations at the OCP Hearings.

COMMENTS ON REPORT TO PLANNING COMMITTEE

FOR THE RAVS , MAY 14th 2003

BY MR. KLAUS WIESEL , 10451 GRANVILLE AVE

AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY STRATEGY

1. Report is well put together, but it's 15 years late and now very costly for some areas. How much "**Business Sense**" it makes is questionable.

2. City wants to promote and foster positive attitudes and images for the **preservation of farmland** and green space – **Motherhood issues**.

3. The Viability Report has **not provided any costs** to implement various strategies. Viability is much affected by **economic conditions**.
Much of the **farm infrastructure** in Richmond needs **repair and upgrading**. Funding from possibly senior governments and the Richmond taxpayer.

4. Talking about money, in this case **big money**, **Return on Investment** requires much planning and serious considerations.
One consideration – to establish **Degrees of Viability**, i.e. **poor, possible and reasonable**.
To focus funding and assistance to the most promising economic situations.
If farming is to survive and prosper, it has to be managed like a business.

5. The Viability Strategy aims to **create partnerships** between Richmond City, the General Public and the Farming Community.

6. It became apparent in Richmond City's **4 or 5 Viability Workshops** that many **farmers have become distrustful** of the City's efforts, due to a **lack of support to the farming community in the past 15 to 25 years**.

7. I participated for the City in the McLennan Area Study Group for the **OCP Programs, some 16 years ago**.
The most pressing problem of many identified was **Lack of Drainage to farmland**, which the City in today's **Viability Report acknowledges**.
The McLennan farmer is trying to farm on a slightly submerged lake for part of the year,

Partly caused by the **many houses along all roads built in recent years**, some houses 10,000 sq.ft. large, a convalescent care facility, and churches.

All their **fluids discharge through septic fields into the farm land**.

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8. **The city needs to owe up for not protecting the farming infrastructure in McLennan and possibly other areas.**
9. **Residential and light commercial users have been allowed to mix with agriculture in the past many years which reduced and eventually defeated the viability of agriculture.**
10. **We are effected by poor access to the farmland, and major crop reductions, i.e. 32 tonnes in 1968, down to 15 tonnes in 2000.**
11. **During the City's Study Workshops in the 3 farming areas, people identified a number of longtime problem-issues affecting farming in some Richmond areas. Pages 14 & 19 & 51.**

Some of these problem-issues are listed in your Report.

What was done to study these issues and check them out for documentation?

*SUBMISSION TO PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING,
RICHMOND AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY STRATEGY,
ON MAY 14th 2003*

*BY MR. KLAUS WIESEL OF
K. WIESEL BERRY FARMS, 10451 GRANVILLE AVE.*