



To: Planning Committee

Date: June 30, 2004

From: Terry Crowe
Manager, Policy Planning

File: 08-4050-10

RE: OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN AMENDMENT – AGRICULTURAL BUFFERS

Staff Recommendation

1. That Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw No. 7768, which amends the agricultural buffer requirements in the Development Permit Area Guidelines of Official Community Plan Bylaw 7100, be introduced and given first reading.

2. That Bylaw No. 7768, having been considered in conjunction with:

- the City's Financial Plan and Capital Program;
- the Greater Vancouver Regional District Solid Waste and Liquid Waste Management Plans;

is hereby deemed to be consistent with said program and plans, in accordance with Section 882(3)(a) of the Local Government Act.

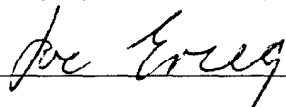
3. That Bylaw No. 7768, having been considered in conjunction with Section 882(3)(c) of the Local Government Act, be referred to the Agricultural Land Commission for comment and response by August 11, 2004.

4. That Bylaw No. 7768, having been considered in accordance with the City Policy on Consultation During OCP Development, is hereby deemed not to require further consultation.



Terry Crowe
Manager, Policy Planning

TC:jl

FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY		
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER		
		
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
REVIEWED BY CAO	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

The purpose of this report is to outline several minor housekeeping text amendments to the Development Permit Area Guidelines in the Official Community Plan (OCP) that pertain to the width of landscaped buffer areas adjacent to the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The purpose of the amendment is to achieve public safety, and avoid urban-rural land use conflicts and complaints.

Findings of Fact

Section 9.2.11 of the OCP includes general guidelines for developments that are adjacent to the ALR. The relevant clauses state the following:

- “b) For all developments immediately adjacent to sites designated within the Agricultural Land Reserve (i.e. no intervening road), a landscaped buffer 15 m (49.2 ft.) wide must be provided between the development and the agricultural land;
- c) All development across a road from sites designated as Agricultural Land Reserve must provide a minimum 5 m (16.4 ft.) landscaped strip as measured from the back of curb, or, in the case of an unopened road, from the property line abutting the road right-of-way. Landscaping should reinforce the character of agricultural lands, including large-scale trees, a combination of shrubs and ground cover, and, where appropriate, a sidewalk;”

Analysis

On April 26, 2004, Council adopted a Zoning Amendment Bylaw to permit the development of 83 townhouses and 8 single-family lots at 13160 Princess Street and 6431 Princess Lane (RZ 03-229096) in the London-Princess Area. The proposed single-family lots at the east end of the site are immediately adjacent to the ALR.

The applicant, Oris Development Ltd., chose to locate the proposed single-family houses adjacent to the ALR in order to keep a lower density form of development in areas adjacent to the ALR. The rear yards of the single-family lots, which were 12 m (39.4 ft.) in depth, were proposed to function as the landscaped ALR buffer.

As the buffer will be narrower in width than the 15 m guideline in the OCP and as it will function as rear yard space for future residents, the applicant worked with the City’s Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) to define an appropriate buffer.

After discussions with the applicant, the AAC endorsed the 12 m buffer because:

1. The rear yards will be raised approximately 1.2 m (4 ft.);

2. A 2.4 m (8 ft.) high fence will be constructed on top of the retaining wall to eliminate ground level views and opportunities for trespass into the agricultural areas. The fence will also help to screen the rear yards from any dust or drift that may emanate from normal farm activities;
3. A row of evergreen trees will be planted within the rear yards in order to form a 4.6 m to 6 m (15 ft. to 20 ft.) high evergreen hedge in addition to the fencing;
4. The width of the landscaped strip within the rear yards will be 4.6 m (15 ft.) and will contain deciduous trees and trespass inhibiting shrubs;
5. A restrictive covenant will be registered over the entire 12 m rear yard area in order to identify it as an agricultural buffer, prevent any of the trees and shrubs planted within it from being removed, and prevent the construction of any habitable buildings or structures within this area.

All development proposals adjacent to the ALR are referred to the AAC for review and comment. The experience with this application has demonstrated that, with the input of the AAC, it is possible to design an adequate buffer to the ALR that is less than the 15 m guideline outlined in the OCP.

The current wording of the guideline prescribes that any buffers adjacent to the ALR must be at least 15 m in width. In light of recent experience, Staff propose a minor amendment to the guidelines in the OCP to add flexibility to the width of the landscaped buffer. Additional guidelines are also proposed to provide more specific information on the type of vegetation that should be provided in the buffer.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

The proposed OCP amendments provide flexibility in the design of buffers adjacent to the ALR. As all development proposals are referred to the AAC for review and comment, the integrity of the buffer will be protected through this process. It is recommended that the proposed minor text amendments be approved.

Janet Lee
Planner 2
(4108)

JL:cas



**Richmond Official Community Plan Bylaw 7100
Amendment Bylaw 7768**

The Council of the City of Richmond, in open meeting assembled, enacts as follows:

1. Richmond Official Community Plan Bylaw 7100 is amended by replacing clauses (b) and (c) of Section 9.2.11 Adjacent Uses (Edge Conditions) with the following:

“b) The purpose of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) buffer is to achieve public safety, and to minimize agricultural-urban land use conflicts and complaints. For all developments immediately adjacent to sites designated within the ALR (i.e. no intervening road), a landscaped buffer of approximately 15 m (49.2 ft.) wide, or of an alternate width deemed appropriate and acceptable, should be provided between the development and the agricultural land. Landscaping should reinforce the character of agricultural lands, including large-scale trees, and a combination of shrubs and ground cover;

c) The purpose of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) buffer is to achieve public safety, and to minimize agricultural-urban land use conflicts and complaints. All development across a road from sites designated as ALR should provide a minimum 5 m (16.4 ft.) landscaped strip, or an alternate width that is deemed appropriate and acceptable, as measured from the back of curb, or, in the case of an unopened road, from the property line abutting the road right-of-way. Landscaping should reinforce the character of agricultural lands, including large-scale trees, a combination of shrubs and ground cover, and, where appropriate, a sidewalk;”

2. This Bylaw may be cited as “**Richmond Official Community Plan Bylaw 7100, Amendment Bylaw 7768**”.

FIRST READING

PUBLIC HEARING

SECOND READING

THIRD READING

ADOPTED

CITY OF RICHMOND
APPROVED for content by originating dept.
APPROVED for legality by Solicitor

MAYOR

CITY CLERK