

Richmond Farmers Institute

Response to the City of Richmond's proposed house size limits for AG1 zoned lands

The farmers of the Richmond Farmers Institute are opposed to further regulations impacting the viability of agriculture in the City of Richmond.

The RFI believes that truly bona fide farmers, whose primary occupation is farming, have behaved responsibly. Farmers have constructed and reside in homes that are appropriate and supportive of agriculture in our community.

We are aware of non-farmers who are purchasing AG1 land with the primary objective of building large residences and their impact on agriculture.

City Council may determine that the course of action needed to resolve this behaviour is to impose limitations on the size of house that can be constructed on AG1 zoned land. Regulations imposed on farm land in Richmond should be carefully considered to specifically address the challenges and needs of farm land in this municipality.

The RFI provides the following guidance when considering the impacts to the livelihoods of generational farmers and their families.

The maximum house size limit should be consistent with recent average house sizes constructed on AG1 zoned lands. A maximum house size of 1000 sq.m provides consistency and will prevent increasingly larger houses from being constructed.

A home plate should be determined using the following criteria:

1. Access for farming equipment to the farmable area of the property needs to be maintained.
2. Residential accessory structures should be limited to a maximum home plate size of 0.4 ha

The current maximum 50m setback for a residence is satisfactory. Additional residential structures within the current 100m setback are also satisfactory. Should a Riparian Management Area be present, the setbacks should be measured from the termination of the RMA.

Septic tanks may be included in the home plate, but septic fields need not be included.

Additional houses for full time farm workers, when appropriately qualified, should each have individual home plates, and be limited by the regulations consistent with the primary residence.

The current 0.6 Floor Area Ratio for residential and farm buildings, except where greenhouses are located on the lot, in which case the maximum FAR would be 0.75, of which at least 0.70 FAR must be used for greenhouses is satisfactory.

Seasonal worker buildings should not be affected by the proposed housing regulations.

The Richmond Farmers Institute