

PITT MEADOWS



CITY OF  
**Pitt Meadows**  
*The Natural Place*

Historical Staff Report -  
For Reference Only

## Staff Report to Council

Community Services Department

FILE: 6635-20-2016-03

**DATE:** May 15, 2018 **Date of Meeting – June 19, 2018**  
**TO:** Mayor and Council  
**FROM:** Allison Dominelli, Development Services Technician  
**SUBJECT:** Agricultural Land Commission Non-Farm Use Application for 18701 Lougheed Highway

**RECOMMENDATION(S):** THAT Council:

- A. Decline to forward to the Agricultural Land Commission the Non-Farm Use Application for religious and community gatherings at 18701 Lougheed Highway; OR
- B. Other.

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER COMMENT/RECOMMENDATION:**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to present to Council an application for a non-farm use in the Agricultural Land Reserve, submitted by the Khalsa Darbar Society for their property at 18701 Lougheed Highway.

☐ Information Report ☐ Direction Report ☒ Decision Report

**DISCUSSION**

**Background:**

The City has received a non-farm use application for 18701 Lougheed Hwy. The property contains an agricultural building that the Khalsa Darbar Society would like to use for religious and community gatherings several times per month. A 0.5 acre community garden is also planned next to the building. This property is zoned General Agriculture (A-1) and is designated as Agricultural – 8 ha (20 acres) minimum parcel size. The property is located within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), and requires approval from the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) in order to use the property for the non-farm use of religious and community gatherings. The property would also require rezoning to be approved for this use.

## PITT MEADOWS

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Applicant:         | Lee Mackenzie, Greenline Management Ltd.   |
| Owner:             | Khalsa Darbar Society  |
| Civic Address:     | 18701 Lougheed Hwy   |
| Legal Description: | Lot 8 Except: Part Subdivided by Plan 48713; Sections 23 and 26 Block 6<br>North Range 1 East New Westminster District Plan 3276 |
| Parcel Area:       | 8.38 ha (20.7 acres)   |
| OCP:               | Agricultural – 20 ha minimum parcel size   |
| Zoning:            | General Agriculture A-1  |

The Khalsa Darbar Society has owned the property since 1991. There were previous applications made to the City and the ALC in 1991 and 1995 to construct a Sikh Temple on the property; these were both turned down by City Council of the day. As part of the 1991 application, a consultant was hired by the City to provide professional advice. The consultant concluded that 18701 Lougheed Highway was not recommended and that the applicant should look at other locations such as the North Lougheed area east of Harris Road or the industrial designated area in southeast Pitt Meadows.

There is an existing trailer on the property being used for storage and the majority of the property is used for blueberry crops. In 2011, a building permit for a 5000 ft<sup>2</sup> agricultural building was issued with a caretaker suite, processing area, equipment storage and employee lunch room. This is the building that is proposed to be used several times per month for religious purposes, including weddings. The owners have also proposed a 0.5 acre community garden to be managed by the Society with plots available to residents of Pitt Meadows free of charge. Community garden members will also be permitted to use the building for processing produce from their garden plot.

The agricultural soil capability of the land ranges from mostly Class 2 with some Class 3 and 4. The agricultural capability is ranked on a scale from Class 1 to 7; Class 1 is considered the best land for agriculture and Class 7 the worst. With improvements such as irrigation, all the property can be improved to Class 2 or 3.

### **Relevant Policy, Bylaw or Legislation:**

This issue is regulated by the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*; Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 2352, 2007; Zoning Bylaw No. 2505, 2011.

### **Analysis:**

#### *Agricultural Land Commission Process*

A non-farm use application only proceeds to the ALC for review if it receives approval from the local government to be forwarded, in the form of an authorizing resolution. Council has the option of:

- Not forwarding the application to the ALC; OR
- Forwarding the application to the ALC with a recommendation of support; OR
- Forwarding the application to the ALC with no comment; OR
- Forwarding the application to the ALC with a recommendation of no support.

If an application is forwarded to the ALC, the ALC will consider the input of the local government but ultimately any decision is made by the ALC. Conversely, if Council does not resolve to forward an application to the ALC, then the application does not proceed any further. There is no appeal process to the ALC that an applicant can make in that case.

### Official Community Plan

The OCP supports agricultural uses and discourages conversion of agricultural land into other uses. The OCP also suggests that an agricultural impact assessment be prepared for non-farm use activities on farmland to quantify the impacts of proposed development that may affect agricultural activity. The OCP is silent on religious facilities but does support cultural, recreation and other community facilities and public uses in the Civic Centre, the Town Centre and Sawyer's Landing Waterfront Village.

### Zoning

The property's A-1 zoning permits agricultural uses. If this application is forwarded to the ALC and is approved by the ALC, the applicants will be required to submit and successfully obtain, a rezoning of the property, to permit the use of *place of worship* in addition to the agricultural use. If a rezoning application was applied for, possible application requirements may include: agricultural impact assessment; more details about the proposed community garden or some other community benefit could be negotiated; building and servicing upgrades to meet Building Code and Engineering requirements; possible traffic study and corresponding ingress/egress improvements; and possible landscape buffering.

### Agricultural Advisory Committee

This application was considered by the City's Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) at their meeting on September 8, 2016. The AAC noted that the condition of this land for agricultural purposes is very good if managed properly. They reiterated that the purpose of the AAC is to preserve farm land and to resist non-farm use applications which could set a precedent. The Committee does not support the loss of farm land in the ALR but understands the need for a building for religious gatherings with their preference that it not be allowed on agricultural land.

### Staff Comments

This application was referred to applicable City departments. The Building Department has advised that an adequate supply of water for fire-fighting purposes is required.

The Fire Department comments include: the building must meet BC Building and Fire Code for assembly use, including sprinklers; Fire Department access to the building from Lougheed Hwy must be maintained and access roads must be maintained to support fire apparatus; a fire safety plan will need to be prepared and reviewed by the Fire Department; a lockbox is required to provide access to site service rooms; and a review of fire hydrant and water supply to this building for firefighting is required.

The Engineering Department has commented that the entry/exit point would likely require enlargement given the number of vehicles accessing/egressing the site but that this will be up to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) to determine. Additional comments include that there is an existing fire hydrant in front of the property but that the existing 1" water service may need to be upgraded for fire suppression purposes.

A referral was also sent to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure as the property is accessed from Lougheed Highway. Presently, there is one gated driveway being used and an additional driveway on the neighbouring property to the east is also being used although there is no registered easement for this shared access. The MOTI has no objection to the proposed ALC non-farm use application under the following conditions: one right-in/right-out access onto Lougheed Hwy is allowed; access shall be constructed in a location and manner acceptable to the Ministry; the existing secondary access on the neighbouring property will be reviewed by Ministry Engineering; and any future rezoning of the land will require review and approval by the Ministry.

## PITT MEADOWS

In general, Planning staff do not support non-farm uses on agricultural property as these remove viable land from agricultural production and may increase speculation on other agricultural properties that other non-farm uses may be supported by the City in the future. This particular application raises concerns about: increased traffic and slowing down on Lougheed Hwy to access the site for religious gatherings and community garden use; additional agricultural land being used for parking; and lack of landscape buffering to adjacent agricultural properties. If this application is approved, Council should also be aware that the Khalsa Darbar Society may wish to apply for permissive tax exemption status.

Based on the size of the building (5000 ft<sup>2</sup>), 47 parking spaces are required for a place of worship or community service use under the City's Zoning Bylaw. This will further eliminate a large area of the property that could be used for agricultural purposes. With the building and parking areas, a large area of agricultural land will be impacted. A relatively small community garden (0.5 acre) does not appear to offset the loss of good, productive agricultural land. For comparison, the existing Pitt Meadows community garden is about two acres in size.

While there is undoubtedly a community desire for such a religious facility in Pitt Meadows, staff do not feel that agricultural land is an appropriate location. Rather, this type of facility is better suited to the urban area where complementary services are located and there is greater accessibility, including transit. Attachment G is a map showing the locations in the City that are zoned to permit a place of worship; currently all of these locations contain a place of worship with the exception of 11887 Bonson Rd which contains a daycare. All of these properties are located within the urban area.

Additionally, the Agricultural Land Commission introduced a new policy for gathering for events. Properties in the ALR are now permitted to hold up to ten events per year with a maximum of 150 people without special approval from the ALC, unless an existing building requires upgrades for assembly use under the BC Building Code in which case an approved non-farm use is required. This was presented to the Khalsa Darbar Society as an option but the Society has advised that more than ten events per year are required.

While there are some properties with existing zoning for places of worship, typically municipalities do not pre-zone locations for this type of use. Rather, any new place of worship would be required to go through the rezoning process, providing an opportunity for public consultation and thorough review. It is acknowledged that Pitt Meadows has a very limited land base in the urban area and that an ideal property for this type of use may not be available or may be expensive. However, in staff's opinion, these reasons do not justify the conversion of good agricultural land for non-farm uses which tend to increase speculation, expectations and the price of other agricultural land to the detriment of legitimate existing and future farming operations.

### Options

1. Decline to forward to the Agricultural Land Commission the Non-Farm Use Application for religious and community gatherings at 18701 Lougheed Highway; OR
2. Forward the Non-Farm Use application for religious and community gatherings at 18701 Lougheed Highway to the Agricultural Land Commission with a recommendation of no support; OR
3. Forward the Non-Farm Use application for religious and community gatherings at 18701 Lougheed Highway to the Agricultural Land Commission with no comments; OR
4. Forward the Non-Farm Use application for religious and community gatherings at 18701 Lougheed Highway to the Agricultural Land Commission with a recommendation of support; OR
5. Other

Staff recommend Option 1 as religious and community gatherings on this property are not permitted by the Official Community Plan or current Zoning Bylaw. Further, non-farm uses on agricultural property tend to

alienate good agricultural land and increase speculation and expectations on other agricultural land, especially properties nearby.

**COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT**

- ☐ Corporate Excellence      ☐ Economic Prosperity      ☐ Community Livability  
☐ Transportation & Infrastructure      ☒ Not Applicable
- 

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- ☒ None      ☐ Budget Previously Approved  
☐ Other      ☐ Referral to Business Planning

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

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**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- ☒ Inform      ☐ Consult      ☐ Involve      ☐ Collaborate      ☐ Empower

Comment(s):

The public will be informed about this application through the normal agenda and Council meeting process.

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**KATZIE FIRST NATION CONSIDERATIONS**

Referral      ☐ Yes      ☒ No

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**SIGN-OFFS**

Written by:

A. Dominelli, Development Services Technician

Reviewed by:

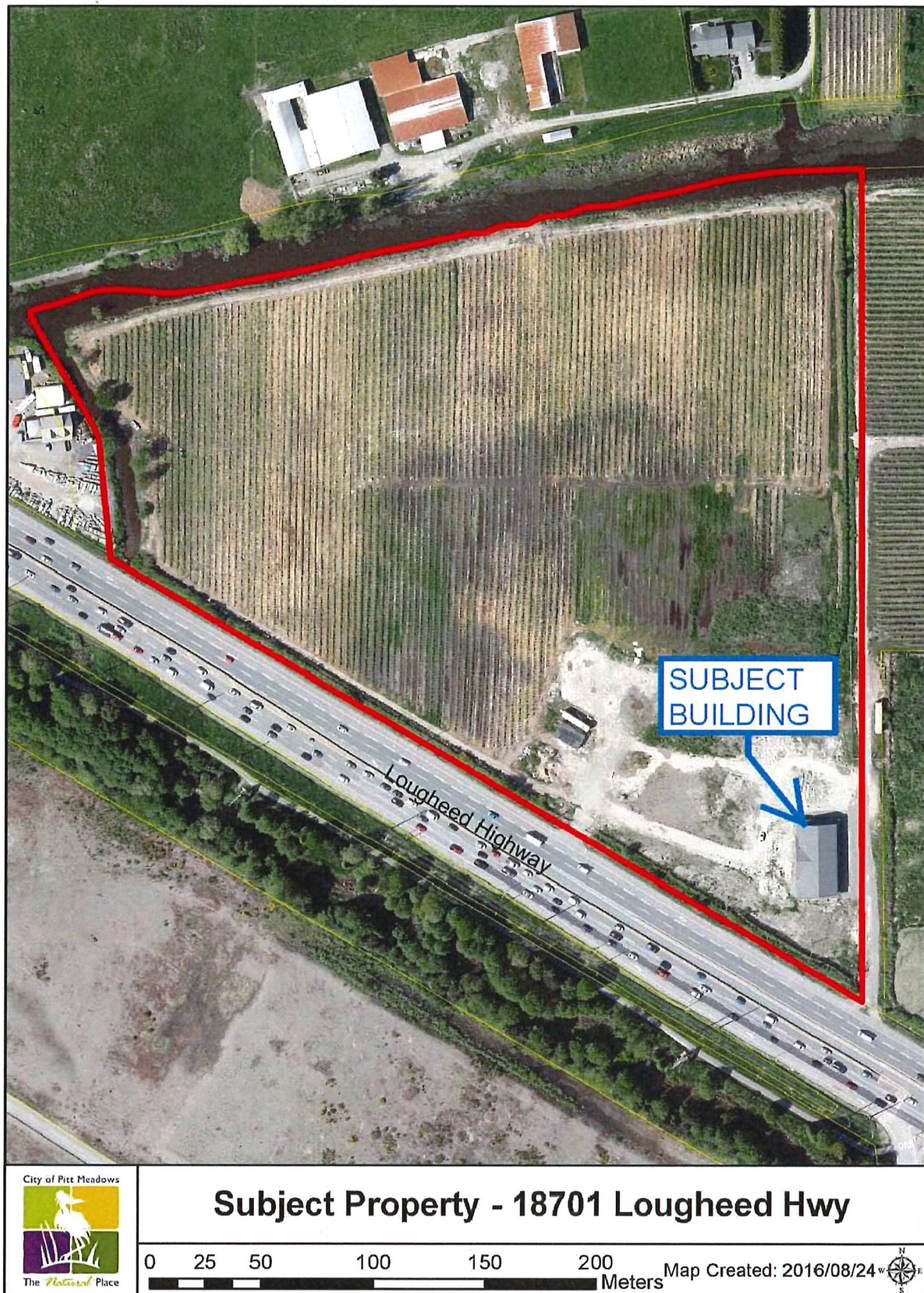
L. Grant, Manager of Community Development

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**ATTACHMENT(S):**

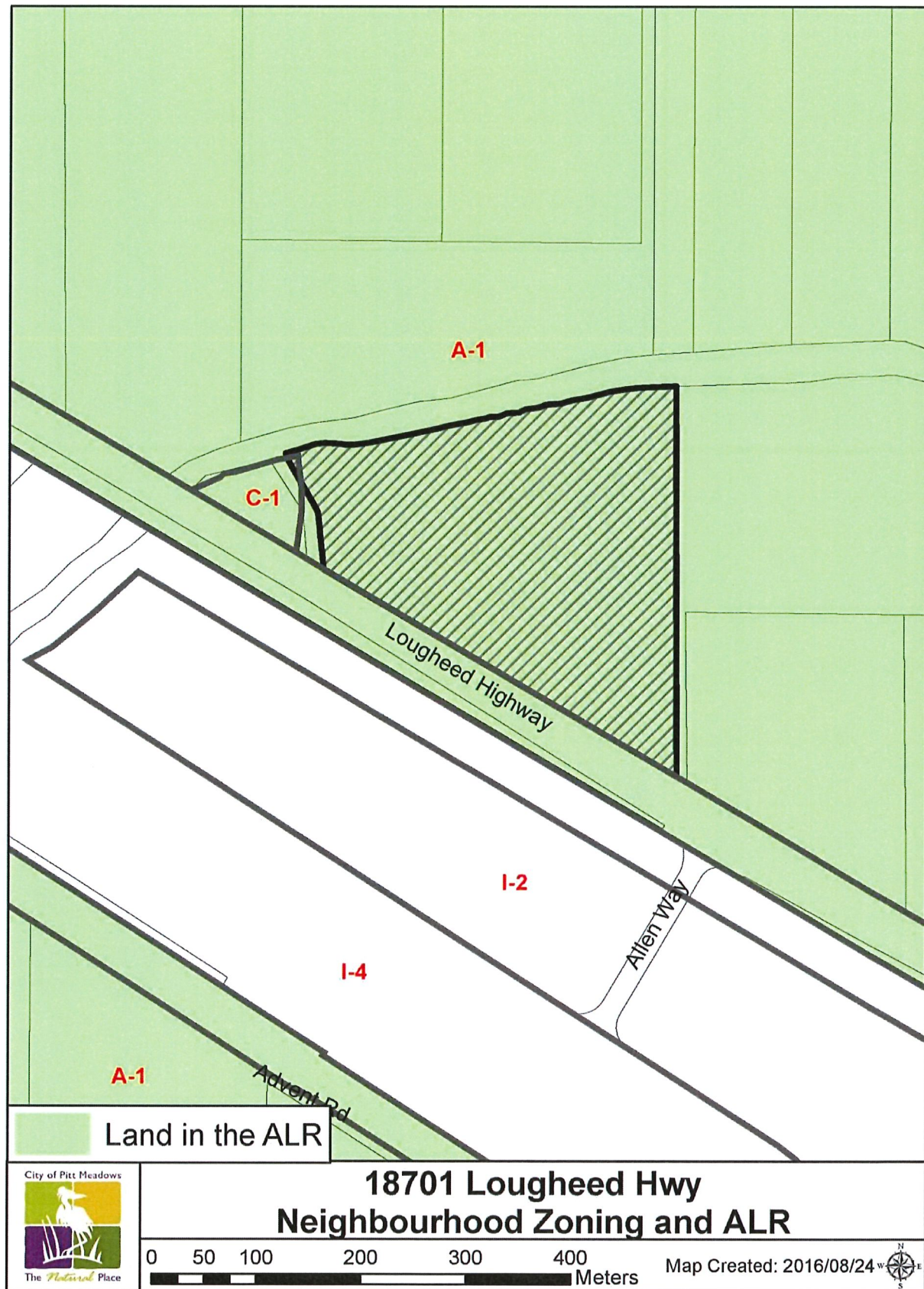
- A. Subject Property Map
- B. Neighbourhood Zoning and ALR Map
- C. Neighbourhood OCP Map
- D. Existing Building Plans
- E. Proposed Community Garden
- F. Letter of Intent
- G. Supplemental Letter from Applicant
- H. Properties Zoned for Places of Worship

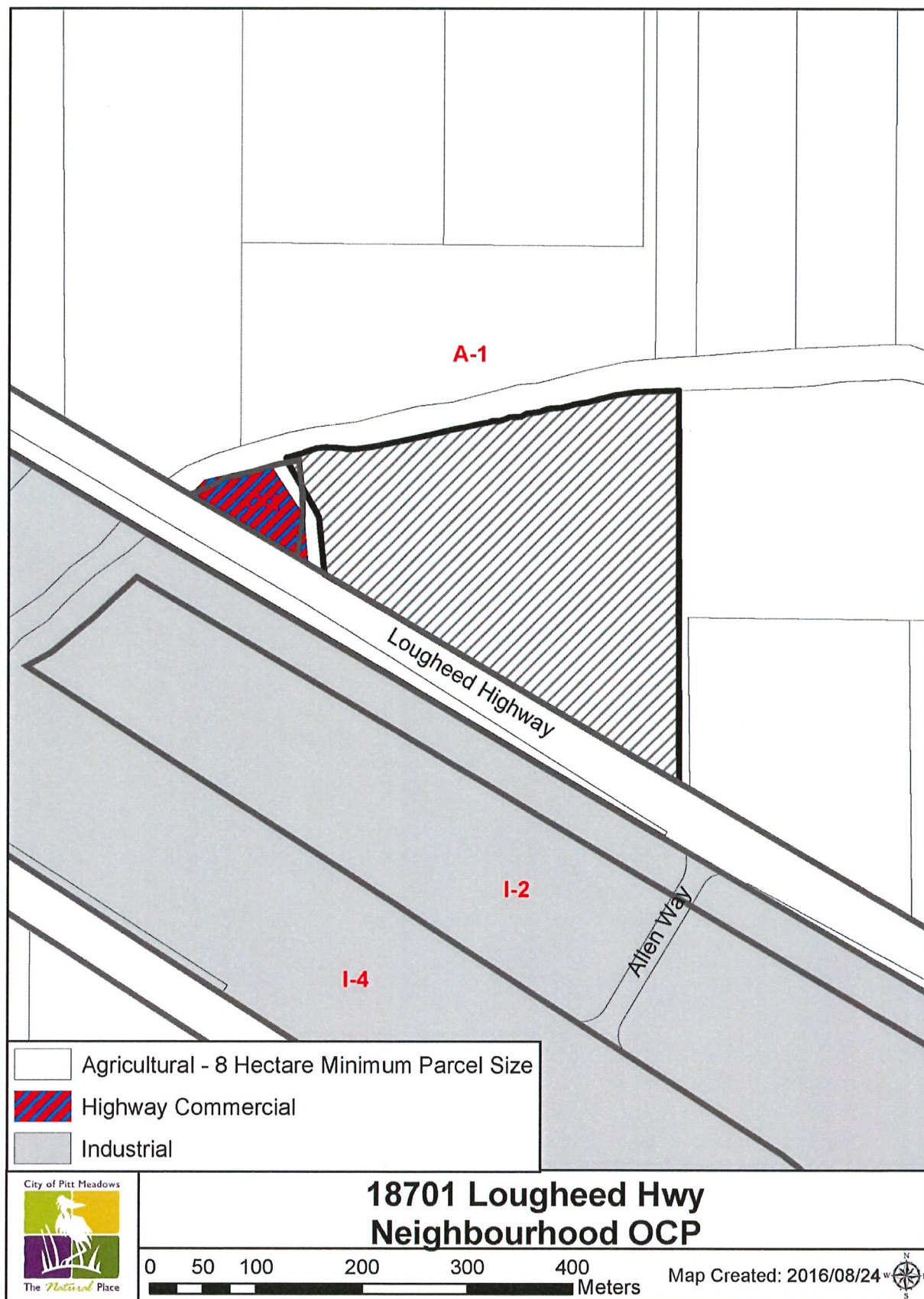






ATTACHMENT B: Neighbourhood Zoning and ALR Boundary







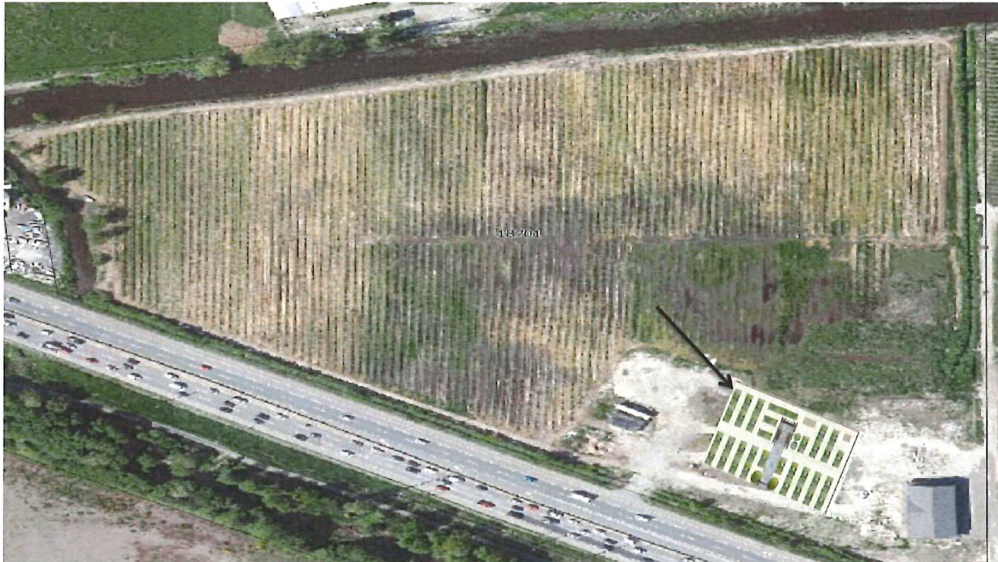
## ATTACHMENT D: Existing Building Plans



# PITT MEADOWS

## ATTACHMENT E: Proposed Community Garden

Community Garden Location( .5acre in size)



Typical Community Garden layout



# PITT MEADOWS

## ATTACHMENT F: Letter of Intent

Greenline Management Ltd.  
Project Management

11579-196 B St.  
Pitt Meadows, B.C. V3Y-1P2  
Ph: 604-319-6638  
greenlinemgmt@gmail.com

August 8, 2016,

Letter Of Intent:

To Whom It May Concern:

The Khalsa Darbar Society of 18701 Lougheed Hwy, Pitt Meadows has retained my services to apply to the City of Pitt Meadows and the ALC to allow an existing building that was constructed on the site in 2010, to be further used as a community gathering building and some religious observations meetings.

The use of this building would be partly non-farm use when it is used for community gatherings. Included in this usage would be the development of a community garden on the site for all Pitt Meadows community to use.

The building was constructed to meet building code bylaws and has the life safety systems installed. Currently, the building is used as a farm process building. The building has a caretaker suite, an area with tables and a kitchen and an area to process farm products.

The society reached out and met with the Mayor of Pitt Meadows and his support letter is attached.

Access to the building is from Lougheed Hwy. It is noted that along the north side of Lougheed Hwy very close to this property is a commercial landscape business and a golf driving range.

The Society would add a .5 acre area where a community garden that would be developed free for Pitt Meadows community to use. The building would be open to all the community to use for gatherings.

The society would continue to use the building as a process building for their harvests. Further uses would be for religious observations. There would be 2-6 meetings a month for religious observations. It is noted that most lower mainland churches are located on ALC farmland. There are several examples across the lower mainland.

We believe the City of Pitt Meadows supports the intended non-farm use of this building and together with the community garden the property would be a great benefit to the Society and the community. The area that would be non-farm use for part of each month is less than one acre of the entire 20 acre property.

This Application includes the following:

1- ALC Application

2- City of Pitt Meadows Application



3- Agent forms (signed)

4-Land Titles

5-BC Registry Services Summary Report

6-Letter of support from the Mayor of Pitt Meadows ( John Becker)

7-Pages of Pictures that Include:

- Pg 1 : Site view

-Pg 2 : Area planted in Blueberries

-Pg3 : location of existing building to be partially used for Non farm Use gatherings

-pg 4: .5 acre community garden to be developed for the community

-pg 5 : typical Community garden layout

-pg 6: typical developed community garden

-pg 7 : Building design that is onsite

-pg 8: Existing Septic field designed and approved for the building

-pg 9: Existing Building Permit

Please review the entire application.

We strongly believe the non-farm use of the building for community gatherings and some religious observations is beneficial to the Pitt Meadows community and the Khalsa Society. The area is less than one acre of the entire 20 acre parcel.

The majority of the property is used for farming and is currently planted in blueberries.

Please contact me directly if you have any questions and or concerns .

Thank You For Your Time  
Lee Mackenzie  
Project Manager

ATTACHMENT G: Supplemental Letter from Applicant

Greenline Management Ltd.  
Project Management

11579-196 B St.  
Pitt Meadows, B.C.  
V3Y-1P2  
Ph: 604-319-6638  
Greenlinemgmt@gmail.com

Oct 10, 2016

Re: 18701 Lougheed Hwy letter for Council:

For : The Khalsa Darbar Society

To Whom it may Concern.:

The following is a supplemental letter to the current application that we have submitted to the City of Pitt Meadows in regards to the non - farm use of the existing building on the site. The application and letter of intent explains the purpose of the application.

It is important to note the following:

- 1- the City of Pitt Meadows does have a designated zoned area for churches however we do not believe there is any available area
  - the Society would have an extremely difficult time to find an offsite area for religious meetings offsite
- 2- the society has a long and good standing in the Pitt Meadows community and deserves a place to have religious meetings on the farm in the existing building
  - many churches have been developed on farm land in the past
- 3- the society will develop a community garden ( free of charge ) for the residents of Pitt meadows on the site
  - the gardens will be free and managed by the society
  - garden will be in an area where there is no current blueberries because the land is not good for the planting of blueberries
  - the rest of the farm is planted in blueberries ( approx. 90 % of the lot)

Further to the submitted application some issues were brought forward by the Agriculture Advisory Committee and in meetings with senior staff. The following will clarify these issues.

Issue #1 - : Community Gardens:

- A- there is a great need and desire for more community gardens in Pitt Meadows
- B- this site has an area where the land is not useful for the growth of blueberries for the garden
- C- the garden will be a good agriculture use and benefit for this area on the farm
- D- the following details are relevant:
  - in our application we detailed an area where a community garden can be developed for the public use
  - the garden plots of 10 ft x 10 ft will be free to use by the public
  - water will be supplied to the gardens
  - and use of the existing building to process the produce from the gardens
  - the plot area will be fenced and locked with plot members having access to the plots.
  - There will be locks on a main gate with keys given out yearly to the plot members
  - The garden area will be located in an area that is not good for planting blueberries
  - The society will form a management group that will oversee the gardens and manage them
  - The plots will be 10 ft x 10 ft and will have framed outlines
  - Each plot will be given out for one year at a time
  - The public that wishes to use the plots will apply directly to the management team
  - A set of rules and regulations will be developed by the society, this will be based on similar gardens in the area
  - The gardens will be a good benefit to agriculture in an area on the property where the land is not ideal for growing blueberries

Issue # 2 - Kwantlen College Program for Agronomy use:

- the society will form a partnership with the college to allow the students use of the property and the building to develop a lab to study the plants
- any minimal maintenance costs will be worked out with College and Society
- students will have access to the site and the building for research
- this will be a great benefit to agriculture

Issue # 3- Road Access:

- society has met with senior staff and we do not believe access will be an issue
- Owners are open to dealing with any issue regarding access if there is a concern

Issue # 4 - Existing Building Usage:

- building is constructed to the building code and has fire safety systems in place
- there only needs a connection to the City 6 inch water line to activate all the requirements for the sprinkler system
- before final approval the City can inspect the building and any further requirements will be met
- building can be used for weddings as now allowed for by the ALC
- weddings will be managed by the society and follow current City and ALC bylaws
- building is used for agriculture at all times of the year and will be open for the community gardens to process their produce from the gardens
- the society will use the building for some religious meetings throughout the year
- all relevant codes and bylaws will be adhered too
- there is enough parking around the building
- access is from Lougheed Hwy

Thank You For Your Time  
Lee Mackenzie  
Project Manager



*City of Pitt Meadows*

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

VIA EMAIL: [gary@purewalblueberry.ca](mailto:gary@purewalblueberry.ca)  
[bradleymusic@shaw.ca](mailto:bradleymusic@shaw.ca)

March 2, 2015

Mr. Gurdial Singh Dulay  
19739 Dewdney Trunk Road  
Pitt Meadows, BC V3Y 1Z1

Attention: Gurd Dulay /Jesse Sidhu /Gary Purewal

Dear Sirs:

Re: Khalsa Darbar Society (the "Society")

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about your community's interest in creating a facility of both specific benefit to your community and general benefit to the greater community of Pitt Meadows and the region.

I can appreciate your desire to have your own space for community gatherings and religious observance. The Sikh community has been an important part of the fabric of Pitt Meadows for over one hundred years and it is time that Pitt Meadows acknowledged the significant contributions of the Sikh community and embraced this project which benefits the entire community.

An application to seek non-farm use of the highway building for a portion of the time would require the approval of the Agricultural Land Commission and the support of Pitt Meadows City Council. I suspect that a general "community benefit" would need to be demonstrated as part of any such application, beyond the ability of the broader community to use the building. Sharing the use of the attached 20 acres of agricultural land and production opportunities might constitute such a "community benefit".

In my capacity as Mayor I would be happy to facilitate a meeting with our planning staff to discuss the application process and explore options on ways Pitt Meadows City Council can assist your Society in realizing its inclusive vision for the property.

Yours truly,

  
John Becker  
Mayor

12007 Harris Road, Pitt Meadows, British Columbia V3Y 2B5  
Phone: 604-465-5454 Fax: 604-465-2404  
[www.pittmeadows.bc.ca](http://www.pittmeadows.bc.ca)



ATTACHMENT H: Properties Zoned for Places of Worship

