

What the Agricultural Land Commission considers:

Applicant Information

Question	Reason for Consideration	Potential Consequence of Approval
How long has the applicant owned the property?	Applicants who have recently purchased agricultural parcels and have not attempted to farm or improve the land may not be committed to using the ALR parcel for agriculture.	Encourages short-term land owners to apply for non-agricultural land uses.

Parcel Information

Question	Reason for Consideration	Potential Consequence of Approval
Is the property currently used for agriculture?	If the land is currently used for agriculture, there must be compelling justification for it to be used for a non-farm purpose, or to subdivide or exclude.	Loss of current productive agricultural land.
What is the agricultural capability?	Prime agricultural land is scarce and extremely valuable. Some secondary classification land can be improved to prime, while other types of agriculture require large tracts of secondary class land for pasture and forage crops. Consider agricultural capability of the land with and without improvements before allowing a proposal based on poor agricultural capability. Land that is suitable for farm use, the farm use can be either soil-bound or non-soil bound agriculture.	Loss of current or potentially productive agricultural land.
Have there been any attempted agricultural improvements to the property?	The Commission considers whether an effort to improve the land has been attempted. The Commission considers whether improvements are possible, now or in future, regardless of the current landowner's interest in undertaking them.	The Commission considers whether an effort to improve the land has been attempted.
Is the property suitable for agriculture?	If the land is suitable for agricultural use (regardless of current use) it should be retained in the ALR. The Commission considers suitability for soil bound and non-soil bound agriculture. Economic viability is not a significant factor in determining benefit or suitability for farm use; that position would inevitably lead to the erosion of the ALR based on prevailing (changing) economic conditions	Loss of potentially productive agricultural land.

What types of land uses surround the property?	<p>The application should not adversely affect surrounding agricultural operations.</p> <p>Surrounding non-agricultural activities may affect the use or suitability of the subject parcel for agriculture.</p> <p>Aim to minimize any possible rural and residential conflicts either by refusing a potentially detrimental proposal, or by applying conditions to an approval (e.g. fencing, buffering, vegetative screening, restrictive covenants, etc).</p>	Negatively impact surrounding agricultural operations, or, create conflict between rural and residential uses.
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Proposal Information

Question	Reason for Consideration	Potential Consequence of Approval
Does the proposal encourage or enhance agriculture or agri-business in the short or long-term?	<p>The purposes of the commission as stated in s. 6 (1) of the ALC Act are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to preserve agricultural land; • to encourage farming on agricultural land in collaboration with other communities of interest; • to encourage local governments, first nations, the government and its agents to enable and accommodate farm use of agricultural land and uses compatible with agriculture in their plans, bylaws and policies. <p>The commission, to fulfill its purposes under subsection (1), must give priority to protecting and enhancing all of the following in exercising its powers and performing its duties under this Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the size, integrity and continuity of the land base of the agricultural land reserve; • the use of the agricultural land reserve for farm use. 	Heightens expectations for non-agricultural land uses in the ALR, loss of land for agricultural use.
Will the proposal encourage farm use in the ALR while preserving the land base?	<p>The commission considers if the impact of the proposal will encourage farming, while preserving the ALR land base.</p> <p>Encouraging farm use is not looked at in isolation from s. 6(1). The commission considers the greater impact on preserving agricultural land.</p>	Subdivision or other non-farm uses proposed on the basis of financing farm uses may have a negative impact on the long-term preservation of agricultural land.

Could this proposal be accommodated on lands outside of the ALR, or on an alternative site within the ALR that is less capable or suitable for agriculture?	Any non-agricultural use within the ALR needs to be compatible and/or clearly justified. Once agricultural land is lost, it is rarely ever reclaimed to agricultural use. ALR land is often less expensive than non-ALR lands but this does not justify its use for non-farm purposes.	Loss of current or potentially productive agricultural land.
Will the proposal remove agricultural land?	The purpose of the Commission includes the preservation of agricultural land. This includes preservation of land regardless of whether it is currently used or unused but has potential for future use.	Loss of current or potentially productive agricultural land.
Does the proposal/application ensure that land is available for farm use if changed circumstances in the future require it?	Once agricultural land is used for non-agricultural purposes, it may be difficult to reclaim or convert to agricultural use.	Loss of current or potentially productive agricultural land.
Does the proposal/application impact the size, continuity, or integrity of the ALR land base?	The purpose of the Commission includes the preservation of agricultural land. This includes preservation of land regardless of whether it is currently used or unused but has potential for future use. Once agricultural land is lost, it is rarely ever reclaimed to agricultural use.	Loss of current or potentially productive agricultural land. Risk of non-compatible uses on ALR land impacting farm uses on other ALR land.
Is a non-adhering residential use necessary for, or supportive of, farm use?	Non-adhering residential uses should be commensurate with the type and scale agriculture taking place on the property. Some intensive agricultural activities and livestock require on-site farm help either seasonally or year round. The ALC has consistently considered residential uses based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • current level of agriculture on the property (e.g. intensive agricultural operations) • number of people involved in agriculture on the property (i.e. most or all of the people in the residences are involved with agriculture on the property) • minimizing the loss of arable land (i.e. size and siting of residence) 	Loss of current or potentially productive agricultural land Risk that additional residences on ALR land can be used for residential purposes unrelated to farming activities in the future if agricultural use of the property is not maintained

Will the size and siting of the residential use minimize the impact to ALR land?	Clustering residences may be preferred in some instances so that configuration of the residences doesn't encourage a future subdivision application. (e.g. locating residences for "farm help" close to farm infrastructure).	Loss of current or potentially productive agricultural land.
Is the ALC able to approve the application or does the ALC Act or regulations require that it reject the application?	Section 25 of the ALC Act says the ALC must not grant permission for an additional residence unless the additional residence is necessary for a farm use; regulations may also specify circumstances in which the Commission must reject an application.	
Is the proposed subdivision likely to narrow the range of agricultural options on the property, or to otherwise negatively impact the use of the property for farm use?	<p>Subdivision to create smaller lots can erode long-term agricultural potential of a parcel.</p> <p>Parcel size and configuration can influence the type of agriculture that is feasible on a parcel.</p> <p>Smaller parcels on which construction of new residences and infrastructure is allowed may reduce the area available for agriculture.</p> <p>In some areas or for some uses, larger parcels of agriculturally capable land are better-suited for farming (e.g. to allow for adequate supply of forage and rotational grazing, to improve economies of scale to support the production of certain crops, or to accommodate the size of farm equipment typically used to plant and harvest certain crops)</p> <p>Introduction of smaller parcels into agricultural areas may present conflict at the agricultural/residential edge (e.g. trespass, spray drift, littering, as well as complaints of noise, odor, and dust, etc)</p>	<p>Decreased viability of agricultural activity, including decreased potential for future agricultural activity.</p> <p>Additional residential construction and related infrastructure, potentially reducing the area available for agricultural activity on each parcel.</p> <p>Potential introduction of residential uses adjacent to farm uses which may invite conflict beyond the current ownership.</p>

Source: <https://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/application-and-notice-process/applications/what-the-commission-considers/>