

# Staff Report to Council

Planning Department

FILE: 6635-20/23

**REPORT DATE:** February 27, 2023

**MEETING DATE:**

March 07, 2023

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Michelle Baski, Project Manager – Agriculture and Environment

**SUBJECT:** Agricultural Plan Update Scoping Report

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW/APPROVAL:**



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## RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT Council:

- A. Receive for information the report titled “Agricultural Plan Update Scoping Report” dated February 27, 2023, providing the project scope for the Agricultural Plan Update;  
OR
- B. Other.

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to outline for Council the scope for the Updated Agricultural Plan.

☒ Information Report

☐ Decision Report

☐ Direction Report

## DISCUSSION

### Background:

The City of Pitt Meadows is proposing to undertake an update of the Agricultural Plan to serve as a long-term strategic plan to meet the needs of the producers, growers, and the community; and, to provide the direction on how to support a sustainable, viable, and resilient agriculture sector. The City of Pitt Meadows contains over 6,900 ha of land in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), which equates to approximately 78% of the City’s total land area. How we manage and protect this land is important, not only to the viability of the farming community, but also to address local food security and climate change impacts on a broader scale.

The original Agricultural Plan, titled “The District of Pitt Meadows Agricultural Plan” was created in May 2000. This plan contains recommendations to support the vision for agriculture in Pitt Meadows, as stated:

*“The District of Pitt Meadows supports a viable and progressive agriculture industry and will strive to optimize the use of all designated agriculture land within the Agricultural Land Reserve. The District will be proactive in fostering a strong and progressive agriculture industry by supporting farmers in cooperation with the Farm Practices Protection Act (Right To Farm) Legislation, by seeking provincial regulatory reform to ensure fair and equitable taxation, and by establishing policies that encourage farmers to maintain a healthy, prosperous, and sustainable agriculture industry.”*

As this Agricultural Plan is now 22 years old, it needs to be updated to include changes in legislation, regulations, and policies that have been introduced since the Plan was approved. Current issues and needs of growers, producers, and the community will need to be assessed, and emerging climate change impacts will need to be incorporated into the Plan. Additionally, the policies of the Plan will need to align with the policies incorporated into the newly adopted Official Community Plan (OCP).

Updating and implementing the Agricultural Plan will involve:

1. Research and a comprehensive review of the City’s policies and regulatory framework;
2. Engagement to determine the vision, issues, needs, strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities; and
3. Plan development, including recommended actions for addressing the threats, needs, and concerns identified.

**Relevant Policy, Bylaw or Legislation:**

Updating the Agricultural Plan will be informed by:

- Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy, *Metro 2050*;
- Metro Vancouver Climate 2050 Road Map for Agriculture (draft);
- City of Pitt Meadows Agricultural Plan 2000;
- City of Pitt Meadows Official Community Plan;
- City of Pitt Meadows Zoning Bylaw;
- City of Pitt Meadows Strategic Plan;
- City of Pitt Meadows Environmental Inventory and Management Strategy;
- City of Pitt Meadows Drainage and Irrigation Study; and
- City of Pitt Meadows Integrated Stormwater Management Plan.

## **Analysis:**

Several steps are involved in updating and implementing the Agricultural Plan, including:

Research and a comprehensive review of City's policies and regulatory framework:

- Reviewing recent census data and land use inventories to understand the current agricultural context and use that information to update the City's agricultural profile, (i.e. a synopsis of the agricultural status in Pitt Meadows, with a breakdown of land use by crop or livestock);
- Reviewing available literature on current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to agriculture;
- Incorporating newly adopted OCP policies related to: agriculture, environment, employment, transportation, local systems, climate and energy, and hazard and emergency management; and
- Reviewing existing legislation, regulation, regional policies and strategies, and incorporating these directives into the plan.

Engagement:

- Engaging with identified stakeholders and rights-holders to determine key priority issues for protecting, supporting, and enhancing agriculture;
- Engaging with the agriculture community to understand their needs and concerns; and
- Engaging with the local community to determine how to strengthen the links between supporting farming and local food security.

Plan Development:

- Providing recommendations to address the threats, needs and concerns identified and build on existing strengths and opportunities;
- Identifying opportunities for education and succession planning to address the aging farming community; and
- Establishing realistic and measurable targets to achieve through an Implementation Plan with prioritized action items.

Further review and adaptation may be required once a consultant has been selected, based on their recommendations for the plan update and engagement strategy.

The project scope will not include: an Agri-Tourism Plan; an Economic Development Plan; a Drainage and Irrigation Plan; an Invasive Species Management Plan; nor a Climate Adaptation Plan. Although some of this work may be recommended as a result of the Agricultural Plan engagement, they are not intended to be a part of the updated Agricultural Plan itself. Some of this work, for example the Invasive Species Management Plan and Climate Adaptation Plan, is already anticipated for 2024 and may be informed by the updated Agricultural Plan. Any

additional work or recommendations could potentially be considered as part of future business planning.

The project timeline is broken down into four phases as outlined in the table below and presentations to Council are tentatively proposed for the third and fourth quarters of 2023:

Table 1. Project Timeline

Program Phase	Key Activities	Key Deliverables
<b>Phase 1: Project Initiation</b>  January – March 2023  RFP Process March – April 2023	Report to Council on Scope of Work and desired deliverables and timelines.  Advertise RFP, allow for posting period, selection of qualified consultant; kick-off meeting with Consultant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductory report to Council</li> <li>• Selection of a qualified consultant</li> <li>• Kick-off meeting</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 2: Public Engagement and Background Technical Work</b> May – June 2023	Interviews, engagement events, and online surveys for determination of values, goals, issues, and objectives.  Gap analysis of regulatory framework  Background research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Potential open house or public event with discussion boards and survey questions</li> <li>• Online surveys</li> <li>• Findings from gap analysis of regulatory framework</li> <li>• Findings from background research</li> <li>• Draft Agricultural Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 3: Public Engagement on Findings and draft Agricultural Plan</b> September – November 2023	Public open house or public event and online surveys to report out on findings, and receive input on the draft Agricultural Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report to Council summarizing findings and draft Agricultural Plan</li> <li>• Open house or public event with summary of findings and draft Agricultural Plan</li> <li>• Online surveys</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 4: Presentation of Final Agricultural Plan</b> November – December 2023	Make amendments to the Draft Agricultural Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Agricultural Plan report presented to Council</li> </ul>

## **COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT**

- ☒ Principled Governance    ☒ Balanced Economic Prosperity    ☐ Corporate Excellence  
☒ Community Spirit & Wellbeing    ☐ Transportation & Infrastructure Initiatives  
☐ Not Applicable

- Engage stakeholders in meaningful discussion around the current and future success and prosperity of Pitt Meadows;
  - Actively advocate for issues of importance to our community;
  - Support and advocate for the continued viability of our agricultural industry; and
  - Promote the conservation and enhancement of our natural environment for the benefit of current and future generations.
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## **WORKPLAN IMPLICATIONS**

- ☒ Already accounted for in department workplan / no adjustments required  
☐ Emergent issue / will require deferral of other priority(ies)  
☐ Other

The Agricultural Plan update was approved at the December 13, 2022 Council Meeting.

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## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

Funding for consultant fees and engagement costs were previously approved on December 13, 2022, through the Planning and Development Agricultural Plan Decision Package, in the amount of \$80,000.00.

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## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- ☐ Inform    ☒ Consult    ☒ Involve    ☐ Collaborate    ☐ Empower

Comment(s):

The consultant and staff will seek to directly engage identified stakeholders and rights-holders, and solicit feedback from farmers and residents through surveys to gather their values and priorities. Background materials will be provided that summarize the current agricultural profile within the City. These background materials will be prepared to help focus conversations and generate questions that will provide meaningful feedback.

Participants will be asked to respond to a survey at a potential open house, or other public event, and online, to identify their values and priorities. The values and priorities identified through this engagement process will subsequently be used to update the Agricultural Plan. In addition to the

Open House or public event, staff will connect with the community through the City's web resources (i.e., website and social media).

Stakeholders and rights-holders are anticipated to include:

- Agricultural Advisory Committee
- Pitt Meadows Farmer Community and residents
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food
- Agricultural Land Commission
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Metro Vancouver – Agricultural Advisory Committee
- Metro Vancouver – Invest Vancouver
- BC Agriculture Council
- ᑭᑭᑭᑭ (Katzie) First Nation
- AgSafe
- The Do More Agriculture Foundation
- Investment Agriculture Foundation
- 4H Club
- Fraser North Farmers Market Society
- BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation
- BC Greenhouse Growers' Association
- BC Potato and Vegetable Growers' Association
- BC Chicken Growers' Association
- BC Dairy Association
- Farmers for Climate Solutions
- ReSeed
- FoodMesh

#### **KATZIE FIRST NATION CONSIDERATIONS**

Referral    ☒ Yes    ☐ No

The ᑭᑭᑭᑭ (Katzie) First Nation will be invited to participate in the consultation on the update to the Agricultural Plan.

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#### **SIGN-OFFS**

**Written by:**

Michelle Baski,  
Project Manager – Agriculture & Environment

**Reviewed by:**

Colin O'Byrne,  
Manager of Planning

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**ATTACHMENT(S):** None