



Staff Report to Council

Planning and Development

FILE: 6480-20-2024-02

REPORT DATE: January 24, 2025 **MEETING DATE:** February 04, 2025

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Patrick Ward, Director of Planning and Development

SUBJECT: Official Community Plan and Zoning Amendment Application for a Resource Recovery Facility at PID: 003-325-695

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW/APPROVAL:

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Council:

- A. Decline the OCP and Zoning Amendment application for a resource recovery facility at PID: 003-325-695, as presented at the February 4, 2025 Council Meeting; OR
 - B. Other.
-

PURPOSE

To present an introductory report on an Official Community Plan and Zoning Amendment application to permit a resource recovery facility at PID: 003-325-695. A Regional Growth Strategy Amendment is also required, if the project moves forward. If approved, the site will be used for soil washing, which is a process for removing contaminants from excess soil taken from construction sites. The recovered resources (e.g. sand, stone, gravel) can then be reused for construction or other applications.

- Information Report
 Decision Report
 Direction Report

DISCUSSION

Background:

The subject site is located just north of the Lafarge quarry, an approximate 3.6 ha (9 acre) portion of a larger 26.8 ha (66 acre) parcel (see Figure 1). The applicant (QM Environmental) is proposing to lease the site to develop it into the resource recovery facility.



Figure 1: Site

Currently, the site is vacant. Diseased blueberry plants were removed from the site in 2020 and the area has not been replanted.

The property is partially located within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR); however, the proposed lease area is not in the ALR (see Figure 2). The proposed area is located within the floodplain (see Figure 2), and there is a registered covenant on title requiring a minimum flood construction level of 5.2 m.

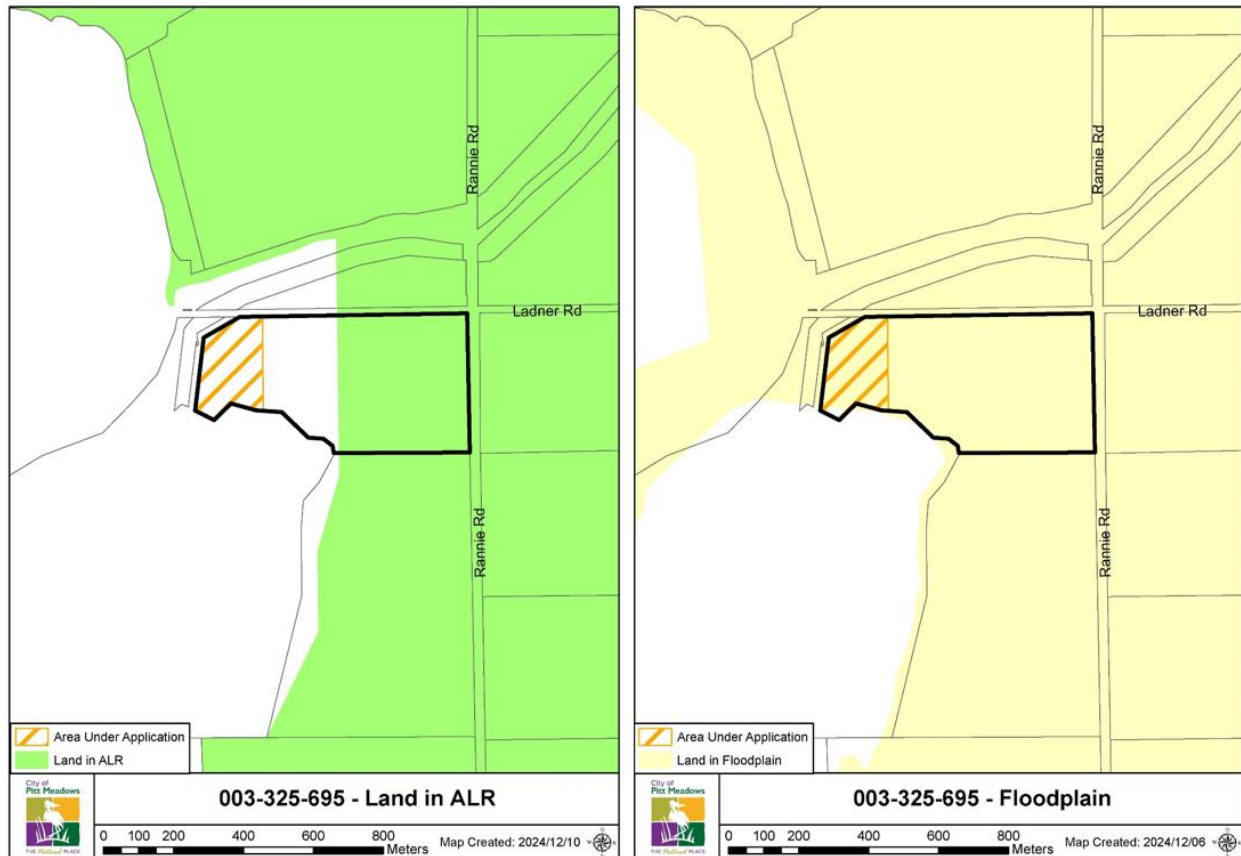


Figure 2: ALR and Floodplain

Sturgeon Slough Road, privately owned by the subject property owner, provides access to the adjacent Lafarge quarry and runs north of the site, along a dike (see Figure 3). The City holds a statutory right-of-way over a portion of that parcel to access the dike on Sturgeon Slough Road and Sturgeon Slough Floodgate. A few years ago, Lafarge widened the road to permit two-way heavy vehicle traffic to the quarry, by agreement with the property owner.



Figure 3: Roads and Access

Previous Development Applications

In 2018, an application was submitted to include the non-ALR portion of the parcel into the ALR. This application was conditional on approval of the Agricultural Land Commission to exclude a different property in Maple Ridge from the ALR. The applicant cancelled the inclusion application when the ALC did not approve the Maple Ridge exclusion.

In 2022, a temporary use permit application was submitted for the site to create an outdoor storage area for farm equipment, construction cranes, crane parts, and other heavy equipment; however, it was ultimately cancelled due to inactivity before Council considered issuance.

Development Proposal

The subject application is to allow a resource recovery facility, also known as soil washing. Soils are “washed” through mechanical and chemical processing to extract contaminants and separate them from sand, stone and gravel aggregates that can be sold for re-use in construction and other applications. The remaining contaminants are concentrated into a filter

cake of extremely condensed fine particles which are disposed of at an off-site, permitted facility (e.g., there is a collection facility in Mission).

Soil from construction sites would be accepted at the facility, and tested in advance of arriving and before being accepted. According to the applicant, the type of soil accepted would exceed Industrial Land Use soil criteria but would be less than Hazardous Waste soil criteria. A permit for a solid waste handling facility is required from Metro Vancouver, and the Province requires compliance with the *Environmental Management Act* for approval of any inbound soils. This involves all incoming soils requiring advance testing and analytical data reviewed by an environmental professional to ensure the soil does not exceed the approved limits (i.e., less than the Hazardous Waste limits).

The applicant advises that operational procedures would require that system testing is conducted throughout the process to monitor and ensure adequate treatment of the water process loop, the recovered aggregate materials, and the waste by-product left behind for disposal. The Ministry of Environment and Parks is the regulatory body responsible for ensuring compliance with the provincial regulations regarding soil relocation.

Proposed renderings have been provided by the applicant (see Figure 4), along with a preliminary site plan (see Figure 5).

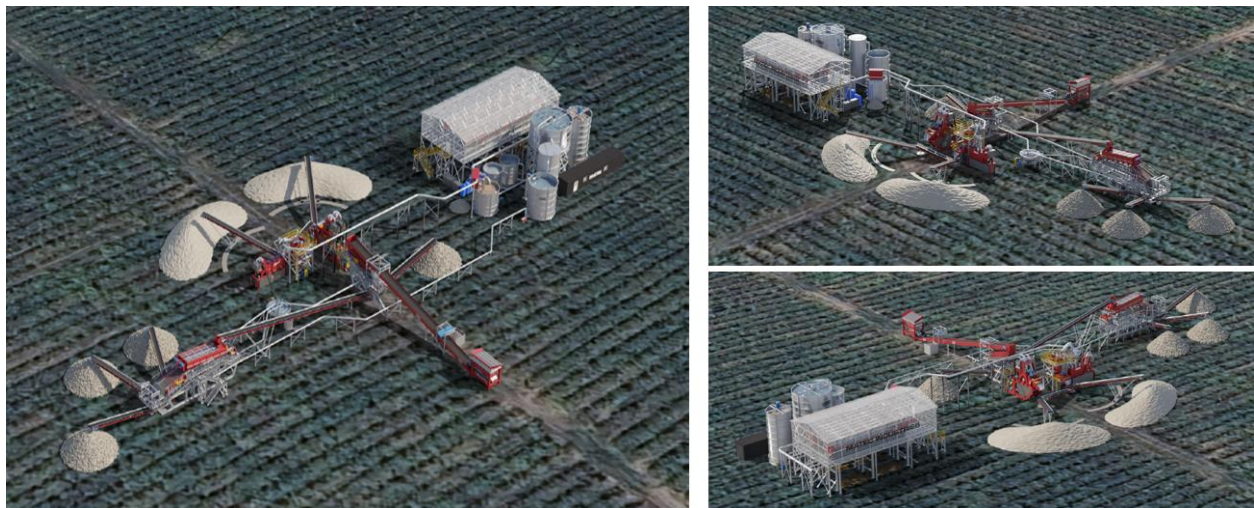


Figure 4: Facility Renderings

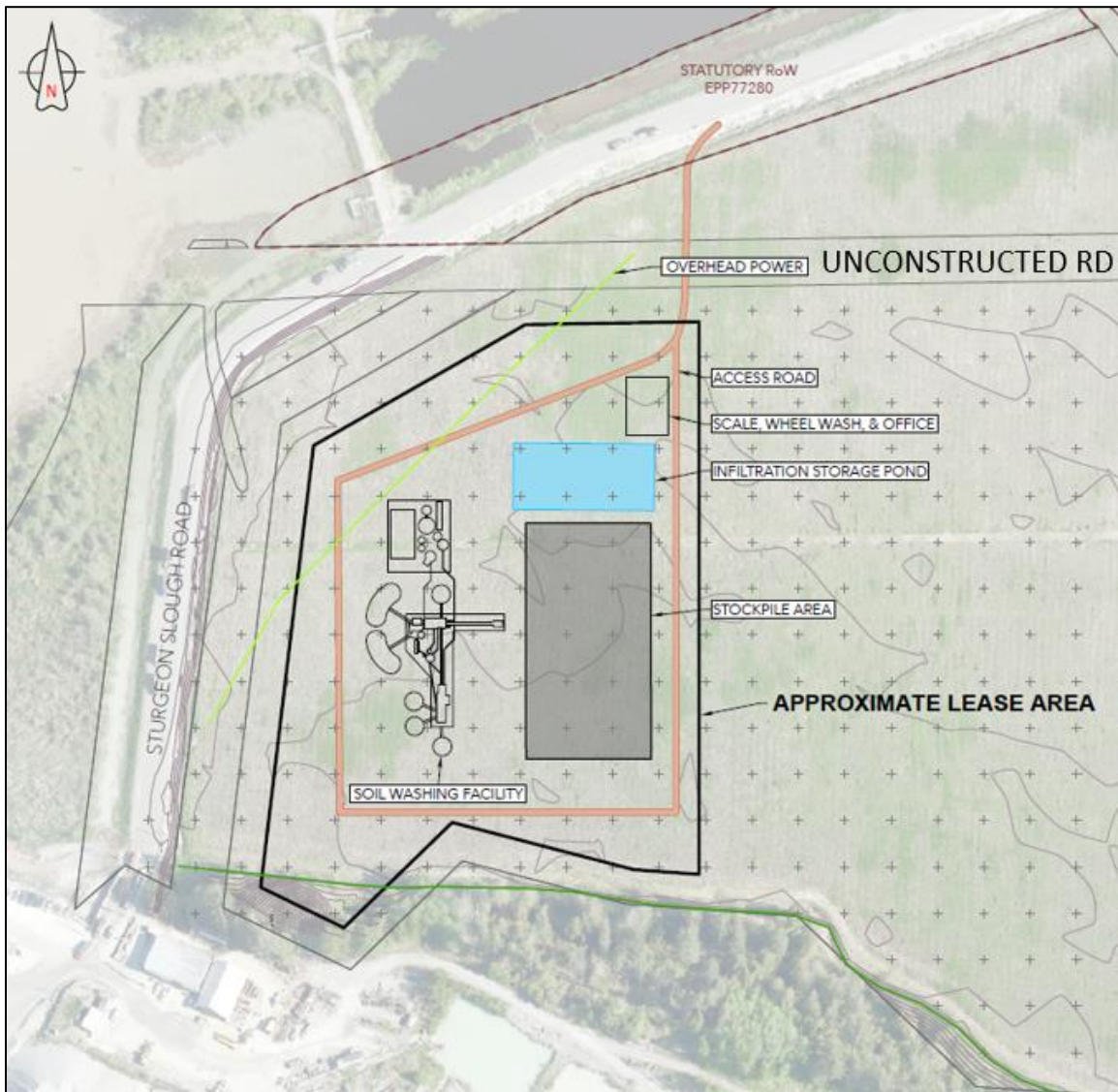


Figure 5: Site Plan

Site Location

According to the applicant, the ideal site for this type of facility is approximately 8-10 acres, situated away from residential uses, and adjacent to accessible waterways for the added potential of marine hauling. The applicant indicated that arrangements can be made with the neighbouring quarry to share their existing barge ramp facilities. Availability of utilities, including power and water, and truck transportation routes are also important location criteria for this type of facility.

Truck Traffic and Access

Trucks would bring soil to the facility via Rannie Road. The applicant estimates that approximately 3-4 truck arrivals and departures per hour, over an 8-hour day, would access the

site. The trucks would follow the same route used by the quarry traffic and be in addition to the quarry traffic.

The applicant is proposing to construct an access road from Sturgeon Slough Road (the dike) to the soil washing facility as part of the application. This access road would cross an unconstructed road allowance owned by the City. Approval for this road development is required from the Inspector of Dikes and Diking Authority, as well as from the City for the use of the unbuilt road right-of-way.

Site Fill

The applicant proposes to import fill to raise the site from the current elevation of approximately 2m to the minimum flood construction level of 5.2 m Geodetic Survey of Canada datum (above sea level) as required by the floodplain covenant registered on title. A geotechnical and hydrogeological report would be required to support the application.

Raising the site may impact drainage for adjacent agricultural land and the related compaction of underlying soils is likely to make it difficult to remediate the site to an agricultural standard, should the soil washing facility vacate the site in the future. If the project proceeds, the change away from agricultural use is likely to be a permanent change.

Water Use and Supply

The facility will operate as a “closed-loop” system, meaning that water used in the washing process is treated and re-used so that there is no effluent discharge to the environment. Although it is a closed-loop system, water input is still required for the facility to operate. The Engineering Department has advised that the City’s municipal water system does not have the capacity to serve the facility. To supply the water needed for the facility, the applicant notes an intention to apply for a water licence from the Province, to obtain water from either the nearby Sturgeon Slough or from a well, utilizing the groundwater aquifer underlying the site. Based on a preliminary hydrogeological assessment, a groundwater well is likely insufficient to provide enough water supply and access to the Sturgeon Slough to draw water is likely more reliable.

This type of soil washing is a relatively new technological process. One such facility is operating in BC, in Nanaimo, and another is being built in Richmond in 2025.

Due to increasing construction across the region, the amount of excavated soil requiring export and processing has risen substantially over the past few years. The applicant indicates that this type of facility is needed in response to the increased demand for soil management, especially in the Metro Vancouver region, where excavated soil from construction projects can be treated and disposed of legally and environmentally responsibly.

Relevant Policy, Bylaw or Legislation:

Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy: Metro 2050

The site is designated as *Agricultural* in the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS). This designation is intended for lands for agricultural production and uses directly supporting the local agricultural industry.

If this application moves forward, a Type 2 (affirmative 2/3 weighted vote) amendment to the RGS is required to change the land use designation to *Industrial*. Metro Vancouver prefers that RGS amendments are not initiated until after the associated Official Community Plan (OCP) Amendment Bylaw receives third reading.

Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 2864, 2020

The site is designated as *Agricultural* in the OCP (see Figure 6), intended for lands providing a long-term and stable land base for agriculture.

This application proposes to amend the site's land use designation to *Industrial*, intended for manufacturing, processing, storage, wholesale, warehouse, and transportation.



Figure 6: OCP Designation

If the application proceeds, it is also recommended that the site be included in Development Permit Area No. 7: Industrial, to guide the form and character of the development.

Agricultural Viability Strategy

The City's Agricultural Viability Strategy prioritizes the protection of farmland and efforts to divert further traffic away from rural roads, to support the needs of agricultural users.

Economic Development Strategic Plan

The City's Economic Development Strategic Plan supports the growth of the agricultural sector as well as the diversification of the local tax base through new industrial assessment.

Zoning Bylaw No. 2505, 2011

The site is currently zoned RR-1 (Rural Residential 1), which was carried over in 2011 from when this part of Pitt Meadows was part of the Dewdney-Alouette Regional District (see Figure 7). This zoning is intended for large, single-family residential lots outside the ALR.

If this application moves forward, the site would be rezoned to accommodate the use, to I-1 (General Industrial) or a site-specific zone.

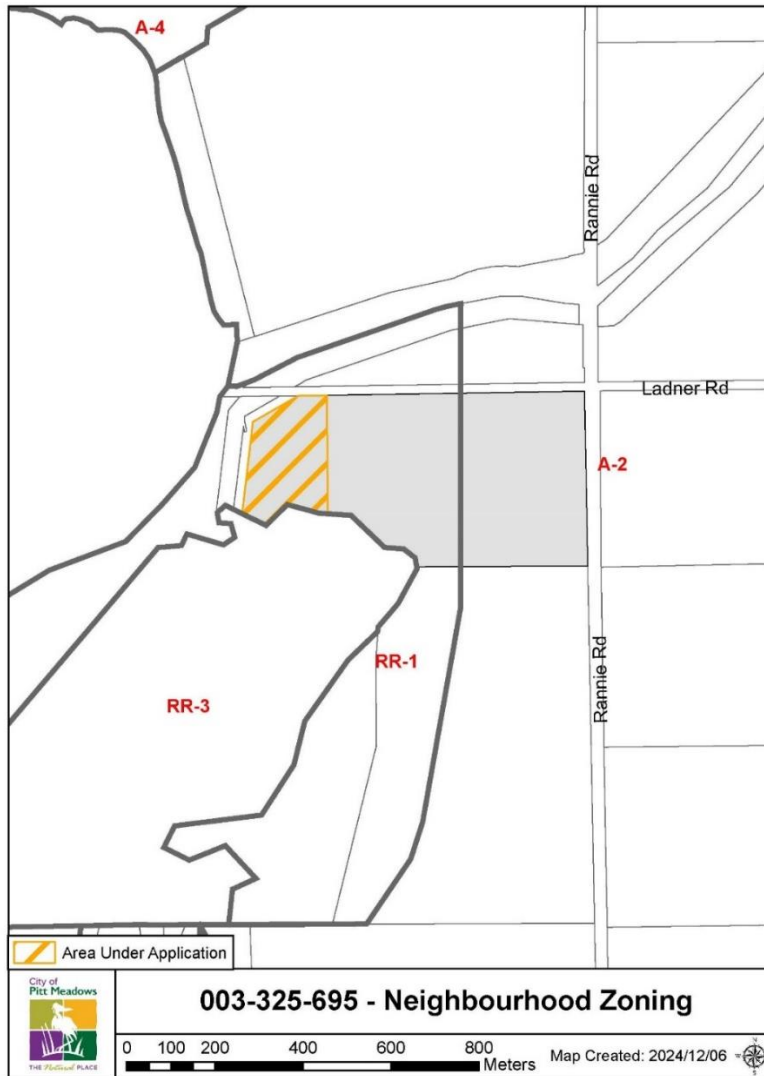


Figure 7: Zoning

Analysis:

The City does not often receive applications that require an amendment to the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS). A change of use at the RGS and OCP levels requires careful consideration, as such a change of use has not generally been contemplated at a regional or municipal scale.

Industrial lands support significant employment activities, contribute to economic well-being, and are a key component to accommodating continued growth in the region. However, industrial uses are a constrained land supply in Metro Vancouver, particularly large sites typically required for major industrial uses. Demand for industrial space is high, but supply is limited.

In Pitt Meadows, industrial uses are presently accommodated in five zones, ranging from light industrial business park to general industrial (see Figure 8):

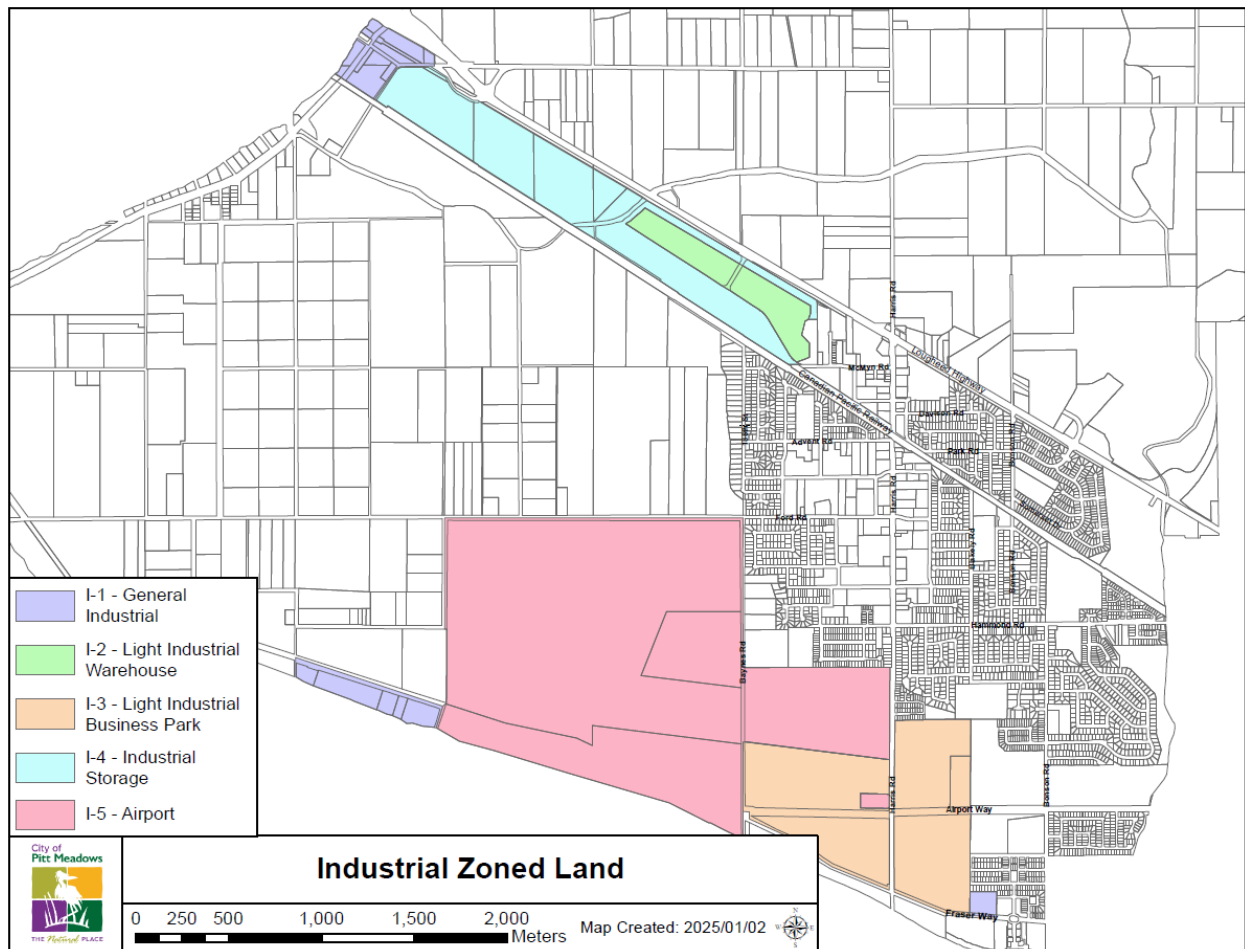


Figure 8: Industrial Zoning

Currently, there are no industrially zoned areas north of Lougheed Highway. The Lafarge quarry adjacent to the subject site is not zoned as industrial because gravel extraction is permitted under the *Mines Act* and is not subject to local government zoning bylaws. The Lafarge quarry has been in operation since the 1960s.

In the OCP, general industrial uses are encouraged to be located away from residential areas and close to central rail and road infrastructure, and increased traffic through farmland is not supported. The OCP supports the expansion of the City's industrial land base if there is no net loss to agricultural lands or productivity.

The nearest residential area (Sheridan Hill) is approximately 1 km away, albeit with the quarry in between. The area already experiences noise impacts from the quarry, and it is anticipated that the topography and remaining forested areas may provide reasonable protection from additional noise from the soil washing facility for those residents. Except for the quarry, the

surrounding land uses are agricultural, so conflicts with adjacent land uses are not expected to be substantial.

While relatively few impacts to adjacent properties are anticipated at this stage, impacts from such a facility are expected to be felt on the broader community. The site is located approximately 10 km from Lougheed Highway and rail infrastructure. While Rannie Road is a truck route, the facility would generate increased trucks and vehicles accessing the site through farmland. Concerns are noted about increased truck traffic in the area, which already experiences high truck volumes travelling to and from the quarry, along with increased traffic on rural roads through farmland.

The applicant notes that the facility will generate approximately 4 to 5 full-time jobs at the facility.

Conclusion:

Increasing the industrial land base can be positive for the City and the region, supporting economic growth and tax base diversification. Having a site in the Metro Vancouver area to treat excavated and contaminated soils from construction projects will also help address an issue affecting construction sites across the region.

However, the selected site is not near central road or rail infrastructure. The proposal will increase heavy truck and other vehicle traffic through farmland and rural roads. Additionally, it will remove approximately 9 acres of agricultural lands from future production. On balance, the City's OCP prioritizes agricultural land uses in the rural area over other land uses; therefore, the recommendation is to decline the application at this location.

Alternatives:

If more information is desired before making an initial decision, Council may instead elect to:

- Refer the application to the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC); and
- Receive further information about truck and vehicle traffic impacts, site fill details, and drainage impacts from the applicant.

Staff would then bring a report to Council summarizing the AAC's input and the additional information provided by the applicant.

If Council would like to advance the application to the first step of the OCP and zoning amendment process, the following are recommended in addition to the points above:

- Applicant to host a Development Information Meeting (Council Policy C015);
- Applicant to provide for a third party independent fiscal analysis on the impact of the proposed development on municipal finances; and

- Applicant to supply additional technical and environmental studies as identified by staff.

Following consideration of this information, Council can direct staff to continue processing the application by drafting OCP and Zone Amending Bylaws to accommodate the proposed use, and consider recommendations on the *Local Government Act* consultation requirements for OCP amendments.

COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

- Principled Governance Balanced Economic Prosperity Infrastructure
 Community Spirit & Wellbeing Corporate Pride Public Safety
 Not Applicable

WORKPLAN IMPLICATIONS

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

While processing applications is accounted for in the City's workplan, an application involving an RGS and OCP amendment is more complex, and therefore time-consuming, than a more typical development application. This application will also require the involvement of other City Departments, including Engineering, Operations, and Agriculture and Environment.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- None Budget Previously Approved Referral to Business Planning
 Other

Currently, the site is assessed as Farm (Class 9). BC Assessment has indicated, that if this development application is successful, the site would likely be assessed as Light Industry (Class 5). The property tax payable for Class 5 land is higher than the equivalent amount of land assessed as Farm Class 9. Increased maintenance of City roads is expected from the increase in heavy truck traffic, while noting that levies would likely be applicable pursuant to the City's Soil Removal and Fill Deposit Regulation Bylaw or Extraordinary Traffic Bylaw. If this application proceeds, it is recommended that the applicant to provide for a third party independent fiscal analysis on the impact of the proposed development on municipal finances.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Inform Consult Involve Collaborate Empower

If the application proceeds, initial consultation is recommended via a developer information meeting and referral to the AAC.

Subsequently, an OCP amendment requires consultation with persons, organizations and authorities it considers will be affected by the amendment. In addition, consideration of consultation with the following groups is required as per the *Local Government Act*:

- Metro Vancouver Regional District;
- Fraser Valley Regional District;
- Adjacent municipalities (Port Coquitlam, Maple Ridge);
- First Nations;
- School District 42; and
- Provincial or Federal government and agencies.

Detailed consideration of further consultation will be included in the next staff report, if the application proceeds.

KATZIE FIRST NATION CONSIDERATIONS

Referral Yes No Other

The applicant has been advised that the site is located within the vicinity of an area of high archaeological potential.

If the application proceeds, referral of the application to Katzie First Nation is recommended.

SIGN-OFFS

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Reviewed by:

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ATTACHMENT(S):

- A. Project Proposal¹
- B. Conceptual Site Plan

¹ Hydrogeological and geotechnical reports referenced as Appendix 3 and 4 are not attached but available upon request