



# Staff Report to EPC

Planning and Development

FILE: 13-6635-20/25

**REPORT DATE:** March 25, 2025                      **MEETING DATE:** April 08, 2025

**TO:** Engagement & Priorities Committee

**FROM:** Patrick Ward, Director of Planning & Development

**SUBJECT:** Proposed Zoning Bylaw Amendments Related to Uses of Agricultural Land

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW/APPROVAL:**

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

THAT the Committee:

- A. Receive for information the report titled "Proposed Zoning Bylaw Amendments Related to Uses of Agricultural Land", as presented at the April 8, 2025 Engagement and Priorities Committee Meeting; OR
- B. Other.

## PURPOSE

To seek Council's feedback on proposed amendments to the Zoning Bylaw related to residential uses of agricultural land, in order to implement the objectives of the Agricultural Viability Strategy and the Official Community Plan.

Information Report                       Decision Report                       Direction Report

## DISCUSSION

### **Background:**

In 2022, the City's Official Community Plan (OCP) was adopted and the City's Agricultural Viability Strategy (AVS) was endorsed the following year. Together, these plans articulate the City's ongoing support for the preservation of farmland for food production, the vitality of the

local agricultural sector, and its commitment to strengthening the long-term sustainability of agriculture. The City's policies clarify that agriculture is the priority use of land in the City's farming areas.

To help realize the goals identified in both plans, a number of amendments to the City's Zoning Bylaw are proposed. These amendments are intended to simplify and improve clarity, increase alignment with the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) regulations, and incorporate best practices.

Taking guidance from the OCP and AVS, staff have reviewed the Zoning Bylaw regulations related to agricultural land, with a goal to identify:

- Opportunities to streamline and simplify;
- Gaps or areas where regulations should be further considered to support the protection of farmland and enhance agricultural viability; and
- Non-alignment with ALC regulations.

Generally, the proposed amendments focus on the regulations for managing residential uses on agricultural land. The recommended changes to the Zoning Bylaw can be summarized as follows:

- Combine the A-1, A-2 and A-3 zones;
- Add clarity to the A-1 zone regarding compliance with ALC regulations and specific use regulations for agricultural zones;
- Clarify total lot coverage requirements;
- Clarify regulations related to on-site parking, including recreational vehicles, farm vehicles, etc.;
- Implement residential footprint (farm home plate) regulations;
- Reduce the maximum single-family dwelling size on smaller parcels;
- Remove redundant allowances for mobile homes;
- Update regulations for accessory farm residential buildings and structures into the new combined A-1 zone;
- Remove allowance for garden suite uses from parcels less than 8094 m<sup>2</sup> (2 acres); and
- Simplify temporary farm worker housing regulations.

It is noted that these are preliminary recommendations based on staff's initial review. On February 13, 2025, these amendments were presented to the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) for their initial input, and are now presented to Council for further discussion. The AAC's comments on the proposed changes are included below.

**Relevant Policy, Bylaw or Legislation:**

The use of Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) land is governed by the provincial *Agricultural Land Commission Act (ALC Act)* and supporting *Agricultural Land Reserve Regulations*. The *ALC Act*

has primacy over local government bylaws and regulations for ALR-designated land, meaning local government bylaws, plans and policies must be consistent with the *ALC Act*. These regulations do allow local government bylaws and regulations to be more restrictive than the ALC for non-agricultural land uses (including residential uses), but not less restrictive. The reverse is true for agricultural uses, where local governments cannot restrict agricultural uses in the ALR any further than the ALC. Any local government regulations that conflict with ALC regulations are of no force and effect on lands within the ALR.

The “Agricultural Land Commission Bylaw Review Guide<sup>1</sup>” (ALC Bylaw Review Guide) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food’s publication “Guide for Bylaw Development in Farming Areas<sup>2</sup>” (Minister’s Bylaw Standards) provide recommended zoning bylaw standards and guidance for farming areas, and were referenced as part of this project.

The OCP identifies Pitt Meadows as a community where agriculture is the dominant land use and farmland is protected for food production. The OCP, therefore, supports the preservation of ALR land for productive uses by discouraging subdivision, encouraging lot consolidation, and limiting housing through farm home plate provisions.

The Agricultural Viability Strategy (AVS) also supports the protection of farmland for farming. It recommends updating the Zoning Bylaw to strengthen agriculture by: discouraging non-farm uses, including restricting non-agricultural vehicle parking; combining multiple agricultural zones for ease of use; and consideration of farm home plate regulations.

The Zoning Bylaw regulates the use of agricultural land, including provisions for residential uses.

### **Analysis:**

Details regarding the proposed agriculture-related Zoning Bylaw updates are provided below. Each section includes background information, the AAC’s initial input from its February 13 meeting, and staff’s emerging recommendations.

#### Combine A-1, A-2 and A-3 Zones

Currently, the City has five agricultural zones. The AVS, ALC Bylaw Review Guide and the Minister’s Bylaw Standards recommend applying a single agriculture zone to properties in the ALR.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/assets/alc/assets/library/land-use-planning/alc\\_bylaw\\_review\\_guide.pdf](https://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/assets/alc/assets/library/land-use-planning/alc_bylaw_review_guide.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/agricultural-land-and-environment/strengthening-farming/local-government-bylaw-standards/840000-1\\_guide\\_for\\_bylaw\\_development\\_in\\_farming\\_areas.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/agricultural-land-and-environment/strengthening-farming/local-government-bylaw-standards/840000-1_guide_for_bylaw_development_in_farming_areas.pdf)

The A-1 General Agricultural zone is the most common zone for ALR properties in the City, with 44 additional A-1 zoned parcels that are located outside of the ALR (e.g. rural areas, some City parks, parts of the Metro Vancouver greenway). The A-2 Large Lot Agricultural zone is used for the largest ALR land parcels (67 properties) in the northern part of Pitt Meadows (see Figure 1).

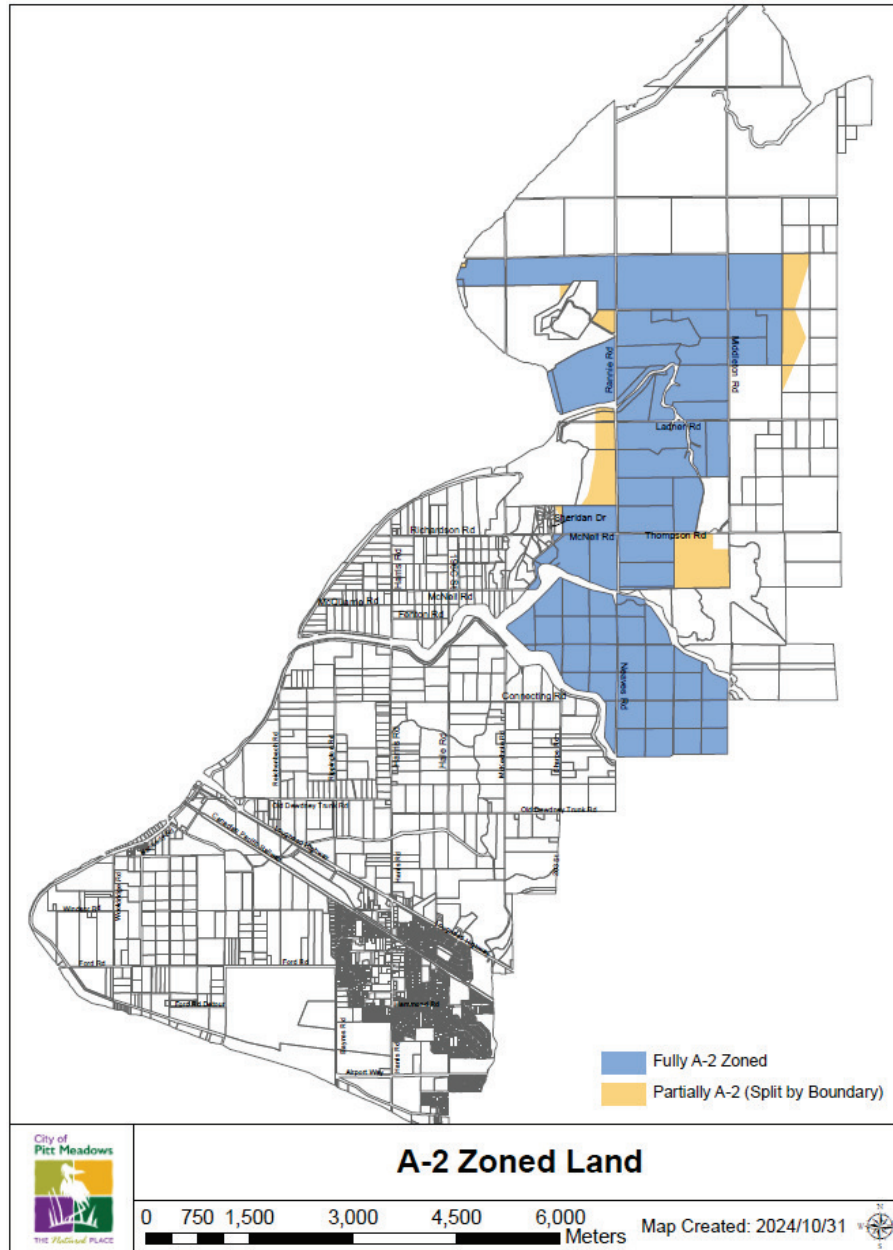


Figure 1: Properties zoned A-2

The permitted uses in both the A-1 and A-2 zones are the same. The main difference between the two zones relates to minimum parcel size for the purposes of subdivision. In the A-1 zone, the minimum parcel size for subdivision is 8 ha (20 acres) and in the A-2 zone, it is 16 ha (40 acres). Subdivision of land in the ALR, however, is not supported by City plans or policies and

requires approval from the ALC. The ALC recommends requiring a large minimum parcel size to discourage subdivision and the use of ALR land for rural residential purposes. Only a small number of subdivisions have been approved in the ALR in the last 20 years, and these include two homesite severances, a lot line adjustment, and some subdivision/re-alignment due to the Golden Ears Bridge project.

There are only 34 parcels in the A-1 zone that theoretically have subdivision potential (i.e. they are larger than 16 ha [40 acres] and could be subdivided to create two >8 ha [20 acres] parcels) (see Figure 2). Of those 34 parcels, 32 are privately owned and the City owns the other two. The word “theoretically” is used because actual subdivision is not supported by City policy. Even if an application were submitted, it would be challenging to support from a policy perspective. Many of the parcels also present technical challenges for subdivision, such as inadequate access and servicing. It is recommended that the new A-1 zone include a minimum parcel size of 16 ha (40 acres), to be consistent with the A-2 zone and to further reinforce the City’s long-standing policy of not supporting subdivision in the ALR and to reduce redevelopment speculation. If implemented, this change to the minimum lot size would make the current A-2 zone redundant. Any existing parcels in the new combined zone that are less than the 16 ha (40 acres) minimum would be ‘grandfathered’ and would not be required to consolidate or alter their property boundaries due to the new zoning.

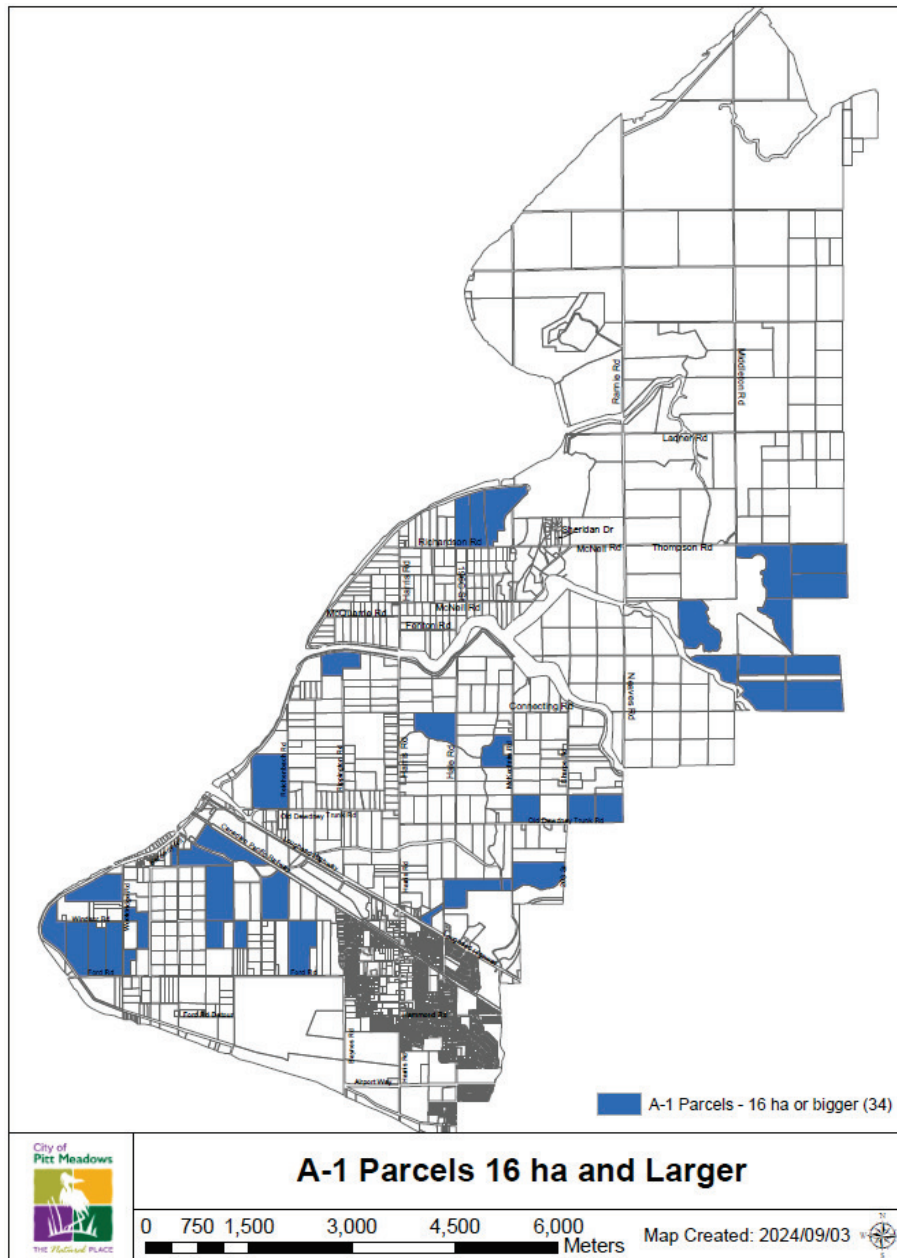


Figure 2: A-1 parcels >16 ha

The A-3 Agricultural and Farm Industrial zone only applies to two parcels, 18315 Ford Rd (Meadow Valley Meats) and 13753 Hale Rd (which includes a berry processing plant). This zone dates back to 1999, when the processing plant at 13753 Hale Rd received approval from the ALC to process farm products other than those originating solely from that farm operation. At that time, ALC regulations only permitted the processing of farm products grown by the farm. A new zone (now A-3) was created to accommodate this use. Subsequently, in 2002, the ALC amended its regulations to permit processing if at least 50% of what is being processed originates on the farm. Therefore, the A-3 zone is essentially redundant, as agricultural processing can and does occur on properties zoned A-1 and A-2.

The property located at 18315 Ford Rd does not process any products that originate from their site; however, they do have authorization from the ALC to operate on the property. Therefore, a site-specific notation will be included in the new A-1 zone, to permit their continued operation.

There are two additional Agricultural zones: A-4 Agricultural and Golf Course and A-5 Agricultural and Wildlife Management. The A-4 zone is used for golf courses within the ALR, and the A-5 zone is for the Pitt-Addington Marsh Wildlife Area. These zones already regulate those specific uses, so no changes are proposed to those zones.

#### *AAC Comments*

The AAC agreed with the recommended changes.

#### *Staff Recommendation*

Combine A-1, A-2 and A-3 zones into a new A-1 zone.

#### Add Clarity to the A-1 Zone

To improve clarity in the A-1 zone, the following minor revisions are suggested.

First, a statement clarifying the primacy and jurisdiction of the ALC is proposed for inclusion into the Zoning Bylaw: *“Despite any other provisions of this bylaw, all lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve are subject to the provisions of the Agricultural Land Commission Act, Agricultural Land Commission Regulations thereto and Orders of the Commission”*. The additional language provides notice that ALC requirements also apply and should be reviewed. This addition aligns with the ALC Bylaw Review Guide and the Minister’s Bylaw Standards, and does not implement any new or additional regulatory requirements.

Second, the Zoning Bylaw currently contains several sections within the Specific Use Regulations detailing permitted uses in the ALR, including:

- Additional farm house (section 5.9);
- Farm Worker Housing (section 5.10);
- Farm Retail Sales and Winery / Brewery / Distillery / Meadery or Cider Lounges (section 5.11);
- Cannabis production in the ALR (section 5.17); and
- Additional (90 m<sup>2</sup> [969 ft<sup>2</sup>]) residence in the ALR (section 5.18).

Since these specific uses only pertain to properties in the ALR, it is recommended that these sections be moved from section 5 (Specific Use Regulations) of the Bylaw into the agricultural zone, where a property owner could easily find the relevant Zoning Bylaw information in one

section rather than having to refer to multiple sections in the bylaw. Minor changes may be proposed where appropriate, to aid in interpretation and administration of these regulations.

Farm worker housing is discussed in more detail later in the report.

*AAC Comments*

The AAC did not have any comments on this section.

*Staff Recommendation*

Include a statement about the ALC jurisdiction and incorporate those specific uses into the new A-1 zone.

Lot Coverage

A combined maximum lot coverage for all buildings and structures on a parcel is proposed to be added to the section on Permitted Lot Coverage. Currently, there is a separate lot coverage limit for buildings containing various uses as follows:

<i>Use</i>	<b>% of lot coverage permitted</b>
<i>Greenhouses</i>	75%
<i>Apiculture</i>	20%
<i>Other agricultural buildings</i>	35%
<i>Residential</i>	1% for parcels >4 ha 5% for parcels <4 ha

When a property contains multiple uses, this can cause confusion about the actual maximum permitted lot coverage. While not intended, it may be interpreted to mean a property could contain greenhouses (75%), barns (35%), and residential buildings (1%), which add up to over 100% lot coverage. While that scenario is unlikely, a maximum combined lot coverage is recommended for inclusion (e.g. 80%), ensuring that at least a portion of a property remains open space and available for stormwater drainage and site access.

*AAC Comments*

The AAC agreed to include a maximum lot coverage for all structures.

*Staff Recommendation*

Include a maximum total lot coverage of 80% for all structures.

## Parking and Vehicles

For the Onsite Parking and Loading regulations in the agricultural zones, the following options are recommended to improve clarity on permitted parking and storage of unlicensed, commercial, and recreational vehicles:

- Include a definition of a farm vehicle;
  - Consistent with the *Motor Vehicle Act*, farm vehicles will be defined as farm tractors and implements of husbandry (e.g., harvesting machinery, bailers);
  - No restrictions will be imposed on the number of legitimate farm vehicles;
- Include a defined limit on the number of recreational vehicles (including motorhomes, camping trailers, and boats) that can be parked on a property;
  - Suggest a limit of four to six per parcel based on parcel size;
  - Must be uninhabited;
  - Must be registered to the property owner or resident;
- Clarify unlicensed vehicles section;
  - Only permit unlicensed vehicles to be parked or stored inside a single-family dwelling (ie., an attached garage) or a residential accessory building (i.e., a detached garage or workshop);
  - Unlicensed farm vehicles and associated equipment are exempt from this requirement;
- Revise commercial vehicle parking limits;
  - Suggest a limit of two commercial vehicles stored on a parcel at any one time;
  - Must be owned and operated by the property owner or a resident of the farm operation;
  - Prohibit storage of construction/contractor's equipment and vehicles unless used for active residential or agricultural development on the property, an authorized use on the property, or in association with a valid building permit.

The use of ALR land for non-farm truck parking or commercial recreational vehicle (RV) storage will continue to be not permitted.

### *AAC Comments*

The AAC raised questions about those vehicles that may be used for both commercial and farm vehicle purposes, and including limits on smaller lots that may be part of a larger farm operation. It was noted that two commercial vehicles may not be sufficient for legitimate farm operations and that the type and variety of farm vehicles can vary.

### *Staff Recommendation*

While staff continue to recommend that legitimate farm vehicles not be restricted, it is recommended that a definition of farm vehicle be drafted. This will assist Bylaw Services staff when dealing with complaints about commercial vehicle parking on agricultural land, as it will be clearer about what a farm vehicle is or is not. The intent is to strengthen regulations

prohibiting vehicle parking and storage that is not associated with a farm operation, while ensuring that vehicles required for farming are not unduly restricted. Staff intend to undertake additional research to further inform potential regulations that differentiate between farm and commercial vehicles used by the farm operation, and vehicles not used by the farm operation.

A limit on recreational vehicle parking is recommended, to four recreational vehicles on properties 8 ha (20 acres) or less, and six recreational vehicles on properties larger than 8 ha (20 acres), and would only be permitted where the recreational vehicle is registered to the property owner or resident.

It is recommended that unlicensed (non-farm) vehicles can only be stored inside a single-family dwelling or residential accessory building.

A new provision is also recommended that prohibits the storage of construction/contractor equipment and vehicles unless used for active residential or agricultural development on the property, an authorized use on the property, or in association with a valid building permit.

#### Implement Residential Footprint (Farm Home Plate) Regulations

To minimize the negative impacts of residential uses on farming, regulating the siting of residential uses is recommended by the ALC Bylaw Review Guide, Minister's Bylaw Standards, and the City's OCP and AVS. In most cases, requiring residential development to be located close to a road provides the greatest protection for agricultural areas by reducing potential conflicts between farm and residential uses and preserving more of the property available for farming. Traditionally, farmers have understood this rationale, and many have located their homes near the road. However, in recent years, some farmland has been used instead for rural estates. Residential estate-style development has tended to be located on a parcel without consideration for farming viability, often in the middle of a parcel, which reduces the long-term potential farming ability of a property (see Figure 3).

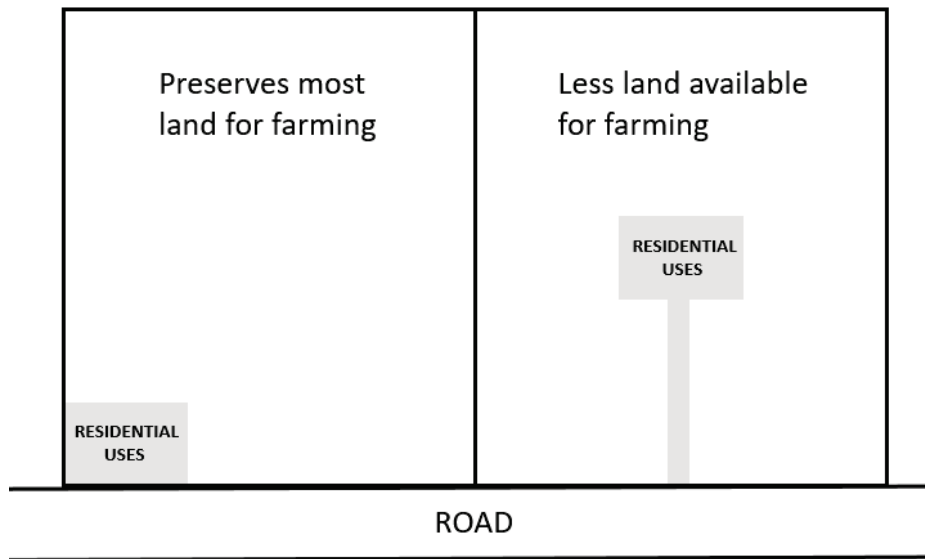


Figure 3: Examples of Residential Uses on Farmland

Currently, no City bylaws restrict the location of residential uses on farmland other than typical property line setbacks. Since 2019, the ALC has provided some oversight for the location of a dwelling, in that any amount of fill placement greater than 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> (10,764 ft<sup>2</sup>) in area requires approval from the ALC. However, if a project does not require fill or requires less than 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> (10,764 ft<sup>2</sup>), then there is no ALC approval required and a dwelling could be located anywhere on a property.

It is recommended that regulations for the siting of residential uses be introduced, in alignment with the Minister’s Bylaw Standards (see Figure 4). Any existing residential uses not complying with the new regulations would be considered as a “non-conforming” use under the *Local Government Act*, meaning they could lawfully continue in their current form.

Typically, a residential footprint (often referred to as a “farm home plate”) includes buildings, structures and improvements associated with a single-family dwelling. For example:

- attached or detached garages or carports;
- driveways to residences;
- decorative landscaping;
- attached or detached household greenhouse or sunroom;
- residential-related workshop, tool and storage sheds; and

artificial ponds not serving farm drainage, irrigation needs or aquaculture use;

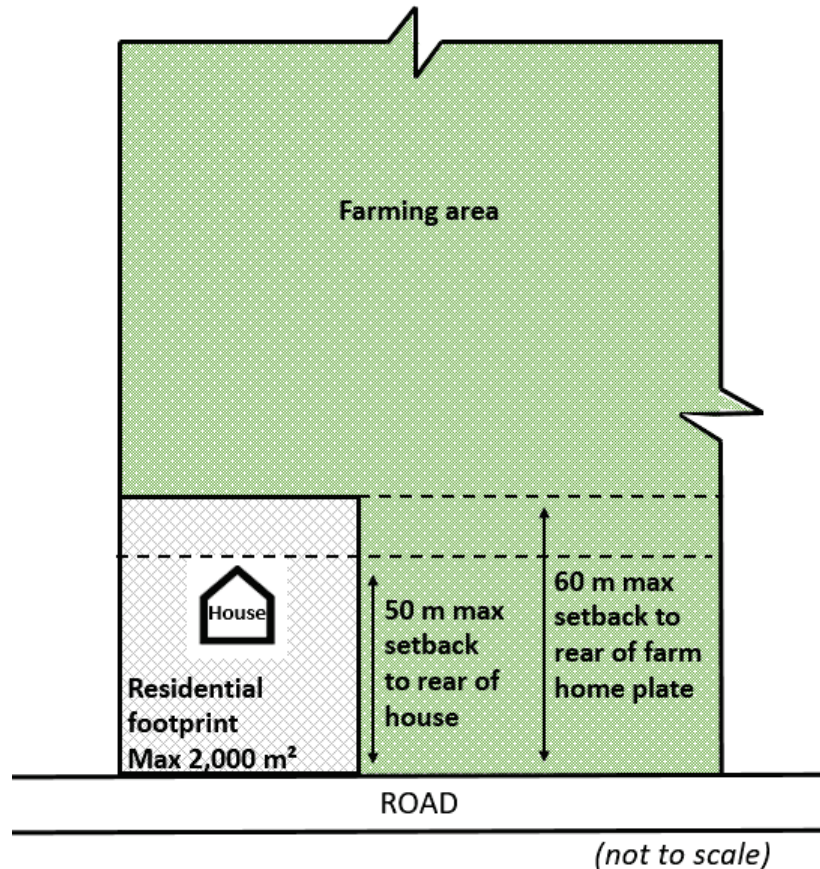


Figure 4: Example of residential footprint (farm home plate) regulations

#### AAC Comments

There was general agreement that the proposed residential siting restrictions are positive, while noting that it was controversial for some community members in 2008 when previously discussed. The AAC also noted that some properties may not be suited for a residential footprint next to a road, and there may be topographic or other considerations that may warrant the footprint location to be revised.

#### Staff Recommendation

Incorporate residential footprint (farm home plate) regulations, aligned with the Minister's Bylaw Standards.

In light of the AAC's comments regarding the potential need for flexibility in some circumstances, it is recommended that a new bylaw be drafted that permits staff (i.e., the Director of Planning and Development) to issue minor development variance permits in these cases. Since 2021, the *Local Government Act* has permitted local governments to delegate the issuance of certain development variance permits to staff, provided that the variance is minor.

The delegation bylaw must include clear criteria for determining if the variance is minor and what the delegate must consider in deciding whether to issue the development variance permit. This would provide property owners with a streamlined option for varying the residential footprint regulations where appropriate and justified. As such, staff recommend that a delegation bylaw strictly related to variances for the proposed residential footprint regulations be prepared in conjunction with the proposed Zoning Bylaw amendments.

#### Reduce Maximum Allowable Single-Family Dwelling Size on Smaller Parcels

Under the *ALC Act*, one single-family dwelling with a maximum floor area of 500 m<sup>2</sup> (5,381 ft<sup>2</sup>) is permitted, along with one additional residence with a maximum floor area of 90 m<sup>2</sup> (969 ft<sup>2</sup>). Any other residential use of an ALR parcel requires approval from the ALC (e.g. temporary farm worker housing or residence larger than 500 m<sup>2</sup> [5,381 ft<sup>2</sup>]). City bylaws permit the additional 90 m<sup>2</sup> (969 ft<sup>2</sup>) residence (e.g., a garden suite) only on parcels at least 8 ha (20 acres) in size.

While 500 m<sup>2</sup> (5,381 ft<sup>2</sup>) of floor area is the current maximum permitted by the ALC and the City for a single-family dwelling, this applies regardless of the parcel size. For example, a 2 ha (5 acres) parcel can have a 500 m<sup>2</sup> (5,381 ft<sup>2</sup>) dwelling on it, similar to an 8 ha (20 acres) parcel. However, the scale of a 500 m<sup>2</sup> (5,381 ft<sup>2</sup>) dwelling on a 2 ha (5 acres) parcel is relatively more impactful than a 500 m<sup>2</sup> (5,381 ft<sup>2</sup>) dwelling on an 8 ha (20 acres) parcel.

The City can choose to implement a smaller house size limit on smaller parcels. For example, Richmond has a blanket size limit of 400 m<sup>2</sup> (4,306 ft<sup>2</sup>), while Delta permits 300 m<sup>2</sup> (3,229 ft<sup>2</sup>) on lots less than 8 ha (20 acres) and 465 m<sup>2</sup> (5,005 ft<sup>2</sup>) on lots greater than 8 ha (20 acres). To minimize the development of estate homes and help protect farmland for farming, the recommended approach is to reduce the allowable size of single-family dwellings on smaller agricultural parcels and use an area of 8 ha (20 acres) as the dividing line. Parcels greater than 8 ha (20 acres) are more likely to require more farm labour, so a larger house size may be required to support multi-generational farming families. For lots of at least 8 ha (20 acres) in area, no changes are suggested, so the maximum floor area of 500 m<sup>2</sup> (5,381 ft<sup>2</sup>) will continue, along with an allowance for an additional 90 m<sup>2</sup> (969 ft<sup>2</sup>) residence.

#### *AAC Comments*

The AAC noted that residential footprint restrictions (i.e., farm home plate) are more important than limiting house size and that a maximum floor area of 350 m<sup>2</sup> (3,864 ft<sup>2</sup>) for homes on lots less than 8 ha, as presented to the AAC, is likely too small, although there may be some merit in a limiting house size on parcels smaller than 8 ha (20 acres). The AAC also noted that the challenge in restricting house size based on lot size, is that this approach does not account for the scale and intensity of the farm operation, including farm operations that might span multiple parcels.

### *Staff Recommendation*

Staff have considered AAC comments related to the intensity of the farm operation and generally concur that restricting house size based on lot size alone does not fully account for the scale and intensity of a farm operation. At the same time, it would be challenging to regulate house size based on the farm operation, given that the scale and intensity of a farm operation can change over time. As such, it is currently recommended that a floor area limit of 400 m<sup>2</sup> (4,306 ft<sup>2</sup>) for single-family dwellings be included for parcels that are less than 8 ha (20 acres) in area, while a floor area limit of 500 m<sup>2</sup> (5,381 ft<sup>2</sup>) continue to apply to parcels greater than 8 ha (20 acres) in area. As noted above, this approach is consistent with other municipalities that have regulated a smaller house size on smaller lots.

### Remove Mobile Home Section

As of January 1, 2022, specific ALC regulations permitting a mobile home as an additional dwelling in the ALR were removed as a result of earlier regulatory changes permitting an additional residence up to 90 m<sup>2</sup> (969 ft<sup>2</sup>), which could include a mobile home.

Since a mobile home is no longer an outright permitted use by the ALC and requires an application for an additional dwelling, this section is redundant and it is recommended that the mobile home section in the Zoning Bylaw be deleted. Existing mobile homes will continue to be allowed as “non-conforming” uses under the *Local Government Act*. New mobile homes <90 m<sup>2</sup> (969 ft<sup>2</sup>) would continue to be permitted in the zone on lots at least 8 ha (20 acres) in size (as an additional residence). New mobile homes >90 m<sup>2</sup> (969 ft<sup>2</sup>) in floor area would be allowed in the zone as an additional farm house, if approved by the ALC.

### *AAC Comments*

The AAC did not have any comments on this section.

### *Staff Recommendation*

Delete the mobile home section.

### Update Accessory Farm Residential Buildings and Structures

The ALC’s recently released guidelines<sup>3</sup> for accessory residential use structures in the ALR clarify that residential accessory structures are only permitted if they are necessary for a residential

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<sup>3</sup><https://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/763/2024/02/Accessory-Residential-Use-Structures-in-the-ALR-Guidelines.pdf>

use. These structures cannot contain residential uses that would normally be contained in a dwelling (e.g. sleeping area, gym, spa, etc.) and cannot be used to circumvent the size limits on residential dwellings in the ALR. The guidelines suggest a maximum floor area of 90 m<sup>2</sup> (969 ft<sup>2</sup>) and single-storey height be included.

It is recommended that these guidelines be incorporated into the accessory farm residential buildings and structures regulations and that these uses be contained within the proposed farm home plate.

It is also recommended that information from Zoning Bylaw section 4.13 on accessory farm residential buildings and structures be moved from the general regulations section to the A-1 zone, again, so that property owners can refer to one location in the Zoning Bylaw for regulations relating to their property.

#### *AAC Comments*

The AAC expressed caution to ensure that a single-storey structure is tall enough for practical use, and concern about the ability to locate new accessory residential buildings and structures if residential footprint regulations are introduced and the existing residential footprint is non-compliant.

#### *Staff Recommendation*

The ALC's guide should be used to draft the regulations related to accessory residential use structures, and that a height limit of 5 m be included. A 5 m height limit provides ample storage room for a recreational vehicle.

As discussed earlier in this report, it is recommended that minor development variance permit applications for siting issues related to the proposed residential footprint regulations be delegated to staff. This new delegation bylaw should also include provisions to accommodate development variance permits where an existing home is not compliant with the proposed residential footprint regulations.

#### Remove Garden Suite Uses from Parcels < 8094 m<sup>2</sup>

Currently, the Zoning Bylaw permits garden suites, in addition to a principal residence, on parcels in the ALR that are less than 8,094 m<sup>2</sup> (2 acres), as ALC use regulations do not generally apply to parcels of this size. There are about 34 parcels to which this is applicable. The City's OCP encourages the consolidation of small agricultural parcels and more intense residential use (i.e., allowing multiple dwelling units) deters consolidation. These parcels are also located outside of the urban containment boundary. Growth and residential development in the City are prioritized for inside the urban containment boundary; therefore, it is recommended that provisions for garden suites be removed from these small agricultural properties.

### *AAC Comments*

Some concern about limiting garden suites and impacting housing availability and affordability.

### *Staff Recommendation*

Increasing housing supply is supported by many City plans and policies; however, that growth is intended to be directed towards the urban area where there are services, amenities, transit, schools, etc. City plans do not support increased residential development in the agricultural area, which can lead to increased traffic through farmland and increased conflict between residential and farming uses. It is recommended that garden suites no longer be permitted on those small lots less than 8,094 m<sup>2</sup> (2 acres) in size. Secondary suites (i.e., attached accessory dwelling units) would, however, continue to be permitted on lots less than 8,094 m<sup>2</sup> (2 acres) in size, as these are attached to primary residences and preserve more land for farming.

### Simplify Temporary Farm Worker Housing Regulations

It is recommended that the terminology be changed from migrant farm worker housing to temporary farm worker housing to align with wording used by the ALC, Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and other agencies. Similar to other specific use regulations noted above, it is suggested that temporary farm worker housing (TFWH) regulations be moved to the A-1 zone.

ALC approval is required for all new TFWH. If approved by the ALC, the City's Zoning Bylaw currently permits TFWH with the following regulations:<sup>4</sup>

- Farm status from BC Assessment;
- Minimum farm operation is contiguous 8 ha (20 acres);
- Minimum lot size of 3.75 ha (9.3 acres);
- Submission of a supporting agrologist report to the City;
- Building on temporary foundation or footings;
- Maximum one building for TFWH per lot;
- Maximum number of workers is 60 per farm operation <40.5 ha (100 acres), 150 per farm operation 40.5 - 405 ha, 250 per farm operation > 405 ha; and
- Minimum and maximum interior space restrictions per occupant, specified by floor area type and rooms.

Many of these regulations were included in the existing Zoning Bylaw when the federal TFWH program was first introduced. At the time, the City was responsible for inspecting these housing

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<sup>4</sup> These regulations reflect the amendments included in Zoning Text Amendment Bylaw No. 2972, 2024, which has received three readings, and requires Ministry of Transportation and Transit approval prior to Council adoption.

units for compliance with the applicable government regulations. Since then, the BC Agriculture Council has taken over the recurring inspections for TFWH, though the City still inspects new TFWH for BC Building Code Compliance during construction as part of the building permit process. In addition, there are now Minister's Bylaw Standards and ALC regulations related to TFWH. It is recommended that the Zoning Bylaw be updated based on these guidelines and to increase flexibility for farm operations to bring in TFWH. The proposed changes, based on the Minister's Bylaw Standards and ALC guidelines, generally include:

- Removal of minimum lot size of 3.75 ha (9.3 acres), but maintain minimum farm operation size of 8 contiguous ha (20 contiguous acres);
- Maximum number of workers per farm operation limited to no more than:
  - 130 workers for greenhouse, mushroom, tree fruit, and berry/vegetable production
  - 40 workers for all other commodities;
- Simplify floor area requirements by using a maximum floor area per worker; and
- Remove the restriction for a maximum of one building.

Although not included in these Zoning Bylaw updates, staff are exploring the merits and legal considerations of a potential Council Policy for evaluating TFWH applications, which may include a recommendation that applications meeting the Zoning Bylaw regulations and selected evaluation criteria could be automatically forwarded to the ALC. This approach, if feasible, could help streamline the process for TFWH applications by eliminating the need for AAC and Council consideration for applications that comply with the designated criteria. Subject to Council's direction, a report outlining this approach is intended to be presented to the AAC at a future meeting.

#### *AAC Comments*

At the AAC meeting, the possibility of adding TFWH to the residential footprint (farm home plate) was raised; however, that was not supported as there may be farm operational reasons for locating it elsewhere on the property. Consideration should also be given to increasing the number of workers for all commodities.

#### *Staff Recommendation*

Staff recommend updates to the TFWH section based on the Minister's Bylaw Standards and ALC guidelines, with the exception of including TFWH into the farm home plate, as suggested by the AAC.

The higher number of workers (130) is suggested for greenhouse, mushroom, tree fruit, and berry/vegetable production, which tend to be more labour-intensive commodities. Staff are not aware of any farm operations in the City for other commodities that have received approval for that many workers. If there was a unique case where a farm producing another commodity

presented valid justification for more than 40 workers, then a land use application (e.g. temporary use permit, rezoning, etc.) could be submitted. It is recommended that the number of proposed workers be based on the Minister’s Bylaw Standards and ALC guidelines.

Miscellaneous Items

Other minor revisions to the Zoning Bylaw may arise as part of this continuing review. These may include refinements to bylaw definitions, updating agricultural building requirements, or other opportunities to clarify intentions.

Conclusion

At this stage, staff request feedback from Council about the proposed changes to the Zoning Bylaw, to help inform the drafting of future bylaw amendments. Subject to Council’s direction, staff will then engage the broader community, continue to refine the proposed bylaw amendments, and then present draft bylaw amendments to the AAC and Council.

**COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT**

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

**Agriculture.** Advocate for the viability of the agricultural industry and food security through innovation and reducing regulatory barriers.

**Regulatory.** Ensure the health and safety of persons and property by confirming that buildings and their systems conform to bylaws, the Building Code and applicable standards.

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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

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**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- None     Budget Previously Approved     Referral to Business Planning
- Other

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**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- Inform     Consult     Involve     Collaborate     Empower

Comment(s):

The AAC was consulted on February 13, 2025. Subject to Council direction, engagement of the broader community is intended, both online and in-person (e.g. an open house). Once feedback has been compiled and a draft Zoning Amendment Bylaw prepared, the proposed amendments would be presented to the AAC and then Council again. The bylaw process would also include a public hearing.

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**KATZIE FIRST NATION CONSIDERATIONS**

Referral     Yes     No

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**SIGN-OFFS**

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