



2.1 AGRICULTURE

ISSUE:

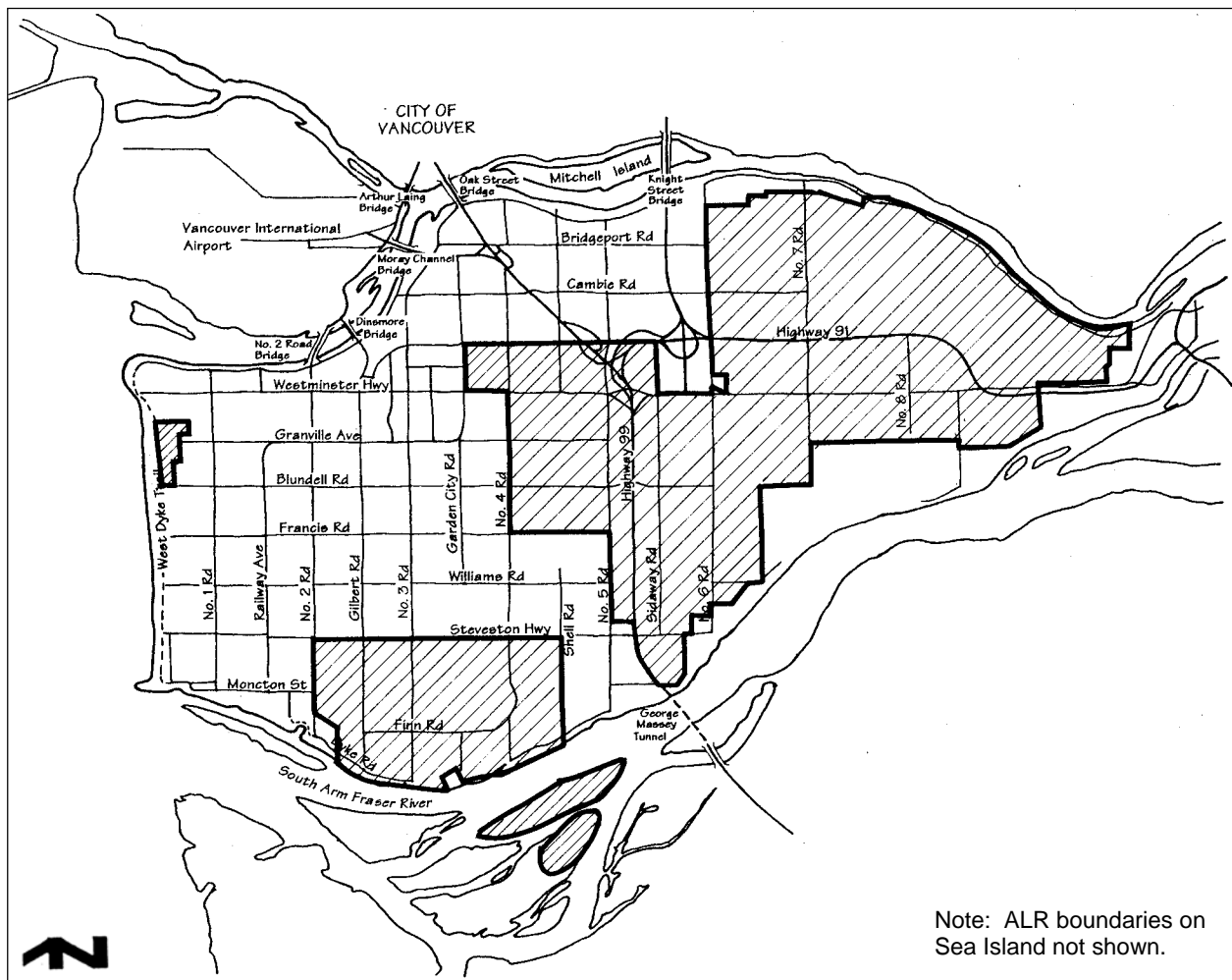
The City recognizes the importance of agriculture as a food source, an environmental resource, a heritage asset (see 5.0 Heritage), and an important contributor to the local economy.

The protection of farmland is a well-established priority in Richmond's agricultural land strategy. However, this does not guarantee that farming will occur or be maintained, as there is continuing pressure to convert Richmond's farm lands to other uses. The primary sources of this pressure include rapid urban growth; increases in absentee land ownership and land values; and limited understanding by the urban public about the economic importance and needs of agriculture.

The City is committed to protecting the supply of agricultural lands and to ensuring the viability of farm operations.

To many members of the public, some of the protected farmlands appear to be underutilized or not farmed at all. In order to justify the continuing protection of farmland, proactive strategies are needed to increase the productive use of these lands.

Agricultural Land Reserve Boundaries





Richmond is a top producer of cranberries and blueberries.



Harvesting cranberries

Some of the reasons for the low productivity of farmland include:

- Obstacles to farming operation (e.g., inadequate drainage/irrigation, aerial spraying restrictions, conflicts between non-farm and farm vehicular traffic, theft/vandalism);
- Unresolved boundary conflicts between rural and urban land uses;
- Aging of the agricultural work force and the possibility that they may not be replaced.

The Provincial Government recently adopted legislative amendments that provide new tools for local governments to respond to many of these challenges.

OBJECTIVE 1:

Continue to protect all farmlands in the Agricultural Land Reserve.

POLICIES:

- a) Support the Agricultural Land Commission in its efforts to maintain the integrity of the Agricultural Land Reserve and its existing boundaries, for both soil bound and non-soil bound agriculture (e.g., green houses);
- b) Support the Greater Vancouver Regional District's Green Zone strategy as it applies to farmland;
- c) Increase public awareness of the importance of agriculture in Richmond.

OBJECTIVE 2:

Maintain and enhance agricultural viability and productivity in Richmond.

POLICIES:

General

- a) Support farm activities which follow normal farm practices and which do not create health hazards to people or the environment;
- b) Work with the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture to identify and implement policies and programs aimed at improving farming viability;



- c) Ensure that all City bylaws, e.g. OCP, Zoning, Noise Control, which affect farmland and farm operations are:
 - Consistent with the Agricultural Land Commission Act, Procedure Regulations and General Orders;
 - Consistent with the standards in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's "Guide for Bylaw Development in Farming Areas";
- d) Establish programs to increase public awareness of farming practices and products;

Urban/Rural Boundary

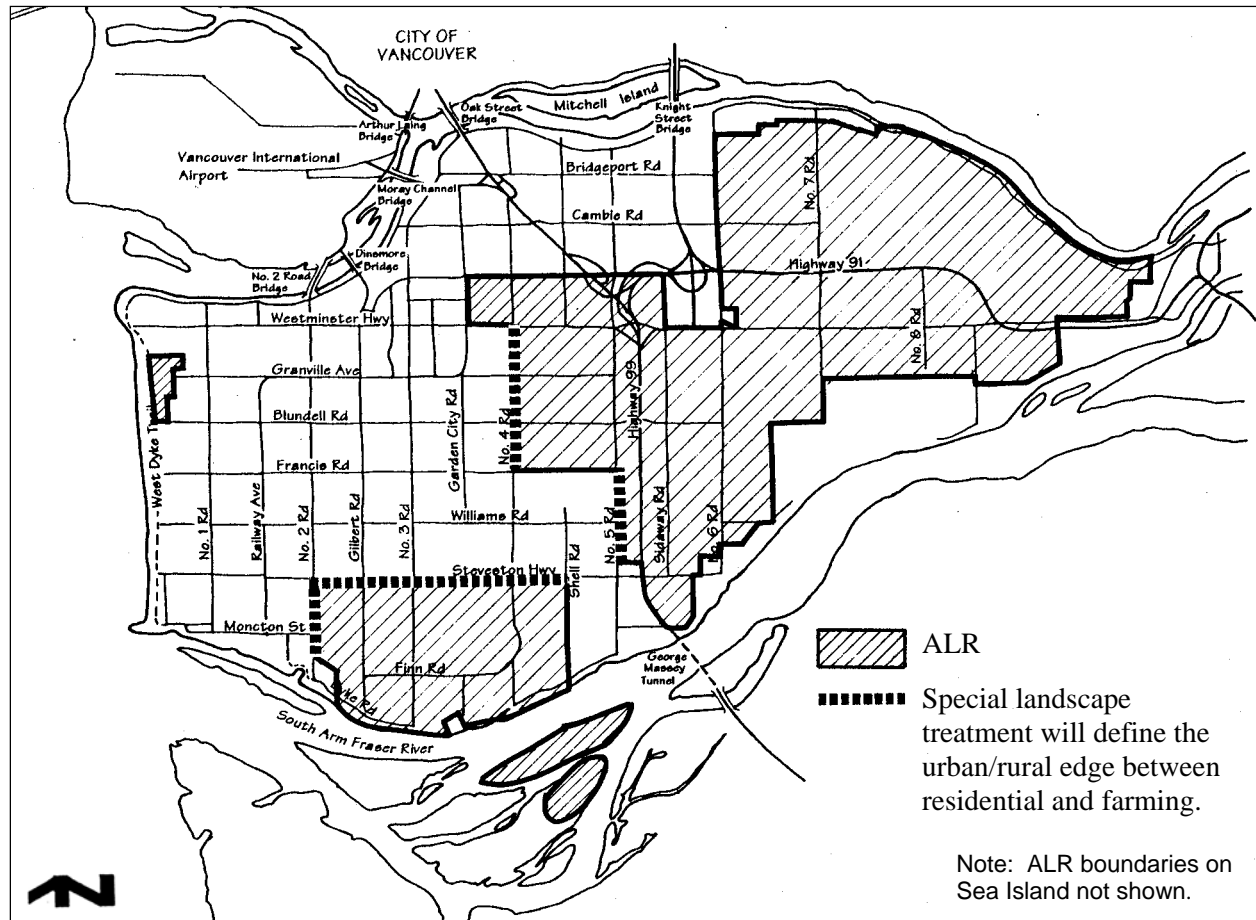
- e) Establish effective buffers along the urban/rural boundary.

There are two types of buffers to consider:

 - Buffers for the purpose of defining the urban/rural edge (e.g., along the major roads abutting the McLennan and Gilmore agricultural areas);
 - Buffers for the protection of farm viability (e.g., along the property lines of those undeveloped industrial sites abutting the East Richmond agricultural area);
- f) Encourage adjacent land uses that are compatible with farm uses and ensure that their impacts on farmlands, e.g. water runoff, will be minimized;
- g) Work with farmers and the recreational community to ensure that recreational areas and activities adjacent to or within the ALR are compatible with farm uses;
- h) Designate all parcels adjoining or reasonably adjacent (within 30m (98.4 ft.)) to the edge of the ALR as Development Permit Areas for the purpose of protecting farming (development permits are not required for construction of single-family dwellings);



Residential Edges to be Buffered



Within the ALR

- i) Limit the subdivision of farmland and investigate ways to encourage the consolidation of lots in the ALR, for example in the McLennan agricultural area;
- j) Discourage, wherever possible, major roads through the ALR;
- k) Design recreation corridors through agricultural lands to minimize disruption and other impacts on agricultural activity.
- l) Continue to assist farmers in securing an adequate supply of irrigation water and drainage improvements, by developing the necessary systems to meet the needs of the farming community;



Specifically:

- Focus on implementing recommended irrigation and drainage works (ARDSA Study, March 1992) for the south half of the East Richmond agricultural area (roughly between Highway 99, North Arm of Fraser River, No. 9 Road, and Highway 91);
 - Undertake a study of the feasibility and costs of providing irrigation and drainage improvements for the Gilmore and McLennan agricultural areas;
- m) Improve access routes for the purpose of farming;
- n) Consider incentives to encourage productive farm use of agricultural land;

*Bylaw 8074
2006/07/17*



Seasonal Farm Labour Accommodation

- o) Seasonal farm labour accommodation is a method of improving agricultural viability in Richmond, where it complies with the objectives, policies and regulations in the OCP, Agricultural Viability Strategy, Zoning & Development Bylaw, Building Bylaw and the provisions identified by Council and Agricultural Land Commission Act;
- p) Seasonal farm labour accommodation, as an additional residential use, may be considered so long as the accommodation is accessory to the principal agricultural purpose and helps to support a farm operation in the Agricultural Land Reserve;
- q) Seasonal farm labour accommodation can only be permitted through the processing and Council approval of a site-specific rezoning application. If approval is granted, the use of seasonal farm labour accommodation buildings will be required to meet all regulations contained in the City's Zoning & Development Bylaw, Building Regulation Bylaw and conditions identified in the rezoning application;
- r) New buildings to be situated on agricultural land for the purpose of seasonal farm labour accommodation must take the form of "manufactured dwellings", which are designed in such a manner to be transported to and from a site and contain the necessary living, cooking, sanitary and sleeping facilities for use by seasonal farm labour;



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- s) For agriculturally designated lots that contain two or more single-family dwellings, the occupation of one of the existing single-family residential dwellings for the purpose of seasonal farm labour accommodation can be considered, as long as all the requirements identified in the Zoning & Development Bylaw and Building Bylaw are followed;
- t) Buildings used for seasonal farm labour accommodation cannot be used as permanent non-farm residences, under any circumstances, as it would be contrary to the City's OCP and Agricultural Viability Strategy as well as provisions contained in the Agricultural Land Commission Act;
- u) The area of land on which a building used for seasonal farm labour accommodation is placed cannot be subdivided;
- v) Legal documentation is required as part of each rezoning application to confirm the use of a structure, dates of occupation, composition of farm operation and additional conditions of City consent;
- w) Seasonal farm labour accommodation buildings must be removed and land reinstated to its original condition by the property owner if they are no longer required for the purpose of accommodating seasonal farm labour on an annual, seasonal basis or are no longer in compliance with the regulations contained in the Zoning & Development Bylaw and Building Regulation Bylaw.