

TO: Agricultural Advisory Committee **DATE:** December 7, 2018
FROM: Angela Buick
Planner **FILE:** PL2018-144
**SUBJECT: Non-Farm Use in the Agricultural Reserve Application No. PL2018-144
1330 and 1410 Hodges Road – Electoral Area G
Lot 1 District Lot 19 Nanoose District Plan EPP16024 and Lot C District Lot
26 Nanoose District Plan VIP80909**

SUMMARY

This is an application for non-farm use in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) to permit a commercial compost facility including retail sales on the subject properties located in Electoral Area G. Should the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) wish to provide comments to the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), it may do so by considering the adoption of a motion. Any comments provided by the Committee will be provided to the ALC, along with a copy of this report to assist the ALC in making a decision on this application.

BACKGROUND

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) has received an application for non-farm use in the ALR from Earthbank Resource Systems Ltd.

The subject properties are legally described as Lot 1, District Lot 19, Nanoose District, Plan EPP16024 and Lot C, District Lot 26, Nanoose District, Plan VIP80909. Lot 1 is 38 hectares in size and is zoned Agriculture 1 (AG1) and Lot C is 24 hectares in size and is also zoned Agriculture 1 (AG1) pursuant to the “Regional District of Nanaimo Land Use and Subdivision Bylaw No. 500, 1987.”

Surrounding land uses include agriculturally zoned properties (AG1) and rural residences to the north, west and east. Morningstar Creek transects the south-east portion of Lot 1 and French Creek is located further west. A vacant Forestry/Resource 1 zoned parcel (FR-1) is located to the south, which borders the inland Island Highway. To the east is Morning Star Springs Farm and further to the north, over 1 km away, is the Morningstar Golf Course and higher density residential parcels (see Attachments 1 and 2 for Subject Property Map and Aerial Photo).

In 2001, the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) approved a non-farm use application to permit the operation of a compost facility on 1.0 hectare of Land, followed by a second ALC approval in 2005 that increased the area of land to 5.0 hectares.

Following these approvals by the ALC, the RDN approved two temporary use permits (TUP) for each property in 2009 numbered: 3360 50 0901 and 3360 50 0902 under file numbers PL2009-228 and PL2009-595. In 2011 these TUPs were renewed under application numbers PL2011-

146 and PL2011-147 to continue the commercial composting facility with accessory retail sales to be consistent with the ALC's former approvals.

In 2014, the applicant submitted a rezoning application where it was referred to the ALC for comments. During the rezoning it was noted that the current operation exceeded the previous approvals as the land being used for the composting operation had increased from the approved 5 hectares and the rezoning application requested an area of 12.3 hectares. In addition, the volume of sales had increased beyond the ALC's definition of composting as a Farm Use.

In order to permit and recognize the expansion of the operation, a new non-farm use application is required to the ALC and consideration by the RDN is required. Earthbank Resource Systems Ltd. proposes to increase the permitted area for a compost facility and retail sale of compost from 5.0 hectares to 9.0 hectares located within the ALR and an additional 0.8 hectares on non-ALR lands.

Currently, Earthbank's composting operations are regulated by the provincial Environmental Management Act under the Organic Matter Recycling Regulations (OMMR) and concurrently by the Regional District of Nanaimo's Waste Stream Management Licensing bylaw (WSML) and is also reviewed by the Organic Matter Review Institute (OMRI). The application that has been submitted has been reviewed by Solid Waste staff who commented that there are currently no operational concerns. Since the previous non-farm use application was denied, Earthbank is technically non-compliant and has been unable to attain annual compliance. In the case that this application receives approval from the ALC, Earthbank would then pursue a re-zoning application with the RDN and compliance with the appropriate agencies including an updated RDN Waste Stream Management License.

The current land uses on Lot C include an estimated 20 hectares for grazing and hayfields as part of the Hof Waldeck Farm, and approximately 4.0 hectares for ongoing soil enhancement using Earthbank Resource Systems compost. The lands also contain drainage ditches, leachate collection ponds and compost curing and storage. The current uses on Lot 1 include a recently constructed single-family dwelling unit with an office and lunchroom facility incorporated within it and a 3,500 square foot greenhouse. Approximately 5.0 hectares is used for the composting operation including compost piles, raw material stock piling, sorting, equipment storage in various buildings, greenhouse and leachate control collection ponds (see Attachments 1 and 2 for Subject Property Map and Aerial Photo).

A copy of the applicant's submission package is included as Attachment 10. Personal Information is redacted as required, in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

AAC members were provided an opportunity to attend the site on November 15, 2018.

REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY

The subject property is designated Resource Lands and Open Space pursuant to the "Regional District of Nanaimo Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1615, 2011" (RGS). This designation supports uses that are compatible with the creation of new parcels that are smaller than the size supported by the Official Community Plan in effect at the date of the adoption of the RGS, see Attachment 7. Further to this, the RGS encourages the provincial government to protect and preserve the agricultural land base through the ALR, (see Attachments 7, 8 and 9).

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

The vast majority of the subject properties are designated as Rural, pursuant to the “Regional District of Nanaimo Electoral Area ‘G’ Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1540, 2008”. A small portion of Lot C (~0.8 ha) that is not in the ALR is designated Rural Resource. The OCP policies support a full range of agricultural and complementary uses in the ALR and value-added activities are encouraged that can improve farm viability. It is recognized that ALC approval may be necessary for some value-added activities (see Attachment 6 – OCP Policies).

The subject properties are designated within the Environmentally Sensitive Features, Fish Habitat Protection and Farmland Protection Development Permit Areas. A development permit will be required prior to alteration of the land. Amendments to “Regional District of Nanaimo Electoral Area ‘G’ Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1540, 2008” are not required.

ZONING

The subject properties are currently zoned Agriculture One (AG1) Zone, pursuant to “Regional District of Nanaimo Zoning and Subdivision Bylaw No. 500, 1987”, see Attachments 4 and 5 for zoning regulations and minimum parcel size. The AG1 Zone permits Farm Use, Agriculture, and Residential Use. The zoning regulation permits one dwelling unit per parcel on a parcel having an area of 2.0 hectares or less; two dwelling units per parcel on a parcel having an area equal to or greater than twice the minimum parcel size. The current zoning does not permit compost facility and retail sales.

If this non-farm use application is approved, the applicant will be required to submit a zoning amendment application as amendments to Bylaw 500 are required.

BOARD POLICY AND AAC PROCEDURE

Regional District of Nanaimo Board Policy B1.8: *Review of ALR Applications* (Board Policy B1.8) provides an opportunity for the AAC to review and provide comments on ALR applications for exclusion, subdivision and non-farm use, on lands within the ALR. Board Policy B1.8 also includes a standing Board resolution for non-farm use of lands within the ALR which reads as follows:

Policy B1.8 also states that all ALR non-farm use applications are to be forwarded to the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) with no resolution of support or opposition from the Regional Board of Directors.

In accordance with the AAC Terms of Reference, the role of the AAC members is to provide local perspective and expertise to advise the Board (and in this case comment to the ALC) on a range of agricultural issues on an ongoing and as needed basis, as directed by the Board. In addition to members’ local knowledge and input, comment on ALR applications may be guided by Board approved policies such as the RDN Board Policy B1.8, the Board Strategic Plan, the RGS and the applicable OCP, along with the relevant land use bylaw.

Members of the AAC can also find information related to ALR land use and agriculture in BC, on the Agricultural Land Commission and Ministry of Agriculture websites. Local and contextual information can also be found on the RDN’s agricultural projects website at www.growingourfuture.ca.

Comment provided to the ALC from the AAC is consensus based, through Committee adoption of a motion. If an AAC member has comments regarding an application being submitted to the ALC, the appropriate time to provide those comments is in the Committee meeting, during discussion on the application, and prior to the Committee's adoption of its motion. Only motions approved by the Committee will be forwarded to the ALC for its consideration. Comments from individual AAC members will not be included in the staff report that is forwarded to the ALC.

The comment provided by the AAC is not an approval or denial of the application and is only a recommendation to the ALC regarding a specific application. As per Board Policy B1.8 any comment from the AAC is provided in addition to the applicable standing Board resolution and Electoral Area Director's comment (if provided). The ALC is the authority for decisions on matters related to the ALR and will consider comments in making its decision on an application.

ELECTORAL AREA DIRECTOR COMMENT

As per Board Policy B1.8, all applications under the *Agriculture Land Commission Act* for exclusion, subdivision, or non-farm use of ALR land are to be forwarded to the applicable subject property's electoral area director, for comment.

With respect to this application, Director Clark Gourlay, Electoral Area G, has identified a conflict of interest and therefore has opted out of the site visit and opportunity for comment.



Angela Buick
abuick@rdn.bc.ca
November 27, 2018

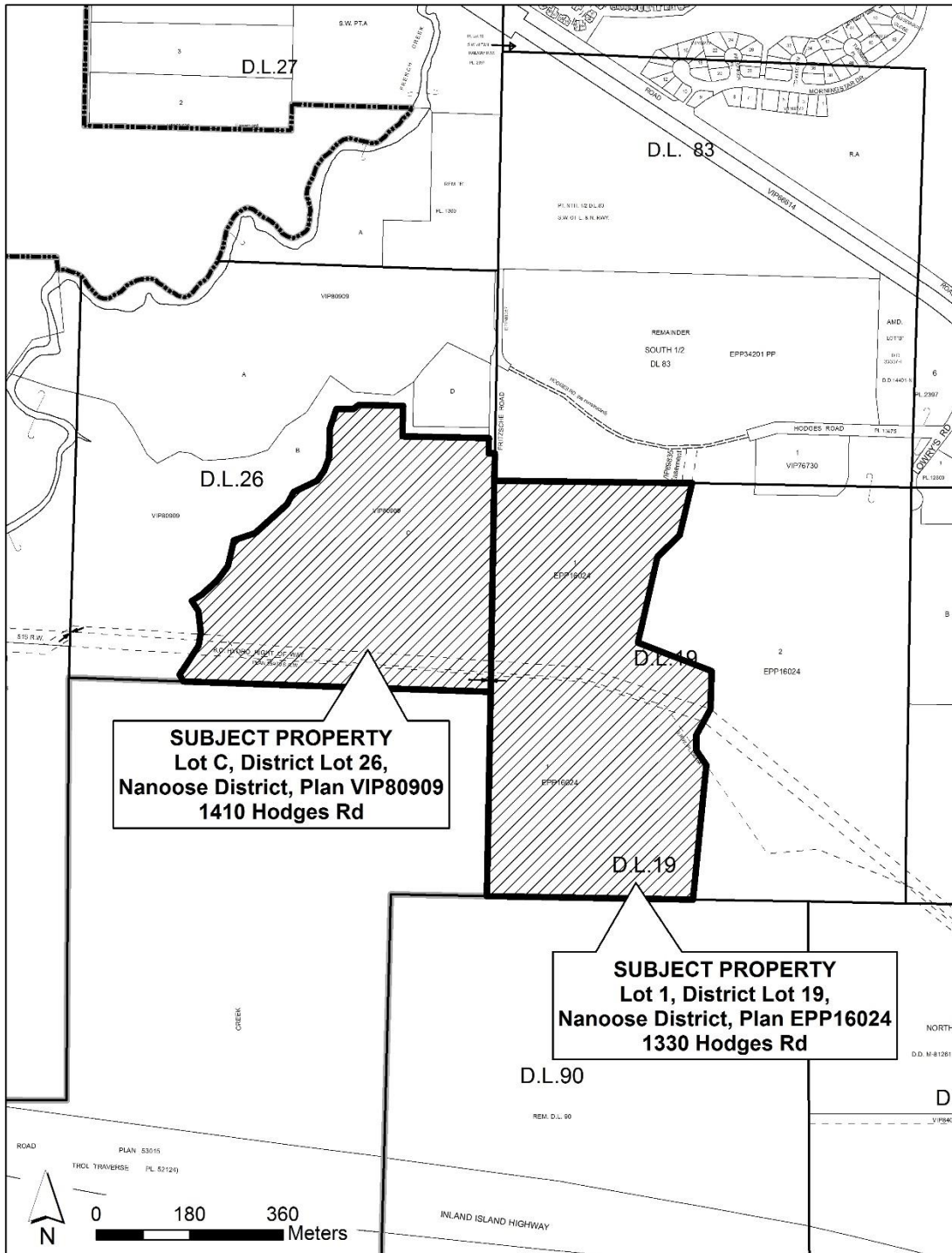
Reviewed by:

- P. Thompson, Manager of Current Planning
- G. Garbutt, General Manager, Strategic & Community Development
- P. Carlyle, Chief Administrative Officer

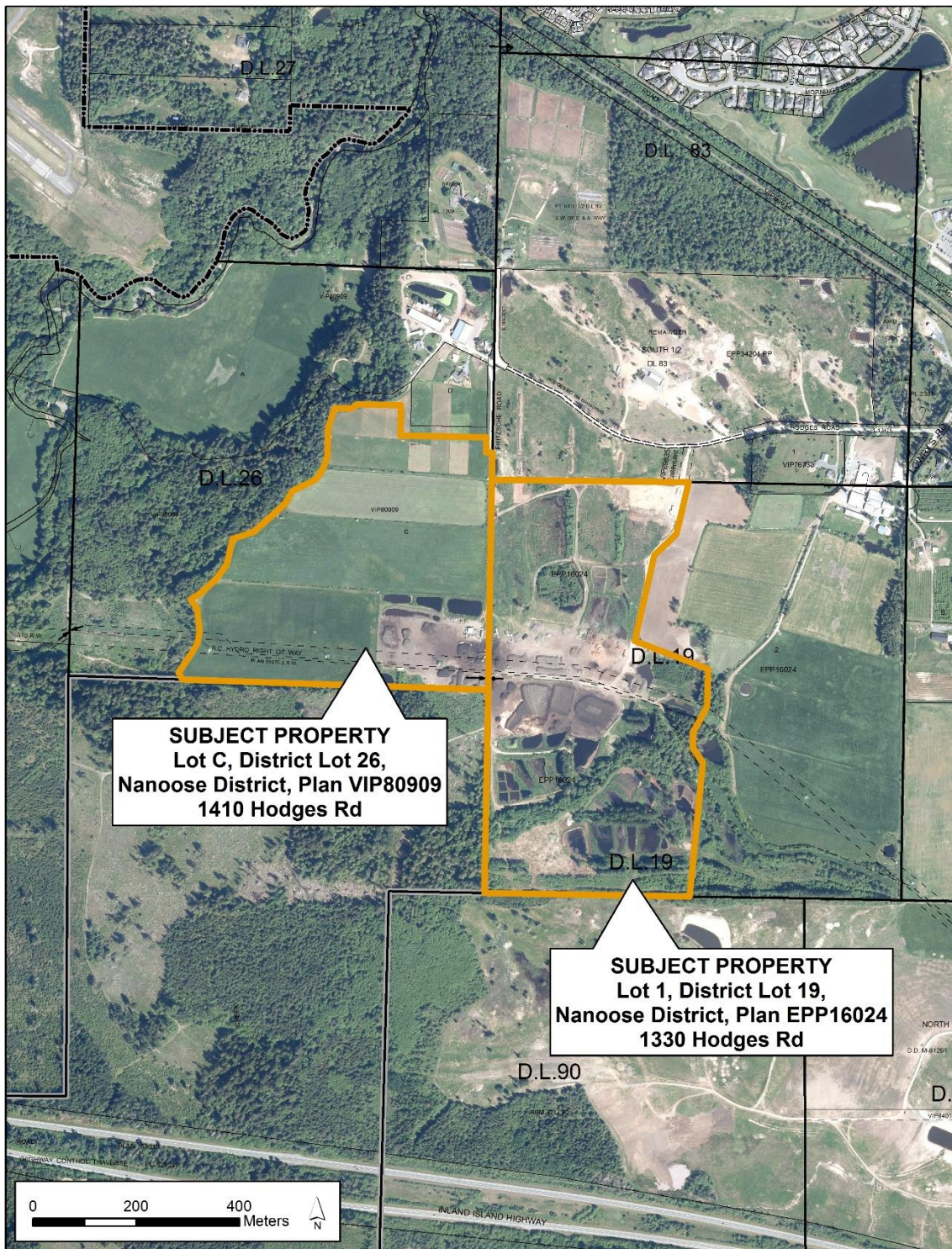
Attachments

1. Subject Property Map
2. 2016 Aerial Photo
3. Proposed Site Plan
4. Existing Zoning
5. Bylaw 500, Schedule '4B' Subdivision Districts – Minimum Parcel Size
6. Official Community Plan Land Use Designation
7. Regional Growth Strategy - Land Use Designation
8. Regional Growth Strategy - Goal 7 - Enhance Economic Resiliency – Agriculture
9. Regional Growth Strategy - Goal 8 – Food Security
10. Applicant's Submission

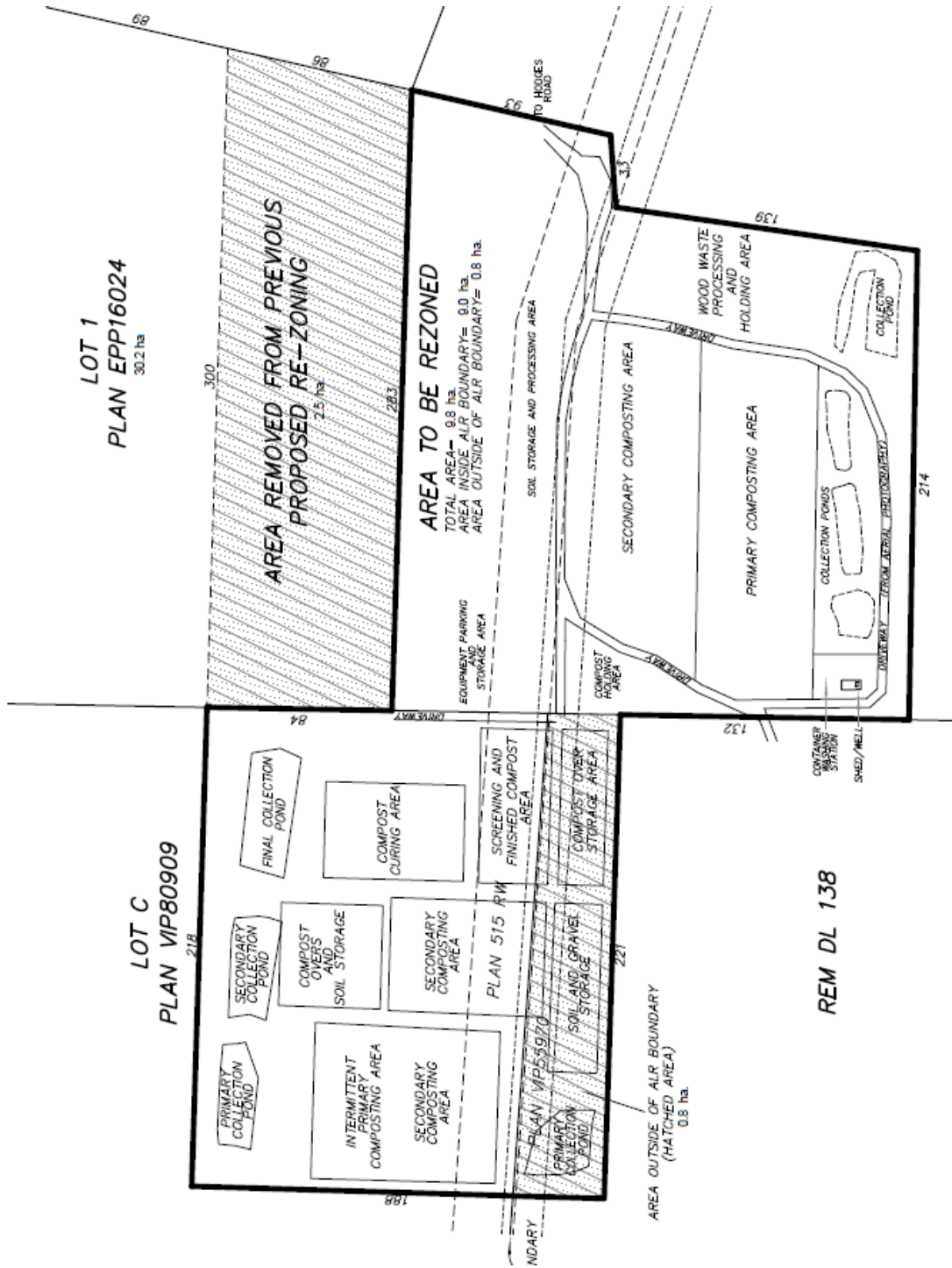
Attachment 1 Subject Property Map



Attachment 2
2016 Aerial Photo



Attachment 3 Proposed Site Plan



**Attachment 4
Agricultural 1 Zoning
(Page 1 of 4)**

Part 3 – Land Use Regulations

Section 3.4.1

A G R I C U L T U R E 1

AG1⁴²⁴³

3.4.1.1 Permitted Uses and Minimum Site Area

Permitted Principal Uses

- a) Farm Use – on lands located in the Agricultural Land Reserve
- b) Agriculture – on lands not located in the Agricultural Land Reserve
- c) Residential Use

Permitted Accessory Residential Uses

- a) Home Based Business
- b) Secondary Suite

Permitted Accessory Farm Uses

- a) Temporary Sawmill
 - b) Agricultural Education and Research
 - c) Agri-tourism Accommodation
 - d) Production of Biological Integrated Pest Management Products
 - e) Gathering for an Event⁴⁴
-

3.4.1.2 Maximum Number and Size of Buildings and Structures

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---|
| 1) Accessory residential buildings | combined floor area of 400 m ² | |
| 2) Dwelling units/parcel | | |
| a) on a parcel having an area of 2.0 ha or less | | 1 |
| For Electoral Areas 'A', 'C', 'E', and 'H' | | |
| b) on a parcel having an area greater than 2.0 ha | | 2 |
| For Electoral Area 'G' | | |
| c) on a parcel having an area equal to or greater than twice the minimum parcel size as established by Schedule '4B Subdivision District – Minimum Parcel Sizes' | | 2 |

⁴² Bylaw No.500.383, Adopted June 25, 2013

⁴³ Bylaw No. 500.402, adopted June 28, 2016

⁴⁴ Bylaw No. 500.413, adopted May 22, 2018

Attachment 4
Agricultural 1 Zoning
(Page 2 of 4)

Part 3 – Land Use Regulations

AGRICULTURE 1 continued

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| d) Notwithstanding subsection (c), on a parcel located in this zone and created prior to February 22, 2011 and having an area greater than 2.0 ha. | 2 |
| 3) Height (non-farm and accessory farm buildings and structures) | 9.0 m |
| 4) Parcel coverage | |
| a) Non-farm buildings and structures | 10% |
| b) Farm or agriculture buildings and structures | 25% |
| c) Greenhouses | 75% |
| d) In no case shall the combined parcel coverage exceed 75%. | |
| e) Notwithstanding a), b), c) and d) above or any other regulation in this Bylaw, the following agricultural structures shall be exempt from maximum parcel coverage: | |
| i) Permeable detention ponds | |
| ii) Support structures used for shading, frost and wind protection, netting, or trellising. | |
-

3.4.1.3 Minimum Setback Requirements

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 1) All non-farm buildings and structures – All lot lines | 8.0 m |
| except where: | |
| a) the parcel is less than 4000 m ² in area then the setback from lot lines may be reduced to 2.0 m from an interior side lot line and to 5.0 m from other lot lines, excluding the front lot line; | |
| b) any part of a parcel is adjacent to or contains a watercourse or the sea then the regulations in Sections 3.3.8 and 3.3.9 shall apply. | |
| 2) All agriculture or farm buildings, structures and uses – in accordance with Section 3.3.10. | |
-

3.4.1.4 Other Regulations

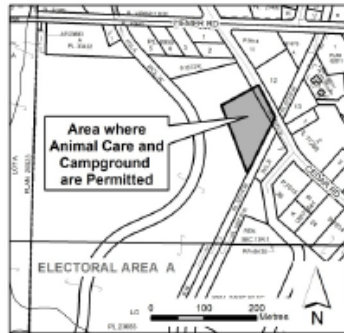
- 1) For any part of a parcel in the Agricultural Land Reserve, 'Farm Use' shall be a permitted principal use and for any part of a parcel not located in the Agricultural Land Reserve, 'Agriculture' shall be a permitted principal use.
- 2) Accessory Farm uses are only permitted on that part of a parcel that is within the Agricultural Land Reserve.
- 3) Specific 'Farm' and 'Permitted' uses as defined in the *Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision, and Procedure Regulation* shall be developed in accordance with Section 3.3.15 and 3.3.16 of this Bylaw.
- 4) Despite any regulation in this Bylaw, land established as "Agricultural Land Reserve" pursuant to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* is subject to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and *Regulations*, and applicable orders of the Land Reserve Commission.

Attachment 4 Agricultural 1 Zoning (Page 3 of 4)

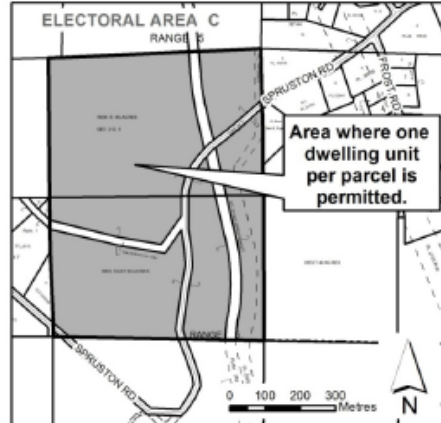
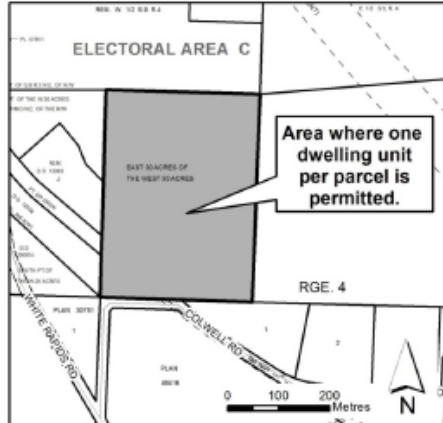
Part 3 – Land Use Regulations

AGRICULTURE 1 continued

- 5) Animal Care and Campground shall be permitted in the shaded area outlined in bold in the map below.



- 6) Notwithstanding Section 3.4.1.2 Dwelling units/parcel the maximum number of dwelling units permitted in the shaded areas outlined in bold in the maps below shall be limited to one dwelling unit per parcel.

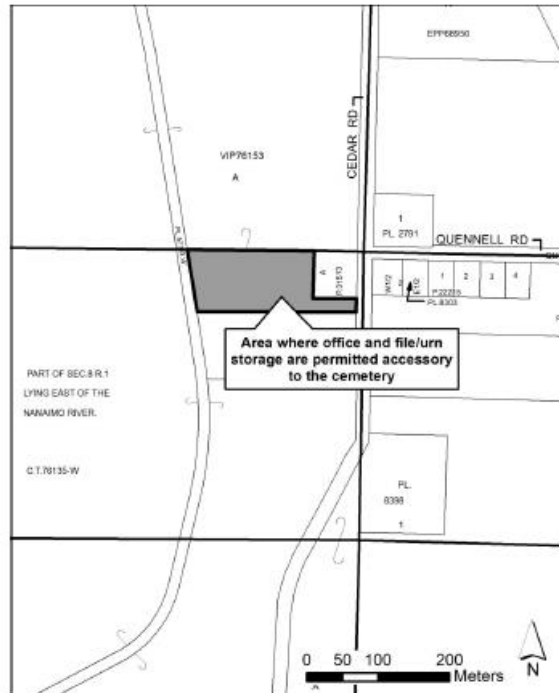


Attachment 4 Agricultural 1 Zoning (Page 4 of 4)

Part 3 – Land Use Regulations

AGRICULTURE 1 continued

- 7) Office and file/urn storage accessory to the cemetery shall be permitted in accordance with ALC non-farm use approval in the shaded area outlined in bold in the map below.⁴⁵



⁴⁵ Bylaw 500.412, adopted March 27, 2018

Attachment 5
Bylaw 500, Schedule '4B' Subdivision Districts – Minimum Parcel Size

Part 4 – Subdivision Regulations '4B' – Subdivision Districts

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO

BYLAW NO. 500

SCHEDULE '4B' SUBDIVISION DISTRICTS - MINIMUM PARCEL SIZES

- 1) The minimum size of any lot created by subdivision shall be determined by the standard of services provided and shall meet the applicable minimal parcel size set out below:¹

Minimum Parcel Sizes				
Subdivision District	Community Water & Sewer System	Community Water System - No Community Sewer	Community Sewer System - No Community Water	All Other Subdivisions
A	20.0 ha	20.0 ha	20.0 ha	20.0 ha
B	8.0 ha	8.0 ha	8.0 ha	8.0 ha
C	5.0 ha	5.0 ha	5.0 ha	5.0 ha
CC ²	4.0 ha	4.0 ha	4.0 ha	4.0 ha
D	2.0 ha	2.0 ha	2.0 ha	2.0 ha
E	1.6 ha	1.6 ha	1.6 ha	1.6 ha
F	1.0 ha	1.0 ha	1.0 ha	1.0 ha
G	8000 m ²	1.0 ha	1.0 ha	1.0 ha
H	5000 m ²	1.0 ha	1.0 ha	1.0 ha
J ³	4000 m ²	6000 m ²	1.0 ha	1.0 ha
K	4000 m ²	4000 m ²	4000 m ²	4000 m ²
L	2000 m ²	2000 m ²	4000 m ²	4000 m ²
M	2000 m ²	2000 m ²	1.0 ha	1.0 ha
N ^{4,5}	1600 m ²	1600 m ²	1.0 ha	1.0 ha
P	1000 m ²	1600 m ²	1.0 ha	1.0 ha
Q (EA G only)	700 m ²	⁶ 1.0 ha	1.0 ha	1.0 ha
Q (other EAs)	700 m ²	2000 m ²	1.0 ha	1.0 ha
R	500 m ²	⁷ 1.0 ha	1.0 ha	1.0 ha
S ⁸	400 m ²	2000 m ²	1.0 ha	1.0 ha
T ⁹	600 m ²	No further subdivision		
V ¹⁰	50.0 ha	50.0 ha	50.0 ha	50.0 ha
Z	No further subdivision			
CD9 ¹¹	400 lots with approved pump and haul service connection			

¹ Bylaw No. 500.238, adopted February 10, 1998
² Bylaw No. 500.347, adopted September 22, 2009
³ Bylaw No. 500.27, adopted August 9, 1988
⁴ Bylaw No. 500.66, adopted December 12, 1989
⁵ Bylaw No. 500.324, adopted February 28, 2006
⁶ Bylaw No. 500.264, adopted October 10, 2000
⁷ Bylaw No. 500.264, adopted October 10, 2000
⁸ Bylaw No. 500.27, adopted August 9, 1988
⁹ Bylaw No. 500.394, adopted August 25, 2015
¹⁰ Bylaw No. 500.253, adopted January 11, 2000
¹¹ Bylaw No. 500.275, adopted October 9, 2001

Attachment 6
Official Community Plan Land Use Designation
(Page 1 of 4)

5.0 Protecting Rural Integrity

Electoral Area 'G' residents define rural as "a perpetuation of a style and quality of life for local residents on lands originally inhabited by First Nations Peoples and later established by pioneers for homesteading and agriculture, with a mixture of protected forests and a forest interface that allows for a continuum of wildlife habitat and access to environmentally sensitive trail systems."

In recognition of the community's value of the rural atmosphere of Electoral Area 'G', and the region's goal of protecting rural integrity, the Electoral Area 'G' OCP identifies the different types of neighbourhoods and land uses in the Plan Area that are considered to be rural in character, and provides policies to protect and enhance the unique attributes of these rural lands and ensure that changes which may occur on these rural lands contribute to, rather than detract from, the quality of life enjoyed by the residents of Electoral Area 'G'.

The Electoral Area 'G' Official Community Plan Area offers diverse rural and semi-rural lifestyles including rural residential areas outside of the Urban Containment Boundary as defined in the Regional Growth Strategy. The following sections set out the objectives and policies for protecting rural integrity in Electoral Area 'G'.

5.1 Rural and Rural Residential Land Use Designations

This Plan designates Rural and Rural Residential land use designations based on the minimum parcel sizes supported by the Regional Growth Strategy. Rural Residential designated lands in this Plan are intended to provide for larger-lot residential uses which may include traditional rural pursuits while also serving as a buffer between resource land and the more urbanized lands.

The Rural and Rural Residential area of Electoral Area 'G' contains a variety of lands with natural resource value including agriculture, aggregates and forestry. These lands have historically played a significant role in shaping the Plan Area's character, as well as providing important economic benefits. Their long term viability and productivity is increasingly threatened by urban encroachment and the spread of incompatible land uses necessitating special attention and protective measures.

The policies of this section define the community's intentions and priorities with respect to the long term management and use of rural residential lands. This section of the Plan recognizes the unique qualities of each distinct rural residential community and supports minimum parcel sizes based on policies in the Regional Growth Strategy. In doing so the Plan divides lands into the following four categories: 'Rural Residential 1', 'Rural Residential 2', 'Rural Residential 3', and 'Rural' as described below.

Objectives:

1. Protect and maintain the recreational, agricultural, forestry and aggregate land base and associated activities.
2. Minimize the impact of agriculture, forestry and aggregate-related activities on the natural environment and other forms of development and land uses.

Attachment 6
Official Community Plan Land Use Designation
(Page 2 of 4)

3. Encourage farm activities on productive agricultural lands and on any lands capable of supporting viable agricultural activities.
4. Provide for continued rural residential opportunities without contributing to further rural sprawl.

General Policies:

The following policies apply to all lands within the, Rural Residential 1, Rural Residential 2, Rural Residential 3, and Rural land use designations.

Policies:

1. Lands designated Rural, Rural Residential 1, and Rural Residential 2 are shown on Map No. 3.
2. Although it is recognized that there are existing parcels within the Rural, Rural Residential 1, 2, or 3 designation that have been serviced with community water prior to the adoption of this Official Community Plan, the provision of or expansion to community water to service lands designated Rural, Rural Residential 1, Rural Residential 2, or Rural Residential 3 shall only be supported for health or environmental reasons and only where such services do not result in additional subdivision or development beyond what is permitted by the current zoning based on the minimum parcel size/site area requirements with no community servicing.
3. Zoning amendment proposals that have the potential to impact the quantity or quality of water resources shall be accompanied by a hydrological impact assessment report prepared by a professional engineer with experience in hydrologic analyses. The amendment proposal must also ensure that there are no impacts on fish habitat and the receiving waters, including channel stability and flow maintenance.
4. Permitted uses shall be compatible rural uses, rural residential uses and uses accessory to rural, and rural residential uses.
5. This Plan does not support lands within the Plan Area being pre-zoned for Animal Care. Lands within this Plan Area with existing Rural 2 and Rural 3 zoning may be considered for rezoning to remove 'Animal Care' as a permitted use, which may include changing the zoning designation to be consistent with the existing surrounding zoning designations.
6. Notwithstanding Policy 5 above, a rezoning to permit Animal Care may be supported within the Plan Area subject to its suitability being determined through the rezoning process.

Attachment 6
Official Community Plan Land Use Designation
(Page 3 of 4)

7. The Ministry of Environment is encouraged to license and monitor groundwater extraction and monitor licensed surface water withdrawals.

Rural and Rural Residential designations

The Regional District of Nanaimo Regional Growth Strategy does not support the creation of parcels smaller than the size supported by the Official Community Plan in effect at the date of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy on June 10, 2003. Notwithstanding this requirement, if a parcel was serviced with community water since June 10, 2003, the minimum parcel size supported by the zoning bylaw which was in affect on June 10, 2003 with community water service and no community sewer service may be supported.

The designations are intended to be consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy and recognize the unique rural qualities of existing rural neighbourhoods in Electoral Area 'G'.

Rural

The Rural designation primarily includes lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve although it is recognized that not all lands within this designation are within the ALR. Lands within the rural designation have value for agriculture, forestry, and other resource activities.

Policy:

22. The minimum parcel size for lands within the rural land use designation shall be 8 hectares although this Plan recognizes that there are existing parcels smaller than 8 hectares in area.

23. Rezoning to permit the creation of new parcels smaller than 8 hectares in the rural land use designation shall not be supported.

24. Where land is located within the Agricultural Land Reserve and is proposed for subdivision or non-farm use, including the placement of a second dwelling, approval must first be obtained from the Agricultural Land Commission, except where additional dwellings are necessary for farm purposes subject to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*. All subdivision and non-farm uses within the ALR shall comply with the agricultural objectives and policies in Section 8.1 of this Plan.

25. New residential development shall be permitted at densities of 1 dwelling unit per 8 hectares to a maximum of two dwelling units per parcel.

26. Temporary Use Permits for primary resource processing, asphalt batch plant, concrete ready mix plant, yard waste chipping, or commercial composting and rezoning applications to rezone existing gravel pits to allow primary processing and related

Attachment 6
Official Community Plan Land Use Designation
(Page 4 of 4)

activities associated with gravel extraction may be supported in accordance with the Policies contained in Sections 8.3 and 8.7 of this Plan.

27. For any of the uses listed in Policy 26 above, the preferred option is to consider them for a Temporary Use Permit prior to considering them for a rezoning in accordance with Sections 8.3 and 8.7.

Attachment 7 Regional Growth Strategy Land Use Designation

Resource Lands and Open Space

The Resource Lands and Open Space land use designation includes:

- Land that is primarily intended for resource uses such as agriculture, forestry, aggregate and other resource development; and
- Land that has been designated for long-term open space uses.

This designation includes:

- Land in the Agriculture Land Reserve;
- Crown land;
- Land designated for resource management or resource use purposes, including forestry, in official community plans;
- Recognized ecologically sensitive conservation areas;
- Provincial parks;
- Regional parks;
- Large community parks;
- Cemeteries;
- Existing public facilities outside of areas planned for mixed-use centre development;
- Destination Resorts; and
- Golf courses.

Resource activities on land in this designation should be encouraged to operate in ways that do not harm the functioning of natural ecosystems. Land use control, and resource management of lands in this designation is shared between landowners, local, provincial and sometimes federal government. Much of the forest land is privately owned. Forest companies, farmers, shellfish aquaculture (and associated research facilities) and aggregate resource development companies are recognized to have the right to operate on land within this designation in compliance with local, provincial and federal government regulations.

No new parcels that are smaller than the size supported by the official community plan in effect at the date of the adoption of this *Regional Growth Strategy* may be created on land in this designation.

Attachment 8

Regional Growth Strategy Goal 7 – Enhance Economic Resiliency - Agriculture

Agriculture

- 7.14 Recognize the importance of agriculture to the region's economy. To this end, the RDN and member municipalities agree to:
- Support the management of the Agriculture Land Reserve (ALR) by the provincial government;
 - Encourage the provincial government to protect the agricultural land base through the ALR;
 - Support the agricultural use of ALR lands within designated Urban Areas or Rural Village Areas except in instances where urban land uses have already been established at the time of the adoption of this RGS;
 - Recognize that all ALR lands will be subject to the regulations of the Agricultural Land Commission;
 - Support the preparation of a study of agriculture in the region for the purpose of identifying the issues and needs (both immediate and future) of the agricultural sector;
 - Encourage and support value-added agricultural industries; and
 - Enhance opportunities for agricultural activity on lands not in the ALR.

Attachment 9
Regional Growth Strategy Goal 8 – Food Security
(Page 1 of 3)

Goal 8 - Food Security - Protect and enhance the capacity of the region to produce and process food.

Most of the food we eat comes from other parts of the world. A study conducted by the Region of Waterloo Public Health in Ontario (M. Xuereb, 2005) found that *'Imports of 58 commonly eaten foods travel an average of 4,497 km to Waterloo Region'*. Although there are currently no regionally specific studies estimating the distance food travels to reach our plates, it is safe to estimate that many of the foods we regularly consume travel on average at least 2,400 km to reach us (a widely quoted figure for North America, based on research conducted in Iowa by R. Pirog, et al 2001).

Despite ongoing debate about the environmental benefits of 'buying local' food versus making dietary changes (C. Weber and H. Scott Matthews, 2008), it is clear that our dependence on imported foods means that our access to food is vulnerable to the effects of weather and political events that may occur thousands of kilometers away. As well, world energy prices play a large role in the cost of food production and distribution. Greater food security means that more food is grown locally and therefore is not as susceptible to events occurring outside the region.

Local food production generates numerous economic, environmental and social benefits. Agriculture employs almost 3,000 people and generates a flow of income into the region. Local sources of food help reduce the region's carbon footprint by reducing transportation-related GHG emissions. In addition, the nutritional content of locally produced food is often greater than imported food – providing a healthier choice of food for residents.

Ensuring the long-term viability of farming and agricultural activity in the region requires a coordinated effort on the part of local, provincial and federal authorities. In addition to the provisions of Policy 5.4, the RDN and member municipalities can undertake a number of actions to support and enhance the viability of food production in the region as set out in the following policies (See Map 5 – Agricultural Lands).

The '5 A's' of food security:

- *Available – sufficient supply*
- *Accessible – efficient distribution*
- *Adequate – nutritionally adequate and safe*
- *Acceptable – produced under acceptable conditions (e.g. culturally and ecologically sustainable)*
- *Agency – tools are in place to improve food security*

Attachment 9
Regional Growth Strategy Goal 8 – Food Security
(Page 2 of 3)

Protecting the agricultural land base is a key requirement for enhancing food security. The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) established by the Province in 1973 has largely been effective in reducing the loss of agricultural lands. Since 1974 the percentage of land protected under the ALR in the RDN has decreased approximately 12%, from 10.10% of the total land base to approximately 8.85% (www.alc.gov.bc.ca/alr/stats).

The majority of ALR lands in the RDN are located in rural Electoral Areas, with smaller portions located within the boundaries of municipalities. This RGS recognizes and supports the jurisdiction of the ALC over all ALR lands and strongly supports the retention and use of all ALR lands for agriculture. The RDN will continue to endorse the Agricultural Land Commission's efforts in preserving agricultural lands. Other actions that would enhance food security in the region include:

- Supporting improved access to sustainable water supplies for irrigation;
- Encouraging best water management practices in agriculture;
- Providing drainage infrastructure for flood-prone lands that do not include environmentally sensitive areas;
- Improving infrastructure to provide agricultural services and processing; and improving access to markets.

Policies

The RDN and member municipalities agree to:

- 8.1 Encourage and support the Agricultural Land Commission in retaining lands within the ALR for agricultural purposes.
- 8.2 Discourage the subdivision of agricultural lands.
- 8.3 Include provisions in their official community plans and zoning bylaws to allow for complementary land uses and activities that support the on-going viability of farming operations.
- 8.4 Establish agriculture as the priority use on land in the ALR.
- 8.5 Minimize the potential impact non-farm land uses may have on farming operations and include policies in their official community plans and zoning bylaws that reduce the opportunity for land use conflicts to occur.
- 8.6 Encourage and support agricultural activity on lands that are not within the ALR. This may include small-scale home-based agricultural businesses.

Attachment 9
Regional Growth Strategy Goal 8 – Food Security
(Page 3 of 3)

- 8.7 Recognize the importance of value-added agricultural uses and complementary land use activities for the economic viability of farms. To support complementary farm uses, official community plans should consider:
- The provision of appropriately located agricultural support services and infrastructure;
 - Reducing impediments to agricultural processing and related land uses;
 - Allowing compatible complementary land use activities (e.g., agri-tourism);
 - Allowing farmers' markets and other outlets that sell local produce to locate in all parts of the community.
- 8.8 Encourage urban agriculture initiatives and support activities and programs that increase awareness of local food production within the region.
- 8.9 Support the appropriate use of water resources for irrigation of agricultural lands.
- 8.10 Support the provision of drainage infrastructure to flood-prone lands that do not lie within environmentally sensitive areas.
- 8.11 Work in collaboration with federal and provincial agencies, adjacent regional districts, and agricultural organizations to improve access to markets for agricultural products.
- 8.12 Support partnerships and collaborate with non-profit groups to enhance the economic viability of farms.
- 8.13 Support farms that produce organic agricultural products and use sustainable farming practices.
- 8.14 Support the production, processing, distribution and sale of locally grown produce (including shellfish).

Attachment 10
Applicant's Submission