

6.0 Agriculture

6.1 Introduction

Cattle ranching and forage production are the primary agricultural activities in the Cariboo. The region produces approximately 20% of the beef cattle in the province. Ranching became established in the Cariboo during the 1860's Gold Rush and spread from Fort Alexandria (south of Quesnel) along the Cariboo Wagon Road to service the early demand for agricultural products. Ranch operations have subsequently been established throughout the Cariboo, mainly in areas that offer grazing opportunities on Crown Land

The expansion of residential settlements contributes to the removal of land from agricultural use. In an effort to preserve agricultural land the provincial government enacted the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* which designates land suitable for farm use throughout British Columbia as the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Approvals for non-agricultural development, for subdivision, for the exclusion of land from the ALR, and for the removal of soil and the placing of fill within the ALR must be obtained by the Commission.

The purposes of the commission set out in Section 6 of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*, which includes; to preserve agricultural land; to encourage farming on agricultural land in collaboration with other communities of interest; to encourage local governments, first nations, the government and its agents to enable and accommodate farm use of agricultural land and uses compatible with agriculture in their plans, bylaws and policies.

- Economic, cultural and social values
- Regional and community planning objectives
- Other prescribed considerations

Due to this enabling legislation, the management of agricultural resources is primarily a provincial responsibility. However, the CRD does have an important role working with the ALC to nurture the agricultural sector. The intent of CRD Agricultural Policy is to promote compatibility between agricultural and non-agricultural land uses, while complementing the existing agricultural policies in OCPs. The policies of this OCP reflect this relationship.

6.2 Objectives

- 6.2.1 Protect the economic viability of the agricultural sector of the community and encourage its improvement and expansion.

- 6.2.2 Support the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) in protecting agricultural land and agricultural opportunities in the plan area.
- 6.2.3 Protect agricultural land by maintaining large parcel areas which can economically sustain agricultural production.
- 6.2.4 Work with the ALC to identify ALR lands that may be suitable for non-farm development and that can better contribute to community development and economic sustainability.

6.3 Policies

The Cariboo Regional District Board will:

- 6.3.1 Encourage agricultural operations on land designated as Agriculture as shown on Schedule 'D': Land Use Designations.
- 6.3.2 Support the protection of land within the Agriculture Land Reserve as shown on Schedule 'E': Agricultural Land Reserve and as expressed through the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*, its regulations, and general orders of the Commission except as noted in Policy 6.3.2.
- 6.3.3 Fine tune the ALR boundaries in the South Cariboo area, in co-operation with the ALC, with the object of excluding land from the ALR consisting of small lots with low agricultural capability and significant constraints to improvement as shown on Schedule 'J': Proposed Agricultural Land Reserve Exclusion Areas. These lots are located:
 - i Along Horse Lake;
 - ii South-west and west of Horse Lake;
 - iii Along Ruth Lake;
 - iv In the Forest Grove townsite;
 - v Between 105 Mile and Watson Lakes; and
 - vi Along Canim-Hendrix Road in the Gateway/Buffalo Creek community.
- 6.3.4 Support the protection of normal farm practices within the ALR including the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act*.

- 6.3.5 Evaluate new developments in respect to their implications and impacts on the agricultural uses in the area.
- 6.3.6 Support edge planning (e.g. buffers, fencing, minimum interface lot sizes) policy as identified in the 2016 CRD Agricultural Policy.
- 6.3.7 Maintain a minimum parcel size of 32 hectares for land designated as Agriculture except for the subdivision of land:
- i In compliance with the Homesite Severance policy of the ALC;
 - ii Divided by a major road with a right of way width greater than 40 metres; and
 - iii For parkland dedication purposes.
- 6.3.8 Support public education as an important means to minimize conflict between agricultural and other land uses.
- 6.3.9 Use building setbacks, drainage protection, retention of vegetation, provision of vegetation screens, fences, the creation of larger or longer parcels and other available measures deemed necessary, to provide for the buffering or separation of non-agricultural development from farming operations in the ALR as detailed in the 2016 CRD Agricultural Policy. Such provisions would apply on the non-agricultural side of the ALR interface.
- 6.3.10 Work with stakeholders to advance the principles of food systems planning, including education programs on the importance of agricultural enterprises and local food production.
- 6.3.11 Support Temporary Use Permits and applications that would develop agriculture production and local food markets
- 6.3.12 Engage with the agricultural community, educational institutions and other stakeholders to support opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship.
- 6.3.13 Encourage business support services for agricultural producers and rural businesses.
- 6.3.14 Support the development of agri-tourism activities such as farm-stay and ranch vacations, sleigh rides and tractor rides, farm-gate marketing, and weddings on agricultural lands to enhance their economic viability subject to ALR regulations.
- 6.3.15 Subject to zoning, guest ranches may be permitted in a designated Agricultural Area.
- 6.3.16 Recognize climate change will impact the agricultural sector at the local scale and will work with stakeholders to undertake adaptive action.

6.3.17 Support the creation of a new zone to permit uses proposed by the ALC and other land uses such as:

- i micro breweries, estate wineries, distilleries, meaderies, cideries;
- ii cottage industries such as value added food processing, agricultural growing and processing specific to the product grown on the farm (e.g. tasting room, workshop); and
- iii growing, manufacturing, processing, packaging and off-sale of product grown on farm for pharmaceutical, cosmetic and medicinal purpose.

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