

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 often 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* in 1973. The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) designated land suitable for farm use throughout British Columbia. The ALR is managed by the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) which is the authority for approval for non-agricultural development, subdivision, the exclusion of land, and the removal of soil and the placing of fill, all within the ALR. Major changes in 2014 resulted in the creation of six regional panels and a two-zone concept. The Lac La Hache Area OCP is located within the Interior Region Panel and in Zone 2, where the ALC must consider the following in descending order:

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, which occupies a large majority of the land in the Lac La Hache area. 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 Recognize the importance of the agricultural sector, encourage its improvement and expansion and minimize conflicts through strong land use policies.
- 6.2.2 Support the ALC in protecting agricultural land and agricultural opportunities within the plan area.
- 6.2.3 Protect agricultural land by maintaining large parcel areas which can economically sustain agricultural production.

6.3 Policies

The Cariboo Regional District Board will:

- 6.3.1 Support the protection of land within the Agriculture Land Reserve as shown on Schedule 'G': Agricultural Land Reserve areas and through the Agricultural Land Commission Act, its regulations, and general orders of the Commission.
- 6.3.2 Encourage agricultural operations on land designated as Agriculture as shown on Schedule 'C': Land Use Designations.
- 6.3.3 Support the protection of normal farm practices within the ALR including the Farm Practices *Protection (Right to Farm) Act*.
- 6.3.4 Support edge planning (e.g. buffers, fencing, minimum interface lot sizes) policy as identified in the 2016 CRD Agricultural Policy.
- 6.3.5 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 primary highway as shown on Schedule 'I': Major Road Network and Gravel Pit Reserves and
 - iii For parkland dedication purposes.

- 6.3.6 Support the block exclusion from the ALR of the following lots along Timothy Lake Road due to their small lot size or limited potential for agriculture as indicated in the 2014 Lac La Hache Agricultural Land Use Inventory:

Address	PID	Area (acres)	Rationale for Exclusion
Timothy Lake Road	004-478-266	13.70	zoned for mobile home park limited potential for cultivation*
4928 Timothy Lake Road	008-870-926	2.00	small lot area of 2 acres
4934 Timothy Lake Road	013-420-127	28.55	limited potential for cultivation* contains wetlands
4938 Timothy Lake Road	023-312-271	1.25	small lot area under 2 acres
4940 Timothy Lake Road	023-312-262	1.21	small lot area under 2 acres
Vacant lot Timothy Lake Road	009-567-224	1.08	small lot area under 2 acres
4946 Timothy Lake Road	009-567-241	1.13	small lot area under 2 acres
4943 Timothy Lake Road	010-006-982	1.08	small lot area under 2 acres

* as per the Lac La Hache Agricultural Land Use Inventory

- 6.3.7 Support public education as an important means to minimize conflict between agricultural and other land uses.
- 6.3.8 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.
- 6.3.9 Discourage non-farm development of agricultural land unless it can be demonstrated that the land is not suited for agriculture and that there is no other viable alternative location.
- 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 Engage with the agricultural community, educational institutions and other stakeholders to support opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship.
- 6.3.12 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.
- 6.3.13 Subject to zoning, guest ranches may be permitted in a designated Agricultural Area.
- 6.3.14 Support the creation of a new agri-processing and tourism zone to permit uses proposed by the ALC and other complimentary 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 (tasting room, workshop, etc.)
 - iii Growing manufacturing, processing, packaging and off-sale of product grown on farm for pharmaceutical, cosmetic and medicinal purpose.
- 6.3.15 Encourage business support services for agricultural producers and rural businesses.
- 6.3.16 A Non-Farm Use must be first approved under a non-farm use application by the ALC and will be evaluated through an application for rezoning or a Temporary Use Permit application subject to the following criteria:
- i The duration of the proposal;
 - ii The scale of the proposal;
 - iii Whether the non-agricultural use is pre-existing (how long it has been in use);
 - iv Will the use cause a nuisance or be detrimental to agricultural operations located on the land or adjacent to the land;
 - v Whether the land can be returned to agricultural function;
 - vi Whether the buildings associated with non-farm use can be converted back to farm use or be removed.
- 6.3.17 Recognize climate change will impact the agricultural sector at the local scale and will work with stakeholders to undertake adaptive action in support of the BC Agriculture & Climate Change Regional Adaptation Strategy for the Cariboo Region.