

NO: **R058**

COUNCIL DATE: **April 6, 2020**

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **March 31, 2020**

FROM: **General Manager, Engineering
General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture**

FILE: **0930-30/218**

SUBJECT: **Proposed New Lease of the Farmland Portion of 5202/88 – 168 Street
(Mound Farm Park)**

RECOMMENDATION

The Engineering Department and the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommend that Council approve the execution by the Mayor and City Clerk of a new five-year lease of a 117-acre portion of City-owned lands located at 5202/88 – 168 Street for farming purposes, as generally described in this report and as illustrated in Appendix “I”.

INTENT

The intent of this memorandum is to obtain Council’s approval to grant a lease of the farmland portions of the City property located at 5202/88 – 168 Street (“Mound Farm Park”) to the proponent of the highest rental bid received by the City.

BACKGROUND

Mound Farm Park is a single title parcel with two civic addresses which is comprised of floodplain agricultural lands at 5288 – 168 Street, adjacent to a treed mound that is reserved by dedication for park uses (Mound Farm Park at 5202 – 168 Street) and for the conservation and enhancement of the native flora and fauna. A gravel-surfaced road provides access to two heritage homes located on the Mound Farm Park and separates the farmlands into a 23.39 hectare (57.79 acre) north field and a 23.96-hectare (59.2 acres) south field (total of 117 gross acres). Major drainage ditches are in place along the perimeters which reduce the farmable areas of the fields to a 20.92 hectare (51.69 acre) north field and a 20.12 hectare (49.72 acre) south field (total of 101.4 net acres).

Mound Farm Park is zoned General Agriculture (A-1) Zone and designated Agricultural in Surrey Official Community Plan. It is listed on Canada Register of Historic Places. The City’s Biodiversity Conservation Strategy identifies the Mound Farm Park as a “biodiversity hub”.

A Master Plan is in place for Mound Farm Park. The Master Plan provides for a “well-integrated park, in an agricultural setting, that allows both active and passive activities consistent with the recreational, agricultural, social, and community needs of Surrey”. The City recognizes the importance of preserving Mound Farm Park as a valued ecological and heritage resource.

DISCUSSION

The City has been leasing the north and south field of the Mound Farm Park to two farmers under the terms of a 20-year lease, which expired on March 31, 2020. Prior to that lease expiring, the City invited the farming community to submit proposals to lease the farmlands by advertising the availability of Mound Farm Park in accordance with the notice provisions of the Community Charter, SBC 2003, c. 26.

Along with the public notices, an Information Package detailing Mound Farm Park was posted on the Realty Services Division's webpage. The Information Package included summary information on the property's biodiversity habitat types and features and requested proponents to state how their farming operations will enhance and/or complement the biodiversity conservation objectives for the lands. Leasing of the north and south field excludes the treed and elevated portion of the Mound Farm Park, which will continue to be preserved along with the two heritage homes.

At the close of the invitation to submit proposals to lease the farmland portions of the Mound Farm Park, the City received three submissions. The proposals were evaluated by City staff based on submitted financial information, farming plans, pest management, and integration of best practices and approaches to enhance biodiversity objectives, as well as meeting the intent of the Master Plan. Staff are recommending that Council approve the proposal to lease for agricultural production purposes with the highest annual rental bid, which the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department supports for the inclusion of key actions, such as a reduction in pesticide use and pest management with low/no impact to local wildlife, protection of adjacent aquatic habitat, and companion plantings that will enhance pollinator and wildlife values.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed lease of the farmland portions of Mound Farm Park supports the City's Sustainability Charter 2.0. In particular, the proposal relates to the Sustainability Charter 2.0 themes of Economic Prosperity and Ecosystems. Specifically, the leasing of the farmlands supports the following Desired Outcomes ("DO"):

- Economy DO4: Surrey's economy is diversified with a mix of service, industrial, agricultural and innovation-based businesses;
- Economy DO12: Food production and food enterprises of all scales are an integral part of the local economy; and
- Green Infrastructure DO12: Surrey protects ecosystem services and manages natural assets in order to create resiliency to adapt and thrive in a changing climate.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, a new lease of the farmland portions of Mound Farm Park at 5202/88 – 168 Street to the proponent of the highest annual rental bid, as generally described in this report will ensure continued use of the north and south field for agricultural production.

Scott Neuman, P.Eng.
General Manager,
Engineering

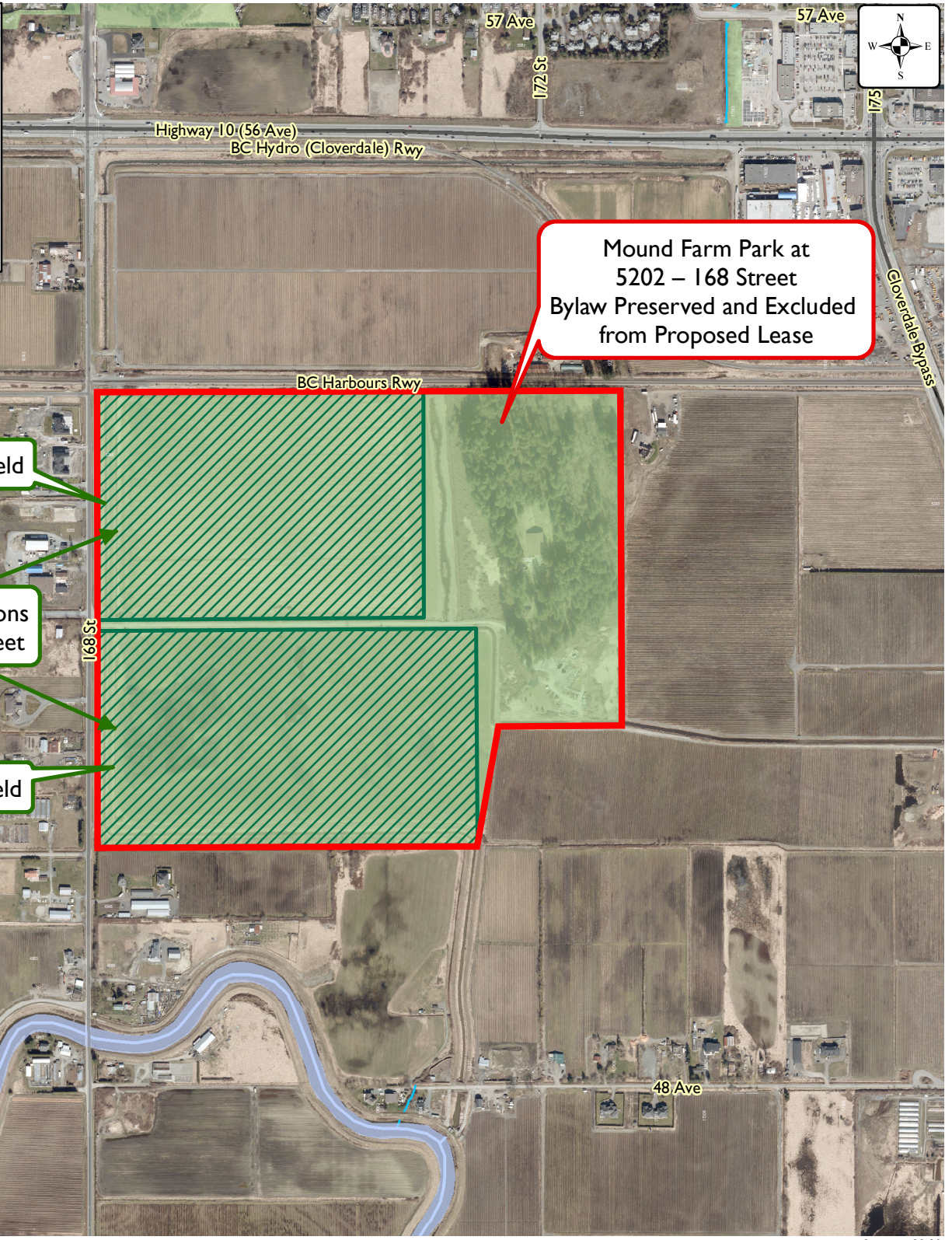
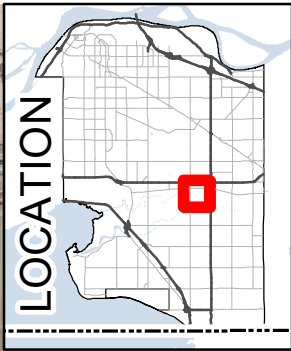
Laurie Cavan
General Manager,
Parks, Recreation & Culture

AW/amg/cc

Appendix "I" - Aerial Photograph of Mound Farm Park

g:\wp-docs\2020\admin\cr\vl proposed new lease of the farmland portion of 5202 and 5288 – 168 street .docx
CC 4/2/20 1:31 PM

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF SITE



LEGEND

- Subject Property
- Farm Fields
- Parks

Produced by GIS Section: 30-Mar-2020, P205934

Date of Aerial Photograph: March 2019

Scale: 1:10,000



SUBJECT PROPERTY
5202 & 5288 - 168 Street
Mound Farm Park

ENGINEERING
DEPARTMENT

The data provided is compiled from various sources and IS NOT warranted as to its accuracy or sufficiency by the City of Surrey.
 This information is provided for information and convenience purposes only.
 Lot sizes, Legal descriptions and encumbrances must be confirmed at the Land Title Office.