

# *Agriculture, Environment, and Investment Advisory Committee Minutes*

Location: Virtual  
Wednesday, July 14, 2021  
Time: 6:03 p.m.

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Present:

Councillor Patton, Chair  
Councillor Nagra, Vice-Chair  
M. Lamont  
S. Rai  
S. Van Keulen

Regrets:

Councillor Hundial  
Shannon Lambie, Agriculture Land  
Commission  
Mikayla Roberts, Ministry of  
Agriculture

Staff Present:

S. Neuman, General Manager, Engineering  
R. Landucci, Urban Forestry Manager  
N. Aven, Manager of Parks  
S. Johal, Planning Technician  
Y. Yohannes, Manager, Utilities  
L. Anderson, Administrative Assistant

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**A. ADOPTIONS**

**1. Adoption of the Agenda**

It was Moved by S. Van Keulen  
Seconded by M. Lamont  
That the agenda of the Agriculture,  
Environment, and Investment Advisory Committee be adopted.  
Carried

**2. Adoption of the Minutes**

It was Moved by S. Van Keulen  
Seconded by M. Lamont  
That the minutes of the Agriculture,  
Environment, and Investment Advisory Committee meeting held June 9, 2021  
be adopted.  
Carried

**B. DELEGATIONS**

**1. Surrey for Future and Sustainabiliteens**

Allison Richardson, Surrey for Future, and Arshia Uppal, Sustainabiliteens, were in attendance to provide a presentation on a community-based view that communicates the strengths and weaknesses of the Climate Change Action Strategy (CCAS) and highlights specific recommendations for improvements.

A PowerPoint presentation was provided, outlining the climate change action targets across Metro Vancouver, including interim targets and priority quick start actions.

The following was highlighted:

- Surrey for Future is a grassroots, advocacy organization founded in 2019 to provide a voice for the people in Surrey on climate issues. Sustainabiliteens is a movement of young people across Metro Vancouver, united by the urgency felt to stop climate catastrophe and by a shared vision to create a more just and sustainable world and a future they can look forward to.
- As each new day passes, the effects of the climate crisis are becoming more and more prominent, signifying the need for urgent and effective climate action plans.
- Grateful to the City for the actions taken to date, including the 2019 Climate Emergency Declaration and the follow-up report in March 2020 (Corporate Report R048) which commits to interim targets and to net zero community emissions by 2050, as well as the draft framework for the CCAS in May 2021 (Corporate Report R095).
- When looking at climate plans of other municipalities or considering the public opinion, three main points are often brought up and must be highlighted and mentioned multiple times throughout Surrey's CCAS:
  - **Equity.** Taking equity into account makes it possible to take action on climate in a way that can deliver remarkable progress towards a healthier, resilient, liveable, and more inclusive city for everyone. Strong, equitable climate plans seek to address issues such as environmental racism, energy poverty, Indigenous solidarity, and unhoused populations noting the intersections between climate and other social justice issues.
  - **Interim Targets.** Providing targets sets goals to strive towards, a measuring stick for progress and accountability for years to come.
  - **Quick Start Policies.** Having interim goals specific to each sector helps set expectations within the City itself and unlock the potential for action within the community.
- It is noted that comments about equity are still vague and without specific equity targets. Some that should be concretely addressed include:
  - Preventing renovictions when older buildings are retrofitted for electrical heating/cooling and greater energy efficiency.
  - Centering Indigenous perspectives to ensure their input is incorporated and the plan works to uplift and benefit Indigenous Peoples.
  - Ways to ensure that incentives are designed to be useful to a broad spectrum of Surrey's residents, not just those that can already afford to take on expensive retrofitting projects or purchase EVs at current prices.

- Interim targets should be an important part of the CCAS. Compared to other Metro Vancouver municipalities with 45% and 50% emissions reductions by 2030, it was surprising to see that a 2030 emissions reduction target was not included in Surrey's framework documentation. Having the 2030 target would signal to organizations within Surrey that the City is serious about its net zero goal, alerting them to begin planning and taking action themselves - unlocking far greater progress towards net zero.
- Effective sector-specific interim targets include:
  - Resilient Zero-Carbon Neighbourhoods – by 2030, 75% of households can access daily needs within a safe 15 minute transit, walk or cycle trip.
  - Safe Zero-Carbon Transportation – by 2030, 50% of trips will be made by sustainable modes of transportation.
  - Healthy Zero-Carbon Buildings – by 2030, the carbon pollution from buildings will be cut by 40%.
- It is suggested there be a 2025 target for Quick Start implementation to ensure that critical first steps are taken as quickly as possible, laying the groundwork for the more comprehensive policies that will enable greater reductions and the net zero goal achievable over the coming decades.
- Similar to the Quick Start Actions undertaken within other Metro Vancouver municipalities, it is suggested the City include, support and fund Quick Start Actions. The following five ambitious but achievable and effective priority Quick Start Actions are suggested for Surrey to realize greater future reductions:
  - Require an OCP review and revision early next year to incorporate climate related changes.
  - Fund the studies needed to create the cycle and active transportation network connecting the town centres.
  - Ensure all new construction is fossil-fuel free as soon as possible.
  - Support mandatory home energy labelling in Surrey as the province rolls it out.
  - Implement mandatory building benchmarking in Surrey and advocate with the province to prioritize it.
- In summary, it is important that equity is given full consideration in all strategies and planning, that science-based interim targets are in place, and quick starts can get funded and off the ground quickly once the plan is adopted.

The Committee expressed their appreciation for the comprehensive presentation and the informative notes provided in advance. It was reported that staff are aligned on many of the initiatives and ideas, and the delegation confirmed their comments have been provided to Sustainability staff and will also be provided to the GM Engineering with respect to transportation.

**2. Agritourism Opportunities**

Ange Chew, Executive Director, Discover Surrey, was in attendance to provide a presentation on local agritourism opportunities.

A brief PowerPoint presentation was given, highlighting the Discover Surrey website content as it relates to local agritourism, and comments were as follows:

- As the foundation for Discover Surrey's content on agriculture, the evergreen webpage is constantly leveraged and updated to drive home agricultural experiences in Surrey and the benefits of supporting local businesses. Included are farm favourite farm stores, u-picks and featured farms within Surrey's farming community.
- To enhance the evergreen content for "foodies", information on locally grown produce and updates on the various urban farmers markets taking place throughout the city each year are also highlighted. In addition, Surrey's breweries and distilleries are also noted for consideration.
- Social media is used to push out blog content, showcasing what there is to do in Surrey at appropriate times, based on seasonality. Examples include:
  - Your Guide to Surrey's Farmers Markets
  - Fall Fun at Bose Farm
  - Your Guide to Farm Fun this Fall
  - Fall Harvest in Newton
  - A Hive of Activity at the Honeybee Centre
- There is a gap when it comes to how agritourism can be added for group and travel trade experiences to capture those that are staying in Surrey for the night and looking at which businesses are open and what group events may be available.
- It is important to look at what type of group experiences are offered, if these experiences are suitable for adults or students and what is unique about the experience, e.g., berry picking, holding honey frame from hive, unique group tastings, etc. Additional considerations may include net group rates offered, guide incentives, bus capacity parking and if there are restroom facilities.
- Discover Surrey is committed to creating more content to support its agricultural partners and their efforts to develop new experiences that Discover Surrey could leverage, drive awareness (e.g., Surrey products sold locally to restaurants) and attract a longer stay in Surrey.

The Committee expressed their appreciation for the presentation and noted the tourism value in wildlife, reporting the example of Tourism Richmond having a large campaign to attract birding which in the US alone, attracts billions of dollars.

The delegation confirmed Discover Surrey has joined with Tourism Richmond and Delta to be part of their bird trail, which will include filming in Surrey and will also be renamed. In addition, Discover Surrey also participates in West Coast Food ([westcoastfood.ca](http://westcoastfood.ca)), which includes multiple municipal partners, looking at what is available and how funds can be leveraged to get out in front.

## C. NEW BUSINESS

### 1. Biodiversity Design Guidelines

Pamela Zevit, Biodiversity Conservation Planner, Parks Recreation and Culture

Staff provided an update on the Biodiversity Design Guidelines (BDG).

A PowerPoint presentation was given, providing a brief history of the 2014 Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) and the progression in nature-based approaches for Surrey.

The following was highlighted:

- The goals of the BCS are to identify the biodiversity that occurs within the City and develop a management strategy such that biodiversity is maintained through buildout of the City.
- The BDG objectives support the implementation of Surrey's BCS by integrating biodiversity-based design approaches and best practices.
- The BDG are Surrey-specific and consider the environmental, social and political context of the City (and how it dovetails with what is already underway) and are adaptable to future conditions. However, biodiversity does not adhere to geopolitical boundaries. Regional connectivity considerations that influence the long-term status of the City's Green Infrastructure Network (where appropriate) have been considered as well.
- Linkages at the operational and policy level are essential. Operational linkages speak to what aspects of biodiversity are being managed, where they are being managed, and why.
- Each of the eight BDG modules include various design actions that can be implemented at the site-level. A brief summary of each action is provided that includes a short description (what it is), BCS linkages (what and where it applies), a list of co-benefits (where applicable), and design, maintenance and monitoring information (how to implement and what to watch for).
- The Biodiversity Checklist is an additional tool in the BDG and is one of the recommended deliverables from the BCS. It serves as an additional tool in the BDG that summarizes the design actions within each module and application for separate biodiversity management and land use categories.
- The City may consider additional strategies in the future to increase uptake of the BDG on private land. For example, incentivizing or requiring the use of the BDG and the checklist during the development permitting process. (The City of Seattle Green Factor could serve as a model for this type of initiative.)
- The BDG are intended for use across Surrey's landscape, with an initial focus on internal rollout (City lands). Concurrently there is already interest from the development community in applying the guidelines, and time will be invested in engagement with external audiences to facilitate this.

- The BDG were published to the web last month, with the long-term goal to have the BDG transformed into an informative interactive online tool that staff and the public can access for the various approaches that can be taken to enhance biodiversity.
- The BDG is a living document that will continue to be transformative with updates as learning outcomes change with implementation and action on the ground.

The Committee expressed their appreciation for the informative presentation, noting the City's efforts in successfully producing these types of progressive, long-term documents that can become a model for other cities.

Staff confirmed a corporate report will be brought forward to Council, providing an update with the BDG and next steps. The report will also include some recent examples of where the City has implemented the BDG (e.g., Green Timbers), case studies and where there are opportunities.

## 2. **Tree Planting Initiatives on Public Land**

Neal Aven, Manager of Parks, Parks Recreation and Culture

Staff provided a review on tree planting initiatives on public land.

A PowerPoint presentation was given, and the following was highlighted:

- The City has had a proactive tree planting program in place along City boulevards and in parks for over 40 years.
- Over the past 10 years the City has planted more than 132,000 trees on boulevards and parks. The Parks Division's Urban Forestry Section is responsible for the majority of tree planting on public land.
- Currently the City manages over 83,000 street trees, 22,000 park trees and 1,650 ha of natural area parkland in over 500 parks. This includes 1,350 ha of forested natural area park land.
- Tree planting in the City supports the goals of the Sustainability Charter 2.0 and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.
- The Natural Areas Management Plan and Shade Tree Management Plan are the two City documents that guide tree planting on public land.
- Tree are planted using operating and capital funding. In addition, the Parks Division applies for grants annually to support the tree planting program; in 2021, a total of \$89,500 in grants were received from the Federal Government, TD and the Arbor Day Foundation, and CN and Tree Canada.
- Tree planting in natural area park land is completed for a number of reasons: as part of restoration projects where invasive (Bb, ivy, lamium) plants have been removed, in riparian strips to support the health of Surrey's waterways (creating shade and food sources), and from time to time, converting grass areas into natural area forest, replacing hazardous trees that have been removed (two trees planted for every tree removed), and conifer recruitment in aging deciduous forests. Over time, more trees are planted than lost.

- Shade tree planting occurs in parks as part of new park construction, adding new trees to existing parks and as part of park renovation projects. Shade tree planting also occurs along arterial, collector and local roads (as part of new road development, road widening projects and new subdivision development), and in older residential subdivisions where there are appropriate locations to plant trees. Parks staff identify areas where trees can be planted.
- The Parks Division has hosted a tree sale since 2012. For 2021, four tree sales were planned with a goal of selling 4,000 trees in 2021 that residents will plant on their properties. As a result of the COVID pandemic, the tree sales have been conducted online, selling 960 trees at the March sale and 945 trees at the sale in May, with two more sales taking place later in the year.
- 2021 is the 30th anniversary of community tree planting events in Surrey, which includes Spring Releaf (including Arbor Day), Fall Releaf (including National Tree Day), and support in both spring and fall school and community group plantings (e.g. Guides and Scouts). The Urban Forestry Stewardship team, with support from Shade Trees and Natural Areas, delivers these community planting events for the whole family.
- Every year over 2500 members of the community plant approximately 150 shade trees, 550 native trees and 6000 shrubs. These community plantings also allow staff to speak to residents about the importance of trees and how to plant and care for them.
- The City has a large planting maintenance program to ensure the trees are healthy. Annually, natural area maintenance will see 6,000 trees weeded and 3,000 trees watered. All newly planted trees and shrubs are mulched to reduce competition from other plants, retain moisture and provide nutrients as the mulch breaks down. Additionally, staff and contractors water approximately 20,000 trees (up to) seven years after planting and prune 25,000 trees annually. Similarly, over 20,000 tree wells are maintained each year for trip hazards, aesthetics and to help prevent mechanical damage.
- Community planting maintenance is another important program where community volunteers, including Surrey Youth Stewardship Squad and Urban Forestry Leaders, Surrey's Natural Area Partnership (SNAP) habitat restoration team, and residents help maintain tree plantings, shade tree watering, tree well maintenance and natural area weeding.

The Committee thanked staff for the informative presentation.

Discussion ensued with respect to tree removal due to development and the negative implications/offset to wildlife habitat as a result. It was suggested that funds be earmarked to support wildlife habitat for the loss of large trees that are offset with smaller trees.

The planned new SkyTrain corridor through Green Timbers was also recognized as an area of potential future development, noting it will be imperative the City have small urban parks along the corridor where substantial trees can be put in place to ensure the City is carbon neutral from the resulting CO<sub>2</sub> consumption of the trees.

In response, staff reported on the Green City program and also noted they will be looking to find those spaces along the road edges, etc. to replace trees slated for removal as a result of the SkyTrain corridor moving ahead.

In closing, the GM Engineering reported that Engineering will work with Parks to add more trees within Green Timbers to increase the forest – not to be replaced with boulevard trees. Going forward, the cross section of the road will provide many opportunities more street trees.

**3. Development Application 7921-0103-00**

Sharon Johal, Planning Technician

Address: 7435 - 176 Street

17540 - Fraser Highway

7371 - 176 Street

The proposal is for a subdivision lot line adjustment in the ALR.

S. Rai declared a conflict of interest regarding Development Application 7921-0103-00 and left the meeting at 7:16 p.m.

The following comments were made:

- The subject site, approximately 18.5 ha in area within the 200 year floodplain, is designated Agricultural in the Official Community Plan (OCP) and zoned "General Agricultural Zone (A-1)". Surrounding lands to the north, west, east and south are also designated Agricultural in the OCP and located within the ALR.
- There are no existing houses or farm buildings on the subject properties.
- The applicant is proposing a lot line adjustment (subdivision) to reconfigure the three exiting lots that vary in size with one lot that totals 16.7 ha, and the other two that total 1.6 ha and 0.7 ha.
- The applicant is proposing to alter the exiting lot lines to create three different parcels, proposed as Lot A, Lot B and Lot C, providing 6.2 ha for each lot.
- A variance to the required minimum lot width in the A-1 for proposed Lots B and C is also requested; from 10% to 5.96% for proposed Lot B and from 10% to 5.4% for proposed Lot C.
- Proposed access for Lot A will be from the existing access along Fraser Hwy. Proposed access for Lots B and C will be from 176 Street, pending approval from the Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure (MOTI)
- The applicant believes the proposal will enhance the farmability of the site, however staff noted that although there are three properties, they function as one, and that the proposal is not consistent with OCP policies which encourage amalgamation of the lots in Agricultural areas.
- Staff are working with the applicant and have also suggested consideration of having two parcels facing Fraser Hwy. for lot access, as approval from MOTI is still needed for access off Hwy. 15.



Members of the Committee provided the following comments:

- As someone that has spent their entire life in Surrey and knows the landscape, the subject site has never been farmed.
- The proposed lot line adjustment makes sense. Even if the lots were amalgamated into one lot, it would still be almost impossible to farm. It is likely that no owner would amalgamate from three lots to one lot unless there is a benefit. Having three decent size lots is better than where it stands now.
- The proposal is the best option, although it was noted in the staff report that the applicant would prefer to have two lots instead of three, but there is no net benefit for the applicant to go to two lots when he has three lots already.

The Committee was asked if there is any support for two lots instead of three, to access from Fraser Hwy., if MOTI does not support access from Hwy. 15. The Committee did not want there to be any chance of the property being landlocked and stated that there is no net benefit for the applicant to reduce the number of lots to two when there are three lots already.

In general, the Committee supported the three lot proposal noting it is the best proposal for the property and much better than the pre-existing lot lines.

It was Moved by S. Van Keulen  
Seconded by Councillor Nagra  
That the Agriculture, Environment, and  
Investment Advisory Committee recommend to the General Manager of Planning  
and Development to support Development Application 7921-0103-00 to move  
forward to the Agricultural Land Commission.  
Carried

## D. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

### 1. Verbal Updates

- A member expressed interest in having the Committee request a delegation from staff to present on the level of urban agriculture that is being developed and/or how planners are encouraging developers to include urban agriculture. Staff reported they will follow up with Planning & Development and have them look at the work plan and to maybe contact the Township of Langley as well.
- It was reported that at the recent Farmers' Institute meeting, some farmers noted the loss of animals as result of the extremely hot weather. One farmer had lost three barns of turkeys and unsure of how many thousands of birds. It is certain there were many insurance claims for the loss of animals, especially turkey and chicken.
- In Sumas, some farmers had potatoes turn green and sprouting in the ground because the land was so warm from the unprecedented heat. The Committee was encouraged to help the farmers by purchasing local fruit and produce as much as possible.

**E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL**

This section had no items to consider.

**F. CORRESPONDENCE**

This section had no items to consider.

**G. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Agriculture, Environment, and Investment Advisory Committee is rescheduled for Wednesday, September 15, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

**H. ADJOURNMENT**

It was

Moved by S. Van Keulen  
Seconded by Councillor Nagra  
That the Agriculture, Environment, and  
Investment Advisory Committee meeting adjourn.

Carried

The Agriculture, Environment, and Investment Advisory Committee adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

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Jennifer Ficocelli, City Clerk

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Councillor Allison Patton, Chair