

Present:

Councillor Patton, Chair
Councillor Elford
M. Lamont
S. Van Keulen

Regrets:

Councillor Nagra
S. Rai
Shannon Lambie, Agriculture Land
Commission

Staff Present:

Y. Yohannes, Manager, Utilities
P. Zevit, Biodiversity Conservation Planner
J. Koch-Schulte, Planner
J. Thompson, Planner
C. Reyes Lao, Administrative Assistant

Agency Representative:

D. Bondar, Ministry of
Agriculture

Guests:

C. Stewart, Senior Planner, Metro Vancouver
James Stiver, Division Manager,
Metro Vancouver
Ammar Mahdi, Senior Project Engineer,
Metro Vancouver
Oleg Verbenkov, Pacific Land Group

A. ADOPTIONS**1. Adoption of the Agenda**

It was Moved by Councillor Elford
Seconded by M. Lamont
That the Agriculture, Environment, and
Investment Advisory Committee meeting agenda held June 8, 2022, be adopted.
Carried

2. Adoption of the Minutes – May 11, 2022

It was Moved by Councillor Elford
Seconded by S. Van Keulen
That the minutes of the Agriculture,
Environment, and Investment Advisory Committee held May 11, 2022, be adopted.
Carried

B. DELEGATIONS**1. Carla Stewart, Senior Planner
Metro Vancouver**

Carla Stewart, Senior Planner, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding
Metro Vancouver's Climate 2050 Agricultural Roadmap. The following information
was highlighted:

- Climate 2050 Strategic Framework is Metro Vancouver’s 30-year strategy supporting the transition to a resilient and carbon-neutral region by 2050. The framework is organized amongst 10 issue areas, including Agriculture, supplemented by individual roadmaps to guide the discussions and actions necessary to reach the vision of Climate 2050.
- The Agriculture Roadmap is also supported by 2 other documents:
 - **Clean Air Plan** outlines actions that focus on Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and is embedded in the draft Roadmap.
 - **Draft Metro 2050** outlines policy supporting the protection of agricultural land, reducing urban development impacts on agricultural land, and supporting general adaptation for the agricultural sector.
- The Climate 2050 Agricultural Roadmap builds its strategies and actions on the changes required from the impacts of climate change such as extreme weather, water shortages, fewer pollinators, drought damage, soil degradation, GHG emissions, and surrounding urban pressures including high land values, invasive species, movement restrictions, illegal dumping, stormwater runoff and non-farm use of agricultural lands.
- The Climate 2050 Agricultural Roadmap’s vision is to become a low carbon sector and increase resiliency as modeled after Climate 2050. The five goals supporting this vision include aiming for a low carbon future, supporting clean renewable energy, expanding regenerative farming, improving sector resiliency, and supporting long-term food production.
- The Roadmap recognizes that the agriculture sector is at a pivotal point that requires actions so as to ensure the long-term viability of farming and food production. These actions are outlined in the 4 strategies developed:
 - **Protect Agricultural Land** by expanding the use of agricultural impact assessments and land protection policies at all levels of government, monitoring the uses of farmland through agricultural land use inventories, advocating for a change in the farm tax structure, and supporting land matching services.
 - **Support Farmers as Climate Action Leaders** by preparing passive design standards for greenhouses, expanding research on ways to reduce carbon emissions, supporting data collection and soil analysis for farmers, providing direct research and knowledge on reducing methane emissions, advocating for funding programs that target replacement of diesel-burning equipment, and reducing barriers and costs associated with anaerobic digestion.
 - **Support Long-term Farm Health and Resilience** by normalizing the use of regenerative farming practices, providing appropriate guidance on ways to value ecosystem services, and expanding digital and high-tech agricultural systems to improve production operations.

- **Enable Long-term Investment in Agriculture** by advocating for incentive programs that increase farming resiliency, funding ecosystem services, testing new practices and technologies that help farmers adapt their business practices, providing information in formats compatible with the specific needs of farmers, updating the Regional Food Systems Strategy, and supporting farmers to integrate climate change into ongoing business decisions.
- A multi-level engagement with stakeholders and entities who contribute to the agricultural sector is mapped out in the draft Roadmap. Current engagement includes presenting information to agricultural advisory committees across the region, Metro Vancouver sub-committees, collecting technical surveys, and working with the Metro Vancouver Agricultural Advisory Committee. The current engagement process is expected to be completed by summer end or early fall.
- Specific questions were provided to help provoke thoughts regarding the contents of the Roadmap. Feedback received will be reported to the Metro Vancouver Climate Action Committee and inform the final Climate 2050 Agricultural Roadmap.

The chair recognized James Stiver, Division Manager, Regional Land Use Policy Metro Vancouver, present in the meeting. In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Stewart and Mr. Stiver provided the following information:

- Metro Vancouver has initiated more thorough research on how ecosystem services can be quantified and valued within the region. Existing programs such as Farmland Advantage currently offer compensation benefits to farmers in order for them to be able to maintain the natural aspects of their land and provide its ecosystem services.
- Additional engagements are anticipated in September and later this year which involves other key players connected to the agriculture sector including universities, landowners, farmers, and other businesses.
- Metro Vancouver has reached out to several agricultural committees across the region involved with the agriculture sector to collect data and feedback that will be used to help implement the ideas and actions of the roadmap.

The Committee provided the following comments:

- The Committee noted the province's unique legislation in place that is the Agricultural Land Reserve and its significance in preserving farmlands within B.C.
- The Committee commented that incentive programs may be further developed to offer better aid to farmers largely considering the new directions this project will support, such as adaption to new technologies, machinery, and other significant farming costs.

- The Committee suggested that the terms of the project be defined with clarification, sensitive to the different branches of agriculture; for example, what carbon-neutral and GHG emissions could mean for a dairy farmer.
- The Committee encouraged that feedback received from agricultural landowners and active farmers be given more focus through the consultation process of the project amongst the overall impressions collected.
- The Committee requested to receive an update regarding Metro Vancouver's 2050 Agricultural Roadmap in the next year once the engagement period is completed.

2. **Pamela Zevit, Biodiversity Conservation Planner
City of Surrey**

Pamela Zevi, Biodiversity Conservation Planner, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding an update on Agricultural Use in Park Lands. The following information was highlighted:

- This project is funded in part by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C.'s Local Government Partnership Program, through funding provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Government of British Columbia. The City of Surrey has matched this funding.
- The project focuses on agricultural land within Surrey parks that are specifically in Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The objectives include assessing the value and benefits of farming in parks, determining the feasibility of expanding farming, identifying resources to support farming in parks while balancing other biodiversity and ecosystem priorities, and aligning these objectives within the City's plans and policies.
- To date, staff have successfully engaged with local farmers, the Surrey Farmer's Institute, Metro Vancouver, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. Outreach has also been undertaken with Semiahmoo, Katzie, and Kwantlen First Nations. The latter expressed interest in reviewing and providing input regarding the project.
- 6 park site visits were completed in May including Godwin, Colebrook, Sullivan, Mound Farm, Hi-Knoll, and the Historic Stewart Farm. The project is now nearing its last phase, with review of the draft recommendations. The initial intention was to complete by the end of June and produce the final plan by end of July. This deadline is expected to be extended in order to accommodate Kwantlen First Nation's referrals process, should it be necessary.
- An analysis of park sites found that there are 18 parks within the Agriculture Land Reserve (ALR) in Surrey. Each of the sites was assessed for current and planned uses, current land cover, adjacent land uses, agricultural potential, ecosystem services, and local food economy.

- High Opportunity Parks (most actively leased) – Mound Farm Park is the largest at 42 hectares and is farmed for squash, pumpkins, and leafy vegetables. Sullivan Park is 2.6 hectares and is farmed for corn, pumpkins, and leafy greens. Colebrook Park is 1.6 hectares and is used to produce hay.
- Moderate Opportunity Parks – Campbell Heights is the city's newest biodiversity preserve and is being considered for regenerative farming practices. Godwin Farm is also used as a biodiversity preserve but is not focused on food production, however it has potential to support Indigenous partnerships looking at traditional food and medicinal plants. The Historic Stewart Farm at Elgin Heritage Park supports a small community garden and orchard used for education and could contain livestock in the future.
- Low Opportunity Parks – There are 12 parks with limited opportunities for agriculture. The focus is on biodiversity objectives, and overall ecosystem services such as water conservation and air quality.
- The drafted recommendations are focused on interdepartmental communication, Indigenous partnerships, OCP updates, review of land tenure and leasing agreements, partnerships with local food security organizations, compliance with the ALC Acts and Regulations, and continuing agricultural uses at Mound Farm, Sullivan and Colebrook Park. It also touches on improving communication regarding watercourse and ditch maintenance, establishing best management practices for farming near watercourses, incubator farm use at Campbell Heights Biodiversity Preserve, maintenance for Godwin and Elgin Heritage Park, building community gardens in low opportunity parks, and managing invasive species.
- Next steps include collaborating with Kwantlen First Nations, finalizing the project by July or August, and presenting the final recommendations to the Committee in September.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Zevit provided the following information:

- Majority of the parks involved are open to the public however Mound Farm is an exception as it has significant active farming and two heritage houses with residential tenants as well as it being an ecologically sensitive area.
- Farming communities have been supportive of the project. Some comments that were raised by the public were concerns that the parks will change however it should be noted that the project is a roadmap to navigate potential opportunities to integrate agriculture into existing park sites.

The Committee suggested incorporating public partnerships and access to the park sites for educational purposes while being sensitive to farming needs and associated food security and liability involved. The Committee anticipates an update when the final recommendation has been drafted in September.

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. Development Application 7920-0285-00

Planner: John Koch-Schulte

Address: 5580 – 164 Street

John Koch-Schulte, Planner, summarized the report dated May 31, 2022, regarding Development Variance Permit 7920-0285-00 to reduce the rear (south) yard setback from 15 metres to 1.2 metres and the side (west) flanking yard setback from 30 metres to 10 metres to allow for the addition of a Ferrous Chloride (FCL) chemical facility to an existing Metro Vancouver Sanitary overflow tank. The following information was highlighted:

- The subject site is owned by Metro Vancouver. It is approximately 8,984 square metres, designated Agricultural in the Official Community Plan (OCP), zoned General Agricultural Zone (A-1), and located in the 200-year floodplain.
- There is currently an existing Metro Vancouver Cloverdale Pump Station on the subject property which was built in 1995. The site was later expanded to include non-farm use which allowed for an overflow facility in 2003.
- The proposed FCL facility is 3.22 metres and is above the 2.4 metres FCL required. The West 164 Street pavement width will be widened by approximately 5 metres to allow truck access and maneuvers.
- There were no issues determined in the assessment of the watercourses on the site.

The chair recognized Ammar Mahdi, Senior Project Engineer, Metro Vancouver, present in the meeting. In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Koch-Schulte and Mr. Mahdi provided the following information:

- The proposed development application is in response to the City of Surrey's request to move the FCL facility from the Surrey Works Yard to this location.
- Ferrous Chloride is a type of chemical injected into the sewer line systems in order to reduce odorous and poisonous gases.
- There is a double containment in place including the tanks, loading bay, and a pump to act as a buffer between the sewer lines in consideration of the FCL facility being relocated to the Cloverdale site. The facility will be a 2-storey building that will house all sensitive equipment, including electricals, within the second level of the structure.

Staff noted the following comments:

- The Committee expressed concerns regarding the chemical facility's proximity to an existing waterway.
- The Committee commented on the implementation of a proper containment plan.

2. Development Application 7920-0229-00

Planner: Jeff Thompson

Address: 5580 – 172 street

Jeff Thompson, Planner, summarized the report dated May 25, 2022, regarding a proposal to exclude 3.6 hectares (8.9 acres) southern portion of the subject site from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) in order to permit a redevelopment for industrial uses. The following information was highlighted:

- The subject property is located in Cloverdale, south of Highway 10 at 5580 – 172 Street, with approximately 6.96 hectares (17.19 acres) in total area. It is split-designated Agricultural (southern portion) and Industrial (northern portion) in the Official Community Plan (OCP), and split-zoned General Agricultural Zone (A-1) and Light Impact Industrial Zone (IL).
- The southwesterly property is located across an unopened city road dedication or future 54A Avenue, the Southern Railway of British Columbia (SRBC) and a BC Hydro corridor. It is designated Agricultural and located within the ALR boundary. The northerly and easterly properties are designated Mixed Employment and Industrial respectively in the OCP and Industrial/Business Park in the Cloverdale Town Centre Plan.
- Previous widening of Highway 10 and the realignment of the BC Railway impacted the agricultural efficiency of the farm site and resulted in the expropriation of the land.
- The proposal suggests an improvement in the drainage and irrigation within the area, setting aside funds to establish an incubator farm at Colebrook Park, and redistribution of approximately 20,000 cubic metres of topsoil to nearby farms should the site be excluded from the ALR and developed for industrial usage.
- From a planning perspective, the exclusion will create a natural Agricultural-Industrial boundary as it is the only portion of ALR land within the Cloverdale Town Centre Plan.

The chair recognized applicant Oleg Verbenkov, Pacific Land Group, present in the meeting. In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Thompson and Mr. Verbenkov provided the following information:

- The property is actively used to grow corn in rotation with a cover forage crop.
- The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is supportive of the proposal. There is an unresolved compensation to the landowners as a result of the road widening and railway realignment.

- There is a lease on both the industrial and agricultural portions of the subject site. Some constraints considered from a farming perspective are the land's nonideal shape and inadequate drainage system.
- According to City Policy No. O-51, lands being excluded from the ALR must demonstrate compensation that will be satisfactory to the Council and to the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). In this situation, the proposal is not suggesting an inclusion of land within the ALR boundary but is willing to undertake additional improvements to the site that would enhance and support existing farmland or benefit agriculture in the area.

Staff noted the following comments:

- The Committee expressed the need to maintain the 30% land percentage in Surrey that is designated ALR. The land portion proposed for ALR exclusion is actively providing crops and agriculture. The Committee commented that when agricultural land is excluded, it becomes a challenge to bring it back to the ALR.
- The Committee highlighted that the remaining ALR portion of the site could potentially be farmed in a reasonable manner despite a future development in the existing industrial portion of the property.
- The Committee questioned the realistic implementation of the proposed compensation provided by the applicant.
- The Committee suggested that the applicant consider including an agricultural land swap or explore opportunities to expand city-owned parklands that are ecologically and agriculturally beneficial to ALR lands as part of the proposed compensation scheme.
- The Committee commented on the City's need for industrial lands.
- The Committee advised that comments from the ALC be sought pertaining to the proposed application.

D. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

This section has no items to consider.

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

This section has no items to consider.

F. CORRESPONDENCE

This section has no items to consider.

G. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Verbal Updates

The Committee requested an update regarding policies in place that encourage developers to include community gardens within the City of Surrey and the possibility of employing additional agricultural planners to specialize in the 30% landscape that is designated ALR.

H. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Agriculture and Food Policy Advisory Committee will be held on **July 13, 2022**, at 6:00 p.m.

I. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by M. Lamont
Seconded by Councillor Elford
That the Agriculture, Environment, and
Investment Advisory Committee meeting adjourn.

Carried

The Agriculture, Environment, and Investment Advisory Committee adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Jennifer Ficocelli, City Clerk

Councillor Allison Patton, Chair