

Present:

Councillor Bose, Chair
Councillor Bains, Vice Chair
R. Brar
H. Dhillon
B. Favaro
P. Harrison
S. Keulen
S. Rai
M. Schutzbank
R. Sihota
R. Tamis
R. Vanderende

Absent:

D. Bondar
W. Kim

Staff Present:

M. Kischnick, Senior Planner
P. Heer, Manager Community Planning
S. Meng, Administrative Assistant

A. ADOPTIONS

1. Adoption of the Agenda

It was

Moved by P. Harrison
Seconded by M. Schutzbank
That the agenda of the Agricultural and Food
Policy Committee meeting of May 2, 2023, be adopted.
Carried

2. Adoption of the Minutes – April 4, 2023

It was

Moved by H. Dhillon
Seconded by R. Tamis
That the minutes of the Agricultural and
Food Policy Committee meeting held April 4, 2023, be adopted.
Carried

B. DELEGATIONS

1. Preet Heer, Manager Community Planning City of Surrey

Manager Community Planning provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy (Metro 2050) Backgrounder. The following information was highlighted:

- Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) provides a collective vision, strategies, and policies to guide the future growth of the region and provides the land use framework for transportation, economy, housing, and utility. Regional planning principles includes protecting important lands related to agricultural, ecological, and industrial aspects.
- RGS was adopted in 2011. The local government act requires this strategy to be updated regularly. In 2019, RGS was updated with a few key changes such as:
 - Focusing on affordable housing.
 - Implementing strong policy regarding climate change.
 - Considering the overall lens that brings in equity.
 - Aligning the strategy with Transport 2050.
- Key targets in Metro 2050:
 - Reduce GHG emissions by 45% by 2030 and Carbon Neutrality by the year 2050.
 - 40% of new homes and 50% of new jobs in Urban Centres.
 - 28% of new homes and 27% of new jobs in Frequent Transit Development Areas.
 - 15% of new housing in Urban Centres/ FTDAs is affordable rental.
 - Protect 50% of the land base for nature.
 - Expand tree canopy cover in urban area to 40%.
- The updated RGS (Metro 2050) was endorsed and supported by Surrey Council in December 2022. Metro Vancouver Board adopted Metro 2050 in February 2023.
- Agriculture designation in the RGS and Official Community Plan (OCP) protect lands for farming and includes lands within Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Uses are permitted in accordance with the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) Act and the Farm Practices Protection Act.
- Urban containment boundary concentrates 98% of the growth and limits sewer connections to rural and ALR areas to maintain growth focused inside urban containment areas.
- Adopt regional context statements in the OCP that:
 - Specify the Agricultural lands within their jurisdiction, denoting those within the ALR.
 - Consider policies and programs that increase markets and the distribution of local food in urban areas to strengthen the viability of agriculture and increase availability of local food for all residents.
 - Include policies that protect the supply of agricultural land and strengthen agriculture viability.

In response to questions from the Committee, Manager Community Planning provided the following information:

- Population increases of 35,000 people a year is projected for Metro Vancouver Region which is 100 people per day. Vancouver and Surrey absorb a large portion of this growth with estimates up to year 2050.
- Conservation and recreation designated areas include regional level and city parks.
- Growth strategy and policies in OCP is around the land uses and not necessarily to protect farmers, which is covered in right to farm and provincial ALR and ALC legislation.

- Disincentives to prevent loss of and misuse of agricultural farmland include agriculture edge buffers, and not being able to connect to sewers and requiring commission approval.
- Semiahmoo is not a treaty nation and is part of Surrey's land.

Ron Brar joined the meeting 6:36 p.m.

The Committee provided the following comments:

- Agriculture industry is evolving and the economics don't allow young children to enter the industry.
- There is a big spread of lands within the flood plains and agricultural land outside of the flood plains. There should be a policy difference that acknowledges those two different types.
- City of Vancouver's disincentive to address the issue with residential area being attacked as urban agriculture was by establishing a challenge to obtain a business license and make it impossible to meet provincial guidelines with farm tax status. Licensing could be implemented to incentivize more food growth sold in the market and push more production.
- Farmland outside of Metro Vancouver define their land one tenth of the cost of farmland located locally. There is an urgent need to find ways to bring the land prices down within the region.
- First Nation developers within the farmland of Tsawwassen Mills and Delta led to agricultural land loss. Committee Chair was on the land commission when the Tsawwassen Treaty was signed and stated the land they retained follows all rules pertaining to ALR.
- Capital cost of land cannot economically grow in the environment and is unable to deal with the short of cash flow.
- There should be a pathway for the government to provide opportunity to protect the farmlands and to create a continuum for the next generation of children and their future careers.

**2. Preet Heer, Manager Community Planning
City of Surrey**

Manager Community Planning provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding City of Surrey OCP process. The following information was highlighted:

- Existing OCP was adopted in 2013.
- The vision in the OCP is current with the occurrences happening today. The plan looks at emerging issues and incorporates them to the OCP where it ensures policies are aligned with the region.
- Opportunity through future review to refining agricultural content to make sure emerging trends are addressed within OCP is important.
- Senior Planner will be the main staff liaison to bring items back to this committee for discussion. Suggest staff to return and present a break down of the OCP and agricultural and food related policies.
- Community engagement will be implemented as the initial start of the OCP process.

- Agricultural food security and a review of existing policy is being supported in the OCP.
- Public engagement will be in every phase to engage with the public and stakeholders in relation to farming. Suggestion for the committee to think about the type of stakeholders who can present to the committee.

In response to questions from the Committee, Manager Community Planning provided the following information:

- General broad engagement will be conducted and address the key issues within agriculture industry. Focused engagement will be conducted with stakeholders.
- Suggest staff from sustainability department to present and provide information to the committee of ongoing initiatives.
- 47% of emissions come from cars.
- Staff to consider doing a workshop on topics regarding agriculture land as 30% or more of land is in the ALR.
- Goal is to have OCP done before the next election cycle (within 2+ years).
- Possibility to review and/or update the Surrey Agricultural Plan (which was originally adopted in 1999) and make it strategic by conducting research and adding elements into the OCP.
- Neighbourhood Concept Plan (NCP) are areas outside of the farmland. Staff will provide updates regarding ongoing NCP's and plans to the committee as appropriate.
- Suggest contacting staff from the engineering department to present to the committee on initiatives in the city as they relate to agricultural areas.
- Detention pods and service strategies will prevent the densification of water being recharged to the ground and effecting agriculture. Staff will work alongside the committee to address these issues.
- Staff can present information to the committee of existing agricultural and food policies at future meetings.

The Committee provided the following comments:

- Develop a strategy that will engage agricultural community farmers around only agriculture issues not just the community at large.
- Request staff to inform the committee on presenters regarding carbon neutrality and emissions.
- Climate action 2050 is not looking at electrification. The plan is focusing on cleaner alternative fuels for hydrogen in relation to transport trucks, agriculture, and heavy excavators.
- Food security should be addressed and included in the section of long-term farm viability within the plan which includes cost of land, investment of infrastructure and protection of land.
- A committee member suggested that city budget should strictly include expenses related to agriculture such as road levy, down street drainage and parcel tax drainage.
- Committee Chair is currently working with General Manager of Planning and Development to develop and foster stakeholder relationships.

- Within the OCP, include the issue of adding ditches and swales at the edges of new road cross sections as it creates new incumbrances on agricultural land. This becomes a classified watercourse where extra land is lost due to riparian setbacks.

C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

This section had no items to consider.

D. NEW BUSINESS

This section had no items to consider.

E. CORRESPONDENCE

This section had no items to consider.

F. INFORMATION ITEMS

This section had no items to consider.

G. OTHER BUSINESS

This section had no items to consider.

H. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Agriculture and Food Policy Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, June 6, 2023 with proposed location in Meeting Room 125 A and B at Surrey Operations Centre.

I. ADJOURNMENT

The Agricultural and Food Policy Committee meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Jennifer Ficocelli, City Clerk

Councillor Bose, Chairperson