

COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM AGENCIES AND MUNICIPALITIES

PRRD Bylaw Enforcement

No concerns.

PRRD GIS

No concerns.

Agricultural Land Commission

The ALC has no concern with the subdivision itself if the boundary is on the non-ALR portion of the property and it doesn't divide the ALR portion(s) of the property. From the sketch, it looks like all the ALR land would remain on one parcel. However, in this it looks like the proposed zoning is the opposite of what typically happens when land is subdivided along the ALR boundary. If I understand correctly, the intent is to retain the A-2 zoning on the larger non-ALR proposed parcel and rezone the smaller ALR proposed parcel to R-6. R-6 zoning is inconsistent with the *ALC Act* as it does not align with the regulations on residences in the ALR (e.g. R-6 would permit two single family dwellings plus a temporary additional dwelling).

I suggest instead using a different zone that is consistent with the ALC regulations (possibly comprehensive zoning) or a text amendment.

Ministry of Food & Agriculture

See attached.



October 30, 2023

File: 0280-30

Ref: 201422

Dear Local Government Planning Staff:

Ministry of Agriculture and Food (the Ministry) staff have noted that there has been a marked increase in Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) subdivision applications over the past few years, resulting in increased referral workload for local government, the Ministry and ALC staff.

A recent referral impact review project conducted by the Ministry, which reviewed 148 referrals from 26 local governments over a six-month period, showed that 80 percent of ALC subdivision applications were assessed by Ministry staff as “not beneficial to agriculture”; however, local government councils and boards opted to send these applications to the ALC for decision in nearly every instance. While local government decisions to forward these applications to the ALC are inconsistent with Ministry staff input, 92 percent of ALC decisions are consistent with Ministry staff’s assessment (i.e., applications identified as not beneficial to agriculture are refused).

Given the similar input provided by Ministry staff on most subdivision applications, the limited impact that Ministry referral responses have on local government decisions, and current staff workload pressures, the Ministry discontinued parcel-specific review of ALC subdivision applications for an initial six-month trial period from March 2023 to September 2023. The Ministry has extended the trial period for an additional 12 months from October 2023 to October 2024. At the conclusion of the 18-month trial period, Ministry staff will complete an analysis to determine how ALC subdivision application referrals from local governments will be reviewed moving forward. In the interim, Ministry staff will focus on developing alternative outreach and education mechanisms to support land use decisions that benefit agriculture.

In the absence of a parcel-specific review, local government planning staff and decision makers are encouraged to consider the following when reviewing ALC applications for subdivision on the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).


- Subdivision in the ALR frequently results in each parcel having diminished agricultural potential and an increase in land cost per hectare due to increased residential and accessory structures. Smaller lots and increased residential structures can also increase conflict between adjacent land uses.

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- Ministry data, through Agricultural Land Use Inventories (ALUI), shows that smaller agricultural lots are less likely to be farmed.
- A [2022 Kwantlen Polytechnic University study](#) exploring the impact of non-farm uses and subdivision on agricultural land found that in regions of British Columbia (B.C.) reviewed, “30 percent of all new parcels created as a result of subdivision ceased to have a farm class status”, and “64 percent of all the parcels had their ownerships transferred within three years after non-farm use and subdivision applications were approved. This percentage becomes higher for subdivided parcels” (Summary Results, p.1-2).
- To advance viable long-term agricultural opportunities on the ALR, Ministry staff encourage ALR landowners to pursue alternative land access and tenure options, other than subdivision, (such as the leasing of portions of the property) as part of a coordinated succession plan. For more information on [B.C.’s Land Matching Program](#), please visit the [Agrarians Foundation](#) organization website.
- The Ministry also provides resources to producers to support successful farm transition, including support through the [B.C. Agri-Business Planning Program](#), as well as succession planning workshops and webinars to familiarize farmers with the steps and practices required for a successful farm transition.
- Ministry staff are available to discuss viable agricultural opportunities with the landowners considering pursuing farming activities on ALR land. For more information or to contact Ministry staff, please visit the Ministry [AgriService BC webpage](#) or email AgriServiceBC@gov.bc.ca.

While the Ministry will not be providing a detailed review and response to this parcel-specific referral, please feel free to reach out to Ministry staff with specific questions or for advice on this referral or land use planning for agriculture in general.

Sincerely,



Arlene Anderson

Executive Director

Phone:

Email:

