

6

Enhance Agricultural Integrity

Bylaw No.
3247-2022



Vision

Abbotsford's agricultural areas – which comprise a longstanding pillar of the local economy and form a vital part of Abbotsford's character – will be protected and maintained as places for agricultural growing, production and processing, and a place for thriving livelihoods.

This rich agricultural identity will also be felt more strongly within urban areas, where community gardens and other forms of agriculture take root, and where local markets and food culture flourish.

Big Picture

Agriculture in the Country

Ensure Abbotsford is surrounded and sustained by a thriving and diverse agricultural sector through maintaining agricultural uses in viable agricultural areas, and encouraging public support for agriculture.

Food in the City

Support the establishment of urban agriculture, such as community gardens, edible landscaping, and permanent markets.



Policies

The policies in this Chapter apply across the city, and will support the regulation of Abbotsford's agricultural lands in coordination with senior levels of government.

AGRICULTURE IN THE COUNTRY

6.1 Partnerships Supporting Agriculture

Continue to work with senior levels of government (e.g., Ministry of Agriculture and ALC), agricultural stakeholders, and the broader community to develop and maintain up-to-date regulations that enable agriculture to grow and thrive.

6.2 Consistency in Agricultural Zoning

To improve regulatory consistency throughout the ALR, the Agricultural One (A1) and Agricultural Two (A2) zones will serve as the primary zones for regulating agriculture in Abbotsford. Other existing zones, such as A4, A5, A6, have been used previously to regulate non-farm uses within the ALR and scenarios for their future use should be minimized.

6.3 Capacity of Existing Agricultural Lands

Preserve viable agricultural land within the context of the Official Community Plan growth vision and support steps to increase the productive capacity of existing farmland. Explore and support opportunities to encourage the use of fallow or underutilized properties.

6.4 Value Added Opportunities

Support appropriately scaled value-added agri-business opportunities in suitable locations, including practices such as farm product processing, agricultural waste management, enhanced on-farm vertical integration, and activities that connect consumers with Abbotsford farms and agricultural products.

6.5 Permanent Buildings for Temporary Farm Worker Housing

While permanent on-farm buildings and structures for temporary farm worker housing are strongly discouraged in agricultural areas, site-specific applications for new permanent buildings may be considered in unique circumstances where temporary manufactured buildings will not meet the operational needs of the farm.

6.6 Support Agricultural Innovation and Agri-tech

Foster agricultural innovation by exploring strategic land use opportunities for agri-industrial within the Agricultural Land Reserve to develop, demonstrate and deploy emerging agri-technologies, facilitate advanced agri-education and research, increase farm commodity processing capacity, and effectively manage agricultural by-products.

Advance this policy in collaboration and coordination with the senior government agencies to identify strategic opportunities and locations for this use in Abbotsford.

6.7 Food Culture on the Farm

Support the agricultural sector through local and regional initiatives to promote and further develop the local food industry and culture. Consider opportunities to improve community visibility and the celebration of agriculture through enhanced branding, signage, and wayfinding in Abbotsford's ALR.

6.8 Holistic Food Systems

Support a thriving food system throughout the city, including local production, processing, distribution, celebration, consumption, nutrient recovery, and waste to energy.

6.9 Environment

Ensure agricultural activities support and respect human health, natural environments and groundwater resources in farming areas, particularly in relation to agricultural waste management, composting, anaerobic digestion, and incineration on farms.

6.10 Rural Centres

Recognize the important role Abbotsford's seven historical rural centres play in serving the needs of the local and surrounding agricultural communities by:

- Supporting opportunities for new public civic and public institutional uses (e.g., public schools, parks, fire halls, post offices); and
- Preserving and enhancing existing services in consideration of local context and community needs.

6.11 Agricultural Enhancement Endowment Fund

Implement the Agricultural Enhancement Endowment Fund ("Ag Trust Fund") by requiring a \$20,000 per acre contribution, calculated on the net lot area, for land that is rezoned in the area identified on Map 16.

Consider opportunities to expand the Ag Trust Fund program to further support agricultural research, innovation, and farm practices. Consider revisiting the per acre contribution requirement if new lands are added to the endowment fund contribution area in the future.

6.12 Legal Non-Conforming Uses in Agriculture Land Use Designations

For properties designated "Agriculture 1 - Uplands" or "Agriculture 2 - Lowlands" in the City's Official Community Plan, which have existing non-agricultural zoning, Council may consider Zoning Bylaw amendments to recognize the historical uses on the property, provided:

- the use is compatible with surrounding properties or supports the agricultural industry; and
- the property is not located within the Agricultural Land Reserve, or is deemed by the Agricultural Land Commission to be exempt from the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and its Regulations, in accordance with Section 23(1) of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*, as amended.

Bylaw No.
2806-2018

FOOD IN THE CITY

6.13 Food Culture in the City

Support initiatives to bring agriculture to the city through branding, marketing, programs and events, (e.g., Taste of Abbotsford).

6.14 Production and Sale

Enable the production and sale of food throughout the urban area by developing urban agriculture guidelines and permitting small scale, commercial urban food gardens.

6.15 Add Bees

Consider supporting additional urban agriculture activities that encourage self-sufficiency such as keeping bees in the urban area.

6.16 Community Gardens

Encourage and establish non-commercial community and demonstration gardens where feasible and appropriate in parks, right-of-ways, boulevards, vacant lots, and mixed use developments.

6.17 Farmers Market

Support establishing a permanent farmers market facility to create a year-round local agricultural presence in the urban area.