



A Shared Community Vision

Electoral Area 'A' OCP Review,

Citizen's Committee Speaker Series

Agriculture Workbook Responses

This document presents the community's responses to the questions and policy options presented in the workbook on agriculture. The workbook is available on the Official Community Plan review project website at www.asharedcommunityvision.ca, by emailing a request to areaaocpreview@rdn.bc.ca, or by contacting the Regional District of Nanaimo planning department at (250) 390-6510

Option: Support for the development of an Agricultural Plan and/or Farm Bylaw for Area 'A'

Do you agree with this option? If so why do you think it is important and how would this option help us achieve the Community Vision?

1. No, these options should be developed and directed thru the Agricultural Advisory Committee. Including such things in the OCP only leads the public into believing that such policies are enforceable, and will lead to even more confusion on what an OCP can actually do.
2. I am not personally in favour of an agricultural plan and farm bylaw for Area 'A' because it seems like it is too involved and places too many rules and regulations on an already stressed out farming community. It may be that the farming community would feel that this is a viable option.
3. This option has the feel of telling landowners what they can or cannot do with their lands, a much tougher sell than the next option which sets out specific encouragements. SO yes to policy and no to bylaw at this time - but not so as to impede the AAC's consultative influences.
4. I think a plan would be a good option as long as farming applications are not put on hold while you do the process. The process can take long and should not impact anyone who meets current policies and regulations, despite the fact that they may be contrary once the plan is written, to what the new plan says.
5. Yes I do agree with this option because it creates the first step towards aligning actions in Area A with the Community Vision, provides clear guidelines as to expectations within Area A with respect to farming and give a stronger voice to farmers enabling sustainability for farming/selling within the community.
6. We agree with an agricultural plan but no bylaws.
7. Yes but only if it will protect agricultural and farm lands and not attack them. We should make it easier for people to run or start farms not harder.
8. It might be of some use but it seems it could be ignored by the Board. It seems that the community through the Official Community Plan could come up with some good ideas, but there is obviously no assurance that the Board would agree with what the community, nor the Official Community Plan says they would like.
9. Yes. These are solid and visible efforts to go significantly beyond the current OCP's fairly generic support of agriculture and the "rural character". If we are to place our money where our mouth is as a community, we have to start getting involved in a hands-on way. Having these 2 elements will elevate the issue of agriculture, help the community focus on details and bring us at least some distance closer to coming to grips with the realities of agriculture in our part of the world. As a community we say we want it; these are steps we can take in converting the desire into action.
10. I'm not sure I can answer this question fairly. I have too many questions. I would like further discussion with farmers and the other organisations listed.

Do you agree with this option? If so why do you think it is important and how would this option help us achieve the Community Vision?

11. Support the development of an agricultural plan since this would provide a basis for informed discussion with farmers and land owners and provide a means of co-ordination between local, provincial and federal government policies and legislation. A farm bylaw may be a result of the agricultural plan but my support would be contingent upon its content and wording. My concerns involve the balancing of the right to farm with the public's interest in placing rules and restrictions on farm operations. Care must be taken that financial and environmental costs are unduly placed on farmers. Changes must be recognized and supported by the public at large- which may mean the public must provide some amount of financial compensation
12. *Yes and No – agree it is necessary to have the “Agricultural Plan” for the purposes of a longer term view to provide direction. This kind of base planning also provides future planners with a reference point to start tracking and measuring progress toward the Community Vision.*
13. Please note that all comments my comments in regards to agriculture are based on that the OCP would support as a priority farming that is producing food crops, or the raising of livestock. Yes. Farm bylaws allow for greater flexibility in setting standards and deal with matters that cannot be regulated by way of zoning. They may prescribe different standards depending on the size or type of farm, type of farm operation, the site conditions, and the adjoining land uses. Farm bylaws could be used in edge planning as the ALR or farmland equivalent to development permit areas for the protection of farming. Farm bylaws may include setbacks, siting of farm activities, and buffer requirements. Local governments will particularly want to consider the benefits of regulation by farm bylaw for areas or uses where lot size of configuration makes standard setbacks inappropriate, where topography and waste management create public health issues, and where there are sensitive adjoining land uses such as urban residential.
14. I'm not sure what is involved with an agricultural plan but would support one if it's focus is to maintain, support, and enhance agricultural lands. I have no interest in a farm bylaw.
15. YES. The community has submitted many excellent ideas through various workshops and this workbook that are consistent with the vision.
16. Absolutely and completely! The Nanaimo—Cedar Farmers' Institute would work with all areas of the RDN for an agricultural plan and/or farm bylaw as well as a land inventory. We would like to work closely with the CVRD who are already working on their agricultural plan.
17. Yes—this would help ensure the preservation of the area's rural landscape.
18. We need to know / understand more of what this entail / portends.

Option: Support for the development of an Agricultural Plan and/or Farm Bylaw for Area 'A'

If you support this option, do you support both an agricultural plan and a farm bylaw or only one of the two?

1. Once a plan is adopted the need for a bylaw can be assessed at that time. If the plan is not worth the paper it is written on then a bylaw maybe necessary to give the plan some teeth.
2. Yes I support both.
3. Only an agricultural plan.
4. Support both. Federal government should give out free seminary and starter kits for small backyard veggie growers to support local food productions. Free soil, free seeds, and seedlings, free services, free books, and how to manuals.
5. Both. And I would also like to see the RDN Board revisit the policy of waiving the opportunity to comment on ALC application submissions. There may be more grounds now to use this avenue as an opportunity to advance Regional and local sustainability objectives. This item may not be the best fit for an OCP, but an effort should be made to build it in in some way, as there are good OCP objectives which would benefit from intervention at the RDN level when ALC applications are turned in.
6. Agree with the Agricultural plan. Terms of Reference should be outlined and evaluated by board members and the community as soon as possible. Disagree with the bylaw - do not see how the bylaw would increase flexibility for the farms. In any case proceed with the Agricultural Plan and assess the need for a Bylaw during the process.
7. I would support an agriculture plan and a farm bylaw. I understand that farm bylaws may only be adopted with the approval of the Minister of Agriculture, and only in an area declared by regulation (sections 917 and 918 Local Government Act).
8. I just support an agricultural plan.
9. BOTH. Put some teeth into the agriculture /agribusiness direction accompanied by oversight legislated in a farm by-law.
10. Possibly both. But this needs more research.
11. Both.

Option: Support for the development of an Agricultural Plan and/or Farm Bylaw for Area 'A'

If you do not support this option, what are your concerns and how could they be addressed?

1. Could lead to more regulation for farmers who are already struggling.
2. My concern is that the Official Community Plan promote and preserve agriculture as a way of life. Too much regulations, too many rules have a negative effect on farmers, farming and other agricultural pursuits. Granted, some regulations are necessary, protection of watercourses and aquifers for instance, but surely they could be promoted in other regulations. The Agricultural Advisory Committee sounds like a great idea for the community.
3. Farmers already have too many bylaws and regulations. It is impossible to follow them all and produce cheap food.
4. Length of time that establishing a plan or bylaw take since it says the ALR Commission and the Minister of Agriculture would have to be involved.
5. We should be working towards less bureaucratic red tape and restrictive bylaws. A farm bylaw would do nothing to encourage more involvement in agriculture in Area 'A' but instead drive it away to a more receptive/ less restrictive (less costly) area.

Option: Provide policies that support agriculture

Do you support the options presented above? If so, which options do you agree with and which options do you disagree with and why? Are there other incentives that should be included in the Official Community Plan?

1. I would support most options that provide financial incentives for farming . I would not support any policies in the OCP that cannot , or likely will not be implemented into regulation (i.e. encouraging Federal and Provincial Governments to consider financial incentives) We don't need a bunch of fluff in a document that has no real effect .
2. I support all of the above options if they are not too cumbersome and easily instituted. Anything that encourages agriculture in Area 'A' should be considered seriously. Community suggestions such as: development of a farmers market, certified meat butchering facility, etc. should also be seriously considered.
3. Dyes, encourage the inclusion of agriculture capable lands into the ALR even if undersized.
4. Many ideas in these workbooks should be federal or provincial mandates. Local Governments cannot afford to give away any money, stretched too far now.
5. Yes I support the options above (except for increasing fees for non-agricultural uses).
6. 1+2 are definitely yes, the rest are just okay.
7. Agree with all of the above. Free soil, free fertilizer, free seeds, free seeds and seedlings, free manuals, free starter kits, free gardening tools, all funded by federal and provincial governments.
8. I generally support the options. Would prefer than non-agricultural uses not be permitted. A concern would be the length of time that might be needed to implement many of these.
9. Yes generally. The best options are those which fall clearly under the RDN's powers (policies, permits, zoning); these can be delivered on. Tax relief is the clearest possible statement by the community at large of the perceived value of agriculture. The other options, "encourage" etc with other government, other agencies etc, are less significant for a farmer, and not likely to help with the critical issue of financial viability (so, nice to have, can't hurt, but should focus on those incentives which can best improve bottom lines for farmers). Conservation covenants are useful if they suit the person and the circumstance, but my experience has been they cause a lot of concern among land-owners; perhaps leave it in, but expect some trouble on the road to final readings of the OCP bylaw Wayne Haddow spoke of lands in Area A which while not in ALR do have the potential for it; there should be a policy to encourage additions to the ALR.
10. 1. not enough information to answer, 2. ", 3. conservation covenants are still largely unknown and untested. Environmentally sensitive features require immediate and clear protection., 4. sure, 5. need more information, 7. yes good luck, 8.like?, 9.organically right?, 10. it could, but when?
11. This is a key part of the OCP and any future agriculture plan for Area A. Specifically support incentives 3, and 5 though 10. Could consider supporting 1, 2 and 4, depending on circumstances.
12. **Support options – 1,2,3,4,5,6,8,9.** #1 – Agree if a minimum dollar value is set and it applies to permanent structures only, # 2 - Assuming fast tracking permits applies to farm related permits only. #3 – Agree with tax relief for farmers in environmentally sensitive areas, such as riparian, # 4 – Agree if “down zoning” has a minimum time frame attached to it (say 5 years) and a substantial rezoning fee is charged to have it changed back to its original or any other zoning, Otherwise it will be open to abuse, #5 – Yes – especially assist in resolving issues quickly, #6 – Yes – strongly support networking in any way possible, #8 – obvious benefits, #9 – obvious benefits, **Do not support – 7,10,** #7 – financial incentives do not build strong business economies and lead to entitlements – then where does it end?, #10 – cost benefit analysis first – what is the potential upside - value seems questionable.
13. YES. I agree with all 10 of them at this juncture.

Option: Provide policies that support agriculture

Do you support the options presented above? If so, which options do you agree with and which options do you disagree with and why? Are there other incentives that should be included in the Official Community Plan?

14. All comments that I have made in this A "green building" checklist should be developed for farm operations if development and building application fees were to be waived, with a fast tracking system that favours green building.
15. I can support a number of the incentives such as (1) First part ok but there should be no need to increase fees for non-agricultural uses. 2, 6, 8, 9. I can not support options 2,4,5, and 10.
16. #6 and 9 are excellent and 1, 2, 5, 7 and 8 are great. However, there needs to be more clarity / definition concerning #3 ("conservation covenants) and #4 ("property owner initiated down zoning").

Option: Provide Policies that support agriculture cont...

Policy Option: Support maximum setbacks and floor area

1. Maximum setbacks are not as clear and simple as they sound . In all cases , it is more suitable to locate buildings on farm property where they impact the least on farm operations , or where they best suit the actual function of the farm. This may not fall within these 'rules' . I would think that a real farmer would already know this , and wouldn't require regulations to tell him. I support some limitation of floor areas.
2. I support the maximum setback option because it would prevent the plopping of mega-homes in the middle of prime agricultural lots thus freeing up the majority of the land for its intended purpose. Perhaps it should be minimum/maximum setbacks so that homes would not encroach on green space, neighbours property, etc.
3. Yes, yes, yes! The older parts of South Wellington - where original shacks sit next to the roadway are friendlier walks than those with the typical, modern front yard (usually with fenced in barking dogs) just as urban areas work better when shops and doorways abut sidewalks rather than when expansive parking lots front store entrances.
4. No. I support maximum setbacks. Before I would support maximum floor area, I would have to know specifically what that would be. Maximum setbacks could be all that is needed. If maximum floor space were considered I would hope it would not be a ridiculously low amount. I feel this borders on dictatorship however setbacks should be looked at.
5. Not sure I understand this one fully enough to present a credible opinion.
6. No. If a farmer can afford a big house he should be allowed to build it. The staff at the Regional District of Nanaimo should be more knowledgeable of farming. When we applied to build a milk parlour we were asked if it was an addition to the house!! A neighbour was told their house took up too much of the field so had to move it a few feet into a hollow thus causing basement flooding.
7. Yes definitely.
8. Support. A key to keeping agriculture viable is reducing the interactions between farming and residential settlement; any steps that can be taken to manage this risk, should be.
9. Idea of maximum setbacks seems to have merit but must be flexible enough to consider other site considerations such as: water and sewer connections; well sites; septic field locations; riparian values; building sites and connections to existing roads. Support limits to floor areas.
10. Agree – (see attached sheet of Vision - Key Points). Large Estates do not fit several of the desired outcomes in the Vision Statement.
11. If the OCP is to encourage and support residential development inside the UCB's then residential development on arable land should not be an issue. Set backs should be used to protect fresh water sources, environmentally sensitive areas, and natural wetlands. A rural community that clearly supports agriculture should not be. I support the OCP including limits on floor square footage to discourage "estate hobby farms", however I would support housing accommodations on working farms to facilitate farm operations.
12. Maximum setbacks may not be appropriate for Area 'A'. The poorest land may be in the centre of a property and that is where the buildings should be located. I would expect that any restriction on floor area would be related to the size of the property.
13. YES. The arguments in this workbook are sound.
14. I suggest this option needs more study and research and that an area agricultural plan would address / explore these possibilities.
15. Yes.
16. Need to know more about the implications.

Option: Provide policies that support agriculture cont...

Policy Option: Encourage value-added agricultural uses

1. By the list you have provided, this appears to be treading into very dangerous and potentially controversial territory. This could be very much like the 'Destination Resort' designation in the RGS, that, because of its ambiguity, has led to significant community conflict. There would need to be very clear and definitive descriptions and limitations on any additional potential uses. I'm sure any farmer deciding to put up a hundred wind turbines on his land would have a difficult time convincing his neighbours that it is farming.
2. I support all of the suggested value-added agricultural uses, especially if supported by individual rezoning applications. These uses could certainly help farmers increase their income through non-traditional methods. A large farm could conceivably support several of these.
3. Yes, It's a fundamental principle of economics that maximizing the value of a product is better than selling a raw product and then buying back that same product in a finished form.
4. I support this option 100% especially on Vancouver Island where so much of the agricultural type properties cannot grow crops. If the current Official Community Plan makes claims that biodiversity has value then value-added options must be looked at and supported.
5. Yes I support this option as a further means to generate income from ALR land.
6. Yes.
7. Yes I support some of the uses but not all.
8. But it was stated previously that the Board is not obligated to proceed with a bylaw or program identified in the Official Community Plan. Only if there are very clear and enforceable rules. It seems to me that if there is too much leeway some of these could be abused. Look at some of the 'farmers markets'. Some of the items have nothing to do with agriculture.
9. Most of these options are good, i.e. there have not been problems in the past with them. However, sawmills and composting operations have caused much heartache for neighbours, some of whom were also farmers, and should be approached quite carefully (cross-ref to agricultural plan and farm bylaw).
10. 'Today's farmers who, despite the fact that BC has the best farmland protection thanks to the ALR, and the best growing conditions and microclimates in all of Canada, have struggled and been marginalised, have been unable to produce food cheap enough to compete with imports, and whose children have been forced to move away from farming, do not yet realise that, the trend in BC is that more and more consumers are interested in food quality and are willing to pay for local and organic products.' There are now many people (esp. young educated) who would like to farm, but the prohibitive cost of land is a major problem. Farmer's are dying before mentoring the next generation.
11. Yes and further suggest that the definition of agriculture be broadened to include forest stewardship, carbon sequestration and the provision of ecological goods and services.
12. Yes – redefine "Value Added Agriculture" to include Wineries, Pet Breeders, and related Education opportunities, etc. These kinds of businesses are environmentally friendly and will go a long way toward keeping young people employed and living in the community. Plan for the next generation - if the family stays chances are the seniors will also stay.
13. Value added agriculture should be encouraged. Farm gate sales should be accommodated wherever possible (I am not sure if this is solely provincial government jurisdiction, if it can be addressed and supported in the OCP it should be done.) Agri-tourism is a value added use and should be included in an agriculture plan.
14. A qualified yes to this option - I can not accept some of the examples listed such as 2, 5, and 10. I don't know what is meant by 'passive recreation'.
15. YES. The examples in this workbook should be pursued expediently. Entrepreneurs do not have to wait for an agriculture plan per se. Short term and mid-term economic sustainability inherently requires faster prioritization and actionable programmes in parallel with plans.
16. Yes. Zoning should permit the listed uses on p. 12.

Option: Provide policies that support agriculture cont...

Policy Option: Encourage value-added agricultural uses

17. Yes—most of these seem to be in existence already.

Option: Provide policies that support agriculture cont...

Policy Option: Explore alternate land tenure options

1. Again , leave this to the Agriculture Advisory Commission.
2. Certainly worth exploring because it may encourage young people to pursue farming as a career option.
3. Yes. Property is too expensive to acquire and work as an individual large scale, so communal ownership is just one obvious solution. Co-op market: co-op farm?
4. I would agree with exploring these options at this point. Once it has been fully explored and outlined what these options are it will be easier to assess if the community would wish to support these options. Don't know enough about this option to offer opinion at this point.
5. Yes, absolutely, I believe European Countries adopt this policy. Land becomes increasingly unattainable for young people interested in farming.
6. Once you get past 60yrs and don't want to continue farming, and no one in the family wants it you should be able to stay on that property without a change in assessment.
7. Yes. Perhaps land could be a co-op or government subsidized ownership for young people wanting to get into agriculture.
8. Unless much care and again enforceable rules were established some owners who are not really very interested in farming would use these methods to set up and enhance a purely commercial non-farming business. (How many “home based businesses have ‘crossed the line’ when it comes to regulations.)
9. Yes; the scenario of retiring farmers converting their holdings to sundry other applications because there is no interest in farming or no business future needs very much to be addressed in the Official Community Plan.
10. Yes, support this.
11. Need further information regarding this subject – Are there any successful models to study?
12. I think that it would be productive to explore this option.
13. YES. Without next generation farmers, there can be no sustainability in the agriculture segment of this area's economy and social structure.
14. Yes. Again, an area agricultural plan could deal with this.
15. Sounds like this has some merit.
16. I) Farms need water—lots of it.
II) A subdivision can not be built close.

Option: Provide policies that support agriculture cont...

Policy Option: Support retention of ALR land

1. The current Policy in the OCP should be sufficient . I believe the bureaucracy and regulations in the ALR are already in place to deal with this .Don't set up the OCP for potential failure when policies can be over ruled by higher authorities.
2. I agree with this policy option. In spite of the Official Community Plan currently having this policy the table on page 4 shows that a significant percentage of ALR land was lost to exclusion from 1974 to 2008. I imagine over the next 25 years that there will be additional pressure on Are A lands for additional exclusions. I think the new Official Community Plan should support the retention of ALR land vigorously. I like option one because it seems the simplest to apply.
3. Please see Bylaw No. 837(3.1). This was a subject dealt with and then exorcised from the subsequent Official Community Plan. We need to revisit that text, strengthen it, and deal quite unsympathetically with the cause of the exorcism.
4. Yes but not at all costs, only if value-added agricultural uses is supported at the same time. If this is not supported, I would not be in support of all ALR land must remain ALR land no matter what. The current method the Agricultural Land Reserve uses now of making an assessment of the lands is a sound method and should continue.
5. Yes, absolutely, ALR keeps larger tracts of land exempt from development.
6. Not at the farmers expense. If you are developed all around you, you should also be able to develop the property. If the Federal Government can have the zoning changed (in the Fraser Valley) from agriculture to industrial why can't the farmer.
7. Yes.
8. Most definitely.!!
9. Good policy to have. Needs also to be backed up by RDN Board, and restoring the practice of commenting on ALR applications.
10. Yes I support the retention of ALR land. The funding to the Ministry of Agriculture to the point of redundancy and without money the Ministry of Agriculture & Lands is useless. I do not believe the ALC has enough 'power' to effectively protect agricultural land especially when there is political pressure for development. i.e. The Nanaimo Airport exclusion request for expansion on prime agricultural land over a vitally important aquifer, after the premier bequeaths \$11,000,000, effectively negating any opportunity for rejection by the ALC. I think the mandate of the ALC should expand to recognise the importance of organic versus chemical and synthetic farming and how the former not only increases the productivity and value of agricultural land but also protects our ground water and biodiversity. A need to recognise the improvements that can be made to so called marginal lands as well as innovative food production uses versus conventional farming. There also needs to be recognition and not penalties for land within the ALR that is left treed or fallow as well as many other practises that protect or enhance water availability as well as biodiversity in general. When a developer has ALR zoning is changed there is a windfall of money made yet a farmer who wishes to sell farm land must accept far less or sell for at such a high price farming will never pay the new mortgage. Consideration must be given as to how sellers of farmland this will be compensated. Paying fair market value in a world with diminishing real estate means farming will never pay. how will we address that?
11. Strong support.
12. YES. But if future OCP reviews conclude that the area would be better served by being more diversified because sustainable economic growth or quality of life indicators (resulting from an agriculture focus) did not adequately materialize, then consider tweaking this policy with some enabling exceptions.

Option: Provide policies that support agriculture cont...

Policy Option: Support retention of ALR land

13. Support a retention policy and enforcement of it. Without the retention of the ALR lands the culture irreversibly changes. The plan should address the notion of a minimum “critical mass” stated in hectares of farm (ALR) lands that must be in place to preserve the very integrity of the area and the “Community Vision”. Agricultural options unknown and unimaginable to us today will present themselves in the future. reservation of the land base is the key to the quality of life in future. The very definition of farming will change and just having “space” will be the key to achieving community goals.
14. Most residents of southern Vancouver Island don’t realize that until 1947 or so, the east side of Vancouver Island, from the Comox Valley in the north to Victoria in the south, produced more grain than anywhere else in B.C. But as cereal-crop production exploded in the Peace River country after the Second World War, the Vancouver Island grain industry nosedived. All types of local food production will become increasingly important in the very near future.
15. I support maintenance of the policy contained in the current Official Community Plan.
16. Yes. And we should encourage the ALC to deny applications for exclusion, sub-division and non-farm use.
17. Absolutely—Those lands located in the ALR must be kept in the ALR. They are the framework of rural integrity of the area and should be used for farm use only.
18. Yes!
19. Yes. I disagree with the proposed policy of allowing change as long as negative impacts can be mitigated. This does not entirely eliminate negative impacts, just make them lesser in nature, or rectifiable after the damage is done.
20. Yes—you expect farmers to participate in this OCP review during the busiest time of the year.

Option: Provide policies that support agriculture cont...

Policy Option: Discourage non-farm development of arable land

1. 'Arable Land' could be a very subjective description that could include almost anything except a piece of solid rock . ALR lands are already designated . Don't add more regulations to simple rural land just because it provides a 'feel good' statement to the Official Community Plan.
2. Don't like that at least two options under this section require involvement of agrologist and reports that can be costly. No everyone is a developer and many are just regular citizens. Must consider that the average person will be stuck with all these regulations being forced on them, not just developers. Focus of Official Community Plan cannot always be only on developers.
3. Yes I support this policy in keeping with the comments and summary of what the community has said about agriculture.
4. Not at the farmers expense. If you are developed all around you, you should also be able to develop the property. If the Federal Government can have the zoning changed (in the Fraser Valley) from agriculture to industrial why can't the farmer.
5. Yes.
6. Yes. Concern - if a conflict arises over use of land e.g. Developer versus community, to whom does the ALC give its support? Just look at the data supplied on page 4.
7. This is a critical element in supporting agriculture; lose the land and the whole question is moot. All three bullets are good, particularly creating DPAs for farmland. However, it is essential for these options to be pursued collaboratively with the agriculture community, land-owners esp. There is considerable risk that these actions could be seen as intrusive or hostile, so the policy must be very clear on its rationale and inclusivity.
8. yup even if it's an airport.
9. Maybe but suggest that any assessment should consider the potential for more than traditional farm crops and be broadened to consider agro-forestry activities and the provision of ecological goods and services.
10. Support this policy and a 'no change in use' approach. Depending on the definition of "nonfarm" uses the preference would be to disallow any applications. A soils study is not needed now and may only create an opportunity for developers to focus on and argue for development on the least arable land which is always there. In addition as agriculture methods change the priority in future may be more on "space" and not as much on soil quality.
11. Yes. Under the current ALC policy land within the ALR that is zoned for "non-farm use" remains in the ALR inventory and does not accurately reflect the actual amount of arable land available for farm production. The RDN should not be support "non-farm use" applications, or support the removal of land from the ALR.
12. The Agricultural Land Commission already covers this and no additional policy statement is necessary.
13. YES. The implementation arguments consolidated thus far seem reasonable.
14. Yes, especially if development would reduce agricultural potential. Non-farm use should only be considered if it supports agriculture (e.g. agro-industrial, agro-tourism or agro-commercial uses). Also, the OCP should recommend farmland protection development permits (The existing environmental development permits are too strict on agriculture).
15. Yes – Our farmlands MUST be protected. They must be used for their intended purpose. Residents of Area 'A' have to look at the seriousness of being able to sustain ourselves which is achievable.
16. Change arable to agricultural use to allow for farm uses for agriculture; other than crops / vegetables grains etc... Such land could be used for greenhouses, raising poultry, value added agriculturally related products.
17. Change "arable" to "agricultural" land to allow for land that can be agriculturally productive, even if the soil is not optimally productive. Such land could be used for raising chickens, greenhouse seedlings, potted plants, etc... "No" to the requirements regarding soil assessment. Need to determine criteria for "impacts" on agricultural land. "No" to mitigating impacts. Keep ALR, ALR.

Option: Provide policies that support agriculture cont...

Policy Option: Support the concept of Transfer of Development Credits as a way to preserve farmland, environmentally sensitive features, and other lands valued by the community.

1. Without some real facts related to this issue , it is impossible to support or reject this option .
2. It seems to me that TDC's would not be needed to protect farmland because the ALC policies currently in place in the province. TDC could, however, prevent the fragmentation of larger farm parcels. They could also protect marshland, etc, Worth exploring.
3. Probably out of place or premature for an enclave as small as Area 'A'. Perhaps a subject for ongoing discussion with senior levels of Government.
4. This question is difficult to answer with this limited amount of information. I do not support larger minimum parcel sizes without full public inquiry and the ability for the landowner to vote on these decisions. The subject of increasing minimum lot sizes effects the entire community and should have the entire communities involvement. Official Community Plans can be amended to reflect decisions of a full public inquiry dedicated to this question alone. The Official Community Plan process has not brought out enough of the citizens input with roughly 60 people participating to even remotely answer this question fairly and with full knowledge of what citizen's want.
5. Yes, I support this concept because land owners of ALR or environmentally sensitive areas can be better stewards of these valued lands if they are compensated for not developing them, for the greater good of us all, as we indicated in the community vision.
6. Sounds like a scam to screw the farm community.
7. Good idea, needs to be further researched and developed. Who pays for all these studies?
8. If an owner has been paying lower taxes because of farm designation then perhaps they should have restrictions on what they can do on or with the land.
9. Particularly since there is some track record with it, it should be gotten underway via the OCP, so that we can determine if it's a good option for Area A.
10. Further research is needed.
11. Strong support to explore this concept.
12. *May support implementing a system of credits that assigns value. Need more information to understand the system, including, who would administer and pay for it? Possibly have a property owner's seminar each year and inform property owners of their actual rights under the Torrens Land Registry System in B.C.*
13. Yes. As indicated in the above reference notes a commitment from the RDN Directors is needed to uphold OCP's and the RGS. This also reflects the need for land owners to be made aware that they do not have entrenched rights to profit from land holdings. In addition the option for land covenants should be supported in the OCP.
14. I do not support this option. May preserve some farmland that may be developed but could also adversely affect community members facing prospect of higher density in growth receiving areas.
15. YES. A TDC- like program has the potential of bringing equity and some flexibility into these often emotionally charged land valuation situations while achieving the Community Vision.
16. Further research / education is needed concerning the TDC. The OCP should recommend a feasibility study concerning the implications a TDC would have on Area A. Again, all this could be part of an area agricultural plan....
17. Not at this time. Too many variables—possible excess control in the hands of the owner of the farmland (not necessarily the farmer). Needs more investigation.
18. Need to know more.

Option: Provide policies that support agriculture cont...

Policy Option: Support the concept of Transfer of Development Credits as a way to preserve farmland, environmentally sensitive features, and other lands valued by the community.

19. No. When people purchase rural lands (I assume ALR) they do so with the understanding of the restrictions for ALR. ALR lands can be protected by ALR regulations without the complication of credits. If people want to buy land for development or other speculation they can purchase non-ALR lands. Maybe the ALC and ALR regulations need more clout. Maybe RGS and OCP need more clout, if what is in place now is not working. There appears to be an implicit expectation and encouragement for development in the presentation of the material and questions in these OCP booklets. To maintain the rural character of Area 'A', any development needs to be minimal and within the character of the existing nature of this area. Do not manufacture a need. In these times of unexpected changes, we cannot expand beyond what is sustainable in terms of local food production and availability of water.

Option: Provide policies that support agriculture cont...

Policy Option: Provide an agricultural focus for new rural development

1. There is a lot of land outside the UCB that is not in the ALR . Many of the options blur the line between simple rural land , and ALR farmland . Agricultural policies and regulations do not , and should not apply to non-farm rural lands. Again , many of the above options are just 'feel good ' wish lists and will not lead to any Regulations that are enforceable . These kind of statements are all too often misinterpreted by the general public as law .
2. I agree with most of this policy option on the previous page. They promote agriculture and farming. The policy supporting a limit on the number of dwellings on ALR farmland could maybe mention additional housing for children. As farmers are aging it would be great to encourage their children to remain on the farm by allowing them to live there. I'm wondering what exactly are the conditions that would allow subdivision to go ahead outside the UCB.
3. There is an excess of industrial lands courtesy of Sandstone. Urban sprawl is the crux of all our problems. So all development must be agriculturally focused. Densification - unless needed for agricultural purposed - must be contained within UCB's.
4. Roads are controlled by MOT. How could the Official Community Plan stop roads on ALR lands. No jurisdiction to do so. If development is close to ALR lands then an assessment could be done. DO not agree it should be done no matter if it is located no where near ALR lands. I support buffering. Feel this is a great option for both the residential owners as well as the farm property owners. Far too many residents trying to change things after the fact they don't like yet were fully aware existed before they ever arrived. Buffering would do much to help alleviate this. Do not support limiting the number of dwellings. Some parcels are huge with more than enough acreage to support more than one house without impacting the land whatsoever. I support setbacks on ALR lands not outright exclusion, especially when properties can be hundreds of acres in size. Stop comparing to what has happened in Delta, this is Delta not here. Do not support dictating house size, non-farm hosing is not going on now so see no point to this question.
5. Yes I support this option provided the new rules and regulations meet the objective at the end of preserving rural lands, but do not discourage the ability for rural development from a cost effective perspective.
6. Yes. I agree with most of it. There should not be any more subdivision style housing allowed. Were already to crowded out here.
7. In the fifth bullet, needs to be more than "discouraging". In the seventh bullet does this mean parcels adjacent to one and other and owner by one farmer. If so encouraging consolidation would be acceptable.
8. These are all good options, and I would like to see them in our OCP. The bullet concerning roads might usefully consider the issue of the many undeveloped public roads in the ALR, and whether these could be de-listed by the Province in support of the agriculture-encouraging policies in our Official Community Plan.
9. These are very important questions however i don 't feel qualified to respond. Many of the ideas sound very positive. Area A schools could have a agricultural component in their curriculums.
10. Strongly support items 2, 8 and 9 on page 18. The others may have merit in some circumstances.
11. *Support all the options and even stronger statements if required.*
12. Yes, especially for farms that are committed to producing food crops, or raising livestock.
13. I can support a policy such as: "The Official Community Plan is supportive of any new development occurring outside of the UCB which are compatible with and contribute towards making agriculture more viable". I think a broad statement is more appropriate for this topic. Only need to consider two things - Is compatible and will it make a positive contribution.

Option: Provide policies that support agriculture cont...

Policy Option: Provide an agricultural focus for new rural development

14. YES ;however, Concerns: Some of the proposed policies mentioned in the workbook seem onerously restrictive. For example I have trouble supporting the following one: "OCP could discourage the subdivision of land outside the UCB, except where it can be shown that a proposed subdivision does not negatively impact agriculture". Rationale: If the background data herewith is correct , that 50% of farm sales average less than \$10,000 annually then it might take decades to make this agriculture thrust sustainable . Coupled with the fact that farms are usually taxed at a much lower base rate, the UCB properties may be forced to subsidize agribusiness properties while the asset values of those acreages increase. The area might want to strategically leave itself some wiggle room in the event that another rural focus emerges over time.
15.
 - 1– There must not be further fragmentation / loss of ALR land.
 - 2- Agricultural assessments for non-farm development should be required. The RDN has an Agricultural Advisory Committee that could do this.
 - 3– Buffering is essential!
 - 4– The ALC already limits ALR farmland to 1 dwelling and has allowance for a 2nd dwelling if it's a manufactured home.
 - 5– The size of the house doesn't matter because anyone farming should put their money into land, water, crop and/or livestock improvements.
 - 6- Beware and cautious of all development. Any proposed subdivisions should have positive impacts on not only agriculture but also the proposed sustainability principles we have identified for a Area 'A'.
 - 7– Bigger parcels do not necessarily mean more agriculture. (Much of organic food production is on small-lot agriculture. e.g. The highest income farm in Courtenay-Comox earns more then \$200 million annually and is on less than 10 acres).
 - 8-Yes.
 - 9-Definitely
16. Yes I do agree and would support the options described on the previous page as I feel it would result in "controlled" development while encouraging preservation of our rural integrity.
17. Rural development needs to be kept to a minimum to maintain the rural character and agricultural purpose of Area 'A'. No housing projects. Only permit small subdivisions up to 5 homes maximum. No clear cutting of trees to build homes—some original trees must be kept to keep the area well treed.
18. New rural development—keep to a minimum. One house here and another over there. No subdivisions to alter the rural landscape and burden local resources.

Option: Provide policies that support agriculture cont...

Policy Option: Designate a Farmland Protection Development Permit Area

1. No, this is not necessary. This is a rural area and such an additional regulation is not necessary. A 15 m buffer of natural vegetation may destroy a residents desire to actually be able to view the farm operations.
2. I am not too familiar with Development Permit Areas, but I think buffer zones between farms and non-farm uses is important. Also it would ensure that the non-farm use would not impact the farm use negatively. Some of the land in both the Cedar and Cassidy UCB border farmland. Would they be subject to the Development Permit Area permits? Also some of the land in Boat Harbour, Cedar, South Wellington, Cedar by the Sea border farmland would they also be subject to Development Permit Area permits? I ask this question because these areas have traditionally had smaller lots and a buffer zone would make these lots even smaller.
3. Better Development Permit Areas than an absence of “buffer” between agriculture and residential and or industrial properties.
4. I support buffers between ALR and residential development. DO not believe this is much of an issue here. DO not support limiting homes on large acreages. This is how farming families can continue to be able to farm. Seems ridiculous to have only one house on hundreds of acres. While I can appreciate that what has happened on the mainland is upsetting to many. Stop jamming it down our throats, we are not the lower mainland and our area did not create that issue and should not be permitted to death out of fear of a repeat here. Many of the options and ideas presented here should be coming from federal and provincial government as national initiatives. Seems to me that policies are being written in a way of penalizing, outright denial of development to get what you want rather than educating and working together to sell these options and have people who want to do it rather than forced.
5. Yes I agree with designating a Farmland Protection Development Permit Area because the community has indicated conflict with adjacent land owners and farmers is currently a problem and in keeping with the community vision, in order to provide sustainability in the future compatibility must also be addressed.
6. Forget about permits and bylaws and regulations and concentrate on educating the public that cheap food isn't necessarily ‘good food’. Machinery, labour etc make producing food a real challenge. A farmer barely breaks even raising beef. Young people can make more money with off the farm jobs. Every time a farmer makes a bit more money the government finds another way to get the majority of it.
7. Yes.
8. Support the option is it would protect the farmland. The more ways the farmland can be protected from non-farm use the better. Regarding Size and not of on-site buildings other than a home. Large buildings, perhaps claim to be needed for farm equipment become “homes” for big toys. Original builder may use them for agricultural implements, new owner uses them for boats, quads, RVs, etc. Needs to be controlled, especially if they were given permission to build greater than the maximum size in the guidelines. The last paragraph on page 8 concerns me a great deal. It seems to say that the Board can ignore the wishes of the residents of Are A which is probably one of the main reasons why we are discouraged, cynical, sceptical, etc.
9. Yes, support this completely, but as noted previously, the policy statement must be written with sensitivity so as to enlist support of agricultural landowners, and not be seen as a grab.
10. Maybe.
11. Yes – support this option as an additional measure for control
12. Yes, especially for farms that are committed to producing food crops, or raising livestock.
13. I can support this option if the focus is to mitigate or minimize any potential conflicts that might be between agriculture and non-farm use.

Option: Provide policies that support agriculture cont...

Policy Option: Designate a Farmland Protection Development Permit Area

14. YES. I would support a 300 metre (1000 ft) arable farmland protection buffer in policy. We have found this successful in suburban/rural agriculture planning processes in another jurisdiction. I can provide maps that depict such buffered areas for example within a Neighbourhood Concept Plan (NCP) if the community finds such application examples useful.
15. Yes. (What other electoral areas are using farmland protection DPAs?) P.S. This workbook has presented interesting and varied policy options for Area A. However, there is one huge aspect missing: the allocation of water for agriculture. Climate change and local food production could drastically change the priorities for water allocation. According to the current study for the CVRD area agriculture plan, 5% of the CVRD is agricultural land but only 1% of the 5% is class 1. However, if water was available, the 4% of poor land would be raised to class 1 agricultural uses. It's more important to grow food than to have green lawns and golf courses.
16. Normally I would be opposed to yet another permit restriction in addition to what is already in place however this appears to be logical and beneficial in maintaining once again the rural integrity which is so important to the residents of the Area A while allowing for carefully planned expansion / modifications as required for future demands—specifically affordable housing for increases in population in the area.
17. Need to know more.
18. Need to know more of what this means.