



Regional District of Nanaimo
Agricultural Area Plan Implementation

Community Engagement Results
January 26, 2015



Overview

As part of the Bylaw and Policy Updates Project, a draft discussion paper was prepared. The draft discussion paper identifies 13 potential obstacles to agriculture in the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) that are a result of RDN policies and/or regulations as well as some potential approaches for how the obstacles could be addressed. To view the draft discussion paper, visit the project website www.growingourfuture.ca. Following completion of the draft discussion paper, the RDN initiated a community engagement process to obtain feedback on the draft obstacles and approaches.

A variety of methods for obtaining community feedback were used including a project website, social media (Facebook and Twitter), email alert, earned media, a workshop, meetings with agricultural organizations, an online survey, and a meeting with the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC).

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of community feedback on the draft obstacles received up to January 23, 2015 (the date of the AAC meeting). This feedback will help guide which obstacles the RDN should consider addressing. For complete community engagement results please refer to the following Attachments.

Attachment	Event
1	October 24, 2014 - Food Security Workshop Results
2	December 11, 2014 - Cedar Farmers Institute Meeting Summary
3	December 16, 2014 – Coombs Farmer’s Institute Meeting Summary
4	November 24, 2014 - January 5, 2015 – Online Survey
5	January 23, 2015 – Draft AAC Meeting Minutes

Community Engagement Summary

The following is a summary of the community feedback received on each obstacle organized by event.

Obstacle 1: RDN Zoning is not consistent with the Provincial Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision, and Procedure Regulation.

Event	Food Security Workshop	Meeting with Cedar Farmer’s Institute	Meeting with Coombs Farmer’s Institute	Online Survey
<i>Summary of Results</i>	<p>Due to time constraints workshop participants helped select their top 8 obstacles for further discussion. Obstacles 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 13 were discussed.</p> <p>This obstacle was considered one of the most important of all of the obstacles and had the greatest support for further</p>	<p>There appears to be general support to adopt an agricultural zone that is consistent with the ALR Regulation which is one of the identified approaches to address this obstacle.</p>	<p>There appears to be general support to encourage agriculture in all its forms and to ensure that RDN regulations and policies do not discourage farming.</p> <p>It was suggested</p>	<p>Of those who responded to the applicable questions 84% indicated that this obstacle was either Very Important or Important and 80% indicated that the RDN should take action on this obstacle.</p>

	<p>action.</p> <p>It was suggested that the RDN should increase consistency with the <i>Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation</i> (ALR Regulation).</p>	<p>IT was suggested that the RDN should adopt an agricultural zone that is consistent with the ALR Regulation.</p>	<p>that an agricultural zone should be flexible and should promote agriculture.</p>	
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AAC Recommendation: *Further action was supported on this obstacle.*

Synopsis

Overall there appears to be a high level of community support for the RDN to take action on this obstacle.

Obstacle 2: The definition of structure may be too restrictive for agricultural fencing.

<i>Event</i>	Food Security Workshop	Meeting with Cedar Farmer's Institute	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Online Survey
<i>Summary of Results</i>	<p>Due to time constraints workshop participants helped select their top 8 obstacles for further discussion. Obstacles 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 13 were discussed.</p> <p>This obstacle was considered important by most workshop participants and there was general support for taking further action.</p> <p>It was suggested that a distinction should be made between transparent and solid fencing.</p>	<p>This obstacle was explained, but there was no discussion. No objections have been received.</p>	<p>There appears to be support to either increase or have no height limit for agricultural fences if the fence is transparent.</p>	<p>Of those who responded to the applicable questions 79% indicated that this obstacle was either Very Important or Important and 66% indicated that the RDN should take action on this obstacle.</p>

AAC Recommendation: *Further action was supported on this obstacle.*

Synopsis

Overall there appears to be a community support for the RDN to take action on this obstacle.

Obstacle 3: Potential loss of larger parcels that have the greatest likelihood of having farm status and the most opportunity to support a broad range of agricultural uses.

Event	Food Security Workshop	Meeting with Cedar Farmer's Institute	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Online Survey
<p><i>Summary of Results</i></p>	<p>Due to time constraints workshop participants helped select their top 8 obstacles for further discussion. Obstacles 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 13 were discussed.</p> <p>This obstacle was considered important by most workshop participants and there was general support for taking further action.</p> <p>There was a broad range of discussion both for and against increasing minimum parcel sizes in the ALR.</p>	<p>This obstacle was explained, but there was no discussion. No objections have been received.</p>	<p>This obstacle was discussed at length. A number of issues were raised including access to land for farming, productivity of small farms versus large farms, affordability for new farmers, impact of non-farm development.</p> <p>Overall there appears to be support to encourage farming of all types (including on small lots) and to protect ALR lands from non-farm development. There also appears to be a desire to incorporate more flexibility in regulations that apply to farm land.</p>	<p>Of those who responded to the applicable questions 41% indicated that this obstacle was either Very Important or Important. However 73% indicated that the RDN should take action on this obstacle.</p>

AAC Recommendation: *Further action was not supported on this obstacle.*

Synopsis

Although there appears to be general support to take action on this obstacle, there appears to be differing opinions on the benefits of increasing minimum parcel sizes for lands in the ALR. While some participants argue that the RDN should protect the remaining large parcels for future agricultural uses others argue that small lot agriculture is more productive and affordable for young farmers. Overall there appears to be a desire to support farming on parcels of all sizes and to encourage farming of smaller lots.

Obstacle 4: There are no bylaw provisions that apply at the time of subdivision to ensure that parcels that are zoned for agriculture have adequate dimensions to allow the siting of a building for housing livestock or storing manure which meets minimum setback requirements.

<i>Event</i>	Food Security Workshop	Meeting with Cedar Farmer's Institute	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Online Survey
<i>Summary of Results</i>	<p>Due to time constraints workshop participants helped select their top 8 obstacles for further discussion. Obstacles 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 13 were discussed.</p> <p>Despite not having group discussion on this obstacle, individual and group responses indicate that this obstacle is important. There appears to be a moderate level of support to take further action on this obstacle.</p>	<p>This obstacle was explained, but there was no discussion. No objections have been received.</p>	<p>Overall there appears to be support to address this obstacle at the time of subdivision.</p>	<p>Of those who responded to the applicable questions 82% indicated that this obstacle was either Very Important or Important and 73% indicated that the RDN should take action on this obstacle.</p>

AAC Recommendation: *Further action was not supported on this obstacle.*

Synopsis

There appears to be general support to take action on this obstacle.

Obstacle 5: The maximum height of buildings and structures in the Water 1 zone may be too restrictive.

<i>Event</i>	Food Security Workshop	Meeting with Cedar Farmer's Institute	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Online Survey
<i>Summary of Results</i>	<p>Due to time constraints workshop participants helped select their top 8 obstacles for further discussion. Obstacles 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 13 were discussed.</p> <p>Despite not having group discussion on this obstacle, individual and group responses indicate that this obstacle is important but there appears to be limited support to take further action on this obstacle.</p>	<p>This obstacle was explained, but there was no discussion. No objections have been received.</p>	<p>It was suggested that the RDN contact the aquaculture industry to discuss this obstacle.</p> <p>The RDN contacted a representative from the aquaculture industry and confirmed that this is an important obstacle that poses a barrier to construct common structures used in the industry.</p>	<p>Of those who responded to the applicable questions 68% indicated that this obstacle was either Very Important or Important and 48% indicated that the RDN should take action on this obstacle.</p>

AAC Recommendation: *Further action was supported on this obstacle.*

Synopsis

There appears to be support to take action on this obstacle.

Obstacle 6: The minimum setback requirements for agricultural buildings do not take into consideration the scale or type of operation.

<i>Event</i>	Food Security Workshop	Meeting with Cedar Farmer's Institute	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Online Survey
<i>Summary of Results</i>	<p>Due to time constraints workshop participants helped select their top 8 obstacles for further discussion. Obstacles 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 13 were discussed.</p> <p>This obstacle was viewed as being important and further action was supported.</p>	<p>Amendments to the minimum setback requirements that apply to agricultural buildings were generally supported.</p> <p>It was suggested that setbacks should consider adjacent uses and should be imposed on residential and not ALR lands.</p> <p>Flexible minimum setback requirements were desirable.</p>	<p>There appears to be support to take action on this Obstacle.</p> <p>Flexible minimum setback requirements were desirable.</p>	<p>Of those who responded to the applicable questions 82% indicated that this obstacle was either Very Important or Important and 63% indicated that the RDN should take action on this obstacle.</p>

AAC Recommendation: *Further action was supported on this obstacle.*

Synopsis

There appears to be strong support for taking action on this option.

Obstacle 7: Farmer’s market is not permitted in any zone where agriculture is a permitted use.

<i>Event</i>	Food Security Workshop	Meeting with Cedar Farmer’s Institute	Meeting with Coombs Farmer’s Institute	Online Survey
<i>Summary of Results</i>	<p>Due to time constraints workshop participants helped select their top 8 obstacles for further discussion. Obstacles 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 13 were discussed.</p> <p>Despite not having group discussion on this obstacle, individual and group responses indicate that this obstacle is important and there appears to be support to take further action on this obstacle.</p>	<p>There appears to be general support to take action on this obstacle.</p> <p>It was suggested that farmer’s markets should be allowed somewhere.</p>	<p>There appears to be general support to take action on this obstacle.</p> <p>There appears to be support to allow farmer’s markets in most zones through a Temporary Use Permit on land that is not considered good agricultural land.</p>	<p>Of those who responded to the applicable questions 76% indicated that this obstacle was either Very Important or Important and 73% indicated that the RDN should take action on this obstacle.</p>

AAC Recommendation: *Further action was supported on this obstacle.*

Synopsis

There appears to be strong support to take action on this obstacle.

Obstacle 8: The maximum parcel coverage for farm buildings is too low.

<i>Event</i>	Food Security Workshop	Meeting with Cedar Farmer’s Institute	Meeting with Coombs Farmer’s Institute	Online Survey
<i>Summary of Results</i>	<p>Due to time constraints workshop participants helped select their top 8 obstacles for further discussion. Obstacles 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 13 were discussed.</p> <p>Despite not having group discussion on this obstacle, individual and group responses indicate that this obstacle is important and</p>	<p>This obstacle was explained, but there was no discussion. No objections have been received.</p> <p>It was suggested that greenhouses be treated differently in terms of parcel coverage.</p>	<p>There appears to be general support to take action on this obstacle.</p> <p>A common theme emerged relating to a desire to have flexible regulations.</p> <p>It was suggested</p>	<p>Of those who responded to the applicable questions 62% indicated that this obstacle was either Very Important or Important and 52% indicated that the RDN should take action on this obstacle.</p>

	there appears to be strong support to take further action on this obstacle.		that parcel coverage be increased but it should not be too prescriptive.	
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AAC Recommendation: *The Committee did not consider a motion on this obstacle.*

Synopsis

There appears to be moderate support for taking action on this obstacle.

Obstacle 9: Farmers are unable to have signs directing customers to their farms.

<i>Event</i>	Food Security Workshop	Meeting with Cedar Farmer's Institute	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Online Survey
<i>Summary of Results</i>	<p>Due to time constraints workshop participants helped select their top 8 obstacles for further discussion. Obstacles 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 13 were discussed.</p> <p>Despite not having group discussion on this obstacle, individual and group responses indicate that this obstacle is important and there appears to be support to take further action on this obstacle.</p>	<p>This obstacle was explained, but there was no discussion. No objections have been received.</p>	<p>There appear to be support to take action on this Obstacle.</p>	<p>Of those who responded to the applicable questions 88% indicated that this obstacle was either Very Important or Important and 78% indicated that the RDN should take action on this obstacle.</p>

AAC Recommendation: *The Committee did not consider a motion on this obstacle.*

Synopsis

There appears to be support to take action on this obstacle.

Obstacle 10: The potential impacts of estate residential and non-farm use threaten agricultural viability and productivity.

<i>Event</i>	Food Security Workshop	Meeting with Cedar Farmer's Institute	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Online Survey
<i>Summary of Results</i>	<p>Due to time constraints workshop participants helped select their top 8 obstacles for further discussion. Obstacles 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 13 were discussed.</p> <p>This obstacle was one of the most important obstacles identified. There appears to be strong support to take action on this obstacle.</p> <p>It was suggested that the RDN consider home plate provisions to limit the impact of non-farm use in the ALR.</p>	<p>This obstacle was explained, but there was no discussion. No objections have been received. However, concerns over the impacts of non-farm use were raised. No objections were received regarding this obstacle.</p>	<p>There appears to be support to take action on this Obstacle including restrictions on residential use in the ALR.</p> <p>It was suggested that there should be restrictions on residential and non-farm use in the ALR.</p>	<p>Of those who responded to the applicable questions 84% indicated that this obstacle was either Very Important or Important and 73% indicated that the RDN should take action on this obstacle.</p> <p>A number of concerns were raised over the use of ALR land including the impact of residential and non farm use, the subdivision of ALR land, and the implications of not specifying any limitations for dwelling unit size.</p>

AAC Recommendation: Further action was not supported on this obstacle.

Synopsis

There appears to be support to take action on this obstacle.

Obstacle 11: Farmland Protection Development Permit Areas may not provide an adequate level of protection and are not consistent across all electoral areas.

<i>Event</i>	Food Security Workshop	Meeting with Cedar Farmer's Institute	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Online Survey
<i>Summary of Results</i>	<p>Due to time constraints workshop participants helped select their top 8 obstacles for further discussion. Obstacles 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 13 were discussed.</p> <p>This obstacle was one of the most important obstacles identified. There appears to be strong support to take action on this obstacle.</p> <p>Increasing the Development Permit Area width, refocusing on new subdivision, and considering pollinator and wildlife use of buffers appeared to be supported.</p>	<p>This obstacle was explained. It was suggested that establishing buffers between farm and non-farm use was important. No objections were received regarding this obstacle.</p> <p>It was suggested that buffers are important and should be established between farm and developed area.</p>	<p>There appears to be support to take action on this Obstacle.</p> <p>There appeared to be support to apply a DPA at the time of subdivision and consider vegetative buffers to also serve as pollinator pathways.</p>	<p>Of those who responded to the applicable questions 77% indicated that this obstacle was either Very Important or Important and 79% indicated that the RDN should take action on this obstacle.</p>

AAC Recommendation: Further action was supported on this obstacle.

Synopsis

There appears to be strong support to take action on this obstacle.

Obstacle 12: The impacts of non-farm use and development adjacent to the ALR is not contemplated by RDN OCPs or Zoning Bylaws.

<i>Event</i>	Food Security Workshop	Meeting with Cedar Farmer's Institute	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Online Survey
<i>Summary of Results</i>	<p>Due to time constraints workshop participants helped select their top 8 obstacles for further discussion. Obstacles 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 13 were</p>	<p>This obstacle was explained. There appears to be general support to address the impacts of non-</p>	<p>There appears to be support to take action on this Obstacle.</p> <p>There appears to</p>	<p>Of those who responded to the applicable questions 80% indicated that this obstacle was</p>

	discussed. Despite not having group discussion on this obstacle, individual and group responses indicate that this obstacle is important and there appears to be support to take further action on this obstacle.	farm use. There was a concern over the maintenance of watercourses on adjacent non-farm properties.	be support to reconsider how development is conducted adjacent to the ALR to both integrate uses but also to protect against the impacts of non-farm use.	either Very Important or Important and 74% indicated that the RDN should take action on this obstacle.
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AAC Recommendation: Further action was supported on this obstacle.

Synopsis

There appears to be support to take action on this obstacle.

Obstacle 13: RDN animal control bylaws do not appear to be adequately addressing concerns regarding the impacts that dangerous dogs and dogs at large are having on livestock.

<i>Event</i>	Food Security Workshop	Meeting with Cedar Farmer's Institute	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Online Survey
<i>Summary of Results</i>	Due to time constraints workshop participants helped select their top 8 obstacles for further discussion. Obstacles 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 13 were discussed. This obstacle was viewed as being important and there appears to be strong support to take action.	This obstacle was viewed as being important and there appears to be support to take action.	There appears to be support to take action on this Obstacle. It was suggested that the onus to prevent dog/livestock incidents should be on the dog owner (i.e control of dogs at large).	Of those who responded to the applicable questions 86% indicated that this obstacle was either Very Important or Important and 72% indicated that the RDN should take action on this obstacle.

AAC Recommendation: Further action was supported on this obstacle.

Synopsis

There appears to be strong support to take action on this obstacle.

Other Concerns and Suggestions

Throughout the community engagement process several other concerns and suggestions were raised that were not necessarily directly related to one of the identified obstacles. The following provides a summary of this information for consideration.

<i>Event</i>	Food Security Workshop	Meeting with Cedar Farmer's Institute	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Online Survey
<i>Other concerns and suggestions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with MOTI to encourage the use of undeveloped road allowance for agriculture. • Ensure that wildlife habitat (including pollinators) is considered in setback and buffer areas. • Support conservation covenants as put forward by landowners in a land trust situation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage and access to adjacent properties to maintain stream flows. • Education for realtors on living in rural areas. • Concern with Marijuana facilities on ALR lands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RDN Waste Stream Management Bylaw may prevent farmers from receiving vegetation from off farm for composting. • Require a notice to adjacent property owners every time a building permit gets issued on land in the ALR. • More needs to be done with regard to water conservation. • RDN should be in control of the ALR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address aquifer protection and climate change • Adopt regulations similar to other Regional Districts.

Attachment 1
Food Security Workshop Results

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Attachment 2
Cedar Farmer's Institute Meeting Summary

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Attachment 3
Coombs Farmer's Institute Meeting Notes

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Attachment 4
Online Survey Results

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Attachment 5
Draft Agricultural Advisory Meeting Minutes

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