

AgRefresh

Enhancing Agriculture in Abbotsford



WELCOME

Please sign in.

ਸਵਾਗਤ

ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇੱਥੇ ਦਸਤਖਤ ਕਰੋ.

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

Use a sticker dot to show us where you live in Abbotsford.



If you live outside of Abbotsford, tell us in this box.

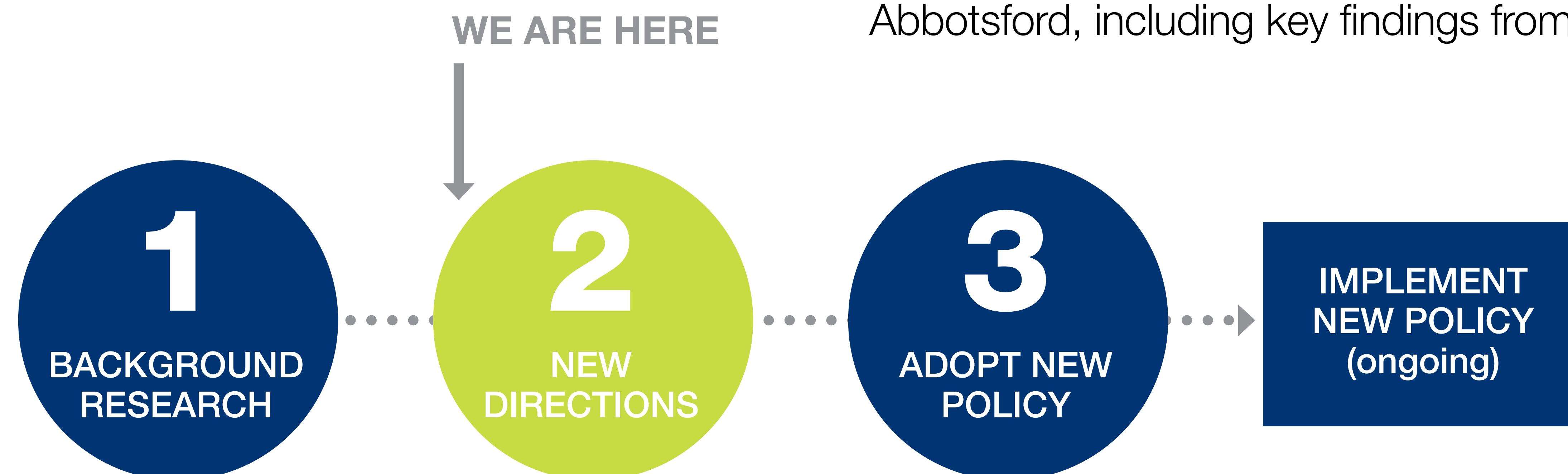
PROJECT OVERVIEW

What is happening?

Agriculture in Abbotsford is changing, with new opportunities and challenges. Abbotsford farmers are looking to add value to their product by introducing on-farm processing, farm retail, commercial events, and agri-tourism opportunities. This value-added approach incorporates industrial and commercial activities in farming, blurring the lines between traditional rural and urban land uses.

What is AgRefresh?

In response, the City has launched AgRefresh, a comprehensive three stage planning process to review and update Official Community Plan (OCP) policies, Zoning Bylaw regulations, and prepare a Bylaw Compliance Strategy for land in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).



Project Purpose

- To create clear and predictable regulations for agricultural land uses.
- To update planning documents with improved agricultural land use regulations.

Project Process

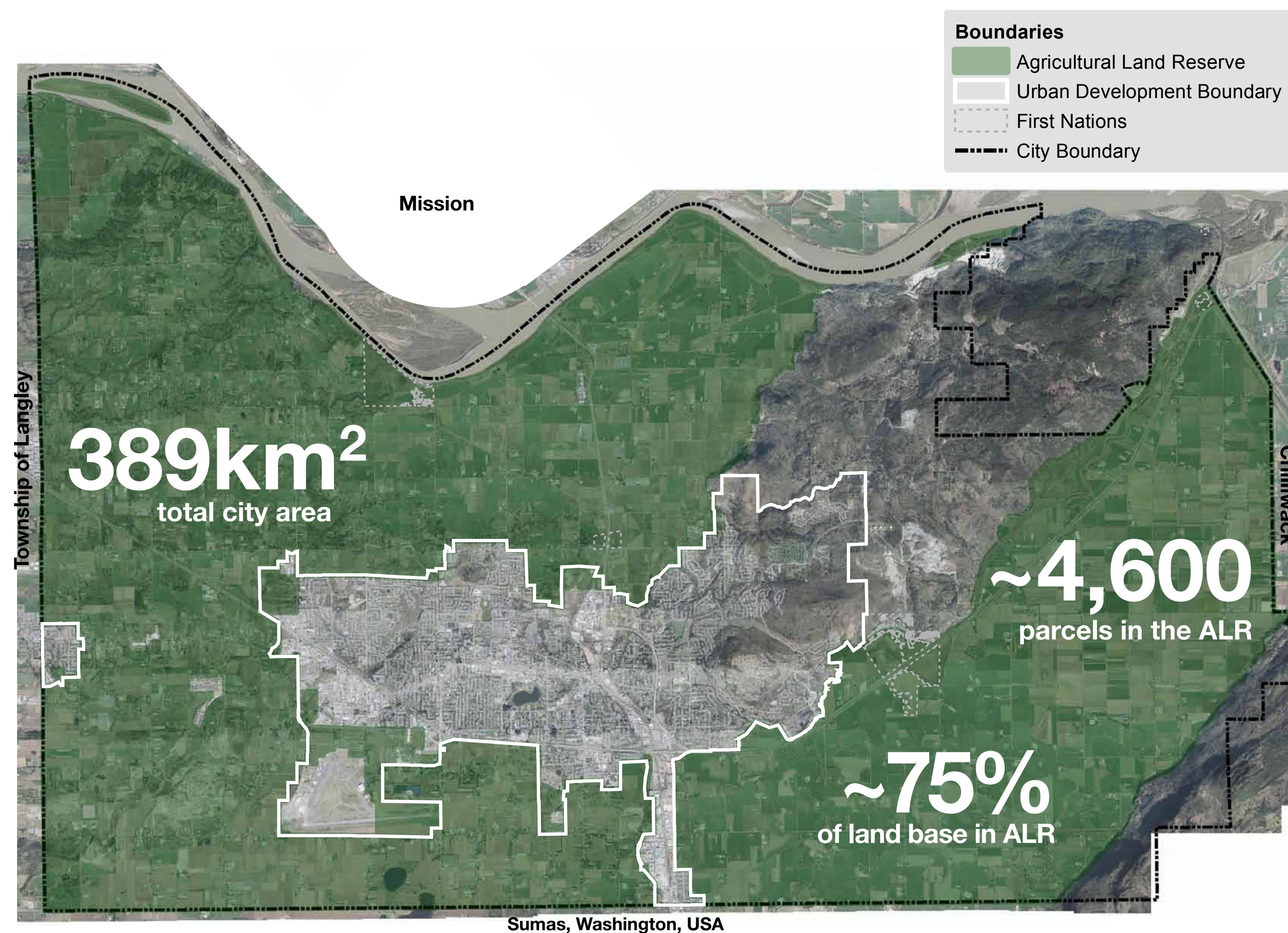
Stage 1 of AgRefresh was completed on October 3, 2016 when City Council received the Background Research Report (BRR). Creation of the BRR involved community engagement and background research to describe the current state of agriculture in Abbotsford, and identify opportunities, challenges and stakeholder views to set the stage for New Directions in Stage 2.

The following boards provide a snapshot of agriculture in Abbotsford, including key findings from the BRR.



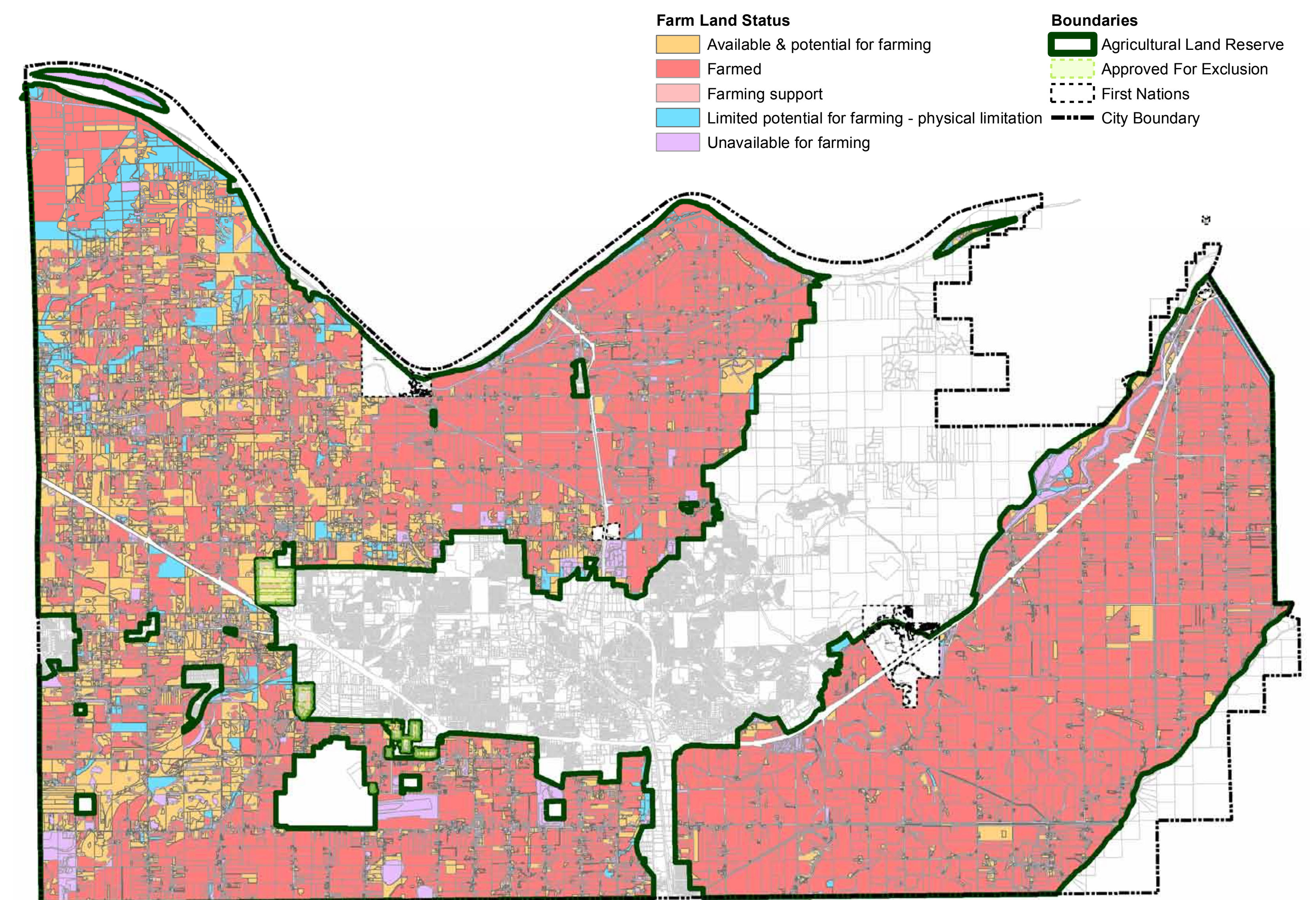
AGRICULTURE IN ABBOTSFORD

ALR Land



The agricultural use of land in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) contributes significantly to Abbotsford's identity and economy. The city is 389km², which makes it the largest by geographic area in all of BC. Approximately 75% of the land base is in the ALR, which is made up of about 4,600 parcels.

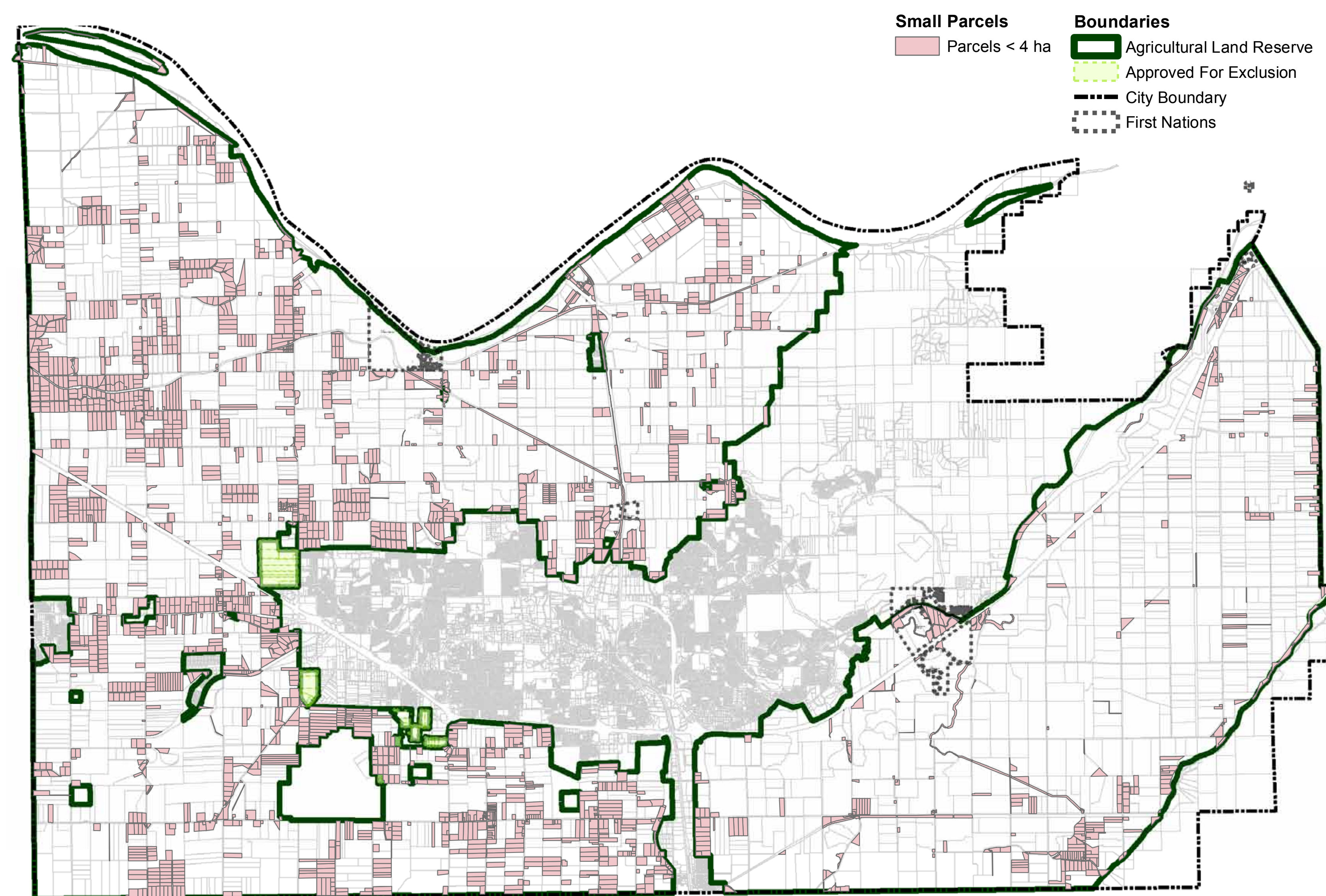
ALR Farmland Status



In 2012, the BC Ministry of Agriculture completed an Agricultural Land Use Inventory (ALUI) in Abbotsford. This map shows land in pink that is being farmed (63%), land in yellow that is available but isn't farmed (19%), and land in blue and purple that isn't available or has limitations for farming (11%).

AGRICULTURE IN ABBOTSFORD

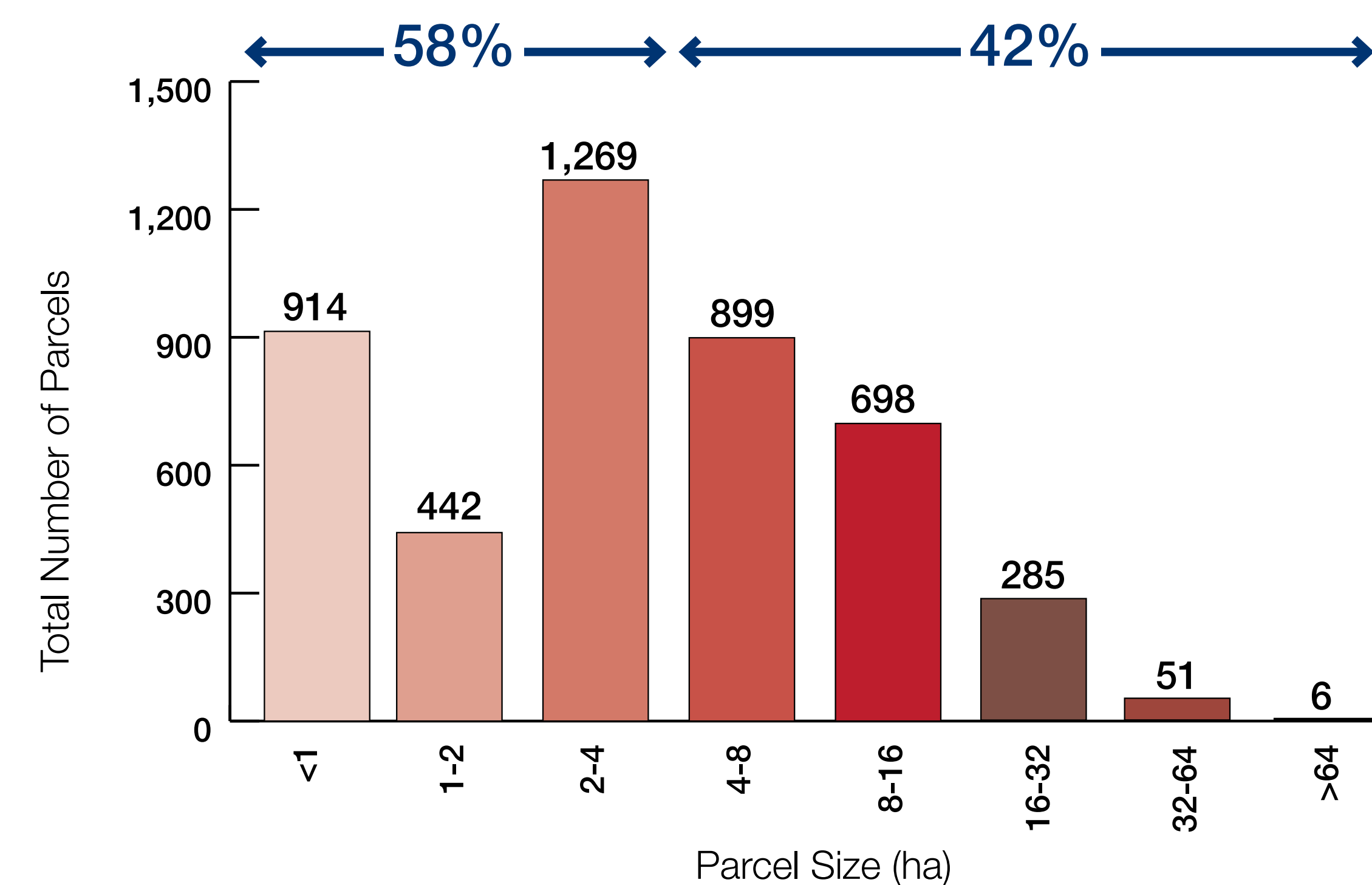
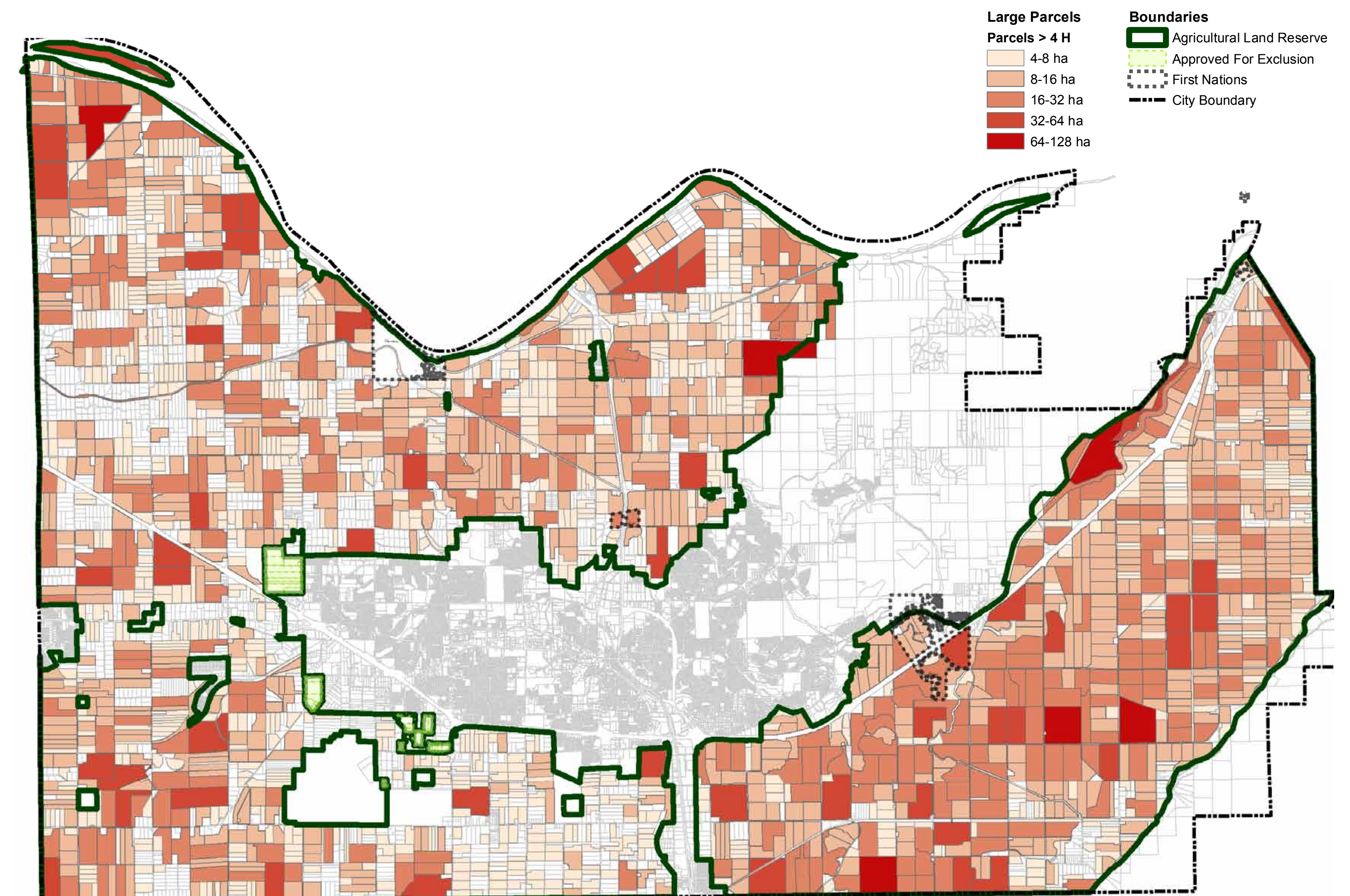
ALR parcels less than 4 ha



Looking at parcel size in the ALR, 58% of the parcels are less than 4 hectares (ha) or 10 acres (ac), while 42% are greater than 4 ha. The average size is 5.6 ha (13.8 ac), and median is 3.3 ha (8.2 ac).

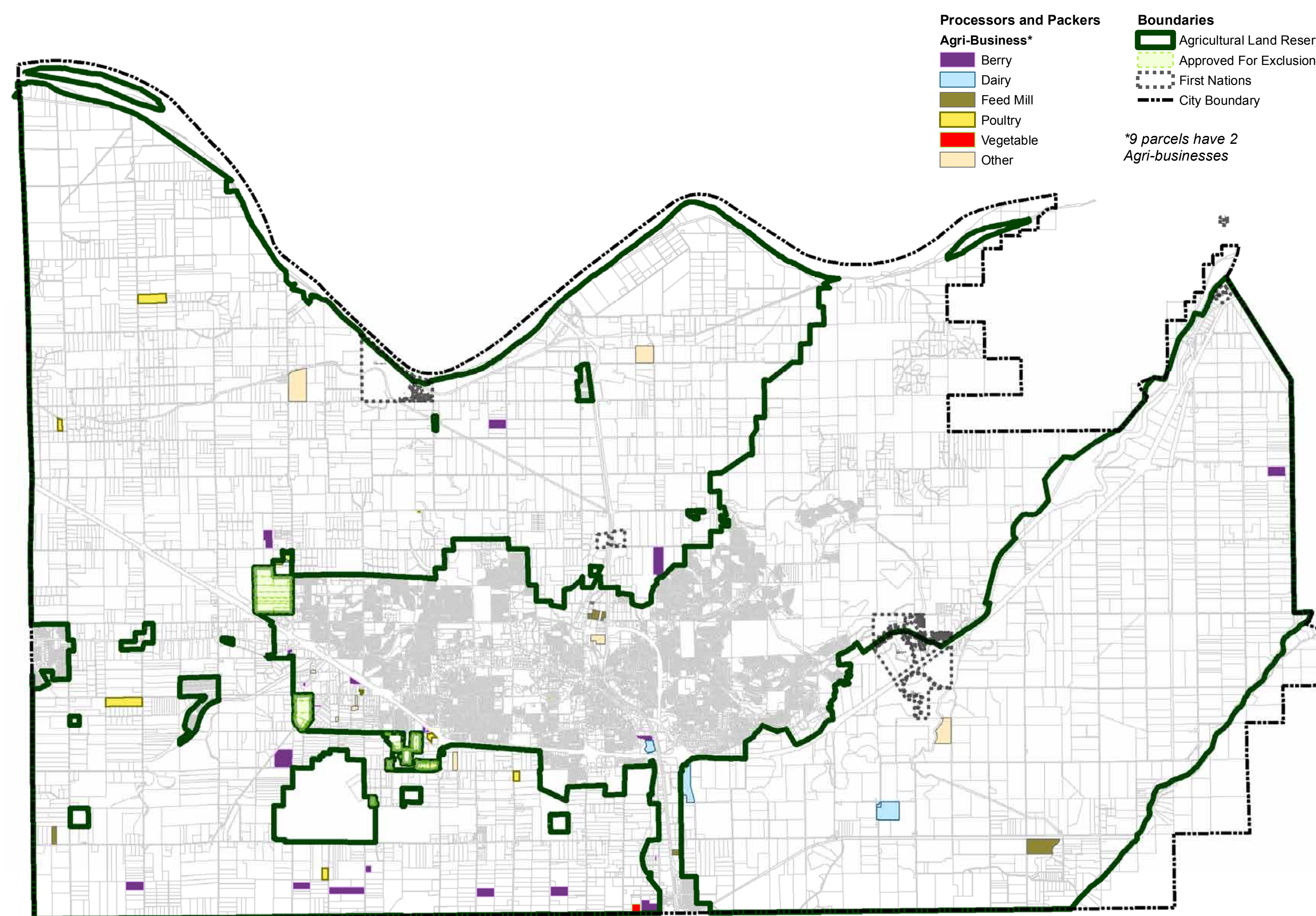
The Ministry of Agriculture's ALUI found that 61% of parcels in the ALR less than 4 ha are available with potential for farming, but were not used for farming. This shows that the smaller the parcel size, the less likely it is to be farmed.

ALR parcels greater than 4 ha



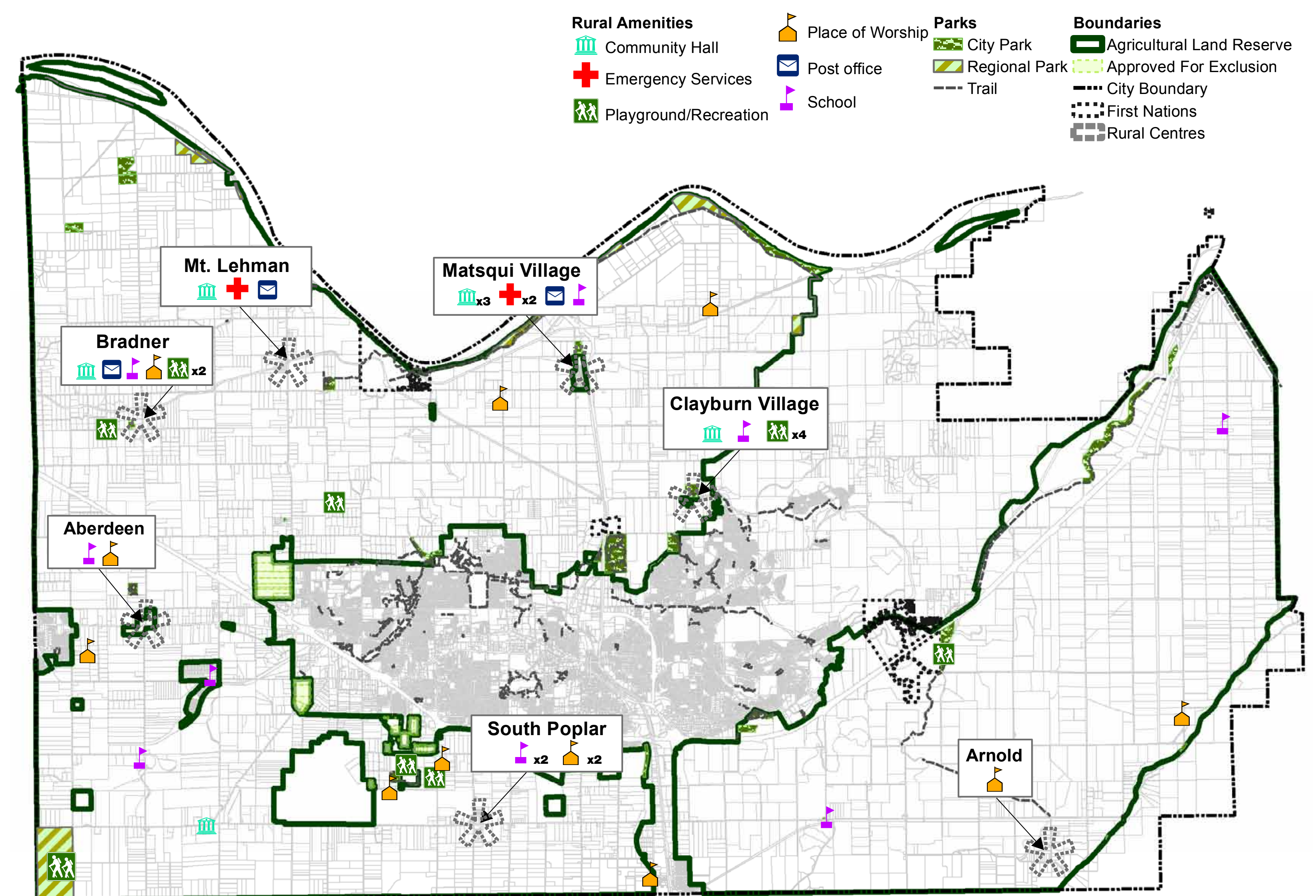
AGRICULTURE IN ABBOTSFORD

Processors & Packers



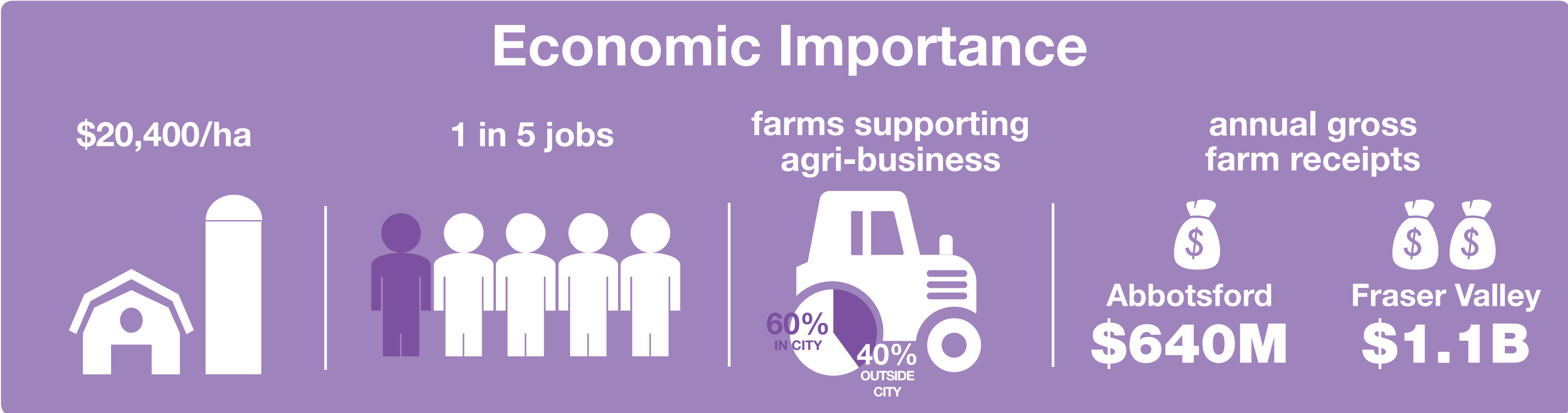
Abbotsford has a significant portion of the provincial food processing sector ranging from berry packing houses to frozen food plants to poultry processing plants, egg grading stations, poultry hatcheries and dairy processing plants. As well, feed mills and other agricultural services are located in Abbotsford. These facilities and services historically were located in the urban area, and are now located both within the ALR (32), and designated industrial areas outside of the ALR (33).

Rural Centres & Amenities

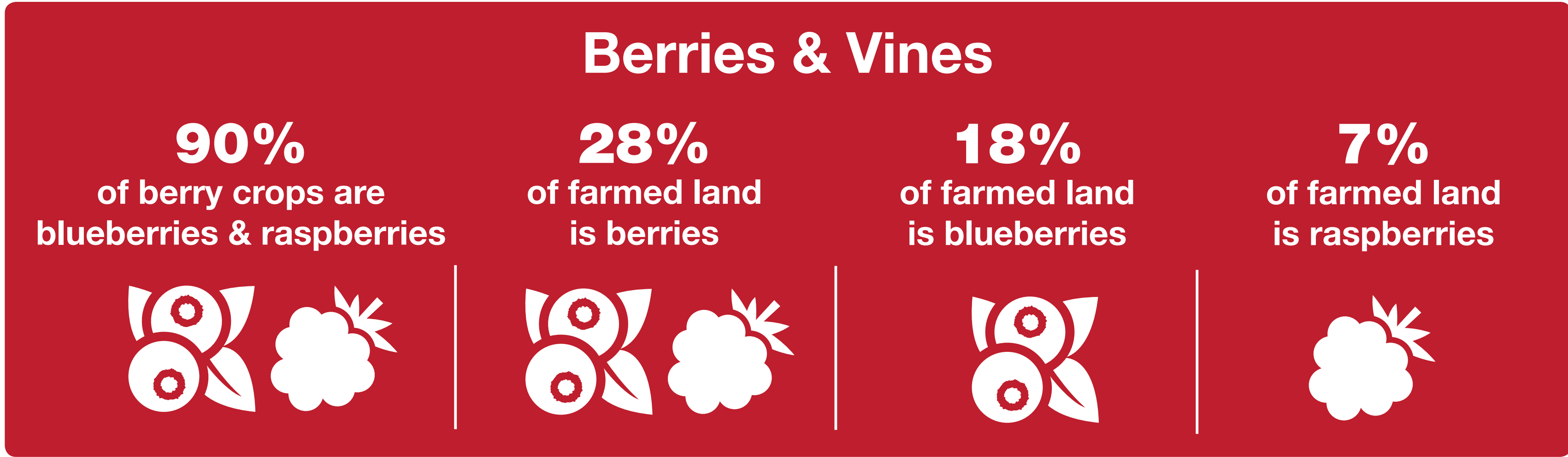
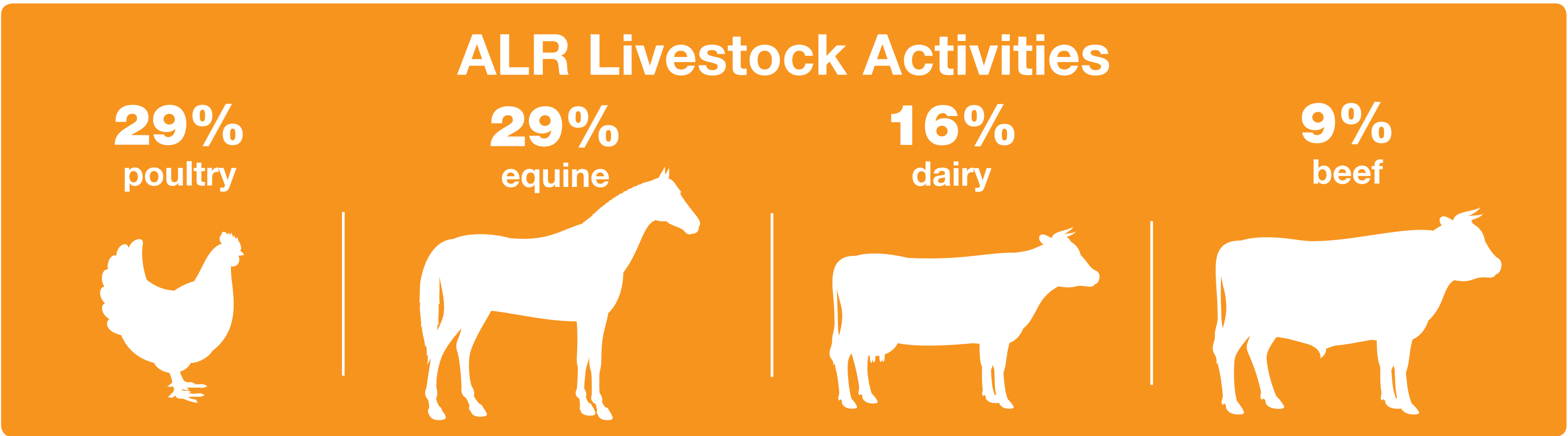
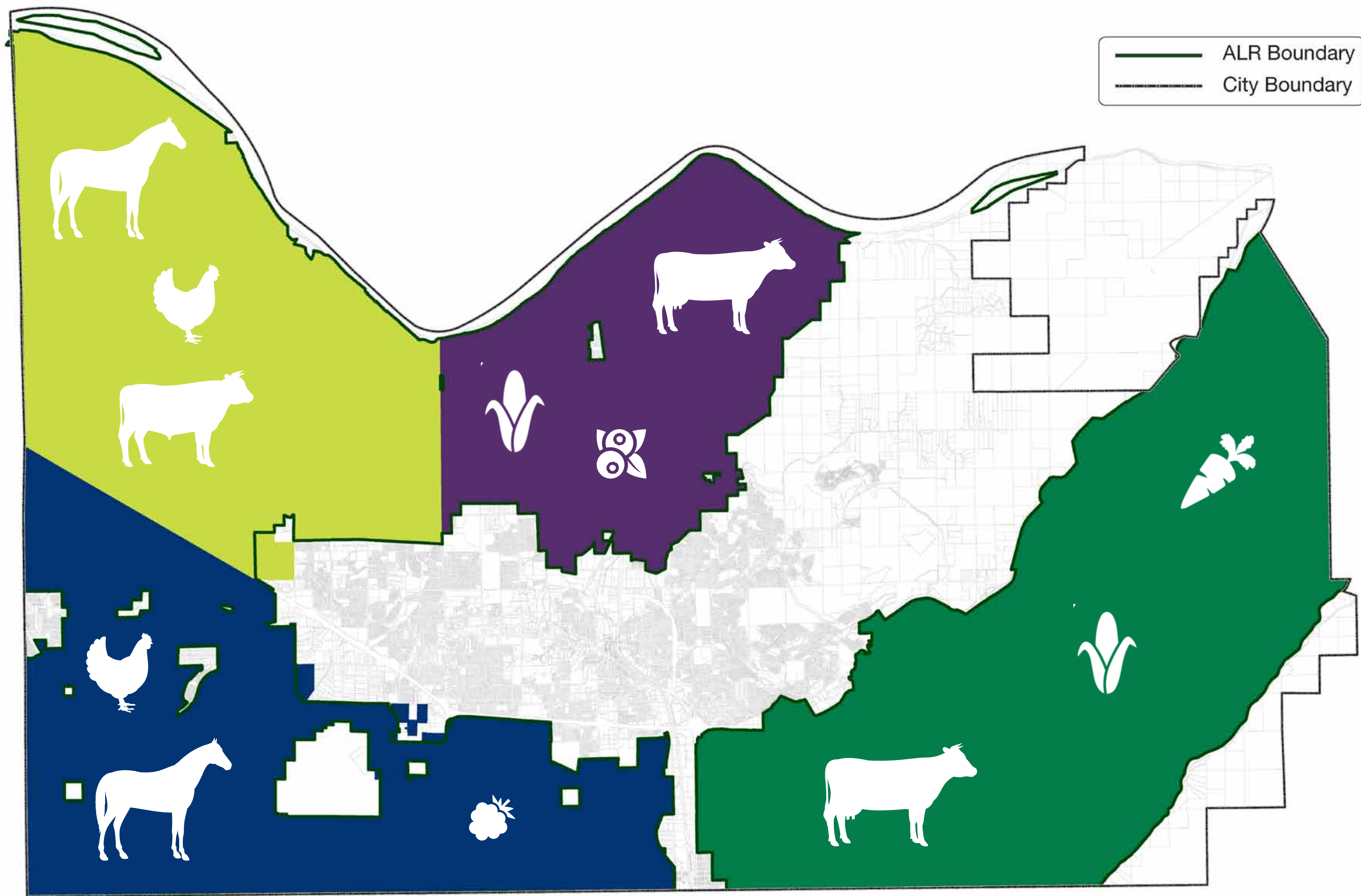


Abbotsford's seven rural centres serve the City's farming community and are characterized by historical clusters of rural amenities surrounded by larger agricultural properties. They contain a variety of land uses including small-scale agricultural functions, single family residences, schools, parks, places of worship, community halls, stores, service stations and repair shops, and industrial and agri-industrial enterprises.

AGRICULTURAL SNAPSHOT



Abbotsford is Canada’s leading agricultural area in terms of employment and economic activity. This success, in part, is influenced by Abbotsford’s favourable climate and high quality soils, resulting in high productivity in certain sectors, such as poultry and dairy. For example, one-third to one-half of all eggs, chickens, and turkeys, and 22% of milk produced in BC, comes from Abbotsford farms.



LEGISLATIVE & POLICY FRAMEWORK

There are three government agencies that have a distinct but interrelated role in regulating agriculture in BC: Ministry of Agriculture, Agricultural Land Commission, and local governments.

Provincial Role

Ministry of Agriculture

Part of the Ministry’s mandate is to provide guidance and support for local governments relating to BC’s agricultural legislation. This is done through the creation of Bylaw Standards for local governments to use when making their own bylaws affecting agriculture, such as the Zoning Bylaw. Abbotsford is a regulated community, and is expected to comply with these standards.

Agricultural Land Commission

Part of the Agricultural Land Commission’s mandate is to encourage local governments to enable and accommodate farm use of agricultural land, and uses compatible with agriculture, in their plans, bylaws and policies. This is guided by the ALC Act, Regulations, and Policies.

Evolving Provincial Legislation

The Province updates their policies and regulations from time to time that the City must incorporate into its Zoning Bylaw.

Legislative Framework

AGRICULTURAL LAND COMMISSION

- ALC Act
- ALR Use, Subdivision & Procedure Regulation



CITY OF ABBOTSFORD

Official Community Plan

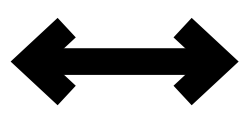
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

- Right to Farm Act
- Minister’s Bylaw Standards



CITY OF ABBOTSFORD

Zoning Bylaw



Municipal Role

Official Community Plan (OCP)

Includes objectives and policies to guide decisions on community planning and land use management, and important direction for regulations outlined in the Zoning Bylaw. The City is required to consult with the ALC when any changes are proposed to the OCP that impact land in the ALR.

Zoning Bylaw

Zoning describes the permitted uses of land and buildings as a result of policies outlined in the OCP. Being a regulated community, the City must obtain approval from the Ministry of Agriculture when any changes are proposed to the Zoning Bylaw that impact farming.

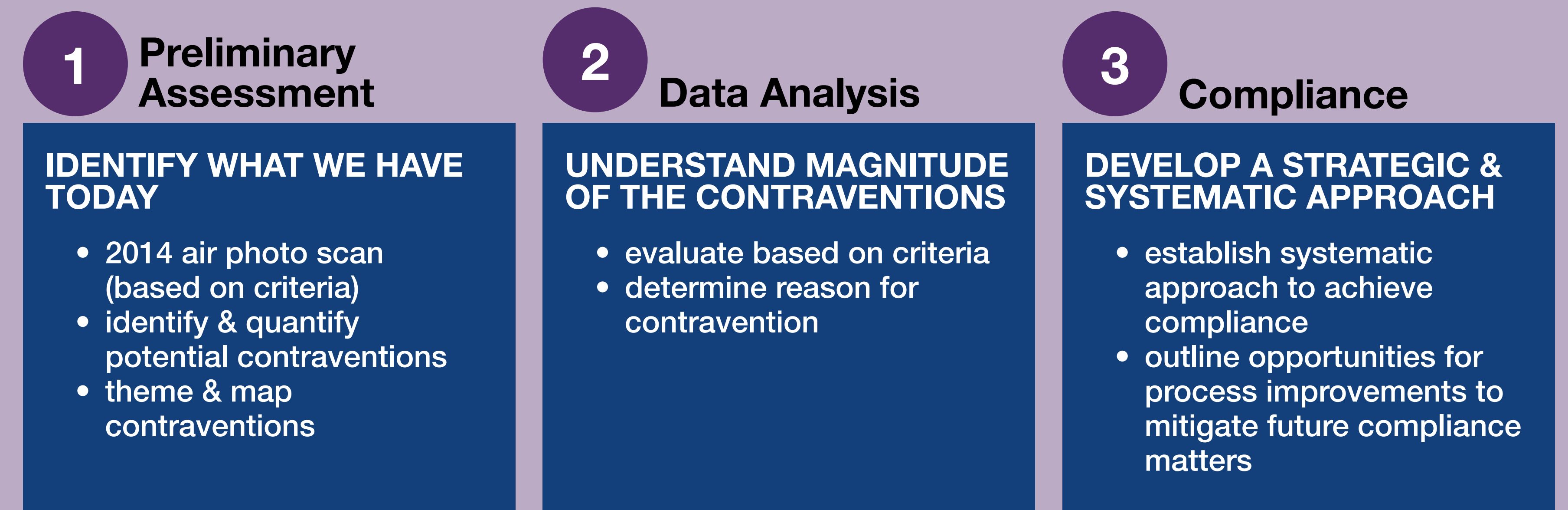
BYLAW COMPLIANCE STRATEGY

Why & how is a Strategy being completed?

In the past there has not been a coordinated zoning and compliance approach in the ALR. There is also an unclear understanding of:

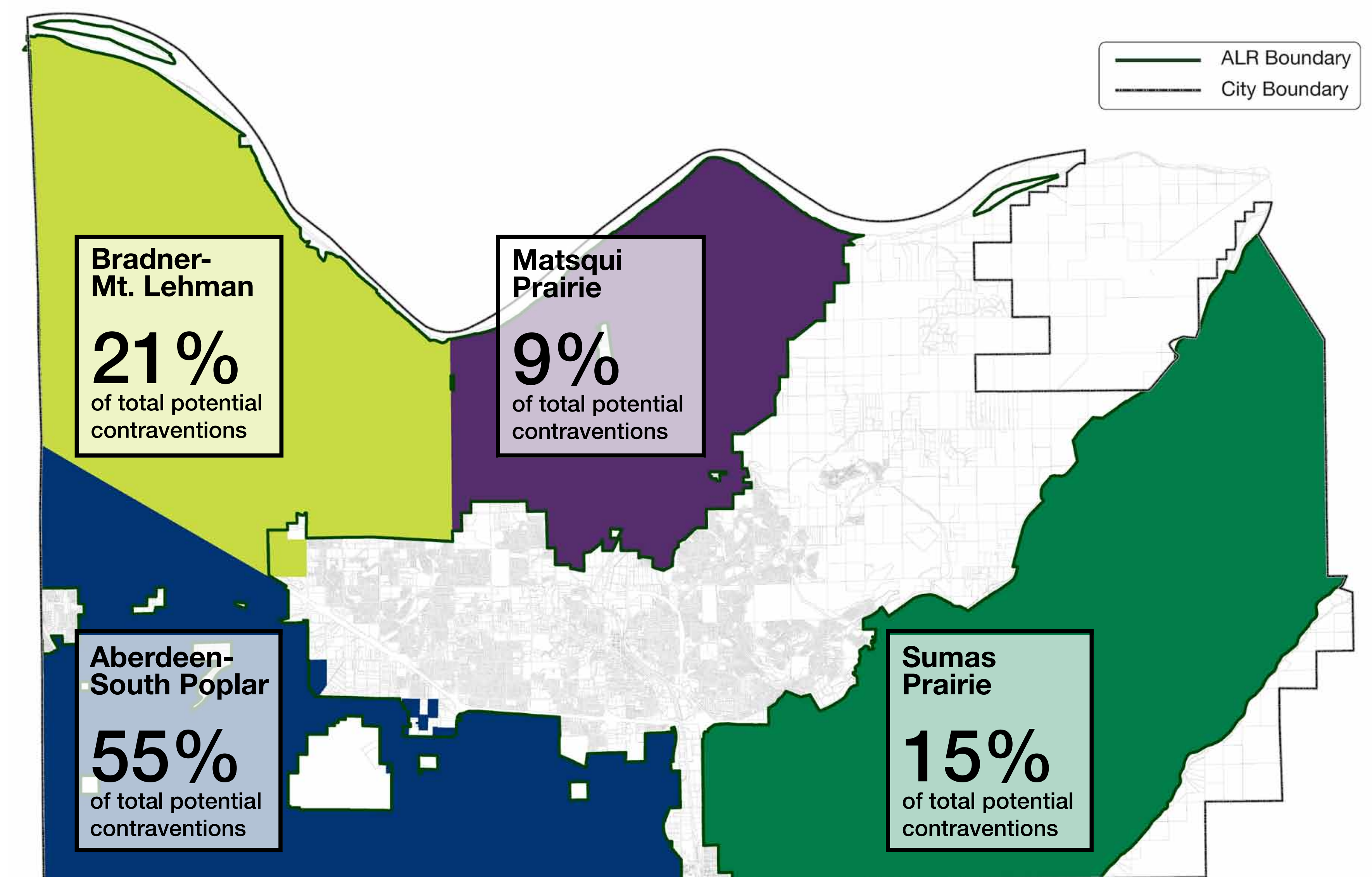
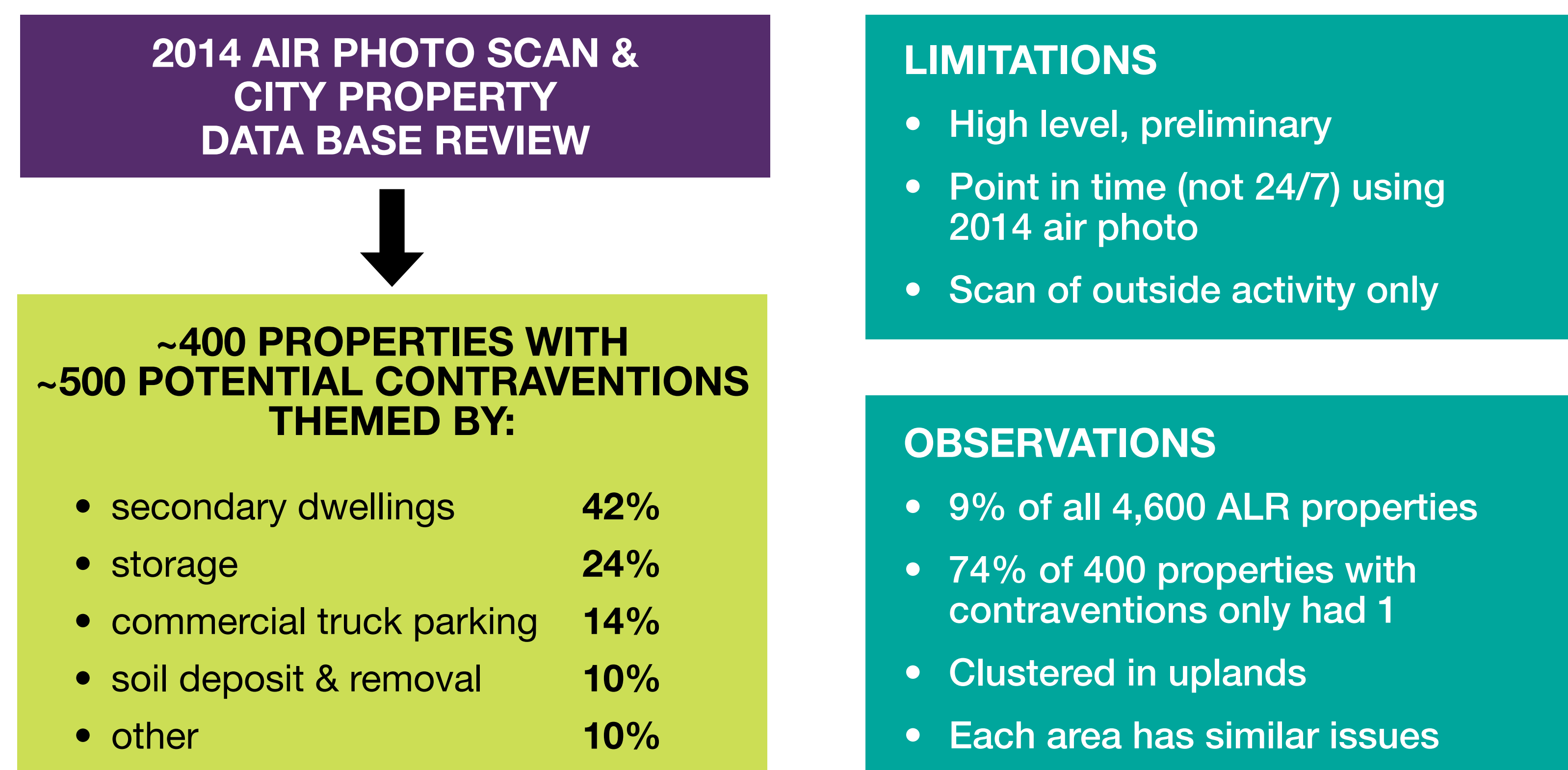
- the extent of non-compliance in the ALR
- whether contraventions are a result of non-compliance, outdated and/or unclear policy and regulation, or a combination of both
- the responsibility of regulatory agencies

The Strategy is being completed over the following three stages:



Stage 1 Assessment

The City completed a high level review of properties in the ALR looking for potential visual contraventions, which resulted in:



AGRICULTURAL TRENDS

The following describes high level trends occurring in some agricultural activities over the past 5 to 10 years.

Berries, Vines & Field Vegetables

- + Land area under production increased by over 30%.
- + Growth in blueberries from crop production systems, and exporting outside of Canada.
- Resulted in a corresponding decrease in some raspberry, strawberry, vegetable crop, and pasture land use.

Greenhouse

- + Land area with greenhouse (vegetable and floriculture) production has almost doubled.

Poultry & Livestock

- + Demand and supply management led to an increase in new poultry operations.
- Economic pressures and changing consumer preferences led to a decline in the hog industry.

Value-Added & Agri-Tourism

- + Renewed interest in re-establishing crops such as hops, and an increase in agri-tourism activities on the farm.

Seasonal Workers & Accommodations

- + Intensive crop production and organic systems require a large labour force to manage and harvest crops.
- + Shortage of local labour resulted in farmers using temporary seasonal workers from other countries, who require accommodations.

+ Increases



— Decreases

AGRICULTURAL THEMES

Stage 1 engagement and research showed that agriculture in Abbotsford is thriving because of local farming expertise, product and process innovation, excellent soil conditions, and an ideal climate. However, agriculture also faces risks and challenges related to a complex regulatory framework, competition from a global market, ongoing intensification of agriculture, and unauthorized activities.

From this, the following three themes were developed to guide Stage 2 engagement.

Within each theme are topics the City would like to get feedback on, as new directions for agriculture in Abbotsford are developed in Stage 2.



SUPPORT A THRIVING AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

- Parcel sizes
- Primary housing
- Temporary farm worker housing



RESPOND TO A CHANGING AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

- Food processing
- Breweries
- Farm retail
- Agri-tourism & gathering events



MANAGE NON-AGRICULTURAL USES IN THE ALR

- Home based businesses
- Rural centres & amenities
- Agri-industrial
- Contraventions

SUPPORT A THRIVING AGRICULTURAL SECTOR



Abbotsford is a leader in agricultural productivity with the highest annual gross farm receipts in BC totaling \$640 million (2011), and the highest gross farm receipts sales per hectare in Canada at \$20,400 (2008).

Do you agree that Abbotsford should maintain its position as an agricultural hub in Canada?

strongly agree

agree

disagree

strongly disagree

PARCEL SIZES

- Research suggests the smaller the parcel size the less likely it is to be farmed. 58% of ALR parcels in Abbotsford are less than 4 ha (10 ac) in size, with 61% of those not used for farming.
- The City currently regulates parcel size, when considering a subdivision proposal, by requiring a minimum lot size of 8 ha (20 ac) in the A1 zone and 16 ha (40 ac) in the A2 zone, which is subject to approval from the Agricultural Land Commission.

How should the City regulate parcel size in the ALR? (place a sticker dot in all that apply)

regulate all parcels within the ALR (all sizes)

regulate different parcels for specific areas within the ALR

don't regulate



COMMENTS (use a sticky note)

SUPPORT A THRIVING AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

PRIMARY HOUSING

- The use of agricultural land for estate homes is growing in popularity. While it is important to support housing for the farm operation, estate homes may inflate land values and displace farmland.
- The City currently allows one single family dwelling plus a secondary suite, and a mobile home for immediate family or farm help.

How should the City regulate housing in the ALR? (place a sticker dot in all that apply)

<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
size of house	size of house & yard (lawn, shed, etc.)	number of houses	location on the farm	don't regulate

TEMPORARY FARM WORKER HOUSING

- The need for a larger farm labour work force has increased the demand for on-farm temporary farm worker housing. It remains questionable as to how much housing should be accommodated on-farm.
- The City currently limits the maximum floor area of seasonal farm worker housing to 200 m² for farm operations less than 40 ha, and 300 m² for farm operations greater than 40 ha.

How should the City regulate additional housing for farm help in the ALR? (place a sticker dot in all that apply)

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size of sleeping units	size of buildings	size of buildings & yard (lawn, shed, etc.)	number of buildings	location on the farm
<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	
off-farm housing	seasonal stay limits	type of farming	don't regulate	

 **COMMENTS** (use a sticky note)

RESPOND TO A CHANGING AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY



FOOD PROCESSING

- Provincial ALC regulations allow on-farm processing facilities, provided at least 50% of the farm product processed comes from the farm where processing occurs (50% rule), or by a co-op.
- The City currently regulates food processing in the ALR with maximum floor space (2,000 m²), which allows farmers to wash, sort, and pack the product before leaving the farm.

How should the City regulate food processing in the ALR? (place a sticker dot in all that apply)

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size of building	location of building on the farm	hours of operation	seasonal operations	don't regulate

BREWERIES

- Recently, the ALC regulations were amended to allow breweries on ALR land given that they operate within the 50% rule. Additionally, food and beverage service lounges are permitted at a maximum floor space of 125 m² indoors and a maximum of 125 m² outdoors.
- The City currently has no regulations for on-farm breweries, but must now allow them due to the ALC regulation changes.

How should the City regulate breweries in the ALR? (place a sticker dot in all that apply)

<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
size of building	location of building on the farm	size of retail &/or service area
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hours of operation	seasonal operations	don't regulate



COMMENTS (use a sticky note)

RESPOND TO A CHANGING AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY



FARM RETAIL

- On-farm retail gives the farmer an opportunity to add value to their product through direct sales to consumers.
- The City currently regulates farm retail buildings with setbacks and by size (maximum floor area of 300 m² for both indoor and outdoor sales and display areas), and must comply with the ALC’s 50% rule (50% of the retail sales area is limited to the sale of farm products produced on the farm or by a co-op).

How should the City regulate farm retail in the ALR? (place a sticker dot in all that apply)

<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
size of building	location of building on the farm	hours of operation	seasonal operations	parking	signs	don't regulate

AGRI-TOURISM

- Agri-tourism is growing in popularity particularly around activities such as farm tours, hay rides, corn mazes, and pumpkin patches, and is intended to help farmers grow their incomes and connect people to local foods and farming.
- The City currently regulates agri-tourism with time limits on operations (10 months per year); by size (300 m² excluding exterior activity space) and special requirements (i.e. on-site parking, no commercial kitchens, etc.).

How should the City regulate agri-tourism? (place a sticker dot in all that apply)

<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
size of building	size of operation	hours of operation	seasonal operations	parking	signs	don't regulate



COMMENTS (use a sticky note)

MANAGE NON-AGRICULTURAL USES IN THE ALR



HOME BASED BUSINESSES

- Home based businesses provide supplementary income to farms. Although restricted in floor area, and must be contained within a building, over time they often increase in size and include outdoor storage.
- The City’s regulations require businesses to be within the dwelling unit or an accessory building, occupying no more than 112 m² of the floor area, and should not generate significant vehicle traffic.

Do you agree that the City should limit the scale and location of home based businesses?

<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree

AGRI-INDUSTRIAL

- Some agri-industrial activities occur on farms and provide vital service to agricultural production. These activities are growing as farmers look to add value to their farm product but are limited by the 50% rule. Agri-businesses located in industrial zoned locations indicate there is an unfair economic advantage with on-farm agri-business enterprises due to lower land costs and property taxes.
- Agri-industrial uses in key locations in the ALR beyond the 50% rule could bridge the gap between facilities on-farm and those located on industrial land.

Do you agree that the City should allow agri-industrial businesses in specific areas of the ALR?

<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree

In which areas of the ALR should the City allow agri-industrial businesses? (place a sticker dot in all that apply)

<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
adjacent to the urban area	only on small parcels	only on major roads	where water & sewer services are provided	not in the ALR



COMMENTS (use a sticky note)

MANAGE NON-AGRICULTURAL USES IN THE ALR



RURAL CENTRES & AMENITIES

- Abbotsford has seven historical rural centres, such as Arnold, Mt. Lehman and Matsqui, which provide amenities and support services for the farming community. Some are in the ALR, some out of the ALR, and some a combination. Amenities and services include: community halls, places of worship, emergency services, post offices, schools, and playgrounds.
- There is potential for rural centres to play a more supportive role for the agriculture community with a wider range of land uses.

What uses are appropriate for rural centres? (place a sticker dot in all that apply)

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community halls	places of worship	emergency services	post offices	schools	playgrounds
<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
retail	gas stations	farm help housing	offices	no uses	other

CONTRAVENTIONS

- The City’s review of properties in the ALR, using an air photo scan and property database research, showed a variety of potential contravention activities including secondary dwellings, outdoor storage, commercial truck parking, and soil deposit and/or removal.
- It is in the City’s interest to explore opportunities and strategies to determine if contraventions are a result of non-compliance, outdated and/or unclear policy and regulation, or both; and, if necessary, to bring these into compliance through a coordinated zoning and compliance approach.

What contraventions should the City’s Bylaw Compliance Strategy prioritize? (place a sticker dot in all that apply)

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secondary dwellings	outdoor storage	commercial truck parking	soil deposit & removal



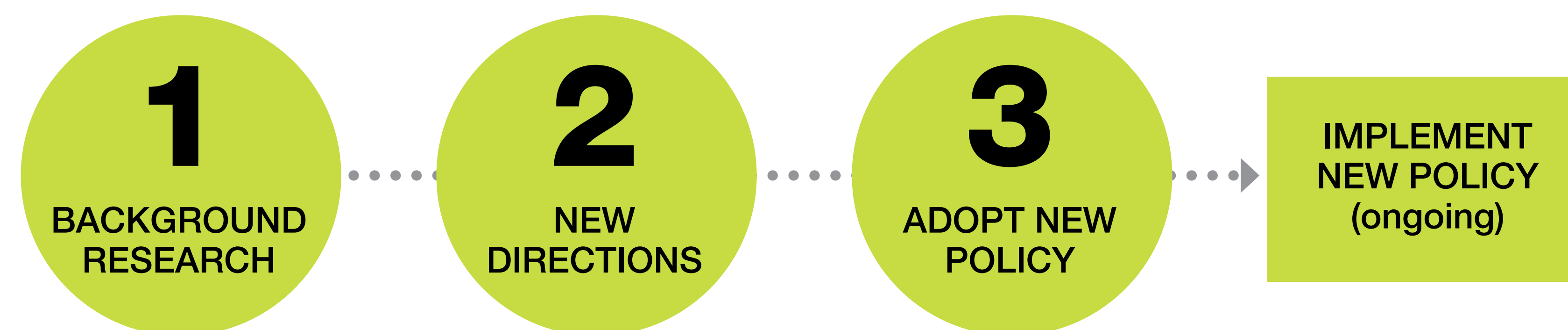
COMMENTS (use a sticky note)

THANK YOU & NEXT STEPS

Thank you for your input!

How will we use your feedback?

- Stage 2 New Directions Report, which will be presented to Council in 2017
- Updates to Official Community Plan policy, Zoning Bylaw regulation, and the creation of a Bylaw Compliance Strategy



Stay Informed & Involved

Residents are invited and encouraged to participate throughout the process. AgRefresh will be back out in the community in 2017, so be sure to stay tuned for project updates and to learn about future engagement activities:

www.abbotsford.ca/AgRefresh



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