

AgRefresh

**STAGE 3 REPORT | EXCERPT
PARCEL SIZE**



2.2 Parcel Size & Subdivision

Maintain & encourage adequate parcel sizes

Parcel size plays an important role in agriculture, with research indicating a relationship between the size of a parcel and the likelihood of the land being farmed. According to 2012 Ministry of Agriculture analysis, 61% of Abbotsford's ALR parcels that are under 4 ha, and available for farming, are not being farmed.

A scan of several other BC farming communities indicates that Abbotsford's A1 Zone 8.0 ha minimum subdivision size is consistent with, and in several cases more restrictive than the minimum subdivision size for agricultural land in other jurisdictions.

This section outlines proposed measures to support the resilience of Abbotsford's agricultural land base and maximize the range of farming opportunities into the future.

2.2.1 Decision Makers

Applications to subdivide land within the ALR involve:

Council	Consider ALC application (forward or refuse)
ALC	ALC approve or refuse the subdivision

2.2.2 What we heard in Stage 3

'Early Ideas' explored through Stage 3 engagement

- Set a 16 ha (40 ac) minimum lot size for new subdivision in ALR
- Continue to allow lot line adjustments that benefit farming
- Consider smaller parcel subdivision in rural centres, where new support services/uses require smaller lots

Stage 3 engagement feedback highlights*

- just over half of respondents (58%) agreed or somewhat agreed with the ideas; this topic received the second greatest level of opposition (behind farm house setback)
- several respondents raised concerns about affordability of larger parcels for new/young farmers and family farms competing with large corporations

*A full summary of Stage 3 engagement material and feedback is available in the "Stage 3 Winter 2017-18 Engagement Results" report.

2.2.3 Draft Recommendations

A SNAPSHOT

Official Community Plan Highlights

- Split the existing 'Agricultural' OCP land use designations into two distinct designations that reflect and protect existing lot patterns.
- New OCP policy to consider smaller lots in the new Agricultural land use designations for special circumstances (e.g., transportation/utility corridors, historical ALC approvals)
- OCP policy for home site severance applications to maintain a viable remainder farm parcel.

Zoning Bylaw Highlights

- Retain existing Zoning Bylaw minimum subdivision sizes for Agricultural Zoning (8 ha and 16 ha).

DRAFT POLICY AND REGULATION UPDATES

New
(OCP)

Two Agricultural Land Use Designations

To reflect and retain historical agricultural subdivision patterns, split the "Agriculture" land use designation into two new designations; generally based on existing A1 and A2 zoning patterns. See Appendix A, Map 2.

- Agriculture 1 - Uplands (A1 patterns)
- Agriculture 2 - Lowlands (A2 patterns)

New
(OCP)

Minimum Subdivision Size - OCP

Specify the following subdivision minimums for each new land use designation:

Agriculture 1 - Uplands: 8 ha minimum lot area

Agriculture 2 - Lowlands: 16 ha minimum lot area

Existing
(Zoning)

Minimum Subdivision Size - Zoning Bylaw

In consideration of engagement feedback, research, and ALC oversight for subdivision, retain the existing Agricultural One (A1) and Agricultural Two (A2) Zone subdivision minimums:

- 8.0 ha in A1
- 16.0 ha in A2

**New
(OCP)**

Lot Size in Agricultural Areas

Rezoning and site specific Zoning Bylaw amendments within the Agricultural 1 - Uplands and Agricultural 2 - Lowlands land use designations to permit a lot size below the set thresholds (8 ha and 16 ha) may be considered in the following circumstances:

- Provision of transportation or utility infrastructure serving public interests
- Subdividing off the portion of a split-designated lot that is not designated for Agriculture
- New public civic and public institutional uses in Rural Centres
- Properties with existing Agricultural Land Commission subdivision approvals
- A remnant agricultural parcel created through the above scenarios

**New
(OCP)**

Homesite Severances

New policy to “minimize the size of home site severance parcels to maximize the agricultural potential of the remaining farm operation parcel.”

As per the Zoning Bylaw, subdivision associated with a home site severance is permitted below the minimum lot size set out in agricultural zones.
