

AgRefresh

STAGE 3 REPORT | EXCERPT
RURAL CENTRES

ABBOTSFORD
FIRE HALL N

5
7
7
5



2.14 Rural Centres

Define and enhance rural centres

Abbotsford's seven rural centres offer important amenities to residents of agricultural areas, such as schools, libraries, post-offices, fire halls, commercial services and residential uses.

Generally, AgRefresh community and stakeholder input has highlighted the importance of rural centres as unique local nodes that support the farming community with social, civic and commercial services, however, feedback has highlighted a general desire to avoid expansion that will impact farmland.

2.14.1 Decision Makers

Council

Council considers the non-farm use (forward or refuse) and any related OCP and/or Zoning Bylaw amendments

ALC

ALC approval required for all non-farm uses in the ALR

Ministry

Minister of Agriculture approval required for Zoning Bylaw amendments impacting agricultural lands

2.14.2 What we heard in Stage 3

'Early Ideas' explored through Stage 3 engagement

- Consider new institutional uses on ALR lands within rural centres if they support the agricultural community
- Consider parcels less than 16 ha where they may be needed to facilitate additional institutional uses, and to reflect historical conditions related to zoning.

Stage 3 engagement feedback highlights*

- 70% of respondents agreed or somewhat agreed with early ideas
- Concerns about subdivision
- Support for institutional uses, but not commercial or residential expansion
- Consider proposals on a case-by-case basis given the diverse characteristics of each rural centre

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

2.14.3 Draft Recommendations

A SNAPSHOT

Official Community Plan Highlights

- Enable opportunities for new public civic and public institutional uses that support the local farming community;
- Maintain and enhance existing local services;
- Allow subdivision below OCP minimum thresholds to minimize the impact of any future institutional uses on agricultural land

DRAFT POLICY AND REGULATION UPDATES

New
(OCP)

Supporting Uses in Rural Centres

Recognize the important role Abbotsford's seven historical rural centres play in serving the needs of the local and surrounding agricultural communities by:
(New Section 6.10 Policy)

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

Considerations for New Civic & Institutional Uses:

(New Land Use Policy OCP Part II - 3)

- Compliance with the *ALC Act*, policies, and regulations, or ALC approval;
- Transportation infrastructure can adequately support the traffic generated by the use, and/or proposed improvements will adequately mitigate issues;
- Water supply and wastewater can be adequately addressed; and
- Buildings and structures are generally compatible with the local scale and character.

New
(OCP)

Allow smaller lot sizes for new institutional uses

New policy acknowledges the potential need for smaller lot sizes (below new OCP minimums) to reduce the impact of new institutional uses on agricultural land.

Policy will facilitate a smaller institutional parcel and remainder farm parcel.