

# AgRefresh

**STAGE 3 REPORT | EXCERPT  
SUPPORTING POLICIES  
& REGULATION**



## 3.0 Supporting Policy & Regulation

While the key AgRefresh topics are central to this initiative, the process provides opportunity to strengthen broader reaching agricultural policy. This section proposes updated and new policy to generally support the future of agriculture in Abbotsford.



## 3.1 Supporting OCP Updates

Higher level land use and policy updates to strengthen agriculture

While previous sections of this report address detailed aspects of agricultural regulation, higher level policy statements in the OCP play an important role in conveying Council's vision, guiding decision making, and supporting implementation of Council policies.

The following section outlines proposed changes to the "Land Use" and "Policies" sections of the Official Community Plan.

### 3.1.1 Draft Recommendations

Update Official Community Plan policy to enhance and refine higher level policies supporting agriculture in Abbotsford.

The full set of proposed amendments to the OCP are provided in Appendix A, with highlights outlined in this section.

#### A SNAPSHOT OF PROPOSED UPDATES

##### Key OCP Topics Addressed

- OCP Restructuring
- Agriculture Land Use Provisions
- Agricultural Enhancement Endowment Fund
- Partnerships Supporting Agriculture
- Consistency in Agricultural Zoning
- Capacity of Existing Agricultural Lands
- Value Added Opportunities
- Food Culture on the Farm
- Food Culture in the City
- Environment

## 3.1.2 Draft Recommendations

### OCP Part II: Section 2 - Land Use (see Appendix A)

Updated  
(OCP)

#### Minor OCP Restructuring

Reorganize OCP Part II, Section 2 to differentiate “Land Use Designations” from “Land Use Regulations”.

There are no changes proposed to non-agricultural OCP content; only relocation within the document.

Appendix A illustrates the proposed restructuring, graying out existing content not proposed for change.

Updated  
(OCP)

#### Agriculture Land Use Designations

Update the ‘Purpose and Description’ and ‘Uses’ for the Agricultural land use designations to acknowledge unique and limited circumstances where non-farm uses may be approved by the ALC to support the agriculture industry and/or agricultural innovation.

New  
(OCP)

#### Agricultural Enhancement Fund - Net Lot Area

When determining Agricultural Enhancement Endowment Fund contributions, calculation of net lot area excludes environmental features requiring protection and the associated setbacks (e.g., watercourse setbacks).

For clarity, the following land is included in the net lot area when determining Agricultural Enhancement Endowment Fund contributions:

- Public road dedications
- Utility rights-of-way, such as power lines/pipelines, not included in the area removed above

### OCP Part III: Section 6 - Enhance Agricultural Integrity

Update  
(OCP)

#### Refinements to Existing Policies

Minor refinements are recommended for the following policies to better support agriculture (see Appendix A)

- Partnerships Supporting Agriculture (6.1)
- Value Added Opportunities (6.4)
- Food Culture on the Farm (6.7)
- Agriculture Enhancement Fund (6.11)

**New**  
(OCP)

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### **Consistency in Agricultural Zoning (6.2)**

A1 and A2 Zones are proposed to function as the primary zones for regulating agriculture in Abbotsford, minimizing further use of A4, A5, and A6, where possible.

**New**  
(OCP)

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### **Capacity of Existing Agricultural Lands (6.3)**

Preserve viable agricultural land within the context of the Official Community Plan growth vision and support steps to increase the productive capacity of existing farm land. Explore and support opportunities to encourage the use of fallow or underutilized properties.

**New**  
(OCP)

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### **Environment (6.9)**

Ensure agricultural activities support and respect human health, natural environments and groundwater resources in farming areas, particularly in relation to waste management, composting, anaerobic digestion, and incineration on farms.

**New**  
(OCP)

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### **Food Culture in the City (6.13)**

Support initiatives to bring agriculture to the city through branding, marketing, programs and events, (e.g., Taste of Abbotsford).

**Retain**  
(OCP)

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### **Retain Existing Policy**

The following agricultural policies will remain in the OCP as written:

- Holistic Food Systems (6.8)
  - Legal Non-Conforming Uses in the Agricultural Land Use Designation (6.12)
  - Production and Sale (6.14)
  - Add Bees (6.15)
  - Community Gardens (6.16)
  - Farmers Market (6.17)
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## 3.2 Other Zoning Bylaw Updates

### A coordinated refresh of other agricultural Zoning Bylaw provisions

AgRefresh provides an opportunity to comprehensively coordinate and modernize all agriculture-related provisions in the Zoning Bylaw.

This section outlines a number of structural and administrative changes to improve clarity, coordinate with Ministry and ALC provisions, and complement the substantive topic-specific changes described in previous sections.

### 3.2.1 Draft Recommendations

#### Zoning Bylaw Highlights

- Use Agricultural One (A1) zone as the base for all other A zones.
- Restructure the A1 Zone.
- Address permitted 'farm' and 'non-farm uses' enabled by the *ALC Act* and the *ALR Use Regulation* for all ALR properties.
- Provide new and clarified agriculture related definitions.
- Update setbacks and height regulations.
- Refine lot coverage provisions.
- Clarify regulation of cannabis production and processing.
- Remove minimum lot size for 'keeping of swine'.
- Add reference to the City's Farm Bylaw for Mushroom growing and composting.
- Remove Kennel from the definition of Agricultural Use and add it as independent use with regulations.
- Incorporate consequential amendments to the RR, CR, SR, and RS zones.



## DRAFT REGULATION UPDATES

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### Update (Zoning)

#### Uses Enabled by ALC Act and ALR Regulations

The *ALC Act* and *ALR Regulations* outline a range of 'farm' and 'non-farm uses' that cannot be prohibited by a local government in the ALR, regardless of municipal zoning (except Minister approved Farm Bylaws).

While limited, Abbotsford's ALR has some zoning that is silent on 'Agricultural Use' and ALC 'permitted farm' and 'non-farm uses'.

To address this context, a new Zoning Bylaw section (200.1) is proposed to:

- acknowledge permitted farm uses and non-farm uses enabled by the Agricultural Land Commission for properties within the ALR; and
- clarify regulations applicable to farm and non-farm uses enabled by the *ALC Act* (section 200.1.3)

More specifically, section 200.1.3 clarifies that provisions of the A1 Zone shall apply in circumstances where a zone does not specifically address a use or building type enabled by the *ALC Act* or its Regulations.

### Update (Zoning)

#### Consistency across agricultural zoning

To improve consistency across the City's agricultural zoning, proposed updates use the A1 Zone as the base for zones A2 to A6, overlaying historical permitted uses specific to each zone.

This approach broadens agricultural and residential options for A3, A4, A5, and A6 zoned properties, with the aim of facilitating a broader range of farming activities in Abbotsford's agricultural areas.

Subdivision provisions remain at the existing 8.0 ha minimum for A1, A3, and A4, and at 16 ha for A2.

A new 8 ha minimum subdivision size is proposed for the A5 and A6 Zones, which do not currently specify a minimum subdivision size for general agricultural use.

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**Update**  
(Zoning)

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## **Restructured Agricultural Zones**

The general structure of the A1 to A6 Zones has been updated for clarity and in light of new uses and Provincial regulation. Highlights include:

- Clarifying uses accessory to Agricultural Use vs. Single Detached Dwelling
- Replacing the 'Conditions of Use' with "Additional Regulations by Use", grouped by residential, agricultural, accessory to agriculture, and other.
- The section titled "Site Specific Permitted Uses and Lot Sizes" has been relocated to the end of the Zone and retitled.

**Update &  
New**  
(Zoning)

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## **New and Updated Definitions**

In addition to the definitions outlined in the previous sections, new and updated definitions are proposed for the following terms. Appendix B (s. 120) provides the full details of each proposed definition.

### **New Uses/Terms and Definitions**

- Agricultural Land Commission
- Agricultural Land Reserve
- Agricultural Products
- Agri-Support Use
- Accessory Cannabis Processing
- Ancillary
- Cogeneration Facility
- Farm Alcohol Production Facility Floor Area
- Breeding and Boarding Kennel
- Soil-less Medium

### **Updated Definitions**

- Agricultural Use (major revision)
  - Cannabis Production Facility (minor revision)
  - Farm Operation (minor revision)
  - Feed Lot (minor revision)
  - On-Farm Composting (minor revision)
  - On-Farm Mushroom Composting (minor revision)
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**Update &  
New**  
(Zoning)

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### **Setbacks and Height**

Setback and height regulations of the Agricultural Zones have been updated, reorganized, and supplemented to address new uses and farming activities (see 210.3 and 210.4 in Appendix B).

Proposed changes are largely based on the Minister's Bylaw Standards for Farming Areas, with some tailored to the Abbotsford context.

**Update**  
(Zoning)

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### **Lot Coverage**

Lot coverage provisions for buildings and structures in the A1 to A6 zones have been reworded to clarify a maximum permitted lot coverage of 35%, with allowance for greenhouse structures to cover up to 75% subject to conditions.

**Update**  
(Zoning)

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### **Cannabis Production**

As a refinement to the cannabis production regulations adopted in 2019, the following amendments improve clarity and coordinate with the new zone structure:

- Cannabis Production is included as a crop in the definition of Agricultural Use, subject to specific conditions.
- The term 'Cannabis Production Facility' is replaced with two separate terms: 'Cannabis Production' and 'Accessory Cannabis Processing'. Activities permitted for each use are clarified.
- The cumulative floor area for 'accessory cannabis processing' and 'farm product processing' may not exceed a gross floor area of 2,500 m<sup>2</sup> per lot.

**Update**  
(Zoning)

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### **Keeping of Swine as an Agricultural Use**

Regulations for the keeping of swine have been updated to remove the 8.0 ha minimum lot size and to clarify existing requirements.

**Update &  
New**  
(Zoning)

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### **Mushrooms and General Farm Composting**

Mushroom growing/mushroom composting and general farm composting are subject to additional municipal and provincial regulations. Updated references to senior agency regulations have been integrated into the definitions and agricultural zones for improved clarity (s. 120 and 210.8.3 of Appendix B).

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**Update**  
(Zoning)

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### **Breeding and Boarding Kennels**

'Kennels' are currently listed within the Zoning Bylaw definition of Agricultural Use. While pet breeding and boarding is permitted in the Agricultural Land Reserve, it is not considered an agricultural use.

- Proposed Zoning Bylaw updates identify 'Boarding and Breeding Kennel' for dogs and cats as an independent use that is permitted accessory to a single detached dwelling in RR, CR, A1-A6 Zones.
- A new definition replaces the current definition of "Commercial Breeding and Boarding Kennel", clarifying permissions on ALR properties.
- New use specific setbacks are provided.
- Screening hedge requirements are included in the Zoning Bylaw (currently in the City's Kennel Regulation Bylaw).

In recent years, the regulation of household domestic animals has largely shifted to the Fraser Valley Regional District, under the FVRD Animal Control Bylaw. These changes have created redundancies within the City's Kennel Regulation Bylaw.

Closely following AgRefresh, the City's Bylaw Services team will bring forward coordinated changes to the Kennel Regulation Bylaw and Business License Bylaw.

**Update & New**  
(Zoning)

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### **Rural Residential and Country Residential Zones**

The Rural Residential (RR) and Country Residential (CR) Zones permit 'Agricultural Use' and 'Farm Retail'.

To ensure consistency, the following consequential amendments are proposed:

- Add 'Boarding and Breeding Kennel' as a permitted use accessory to a Single Detached Dwelling
  - Update regulations for Farm Retail Sales
  - Reference new ALR house size provisions
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