



AgRefresh

STAGE 3 REPORT | EXCERPT
URBAN-RURAL INTERFACE



2.7 Urban-Rural Interface

Maximize urban-rural compatibility

With urban and farming uses intensifying, the urban-rural interface is an area of possible land use conflict if not effectively managed. This can strain relationships between farmers and non-farm neighbours.

AgRefresh is proposing improvements to urban-side ALR landscape buffers set out in the Protection of Agriculture Development Permit Guidelines.

2.7.1 Decision Maker

Protection of Agriculture Development Permit (landscape buffer):

City

Development Permit issued by Director of Planning

2.7.2 What we heard in Stage 3

'Early Ideas' explored through Stage 3 engagement

- Update the landscape buffer guidelines in the OCP
- Analyze specific conditions where a property may be exempt from providing a landscape buffer
- Review and update farm-side setbacks where needed

Stage 3 engagement feedback highlights*

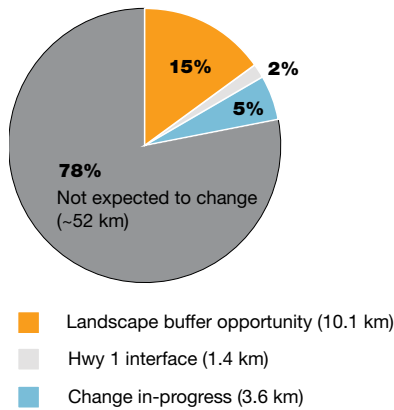
- 75% of respondents agreed or somewhat agreed with the early ideas
- preference for landscape buffer to be located on the urban side of the ALR interface and support to use buffers as pollinators and to compensate for habitat loss

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

2.7.3 Background

Abbotsford’s Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) interfaces with ‘urban type’ uses for about 67 linear kilometres. Of this interface, roughly 11 km (~17%) of ALR adjacent lands are expected to redevelop over the long term as urban areas transition to uses envisioned in the Official Community Plan.

Figure 6: Urban-ALR Breakdown

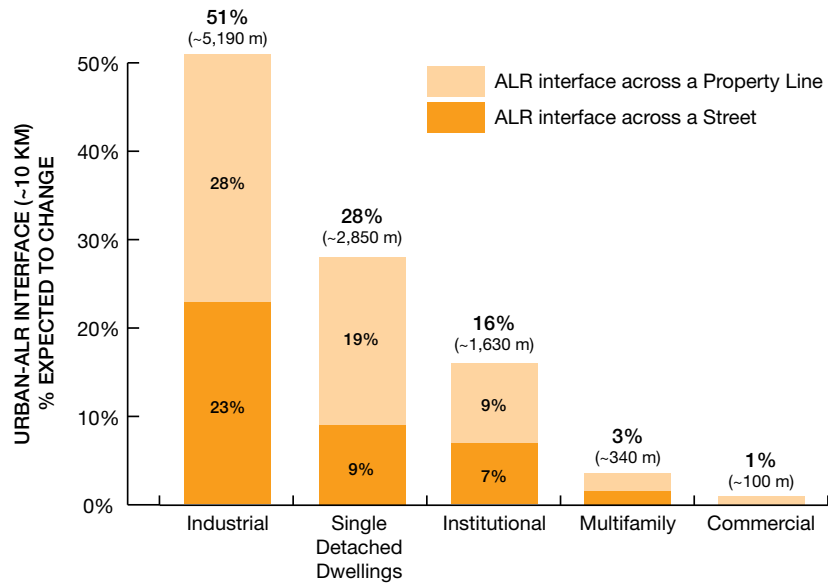


New urban-side development provides an opportunity to implement ALR landscape buffers to maximize land use compatibility between farming and non-farming areas.

Given the unique context of new development interfacing with the ALR across Highway 1, AgRefresh recommends exempting this interface from buffer requirements. Removing this segment leaves roughly 10.1 km (15%) of the total urban-ALR interface with the opportunity to provide landscape buffering as uses change over the long term (see Figure 6).

The urban-ALR interface occurs across both streets and property lines, and is adjacent to a variety of land uses. The chart below provides a rough breakdown of this expected transition by land use type.

Figure 7: Estimated Long Term ALR Interface by Type (excludes Urban 3 and Hwy 1 ALR Interface)



Data Limitations: Figures 6 and 7 are based on late 2020 analysis of existing conditions and provide a rough estimate of remaining ALR interface likely to change to uses envisioned under the Official Community Plan. This estimated order-of-magnitude analysis is intended to provide high level insight into the main interface types requiring guidance and is not a precise representation. The analysis does not account for potential redevelopment of existing uses that are consistent with the OCP, which may also provide an opportunity for improved ALR landscape buffers.

2.7.4 Draft Recommendations

Update the Official Community Plan Protection of Agriculture Development Permit (DP) Guidelines. Appendix A, OCP Section 5 outlines a complete draft of proposed OCP amendments, with highlights provided below.

A SNAPSHOT

1. Updated Development Permit exemption provisions
2. Updated the ALR landscape buffer requirements:
 - a. reorganized by land use and interface type for clarity
 - b. simplified lot-line interface buffer
 - c. more comprehensive street interface scenarios
 - d. new and updated buffer design requirements

DRAFT OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATES

Revised Protection of Agriculture Development Permit Area

Currently, the OCP requires a development permit for all lands wholly or partially within the Urban Development Boundary that are adjacent to the Agricultural Land Reserve.

AgRefresh proposes refinements that clarify exemptions for the airport and open space lands.

Exemptions

The OCP includes circumstances where a proposal may be exempt from Protection of Agriculture Development Permit requirements. The full updated exemption list is provided in section 5 of Appendix A, with highlights below:

- Agriculture buildings on lots zoned for agriculture
- Development interfacing with the ALR across Highway 1
- Urban 3 - Infill lands
- Rezoning or subdivision of Urban 4 that results in less than four lots
- Building Permits for single detached dwellings & accessory buildings
- Building additions to set thresholds by use
- Institutional building exemptions when over 90 m from ALR or buffered by existing buildings
- Construction or alteration of buildings on a lot that interfaces with ALR lands not designated for Agriculture
- Where a proponent provides satisfactory information clearly demonstrating that the existing interface conditions will satisfy the intent of the Development Permit Guidelines.

Guideline Updates

Updates are proposed to provision AG8, which outlines general landscape buffering requirements applicable to all interface types. The full guidelines are provided in section 5 of Appendix A, with new or updated provisions highlighted below:

- Reference Ministry Guide to Edge Planning for species selection
- Measure interior lot line building setbacks from the buffer edge
- Generally require 60% coniferous tree species, except for street trees within the public right-of-way
- Provide buffer signage on encroachment protection fencing and at dead end roads
- Accommodate buffer depth flexibility to coordinate with adjacent sites with established buffers
- Where existing wooded, natural, or environmentally sensitive areas separate development from the ALR, buffer design may incorporate and enhance (where necessary) the existing vegetation to satisfy the Protection of Agriculture Development Permit Guideline objectives.

Updated Landscape Buffers

Currently the Protection of Agriculture Landscape Buffer requirements do not adequately address a few common scenarios, such as an ALR interface along an existing street. The following draft approaches are proposed to better address anticipated development interface conditions as the city continues to grow.

Interior Lot Line Interface Landscape Buffer

The following provisions apply to development interfacing with the ALR across an interior lot line (rear and side) or where the ALR interface is mid-parcel:

- minimum 10 m on-site landscape buffer
- minimum of two contiguous and coordinated rows of coniferous and deciduous trees; provide at least 60% coniferous species
- 3-5 rows of continuous screening and trespass inhibiting shrubs;
- a pathway may be required on the urban side of the buffer, at the discretion of the City; this space shall be planted with understorey shrubs if a pathway is not provided
- 1.2 m buffer encroachment protection fencing with signage
- 1.8 m ALR boundary/property line fence
- measure building setbacks from the buffer, not lot line, where space permits



Fig. 8: Interior lot line landscape buffer

Existing Road Edge Landscape Buffer 1 - Urban (with street trees)

The following provisions apply to development, other than single detached dwelling development, that fronts, flanks, or backs onto the ALR across an existing road developed to an urban frontage standard, with street trees:

- minimum 3.0 m on-site landscape buffer; a reduction may be considered for shallow, highly constrained sites.
- single contiguous row of deciduous and coniferous trees spaced in coordination with street trees; at least 60% coniferous. Provide a higher proportion of dense coniferous species where the buffer depth is constrained.
- 3 rows of screening shrubs; 2 rows of dense evergreen species in constrained circumstances

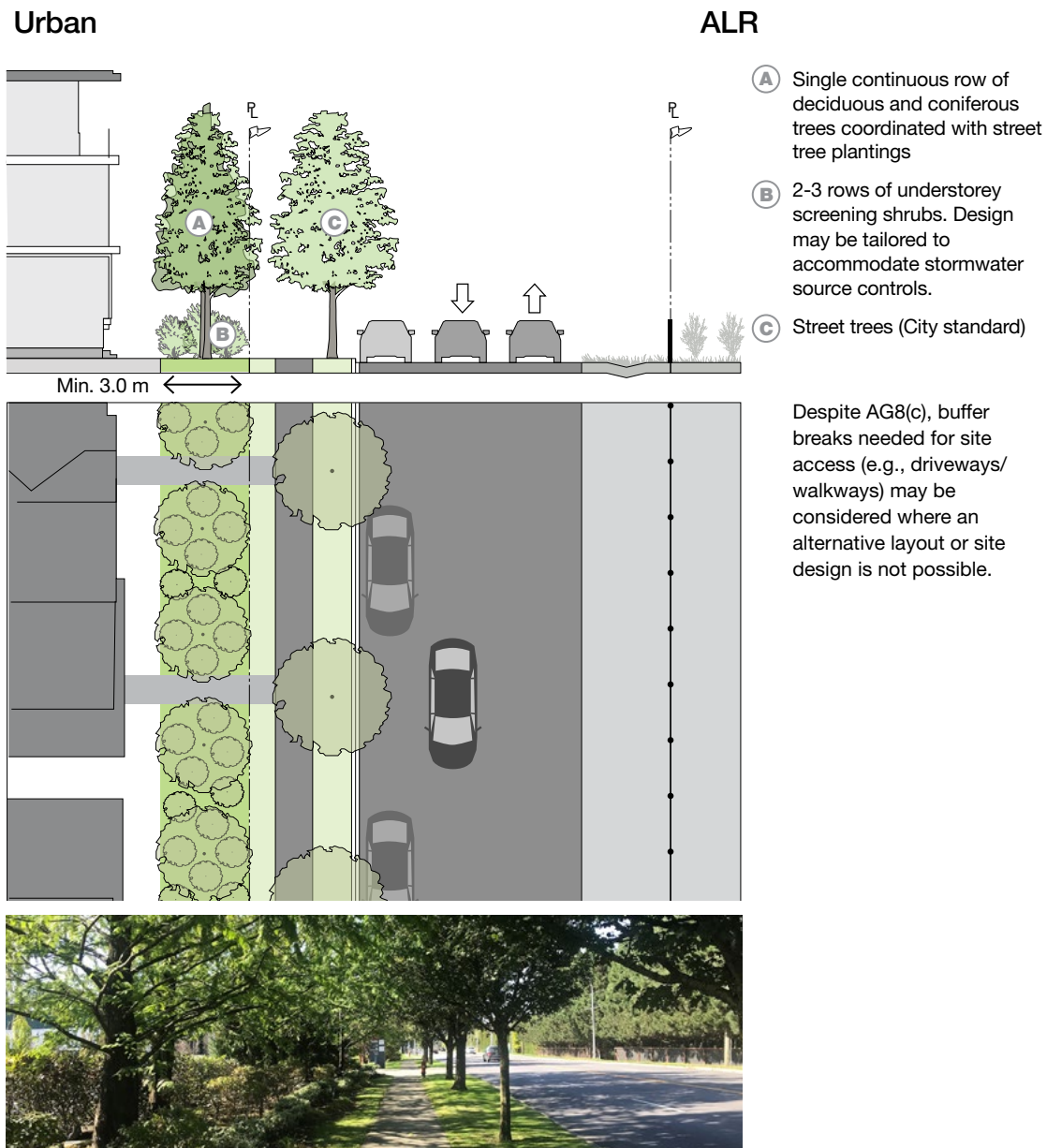


Fig. 9: Road edge landscape buffer with street trees

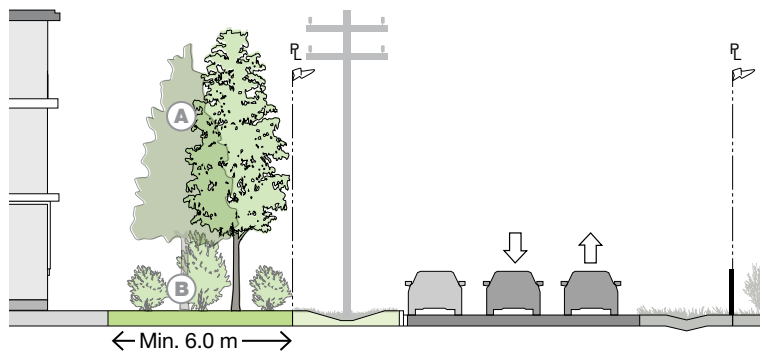
Existing Road Edge Landscape Buffer 2 - Rural (no street trees)

The following provisions apply to development, other than single detached dwelling development, that fronts, flanks, or backs onto the ALR across an existing road designated “rural” or a road without street trees:

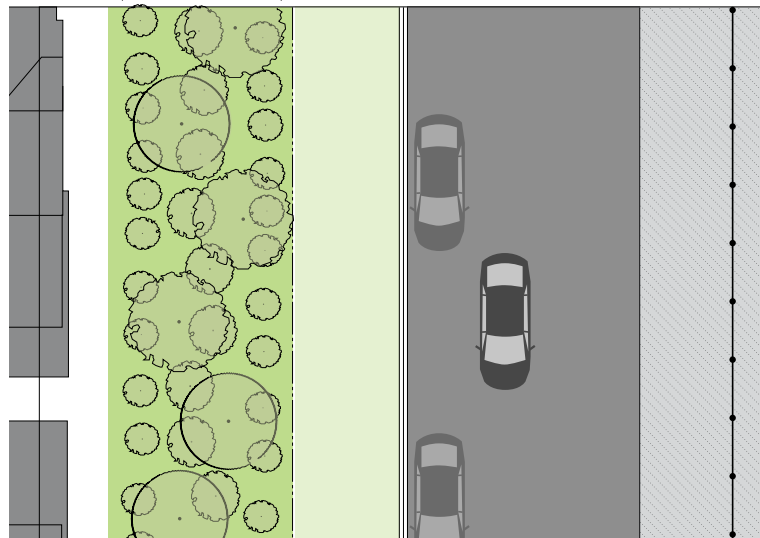
- minimum 6.0 m on-site landscape buffer with a staggered, contiguous double row of trees; at least 60% coniferous species.
- where 6.0 m cannot be achieved, a reduction to 4.0 m may be considered with a higher proportion of coniferous species (over 60%). Special consideration may be given for further reductions in highly constrained locations.
- minimum 3 rows of understorey screening shrubs

Urban

ALR



- A** two contiguous and staggered rows of trees
- B** 3 rows of understorey screening shrubs. Design may be tailored to accommodate stormwater source controls.



Despite AG8(c), buffer breaks needed for site access (e.g., driveways/walkways) may be considered where an alternative layout or site design is not possible.



Fig. 10: Road edge landscape buffer without street trees

Existing Road Edge Landscape Buffer 3 - Single Detached Dwellings

The following provisions apply to single-detached dwelling development that fronts, flanks, or backs onto the ALR across an existing road (with or without street trees):

- minimum 3.0 m on-site buffer with a single contiguous row of trees spaced in coordination with adjacent street trees, where provided; provide at least 50% coniferous species.
- provide a higher proportion of coniferous tree species where a rear yard buffer interfaces with the ALR across a road without street trees.
- 2 rows of screening shrubs; 1 row of dense evergreen species in constrained circumstance.

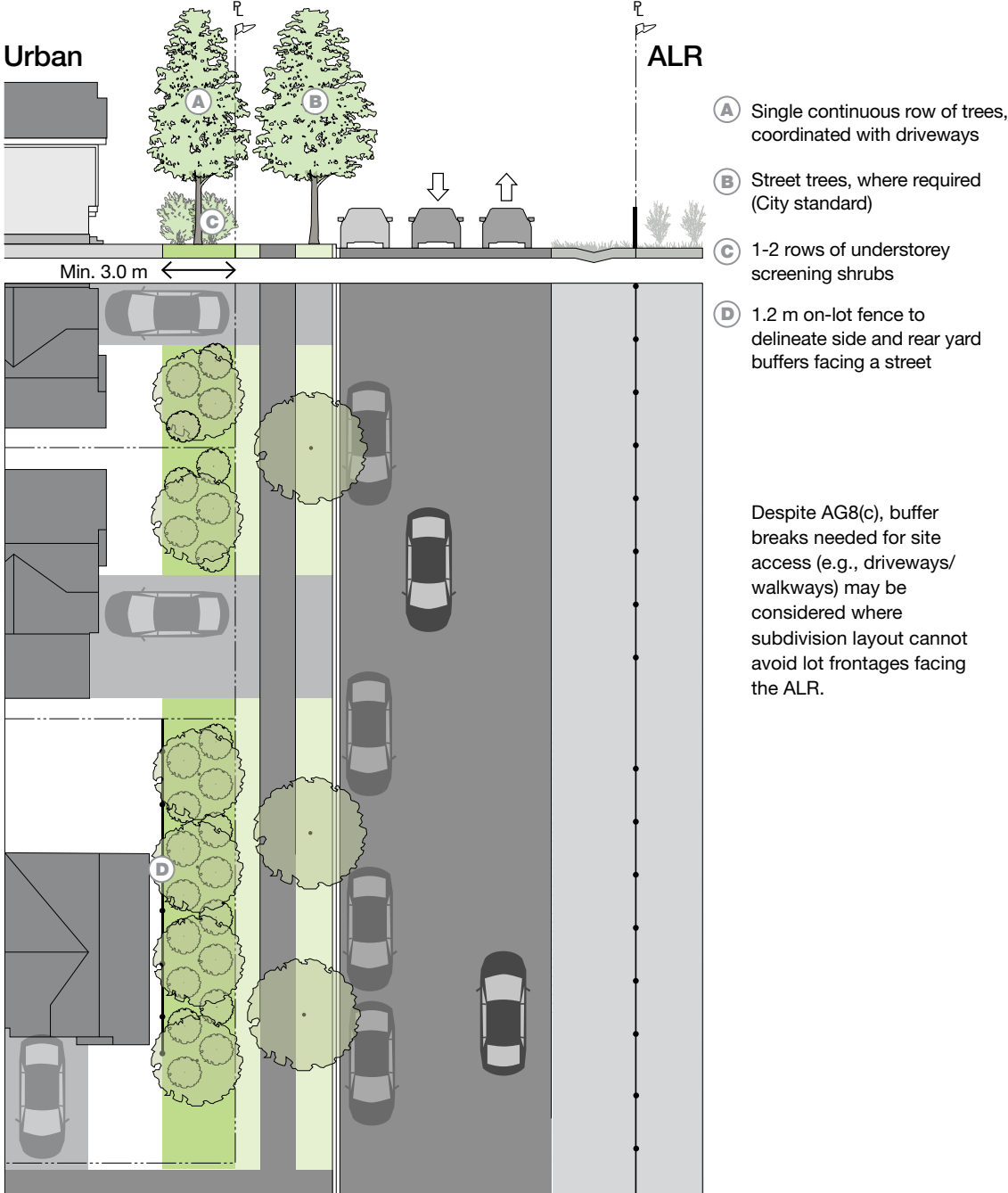


Fig. 11: Road edge landscape buffer for single detached dwelling development

New Road Edge Landscape Buffer

The following provisions apply to development fronting the ALR across a new street constructed as part of the development:

- wherever possible, avoid new roads adjacent to the ALR that require this buffer type
- in circumstances where this interface type cannot be avoided, a maintenance/funding plan and financial security may be required and will be determined through the application process
- minimum 6.0 m road right-of-way buffer
- minimum of two contiguous and coordinated rows of coniferous and deciduous trees; providing at least 60% coniferous species
- 3 rows of continuous screening and trespass inhibiting shrubs
- 1.8 m ALR boundary fencing (page wire, existing, or as per AG14)



Fig. 12: New road edge landscape buffer

Landscape Buffer Signage and Fencing

Buffer concepts include encroachment protection fencing or ALR edge fencing to prevent trespass. Signage is also required to highlight the importance of protecting and maintaining the buffer.

Signage

- Affix one sign on the buffer encroachment fencing or ALR fencing (new in-road buffers) every 15.0 m, or at the back of each lot (the closer of)
- See section 5 (AG14) of Appendix A for further specifications

Fencing

- Gate: provide at least one buffer maintenance access gate in encroachment fencing for each lot with a rear or side yard buffer that cannot otherwise be accessed by the lot owner. Materials and construction shall be consistent with fencing.
- ALR boundary fencing (1.8 m) may be chain link page wire, or solid wood. Reuse of existing fencing that meets the guidelines is encouraged.
- See Section 5 (AG14) of Appendix A for detailed fencing specifications.

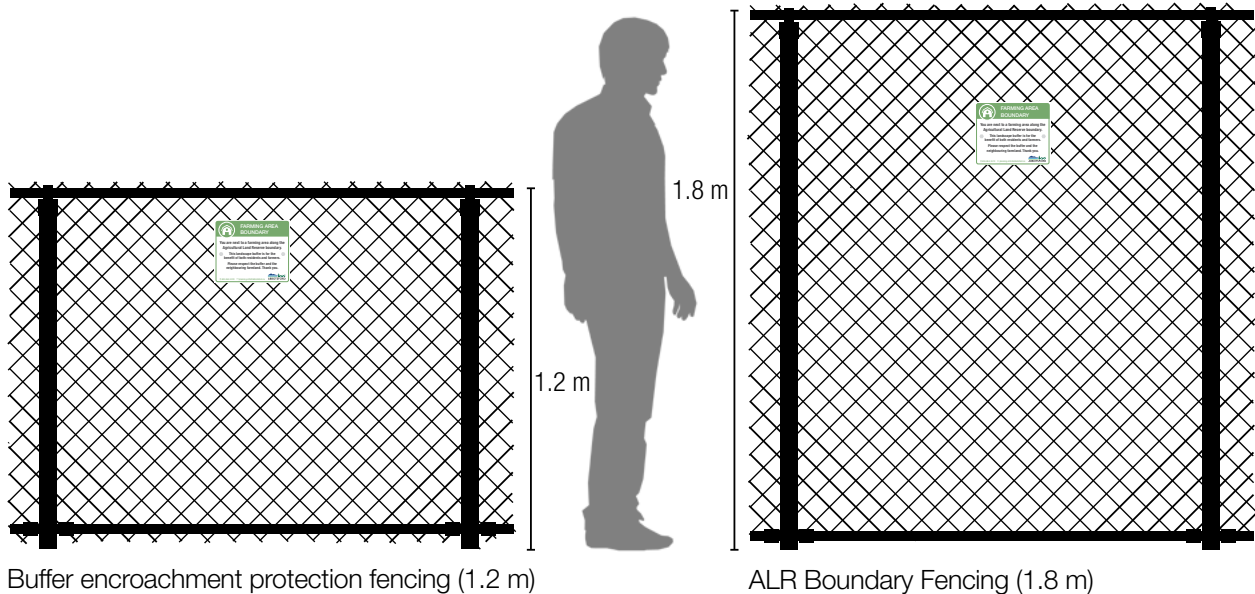
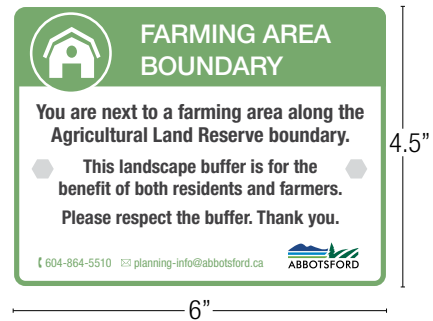


Fig. 13: ALR Buffer Fencing and Signage