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**Agricultural Land Commission**

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November 29, 2011

Reply to the attention of Tony Pellett  
File #26551 (Planning Review ID 175)

District of Maple Ridge  
11995 Haney Place  
MAPLE RIDGE BC V2X 6A9  
Attention: Ernie Daykin, Mayor

Dear Mayor Daykin:

Further to your letter of May 4, 2011 the Commission has undertaken a thorough review of the Albion Flats Concept Plan and the accompanying large binder of reports.

The Commission has now formulated its response, which is attached for your consideration.

Yours truly

PROVINCIAL AGRICULTURAL LAND COMMISSION

Richard Bullock, Chair

cc. Jim Rule, Chief Administrative Officer

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## PROVINCIAL AGRICULTURAL LAND COMMISSION

A meeting was held by the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission on October 27, 2010 at the offices of the Commission located at #133 – 4940 Canada Way, Burnaby, B.C.

### COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Richard Bullock	Chair
Jim Collins	Commissioner
Lucille Dempsey	Commissioner
Denise Dowswell	Commissioner
Jennifer Dyson	Vice-Chair
Gordon Gillette	Vice-Chair
Jim Johnson	Commissioner
Bert Miles	Commissioner
Jerry Thibeault	Commissioner

### COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT:

Colin Fry	Executive Director
Brian Underhill	Executive Director
Tony Pellett	Regional Planner
Eamonn Watson	Land Use Planner

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### Planning Review ID: #175

**PROPOSAL:** Review draft Albion Flats concept plan endorsed by the District of Maple Ridge ("DMR") Council in the context of a package of reports submitted by DMR for review by Commission members and staff.

<b>COMMISSION CONSIDERATION:</b>
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#### Context

Section 6 of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* identifies the purposes of the Commission as: (1) to preserve agricultural land; (2) to encourage farming on agricultural land in collaboration with other communities of interest; and (3) to encourage local governments, first nations, the government and its agents to enable and accommodate farm use of agricultural land and uses compatible with agriculture in their plans, bylaws and policies.

The draft concept plan would encourage non-farm development throughout the Albion Flats area while preserving a few small, isolated fields as "edible landscapes" and possibly also encouraging the development of greenhouses on rooftops of commercial/industrial buildings. DMR's Agricultural Plan, adopted December 2009, states, "The primary goal with respect to larger, established farming operations...is to plan for their retention as farms....Limited to highly specific situations, the secondary goal...is to explore a policy of compensation from development that enables funds to be generated so that the net agricultural capability of DMR is enhanced by investment elsewhere."



In essence, the outcome of previous Commission decisions respecting the Albion Flats is that the Commission has approved or agreed in principle with non-farm development of much of the area south of 105 Avenue subject to DMR ensuring that the area north of 105 Avenue can be drained in such a way that field drainage is accommodated. Despite DMR being allowed to develop significant recreational amenities, DMR has to date not followed through on drainage commitments.

### **Agricultural Suitability**

The Commission assessed whether external factors such as encroaching non-farm development have caused or will cause the land to become unsuitable for agriculture. Apart from the proposals contained in the concept plan, the Commission does not believe there are external factors which would render the land north of 105 Avenue unsuitable for agricultural use. In respect of internal factors, the Golder Associates overview agricultural assessment provided with the overall planning proposal confirms that much of the drainage problem is associated with inadequate outlets for on-farm drainage systems. In addition, limitations resulting from localized slopes and differential drainage conditions are more severe than indicated by Land Capability for Agriculture mapping. Even so, the report concludes that with appropriate drainage and proper buffering from the non-farm uses to the east, the two large parcels (totalling 24 ha) can achieve the potential associated with prime farmland. With respect to the remainder of the ALR parcels north of 105 Avenue, the report notes that there are some disturbed areas but that the remainder of the land does not appear to have experienced disturbance that limits sustainable soil-based agriculture.

### **Assessment of Potential Impact on Agriculture**

The Commission noted that the proposal to eliminate all but the smallest scale of farming from the Albion Flats is likely to have a negative impact on DMR's overall agricultural production potential, even if the suggested compensation policy is initiated.

### **Assessment of other reports submitted as part of the proposal**

The Commission noted that the HB Lanarc environmental baseline report identifies various land use constraints at Albion Flats, notably that the row of lots north fronting Lougheed Highway north of 105 Avenue are predominantly within streamside protection regulation setbacks, limiting non-farm development but with little limitation on agriculture. It was also noted that the area with fewest environmental constraints is at the east end of the Albion Flats.

The Commission also reviewed the other submitted reports and made itself familiar with the economic importance to DMR of the opportunity to develop a commercial hub at Albion Flats. With respect to the Urban Systems traffic report, it was noted that the Lougheed/105 Avenue intersection will be of critical importance, thus the Commission believes that at that time the overflow parking lot should be phased out and the site rehabilitated for agriculture.

The Commission undertook a critical review of the position it took in 1999 with respect to land uses for the Albion Flats, which was that, upon resolution of the agricultural drainage issues north of 105 Avenue, all but seven parcels of land south of 105 Avenue should be excluded from the ALR, with those seven parcels remaining in the ALR and being limited to agricultural or agri-industrial use. After reviewing the 2011 draft concept plan the Commission concluded that in return for agricultural restoration north of 105 Avenue, it should not place any restrictions on the use of those seven parcels, which could play an important rôle in DMR's economic future.



## CONCLUSIONS:

1. That the land north of 105 Avenue has agricultural capability, is suitable for agricultural use and is appropriately designated as ALR.
2. That apart from the agricultural fairgrounds, the land south of 105 Avenue is of very limited interest to agriculture, thus previous Commission proposals for limiting land use options may be reconsidered.
3. That the draft concept plan, as proposed, will have an overall negative impact on agriculture in DMR.
4. That the draft concept plan is inconsistent with the objective of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* to preserve agricultural land.

## IT WAS

**MOVED BY:** Commissioner Collins

**SECONDED BY:** Commissioner Miles

THAT the Commission not endorse the draft concept plan entirely as submitted, but only in part;

THAT DMR be advised that while the Commission is prepared to cooperate towards future commercial or industrial development at Albion Flats, it will do so in conjunction with restoration of an agricultural future for that part of Albion Flats lying to the north of 105 Avenue;

AND THAT focusing on the area north of 105 Avenue the Commission will expect DMR to undertake a comprehensive review of drainage and stream flow conditions in the Road Thirteen Dyking District with a view to resolving issues identified in the Golder Associates overview agricultural assessment and the HB Lanarc environmental baseline report, that review to include

- preliminary consultation with Fisheries and Oceans Canada,
- preparation of an agricultural remedial action plan in consultation with the Commission, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the land owners, such a plan to address all relevant issues including but not limited to drainage, long term access, buffering or consolidation, and
- design to ensure that traffic patterns enable practical access and use by farm vehicles;

AND THAT the Commission will expect DMR to submit an application under section 29 of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* to exclude from the ALR the land lying south of 105 Avenue and west of 240 Street together with any remnant areas elsewhere in DMR identified by the Commission as being unsuitable for agriculture; Commission approval of such an application may be in part or in whole conditional on progress toward the foregoing action plan;

AND THAT this response does not suggest or promote any move to eliminate the use of land at Albion Flats as an agricultural fairground;

AND THAT the Commission recognizes that any implementation or action to be taken with respect to the Commission's response to the concept plan will require that DMR and land owners be responsible for complying with applicable Acts, regulations, and decisions of any authorities that have jurisdiction under an enactment.

## CARRIED

**Resolution # 2635/2011**





## Staff Report – Maple Ridge Albion Flats

Date of Report: September 22, 2011  
File: 26551 (ID 175)

Report prepared by: Tony Pellett

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**ISSUE:** Draft Albion Flats Concept Plan

**DIRECTION REQUESTED:** Comment / Guidance to the District of Maple Ridge (DMR)

**CONTEXT:**

In November 2009 DMR advised the Commission that it was considering advancement of an area plan review for the Albion Flats. The Commission suggested that the planning review process should be developed so as to provide an opportunity for involvement of Commission staff and a process to determine whether the plan is consistent with the intent and purpose of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*. In January 2010 DMR Council directed its staff to proceed with an Albion Flats area plan in consultation with the Commission. In July DMR hired consultants to conduct a charette process and in August the consultants met with Commission staff. Commission and Ministry of Agriculture staff were invited to participate in the charettes but timing problems prevented them from doing so. In May 2011 DMR Council endorsed a Draft Albion Flats Concept Plan and asked for a meeting with the Commission to review and discuss it. In July 2011 the Chair and staff conducted a workshop with DMR Council and staff, after which the Chair directed staff to prepare this report for Commission consideration.

**BACKGROUND:**

- For an ALR context map and a current overview, see **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 1A**.
- Under the *Drainage, Ditch and Dike Act* most of the Albion Flats area has always been within the Road Thirteen Dyking District (more recently administered by DMR). See **Appendix 2**.
- In August 1966 Cabinet approved the *Lower Mainland Official Regional Plan* (the "ORP"). Except for lots directly fronting 240 Street, the Albion Flats were designated as a LOWLAND RURAL AREA ("RRL-3"), which because of
  - location in a floodplain,
  - predominantly large parcel size, and
  - general arability, or isolation from urban development,were best suited for extensive lowland agriculture or other large holding rural development that would suffer least from flooding. The only allowable uses in these areas were "Rural Uses" (uses providing for the growing, rearing, producing, harvesting, and extracting of primary agricultural, forestry and mining products) and "Transportation Uses" (uses of regional significance providing for the movement and temporary storage of people, goods and energy by land, water, and air). The minimum parcel size for any subdivision not already completed or in progress was 20 acres ( $\pm$  8 ha). The ORP provided that a LOWLAND RURAL AREA might be redesignated through Plan Amendment as an ESTABLISHED URBAN AREA only where an existing ESTABLISHED URBAN AREA located in a floodplain or surrounded on all sides by a floodplain was committed to further urban development through early settlement and required additional land for development. See **Appendix 3**.

- In 1972, the ORP was turned over to the four Lower Mainland regional districts and at the end of 1983 the provincial government abolished regional planning and ORPs throughout the province.
- On 30 July 1972, aerial photography shows that the only non-farm uses on the Albion Flats were a building supply business on the Lougheed Highway, fairgrounds buildings along the southeast side of 105 Avenue and an automobile dealership at the intersection of Lougheed Highway and Tamarack Lane. Most other lands were in farm or hobby-farm use. The only undeveloped land on the Albion Flats was a treed area near the southeast end of the RRL-3 area. The only "urban" development alongside the Albion Flats was on a hill at 109 Avenue and Tamarack Lane (part of a subdivision registered in 1960). **See Appendix 4.**
- On 09 April 1974, the ALR plan for what was then Dewdney-Alouette Regional District was designated. At the Albion Flats, the ALR boundary was virtually the same as in the ORP except that the ALR extended east of 240 Street. **See Appendix 5.**
- On 23 March 1977 the Commission allowed the importation of up to 218,000 m<sup>3</sup> of fill (from Lougheed Highway widening) onto land southeast of 105 Avenue so that the Maple Ridge Agricultural Association could "enhance the potential of the site".
- In the early 1980s, Imasco Enterprises Inc. acquired the lands along the northeast side of the Albion Flats. These lands are mainly outside the ALR; from 1988 to the present, Imasco's "Genstar" division has subdivided them into urban residential lots and a neighbourhood park.
- On 18 July 1984, the Commission allowed widening of 105 Avenue to 20m and allowed the establishment of a 5-year lease by the Pitt Meadows/Maple Ridge Agricultural Association of a 9 ha portion of the 24 ha parcel owned by DMR for the Maple Ridge Parks and Recreation Department. Both decisions affected the southeast side of 105 Avenue.
- On 22 May 1985, following a two-year review of Maple Ridge's ALR lands, the Commission set forth recommendations on the basis of ten distinct ALR areas. Area 3 consisted of the Albion Flats and a nearby area (mostly park land) southwest of the Lougheed Highway. The Albion Flats were retained in the ALR; the area southwest of the highway and the pre-existing automobile dealership were excluded from the ALR in 1986.
- On 27 August 1987, the Commission completed a review of DMR's Urban Growth Strategy study and agreed with a recommendation under which lands immediately east of 240 Street would be excluded from the ALR for urban development. That exclusion was finalized on 31 July 1995, effectively isolating the Albion Flats from nearby agricultural areas.
- On 25 February 1988, the Commission considered Genstar's plans, including a proposal to develop a neighbourhood park within some of Genstar's ALR holdings. The Commission allowed the requested park development, including deposit of  $\pm 12,000$  m<sup>3</sup> of fill, "on the understanding that measures will be taken to effectively manage the watercourses and drainages within the property and on surrounding lands (including the upland subdivision) so as to avoid detrimental effects on agriculture." The Commission subsequently authorized deposit of each subdivision plan adjoining or partially within the ALR.
- On 31 March 1989, following expressions of concern from Albion Flats farmers over potential for flooding of farmland (in addition to flooding already resulting from development of Genstar lands), the Commission agreed in principle with an application by DMR to carry out a variety of commercial, recreational and special events including agricultural fairground activities on its property on the southeast side of 105 Avenue in accordance with a sketch plan [see Appendix 6] and subject to the following conditions:
  - 1) The commitment of DMR to carry out fill and drainage works in a manner that will ensure there is no negative impact on adjacent ALR lands. This will involve informing adjacent land owners and the Dyking District of the details of the fill and drainage plans prior to implementation. Every effort should be made on the part of DMR to mitigate impacts such as flooding along Spencer Creek and increased surface run-off as the filling activity progresses over time.



- 2) The approved land uses must comply with the existing zoning and be in accordance with the sketch plan with the following provisos:
    - a) While the Commission endorses the agricultural focus of the fairground development it is essential that special and entertainment events not directly related to agriculture be contained, as much as possible, within the fairground buildings.
    - b) The campground component is endorsed by the Commission provided its operation is directly linked to major events held on the site. The Commission does not wish to see a full-time campground operation that caters to non-fairground related participants.
    - c) In regard to the proposed sportsfield area, the Commission notes that this development is to be phased in at some future time, thus in advance of any filling activity taking place on this area, the Commission requests that DMR make these lands available for agricultural purposes on a lease/rental basis until such time as the sportsfield development occurs. The Commission notes that the land designated as sports fields possesses good quality agricultural soils that will benefit from drainage improvements. It would not be out of character with adjacent land uses to encourage the agricultural use of these lands as an interim measure.
  - 3) Due to increased traffic flows and the planned improvements and intensity of use, landscaping and fencing must be established along 105 Avenue so as to reduce the potential for conflict with adjacent agricultural lands. DMR is encouraged to consult with the property owners and report back to the Commission to identify concerns and propose a buffering plan that is mutually beneficial.
- On 05 April 1989, the Commission considered a homesite severance application from the owner of the 8.1 ha farm parcel immediately adjoining Genstar. The Commission refused to allow a 1.0 ha severance, but agreed to allow either a 0.6 ha severance or a boundary adjustment with the neighbouring 16.6 ha farm with all but the requested 1.0 ha homesite parcel being consolidated to create a new 23.7 ha farm parcel. The subdivision did not proceed.
- On 29 October 1990, Maple Ridge Council considered an exclusion application toward the east end of the Albion Flats. Council forwarded the application to the Commission and endorsed a staff recommendation to review the District's existing policy on the Albion Flats. Following the Commission's review of that application, the Commission initially declined it, to allow time for its staff to review the Commission's policy on the Albion Flats.
- On 08 March 1993, the Commission considered the staff review. It was noted that the parcel toward the east end of the Albion Flats was of low agricultural capability whereas two large farms northwest of 105 Avenue have agricultural capability ratings of Class 1 to Class 3. Flooding problems in that area were being reported, and the farmers alleged that the water contained pollutants. The Ministry of Environment reported that Genstar had installed a high capacity pump, and suggested that the problem may be lack of maintenance by the Road 13 Dyking District. The farms northwest of 105 Avenue also documented weed infestation from the row of 1.0 to 1.7 ha ALR lots across Spencer Creek. The Commission resolved to advise Maple Ridge Council that it was prepared to work with the District in preparing a land use and development plan for the Albion Flats which considers the following:
1. Appropriate agricultural and agricultural-related uses, including possible restrictions on intensive agricultural uses, and an appropriate range of agricultural/commercial and agricultural/industrial uses and appropriate locations for these uses in the Albion Flats;
  2. Appropriate mitigation and management measures to address the problems of urban stormwater runoff from the surrounding urban area and uncontrolled weed growth; and
  3. Appropriate site planning standards.
- On 01 February 1994, the Commission considered an amended fairgrounds development plan submitted by Maple Ridge partially in response to the foregoing Commission offer. The new plan changed the focus from agriculturally related recreation to team sports related recreation, nevertheless the Commission considered that the new focus was compatible with the original intent of the 1989 agreement in principle. The Commission approved the application subject to

1. the submission of a drainage plan prepared with the cooperation of adjacent farm operators, that ensures an enhanced drainage system for the Albion Flats and that includes the institution of an ongoing maintenance program by the municipality which addresses upstream and downstream drainage issues including the drainage and water quality concerns of agriculture;
  2. the installation of perimeter fencing and fencing/landscaped buffering [per schedule D.6 of the Commission's published *Landscape Buffer specifications*] along the fairgrounds' boundary sufficient to meet the trespass concerns of adjacent farm operators;
  3. the submission of an irrevocable letter of credit or bond (value to be determined subsequent to the submission of a revised drainage plan) in favour of the Commission to ensure implementation of the drainage plan and the installation of fencing and buffering;
  4. development of the fairgrounds site being in substantial compliance with the sketch plan previously submitted by the District. **See Appendix 6.**
- On 20 February 1995 DMR requested reconsideration of the Commission's decisions on Albion Flats land uses in order to allow a building to house DMR's Search and Rescue team's offices, training facility and equipment storage. On 10 March 1995, the Commission conditionally approved a new drainage plan, the proposed search and rescue facility and a four-rink arena facility in lieu of a previously approved community gymnasium. The conditions were:
1. DMR must ensure that sufficient detention capacity is provided to deal with runoff during construction of the fairgrounds facilities and the permanent drainage works;
  2. DMR must submit a 3-part written undertaking in favour of the Commission, stating that
    - a. DMR will address any negative drainage impacts on the Albion Flats ALR that may arise from DMR's undertakings in the Spencer Creek drainage area,
    - b. DMR will ensure that the Maple Ridge Fair Board has access in perpetuity to facilities necessary to hold an agricultural fair on an annual basis on the fairgrounds property, and
    - c. DMR will ensure that a farmers market will be a permitted use on at least a seasonal basis on the fairgrounds in perpetuity; and
  3. any further change to the approved Maple Ridge Fairgrounds development plan as amended by this decision will require a new application. **See Appendix 7.**
- On 12 October 1996, following action by the provincial government to accord the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) *Livable Region Strategic Plan* (LRSP) the status of a regional growth strategy, GVRD and the Commission entered into an implementation agreement calling for consultation on a number of issues, notably exclusion applications which would (in the view of the Commission) have a significant effect on the LRSP and its "Green Zone".
- On 17 November 1997 the Commission received a presentation on Maple Ridge's draft Rural Plan, the northeastern part of which are still under discussion. With respect to the Albion Flats, the Commission confirmed its 1993 comments and the promise to consider agri-industrial uses.
- On 23 July 1998, the Commission considered its 1993 position on a suitable land use and development plan for the Albion Flats in the context of the Maple Ridge Rural Plan. It was concluded that in the area southeast of 105 Avenue, four areas should be considered for exclusion and one for retention in the ALR. The areas for exclusion would be
1. The Genstar neighbourhood park lands, including an area in which the Commission had authorized subdivided lands and a collector road encroaching slightly into the ALR;
  2. the 5.5 ha parcel initially declined on 29 October 1990;
  3. the 25.2 ha fairgrounds block; and
  4. the 29.0 ha southeast block, consisting of all ALR lands south of the south boundaries of 2. and 3. above.
- The area for retention in the ALR would be the area fronting the Lougheed Highway north and west of area 4.
- DMR depicted these areas on a drawing dated 18 January 1999. **See Appendix 8.**



- On 01 October 1999, Maple Ridge presented the Commission with an Albion Flats concept plan (dated 18 January 1999). The Commission endorsed the plan itself but disagreed with the proposal to exclude the entire agri-Industrial area from the ALR; rather the area for retention in the ALR (as proposed by the Commission in 1998) would remain in the ALR but be made available for agri-Industrial development within the ALR by non-farm use applications, decisions on which the Commission was willing to delegate to the District of Maple Ridge. The two plans for the area southeast of 105 Avenue remain current. **See Appendix 9.**
- On 23 October 2000, the Commission allowed an application to exclude a parcel fronting 240 Street, given that only the rear half of the property was in the ALR and the exclusion was in accordance with the endorsed concept plan.
- On 16 February 2005, the Commission allowed a similar application, but on the same day refused a four-parcel exclusion application which would have had a significant effect on the LRSP Green zone. Further exclusions under the 1999 concept plan were delayed pending replacement of the LRSP by a new regional growth strategy.
- On 24 October 2006, Maple Ridge adopted a new Official Community Plan (OCP). It called for the development of more detailed policies for Albion Flats following completion of an Agricultural Plan.
- On 11 January 2010, following completion of the Maple Ridge Agricultural Plan, Council directed its staff to proceed with an area plan for Albion Flats in consultation with the Commission.
- On 14 July 2010, Council engaged consultants to conduct a Charette process for the Albion Flats Concept Study.
- On 22 March 2011, following a Charette process which produced a number of options, Council endorsed "revised Scenario 2" for public information.
- On 02 May 2011, Council endorsed a Draft Albion Flats Concept Plan for the purpose of submission to the Commission and asked for a meeting with the Commission to review and discuss the plan. The submission was then delivered to the Commission, containing
  - i. a covering letter requesting Commission written commentary and direction regarding any requirements attached to future approvals;
  - ii. the draft Albion Flats Concept Plan;
  - iii. seven background reports;
  - iv. charette primer;
  - v. Albion Flats Charette Summary Report;
  - vi. public feedback August to December 2010 and outcomes of the 30 March 2011 public open house; and
  - vii. all related staff reports, appendices and attachments.
- On 04 July 2011, Commission chair Richard Bullock, Commission vice-chair Sylvia Pranger, and Commission staff Brian Underhill and Tony Pellett held a workshop meeting with DMR Council and staff to review and discuss the plan. At the meeting, DMR provided an overview of potential agricultural benefits and offsets which would derive from implementation of the draft Albion Flats Concept Plan. The correspondence pertaining to the workshop meeting and a copy of the agricultural options discussion paper are provided at the end of the body of this staff report, immediately before the Appendices.
- On 29 July 2011, the Metro Vancouver board of directors adopted a new regional growth strategy, superseding the LRSP. The Albion Flats is no longer in a "Green Zone", but is a "Special Study Area", simplifying the process for implementing a plan for the Albion Flats.

## **PRIMARY ISSUES:**

- The draft Albion Flats Concept Plan differs significantly from the concept agreed 01 October 1999. That plan envisaged agricultural uses being supported northwest of 105 Avenue in conjunction with resolution of issues around flooding and weed control. The current plan is based on the concept that agriculture cannot be protected as originally envisaged; therefore the ALR should be removed from the Albion Flats in its entirety.
- In the package of reports is a storm servicing requirement report. It illustrates that the pumping station is near the point where Spencer Creek flows into Kanaka Creek. In other words it is at the low end of the drainage system, reinforcing the comments made by farmers that the flow limitations in the creek contribute to the flooding on the lower fields, when storm water from the upland subdivision and from the areas filled to higher elevations for recreation facilities cannot move downstream fast enough. **See Appendix 10.**
- The *Maple Ridge Agricultural Area Planning Situation Analysis: 2008 Update* (quoted in the Golder Associates Overview Agricultural Assessment forming part of the package of reports) notes, "Agricultural drainage in the Albion Flats is problematic even though the area has drainage improvements from a dyke system in the area. Unimpeded drainage from upland development is leading to more storm water draining onto the agricultural flood plain faster with higher peak flows. In addition, elevations surrounding non-agricultural land use in the Albion flats floodplain have been raised relative to the agricultural land. The agricultural land, with the lowest elevation, is now the recipient of the displaced storm water and not effectively served by the disrupted drainage system.  
"The effects of the deteriorated storm water drainage system on agricultural cropping include inability to grow perennial crops due to flooding, later spring seeding, higher water tables leading to difficult field operations during the growing season, early fall saturation resulting in the inability to harvest crops."
- By anecdotal and personal communications, farmers have advised that the field adjoining 105 Avenue has sunk to the point that it can no longer be effectively farmed, but a "back" field (farther to the north) still produces well. The main problem with the back field is that it can be accessed only across the front field, which is impassible when flooded—thus grasses have gone to seed and lost most of their beef conversion value by the time they can be fully harvested. The attached AECOM drawing has been annotated to show the locations of the front and back fields. **See Appendix 10.**
- The other area proposed in 1999 for retention in the ALR is the row of 1.0 to 1.7 ha lots lying between Loughheed Highway and Spencer Creek. In expectation of commercial development opportunities, most of these lots have been acquired by a single company, thus there is a possibility that if the land is not converted to commercial use, lots could be consolidated or used together to provide a greater range of agricultural options. The Golder Associates Overview Agricultural Assessment points out that many of these lots have disturbed areas consisting primarily of former building sites, thus reclamation would be required, in some cases requiring the importation of suitable quality soils from other sites. Alternatively, if some or all of these sites were developed for non-farm use, the surface soils could be removed for reclaiming other disturbed sites or to improve agricultural fields on other ALR lands.
- The Golder Associates Overview Agricultural Assessment also discusses the potential for improving agricultural productivity on the 24.7 ha area of active agriculture. Although there is little prospect of irrigation, "with a properly functioning on-farm drainage system (subsurface drains with an adequate outlet) and proper soil management practices such as timely cultivation and periodic subsoiling, it is expected that the mapped improved agricultural capability ratings [prime land ranging from Class 1 to Class 3] can be achieved."
- The G.P. Rollo & Associates study of socio-economic trends (executive summary attached as **Appendix 11**) points out that investment in transportation infrastructure has dramatically improved regional access to DMR. With the enhanced connectivity to the rest of Metro Vancouver, an increase in development activity for all types of land uses is expected in DMR.



The DMR population is forecast to grow by 74% to 84% over the next 35 years, meaning that additional retail and public amenities will be required beyond the Town Centre. DMR as a whole is commercially underserved and East DMR is particularly underserved. The study comments that if commercial development were to proceed on the Kwantlen Lands (Indian Reserve land between 5 and 6 km east of 240 Street along the Lougheed Highway), DMR would lose potential tax revenue from new retailers and current tax revenue from retailers relocating. DMR would also lose control over project design and size. **See Appendix 12**, showing downtown Maple Ridge, the Albion Flats, the Kwantlen Lands and non-ALR land adjacent to the Kwantlen Lands. (For context, it also shows the Kwantlen home base on nearby McMillan Island.) It is  $\pm 5$  km from downtown Maple Ridge to the northwest end of the Albion Flats; the Albion Flats front the Lougheed Highway for  $\pm 5$  km, it is a further  $\pm 5$  km to the Kwantlen Lands, and it is a further  $\pm 3$  km to the end of the adjoining non-ALR lands. Also see **Appendix 12A** showing the "bigger picture" including proposed non-farm use designations in the Pitt Meadows *North Lougheed Land Use Study* to which the study makes reference.

- The HB Lanarc environmental baseline report provides a thorough review of environmental constraints and opportunities. Note the attached Figure 10 (**Appendix 13**) which shows the effect on the availability of land for non-farm development as a result of Streamside Protection Regulation setbacks. Apart from areas the Commission has already endorsed for non-farm development in the Albion Flats area, the area most suited to substantial non-farm development is a portion of the "front field" discussed above and illustrated in **Appendix 10**.
- The G.P. Rollo & Associates analysis of land use demands (executive summary attached as **Appendix 14**) found "significant merits for a range of land uses to be included at the Albion Flats". The analysis reviewed options for commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational and residential development.
- The Charette produced four scenarios, two of which included agriculture. Council also received two alternative scenarios from a group named "Residents for Smart Shopping". All six scenarios are attached. **See Appendices 15 through 19**.
- After considering the several scenarios and other public input, Council directed that revisions be made to Charette Scenario Two (originally entitled "Jobs & Auto-Oriented Commercial"). That is the draft Concept Plan before the Commission for consideration. **See Appendix 20**.

### **STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The Albion Flats is isolated from other DMR agricultural areas; in 1998 the Commission agreed to exclude much of it from the ALR; and of the area proposed for retention in the ALR only two parcels (totalling 24.7 ha) exceed 2.1 ha—and roughly half the area of those two parcels has been debilitated by increasing flood events. Given those facts, consideration needs to be given to deciding to what extent agricultural lands will be retained in the Albion Flats.
- In the work done in 1998 and 1999, the Commission envisaged the possibility of reserving an area fronting the Lougheed Highway southeast of 105 Avenue for agri-industrial development within the ALR. Agri-industrial development now appears unlikely to seek that area. **It is recommended** that regardless of the outcome of the Albion Flats Concept Plan, the Commission advise Maple Ridge that the entire area southeast of 105 Avenue is considered appropriate for exclusion from the ALR.
- Some of the reports submitted by DMR speak to the need to improve drainage, but do not fully address the question of whether it is possible to do so without the full cooperation of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. In addition, anecdotal advice from farmers has raised the issue that actions by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (notably changing a floodgate to retain more water and fostering canary grass in the ditches) may be preventing restoration of an adequate outlet. **It is recommended** that the Commission ask DMR to engage (possibly with Commission staff) in discussion with Fisheries and Oceans Canada regarding ways in which effective agricultural drainage and fish habitat protection can both be assured.

- Some of the reports submitted by DMR make a link between the Albion Flats planning decision and the planning decision to be reached on the Pitt Meadows *North Lougheed Land Use Study* (where the Commission has agreed to a location for a new road which will have major benefits to the farm community, but which may isolate an area of Class 2 land which is attractive for commercial or industrial development, thus some or all of the road building cost may be borne by the prospective developers—the same prospective developers as for the Albion Flats). **It is recommended** that the Commission consider the regional as well as the local context of the draft Albion Flats Concept Plan, bearing in mind that the Commission will be considering the North Lougheed Land Use Study at a later date, following discussions with Pitt Meadows.
- Regarding the issue of debilitation of much of the remaining Albion Flats farmland, the BACKGROUND report shows that for over twenty years the Commission has consistently informed DMR of its concern over the need to deal with the agricultural drainage issue. If the Commission believes that the "front field" has deteriorated due to inadequate drainage, consideration should be given to non-farm designation, exclusion from the ALR, or retention and remediation.
- If the Commission does not endorse the concept plan direction, **It is recommended** that the Commission consider what would constitute remediation, such as
  - construction of an all-weather access to the "back field" for use during remediation of the "front field", and
  - making use of topsoil being stripped for any of the endorsed non-farm uses elsewhere in the Albion Flats.
- If the Commission concludes that agriculture is possible at Albion Flats but that the "front field" or other lands cannot be preserved, **It is recommended**
  - that the "back field" be designated appropriately and retained in the ALR,
  - that agricultural development be encouraged by requiring removal of the most northerly road cross-link and three business offices shown on the concept plan,
  - that the Commission consider whether it should be a requirement that the northern part of the "auto-oriented regional serving retail" area be rehabilitated and consolidated with the "back field", and
  - that rehabilitation should include the use of topsoil being stripped for any of the non-farm uses proposed elsewhere in the Albion Flats, including soil from the "front field".



Tony Pellett, Regional Planner  
South Coast Region





Deep Roots  
Greater Heights

November 16, 2009

File No: 6520-20/ALBI

RECEIVED  
PROV. AGRICULTURAL  
LAND COMMISSION NOV 18 2009

Agricultural Land Commission  
#133 - 4940 Canada Way  
Burnaby, B.C. V5G 4K6

Dear Sir/Madam:

Re: Albion Flats

At an open meeting on November 9, 2009, Municipal Council received a staff report dated November 5, 2009 outlining the process to undertake an Area Plan for the Albion Flats.

The following resolution was adopted:

That Maple Ridge Council and District staff meet with representatives of the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) to ascertain whether the ALC is prepared to consider exclusions in Area A, Albion Flats.

Hence, I will be contacting your office shortly to assist in making the necessary arrangements.

Yours truly,

Ceri Marlo  
Manager, Legislative Services

/dd





**Agricultural Land Commission**

133 – 4940 Canada Way  
Burnaby, British Columbia V5G 4K6  
Tel: 604 660-7000  
Fax: 604 660-7033  
[www.alc.gov.bc.ca](http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca)

January 7, 2010

Ceri Marlo  
Manager, Legislative Services  
District of Maple Ridge  
11995 Haney Place  
Maple Ridge, BC V2X 6A9

Dear Ms. Marlo:

Re: Albion Flats, Your File No: 6520-20/ALBI  
Our File No: O-26551

Reference is made to your letter of November 16, 2009, advising that Council is in the process of considering its approach to advancing an area plan review for the Albion Flats area of Maple Ridge. The Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) understands that Council is requesting a meeting with representatives of the ALC to ascertain whether it is prepared to consider exclusions in Area A, Albion Flats.

The Commission appreciates the request by Council, and wishes to advise that it would not be appropriate for the South Coast Panel of the Commission to discuss the matter of whether land within the ALR may be considered for exclusion in advance of an application being determined under the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*, or in advance of a land use planning exercise. The Commission understands that since the early 1990s there has been periodic review, discussion and correspondence with the District about Albion Flats in the context of ALR applications and District led planning studies resulting in the establishment of land use policy direction being provided by the Commission. Future discussions in a planning process context could lead to the development of some further policy direction on the part of the Commission that may be of assistance to Council and in this regard, we suggest that Council may wish to consider moving forward with its area plan which would provide an opportunity for involvement of Commission staff and a process to determine whether the Commission believes the plan is consistent with the purpose and intent of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*.

If Council believes it would be of assistance to discuss how the Commission's staff could participate in the process of developing an area plan for Albion, it is prepared to make its senior staff available to meet with Council and District staff to discuss the current land use policy direction and explore the opportunities for collaboration. We look forward to hearing from you at your convenience. Please contact Brian Underhill, Executive Director who would be pleased to assist in making the arrangements as appropriate.

Yours truly,

PROVINCIAL AGRICULTURAL LAND COMMISSION

Per:

Erik Karlsen, Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erik Karlsen', is written over the printed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.



Office of the Mayor

May 4, 2011

Mr. Richard Bullock, Chair  
Agricultural Land Commission  
133-4940 Canada Way  
Burnaby, BC V5G 4K6

Re: Draft Concept Plan for the Albion Flats  
Your File No: 0-26551

Dear Mr. Bullock:

As the Commission is aware, in January 2010, the District of Maple Ridge commenced a study of the Albion Flats, and at that time sent a letter to the Agricultural Land Commission requesting a meeting between Maple Ridge Council and the Commission. In a letter dated January 7, 2010, the Commission advised that it would not be appropriate to meet at that time, and suggested that Maple Ridge proceed with its area planning process, noting that Commission staff would be available to participate.

Over the last year, Maple Ridge Council has been working with the community in the creation of a draft Concept Plan for the Albion Flats. As a component of this work, our Chief Administrative Officer has spoken with Mr. Brian Underhill to discuss the project. During these discussions Mr. Underhill mentioned that the Commission would be prepared to consider meeting with the District to review and provide comment on the Albion Concept Plan if that was the wish of the District. Council appreciates the opportunity to have a conversation regarding this key area of Maple Ridge.

Maple Ridge Council is very interested in discussing the Albion Concept Plan with the Commission and receiving your comments.

On behalf of our Council, I respectfully request that the Agricultural Land Commission convene a meeting with our Council and staff to review and discuss the Albion Flats Concept Plan and the information contained in the Agricultural Options Discussion Paper. We also request that the Commission provide written commentary on the Concept Plan after we have had the opportunity to meet and discuss the Plan with the Commission.

In order to assist the Commission with your review of the draft Concept Plan, I have attached a copy of the staff report that was presented to a Council Workshop meeting dated May 2, 2011, that provides an excellent background. A copy of the Council Resolution from that meeting is attached. The following materials also form part of this submission:

- I: The draft Albion Flats Concept Plan;
- II. All Background Reports prepared for the charrette including:

.../2

District of Maple Ridge

11995 Haney Place, Maple Ridge, British Columbia V2X 6A9 CANADA

Telephone: 604-463-5221 • Fax: 604-467-7329 • Email: [enquiries@mapleridge.org](mailto:enquiries@mapleridge.org) • [www.mapleridge.org](http://www.mapleridge.org)

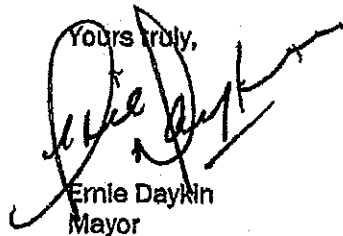


MAY 5, 2011

- o the Albion Flats Storm and Sanitary Off-site Servicing Requirements (AECOM September 2010)
  - o Existing Traffic Conditions and Potential Impacts (Urban Systems, September 2010)
  - o Albion Flats Development Water Servicing Summary (Kerr Wood Leldel, September 2010)
  - o Overview Agricultural Assessment (Golder Associated, September 16, 2010)
  - o Maple Ridge Socio-Economic Trends and Implications for the Future of Albion Flats (G.P. Rollo & Associates, September 2010)
  - o Albion Flats Environmental Baseline Report (HB Lanarc)
  - o Analysis of Land Use Demands and Implications for the Albion Flats (G.P. Rollo & Associates, September 2010);
- III. *Charrette Primer, prepared by HB Lanarc (October 20, 2010);*
- IV. *Albion Flats Charrette Summary Report, prepared by HB Lanarc (February 3, 2011);*
- V. *Public Feedback Received During the Albion Flats Planning Process, August – December 2010, prepared by HB Lanarc and outcomes of the March 30, 2011 Public Open House;*
- VI. *All related staff reports, appendices and attachments; and*
- VII. *Staff report dated January 10, 2011, and entitled "Financial Support for Agriculture" and related Council Resolution.*

We are looking forward to meeting with the Commission and your staff to discuss the Albion Concept Plan. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please follow up with Jim Rule, our Chief Administrative Officer.

Yours truly,



Ernie Daykin  
Mayor

enclosure

cc Maple Ridge Council  
Jim Rule, Chief Administrative Officer, District of Maple Ridge  
Frank Quinn, General Manager Public Works & Development, District of Maple Ridge  
Paul Gill, General Manager Corporate & Finance, District of Maple Ridge  
Kelly Swift, General Manager Community Development Parks & Recreation, District of Maple Ridge  
Brian Underhill, Executive Director, Agricultural Land Commission



**Agricultural Land Commission**  
133-4940 Canada Way  
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June 23, 2011

Reply to the attention of Tony Pellett

Sent via eMail: [edaykin@mapleridge.ca](mailto:edaykin@mapleridge.ca)

Mayor Ernie Daykin  
District of Maple Ridge  
11995 Haney Place  
Maple Ridge, British Columbia, V2X 6A9

Dear Mayor Daykin:

Re: Draft Concept Plan for Albion Flats  
ALC File# 26651

Further to receipt of the draft Concept Plan for Albion Flats on May 6, 2011, please be advised that the plan and background information is being reviewed. To assist the Agricultural Land Commission in gaining a broader understanding of the background associated with this planning initiative, we invite you and members of council and staff to meet with representatives of the ALC.

A meeting has been scheduled in the afternoon of July 4<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm in the Blaney Room at Maple Ridge Municipal Hall.

Attached for your information is a copy of an Agenda for the meeting.

We look forward to meeting with you, your council and staff to gain a broader understanding of your Concept Plan.

Yours truly,

PROVINCIAL AGRICULTURAL LAND COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Underhill', is written over a horizontal line.

Brian Underhill, Executive Director



**Meeting between the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission and  
District of Maple Ridge Regarding the draft Concept Plan for Albion Flats  
July 4, 2011, 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm  
Blanney Room, Maple Ridge Municipal Hall**

**Attendees:** Richard Bullock, Chair, Agricultural Land Commission (ALC)  
Sylvia Pranger, Commissioner, ALC  
ALC Staff: Tony Pellett, Eamonn Watson, Brian Underhill

**Invited:** Mayor Ernie Daykin and Members of Council, District of Maple Ridge (DMR)  
Maple Ridge CAO Jim Rule and staff

**Agenda**

1. Introductions and purpose of meeting (ALC)
2. Overview of draft concept plan by Mayor and Maple Ridge staff (DMR)
3. Questions and discussion (ALC and DMR)
4. Next steps (ALC)
5. Adjournment



### Agricultural Options Discussion Paper

At the February 14, 2011 Workshop, Council gave consideration to the Albion Flats Charrette Summary Report prepared by HB Lanarc and directed that Scenario 2, Jobs and Auto Oriented Commercial be revised to include some of the elements contained in Scenarios 1 and 4, and that information on alternative agricultural activities and off-sets be provided. This was reiterated in a report reviewed at the March 14, 2011 Council Workshop.

The following provides an overview of alternative agricultural activities, and agricultural off-sets explored by others through a review of exclusion applications. Those applications and Agricultural Land Commission decisions identify the agricultural offsets that have been considered by the Commission to date, and provides a starting point for the District in discussing the offsets that may be applicable to Albion Flats. They also provide an insight into factors that affect ALC decisions. Some ideas related to "alternative" agricultural practices are also provided.

### Background Context

The policies of the District's 2006 Official Community Plan and 2009 Agricultural Plan discuss agricultural off-sets. Section 6.2.2 of the Official Community Plan contains policies relating to support for sustainable agriculture in the community. Policy 6-12 commits the District to protecting the productivity of its agricultural land by adopting a principle of having a "positive benefit to agriculture" when making land use decisions that could affect the agricultural land base. The policies specifically state that favourable recognition should be given to supportive non-farm uses, infrastructure improvements for farmland, or the inclusion of land elsewhere in the Agricultural Land Reserve. That policy reads as follows:

*Maple Ridge will protect the productivity of its agricultural land by:*

- a) Adopting a guiding principal of "positive benefit to agriculture" when making land use decisions that could affect the agricultural land base, with favourable recognition of initiatives including but not limited to supportive non-farm uses, infrastructure improvements for farmland, or the inclusion of land elsewhere in the Agricultural Land Reserve;*
- b) requiring agricultural Impact assessments (AIAs) and Groundwater Impact Assessment of non-farm development and infrastructure projects and identifying measures to off-set impacts on agricultural capability;*
- c) preserving larger farm units and areas by using appropriate buffers such as roads, topographic features, watercourses, ditching, fencing, or gradually reduced residential densities on properties adjacent to agricultural land;*
- d) discouraging the subdivision of agricultural land into smaller parcels, except where positive benefits to agriculture can be demonstrated;*
- e) reinforcing the concept that the Agricultural Land Reserve is intended for agricultural use by increasing the minimum lot size for ALR properties that are zoned Rural Residential;*

- f) *encouraging the amalgamation of smaller parcels of farmland into larger, more cohesive parcels.*

### Environmental Conservation Areas

If urban development occurs on the Albion Flats, dedication will be required for the watercourse setback areas. The required dedication will exceed the amount currently protected on the portions of the study area that are used for agricultural purposes.

Questions have been raised regarding the impact of farming on watercourses and other sensitive areas. These questions include discussion about whether the right to farm supercedes environmental legislation, and it appears that under Federal legislation, environmental protection measures take precedence. Fortunately, when situations have arisen where a conflict may arise, the various agencies and municipality have been able to arrive at a satisfactory solution. Section 6.7d) of the Official Community Plan states that the District will promote sustainable agriculture and encourage farmers to implement Environmental Farm Plans. Provincial and Federal grants are available to assist farmers wishing to pursue these Plans.

Currently, the Agricultural Land Commission must approve all restrictive covenants within the Agricultural Land Reserve prior to being registered on title.

### Exclusion Applications

The following section of this paper summarizes 11 exclusion applications made in the Province within the last 5 years. The implications of these decisions have been summarized for convenience. In addition, large scale applications/proposals advanced by government agencies are summarized for their relevance to the Albion Flats Concept Plan process. Background information for the study area, previous applications and the agricultural assessment of the area are provided to explore further how the Commission may perceive a large scale exclusion application for this area.

### Pertinent Examples of Recent Exclusion Applications

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#### **Example 1 Simple Exclusion Application**

**Application #** 36981

**Decision date** 2007

**Place:** FVRD (Abbotsford)

**Proposal:** Exclude 5.0 hectares for residential development

**Compensation or Rationale:** Application made on the grounds that the site was not suitable for agriculture.

**Approval:** Application approved on the grounds that the site was not suitable for agriculture (steep slope)

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**Example 2 Exclusion Application with Off-Sets Of Inclusion.**

**Application # 45879**

**Decision date 2008**

**Place: FVRD**

**Proposal:** Exclude 1.0 ha, Include 1.0 ha to construct a monastery on the top of the knoll portion of the property. Subdivision of site from main parcel.

**Compensation or Rationale** Include 1.0 hectare on an adjacent property. Staff report notes stoniness and limited agricultural capability on the proposed building envelope portion of the site.

**Approval:** Allowed with conditions of Inclusion based on further refinements with survey and agrologist's recommendation

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**Example 3 Exclusion application with Off-Sets Of Inclusion and Securities Posted**

**Application # 51840**

**Decision date 2010**

**Place: Abbotsford**

**Proposal:** to exclude 8.1 ha of the 18.4 ha subject property for residential development.

**Compensation or Rationale:** Abbotsford Council supported exclusion application on the condition that the applicants "(a) provide a Letter of Credit for \$525,000 to secure for the rehabilitation of the subject property" to a good agricultural capability, (b) inclusion of the 16.6 ha property (33205 Bell Road) into the ALR and (c) "registration of a Section 219 "right to farm" covenant on title of the lands to be excluded".

**Approval:** Approved with conditions of inclusion of over 26 hectares (the proposed 16.6 ha property along with the remainder of the original subject property) within the ALR and \$625,000 securities posted for reclamation works

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**Example 4 Agricultural Offsets Not Accepted.**

**Application # 51764**

**Decision date 2010**

**Place: Township of Langley**

**Proposal:** To exclude one property of 15.19 ha from the ALR for urban development and future growth of Aldergrove. An off-setting Inclusion application in Abbotsford is tied to the proposal.

**Compensation or Rationale:** The Langley Township Council supported the application for exclusion as "the proposal allows for the expansion of the Aldergrove Community Plan area in accordance with the Township's Official Community Plan and overall Township growth management objectives. The staff report recommended that Council support the application.

**Approval:** Denied on the basis that the exclusion would encourage speculation in the area. Commitment to include land in Abbotsford was considered. Concluded that while the inclusion would mean no net loss of agricultural land, the impacts of the exclusion on the surrounding area would be negatively affected.

---

**Example 5 Innovative Development Proposal**

**Application # 51784**

**Decision date 2010**

**Place: FVRD (Cultus Lake, Lindel Beach Area)**

**Proposal:** Exclude 1.7 ha for bare land strata recreational cottages to form part of a larger planned "agriculture bare land strata development".



**Compensation or Rationale:** Registration of a restrictive covenant on 2.4 ha of non-ALR Lands for agricultural uses only. The remaining ALR lands and restrictive covenant lands are proposed to become common property of all strata lot owners within the development.

**Approval:** Approved with conditions of substantial compliance to propose as submitted, the registration of covenant to ensure agricultural uses only in perpetuity on the site plan portion designated for hobby farm, strata bylaws to include one full time staff maintenance position for this use.

### Unsuccessful Community Need Applications

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#### **Example 6 Church Development**

**Application #** 36982

**Decision date:** 2007

**Place:** Chilliwack

**Proposal:** 18 hectare exclusion application for church development

**Compensation or Rationale:** The application was made on the basis that the church and its congregation were in need of the facility. The ALC Staff report noted that no rigorous demonstration of community need was provided nor was an analysis of soils included with application.

**Approval:** Denied. Commission noted that a community needs argument "whether it be for residential, commercial, institutional, industrial purposes, etc must originate from the local government- not individual property owners. Community need arguments from local governments are to be based on local and regional planning assessments and supported by rigorous technical analysis before being considered by the Commission".

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#### **Example 7 Exclusion for Industrial Purposes.**

**Application #** 51725

**Decision date:** 2010

**Place:** Township of Langley (Gloucester)

**Proposal:** to exclude 8 properties located north and west of the Gloucester Industrial Park totalling 14.6 ha from the ALR, in order to facilitate their development as industrial land.

**Compensation or Rationale:** Application was made after an "Employment Lands Study" was completed. The Study determined the amount of land required to meet the objectives of the Township of Langley's OCP goal. The report concluded that demand was for 810 acres (327 ha) over 25 years with supply of 930 acres (376 ha) currently identified in Community Neighbourhood Plans.

**Approval:** Denied on the basis of negative impacts to agriculture, and that a community need argument was not supportable based on background research.

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#### **Example 8 Exclusion by Municipality for Commercial Purposes.**

**Application #** 51602

**Decision date:** 2010

**Place** Port Alberni

**Proposal** The municipality requested the removal from the ALR of a 1.6 ha area of city-owned property adjacent to an area approved in principle for removal from the ALR. Several applications regarding city owned land to allow development (RV Park or retail mall) have taken place previously. The Commission report noted that they had required several actions on the part of the city regarding the agricultural future of the land, and that many of these conditions had not been fulfilled. The Commission has already excluded three areas of land to facilitate retail development in this area.

**Compensation or Rationale:** An argument was advanced that the intended purchaser of the previously excluded area needed additional area for the proposed retail/commercial development as the demand for space had exceeded the initial area available.

**Approval:** Denied on the basis of negative impacts to agriculture.

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**Example 9 Exclusion Application by Property Owner for Industrial Development.**

**Application #** 51771

**Decision date:** 2010

**Place:** Maple Ridge (Peltons)

**Proposal:** Exclusion of 62.0 ha from the ALR for proposed industrial uses. 20.5 ha is proposed for non-farm uses, including community parks space, recreational trails, and small-scale agriculture uses.

**Compensation or Rationale:** The ALC Staff report noted that the proposal contained many factors which, if implemented, may provide a benefit to the agricultural community. These include: a contribution of \$5,000 to the Drainage Improvement Fund for each acre excluded from the ALR, the creation of an Ag Terminal to improve market opportunities to local farmers, a 3.0 ha area reserved as an "Incubator farm" available for lease to encourage new farmers, community gardens, a high-profile agricultural retail area, equestrian riding opportunities, agricultural processing facilities and other agricultural support services.

**Approval:** Denied on the basis that the proposal would have negative impacts in a prime agricultural area. The suitability of the site for the proposed use was recognized, however, the Commission did not feel its strategic location merited this loss of farmland.

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**Example 10 Reconsideration of an Exclusion Application by the Commission**

**Application #** 50333

**Decision date:** 2010

**Place:** Langley, BC.

**Proposal:** The original proposal was to exclude 3 small parcels (totaling 4.46 hectares) for urban residential development. The Commission supported in principle the subdivision of these lands, but denied the application on the basis that the buffering provisions made would be inadequate to protect adjacent agricultural lands.

**Approval:** In their reconsideration, the Commission reversed their decision.

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**Example 11 BC Wilderness Tours Inc.**

**Application #** ZZ-36735

**Decision date:** 2007

**Place:** Kamloops, BC

**Proposal:** to exclude from the ALR, 47 ha in Kamloops to build 320 single-family homes, 950 multi-family homes, 20,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of commercial space and to use 46.1 ha in the ALR for a golf course. The former Tranquille Health Care Institution was located on the property.

A previous decision made in 1989 given to the then Ministry of Crown Lands was to exclude 32 ha of land that encompassed the health facility and to use 10 ha for recreational use provided the recreational use did not encroach on adjacent agricultural land. The land was never excluded because the required fence and buffer were not established.

**Approval:** In July 2006 the application was refused as proposed. However, in light of the 1989 decision the Panel indicated it was prepared to consider a revised proposal that benefited

agriculture by more efficiently configuring agricultural fields and designing the urban uses and infrastructure in such a way as to not intrude on or impact the agricultural area of the property. A revised proposal was approved on the basis that the suitability of the ALR lands for farm use would be preserved or improved, and that the impact of the proposed non-farm uses would be mitigated and contained. The Panel required the development to proceed in phases to ensure the agricultural improvements associated with the project would be substantially completed in phase one. Agricultural improvements include the consolidation of the agricultural area into a single parcel, upgrading the irrigation infrastructure, securing water rights, repairing and constructing fences and vegetative screening, reclamation of debilitated lands associated with the Tranquille facility by removing derelict buildings and soil remediation.

### Summary Discussion

The 11 exclusion applications noted above illustrate the following:

1. The Commission does not use a simple formula in their decision making process.
2. The merits of an exclusion application are reviewed in light of the agricultural potential of the land. If a site is not found by the Commission to be suitable for agriculture, it may well be approved without requirements for compensation. Conversely, if a site is felt to have good agricultural potential, the application may be denied even if compensation is offered in exchange.
3. The Commission staff reports detail the history of a site and pertinent previous applications that may have occurred on the site or within its vicinity.
4. Community need arguments are evaluated on the basis of defensible supporting evidence.
5. Context is an important consideration in evaluating agricultural impacts. The Commission appears to be especially concerned about applications occurring on properties that are within large farming areas.
6. Under certain circumstances, the Commission does appear to accept innovative proposals, and will consider mechanisms such as restrictive covenants on non-ALR land to encourage certain types of agricultural practices.
7. Agricultural Off-sets may be considered, with measures such as the posting of securities to ensure land rehabilitation, or the inclusion of land elsewhere within the community. In the above example, the conversion ratio was 2 to 1 for inclusion to exclusion.
8. Generally, a Commission decision is effective in perpetuity and is recorded as a resolution. However, in some cases, the Commission will set a time limit for applicants to complete the requirements of their conditional approval. Failure on the part of the applicant to complete these requirements results in the application being closed and effectively denied.

### Large Scale Government Agency Applications

#### **Garden City Lands, Richmond**

The City of Richmond made an exclusion application of its Garden City Lands, which was a 136 acre site bounded by urban development. The Commission Panel was extended in this instance to include three additional members: the Commission Chair and a Commissioner each from the Island

and Okanagan panels. In addition to reviewing the application information, the Panel examined relevant parts of Richmond's Agricultural Viability Strategy and expressed concerns regarding the lack of information associated with the provisions of the Strategy. The municipality was pursuing the following agricultural enhancements:

1. Improved Bylaw Enforcement, Policy and Program
2. Improvements to Drainage and Irrigation in East Richmond
3. Minimize Effects of Small Lots on Agriculture
4. Discourage Uses Other than Bona Fide Agricultural Uses within the ALR
5. Promote Urban Agriculture

The Commission was prepared to engage further in dialogue but Richmond Council did not pursue the matter further. The application was refused as submitted. These lands remain in the ALR.

#### District of Mission

For its long range industrial development, The District of Mission indicated lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve as part of the Regional Growth Strategy of the Fraser Valley Regional District. It was understood that this initiative was for dialogue with the Commission, not for establishing land use decisions at that stage. In 2004, the District of Mission advanced this goal further by submitting a proposal to the Commission and for public comment. The proposal was to exclude 138 acres and include 102 acres within the Reserve (the inclusion would consolidate these lands to form a 200+ acre site).

The Commission responded in 2005, with a negative recommendation for the exclusion as proposed, but did provide the opportunity for additional dialogue. Thus far, this proposal has not been advanced further.

The Municipality gave Final Reading to its Official Community Plan in 2008 without proposing non-farm use of ALR lands except for minor road encroachments already approved through previous planning reviews.

#### The City of Abbotsford

In 2005, the City of Abbotsford was partially successful in its application (# MM - 35445) to exclude large tracts of land from the Agricultural Land Reserve for industrial development. The original proposal was to exclude 372 hectares. The Commission agreed to exclude 180 hectares and deferred their decision for 72 hectares. The staff report for this application notes that the municipality had been engaged in dialogue with the Commission for this purpose since 1974. The intent of the exclusion was to respond to community need for economic development. For the lands that it agreed to exclude, the Commission imposed conditions to ensure that the subsequent development of these lands complied with the original proposal. In addition, the Commission sought measure related to protecting adjacent agricultural lands.

On its own initiative, Abbotsford established an Agricultural Enhancement Endowment Fund, which is being implemented as a "net benefit to agriculture" strategy. Through this process, developers of industrial properties in these excluded lands provide as a condition of rezoning funds towards agricultural productivity and research in the City. A non-profit society, The Abbotsford Community Foundation administers these funds and is recognized for its neutrality and history of managing trust funds that assist the City. The current amount being charged is \$20,000.00 per converted acre, and the municipality is reviewing this amount, which will likely increase.



### **Prince George Airport Logistics Park**

This proposal for exclusion involved 2 separate applications for exclusion for light industrial development:

#N-37662, involving 560 hectares, and

#N-37710, involving 128 hectares

The Integrated Land Management Bureau was involved in the larger application. In their consideration, the Commission noted that the loss of these lands was a negative impact to agriculture. However, the Commission also noted that the infrastructure improvements brought about by this development proposal could advance agricultural opportunities through improved transport of goods.

These applications were jointly allowed with the following conditions:

1. The Land Management Bureau was to include an equal or greater amount of land within the Agricultural Land Reserve within one year of the decision date;
2. The exclusion would take place once the rezoning, subdivision, and servicing provisions were completed on the site;
3. A development fund was to be established on the basis of \$5000.00 per acre of converted land;
4. The development fund was to be used for agricultural enhancement projects only;
5. A memorandum of understanding be established by the development fund's administrative body to ensure this intent was carried out.

### **Burnaby Big Bend (Application #59-0-30608)**

The City of Burnaby advanced an exclusion application in the Big Bend area within the context of a larger scale Agricultural Development Concept Plan for the Big Bend agricultural lands. The Plan included the conversion of some lands for industrial uses. In its review, the Commission concluded that the plan met the objectives of the Agricultural Land Commission and provided overall net benefits for agriculture.

The application was allowed subject to the following conditions:

1. Consolidation of the lands to remain in the Agricultural Land Reserve into 2 35 hectare parcels, with a habitat restoration area (including hawk habitat), a 7 hectare bog forest buffer and a legal parcel which encompasses the portion of the ALR within the proposed municipal parkway.
2. The submission for Commission approval of landscape buffer plans for the interface between the municipal parkway, the habitat restoration and protection areas and the agricultural land. These plans were to include fencing, vegetative screening and dykes and/or drainage ditches, in order to restrict access to adjacent agricultural lands.

3. Detailed drainage plans outlining the design for on-farm drainage, access to a fresh water supply, road access, cranberry bog construction, and site layout for farm and residential buildings.

#### **TimberWest at Campbell River Airport (Applications #I-37745 and #I-37430)**

This application involved an exclusion application of 166 hectares from the Agricultural Land Reserve. The purpose of the application was to provide an Industrial land supply near the Campbell River Airport, which was noted as a community need in the Campbell River Official Community Plan. To compensate for the loss of agricultural land, significant areas were made available for inclusion into the Land Reserve.

The application was allowed subject to the inclusion of 480 hectares into the Agricultural Land Reserve. This is a ratio of greater than 2:1.

#### **South Fraser Perimeter Road (Application #38321)**

This utility use application proposal was consistent with regional planning collaboration involving senior government agencies including the Commission over several years. It was intended to distribute car and truck traffic between major elements of the Pacific Gateway south of the Fraser River. It links the Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal, the Deltaport container terminal, and Industrial and port complexes along the Fraser River from Tilbury to Port Kells, with direct connections to the Golden Ears Bridge and the Pacific Highway truck route to the International boundary.

Commission requirements included:

1. adequate mitigation in response to farm development or operational problems arising from the construction or operation of the SFPR through the farm area, and
2. substantial enhancement to agriculture on adjacent lands where potential alienation of prime farmland was inevitable.

The application proposed transportation upgrades that would result in a total loss of farmland of approximately 90 Hectares. The submission proposed mitigation for directly affected farms and a substantial enhancement to agriculture in the form of an irrigation and drainage project to benefit most of Delta's farmland.

The Commission's conditional approval required a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure concerning implementation, a Province wide commitment that the Ministry would apply similar standards to its highway design, construction and maintenance on ALR lands, and mitigation measures made where lands had been damaged due to Provincial highway construction.

#### **c) Previous applications to the Agricultural Land Commission within the Albion Flats.**

As noted earlier, the Commission does give consideration to previous decisions made in an area as a component of an exclusion application. For that reason, information is provided on the history of ALR decisions in the Albion Flats.

#### **Planet Ice and Fairgrounds -- (1989)**

This non farm use application (AL/013/098) was to permit a variety of commercial recreation and special events within this site which remains within the Agricultural Land Reserve. The Commission's conditional approval (Resolution 129/89) contains the following:

1. A commitment by the District to carry out fill and drainage works in order to avoid negative impacts on adjacent ALR lands.
2. Compliance with the proposed CD-4-88 (Fairground) Zoning with the following provisions:
  - a. Special and entertainment events not directly related to agriculture are to be contained within the fairground buildings;
  - b. The permitted campgrounds are to be directly linked to agricultural events;
  - c. The lands designated as sports fields be used for agricultural purposes as an interim measure prior to being developed.
3. Installation of landscaping and fencing along 105th Avenue to reduce potential impacts on increased traffic flows on adjacent agricultural areas.
4. The District was encouraged to collaborate with property owners towards the development of a buffering plan, which was to be provided to the Commission.

#### Albion Flats Discussion 1993- 2000

This timeframe involved a lengthy dialogue between the District and the Commission. The most recent Commission consideration is appended to this report as Appendix B. It shows Commission support for the exclusion of a small area, for non-farm use approval to permit supportive non farm uses (agri-industrial) on another portion of the site, and the retention of the lands west of 105th within the Agricultural Land Reserve with all uses being consistent with the Commission mandate.

#### Recent Work 2010- Present

##### **Agricultural Assessment Report Summary**

The main points of the Agricultural Assessment report, prepared as background to the Albion Flats Concept Plan, are as follows:

1. The improved value of the properties to the West of 105th have greater agricultural capability, than the properties to the east of 105th.
2. Drainage improvements would be required in order for the properties to realize their full productive potential.
3. The fragmentation of the subject area into several smaller parcels was noted as a constraint affecting the suitability of these lands for agriculture.

These lands favourably in light of the fact that their agricultural suitability has been compromised.

#### Potential Offsets for the Albion Flats

If the Commission is agreeable to accepting measures that would support agriculture in exchange for the exclusion of these lands, it would be prudent to begin formulating ideas about potential items.

The District's Agricultural Plan would be a logical start for suggestions about potential off-sets.

### Agricultural Plan Recommendations

Adopted in December 2009, the Agricultural Plan established a number of goals for promoting and enhancing agriculture within the District. These goals include:

- Goal 1: Increase Access to Underutilized Agricultural Land
- Goal 2: Improve the Agricultural Knowledge Base of Farmers
- Goal 3: Improve the Agricultural Knowledge Base of the Consumer Public
- Goal 4: Develop the Local Distribution and Marketing System
- Goal 5: Protect the Agricultural Land Base
- Goal 6: Rehabilitate and Improve the Agricultural Infrastructure
- Goal 7: Develop Local Food System Infrastructure Capacity
- Goal 8: Increase the Diversity of Agricultural Activity
- Goal 9: Reduce Potential for Stress in the Agricultural-Residential Interface
- Goal 10: Minimize the Impact of Agriculture on the Environment
- Goal 11: Reduce Agriculture-Wildlife Conflicts
- Goal 12: Create a Regulatory Environment Friendly to Agriculture
- Goal 13: Protect and Enhance the Agricultural Context of the Agricultural Land Reserve

Many of these goals are cost effective, involving promotional, educational, and collaborative efforts with the Agricultural Advisory Committee, the local community and appropriate agencies. Some of these goals, most particularly Goal 6, require capital intensive investments that are beyond the scope of many property owners. Establishing levies on the conversion of agricultural land may be a means to achieve net agricultural benefits even where the loss of agricultural land is being contemplated. Goal 6 of the Agricultural Plan states:

*The primary goal with respect to larger established farming operations in Maple Ridge is to plan for their retention as farms, rather than watch them languish and deteriorate, so that the community can optimize the rewards and advantages of having agriculture in its midst. Limited to highly specific situations, the secondary goal (if the primary goal is not feasible) is to explore establishing a policy of compensation from development that enables funds to be generated and expended so that the net agricultural capability of the District is enhanced by investment elsewhere.*

Specific recommendations related to meeting this goal are as follows:

#### **Recommendations**

- a) Investigate a watershed-based surface and groundwater irrigation strategy;
- b) Where a need is identified, undertake a water supply inventory for lands in the Agricultural Land Reserve;
- c) Explore establishing a drainage and flood control levy;
- d) Require upland land owners and applicants to control storm water flows into the flood plain;

- e) Undertake a feasibility study of drainage and flood control to rehabilitate affected areas
- f) Continue to build relationship with the neighbouring municipality;
- g) Require compensation from unavoidable agricultural land conversion developments to be used to increase net agricultural capability in the District;
- h) Encourage the Agricultural Land Commission to enforce agreements entered into with proponents that allow applications to proceed on Agricultural Land Reserve land.

While many of these recommendations are related to agriculture throughout the District, they could be refined to apply to Albion Flats if Council wished. Further discussion with the Agricultural Advisory Committee may be warranted to clarify areas where funding could be best applied to enhance agriculture either in the District or in the Albion Flats area.

#### Alternative Approaches

Council has requested that this paper include discussion about possible alternative approaches that could be considered with the development of these lands for commercial and industrial purposes. Within a global context, there are numerous examples of higher intensity agricultural uses that can occur in a dense urban setting. Few are local in nature and most are smaller in scale eg. rooftop gardens, green roofs, local marketing, etc.

Within the Albion Flats context, less intensive urban agriculture practices are highly feasible. They could be in the form of edible landscapes, where community gardens, fruit trees, berry bushes, and fruiting vines could be installed in the landscaping of the lands. It is noted that there are small agricultural fields identified on the draft Concept Plan and fields of this size would accommodate uses such as this. Suggestions such as growing food on site that is utilized in a resident restaurant could also be considered.

There could be some potential for more intensive commercial agriculture on the site as well through means such as greenhouse structures on rooftops of the commercial/industrial buildings. There are advantages and disadvantages in any large concept like this one. These include value added and direct to the consumer opportunities, capital costs to the farmer are somewhat alleviated, proximity of land uses can generate conflict, tenure for an operation can be tenuous, and a lack of a proven track record of success.

Other considerations that could be considered "alternative" are:

- Leasing land to an educational institution for use in training young farmers;
- Supporting a demonstration farm where the public could learn about food production;
- Fostering a food hub which promotes and facilitates retail, wholesale, processing and storage of food in its raw and simplest state.

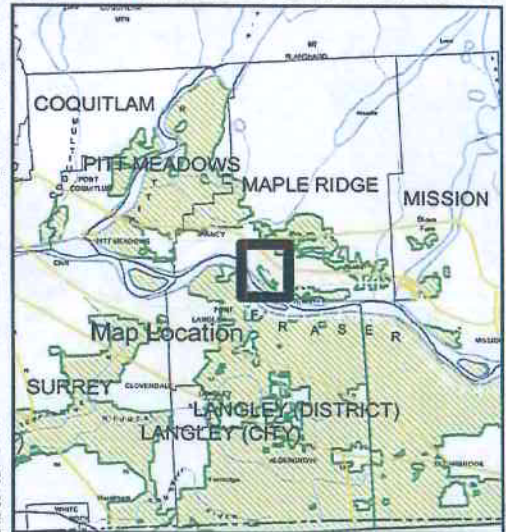
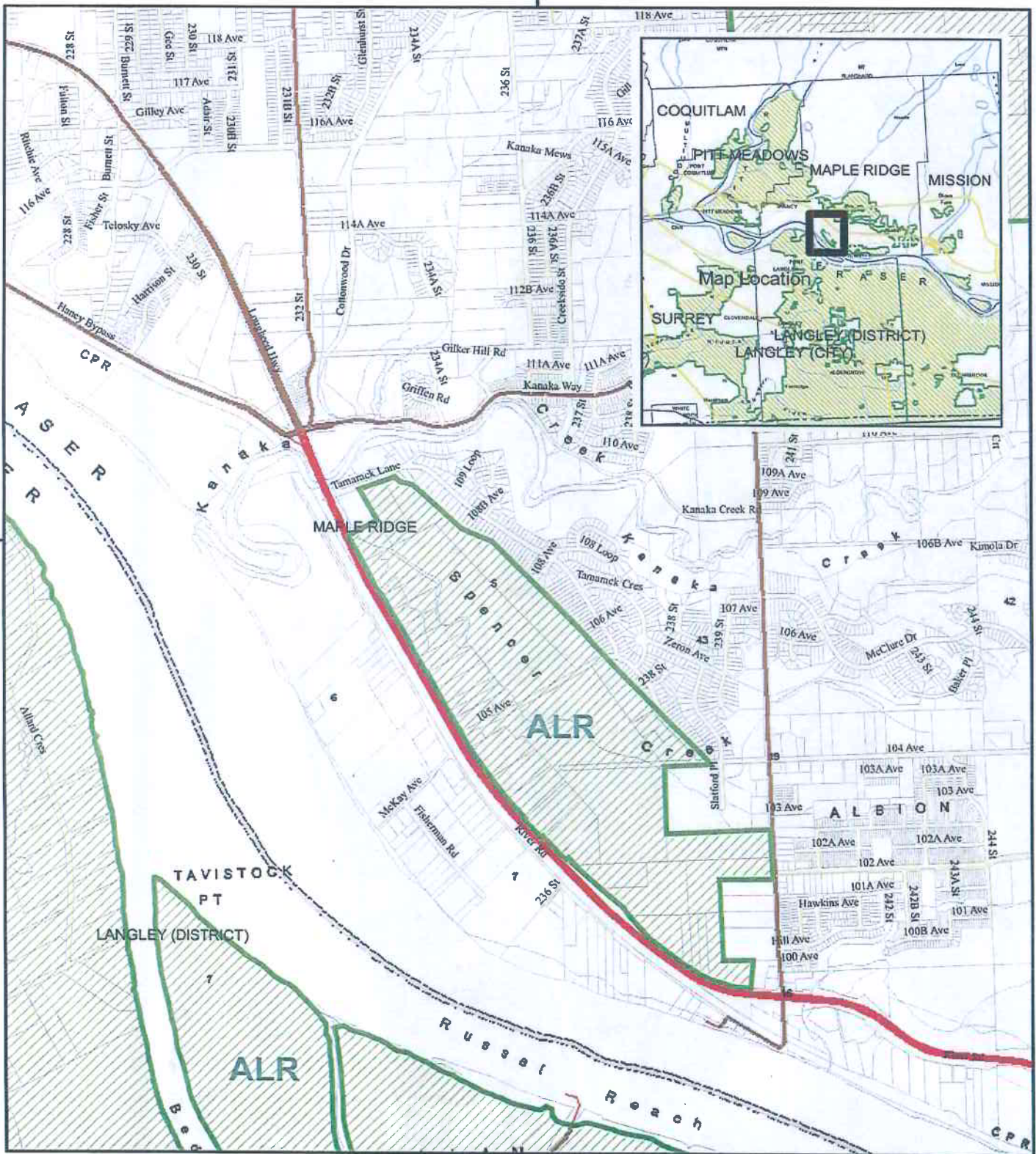
#### **CONCLUSION:**

In response to a Council request this paper has examined exclusion applications in B.C, reviewed large scale municipal applications, and explored some ideas on potential agricultural offsets and alternative forms of agriculture. This is intended as information at this stage.



122°34'0"W

49°12'0"N



## APPENDIX 1

### ALC Context Map

Map Scale: 1:20,000



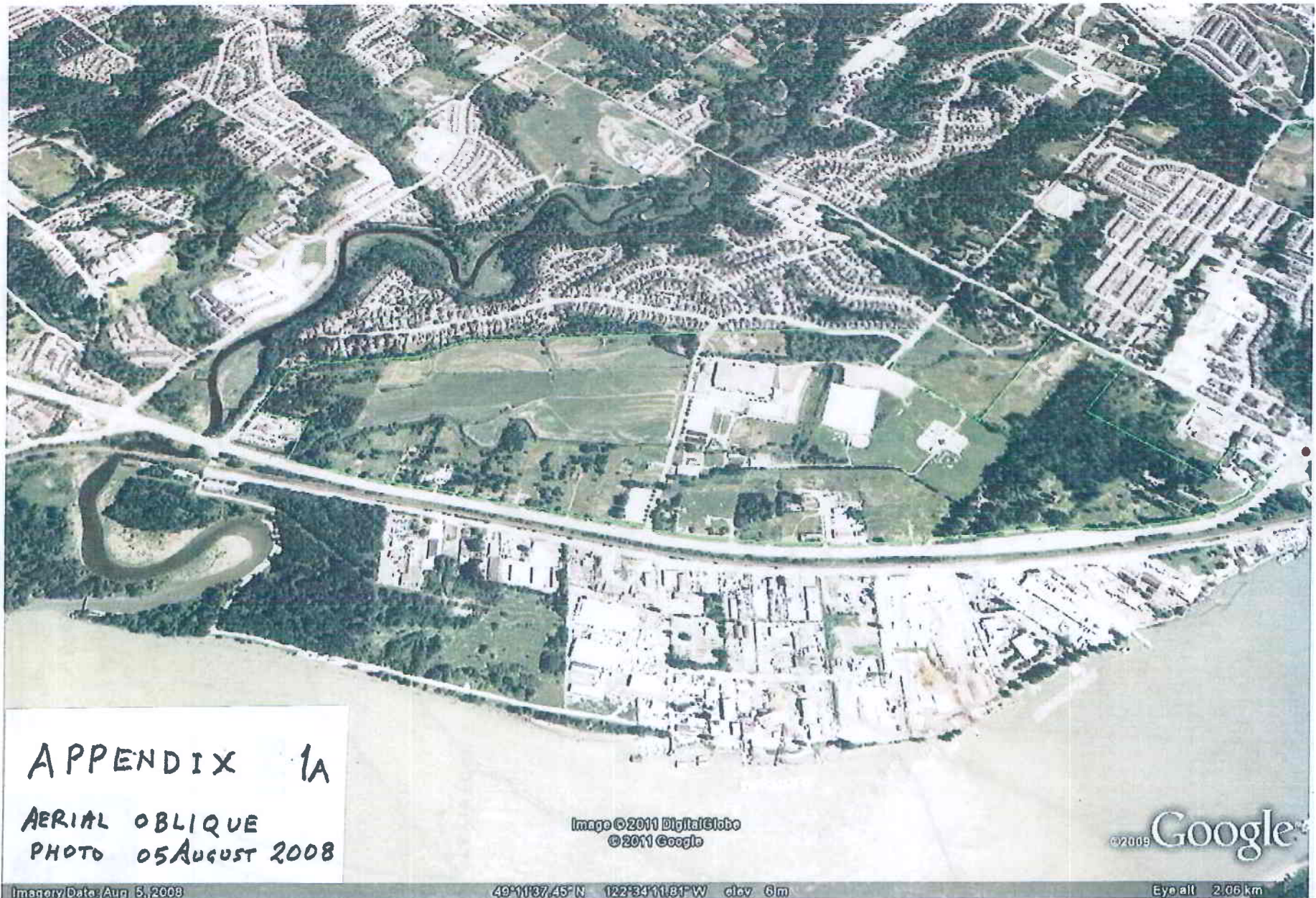
ALC File #:

Mapsheet #: 92G/2

Map Produced: Aug 30, 2011

Regional District: Greater Vancouver





APPENDIX 1A

AERIAL OBLIQUE  
PHOTO 05 AUGUST 2008

Image ©2011 DigitalGlobe  
©2011 Google

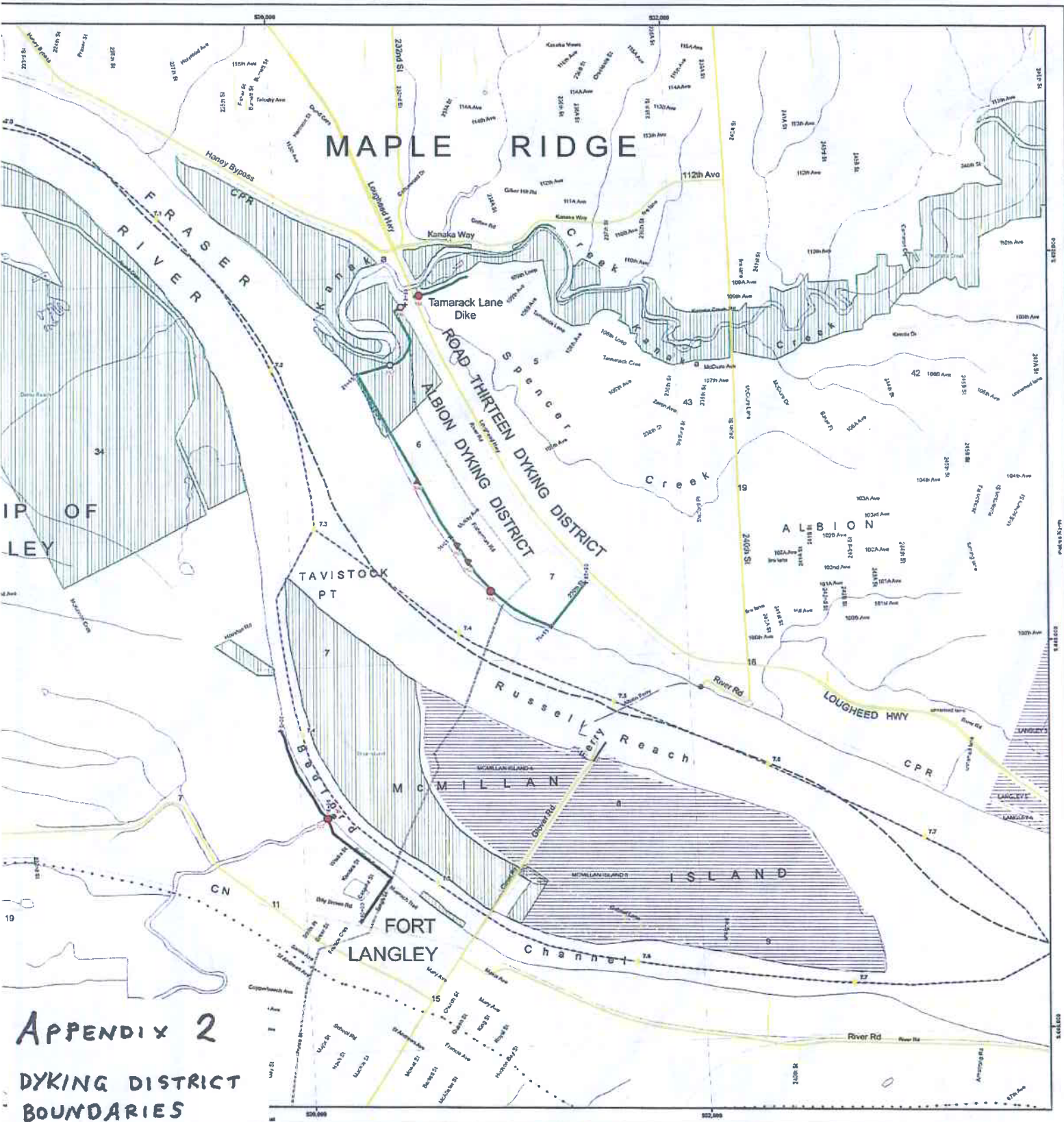
©2008 Google

Imagery Date: Aug 5, 2008

49°11'37.45"N 122°34'11.81"W elev 6m

Eye alt 2.06 km





# **Appendix 2** **DYKING DISTRICT** **BOUNDARIES** **(ADMINISTERED BY DMR)**



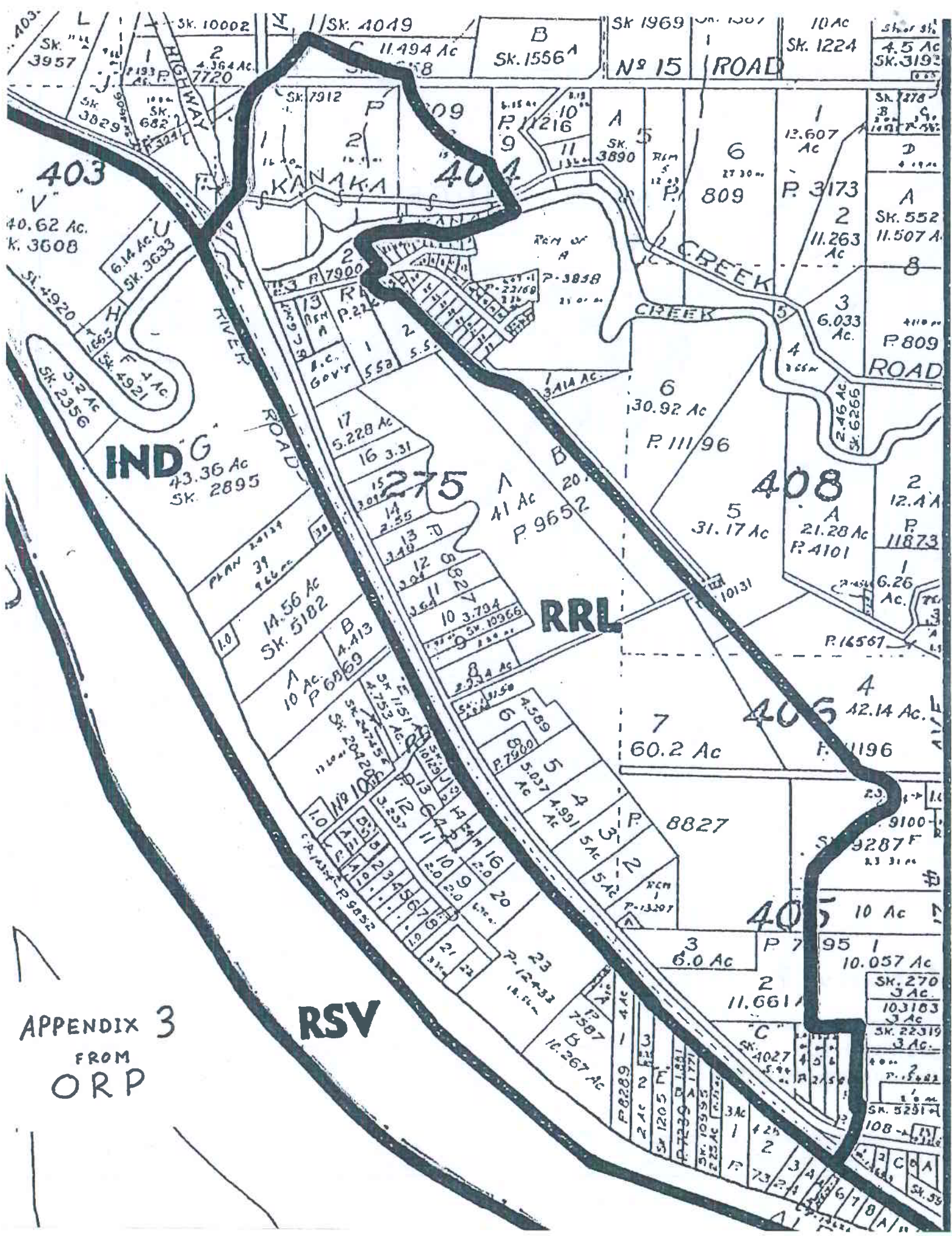
**IMPORTANT NOTES AND DISCLAIMERS**

The District of River and District of Alberion are not responsible for any errors or omissions in this map. The District of River and District of Alberion are not responsible for any errors or omissions in this map. The District of River and District of Alberion are not responsible for any errors or omissions in this map.

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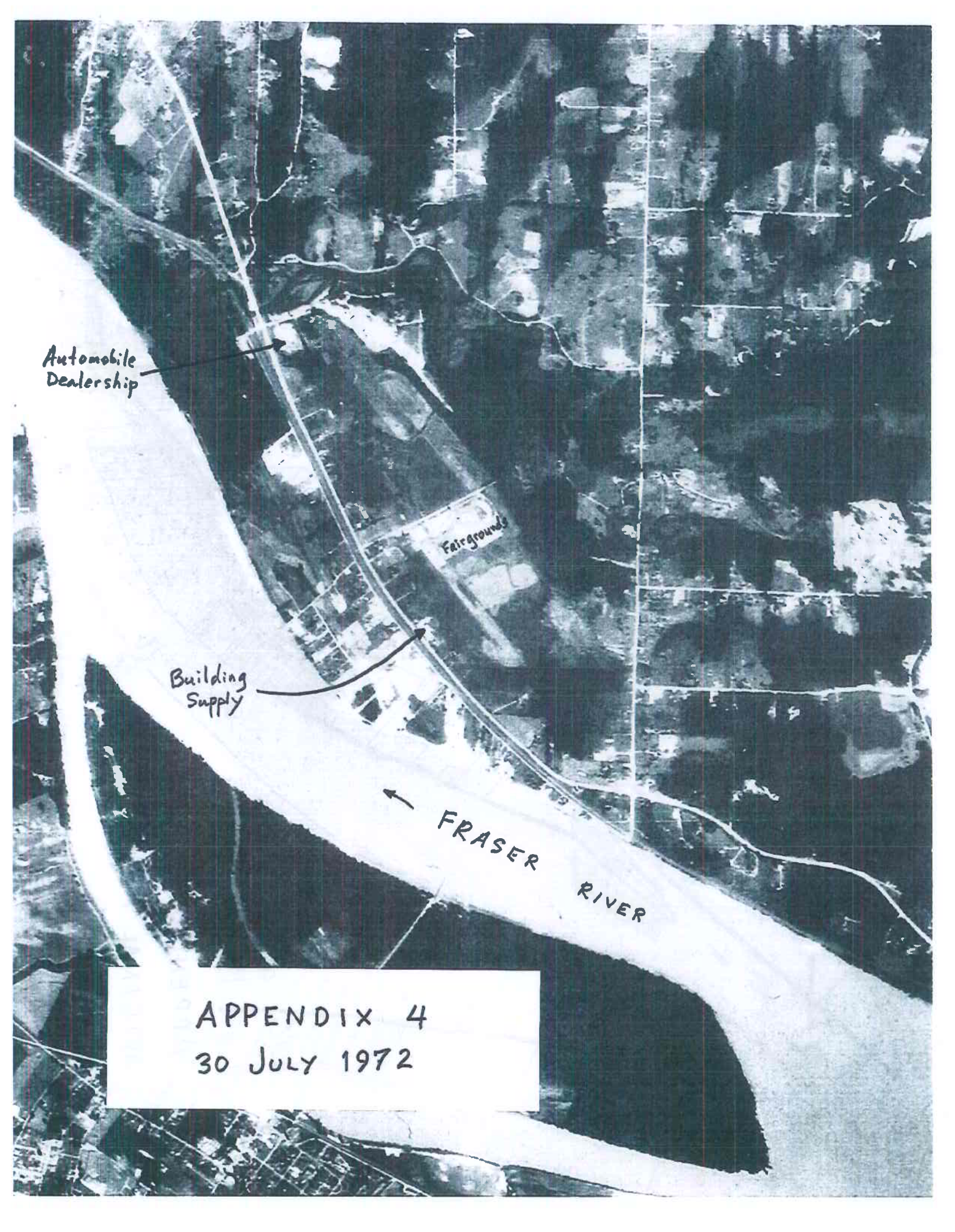




APPENDIX 3  
FROM  
ORP

RSV





An aerial photograph of a river valley. A wide, light-colored river flows from the bottom left towards the top right. On the left bank, there is a cluster of buildings. Two arrows point from handwritten labels to these buildings: one to a building further up the bank labeled 'Automobile Dealership' and another to a building closer to the river labeled 'Building Supply'. To the right of these buildings, a rectangular area is labeled 'Fairgrounds'. The surrounding landscape is a mix of dark, forested areas and lighter, cleared land. A road or path runs parallel to the river on the right side. The overall image has a grainy, high-contrast appearance typical of older aerial photography.

Automobile  
Dealership

Building  
Supply

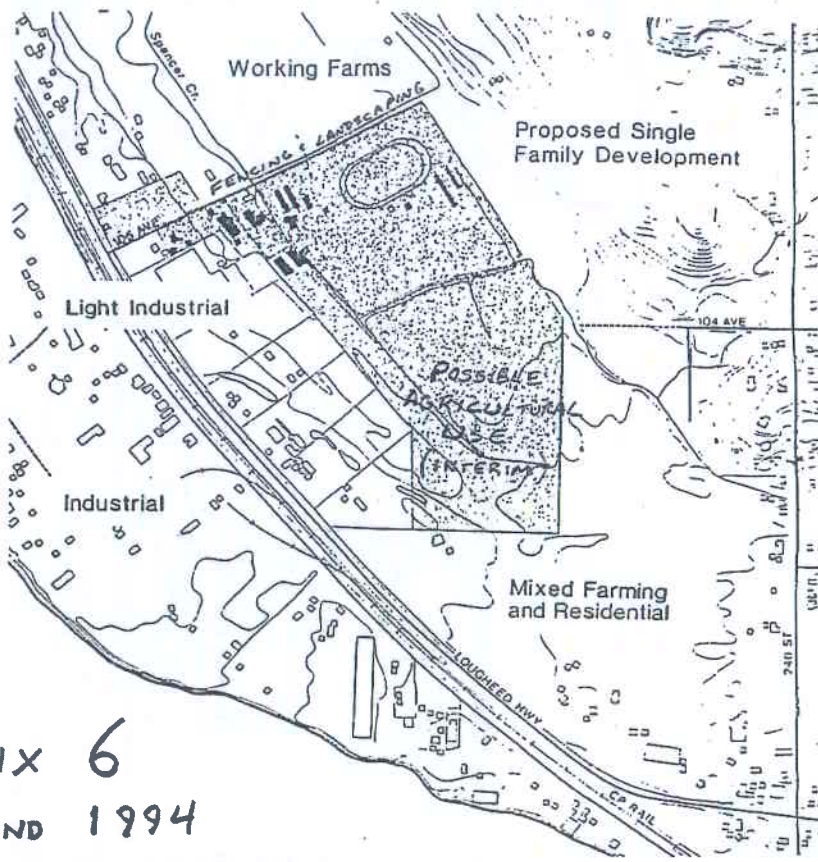
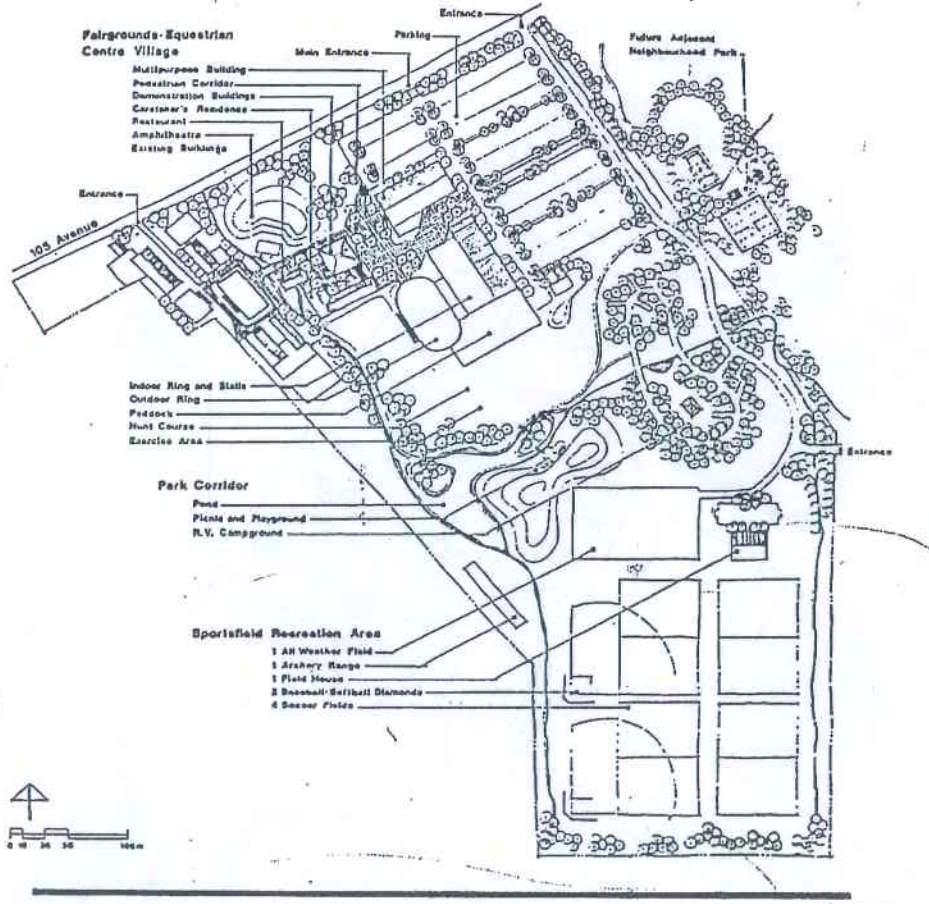
FRASER  
RIVER

APPENDIX 4  
30 JULY 1972

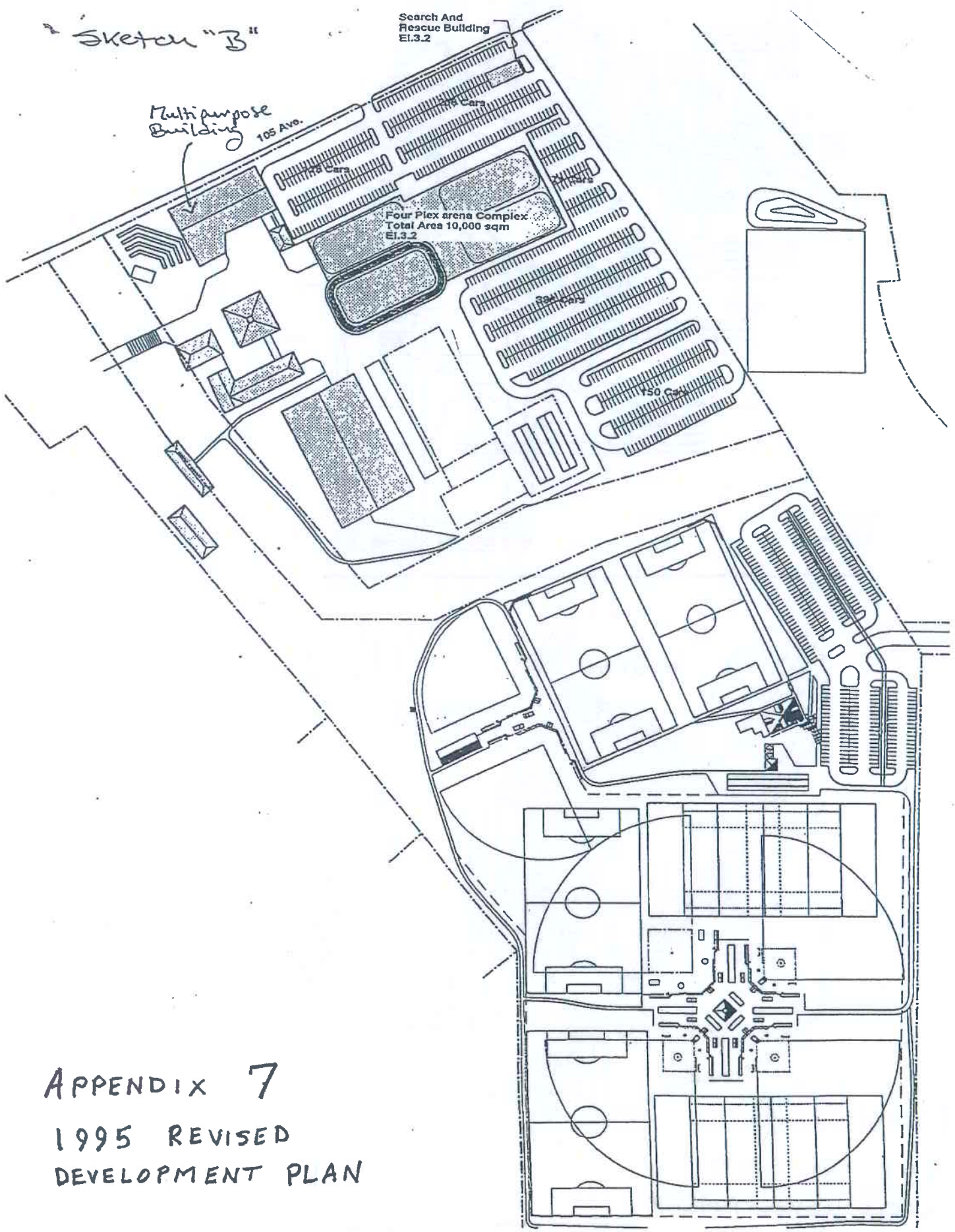






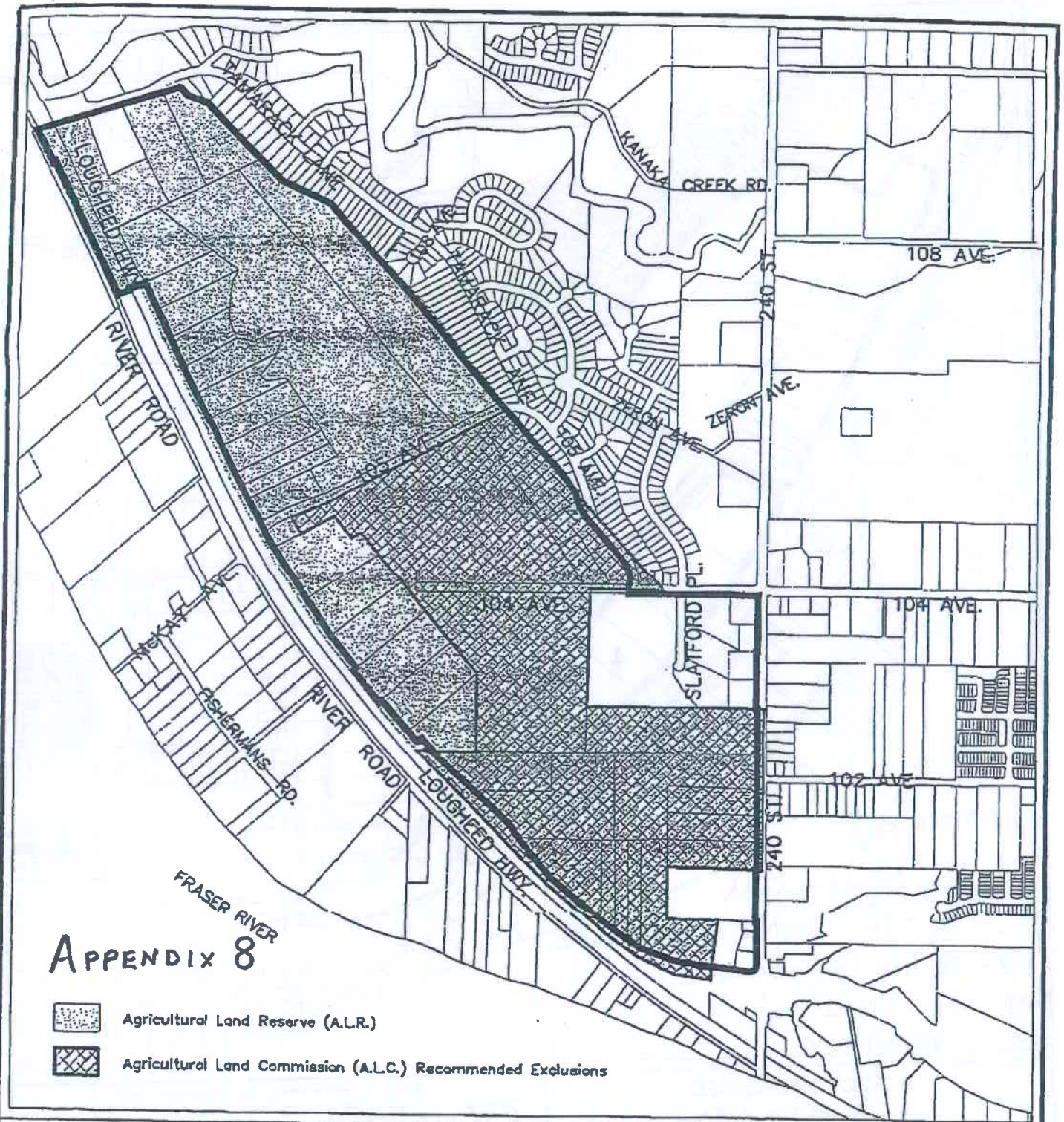


# APPENDIX 6 1989 AND 1994 AGREED DEVELOPMENT



APPENDIX 7  
1995 REVISED  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN





**SUBJECT PROPERTIES  
ALBION FLATS AREA**

AGRICULTURAL LAND RESERVE AND RECOMMENDED EXCLUSIONS



**MAPLE RIDGE**  
Incorporated 12 September, 1874

**CORPORATION OF THE  
DISTRICT OF MAPLE RIDGE**

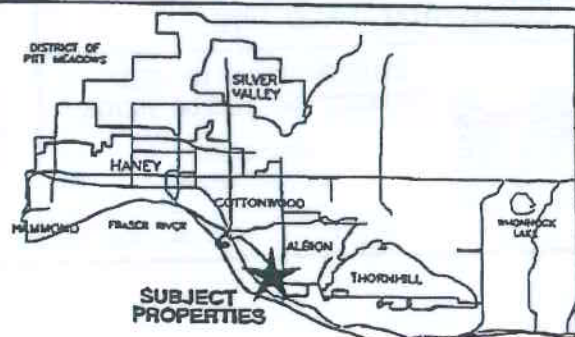
**PLANNING  
DEPARTMENT**

FILE/BYLAW:

NA

DATE:

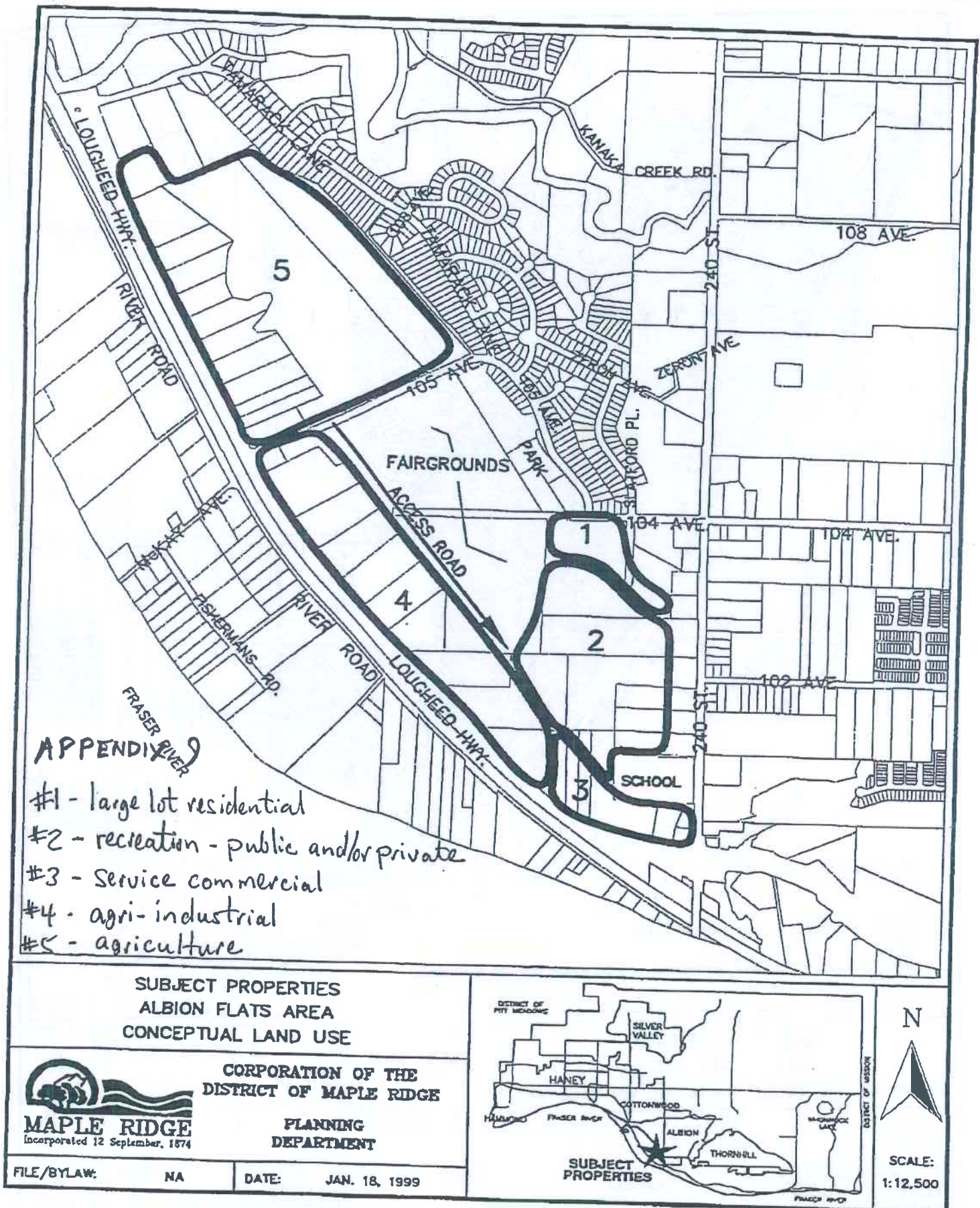
JAN. 18, 1999

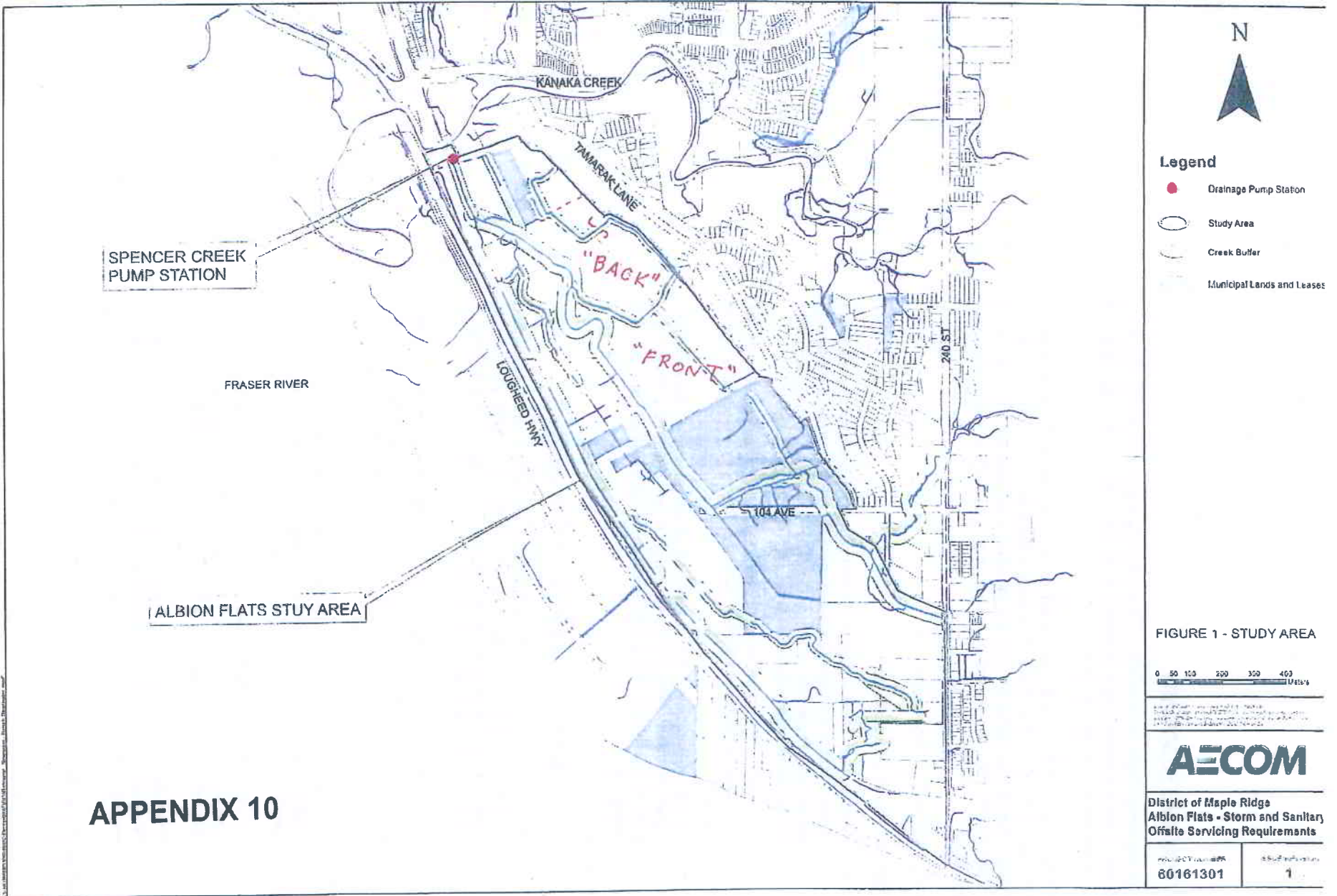


SCALE:

1:12,500









## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the increasingly rapid development of Maple Ridge, the Albion Flats have become a much discussed piece of land given its proximity to the Town Core, and its location on the Lougheed Highway.

This study is intended to provide a preliminary socio-economic background for the issues facing the Albion Flats. The study is focused on analysing the various land uses being considered for the site including overviews of land uses being considered for the site: industrial, commercial, residential, recreational and agricultural.

Key findings of this study include:

### Albion Flats Location & Linkages:

- Investment in transportation infrastructure has dramatically improved regional access to Maple Ridge and the Albion Flats. With the enhanced connectivity to the rest of Metro Vancouver an increase in development activity for all types of land uses is expected in Maple Ridge;
- The Albion Flats' location on the Lougheed Highway just east of the Town Centre makes it extremely attractive for developers of any type of land use.
- The Albion Flats have a number of natural constraints to development: stream setbacks; seasonal flooding risk; location within a flood plain; forested marshlands; and geotechnical constraints (risk of liquefaction in earthquake).

### Population:

- Maple Ridge will see 74% growth between 2006 and 2036.
- Maple Ridge population's contribution to the labour force was 37,200 members in 2006, of which 65% are employed outside the District. Approximately 9,800 people commute to Maple Ridge for work, creating a daytime working population of 23,000.
- With the population forecast to pass 100,000 between 2024 and 2025, and the associated 'opening' of the Urban Reserve for urban development, decisions will have to be made regarding desired patterns and densities of development.
- The population of the Town Centre is forecasted to increase by 201% between 2006 and 2036. Such an increase in population in the core will need to be matched by retail and public amenities.
- The number of residents aged 75+ is expected to increase by 256% between 2006 and 2036. Older residents will increase demand for walkable neighbourhoods, transit access and multi-family dwellings.
- Given proximity to transit, highways, urban areas and the Town Centre, the Albion Flats could be a desirable location for either new public amenities, retail, or residential uses to meet the growing population.

## APPENDIX 11



**Industrial:**

- Metro Vancouver has designated the Albion Flats as a 'Special Study Area' which based on history would facilitate the re-designation of the site to industrial uses.
- Vacancy on industrial lands was 5.9% in Q2 of 2010, slightly above the metro average of 4.2%.
- Industrial investment in the Maple Ridge area is increasing with the recent completion of the Golden Ears and Pitt River Bridges. The Albion Flats are located next to existing industrial lands, transportation infrastructure and possible servicing extensions.

**Commercial:**

- Maple Ridge as a whole and eastern Maple Ridge specifically has a shortage of retail space based on population and spending levels, making the Albion Flats an excellent potential location for commercial development.
  - East Maple Ridge is underserved with retail, as 95% of Maple Ridge's retail is located in the Town Core, or west of the Town Core along the Lougheed / Dewdney Trunk Trail corridor.
- Many major retailers are absent from the Maple Ridge / Pitt Meadows market.
- The impact on the Town Centre of any commercial development on the Albion Flats would need to be assessed.

**Residential:**

- Maple Ridge is forecast to have strong population growth rates, outpacing regional growth through to 2036. The location of the Albion Flats in proximity to the Town Centre, public transit and highways make it an attractive location for multi-family residences.

**Agricultural:**

- 89% of the Albion Flats are within the Agricultural Land Reserve. Any non-agricultural development in this area would first require ALR exclusion by the Agricultural Land Commission.
- Total farm receipts decreased in Maple Ridge between 2001 and 2006, but the agricultural uses of the Albion Flats were not optimized.
- The ALC has suggested that the lands north of 105<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the Albion Flats are better suited to agricultural uses than the lands to the south.

**Recreational:**

- The District of Maple Ridge, along with Pitt Meadows, has created a Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan that forecasts amenity goals and demands for the region. To accommodate population growth the

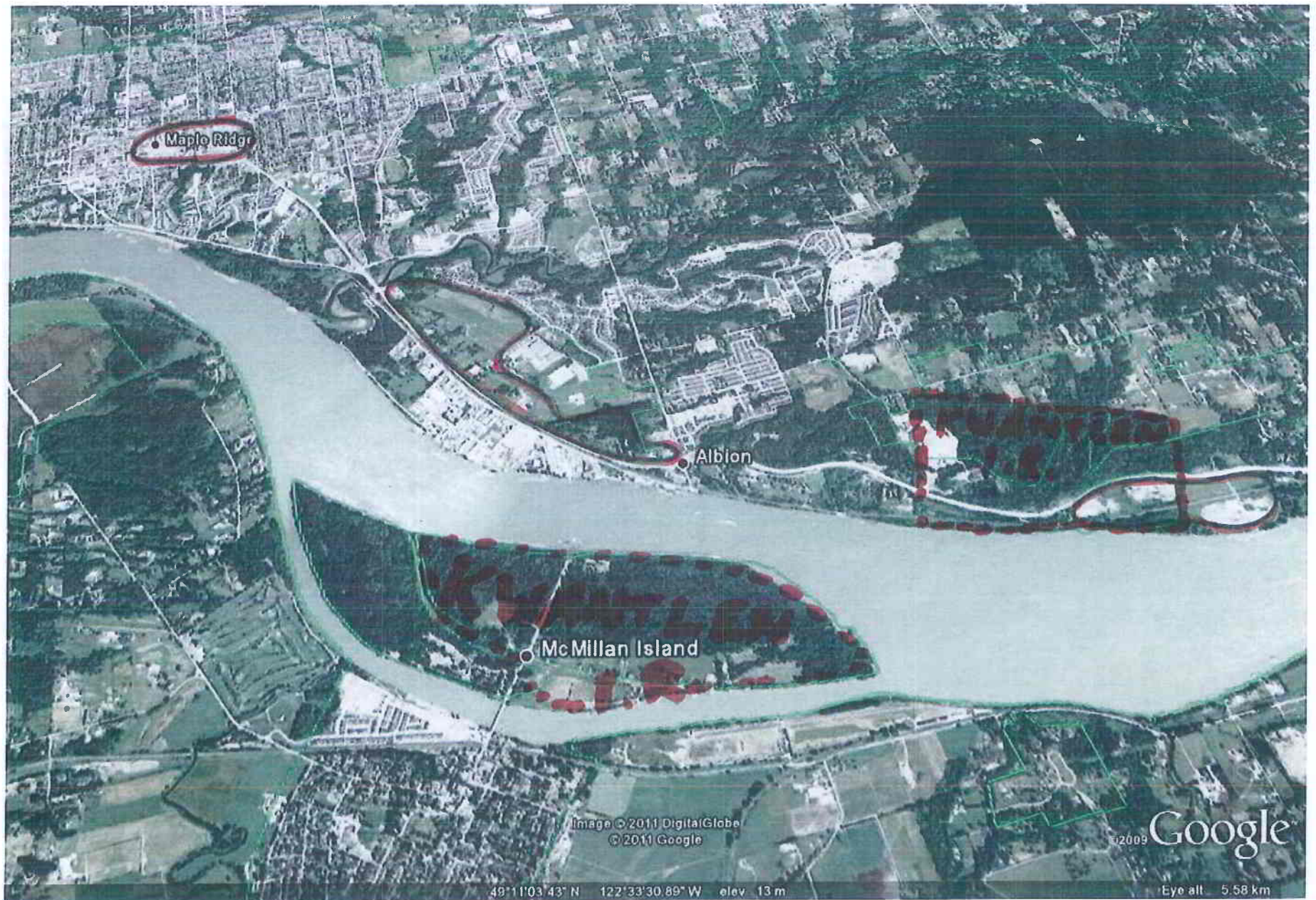
Master Plan envisions increasing the recreational facilities on the Albion Flats to include additional fields, a new indoor multi-purpose facility, and additional sheet of ice at Planet Ice, and an expanded parking lot.

Based on the preliminary socio-economic review, each of the land uses considered could utilize the Albion Flats. Assuming some portion of the site was removed from the ALR, there would be pressures on the District from a number of different sectors, raising the possibility for a mix of uses on the site.

This study does not provide use recommendations for the Albion Flats, nor does it rank the appropriateness of different land uses. Rather, its findings simply show that the Albion Flats is and will continue to be a much sought after piece of land for a variety of use types.

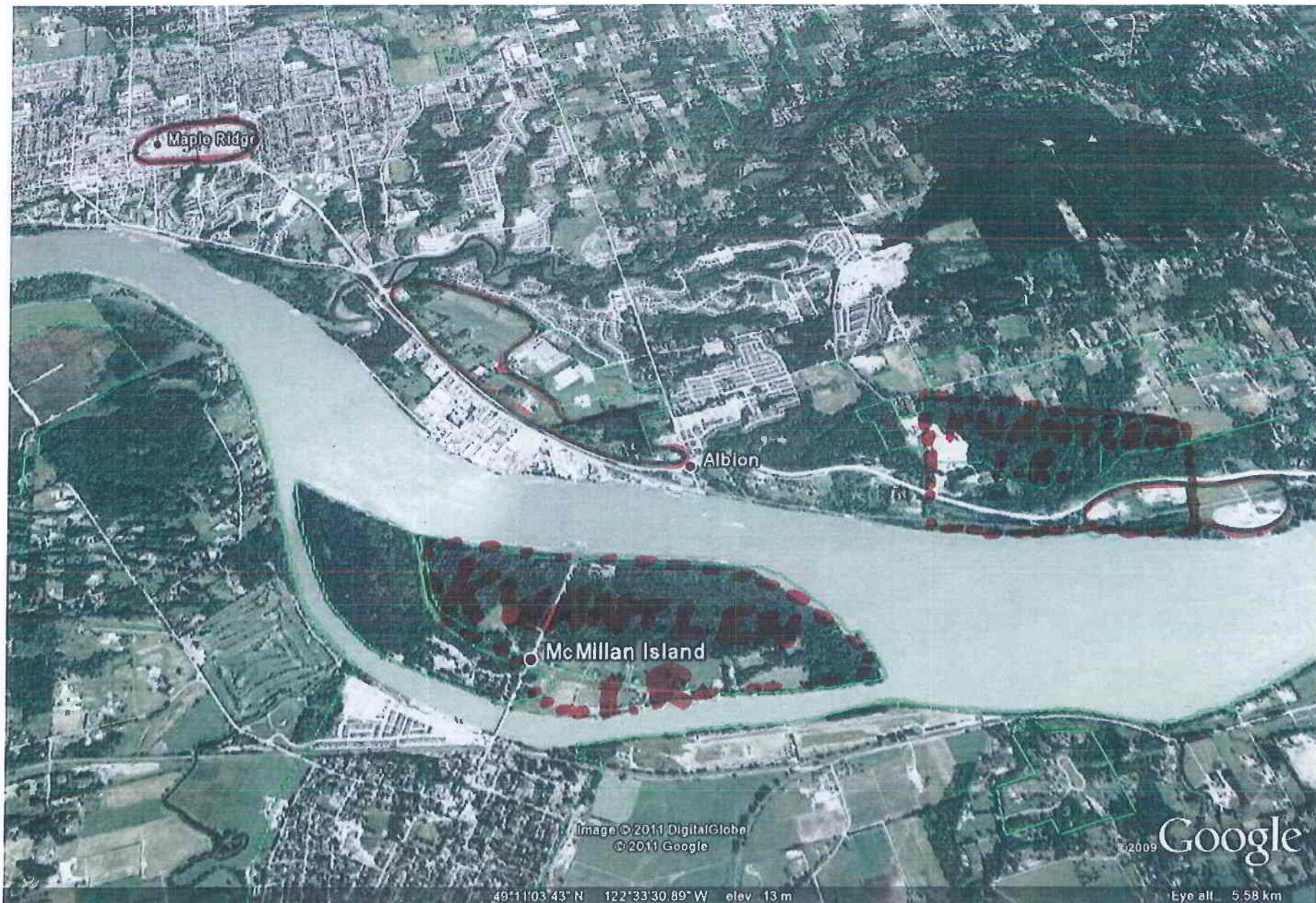
GPRA will use the findings contained in this report to produce a follow-up report which details the appropriateness of a variety of uses for the Albion Flats.





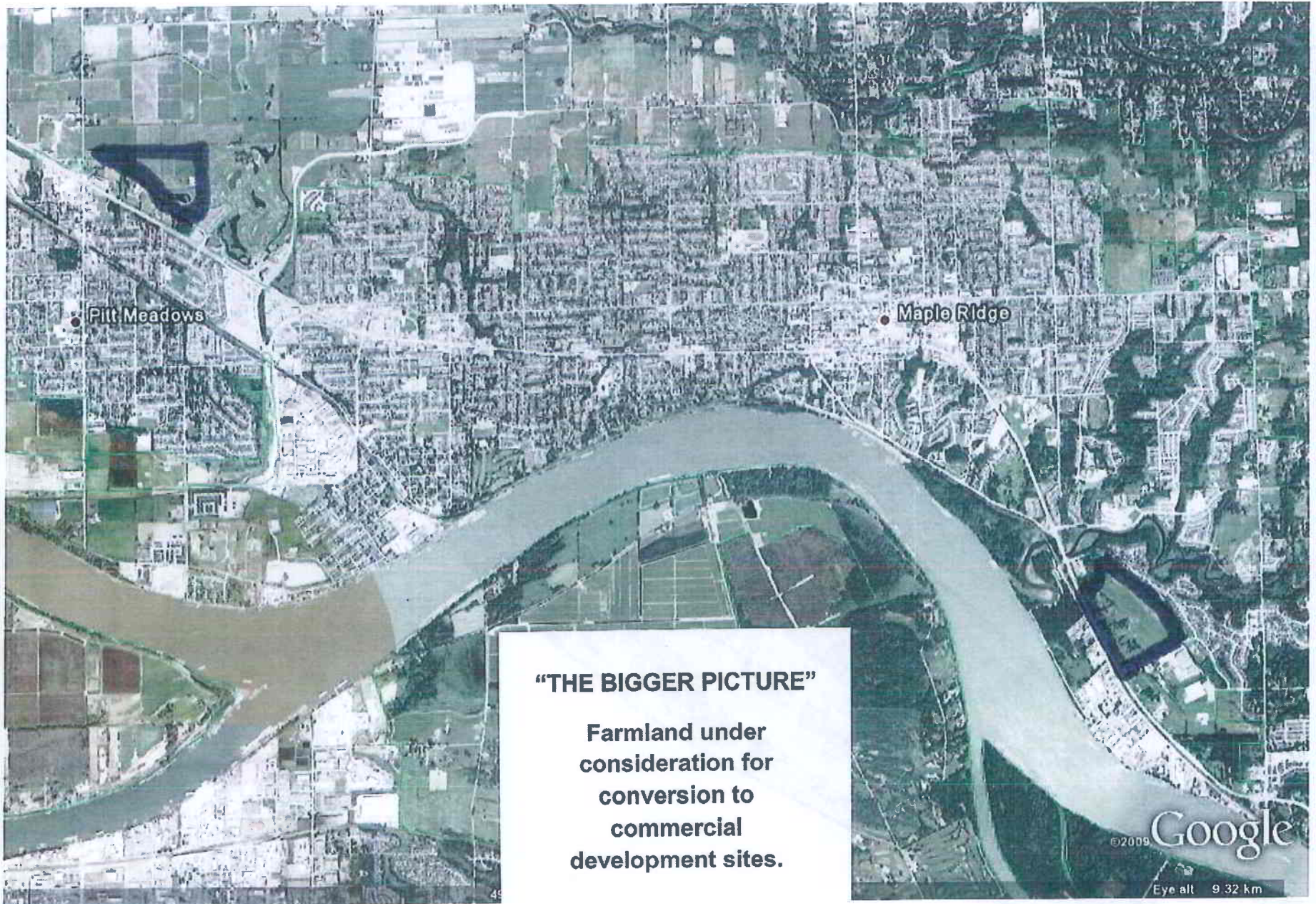
## APPENDIX 12





## APPENDIX 12

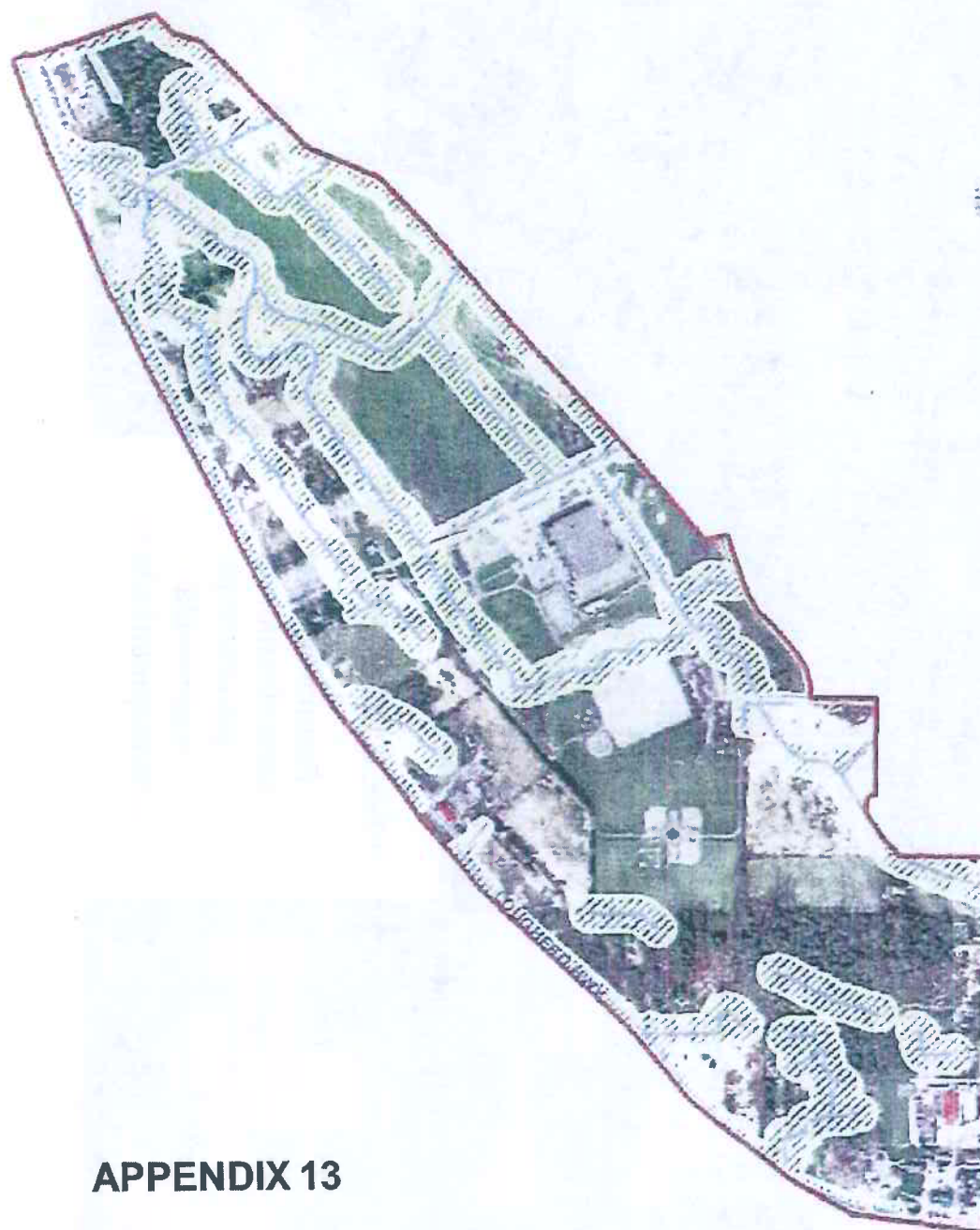





## APPENDIX 12A



## Maple Ridge, BC



### Legend

- Railway
- Paved Roads
- Streams & Creeks
-  Site Boundary
- Streamside Protection Regulation Setbacks

Date: June 22, 2010  
Data Source: District of Maple Ridge,  
Raincoast Applied Ecology



Figure 10 Streams and Streamside Protection Regulation Setbacks



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

G.P. Rollo & Associates Ltd. (GPRA) has been engaged by the District of Maple Ridge to conduct an analysis of land use demands and opportunities for the Albion Flats. Specifically, GPRA has examined the potential for industrial/business park, agricultural, commercial, recreational and residential uses to be incorporated into a future vision for the Albion Flats. The intent of this study is to provide key background information for subsequent visioning and planning exercises to be undertaken by the District in conjunction with all stakeholders.

This analysis has found significant merits for a range of land uses to be included at the Albion Flats. It presents overviews of the market potential for each land uses, and provides indications of the relative strengths and weaknesses of each in the context of a series of criteria.

The relative potential, and key strengths and weaknesses of each use, are presented below.

### Commercial:

#### *Demand (Scenarios):*

- If a proposed 300,000+ square foot shopping centre is developed at the Kwantlen lands along the Lougheed Highway by 2012, it is projected that demand would allow for construction of between 140,000 and 190,000 square feet of retail space could be constructed at the Albion Flats by 2015, and between 300,000 and 425,000 square feet could be constructed by 2025.
- If the Kwantlen project proceeds in 2012 and an additional 400,000 square feet are constructed in Pitt Meadows east of Harris Road along Lougheed Highway prior to Albion Flats coming to market, it is expected that demand would allow for construction of between 85,000 and 112,000 square feet by 2015 and between 171,000 and 240,000 by 2025.
- If neither the Kwantlen or Pitt Meadows projects proceed there would be demand for a shopping centre with between 259,000 and 303,000 square feet by 2017, and between 444,000 and 524,000 square feet by 2025.
  - If a new shopping centre on Albion Flats is assumed to capture 5% of sales from existing retail in Maple Ridge, a shopping centre with between 378,000 to 422,000 square feet by 2017 and 586,000 to 667,000 square feet by 2025 would be warranted.

#### *Strengths:*

- Major retailers look for highway locations due to visibility and ease of access and egress. The Albion Flats provide both. Also, Albion Flats is 10-20 minutes by car from major population concentrations such as Mission and Langley, and less than 10 minutes from downtown Maple Ridge.
- For medium and large format retail uses and associated ancillary businesses, the Albion Flats provides a large land base which would allow for strategic grouping, something which may not be possible at other locations.
- Commercial at the Flats would provide service sector employment opportunities.

## APPENDIX 14

- Retail uses at the Albion Flats could have competitive implications for Haney Place Mall in the Town Centre. This may force a repositioning of the centre, which would be a boon for town centre revitalization prospects.
- New retail offerings in the District would provide additional tax revenue, and would reduce the need for residents to seek shopping opportunities at Pitt Meadows, Langley and elsewhere.

*Weaknesses:*

- If retail development at the Albion Flats were to offer a pedestrian-oriented shopping experience in the form of an 'idealized' downtown high-street, this could have competitive implications for the Town Centre.
- The placement of retail tenants at the Albion Flats would pre-empt them from possibly locating in the Town Centre.
- Retail development at the Albion Flats is inconsistent with current District and Metro Vancouver planning policies, and would require the lands to be excluded from the ALR.
- Retail development could lead to removal of relatively high quality agricultural lands north of 105<sup>th</sup> Avenue from the region's agricultural land base.
- Commercial development could increase competition for some retail categories in the Maple Ridge Town Centre.
- Commercial uses would require an amendment to the Draft R.G.S. to be developed on the Albion Flats.

**Industrial:**

*Demand:*

- Based on forecasted employment growth as well as historical development trends, Maple Ridge is expected to require an additional 150 – 250 acres of industrial land by 2041.
- If the Pelton Lands are excluded from the ALR and developed as an industrial park, this will reduce short-and medium term pressure for designation of additional industrial lands in the District.

*Strengths:*

- Under the Draft Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy (2010), re-designation of agricultural lands to industrial at the Albion Flats would require a 50% + 1 vote from the Metro Vancouver Board.
- Maple Ridge is looking to increase employment opportunities to reduce the number of residents that commute elsewhere in the Region for work. Additional well-located and fully-serviced industrial areas would help to meet this goal.
- Albion Flats is located more strategically than the majority of Maple Ridge's remaining vacant and under-utilized industrial lands.

*Weaknesses:*

- Distance from Golden Ears or Pitt River Bridge suggests that industrial lands in the south Harris Road area of Pitt Meadows, along Lougheed in Pitt Meadows, and the few remaining acres in western Maple Ridge would likely be absorbed before the Albion Flats.
- If the Pelton Lands are removed from the ALR, industrial absorption at the Albion Flats would likely be delayed as the Pelton Lands are better located relative to transportation corridors.
- Industrial lands would not provide as much tax revenue as residential or commercial uses.
- Could lead to removal of significant potentially productive farmland from the agricultural land base.
- Additional high quality light industrial/business park space may draw office tenants from the Town Centre and elsewhere, and/or preclude future office space from locating in the Town Centre.
- Industrial uses would require an amendment to the Draft R.G.S. to be developed on the Albion Flats.

**Agricultural:**

*Demand:*

- It is difficult to quantify demand for agricultural land, but regional goals require protecting the agricultural sector and productive agricultural lands.

*Strengths:*

- The Agricultural Land Commission suggests that the Albion Flats has good soils for agricultural uses, particularly north of 105<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Agriculture is the designated use for the Albion Flats by both the Maple Ridge OCP and the Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy (current and Draft)
- Retaining agriculturally productive land is a key aspect of maintaining a sustainable region.
- Agricultural use is well suited to lands situated within the Fraser River floodplain.
- Environmental sensitivities. While agriculture can be an intensive land use, it can still be suitable next to environmentally sensitive areas.

*Weaknesses:*

- Nearby development, including residential units to the north and Planet Ice arena has reportedly caused flooding issues on the agricultural lands north of 105<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Bringing those lands to their full productivity potential will require hydrological upgrades.
- Smaller lots and fragmented ownership make efficient agricultural use of the land difficult. Consolidation of land would make the Albion Flats more productive for agricultural purposes.
- Real estate speculation makes acquiring land for agriculture difficult.
- Urban encroachment increases complaints about agricultural use.
- Economic spinoffs from agriculture are hard to quantify.

## **Recreational:**

### *Demand:*

- The District's Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan (2010) calls for the addition of approximately 40 acres of new recreational facilities on the Albion Flats.
- Population growth, combined with the fact that existing recreational facilities are at capacity, indicates need for significant new outdoor and indoor recreation facilities in the District in coming years.

### *Strengths:*

- Building upon existing facilities. Albion Flats already have a strong cluster of recreational and cultural facilities; additional amenities would build a strong regional cluster capable of hosting larger events.
- Low density recreational facilities are a suitable use for lands in a floodplain.
- Environmental sensitivities. Recreational and cultural uses of the Albion Flats are less invasive than other uses, and would be suitable next to lands where there are environmentally sensitive areas.

### *Weaknesses:*

- More dense residential development nearby would assure more consistent use of the multi-purpose indoor facility.
- Recreational facilities and public amenities make excellent anchors in town centres. Additional investment in recreational facilities on Albion Flats could be made in the Town Centre and would have a significant positive impact on the downtown area.
- Recreational uses would require permission for non-farm use from the ALC.

## **Residential:**

### *Demand:*

- If Albion Flats were developed with primarily residential uses the site could accommodate between 1,500 & 2,500 units (based on density) and require between 8 and 24 years to absorb (assuming a market share of 15% to 25%).

### *Strengths:*

- Strong Location. The Albion Flats are a short, typically traffic free, drive to the Town Centre. The site also has easy access to Lougheed Highway, 240th Street.
- Combination within a mixed-use project. If commercial uses are being considered for the site, residential uses would also be appropriate. Residential uses would also work well with the recreational facilities planned for the Albion Flats.
- Green space. A residential project on the Albion Flats would benefit from all the green space and parks located on the site.

*Weaknesses:*

- The Albion Flats are not designated for residential use, and re-designation would run counter to planning policies at the District and Metro Vancouver levels.
- The Albion Flats are located within the Fraser River floodplain. Residential development in a floodplain raises potentially serious issues.
- Locating residential units near agricultural uses has been problematic in the past. The Maple Ridge Agricultural Plan cites stress in the agricultural / residential interface as a key issue facing the agricultural sector. Educating nearby residents about the agricultural sector was recommended.
- Residential density at the Albion Flats would likely delay both the possibility of increasing residential density in the Town Centre and growth in identified expansion areas.
- Residential uses would require an amendment to the Draft R.G.S. to be developed on the Albion Flats.



## Scenario One: Jobs, Commercial & Agriculture



Area Type*	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Area (ft <sup>2</sup> )	Area (Ha)	Area (Acres)
Agriculture	354,028	3,810,725	35.40	87.48
Commercial/Residential	25,336	272,714	2.53	6.26
Commercial/Industrial	33,021	355,435	3.30	8.16
Greenspace	351,246	3,780,780	35.12	86.79
Recreation	181,790	1,956,771	18.18	44.92

\* Area calculations are approximate and totals vary between concepts. Due to the conceptual stage that the design is at, the parking, circulation, access and rights-of-way are not yet possible to calculate to any degree of accuracy.

## Scenario Two: Jobs & Auto-Oriented Commercial

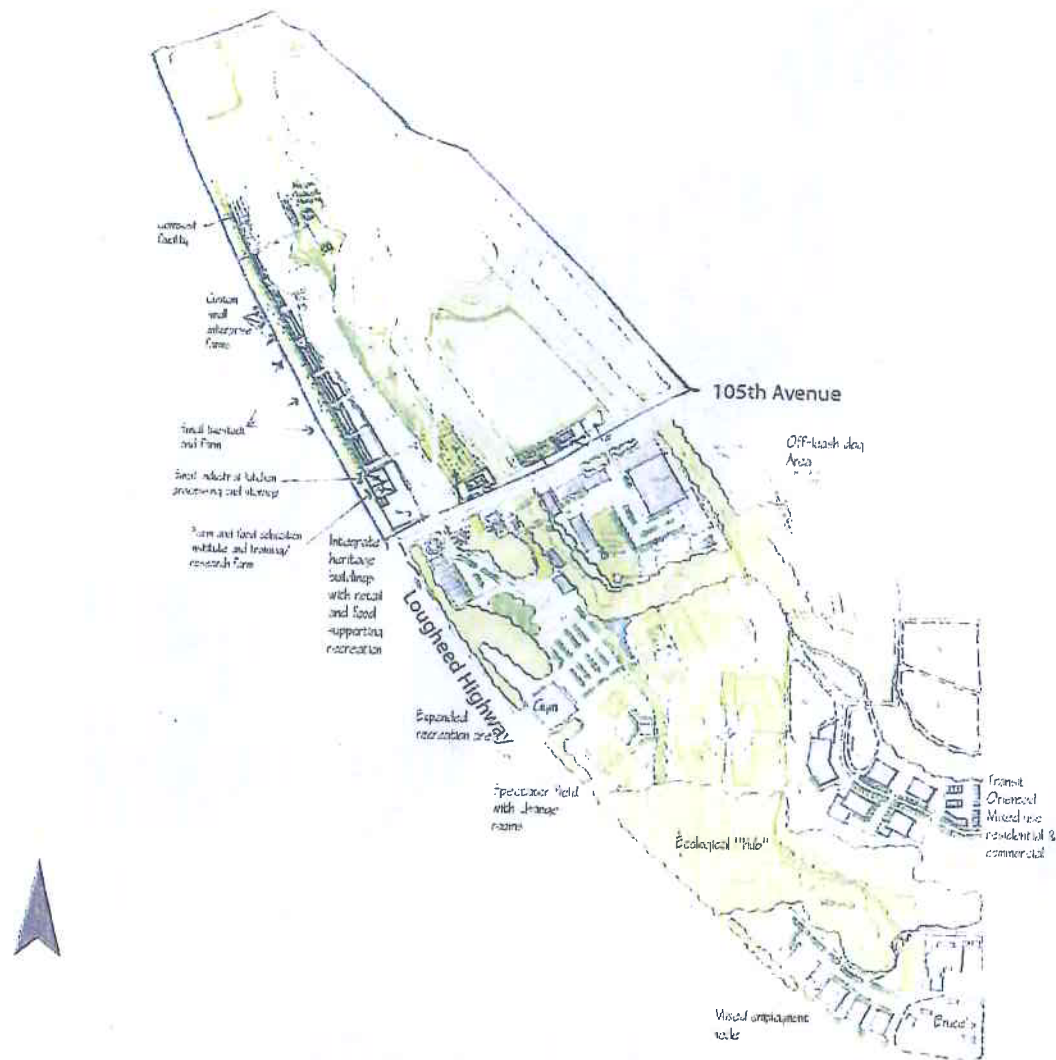


Area Type*	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Area (ft <sup>2</sup> )	Area (Ha)	Area (Acres)
Agriculture	5,069	54,562	0.51	1.25
Commercial/Residential	25,336	272,714	2.53	6.26
Commercial/Industrial	173,046	1 862 651	17.30	42.76
Greenspace	422,593	4 548 753	42.25	104.42
Recreation	181,790	1,956,771	18.18	44.92

\* Area calculations are approximate and totals vary between concepts. Due to the conceptual stage that the design is at, the parking, circulation, access and rights-of-way are not yet possible to calculate to any degree of accuracy.



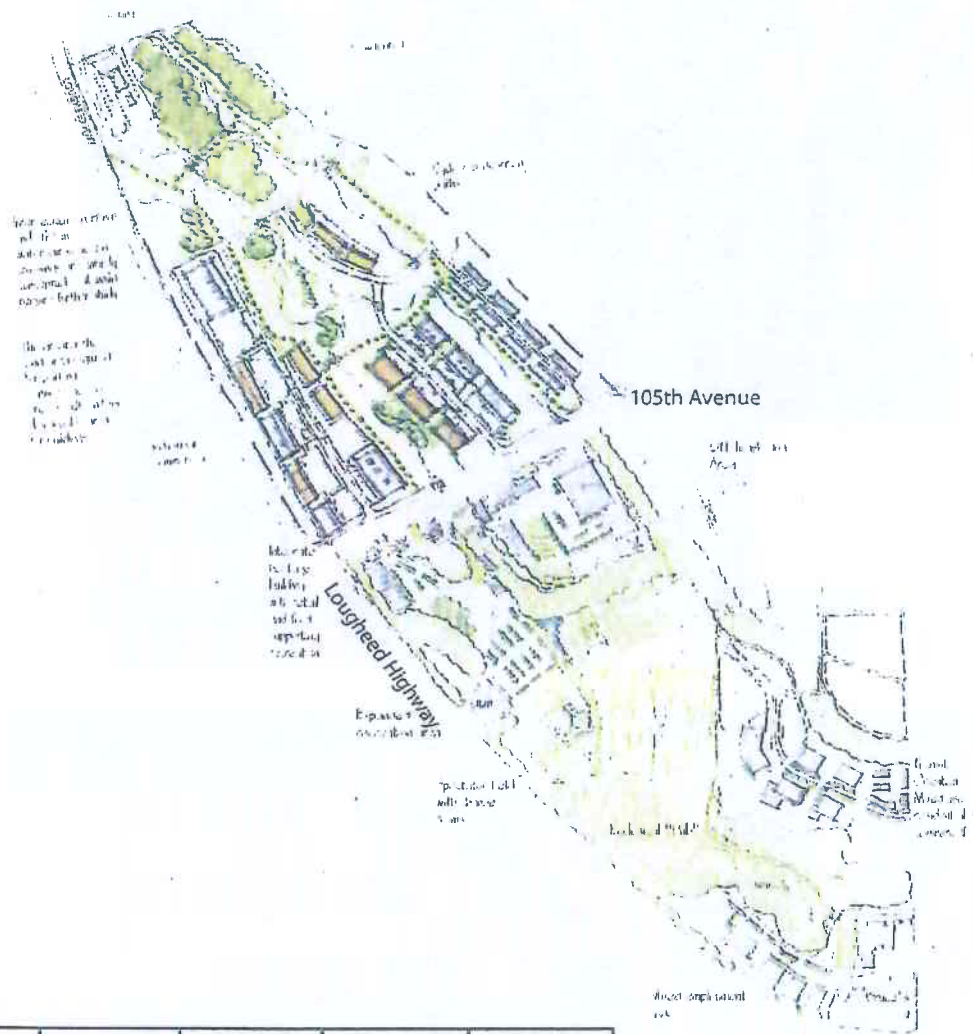
## Scenario Three: Recreation, Mixed Use & Agriculture



Area Type*	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Area (ft <sup>2</sup> )	Area (Ha)	Area (Acres)
Agriculture	359,085	3,865,158	35.90	88.7
Commercial/ Industrial	26,502	285,265	2.65	6.5
Commercial/Residential	15,973	171,931	1.59	3.9
Greenspace	379,740	4,087,487	37.97	93.8
Recreation	210,249	2,263,101	21.02	52.0

\* Area calculations are approximate and totals vary between concepts. Due to the conceptual stage that the design is at, the parking, circulation, access and rights-of-way are not yet possible to calculate to any degree of accuracy.

## Scenario Four: Recreation, Mixed Use & Auto-Oriented Commercial

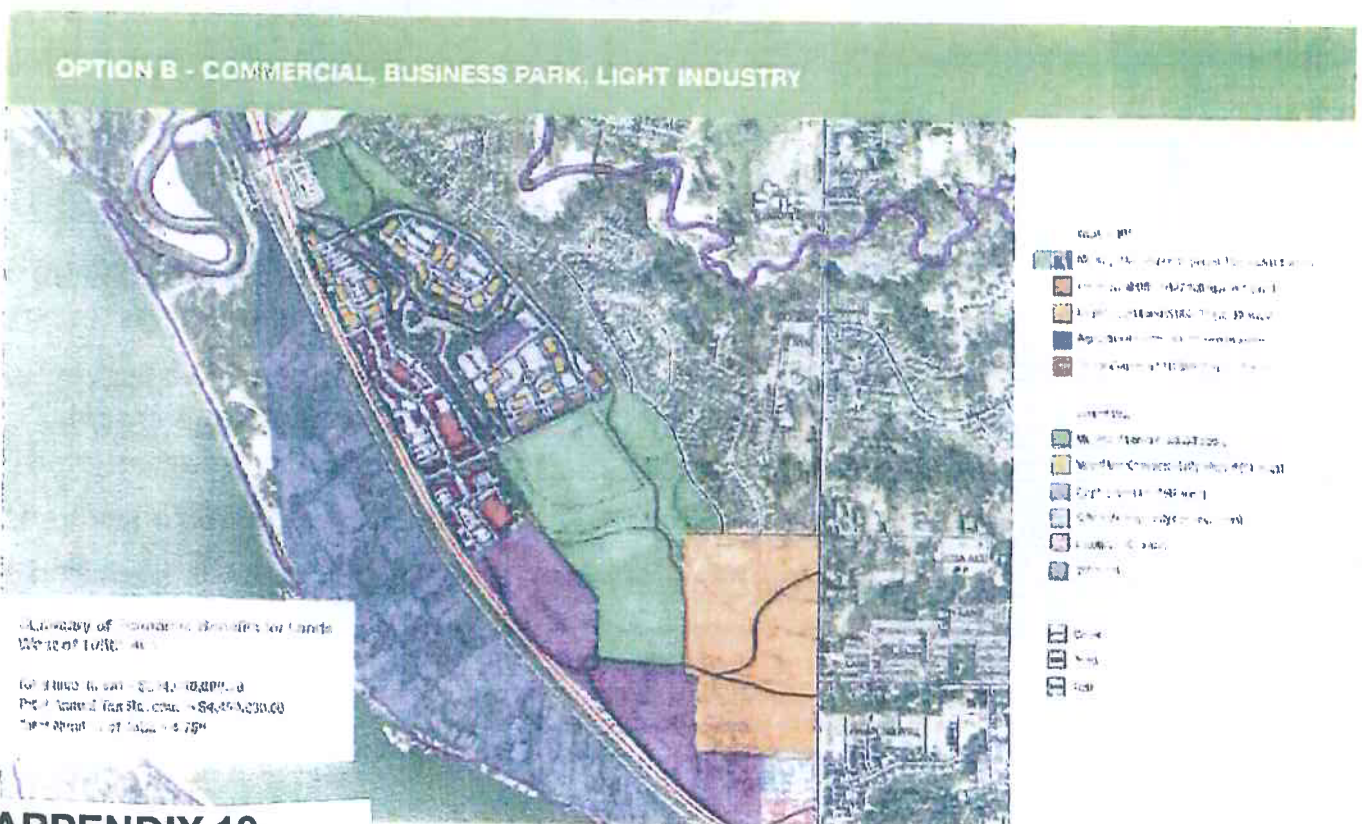
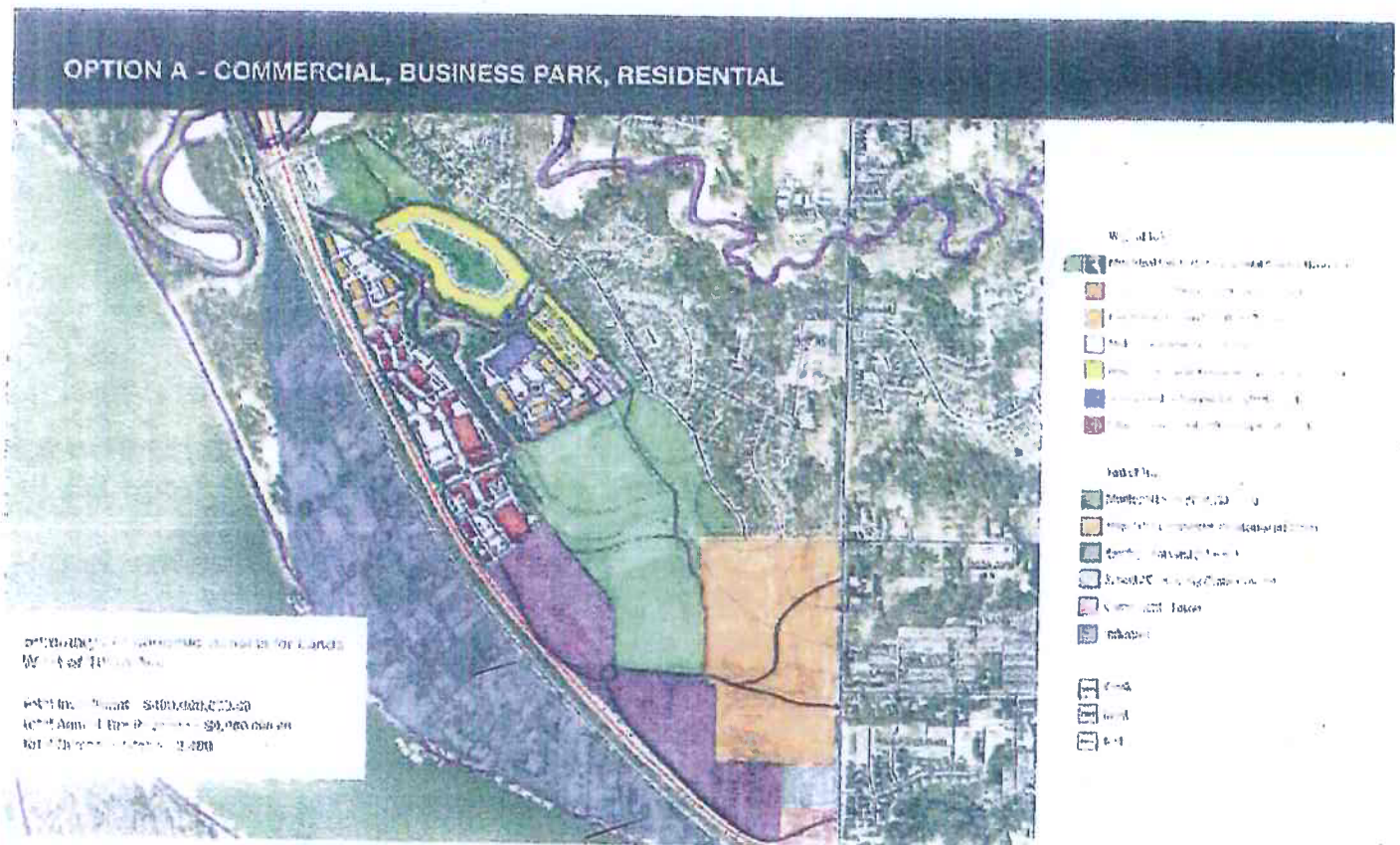


Area Type*	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Area (ft <sup>2</sup> )	Area (Ha)	Area (Acres)
Agriculture	10,126	108,995	1.01	2.5
Commercial/ Industrial	166,527	1,792,481	16.65	41.1
Commercial/ Residential	15,973	171,931	1.59	3.9
Greenspace	451,087	4,855,460	45.10	111.5
Recreation	210,249	2,263,101	21.02	52.0

\* Area calculations are approximate and totals vary between concepts. Due to the conceptual stage that the design is at, the parking, circulation, access and rights-of-way are not yet possible to calculate to any degree of accuracy.



## 6.2 APPENDIX B: RESIDENTS FOR SMART SHOPPING INPUT



## APPENDIX 19

SUBMISSION BY: Residents for Smart Shopping, Dec 8, 2010.



# Draft Concept Plan

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Proposed Land Use	Area hectares*	Area acres*
Agricultural Fairgrounds & Farm Cluster	5.6	13.8
Agriculture Fields & Community Garden	4.6	11.4
Auto Oriented Regional Serving Retail	9.8	24.2
Mixed Employment Node, Light Industrial, Business Office & Agri-Industrial	27.2	67.2
Green Space & Stream Setbacks	42.6	105.3
Institutional (school site)	2.1	5.2
Recreation (includes multi-purpose recreation facility)	20.0	49.4
Townhouse	8.0	19.8
Transit-Oriented Mixed Use	4.8	11.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>124.7</b>	<b>308.1</b>

\* Area calculations are approximate

As directed by Council, the Consultants original numbers have been refined.