

Report to Council



Date: February 11, 2016
File: 1210-22
To: City Manager
From: Tracy Guidi, Sustainability Coordinator
Subject: Agricultural Plan Update

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Sustainability Coordinator dated February 11, 2016, with respect to Agricultural Plan Update.

Purpose:

To inform Council of the strategy to update the 1998 City of Kelowna Agriculture Plan.

Background:

Over 12,000 hectares of the City's land base is zoned agricultural, and of that over 8,600 hectares are within the Agricultural Land Reserve. Policy covering this massive land base is currently directed by the City's Agriculture Plan, endorsed in 1998, as well as the existing 2030 Official Community Plan.

Since the adoption of the 1998 Agriculture Plan, there have been two major Official Community Plan updates, the introduction of a City of Kelowna Permanent Growth Boundary, adoption of a new Regional Growth Strategy, and changes in provincial agricultural regulations. Additionally, mapping contained within the 1998 Plan has not been updated, and consequently does not accurately depict the changes that have occurred over the past 17 years, nor do the maps provide a robust mapping information layer to help inform the City during development approval review. Further, many of the policies listed in the 1998 Agriculture Plan are not clear or prescriptive and therefore the Plan is often challenged during the development process.

An Agriculture Plan Update is necessary to provide clear direction for the over fifty-five per cent of land zoned agricultural in Kelowna to ensure policy is current, accurate, defensible, and aligned with other major corporate policy documents. Timing for the project is ideal as the Ministry of Agriculture, with funding from the Okanagan Basin Water Board, have just completed an Agricultural Land Use Inventory for Kelowna. The mapping and data provided in

this provincial report will provide an excellent baseline for the City's Agriculture Plan update. Further, according to the Corporate Projects Planning Cycle, an update to the Agriculture Plan is necessary prior to the next Official Community Plan update (scheduled to begin analysis in 2018).

The existing Agriculture Plan still has relevant content and policy direction, and it has served its useful life over the past 18 years in providing policy guidance, land use direction, and infrastructure decisions for those lands zoned 'Agriculture' and the parcels that interface with them. However, an update to this Plan will allow the following goals to be integrated into a more current and responsive policy document:

1. Develop clear policies that serve to protect and promote agriculture while preserving the character of the City of Kelowna;
2. Identify opportunities to strengthen farming and develop agriculture as an economic driver;
3. Increase the amount of, and access to, locally grown and produced food;
4. Build resilience in communities against rising costs of food and risks from climate change.

The Agriculture Plan Update will take approximately fifteen months to complete and will involve the following phases:

- ***Phase 1 - Background scoping and Agricultural Profile development***

Using the information provided in the provincial Agricultural Land Use Inventory, combined with data from the Canadian Census of Agriculture, BC Agricultural Statistics and BC Assessment, an Agricultural Profile for Kelowna will be compiled with information pertaining to the number of farms, farm type, production levels, under-utilized agricultural land, and demographic and financial information. This profile will include updated maps including land use inventory, farmland use and availability, crops currently being grown, presence of agricultural constraints and presence of value added activities. This first phase is expected to be completed by May of this year.

- ***Phase 2 - Public consultation and issues identification***

Facilitating meaningful dialogue amongst stakeholders across the community will be a critical goal of this process. In all forms of consultation, emphasis will be placed on considering both collective and individual needs, ensuring all voices are heard and analyzing the range of issues. A communications plan reflecting the City's Public Engagement Guiding Principles and Engage Policy will be in place in order to effectively engage the community throughout the development of the Plan, and a variety of public consultation techniques will be utilized to identify issues and gather input for the plan. The Agricultural Advisory Committee will be engaged for input on stakeholder identification, vision goals and priorities, and draft policies. Further the community will have many opportunities for input on the plan through an online survey, stakeholder group sessions, and public open houses. This phase of the project will begin this May and will continue until the project completes in Spring, 2017.

- **Phase 3 - Agricultural Plan Update**

Using information gathered through the background scoping and Agricultural Profile combined with public input, the Agriculture Plan will be drafted. Upon completion, the Plan will include:

- Vision, goals, and priority areas
- Extensive updated agricultural mapping
- Local government market opportunities
- Policy development
- Recommended actions
 - Farmland protection strategies
 - Policy directions to inform future bylaw updates (i.e. Recommended policy amendments for dwellings on farmland, building footprints/ratio, Temporary Use Permits, agri-tourism, etc.)
 - Climate change adaptation and mitigation
 - Building connections with the community
 - Bridging gaps with the existing local food system
- Monitoring framework and implementation strategy

Ultimately the final Plan will be current, accurate, defensible and aligned with other major policy and regulation documents. This phase of the project will continue concurrently with phase 2, with expected completion in Spring, 2017.

In summary, an updated Agriculture Plan is an important component to ensuring local and regional food security and market viability in an ever-changing global agricultural context. By embarking on this initiative, the City of Kelowna will be taking a leadership role to enhance the agricultural sector, update mapping tools to assist with land use decisions, increase the amount of and access to locally grown food, preserve the local rural character, and build community resilience in the face of climate change and rising costs of food and energy.

Internal Circulation:

Divisional Director, Community Planning & Real Estate
Suburban and Rural Planning Manager
Planner Specialist, Suburban and Rural Planning
Communications Advisor
Director, Business and Entrepreneurial Development

Existing Policy:

OCP Goal - Enable Healthy and Productive Agriculture. Promote healthy and productive agriculture through diverse strategies that protect farmlands and food production.

OCP Objective 5.33 Protect and enhance local agriculture. (and all associated policies)

OCP Objective 5.34 Preserve productive agricultural land. (and all associated policies)

OCP Policy 7.20.1 Water Availability for Agriculture. Work with stakeholders to ensure the continued delivery of sufficient quantities of water as per best practices for water conservation to ensure continued agricultural productivity.

OCP Chapter 15 Farm Protection DP Guidelines

Agricultural Plan (1998)

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

The cost to complete the Agricultural Plan Update is \$60,000. The City of Kelowna acknowledges the support of the Real Estate Foundation of BC who recently granted \$20,000 towards this project. Further, staff have also applied for a grant from Investment Agriculture Foundation and will be informed of that decision in April, 2016. The remainder of the funds will be funded by Policy and Planning's Professional Consulting budget (2016/17).

Communications Comments:

The project consultant will develop an engagement strategy for this project which will be approved by Communications prior to consultation beginning.

Communications will develop a complimentary communications plan, including a City of Kelowna webpage for the project.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority:
Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:
Personnel Implications:
External Agency/Public Comments:
Alternate Recommendation:

Submitted by:

Tracy Guidi, Sustainability Coordinator

Approved for inclusion:



Danielle Noble-Brandt, Dept. Manager, Policy & Planning

cc:

Divisional Director, Community Planning & Real Estate
Suburban and Rural Planning Manager
Planner Specialist, Suburban and Rural Planning
Communications Advisor
Director, Business and Entrepreneurial Development