

Report to Council



Date: November 14, 2016
File: 1210-22
To: City Manager
From: Community Planning and Real Estate Division
Subject: Agriculture Plan Update: Engagement and Draft Actions

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Community Planning and Real Estate Division dated November 14, 2016 with respect to the Agriculture Plan Update: Engagement and Draft Actions.

Purpose:

To inform Council on the engagement completed to date and to obtain Council's feedback on the draft recommended actions for each theme area of the Agriculture Plan Update.

Background:

The Agriculture Plan Update, currently underway, will provide direction for the 55 per cent of the land base zoned for agriculture in the City of Kelowna and will allow the following goals to be integrated into a current and responsive policy document:

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

Initiated in the spring of this year, the Agriculture Plan Update has adhered to the following timeline:

- Feb. - May, 2016 Background research
- May - June, 2016 Issue identification
- July - Oct., 2016 Draft policy and actions
- Oct. - Dec., 2016 Refine policies and actions
- Jan. - May, 2017 Draft and present plan

Background research was completed and summarized in an Agriculture Background and Profile report. This report reviewed the number and size of farms in the area, the crops being grown, soil and water practices, as well as demographic and financial information for farms. Further, the background research also examined governing policies and environmental constraints (i.e. water, soil and climate).

Spring Engagement:

In June, staff and the consultant engaged stakeholders, industry and the general public to gather input on challenges and opportunities for agriculture in the community (see Schedule A: Agriculture Plan Update Engagement Summary). Over 560 people completed the survey either online or in attendance at one of the two open houses. Of the respondents that completed the survey, 21 per cent self-identified as farmers. Overwhelmingly, 95 per cent of those who completed the survey felt that policies preserving farmland were important or very important and cited the top three reasons for preserving farmland as food security; fresh produce, wine and agricultural products; and the local economy.

Over 73 per cent of the survey respondents also agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement being the vision for the Agriculture Plan Update:

Kelowna is a resilient, diverse and innovative agricultural community that celebrates farming and values farmland as integral to our healthy food system, economy and culture.

(It should be noted that 18 per cent of respondents were neutral, leaving only 9 per cent of the respondents who either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.)

Seven key themes emerged from the input provided through the survey, Get Involved web platform, open houses, stakeholder and industry sessions, and Agricultural Advisory Committee input:

1. Harnessing and stewarding the bio-physical environment: taking advantage of great soil and sun, while minimizing water use and waste.
2. Increasing consumer awareness and support for local agriculture: introducing Kelowna farms to residents and visitors alike.
3. Managing urban and rural growth and development: keeping non-farm uses off the ALR.
4. Supporting economic development of the agricultural sector: creating farms that create a profit.
5. Bridging existing gaps in the food system: getting local food onto local plates.
6. Planning for farm succession: making sure that retirement of the farmer doesn't mean retirement of the farm.
7. Aligning local policies and regulation with the Agriculture Plan's vision: providing clear direction for decision-makers and landowners.

It is recognized that the City's role in each of these theme areas will vary. For example, the City may have a lead role in aligning local policies and regulation with the Agriculture Plan's vision but may only have a supporting role in planning for farm succession.

Draft Actions:

A draft action list was compiled based on best practices research. This list was brought to the Agriculture Advisory Committee last month for their review and input and a more robust list

was created (see Schedule B: List of Recommended Actions DRAFT). The actions identified are intended to achieve the outcomes described in each of the seven themes.

Concurrently, the consultant is working on three policy papers to address several of the theme areas. These policy papers will examine best practices and potential policy options for three key topics:

- Criteria for assessing non-farm uses on ALR;
- Urban-side farmland protection tools (including buffer and vegetative strips); and
- Supporting a farm community identity and culture.

After obtaining Council's input, staff and the consultant will be initiating another round of engagement targeted to gather further input on the draft proposed actions (see Schedule B: List of Recommended Actions DRAFT). Over the course of two days (November 22 and 23) a variety of engagement sessions will occur including:

- Stakeholder session;
- Industry session;
- Farmer conversation session (targeting small to medium size farmers);
- Okanagan Basin Water Board and BC Climate Action Initiative;
- Irrigation Districts;
- Tourism Kelowna and Economic Development Commission; and
- Kelowna Airport staff.

Summary and Next Steps:

After this round of engagement is complete, staff and the consultant will begin to develop the draft Agriculture Plan. Once the draft plan is complete, staff will report back to Council and host public information sessions to gather input prior to the plan being considered for Council endorsement.

Internal Circulation:

Divisional Director, Community Planning & Real Estate
Department Manager, Policy and Planning
Planner Specialist, Suburban and Rural Planning
Communications Advisor
Director, Economic Development

Existing Policy:

One of the goals of the Official Community Plan is to *Enable Healthy and Productive Agriculture* by promoting healthy and productive agriculture through diverse strategies that protect farmlands and food production. Policies in the OCP that support this goal include:

- 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; and
- OCP Chapter 15 Farm Protection DP Guidelines.

Agriculture policy is also guided by the 1998 Agriculture Plan.

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 granted \$20,000 towards this project. A grant of \$18,590 was also received by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the BC Ministry of Agriculture through programs delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC. The remainder of the funds will be funded by existing Community Planning budget.

External Agency/Public Comments:

The Agriculture Advisory Committee met with staff and the consultant to review the draft theme areas that emerged from the public engagement on October 13, 2016. As well the Agriculture Advisory Committee reviewed and provided input on draft action items for the Agriculture Plan Update. Please see attached Schedule C, Agriculture Advisory Committee Recommendations to Council on Agriculture Plan Update, from October 13, 2016.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Communications Comments:

Personnel Implications:

Alternate Recommendation:

Submitted by:

T. Guidi, Sustainability Coordinator

Approved for inclusion: TC

cc:

Divisional Director, Community Planning & Real Estate
Department Manager, Policy and Planning
Planner Specialist, Suburban and Rural Planning
Communications Advisor
Director, Economic Development

Attachments:

Schedule A: Agriculture Plan Update: Spring Engagement Summary

Schedule B: Agriculture Plan Update: Draft Recommended Actions

Schedule C: Agriculture Advisory Committee Recommendations to Council