

COMMITTEE REPORT



Date: June 8, 2017
RIM No. 1210-21
To: Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC)
From: Community Planning and Strategic Investments
Application: Agriculture Plan **Applicant:** City of Kelowna
Subject: Draft Agriculture Plan

1.0 Purpose

To present the 2017 Draft Agriculture Plan to the Agriculture Advisory Committee.

2.0 Proposal

2.1 Background

The existing 1998 Agriculture Plan has served the City well over the past 2 decades, but many local and provincial policies and legislation have evolved in addition to multiple updates to the City's Official Community Plan that necessitate an update to the Plan. The updated *Agriculture Plan* will provide direction for 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;
2. Identify opportunities to strengthen farming as an economic driver;
3. Increase the amount of, and access to locally grown and produced food;
4. Promote and celebrate the agricultural character of Kelowna;
5. Build resilience in communities against rising costs of food and risks from climate change.

Initiated last spring, the update to the Agriculture Plan adhered to the following timeline:



a denotes Council workshop, b denotes Agricultural Advisory Committee workshop, c denotes public engagement

The Agriculture Advisory Committee has provided valuable input to the development of the draft Agriculture Plan at six times throughout the process:

- April 14, 2016 Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis
- May 11, 2016 Vision workshop
- October 13, 2016 Policies, recommendations and themes
- December 8, 2016 Engagement summary and recommended actions
- March 13, 2017 Draft policy and recommendations
- April 13, 2017 Implementation Strategy

With the AAC's input and a year-long public and stakeholder engagement process, a vision statement was crafted and key theme areas were identified. The vision for the 2017 *Agriculture Plan* is:

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

The Plan presents 51 recommended actions that the City can take a lead role in implementing, under four themes:

1. **Strengthening local policies and regulations to protect agriculture.** This theme recommends 33 actions including updates to the Official Community Plan, Farm Development Permit Guidelines, Zoning Bylaw, and other key policies and bylaws. Collectively, these policy recommendations express a commitment to the preservation and strengthening of farmland and will help to limit non-agricultural development, minimize conflicts between producers and non-producers, and proactively use and manage farmland for agriculture.
2. **Stewarding natural resources and the environment for food production.** The nine actions in this theme involve integrating the agricultural sector's needs into existing and/or future environmental initiatives to address concerns over water, climate and buffers.
3. **Improving awareness of local agriculture and access to local food.** Eight actions have been identified to increase the visibility of, and access to, local food products as well as to raise the level of understanding about agriculture.
4. **Fostering and sustaining farm business and farmland.** One action has been identified to investigate and support alternative ownership for farmland to ensure it is farmed to its fullest capacity over the long term.

Although developed for the City of Kelowna, the 2017 draft *Agriculture Plan* acknowledges that the participation of local governments, senior levels of government, agricultural businesses, community organizations, and the public is essential to realize a resilient agricultural sector. As such, an additional nine actions have been identified that the City can support but cannot lead due to jurisdictional or capacity constraints.

An Implementation Plan is included to guide the City on the timing and priority level associated with each of the recommendations. The Implementation Plan separates the 51 actions the City can take leadership on into "actions that can be undertaken using existing staff resources" (Table 9) and "actions that require additional staff resources" (Table 10). In addition, some actions may require additional budget beyond staff resourcing. For these actions, funding options will be investigated and/or budget requests will be made as part of the annual budget cycle.

After receiving Council input on the draft *Plan*, staff will consult the public in a final round of engagement hosting the following sessions:

- Small to medium sized 'farmer conversation'

- Stakeholder session
- Agricultural industry session
- Public Open House

It is anticipated that the final Agriculture Plan will be presented to Council for endorsement in early July. The endorsement of this Plan will provide direction on the Official Community Plan update, 20-year Servicing Plan, infrastructure decisions as well as direction for city owned assets. The draft *Agriculture Plan* is expected to be a robust document that will serve the community for at least the next ten years.

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Attachments:

2017 Draft Agriculture Plan