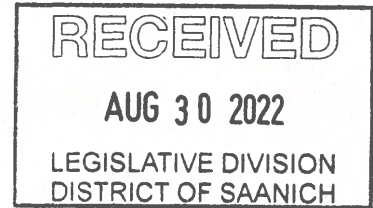




The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

To: Mayor and Council
From: Sharon Hvozanski, Director of Planning
Date: August 29, 2022
Subject: Agricultural Land Reserve Exclusion and Inclusion and Subdivision Application
File: ALR00030; SUB00886 • 4621 and 4631 Pipeline Road



RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council provide direction to Staff as to whether it is willing to consider the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) application separately from the companion Rezoning Application; and
2. If Council is willing to consider the ALR application separately, direct Staff to forward the subject application to the Agricultural Land Commission, without comment.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Report is to seek direction from Council on the subject application. The application is for a boundary adjustment subdivision between two A-1 (Rural) zoned parcels to address an application made to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) which has been referred to the District of Saanich for review.

The ALC application is proposing the exclusion of 4621 Pipeline Road from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) in exchange for the inclusion of the northwest corner of 4631 Pipeline Road into the ALR. The applicant has indicated if the subject application is successful, they intend to submit a rezoning application for the larger parcel in order to do a residential townhouse development. An application for a Streamside Development Permit has also been submitted. The applicants are Wiser Projects (Kaeley Wiseman) for the subdivision and Phil Christie, P.Ag. for the ALR application.

DISCUSSION

Neighbourhood Context

The subject property is located within the Royal Oak Local Area on the east side of Pipeline Road north of Normandy Road. The properties are both outside the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) and mostly outside the Sewer Service Area (SSA). In the late 1980s, the SSA was extended outside the UCB to include only the house footprint area of 4631 Pipeline Road, along with the house footprint area of several other homes along Pipeline Road, to resolve an

environmental concern resulting from malfunctioning septic fields. Installation of sewers in this area was not to create new development opportunities.

The Agricultural Land Reserve parcel at 4621 Pipeline Road contains a single-family dwelling and is generally not used for agriculture. 4631 Pipeline Road is not in the ALR. It contains a single-family dwelling and accessory buildings and structures and is used for grazing two Dexter cattle as well as raising four hogs. Surrounding land use is single family dwellings and rural residential within the ALR to the north, rural residential and two-family dwellings to the west, single family dwellings to the south and Saanich Commonwealth Place Community Recreation Centre to the east (see Figure 1).

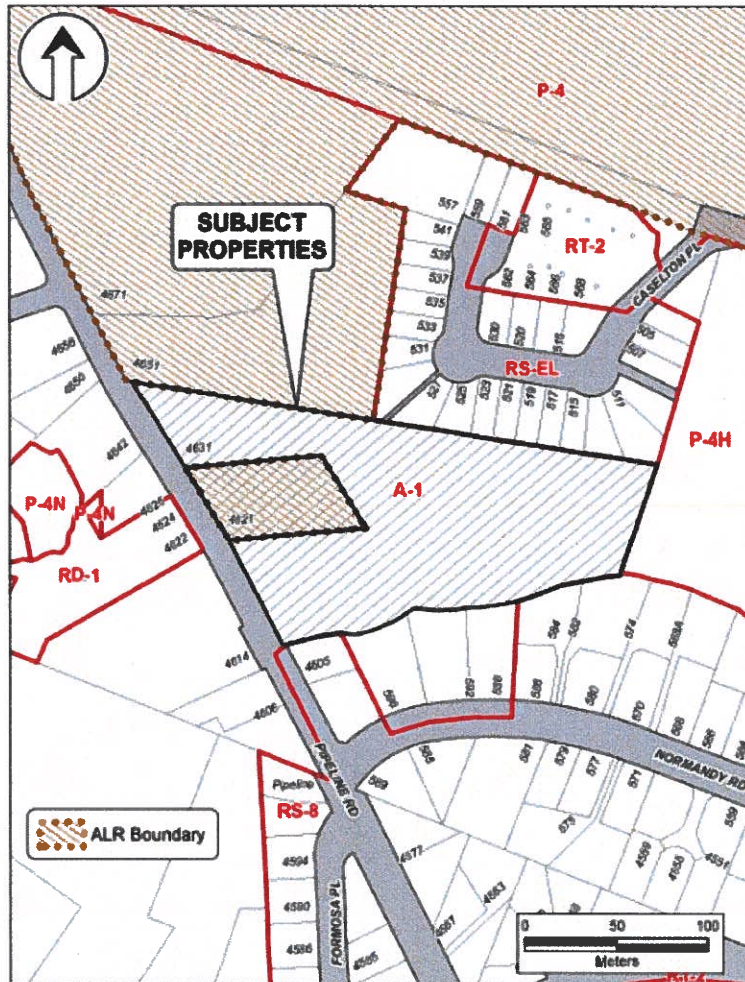


Figure 1: Neighbourhood Context

Proposed Short Term Land Use

In the short term, the land use would not change through this specific application. Both parcels would retain the current A-1 (Rural) zoning and the existing dwelling at 4631 Pipeline Road would be retained. Proposed Lot A would have an area of 3470 m² and proposed Lot B would have an area of 1.92 ha (see Figure 3). While the minimum lot area for the A-1 (Rural) Zone is 2.0 ha, the proposal would comply with Section 5.2 of the Subdivision Bylaw which states as follows:

“The Approving Officer may approve a plan of subdivision which creates a parcel or parcels which do not comply with the minimum parcel size or width requirements of the Zoning Bylaw where:

- (a) two or more parcels are being consolidated and re-subdivided, and
- (b) the proposed subdivision will result in the same or lesser number of parcels, and
- (c) none of the parcels to be created by subdivision is smaller in area or in width than the smallest of the existing parcels of land being subdivided, or
- (d) at least one of the parcels in the proposed subdivision is within the Agricultural Land Reserve and the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission has approved the subdivision, in which case one of the new lots may be smaller than the smallest existing parcel.”

The amount of land in the ALR would increase slightly and the ALR land (proposed Lot A) would be relocated to be contiguous with the ALR parcel to the north.

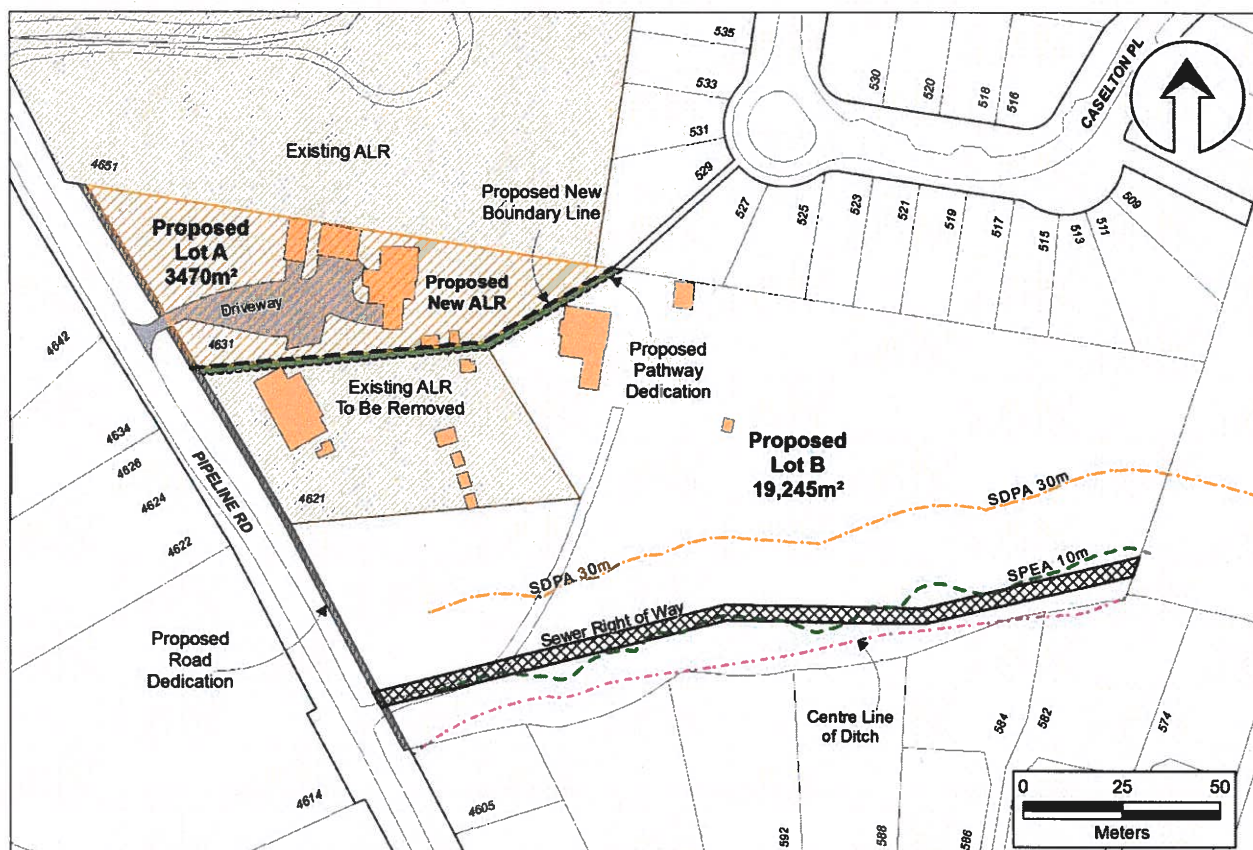


Figure 2: Site Plan

Proposed Long Term Land Use

If the subject application is approved, the applicant intends to make a subsequent Rezoning and Development Permit application to develop proposed Lot B for residential purposes. The applicant has stated that the proposal is to construct ± 74 townhouses. An application to amend the Official Community Plan to include the site in the UCB and a Sewer Service Area Inclusion application would also be required.

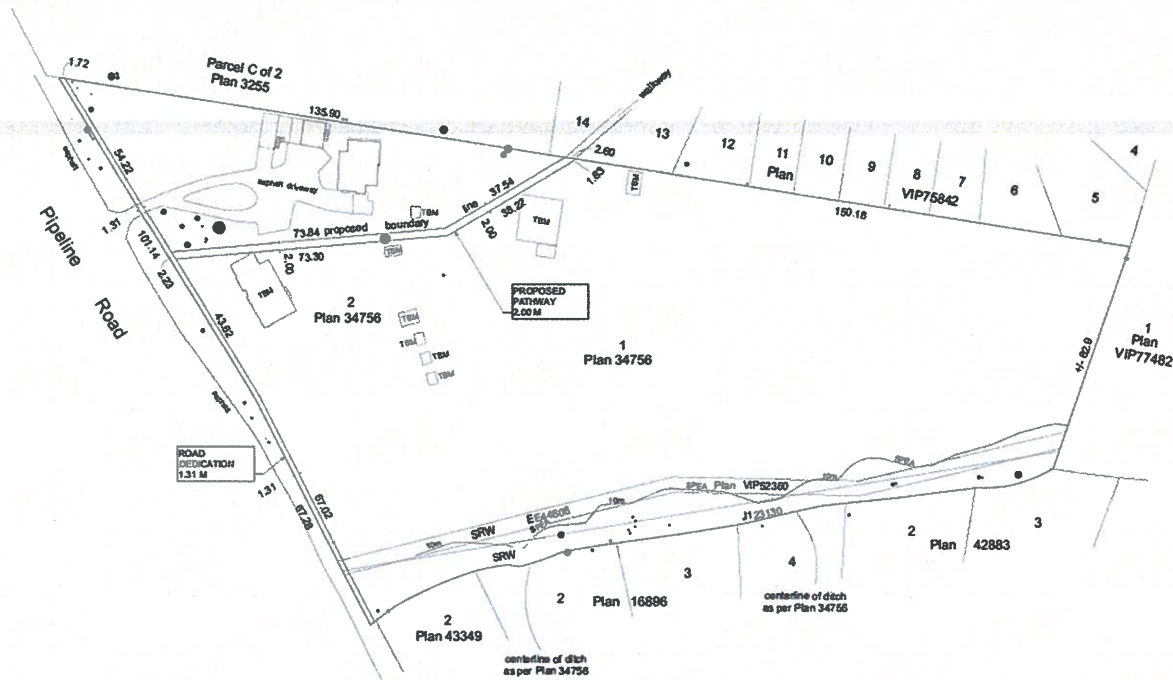


Figure 3: Proposed Subdivision (from plan prepared by Parsi Development Ltd.)

Council Policy - Considering Agricultural Land Reserve applications in tandem with Development Applications

It is policy that where an Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) application is requested to facilitate the development of land, and other development applications are required, all of the applications be submitted and reviewed together, and are addressed in a single Report to Council.

This policy is intended to provide Council with the information necessary to make an informed decision about the Agricultural Land Reserve application referral as well as the intended use of the land should the ALR application be successful.

As noted above, the applicant has indicated it is their intent to construct ± 74 townhouses on proposed lot B. Such an application would require; an application to amend the Official Community Plan to include the site in the UCB, and a Sewer Service Area (SSA) Inclusion application.

Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) Exclusion Review Process

At the time of application, Agricultural Land Reserve Exclusion applications were electronically submitted by the applicant to the Agricultural Land Commission through the Commission's application portal. Prior to filing an application, the Agricultural Land Reserve legislation required that the applicant must give notice of intent by posting a sign on the property and notices in a locally circulated newspaper. Once a complete application was received by the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) it was referred to local government for review.

New changes to the ALC Act are now in effect which no longer allow landowners to make ALR exclusion applications to the ALC. Only Provincial, Local and First Nations governments and

prescribed bodies can make an application to the ALC for ALR exclusion. In this case, the subject application is not impacted by the ALC Act changes noted above, as it was received by the ALC prior to Bill 15-2019 receiving final approval.

Council has the options to:

- Reject the application; or
- Forward the application to the Agricultural Land Commission with, or without, a recommendation.

If Council resolves not to forward the application to the Agricultural Land Commission the application proceeds no further. If Council resolves to forward the application, the final decision rests with the Agricultural Land Commission.

Agrologist Report

An agrologist report was prepared for the proposal by Phil Christie, P. Ag. The report states that the existing lot at 4621 Pipeline Road is an orphaned parcel surrounded by land anticipated to be developed for residential use. It was a farm severance completed in 1980. The surrounding parcel at 4631 Pipeline Road was removed from the ALR in 1992 on application by the owner. At the time, 4621 Pipeline Road was under separate ownership and did not form part of the exclusion application.

The intent of the proposed ALR amendment is to exclude the existing lot at 4621 Pipeline Road (0.31 ha) from the ALR and exchange it for a slightly larger lot (0.34 ha) located on a portion of the adjacent property at 4631 Pipeline Road. This newly created lot at 4631 Pipeline Road would be contiguous with the existing ALR parcel to the north at 4651 Pipeline Road.

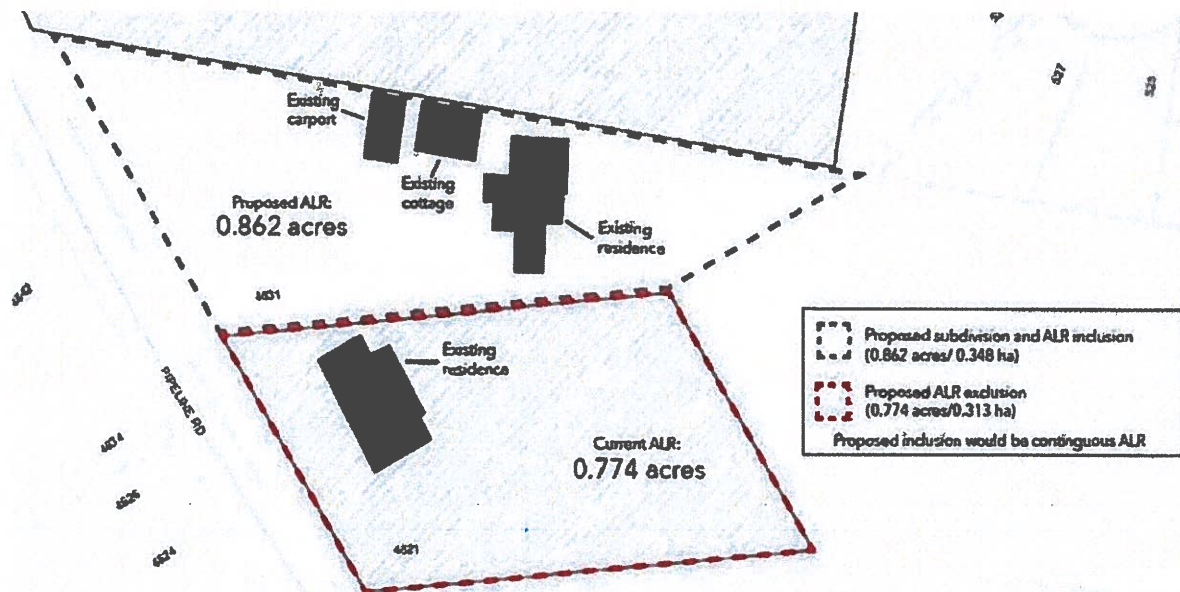


Figure 4: Proposed ALR Land Exchange (From Agrologist Report by Phil Christie, P. Ag.)

The agrologist report states that the soils on the properties have formed as a result of glacial marine deposits laid down during the last glacial period. These glacial marine deposits contain high percentages of silts and clays and as a result have loam to silty textures. These soils are typical of Saanichton and Cowichan soils, the latter being poorly drained. Along the western

boundary of the subject properties, the soils tend to be shallow to bedrock with bedrock observable at the surface in several places throughout the western portion of both lots.

Due to the rough topography and bedrock outcrops much of the area on the western half of the properties along Pipeline Road and particularly around the homes has historically been extensively disturbed. When the residences were built, in order to improve parking on previously steep topography, rock bluffs were blasted to establish accessible building sites. Blast rock fill was then deposited in various quantities near the existing residences.

The report notes that soil capability for agriculture is rated on a scale of 1 to 7, Class 1 being the highest capability and Class 7 having no agricultural capability. Generally, soils of Class 3 or better are considered to be suitable for soil-based agriculture. The inventory of the surrounding non-ALR lands confirms the presence of quality topsoil that can be stockpiled and used to improve the land parcel that is proposed for exchange. The Agricultural Capability of the proposed parcel will improve from classes 3W, 4W, 5R & 7R to 63% Class 2WDA. The existing residence, cottage, driveway, carport and yard area comprise the remaining 37% of the land area. The improved agricultural capability of the proposed parcel would allow for a wide range of crops including all "climatically adapted crops" such as beans, Cole crops, leaf vegetables, most forage crops and peas.

Consultation

In accordance with the Agricultural Land Commission Act, the applicant posted a sign on the property and placed notices in a locally circulated newspaper. The project team held a virtual community meeting on Zoom. Fliers with information about the proposal and the Zoom meeting were distributed to neighbours within 100 m of the property.

Planning also sent notification about the application to neighbours within 90 m radius of the site. Numerous responses have been received; the majority being opposed to the application based on concerns about possible redevelopment of the non-ALR parcel for residential purposes. Copies of all correspondence received are included in the Council package.

Royal Oak Community Association

Planning sent a referral to the Royal Oak Community Association (ROCA). A response was received from ROCA recommending that a farmland quality study be conducted. If it is found that the parcel proposed for ALR is similar to or more favourable for farming than the land currently within the ALR, ROCA would have no objection to the land exchange. ROCA also noted that the present situation with the ALR being orphaned could limit its potential viability for long-term farming use, particularly if and when the surrounding non-ALR land is developed. In a situation where it is developed, the current scenario is likely to place the existing ALR land at higher risk of eventually being removed from the ALR, and therefore create a net loss of ALR land, which would be undesirable. Taking preventive steps at this time to avoid this from happening would be prudent.

Peninsula and Area Agricultural Commission

Planning sent a referral to the Peninsula and Area Agricultural Commission (PAAC) on July 19, 2022. A response was received on August 8, 2022. As the PAAC does not formally meet during the summer months, the response was a compilation of comments from the commission's membership. The comments provided included comments from one member in support and one in non-support.

ALTERNATIVES

1. That Council approve the recommendations as outlined in the Staff Report.
2. That Council reject the recommendations as outlined in the Staff Report.
3. That Council provide alternate direction to Staff.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposal has no immediate implications related to the District of Saanich Financial Plan. However, if the current application is approved the applicant intends to make application to develop proposed Lot B for urban residential development. Extending Services to support this development comes with ongoing maintenance and upgrade costs, associated with all of our infrastructure in the District of Saanich. The Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) and Sewer Service Area (SSA) were set up to protect rural and agricultural lands, protect the natural environment, focus growth, and ensure good fiscal management in regard to installation and ongoing costs of maintaining the District of Saanich's already substantial infrastructure. New residential taxation generated from this development will not cover the associated hard and soft infrastructure costs.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The proposal to ultimately develop proposed Lot B for townhouses would address one of Council's key Strategic Plan goals pertaining to housing supply and diversity. However, it is done at the expense of another of Council's key Strategic Plan goals, namely the continued protection of the Urban Containment Boundary and the Agricultural Lands. The proposal would involve the loss of A-1 (Rural) zoned land that lies outside the UCB and SSA and is located adjacent to valuable farmland within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Policy

The following District of Saanich Planning Policies are most applicable to the subject proposal:

Official Community Plan

- 4.1.2.2. "Support the Regional Growth Strategy with respect to the preservation of: Regional Growth Strategy Capital Green Lands; Unprotected Green Space; Green and Blue Spaces; Farm and Agricultural Land Reserve lands; and Renewable Resource Lands Policy Areas."
- 4.2.1.1. "Support and implement the ten strategic objectives of the Regional Growth Strategy, namely: keep urban settlement compact; protect the integrity of rural communities; protect, conserve and manage ecosystem health; manage regional infrastructure services sustainably; create safe and complete communities; improve housing affordability; improve multi-modal connectivity and mobility; realize the region's economic potential; foster a resilient food and agriculture system; and, significantly reduce community-based greenhouse gas emissions."

- 4.2.1.2. "Maintain the Urban Containment Boundary as the principal tool for growth management in Saanich, and encourage all new development to locate within the Urban Containment Boundary."
- 4.2.1.3 "Do not consider major changes to the Urban Containment Boundary except as an outcome of a comprehensive five year review of the Regional Growth Strategy."
- 4.2.1.4 "Do not adopt any bylaw or resolution providing for a major expansion to the Urban Containment Boundary without first obtaining the assent of the electors through a referendum or plebiscite."
- 4.2.5.1. "Support the retention of rural and farmlands through adherence to the Urban Containment Boundary policy and preservation of the Agricultural Land Reserve."
- 4.2.5.2. "Maintain farming, food production, and large lot residential as the predominant land use on rural lands."
- 4.2.10.14 "Consider major extensions of sewer service, beyond designated Official Community limits at the date of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy bylaw, only as of a comprehensive 5 year review of the Regional Growth Strategy."
- 5.1.1.2. "Do not support applications to exclude land from the Agricultural Land Reserve, unless: a qualified professional agrologist provides evidence that the property is incorrectly designated; and exclusion would not adversely affect the long-term agricultural value of the adjoining land within the Reserve."
- 5.1.1.14 "Buffer rural and agricultural lands from adjacent urban residential development as part of any redevelopment and subdivision proposals, where appropriate."

Royal Oak Local Area Plan

- 5.1 "Consider only minor amendments to the urban containment boundary to include land which can be serviced by gravity to the sanitary sewer system without replacing or deepening existing sewers.
- 6.1 "Consider only minor amendments to the Sewer Service Boundary to include land which can be serviced by gravity to the sanitary sewer system without replacing or deepening existing sewers."
- 7.1 "Support applications to exclude from the Agricultural Land Reserve the parcels identified on Map 7.1." (Note: the subject property is identified for exclusion on Map 7.1)
- 9.1 "Maintain single family housing as the predominant land use and promote appropriately located and designed small lot single family, multi-family and mixed residential housing."

Agriculture & Food Security Plan

- 5.7 "Require Agricultural Impact Assessments, performed by a Professional Agrologist, to be accompanied with ALR applications such as: non-farm use, deposit of fill, exclusions and/or subdivision. Agriculture impact assessments should assess impacts to the subject property and adjacent property."

- 5.9 “Maintain the Urban Containment Boundary as a principal tool for growth management in Saanich and encourage all new development to locate within the Urban Containment Boundary in an effort to protect rural agricultural land.”
- 6.3 “Support efforts of farm operators to enhance farmland and increase crop yield through activities such as: improving water supply; erecting fencing; undertaking drainage improvements; improving soil capabilities; and protecting natural ecosystems that benefit agriculture.”

Policy Analysis

Agricultural Land Reserve

The Agricultural Land Reserve was established by the Province in July 1974, to preserve high quality agricultural lands from development. Over time, it has been refined by the Agricultural Land Commission through concerted reviews of the Agricultural Land Reserve boundaries throughout the province using new maps and better soil information and through adjudication of applications from local government and individual property owners.

Prior to 2008, the District of Saanich Official Community Plans identified Agricultural Land Reserve lands to be retained and Agricultural Land Reserve lands for possible exclusion or further review on application of the owner. The Royal Oak lands, which include the subject properties, were identified for further review. Subsequently, the Saanich Commonwealth Place site and the property at 4631 Pipeline Road were excluded from the Agricultural Land Reserve by the Agricultural Land Commission. The rationale for the exclusion included the relative isolation from large tracts of intact Agricultural Land Reserve land and the location adjacent to intensive urban development. A portion of the former Royal Oak golf course and three private properties on Pipeline Road remain in the Agricultural Land Reserve (see Figure 5).

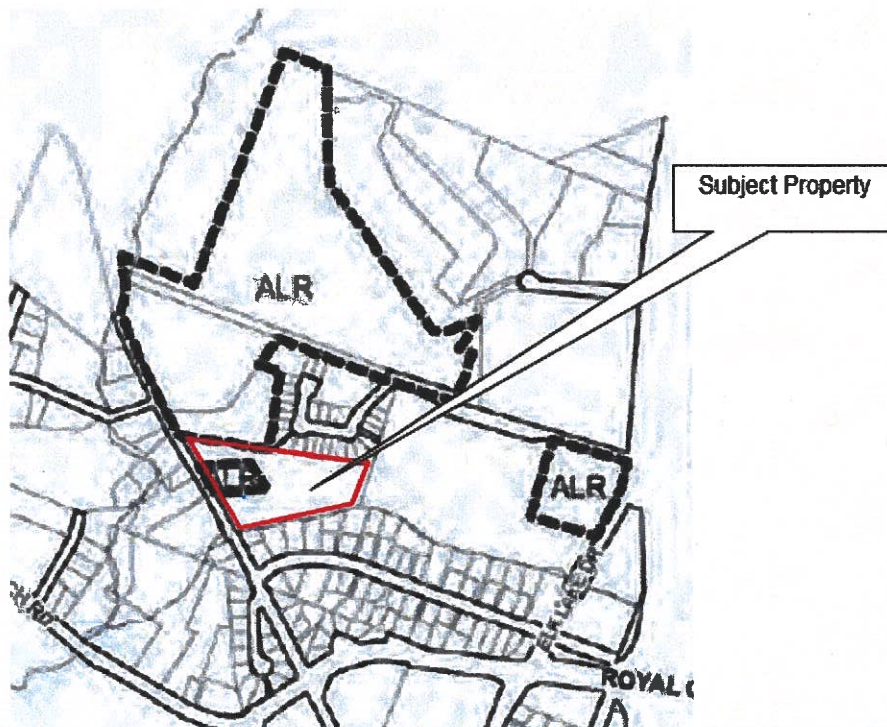


Figure 5: Remaining ALR lands in Royal Oak

The Royal Oak Local Area Plan acknowledges the relatively small size of the remaining Agricultural Land Reserve parcels, the isolation of these parcels from large tracts of quality Agricultural Land Reserve land located outside the Urban Containment Boundary in rural Saanich, and the location adjacent to intensive residential development. It supports the exclusion of the remaining Agricultural Land Reserve parcels in Royal Oak.

The Official Community Plan is the principal legislative tool for guiding future growth and change in the District of Saanich. It applies to the entire Municipality and provides the principal policy framework for development and regulation within an overall municipal perspective. While all of the documents which form the Official Community Plan are relevant, in the case of a conflict or where policy direction is unclear, the Official Community Plan, as the most contemporary of the documents, usually prevails.

The current Official Community Plan and the Agriculture & Food Security Plan acknowledge the need for a healthy, sustainable, and stable food supply and enhancement of local food production through protection of agriculture and arable land and the use of sustainable farming practices. Policies support maintenance of the Urban Containment Boundary and large lot subdivision minimums for rural lands, buffering of high-quality agricultural lands from non-farm uses, support for intensive farming and specialty crops, and support for small-scale agricultural initiatives within the urban area.

It is important to understand that the Agricultural Land Reserve is a Provincial designation that is intended to protect high-quality agricultural land throughout the province. It is not intended to be used by local government to protect marginal agricultural land from development, maintain greenspace, or limit appropriate urban expansion. Regulating growth and development is the responsibility of local government through the Official Community Plan and local zoning bylaws. In this case, a Licensed Professional Agrologist has provided a Land Capability for Agriculture Assessment which indicates that the proposed ALR addition would be larger than the proposed exclusion with more arable land. Further, the new parcel would be contiguous with other properties within the ALR. The proposed soil management plan, which involves stockpiling topsoil from the rest of 4631 Pipeline Road for the proposed addition, would result in significantly improved growing conditions for a wider range of crops and future sustainability of the agricultural parcel.

Focused Growth and Sustainable Infrastructure

The applicant's ultimate goal to develop proposed Lot B with ±74 stacked townhouses is contrary to Official Community Plan (OCP) policies that direct new development to locate within the Urban Containment Boundary.

The OCP policies reflect that a greater emphasis is being placed on the need for long term sustainable development, based on focusing the vast majority of future growth in "Centres", "Villages", and along Corridors such as Shelbourne Street, Douglas Street, and McKenzie Avenue, that are well serviced by existing infrastructure and alternative forms of transportation.

The Urban Containment Boundary identifies the division between the Urban and Rural Area and is the main tool of the District of Saanich Growth Management Program. The concept of the UCB was formally adopted by Council in 1968 and refined through a series of Planning Studies undertaken in the late 1960s and later, through the Local Area Planning Process.

When it was first established, the UCB was intended to encompass about a 50 year supply of urban land. The Sewer Enterprise Boundary (now Sewer Service Area (SSA), within the UCB

included the sewered area of the District of Saanich, and the areas planned to be sewered within a five year period. The rationale was that land for residential development should be made available on a carefully staged basis, coordinated with population growth and the District of Saanich financial resources. The UCB was based, in part, on the area that could be serviced by gravity into the existing and planned sewerage system.

The Urban Containment Boundary has been refined over time. Major changes to the UCB were made by Council following designation of the Provincial Agricultural Land Reserve in 1974 to remove large areas of ALR land, including land in North Cordova Bay. The Blenkinsop Valley was removed from the UCB in 1978, and Panama Flats in 1981.

Previous OCPs and the Local Area Plans mostly enabled minor changes to the UCB to include lots that could be serviced by gravity into the existing sewerage system. Minor changes were considered on a site-by-site basis based on detailed information provided by the applicant as part of the rezoning and subdivision process.

In the context of the UCB policies, “minor” and “major” changes have intentionally not been defined to permit Council discretion to consider an application on its merits

Process for Reviewing Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) Applications

In 2003, Council requested Staff to examine the process for reviewing UCB applications based on concerns about incremental changes to the UCB. Also, there was concern that the rationale for adjusting the UCB should not be based solely on the ability to service a property by gravity into the existing sewerage system, but more on the overall merit and/or public benefit of the proposed application. No changes to the UCB have been made since 2006.

Buffering Rural and Agricultural Lands

OCP Policy 5.1.1.14, recognizes the importance of buffering Rural and Agricultural Lands from adjacent Urban Residential Development. The site is located adjacent to agricultural land within the Agricultural Land Reserve. Farm smells, dust and noise can result in conflicts between Urban Residential and Agricultural Neighbours, and Urban Encroachment can result in increased chances for damage to, or theft of crops, farm animals, and farm equipment.

Placing ±74 dwelling units, as the applicant proposes, on the edge of farmland creates unnecessary risks for current and future farmers/farming operations. In general, when farmland is composed of large open fields, residential neighbours appreciate the beauty of the farmland. When the farm is used for active and more intense farming, complaints (bird cannons, culling geese, early morning truck and tractor noise, dust, smells, etc.) and expectations for quick resolutions, increase.

The location of more residential units adjacent to ALR lands will increase the operational risk and conflicts for farmers. Farmland needs to be protected for the benefit of all residents in the District of Saanich and the Region. Increasing housing supply and diversity is very important, but food and farmland security is essential.

Servicing

The Development Servicing Requirements for the proposal require a 1.1314 m wide dedication along the entire frontage of the subdivision on Pipeline Road towards a 20.0 m wide road allowance. A 2.0 m wide pathway must be dedicated and constructed including fencing in accordance with municipal specifications, between Pipeline Road and the existing pathway from Caselton Place, which abuts the northern property line of proposed Lot B.

The existing house at 4631 Pipeline Road must be connected to the storm drain. Also, storm water management must be provided onsite. The existing 13 mm water service to proposed Lot A must be upgraded to 19 mm.

Long term, and application to extend sewer serving would be required if the townhouses are to be developed. This would be counter to the objectives and policies of the OCP.

Parks

A Construction Impact Assessment and Tree Preservation Plan was prepared for the development by Talbot, Mackenzie & Associates Consulting Arborists. Saanich Parks has reviewed the Arborist Report and notes that the revised site plan shows a storm connection to property line for proposed Lot A that is in an area with the least impact on trees. If additional work is required onsite for a storm water management system, Parks recommends the applicant's project arborist and engineer work together to locate the system outside the Protected Root Zone (PRZ) of trees. If the Subdivision is approved, Parks recommends that this be a condition of the subdivision approval.

The pathway required with this application would need to be constructed within the PRZ of trees shown to be retained. The arborist report provided details for constructing the pathway over the root zone of trees. If the subdivision is approved Parks recommends the arborist report recommendations are a condition of subdivision approval. This information has been provided to the Approving Officer for consideration should Council forward the application to the ALC for consideration and if the ALC recommends approval.

The servicing for the subdivision would require the removal of Douglas-fir tree #1774 for the construction of the pathway. The removal of a Bylaw protected tree for servicing requires replacement trees at a 3:1 ratio and a security deposit of \$700 per replacement tree. The site plan shows three replacement tree planting sites that meet the Tree Protection Bylaw No. 9272 requirements. With the existing boulevard trees the Subdivision application meets the Schedule I requirement of the Subdivision Bylaw. At the site servicing stage of the subdivision a tree permit will be required for the proposed work and the security deposit for replacement trees will be collected at that time.

In 2010, Saanich Council adopted the Urban Forest Strategy. A key goal is "To Protect and Enhance the Urban Forest". Further to this goal is the "No Net Loss" canopy policy. The policy will ensure that every public or protected private tree removed is replaced with a minimum of one tree. The current proposal meets the replacement tree requirements of the Bylaw and the Urban Forest Strategy policy.

The applicant has submitted an application for a Streamside Development Permit. Parks Staff will address riparian restoration through the streamside permit and the applicant will need to demonstrate how impacts to the riparian area would meet the guidelines of the Streamside Development Permit Area (SDPA). In terms of the subdivision, approval of the boundary adjustment cannot be the cause of future hardship in adhering to the SDPA guidelines and fulfilling the development potential. As there appears to be ample space in proposed Lot B for development, there are no concerns anticipated. Should the subdivision be approved, an amended Streamside Development Permit would be required for any future development within 30 m of the stream. Impervious surfaces and stormwater management will be addressed at that time.

CONCLUSION

If the application is approved, the applicant intends to make a subsequent Rezoning and Development Permit application to develop proposed Lot B for ±74 townhouses. An application to amend the Official Community Plan to include the site in the Urban Containment Boundary and a Sewer Service Area Inclusion application would also be required.

The current Official Community Plan and the Agriculture & Food Security Plan acknowledge the need for a healthy, sustainable, and stable food supply and enhancement of local food production through protection of agriculture and arable land and the use of sustainable farming practices. Policies support maintenance of the Urban Containment Boundary and large lot subdivision minimums for rural lands, buffering of high-quality agricultural lands from non-farm uses, support for intensive farming and specialty crops, and support for small-scale agricultural initiatives within the urban area.

A Licensed Professional Agrologist has provided a Land Capability for Agriculture Assessment which indicates that the proposed ALR addition would be slightly larger (0.34 ha) than the proposed exclusion with more arable land and the new parcel would be contiguous with other properties within the ALR. The proposed soil management plan would result in significantly improved growing conditions for a wider range of crops and future sustainability of the agricultural parcel.

Growth Management Policies in the District of Saanich have been long standing. While the applicant's ultimate proposal to develop proposed Lot B for attached housing would address one of Council's key Strategic Plan goals pertaining to housing supply and diversity, it is done at the expense of another of Council's key Strategic Plan goals, namely the continued protection of the Urban Containment Boundary and the Agricultural Lands.

The subject proposal involves the loss of A-1 (Rural) Zoned land that lies outside the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) and Sewer Service Area (SSA) and is located adjacent to valuable farmland within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Placing ±74 dwelling units on the edge of farmland creates unnecessary risks for current and future farmers/farming operations. Farmland needs to be protected for the benefit of all residents in the District of Saanich and the Region. Increasing housing supply and diversity is very important, but food and farmland security is essential.

A subsequent application to amend the Official Community Plan to include the site within the Urban Containment Boundary and Sewer Service Area and to rezone proposed Lot B for attached housing would be difficult to support for reasons outlined in this report.

If Council wishes to send the subject ALR application to the ALC, Staff recommend that it be done without comment, as professional Staff at the ALC are in the best position to determine if the subject ALR proposal is appropriate.

That said, forwarding the application to the ALC does set a tone that redevelopment of proposed Lot B is a possibility.

Prepared by: 

Neil Findlow

Planner

Reviewed by: 

Shari Holmes-Saltzman

Manager of Current Planning

Approved by: 

Sharon Hvozdzanski

Director of Planning

NDF/aw

Attachments

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:

I endorse the recommendation from the Director of Planning.

for 

Brent Reems, Chief Administrative Officer