



# Governance & Services Committee

**TO:** Governance and Services Committee

**FROM:** Todd Cashin  
Director of Community Services

**DATE:** October 10, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Regional Agricultural Compliance and Enforcement Strategy (6430-30)

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**Purpose:** To update the Governance & Services Committee on the Regional Agricultural Compliance and Enforcement Strategy.

## Executive Summary:

The Central Okanagan has strong agricultural roots and this sector has been important in defining the region and its growth pattern. With changes in population, pressures of development, increased climate impacts, and water pressures, these changes have raised more awareness of the importance of farmland. Over the last number of years, staff have become aware of a significant increase in the misuse of farmland. In response, staff are working towards a comprehensive compliance and enforcement strategy that is aimed at consistency, effectiveness, and fairness throughout the Central Okanagan.

This Regional Agricultural Compliance and Enforcement Strategy will outline the Region's approach to its compliance goals, ranging from assisting property owners in understanding their obligations to comply with legislative requirements on farmland, and extends to monitoring compliance, performing inspection activities, and communicating the message that farmland is to be used for farming.

## RECOMMENDATION:

**THAT** the Governance & Services Committee receive the presentation from the Director of Community Services, dated October 10, 2019, regarding the Regional Agricultural Compliance and Enforcement Strategy for information.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Cashin".

Todd Cashin  
Director of Community Services

*Prepared by: Brittany Lange, Planner*

Approved for Committee's Approval

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Reardon".

Brian Reardon, CAO

**Implications of Recommendation:**

Strategic Plan:	Receiving this presentation aligns with the Regional Board's Strategic Priority "Sustainable Communities" by expanding the Regional Planning Lab initiative to identify common needs and opportunities for collaboration.
Policy:	Receiving the presentation is in keeping with the Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1336 policies, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3.2.5.2 Preserve and support sustainable agricultural activities and land base that enhances local agriculture through the strengthening of best practices, support of local and regional food systems and the expansion of local food markets and agri-tourism.</li><li>• 3.2.5.3 Encourage cooperation with the Agricultural Land Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture to promote consistency among bylaws, policies, regulations, and decisions that will be made regarding agriculture.</li><li>• 3.2.5.6 Promote the use of agriculture and ALR lands for food production and ancillary agriculture processing and retailing consistent with uses outlined in the Agricultural Land Commission Act and Regulation.</li><li>• 3.2.5.7 Protect the supply of agricultural land and promote agricultural viability.</li><li>• 3.2.10.4 Support opportunities for regional partners to collaborate, communicate and coordinate on matters of regional significance.</li><li>• 3.2.10.5 Encourage collaboration among the regional partners on long range land use, infrastructure and financial planning based upon projected growth, emerging priorities and the anticipated needs of communities.</li></ul>

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**Background:**

In June 2019, staff provided the Governance and Services Committee with an introduction to the Regional Agricultural Compliance and Enforcement Strategy (See Appendix 'A'). The identified purpose of this strategy is to protect farmland through the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices, and to increase food security in the Central Okanagan. More specifically, members of the Regional Planning Lab have expressed their concerns about agricultural issues in the Central Okanagan, and agreed to move forward with the creation of a collaborative compliance project.

Project members will collectively problem solve through shared learning, taking proactive measures to promote food security, and thereby protect farmland for generations to come. Collaboration will reduce duplication, facilitate efficiencies, and encourage consistent enforcement across the region. The goal is to form new connections, increase communication, strengthen relationships that have already been formed, and ensure that farmland is used primarily for farming.

**Financial Considerations:**

The RDCO has been approved for \$15,000.00 as part of the Community Food Action Initiative in cooperation with Interior Health Authority for the Regional Agricultural Compliance and Enforcement Strategy. This funding will assist Regional District staff in administering and supporting the project. Furthermore, Community Services staff will be submitting a budget request of \$5,000.00 in the 2020 Regional Planning budget for continued implementation of the project.

## **Project Deliverables and Responsibilities:**

The role of the RDCO is to administer and support the project by:

- Increasing communication between stakeholders (i.e. local government and staff at the Agricultural Land Commission);
- Developing a collaborative system for addressing agricultural issues;
- Developing a regional Memorandum of Understanding; and,
- Building public awareness on the importance of protecting the ALR and best practices on farmland.

## **The Role of Project Partners:**

Project partners include staff from RDCO incorporated municipalities (City of Kelowna, City of West Kelowna, District of Peachland, and District of Lake Country), Westbank First Nation, the District of Summerland, Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), B.C. Assessment, Interior Health Authority, and the Ministry of Agriculture.

All Project Partners are expected to participate in the Regional Agricultural Compliance and Enforcement Strategy through in-kind staff support. Project partners are responsible for:

- Attending meetings to share ideas, concerns, problems, and success stories;
- Contribute to the sharing of information and dialogue between other partners; and,
- Promote safe and sustainable farming practices within the ALR and communicate this to the public and our shared communities.

## **Feedback from Regional Partners**

Following the initial meeting with Project Partners held on July 31, 2019, RDCO Planning staff conducted a survey to identify key issue areas and identify helpful tools to take action on compliance issues (See Appendix 'B'). Out of 16 partners, 13 participated in the exit survey following the initial meeting. Below is a brief summary of the survey results:

- 99% of participants found the initial meeting to be very useful and believe the project to be meaningful to the Central Okanagan;
- The top three issues were identified as:
  1. The deposition of fill;
  2. Large structural footprints and production facilities; and,
  3. Storage of vehicles and equipment.
- The top three issue areas were identified as:
  1. The community of Ellison;
  2. West Kelowna Wine Trail; and,
  3. Southeast Kelowna Wine Trail.
- The top three tools identified as being helpful to partnering jurisdictions includes:
  1. Better collaboration and engagement with ALC staff;
  2. Developing an educational campaign to inform landowners (e.g. brochures, bulletins, news releases); and,
  3. Completing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between project partners and the ALC.

**Conclusion:**

As was identified in the survey results, project partners will continue to meet every 3 months in an effort to continue building momentum with this partnership. It is clear that one of the main topics of concern is the placement of fill, illegal dumping, and the transition of soils impacting farmland in the ALR. As such, the next meeting will be held in mid-November and will be a targeted discussion on the topic of soil deposition in the ALR. Furthermore, RDCO staff will continue discussions with the ALC and begin drafting a Regional MOU.

***Considerations not applicable to this report:***

- Organizational
- External
- Alternative Recommendation

**Attachment(s):**

- Appendix 'A' – June 13, 2019 G&S Report
- Appendix 'B' – Exit Survey Results