



Governance & Services Committee

TO: Governance and Services Committee

FROM: Todd Cashin
Director of Community Services

DATE: June 13, 2019

SUBJECT: Agricultural Compliance and Enforcement Strategy

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

Executive Summary:

Over the last number of years, staff have become aware of a significant increase in illegal activity on farm lands. In response, staff are proposing a comprehensive compliance and enforcement strategy that is aimed at consistency, effectiveness and fairness.

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 agricultural lands and extends to monitoring compliance, performing inspection activities to the various tools available to respond to noncompliance.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Governance & Services Committee receive the presentation from the Director of Community Services, dated June 13, 2019, regarding the Regional Agricultural Compliance and Enforcement Strategy for information.

Respectfully Submitted:

Todd Cashin
Director of Community Services

Approved for Committee's Consideration

Brian Reardon, CAO

Prepared by: Janelle Taylor, Planner

Implications of Recommendation:

- Policy: Receiving the presentation is in keeping with the Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1336 policies, including:
- 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 3.2.5.7 Protect the supply of agricultural land and promote agricultural viability.
 - 3.2.10.4 Support opportunities for regional partners to collaborate, communicate and coordinate on matters of regional significance.
 - 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.
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Background:

Over the last couple of years, staff from the Regional District, our municipal partners and both Agricultural Land Commission and Ministry of Agriculture have become aware of a significant increase in illegal activity on agricultural lands. Staff are also keenly aware that there is a public expectation that illegal activities on farm land will be met with meaningful compliance or appropriate enforcement action. In response, Regional staff have started working on a strategy with respect to improving compliance and enforcing legislation and regulations if necessary.

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 agricultural lands and extends to monitoring compliance, performing inspection activities to the various tools available to respond to noncompliance and will be aimed at consistency, effectiveness and fairness which can be expanded to other sectors of the Region as required.

Regional Growth Strategy

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) was adopted by the Regional District of Central Okanagan in 2014. The RGS outlines ten issues areas, including 'Our Food' and 'Our Governance'.

- Our Food contains policies to support the goal of a regional food system that is healthy, resilient, and sustainable.

The RGS outlines that 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, water pressures, and more focus on local food production for sustainability, these changes have raised more

awareness on food systems from cultivating and planting to consumption to the compost heap, and back again. Today, food policies appear on the agenda of dozens of municipal governments across North America and beyond. Future planning can help ensure food systems are adequately addressed in growth management decisions.

- Our Governance contains policies to support the goal of responding to the needs of the region with an effective and efficient governance service model.

The RGS outlines that the roles and services for a regional district are determined by its member jurisdictions; regional district's act only in response to the expressed needs, interests and instructions of their members and address issues that cross political boundaries.

The mission of a regional district is to help protect the quality of life for all citizens in the region by planning for the future. As the Region grows, there needs to be a balance of local autonomy with effective regional coordination in order to address environmental, economic, transportation and quality of life issues that cross local government boundaries. Long range planning for the Region is necessary to identify opportunities and build partnerships to protect the health and safety of current citizens as well as future generations that will live in the Region.

Regional Planning Lab

The RGS Priority Projects Plan was endorsed by the Regional Board in 2017. This 5 year action plan outlines priority initiatives for RDCO to implement based on the Regional Growth Strategy. The Regional Planning Lab is Project #2 of the RGS Priority Projects Plan.

Public servants from across the region are regularly struggling with common challenges and developing effective solutions. The Regional Planning Lab is a forum for those located around the region to work together on common issues. It is hoped that experiences and lessons-learned will be shared, and that relationships will be built across different organizations.

A Regional Planning Lab took place on April 24, 2019, to discuss land use compliance within the Agricultural Land Reserve. Attendees included staff from the Agricultural Land Commission, Ministry of Agriculture, District of Peachland, City of West Kelowna, City of Kelowna, District of Lake Country, and Regional District. During the Lab, it was discovered that jurisdictions throughout the Central Okanagan are struggling with a multitude of similar agricultural compliance issues. Examples of uses which negatively impact land meant for food production include depositing substantial amounts of unsanctioned soil/debris; operating commercial businesses which require storage of vehicles and materials; storing vehicles; constructing winery/cidery/brewery/cannabis facilities with significant building footprints.

The Lab concluded with participants encouraging the region to move forward with consideration of a regional agricultural compliance coordination strategy.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

- *Financial*
- *Organizational*
- *External Implications*
- *Alternative Recommendation*

Attachment(s):

- N/A