

**HOLDING THE LINE:
THE VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND
IN DELTA, BC**

by

Teresa Hanson
B.A. (Geography), University of British Columbia, 1999
A.Dipl.T (Geographic Information Systems),
British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2001

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APPROVAL

Name: Teresa Hanson
Degree: Master of Urban Studies
Title of Thesis: Holding the Line: The Value of Agricultural Land in Delta, BC

Examining Committee:

Chair: Dr. Karen Ferguson
Associate Professor
Urban Studies and History

Dr. Meg Holden
Senior Supervisor
Assistant Professor
Urban Studies and Geography

Dr. Anthony Perl
Supervisor
Professor
Urban Studies and Political Science

Lee-Ann Garnett, MCIP
External Examiner
Senior Regional Planner
Metro Vancouver

Date Defended/Approved: November 23, 2009



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ABSTRACT

Public values and social norms form the basis of land use regulation by dictating the land use issues requiring regulation and setting acceptable land use management approaches. Over time, public values and social norms change. Consequently, regulation must evolve to reflect value changes or face irrelevance.

In Delta, British Columbia, three levels of government are responsible for determining agricultural land use regulation. Historically, resource management rationales, based on identifying the physical capabilities of the land to determine the appropriate use of land, have supported local regulation. Although the region is subject to typical urban growth pressures, this approach has served to maintain agricultural land for agricultural uses, and helped define an edge to urban growth.

By analyzing the Tsawwassen Golf and Country Club development application and existing agricultural land use regulation, this project demonstrates that public values and social norms continue to support existing regulations for agricultural land management.

Keywords: farmland conversion, agricultural land protection, urban growth containment, Agricultural Land Reserve, Green Zone, agricultural land values, public values

DEDICATION

For my family: Jeremy, Mattea and Seppi.

For my parents: Cathie and Rudi.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval	ii
Abstract	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Figures	viii
List of Tables	ix
List of Acronyms	x
1: Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Research Question	5
1.3 Organization of this Paper	5
2: Literature Review	7
2.1 Agricultural Land Preservation: the Role of Values.....	7
2.2 Agricultural Land Preservation: the Influence of the Urban.....	11
2.3 Agricultural Land Preservation: a Typology of Rationales	14
2.3.1 Agrarian Ideals	15
2.3.2 Local Amenity Protection.....	16
2.3.3 Utilitarian	17
2.3.4 Resource Management.....	18
2.3.5 Ecological Conservation.....	20
2.3.6 Typology Summary	21
2.4 Literature Review Summary	22
3: Methodology	23
3.1 The Case	23
3.1.1 Case Study Selection	24
3.2 Content Analysis.....	29
3.2.1 Phase 1: Regulation	30
3.2.2 Phase 2: Development Application	31
3.3 Methodology Summary	34
4: Regulation	35
4.1 British Columbia: Agricultural Land Reserve	36
4.1.1 The Regulation	36
4.1.2 History	38

4.1.3	Agricultural Land Preservation Rationale	39
4.2	Metro Vancouver: Green Zone	41
4.2.1	Legislative Context	41
4.2.2	History	43
4.2.3	Agricultural Land Preservation Rationale	46
4.3	Delta: Official Community Plan	48
4.3.1	Regulatory Context.....	48
4.3.2	Agricultural Land Preservation Rationale	49
4.4	Regulation Summary	51
5:	Application	53
5.1	Description of the Project and Site.....	53
5.1.1	Land Use Designations to Change.....	54
5.1.2	Description of the Application Process and Timeline	56
5.2	Public Consultation Summary.....	58
5.3	ALC Public Information Meeting	60
5.4	Delta Public Hearing	65
5.5	Metro Vancouver Public Hearing	70
5.6	Application Summary.....	74
6:	Synthesis and Conclusion	75
6.1	The Decision.....	75
6.2	Conclusion.....	78
	Reference List	80
	Data Sources	84
	Regulation	84
	Application	84
	Submissions to the Agricultural Land Commission	85
	Submissions to the Corporation of Delta	86
	Submissions to Metro Vancouver	87
	Appendices	88
	Appendix 1: Site Plan for Expansion of the Tsawwassen Golf and Country Club	89
	Appendix 2: Public Consultation Data Categories and Analysis Framework.....	90
	Appendix 3: Summary of Initial Public Consultation Data	91
	Appendix 4: Summary of Rationales for Protecting Agricultural Land.....	96

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Map of lands designated Agricultural Land Reserves in Metro Vancouver (Metro Vancouver 2008, 3)	25
Figure 2: Lands designated Agricultural Land Reserves in Delta (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), Map 14)	28
Figure 3: Metro Vancouver's Green Zone in Delta (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), Map 12)	28
Figure 4: On the left, land excluded from and included in the ALR (Gaudry, K. July 25, 2007, 11). On the right, land excluded from the Green Zone (Gaudry, K. February 6, 2008, Attachment 6).	55
Figure 5: Site plan for development of the Tsawwassen Golf and Country Club. (Produced by Fougere Architecture July 9, 2007 in support of the application.).....	89

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Summary of applications made to the Agricultural Land Commission in the South Coast Region from 2006 to 2009	3
Table 2: Summary of agricultural land preservation typology	22
Table 3: Distribution of agricultural and Green Zone lands.	25
Table 4: Brief application timeline and summary of public meetings and materials reviewed regarding the TGCC development application	32
Table 5: Quotes demonstrating the relationship between regulation and the agricultural land preservation typology.....	52
Table 6: Summary of submissions to the public consultation process analyzed.	59
Table 7: Summary of the number of people represented by the submissions to the public consultation process analyzed.	59
Table 8: Geographical source of submissions determined by address provided on submission.	60
Table 9: Public consultation data categories / analysis framework	90
Table 10: Summary of the reasons given for why the project was supported or not.....	91
Table 11: Rationales for protecting agricultural land given during public consultation.....	96

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ALC	Agricultural Land Commission
ALCA	<i>Agricultural Land Commission Act</i>
ALR	Agricultural Land Reserve(s)
CLI	Canadian Land Inventory
LRSP	<i>Livable Region Strategic Plan</i>
LGA	<i>Local Government Act</i>
OCP	official community plan
TGCC	Tsawwassen Golf and Country Club

1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Lower Mainland¹ is known for its spectacular natural assets. Over time, natural processes have conspired to compile a local bounty that includes dramatic mountain and ocean views; fertile rivers, forests and soils; and a mild climate. These natural assets contribute significantly to Metro Vancouver's character, livability and function, and explain why the region has attracted, and is able to support, the largest urban population in British Columbia. This physical geography also defines how the region can accommodate future population growth. As Metro Vancouver's² urban areas grow to serve an increasing population, the pressures on the region's natural assets increase.

Agricultural land, or land where the soil is capable of growing crops, is a key natural asset in Metro Vancouver. The Canadian Land Inventory (CLI) ranks "mineral soils according to their potential and limitations for agricultural use" (Environment Canada 1976, 3). According to the CLI, agricultural land is a rare resource provincially. In fact, only 1.1% of the provincial land base is considered prime agricultural land (CLI class 1-3) and 5% of the provincial land base was

¹ The Lower Mainland is generally understood to be the area between the Georgia Strait in the west and the town of Hope in the east, the Coast Mountains in the north, and the USA/Canada border in the south.

² Metro Vancouver is the regional district on the western end of the Lower Mainland. Comprised of 22 municipalities, one electoral area and one treaty First Nation, the regional district stretches from Bowen Island in Georgia Strait to Langley and Maple Ridge in the east, and from the USA/Canada border in the south to the Coast Mountains in the north.

deemed suitable for agriculture and protected in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) (Metro Vancouver 2008, 2). Although Metro Vancouver only occupies 0.4% of the overall provincial land base, the region includes 4% of the provincial agricultural land base (Agricultural Land Commission 2008(b)). In the Lower Mainland, the range and quality of soils (i.e. low inputs required to achieve production) in combination with local climatic characteristics (long frost-free period, extended growing season lengths and adequate heat units) provides the biophysical capability to grow almost all of the 80+ agricultural commodities grown in British Columbia (Runka 1990, 4).

The number of applications submitted to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) for changes to land use or exclusion of land from the ALR (as shown in Table 1 below) demonstrates the ongoing pressure on agricultural land in the region (South Coast Region³). As key natural assets, agricultural lands contribute to the regional economy, society, food supply and character. In fact, local policy work has identified many different reasons for protecting agricultural land. Recent work by Bronwynne Wilton defines a typology of rationales for protecting agricultural land.

³ The South Coast Region is defined by the Agricultural Land Commission as the extents of the Fraser Valley, Greater Vancouver, Powell River, Squamish-Lillooet and Sunshine Coast Regional Districts (Agricultural Land Commission n.d.(c))

Table 1: Summary of applications made to the Agricultural Land Commission in the South Coast Region from 2006 to 2009

Year	Number of Applications in the South Coast Region			
	Exclusion	Inclusion	Subdivision and Non-Farm Use	Source
April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009	11 (30 ha approved, 75 ha rejected)	4	56	Agricultural Land Commission 2009, 45 – 46
April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008	12 (73 ha approved, 346 ha rejected)	1	125	Agricultural Land Commission 2008(a), 44 – 45
April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007	12 (16 ha approved, 630 ha rejected)	2	104	Agricultural Land Commission 2007, 36 - 37

Fifty years ago, Canadian society recognized the loss of prime agricultural lands to conversion to non-farm uses as an issue that required governmental intervention (Troughton 2007, 45). By the early 1980's, British Columbia, Quebec and Ontario had responded to public concern over farmland conversion losses by formulating and/or enacting farmland protection legislation (Troughton 2007, 46). A need to ensure a long-term food supply in the face of unrestrained urban growth initially rationalized protection of these lands, especially in British Columbia. The government of British Columbia established the ALR in response to those concerns to protect prime farmland.

The protection of agricultural land in the ALR has shaped land use decisions in the region. Twenty years ago, Metro Vancouver developed the Green Zone concept in cooperation with its member municipalities. The Green Zone groups agricultural land with parks, watersheds and forests as components of the region's natural heritage. The Green Zone acts as an urban growth boundary and preserves the region's natural heritage from urban sprawl (Greater

Vancouver Regional District 1996, 10). In the last five years, the Corporation of Delta (Delta) has revised its Official Community Plan (OCP) to reflect the community's "values and visions for the future of Delta" (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 1-1). The OCP states that, "Delta will protect the natural environment, agricultural lands, and heritage features" (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 1-3). Delta rationalizes support for farming and agricultural land protection because it is part of the community's history, adds to the economy and residents' quality of life, and contributes to municipal and regional food sufficiency (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 2-24).

The reasons for protecting agricultural land supported at the time a new land use policy is created define the emphasis and direction of the policy. The effectiveness of a policy is determined in part by continued social support for the rationales that created the policy initially. Feitelson's approach to understanding the rationales for farmland protection and farmland protection policy identifies a way to test if regulations are remaining valid in the face of changing social norms. Social norms set appropriate actions to take in response to a particular situation as defined by society as a whole. According to Feitelson (1999, 431), rationales for farmland protection and the structure of regulation designed to protect farmland must reflect dominant social norms and public values to ensure that farmland protection programs are supported initially and remain legitimate over the long term. One way to understand these values and social norms is through analysis of the rationales used to debate the merits of protecting farmland as Feitelson did in his 1999 historical look at the development of agricultural policy

in Israel. An appreciation for the rationales for farmland protection will help create regulation that is more robust over time because the regulation can then respond to current values.

This paper investigates the rationales behind existing agricultural land protection regulation in British Columbia. A deeper look at current rationales is achieved through investigation of the public discussion that took place over a twenty month period between January 2007 and August 2008 surrounding a land development application in Delta, BC. The development application required the exclusion of land from the ALR and the Green Zone, and an amendment to Delta's OCP to proceed. The application was one of the first applications to amend the *Livable Region Strategic Plan* to remove land from the Green Zone. The public hearings during the application process provided citizens the opportunity to describe their personal rationales for protecting agricultural land. The application process itself and the points considered by government to rationalize the application tested the objectives of existing regulation.

1.2 Research Question

In Delta, do public values and rationales for protecting agricultural land support existing regulation protecting agricultural land? What are the implications for protecting agricultural land and regional growth management?

1.3 Organization of this Paper

This capstone research project is founded on an observation that agricultural land is expected to serve many purposes. Because of the many

roles agricultural land can play, there is broad public support for protecting agricultural land. However, these different reasons for protecting agricultural land can ultimately affect the method used to protect agricultural land and the long-term success of that method. The literature reviewed describes the importance of the reasons for protecting agricultural land and highlights the influence of the relationship between urban areas and agricultural land on the protection of agricultural land. The case study examines existing legislation and public consultation submissions to investigate the question. Section 3 describes and rationalizes the research program, methodologies and limitations. The analysis begins with consideration of the legislation that regulates the ALR, and the bylaws that regulate the Green Zone and land use in Delta (Section 4), and concludes with an analysis of the public comments on the Tsawwassen Golf and Country Club application (Section 5). This paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of the research for agricultural land protection and regional growth management practically and suggests opportunities for further research.

2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This project is founded on the idea that the values people ascribe to land affect the acceptable uses of land and subsequently, the design and implementation of regulation that controls land use over time. Here, the idea of value is far broader than economic value; 'value' encompasses all philosophies toward land (Leopold 1949, 223). In the case of farmland preservation, the international discussion about rationales for protecting farmland has evolved in response to changing social, political and economic situations as observed by Bunce (1998) and Furuseth and Pierce (1982) in North America, Feitelson (1999) in Israel, and Garrish (2003) in British Columbia. The expansion of urban areas has had a key influence on how agricultural land is valued. Traditional reasons for protecting agricultural land for agricultural users have been affected by the perceived and actual uses of agricultural land in proximity to the city. Theories explain how changes in the relationship between cities and surrounding rural areas have affected the use and value of land in rural areas. The current debate around farmland preservation at the urban rural fringe has grown to a typology of rationales for preserving farmland.

2.1 Agricultural Land Preservation: the Role of Values

The preservation of agricultural land has been a land use planning issue for approximately fifty years. Initially, rationales for protecting farmland responded to increased urban development pressure and concerns over

potential food shortages. Furuseth and Pierce (1982, 191) suggest that the recognition of agricultural land as both a resource and commodity, an increasing concern regarding rates of farmland conversion to other uses, and the long term implications of ongoing farmland loss inspired governments in Canada and the United States to develop and implement policies to limit farmland conversion. Over the years, the particular rationales for preserving farmland have been refined and expanded in support of a wide variety of approaches to farmland preservation. The typology originally defined by Wilton in 2007 and expanded in Section 2.3 describes five approaches to rationalizing agricultural land protection: agrarian ideals, local amenity protection, utilitarian, resource management and ecological conservation.

Bunce (1998, 235) has noted that all discourses about farmland relate to a “common thread of the socially constructed primacy of farmland”, no matter what rationale put forward by whichever group for protecting farmland is chosen. In other words, our society generally places merit in the idea that farmland is important. Even those who intend to develop farmland for non-farm uses acknowledge the importance of farmland by providing reasons why the land should change uses or provide compensation for discontinuing farming. Bunce holds that whatever motivation is behind support for farmland preservation, “the language of farmland preservation articulates ideals for which farmland itself acts as a physical symbol and thus elevates the meaning and significance of agricultural life and landscape above that of a basic productive resource” (Bunce 1998, 235). Therefore, “farmland preservation” has proven to be a rallying cry

that suits many different objectives because farmland is seen to play many roles, including urban growth containment and habitat provision.

For the idea of farmland preservation to stimulate policy development and ongoing maintenance, the reasons for protecting farmland must be supported politically and by society as a whole. In support of this idea, Carrow, Churchill and Cordes (1998, xi) have found that “social values are at the heart of defining the public interest” and that the public interest is key to the political discourse and successful communication of public policy. Furuseth and Pierce (1982, 204) hold that the public must perceive the loss of farmland from active farming as a problem for which a public response is needed. As with all land use policy, they argue that without support from all involved in or affected by a policy, the policy may not function and consequently could be abandoned or ignored (Furuseth and Pierce 1982, 191). In addition to political and institutional support, Feitelson raises the importance of defining rationales for farmland protection with a broad level of overall social support in his 1999 work regarding farmland preservation and social norms in Israel. He states that “the support for a program hinges to a significant degree on the ability of its proponents to show that the program addresses a ‘real’ (socially construed) need or problem in a socially accepted way. Rationales are advanced, therefore, in order to legitimize programs by identifying a concern that the program addresses” (Feitelson 1999, 432). Feitelson’s work focuses on the connection between the perceived legitimacy of an established program and continued support for the rationale and problem that the program was designed to address. If a program does not evolve to address

changing social norms, sanctioned discourse, power structures and ideologies (Feitelson 1999, 444), Feitelson has documented a “crisis of legitimacy arising from a widening discrepancy between the program’s structure and rationales and the dominant social norms” (Feitelson 1999, 431). Once the legitimacy of a program is questioned, the program loses power and effectiveness.

Consequently, understanding rationales for farmland protection is important to creating and maintaining successful farmland protection policies and programs.

Social norms are defined by society as a whole and indicate the appropriate actions to take to address a situation. Social norms change over time in response to changing social, political, environmental and economic trends and power structures (Feitelson 1999, 431). Feitelson used policy documents, unpublished government documents and reports, and observations of policy development processes to explore the relationship between social norms and the legitimacy of policy (Feitelson 1999, 432). As stated by Stewart (2006, 186), public policies represent enacted values (i.e. they embody values), therefore, policies can be seen as the written log of social norms because, as long as a policy is upheld, the action taken in the policy is generally acceptable.

As stated previously, the farmland protection movement was born out of a concern for the preservation of agricultural land for farming at a time when food security was important and the limits of natural resources were recognized.

Those in opposition to farmland preservation tend to focus on the profit earned from developing land for non-farm purposes. As described by Smith “agricultural land means different things to different people” (1998(a), 4). He provides the

following examples of the different ways agricultural land can be valued: as natural capital (part of our global life support system), wildlife habitat, green space (pleasant scenic vista, part of the character of an area, maintains air quality), parks and recreation, amenity value (contributes to the attractiveness of the area as a place to live, visit, study and invest), rural/estate residential, urban land in waiting (speculation on potential land use change), hobby farms and small holdings, alternative productive capability (nurseries, silviculture, sod farms), horse industry, and farmland for farmers and farming (Smith 1998(a), 4-6). Therefore, the wide variety of people, and so personal land values, that contribute to achieving the goal of preserving farmland characterize the farmland protection movement.

The proximity of the city to farmland is a key influence noted in the literature by Bryant, Coppack and Mitchell (2000), Wilton (2007) and Smith (1998(a)) on the social norms and public values driving farmland preservation as described in the next section.

2.2 Agricultural Land Preservation: the Influence of the Urban

The relationship between the city and agricultural lands in close proximity to urban areas is complex and built on satisfying reciprocal needs. According to Bryant, Coppack and Mitchell (2000, 334), systems of exchange involving the transfer of ideas, commodities, and information have resulted in the “development of an extended urban life-space around the city and the development of the city’s countryside”

The rural land that falls under the influence of the urban environment is also known as the urban field (Friedmann and Miller 1965, 314), rural-urban fringe and exurbia (summarized by Sharp and Clark 2008, 62-64). The zone of influence and physical constraints of this phenomenon are typically defined by the distance people are willing to commute from the rural area to the urban area (Friedmann and Miller 1965, 313). In general, as the density of urban uses increases, the greater the influence of urban perspectives on rural areas. As a population generally becomes older and more affluent, and accessibility improves through advances in transportation and communication, the relationship between rural peripheries and built-up urban areas has become more intimate (Bryant, Coppack and Mitchell 2000, 340). For example, when describing the Canadian situation in the 1950's, Troughton (2007, 45) identifies a demand to expand urban uses onto farmland to achieve higher rents in combination with weak local land use controls as the primary urban influences that weakened the distinct, farm-based rural fabric adjacent to the city. Now, the urban influence has spread further from the confines of the city as more people take advantage of technology and transportation systems. Ex-urbanites, who have no experience with farming, and therefore limited understanding of the needs of the agricultural industry, are becoming the dominant voice advocating for farmland protection. To those former city-dwellers, farmland is more than a livelihood and food source, farmland is wildlife habitat, a beautiful view, a symbol of a simpler way of life, and a part of nature. This research reveals some of these values in the Metro Vancouver context.

One consequence of the relationship between the city and the adjacent rural area is the increase in the number of perspectives that contribute to land use decisions. The social norms in a solely urban area or a solely rural area are more uniform than where the two areas meet. Wilton (2007, 28) concludes that a contemporary metropolitan area with its rural outskirts contains a “multiplicity of voices calling for stronger controls over agricultural land, quite often for a variety of reasons”. She has found that “nowhere is this multiplicity more evident than in the rural-urban fringe regions around urbanizing centres where the demand for land to be used for different purposes increases” (Wilton 2007, 28). Bunce (1998, 244) has found that control of the farmland protection movement is not found in farmers but at the intersection of popular and professional discourses. In fact, “mainstream farm voices are barely detectable in the farmland preservation movement” (Bunce 1998, 244-245).

Bunce (1998, 244-245) asserts that the farmland preservation agenda “has come to be defined in terms of the socially constructed primacy of farmland as a physical symbol of a mix of ideologies and values held largely by non-farm people, especially those occupying the urban fringe”. For example, in Israel, Feitelson has documented a new coalition of groups and individuals concerned about farmland preservation. This coalition includes “environmentalists, planners, and exurbanites seeking to preserve the rural atmosphere; the urban middle class seeking to protect its potential recreation areas and visual amenities; and, several regional councils (the rural local jurisdictions) concerned about urban encroachment and shifts in local political power” (Feitelson 1999,

443). Feitelson found that the coalition strove to advance new rationales for farmland protection that received the broadest support possible because then the most voices were offered in opposition to the powerful development, financial and governmental voices against farmland preservation (Feitelson 1999, 443 - 444).

In the Lower Mainland, the geography of prime agricultural land has created cities and suburbs separated by fields of green. In accordance with Friedmann and Miller's 1965 definition, this geographical configuration places the agricultural land in the Lower Mainland in the "urban field" because the suburbs and agricultural lands are all within commuting distance of the Vancouver core. Smith concludes his discussion of perspectives on farmland by acknowledging that the challenge facing planning for agriculture in the long term is rooted in setting an agricultural agenda "within the context and under the influence of urban dominated perspectives" rather than from a strong agrarian outlook (Smith 1998(b), 2-15).

2.3 Agricultural Land Preservation: a Typology of Rationales

Attitudes towards green space and agricultural land in and near cities have responded to changing overall urban environments and human situations. The following values are identified in the literature as commonly held and have been used to support arguments for farmland preservation. The work of previous researchers has grouped these values and rationales by their theoretical underpinnings. The general typology "of reasons that motivate societies to engage in farmland protection" developed by Wilton (2007, 28) lists five

rationales for the protection of agricultural land: agrarian ideals, local amenity protection, utilitarian, resource management and ecological conservation. The following sections define and expand Wilton's work. This typology is founded in the literature related to contested agricultural lands along the urban rural fringe. In some instances, the planning vision that contributed to the general acceptance of the land use value is identified.

2.3.1 Agrarian Ideals

One of the values that urban dwellers and exurbanites seek in the countryside is the romantic, rural atmosphere found in picturesque and historic towns and landscapes that provide traditional goods and services (Bryant, Coppack and Mitchell 2000, 347-350). The maintenance of this cultural atmosphere via supporting farmers and maintaining farmland is the basis for farmland protection from an agrarian ideal perspective. For example, Frank Lloyd Wright advocated a return to the country in his conception of the Broadacre City. Wright supported a romantic idea that human wholeness could be achieved by pursuing a combination of manual and intellectual work daily in an agricultural/rural setting (LeGates and Stout 2003, 325). A family commitment to the same land for generations can construct a deeply entrenched social fabric foreign to more transient urban populations (Smith 1998(b), 2-14).

Preserving farmland for this purpose is also typically tied to the cultural ideology of the farmer as a steward of the land and the family farm as the primary unit of the rural community (Feitelson 1999, 434; Wilton 2007, 24). Gilg (1991) maintained that keeping smaller farmers on the land should result in two

consequences: “first, a slowing down of the trend to chemically dominated agribusiness, and second, a return to a sense of land stewardship endemic in the nature of the small family farmer” (77).

2.3.2 Local Amenity Protection

Local amenity protection rationales for farmland preservation are based on a desire to protect farmland to maintain a range of public goods (Wilton 2007, 23-24). “Both the enterprise and landscape of farming contribute to an area’s amenity value: its values as a place to live, to visit, to study and to invest” (Smith 1998(b), 2-7). Rural amenities such as open space, recreational opportunities, and historical character are maintained and enhanced through agricultural land protection thereby protecting the local character of a place and enhancing regional identity (Curran 2005, 8). Smith notes that maintaining the “green oasis” or the “green counterpart to an urban landscape” may be reason enough to preserve agricultural land for farming activities (Smith 1998(b), 2-5). Farmland can be viewed as part of a city’s open space amenity to be consumed by urban dwellers in pursuit of recreation (Troughton 2007, 52-53; Gilg 1991, 76; Smith 1998 (b), 2-5 and 2-7). Bunce (1998) notes that “local rural conservation is at its most active in exurban communities, in which the protection of open space and of rural character is inextricably bound up in lifestyle and property values” (240). In this rationale, farmers can be seen as tourism operators. Farmers of the future might add creating a landscape and lifestyle for consumption to their roles as food producers.

2.3.3 Utilitarian

Utilitarian rationales for farmland protection are based on the idea that the land is a commodity and its value (price) is determined by buyers and sellers in the market (Wilton 2007, 22). The market value of agricultural land is therefore based on the amount and quality of commodity that can be produced.

On the urban edge, these market values are complicated by the perceived non-farm uses to which the land can be put; in particular, residential uses. A non-farm use with a significant effect on the market value of agricultural land is the rural/estate residential use. Building large, expensive homes with extensive amenities (pools, tennis courts, landscaping) can remove large portions of land permanently from the agricultural land base by both damaging the soil and increasing the rent value (Smith 1998(b), 2-8). Former urban residents who may not fully value or understand the farming industry can also potentially introduce conflict into a farming area (Smith 1998(b), 2-9).

Perhaps because of the influence of ideas like Le Corbusier's City of 3 Million Inhabitants, the rural area directly adjacent to the city is often perceived as "urban-area-in-waiting" (Byrant, Coppack and Mitchell 2000, 351). Le Corbusier advocated maintenance of a protective reserve zone that allowed for the future extension of the city (Le Corbusier 1929, 320). Although LeCorbusier planned for higher density cities than the current urban sprawl, this perception of rural land adjacent to the city can be seen in the price difference between lands near the city versus lands farther from the city. From a utilitarian perspective, farming is not the "highest and best use of agricultural land" (Smith 1998(b), 2-9)

unless farming can generate the most income. Agricultural land or green space that is valued for its potential to generate income on conversion to an urban use is likely not to be farmed or maintained because the owner is not invested in using the land for farm purposes over the long term (Curran 2005, 7-8). This perception of rural land as 'urban land to be' was one of the primary concerns that led to establishing the ALR as outlined in Section 4.1.

2.3.4 Resource Management

The resource management rationale for farmland protection is founded in a concern over the misuse of prime agricultural land. Under this rationale, farmland is suitable for protection if it is of high quality and has high agricultural capabilities (Wilton 2007, 22). Farmers are stewards of the land charged with maintaining the capabilities of the land.

The capabilities of agricultural lands are mapped to ensure that land use planning is directed in the most efficient manner possible (i.e. based on the ecological and physical capabilities of the land), an approach to land use management suggested by Ian McHarg in his 1969 book *Design with Nature*. McHarg provides this example: flat land is often as suitable for agriculture as for urbanization "so prime agricultural land will be identified as intolerant to urbanization and constituting a high social value – all other flat land will be assumed to have a low value in the natural process scale and a high value for urban suitability" (McHarg 1969, 57). According to McHarg (1969), urban areas should be located where they have the least impact on nature:

Mere market values of land do not reflect the long-term value of the irreplaceable nature of these living soils. An omnibus protection of all farmland is difficult to defend; but protection of the best soils in a metropolitan area would appear not only defensible, but clearly desirable (60).

Although his method for land use planning is used by resource managers, McHarg's work, philosophically, is more closely linked with an ecological conservation rationale for farmland protection. Unlike a utilitarian rationale, a resource management rationale defines the best use of the land based on its physical capabilities, not its ability to earn income.

Prime agricultural land is valued for the food it can produce, the jobs it provides, and the contribution it makes to the local economy (Smith 1998(a), 4-6). Threats of food shortages and ideas such as the "100 Mile Diet" (Smith and MacKinnon 2007) are emphasizing the importance of maintaining local agricultural land to provide some measure of self-sufficiency over the long term. Currently, BC produces diverse commodities that would be able to meet 50% of provincial food needs (Curran 2005, 8). Preserving agricultural land in BC helps to ensure a secure local food supply for British Columbians thereby reducing broader social, economic and environmental implications of continuing to import food from around the world (Smith 1998(b), 3-4).

Green space and agricultural land are also valued for their ability to act as urban containment boundaries (Curran 2005, 13). The obvious shift in uses can provide a strong linear element that improves the overall structure and legibility of a region (Lynch 1960, 47). Using agricultural land or green space as a growth control can be seen initially in Ebenezer Howard's Garden Cities (Howard 1898,

313) and currently in the compact community ideas advocated by the New Urbanists (Congress for the New Urbanism 1996, 310) and Smart Growth (Smart Growth BC n.d.). By curtailing urban expansion, the land most suitable for agriculture is protected thereby ensuring long-term use of agricultural land and land suitable for urban development is defined.

2.3.5 Ecological Conservation

The ecological conservation rationale for protecting farmland advocates a new relationship with land overall, and responds to the degradation of soils through un-sustainable farm practices and conversion of farmland to urban land (Bunce 1998, 238). This rationale works to equate farmland preservation to protection of the natural environment (Bunce 1998, 238) and encourages an ecological relationship with the land similar to that advocated by Aldo Leopold. Leopold (1949, 204) describes a land ethic where the role of humans is changed “from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it”. His land ethic “implies respect for man’s fellow-members and also respect for the community as such” (Leopold 1949, 204). According to Wilton (2007, 23), “this rationale encompasses a broader philosophy of land management based on stewardship of natural resources for intrinsic purposes as opposed to strictly anthropocentric needs”.

From this perspective, prime agricultural land and arable soil are also perceived as natural capital “responsible for life support functions of the ecosphere” (Smith 1998(b), 2-3). Therefore, farmers are encouraged to undertake sustainable farming practices. In addition, as suggested by McHarg

(1969, 55), “nature performs work for man without his investment and such work does represent a value”. In other words, farmland can provide ecological services. For example, farmland “retains rainwater, prevents flooding, recharges aquifers that provide drinking water, and provides habitat for a variety of species” (Curran 2005, 10). Farmland and green space can work to improve and maintain air quality and absorb other pollutants from human actions from the environment (Smith 1998(a), 4). William Rees suggests that, counter to a utilitarian basis for managing land use, some resources like agricultural soils, have “immeasurable positive economic value” (Rees 1993, 3). Each generation should inherit an adequate stock of essential natural capital no less than the stock of such assets inherited by the previous generation (Rees 1993, 4). This philosophy is similar to what is commonly understood as the aboriginal approach to land management. Aboriginals “are often referred to as the original stewards of the environment, protecting and managing agricultural and forest lands in a sustainable manner” (Hibbard, Lane and Rasmussen 2008, 141).

2.3.6 Typology Summary

The typology of rationales for farmland protection contains overlap, as shown by McHarg’s contribution to both the resource management and ecological conservation rationales, and does not claim to comprehensively address all rationales for farmland preservation. However, this typology (summarized in Table 2 below) does define the dominant public values supporting farmland preservation. This typology is used to frame the discussion around current rationales for protecting farmland in this paper.

Table 2: Summary of agricultural land preservation typology

Category	General Meaning	Sample Rationales (Agricultural land ...)
Agrarian Ideals	Rural atmosphere and way of life Long term commitment to the land Holds the farmer as steward of the land and community	...is the home, place of work and source of livelihood of farmers (Smith 1998(a), 6) ...is owned and cared for by farmers (Smith 1998(a), 6)
Local Amenity Protection	Encompasses protection of rural amenities as part of a regional identity / character Rural amenities provide range of public goods	...plays a role in defining the attractiveness of an area as a place to live, visit, study and invest (Smith 1998(a), 4) ...represents a pleasant scenic vista (Smith 1998(a), 4)
Utilitarian	Perceives the land as a commodity whose market value is determined by productivity and function Urban land in waiting	...is an urban area in waiting (Smith 1998(a), 5) ...has a strong appeal as a rural/estate residential place to raise a family (Smith 1998(a), 5)
Resource Management	Response to misuse of farmland Physical capabilities and qualities of land determine best use Urban growth control	...has a finite ability to produce food crops (Smith 1998(a), 4)
Ecological Conservation	Stewardship of natural resources for intrinsic purposes Farmland preservation is equated to protection of the natural environment	...has a capacity to reduce pollutants (Smith 1998(a), 4) ...plays a role in maintaining air quality (Smith 1998(a), 4) ...plays a complementary role in sustaining wildlife habitat (Smith 1998(a), 4)

2.4 Literature Review Summary

Overall, the literature provides the basis for investigating the relevance of current land use regulation based on dominant public values and social norms. When looking at managing agricultural land, the literature identifies key challenges along the urban rural fringe and defines a typology of farmland protection rationales. These ideas form the basis of the research methodology defined in the following section.

3: METHODOLOGY

In Metro Vancouver, certain land values and attitudes towards agricultural land are enshrined in regulation and dominant in public opinion. A two-phased case study analysis of the Tsawwassen Golf and Country Club's (TGCC) land development application provides insight into current interpretation of regulation and public perception of acceptable rationales for farmland preservation on the rural/urban edge. This method illuminates tensions that may be affecting our region's ability to preserve agricultural land and contain urban growth.

3.1 The Case

Case study methods provide the opportunity to investigate a question in detail while considering and interpreting the data based on a wider theoretical framework. As described by Yin (1981) and Stake (1985), the distinguishing characteristic of a case study is the knowledge revealed through an understanding of the question or phenomenon in its real-life context.

In this case, studying a single, precedent-setting land development application increases our understanding of the various rationales used to support agricultural land preservation and reveals if the different rationales continue to provide legitimacy to existing legislation. This detailed focus uses a concrete example to expand on the generally accepted rationales for protecting agricultural land described in the literature review. The following section

describes the rationale for selecting the TGCC development application to explore the research question.

3.1.1 Case Study Selection

Geographically, the TGCC is located on the northern edge of Tsawwassen, BC. The provincial Highway 17 connecting the BC Ferry terminal to the main highway to downtown Vancouver, defines the northern boundary of the site. Tsawwassen is a community in the Corporation of Delta (Delta). Delta is a municipality of 96,750 people (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 1-9) divided between three main communities (Ladner, Tsawwassen and North Delta). These communities are separated by agricultural and park land. Delta is one of 24 member local authorities of the Metro Vancouver⁴ regional district. Metro Vancouver is home to 2.1 million people (Census 2006 quoted in Metro Vancouver n.d. (a)). The communities within the region are bounded by the natural features for which the region is known – the North Shore mountains, Fraser River, Pacific Ocean, and verdant agricultural fields and park land. Metro Vancouver is located in the southwest corner of the mountainous province of British Columbia.

Locally, regionally and provincially, agricultural land is a rare and productive resource as shown in Table 3 and Figure 1 below. The site of the TGCC application is designated agricultural land and included in the ALR. Although a limited resource, agricultural land contributes to the local, regional

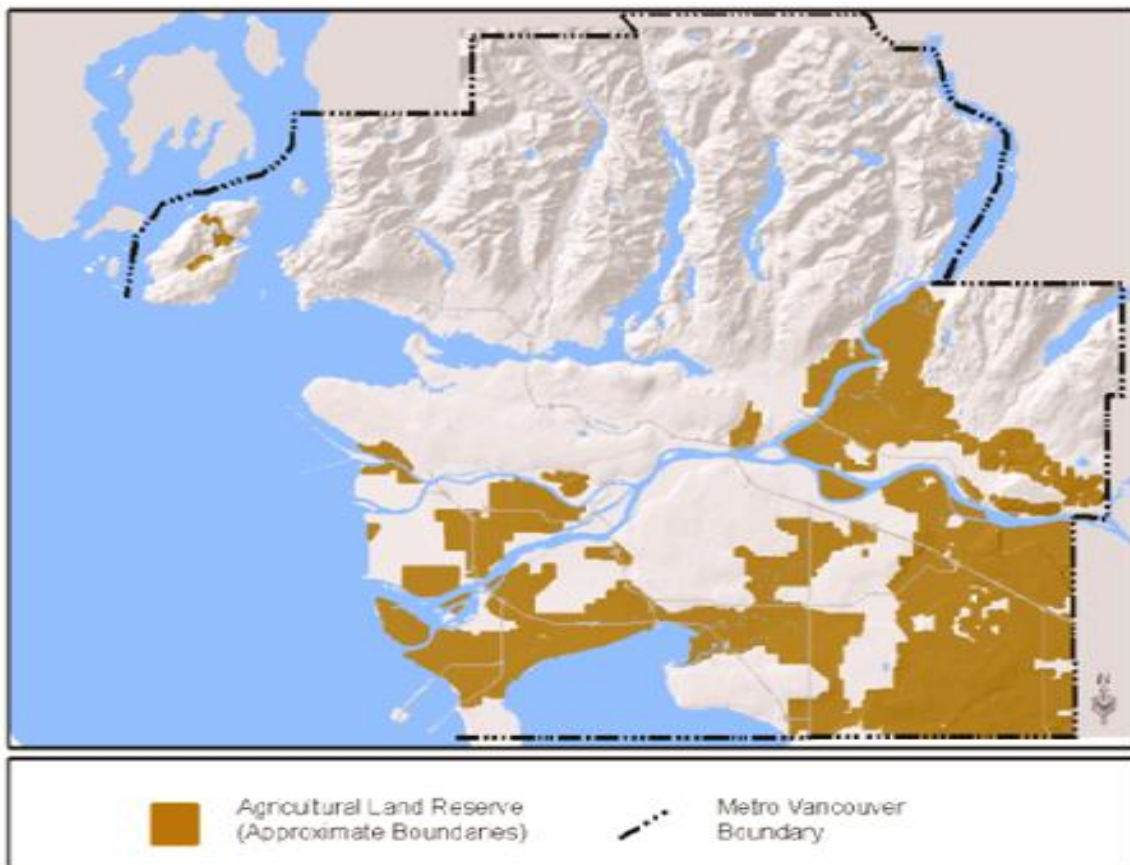
⁴ The Greater Vancouver Regional District was recently renamed “Metro Vancouver”. The term “Metro Vancouver” is used in this paper to describe both the governing body of the regional district and the spatial extents of the regional district.

and provincial economy, food supply and character. The scarcity of the resource along with the contribution of the resource to the region makes a local comparison of rationales for protecting farmland and regulation for protecting farmland in the context of a development proposal for agricultural land relevant.

Table 3: Distribution of agricultural and Green Zone lands.

Region	Agricultural Land Reserve		Green Zone	
	% of region in ALR	Hectare	% of region in Green Zone	Hectare
British Columbia	5%	4,645,538	0.2%	199,500
Metro Vancouver	21%	61,228	72%	199,500
Delta	46%	10,085	73%	13,557

Figure 1: Map of lands designated Agricultural Land Reserves in Metro Vancouver (Metro Vancouver 2008, 3)



The quality of agricultural land in Metro Vancouver is demonstrated by the fact that in 2006, the region produced 27% of BC's total gross farm receipts on only 1.5% of the province's land base (Metro Vancouver 2008, 1). At a local level, Delta's farming industry generated \$161 million in gross farm revenues in 2001 (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 2-24). In addition, the particular physical attributes of the region provide the biophysical capability to grow almost all of the more than 80 commodities grown in BC (Runka 1990, 4).

As defined in the literature reviewed for this project, all of the agricultural lands within the Metro Vancouver region are within the City of Vancouver's "urban field" because they are within commuting distance of the downtown core. Consequently, the entire region is subject to increasing urban influences from increasing urban growth. The region's current population is expected to grow by another 600,000 people by 2021 (Metro Vancouver n.d. (b)). In Delta, according to the OCP, the population is expected to increase to 112,360 by 2021 (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 1-9). Delta anticipates accommodating the population growth between its three urban communities. Tsawwassen will build an additional 1,200 dwelling units to help accommodate Delta's share of the region's population growth (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 1-14). Tsawwassen's anticipated growth is of particular interest in this case because the subject development application adds 440 residential units to that community.

Much of the growth pressure in the region is felt along the long urban/rural shoreline resulting from the physical geography. As shown in Figure 1 above, agricultural lands are dispersed across the lowlands of the region. In Delta, as

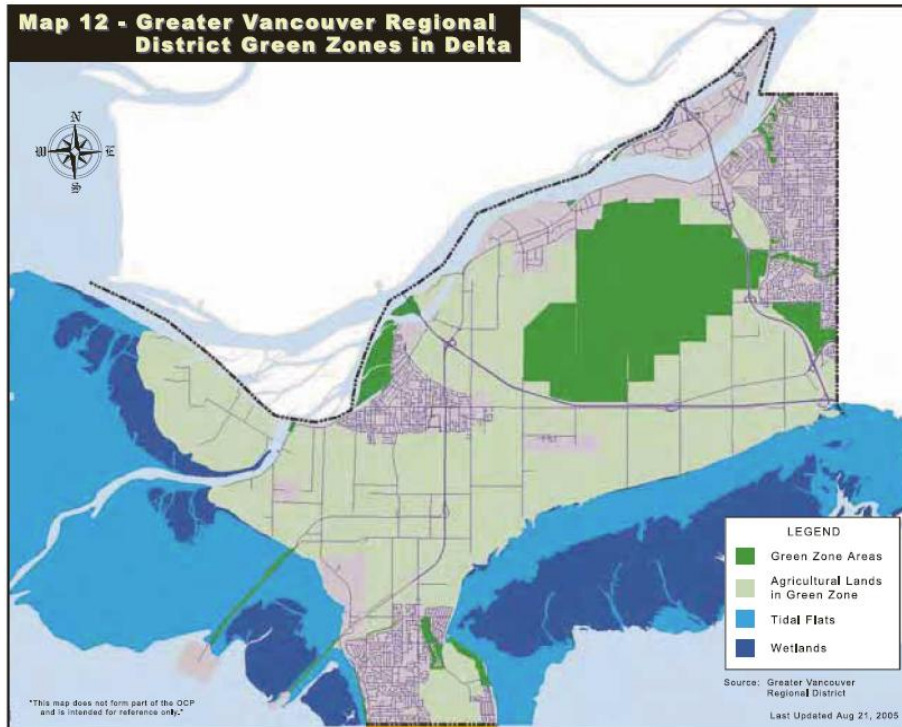
shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3 below, the urban areas are surrounded by agricultural lands and green space. As a residential housing development on the edge of a community, the TGCC development is a manifestation of these growth pressures locally. Other examples of growth pressures on agricultural lands in Delta abound. For example, the South Fraser Perimeter Road alignment will result in the removal of 15 hectares of agricultural land from production and will impact up to 90 hectares of land in the ALR (Gateway Program n.d., 1). The South Fraser Perimeter Road will provide a transportation corridor for goods through the region. The Roberts Bank Port area is expanding and including agricultural land for container storage. The Tsawwassen First Nation is proposing to develop their treaty settlement lands between lands in the ALR and the ocean. Century Group is proposing a large residential development on the Spetifore Farm lands north of Tsawwassen. These lands were excluded from the ALR in 1981 but approval for redevelopment from Delta and Metro Vancouver has not yet been achieved. These development pressures on agricultural land are raised in discussion about the TGCC development proposal.

In addition to local pressures on agricultural land, issues in the media highlight the importance of a secure food supply. For example, rising food prices; scandals associated with melamine in food from China, listeria in deli meats and e.coli in fresh spinach; and awareness resulting from the release of *the 100 Mile Diet* by Alisa Smith and James MacKinnon (2007). In general, the public and government were conscious of the agricultural land issue and had opinions regarding how best to address the situation.

Figure 2: Lands designated Agricultural Land Reserves in Delta (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), Map 14)



Figure 3: Metro Vancouver's Green Zone in Delta (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), Map 12)



From a practical perspective, the TGCC project was chosen as a case study because approval of the project was needed from three governing bodies – the ALC, Metro Vancouver and Delta. Through the application process, those organizations interpreted and implemented their governing legislation fully providing an opportunity to test the public and regulatory rationales for protecting agricultural land. A public consultation process was required for each approval which also provided a record of public opinion for analysis. Section 4 describes the mandates and powers of the ALC, Metro Vancouver and Delta in more detail.

Even though this research is based on a particular geographical area with distinct physical, political and historical attributes, the above rationales define why the site was chosen for the case study. The results based on this particular case may not be generalized to every urban area facing these challenges because of the particular local context; however, the existing well-defined land use definitions for the site, city and region do provide a clear framework within which to understand the issues. This understanding can be used to improve approaches to agricultural land protection policy elsewhere.

3.2 Content Analysis

As described above, the case involves using a development application to investigate if public rationales for protecting agricultural land support existing regulation for protecting agricultural land. The intent of this study was not to evaluate if the correct decision was made regarding the TGCC development but to take advantage of an existing body of data that documented in the public domain rationales for the regulatory decisions made and public opinion. The

agricultural land preservation typology described in Section 2.3 and summarized in Table 2 served as the basis of a thematic analysis of the data.

3.2.1 Phase 1: Regulation

The regulations selected for analysis were those implemented in the TGCC application as follows: *the Agricultural Land Commission Act [SBC 2002] Chapter 36 (ALCA); Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation; Local Government Act [RSBC 1996] CHAPTER 323; Livable Region Strategic Plan; and, Corporation of Delta Official Community Plan and Tsawwassen Area Plan*. These regulations were secured in hard copy from the issuing agencies. Each document was read to identify the land use goals, objectives and policies related to agricultural land protection. The approaches used in each regulation were considered for how they fit into the agricultural land preservation rationales defined in Table 2. Each of these items was transcribed into an Excel spreadsheet. References to specific sections of these regulations in the following text refer to the title of the regulation. Section 4 summarizes the findings.

In this case, current versions of the regulations were analyzed. Secondary data sources, including historical documents and published materials, were used to both trace the source of the current rationale for agricultural land preservation and to provide more depth to the sometimes-neutral language used to write regulation. Review of the documents highlighted the importance of the relationship between the three agencies to the implementation of the regulation.

Therefore, these regulatory relationships are described in the analysis where appropriate.

3.2.2 Phase 2: Development Application

In general, the public consultation process provides citizens the opportunity to present opinions about a development proposal and the implementation of regulation, and so provides an ongoing measure of the relevance of a policy. This approach is the basis of the following content analysis.

The sources of the public opinion for this case were two public hearings and one public information meeting held to collect input from the public to help the agencies make their decisions regarding the application. The written submissions made to Delta and Metro Vancouver during the public consultation process were collected in hard copy from the respective Clerk's offices. The written submissions to the Agricultural Land Commission were downloaded from www.alc.gov.bc.ca. Minutes of the meetings were downloaded from the agency web pages. Table 4 below summarizes the submissions and Table 6 and Table 7 on page 59 provide statistical detail about the responses.

The sole focus of the discussion about the development application was not 'rationales for protection agricultural land'; therefore, the analysis began by reading each submission to determine the reason(s) why the person supported or opposed the application. The rationales were free-coded (manually in the case of Delta and the ALC data, and using Atlas.ti for the Metro Vancouver data).

The codes were based on my interpretation of each submission. The resulting codes were compiled and consolidated before the data was reviewed again. The second review of the data using the refined codes helped to ensure consistent interpretation. The data and codes were then organized into categories defined in Appendix 2. This exercise defined the debate and demonstrated the role of agricultural land values in the final decision about the application.

Table 4: Brief application timeline and summary of public meetings and materials reviewed regarding the TGCC development application

Hosting Agency	Meeting Date	Meeting Type	# of Submissions Reviewed	# of People Represented
	January 24, 2007	Development application submitted to the Corporation of Delta		
Agricultural Land Commission	September 24, 2007	Public Information	105	266
	November 15, 2007	Agricultural Land Commission approved applicant's proposal.		
Corporation of Delta	January 22, 23 and 24, 2008,	Public Hearing	221	1357
	February 11, 2008	Corporation of Delta granted third reading to the application.		
Metro Vancouver	June 17, 2008	Public Hearing	298	1351
	June 27, 2008	Metro Vancouver approved Green Zone amendment.		
	August 8, 2008	Corporation of Delta finally approved all components of the application.		

Once the role of agricultural land values was understood, each submission was read to determine what the submitter valued about agricultural land. Although people did not state, "I continue to support the *ALCA* and the *ALR*", by describing what is acceptable to them personally, people revealed their values. For the submission to be included in this subset of the data, the writer had to

explicitly state why agricultural land or farmland was important to them. These reasons were considered in relation to the typology summarized in Table 2. The final analytical step compared the rationales for preserving farmland identified in the regulation with the public value given to agricultural land during the public consultation process.

My search for agriculturally focused statements guided my interpretation of the submissions. My interpretations evolved iteratively as the ongoing analysis of each submission increased my understanding of the debate, the typology and the context. Reviewing the submissions three times provided the opportunity to verify interpretations and maintain consistency. Consolidating codes also ensured consistency of interpretation. The volume of submissions reviewed may have affected the accuracy of the statistics generated however repeat reviews of each submission minimized the impact of quantity-induced fatigue.

In this case, documents submitted to public agencies in response to a development application are used as a measure of public opinion, and so, overall social norms. All of the documents submitted to the public record for the three official processes were analyzed. However, because only a small subset of the overall population contributed to the public process, this data is a sample of overall public opinion. This is a typical challenge associated with public hearings as a form of public consultation. As stated by Rowe and Frewer, “the involved public is largely self-selected and biased in terms of those most proactive and interested” (2005, 8). For that reason, the data cannot be interpreted as a

statistical measure of support for a particular rationale for protecting agricultural land. The data is interpreted as an indicator of what rationales are present in the general population. Writing down a rationale and submitting it to an agency in support of an argument lends credence to the idea that the rationale is legitimate in the eyes of that individual. Repeat submissions of the same rationale indicate that the rationale is legitimate in the eyes of society as a whole. The quantity of submissions insures that many voices are included in the analysis. A comprehensive survey of citizens would be required to test the question without subjecting the analysis to challenges on these points.

The data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The results are presented in a mix of summary tables that provide a quantitative sense of the public process and distribution of public values within the data set, and qualitative descriptive analysis that categorizes the public values regarding agricultural land and uses quotes to provide a more in-depth understanding of the nature of the debate.

3.3 Methodology Summary

In conclusion, this research project uses a two-phased case study analysis of the TGCC's land development application to provide insight into the relationship between public values, social norms and agricultural land preservation in Metro Vancouver. Data sources include current regulation and submissions made to public consultation processes. The analysis used both qualitative and quantitative techniques to more fully describe and understand the implications of the findings.

4: REGULATION

In Delta, three levels of government are involved with determining acceptable land uses: provincial, regional and municipal. The provincial government manages directly issues of province-wide concern, like the preservation of agricultural land as a provincial resource through the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). The regional district, in this case Metro Vancouver, is responsible for coordinating cooperation between member municipalities on matters of region-wide concern, like regional growth management. Municipal governments, in this case the Corporation of Delta, have been delegated authority from the provincial government to regulate land use locally. The province requires cooperation between the government agencies through legislation; however, the agencies are still primarily responsible for fulfilling their individual mandates.

The following sections analyze the current regulation of agricultural land at the provincial, regional and municipal level. Each section includes a discussion of the link between current policy and the typology of agricultural land protection rationales developed in Section 2.3. At the end of Section 4, the reader will understand the rationales behind existing agricultural land use regulation in Delta.

4.1 British Columbia: Agricultural Land Reserve

4.1.1 The Regulation

The Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) is the provincial agency responsible for implementation of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act (ALCA)*.

According to Section 6 of the *ALCA*, the purposes of the ALC are to:

- a. preserve agricultural land;
- b. encourage farming on agricultural land in collaboration with other communities of interest; and,
- c. encourage local governments, first nations, the government and its agents to enable and accommodate farm use of agricultural land and uses compatible with agriculture in their plans, bylaws and policies. (*ALCA*, Section 6)

The province recognizes agriculture as a provincial resource. As such, before referring an issue regarding agricultural land to an inquiry, the *ALCA* requires the Lieutenant Governor to consider the:

- a. preservation of agricultural land as a scarce and important asset,
- b. potential long-term consequences of failing to preserve agricultural land, and
- c. province-wide context of the matter (*ALCA*, Section 40.3 a,b,c)

The ALC preserves agricultural land through the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The ALR is a provincial-level land use zone that recognizes agriculture as the priority use by encouraging farming and controlling non-agricultural uses (Agricultural Land Commission n.d.(a)). Lands are included in the ALR if they are “suitable for farm use” (*ALCA*, Section 15). The *ALCA* maintains the ALR by authorizing the ALC to consider applications for non-farm use within the ALR, subdivision within the ALR, and exclusion and inclusion of land from and into the ALR (Sections 16, 17, 25 and 30).

The ALR is reinforced through provisions in the *ALCA* and the Local Government Act that require mutual support between the three levels of government. The *ALCA* ensures that an application complies with existing local land use bylaws by requiring (as conditions of application approval): a resolution from the local government supporting the specific application (Sections 25 and 30); and, applicants to comply with local bylaws, other applicable Acts and regulations, laws of the First Nations government and decisions and orders of any person or body having jurisdiction over the subject land (Section 31).

Section 46 of the *ALCA* requires local governments to ensure that their bylaws are “consistent with the *ALCA*, and the regulations and orders of the commission” (*ALCA*, Section 46.2). A local bylaw that is inconsistent with the *ALCA* is overridden by the provisions of the *ALCA* (*ALCA*, Section 46.4). The *ALCA* limits what a local governing body can do on agricultural land without specific permission from the ALC. A local government cannot:

- Permit non-farm use of agricultural land or permit a building to be erected on the land except for farm use (*ALCA*, Section 18.a.i)
- Approve more than one residence on a parcel of land unless the additional residences are necessary for farm use (*ALCA*, Section 18.a.ii.)
- Approve a subdivision of agricultural land (*ALCA*, Section 18.b.).

Regionally, Section 849.2.e. of the *Local Government Act* reinforces the ALR by requiring regional districts to “maintain the integrity of a secure and productive resource base, including the agricultural land reserve.” The ALC, regional and

local governments are thereby required to coordinate resolution of land use matters in the ALR.

4.1.2 History

Both the ALC and the ALR were established in the early 1970's in response to considerable public concern regarding the future of farmland in the province. Mary Rawson, one of the first Commissioners of the ALC appointed in 1973, provides an example of how that concern was phrased:

The prospects for continuing, let alone improving, the quality of urban life are intimately tied to the patterns and prospects of agriculture. Have a care, urban intruders. Have a care, or we will starve tomorrow. (Rawson 1976, 13)

As a primarily mountainous province, lands physically suitable for farming are limited. These lands tend also to be suitable for urban development. As a result, without land use controls, agricultural lands were being permanently lost to non-farm and urban uses (Bray 1984, 251). Given the limited natural resource, preserving a land base for food production to limit dependence on outside food was a concern (Bray 1984, 251). There was also a desire to alter the standard growth pattern to contain sprawl. The Greater Vancouver Regional District's 1972 *Report on Livability* indicates, "public meetings are evidence of a strong public demand that growth be discouraged unless it will improve the quality of life in the Region" (Greater Vancouver Regional District 1972, 6). Gary Runka, the General Manager of the ALC in 1973 and Chair until 1979, summarized the concerns that motivated creation of the ALR as follows:

- Recognition that prime farmland is scarce in BC.

- Recognition of increasing loss of prime farmland to irreversible urban uses (prior to 1973, approximately 60,000 hectares of farmland per year were lost to urban and non-farm uses).
- Concern about food security for BC in the face of significant food imports.
- Observation of local governments unwilling or unable to protect farmland in the face of increasing land use pressures. (Runka 2006, 1)

4.1.3 Agricultural Land Preservation Rationale

The driving force being the creation of the ALR and its regulatory body is typical of the time. Rationales for protecting agricultural land rebelled against utilitarian pressures to convert agricultural land to other higher and better uses by embracing resource management rationales for protecting agricultural land. The resource management school of thought advocated protecting agricultural land because it was a finite natural resource needed to produce food. Therefore, the most biophysically capable land had to be protected. What was not typical was the provincial government's response to this concern. The government used a resource management rationale for protecting agricultural land to create a land use zone based on the biophysical capability of the soil.

The definition of lands suitable for agriculture demonstrates the resource management rationale behind the ALR. Lands to be included in the ALR were first identified as arable land (classes 1 through 4 in the Canadian Land Inventory⁵) (Garrish 2003, 42; Bray 1984, 251). As a commissioner active in the establishment of the ALR, Mary Rawson provides a thorough description of the choices made when selecting land for inclusion in the ALR in her 1976 work titled

⁵ The Canadian Land Inventory (CLI) ranks "mineral soils according to their potential and limitations for agricultural use" (Environment Canada 1976, 3).

III Fares the Land. According to Rawson(1976, 24), land in CLI classes 1 to 4 was included in the ALR and, for land where a mixture of classes occurred; the land was included in the ALR if 40% of the land was class 4 or better. The ALC took a conservative or conservationist approach to selecting lands for inclusion in the ALR because “land converted to urban uses from agricultural ones is very difficult – if not impossible – to recover for food production” (Rawson 1976, 28). Ultimately, “ALR boundaries were based on the capability and suitability of the land, its present use, local zoning and input from public hearings” (Agricultural Land Commission n.d.(b)). Current land use and economic conditions were not considered because “obviously the land need not presently be in farm use to warrant protection. It is the long-haul situation which is the basis of our concern” (Greater Vancouver Regional District 1973, 3.1).

The boundary of the ALR was refined through consultation with regional districts and eventually resulted in the protection of 4.7 million hectares or roughly 5% of the provincial land base (Agricultural Land Commission n.d.(a)). The current *ALCA* maintains this definition by requiring land that is to be included in the ALR to be suitable for farm use (Section 15).

The *ALCA* provides ongoing protection for the primary physical asset, the soil, by considering “the removal of soil and placement of fill” to be non-farm uses (*ALCA*, Section 20.2). According to the *ALCA*, “a person must not use agricultural land for a non-farm use unless permitted” (Section 20.1). Therefore, the *ALCA* gives the ALC and other governing bodies the power, through a

permitting process, to evaluate the merit of altering the soil, monitor the process undertaken on a particular site and penalize those who damage soils.

The resource management rationale for protecting agricultural land is further reinforced by the *ALCA*'s reiteration of the fact that, when disputes are to be resolved or assessments made regarding agricultural lands, agricultural values are to be considered first above environmental, heritage, economic, social and cultural values (*ALCA*, Sections 44.3 and 13.4). However, although the ALC is directed in its mandate to protect agricultural land, the provincial government as a whole tries to find a balance between “preserving agricultural land, strengthening the economy, conserving the environment, protecting natural resources, addressing social needs of communities, and recognizing aboriginal rights” (Barlee 1993, 2). Since originally established in the 1970's, the ALR has remained roughly the same size overall demonstrating an ongoing commitment to agricultural land preservation.

4.2 Metro Vancouver: Green Zone

4.2.1 Legislative Context

In 1965, the *Municipal Act* (now the *Local Government Act*) was revised to create regional districts in British Columbia as federations of municipalities and electoral areas (Ministry of Community Services 2006, 9). Regional districts responded to a province-wide need to improve services to rural residents and coordinate service provision at a regional level (Ministry of Community Services 2006, 1). Regional districts provide efficient delivery of region-wide services like

drinking water and solid waste management, and provide a forum for inter-municipal cooperation (Ministry of Community Services 2006, 5).

Regional districts were initially granted land use planning responsibilities. Those powers were rescinded in 1983. In 1995, the provincial government passed the *Growth Strategies Statutes Amendment Act* to reinstate regional planning powers on a voluntary basis through regional growth strategies. Regional growth strategies are twenty year guides for regional decision making that “promote human settlement that is socially, economically and environmentally healthy and that makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources”(Local Government Act, Section 849.1). Of particular relevance to this study, the *Local Government Act (LGA)* goes on to require that the regional growth strategy “should work towards but not be limited to maintaining the integrity of a secure and productive resource base, including the agricultural land reserve” (LGA, Section 849.2.e).

Once adopted, a regional district is required to act consistently with a regional growth strategy by adopting bylaws and providing works and services in accordance with the regional growth strategy (LGA, Section 865.1). Member municipalities of a regional district are required to include regional context statements in their official community plans (LGA, Section 866). A regional context statement identifies the relationship between the regional growth strategy and the municipality’s official community plan (OCP) and includes how the municipality will make the OCP consistent with the regional growth strategy over time (LGA, Section 866.2). The LGA requires a regional context statement, as

part of an OCP, to be consistent with the rest of the OCP and to show how local policies apply in a regional context (Section 878.1).

The *LGA* initially provided limited power to amend a regional growth strategy once adopted. Metro Vancouver had historically expressed concern that the *LGA* Section 857 requirements rendered regional growth strategies “static and inflexible” (Kellas, H. October 4, 2007, 2). In November 2007, the provincial government passed an Order in Council allowing an amendment to Metro Vancouver’s regional growth strategy to occur only if the Board agrees that it “is consistent with protecting Greater Vancouver’s natural assets including major parks, watersheds, ecologically important areas and farmlands” (Province of British Columbia 2007, Section 2a). By allowing Metro Vancouver to consider local amendments to regional land use designations like the Green Zone, without satisfying Section 857 of the *LGA* (which required acceptance for any amendment by all member municipalities, Translink and adjoining regional districts), the provincial government provided the mechanism for the Board to consider the TGCC application to remove lands from the Green Zone.

4.2.2 History

The Greater Vancouver Regional District (now known as Metro Vancouver) was created in 1967 (O’Toole 2007, 5). The *Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP)* is Metro Vancouver’s regional growth strategy. Metro Vancouver developed the *LRSP* in the late 1980’s-1990’s based on significant public input. The *LRSP* was adopted by all of the member municipalities of the GVRD on January 26, 1996 and deemed a regional growth strategy by the

Minister of Municipal Affairs on February 10, 1996. The Green Zone is a land use designation in the *LRSP*.

Throughout the *LRSP*, cooperation between different levels of government and agencies, and a broad level of local support, are held as key to achieving the goals of the plan (for example, pages 14, 16, 20, 24). When discussing implementation, the *LRSP* states:

Partnerships are essential to the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan, since land use, development and transportation decisions are being made every day in each of the municipalities that make up Greater Vancouver. Taken together, the trends established by these decisions will go a long way in determining how well the growth management objectives of the Strategic Plan are being met. (Greater Vancouver Regional District 1996, 14)

The regional district's power to regulate specific land uses or enforce implementation of, for example, Green Zone policies, is through controlling delivery of GVRD services and approval of regional context statements for local OCP's (Greater Vancouver Regional District 1996, 24). Therefore, Metro Vancouver is required to secure consensus among members to achieve local land use decisions that are consistent with the *LRSP* and build partnerships with provincial agencies to ensure recognition of the *LRSP* when higher-level decisions are made.

The "Choosing our Futures" public consultation process that informed development of the *LRSP* indicated that residents wanted Greater Vancouver's natural assets protected from sprawl (Greater Vancouver Regional District 1996, 10). Agricultural land was identified as one of those natural assets and respondents ranked "protecting existing agricultural reserves" fifteenth most

important of 54 issues (Hardwick, Torchinsky and Fallick 1991, 10). When summarizing the results of the Public Opinion Surveys collected as part of the Choosing Our Futures program, Hardwick, Torchinsky and Fallick (1991) found that:

Overall, the responses show that residents feel that the natural environment is much of what makes Greater Vancouver special, contributing substantially to the Region's livability and identity. A high quality, healthy natural environment is part of our heritage – residents value this and want it protected. (3)⁶

As a result, when the *LRSP* was adopted, one of the four goals fundamental to managing growth in the region was “Protect the Green Zone”. According to the *LRSP*:

The Green Zone is intended to protect Greater Vancouver's natural assets, including major parks, watersheds, ecologically important areas and farmland. By doing so, the Green Zone also establishes a long term boundary for urban growth. (Greater Vancouver Regional District 1996, 18)

The lands comprising the Green Zone were nominated for inclusion by member municipalities (thereby ensuring municipal cooperation in Green Zone protection over the long term) and included areas that were not to be available for urban development (Harcourt, Cameron and Rossiter 2007, 132-133). “Four types of land make up the Green Zone:

- community health lands, such as watersheds and floodplains;
- ecologically important lands, such as forests, wilderness areas, wildlife habitat and wetlands;
- outdoor recreation and scenic lands, such as major parks and recreation areas; and

⁶ Earlier discussion by Hardwick, Torchinsky and Fallick in that section included “protecting agricultural land “ in a general concern for the Region's open spaces (1991, 3).

- renewable resource lands, such as agricultural and forestry areas. (Greater Vancouver Regional District 1996, 10)

4.2.3 Agricultural Land Preservation Rationale

Public consultation revealed a local amenity rationale for agricultural land protection because agricultural land is part of what makes Greater Vancouver special (Hardwick, Torchinsky and Fallick 1991, 3). Agricultural land was grouped with open space and natural assets through the consultation process reflecting an ecological conservation rationale. Agricultural land in the region became part of a larger ecological whole through the Green Zone designation. The definition of the Green Zone includes lands based on their biophysical capabilities, reflecting a resource management rationale for protecting land. Implementation of the Green Zone reinforces resource management ideas of ensuring that the land is used for its best purpose by keeping urban sprawl off prime farmland.

The use of the Green Zone as an urban containment boundary is a resource management based approach to growth management in the region. Because the ALR already required protection of agricultural land from urban growth, these lands were a natural choice to be included in the growth containing Green Zone. The Green Zone ultimately has two intentions: protect Greater Vancouver's natural assets and establish a long term boundary for urban growth (Greater Vancouver Regional District 1996, 18) reflecting a pluralism of fundamental values. The local amenity protection and ecological conservation rationales are held equal to the resource management rationale.

Metro Vancouver's regional growth strategy is currently under review. The draft reviewed (*Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping Our Future, November 2009*) no longer identifies a Green Zone. Instead, the land uses in the Green Zone have been mapped and described as non-urban designations: conservation / recreation, agricultural and rural areas. These areas are defined firstly by their biophysical capability and secondly by their existing uses. Agricultural areas are intended to support provincial and local objectives to protect the agricultural land base of the region for agricultural uses and agriculture supporting services (Metro Vancouver 2009, 10). In this version of the regional growth strategy, the agricultural policies are written in the "Support a Sustainable Economy" section. The draft regional growth strategy recognizes the need to retain farmlands for farm purposes and, in addition to delineating the land as farmland, supports protection of the land base by supporting the agriculture industry. Another key difference between the draft document and the *LRSP* is the delineation of an urban containment boundary. The draft regional growth strategy requires local regional context statements to specify the urban containment boundary in each municipality, demonstrate how the municipality will accommodate their share of regional growth, and direct growth to brown field rather than green field sites. Metro Vancouver will not extend services beyond the urban containment boundary except in very limited cases (Metro Vancouver 2009, 14). This plan clearly separates growth containment from agriculture. The draft document is currently being reviewed by member municipalities, other agencies and the

public. Metro Vancouver anticipates bringing a regional growth strategy bylaw for Board review early in 2010.

4.3 Delta: Official Community Plan

4.3.1 Regulatory Context

The Corporation of Delta (Delta) is a member municipality of Metro Vancouver located in the southwest corner of the region. The *Local Government Act (LGA)* governs land use planning in Delta. The *LGA* grants local governments the opportunity to adopt official community plans that are a “statement of objectives and policies to guide decisions on planning and land use management” (*LGA*, Section 875.1). As described above in Section 4.2.1, official community plans (OCP’s) must reflect the regional growth strategy. Before adoption, OCP’s must be referred to the ALC for review (*LGA*, Section 882.3.c). As stated above in Section 4.1.1, the *ALCA* requires municipal bylaws to be consistent with the *ALCA*. As defined by the *LGA* (Section 884.2), the effect of an OCP on local land use bylaw development is that all bylaws adopted after the OCP is adopted must be consistent with the policies of the OCP. As a result, the regional growth strategy, reflected in the OCP by the regional context statement, is given implementation power. Delta’s OCP was initially adopted in 1986. In 2005, Delta undertook a review of the OCP to reflect fundamental changes to the municipality’s population, infrastructure, industry, commerce, and natural resource protection objectives (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 1).

4.3.2 Agricultural Land Preservation Rationale

As required by law, Delta must uphold both the ALR and support Metro Vancouver's regional growth strategy. Consequently, much of the language in Delta's OCP repeats that used by the higher levels of government and reflects the resource management rationale for protecting agricultural land ingrained in the ALR and the Green Zone. However, because Delta is charged with managing the detailed land use requirements locally by the *LGA*, the values of the municipality are reflected in how the *ALCA* and the *LRSP* are implemented and interpreted through Delta's OCP.

The *OCP* acknowledges agriculture as an industry and way of life in Delta in the historical description of the city by stating: "farming and fishing were the economic foundations of Delta" (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 1-5). Agricultural lands are shown as the most significant land use in the municipality occupying 46% of the municipality's land base (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 1-6). The employment summaries acknowledge agriculture as "an important industry in the municipality with 196 farms generating about \$161,000,000 of gross revenue" (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 1-12). The introduction to the Agriculture Policy section of the plan states:

Farming is important in Delta, as it contributed to the early settlement of the municipality, and today, adds to the economy and to residents' quality of life. Farming also contributes to municipal and regional food sufficiency. (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 2-24)

These statements regarding the agricultural industry in Delta reflect a utilitarian rationale for protecting agricultural land for economic purposes. Policies that, for

example, advocate improving the road network to “accommodate and support agricultural vehicles and to minimize conflicts with other vehicles on the road” (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 2-51) demonstrate a utilitarian rationale. The OCP also speaks directly to policies that will support the diversification and on-going success of the agricultural industry that include, but are not limited to, protecting the agricultural land base (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 2-25). This policy to protect agricultural land also reflects a resource management rationale because it recognizes the need to protect the soil to protect the industry.

Because of the prominent role played by agriculture visually in the community, agriculture was expected to be held as a defining characteristic of Delta’s identity. Although agriculture is acknowledged as important to the community, both historically and in the present, the OCP does not describe agriculture as “an integral part of Delta’s community identity” (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 2-16). That language, which reflects a local amenity rationale, describes the importance of the natural environment to the community. Some agricultural land in Delta is perceived as part of the natural environment. The OCP recognizes soil-based farm field, old-field habitat and short grass fields as habitats that support a diversity of wildlife and contribute to green space in Delta (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 2-17). Delta’s OCP seems to be working towards reconciling agricultural land uses with wildlife habitat and other ecological concerns. Many of the agricultural policies speak to finding a balance between agricultural uses and environmental values, which is in contrast to the priority given to agricultural uses in Delta’s Tsawwassen Area Plan (written in 1990-

1992). The focus on the natural environment demonstrates a new focus on environmental conservation by the municipality.

In summary, the specific geography of Delta means that agricultural land serves two purposes locally – economic and environmental. These utilitarian and ecological conservation rationales for protecting agricultural land are reflected in the OCP in addition to the higher order resource management rationales.

4.4 Regulation Summary

In summary, resource management rationales for protecting agricultural land dominate regulation managing agricultural land use in Delta. As summarized in Table 5, other agricultural land preservation rationales are evident but implementation tends to focus on effective management of the land resource. The initial adoption date of each policy indicates a general tendency towards designing policies to embrace a wider range of agricultural land preservation rationales over time. Agrarian Ideals for preserving agricultural land were not reflected in the regulation reviewed.

Table 5: Quotes demonstrating the relationship between regulation and the agricultural land preservation typology.

Agricultural Land Preservation Rationales	<i>Agricultural Land Commission Act and Agricultural Land Reserve Subdivision and Procedure Regulation</i>	Metro Vancouver's Livable Region Strategic Plan "Green Zone"	Corporation of Delta's Official Community Plan
Local Amenity Protection		This natural environment is important to our quality of life and sense of place. (Greater Vancouver Regional District 1996, 10)	Farming is important in Delta, as it adds to residents quality of life. (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 2-24)
Agrarian Ideals			
Utilitarian			Recognize farming as the primary use of agricultural land. (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 2-25) Support initiatives that reinforce ... the continued development of a viable agricultural industry (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 2-25)
Resource Management	The following are the purposes of the commission: a. to preserve agricultural land (ALCA, Section 6.a) ...the commission may designate as agricultural land....land that is suitable for farm use... (ALCA, Section 15) ...the preservation of agricultural land as a scarce and important asset... (ALCA, Section 40.3.a)	...the Green Zone also establishes a long-term boundary for urban growth (Greater Vancouver Regional District 1996, 18) Four types of land make up the Green Zone...renewable resource lands, such as agricultural and forestry areas (Greater Vancouver Regional District 1996, 10)	Protect the agricultural land base and lands included in the ALR (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 2-25)
Ecological Conservation		...Green Zone is intended to protect Greater Vancouver's natural assets, including major parks, watersheds, ecologically important areas and farmland (Greater Vancouver Regional District 1996, 18)	Balance the interests of agriculture, the protection of the environment and the co-operative management of the Fraser River Delta ecosystem (Corporation of Delta 2008(a), 2-27)

5: APPLICATION

5.1 Description of the Project and Site

The Corporation of Delta (Delta) received an application from Shato Holdings Ltd. on January 24, 2007 to redevelop the existing Tsawwassen Golf and Country Club (TGCC). The golf facility was built in 1966 at 16 Avenue and 52 Street and included a clubhouse, nine-hole public golf course and driving range on 31.65 hectares (78.2 acres) of land all south of 16th Avenue. The application proposed to expand the site to include 22.4 hectares (55.4 acres) of undeveloped land north of 16th Avenue for the following:

- Redeveloped and expanded golf course (18 holes, par 70, 5700 yards long), and driving range.
- 92 strata ground oriented homes and 250 apartment homes.
- A new clubhouse, spa, gym and a small retail commercial centre.
- A pedestrian and bicycle pathway system. (Gaudry, K. April 20, 2007).

Appendix 1 contains a copy of the site plan presented to Delta Council in July of 2007.

Shato Holdings designed the residential component of the development to appeal to what their market research indicated Tsawwassen area empty nesters wanted (Shato Holdings Ltd. March 14, 2007, 2). The strata units included bungalows to two storey homes ranging in size from 128 m² (1378 ft²) to 279.2 m² (3005 ft²) with two large fee simple single-family homes (424.6m² / 4571 ft²). All homes included at least one bedroom on the ground floor and a two-car garage. The terraced apartment buildings were to range in height from three to

six storeys. Providing single level housing, the apartments included one bedroom to three bedroom plus den units ranging in size from 66.7 m² (718 ft²) to 177.3 m² (1909 ft²). The proposal assigns two parking spaces to each apartment unit. Shato Holdings was granted final approval to construct 194 bare land strata units and 243 apartment homes.

Two soil studies were completed for the subject site. C&F Land Resource Consultants conducted the first for the applicant. EvEco Consultants Ltd. conducted the second for Delta. Both reports found that the soils on the site had been significantly altered by placement of fill and development of the golf course. Both reports also found that remediation would be required for the land to be used for agricultural purposes. According to the agricultural capabilities of the soils on site defined in each report, the unimproved agricultural capability ranged from class 3 to 7. The improved capability also ranged from class 3 to 7. In other words, both reports demonstrated that the agricultural capability of the site is hindered by the changes made to the on-site solids, the salinity of the irrigation water, the depth of the water table and the proximity of residential uses. C&F Land Resource Consultants felt that the agricultural capability of the land north of the 16 Avenue was not improvable, while EvEco thought that agricultural capability could be improved by the removal of the imported fill material.

5.1.1 Land Use Designations to Change

From a land use perspective, the project required the following:

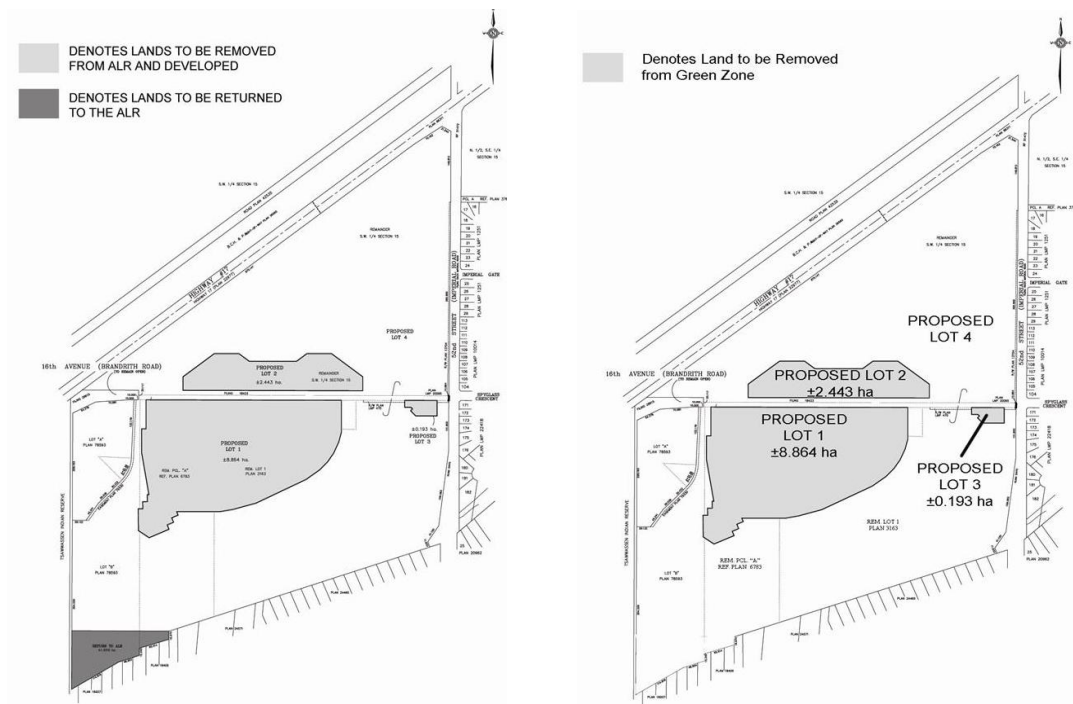
- Exclusion of the land occupied by the residential and commercial components of the development from the ALR (by

the ALC) and the Green Zone (by Metro Vancouver) as shown in Figure 4 below.

- An OCP amendment from Commercial Recreation (CR) and Agriculture (A) to Tsawwassen Golf and Country Club (TGCC), and a Tsawwassen Area Plan Amendment from Major Parks and Recreation Area (P) to Tsawwassen Golf and Country Club (TGCC) (by Delta).
- An extension of the sanitary sewer area (by Delta and Metro Vancouver).

Additional requirements related to zoning, engineering, form and character, and environmental compensation were conditions of development. These matters are beyond the scope of this discussion related to agricultural land values and so are not included in this analysis.

Figure 4: On the left, land excluded from and included in the ALR (Gaudry, K. July 25, 2007, 11). On the right, land excluded from the Green Zone (Gaudry, K. February 6, 2008, Attachment 6).



5.1.2 Description of the Application Process and Timeline

Delta planning staff first considered the proposed development in early 2007. Preliminary analysis of the development included three public information meetings (February 15, 2007, April 4, 2007 and June 27, 2007). These meetings resulted in changes to the design of the development. The proposal was also referred to the ALC and Metro Vancouver for initial consideration. Metro Vancouver initially returned the application to Delta stating that the application would be considered in the context of the overall regional growth strategy revisions if the ALR exclusion application was approved and after the Delta hosted a Public Hearing regarding the application (Yeomans and Stinger May 30, 2007, 2).

Delta granted second reading to the OCP amendment and rezoning bylaw in July 2007 but decided to postpone scheduling the Public Hearing until a decision was reached by the ALC. Refusal of the application by the ALC would require reconsideration of the project's feasibility and design by the application, and could result in an entirely new proposal.

The ALC hosted a public information meeting on September 24, 2007 and approved exclusion of 11.5 ha (28.4 acres) of land from the ALR on November 15, 2007(as shown in Figure 4 above). The exclusion was "to facilitate redevelopment of the Tsawwassen Golf and Country Club into a self-contained golf and residential community with expansion, realignment and lengthening of the golf course" (Agricultural Land Commission November 15, 2007, 1). In support of the exclusion, the applicant had compiled a package of agricultural

benefits for the community that the ALC also considered. These benefits included an inclusion application (1.3 hectares adjacent to the site), a recreational trail proposal (along the Deas Slough Dyke) and the applicant's proposed agricultural initiatives (to rezone land on Crescent Island from industrial to agricultural, and to abandon two previous ALC approvals for exclusion from the ALR on Crescent Island to leave the lands in the ALR) (Agricultural Land Commission November 15, 2007). The ALC approved the application because:

...the established non-farm uses within the proposed exclusion area – including the lake, the establishment of the golf course prior to the introduction of the ALR and the outstanding golf course approval north of 16th Avenue, the Commission believes the exclusion will have no greater impact on the agricultural suitability of the land beyond that which currently exists. (Agricultural Land Commission November 15, 2007, 6)

Delta hosted a Public Hearing over three nights from January 22nd to January 24th, 2008 and granted third reading to the application on February 11, 2008. At that time, the application was referred back to Metro Vancouver for consideration under the interim amendment procedure described in Section 4.2.1 above. Metro Vancouver staff did not support proceeding with the *LRSP / Green Zone* amendment in advance of the full regional growth strategy review because:

...from a regional perspective, the proposal does not reinforce the objectives of the *Livable Region Strategic Plan* and reflects an erosion of the Green Zone's function as an urban growth boundary. (Kellas April 2, 2008, 4)

The Metro Vancouver Board voted to proceed with the application and hosted a public hearing regarding the application on June 17, 2008. The Metro Vancouver

Board approved the amendment to the Green Zone on June 27, 2008. Delta finally approved all components of the application on August 8, 2008.

5.2 Public Consultation Summary

In total, approximately 625 submissions made to three levels of public process regarding the TGCC application (see Table 6 and Table 7) were analyzed. The submissions represented approximately 2973 people. The names associated with each submission were not tracked therefore information is not available regarding whether the same individual made a submission more than once to a single agency nor whether the same individual contributed to more than one agency's process. Based on these submissions, the proposed development was opposed by 387 people and supported by 2588 people. Agricultural rationales for supporting or opposing the application were presented in 305 (48%) of the submissions.

As shown in Table 6 and Table 7, submissions were received from individuals in the form of unique letters, or from individuals in form letters, or from individuals representing large groups in the form of petitions. Instinctively, one could assert that the form letters and petitions should be given less weight in this analysis because these methods of comment provide people the opportunity to be counted as registering an opinion without the commitment needed to write an original letter. However, developing an analysis tool to fairly weigh the form of response was considered beyond the scope of this project. In this analysis, the form of the submission sheds light on, for example, the disproportionate number of people who supported the application because it was designed to be

environmentally friendly (one of the reasons given for supporting the application in a petition). Those issues are highlighted in the analysis where appropriate. In this study, the emphasis is on identifying rationales for protecting agricultural land. Therefore, every submission is considered equal.

Table 6: Summary of submissions to the public consultation process analyzed.

Agency	Number of Submissions					Total
	Opposed	Support			Subtotal	
		Form Letter	Petition	Individual		
Agricultural Land Commission	84	1	0	20	21	105
Corporation of Delta	148	10	1	63	74	222
Metro Vancouver	74	116	1	107	224	298
Total	306	127	2	190	319	625

Table 7: Summary of the number of people represented by the submissions to the public consultation process analyzed.

Agency	Number of People Represented ⁷					Total
	Opposed	Support			Subtotal	
		Form Letter	Petition	Individual		
Agricultural Land Commission	97	141	0	28	169	266
Corporation of Delta	210	289	767	92	1148	1358
Metro Vancouver	80	283	830	158	1271	1351
Total	387	713	1597	278	2588	2973

Although the development application involved a local property, regional agencies were involved in the application process. At all three of the meetings,

⁷ The number of people represented by each submission was determined by the number of people who signed each submission. Organizations were counted as one person. The number of people was tracked as a statistic when each submission was reviewed.

most of the people who made submissions were Delta residents. However, by the time the application was being considered by Metro Vancouver, and in response to a drive for submissions by the applicant, one quarter of the submissions were signed by people who did not live in Delta, as shown in Table 8. This geographical distribution of submissions shows two things. First, that the project was of regional significance to the public and second that the applicant was conscious of the consideration that may be given to a Delta address by each agency.

Table 8: Geographical source of submissions determined by address provided on submission.

Agency Addressed	Delta Resident ⁸		Not a Delta Resident ⁹		No Address ¹⁰	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Agricultural Land Commission	83	79%	18	17%	4	4%
Corporation of Delta	206	93%	12	5%	4	2%
Metro Vancouver	186	62%	76	26%	36	12%
Total	475	76%	106	17%	44	7%

5.3 ALC Public Information Meeting

The ALC held a Public Information Meeting to provide citizens the opportunity to comment on the application to exclude land from the ALR on Monday, September 24, 2007 at the South Delta Recreation Centre. According to the ALC, 125 to 150 people attended the meeting with 40 people offering

⁸ Address on submission was from Delta.

⁹ Address on submission was not from Delta.

¹⁰ Address was not provided on submission or was not legible.

verbal comments¹¹ (Agricultural Land Commission November 15, 2007, 4). The correspondence (105 submissions representing 266 people) analyzed for this portion of the project dates from May to October 2007 because the public consultation process for the exclusion application was ongoing, unlike the formal public hearing process required by the other agencies.

The primary reasons given for supporting or opposing the application were related to agriculture (mentioned 152 times). These reasons generally reflected a recognition that prime agricultural land should be used for farming (189 people were for or against the application because of the affect of the land exchange on agriculture locally, 36 people were for or against the application because of the suitability of the land for agriculture). Respondents were concerned that the development would set precedents that would lead to destruction of the ALR, and uncontrolled growth (128 people). Other issues discussed included housing (mentioned 21 times), infrastructure (mentioned ten times) and wildlife (mentioned ten times) (see Appendix 3 for full summary data). Several people also commented on their dissatisfaction with the public consultation process and the quality of information provided (mentioned 13 times).

Most of the people who made written submissions were in favour of the development proceeding. 141 of the submissions in support of the application were form letters in favour of the proposal because a net increase to the quality of agricultural land in Delta would result (Michael Sturby October 9, 2007).

¹¹ I was not able to obtain a copy of these verbal submissions therefore these comments were not considered.

Individual comments that indicated support for the project because it would provide a net benefit to agriculture in Delta include statements like the following:

Losing real Ladner farmland today for a very unlikely and much lower quality property at the TGCC tomorrow makes absolutely no sense to me. Finally, some naysayers may say that a precedent will be set with approval here. I say good, intelligent decisions make for good precedents. (Peter Guichon, August 31, 2007)

Reasons for supporting the application also included the idea that the proposed project would be a better use of the site than an agricultural use and would be a general benefit to Tsawwassen as demonstrated by this statement:

I believe that both are a bonus for Tsw'n. The use of non-producing 'farm' land for an eye-pleasing golf course and a place to live brings a much needed new vitality to the Tsw'n community. (Tom Gabe, May 12, 2007)

The people supporting the project felt that the benefit of the amenities offered by the project to Tsawwassen would outweigh the potential harm to agriculture locally.

Those that were opposed to the application provided a wider variety of reasons for their opposition. Comments indicated concerns that approval of the application would encourage land development speculation and set a precedent for degrading agricultural land to allow development further undermining the ALR. For example:

The purpose of the ALR is not to provide a land bank for future development. It is supposed to provide an everlasting bank of agricultural land. I believe the exclusion of this land will set an unstoppable precedent in South Delta. Not only will BC lose the 30 acres in question, the ALR in this area will be weakened and farming will be hurt. (Tracey Stobbe, May 8, 2007)

There is a lot of agricultural land in Delta. Most of it is owned by persons who are farming it in the hope that one day you -- the ALC -- will make the flub of giving someone the right to do anything other than farm it. Please don't. (Marnie Huckvale, May 7, 2007)

There are many parcels of land in South Delta that have been "filled" or used as private dumps and are therefore "hard to farm" or "can't be farmed". If the TGC application is approved, the owners of these filled or dumped-on properties could claim that a precedent for exclusion from the ALR exists. (Kent Warmington, May 7, 2007)

People felt that the agricultural land resource needed to be protected as demonstrated by the following quote:

With global warming felt to be inevitable, Canada, and particularly the fertile soils of Delta, are poised to become "the breadbasket" of North America and all agricultural land must be protected. (Ian Connell, May 13, 2007)

As shown by the following two quotes, people opposed to the project recognized the wildlife value of agricultural land.

God wants all the coyotes, muskrats, eagles, rats, owls, and herons He 'created' to survive. He feels a golf course is an acceptable buffer between residential areas and farmland, 452 homes are not. (Jennifer Thoss, May 14, 2007)

There is no greater threat to wildfowl than the loss of farmland for feeding and nesting. (S. Watkins, June 7, 2007)

To the people opposing the project, approval of the project, especially based on a land swap and that the filled land was no longer agriculturally viable, would contribute to the erosion and downfall of the ALR. As described above, respondents were overwhelmingly concerned with the precedent that would be set by approving the application.

The defined role and responsibilities of the ALC and the ALR seemed to be understood by the people who contributed to the public consultation process. Discussion about the application directed to the ALC was focused on the agricultural rationales for supporting or opposing the application. The subset of submissions that presented reasons for protecting agricultural land provided examples of all of the categories defined in the typology summarized in Section 2.3. The most frequent reason given for why agricultural land should be protected was to provide food production and security (mentioned 58 times). Statements like "...preservation [of agricultural land] so food sources can be close to home" (Vivian Fitzpatrick, August 20, 2007) are in keeping with the resource management rationale for the ALR. Ecological conservation rationales for protecting agricultural land were mentioned 15 times in statements like "...all those migratory waterfowl and other creatures who depend on farmland..." (Judy Williams, June 9, 2007). Letters with content like "your duty to agricultural land and farm business does not allow you to do so [consider the application on the idea of the limited agricultural quality of the site]" (Ed Ries, September 24, 2007) show a utilitarian rationale for agricultural land protection (mentioned nine times). The local amenity protection rationale was presented four times in statements like "...homeowners/tax payers/constituents do not want their open space to disappear" (Jennifer Thoss, May 14, 2007). An agrarian ideal rationale for agricultural land protection was presented once as a recognition that "the land...protects Tsawwassen's agricultural heritage" (Tracey Stobbe, May 8, 2007).

In the correspondence to the ALC, people generally seemed to be more concerned about the wider impact of the decision on agricultural land in general than the impact of the application on the local community or the particular parcel. This observation is unexpected given that most of the correspondence was received from Delta residents (80%).

5.4 Delta Public Hearing

Following approval of the application to the ALC, Delta scheduled a public hearing to receive comments regarding the development from the public. Delta's Council received 222 verbal and written submissions representing approximately 1358 people over three nights (January 22, 24 and 24, 2008). In this case, the comments for or against the development were more comprehensive. Maintaining the quality of agricultural land remained an issue (mentioned by 324 people); however, the effect of the development on the community was a key point. People discussed the design of the development (mentioned 976 times), the benefit/harm to the community (mentioned 319 times), housing need in the community (mentioned 239 times), traffic and transportation infrastructure (mentioned 92 times) (see Appendix 3 for full summary data). In general, people presenting to Council supported or opposed the development because of how it fit Tsawwassen, not because of the agricultural values associated with the subject site. Agricultural values were present in the discussion in recognition of the role of agricultural land in defining the character of Tsawwassen and Delta. Most people who made submissions were in favour of the development proceeding. A form letter emphasizing the benefits to the community of

improving the golf course, providing housing and improving agricultural land overall (Yvonne Lynch, January 18, 2008) was submitted 289 times in support of the application. One petition was received representing 767 people supporting the application because the development was designed to be environmentally sustainable and to provide services desired in a housing development (Michael and Carolyn Sturby, January 21, 2007). To the people supporting the project, the development would provide benefits to Tsawwassen. Statements like the following show a general support for improvements to Tsawwassen:

Strongly believe in overall merits to Delta. (Janice Leroy and DR Brown, January 23, 2008)

Many people were supportive of the variety of housing forms (initially providing local housing for downsizing baby-boomers which would free up existing single family houses for young families) proposed and resulting from the development as demonstrated by the following quote:

It's time to say 'no' to the naysayers and get real about providing housing to keep those of us who want to stay, here. (Dayle Cook, January 16, 2008)

There was also support for growth to support local businesses and amenity / infrastructure improvements, and for improvements to the appearance of the entrance to Tsawwassen and Delta as shown by the following:

During this period we have become increasingly concerned about the lack of growth in our community. We believe this has a negative effect on property values, and that the lack of growth is a barrier to continuing enhancement of the quality of life in Tsawwassen. (Carl and Margaret Nygren, January 22, 2008)

I think a lot of thought has gone into the planning of this community and it will only beautify an otherwise eyesore of the community. (Irene Brown, January 21, 2008)

Supporters of the project, who acknowledged the agricultural designation of the land, did not have reservations about developing this particular piece of ALR because: firstly, the land exchange proposed by the developer was felt to result in an overall improvement to the agricultural land in Delta (approximately 314 people)¹², and secondly, the land had not been used for agricultural purposes for years and was not perceived as viable farmland (approximately six people).

To the people opposing the project, the development is a fundamental philosophical change to the direction of development in the Tsawwassen community as demonstrated by the following quotes:

We moved to Tsawwassen for its rural setting. Let's not start down a road of massive development and complete disregard for the farmland, the ALC and our Official Community Plan. (Sandy and Bill Dalglish, January 20, 2008)

In my view, a proposed development of this magnitude epitomizes community assassination. If these Amendment Bylaws are approved by Council the legacy will quite simply be the creation of an even smaller town in an already small town. (Keith Fletcher, January 20, 2008)

4, 5, and 6 story buildings are not currently in the community plan and my view of the mountains will be impinged. (Christine Miller, January 22, 2008)

They tend to be frustrated with existing problems, like traffic, and fear that the development will only make matters worse (approximately 89 people). From

¹² See Section 5.1.2 for a description of the package proposed by the developer as a net benefit to agriculture.

their perspective, Tsawwassen is a community at capacity with a rural character and ambiance that those against the project are apprehensive about changing as demonstrated in the following statements:

We strongly oppose the development which is profit driven and shows no regard for the concerns of the people whose life style it will effect enormously. (Katarina Pejakovic, January 21, 2008)

This project is a get rich proposal for the developer and associates, at the cost of destroying the pleasant ambiance of our area. (Peter Duffey, January 19, 2008)

Although submitters occasionally acknowledged that the subject property was not prime agricultural land, people were very concerned about the precedent that would be set if the application was approved for developing agricultural land, swapping agricultural land, ruining soils and building density away from the existing town centre (approximately 147 people). For example:

Farmland should remain farmland, they do not make any more of it. (Vlad and Dasa Scholz, January 22, 2008)

I do not believe we can give up any more farm land to housing or recreation, especially with the Tsawwassen Tready [sic], south perimeter road and the many greenhouses that are being pushed on us. (Siobhan Swayne, January 23, 2008)

Consequently, people were conscious of the fact that this development required significant variances to existing bylaws, especially the Official Community Plan. Given the major changes anticipated in the South Delta area associated with the South Fraser Perimeter Road, Tsawwassen First Nations Treaty, Spetifore lands redevelopment and expansion of the Roberts Bank Port facilities, a spot rezoning application was considered inappropriate. Many comments called for a

comprehensive review of the OCP in the Tsawwassen area: “We need an updated OCP, not a disregarded one” (Lynn Burke, January 23, 2008).

The analysis of the subset of data that defines what people value agricultural land for in Delta again reflected a resource management based rationale for protecting agricultural land. The dominant rationale was related to protecting a rare resource to ensure food production (mentioned 62 times) in statements like:

Every bit of farm land is precious and we have so little of it here in BC that even this acreage should be left as farmland. (Floyd Wartnow, January 18, 2008)

Ecological conservation rationales were presented to Council 119 times in statements like:

Housing can be put anywhere. Birds and foodland however, are limited to certain precious parcels of land such as this one. (Amy Jones, January 22, 2008)

Local amenity protection rationales were also provided as reasons for protecting agricultural land (mentioned 11 times). For example, Joost and Rebecca van den Brink stated:

We enjoy the community very much, and appreciate the balance between urban and rural areas. We also very much appreciate the green space around our community. (January 19, 2008)

Agrarian ideal rationales for preserving farmland were mentioned once. I was surprised that, given how dominant the agricultural industry is in Delta, the utilitarian rationales related to earning the most money from the land were not presented by the public.

Overall, the comments at the Public Hearing for the OCP amendment and rezoning bylaws were not focused on preserving agricultural land. The people who voiced their opinion regarding the development were concerned about how best to grow their community. The responses to the application received by Delta included many NIMBY¹³-based arguments founded on a desire not to change the community locally. The agricultural land contributed to what residents love about Tsawwassen but the development of this particular parcel was held as a symbol of what precedent could be set for future development. There was an overwhelming concern that approval of this application would result in a landslide of further development. In the eyes of many, this application could serve to undermine the ALR, the Green Zone and the OCP.

5.5 Metro Vancouver Public Hearing

Metro Vancouver hosted a public hearing for the application June 17, 2008. According to minutes from the Public Hearing, the Board received 347 written submissions and listened to approximately 44 verbal submissions (Greater Vancouver Regional District June 27, 2008). Analysis for this project reviewed the 298 submissions available on Metro Vancouver's web page. In those submissions, over half of the reasons for supporting or not supporting the application were related to growth management including ideas such as the general effect on the Tsawwassen community, potential infrastructure improvements, concern about the adequacy of existing infrastructure, and housing supply as shown by the following comments:

¹³ NIMBY stands for "not in my back yard" (Schively 2007, 255).

Arguments have been made that there is buildable space available in the downtown core of Tsawwassen, and that the golf course development is not needed. We think that our community needs a "choice" in housing. Not everyone wants to live in an apartment on 56th street, just to be able to remain in this community near their families. (Martin Reynolds, June 11, 2008)

My wife and I [are] owners of a number of properties in both Ladner and Twassessen, as well as living here. We are both supporters of the above by-law and consider this a project that will over time, bring much value to our community as a whole. Mr. Toigo's numerous projects have always been of the utmost taste and from the view of the plans, we are sure this will be the same. (Jim and Linda McKay, June 17, 2008)

The project was seen as a net benefit to agriculture by approximately two-thirds of the people who cited agricultural rationales in support of their opinion about the development. Proposed green construction techniques and habitat provisions were held as reasons why the application should be supported (as seen in the quote from the form letter below). Overall, 1271 people supported the application while 80 people opposed the application. A form letter campaign undertaken by the developer saw 1113 people supporting the application for the following five reasons:

This project:

- provides a net benefit to agriculture in Delta as approved by the Agricultural Land Commission and the Delta Farmers' Institute
- offers new bike and walking paths in Tsawwassen and completes the Millennium Trail connecting Ladner to the Metro Vancouver Deas Island Regional Park
- provides badly needed housing in the South Delta area, with a range of housing types and sizes to serve a wide range of budgets and needs
- strives to be an environmentally sustainable community and will obtain LEED and Audubon International certification, and
- upgrades and lengthens the public Tsawwassen Golf

Course, adding a new clubhouse and commercial facility to serve the local area. (Glen Suberlat, June 2008)

Therefore, to the people supporting the application, the developer is providing a complete package that mediates the potential effects on agriculture and the environment while generally improving the quality of the life in Tsawwassen by providing more housing for empty-nesters and recreational infrastructure.

Those opposed to the application were concerned about the precedent being set for developing land beyond the designated urban area and the potential impact on the livability of the region as a whole as shown in the following two quotes:

It is highly unlikely that Metro Vancouver will suffer a shortage of housing if this particular development does not go ahead. It will however very soon suffer from a loss of green space. Past Boards and citizens of Metro Vancouver were forward looking enough to develop the Livable Region Strategic Plan and develop the Green Zone. Do you want to be the Board that dismantles this plan? (Robert and Margaret Handheld, June 14, 2008)

As I close off this submission and urge you, one more time, to exercise your obligation to protect our Green Zone, I'd like to emphasize that politicians and bureaucrats have got to jump off the "rape-the-land-to-make-a-buck" bandwagon and start thinking about future generations and what we're leaving behind for them. (Liz Gough, June 17, 2008)

Many submissions included a quote from a senior Metro Vancouver staff member made to a local newspaper about accommodating future growth -- "the good news is we don't have to touch the agricultural land and we don't have to touch the Green Zone" said Regional Development Division Manager, Christina DeMarco, "We have plenty of room to grow within the existing urban footprint "(as quoted by Mary Taitt, June 17, 2008). People felt that supporting the

application, especially when the land was not needed to accommodate regional growth as stated by Metro Vancouver, would undermine the overall Livable Region Strategic Plan.

The analysis of the agricultural land preservation rationales data subset at the regional scale again reflected a resource management based rationale for protecting agricultural land. The dominant rationale was related to ensuring food production which was mentioned 35 times in statements such as:

Simply put, it is not a small piece in the context of the overall assault on the arable land of the Fraser Delta, nor in the context of world events threatening a sustainable food supply. (Wilma Haig June 17, 2009)

As shown in Appendix 4, only the ecological conservation (mentioned eight times) and the utilitarian (mentioned once) rationales were raised in addition to ensuring that prime agricultural land was reserved for agricultural purposes.

Ecological conservation rationales were demonstrated in statements that drew a relationship between agricultural land and the wider ecological world such as:

From a conservation point of view, agricultural land ... plays a dual role, providing critical resting and feeding areas for both migratory and native birds, as well as a host of other creatures. (Gillian Anderson, BC Great Blue Heron Society June 11, 2008)

The utilitarian rationale connected the land swap based protection of agricultural land to economic benefits for the community as follows:

The security of that land [land swap] will contribute to the long term sustainability of local farming operations and will, in turn, also benefit other local businesses. (Maria DeVries, Delta Chamber of Commerce, June 17, 2008)

Because of the relationship between agricultural land and the Green Zone in Metro Vancouver, the lack of mention of local amenity protection rationales is unexpected.

5.6 Application Summary

Over the course of twenty months, the ALC, Delta, Metro Vancouver and the public considered the application put forward by Shato Holdings Ltd. to redevelop the TGCC. The public both for and against the development adjusted their arguments to suit the mandate of the agency receiving the comments. Overall, the public tended to focus their comments on the general fit of the project in the existing community. Rationales for protecting agricultural land locally were revealed as a part of the public consultation process as a result of the agricultural designation of the land. The analysis shows that the public primarily provides resource management rationales for protecting agricultural land. People both for and against the application used these rationales demonstrating support for protecting agricultural land as a biophysical resource. Because these rationales were used by both those supporting and opposing the application, the data shows support for agricultural land protection in general even though the agricultural merits of the particular site were questioned. As per Bunce (1998), this piece of land was held as a symbol of all agricultural land.

6: SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION

According to the literature, social norms form the basis of rationales presented to argue for farmland preservation. If society does not support the objectives of a farmland preservation policy nor the rationales on which the policy was based, the policy will ultimately fail. Therefore, understanding the current perspectives towards farmland preservation locally can help to ensure that local policy continues to be relevant. The Tsawwassen Golf and Country Club (TGCC) development application provided an opportunity to see how existing farmland preservation and growth management regulations were interpreted in public opinion and a land use decision.

6.1 The Decision

As shown in the preceding analysis, the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) is charged with preserving prime agricultural land for farming based on a resource management rationale. Soil studies submitted in support of this application and independently verified by the municipality indicate that soil and drainage conditions make this site unsuitable for crop production. Consequently, the land's value to agriculture was questioned. The existing land use designation and other values ascribed to agricultural land were then used to argue for the protection of this piece of agricultural land. The decision also considered the wider impacts of the agricultural benefit package the developer offered in exchange for the exclusion. The ALC's decision was based on ensuring the

protection of agricultural land for farming in accordance with a resource management mandate. The important observation is that people on both sides of this particular land development application continued to support preserving prime agricultural land for farming, even if they did not consider the subject site prime agricultural land.

The Green Zone lands include a broader definition of lands to protect; therefore, because the physical agricultural capability of the land was circumspect, the land needed to offer an environmental or habitat or recreational or ecological benefit to the region to be suitable for Green Zone designation. From a regional perspective, this piece of land did not offer those attributes. During the public consultation process, the property was presented as, for example, wildlife habitat, to argue against approval of the application. The concerns were often based on the idea that allowing this exclusion would set a precedent for development of the Green Zone. Although agreement was not reached on the natural attributes of the parcel, support for the resource management rationale behind the Green Zone was demonstrated in the analysis in the public's arguments for using the land for its best purpose.

As described, the Green Zone serves an additional purpose – “establish a long-term boundary for urban growth” (Greater Vancouver Regional District 1996, 18). When considering their recommendation to the Metro Vancouver Board regarding the application, staff acknowledged that the project was small from a regional perspective. However, staff recommended that the application be referred to the impending review of the regional growth strategy so as not to

undermine overall regional growth management goals (Kellas, April 2008). By approving the application, the Board demonstrated how difficult holding a growth management line can be when based on a resource management rationale. Politically, the particular attributes (or lack thereof) of the land in question could be used to support the exclusion application especially because there was seen to be more regional merit in providing housing than in retaining this particular piece of farmland.

As shown in the analysis of Delta's OCP, a broader range of considerations played in to the ultimate decision regarding the subject site. On the urban side of the property, Tsawwassen is experiencing a demographic shift to an older population with consequent social and economic changes. A demand for housing form options was identified as a solution to the age imbalance in the local population. Finding a location for the housing was the challenge faced by the community. On the agricultural side of the site, the public was concerned about changes to Tsawwassen. Development of the subject site was held as a symbol of losses to the community in the form of agricultural land, wildlife habitat, character, views and small-town feel. The debate surrounding the development was founded in this overall tension about defining the best use of the land.

Agriculture was only a small part of the decision to permit the development. The use of agriculture-based rationales for and against the application demonstrates that the public remains supportive of preserving agricultural land. From a growth management perspective, if the ALR and Green Zone are designed to define the farthest limit of urban expansion, the resource

management basis for the regulation must be considered. As demonstrated by the case study, determining land use based on resource management rationales leaves government unable to maintain a hard boundary if the scientific information demonstrates that a particular site is not suitable for agricultural or environmental purposes.

6.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, the public opinion analyzed for this research project demonstrated that the current public values and social norms continue to support the resource management-based approach to land use management enshrined in existing legislation. The arguments presented during the public consultation process show that those for and against the particular application alike wanted to see the land used to its best capability. The arguments presented also generally acknowledged the legislated rationale for protecting agricultural land of the agency receiving the argument. This research illustrates that agricultural land can be seen through a variety of lenses and put to a variety of purposes. Existing regulation continues to protect the resource but has not yet adequately addressed the other economic, environmental or social purposes of agricultural land. A comprehensive analysis of economic, environmental and social policies would shed light on these aspects of the urban fringe.

In this case, the physical and chronological context of the site, and the politics associated with the decision were not considered. This project was not focused on determining if the correct decision was made but on determining current rationales for protecting agricultural land. Further research into the role

of the rationales in the decision made would reveal the power of agricultural land as a symbol in land use decisions.

Opinion presented at public hearings has acknowledged weaknesses with regards to representation and objectivity. Public hearings are common practice for providing an opportunity to express an opinion about a land use issue. People are disillusioned about participating in public hearings for many reasons including a general feeling that public hearings happen too late in the process for the opinions expressed to affect change. Combining a public hearing with a collaborative public consultation approach held before any decision was made could help counteract this feeling. Rationales for agricultural land preservation could be defined when creating regulation for managing agricultural land use. Then public hearings can be used as ongoing tests of the legitimacy of the regulatory approach as in this project. This approach could both help to improve regulation overall and combat disillusionment with the public hearing process.

Understanding the rationales for protecting agricultural land helps to ensure that the many values and roles attributed to agricultural land are recognized and can be continued to be provided. In the Metro Vancouver region, protecting agricultural land acknowledges the role of the local natural assets in defining the region. Continuing to find space for agricultural land demonstrates a regulatory commitment to finding a balance between growth, character, livability and function.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: SITE PLAN FOR EXPANSION OF THE TSAWWASSEN GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

Figure 5: Site plan for development of the Tsawwassen Golf and Country Club. (Produced by Fougere Architecture July 9, 2007 in support of the application.)



AREA PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 500'

TSAWWASSEN
GOLF COURSE
DEVELOPMENT
FOR SHATO HOLDINGS 1

JULY 9, 2007
FOUGERE
ARCHITECTURE
1000 10th Street, Suite 100
Vancouver, BC V6Z 1G6
TEL: 604.681.1111 FAX: 604.681.1112

APPENDIX 2: PUBLIC CONSULTATION DATA CATEGORIES AND ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

Table 9: Public consultation data categories / analysis framework

Broad Categories	Categories	Category Definitions "Position on the development rationalized based on ..."
agriculture	agriculture	... the damage or good the development will do to agricultural land, food supply, the farming industry, etc.
environmental	environmental	... whether they feel the development will affect the natural environment (either positively or negatively).
environmental	wildlife	... whether the development will harm or improve the position of wildlife within the community.
growth	growth	... whether the development will positively (i.e. support local business, stimulate improvements to infrastructure) or negatively (i.e. increases to traffic, make the place more urban) affect the community if more people live in the community.
growth	housing	... whether the development is needed or not needed to provide housing for the people of the community.
growth	infrastructure	... whether the development will overwhelm existing infrastructure or is needed to stimulate investment in infrastructure. Infrastructure includes engineering services, social services, etc. (Transportation infrastructure is addressed separately.)
growth	tourism	... whether the development will bring tourism to the community.
growth	transportation	... the development's perceived affect on the existing transportation system and traffic.
physical	appearance	... the damage or good the development will do to the appearance of the subject site, Delta and Tsawwassen, or to viewscapes, etc.
physical	community fit	... how the development will integrate into and/or affect the existing community including community character, building style, location and scale of the development, property values, etc.
physical	feasibility	... whether the site can actually be built on.

APPENDIX 3: SUMMARY OF INITIAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION DATA

Table 10: Summary of the reasons given for why the project was supported or not.

Broad Category	Category	Rationale for supporting or rejecting the development proposal	Agricultural Land Commission	Delta	Metro Vancouver
agriculture	agriculture	Reject because agricultural land is an overall benefit to society and should be maintained.	5	12	6
agriculture	agriculture	Reject because agricultural land must be maintained to provide food security.	20	11	21
agriculture	agriculture	Reject because agricultural land swap generally decreases quality of agricultural land.	37	10	6
agriculture	agriculture	Reject because context not considered (TFN, Port, SFPR, Southlands)	24	29	8
agriculture	agriculture	Reject because encourages land development speculation.	27	23	18
agriculture	agriculture	Reject because inflates price of agricultural land.	1		
agriculture	agriculture	Reject because land speculation discourages investment in farmland by farmers.	3	1	
agriculture	agriculture	Reject because of potential urban/rural conflicts.	1	1	
agriculture	agriculture	Reject because sets a precedent for approving exclusions from the ALR based on land exchanges.	18	4	
agriculture	agriculture	Reject because sets a precedent for approving exclusions from the ALR.	16		32
agriculture	agriculture	Reject because sets a precedent for degrading farmland to allow development.	24	11	1
agriculture	agriculture	Reject because sets a precedent for development of agricultural land.	15	91	1
agriculture	agriculture	Reject because subject site is viable agricultural land.	23	5	2

Broad Category	Category	Rationale for supporting or rejecting the development proposal	Agricultural Land Commission	Delta	Metro Vancouver
agriculture	agriculture	Reject because weakens public commitment to farmland.	3		
agriculture	agriculture	Support because agricultural land swap generally increases quality of agricultural land.	152	314	131
agriculture	agriculture	Support because proposed use of subject site is of greater value than agricultural use of subject site.	4	5	
agriculture	agriculture	Support because sets a precedent for determining land use based on physical capability of land.			
agriculture	agriculture	Support because subject site has been filled and is no longer viable agricultural land.			2
agriculture	agriculture	Support because subject site is not viable agricultural land.	14	6	11
<i>Agriculture subtotal</i>			<i>387</i>	<i>523</i>	<i>239</i>
environmental	wildlife	Reject because agricultural land is also wildlife habitat.	9	7	3
environmental	environmental	Reject because development not designed to be sustainable/environmentally-friendly.		5	
environmental	wildlife	Reject because negative impact on wildlife.			
environmental	environmental	Reject because sets a precedent for development of green space.		4	4
environmental	wildlife	Reject because wildlife habitat will be lost.	1	25	20
environmental	environmental	Support because development designed to be sustainable/environmentally-friendly.	1	773	129
environmental	wildlife	Support because will provide improved wildlife habitat.		4	
<i>Environmental subtotal</i>			<i>11</i>	<i>818</i>	<i>156</i>
growth	growth	Reject because context not considered (TFN, Port, SFPR, Southlands)			
growth	housing	Reject because does not provide housing for downsizing.		10	1
growth	housing	Reject because housing not needed.			

Broad Category	Category	Rationale for supporting or rejecting the development proposal	Agricultural Land Commission	Delta	Metro Vancouver
growth	infrastructure	Reject because no/inadequate improvements to infrastructure proposed.		18	1
growth	infrastructure	Reject because no/inadequate improvements to transportation infrastructure proposed.	8	89	7
growth	housing	Reject because not affordable housing.	7	5	16
growth	growth	Reject because of potential traffic increases.			
growth	growth	Reject because of potential urban/rural conflicts.			
growth	housing	Reject because project will not solve housing problems.		5	
growth	growth	Reject because sets a precedent for development of green space.			
growth	growth	Reject because sets a precedent for high density development.		2	
growth	growth	Reject because sets a precedent for uncontrolled growth.		35	4
growth	growth	Reject because sets a precedent.			
growth	growth	Reject because the development adds to urban sprawl.	1	3	2
growth	growth	Reject because the development is not a general benefit to the community.	1	39	
growth	growth	Reject because the development will not address demographic issues.			1
growth	growth	Reject because the land should not be needed to accommodate foreseeable growth.	13		16
growth	growth	Reject because the proposed buildings are too tall.		39	
growth	growth	Reject because this development is an indicator of larger issues.			6
growth	infrastructure	Support because development leads to infrastructure improvements.		3	4
growth	growth	Support because good growth is a benefit to the community.	2	28	2
growth	housing	Support because provides housing for downsizing.	4	23	33

Broad Category	Category	Rationale for supporting or rejecting the development proposal	Agricultural Land Commission	Delta	Metro Vancouver
growth	housing	Support because provides housing options.	8	186	148
growth	infrastructure	Support because provides improvements to transportation infrastructure.		3	5
growth	infrastructure	Support because provides recreational facilities.	2	178	264
growth	growth	Support because the development is a general benefit to the community.	12	29	37
growth	growth	Support because the development is an economic benefit to the community		19	5
<i>Growth subtotal</i>			<i>58</i>	<i>714</i>	<i>552</i>
physical	appearance	Reject because development will obstruct existing views.		24	
physical	appearance	Reject because green space is an important component of regional livability.			7
physical	community fit	Reject because housing not needed.	2	10	
physical	community fit	Reject because the design of the development is not acceptable.	1	6	
physical	community fit	Reject because the development does not fit the existing community.		93	5
physical	community fit	Reject because the development does not fit the existing community.			
physical	community fit	Reject because the development will decrease property values.		1	
physical	community fit	Reject because the proposed density is too high.		17	
physical	community fit	Reject because the site is not suitable.	3	9	4
physical	appearance	Support because proposed use of subject site will improve the appearance of the site.	1	8	23
<i>Physical subtotal</i>			<i>7</i>	<i>168</i>	<i>39</i>
process	process	Reject because approval fast-tracked.	4	31	
process	developer	Reject because encourages land development speculation.			
process	process	Reject because encourages land development speculation.			

Broad Category	Category	Rationale for supporting or rejecting the development proposal	Agricultural Land Commission	Delta	Metro Vancouver
process	process	Reject because not in conformance with existing land use plans and bylaws, and past approvals.	31	105	1
process	process	Reject because public consultation has been inadequate.	7	15	
process	process	Reject because sets a precedent for approving changes to land use plans.			6
process	developer	Support because the developer has a good reputation.		33	23
<i>Process subtotal</i>			<i>42</i>	<i>184</i>	<i>30</i>
		No reason.	4	17	

APPENDIX 4: SUMMARY OF RATIONALES FOR PROTECTING AGRICULTURAL LAND

Table 11: Rationales for protecting agricultural land given during public consultation.

Rationales for Protecting Agricultural Land	Reason Given	Agricultural Land Commission	Delta	Metro Vancouver
<i>Local Amenity Protection</i>				
	green space		5	
	livability	1	1	
	natural beauty		1	
	open space / fresh air	2	4	
	scenic views	1		
<i>Agrarian Ideals</i>				
	agricultural heritage	1		
	rural		1	
<i>Utilitarian</i>				
	economic business			1
	farmers-livelihood/encourage	9		
<i>Resource Management</i>				
	critical resource	1	3	
	farmland	20	24	4
	food land	13	5	4
	food production	6	2	9
	food security	15	7	18
	growth containment		1	
	irreplaceable/precious	4	18	
	local food	4	1	
	provincial resource	1	1	
<i>Ecological Conservation</i>				
	flood mitigation	1	1	
	groundwater recharge	1		
	sensitive		1	
	sustainability	1		
	wildlife habitat	12	17	8