

AGRICULTURAL POLICY REVIEW



RESIDENTIAL USES ON AGRICULTURAL LAND

SECONDARY RESIDENCES IN THE ALR

New Regulations

The Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) recently announced their plans to amend their regulations to permit a secondary residence on properties in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). As of December 31st, 2021 a secondary residence will be permitted by the ALC as follows:

- On parcels 40 hectares (99 acres) or smaller, if the existing residence is 500 square metres (5,382 square feet) or less, a second residence of 90 square metres (969 square feet) or less can be built.
- On parcels larger than 40 hectares (99 acres), a second residence 186 square metres (2,002 square feet) or less is permitted, no matter the size of the first residence

RDCK's Role

RDCK must now amend its Zoning Regulations. Local Governments can decide whether to amend their agricultural zoning regulations to:

- Align with the new ALC rules and allow secondary residences;
- Allow secondary residences but only under certain conditions; or
- Not allow secondary residences.

Local Governments cannot be more permissive than ALC regulations.

Note: Even if secondary residences are permitted by the ALC they must also be permitted by a property's zoning before being able to apply for Building Permit.

Occupancy

The additional residence can be used for housing extended family, agri-tourism accommodation, housing for farm labour or a rental unit for supplemental income. There is no longer a requirement that additional residences must be used by the landowner or immediate family members. Local Government zoning can restrict who may reside in a secondary residence if desired.

Density

ALC rules allow for a primary residence, secondary suite and secondary residence (i.e. up to 3 dwelling units). Local Government zoning can further restrict this density if desired.

Housing Form

Examples of flexible housing options permitted under the regulation include, but are not limited to:



Local Governments can choose to limit the housing form allowed.

Considerations

The goal of RDCK's agricultural zoning is to support farming and protect farmland in the RDCK. Secondary residences may assist farmers by providing housing for farm workers, for new farmers, or for farmer's family as they succession plan. Increasing dwellings in our finite farmland can also have negative consequences such as increasing the price per acre of farmland making it out of range for those wishing to farm and by reducing farmable area on lands with agriculturally capable soils.

Mitigation Options

For these reasons the addition of secondary residences onto farm land must be carefully considered. RDCK could chose to allow these homes only in certain conditions, for example:

- Cluster residential uses together in one area on the property
- Site residential uses close to the frontage of the property
- Require a shared driveway
- Only allow if the property has Farm Status or if a farm business can demonstrate that it needs additional housing
- Restrict the maximum size of the secondary residence
- Only allow on lots of a certain size
- Only allow in certain areas or direct off farm accommodation to other nearby zones



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