

Salmon Valley Agricultural Representatives  
C/O Scott Syme & Michael Schroeder  
Salmon Arm, BC

January 6, 2024

Salmon Arm Mayor and Council  
City Hall  
500 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave NE  
Salmon Arm, BC

To: Salmon Arm City Council

**Subject: Active Transportation from Agriculture's Perspective**

This letter is to follow up the agriculture input sessions hosted by OCP Planning City Staff and the Salmon Arm Agricultural Producer Group at the Mt. Ida Hall on June 20, 2024, and November 20, 2024.

**Background**

Mike Schroeder and I have taken the initiative to form a producer's group to represent commercial agricultural producers in Salmon Arm. We both operate commercial farms in the Salmon Valley. Mike and his family operate Lakeland Farms and Lakeland Feeds; two operations that encompass certified organic egg, grain, and livestock feed production. My wife and I operate Torphichen Farms: an organic dairy; in addition to Syme Structural Engineering. Mike and I are both members of the Ag Advisory Committee. With this producer group we're looking to bring value to agriculture in the region through advocacy, infrastructure projects and group purchases. The group's direction and formation are still in its infancy, but in the short term we've been focussing on the Official Community Planning (OCP) process. We've brought the agriculture community together in June 2024 for a producers OCP input session. The second input session on the Draft OCP occurred the week of Nov 20th. City staff has been accommodating and producer engagement has been excellent. We are encouraged by the permissive nature of the process and the language adopted in the recent OCP drafts specific to agriculture; however, the current Active Transportation Network Plan (ATNP) has caused a great deal of concern with rural and agricultural residents. As we continue to work on creating a formal producer group, we feel it is important to address this issue now.

It is obvious that active transportation is in the best interest of the community. The OCP surveys have indicated a high value of support by community members. A strong active transportation infrastructure improves a community through health outcomes, entertainment and outdoor connection. However, it's our opinion that the proposed active transportation route through agriculture zones, in combination with the "developer pays" model for rural areas has not been well conceived.

### **Counter to the CSA's 2012 OCP and 2024/2025 OCP Draft**

The City of Salmon Arm has committed to support agricultural production for a variety of reasons in both the 2012 OCP and the 2025 Draft OCP. The biggest threat to food production and food security continues to be the loss of agricultural land. The proposed long term active transportation corridor through the Salmon Valley will require an expansion of the existing road and utility corridor. This project will take agriculture land. A 15' wide path, 5.5 miles long (Salmon Arm West School to Branchflower Road) equates to 10 acres. 10 acres of land can grow the following annually:

- 60 tons of forages that can equate to 96 000l of milk or 4000 lbs of butter.
- 25 tonnes of wheat equating to 15 000 dozen eggs or 45 000 loaves of bread.
- 200 tons of potatoes
- 380 bins of apples
- 150 000 ears of sweet corn

### **Cost**

It's our opinion that the "developer pays" cost structure outlined in the City's Develop Services By-law is not compatible for rural holdings with large frontages. Landowners are being asked to pay for active transportation improvements on a frontage basis when initiating a building permit. Some farm frontages are measured in kilometers. This can result in active transportation development service charges exceeding \$400 000. It's our opinion that the active transportation corridors proposed for rural areas are predominantly recreational with little benefit to agriculture. We do not feel this is equitable.

Further to development services charges, the cost of such a project through the Salmon Valley will be enormous. The existing elevated roadway, utilities and ditch network highly complicate any further expansion. The acquisition of a larger road allowance will require purchasing significant quantities of land from multiple landowners.

### **Road Safety and Conflict**

Agricultural zones are work zones. Farm equipment is big, heavy and wide. Navigating large farm vehicles among other road users creates safety concerns for producers, motorists and ATN users. As a recreational pathway, this is further urban encroachment into agriculture areas. Corridors through agriculture zones will require effective buffering to prevent spread of invasive weeds, pet harassment of livestock, trespass, vandalism and crop damage. Regardless of buffering ATN users will be exposed to noise, dust, spray activity, machinery, livestock and chemicals.

### Consultation

We believe that the current ATN Plan lacks consultation with the agricultural community. 38% of the City's land falls within the ALR. The ATN Plan proposes approximately 30km of corridors through the ALR. Although the 2012 Agriculture Area Plan was not adopted by council, it highlighted that traffic affects agriculture and that the agriculture community should be consulted in the long-term transportation planning.

### An Alternative Solution and Specific Requests

Let's keep agriculture and recreation separate. This will balance community goals in Active Transportation, safeguard agriculture production, and benefit road safety. It's our opinion that the City should pursue a corridor elevated from the valley floor on the foothills of either Mt. Ida or Fly Hills. This option has benefits beyond active transportation and agriculture. Further to active transportation, an elevated corridor could serve as a rapid response route for forest fires or encourage tourism with vista's rivaling the Kettle Valley.

With regards to develop service charges, we understand that the council has been supporting variance applications, but we're asking for certainty through a bylaw amendment.

We're asking that council put forward the following motions to City staff to act on:

1. Amend the current cost structure and service levels designated in the Subdivision and Development Services Bylaw (SDSB) to omit cost charge requirements for sidewalks/multi-use paths/bike lanes for rural areas.
2. Revise the current long-term active transportation route from the Salmon Valley floor to an alternative pathway on crown land.
3. Provide language in the current OCP to discourage the planning of future recreational infrastructure within agriculture zones.
4. Update and adopt an Agriculture Area Plan as put forward in 2004.

Regards,



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