

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

January 6, 2024

Salmon Arm Mayor and Council
City Hall
500 2nd 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,



Scott Syme, P.Eng, BASc
Torphichen Farms Ltd.



Mike Schroeder
Lakeland Farms Inc.
Lakeland Feeds Inc.



INFORMATION ONLY

To: Mayor & Members of Council

Title: Manager of Planning and Building and City Engineer – Active Transportation Requirements in Rural Areas

Date: February 24, 2025

Background:

At the January 13, 2025 Regular Council Meeting a letter authored by Scott Syme and Mike Schroeder was presented that outlined concerns with the identification of Active Transportation Routes in the rural areas and the negative impacts of infrastructure development and public use within agricultural and rural areas.

To summarize, the authors cite that frontage requirements at the time of development are particularly onerous for owners of agricultural land. Frontage requirements, in some areas, include road dedication, multi-use path and/or bike lane design and construction, road widening and ditching. As noted in the correspondence, these requirements compounded by the length of frontage typical for agricultural properties and the area necessary to complete the improvements removes that land(s) from agricultural productivity.

Staff recognize that the scale of development in rural areas is typically limited to the construction of a single-family dwelling or an accessory dwelling. In some instances, the estimated cost of the frontage improvements is appreciably more than the estimated cost of the development. Furthermore, in some areas the existing road right of way is narrow and in combination with required ditching the required area of road dedication can be substantial. Additionally, due to legislative amendments in 2019, road dedication and construction of infrastructure through land within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) requires the separate approval of the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). Therefore, there may be situations in which the landowner seeks to complete the requirements of the bylaw, but the road dedication and/or infrastructure construction are not approved by the ALC.

Owners may apply for a Development Variance Permit to request that Council waive all or some of the servicing requirements of the bylaw.

Staff note that from 2020 to 2024 there have been eight (8) servicing variances to address waiving all or some of the servicing requirements in rural areas or areas outside of the Urban Containment Boundary. Of these variance requests Council waived most if not all of the requirements.

Staff also note that in the Active Transportation Network Plan (ATN Plan) endorsed by Council in 2022, multi-use paths and/or bike lanes were identified along major streets in the Gleneden, Salmon Valley and North Broadview areas as desired bike routes. The ATN Plan also prioritized

routes in the community and highlighted major project priorities within a ten (10) year timeframe (refer to attachments). It is worthwhile to note that very few of the priority projects are located in the rural areas. In implementing the ATN Plan, the mechanism to see non-priority routes develop is through development triggered frontage improvements. The Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw (SDSB) was amended to include widened shoulders on rural roads as opposed to offset multi-use paths. The ATN Plan recommended a study be completed to determine appropriate AT facility types on various roadway types which may result in recommend changes to the SDSB. This study is anticipated to be completed in 2026.

Given the correspondence and information above, should Council wish to consider amendments to the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw No. 4293, below is a summary of amendments that could be considered:

1. Amend the service level in the rural areas to reduce the service level of AT infrastructure in rural areas:

Require that future AT Facility Type study reviews options for AT infrastructure and optimal facility types that can fit within existing or reasonable dedication (18 – 20m ROW) in rural areas. Review options to amend SDSB and/or ATN plan upon completion of the study (note that in the meantime current SDSB requirements would be in force).

2. Amend the service level in rural areas to remove AT infrastructure in rural areas:

Remove the requirement for constructing or dedicating land for AT improvements (shoulder widening, bike lanes, MUPs) for developments in all rural areas. This option would be a significant departure from our major project priorities as identified in the ATN plan.

3. Amend the service level in rural areas to remove AT infrastructure in rural areas where not in the short/medium term priorities of the ATN plan:

Remove the requirement for constructing or dedicating land for AT improvements (shoulder widening, bike lanes, MUPs) for developments in the rural areas excluding those fronting the ATN plan priority projects.

4. Transfer the responsibility of constructing AT projects in rural areas to the City:

Require dedication of land for future ATN identified projects but remove requirement of developers to design and construct the works. Staff's experience is that significant trail development bisecting agricultural land should be forwarded as a community project given the multiple applications that need to be made to the ALC. On a parcel-by-parcel basis this is problematic.

The City is currently working towards a Complete Streets guide that would append to the SDSB and allow for varying service levels throughout the City. Currently a single road cross-section standard holds for all roads of a certain type (rural local roads, urban collector roads, etc.). A Complete Streets Guide adds flexibility to add a variety of service levels along the same road type while offering clarity to developers on requirements. The Complete Streets Guide will be attached to any future SDSB amendments and will be enhanced over time as specific studies are completed such as the Sidewalk Infill Study for approved in the 2025 budget.

Council direction to advance any of the changes noted above will effectively amend the ATN Plan either through reduced service levels or anticipated timelines and would give staff direction to amend the SDSB where necessary. With the upcoming Complete Streets Guide, the City would have the tools to implement any of the above changes easily.

If Council was to decide to provide any guidance or direction, staff would suggest that Option 3 would be the most likely to provide much of the relief sought by the authors of the correspondence, while still maintaining some focus on AT projects in rural areas.

Legislative authority / plans / reports:

	Official Community Plan		Master Plan
	Community Charter/LGA	x	Active Transportation Network Plan
x	Bylaw No. 4293		Corporate Strategic Plan
	Zoning Bylaw		2024-2028 Financial Plan
			Long Term Financial Plan

Financial Considerations:

N/A

Alternatives & Implications:

1. Information Only – No Motion Required.


















Communication:

Prepared by: City Engineer
 Prepared by: Manager of Planning and Building
 Reviewed by: Director of Engineering and Public Works
 Approved by: Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

- Active Transportation Network Plan – Figure 17: Priority Infrastructure Projects

MAJOR PROJECTS – PRIORITIES

-  Existing Underpass
-  Future Underpass
-  Trail Head
-  Long-Term Active Transportation Network
-  Existing Trails
-  Proposed Trails
-  Sidewalk
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Highway
-  Railway
-  School
-  Park / Protected Area
-  Industrial Area
-  Commercial Area
-  Forest Reserve
-  ALR
-  First Nation Reserve



2 km

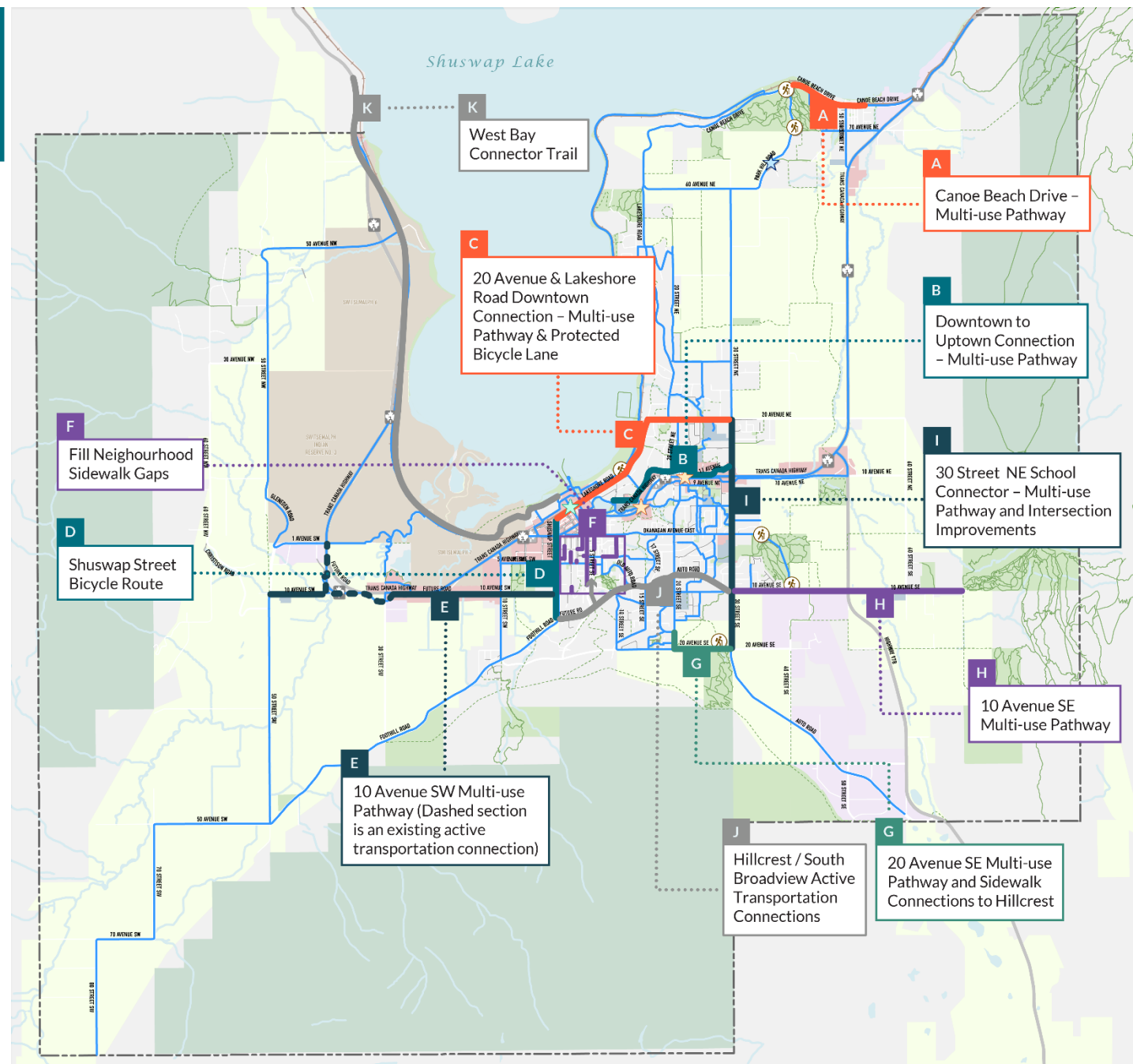


Figure 17: Priority Infrastructure Projects