



Electoral Area A

Agricultural Bylaw and Policy Updates Project Draft Property Data Summary

Background

One of the projects identified in the Agricultural Area Plan Implementation Plan is the Bylaw and Policy Updates Project. The purpose of the project is to review Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) bylaws and policies with the purpose of identifying and taking action on obstacles and barriers to agriculture in the region.

As part of the Bylaw and Policy Updates Project, a detailed analysis of property data was completed. The purpose of the analysis was to gain a better understanding of agriculture in the region. This document represents a summary of the findings of the analysis for Electoral Area A.

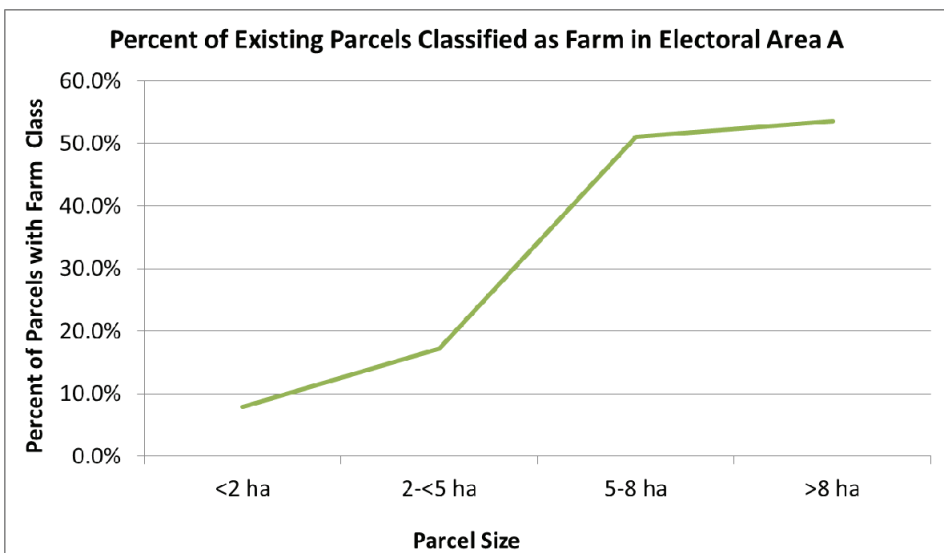
Farm Classification

In British Columbia, farmers may apply to the BC Assessment Authority to have their land classified as farm land for tax assessment purposes. To qualify for farm classification, farmers must be using the land for agriculture and must generate a minimum amount of income from their farm operation.

Farm classification is an established source of data that provides an indication that agricultural activity is occurring on a given parcel. For the purpose of this project, farm class was used to determine if a property was being farmed. It is recognized that there

are existing agricultural activities that do not qualify for farm class and have not been included here.

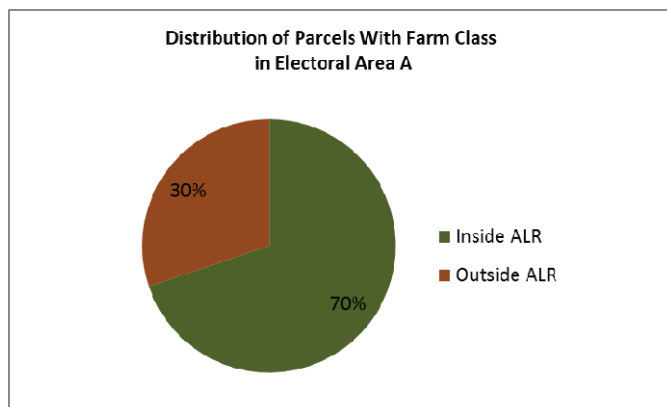
The chart to the left shows the percent of parcels classified as farm based on parcel size. As the parcel size increases, the proportion of properties with farm class



Parcel Size	# of Parcels with Farm Class
< 2 ha	47
2-<5 ha	67
5-8 ha	24
>8 ha	74

In Electoral Area A 78% of the parcels with Farm Class are larger than 2 ha.

The pie chart to the right shows the distribution of parcels with farm class. In Electoral Area A, the vast majority (70%) of parcels with farm class are located in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).

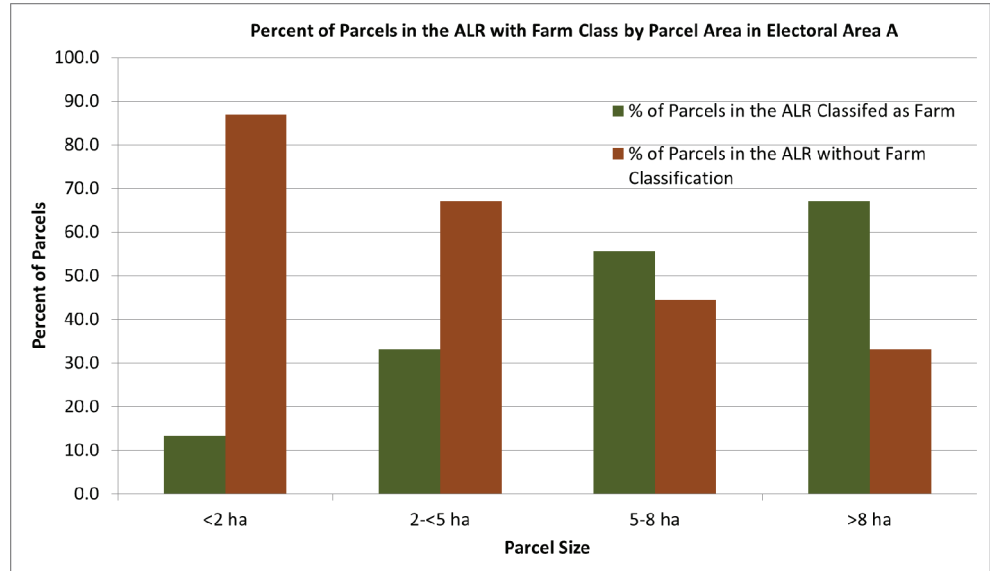


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Farm Class Continued

While most parcels with farm class are in the ALR, there is also a relationship between parcel size and farm class. The chart to the right shows the percent of parcels with farm class in the ALR organized by parcel size. As can be seen from the chart, in Electoral Area A, the proportion of properties with farm class located in the ALR increases as parcel size increases.

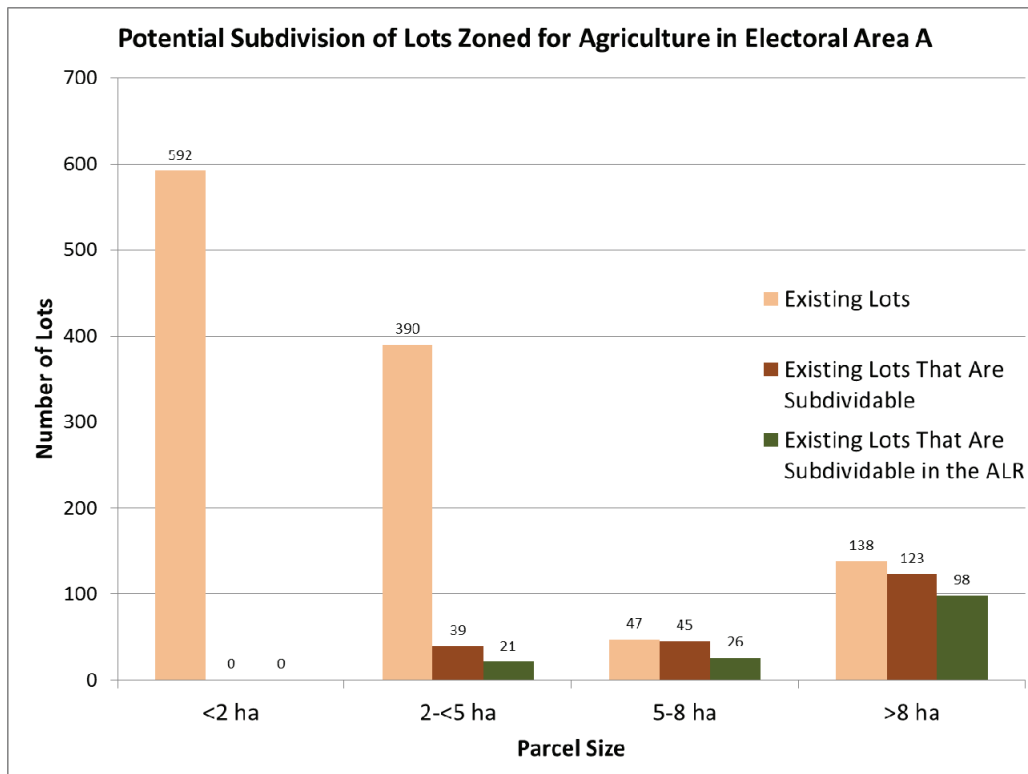


Subdivision of Lands Zoned for Agriculture

As indicated in the previous section, the likelihood of farming being conducted on a parcel decreases as parcel size decreases. In Electoral Area A there is significant potential for subdivision of lands zoned for agriculture into smaller parcels. As shown in the chart below, the majority of the larger parcels zoned for agriculture can still be subdivided under current zoning. In addition, many of the parcels with subdivision potential are located in the ALR.

If all of the parcels zoned for agriculture were subdivided to the smallest permitted parcel size there would be far fewer of the larger parcels.

It should be noted that approval from the Agricultural Land Commission is required for subdivision of ALR lands.



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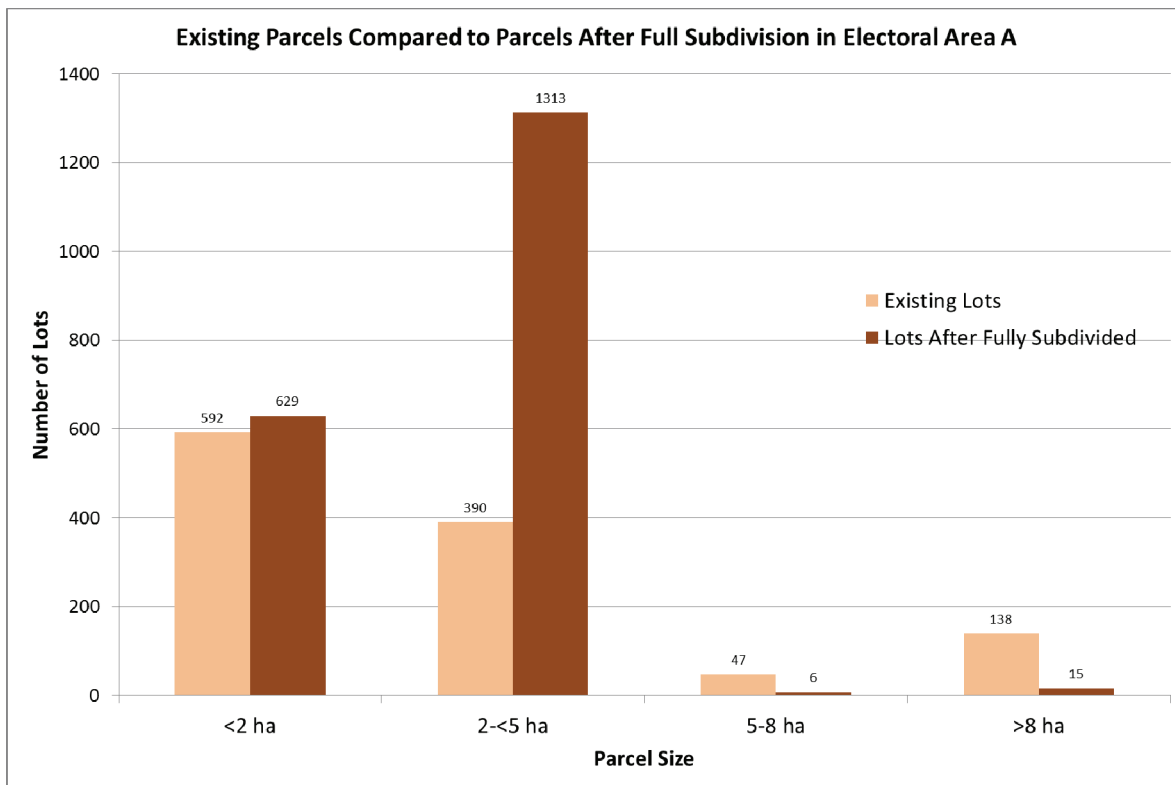
Subdivision of Lands Zoned For Agriculture Continued....

The chart below shows the number of parcels in each of the four parcel size categories now compared to the number of parcels if all of the subdividable parcels are subdivided into the smallest parcels permitted under zoning. As can be seen from the chart, there would be a significantly greater number of parcels that are 2-<5 ha and far fewer parcels that are greater than 5 ha.




Of particular concern is the limited number of 5-8 ha parcels as this parcel area category is more likely to have farm class than 2-<5 ha parcels. In addition, research has shown that as parcel size increases so does the likelihood of agricultural activity at a measurable scale. Therefore, it is important to maintain and/or increase the number of larger parcels.

Many of the existing parcels that are 5-8 ha or >8 ha are currently zoned for a 2.0 ha minimum parcel size. As these parcels are subdivided, the number of larger parcels in the 5-8 ha and >8 ha categories will be reduced.

At full buildout, the number of 5-8 ha parcels decreases from 47 to only 6 and the number of parcels >8 ha decreases from 138 to only 15. At full buildout the number of 2-<5 ha parcels increases from 390 to 1,313. If this were to occur, it could have significant consequences with respect to protecting agricultural viability and productivity.



Farm Facts

-  There are 1,167 parcels that are zoned to allow agriculture that occupy approximately 4,503 ha of land.
-  There are 2,758 ha of land located in the Agricultural Land Reserve. This represents 61 % of the total land base where agriculture is a permitted use.
-  Agriculture is a permitted use on most lands in Electoral Area A.

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