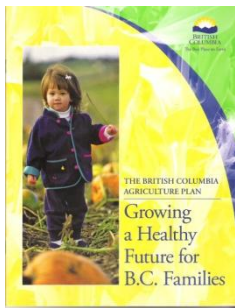


Excerpt from Jim Wright to Richmond Public Hearing on the Garden City Lands

This is one view of the Garden City Lands. And this is what the scene is like from the Garden City Lands at earth level.



The exclusion of the Garden City Lands from the ALR would result in a major net loss to agriculture in the context of the provincial government's *British Columbia Agriculture Plan: Growing a Healthy Future for B.C. Families*. I was most fortunate to hear Agriculture Minister Pat Bell's speech to a recent breakfast meeting of the Richmond Farmers' Institute on the topic of the new plan. It's a terrific plan, overseen by a terrific minister. This is what the plan looks like in published form, with its five themes.



Theme 1: Producing Local Food for a Changing World

Theme 2: Meeting Environmental and Climate Changes

Theme 3: Building Innovative and Profitable Family Business Practices

Theme 4: Building First Nations Agricultural Capability

Theme 5: Bridging the Urban/Agriculture Divide

Theme 1: Producing Local Food for a Changing World

Whether or not Richmond is "better in every way," I think one would be hard-pressed to find many places with stronger local-food movements than Richmond is developing. The new agricultural park would take that even further and help us to promote it.

Theme 2: Meeting Environmental and Climate Changes

The proposed development would send the methane from the sphagnum of the Garden City Lands out into the atmosphere. Instead of being a carbon sink, the lands would become an emitter of the worst greenhouse gas. In contrast, if the mega-density development is replaced by an alternative like the citizens' vision for the Garden City Lands, the farming and gardening would be *organic*. Gardeners would be able to *walk* to the community gardens from the dense City Centre, without having to drive. That is a whole lot better than a development that would put thousands of extra vehicles on the roads, making a traffic mess and sending off greenhouse gases and pollutants.

Theme 3: Building Innovative and Profitable Family Business Practices

That includes assisting the agriculture industry with human resources and new entrants. The Kwantlen Polytechnic University Urban Agriculture Education proposal is a wonderful concept, and you can find and read the proposal via the Garden City Lands blog site. It will certainly bring in new entrants into the agriculture field, and the community farms will be a place where some can start out.

Theme 4: Building First Nations Agricultural Capability

The potential is certainly there. It would be great if the Musqueam and other First Nations were to get involved. Besides being able to participate in the Kwantlen courses and community education, they could farm or garden on the lands. I should reiterate that an intent of the Kwantlen program is to interact with the people using the other parts of the agricultural park, especially the community gardeners and farmers, so First Nations people would have a lot of options to draw on to develop their skills. I'm confident that the people of Richmond would welcome them.

Theme 5: Bridging the Urban/Agriculture Divide

In Richmond, the agriculture community and the urban community are fairly separate even though they are geographically close. In the proposed new agricultural park, they could hardly be more integrated.

This theme includes increasing "awareness and interest in agriculture and food among B.C. youth." You can be sure that there would be a much larger version of the Terra Nova Schoolyard Project, and it is amazing what effect it can have to start young people on farming and gardening. I can attest to that from my own experience as a young blueberry picker in Richmond, which is still influencing me half a century later.

This appendix is a slightly abridged excerpt from a presentation by Jim Wright to Richmond Council's Garden City Lands Hearings on Day 2, March 12, 2008. The presentation was intended to be the Garden City Lands Coalition's basic response to the application to remove the Lands from the ALR.