

Growing Green: Project Priorities
Interim Backgrounder March 31 2003

Showcasing model Official Community Plans and Bylaws

Generally, until recently, agriculture and food have not been on the radar of regional and local governments. Now senior levels of government are reducing budgets and services and pushing more responsibilities down to regional and local levels.

Agriculture and food interests in communities are coming under increasing pressure (from regulation, development and other factors). Both the *Farm Practices Protection Act* and new *Agricultural Land Commission Act* require increased attention to planning for agriculture in regional/local governments. Agricultural land speculation around the province has increased dramatically since the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* was changed.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries' (MAFF) 2002-05 Service Plan calls for bylaws review (of local governments with significant agricultural activity) with a view to increasing their support for agriculture. MAFF staff has been collecting information on agriculture-friendly bylaws and are helping facilitate development and management of Agricultural Advisory Committees (AACs) around the province.

Growing Green will partner on these initiatives with Smart Growth BC, its Smart Growth on the Ground project and with Smart Growth Canada.

Goals

- Identify or help others draft or amend 3-4 bylaws and relevant sections of Official Community Plans to facilitate local food economies.
- Participate in educating Councils about the importance of local food economies and of planning for agriculture and food.
- Explore best ways to link Agriculture Advisory Committees and community-based food security organizations around BC, with a view to the formation of community-based food councils.

Results

By the time *Growing Green* ends in 2004 we want to see:

- Bylaws in 3-4 local governments that support local food systems components such as agricultural infrastructure (drainage, electricity, water), farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture, buying co-ops, box programs, on-farm processing, agri-food teaching/demonstration centres, agri-tourism and/or restaurants committed to local foods.
- Sections of Official Community Plans in 3-4 local governments that support development of local food economies and systems.
- Community-based food councils in the GVRD, CRD and elsewhere appropriately linked with AACs and equipped with management and reporting structures to buffer political shifts.
- Ten Councils educated about the importance and potential of their local food economy and useful/workable strategies to support it (e.g. feasibility and benefits of using farmland for floodplain management).