



FARM BUILDINGS ON AGRICULTURAL LAND



The City of Delta is exploring options to guide the approval of non-residential farm buildings on agricultural land. The following summary describes the background and progress to date, what is being considered, and how members of the farming community (agricultural landowners and farm operators) can get involved.

BACKGROUND

Jan. 20, 2025



Council directed staff to review the Zoning Bylaw and work with farming community to address concerns about buildings on agricultural land.

Apr. 24, 2025



Agricultural Advisory Committee confirmed approach to involving the farming community in development of guidance.

May 7 to June 9, 2025



City issued mailout to 1,175 members of the farming community with invitation to complete a form to provide input.

June 26, 2025



Agricultural Advisory Committee and representatives of Delta Farmers' Institute reviewed survey results and provided direction to staff for preparing options and recommendation.

WHAT WE HEARD

The City sent letters to 1,175 farm properties and farm property owners seeking to understand concerns about buildings on agricultural land to guide the direction of the work. We received responses from 175 participants. You can see the full report at letstalk.delta.ca/Farm-Buildings. Here is what we learned:

- 73% have some level of concern about ensuring buildings are for farm use.
- Concern about the appearance, size, location, and impacts of farm buildings was split amongst participants.
- Participants are primarily concerned about appearance, size, location, and impacts of farm buildings, to assist with determining if building is intended for farm use.
- Participants also expressed concern about the application process and confusion over Agricultural Land Commission and City requirements.



WHERE WE ARE HEADED

Based on the results of the feedback form and subsequent discussions with the Agricultural Advisory Committee and representatives of the Delta Farmers' Institute, staff began working on a new approach to reviewing applications that focuses on confirming how the proposed building is necessary for farm use. The main features of the proposed approach include:

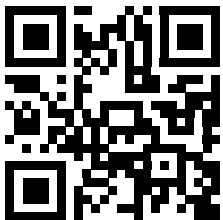
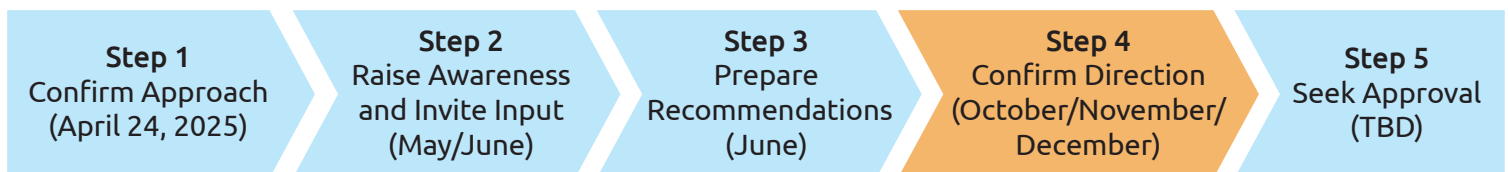
1. **Communication** - Improve communication of building permit application requirements and process, including clarification of when approval from the Agricultural Land Commission is necessary. This may include an enhanced webpage and guide for completing the application. Applicants will know what to expect in advance of submitting an application, reducing the back and forth required to have a complete application.
2. **Application Form** - Introduce a questionnaire as part of the building permit application package that seeks detailed information about the proposed structure and how it is necessary for the farm operation. Staff will have the information they need to evaluate applications early on, reducing the time needed for processing.
3. **Application Review** - Establish criteria that aids staff in confirming whether or not the structure is necessary for farm use. Features such as decorative exteriors and livable interiors may indicate an application needs a closer review.
4. **Referral** - Refer applications that do not clearly meet provincial legislative requirements and Delta's established criteria to the Agricultural Land Commission for review and approval. Applications that meet the provincial legislative requirements and established criteria can be processed quickly by staff.

How will these steps address concerns?

- ✓ Applicants will know what information is required to submit a complete application, ready for processing.
- ✓ Applicants will clearly understand what is required by the Agricultural Land Commission and what is required by the City.
- ✓ Applicants will be aware of the criteria that may lead to additional review by the City or Agricultural Land Commission.

WHAT'S NEXT?

We are currently confirming the direction of the work. Once we receive feedback, we will prepare a recommendation for the Agricultural Advisory Committee to review before bringing it to Council.



HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

Delta is inviting the farming community to provide feedback about the proposed changes to the process for reviewing non-residential farm buildings on agricultural land. Please feel free to visit letstalk.delta.ca/Farm-Buildings to review materials and complete the form before November 30, 2025.

