

City of Surrey PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REPORT File: 7914-0242-00

Planning Report Date: February 1, 2016

PROPOSAL:

• Development Variance Permit

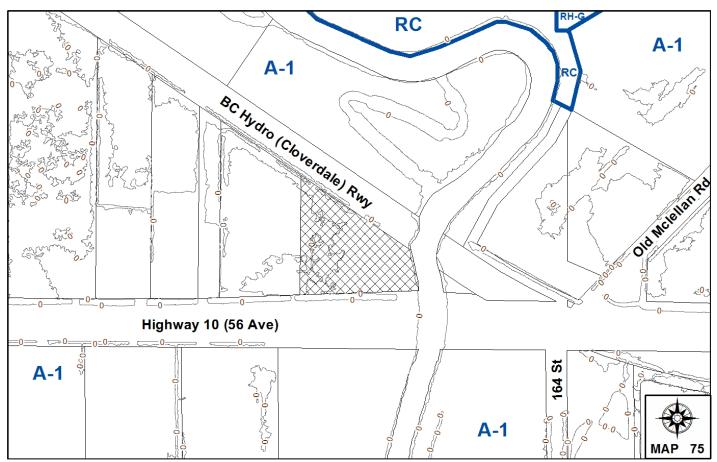
to increase the farm residential setback and depth of the farm residential footprint to permit construction of a single family dwelling on an agricultural lot.

LOCATION: 16327 - No. 10 Highway (56 Avenue)

OWNER: Raikot Farm Ltd.

ZONING: A-1

OCP DESIGNATION: Agriculture



RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

• <u>Denial</u> of Development Variance Permit (DVP).

DEVIATION FROM PLANS, POLICIES OR REGULATIONS

• Seeking to increase the maximum farm residential setback and maximum depth of the farm residential footprint in the A-1 Zone.

RATIONALE OF RECOMMENDATION

- The proposal was considered by the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee (AFSAC) on January 14. 2016. The AFSAC recommended to the General Manager of Planning and Development that the requested variances <u>not</u> be supported, as the proposal represents no benefit to agriculture.
- The existence of protected watercourses on all four sides of the property, in addition to water shrew habitat considerations and the need for a shared private access road to the site do not create additional encumbrances for house construction on the lot. The maximum farm residential footprint permitted under the A-1 Zone of 2,000 square metres (0.5 acre) is still available on the lot without the requested variances to the A-1 Zone.
- The owner's concerns of road noise and vibrations from No. 10 Highway are not considered to have merit from an agricultural perspective, to support the requested relaxations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Development Department recommends that Council <u>deny</u> Development Variance Permit No. 7914-0242-00.

If, however, Council finds merit in this application, Council could:

- 1. Approve Development Variance Permit No. 7914-0242-00 (Appendix VII) varying the following, to proceed to Public Notification:
 - (a) to increase the maximum front yard setback of any portion of a single family dwelling in the A-1 Zone, from 50 metres (164 ft.) to 60 metres (197 ft.); and
 - (b) to increase the maximum depth of the farm residential footprint of the A-1 Zone from 60 metres (197 ft.) to 70 metres (230 ft.).
- 2. Instruct staff to resolve the following issues prior to approval:
 - (a) the applicant obtain a highway access permit from the Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure for the property at 16237 No. 10 Highway (56 Avenue);
 - (b) the applicant register a combination Easement/Covenant document with the properties to the west at 16237 and 16277 No. 10 Highway (56 Avenue) to secure driveway access to the subject site;
 - (c) the applicant submit Water Act Notification to the Ministry of Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO) for the proposed driveway crossings over Class AO watercourses; and
 - (d) the applicant's Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) provide a self-assessment according to Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) procedures in determining 'serious harm to fish', for the proposed driveway crossings over Class AO watercourses.

REFERRALS

Engineering: The Engineering Department has no objection to the project.

Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure (MOTI):

The requested setback variance does not require approval from MOTI. However, the proposed driveway access for the property located at 16237 No. 10 Highway currently does not have a highway access permit and a permit will be required.

Agricultural and Food Security Advisory Committee (AFSAC): At their January 14, 2016 meeting, AFSAC recommended to the G.M. Planning and Development that Council not endorse Development Variance Permit No. 7914-0242-00 as there is no net gain to agriculture; especially due to the proposed access to the site and because a dwelling can be placed on the property in accordance with the existing zoning requirements.

Ministry of Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO) The assessments prepared by EDI Environmental Consultants and Gebauer & Associates have identified measures to effectively protect the functioning critical habitat and mitigate impacts on the pacific water shrew. MFLNRO encourages the City of Surrey to seek voluntary stewardship measures from the landowner(s) to help mitigate this loss.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Existing Land Use: Vegetable farm on 2-acre lot with storage container for farm machinery

storage, within the ALR.

Adjacent Area:

Direction	Existing Use	OCP Designation	Existing Zone
North (Across BC Hydro (Cloverdale) Railway):	City-owned floodplain for Serpentine River	Agricultural.	A-1
East (Across Serpentine River):	Soil-based agriculture, greenhouses and single family dwelling on 2-acre lot (currently under Development Application No. 790-0161-00, referred to ALC).	Agricultural.	A-1
South (Across No. 10 Highway):	Nursery on 10-acre lot.	Agricultural.	A-1
West:	Vacant farm land on 2.6-acre lot.	Agricultural.	A-1

DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- The o.8-hectare (2 acre) subject site is located in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and is zoned "General Agriculture Zone (A-1)".
- The subject site is triangular in shape and bounded by No. 10 Highway to the south, the Serpentine River to the east, the BC Hydro Railway to the north, and an unfarmed vacant parcel to the west.
- The site is currently being used for crop production (vegetables).
- There are three Class AO watercourses that run along the north, south, and west portions of the site. The Serpentine River, which is on the east side of the site, is a Class A watercourse. The applicant has submitted an environmental assessment prepared by QEP Environmental Ltd. to determine the minimum required setbacks from the north, south, and west watercourses to meet the Riparian Area Regulation (RAR). This report recommends a 2-metre

(7 ft.) setback from the top-of-bank of these three watercourses. The setback to the Serpentine River is already protected by an approximately 19-metre (62 ft.) wide statutory right-of-way registered in 2001.

- The subject site is also within an area defined as pacific water shrew habitat. The applicant has submitted an environmental assessment prepared by EDI Environmental Consultants, which reports on the potential impacts on the pacific water shew habitat. This report recommends a 5-metre (16 ft.) setback from the top of the bank of the southern watercourse and enhanced plantings.
- The report prepared by EDI Environmental Consultants Ltd. was accepted by the Ministry of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. In addition, the BC Transportation and Finance Authority also commissioned their own environmental report for adjacent properties to the west, which recommends a 10-metre (33 ft.) setback from the top of the bank of the southern watercourse for the properties located at 16237 and 16277 Highway 10 (56 Avenue) immediately west of the subject site.
- The subject site does not have direct access to No. 10 Highway. Access is proposed from No. 10 Highway via the existing driveway at 16237 No. 10 Highway (56 Avenue) (City-owned lot), and the property at 16277 No. 10 Highway (56 Avenue) (owned by BC Transportation and Financing Authority (BCTFA)).
- Easements are required over the properties at 16237 and 16277 No. 10 Highway (56 Avenue) to secure driveway access to the subject site.
- The proposed east-west driveway access from 16237 No. 10 Highway (56 Avenue) to the subject site will cross two AO-coded watercourses and will require that the applicant's Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) provide a self-assessment according to DFO's procedures in determining 'serious harm to fish', and submit Water Act Notification to the Ministry of Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO) for the proposed driveway crossings over Class AO watercourses.
- The owner would like to build a house on the north portion of the subject lot and is requesting variances to the A-1 Zone to increase the maximum house setback from 50 metres (165 ft.) to 60 metres (197 ft.) and to increase the maximum depth of the farm residential footprint from 60 metres (197 ft.) to 70 metres (230 ft.), both measured from the front lot line. The driveway area is proposed to be included in the farm residential footprint calculation of 2,000 sq.m. (0.5 acre).
- On January 14, 2016, the application was referred to the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee (AFSAC).
- Following a discussion of the application, the AFSAC made the following recommendation:

"That the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee recommend to the G.M. Planning and Development that Council not endorse Development Variance Permit No. 7914-0242-00 as there is no net gain to agriculture; especially due to the proposed access to the site and because a dwelling can be placed on the property in accordance with the existing zoning requirements."

BY-LAW VARIANCES AND JUSTIFICATION

(a) Requested Variances:

- To vary the following setback regulations in the A-1 Zone:
 - o To increase the maximum allowable distance from the front lot line that any portion of a single family dwelling can be located, from 50 metres (165 ft.) to 60 metres (197 ft.); and
 - O To increase the maximum allowable depth of the farm residential footprint from 60 metres (197 ft.) to 70 metres (230 ft.), as measured from the front lot line.

Applicant's Reasons:

- The subject lot is heavily constrained, being located between No. 10 Highway, the Serpentine River, and the railway, and being encumbered by protected watercourses on all four sides.
- The subject lot does not have direct access to No. 10 Highway. Access is required via easement with two neighbouring properties to the west and that easement must be located a minimum of 10 metres (33 ft.) from the south lot line to protect the pacific water shrew habitat.
- The subject lot fronts onto No. 10 Highway which carries heavy traffic volumes at high speeds. It is desirable to locate the house further back on the lot to reduce the noise and ground vibration caused by vehicles.

Staff Comments:

- The maximum setback from the front lot line for any portion of a single family dwelling in the A-1 Zone is 50 metres (165 ft.). The maximum depth of the farm residential footprint in the A-1 Zone is 60 metres (200 ft.). The maximum area of the farm residential footprint in the A-1 Zone is 2,000 square metres (0.5 acres).
- The intent of the farm residential footprint and the maximum setback provisions in the A-1 Zone are to protect lands for agricultural purposes by locating the residential footprint closer to the front lot line thereby creating larger, contiguous areas for farming at the rear of the property.
- The Ministry of Agriculture's (MOA) 2011 Discussion Paper entitled "Regulating the Siting and Size of Residential Uses in the ALR" provides reasons for requesting a variance to Farm Residential Footprint Siting that may have merit and reasons which may be proposed but have no merit from an agricultural perspective (Appendix VI).
- The following is a summary of some of the reasons referenced in the Ministry of Agriculture's Discussion Paper, which may be considered applicable to the subject site. (with staff comments in italics):

o Easements, Steep Slopes or Watercourses

(The subject site contains critical habitat areas for fisheries watercourses and the pacific water shrew. The applicant's environmental consultant has recommended a 5-metre (16-ft.) setback plus enhanced plantings for the southern watercourse to protect the pacific water shrew habitat.

The A-1 Zone requires a minimum front yard setback of 7.5 metres (25 ft.). The critical water shrew habitat area of 5 metres (16 ft.) from the south lot line is within this standard setback area and therefore does create an additional encumbrance.)

Parcels with Private Roads

(The environmental consultant for the BC Transportation and Finance Authority has recommended a 10-metre (33 ft.) setback from the watercourse located at the front of 16237 and 16277- No. 10 Highway. A 10-metre (33 ft.) wide easement, granting access to the subject site, is therefore proposed to be set back 12 metres (39 ft.) from the front property line of 16237 and 16277- No. 10 Highway to the west.

Despite the driveway access easement being 12 metres (39 ft.) from the front property line, which is further than the 7.5- metre (25 ft.) minimum building setback in the A-1 Zone, there is still sufficient area for a house to be constructed within the provisions of the A-1 Zone, as illustrated in Appendix III)

- In summary, while the Ministry of Agriculture's discussion paper does list the existence of watercourses and need for shared private access roads as possible reasons why a relaxation to the Farm Residential Footprint provisions may have merit, they do not represent an additional encumbrance for house construction on the subject site. The maximum allowable farm residential footprint of 2,000 square metres (0.5 acres) is still achievable on the lot and as such the owner can construct a house within the setback requirements outlined in the A-1 Zone.
- Issues of road noise and vibrations are not considered to have merit from an agricultural perspective to support the requested relaxations.
- At the January 14, 2016 AFSAC meeting, the committee expressed concern about relaxing the requirements as there is no net gain to agriculture; especially due to the proposed access to the site and because a dwelling can be placed on the property in accordance with the existing zoning requirements.
- The AFSAC recommended that Application No. 7914-0242-00 not be supported as proposed.

CONCLUSION

• To construct a house on this 2-acre lot, the owners are requesting a variance to the setback provisions in the A-1 Zone to increase the maximum house setback from 50 metres (165 ft.) to 60 metres (197 ft.), and to increase the maximum depth for the farm residential footprint from 60 metres (197 ft.) to 70 metres (230 ft.).

• The applicant is not proposing to vary the maximum area of the farm residential footprint of 2,000 sq.m. (0.5 acre).

- The proposed variances to increase the maximum setback regulations and depth of the farm residential footprint (as per Appendix VII), to accommodate a new house, were considered by the AFSAC and not supported as they represent no benefit to agriculture.
- The maximum allowable farm residential footprint of 2,000 square metres (0.5 acre) is still achievable on the lot taking into account the watercourses surrounding the site, and the water shrew and shared private access requirements. The owner can construct a house within the setback requirements outlined in the A-1 Zone.
- The Planning & Development Department recommends that Council <u>deny</u> the requested variances.
- If, however, Council finds merit in this application, Council could approve Development Variance Permit No. 7914-0242-00, varying the maximum farm residential setback and maximum depth of the farm residential footprint (attached as Appendix VII), to proceed to public notification.
- It is noted that should Council support the requested variances, the applicant would need to:
 - o obtain a highway access permit from the Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure for the property at 16237 No. 10 Highway;
 - o register a combination Easement/Covenant document with the properties at 16237 and 16277 No. 10 Highway to secure driveway access to the subject site;
 - o instruct their Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) to provide a self-assessment according to DFO procedures in determining 'serious harm to fish', for the proposed driveway crossings over Class AO watercourses; and
 - submit a Water Act Notification to the Ministry of Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO) for the proposed driveway crossings over Class AO watercourses.

INFORMATION ATTACHED TO THIS REPORT

The following information is attached to this Report:

Appendix I. Lot Owners, and Action Summary

Appendix II. Proposed house plan

Appendix III. Illustration of approximate buildable area

Appendix IV. Map of Critical habitat areas

Appendix V. Excerpt of Draft Minutes of January 14, 2016 Agriculture and Food Security

Advisory Committee Meeting

Appendix VI. Excerpt from the Ministry of Agriculture's 2011 Discussion Paper "Regulating

the Siting and Size of Residential Uses in the ALR"

Appendix VII. Development Variance Permit No. 7914-0242-00 (if required)

original signed by Judith Robertson

Jean Lamontagne General Manager Planning and Development

SAL/dk

Information for City Clerk

Legal Description and Owners of all lots that form part of the application:

1. (a) Agent: Name: Dharminder Grewal

Address: 6736 - 137 Street

Surrey, BC V₃W ₇V₁

Tel: 604-597-0725 - Primary

2. Properties involved in the Application

(a) Civic Address: 16327 No 10 (56 Avenue) Highway

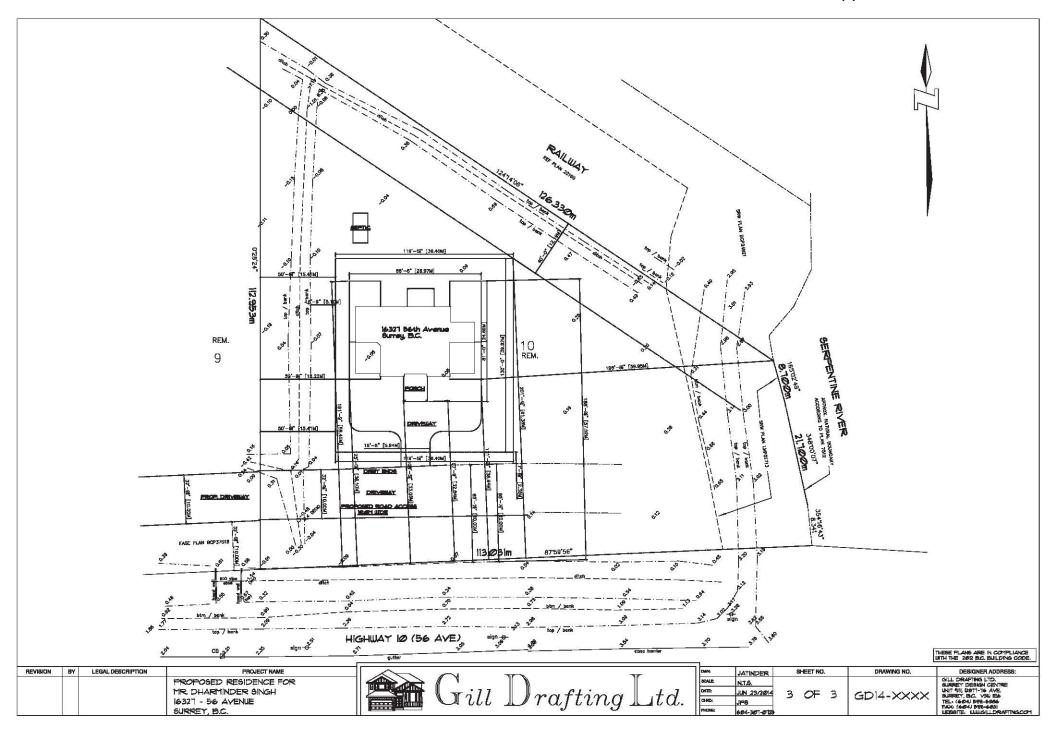
(b) Civic Address: 16327 No 10 (56 Ave) Highway

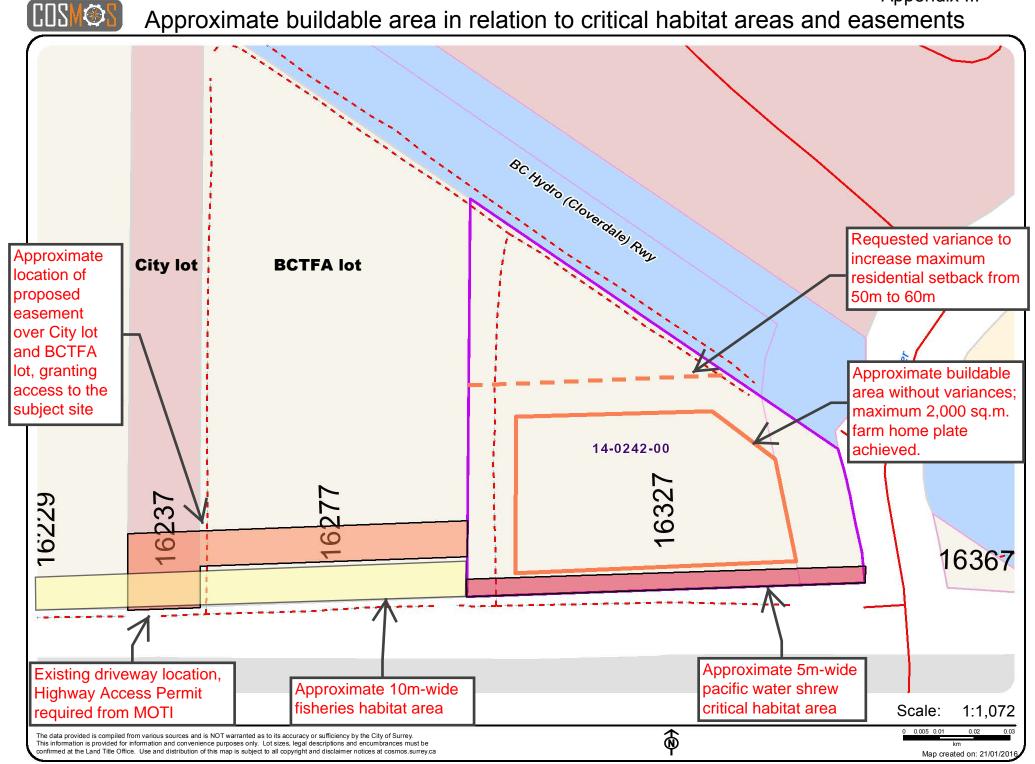
Owner: Raikot Farm Ltd.

PID: 011-120-924

Lot 10, Except Part Dedicated Road On Plan Bcp16845, Section 12 Township 2 New

Westminster District Plan 7512









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4. Development Variance Permit No. 7914-0242-00

Stephanie Long, Planner File: 7914-0242-00

The following comments were made:

- The subject site is 16327 No. 10 Hwy (56 Avenue). It is located on HWY 10 in ALR, bounded on all sides by Class AO watercourses that run along the south, west and north portions of the site.
- Staff clarified that the site is currently not being farmed and falls within an area defined as pacific watershew habitat.
- The Applicant is requesting a Development Variance Permit (DVP) to increase the maximum setback for a single family dwelling in an A-1 Zone from 50 metres to 60 metres as well as increase the maximum depth of the farm residential footprint from 60 metres to 70 metres to build a house.
- The driveway area is proposed to be included in the farm residential footprint; proposed site access would come from 2 lots to the west. The access will be to come from 16237 to the privately owned parcel; this would involve negotiating access easements and a properly issued access.

Discussion

- The Committee noted that the site was farmed successfully until the Ministry bought the property for HWY 10 widening and that at that time AFSAC recommended that there be a consolidation.
- Staff clarified that the proposed variance was brought forward to the AFSAC due to the request for a 10 metre reduction off the front and that the homeowners would be limited, through soil deposition bylaw and ALC policy to 2,000 m² of fill for residential purposes.
- The Committee expressed concerned that the owner purchased the property well aware of the challenges and that the request before the AFSAC yields no net benefit to agriculture. It was further discussed that the proposal sets a precedent and that unless access off the highway can be negotiated construction of the house is ill-conceived.

It was

Moved by M. Bose Seconded by D. Arnold

That the Agriculture and Food Security

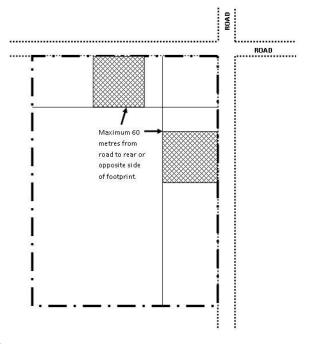
Advisory Committee (AFSAC) recommends to the General Manager, Planning and Development that Council not endorse Development Variance Permit No. 7914-0242-00 as there is no net gain to agriculture; especially due to the proposed access to the site and because a dwelling can be placed on the property in accordance with the existing zoning requirements.

Carried

With H. Dhillon abstaining

Appendix A - Setback Variances for Farm Residential Footprint Siting

Some properties may have anomalies which prevent the farm residential footprint from being located according to the standard location criteria above. This section describes accepted variances for local governments to utilize when necessary. It mentions several reasons for requesting a variance which may have merit, depending on the circumstances. It also mentions reasons which may be proposed but which have no merit from an agricultural perspective.



A. Reasons for variance which may have merit

1. Cluster farm residential use(s) with farm buildings

A farmer may want to have his house close to the farm buildings for the efficiency or security of operations – e.g., to tend dairy cows or to watch over valuable equipment. Such a request for a setback variance must be accompanied by a farm management plan that describes the farm personnel's functions in the operation. The farm residential footprint should be no larger than if located close to the road.

ROAD

2. Septic disposal system

The septic tank and disposal field are not part of the footprint. If the ground conditions dictate that they cannot be situated behind or beside the footprint, the location of the footprint can be adjusted somewhat, but always with the goal of using a minimum farm land area.

3. 'Panhandle' lots

Occasionally, a lot is created behind another one, with a slim portion of the rear lot (the 'panhandle') reaching to the road to provide access. It is common practice to consider the rear lot line of the forward lot to be the front lot line of the lot behind (the 'panhandle lot'). The same can be done when measuring the maximum setback for a farm residential footprint - the maximum 60 metres depth of the footprint would be measured from the rear lot line of the forward lot.

Figure 10. A Panhandle Lot

60 m

Panhandle
Lot

4. Easements, steep slopes, or watercourses

If there is an easement for utilities (hydro lines, gas, cable, telephone, etc.), a steep slope, or a watercourse with riparian setbacks that cuts off part of the front of a lot, the *farm residential footprint* could take an irregular shape. That shape, or polygon, would fit into the space outside of the easement or other feature. The area of that polygon could be equal to the maximum area of the footprint, and because part of it may be narrow, the depth could be longer than the standard 60 metres.

To allow for a back yard for the house, the maximum setback of the rear of the house would be 10 metres less than the depth of the footprint – e.g., if the varied footprint depth is 85 metres, the distance to the back of the house should be no more than 75 metres. The house should still be located as close to the road frontage as practical.

5. Floodplain or other hazardous area

There may be cases where the front portion of the property is in the floodplain or other hazardous area and, for safety reasons; the residential uses should be placed elsewhere on the lot. A report by appropriate professional(s) should describe the hazards, the recommended safe areas, and how the coverage of farmland by *farm residential footprints* and driveways will be kept to a minimum.

Figure 11. A Lot with an Easement, Ravine, etc.

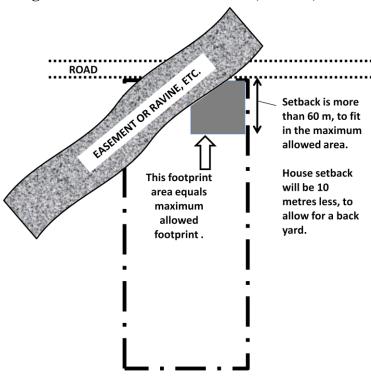
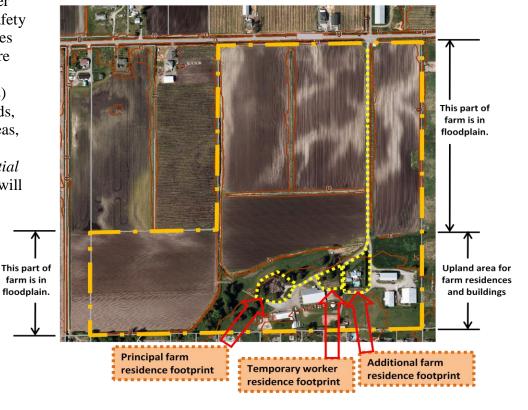


Figure 12. A Farm with Land within a Floodplain



6. Parcels with private roads

Where there is a private road giving access to a property, e.g., a shared road for bare land strata lots, it should be considered the same as a public road. The setback measurements to the rear of the footprint and the house should be taken from the private road's edge. If access is via an easement across neighbouring property, the setback measurements should be taken from the point where the easement intersects with the subject lot.

7. Parcels affected by oil and gas industry

Placement of an oil or gas rig on a farm can create the need for separation between the rig's operational area and the houses for safety, noise, and/or fumes. In such cases, the siting of a farm residential footprint should be adjusted, with the goal of minimizing the area for the footprint and the driveway(s) to it, and maximizing the area available for farming.

B. Variance requests with no merit from an agriculture perspective

1. Agricultural capability of soils

Section 7.1 of the discussion paper considers the siting of residential uses. The conclusion is that siting close to roadways at the front of a lot is considered more important than siting residential uses farther back on properties where there are poorer soils.

It is difficult to foresee a circumstance where the soil quality of the residential footprint was so significant that it justified the negative impact on farming potential of the neighbouring lots of moving the residential footprint farther back into the lot.

2. Avoid cutting trees

If there is a stand of trees which has some significance, it is not necessary to amend the *farm residential footprint* setback depth. The footprint does not need to be a rectangle or square and could take a flexible shape around the key trees. The design of the house and its grounds could incorporate key vegetation. If legislation or regulation protects vegetation, a variance approach similar to item A.4, "Easements, steep slopes, and watercourses", above could apply.

3. Views and aesthetics; rock outcroppings

Some farm properties may have a portion of land in the ALR and a portion which is outside of the ALR. The farmer may wish to relocate the *farm residential footprint* up on a viewpoint, or on a rock outcrop, or for other aesthetic reasons. For such purposes, the footprint should only be allowed to relocate away from the front of the lot onto the parts of a lot outside of the ALR, to avoid impacting farming opportunities on neighbouring lots.

4. Avoid impacts on existing neighbouring farms

Most effects on neighbouring farms are likely to occur if the residential uses are NOT at the front of the lot, by the road. Because neighbouring farming operations can change from farmer to farmer, year to year, it is best <u>not</u> to situate a *farm residential footprint* based on current activities on nearby lots.

CITY OF SURREY

(the "City")

DEVELOPMENT VARIANCE PERMIT

NO.: 7914-0242-00

Issued To: RAIKOT FARM LTD

("the Owner")

Address of Owner: 6736 - 137 Street

Surrey, BC V₃W ₇V₁

- 1. This development variance permit is issued subject to compliance by the Owner with all statutes, by-laws, orders, regulations or agreements, except as specifically varied by this development variance permit.
- 2. This development variance permit applies to that real property including land with or without improvements located within the City of Surrey, with the legal description and civic address as follows:

Parcel Identifier: 011-120-924 Lot 10, Except Part Dedicated Road On Plan Bcp16845, Section 12 Township 2 New Westminster District Plan 7512

16327 No 10 (56 Ave) Highway

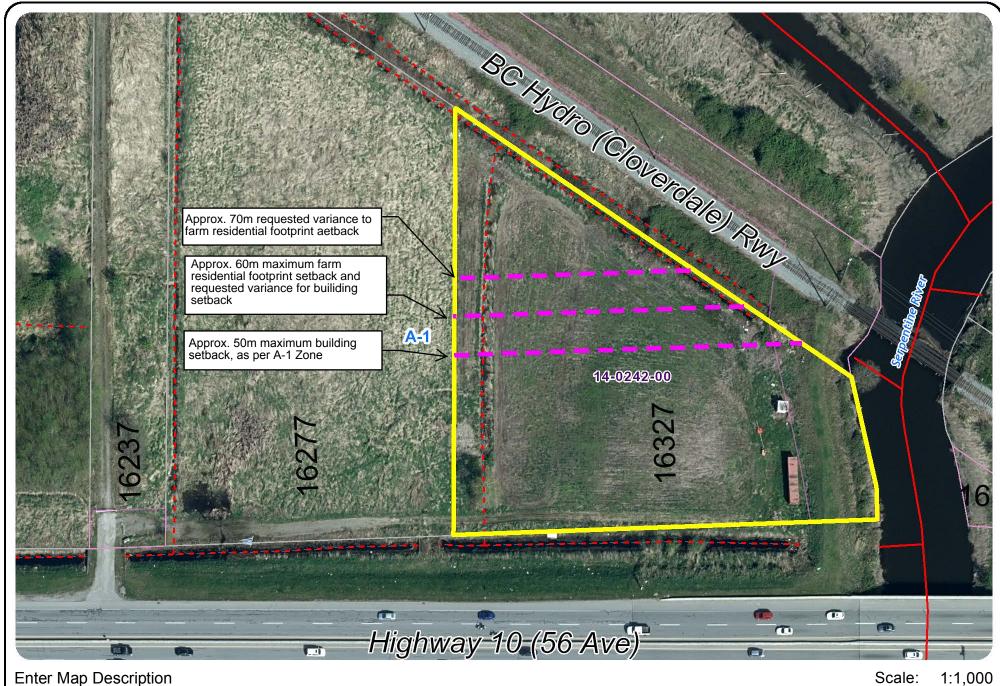
(the "Land")

- 3. Surrey Zoning By-law, 1993, No. 12000, as amended is varied as follows:
 - (a) In Sub-section F.1(b) of Part 10 General Agricultural Zone (A-1) the maximum setback of a single family dwelling from the front lot line is increased from 50 metres (164 ft.) to 60 metres (197 ft.); and
 - (b) In Sub-section J.2(b) of Part 10 General Agricultural Zone (A-1) the maximum depth of the farm residential footprint measured from the front lot line is increased from 60 metres (197 ft.) to 70 metres (230 ft.).
- 4. The landscaping and the siting of buildings and structures shall be in accordance with the drawing numbered 7914-0242-00 (A) (the "Drawings") which is attached hereto and form part of this development variance permit.

5.	The Land shall be developed strictly in accordance with the terms and conditions and provisions of this development variance permit.		
6.	This development variance permit shall lapse if the Owner does not substantially start any construction with respect to which this development variance permit is issued, within two (2) years after the date this development variance permit is issued.		
7.	The terms of this development variance permit or any amendment to it, are binding on all persons who acquire an interest in the Land.		
8.	This development variance permit is not a building permit.		
	ORIZING RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE COUNCIL, THE DAY OF , 20 . D THIS DAY OF , 20 .		
	Mayor – Linda Hepner		

City Clerk - Jane Sullivan





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