Executive Summary

The City of Kelowna has seen steady growth over the last number of years. The amount of prime

agriculture land, the surrounding mountains and lake has reduced the amount of available land and has

resulted in significant conflict at the urban and rural interface. Provincial and municipal policies have

attempted to mitigate this conflict, which include the use of local Agricultural Advisory Committees

(AAC).

This report examines the fringe management practices of Kelowna, focusing on the use of a local AAC to

city council. The minutes of the AAC meetings regarding development applications were subjected to

content analysis in order to look for patterns and anomalies. The major themes developed from the

analysis resulted in commentary on how:

1. Fringe conflict was characterized

2. Applicants and members of the AAC rationalized their arguments

3. The role of the AAC was viewed by city council and the provincial Agricultural Land Commission

   (ALC)

 These findings, along with current policies in Kelowna, such as those within the Official Community Plan

(OCP), the Agricultural Plan (AP) and provincial policies, the context of Kelowna and current theories

regarding the fringe, were used in the final analysis, including:

4. A review of the role of the AAC

5. A review of how the fringe is defined

6. The obstacles Kelowna faces in fringe planning

Thirty four development applications were reviewed that have gone before the AAC from 2008-2010

and were followed through the application process to city council and to the ALC. The results of the

applications and whether they were supported at the various stages of the application process are seen

below.

Application Type	Policy Support			AAC Support			Council Support			ALC Approved		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Homesite Severance	5	-	5	6	1	7	6	-	6	2	4	6
Subdivsion	2	8	10	2	8	10	4	2	6	0	3	3
Exclusion	2	4	6	1	6	7	-	2	2	1	2	3
Non-farm use	0	5	5	5	4	9	5	0	5	3	1	4
Total	**9**	**17**	**26**	**14**	**19**	**33**	**15**	**4**	**19**	**6**	**10**	**16**
Percentage	35%	65%	100%	42%	58%	100%	79%	21%	100%	38%	63%	100%

Overall, Kelowna's city council was much more likely to favor applications than either the AAC or current

policy. Of the cases where council made a decision, they supported 79% (15/19) while the AAC

supported 42% (14/33) and city policy was least favorable at 32% (9/28). The ALC at the provincial level

finally approved 38% (6/16) applications. More important than the overall results are the variables that

helped inform these decisions.

1. **Fringe Conflict**

Typology of Conflict by Application Type				
	General	Speculative Pressure	None	**Total**
Homesite Severance	-	-	7	**7**
Subdivsion	7	1	2	**10**
Exclusion	3	2	2	**7**
Non-farm use	3	3	4	**10**
Total	**13**	**6**	**15**	**34**
Percentage	38%	18%	44%	100%

Instances of specific conflict were rarely discussed within the minutes. Conflict around the fringe was

mainly presented by planning staff in general terms with no specific cause for the conflict mentioned.

The second most common conflict was speculative pressure due to urban encroachment into farmland. Conflict related to farming was much more frequent than conflict affecting urban land uses. Frequently the discussion revolved around the potential for conflict between land uses and not necessarily about the parameters of the current application.

2. **Applicant and AAC Rationale**

Applicant Rationale by Application Type				
	Agricultural	Urban Expansion	None	**Total**
Homesite Severance	4	0	3	**7**
Subdivsion	6	2	2	**10**
Exclusion	3	2	2	**7**
Non-farm use	7	0	3	**10**
Total	**20**	**4**	**10**	**34**
Percentage	59%	12%	29%	100%

Source: Mark Janzen

Applicants focused primarily on agricultural rationales for applications, such as the lack of viable farmland or that farming would continue uninterrupted. These arguments based solely on the viability of agriculture do not meet all the criteria within the city's AP for applications attempting to subdivide or exclude their land from the ALR.

It was argued that Applicants may be focusing on the agricultural aspects due to the AAC being swayed by such arguments. Only applications that had an agricultural rationale focus were supported by the AAC.

It is clearly stated by various provincial and municipal policies that the AAC is to provide advice on issues related to applications, but there were a few examples of applications where the AAC failed to fulfill their role as advisors by disregarding policies on their responsibilities. It was argued that the AAC may be confused in their role in the application process.

3. **City Council and the ALC's Perception of the AA**C

The previous finding related to the AAC's rationale was alarming due to evidence suggesting that the AAC is highly regarded by the ALC and holds great influence on ALC application decisions. The AAC was often mentioned in ALC decisions while the city council was not. The findings were inconclusive regarding how much city council valued the AAC, but this may be inconsequential based on other findings and that the ALC has the final say regarding applications.

4. **Reviewing the Role of the AAC**

This report recommends that the AAC be given a more pro-active and expanded role to promote agriculture and ensure that policies are being followed correctly. However, they should remain in the current advising role in regards to applications. The advisory role needs to be firmly followed by the AAC before an expanded role should be considered. More research is also recommended on how AACs interact with city councils and the ALC to further examine their impact and influence within the application processes.

5. **Reviewing Definitions of the Fringe**

This report also reviews how Kelowna defines its fringe areas. Presently, the city primarily uses the boundaries of the ALR. However, current provincial policy has mandated for specific edge planning areas (EPAs) to be in place on both sides of the ALR in order to consider the needs of both urban and rural land uses. Even though it was found that planning staff may already be considering an expanded fringe and not simply using the ALR, the lack of urban conflict consideration indicates a need for a formal policy to be enacted. For this to be achieved, an update to the AP will be required as the main fringe planning document.

6. **Obstacles to Proper Fringe Planning**

Besides outdated planning resources, Kelowna faces other challenges that are common problems for fringe management. These include the size and amount of fringe areas within the city plus the

continuous growth and scattered development that has occurred. Kelowna will likely need a change in how it develops to fully mitigate the issues along the fringe. However, changes to current policy and an effective Agricultural Advisory Committee will aid the process.