

# CHILLIWACK'S GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY: *Agricultural Land Reserve Exclusion- Phases-Submissions*

## ABSTRACT

Planners, in the planning practice, must design tactics or strategies' to deal with challenges, both real and potential, that affect the area they plan for.

The Chilliwack's Growth Management Strategy (CGMS) was produced to focus on current and future growth challenges. It was formed to create a long-term strategy related to the urban boundary, population growth, economic development and Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) exclusions.

The CGMS is a source for rules, regulations, method guidelines for the planning practice in Manitoba. The strategy of having the ALR exclusions approved provides a set of information that can be followed somewhat in an area without ALR or less intense restrictions.

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in collaboration with  
Derek Eno, MCIP

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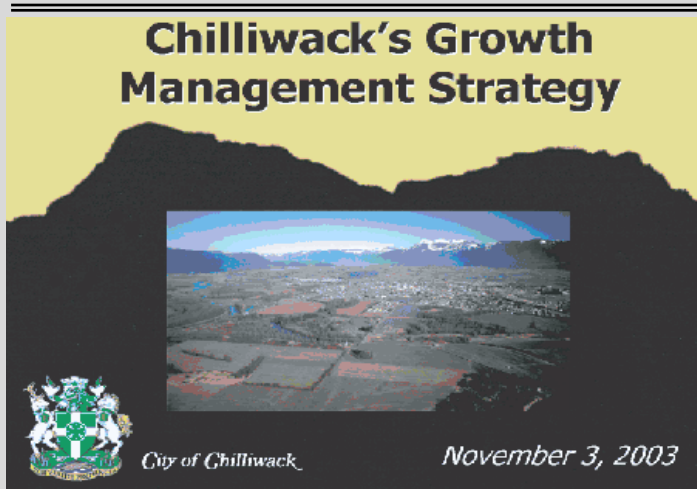
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## The CGMS

The CGMS has been in place since November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2003. It is still in use currently and available on the City of Chilliwack internet web page. Some changes have been made since 11/03/2003 including some improvements and modernization.

The CGMS includes topics that are related to or actually within the responsibility of the City Planning department. Some of the issues in it are topics carried out by other departments and therefore require interaction between divisions, sectors, and city planning is enhanced.

Overall the CGMS topics fit since growth is a vital part of:

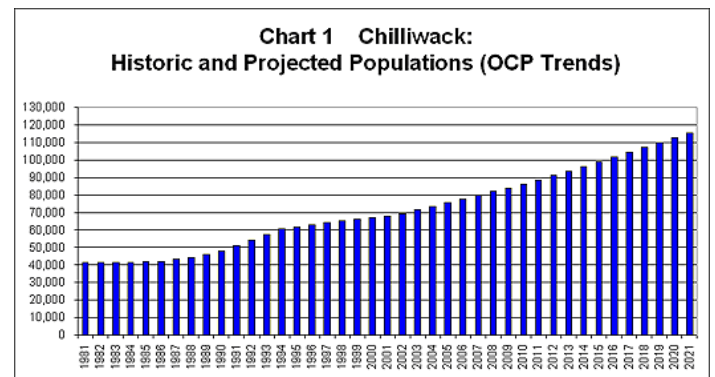
- Challenges;
- Official Community Plans (OCP);
- Projections;
- Economics;
- Goals;
- Urban size increase or decrease;
- Social development;
- Environmental impact.

The CGMS is “consistent” with the Regional Growth Strategy, formed by the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD), BC Stats, local governments, and committees.

There are three phases in the CGMS that are “Proposed ALR/Urban Growth Boundary Exclusion Requests.

- Phase 1: Industrial & Building Park Lands (November 2003)\*\*
- Phase 2: Commercial Lands (2004)\*\*
- Phase 3: Residential & Community Development (2004)”. (CGMS: Pg. 21)

\*\* (NOTE: PHASE 1 AND 2 WERE UNDERTAKEN AT THE SAME TIME AND PHASE 3 HAS NOT BEEN DONE YET)



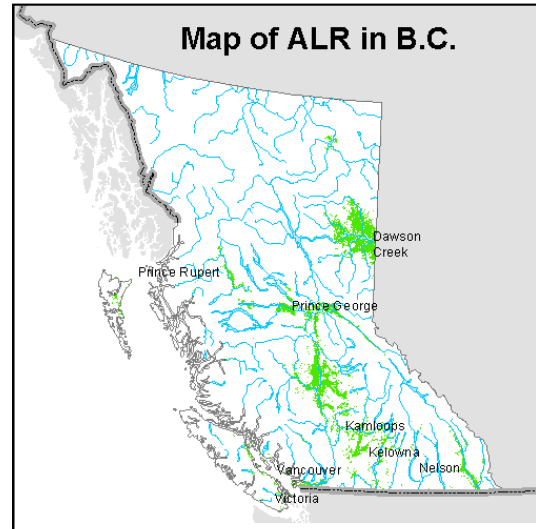
## ALR Description

The ALR began in 1972 throughout the province<sup>1</sup>. The entire province now has ALR sections, and more have been created.

ALR is a provincial zone, covering reserve areas with agricultural as the prime usage. It is in place to promote farming and manage, organize or direct non-agricultural usage. The Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) is the governing body responsible for the ALR. The ALC reports that there are approximately 4.7 million hectares of ALR. The lands are either public/crown land or privately owned. The ALR has precedence over municipal legislation(s) in place but is not intended to substitute them, or any bylaws that possibly apply to the land. ([www.alc.bc.ca](http://www.alc.bc.ca))

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<sup>1</sup> The boundaries created for urban areas by the ALR are related to the ones Portland, Oregon. The boundaries there were extended in 2006 but the new ones are still treated as legal boundaries.



## Submission to Agricultural Land Commission

Prior to producing the CGMS, the City of Chilliwack was required to get approval from the ALC on a number of submissions.

“The Future Growth of Chilliwack” (FGC). It was dated complete and submitted for approval October 7, 2002. Included within it is a presentation of the historical growth of Chilliwack. Per the submission, BC Stats estimates that the 1971 population was 33,000, and the 1996 population was 65,000. The 2001 Census reported

that Chilliwack had 62,927 residents. Given the historical increases, the growth projected by Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), the OCP, and FVRD growth assumptions, Chilliwack's population is estimated to be 101,000 to 115,000 by 2021<sup>2</sup>. Based on this growth, the submission to ALC is requesting ALR exclusion requests within each of the phases in the CGMS.

The "revised growth capacity" within the FGC tables projected development demands, realistic expectations and potential shortfalls. The development tables are provided based on separate topics (*showing the demands, expectations and shortfalls in acres*):

- Residential Development;
- Industrial Development;
- Institutional Development;
- Commercial Development and;

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<sup>2</sup> Note: The CGMS increased the estimated population of the city based on larger increases, estimates and assumptions. CGMS 2021 population = 134,000.

#### - City of Chilliwack - All Development

The table information is one of the "justifications for proposed exclusions." Others are: the historic and future growths of the city; a new Urban Containment Boundary; increases in infrastructure costs; cost increases in utilities and roads (for hillside development), and increasing to some extent the valley floor expansion. Mainly the planners, and employees in related occupations, have focussed on great growth, sustainability, and huge costs involved in extending services over large distances.

The summary of this submission is to apply for the ALR exclusions first between 2002 - 2010 and then between 2010 - 2020. This is the application as it is a "stepping-stone" method or format.

The submission was approved by the ALC. However, portions of the exclusions were not allowed and

had to be changed or altered by the city.

### **Submission to The Agricultural Land Commission**

“Phase One: Economic Development Lands.” (PIEDL) Dated complete and submitted for approval July 31, 2003.

This submission was created once the FGC was approved and required changes were made. This submission is directly an application for ALR block exclusion in certain areas. Based on the “specific growth needs” there are certain employment lands that need to have ALR exclusions. The industrial land and commercial land are those that are approached here. These are referred to as “Proposed Economic Development Areas” in the submission. A map is included showing the areas and it has been altered from those shown in the FGC based on the changes required by ALC for the approval. The total acreage proposed in the

PIEDL is 535. The majority of this land, 513 acres, is located north of the Trans Canada Highway (TCH) in Chilliwack. 22 acres are proposed south of the TCH in the Sardis area. This conforms with the usage in both areas primarily because the current industrial areas are located adjacent to the proposed economic development areas.

This submission was approved by the ALC however some changes were required.

- The Lickman – Chilliwack Road area was approved as applied for.
- The Yale West – Parr Road was altered, as the section on the eastern side was not approved for exclusion.
- The Airport Related/Aerospace Industrial Park block was altered, as the most southern section for exclusion was not approved. The eastern portion of this one was not approved as it was considered to be increasing the urban boundary too much.

- The Legacy Pacific & Slocan Forest Products block was altered by enlargement. *(It should be noted though that the public questioned this block extensively. The two companies occupying the land were industrial and storage ones. The area has a long history of this although some of the people attending public meetings thought it should not be changed at all.)*

The planners and other city staff were not allowed to make changes to the original application. Any changes would require a re-submission, as per ALC procedural rules and requirements.

### **CGMS 1<sup>st</sup> Phase - Industrial & Business Park (IBP)**

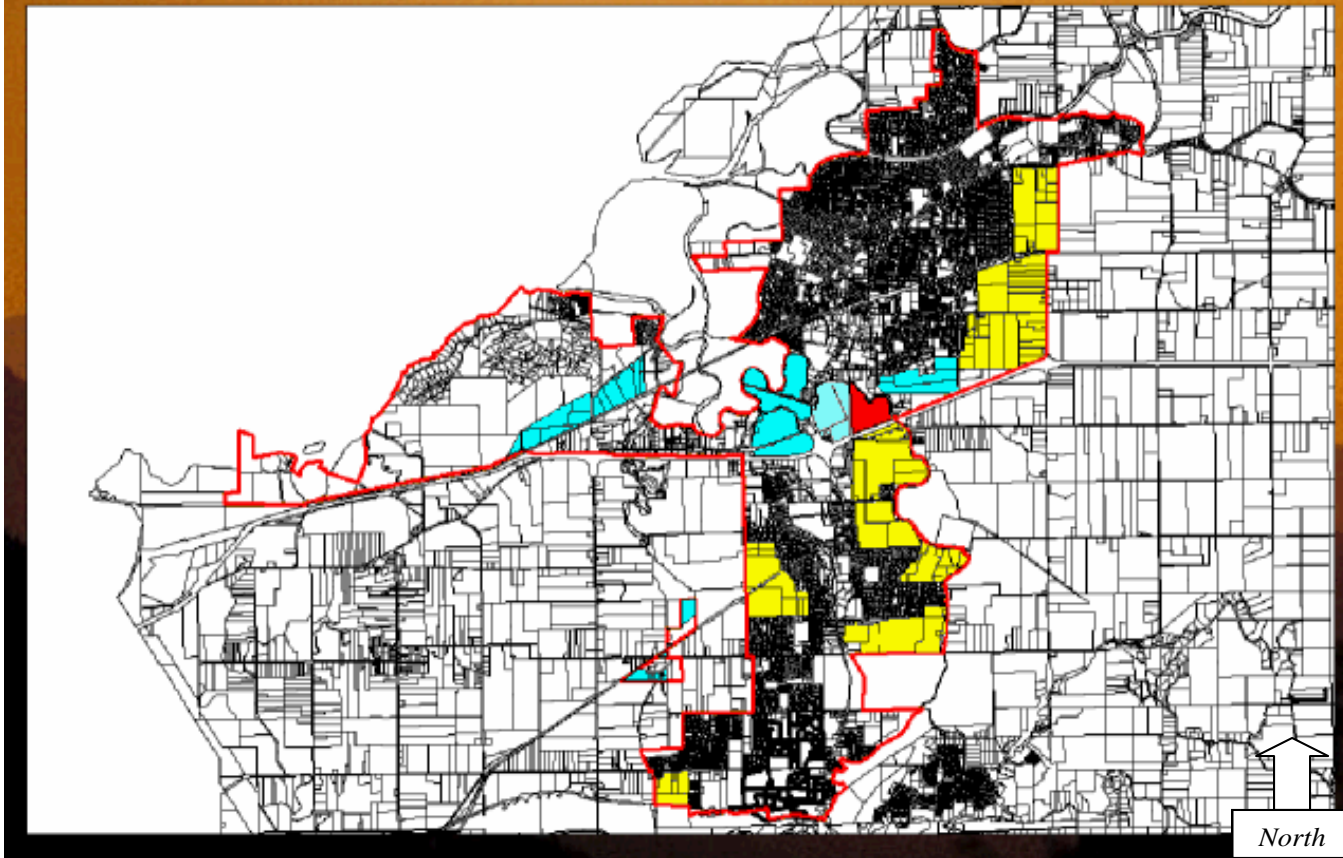
CGMS creation was started prior to, and/or during, the production of the submissions to the ALC. The two of those, partially explained prior to this, added to portions the CGMS phase one. The IBP areas, map, requirements and explanation to the public, required approval of

the submissions. The IBP map in the CGMS was created obeying the ALC rules including changes to the approved exclusions.

Part of the reason for making the IBP the first phase was that it was intended to be the first ALR exclusion undertaken. The anticipated start date was November 2003 and some of it was done then. The entire IBP was not done as it includes multiple areas that could not be done together. Additional submissions may be required once the creation of additional industrial or business parks began.

Currently, not all have been completed although processes to do them, or start them, are ongoing. Some parts of IBP have been changed and required re-submissions have been made, but the initial overall approval is still in place.

Phase three is currently on hold. Some are partially in progress due to a variety of planning or growth concerns/changes.



Map of Phase 1, 2 & 3 in CGMS - IBP = Phase one - blue.  
Commercial = phase two - red. Residential = phase three - yellow.

## “ Justification for Exclusions

- 1) Permits comprehensive, long term infrastructure & development planning, based on sustainable development principles.
- 2) Reflects realistic expectations of hillside development & densification rates, providing for interim residential needs and short- & long-term economic development growth.
- 3) Allows for build up of municipal financial resources and funds for eventual upland infrastructure development.
- 4) Assists City in meeting FVRD’s Regional Growth Strategy target (134,000 population).
- 5) Based on OCP vision, & strongly supported by community ”

*(Two pages on the CGMS located just before the final page that says “Thank You”)*

## **CGMS and Chilliwack Planners**

In all, the Chilliwack planners have done well in the areas of growth management.

Public meetings have been held throughout. All are reported as well organized, and well done.

All areas of it have been researched and properly studied including:

- ✓ Published information;
- ✓ Discussions with other government agencies or departments;
- ✓ Information from consultants;
- ✓ Information from firms and groups (ie: FVRD, GVRD);
- ✓ Discussions with the public primarily effected and partially effected.

The required submissions have been well done and approved with only minimal or minor changes.

The CGMS is still available and in use in currently.

Urban boundaries have changed and have been endorsed by the public.

The ALR is still in place and new areas of it have been created in exchange for exclusions.

*(Not matching acre per acre)*

The Official Community Plan has been amended

## Interests To Manitoba

The styles and methods of planning for the CGMS are considered to be excellent and may help Manitoba to alter some of their own methods of planning and growth managements.

In Manitoba there is no ALR. The restrictions on development, changing, rezoning, growth management, and such of agricultural land here are not as intense. The large, or fast growth, development, and rezoning of agricultural or municipal areas, outside of the Winnipeg urban boundary, is an example of the decreased restrictions.

Some justifications included in the CGMS are excellent and would do well if increased here. Of note is a portion of the final one “strongly supported by community.” As planning here is done for the entire population our methods or guidelines for public meeting and involvement could be enhanced.

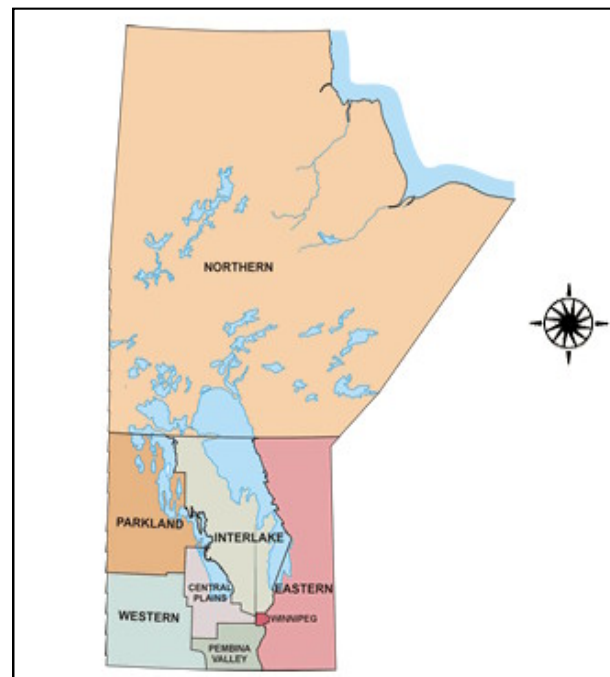
*The analysis and background work put into the CGMS is good for determining the amount of land actually needed for economic development and supporting a growing population.*

*Increases thought towards community “visioning” and the long term achievements, policies, or tools needed to attain it.*

*The Chilliwack process opened up conversation on “how important is agriculture to this community?”. Ended up as a very important base for the community – balanced with growth and other economic employment opportunities. The process forced planners, other planning staff, politicians and the public to decide what type of agriculture they want to support, enhance and look into where should this agriculture be located?*

*(Derek Eno – 2007)*

*These planning points are positive for Manitoba to look into more.*



*(Map courtesy of The Province Of Manitoba – usage approved)*

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