

April 8, 2024

File: CR-12-01  
Ref: RD 2024 01 26

The Honourable Rob Fleming  
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure  
PO Box 9055, Stn Prov Govt.  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2  
VIA EMAIL: [Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca)

Dear Honourable Rob Fleming:

### **Commercial Truck Parking on Agricultural Lands**

The issue of unauthorized commercial heavy duty truck parking on agricultural lands has been an ongoing challenge in the Metro Vancouver region.

At its January 26, 2024 regular meeting, the Board of Directors of the Metro Vancouver Regional District (MVRD) adopted the following resolution:

*That the MVRD Board:*

- a) send a letter to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure and the Minister of Agriculture and Food advocating for provincial actions to address the issue of commercial truck parking on agricultural lands in Metro Vancouver; and*
- b) send a copy of the report titled "Commercial Truck Parking on Agricultural Lands", dated January 3, 2024, to member jurisdictions with agricultural land.*

The region's limited agricultural lands are intended for agricultural uses, while commercial trucks and trailers are essential for goods movement and supporting the local, regional and provincial economies. Commercial trucks should be parked at appropriate locations such as industrial sites and/or dedicated parking facilities but there are limited locations where this can occur in the region. There is a need for provincial leadership and collaboration among member jurisdictions, other levels of government, and other agencies and organizations to address this ongoing issue. We encourage the Province to review the attached report, and we look forward to the Province initiating collaborative action to address the lack of appropriate truck parking options in the region.

65739930

If you have any questions, please contact Jonathan Cote, Deputy General Manager, Regional Planning and Housing Development, by phone at 604-432-6391, or by email at [jonathan.cote@metrovancover.org](mailto:jonathan.cote@metrovancover.org).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "George V. Harvie". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

George V. Harvie  
Chair, Metro Vancouver Board

GVH/JWD/hm

cc: The Honourable Dan Coulter, Minister of State for Infrastructure and Transit  
Kathryn Krishna, Deputy Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure  
Kim Grout, Chief Executive Officer, Agricultural Land Commission  
Jason Lum, Chair of the Board, Fraser Valley Regional District  
Jerry W. Dobrovolny, Commissioner/Chief Administrative Officer, Metro Vancouver  
Heather McNell, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Policy and Planning, Metro Vancouver

Encl: Report titled "[Commercial Truck Parking on Agricultural Lands \(pg. 408\)](#)", dated January 3, 2024, advanced to the Metro Vancouver Regional District Board on January 26, 2024.

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April 8, 2024

File: CR-12-01  
Ref: RD 2024 01 26

The Honourable Pam Alexis  
Minister of Agriculture and Food  
PO Box 9043, Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2  
VIA EMAIL: [AF.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:AF.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

Dear Honourable Pam Alexis:

**Commercial Truck Parking on Agricultural Lands**

The issue of unauthorized commercial heavy duty truck parking on agricultural lands has been an ongoing challenge in the Metro Vancouver region.

At its January 26, 2024 regular meeting, the Board of Directors of the Metro Vancouver Regional District (MVRD) adopted the following resolution:

*That the MVRD Board:*

- a) send a letter to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure and the Minister of Agriculture and Food advocating for provincial actions to address the issue of commercial truck parking on agricultural lands in Metro Vancouver; and*
- b) send a copy of the report titled "Commercial Truck Parking on Agricultural Lands", dated January 3, 2024, to member jurisdictions with agricultural land.*

The region's limited agricultural lands are intended for agricultural uses, while commercial trucks and trailers are essential for goods movement and supporting the local, regional and provincial economies. Commercial trucks should be parked at appropriate locations such as industrial sites and/or dedicated parking facilities, but there are limited locations where this can occur in the region. There is a need for provincial leadership and collaboration among member jurisdictions, other levels of government, and other agencies and organizations to address this ongoing issue. We encourage the Province to review the attached report, and we look forward to the Province initiating collaborative action to address the lack of appropriate truck parking options in the region.

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Yours sincerely,

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George V. Harvie  
Chair, Metro Vancouver Board

GVH/JWD/hm

cc: Peter Pokorny, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food  
Kim Grout, Chief Executive Officer, Agricultural Land Commission  
Jason Lum, Chair of the Board, Fraser Valley Regional District  
Jerry W. Dobrovolny, Commissioner/Chief Administrative Officer, Metro Vancouver  
Heather McNell, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Policy and Planning, Metro Vancouver

Encl: Report titled "[Commercial Truck Parking on Agricultural Lands \(pg. 408\)](#)", dated January 3, 2024, advanced to the Metro Vancouver Regional District Board on January 26, 2024.

65739930

To: Regional Planning Committee

From: Eric Aderneck, Senior Planner, and Carla Stewart, Senior Planner,  
Regional Planning and Housing Services

Date: January 3, 2024

Meeting Date: January 12, 2024

Subject: **Commercial Truck Parking on Agricultural Lands**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the MVRD Board:

- a) send a letter to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure and the Minister of Agriculture and Food advocating for provincial actions to address the issue of commercial truck parking on agricultural lands in Metro Vancouver; and
  - b) send a copy of the report titled "Commercial Truck Parking on Agricultural Lands", dated January 3, 2024, to member jurisdictions with agricultural land.
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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Metro Vancouver staff have reviewed the matter of unauthorized commercial (heavy duty) truck parking on the region's agricultural lands. This issue has been an ongoing challenge for some member jurisdictions in the region and involves truck owners-operators parking or storing vehicles on agricultural lands in response to the limited options available to them. This report provides the Regional Planning Committee and the MVRD Board with background and context of the issue, including: a summary of relevant policies and plans, an overview of the complexity and interconnected aspects of the issue, impacts on the agricultural sector, the needs of truck drivers and their operational considerations, current efforts to address the issue, and possible solutions that could be further explored by various agencies.

The region's limited agricultural lands are intended for agriculture, and not to accommodate vehicle parking unassociated with a primary farm activity. Commercial trucks and trailers should be parked at appropriate locations such as industrial sites and / or dedicated parking facilities. To advance efforts towards resolving the issue, it is recommended that the Board send a letter to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure and the Minister of Agriculture and Food advocating for provincial actions to address the issue.

### **PURPOSE**

To provide the Regional Planning Committee and the MVRD Board with a summary regarding the ongoing issue of commercial truck parking occurring on the region's agricultural lands.

### **BACKGROUND**

The issue of commercial truck parking on the region's agricultural lands was recently raised by members of the Regional Planning Committee. At the Committee's September 7, 2023, meeting the following motion was passed:

*That the Regional Planning Committee direct staff to report back with further context and potential options for regional advocacy related to the issue of truck parking constraints in the region.*

## **APPLICABLE PLANS, POLICIES AND PROJECTS**

### **Regional Growth Strategy**

*Metro 2050* emphasizes the importance of the associated transportation network and system, including parking for goods movement, with these relevant policy actions:

*Metro Vancouver will:*

*2.2.6: Advocate to the Federal Government and the Province to coordinate transportation infrastructure and service investments that support the efficient movement of goods and people for industrial and employment operations, and considers the Regional Goods Movement Strategy and the Regional Truck Route Network.*

*2.2.9 c) v): review and update parking and loading requirements to reflect changes in industrial forms and activities, ensure better integration with the surrounding character, and reflect improvements to transit service, in an effort to avoid the oversupply of parking.*

*Member jurisdictions will:*

*5.2.6 f): identify policies and actions that anticipate the land and infrastructure requirements for goods movement and drayage, such as truck parking, zero-emission vehicle charging infrastructure, and e-commerce distribution centres, and mitigate any negative impacts of these uses on neighbourhoods.*

### **Industrial Lands**

The Metro Vancouver Regional Industrial Lands Strategy (Reference 1) includes the following statements relating to truck parking:

*That the Province work with municipalities and industry partners to understand, forecast, plan for, and mitigate the impacts of the land demands for truck traffic and truck parking related to goods movement and drayage.*

It is important to note that the Strategy also:

*... affirms that conversion or use of agricultural lands is not a solution to the shortage of industrial lands in the region. This principle was endorsed by the Industrial Lands Strategy Task Force and Metro Vancouver Board.*

Metro Vancouver maintains a Regional Industrial Lands Inventory, which tracks the amount and type of industrial related lands and uses in the region (Reference 2). Some of these lands include or could include truck and trailer parking, which could be provided by the operator for their drivers, or as a separate dedicated truck parking facility serving the wider community. It is well documented that there is an acute shortage of industrial lands in the region and there are strong pressures to use or develop these lands for industrial or other uses. As a result, there are limited industrial lands that are readily available for truck parking purposes.

## **Agricultural Lands**

Metro Vancouver also maintains a Regional Agricultural Land Use Inventory, which tracks the changes in agricultural land use over time, including the amount of agricultural land lost to development or other uses (Reference 3). Similar to the region's Industrial lands, there is intense pressures on Agricultural lands to be converted to urban uses. In some cases, there is also significant and ongoing degradation of existing agricultural lands by illegal uses such as vehicle storage, commercial truck parking, and the placement of construction fill, debris, and garbage. All of these uses compromise the production potential of farmland, particularly when fill, surface pavement and gravel are added to the site. These uses can further compromise these lands by increasing the risk of environmental contamination of soil, such as from oil or fuel leaks from the storage of trucks and other equipment.

Metro Vancouver's Regional Food System Strategy recommends a collaborative approach to supporting a sustainable, resilient, and healthy food system, which includes protecting agricultural land for food production (Reference 4). The Strategy specifically identifies the negative impacts created when truck parking takes place on farmland, and recognizes that farmland is a limited resource that requires protection to retain its contribution to the regional food system.

Metro Vancouver's *Climate 2050 Agriculture Roadmap* also highlights the need to protect agricultural land in the region, including from the piecemeal accommodation of other uses (Reference 5). The Agriculture Roadmap highlights the economic contribution that agriculture makes to the region, the ecosystem services it provides, and the necessity to maintain and protect it for agricultural land uses to ensure the long term resilience of the farming community.

## **In-Region Truck Parking Facilities**

Supplementing smaller private truck parking facilities dispersed throughout the region, the provincial and federal governments have invested in facilities to accommodate truck parking over the past several years, including:

- The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) completed in 2016 a truck parking facility at Nordel Way near the Alex Fraser Bridge in northeast Delta. The facility can accommodate up to 40 trucks to park overnight and includes lighting, washrooms, and a sani-dump;
- Currently under construction in north Surrey, the Provincial and Federal governments invested in a new truck parking facility on the north side of Highway 17, near the Port Mann Bridge. When completed, the facility will have room for about 100 trucks and include washrooms, fencing, lighting and other security measures; and
- As part of the ongoing Fraser Valley Highway 1 expansion project, MOTI is contemplating expanding truck parking at the Bradner Road rest stop in Abbotsford and at an improved 264<sup>th</sup> Street interchange in Langley.

## **THE USE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND IN METRO VANCOUVER**

Agricultural lands are located in many parts of the Metro Vancouver region (including Richmond, Delta, Surrey, Langley Township, Pitt Meadows, and Maple Ridge), primarily within the provincial Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Agricultural lands contribute to the regional economy through the production of fresh food, while providing valuable ecosystem services such as flood control, wildlife habitat, and clean air.

### **Permitted Uses on Agricultural Lands**

For land in the ALR within their jurisdiction, local governments are responsible for managing land uses to support agriculture, in conjunction with and under the authority of the Agricultural Land Commission and / or the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. Local governments, through official community plans, zoning, subdivision, parking, and farming bylaws and agricultural strategies, are required to be aligned with the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and corresponding *Regulations*.

The *Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation* identifies allowable uses on ALR lands, including common farming and ranching activities. Other uses, such as cannabis production and horse facilities, are also permitted as they are related to agriculture, and some non-farm uses are considered compatible with agriculture and also permitted subject to conditions, thresholds, or other requirements, such as ancillary structures and animal kennels.

Beyond the on-site uses permitted by the Agricultural Land Commission, commercial truck parking is not a permitted use on the ALR. Any change in the use of ALR lands not accounted for in the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* or *Regulations* (e.g., to allow commercial truck parking) requires approval from the Agricultural Land Commission.

### **Truck Parking in the City of Surrey**

Over the past decade, City of Surrey staff have completed a series of reports documenting truck parking issues, noting that unauthorized truck parking is an issue throughout the City, including in residential, commercial, and agricultural areas. A Mayor's Task Force was formed in 2019 with the mandate to increase the supply of authorized truck parking facilities. The Task Force contributed to the Surrey Truck Parking Strategy which recommended the following new initiatives to address truck parking in the City (Reference 6):

- Developing an on-street truck parking permit program on specific streets in select industrial areas;
- Allowing truck parking in select low-density residential areas;
- Reducing costs for the development of new truck parking facilities;
- Developing a parking app to facilitate finding and paying for truck parking;
- Increasing the parking provision requirement for trucking companies; and
- Piloting the City's 'Local Area Service Program' to facilitate truck parking development.

The City of Surrey's work on truck parking also identified the following:

- The lack of adequate authorized truck parking facilities is an ongoing issue and, given the cross-boundary aspect of transportation, is highlighted as a regional concern;
- Truck owner-operators are business owners and by extension, truck parking and associated costs are a necessary component of the truck owner-operator business;
- Truck parking can be accommodated on industrial lands through the use of municipal approvals, for example, Temporary Use Permits, which permits a use for a maximum of 6 years (3 years initially, and up to a 3-year extension);
- Truck parking lots, whether temporary or permanent, require property upgrades and construction (e.g., paving, water quality control facilities, landscape screening adjacent to roadways or residential areas);



- Parking lot operations also require business licences, when combined with the required on-site improvements, discourages some operators from pursuing approvals; and
- Unauthorized truck parking is a complex issue requiring a high degree of ongoing monitoring, enforcement, and administrative coordination between: multiple departments within a single municipality (e.g., bylaw enforcement, planning, engineering, transportation), multiple Provincial authorities (e.g., the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agricultural Land Commission, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure), and neighbouring municipalities in the region.

To address the issues raised, the Surrey Truck Parking Strategy recommended that the City of Surrey advocate that:

- The Agricultural Land Commission and the Province enhance enforcement of unauthorized truck parking on agricultural land;
- Request trucking and logistics companies to provide on-site parking for trucks used on an exclusive basis;
- Contact owners of industrial lands encouraging them to consider allowing third party truck parking on any surplus lands;
- Allow truck parking on specified large rural lots; and
- Allow, in limited cases, truck parking on public roads.

On October 30, 2023, Surrey City Council directed staff to identify city-owned lands that could potentially be utilized for commercial truck parking, and issue a request for proponents to lease and operate truck parking facilities. Metro Vancouver staff have discussed this initiative with City of Surrey staff and understand that it is intended to advance in early 2024.

### **Truck Parking in the City of Abbotsford**

Although not within the Metro Vancouver region, the City of Abbotsford's work in this area was explored noting the cross-boundary aspect of transportation. In 2011 the City of Abbotsford completed a report titled *Mayor's Task Force on Commercial Truck Parking: Moving Forward* (Reference 7). With representatives from the trucking industry, business community and members of the public, the Task Force identified and evaluated 15 specific options. The recommendations of the Task Force are summarized in the report and included:

- Fast-tracking development applications for new or expanded commercial truck parking facilities on properties designated in the Official Community Plan for Industrial or Commercial uses and not located within the ALR;
- Use of some gravel pits for commercial truck parking;
- Retention and maintenance of existing surplus MOTI sites for commercial truck parking; and
- Examining the use of specified City roads in industrial areas on a pilot project basis for overnight commercial truck parking.

### **Summary of Truck Parking Needs**

In terms of the commercial trucks that operate in the region and require parking, there are a number of different needs and specific aspects, including:

- Short-haul truck drivers who live within the region require an overnight parking location for their truck that is convenient and close to where they live;
- Long-haul truck drivers may be able to time their trips to find overnight accommodations on the edge of the region, and can benefit from an in-region staging area to wait for scheduled pick-ups / drop-offs;
- Truck owner-operators typically start and end their routes at different places, therefore it's often challenging to find a truck parking facility convenient relative to both locations as well as their home;
- Some trucks are part of a company fleet, where typically the truck maintenance and parking is the responsibility of the business and the truck driver is an employee; and
- Truck driver shifts are limited to working 14 hours a day and driving the truck up to 13 hours; this makes for a long day, plus their personal commute time to their parked truck.

### **Additional Considerations**

The matter, and possible responses, is further complicated and could conflict with these and other considerations:

- Municipal zoning regulations that restrict the locations where commercial trucks can be parked, vary by jurisdiction and zone;
- Municipalities often regulate and limit vehicle parking on public roads, including overnight truck parking;
- For short-haul operators, ideal truck parking facilities would be located close to the home of the truck driver to limit the length of commutes. If the truck parking facility is located further away (noting that truck trips for the day often start and end in different locations) that would make for additional driving / traffic and an inefficient and unproductive use of time on the transportation system and increase GHG emissions;
- Some drivers are required to pick up a chassis at a yard before they pick up a container, and then deliver to a destination. For the next trip, they then do the same. In those cases, at the end of the day, when they park their truck at night, it is usually the truck tractor only without the chassis or container;
- Competition and cost considerations regarding parking facilities vary widely. While owner-operator truck drivers prefer free parking, company fleets / carriers may oppose free parking facilities for their competitors as they need to provide and pay for parking for their own vehicles;
- Owner-operator truck drivers are typically independent contractors rather than employees, and mostly work for just one company at a time, but can often switch companies for better rates;
- There are different types of truck drivers and respective needs;
- There is the possibility of parking trucks on commercial / retail parking lots at night when not in use. However, there is a potential for conflicts with retail customer parking if trucks stay longer than planned or drivers need to park their own car there during the day, etc., and theft, liability and insurance, could be a concern for the property owner; and
- There is a potential to park additional trucks on industrial lands, although those lands are in limited supply, are largely already used, and expensive. Some industrial lots may not be fully

occupied at night and could allow for overnight truck parking; noting that some conflicts could arise, similar to overnight parking on underutilized commercial / retail sites.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

### **Summary of the Agricultural Sector's Needs**

In terms of truck parking on agricultural lands, the following has been noted by staff:

- Vacant agricultural land should not be assumed to be unproductive land from an agricultural perspective, as agricultural production typically requires the use of rotating fallow fields, or unused land, to ensure long term soil health;
- Encroachment of urban uses into agricultural areas challenges the ability of producers to turn vacant agricultural land into active production; and
- Agricultural operations are also businesses that contribute to the economy, and need affordable access to land in the region to expand or ensure long-term, viable operations.

### **Potential Solutions**

Based on preliminary exploration, some possible efforts to increase commercial truck parking options in urban areas and not on agricultural lands have been identified. Staff recommend that the MVRD Board advocate for the Province to take on more of a leadership role on this, through such actions as:

- Further researching and documenting the complexities of accommodating truck parking in the region (e.g., different truck types, truck origins / destinations / routes, truck ownership, home location of drivers, operational considerations, financial aspects);
- Coordinating enforcement of existing regulations, including those of the Agricultural Land Commission and municipalities, across the region and in the adjacent regional districts;
- Strengthening legislation to increase the capacity of the Agricultural Land Commission and municipalities to more readily enforce their respective land use regulations and apply fines for illegal parking on agricultural land;
- Coordinating efforts that encourage:
  - MOTI and Transport Canada to construct and maintain additional truck parking facilities in the region given the importance of this issue to supporting the local, provincial, and national economies;
  - The Port of Vancouver to enhance and share the data collection for drayage related trucks to inform the need and possible solutions for parking associated with these trucks;
  - The Province and / or other agencies to provide a truck parking app for the entire region to match truck operators with owners of available lands; and
  - Transportation companies that contract non-fleet trucks to allow truck parking on their available lands.

Municipalities can also take action on this issue by:

- Exploring the potential, through partnerships, regulatory or incentive-based options, for select municipally-owned properties, commercial sites (e.g., retail shopping centres, big box stores with large surface parking lots), and industrial lands, to be used for overnight truck parking;

- Exploring the potential for permitting overnight on-street truck parking on roads in industrial areas;
- Simplifying the process for Temporary Use Permits for truck parking facilities, in appropriate areas; and
- Reviewing vehicle parking, truck loading, outdoor storage, and maneuvering regulations and provisions in industrial zones to ensure they are balancing transportation-related needs with the objectives to maximize the development potential and utilization of those lands.

These efforts would require close collaboration between multiple levels of government, agencies, and industry organizations.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. That the MVRD Board:
  - a) send a letter to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure and the Minister of Agriculture and Food advocating for provincial actions to address the issue of commercial truck parking on agricultural lands in Metro Vancouver; and
  - b) send a copy of the report titled “Commercial Truck Parking on Agricultural Lands”, dated January 3, 2024, to member jurisdictions with agricultural lands.
2. That the Regional Planning Committee receive for information the report dated January 3, 2024, titled “Commercial Truck Parking on Agricultural Lands” and provide alternative direction to staff.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial costs associated with this report.

### **CONCLUSION**

This report explores the matter of commercial truck parking on agricultural lands in the Metro Vancouver region, which is a particular issue for some municipalities with significant lands in the Agricultural Land Reserve. Agricultural lands are intended for agricultural uses, not for the parking of vehicles unassociated with a primary farm activity. Commercial trucks should be parked at appropriate locations, such as industrial sites and / or dedicated parking facilities, but there are limited locations where this can be achieved.

This report provides background and context of the truck parking issue, a summary of relevant findings related to the complexity and interconnected aspects of the issue, as well as the needs of the agricultural sector and those of truck drivers. Based on preliminary exploration, there are some possible solutions that could be further considered including updates to municipal policies and bylaws, and enhanced enforcement. It is clear that there is a need for collaboration between member jurisdictions, other levels of government, and other agencies and organizations to address this ongoing issue. Staff will report back to the Regional Planning Committee and the MVRD Board with additional information as it becomes available.

## REFERENCES

1. [Metro Vancouver Regional Industrial Lands Strategy](#)
2. [Metro Vancouver 2020 Regional Industrial Lands Inventory: Technical Report](#)
3. [Metro Vancouver Agricultural Land Use Inventory](#)
4. [Regional Food System Strategy](#)
5. [Climate 2050 Agriculture Roadmap](#)
6. [City of Surrey - Surrey Truck Parking Strategy Report](#)
7. [City of Abbotsford Mayor's Task Force on Commercial Truck Parking: Moving Forward](#)

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