

Why keep the Garden City Lands in the ALR? Respect and Gratefulness.

The people of the Garden City Lands Coalition long ago realized that the only way to keep the lands green is to ensure they are firmly in BC's Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). We also saw that the reasons for keeping the lands green in the ALR are all related to **respect** in one way or another. We then realized that the respect flows from **gratefulness**—gratitude for what we have in the Garden City Lands, leading to a desire to share it well forever. Here's what we came up with.

Why conserve the Garden City Lands?

1. **Respect a natural jewel.** When conserved by the ALR, the Garden City Lands can be kept green for agricultural, ecological and open-land park uses, including trails, lakes, and tranquil places to relax, gather, and play.
2. **Respect the ALR.** Over 36 years ago, BC took the visionary step of creating the ALR, keeping us prepared to produce our own food. It became a model for the world, though rarely equaled. The Garden City Lands are a battleground that anti-ALR forces have chosen, and the loss of this fertile land to powerful special interests would set a precedent that would threaten all ALR land and the ALR itself.
3. **Respect our planet.** With ALR uses, including organic urban agriculture and a peat wetland habitat area, the Garden City Lands will enhance their value as a carbon sink, reducing Richmond's carbon footprint and putting the community at the leading edge of effective environmental action.
4. **Respect the needy.** In a popular vision for the lands, one of the small community farms there will grow local produce for Richmond Food Bank clients and others in need, with the central location making it possible for people who receive the benefits to help tend the crops.
5. **Respect City Centre people.** The people of the City Centre area don't need another Minoru Park or Aquatic-Culture-Arenas complex on the lands. As an ALR-themed park, the lands will complement what they have while supplying the green space and relaxing mountain-view landscape they *deserve* to have—and be able to share with everyone else.
6. **Respect the human desire to be in touch with the land.** People want to grow their own food and feel the healthy effects of growing things. Besides the future 120,000 residents of the City Centre, people in densifying areas to the north and south will need places for that. There can be about 300 community garden plots per hectare, so part of the Garden City Lands can meet much of the future need.
7. **Respect the reason for the "low" price.** The reason is that the Agricultural Land Commission firmly rejected the previous applications on the overwhelming advice of citizens. Both the ALC and the citizens acted to keep the lands in the ALR for ALR values, not to enable Richmond to obtain the lands at a low price for other purposes.
8. **Respect the Musqueam.** If the City actually had a means to get the lands out of the ALR, the Musqueam might feel the City should have used that means when they were partners, not after the Canada Lands Company, along with its Musqueam partner, had sold the property at about one-seventh of the non-ALR value.
9. **Respect our children.** They should have an accessible Garden City Lands Schoolyard Project—like the one at Terra Rural Park, where kids learn to grow their food. To add to the experience, they could also go on boardwalk tours of the habitat area with its native berry species.
10. **Respect our living agricultural heritage.** The Garden City Lands is the perfect place to celebrate our identity—a leading-edge urban agriculture park in an agricultural city.
11. **Respect our peat bog heritage.** The lands include one of the last and best remnants of Lulu Island's rare delta bog and bog plants that have almost disappeared elsewhere.
12. **Respect the uniqueness of Richmond.** It is the home of a burgeoning vibrant community in a super-natural setting that strives to experience the benefits of urban development without losing touch with the source of our sustenance.
13. **Respect the looming food shortage.** The Garden City Lands can be a centre for urban agriculture education that helps the lands and all of Richmond to supply our own needs.
14. **Respect our future.** Beyond our individual financial reserves, our community nest egg must include reserves of food-growing capacity. The Garden City Lands have become a symbol of that kind of prudent foresight as well as a leading-edge way to put it into practice.
15. **Respect Richmond's hospitality industry.** The Garden City Lands, adjacent to the Golden Village, could anchor the city's agritourism and ecotourism.
16. **Respect the danger of the alternative, ALR exclusion.** Since history has shown how difficult it would be for pro-exclusion forces to put an end to the conservation of the Garden City Lands, those people would not take on the difficult task without an agenda of quite different ends.

Why say a firm **No** to ALR exclusion immediately?

1. **Stop throwing money away.** Preempt further versions of the phony "Richmond community survey" of 2007 and the phony "open house feedback survey" of 2008—which both seemed better suited to manipulating citizen responses than to gathering them.
2. **Get into big-picture thinking.** Enable positive action to start on Richmond-wide planning that includes the Garden City Lands confirmed as dedicated to ALR-acceptable uses.
3. **Get started on the lands.** At last, enable positive action on the Garden City Lands to start—after all the wasted years.