

Re: Subdivision Application PL20220066

Dear Sangeeta,

Further to our conversation this letter is to express concerns surrounding the proposed 50 acre parcel subdivision from what has been described as an existing 145.42 acre quarter section not deemed to have yet had a 1<sup>st</sup> parcel out.

As previously discussed concerns focus around the necessity and intent of this subdivision application and its broader implications for the area. Based on previous experience the current applicant has been represented by a group of family members identifying themselves as the McKay Land Owners Group. This group as of December 2020 controlled ownership of what totalled approx. 6 quarter sections of agricultural land in the area north of Keoma. In 2021 it became known of the owner groups intent to sell the subject land of which included the 145.42 acre parcel in question. Given the significance of agricultural land in the area these parcels have received interest from number of area farmers with fair market value offers placed on a number of parcels including the 145.42 acres in question. During this time it became clear that these lands were no longer being considered Agricultural Parcels and that any acres east of RR271 were in fact being marketed as residential or commercial development opportunities. As such the asking price per acre has in many cases exceeded 50-100% higher than comparable agricultural acres located directly west of RR271.

The apparent differentiator in land pricing appears to be related to the previous segmenting of parcel sizes during the AT highway realignment taking place several years earlier. Of importance for the County to consider during this application is the further degrading of agricultural activities in this area by the continued downsizing of parcels which will ultimately lead to future applications for land use re designation as has already been demonstrated in application PL20220079 (Roll 06224010).

It is believed that the current owner does not actively farm the parcel in question and does not reside in the community or county. A reasonable farmer or livestock producer would question any agricultural value to creating a separate legal parcel specifically for a purpose identical to the current use, even more so considering a significant portion of the proposed subdivided lands is comprised of slough lands situated within a natural flood plain. The number of livestock the proposed pasture parcel could reasonably maintain for grazing independent of any other land parcel within the area would be so low that it would be difficult to produce a viable business case on its own. It would reasonably leave one to wonder what improvement or value is being created beyond creating smaller parcels to gain a higher price per acre than the natural agricultural value of the intact quarter section while further degrading agricultural land inventories in the area.

It would be reasonably assumed that a similar outcome would be expected for the remaining 95+/- acres of cultivated land within the original parcel.

To summarize if the proposed future uses of the subject land as per the application are truly intended to remain as is with no change in expected use, what agriculture value is generated from the considerable time and resources the applicant is required to invest in this application? To further highlight this I would ask why a Fair Market Value offer would be rejected for the current parcel if ownership is truly looking to divest of what is at this point a Ag Gen parcel of a size meaningful enough to support reasonable agricultural activities consistent with the area. While I appreciate the raising of these concerns will almost certainly disqualify me as a potential purchaser of these lands from the seller, I would request the County maintain the current parcel size and use and limit future sub division without a bona fide agricultural purpose. The County and Council's support in this area would go a long way to recognizing Ag families who make their livelihood in the community and all too often are forced to purchase land in some cases up to an hour away to maintain or expand operations. Beyond the obvious limitations this present to farm succession and the creation of opportunities for younger family members to join the family business, I would also impress upon council the equally obvious environmental impact of having scattered parcels considerable distances away and the expanded carbon footprint of extended travel from field to field. It would make sense that when opportunities to avoid these challenges present themselves they should be exercised while not being considered a penalty to land owners wishing to divest of land.