



Goleta Community Plan Update

Challenge: How can we retain our agricultural heritage in Goleta Valley and look to the future with agriculture in mind?

Protecting Urban Farmland



Creating New Markets and Planning Tools for Farm Products

- Incentivize ag landowners to adopt new methods of farming in urban areas by allowing for things such as streamlined permitting for innovative ag uses or ag-related uses, such as farmworker housing or processing facilities



Common issues facing Urban versus Ag uses



COMMON FARMER CONCERNS

Litter
Pests
Theft/Vandalism
Increased Liability
Farm Restrictions
Loss of Profit



COMMON SUBURBANITE CONCERNS

Pesticides
Noise
Odors
Dust, Smoke
Lights
Farm Traffic



Agricultural Buffers

Urban Agriculture: Facing increased pressure from urbanized land uses encroaching on ag-zoned land-Several small pockets of undeveloped land exist near ag-zoned areas in GV and need protection.

- AFA
- Buffer policy
- Need interim protections in GV Plan
- Suggest 50 feet setback in urban areas, 150 feet in rural as interim policy until Ag Buffer policy is adopted, which will likely be more restrictive.



The Goleta 20/20 plan

We Will Recognize Success When:

1. No net loss of agricultural lands has occurred.
2. Policies are in place to enhance, promote and protect farming and agriculture lands.

- The GC Plan should use these goals for success as a starting point to formulate the vision for the update.

Staff Recommendations for Agricultural Land Use

OVERARCHING GOALS-suggest adding zoning protection to goals

- Preserve and enhance the agricultural ZONING AND characteristics of the planning area
- Maintain and enhance large parcel agricultural operations AND ZONING in the rural area of the planning area.
- Maintain, enhance, and discover new opportunities for thriving agricultural operations and agribusinesses in the urban area of the planning area.
- Allow flexibility with a range of uses permissible for urban agricultural land to promote viable agribusinesses and maintain agricultural characteristics.

PAC Draft Goals

Urban Agriculture

- Preserve agricultural operations as a vital element in a sustainable mix of economic activity.
- Agricultural character is preserved.
- Sustainable agricultural opportunities are promoted.

Suggestion for consideration:

These can be combined into one statement:

Vision Statement: *Agricultural operations and their associated agrarian landscape are a vital element in the character of land use in Goleta Valley, and therefore shall be preserved, sustained and promoted as important part of the economy and sense of place in the community.*



ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR PLANNING GOALS

- **GOAL LUA-GV-1:** Protect agricultural lands from encroachment, conversion and conflicts by residential and commercial development.
- **GOAL LUA-GV-2:** Assist farmers and land owners in promoting sustainable agriculture and maintaining viable vibrant farm lands and production in the Goleta Valley.
- **GOAL LUA-GV-3:** Agricultural land use designations should be supported by the County's encouragement of innovation in agricultural practices via incentives (e.g., permit streamlining and ag-related allowances [e.g., farmworker housing or ag processing facilities]) .



Draft Goals

Urban Agriculture (Currently draft PAC goals)

- Review the two large blocks of agricultural land within the urban planning area (S. Patterson Neighborhood and San Marcos Farms Neighborhood) to determine the values of continued agricultural usage.
- Where a plan exists, 'maximize amount of open space, community gardens, connectivity, pocket parks'
- Where a plan exists, any conversion of agricultural land to nonagricultural use includes a meaningful open space, parks, trails and/or community gardens component.
- County shall explore new Parcel Specific Development Standards (in the South Patterson Block) Comprehensive Plan
- Allow South Patterson Block Ag landowners the opportunity to submit specific plans for conversion on a parcel by parcel basis.

Suggestions for consideration:

These goals are very specific for this stage of the process, and could be worded more broadly:

The County should consider preparation of sub-area plans for portions of the urban planning area, including the S. Patterson and San Marcos Farms Neighborhoods, to explore alternatives that would retain the land in agricultural zoning while allowing for some land use flexibility on agricultural land that supports agriculture.

Examples: Overlays for CSAs, Community Gardens, Farmworker Housing, AG support facilities

Comment: The General Plan should NOT consider parcel by parcel zoning, and must consider large blocks of land as a planning unit.

Draft Goals

- Review the smaller MTD parcels of agricultural land within the urban planning area to determine the values of continued agricultural usage, or if another land use designation could be considered (mixed use?)
- County shall explore conversion of infill property to Community Gardens or parks
- County shall explore conversion of specific Ag zoned properties to Community Gardens or Public Parks, if shown land is no longer viable
- County shall explore new zoning (overlay?) for specific urban Ag lands that can no longer support the business of crops for profit.
- Explore the possibility of converting specific Ag zoned land that is adjacent to urban corridors that could be rezoned for a public benefit to create more access to work, recreation, and open spaces.

Suggestions for consideration:

This language should be reconsidered, as it suggests the conversion of ag lands in the GV Plan area, and would be contrary to the 20/20 vision plan.

Suggested additions/deletions

Staff Recommendations:

When Land Use Changes and Development can be Considered

Consider land use changes and development of agricultural and/or open lands in the urban area only:

- when the change improves the natural environment or the environmental impact is minimized, and
- when the change improves the local economy and enhances community character, and
- when the change provides significant public open spaces and/or community parkland.

Suggestion: As with the residential findings, suggest removing the reference to the improvement of the local economy, since this would conflict with the other two required findings.

Would add the words “is in the community interest” as a substitute for “improves the local economy”.

Suggestions for consideration

Current PAC goals read:

- Assist farmers and land owners in promoting sustainable agriculture and protecting viable farm lands for production in the Goleta Valley.
 - The viability of agricultural operations is determined through a transparent and clearly pre-defined process, including an environmental and financial analysis of agricultural land-use alternatives.
 - The analysis of future agricultural operations should be used for evaluating the viability of agricultural lands.
- Suggest removing any reference to the word “viable” in draft policy goals.
 - **AGREE WITH COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PLANNER, THERE IS MUCH SUBJECTIVITY REGARDING THE DEFINITION OF VIABILITY, WOULD SUGGEST REMOVING THE WORD VIABLE AND REPLACING IT WITH REFERENCE TO THE PRESERVATION OF PRODUCTION AGRUICULTURE.**

Thank you

Just some thoughts to leave you with (from the 20/20 plan):

As well as providing fresh local produce, agricultural parcels, even small ones, offer refreshing contrasts to existing urban patterns. The remaining agricultural lands are a vivid and poignant reminder of the rich agricultural history of the Goleta Valley.

Despite all its benefits, our valley's agriculture is vanishing. Over 1,000 acres of agricultural land have disappeared from the Eastern Goleta Valley in the last three decades. The dominant issue in preserving agricultural lands here is the strong demand for housing and inflated land values. These trends have significantly intensified already existing pressure to rezone farms into residential subdivisions. Clearly these conversions are irreversible. Once a decision is made to rezone parcels from agriculture to residential or commercial uses, the opportunity to farm these parcels is lost forever.

