



Oakland Urban Agriculture Community Meeting - July 21, 2011 Summarized Comments

The following list is staff's summary of the comments received at the Oakland Urban Agriculture Community Meeting that was held on July 21, 2011. The summary of comments is in no particular order. Specific and individual comments can be found in the transcribed comments document.

- ❖ The City should write clear definitions for urban agriculture, community gardens that should delineate between personal, commercial or civic use. Define sales and exchange and pets versus livestock. Size of lots, farms and pens, employees or farm workers, and equipment should be included.
- ❖ This process should consider expanding the urban agriculture update process to include city owned parks. The Planning Division should encourage the Parks and Recreation Division to adopt park master plans. City should offer public land not currently used for urban agriculture.
- ❖ The City should save the historic Produce Market in Jack London Square or it should be relocated to the Oakland Army Base.
- ❖ The local business community has expertise that should be engaged prior to adopting a City-wide food policy.
- ❖ Residents should be outright permitted to grow, consume, and sell agriculture products produced on their own land and in other zones based on certain thresholds. City should carefully consider health issues associated with dairy, meat, and eggs from the home. City should address wholesale products.
- ❖ Farmers should be allowed to pool the products and sell collectively.
- ❖ The City should encourage local product sales in grocery stores and fruit stands or carts in commercial areas on sidewalks. City should address "pop-up markets" and also make a local farmer's market site available. The City should address traffic from these sales.
- ❖ The City should encourage urban agriculture and reduce blight on vacant land by eliminating restrictions.
- ❖ The City should provide incentives for people to grow food instead of other plants.
- ❖ The City should address indoor container gardening as part of this process.
- ❖ The City should provide urban farming education to the public so they know how to produce healthy food. Public – private partnerships should be encouraged.



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- ❖ The City should promote urban agriculture by setting up a tool lending library, urban agriculture training curriculums, locations of urban farms, free or available compost locations, a helpline, links to information, other organizations, seeds City should make public land available.
- ❖ Urban agriculture production can used as an economic tool and job training for jobless residents and local youth.
- ❖ Encourage permaculture.
- ❖ Encourage bee-keeping. Consider insurance or neighbor notification. Encourage native plants to attract bees.
- ❖ Any revenue generated from urban farming permits should be used to support urban farming throughout the City. Permit should be inexpensive.
- ❖ The City should consider renting out or using school kitchens as commissaries or commercial kitchens to encourage local start-up businesses that produce value added agricultural products.
- ❖ Commercial kitchens for value added production should be allowed in residential zones subject to County Health Department regulations.
- ❖ The City should encourage local growers to sell to customers within the City, such as local restaurants, schools, and food banks. The City should help ease any restrictions by setting up a certification process.
- ❖ The City should require from the farmers some sort of notification/documentation as to how the products were grown. Health certification, education, training, and possibly insurance should be required as a part of any sales permit. The City should reference existing government standards and help regulate food safety.
- ❖ Food grown on school land should be used to supplement school food programs.
- ❖ Soil testing, if required, should be simple and inexpensive yet address harmful substances. The City should supply clean-up or detoxification information if harmful substances exist.
- ❖ Sharing or bartering of food should be encouraged and not regulated. The City should identify when a business license is required.
- ❖ The City should engage existing agencies in the process, such as the U.C. Agricultural Extension, Alameda County Lead Poisoning, EPA, StopWaste.Org, etc.
- ❖ Chemical pesticide and fertilizer use should be discouraged and the application and types should be regulated, such as with a pest management plan. The City should encourage composting.



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- ❖ The City should address water use, conservation, and water quality impacts as part of the process. The City should coordinate with EBMUD regarding these issues.
- ❖ Any standard the City develops should be performance based and not prescriptive. Encourage sanitation plans, management plans, irrigation plans, disposal plans, and flock or herd management plans.
- ❖ The City needs to address urban agriculture nuisances such as flies, odor, manure control, noise from machinery (limit hours) as part of the process.
- ❖ A Task Force or Advisory Group should be set up to encourage quick adoption of regulations, keep the process from being politicized,
- ❖ Promoting livestock animals in the City could increase wildlife and habitat conflicts. The City should consider a wildlife management plan that addresses secure feed, predator safe enclosures, and vectors such as rats.
- ❖ Animals should not be included in the process because:
 - They will create noise, odor, health issues;
 - Animal diseases will increase;
 - There is a lack of livestock veterinarians in the City;
 - Farms animals are not local (they need to be mailed or trucked in)
 - City policies do not include animal raising;
 - Animal raising is not sustainable because it increases GHG emissions, and is inefficient;
 - The City is an urban area and is not suitable for livestock animals;
 - There is not enough land to feed Oaklanders even if animal raising is allowed; therefore animal raising does not promote food security or resilience;
 - It would create enforcement and budget burdens on City staff;
 - There is already overcrowding and increased euthanasia of domestic animals at the Animal Shelter; and
 - Animal raising could trigger nuisance lawsuits against neighbors and the City and encourage neighbor animosity.
- ❖ Animal health, welfare, and possible mistreatment of animals should be considered in the regulations. The City should form an animal welfare commission.
- ❖ Animal raising should be included in this process because it:
 - Allows families food choices and control;
 - Diverts money from large corporations into the local economy;
 - Promotes food security and greater food accessibility;
 - Reflects the City's diversity
 - Increases sustainability by reducing food transportation miles;
 - Promotes awareness about where food comes from;
 - Decreases animal consumption because animal raisers eat less meat;



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- Will lessen the burden on City staff by setting out clear rules.

Also, there should be education about the time and effort commitment involved with animal raising. Some commenters stated that there should not be a fee, while others stated there should. Animals should be enclosed.

- ❖ The number of animals permitted could be based on: lot size, size of animal, animal type, performance based standards, and frequency of complaints/nuisances.
- ❖ Some commenters stated that roosters should be allowed with restrictions such as in Berkeley, while others stated that roosters should not be allowed such as in Seattle. Rooster related noise should be the consideration.
- ❖ Some commenters stated that goats should be allowed while others stated that goats should not be allowed. Commenters also stated that dwarf goats should be allowed.
- ❖ City should know how many animals are in the City.
- ❖ Backyard slaughter should not be permitted. Meat eating is unhealthy and inhumane. There are links between slaughter and violence. Oakland would be one of the few cities to allow backyard slaughter. Noise and enforcement of animal treatment are issues.
- ❖ Some commenters stated that backyard slaughter should be permitted only for personal consumption while others stated that they should be allowed whether or not it is for personal consumption. This is a personal choice and can be accomplished humanely. Backyard slaughter is healthier than industrial meat production practices. The City should consider the diversity of Oakland's population and religious beliefs. The City should produce an informational booklet about safe slaughtering based on proper practices, health codes, and coordination with local authorities.
- ❖ The community should vote on permit issuance. A neighborhood permit process should be set up to address complaints through community review and a community judge. The revocation of a permit should be easy.
- ❖ Urban farming should be considered in the context of other activities and not held to a higher standard than dogs, lawnmowers or other yard equipment, other gardening or lawn activities, and garage sales, etc.