



## Planning & Development Services

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# MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Boise City Council

**FROM:** Cody Riddle  
Boise City Planning and Development Services

**DATE:** June 14, 2011

**RE:** Urban Agriculture Committee (Progress & Preliminary Recommendations)

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### **BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION**

As currently drafted, Blueprint Boise includes several elements focused on the importance of urban agriculture and local food production. This includes a specific policy stating the need for ordinance amendments to support such uses. In anticipation of the new Comprehensive Plan's adoption, Planning Staff has formed the Urban Agriculture Committee. The group is comprised of individuals who expressed interest in the topic during Blueprint Boise outreach or have processed related applications in recent years. It includes individuals already involved in community gardening, operating produce stands, maintaining apiaries, or raising livestock and poultry. The Public Works and Parks Departments are also represented.

### **PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Committee has been asked to assist staff in comparing current Boise City standards related to urban agriculture with those of other municipalities. The group has met three times with focused discussions on the following topics:

- Community Gardens
- Urban Farms
- Produce Stands
- Poultry
- Livestock
- Beekeeping

The ultimate purpose of the Committee is to create allowances and standards for the aforementioned uses. In most instances this will be entirely new ordinance language as Boise City Code does not currently even identify things like community gardens or urban farms. Prior to drafting specific regulations, the Committee was asked to review the ordinances of other municipalities and create a list of general recommendations that could be presented to neighborhood association representatives and public agencies for feedback. The Growth Management Committee directed Staff to present the list of recommendations to Mayor and Council prior to neighborhood outreach.

## **PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS**

After reviewing ordinances from other municipalities, the Committee has agreed upon the following preliminary recommendations:

### **Community Garden**

*An area of land managed and maintained by an individual or group to grow and harvest food crops and/or non-food, ornamental crops, such as flowers, for personal or group use, consumption, donation, or sale. Limited sales and events may also occur on the site.*

1. Community gardens are generally appropriate in all zoning districts and should be allowed both as accessory uses, and the primary use of vacant lots.
2. They should be allowed, subject to specific standards, without requiring an application.
3. Retail sales, limited to produce raised on-site, should be allowed.
4. A definition needs to make a clear distinction between community gardens and urban farms.
5. The standards should be simple, and refer to other ordinance sections (signs, noise, setbacks, etc.) when possible.
6. Community gardens should include those operated for educational purposes.
7. There should be no restriction on row crops.
8. Gardens should be allowed within front yards.
9. Fencing and setbacks for crops should not be required.
10. Signage with appropriate contact information for neighbors should be required.
11. Operations should not begin before March 1<sup>st</sup>, and all gardens should be cleaned up by November 1<sup>st</sup>. A “clean-up date” at the end of season is of most importance.
12. Operations should be limited to daylight hours. Further restrictions for gas powered equipment may be necessary.
13. Structures should be allowed, subject to the dimensional standards of the underlying zone.
14. Chemicals, tools and equipment stored on site need to be kept within a locked structure.
15. Gardening in planter strips (public right-of-way) should be supported.
16. Livestock and poultry should only be allowed when their owner resides on the premises.
17. A brochure should be created to outline ordinance requirements, and provide resource information for potential gardeners and members of the public.
18. Bylaws could be a helpful tool in regulating community gardens.

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### **Urban Farms**

*A use in which plants, and products derived from them, are grown and sold on the same lot or off site. No other items can be sold onsite. Examples may include flower and vegetable raising, orchards and vineyards.*

1. Urban farms should be an allowed use in most districts, but subject to administrative approval in residential zones.
2. For farms requiring administrative approval, applicants should be required to obtain the signature of neighbors prior to submittal.
3. Farms should be issued an initial one year approval, followed by subsequent five year approvals, for those operating in conformance with established standards.
4. A notice of approval should be issued to the neighborhood association and owners and occupants within 300’ of any farm receiving administrative approval. This will allow for an appeal to the Planning and Zoning Commission.
5. Urban farms should be subject to similar operating standards (hours, signage, setbacks, etc.) as community gardens.

6. A requirement for a management plan that addresses water use, chemical application, disposal of waste, etc. should be required.
7. Signage with appropriate contact information for neighbors should be required.
8. A brochure should be created to outline ordinance requirements, and provide resource information for potential gardeners and members of the public.

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**Produce Stands** – *Currently regulated by B.C.C. 11-05-01.4 (temporary uses).*

1. Produce stands should be approved annually, rather than the current practice of six-months.
2. Opportunities to streamline the requirements and permitting process with those of the City Clerk's Office should be explored.

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**Livestock** – *Currently regulated by B.C.C. 11-09-09*

1. The current allowances for larger livestock (horses, cattle, etc.) are appropriate.
2. Standards should be updated to ensure waste management and disposal is adequately addressed.
3. Information on the keeping of livestock should be included in a new urban agriculture brochure.

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**Poultry** – *Currently regulated by B.C.C. 11-09-09*

1. The number of chickens allowed as pets (currently three) should be increased to as many as six to eight.
2. Additional chickens should be allowed on parcels smaller than one acre in size. This would be based on performance standards, and subject to administrative approval.
3. Additional research into a potential allowance for roosters should occur.
4. The Idaho Humane Society should be consulted regarding any new standards.
5. Information on raising poultry should be included in a new urban agriculture brochure.

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**Beekeeping** – *Currently regulated by B.C.C. 11-09-11*

1. The current allowance of 3 colonies per ¼ acre is appropriate. However, the cap of 12 colonies, regardless of parcel size is too restrictive.
2. The current application process and \$55 fee are cumbersome for those maintaining only a couple hives.
3. There should be an additional allowance for nucleus hives (swarms) from April through June.
4. Beekeeping should be allowed at community gardens, urban farms, and vacant parcels in residential and open space zones.
5. The contact information of the beekeeper should be posted on each apiary.
6. The group felt the Treasure Valley Beekeepers could serve as an educational resource for local beekeepers, and potentially offer certification courses in the future to ensure best management practices are employed.
7. Information on beekeeping should be included in a new urban agriculture brochure.

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**ACTION REQUESTED**

With the support of Mayor and Council, staff would like to present these recommendations to the registered neighborhood associations and public agencies. Upon receiving their input, staff will work with the Urban Agriculture Committee on applicable ordinance amendments.

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