

Agriculture Outreach Project



Summary of Public Comments and Jan. 18, 2018 Open House Outcomes

CONTENTS

PURPOSE & BACKGROUND	2
NEXT STEPS.....	3
THEMES	3
<i>Economic Stability and Resilience</i>	4
Farm Sales/Farm Stands, Comment Summary.....	4
Agritourism, Comment Summary.....	4
Multiple Principal Uses, Comment Summary.....	5
Economic Resilience, Long-term Planning, and Intensity of Uses, Comment Summary.....	5
Staff’s Familiarity with Sustainable Agriculture, Comment Summary	5
Open House Takeaways for Farm Stands	5
Open House Takeaways for Agritourism and Economic Stability	6
<i>Education</i>	7
Producer Education, Comment Summary.....	7
Community Education, Comment Summary	7
Open House Takeaways for Education.....	7
<i>Housing</i>	7
On-site Housing, Comment Summary.....	8
Open House Takeaways	8
<i>Land Use and Building Codes</i>	9
Clarity and Intent, Comment Summary.....	9
Hoop houses & Greenhouses, Comment Summary.....	9
Regulations Preventing Infrastructure & Uses, Comment Summary	9
Complaint-driven Enforcement, Comment Summary.....	10
Interactions Between Agricultural and Other Uses, Comment Summary.....	10
Open House Takeaways.....	10

<i>POS Leases</i>	11
Bid Process Comment Summary	11
Lease Length, Comment Summary	11
Lease Sizes, Comment Summary	11
Infrastructure, Comment Summary	11
Soil, Comment Summary	12
Damage Deposits, Comment Summary	12
Open House Takeaways	12
<i>Public Health</i>	13
FSMA Produce Safety Rule Compliance Concerns and Assistance Comment Summary	13
State Farm Food Safety Regulations Comment Summary	13
Expansion of Cottage Food Comment Summary	13
Water Quality Issues Comment Summary	13
Common Use Facilities Comment Summary.....	14
Open House Takeaways	14
<i>Other</i>	15
DOT BOARD TOTALS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AGRICULTURE OUTREACH PROJECT JAN. 18, 2018 OPEN HOUSE	16

PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

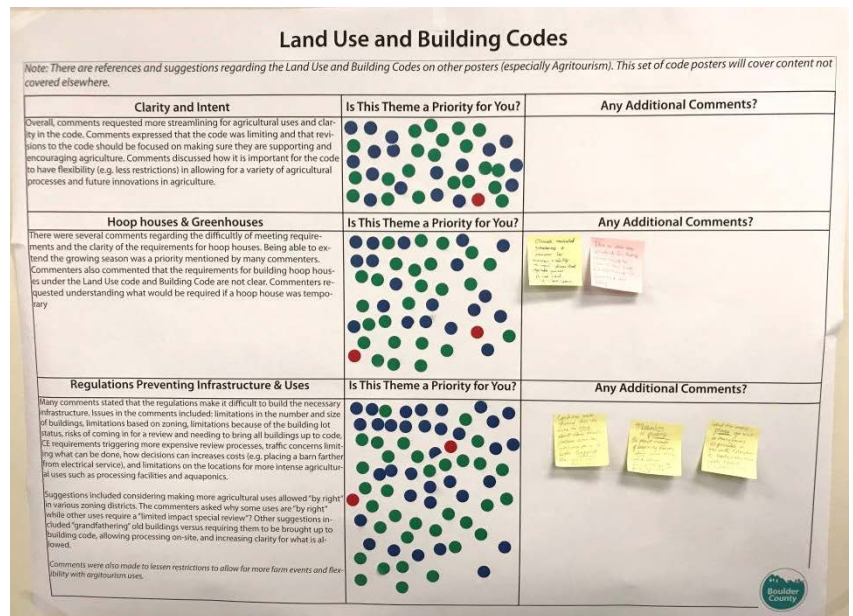
Boulder County launched the Agriculture Outreach Project to identify and prioritize for updates to the Land Use Code, as well as related regulations and programs. The county recognizes that the agricultural community faces a variety of significant challenges. The Boulder County Comprehensive Plan (BCCP) sets forth a policy vision that encourages a diverse and sustainable agricultural economy. We look forward to continuing to work with the community to identify and address changes that can help achieve better alignment between agricultural land use policies (BCCP) and land use regulations (Land Use Code and related regulations). We will focus on those potential changes that are within the county’s control so that farmers and growers are better positioned to succeed and thrive in Boulder County.

The project launched in December, 2017. At that time, an online public comment form was opened to provide an opportunity for members of the public to explain the challenges facing the agricultural community. Members of the public were also invited to call, email, meet with, or mail county staff their comments. In mid-January, staff reviewed all of the comments received through January 12, 2018 and identified themes. The themes and subtopics are summarized in this report and were brought to an Open

House on January 18, 2018. At the open house, members of the public were invited to learn more about the Agriculture Outreach Project, provide input, review feedback received from the public, and help set priorities for future changes.

Staff created large “Dot and Comment Boards” with the subtopic comment summaries described (see image to the right for an example). Open house participants were invited to specify their top priorities by placing up to ten dot stickers next to topic summaries. The boards also provided room for additional comments. After reviewing the boards, attendees were invited to participate in theme-based facilitated group discussions.

This document includes summaries of the comments received through January 24, 2018 and key takeaways from the open house.



Note: The subtopic summaries reflect what was provided at the open house. Since staff received comments after the January 12 cutoff for the open house, information has been added to the summaries, and the new information is shown in gray text.

NEXT STEPS

Through the end of Q2 2018 staff will further clarify the needs of the agricultural community and present initial land use code change ideas for consideration. Staff anticipates near-term Land Use Code changes will be most likely in the area of farm sales. The county will be better positioned to proceed with specific code update plans after reviewing ideas in more detail during topic-focused community meetings planned for March (March 8: farm sales and farm events; March 14: hoop houses, greenhouses and other agricultural structures).

THEMES

Each of the theme sections is set-up as follows:

- Overall Theme Title
- Subtopic Comment Summaries
- Open House Facilitated Discussion Summary
- Summary of the Dot and Comment Board

Economic Stability and Resilience

Farm Sales/Farm Stands, Comment Summary

Many of the comments expressed support for on farm sales and discussed a desire to have more flexibility with on farm sales. Concerns include: a desire for the ability to have on farm sales if a property is not zoned as agriculture, and to make it easier to sell products from other farms, as well as limitations due to traffic requirements, and building code requirements.

Comments expressed the importance of on farm sales for income. Some comments also stated that if the farm is in the right kind of location (on a busier road), farm stands are a better way to earn income than the farmers market. One commenter asked about the possibility for food carts with fresh food.

Note: The county does allow farm stands with different processes depending on the scale and amount of product grown on site. There are additional building and public health requirements if a permanent structure is proposed.

Suggestions included: simplify and clarify the approval process (including Land Use, Building Code, and Public Health), create farm stand design templates that will allow for a fast approval process, expand the by right sales provisions to allow selling larger percentage of off-site products, reduce the review process on all zoning types, allow more flexibility and less regulation for the types of products sold (meat, value-added, etc.), review the different types of farm sales addressed in the Code to make sure they reflect current technology (e.g., seasonal farm stands should be allowed for longer than 42 days to account for extended growing seasons), make sure regulations support the cottage industry, and look at Lafayette's temporary business rules for farm stands.

Agritourism, Comment Summary

In general, comments expressed a lot of support for agritourism, and explained that it is the best way for the larger community to interact with farming and understand where food comes from and the challenges of farming. Most commenters requested fewer regulations so farmers can diversify their income sources. Types of agritourism discussed include: farm dinners, B&Bs/short term housing for those interested in engaging in farming, restaurant, farm events, educational events and day camps, and music performances.

Suggestions included: make the Land Use processes simpler and less restrictive so that agritourism uses are a not cost-prohibitive, look at the building code requirements, review all agritourism-related uses, reduce the requirements for traffic impacts/review, make it easier to allow school field trips, more clearly communicate the processes for approval including those requirements outside of Land Use, make sure the regulations support the cottage industry, extend what is allowed for on-site processing, base the number of events allowed on the farm's location and supportive infrastructure, allow more events by right, allow some agritourism pilot projects, limit the impact neighbors' complaints/concerns have on a farmers' ability to support his/her farm, support more farmers markets, and look at creative models across the county that are successful.

Note: There was a large variety of agritourism uses described in the comments. As the process moves forward, staff and stakeholders will need to discuss the appropriate scale for these uses throughout the county.

Multiple Principal Uses, Comment Summary

Look into allowing multiple principal uses that work together on one parcel. The discussion included how agriculture works with B&Bs, short-term dwellings, and uses like carpentry.

Economic Resilience, Long-term Planning, and Intensity of Uses, Comment Summary

The concerns raised in this area included the need for costly infrastructure, the barriers and expense associated with building structures necessary to meet the requirements of the Land Use and Building Code and other regulations (e.g., efficiency and health requirements), a need for the ability to increase the intensity of agriculture, a need for the ability build appropriate infrastructure to extend the growing season, a need for a cooperative processing center, and an interest in ensuring county regulations support the variety of farms and farming techniques currently in the county and that may be introduced in the future.

Suggestions included: work on food strategy and agriculture resilience planning by looking at ways to share capital equipment, cover crop seeds, as well as storage and processing facilities; look at ways the county can support agriculture, create local food hubs, build an all-year indoor market; support for improving soil health; explore working on creative ideas such as a mobile slaughter truck; support vertical farming, and allow experimental projects.

Note: Comments related to Hoop houses and Greenhouses are under the Land Use Code Theme.

Staff's Familiarity with Sustainable Agriculture, Comment Summary

Some comments expressed a concern that staff are not familiar with farming, provide inconsistent interpretation of code requirements, and are quick to turn down innovative ideas. Suggestions included: dedicate a county employee to focus on agriculture resilience and guiding farmers through the Land Use and Building Code processes, and have the insight from that work inform long-term planning; look at potential conflicts between Parks & Open Space leases and the Land Use Code.

Note: The facilitated discussion at the open house for Economic Stability was split into two groups: Farm Stands/Farm Sales and Agritourism & Economic Stability.

Open House Takeaways for Farm Stands

Facilitated Discussion - Top Priorities:

1. Make farm stand/farm sales regulations clear, simple, and appropriate. There are too many different distinctions (5 categories) for sales which causes confusion. Consider whether specific provisions (e.g., the number of days and percentage of sales from on-site production) make sense. Create a fast track review to expedite applications for core, production and sales-focused agricultural activities (e.g., make it easy to build a farm stand). Differentiate between “real” farmers and those just looking like farmers / hobby farmers.
2. Provide additional county support and education, and create a central information hub to make the full range of regulatory information easy for the agricultural community to access and understand. It’s important to get all the relevant information (including public health, land use and building-related) together in one place (one-stop-shopping). [Other topic raised: How can the county financially support agricultural projects – write grants for farmers?]

Why?

- Having on-site sales improves product transparency, educates the public about food production, eliminates the general public's fear of buying local agricultural products (it's not wrapped in plastic, thus not clean)
- The rules are ambiguous and unclear, resulting in confusion and inconsistent implementation
- The price of land use reviews and permits is costly and can be the straw that breaks the camel's back
- Direct sales are more profitable and improve a farmer's economic viable
- More local meat sales will help soil quality
- Selling off site has trip impacts, as the producer must make frequent deliveries

Theme Board Dot Total for Farm Sales (no comments)		
On Farm Sales	47	

Open House Takeaways for Agritourism and Economic Stability

Facilitated Discussion - Top Priorities with Reasons:

1. Allow for mixed uses on agriculture properties to diversify income streams
2. Reduce or better target regulation to recognize the reality of farming incomes
3. Support ag tourism at the county level through programs, signage, taxation
4. Cooperative processing and storage facilities

Places to look for guidance: California, Vermont, Italy, France

Theme Board Dot Totals and Comments for Agritourism and Economic Stability		
Agritourism	52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agritourism Inclusions, Touring of Infrastructure and Equipment • Boulder County is missing out on the economic benefits of not promoting this. • How do you define "Boulder's Agritourism" – it's too opaque a term. The 99 guest limit is unfair and out of touch with reality. Most parties are 100-150. The guest count should be dependent on the farm's space, infrastructure, and experience. Current policies prevent a 'stone barn' type of venue from ever being built on farms in Boulder County. How can 1000's of athletes close down our rural neighborhood for sport events, but not more than 99 people can go to a farm event? Crazy! Agritourism should include experiential learning, i.e. harvesting, cooking, eating. The latter are not allowed due to planning regs and the Health Dept. • Include horse in the definition of livestock agriculture • Limited class sizes (8 students) is restrictive. The State already works on class size and what is appropriate. The county does not need to regulate this. • Why limit to 99 guests? (too restrictive)
Multiple Principle Uses	35	
Economic Resilience and Long-term Planning	32	
Staff's familiarity with Sustainable Agriculture	31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Sustainable" is a little vague. What about using the term "Regenerative" farming with a focus on soil health, soil quality, and soil fertility?

Education

Producer Education, Comment Summary

Commenters requested additional information on the following topics:

- What are the optimum crops for growing in this climate? Are there any new and innovative crops that should be considered?
- Information on equipment to serve small scale farms to make them successful.
- One commenter suggested a laboratory and incubator for agricultural education and business incubation.
- Safe food handling, good agricultural practices, labor laws, finance and other local regulations applicable to agriculture in Boulder County.

Community Education, Comment Summary

Some commenters expressed the need to have the public understand the positive impacts that farmers have on the community and environment, the challenges local producers face, what it means to live on and near a farm, and the true costs of local farming. One farmer commented on the need to increase the visibility and value for local grain products as grains require less water than vegetable crops.

Open House Takeaways for Education

Facilitated Discussion- Top Priorities with Reasons:

1. Promote interest in small farms to raise awareness of the new multi-faceted farming culture
 - Need to build community interest in farming by utilizing agritourism and edu-tourism to educate the public about the essential need for local farmers
 - To facilitate activity that will educate the public, Education and Agriculture should not be separate Uses
 - To help stimulate community interest, there should be more uses by right that allow for more people on the property and more traffic trips
2. Facilitate mediation between farmers and zoning complainants to reduce conflict
3. Support education of the public to prioritize farming – request that the county provide more resources and funding for farmers (e.g., to support share and co-op machinery, and youth education programs).

Places to look for guidance: Open Studios Program, WWOOFing

Theme Board Dot Totals and Comments		
Producer Education	6	
Community Education	30	• Trails are a good way for people to "experience" agriculture

Housing

Note: Affordable housing is an issue throughout Boulder County. Land Use staff's 2018 work plan includes updating the Housing Element of the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan. Through that

project, staff will engage with the public on housing issues and identify steps forward. Housing for farm workers will overlap with that discussion. Changes to housing regulations in the Land Use Code require careful consideration of interactive effects with other aspects of the code, and potential unintended consequences.

On-site Housing, Comment Summary

Labor costs are high, especially for skilled workers. It is difficult for farms to attract labor. An ability to house workers onsite would help farms offer a more attractive compensation package to their workers.

Farming requires long days, and it doesn't follow a 9-5 schedule.

For farms that keep animals on-site, it is important for a caretaker to be nearby. There is also better stewardship if you live on the land. People interested in learning about farming want to live on the farm. They are looking to get experience in this area and understand the daily routine.

On-site housing would help issues with in-commuting, pollution, traffic congestion, and climate change.

Housing farm workers on site is a traditional model, and one that contributes to the success of sustainable agricultural activity in other parts of the U.S. and Europe.

Temporary housing ideas included: tiny homes, RVs, mobile homes, tents, yurts, and airstream trailers. Related low-impact ideas included composting toilets, grey water usage, and solar showers.

Permanent housing ideas included converting large farm houses into housing for workers- set-up like a hostel. One suggestion was allowing more farm worker Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) or converting homes to duplexes.

Ideas for implementation included: simplify the approval processes for accessory housing, create pre-approved designs for temporary and accessory housing that would allow for fast approvals, have Parks & Open Space invest in housing (*there are some current investments*), and make investing in a farm property cost-effective (permitting and support from the county on Parks & Open Space properties) to allow farmers to pay their workers more. One comment suggested using permanent worker housing in the off season for short-term rentals in relation to agritourism. Another suggested that staff should look at the federal government's regulations for farm workers to ensure that Boulder County's regulations are not more stringent.

Open House Takeaways

Facilitated Discussion - Top Priorities with Reasons:

1. Facilitate a range of on-site housing options as farms require the on-site housing in order to survive economically. When farmers can't make farming economics work some are left with no option but to sell the farm. If the county values sustainable, local sources of food, it is essential to address the farming community's need for on-farm housing.
 - a. Farming requires non-standard work hours (early/late animal chores, etc.) so it is most efficient (transportation resources, labor costs, time management) for workers to live on the farm.

- b. Given the high cost of living in Boulder County it's essential to offer onsite housing as an incentive in a competitive labor market.
 - c. Different farms have different needs, so a range of flexible housing options are important (seasonal and year-round options, more ag-appropriate criteria for farm worker accessory dwelling units, yurts, mobile homes, allow longer-term camping on farms, shift definition of household to allow for larger number of workers to reside in farm-worker accessory dwelling units). Make it easier to build bathrooms and kitchens on farms so those in temporary seasonal housing can do so more easily and in sanitary conditions.
 - d. It is essential to train a new generation of farmers, and the only way to truly learn farming and understand the farming lifestyle is to live on the farm.
2. Shift the paradigm of what's considered acceptable and view the code updates through a "pro-farm" / "right to farm" lens. The agricultural community has different needs than other land owners / lease-holders in the county, particularly in the area of housing.
 3. Preserve existing farmhouses: existing farmhouses are a historic and cultural resource and would make excellent housing for farm workers, if the facilities are not put to alternative use.
 4. Ensure definitions are clear and consistently interpreted.

Theme Board Dot Total and Comment		
On-site Housing	53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide protocol for turning old, unused infrastructure (e.g. silos, barns, into domiciles/temporary housing

Land Use and Building Codes

Note: There are references and suggestions regarding the Land Use and Building Codes in other sections (especially Agritourism).

Clarity and Intent, Comment Summary

Overall, comments requested more streamlining for agricultural uses and clarity in the code. Comments expressed that the code was limiting and that revisions should focus on making sure the regulations support and encourage agriculture. Comments discussed how it is important for the code to have flexibility (e.g. less restrictions) in allowing for a variety of agricultural processes and future innovations in agriculture.

Hoop houses & Greenhouses, Comment Summary

There were several comments regarding the difficulty of meeting Land Use and Building Code requirements, and the clarity of the requirements for hoop houses. Being able to extend the growing season was a priority mentioned by many commenters. Commenters requested that staff explore the possibility of including hoop houses as a temporary use.

Regulations Preventing Infrastructure & Uses, Comment Summary

Many comments stated that the regulations make it difficult to build the necessary infrastructure. Issues in the comments included: limitations in the number and size of buildings, limitations based on zoning, limitations because of the building lot status, risks of coming in for a review and needing to bring all

buildings up to code, conservation easement requirements triggering more expensive review processes, traffic concerns limiting what can be done, how conditions associated with land use decisions can increase costs (e.g. placing a barn farther from electrical service), and limitations on the locations for more intense agricultural uses such as processing facilities and aquaponics.

Suggestions included: consider allowing more agricultural uses “by right” in various zoning districts (commenters asked why some uses are “by right” while other uses require a “limited impact special review”); “grandfathering” old buildings versus requiring them to be brought up to building code; allowing processing on-site; and improving clarity of the regulations to make it easier to understand what is allowed.

Complaint-driven Enforcement, Comment Summary

Several commenters raised concerns about how zoning enforcement is complaint-driven. Commenters explained that this procedure does not give as much of an incentive for going through the land use processes, leaves too much power with neighbors who do not understand farming, and results in inconsistent staff review.

Interactions Between Agricultural and Other Uses, Comment Summary

Questions were raised as to how wineries and tasting rooms fit into Agriculture. Another comment asked about what the relationship should be between equestrian uses and agriculture. Equestrian comments included expanding the definition of agriculture to include horses and expanding agritourism to include equestrian uses such as boarding facilities, possibly horse shows, and B&B's that cater to horses and their owners.

Open House Takeaways

Facilitated Discussion - Top Priorities with Reasons:

1. Simplify the Land Use and Building Code requirements so they are not so complicated.
 - a. Specifically, the planning and building costs, including electrical, for hoop houses is expensive.
2. More flexibility with multiple principal uses on farm properties
3. Reduce barriers related to ag worker housing, wash stations, and processing of farm products.

Theme Board Dot Totals and Comments		
Clarity and Intent	39	
Hoop Houses & Greenhouses	47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate controlled greenhouses are essential for economic vitality of small diversified vegetable grows on private land and Open Space. • This is very important for people who want to grow in their yards to simply provide for themselves and their family.

Regulations Preventing Infrastructure and Uses	73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Use staff should take the time to learn about farm needs, processes, activities, infrastructure to better support than restrict farming. Streamline or package to meet needs of beginning farms. Learn what those are and design a basic package for quick low cost starts. Land use staff: please go visit as many farms as possible in the county and elsewhere to really understand what is needed and how farms work. • Limited Impact Review is for developers, not farmers
Compliant-driven Enforcement	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can 1 neighbor catalyze so much enforcement for 1 farm? Is Boulder County pro-farm event if a few neighbors are not?
How Other Uses Work or Fit with Agricultural Uses	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails on ag lands = compatible uses

POS Leases

Note: Information gathered regarding Parks & Open Space leases will be reviewed by staff to understand where concerns overlap with the Land Use Code. Other information gathered will help inform current and future projects in the Parks & Open Space work plan.

Bid Process Comment Summary

New farmers feel the lease program is difficult to learn about and take advantage of. Additionally, small farmers feel the bid process is challenging to navigate. 30-day notice for new leases is much too short a time frame for farmers to effectively and successfully prepare a bid.

Minimize the need for “farmer commutes” by keeping leases with local farmers. Give “proximity” points to enable nearby tenants to have a better opportunity to grow operation near their existing farms.

The best lands with water are often already leased and thus usually only properties with challenging land and water conditions come available to new farmers.

Lease Length, Comment Summary

Lease terms are too short for farmers to make investments in soil, infrastructure, etc. Consider an equity share model for leases to foster long-term actions. Account for difficulty of farming in Boulder County environment.

Lease Sizes, Comment Summary

Leases are typically large properties and not suitable for new, small-scale farmers.

Infrastructure, Comment Summary

Lease properties often lack infrastructure, buildings, housing, etc. The county should provide more investment/infrastructure in leased properties. Structures such as hoop houses and greenhouses and wash stations should be provided in order to help farmers meet Federal and State food safety (e.g. FSMA) requirements. The county’s agricultural properties have soil and infrastructure conditions that require an investment by tenants.

Soil, Comment Summary

The county should subsidize compost applications and other soil health measures, as well as pay for soil health tests. Additionally, lease renewals should be contingent on soil health improvement as indicated by soil tests.

Damage Deposits, Comment Summary

Leases need a damage deposit and annual inspection to ensure that junk/trash do not accumulate on open space properties. One commenter suggested setting up a land evaluation before and after Parks & Open Space leases the land.

Open House Takeaways

Facilitated Discussion's Top Three Priorities / Highest Interest Topics:

1. **Soil health:** Soil health issues are a topic area that POS is working on within the Ag Division and is probably not something that can be addressed in the Land Use Code.
2. **Lease particulars:** There were also comments about the lease process itself and there is a desire by new farmers to see the county offer longer but smaller leases (smaller leases, i.e. grower co-ops, is something we've tried before without success). Again, the lease topics are something we can work on in POS and is not necessarily something applicable to Land Use Code issues
3. **Infrastructure:** During the discussion, participants asked staff to look into the following:
 - a. What can POS fund?
 - b. What is allowed on the leased land?
 - c. What is allowed by the code?
 - d. How do all of these questions overlap?
 - e. Examples can be found on POS lands where tenants feel that existing infrastructure does not properly support existing agricultural operations and does not address anticipated Food Safety and Modernization Act rules. There continues to be interest in market farm needs for buildings associated with food storage, washing, greenhouses, hoop houses, etc. There was also strong interest in incentivizing practices the county supports with funding and ease of permitting.

Theme Board Dot Totals and Comments		
Bid Process	5	
Lease Length	18	
Infrastructure	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who pays for the infrastructure? Tenant or County? Plan to pay back the infrastructure costs when the tenants leave the property.
Soil Health	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subsidize cover crop seeds and other proven soil building techniques. Monitor soil health, track progress, and share the data• Require education on soil health for all lease holders and to renew leases. An operating plan for each property, should give priority to the long term soil health over production.
Damage Deposits	0	

Public Health

Note: Information gathered regarding Public Health and Food Safety will be reviewed by staff to understand where concerns overlap with the Land Use Code. Other information gathered will help inform current and future projects in the appropriate department's work plan.

FSMA Produce Safety Rule Compliance Concerns and Assistance Comment Summary

There is an educational opportunity here. Farmers would like a better idea of what farms are subject to the FSMA Produce Safety Rule. There is interest in figuring out how to create low cost hand washing stations for farm workers as well.

Comments related to expediting the building code review for produce washing and packing sheds are summarized on the Land Use Processes posters.

State Farm Food Safety Regulations Comment Summary

What are the state food safety regulations?

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment food safety regulations can be found here

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/food-regulations>

On Farm Food Preparation Comment Summary

Comments requested looking at how to create a 'farm food handler' program so caterers, local chefs and home cooks can prepare food harvested locally and serve it on that local ag. land, farm or ranch. Commenters had questions on the public health requirements they needed to meet to prepare food on the farm (especially for farm-to-table dinners).

Preparing and serving meals directly to the general public, such as farm to table dinners, requires a Retail Food License issued by Boulder County Public Health. The first step in obtaining a Retail Food License is submitting plans for a proposed facility. Plan review applications can be found at www.Bouldercountyfood.org. Another option is to use a licensed caterer to prepare meals and have them delivered to the farm.

Expansion of Cottage Food Comment Summary

Questions raised:

- What is currently authorized under the Cottage Foods Act?
 - <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/cottage-foods-act>
 - <http://cofarmtomarket.com/>
- How can we expand the Cottage Foods Act? Several comments also expressed interest in looking at the Food Freedom Act.
 - *Cottage Foods Act is a Bill from the Colorado General Assembly. Discuss amendments to this bill with your local legislator.*

Water Quality Issues Comment Summary

Several questions were asked to better understand the regulations in these areas:

- How do I conform to water discharge from wash stations?
- Can wash station graywater be discharged underground for irrigation purposes?
 - *State Regulation 86 on graywater:* <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/wq-graywater>
- How do I permit bathrooms (toilets and sinks) for workers and farm guests?
 - www.SepticSmart.org

Common Use Facilities Comment Summary

- There is interest in having a Mobile Slaughter House available (not discussed who would own and manage this). Other communities in the U.S. have example of implementation. <https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2010/08/30/introduction-mobile-slaughter-units>
- Can a community food kitchen for food preservation be explored?
Parks & Open Space will be exploring this as a possible project when the Fairgrounds are redeveloped.

Open House Takeaways

Facilitated Discussion - Top Priorities with Reasons

1. Processing
 - a. On farm livestock process and sales is also desired as another means to increase farm profits through direct to consumer sales. USDA regs and BC public health regs are directly applicable.
 - b. Ease of commercial kitchen permitting and less cost for the process is desired as a means to increase farm profits with value added products and services. Products could include numerous prepared and processed food items while services would include educational classes on cooking and nutrition. LU Code is directly applicable.
 - c. An expansion of Cottage Foods to include items (such as meat) is desired along with education regarding which food items are covered and how comply. Many requests to see the Food Freedom Act implemented. Education is currently offered through CSU Extension.
2. Increase information on what is required to comply with FSMA as well as with water quality regulations. When is a septic system required? What can be discharged onto the ground?
3. Food safety education should focus on an ‘education first’ approach instead of punitive through regulations first approach. Increase dialogue/education and outreach with farmers to accomplish this.
4. A reduction of toxicity on public lands is desired to reduce risks to human and bee health. Requests for only allowing organic farming for open space leased lands.

Theme Board Dot Totals and Comments		
FSMA Produce Safety Rule Compliance Concerns and Assistance	7	
State Farm Food Safety Regulations	0	
On Farm Food Preparation	32	• What about approval for a licensed kitchen on a farm? Boulder Sr. Planners told us "industry and agriculture" won't meet, so no cooking.
Expansion of Cottage Food	22	• County marijuana regulations for pesticides, indoor us, GHG electricity use

Water Quality Issues	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a farmer who has been in violation for simply washing my vegetables, this is important to me. • On farm process of chickens, rabbits
Common Use Facilities	21	

Other

Note: This is a list of comments that didn't fit within the themes or stand out as priorities related to the Land Use Code. Some are part of other projects. All comments are certainly helpful and may be woven into this project.

Open House Takeaways

Top interest topics were:

1. Carbon Farming
2. Fracking
3. Small Scale Farms

Theme Board Dot Totals and Comments		
Small-scale farming - allow hemp, animal fiber, and flax production	12	
More conservation easements	8	
Programs to help the food insecure	9	
Subsidize local production	7	
Use degraded farmland for affordable housing	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No • If the farmland is "degraded" then we all need to repair it
Increase beekeeping regulations to 6 hives in SR	4	
Support solar farms, wind farms, and geothermal	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow community solar gardens on farmland designated as of National Ag. Importance with the land owner doesn't have water shares or the ability to farm the land. Solar gardens provide renewable energy and that is a Boulder County priority. And, solar garden installations don't degrade the land.
Support carbon farming	18	
Concern about the impact of fracking on agriculture	13	
Conflicts with prairie dogs on farmland	10	
Restart the Boulder County Food and Agriculture Policy Council	0	
Minimize unsustainable farming methods and county support for researching sustainable methods.	8	

DOT BOARD TOTALS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AGRICULTURE OUTREACH PROJECT JAN. 18, 2018 OPEN HOUSE

Themes	Dots
Economic Stability and Resilience Themes	
On Farm Sales	47
Agritourism	52
Multiple Principle Uses	35
Economic Resilience, Long-term Planning, and Intensity of Uses	32
Staff's familiarity with Sustainable Agriculture	31
Education	
Producer Education	6
Community Education	30
Housing	
On-site Housing	53
Land Use and Building Code	
Clarity and Intent	39
Hoop Houses & Greenhouses	47
Regulations Preventing Infrastructure and Uses	73
Compliant-driven Enforcement	16
How Other Uses Work or Fit with Agricultural Uses	14
Parks & Open Space Leases	
Bid Process	5
Lease Length	18
Infrastructure	22
Soil Health	35
Damage Deposits	0
Public Health and Safety	
FSMA Produce Safety Rule Compliance Concerns and Assistance	7
State Farm Food Safety Regulations	0
On Farm Food Preparation	32
Expansion of Cottage Food	22
Water Quality Issues	9
Common Use Facilities	21
Other	
Small-scale farming - allow hemp, animal fiber, and flax production	12
More conservation easements	8

Programs to help the food insecure	9
Subsidize local production	7
Use degraded farmland for affordable housing	0
Increase beekeeping regulations to 6 hives in SR	4
Support solar farms, wind farms, and geothermal	9
Support carbon farming	18
Concern about the impact of fracking on agriculture	13
Conflicts with prairie dogs on farmland	10
Restart the Boulder County Food and Agriculture Policy Council	0
Minimize unsustainable farming methods and county support for researching sustainable methods.	8