

PARTICIPANTS' WRITTEN COMMENTS
Urban Agriculture Public Meeting / May 13, 2014
City of Tucson

The following written comments were received from participants at the May 13, 2014, Public Meeting on the City's effort underway to revise zoning regulations on community gardens, farmers markets, small urban animals, and urban farms. Participants were asked to specify which category each of their comments pertained to, or to specify "other." Please note when a category was not specified, or there were multiple comments on one comment card, staff made a judgment about how to categorize comments.

Transcribed by Office of Integrated Planning staff.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

- Community Gardens have been shown to increase property values.
- Vacant lots are associated with more crime and converting them to community gardens enhances community socialization and decreasing crime.
- Community Gardens will improve food security and diets of families and more importantly children. This will improve the health of Tucsonans and decrease our obesity epidemic and health care costs.
- Community gardens are an important way to increase fresh food in areas with limited ability to have gardens in their yard, especially low income areas.
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- I also have a neighbor that has a front yard garden. There have not been any problems.
- Regarding non-commercial community gardens that must pay their own water bills: even if Tucson Water controls pricing, which is a bundled fee/rate, (no matter that community gardens don't use sewage.) Can they City either through these amendments or some other way, lessen the financial burden of water bills?
- Will there be any size parameters for community gardens?
- Will there be an accommodation for water costs for community gardens?
- Will a community garden be eligible for commercial water rates? Residential rates are too punitive.
- What are the regulations / restrictions on community garden produce sales to the public – neighbors?
- How will gardens/farms intended for teaching purposes be affected? It seems like these spaces would fall between "residential" and "commercial" applications as they require a larger scale operation than home gardens but do not sell for profit? A↓4xyear

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FARMERS' MARKETS

- Satisfying everyone is impossible but making things easier would go a long way toward food security. We are a country of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; let's keep it that way!
- Sales: My concerns about the current recommendations:
 - the 7 am - 5 pm hours of operation for farmers' markets or neighborhood sales seems restrictive given that most people work during those hours.
 - *[Note: Moved second concern under "Small Farm Animals"]*
- The expansion of farmers' markets supports local growers, the local economy and increases the availability of locally grown fresh food. You can't have too many!
- Farmers' markets are valuable for many reasons - especially social. [They] allow for gatherings that include activities for all ages to enhance sense of community.
- I am worried that the proposed market regulations will negatively impact markets without a strong community justification. For instance, one market in particular requires vendors to be food-related or sell items made from organic ingredients, so this includes soap and lotion. I think this and other markets would be hard-pressed to actually host 8 out of 10 produce booths. Customers have come to expect a variety of items and they ask for all of these vendors. The soap and produce vendors, for example, complement each other in a market setting, especially in Tucson where the farmers' market culture has developed organically. Allowing a market like the one I mentioned here to have 30-50% non-produce vendors at a farmers' market, especially when it would be difficult to replace them with available and regularly appearing gardeners and farmers, makes it possible for directors to run their markets realistically and does not harm the community.
- I believe the revisions posit regulating hours of operation for farmers' markets from 7 am - 5 pm. This is more restrictive than current hours, and people who work jobs during that time should be able to visit a farmers' market later during the day. If the code is addressing concerns over equitable access to fresh, locally grown food, why restrict farmer's market hours thusly?

SMALL FARM ANIMALS

- I live off of Speedway and Craycroft and I have chickens as neighbors. They have been no problem at all. They are not loud, they do not smell, and they have not attracted predators. I support my neighbor's right to feed their families healthy food. I do not have the right to tell my neighbors what kind of animals they can have, and I think it's over controlling for anyone to do so. Let's support those who want to live a healthy lifestyle, and stop preventing them from doing so. PS. I do not keep chickens.

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Small Farm Animals *continued*

- Although I would prefer to see more than 8 [chickens] allowed, I appreciate the compromise and would prefer to trade the lower # for more protection from vindictive neighbors. Thank you for the hard work and effort.
- Keep the number of chickens to 24!
- More than 8 chickens please
- 8 chickens are not enough! A few will die readily. Increase the limit to 12, or go ahead and publish a formula.
- Does the limit of 8 chickens per house prevent the owner from also having a turkey or quail?
- The limit of 8 chickens is too few: 12 – 15 seems reasonable.
- Limitation of 8 chickens seems small to me. 12 would be a better number.
- Number of animals - e.g., 8 chickens – should be per number of sq. ft.
- The reduction in fowl numbers allowed also seems restrictive. It seems that more consultation should take place on this with community members involved in animal husbandry.
- 8 domestic fowls are going to hamper a family's ability to have enough food. The average chicken produces 240 - 260 eggs per year. Now the family butchers 3 of these chickens. It will take 20 - 22 weeks for a replacement pullet to replace the egg laying ability of the hen butchered. Apache Junction this past week that is more reasonable and says 2 chickens for every so many feet, I believe it's 2000 or 5000 sq. ft.
- Limiting a home flock to 8 is unnecessarily restrictive - at many times of the year 8 chickens wouldn't be laying enough eggs to even supply a small family. 24 hens limit has been very reasonable and should be continued.
- Re: The poultry distance limit from another house - Should be referring to the main house, not studios, guest homes, back lot rentals, etc. The intent should be to make it easier to keep backyard poultry, not make it more difficult.
- Even 8 chickens can be kept inhumanely in a coop, and I would prefer to see more chickens allowed with minimum space requirements.
- Cual es la & espuerta a la limitacion a-tener solamente 8 gallianas por casa y que hacer para aumentar el limite a 12. *English translation: What is the answer to the limitation of having only 8 chickens/dwelling and what can be done to increase the limitation?*
- Generous allowances should be made for small farm animals and chickens. Many reasons support this – environmental, economics, health, and social.

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Small Farm Animals *continued*

- *Required Setbacks:* Currently the setback for an animal shelter, coop in particular, is 20 ft. from the property line and 50 ft. from the neighboring house. I believe that setbacks of this amount are a barrier to growing one's own food. If the property line has an existing cement block wall, there should be the ability to use the wall as one side of the structure and no property setbacks. If there is no permanent fence structure I would be supportive of an increased setbacks of the proposed 6 ft. with the addition of a "screen" if completely open access. I don't believe the 50 ft. setback is realistic at all in small city properties
- Is the 50 ft. from property line for chicken coops going to be changed? I have a regular size lot and an established garden on part of my yard and only have room along my property line.
- How are you addressing corner lots?
- Re: The poultry distance limit from another house, should be referring to the main house, not studios, guest houses, back lot rentals, etc. The intent should be to make it easier to keep backyard poultry, not make it more difficult.
- Will someone's particular zoning dictate the number of animals as it does now?
- Generous allowances should be made for small farm animals and chickens. Many reasons support this - environmental, economics, health and social.
- Will current people's chickens be grandfathered in, or will they be made to reduce their numbers?
- Dropping the nuanced version of how many animals are allowed seems to be a mistake. Lot sizes make a difference. If the goal of this process is to more accurately address issues of zoning, ignoring lot size loses that accuracy.
- I think the placing of a coop should be reconsidered so it is not 50 ft. from the line.
- Can the chicken run go to the property line if the coop is away from the line?
- Require full enclosure of domestic fowl for their protection. No permits should be required for coops.
- Is the coop the place where chickens primarily reside or does it include the adjacent pen where we let them roam when we're home?
- In an effort to have very happy and healthy 3 chickens, I let them free range the entire yard, and they sleep most safely from neighborhood dogs in a very tall tree. All adjacent neighbors have chickens as well! Would this be allowed?
- A dog barks at 100 dBA and hen squawks at only 65 dBA

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Small Farm Animals *continued*

- You can't use commercial studies or studies from Asia to measure any negative effects of chickens in backyards in Tucson home.
- Having chickens is not different than having other pets.
- Could you tag chickens the same way we tag dogs? The comment tonight that dogs and cats are regulated (implying they are successfully regulated and not a nuisance) begs the question. And anyone who lives here knows cats are a nuisance.
- Small animals provide psychological benefits to owners, food security, economic security, environmental benefits with less food waste going to sewer and landfills, and less pests as chickens eat them.
- What resources were used to create the standards and regulations and evidence that more animals are of a public health or social problem?
- There is a concern about chickens raised with insufficient room (minimum area per animal?), and what to do when they become old and unproductive - slaughter standards.
- If you sell eggs does it have to go through the health department?
- My question or concern is about roosters if the chicken coops are allowed and the people/citizens start raising their own for eggs etc. Knowing some will be born roosters. How long of a time will they have to get rid of them (roosters)? I do NOT wish for the rooster laws to change!! They crow all day and the people don't care. I have had to call the police half a dozen times in the past years to get rid of them. Will their upkeep be monitored at all?
- Are roosters allowed outside of city limits?
- Rooster concern. Do not want them in City limits.
- Will roosters ever be allowed within city limits? - meat production would be difficult without them.
- What are the regulations regarding dwarf dairy goats?
- If someone has a very large urban lot, why shouldn't they be allowed to have a full size goat?
- Some sheep are smaller breeds and there should be inclusion just as there is for "dwarf/miniature" goats.
- I think if I want to support my family and this form of support creates happiness. Then why regulate my constitutional right in my pursuit of happiness?
- If my residentially-zoned single lot is multi-acre, is there a process to seek allowance for greater numbers of small farm animals?

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Small Farm Animals *continued*

- What animals are considered "fowl" in the proposed ordinance? Chickens, ducks, turkeys, quail
- What health concerns were taken into account when considering small animals? (ie) waste, flies, mosquitoes, SARS, Bird Flu, West Nile Virus, smell
- How will you enforce the new standard since the current code is violated - i.e. dog owners don't clean up after their animals, people have chickens now in violation of code.

URBAN FARMS

- I want to build a large ferret cage, what are the setback requirements?
- I want to breed rabbits; how far away from my property line must I locate the structure?
- Urban farms should be allowed/encouraged.
- Rainwater harvesting to support the agriculture needs to be subsidized.
- Many dwellers in the county - notable in wildcat development - state restrictions on agriculture as a reason for leaving the city. I would recommend doing outreach w/the county and county dwellers (notably Summit Neighborhood) as part of this work. Additionally, "urban agriculture" is not a new concept, please network with the area's native communities for advice on how to live off the land sustainably & make sure regulations aren't arbitrary.
- Problem - Homeowner wants to have more animals on lot than allowed and/or wants to have farm sales on weekends in excess of 4/year. Solution- A variance is suggested under a DDO process. Problem- Urban Ag has a small profit margin plus DDO cost hundreds of dollars = People choosing to break these rules to create a viable livelihood.
- Are these regulations only for permanent structures? If the greenhouse is designed to be used for season extension only & will be taken down (during peak season when food is in ground) does it fall within these restrictions?
- I am so grateful to the small farmers within our city limits who are trying to earn a living growing fresh produce for our community. They deserve our praise, support and less restrictions on their livelihoods. We need many more of them
- **Please ensure a viable path from amateur →professional. There should be no obstacles between a high school student (ie) growing a large garden who then graduates and moves towards a consistent commercial basis of selling to neighbors, farmers markets, etc. **Yes! enable the home occupation of urban farmer! As many of us are losing our jobs in this economy, we need something human to fall back on!

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Urban Farms *continued*

- One of the true gems of our central city is the University of Arizona's Campus Agricultural Center on North Campbell Avenue at Allen Rd. This farm is well-established and a terrific oasis - it is an ideal example of the benefits of an urban farm in an urban area.
- Referring to farming in the front garden, are there restrictions on structures such as screens, wire & shades?
- Our large property/garden is adjacent to a city well that is operable but not actively being used to serve the public. It is maintained and flushed 2 times per year. Can we gain access to this well to use for the garden?
- Will the city expand access to recycled/effluent water? -- i.e., build more distribution.
- How is a greenhouse defined? Does an open caged raised bed with summer white shade cloth fit this definition? 11' tall at highest point

OTHER

- *Zoning Concerns:* There are large parcels west of the freeway along Cottonwood, Silver Lake, La Cholla that consist of 2.5 acres or greater that have horses, sheep and goats zoned R1 not RH or SR. The city should look at rezoning those areas.\
- *Food Distribution:* Loading zones are restricted to "commercial or government plates." Small farms often use passenger vehicles for restaurant deliveries & deserve space. 7 day "Hubs" would facilitate distribution. Please keep regulations minimal.
- *Growing Own Produce:* I really value being able to grow my own veggies and eggs and purchase other garden products from my neighbors. This is a major source of food for my family.
- *Eating Fresh:* Front yard gardens, back yard gardens, why can't the city promote the eating of fresh foods you grow? Discussion about low income, urban folks living in a food desert can be offensive because you don't have to be poor to understand fresh food tastes good. Why can't the city favor more gardens?
- *Pursuit of Happiness:* I think if I want to support my family and this form of support creates happiness. Then why regulate my constitutional right in my pursuit of happiness?
- *Composting:* If managed properly, compost should have no smell and have no consequence to adjacent neighbors. Compost piles should have no setback requirements.
- *Compost:* How will compost & materials used for gardens be controlled - i.e. left in alley? If well cared for, not a problem.

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Other *continued*

- Would they be willing to allow a neighborhood compost (maybe isolated....)?
- *Composting Toilets*: How will composting toilets be regulated? Do they fall under the sustainable goals? It seems they should, especially given drought, and it should be made easier to install them, not more difficult.
- *Home-composting System*: If a backyard cannot maintain a home-composting system due to codes on distance from property lines, smell, or neighbors' discontent, what can the City do for these people who generate so much kitchen/yard waste?\
- *HOA's & CCR's*: Since HOA's & CCR's supersede the proposed plan, can we start an HOA or CCR to allow large farm animals or more small farm animals than proposed?
- *Wildlife in Urban Areas*: Coyotes have been dining on cats in my neighborhood for years. I think they would prefer a poor unfortunate cat over cucumbers & tomatoes being grown in the front yard...Just sayin'... Could you send your coyotes to my _____?
- *Large Animals*: Some people have been concerned that they will lose their large animals if these changes pass. I want to make sure folks that keep large animals will be grandfathered in.
- *Venomous Animals*: Could further clarify be provided regarding raising/using venomous animals (i.e., honey bees) for production or crop pollination?
- *Public Health*: Have you considered whether people may pursue capturing storm run-off to water their plants? With freedom to grow and sell produce comes responsibility to make sure produce is free of heavy metal contaminates. Are you considering how mosquitos & other arthropods may promulgate disease because of standing water and irrigation? is this something that should be, could be, already is addressed?
- *Water Harvesting*: Can the water harvesting tank be situated within 6 feet of the property line?
- *Green House, Chicken Coop*: For large lots (2 acres+) w/neighbors >200' away, can more generous/expensive facilities, more chickens, etc. be allowed?
- *Gleaning*: Re: Urban Agriculture definition is gleaning of edible trees included in the definition?
- Gleaning?
- *Urban Ag Definition*: Please consider adding gleaning to this definition of urban ag as it exists in Plan Tucson
- *Definitions*: What are the working definitions?

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City of Tucson

Other continued

- *Community Meat Processing Facility:* With the restrictions on processing animals for meat, are there any provisions to support a community based meat processing facility to help small scale procedures meet the requirement?
- *Funding Sources:* What are the funding sources for Plan of Tucson? You mentioned that some of your funding comes from Department of Energy. Does any of your funding come from the UN or ICCLI?
- *Presentation:* Great job Adam. You spoke very elegantly. I appreciate your hard work.
- *Effort:* Thanks! I applaud your efforts!
- *Mentoring:* How can those of us who have urban ag help those who are now into it or those who are thinking of giving it a try? I suggest an ambassadors program.
- *Involvement in Conversation:* I am president of Northwest Neighborhood and we support urban agriculture and have many examples of urban ag practitioners in our neighborhood. How can we be involved in the more detail oriented planning conversations?
- *Community Outreach:* What type of outreach are you doing to be inclusive of the underserved community? I noticed that the translator left, meaning a large majority of the folks who already practice food production and small animal husbandry aren't receiving this information. (Spanish speaking / South Tucson)
- *Clarification/Publicity:* I think much of the community is unaware of current zoning, sustainability and urban agriculture policies (let alone any proposed changes). However, this issue is likely to influence many Tucsonans outside of those of us actively involved in the food movement. What is being done to make sure those affected are informed of community forums and educational sessions?
- *Regulation Approval Process:* Can you share more about the process to approve the new zoning regulations. Examples: Input process, when will it go up for vote? How many meetings are expected, timeline.