



# 8

## Agriculture Element





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## 8.1 Agriculture

Formalized agriculture within the Ukiah Valley began in the 1850s. Efforts included the raising of livestock and the growing of various grains, and hops. When the Northwestern Pacific Railroad was completed in 1889, prunes, potatoes, pears, and hops were sent from the Ukiah Valley to San Francisco and other regional markets. Hops, pears, prunes and grapes were the most widely planted crops in the 1950s, and today the Ukiah Valley is home to a number of productive agricultural activities, including organically produced crops and notable vineyards. The Valley's rich bottom-land, resourced by the Russian River, consists of prime, fertile soils and benchlands highly productive for grapes. Presently, agricultural land within the region is mostly comprised of vineyards and pear orchards but also includes row crops and pasturelands.

Agricultural production has been an important part of the regional economy for generations and will continue to be a foundational component for decades to come. In addition to the economic benefits, agricultural lands provide a pastoral quality that helps define the character of the Ukiah Valley. If undertaken appropriately by addressing issues related to health and, potential nuisances (e.g., noise, odor, aesthetics), urban agriculture can improve access to healthy food, promote community development, and create jobs.<sup>1</sup>

While agricultural resources are addressed and protected by numerous State laws, this Agriculture Element is included here to implement new approaches to local agriculture and strengthen existing City policies regarding preservation and enhancement of regional working lands.

### Goals and Policies

**AG-1** *To preserve and strengthen agricultural uses in and around Ukiah that influence the regional economy.*

#### **AG-1.1** Reduce Agricultural/Urban Conflict

The City shall reduce conflict between incompatible uses and agriculture within and adjacent to the City.

#### **AG-1.2** Preserve Agricultural Lands

With the exception of presently proposed or approved subdivisions, the City shall discourage urban development on unincorporated land within its Sphere of Influence until annexed by the City. The City shall support County land use regulations that protect the viability of local agriculture in the Ukiah Valley.

#### **AG-1.3** Plan Together

The City shall identify and involve stakeholders, as well as advisors with knowledge and expertise, to create and implement a comprehensive planning framework that preserves and strengthens agricultural uses in and around Ukiah that inform and influence the regional economy.

<sup>1</sup> Golden, S. (2013). *Urban Agriculture Impacts: Social, Health, and Economic: A Literature Review*. University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program: Agricultural Sustainability Institute at UC Davis.

**AG-2** *To create a healthy, equitable and resilient local-food system that further integrates agriculture into the City's identity.*

**AG-2.4 Backyard Food**

The City shall allow and encourage residents to undertake supplementary local agriculture, including backyard gardens, apiaries, poultry, and 'foodscaping'. Examples include community, school, backyard, and rooftop gardens with a purpose extending beyond home consumption and education.

**AG-2.5 Buy Local, Enjoy Local**

The City shall encourage additional farmer and community markets, food trucks, and farm stands to support production, distribution, and sale of locally grown foods and continue to support community-based food production and local, nutritious food by working with local landowners for the creation of additional community gardens.

**AG-2.6 Support Gardeners**

The City shall coordinate with the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Mendocino County Master Gardener Program, to connect city residents with backyard gardening knowledge.

**AG-2.7 Farmer's Markets**

In conjunction with the Mendocino County Farmers Market Association, the City shall research and identify additional ways to support the sale of local produce and goods at farmers markets within the City of Ukiah.

**AG-3** *Help existing agricultural stakeholders move 'Beyond the Farm'.*

**AG-3.1 Establish Infrastructure to Grow the Agricultural Economy**

The City shall support existing agriculture operators by encouraging a diverse, vibrant, and innovative agriculture economy that creates new opportunities and products from regional producers for local consumption and export. In conjunction with stakeholders, the City shall encourage the creation of agricultural business incubators, shared kitchens, and workforce development programs that create locations to strengthen agricultural operators within the region.

**AG-3.2 Agritourism**

The City shall support expansion of the agricultural tourism industry by assessing utilization use of tourism facilities (e.g., hospitality, restaurants, etc.), as well as supporting efforts to plan and integrate the Great Redwood Trail into the agricultural economy.

**AG-3.3 University Research**

The City shall encourage research, particularly at the University of California Cooperative Extension, pertinent to the Ukiah Valley to identify new potential uses and enhancement for existing agricultural industries, especially pomology, 'forestry, livestock, 'and viticulture.

## 8.2 Ukiah Valley Agricultural Stakeholders

While the City recognizes the geographical limitations of its agricultural policies, the City also recognizes its sense of identity and quality of life are closely associated with the surrounding setting. To implement the goals and

policies associated with this Agriculture Element, involvement of the below mentioned stakeholders, plus potentially many more, will be critically important to successful implementation of this general plan element. If implemented successfully, the Agriculture Element would activate conversations between government agencies and key stakeholders in the region to undertake a more collaborative effort resulting in unified land use policies for the future.

**LAND USE PLANNING AND POLICY**

- Mendocino County Resources Conservation District (MCRCD)
- Mendocino County Department of Planning and Building Services (PBS)
- Sustainable Agriculture Lands Committee (SALC)
- Mendocino Land Trust (MLT)
- Mendocino Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo)

**FARMING AND FOOD SECTOR**

- Mendocino County Farm Bureau (MCFB)
- Mendocino County Farmers Market Association
- University of California's Cooperative Extension - Mendocino County
- Mendocino County Agricultural Commissioner
- Plowshares - Ukiah
- NCO Gardens Project
- Mendo Lake Food Hub



## 8.3 Implementation Programs

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible	2022 – 2025	2026 – 2030	2031 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
		Supporting Department(s)					
<p><b>A Agricultural Buffer</b></p> <p>The City shall work with Mendocino County to establish setback or buffers for new non-agricultural development adjacent to agricultural lands to reduce conflict between incompatible land uses.</p>	AG – 1.2	Community Development	■				
<p><b>B Right to Farm</b></p> <p>The City shall adopt a right-to-farm ordinance to ensure appropriate disclosure of agricultural activities both within and adjacent to the City of Ukiah.</p>	AG – 1.2	Community Development	■				
<p><b>C Align Agricultural Standards</b></p> <p>The City shall revise agricultural standards and use terminology to be consistent with adjacent jurisdictions within the Ukiah Valley for the support of future annexation efforts.</p>	AG – 1.2 AG – 1.3	Community Development		■			
<p><b>D Williamson Act</b></p> <p>In coordination with the County Assessor, the City shall establish a Williamson Act program that aligns with ongoing efforts to preserve agricultural lands across Mendocino County.</p>	AG – 1.2	Community Development City Manager	■				
<p><b>E Reduce Regulation – Local Agriculture</b></p> <p>The City shall revise the Zoning code to allow low-intensity agricultural activities on residential parcels, including but not limited to back yard beehives, chickens and gardens. The revision will include objective use, development, and environments standards, and minimal permit fee requirements.</p>	AG – 2.4	Community Development City Attorney	■				

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible	2022 – 2025	2026 – 2030	2031 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
		Supporting Department(s)					
<p><b>F Foodscaping</b></p> <p>The City shall revise the City’s objective development and design standards for multi-family housing projects to include the definition of and provisions for ‘foodscaping’.</p>	AG – 2.4	Community Development	■				
<p><b>G “No Mow May”</b></p> <p>To encourage additional pollinators, the City shall prepare a pilot program for a “No Mow May” to encourage more ecologically beneficial lawns within the City of Ukiah.</p>	AG – 2.4	Community Development City Manager		■			
<p><b>H Urban Agricultural Definitions</b></p> <p>The City shall revise the City Zoning Code definitions, standards, and limitations for “Urban Agriculture”, including rooftop gardens, aquaculture, hydroponics, etc.</p>	AG – 2.4	Community Development		■			
<p><b>I Support Community Gardens</b></p> <p>The City shall revise the Zoning code to streamline the regulatory permitting process to support the creation of additional community gardens within the City.</p>	AG – 2.5 AG – 2.6	Community Development City Manager	■				
<p><b>J Urban Agricultural Incentive Zone</b></p> <p>The City shall research and consider implementation of an Urban Agricultural Incentive Zone (AB 551). “The Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones Act authorizes a city... and a landowner to enter into a contract to restrict the use of vacant, unimproved, or otherwise blighted lands for small-scale production of agricultural crops and animal husbandry.</p>	AG – 2.4	Community Development City Manager		■			
<p><b>K Local Food: Food Trucks &amp; Farm Stands</b></p> <p>The City shall revise the Zoning Code to support the distribution and sale of locally-grown food via Food Trucks, Farm Stands, and farmer/community markets.</p>	AG – 2.5	Community Development Public Works	■				



Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible	2022 – 2025	2026 – 2030	2031 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
		Supporting Department(s)					
<p><b>L Farmers Markets</b></p> <p>In conjunction with the Mendocino County Farmers Market Association, the City shall research and identify additional ways to support the sale of local produce and goods at farmers markets within the City of Ukiah.</p>	AG – 2.7	Community Development <hr/> Public Works					■
<p><b>M Local Purchasing</b></p> <p>The City shall research and prepare a local preference purchasing policy for future adoption to promote and support local preference purchasing policies for the City of Ukiah, local school districts and other institutions as a means to foster awareness and build relationships across the regional economy.</p>	AG – 3.1	Community Development <hr/> City Manager		■			