

D R A F T

A Proposal for a Comprehensive Study of the Agricultural and Resource Protection Zone

Current Situation:

The Agriculture and Resource Protection Zone has been in place since the early 1960's and has done an impressive job of achieving its goals of limiting sprawl development, protecting Agricultural lands and environmentally sensitive areas and reserving land for future development. Recently, a petition was made amend the AG/RP zone to allow the transfer of residences from a rural residential strip zone to the rear agriculturally zoned portion of a property. While this particular idea was recommended in the Comprehensive Plan, it does not address issues lying at the core of the Agricultural zone. Rather than take a piecemeal approach; the City Council (and others) expressed an interest in a comprehensive review of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan's policy on agriculture and resource protection.

This study can have long term, far reaching impacts on the future of Auburn. It must be carefully planned and executed. It will chart the course for the City's future for Agriculture, Housing, Infrastructure and Land for Future Development to name a few.

Some Possible Issues, Topics and Questions:

- Land use, tax rates and land values.
- State of farming in Auburn, is it viable under current regulations?
- Statewide trends in agriculture and forestry.
- Should Agriculture be part of the City's economic development policy?
- What is the cost of services in the agricultural zone?
- Is the 50% income rule for new homes in the AG/RP a barrier to agriculture?
- What role should environmental protection play?
- Consider cluster development or transfer of development rights.
- Where should new homes be located? What should the minimum lot size be?

The Process:

Due to existing projects already underway or committed to by staff, the review of the Agriculture and Resource Protection Zone is proposed to take place in two phases.

Phase 1: Preliminary Ground Work (will take 6 months, June to November 2014)

- Staff will generate an inventory of Agricultural lands and compile all Agricultural goals, objectives and recommendations from the 2010 Comprehensive Plan.
- Work with and seek out outside Agricultural entities for technical assistance to evaluate Auburn's existing Ag conditions and help in developing the study.
- Assign the Planning Board regular work sessions to help in the phase 1 development of goals and an action plan for Phase 2.

Phase 2: The Study (will take 6 months, December 2014- May 2015)

- Planning Board hosts a series of workshops and public hearing to get public input and information from outside experts on the future of the Agricultural and Resource Protection zone.
- Develop a series of alternatives that address different aspects of the City's Agricultural policies, based on the public input and review by outside entities.
- The Study will create a final proposal possibly amending the Comprehensive Plan and or make any changes to the Zoning Ordinance.

May 21, 2014