**Agriculture and Development in Towns Team**

**Action Team Member:** Keith Krebs

**How Might We:** **Focus growth in and around existing developments of Salida, BV, Johnson Village, Granite, Maysville and Nathrop** (Primary ”How might we?”)

Make local agriculture diverse, interconnected and dynamic (Secondary but relevant and important “How might we?”)

Educate the community on the value of agricultural land and the challenges, benefits and needs of local producers (Secondary but relevant and important “How might we?”)

**Data Source:**

Name: Jeff Moline – Boulder Parks and Open Space

Contact: 303.578.6270

Add Contact to Envision Contacts? Y

**Insights:** In 1985 a CSU – Boulder County Agricultural Survey revealed that the number one factor discouraging continued agriculture was not market economics, but the stresses and impacts created from urban influences. Since 1978, over 18,000 acres of agricultural land has been annexed into Boulder County’s municipalities. A 1991 county land use survey suggested that commodity prices and land speculation affecting property taxes had moved ahead of urbanization as the major hindrance to farming in Boulder County, although urban impacts and the loss of nearby agricultural support services remained high on the list. In combination, these pressures led to larger farms being carved up into 35-acre tracts which by state statute are exempt from any subdivision review and design requirements then sold to non-agricultural interests.

Boulder County pursued options to stem the loss of agricultural loss (and limit growth areas) and, in 1979 adopted the Non-Urban Planned Unit Development (NUPUD). This form of subdivision offers landowners a development density of two dwellings/35 acres and an additional dwelling for each 17.5 acre increment above that figure. A total of **75%** of the total acreage must be deeded to the county in the form of a conservation easement which restricts activity to agriculturally related or other rural land uses. Title remains with the owner to determine use (sell development rights, continue farming/ranching, or leasing) consistent with the terms of the easement.

The 2016 Annual Report indicates an acreage breakdown of: Irrigated Cropland = 13,000; Dryland Cropland = 3,000; Rangeland = 7,000; Roads-Ditches-Buildings-Habitat = 2,000; Total = 25,000. Crops grown include alfalfa and grass, beans, corn, sugar beets, grains and vegetables under water conserving conditions. A range of on-going management practices includes installing irrigation systems, re-vegetating lands taken out of production, exercising water rights and fencing cropland and riparian areas to help achieve livestock management goals.

Boulder County has been successful in securing open space acreage for almost the last 40 years. All the towns located within the county were contacted. It was determined that a large majority of the constituents were very pro-open space and wanted to preserve agricultural land as well. IGA’s were made with these stakeholder towns and this sentiment was eventually included in the County Comprehensive Plan. In the mid 1990’s a series of four small county sales tax increases were approved by voters to be used specifically for open space land purchases. Since that time, over 100,000 acres have been preserved as open space for recreation, habitat and agriculture.

Text paraphrased from the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan

Any reports or maps or web links the team should read/review?

The Boulder County Comprehensive Plan – Agricultural section.