

November 8, 2013

Planning Commission
San Jose City Hall
200 East Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Dear Members of the Planning Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed zoning ordinance amendments that would permit urban agriculture in the city's commercial zones. SPUR supports these amendments because they will remove existing obstacles that hinder the growth of urban agriculture in San Jose.

As we detail in our report, *Public Harvest*, urban agriculture provides city residents with many benefits: vibrant green spaces and recreation, education about fresh food and the effort it takes to produce it, ecological benefits for the city, sites that help build community, and a potential source of modest economic development. Decades ago, cities across the country restricted the growing of food within their boundaries through their zoning code. San Jose, in its most recent general plan and through earlier passage of the Neighborhood Agriculture use designation, recognized that the city benefits by bringing agriculture back into urban areas.

The current proposal would allow Neighborhood Agriculture, defined as the growing of plants and small-scale animal husbandry on less than one acre, as a permitted use in commercial zoning districts. This is an appropriate change that can help activate vacant lots with a beneficial use and will allow local community groups, such as Garden to Table, to proceed with their projects. The update to the commercial zones also follows the recent incorporation of Neighborhood Agriculture as a permitted use in industrial zones.

I appreciate your consideration of SPUR's comments and encourage you to support the proposed amendment to allow Neighborhood Agriculture as a permitted use in the commercial zones of the city.

Sincerely,



Eli Zigas
Food Systems and Urban Agriculture
Program Manager

CC: Laurel Prevetti, Assistant Director, Planning Division
Jenny Nusbaum, Senior Planner, Planning Division

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