

DRAFT

Covell Village Small Urban Farms Concept – Draft December 2004

Issue statement: The CV project is designed to meet multiple objectives of both the City and the applicant. The footprint of the project is one of the primary features as it determines how successful the City is in meeting its goal of maintaining a compact urban form surrounded by farmland. One option under consideration is developing urban uses south of Channel A while retaining agricultural uses north of the channel. While considerable information has been developed for the higher density project alternative area south of the channel, little analysis has been done regarding potential land uses north of the channel. This concept paper offers a summary analysis of one alternative.

Goal: Create a sustainable land use at the north edge of the CV project that:

- Establishes an effective urban/ag buffer.
- Integrates farming and the community through recreational, educational, and direct marketing opportunities.
- Provides an opportunity for farmers to develop sustainable farms and farming practices.
- Creates beneficial connections for people and wildlife between existing habitat/greenbelts to the east and west of the CV site.
- Develops a successful example of small urban farms.
- Creates opportunities for redevelopment of the City's abandoned landfill that supports the agricultural industry.

Measures of success

The small farms concept would be considered a success if it is:

- Sustainable (economic, environmental, and community)
- Accepted by the community
- Supports diversity in yolo county ag production
- Enhances wildlife habitat value.

Concept elements:

Physical design (see Attachment 1)

- 4 Small organic farms (120ac)
- 4 Limited Resource Producer farmsteads for entry level farmers either on marginal soils or in the CV housing development near the farms (4ac).
- 1 Consolidated farm stand marketing area @ Poleline Road (2ac)
- 1 Community gardens (5ac)
- Greenbelt @ Channel A (14ac)

Total area: 145ac

Cultural design

- Small organic farms established prior to construction of adjacent housing to minimize urban/ag conflicts and to establish realistic expectations for homeowners living on or near the rural edge.
- Direct access to local markets (farm stand, CSA program, farmers market, Coop, etc).
- Support recruitment of farmers to replace retiring generation.
- Build knowledge of and support for sustainable farm practices in the County.
- Integrate farms into the fabric of the community, blending urban and rural land uses.
- Diversify ag production in the County to better withstand market fluctuations and changing national and global ag policies.

How/Why?

How will the concept be implemented and why is it advantageous.

1. Supports and complements higher density design south of the channel.
2. The project can provide its adjacent mitigation north of the channel, satisfying adjacency requirements and realizing bonuses associated with providing additional adjacent mitigation. Preliminary staff calculations, ag mitigation requirement reduced from 766ac to 334ac.
3. City can possibly provide incentives in the development agreement process to reduce parks and greenbelt area south of the channel in exchange for developer participation. (Nexus: opportunity for farm visits by the general public). Reduces parks O&M cost to City and allows more space in development for identified housing need.
4. City buys back north of channel land with project open space impact fees (at ag value). City retains ownership and enters into long term leases with small farmers or sells farms with CE and right of first refusal. Any lease revenues would be used to fund community education programs, community gardens, buffer management, etc.
5. Develop a non-profit to administer the community outreach and education program.
6. Identify grants to redevelop landfill to support sustainable ag uses (packing facility, etc.).

Comparison (north of channel area)

Small Farms Concept	Existing proposal
Supports and complements higher density south of Channel A.	Does not support higher density south of Channel A.
More ag mitigation adjacent to City.	More ag mitigation in outlying areas.
Uses project and ag mitigation to directly support sustainable ag in the Davis area.	Passive support of ag in general. “Buys down” a large block of ag land that could support sustainable ag in the future.
Meets expressed need in the ag community for affordable small farms for entry level farmers.	Large block generally better suited to conventional, more established producers.
Directly engages community in the issue of the viability of ag.	Creates opportunity to engage community in ag viability discussion on a more theoretical level.
Buffers old land fill from housing and creates opportunities for ag related redevelopment of the site.	Does not create new redevelopment opportunities. Likely to create need to redevelop old land fill as non-revenue generating recreational use compatible with adjacent housing.
Integrates more compatible farms with community.	Separates less compatible farms from community.
Implements new, innovative program that will require administrative support from City staff.	Implements an existing program that will not require significant additional administrative support from City staff.

Sustainability

Economics

- Direct marketing
- Land/leases at agricultural values
- Affordable homes for entry level farmers
- City able to reinvest lease revenues back into farms

Environment

- Connections with existing habitat areas adjacent to the site
- Organic ag production supports and takes advantage of on-site natural resources and natural biological cycles and controls (e.g. IMP, hedgerows, soil building, tail water ponds, etc).

Community

- Farms accessible to the community (location and opportunities)
- Builds more direct connection between the farming community and the City and its residents
- “Destination” along the City’s greenbelt encourages outdoor activity/exercise
- Integrates community garden with “professional” ag production
- Fresh produce for local consumers
- Creates a balance between accessible, less structured “open space” for residents living in a relatively dense development south of the channel
- Creates connections between University and community through unique ag research opportunities

Desired outcome: Integrate small sustainable farms into CV design to complement higher density design south of the channel.

Ideas:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use Fairview Gardens as a working example (see Attachment 2)• Use UC Sustainable Agriculture Research & Ed. Program and Small Farms Center as resources.• Work with CAFF to develop farm support and community integration program.• Engage local sustainable farm consultant to assist in developing business plan for sustained agricultural use on the site. | <h3>Issues:</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liability insurance• Vandalism• Dust/Noise• Financing• Land owner interest/participation• Viable business plan for farmers |
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Issues:

Attachments

1. Conceptual land use plan.
2. Fairview Gardens information sheet (www.fairviewgardens.org).

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