



Community Planning & Permitting

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Authorization Memo

BOULDER COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS PUBLIC MEETING

February 4, 2025 at 10:30AM

All Commissioners' public meetings will be offered in a hybrid format where attendees can join through **Zoom** or **in-person** at the Boulder County Courthouse 3rd Floor, 1325 Pearl Street, Boulder. The Commissioners retain the right to switch all hearings and meetings to in-person only instead of hybrid if technical difficulties arise.

Authorization under Article 16-100.A of the Boulder County Land Use Code for Text Amendments to the Land Use Code to add a mobile farm stand option.

Staff: Jack Sheehan, Community Planning & Permitting, Planner I

Public testimony will not be taken – action requested

SUMMARY

Staff requests authorization to initiate text amendments to the Land Use Code that would allow for the use of mobile farm stands. This proposal stems from the 2023 Farm Stand Pilot Project, which was authorized by Boulder County Commissioner Ashley Stolzmann for Community Planning and Permitting (CPP) to explore the feasibility of pre-approved farm stand building designs as a means of addressing the associated financial and time constraints that local agricultural producers face in navigating the building permit process.

Farm stands are a critical marketing tool for beginning and small-to-medium scale farms, providing direct-to-consumer sales opportunities and helping producers establish a customer base within the community. According to the most recent USDA Agricultural Census, the majority of agricultural producers in Boulder County operate at a small-to-medium scale, making access to affordable and efficient marketing infrastructure essential to their viability.

While the pilot project demonstrated strong interest and demand, the proposed free-standing farm stand structures project ultimately determined that even a structure pre-approved under the building code would still be of a cost that would make it unfeasible for widespread use by the farming community. As a result, an alternative solution has been identified: allowing mobile farm stands. This approach was strongly supported by 92% of participating agricultural producers during the 2024 pilot survey and roundtable discussions. Mobile farm stands offer key advantages, including the ability to

store and transport products more efficiently, thereby increasing access to local food across the community.

Additionally, regulating mobile farm stands only through the Land Use Code (these units would not be subject to the Building Code as they are not structures) would significantly reduce permitting time and costs—factors that rendered the original pre-approved designs financially unfeasible for most producers. This amendment would align with the county’s ongoing efforts to support local agriculture by providing practical, accessible solutions that enhance market opportunities for small farms.

Standard public notice of this amendment, including a press release and publication through the Land Use Code change GovDelivery channel, will occur following authorization. Public hearings before the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners will provide opportunities for the public to provide comments on the amendment.

Given the importance of this amendment in supporting local agricultural producers, staff intends to expedite this update with the goal of presenting it to the Planning Commission in March 2025. This timeline aims to ensure that, if adopted, the code update will be in place by spring of this year, allowing agricultural producers to utilize this provision in 2025.

ACTION REQUESTED

Staff requests authorization from the Board of County Commissioners to pursue these text amendment to the Land Use Code (“the Code”).