A FUTURE VISION OF THE UC AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTER LAND (BAREC)
As 17 acres of urban agricultural /horticultural land

prepared by Kathryn Mathewson, (408) 292-9595 or kathryn@secretgardens.com
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Agriculture, not technology, is California's number one industry and gardening is the country's number one leisure time activity. Santa Clara was named for St. Clare of Assisi. She lived in an enclosed garden and her life nourished the communities around her. Her thirteenth-century biographers compare her to flowing water and to a fruitful tree. Her mother, Ortolana, which means "good gardener," and her friend St. Francis called her "little plant." St. Francis visited her garden for inspiration and refuge. The Santa Clara Valley at one time was called "The Valley of Heart's Delight." The isolation of our citizens from the rich history of its agricultural and gardening roots and from nutritious food increases with the loss of each urban farm.

This 17-acre Center is the Valley's last piece of public agricultural land. The existing 1928 building and the property adjacent to Winchester was a Sanitarium for Civil War Veterans, thus the connection with the Veterans office on the property's corner. These are some of the reasons why the community's desire is to keep all 17 acres zoned in agriculture so that in the future it will keep our citizens healthy, give them a sense of connectedness to each other and the land, and bring long-term stability to the community. Construction jobs bring only short-term stability. Housing can be placed in less historic areas. The City's planners have identified the housing needs for the next five years. This site is a once in a lifetime opportunity to do something unique, a self-sufficient working urban organic farm for education and research.

We see this site as a place which will be a center for all organizations that have interests in agriculture, gardens, and the environment. Such a center should strengthen our community and our governments, create new jobs and training for jobs, and make enough money to continue improving and helping the community. The City of Santa Clara will not be required to spend money for the research necessary to determine the Center's future. The goal of the Center would be self-sufficiency. There would be nothing like it. Consequently, time is needed to bring the elements together so it will work. What a wonderful and unique gift to the city and region!

1. Centralize the regional government offices for agriculture and environmental programs at the Center so there is continuity in these programs and they can learn from each other. Also, centralize offices for environmental and green industry groups at the Center for the same reason. A very important part of this centralization process is to save existing urban farms and orchards and match farmers to these places.

2. There should be several organic farmers for produce (seasonal events like a corn maze, a scarecrow contest, a pumpkin patch), one for fruit (espaliered fruit and dwarf fruit trees and show the community how to make cider and dry fruit), one for herbs (demonstrations of how to use them for health and home usages), and one for flowers (flower bouquets and hanging baskets and window boxes and flowers to grow in gardens).
3. The Center can create new jobs in a place where many technology jobs have disappeared and the economy is suffering. Biotechnology, the revolution for the 21st century, needs a new definition. It includes not only the study of gene manipulations but also the use of microorganisms to clean up the environment and to create healthier food. It can help us learn to live with nature more harmoniously and less expensively. The Center is needed for this work.
4. Create relationships with the local colleges and universities which have departments and programs that may need this kind of place for their work, such as the Agricultural Economics Department at Santa Clara University and the Agriculture Department and the Organic Farming Research Foundation at UC Santa Cruz, the Environmental Studies departments at Stanford, De Anza College, UC Santa Cruz, Santa Clara University, and San Jose State, the Horticulture Departments at San Mateo and Foothill Colleges, the Botany Department at San Jose State. Also, create an intern and research program for the students in these programs.

5. It should develop curriculum on gardens for schools and create after school/weekend programs where children learn garden skills which will help give them job skills. It should help the schools learn how to create garden/agriculture/native plant surroundings for our schools. It should also teach children where food comes from and bring healthy food to school kitchens and, as a result, to the rest of their lives.
6. Include at the Center many moneymaking activities such a tea room/restaurant/garden store/gift shop, environmental/gardening/farming office centers, several working organic farmers, an organic Farmer's Market, a drop-in day care center connected to the nearby shopping centers, special Holiday events, solar displays and sales, a store for environmentally friendly products, and offices for environmental services. Environmental products and services are a big business and everyone leaves the community to buy these things because the Valley has almost no environment products. This combination of activities would be unique in the Central Coast and much needed in the South Bay region.
7. It can bring federal and state grant money, researchers, and educators into the Central Coast for our needs. Serious current research needs include Sudden Oak Death Syndrome and the Pine Beetle disease, both of which are killing our native trees.
8. It is the only research center that exists for our region's climate and urban community needs. The two nearest coastal centers are in rural Mendocino and semi-desert Ventura Counties. Maybe the State could have its offices on the property with a much smaller research facility.
9. It has been doing important research on urban tree and root care that will help stop expensive damage to foundations, streets, and walks, and research on microorganisms for healthier soil thus reducing chemical pesticides, and creating healthier food. Microorganism research is also needed for cleaning up environmental pollution.
10. It has produced new varieties of drought-tolerant lawn grasses that preserve water resources. It can do other studies related to reducing water and have display areas for this purpose.
11. The Center will continue helping our cultural heritage by developing ethnic foods appropriate for our ecology and save our historically important plants with its seed bank. Growing food locally will reduce fossil fuel use and, thus, reduce state freeway maintenance costs.
12. Its historical weather station is connected to hundreds of automatic irrigation systems, thus conserving precious water.
13. Our region's urban governmental organizations and businesses need education and help to understand the ecological implications of their work. If the Center closes we will have five less regional biotech/ecological research experts and no high-level educational programs to meet community and ecological needs. Possibly the State can find a way to meet this need on the property.
14. Within a few years 50% of California's population will be of Latin heritage and most of this population works in agriculture and landscape construction. The urban Latinos are the best educated and can help us understand how to make their lives and work better through new research and educational projects.
15. It will provide a permanent facility for the training and continuing education of the region's Master Gardeners, and for the Future Farmers of America and 4H programs for young people and their teachers. These are outreach programs that have no central facility to support their valuable contributions to our region. Current facilities are scattered and, therefore, weak. Such a center will create a place where the Master Gardeners can help the community with their garden problems.
16. Encourage by example sustainable and ecological landscape ideas for the community including the governmental programs that relate to the land. Some ideas would include perforated paving, on-site drainage retention, rainwater holding tanks, solar energy technologies, composting, least toxic approaches to maintenance, and "deer-proofing" ideas for farms and gardens. Such products could be sold on the property.
17. Provide examples of plants which should not be used, such as poisonous plants, heavy pollinator plants not good for people with asthma, trees too large for small gardens, invasive plants, and plants with massive root systems which break up paving or take over an area so no other plants can grow.
18. The Center's locations and its easy access by public transportation will be excellent and, therefore, ensure that all residents of any culture, young or old, rich or poor, will be able to gather here easily.

19. Suggest varieties of good cutting flowers for gardens, colorful flowers that need little water and maintenance to embellish our public spaces, and good examples of pot and window box plantings for those who have no garden space, and sell them.
20. Develop a horticulture, garden design, and agricultural library for private and public urban gardens and farms to be used by homeowners, professionals, and governmental organizations. As part of the library there should be an auditorium where talks can be given on urban subjects relating to plants, design and sustainable/ecological issues. At least one full-time librarian and one full-time community outreach coordinator is necessary for this.
21. Regional studies are needed in organic agriculture and gardening and how to deal with weeds, pest and soil problems without chemicals. The urban gardeners use more than double the number of chemicals used in agriculture.
22. It has been doing vermiculture composting and soil studies for local governments.
23. Develop dwarf fruit tree varieties for small urban gardens as few gardens in the region have the space to grow fruit trees. It should continue to select varieties of fruits and vegetables for our particular soil conditions and for farmers as well as gardeners.
24. Create a place where professionals can become better qualified and where homeowners can improve their garden knowledge. Garden and plant clubs and professional organizations could meet there regularly.
25. Be a resource and outreach center for sustainable professionals in timber, agriculture, and mineral resources.
26. Dedicate a place at the Center to the agricultural history of the area and the Civil War Era history of the historic building on the site. Link the history of the Veterans office to the Center.
27. There should be community gardens for young and old and for people from all cultures. This will encourage people to meet and work together who would not normally meet each other.
28. Develop celebrations with food and educational events. Our urban population needs to learn more about the historical and current business of agriculture. There are many technology events and no agriculture events. Agriculture events are best held in open space land and not in conference centers.
29. The land should be placed in a permanent agriculture land trust so never again will we worry that the land will be lost to housing or commercial usages other than products or services related to agriculture and horticulture.