Preservation of farms and ranches in Boulder County, Colorado

-Long-term commitment to preserving rural areas
-Boulder County Comprehensive Plan – 1978 -Preserve rural areas as buffers and direct urban growth to cities and towns -Tools to implement the Plan:
  -Very low density development allowed in the unincorporated county -1 unit per 35 acres -Incentive for cluster development with surrounding land preserved as conservation easement -Transferable Development Rights to locate development closer to existing development -Intergovernmental Agreements to create a common vision with cities and towns about where land should remain rural
-And most importantly -Boulder County Open Space -Program is over 30 years old -Funded by voter approved sales taxes and by property taxes -95,000 acres preserved – About 20% of Boulder County -65,000 acres fee simple, 30,000 acres of conservation easements

Agricultural land stewardship: -25,000 acres of farm and ranch land owned fee simple -about 80% had been farmed by tenants prior to our purchase. -Land now leased to farmers and ranchers – 85 lessees – over 100 leases
-Crop-Share and Cash Leases -Lessees our “Partners in Conservation” -Net lease revenues – about $400,000 to $800,00 per year – allocated to maintain agricultural infrastructure and make improvements:
  -Lessee input into infrastructure needs -increase productivity/profitability -Improvements include hay barns, granaries, center pivot irrigation systems, irrigation enhancements.

New Agricultural initiatives: -Community garden locations and Market Farms -Small parcel farming for “farmer’s markets” and local food production -Grower’s Association format -Extension Office “Building Farmers” training programs -Consideration of farm stand/outbuilding architecture and signage that identifies open space parcels that grow food for the local market

Info: Boulder County Open Space: http://www.bouldercounty.org/openspace Land Use Techniques/IGAs: http://www.bouldercounty.org/lu Extension Programs:
http://www.coopext.colostate.edu/boulder/AG/agr.shtml