

PRESS RELEASE

OCEANSIDE SOAR LAUNCHES THE “SAVE OPEN-SPACE AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES INITIATIVE TO PROTECT OCEANSIDE’S REMAINING OPEN SPACES AND FARMLAND”.

Oceanside SOAR, a non-profit, grassroots group of Oceanside citizens dedicated to protecting our City's precious few remaining open spaces and farmlands is launching their **SOAR Initiative** on the steps of Oceanside City Hall on Wednesday, October 4th at 4:30 p.m. Following the launch, supporters will be encouraged to attend the City Council meeting and provide public comment on the Initiative.

The Initiative will establish a mechanism that provides for direct citizen participation in land use decisions affecting the City of Oceanside’s General Plan policies as they relate to Agriculture and Open Space. It takes the vote away from just three City Council members and gives the vote to Oceanside’s Citizens.

The purposes of the Initiative are: 1. To establish a mechanism that provides for direct Citizen participation in land-use decisions affecting the City of Oceanside’s General Plan policies as they relate to open space and agriculture; and 2. To minimize sprawl, reduce infrastructure costs, reduce greenhouse gases, and preserve open space and farmland. The protected open space areas would include parks, golf courses, habitat areas, rivers, and beaches.

The Initiative also proposes to amend Policy B in Section 2.5 of the Land Use Element of the General Plan to allow agritourism in areas designated for agricultural use. The Initiative permits agritourism provided it does not interfere with agricultural operations and the open space character of the area is preserved.

If adopted, the Initiative will remain in effect until December 31, 2038.

Oceanside Citizens decided to take action after the City Council voiced approval of further planning of a project for over 900 homes on 177 acres of agriculturally zoned land, with current zoning for 71 homes, in spite of unanimous rejection by the Planning Commission and City Planners. The City Council had also supported increased development at El Corazon, a recreational area.

Oceanside SOAR plans to have their Initiative on the June 2018 ballot. They are in the process of gathering the 17,500 signatures they will need by January to get the Initiative on the ballot. To find out more about Oceanside SOAR and their Initiative, visit their website at oceanside-soar.org.