

What are the Key Elements of a Good MUNICIPAL Agricultural Protection Plan?

1. Establish an Agriculture Plan Steering Committee

- Invite farmers and members of agricultural support businesses to serve.
- ✓ Hire a consultant with knowledge of rural/farmland protection planning issues.

2. Outline a Public Participation Program

- ✓ Set a plan to regularly inform farmers & public regarding plan progress.
- ✓ Develop mailing and e-mail lists; post updates on the Town Web site.
- ✓ Invite - all farmers to - all meetings - all the time.
- ✓ Establish and publish an Ag. Protection Plan meeting schedule.

3. Work out a “Tentative” Table of Contents with Steering Committee and Consultant

- ✓ Base plan around key local issues and NYSDAM plan grant requirements.
- ✓ Review NYSDAM Circular 1500 section 324-a “Municipal Ag and Farmland Plans”
- ✓ Establish a milestone table identifying key issues and proposed time frame.

4. Some Key Content Items for the Plan

- ✓ Provide a brief analysis of local conditions and issues.
- ✓ Conduct a SWOT analysis. (**S**trengths-**W**eaknesses-**O**pportunities-**T**hreats)
- ✓ Develop a definition of agriculture for your Town.
- ✓ Interview farmers and representatives of agricultural support businesses; ID needs.
- ✓ Craft a vision statement for agriculture; include a listing of farming- related goals.
- ✓ Develop base maps for the plan-prime soils, existing farms, rented lands, number of parcels receiving Ag assessment, Zoning, parcels in Ag Districts, identified growth areas-identified protection areas-key maps from Comp. Plan, etc.
- ✓ Provide an analysis of zoning and subdivision regulations to determine if they are “Farm-Friendly”. Identify specific zoning changes or other actions to mitigate impacts from growth on farmland and the agricultural industry.
- ✓ Provide an analysis of existing and future sewer and water lines in relation to Ag.
- ✓ Review & illustrate “Tools in the Tool Box” to protect agriculture in your Town.
- ✓ Identify agricultural land or areas proposed to be protected.
- ✓ Document farmer and public involvement in Plan development.

5. Plan Recommendations

- ✓ Develop an Executive Summary of the Plan.
- ✓ Ag Protection Recommendations which identifies the implementation agent, time frame, priority level and cost estimate (Implementation Matrix)
- ✓ Describe activities, programs and strategies intended to be used by the Town to promote continued agricultures use.
- ✓ Consider establishing a permanent Town Agricultural Advisory Committee to help implement the Ag Protection Plan and provide advice to the Town Planning Board

6. Plan Approval

- ✓ The Town shall conduct at least one public hearing on the Ag Protection Plan.
- ✓ The Plan shall be submitted to the County Ag Protection Board for approval.
- ✓ The Ag Plan is to be approved by the Town Board.
- ✓ The Ag Plan shall be submitted to the Commissioner of Agriculture for approval.