

Integrating Land Use Planning into Farmland Preservation

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What have we done?

It's been an evolution....

- Planning & Development Map
- Out of Ranking Order Criteria
- County Minimum Criteria – new for 2021!

Why?

- Ensure long term viability of farms preserved
- Protect program investment
- Sound utilization of limited funding
- Address challenges associated with local land use planning
- Encourage better planning for agriculture

Real Example #1

- 150 acre beef and crop farm
- Twp approved ASA in August 2014
- Landowner applied to preservation 2015
- Farm ranked #1
- 99% Class 1 & 2 soils
- Partially consistent with P&D map
- Zoned R1 & R2, nearby sewer investments
- Twp was furious with the County and is no longer supportive of the program!

Real Example #2

- 95 acre crop and beef farm
- ASA approved 1992, Twp conducted 1, 7-year review in ~30 years
- Landowner selected for preservation in 2020
- Class 1-3 soils, adjacent to other preserved farms
- Farm zoned Industrial
- Property adjacent to railroad spur, other existing industrial land
- Located on road not suitable for industrial development
- Township & landowner working together to rezone to Ag!

Real Example #3

- 2 Farms totaling 180+ acres cropland
- Properties located in an ASA
- Joint Township-County Easement Proposed: cost share 50/50
- Property zoned Residential Estate
- Review of zoning ordinance revealed that Agriculture was not a permitted use
- Applicant could not meet out “Out of Ranking Order” criteria – preservation delayed!
- Township is revising zoning ordinance to permit Ag use

Common Themes

- Lack of integration between Comprehensive Plan/ASA Program/Zoning Ordinance
- Misunderstanding of ASA Program
- “Rubber stamping” ASA additions w/o consideration of criteria
- Lack of 7 year ASA reviews
- The County was left holding the bag!!

County Minimum Criteria

- *Preservation shall be consistent with the Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan and Planning & Development Map.*
- *Preservation shall be consistent with the municipal comprehensive plan and land use planning documents.*
- *Local land use planning documents shall be supportive of agriculture. The Agricultural Land Preservation Board shall evaluate the following areas:*
 - ✓ *The county and municipal comprehensive plans shall encourage agriculture as land use.*
 - ✓ *Agriculture shall be a use permitted by right in the zoning ordinance.*
 - ✓ *The purpose statement of the zoning district shall encourage agriculture.*