

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 an analysis of local conditions and issues.
 - ✓ Conduct a SWOT analysis.
 - ✓ Develop a definition of agriculture for your Town.
 - ✓ Interview farmers and representatives of agricultural support businesses.
 - ✓ Craft a vision statement for agriculture in your community—
 - ✓ Develop base maps for the plan—prime soils, existing farms, rented lands, lands receiving Ag assessment, Zoning, Ag Districts, identified growth areas- identified protection areas—key maps from Comprehensive Plan, Hamlet Studies, 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 the agricultural industry and farmland.
 - ✓ Provide an analysis of existing and future sewer and water lines in relation to Ag.
 - ✓ Review “Tools in the Tool Box” to protect agriculture in your Town. Include illustrations.
 - ✓ 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.
 - ✓ Consider a listing of Ag Protection Recommendations which identifies the implementation agent, time frame, priority level and cost estimate.
 - ✓ Describe activities, programs and strategies intended to be used by the Town to promote continued agriculture use.
 - ✓ In conjunction with above, develop an “Implementation Matrix” for plan recommendations.
 - ✓ Consider establishing a permanent Town Agricultural Advisory Committee to help implement the Ag Protection Plan and provide advice to the Town Board and the 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.