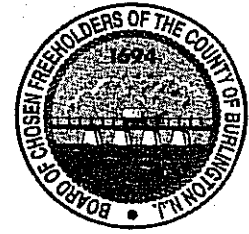


Board of Chosen Freeholders County of Burlington New Jersey



Department of Resource Conservation

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BURLINGTON COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

PLANNING INCENTIVE GRANT PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY FOR MUNICIPAL APPLICATIONS

I. PLANNING INCENTIVE GRANT REGULATIONS: N.J.A.C. 2:76 – 17

The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) rules describe the process by which counties and municipalities may apply and receive funding under the Planning Incentive Grant (PIG) Program, authorized by N.J.S.A. 4: 1C-5f and 13:8C-1 et seq., and P.L. 1999, c. 180. This Burlington County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) policy has been established to provide the Board with direction on criteria for recommending preliminary approval of project areas to the Board of Chosen Freeholders, the administrative processing of easement acquisitions on targeted farms, the procedures for amendments to the list of targeted farms, and to set forth an acceptable communication policy between the Burlington CADB and the Municipal Agricultural Advisory Committees (AAC). The PIG program represents a significant partnership between the SADC, Burlington County, and the applicant municipality, with the common goal of preserving a significant area of reasonably contiguous farmland to promote the long-term economic viability of agriculture as an industry.

II. GUIDELINES FOR CADB PRELIMINARY APPROVAL/FUNDING RECOMENDATION

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 2:76-17.7, if county funding is sought, the municipal application shall be forwarded to the CADB for review and approval prior to the submission of the application to the SADC. The Burlington CADB shall not recommend preliminary approval for funding unless the following conditions are met:

1. The application advances the goals of the Burlington County Farmland Preservation Program and does not interfere with the implementation of other county comprehensive plans including the County's Parks and Open Space Master Plan.
2. All lands proposed for preservation are within the geographic boundary of the County's ADA
3. All eligibility requirements have been met, including;
 - i. The appointment of an agricultural advisory committee pursuant to N.J.A.C. 2:76-17.4
 - ii. The establishment of a dedicated funding source pursuant to N.J.A.C. 2:76-17.5
 - iii. The adoption of a farmland preservation plan element to the Municipal Master Plan pursuant to N.J.A.C. 2:76-17.6
4. The application includes submission criteria pursuant to N.J.A.C. 2:76-17.7(c) prepared in consultation with the municipal AAC and meets the definition of a "project area" according to the definitions provided in N.J.A.C. 2:76-17.2.
5. The Municipal governing body and the AAC have approved the application by resolution

Upon satisfactory completion of these conditions, the Burlington County CADB shall consider the merits of an application and make an approval and funding recommendation to the Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders provided that:

1. The County will provide cost share grants in an amount not to exceed one-half of the portion of the SADC certified easement value not provided for by the SADC.
2. At no time shall the County's cost share exceed that of the Township.
3. The County shall provide cost share funding to the extent it can without compromising its financial capacity to achieve other County conservation program goals.

III. PROCESSING EASEMENT ACQUISITIONS ON TARGETED FARMS

1. The municipality shall be viewed as the administrative contact during the application process at the SADC and will remain the administrative contact if preliminary approval is granted to the project area. The County should be copied on all relevant correspondence to and from the SADC.
2. The municipality shall be responsible for soliciting farmland preservation program applications from targeted farms. Further, the municipality shall be responsible for contracting for appraisal services consistent with the SADC Farmland Preservation Program's Appraiser's Handbook. The municipality will send to the County a copy of each farmland preservation application along with a certified copy of both appraisals as soon as they are available.
3. The CADB will grant preliminary approval with the intent of setting forth application details and confirmation of Acquisition Targeting List (ATL) status. All applications must be consistent with the Burlington CADB Policy for Exceptions, RDSO's, and Housing Opportunities in order for the county to participate in the acquisition.
4. Once an easement value is certified by the SADC for an individual farm, the county and the municipality will prepare a joint landowner offer.
5. If the offer is accepted, the Burlington CADB, the Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders, and the Municipality shall individually grant final approval for the acquisition. These approvals shall be sent to the SADC for consideration at their next available meeting for State final approval.
6. Once the SADC grants final approval for the acquisition, the County will coordinate the landowner contract, survey and title work, and the closing of the easement purchase.
7. The County will not close with the landowner until both the State and Township share of the acquisition costs are deposited in the County's account.
8. If the farm meets the criteria for the CADB's ATL, the County will reimburse the Township 25% of the standard appraisal fees upon closing of the easement.
9. At the Request to the Township governing body, the CADB may authorize the Township to perform survey and title work in association with the purchase of an easement on targeted PIG parcels. The County will not reimburse costs associated with such services contracted by the Township.

IV. AMENDMENT APPROVALS TO THE LIST OF TARGETED FARMS

1. All amendments to the list of targeted farms must be approved by the CADB. Amendments shall be consistent with Section II of this policy and be reasonably contiguous to the current approved project area.

V. PARTNERSHIP COMMUNICATION

1. A member of the AAC is encouraged to attend monthly Burlington CADB meetings and report back to the AAC and the Township Committee
2. It will be the joint responsibility of the County staff and the Municipal AAC to schedule meetings at least quarterly to discuss pertinent issues.
3. County staff shall provide a report to the CADB of the progress of the municipal PIG.

4. The annual review requested by the SADC shall be completed jointly by the Municipality and the County.

Adopted by CADB: November 18, 2004

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