

# Streamlining Agricultural Applications

Presented by  
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Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation

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# Barriers to Processing Agricultural Applications

When asked to discuss in small table groups the barriers incurred in processing agricultural applications, the group presented the following list:

- Proposals are often difficult to understand, unclear or lacking in detail
- Interpretation of regulations is restrictive rather than enabling
- There is a lack of understanding of MDS requirements, context within nutrient management requirements, and when to apply MDS within vs. outside urban boundary
- The process timing and actual regulatory requirements are unclear
- Delays and lack of clarity leads to lack of trust

# Barriers to Processing Agricultural Applications cont'd

- Planners need a better understanding of agriculture and farmers need a better understanding of planning language to communicate effectively
- The inability to coordinate is frustrating for staff and proponents
- Overregulation & policy fatigue: planners have to work within policy realm but farmers have been farming for a long time, leads to lack of trust, lack of communication, and frustration

# Barriers to Processing Agricultural Applications cont'd

- Planning application at municipal level can be linked to regional OP change
- Changes in application when partway through process: how to manage & continue processing in a timely manner
- Contradictory regulations: up to 9 commenting agencies & many building codes/regulations
- There are inconsistent setbacks among regulations
- Each application is different & often pushes limits

# Streamlining Solutions

After hearing the workshop presentations, the group brainstormed the following list of potential solutions to the barriers discussed at the outset of the workshop:

- Agricultural knowledge/training for planners and economic development staff
- Conduct actual site visits with farmer/planner who will be dealing with application
- Clear, consistent rules specific to agriculture
- Conduct consultation with the agricultural community when changing regulations/policies
- Business/economic development staff can act as liaison with planning

# Streamlining Solutions cont'd

- Complete, correct & accurate applications upon submission will result in a more timely, communicative and trusting process
- Pre-consultation at beginning of process, establish clear understanding and appropriate expectations, track the dialogue
- Pre-consultation checklist for agriculture
- Scope of pre-consultation relative to complexity of application

# Streamlining Solutions cont'd

- Investigate interpretation of value-add & commercial definitions
- Limit to one revision during process, and one recirculation
- Increased and renewed appreciation for client 'on the other side of the counter'
- Consistency in policies, up-to-date zoning