



Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

Meeting Date: 8/4/2020

New Business

Department: Buncombe Soil and Water Conservation District

Presenter(s): Agricultural Advisory Board and Smithson Mills

Contact(s): Ariel Zijp, Farmland Preservation Coordinator, Buncombe Soil and Water Smithson Mills, Consultant guiding the Buncombe Farmland Protection Plan Update

Subject: Buncombe County Farmland Protection Plan Update

Brief Summary:

In March 2019, Buncombe County Commissioners approved the funding for an update to the original Farmland Protection Plan completed in 2007 by Sam Bingham. Buncombe Soil and Water hired Smithson Mills to develop a new written report detailing an actionable plan and updating the findings and recommendations from the original plan. The plan explores practice policies that Buncombe County has implemented over the last decade and makes recommendations on how to continue to prioritize the farmland and agricultural community in Buncombe County. The plan includes the survey of the farm community, farmer profile interviews and statistical analysis of the changes in agriculture over the past decade. The update to the Farmland Protection Plan includes imperative action steps/recommendations to help direct the strategic plan goal of preserving farmland and environmentally sensitive tracts. Counties with current plans in place are allowed reduced match requirements for North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Funds (NCDA ADFPTF) used to purchase conservation easements, implement projects that reduce loss of farmland, and support projects that increase economic viability of farming.

Recommended Motion & Requested Action:

The Buncombe Agricultural Advisory Board, Buncombe Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors and Buncombe County Soil and Water Staff recommend voting to adopt the Farmland Protection Plan Update.

County Manager's comments and Recommendation:

Recommends Approval