

STAFFORD COUNTY PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (PDR) PROGRAM



July, 2022

What is a PDR Program?

- Voluntary program
- County pays landowners to restrict residential development on their land
- Owner retains ownership, can reside on property, continue farm or timber operations, or related uses
- Perpetual easement is placed on property
- Property may be sold, but easement and restrictions remain

Benefits of PDR program

- Preserves farmland and open space
- Reduces need for public services and infrastructure in rural areas
- Offers landowner alternative to selling
- Potential state tax credits or federal tax deductions



Background

- Board of Supervisors established the PDR program in 2007
- Three application rounds to date
 - easement acquisition on 12 properties totaling 1,035 acres
 - total development rights retired = 273
- Application rounds are based on availability of County funds and matching funds

Funding

- ~\$900,000 currently available
- Funds generated through rollback tax program
- Matching funds applied for through various State and Federal agencies



Eligibility Requirements

- Property zoned A-1 or A-2, minimum 20 acres
 - Contiguous properties can be combined to achieve 20-acre minimum
- Property able to be subdivided
- Property has capability of supporting agricultural or forestal use



PDR Program Process

- Landowners submit application by September 30
 - Application is voluntary
 - Submission of application does NOT bind landowner to participate
- Properties are ranked using specific criteria
 - Criteria found in Chapter 22A of County Code
- Property scoring is sent to applicant for comment
- Agricultural and Land Conservation (ALC) Committee reviews and makes recommendations to Board of Supervisors

PDR Program Process (cont.)

- County acquires easements in order of ranking
- Available funding determines number and timing of easements purchased
 - Payment based on appraised value of the easement
 - Staff applies for matching funds
 - Money and applications can carry over to future years
- Terms of easement agreed upon
- Easement recorded
- County pays applicant at closing



Application

- Available on County website
- Must be signed by all owners
- Applicant provides:
 - Basic property information
 - Copy of deed and survey
 - Lien information, i.e. mortgage
 - Info on agriculture/silviculture activities
 - Current management plans, easements or restrictions
 - List of structures and their uses
 - Photographs (optional)



Ranking Criteria

- County Code, Chapter 22-A
- 5 categories, total 275 points
 - Quality of parcel (productivity capability)
 - Maximum 110 points
 - Likelihood of development
 - Maximum 70 points
 - Circumstances supporting agriculture
 - Maximum 35 points
 - Environmental and aesthetic quality
 - Maximum 40 points
 - Cultural resources
 - Maximum 20 points

Determining Payment through Appraised Value of Easement

- County hires appraiser
- Appraiser determines highest and best use of property before easement (i.e. residential development potential)
- Appraiser determines after-easement value
- Easement value is difference between the two

Additional information

- Easement spells out any restrictions
- Easement held by County, with possible land trust co-holder
- Matching fund agencies have certain requirements that must be met, and must review and approve deed of easement
- Process can be lengthy – patience required!
- Annual monitoring conducted by County or designee to ensure compliance with easement

Steps for Landowners

- **Step 1:** Contact your accountant/attorney/advisor to determine if program is right for you
- **Step 2:** Contact PDR administrator with questions
- **Step 3:** Submit application and associated paperwork by September 30, 2022
- **Step 4:** Work with PDR administrator throughout process

QUESTIONS?



www.staffordcountyva.gov/pdr

Kathy Baker

kbaker@staffordcountyva.gov

540-658-8675

