

## Jefferson County Farmland Preservation Plan

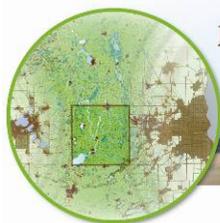


# Quadrant Meeting Notes

**Tuesday, July 20**

(24 attendees from the Towns of Lake Mills, Milford, Waterloo, Aztalan, Koshkonong, and the Villages of Waterloo and Deerfield)

- Concern about bad planning practices that have resulted in gerrymandered annexations in past.
- Concern about **city/village influence in identifying 15 year planned growth areas**.
- Question about tax sharing agreements with city/village and towns. Mark indicated this planning process and Chapter 91 does not affect these agreements. However, is an agreement identified an area as planned for growth within 15 years then the County couldn't say it wasn't.
- Question about town veto power on CUPs. Most county attorneys suggested that the county does not have the legal authority to delegate that power (less town discretion). **This is a deal breaker!**
- Concern that some city/village USAs are incredibly expansive and using the mapping approach in Scenario D in particular would have a considerable impact. Steve Grabow suggested that consultant would have to help us with the technical formula for identifying USA boundaries.
- Need to develop approach for lots that have **approved but unrecorded rezonings**. In the past there was no deadline, but now must record within 1 year via policy. This should be incorporated into the land division/zoning ordinances.
- Concern that State departments (e.g. DOT and DNR) aren't concerned about farmland preservation.
- Need additional information on financial impacts (\$350,000 from state for PACE, \$500,000 tax credits now, could be \$2.2 million, etc.)
- Focus groups sound like two against one; too large a voice in this process. Rob suggested that last time the developers were on one side, the environmentalists on the other, and the farmers and towns in the middle. Mark indicated that there would be no "voting" at the focus groups.
- Comment that the **power point presentation should be part of the packet**. Should send also to farmers.
- Comment from one individual that **Scenario B is acceptable, but not with C or D**; keep tax credit eligibility.
- Comment that the future trend is for municipalities to contract and increase population density. Current economic situation makes development more difficult. There are groups we can use as allies that promote sustainable activities that ensure that there will be family farms in the County. Cities will be hard pressed to extend services to new developments. We understand that farmers have financial hardships and if they need to sell for retirement it would be nice to know where so that we can make sure they would stay family farms.



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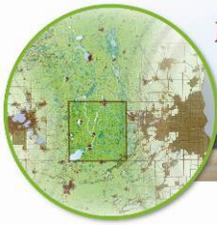


### Quadrant Meeting Notes

Wednesday, July 21

(17 attendees from the Towns of Hebron, Coldspring, Sullivan, Palmyra, Koshkonong, and the City of Fort Atkinson)

- Question about how farmers prove the \$6000 gross farm revenue requirement. Need to discuss this with DATCP.
- Comment that assessed values could go up if closer to planned growth area. Mark indicated that taxes are based on use value assessment not on proximity to development.
- Comment that if County does CUP approach in Scenarios C or D, Towns that want to carry out **stricter town plan policies** would lose the veto authority to assure that their stricter town plans could be realized.
- Comment that Scenario C may seem attractive up front because there are fewer homes/less acres used, but that is **outweighed by loss of Town veto power**.
- Question about whether the 1:20 ratio policy be added to a rezoning scenario. Mark comments that it would, but it would probably replace the “max 3 non-farm divisions, 2 non-prime divisions” scheme with a table based on ratios.
- Comment that we need to somehow **weave in town plans and policies in County plan**—may want to indicate that County plan policy is the default, but County will partner to enforce Town policies where stricter.
- Comment from one individual indicating that she **prefers Scenario A** because it reduces the amount of farmland used.
- Several people said to **get rid of Scenario D**.
- One person said to **get rid of Scenario A**.



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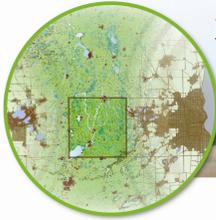


# Quadrant Meeting Notes

**Monday, July 26**

(34 attendees from the Towns of Jefferson, Oakland, Koshkonong, Sumner, Oakland, Lake Mills, Hebron, and Farmington)

- Questions on calculation of tax credit; how it is different from current program? Flat per acre tax credit rate per total acreage, if land “primarily” in ag use. What would be total amount lost to County if decided to do Scenario A? Most recent tax credit data had \$464,000 coming to County farmers on an annual basis; could go up assuming same participants remained in program.
- Questions of 15 year growth areas. Will it promote more annexation? Maybe, because no more tax credits, but does not change annexation law. Who determines these areas? County and town, but it has to pass sniff test at the State level. What will these properties be rezoned to? County could create **new “ag transition” zoning district**, with similar rules as A-1 but no longer any tax credit eligibility.
- Could **rezoning or CUP option both** exist together? Yes, but there would be challenges—who decides which option to use, how County tracks splits, how to decide initial zoning of property, and additional complexity for multiple options.
- Does the CUP option suggest that additional conditions on use, etc. may be applied to each CUP? Not necessarily; could depend on how zoning ordinance was written.
- Is it logical for the State to create an incentive away from rezoning and towards CUPs if they need funding for PACE, etc. programs?
- Would the CUP approach allow **additional uses on remaining farm acreage** once maximum 4/5houses are used? This is a good question which requires further research, but it would likely require rezoning, which would have to be enabled by County policy and may be subject to the conversion fee.



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Farmland Preservation Plan**



## **Quadrant Meeting Notes**

**Thursday, July 29**

(36 attendees from the Towns of Concord, Watertown, Farmington, Ixonia, Aztalan, Palmyra, AJ Appraisals, and Farm Bureau.)

- Can Towns be more restrictive than the County plan/ordinance? Yes, that is the current policy and County will likely try to figure out how to continue that policy. County may need to reference Town plans directly in County plan because the County is required to follow its own plan.
- Are we required to identifying 15 year growth areas? Yes, but no plan in Jefferson County has done this already, so through this process we would have to identify them to stay in State program. The 1999 County plan does have planned development areas and the local plans do too (e.g., urban service areas). We'd have to take all of those into consideration.
- Can planned 15 year growth areas be smaller than the current USAs? Yes, they almost certainly would because these were sized to accommodate 20 years of growth with a lot of flexibility. May be more reasonably understood as 40-50 year growth areas.
- Are the cities and village going to be identifying the 15 year areas? No, the County and State is. The Town is involved since they approve the updated zoning map. We will need to identify reasonable and defensible areas for future development.
- A couple people noted that it isn't fair that they won't get the tax credit if located in a "planned 15 year growth area" if they don't want to develop or cannot develop for whatever reason (e.g., no market demand).
- Question about whether a farmer could sign an agreement that they would not develop in the next 15 years, even if located right next to a City or Village. We will need to ask DATCP if they will consider that a reasonable criteria along with more technical criteria.
- Comment about City plan for future development around STH 26 in Watertown. Comments about annexation and municipal authority.
- Comment that the State is losing out on the conversion fee with the CUP approach and 15 year growth area rezoning.
- No more State advisory committee; now plans and ordinances are approved by DATCP staff.
- Question about affect on assessment. No changes to use value assessment because the use isn't changing.

- Why does the State want the 15 year growth areas in the program? The state's goal is to promote growth within USAs rather than towns. The State doesn't want to spend tax credits on lands that will be developed soon.
- Can we reconsider our **definition of Prime Soils** (so much is defined as prime)? State's law says prime must include Class I and II and counties can add to it. Jefferson County has I, II, and III with I and II characteristics. Taking out III might reduce it by 15-20 percent.
- Comment about why towns would care if there was a conversion fee or not.
- What is the plan for open space/natural resources? Comment that **open space should be preserved** also. Environmental corridors will be included; change to natural resources zoning district will be considered; A-1 zoning has had the effect of preserving open space/natural resources, too.
- What about horse farms or stables? Eligible for A-1 zoning but may not be eligible for tax credits; need to research this.
- Comment from an individual that **Scenario D should be dropped**; it goes against farmland preservation goal.
- Comment from an individual that **Scenario A seems like a problem** because of loss of tax credits and PACE grants.
- Comment that we should look out east for models, particularly New Jersey. Give the farmer an incentive to preserve the land. Can give financial incentives (tax credits, PACE) and help build farm markets locally.
- Can nutrient management plans cover only a portion of the farm? Need to research this.
- Comment from an individual that they liked **combination of different scenarios**
- Comment from an individual that the State should do more to assist passing farms from parents to children.