WAUKESHA COUNTY

AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Waukesha County Agricultural Land Preservation Plan has been prepared in direct response to Resolution 197 adopted by the Waukesha County Board of Supervisors on March 21, 1978. One of the stated purposes of that resolution related to the Waukesha County Board of Supervisors desire to encourage continued agricultural use of land in Waukesha County. The Waukesha County Board of Supervisors has demonstrated its support for comprehensive land use planning through its adoption of the Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan along with various elements of it which collectively comprise the Regional Plan. With respect to those previously adopted elements of the Regional Plan the Agricultural Land Preservation Plan may be considered a refinement of the Regional Plan addressing itself specifically to the issue of agricultural land preservation. The narrative portion of this handout is intended to provide an overview to the need for developing such a plan, the process of plan preparation and the recommendations of the plan.

There has been a growing public concern over the loss of farmland to urban uses as evidenced by the results of many local studies, forums and public discussions. Many direct as well as indirect impacts bear on this issue, i.e., land use compatibility problems, loss of economic base as it relates to agriculture, encroachment of urban uses and demand for services into farm areas, environmental deterioration of land, water and air and the changes imposed upon the nature of rural living.

The growth of Waukesha County in the post World-War II era has been substantial with a population increase from 85,901 in 1950 to 280,326 in 1980. The absolute gain during the 1970's (48,991) is down from that of the 1960's (73,086) and was about the same as that of the 1950's (72,348). Over 38,000 acres of farm land has been converted to subdivision use in this period with much of that occurring in areas beyond the reach of proposed urban services.

PLAN PROCESS

Planning is a rational process of formulating goals and through the preparation and implementation of plans, for achieving those goals. Goal is synonymous with the term objective in that it is an end point toward which plans and policies are directed. The formulation of goals, therefore, is a necessary and proper task to perform prior to the development of plans. Under the Waukesha County Program of Agricultural Land Preservation, the Waukesha County Park and Planning Commission has been charged with the responsibility of both formulating goals and directing the preparation of the plan.

In developing the goals of this planning effort and the policies which are intended to be utilized in implementing those goals, the Commission has addressed itself to three interrelated and equally important areas of land use which it felt must be provided for. These three areas are:

1. The preservation of productive agricultural lands.
2. The protection of environmentally sensitive lands and open spaces.
3. The allocation of lands to accommodate urban growth.

A plan which strikes a balance between these three major land use issues has the best opportunity for success. It must be shown that environmentally significant lands, because they are sensitive and fragile, ought to be generally beyond the supply of lands available for development purposes. Further, the supply side of the development equation should relate closely to the forecast level of demand as expressed in population forecasts. It is certain that not all permissively zoned undeveloped land in Waukesha County will be consumed by urban growth over the next 20-50 years at development rates similar to those of the last 30 years. Considering the amount of land not presently committed to urban use, the Commission was left with many options in regard to the preparation of a plan which would appropriately allocate the land resources to their most beneficial use countywide and strike a reasonable balance between competing forces for the use of the land.

GOALS

GOALS FOR AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

The Waukesha County Park and Planning Commission, after due consideration, has determined that the goals for agricultural lands should include the preservation of the most productive farmlands of Waukesha County which lie beyond forecast development needs. These lands nurture wildlife habitats, help to maintain the ecological balance of the community, supply locally produced agricultural products not only to the surrounding communities but to national markets and support accessory agricultural businesses. Hand in hand with the above goal is the attainment of wise land use practices which recognize the various needs of society and satisfy all of those various needs to the greatest degree practicable. A secondary goal is the implementation of the Regional Plan, particularly with regard to land use, park and open space and urban services.

GOALS FOR OPEN SPACE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS

The Commission recognizes two major goals for open space and environmentally sensitive lands. The first goal is the protection of the surface and ground water resources through the abatement of pollution from all contributing sources. The second goal is the preservation of the high value elements of the natural resource base identified and mapped on the Regional Park and Open Space Plan which was adopted by the Waukesha County Board of Supervisors as the Waukesha County Park and Parkway Plan. Subsequent refinement of the areas identified in that plan are now being prepared by the Regional Planning Commission in connection with the detailing of the sewer service area element of the Areawide Water Quality Management Plan. An additional natural resource related goal is the implementation of the Sand and Gravel Utilization Plan recommendations for Waukesha County which identified the high value sand and gravel resource by relating a series of factors both inhibiting and supporting the exploitation of that mineral resource.

GOALS FOR GROWTH

The Waukesha County Park and Planning Commission understands that the causes for urban sprawl are diverse and complex. Some of these causes relate to the extent of permissively zoned lands which exist throughout Waukesha County, the market prices obtained for farmlands which convert to urban uses versus farmlands which remain in farm use and the reluctance, thus far, of most communities in Waukesha County to work together in implementing the adopted elements of the Regional Plan to a greater degree. The problem, as the Commission views it, is imparting a rational system on an already irrational pattern of action. The goals for growth are:

1. To provide a supply of suitable land for development adequate to meet anticipated needs through the year 2000 while avoiding the premature conversion of good farmlands.
2. To promote an efficient pattern of development which maximizes the use of costly community facilities such as roads, schools, sewage treatment plants and water distribution systems.
3. To promote the conservation and wise use of increasingly scarce energy resources.

POLICIES

POLICIES FOR AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

The Waukesha County Park and Planning Commission has formulated the following policies in developing the Agricultural Land Preservation Plan for Waukesha County. First among those policies is the identification and mapping of agricultural lands which exhibit high potential for sustained long-term agricultural productivity, using modern management techniques and practices. The Commission has and will continue to cooperate with other agencies and governmental units at all levels to qualify eligible farmers wishing to participate in the State of Wisconsin Agricultural Tax Credit Program and will work toward reconciling conflicts where they might exist in the placement of public facilities and improvements so as not to undermine the intent of the Agricultural Land Preservation Plan. The Commission is also committed to ameliorating the effects of previous scattered development by working to discourage further sprawl throughout Waukesha County and in this manner will encourage new urban development in areas consistent with the planned extension of community services, such as sewer and water. Finally, the Commission believes that some rural non-farm development at low densities may be consistent with the greater good of preserving productive agricultural farm lands. In such cases though development will be discouraged on prime soils, other work lands or lands which could recombine with existing productive farm operations. Where any such proposed rural non-farm development would be trend setting it will be discouraged.

POLICIES FOR OPEN SPACE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS

The policies selected by the Waukesha County Park and Planning Commission for the implementation of the above goals include the critical review of all development proposals with the intent of eliminating or reducing undesirable impacts on the environment in order to maintain the quality of natural functioning systems. The Commission intends to firmly support the implementation of the Areawide Water Quality Management Plan through decision making which is consistent with the recommendations of that plan. The Commission in reviewing subdivision plats will attempt to maintain such features of the natural environment as woodlands, wetlands, floodplains, streams, lakes, steep slopes and prairie in as natural a state as possible. In the area of land altering activities, the Commission is committed to lessening the effects of sedimentation and erosion and to that end, the Commission and the Waukesha County Soil and Water Conservation District Board will coordinate its activities with the activities of developers and other local units of government to insure that no unnecessary erosion or sedimentation will be permitted in connection with development activities.

POLICIES FOR GROWTH

The Waukesha County Park and Planning Commission has directed the plan preparation in accordance with the following policies for growth. The amount of land to be made available for development under the terms of this plan will be linked to accommodating the planned population increase over the plan period. Within the sewer service boundary of the adopted Areawide Water Quality Management Plan, development will be encouraged at urban densities. In rural areas (beyond the urban service boundary) non-farm rural residential development will be permitted only on lands not considered worklands in the sense that they cannot reasonably be returned to farming use or otherwise unsuitable for farming and only where they lie adjacent to existing residential or other development. Other isolated parcels below the 35 acre minimum size required for consideration in the State of Wisconsin Agricultural Tax Credit Program may be permitted to develop non-farm residential uses only where no land use compatibility problem is likely to result. Industrial development with its employment generating effect will be encouraged close to existing centers of population in configurations which will make efficient economic use of the land resource and community services and facilities. Within the urban service boundary the staging of large scale development will be coordinated with the phased provision of sewer and water. For the purposes of this plan, large scale is meant to apply to sites 10 acres or more in overall size.

RECOMMENDED LAND USE CATEGORIES

AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

Parcel Size 35 Acres or Greater: These lands are recommended for agricultural land preservation on the basis of their ability to meet or exceed the criteria established for such lands, i.e. Each individual farm unit consists of a parcel or parcels 35 acres or in area with 50% of the farm unit covered by soils which have been rated National Prime or of Statewide Significance or a combination of the two. The individual farm unit lies within an aggregation of similarly situated farm units comprising at least 100 acres in size and these lands lie beyond the anticipated needs of the community for lands in which to grow through the Year 2000. Also included within this category are some areas of environmental corridor lands which lie within portions of active farm operations. Inclusion of these lands was deemed desirable and necessary in order to preserve and maintain the integrity of these active operations without having them divided by the environmental corridors. It is the intent, however, that these environmental corridors not be modified or altered but that they continue to remain in undisturbed or relatively undisturbed states.

Parcel Size Less Than 35 Acres: This area depicts agriculturally used parcels smaller than 35 acres which are recommended for agricultural preservation. These lands in and of themselves will not qualify for participation in the State of Wisconsin Tax Credit Program. They possess the potential for reaggregation to efficient and economical farm operations and for that reason it is deemed under this plan to be desirable to place them into the preservation category.

AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION - TRANSITIONAL

Transitional farmlands are recommended for preservation but with the recognition that they lie in close proximity to existing centers of development and/or within areas to which community services are planned over the planning period of the next 20 years (the Year 2000). At some time within the planning period, therefore, it may be necessary to convert these lands to urban or suburban uses to accommodate future population demands. It is consistent for this to occur in accordance with the growth element of this plan.

LAND TO ACCOMMODATE FUTURE GROWTH

Under this plan, these areas which have been designated to accommodate future growth are available immediately, if necessary, to accommodate the present demand for building sites within the various communities of Waukesha County. These lands where possible are located in areas adjacent to existing centers of development to facilitate the efficient use of community facilities, such as roads, schools, police and fire protection and water distribution systems. In most cases, these areas lie within the sewer service area of the Year 2000 Areawide Water Quality Management Plan. Also included within this designation are lands which are in the process of being platted or have been so recently platted that they are not yet completely built upon and contain substantial remaining sites for development.

ENVIRONMENTAL CORRIDOR

The areas shown as environmental corridors on the recommended plan are those environmentally sensitive lands which exhibit at least three of the eleven elements of environmental corridors which were discussed in Chapter V. Small areas of environmental corridors which lie within and are portions of active farm operations are not always distinguished here. This, it is felt, does not pose any particular problem in that these lands under U.S.D.A./Soil Conservation Service cooperator agreements and resulting farm plans will not be converted from their natural state to incompatible uses.

OTHER LANDS

This category includes all existing developed lands and all lands not included in the environmental corridors or lands needed to accommodate the forecast level of population increase or lands recommended for agricultural land preservation either permanent or transitional. It serves as a holding type of category which in the future may be considered for accommodating growth.

PLANNING ANALYSIS AREAS

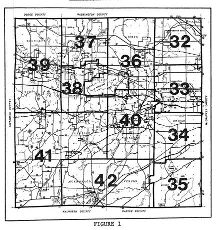


FIGURE 1

POPULATION AND LAND USE FORECASTS

PLANNING ANALYSIS AREA	COMMUNITIES	POPULATION INCREASE 1980 - 2000	ACREAGE NEEDED FOR DEVELOPMENT 1980 - 2000
32	Butler Village Lannon Village Menomonee Falls Village	30,000	2,700
33	Brookfield City Brookfield Town Elm Grove Village	9,000	1,500
34	New Berlin City	24,000	2,000
35	Muskego City	6,000	800
36	Lisbon Town Pewaukee Village Sussex Village Delafield Town (part) Pewaukee Town (part)	15,000	3,500
37	Chenequa Village Merton Town Merton Village	2,500	1,000
38	Delafield City Hartland Village Nashotah Village Delafield Town (part)	6,000	1,700
39	Lac La Belle Village Oconomowoc City Oconomowoc Town Oconomowoc Lake Village Summit Town	6,000	1,600
40	Waukesha City Waukesha Town Pewaukee Town (part)	20,000	3,000
41	Dousman Village Eagle Town Eagle Village Genesee Town North Prairie Village Ottawa Town Wales Village	6,000	2,000
42	Big Bend Village Mukwonago Town Mukwonago Village Vernon Town	5,000	1,700
	TOTAL	129,500	21,500

FIGURE 2

RECOMMENDED LAND USES UNDER THE AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION PLAN-IN ACRES

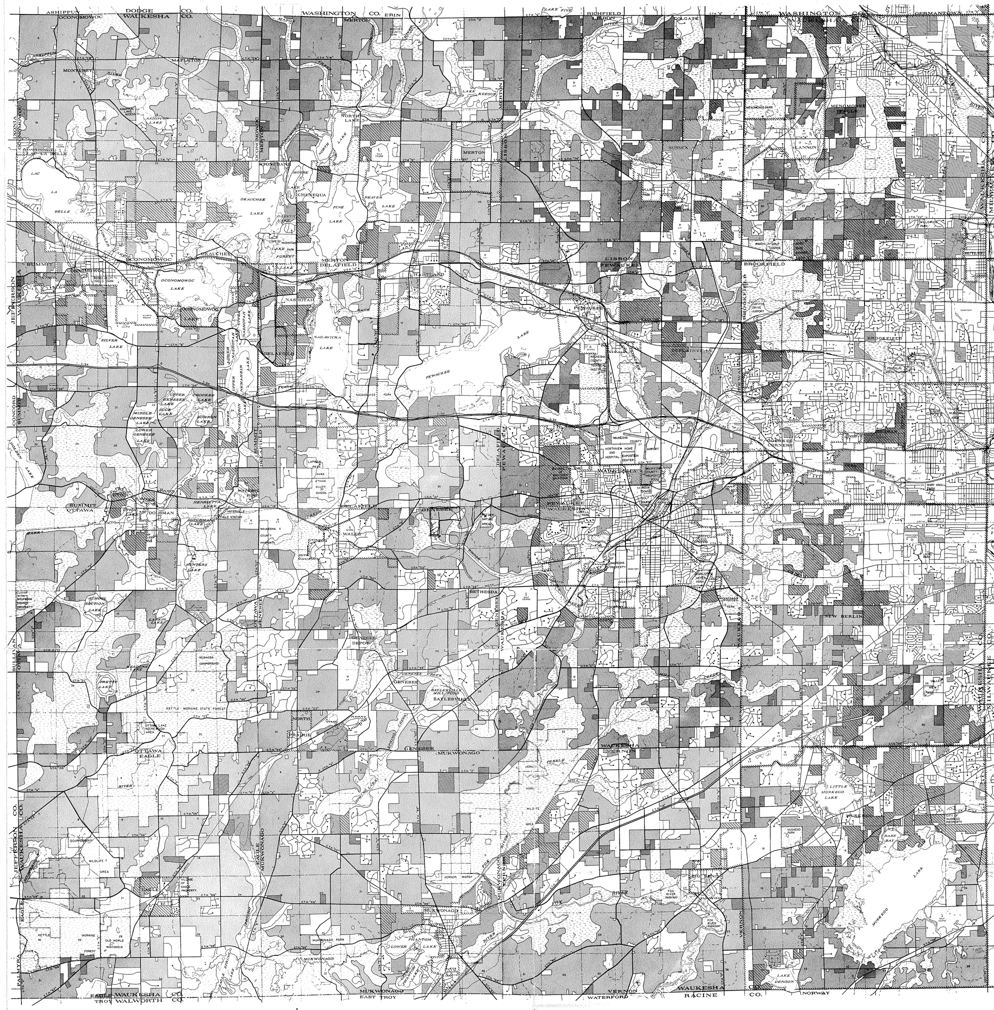
PLANNING ANALYSIS AREAS	#	Ag. PRESERVATION PARCELS GREATER THAN 35 ACRES	Ag. PRESERVATION PARCELS LESS THAN 35 ACRES	Ag. PRESERVATION TRANSITIONAL LANDS	LAND TO ACCOMMODATE FUTURE GROWTH	ENVIRONMENTAL CORRIDOR
Butler V. Lannon V. Menomonee Falls V.	32	2,994	441	1,674	2,738	4,281
Brookfield City Brookfield Town Elm Grove V.	33	0	0	1,218	1,471	3,785
New Berlin City	34	3,891	524	2,600	2,050	1,564
Muskego City	35	5,795	502	2,839	830	2,860
Lisbon T. Sussex V. Pewaukee V. Delafield T. pt. Pewaukee T. pt.	36	12,668	987	1,173	3,541	5,872
Merton T. Merton V. Chenequa V.	37	8,472	478	1,191	963	2,745
Delafield C. Delafield T pt. Hartland V. Nashotah V.	38	4,958	142	822	1,673	4,172
Oconomowoc C. Oconomowoc T. Lac La Belle V. Oconomowoc Lake V. Summit T.	39	17,997	644	2,293	1,607	9,570
Waukesha C. Waukesha T. Pewaukee T. pt.	40	6,808	299	1,154	3,049	6,299
Ottawa T. Dousman V. Eagle T. Eagle V. Genesee T. North Prairie V. Wales V.	41	26,447	842	719	2,021	23,269
Mukwonago T. Mukwonago V. Vernon T. Big Bend V.	42	18,776	678	943	1,727	10,939
TOTAL ACRES WAUKESHA COUNTY		108,806	5,537	16,626	21,670	75,356

FIGURE 3

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The recommended plan map printed to the right if implemented will attain the goals formulated by the Waukesha County Park and Planning Commission for the preservation of agricultural lands, the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and the provision of suitable land to accommodate future growth. The forecast population increase and land area needs have been modified from previously adopted elements of the regional plan to more closely relate to changing demographic trends now becoming apparent in the release of 1980 census reports. The geographic unit employed to develop the forecasts as well as report the land uses recommended in the plan is the Planning Analysis Area as shown on Fig.1.

The implementation of this plan will not be complete without its adoption by the Waukesha County Board of Supervisors, certification by the Wisconsin Agricultural Land Preservation Board and the enactment of exclusive agricultural zoning ordinances in each of the local communities in which the plan calls for agricultural lands to be preserved. It must be emphasized that the enactment of exclusive agricultural zoning ordinances will, under the recommendation of this plan, be a matter for each local community to deliberate upon and act accordingly. Without plan adoption and the enactment of exclusive agricultural zoning no tax credits under the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Credit Program will be available.



PREPARED BY: WAUKESHA COUNTY PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION 1980

BASE MAP SOURCE: SEWRPC

County adopted Res. 190 11-?-84

State Certified = 12-4-84

LEGEND

- INCORPORATED CITY OR VILLAGE
- MAJOR PUBLIC LAND HOLDING
- RECOMMENDED FOR AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION PARCEL SIZE 35 ACRES OR GREATER
- RECOMMENDED FOR AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION PARCEL SIZE LESS THAN 35 ACRES
- RECOMMENDED FOR AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION TRANSITIONAL LANDS
- LAND TO ACCOMMODATE FUTURE GROWTH
- ENVIRONMENTAL CORRIDOR
- OTHER LANDS

N

0 1/2 1 2 3 4 MILES

GRAPHIC SCALE

WAUKESHA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION PLAN