

## **Steps for developing local/state farmland preservation programs**

Summarized from Scott Everett's presentation, @ Growing Wisconsin Conference, 2/27/07, Kimberly, WI.

### **At state level**

- Need state law allowing counties to fund, purchase and hold easements on farmland
- Need state law enabling and allowing local governments to do farmland programs such as PDR, TDR
- Need state law that sets up the broad parameters of a PDR program, including, but not limited to:
  - Clear definition of farms and farmland
  - Easements should be perpetuity
  - County/local municipality needs to have a preservation ordinance and a local governing board
  - Local municipality needs an application procedure
  - Farmland scoring process with broad criteria, such as
    - Productive capacity of land
    - Complements local planning goals
    - Potential for land to be part of a larger block of land
    - Farmland with a greater amount of match money
    - Land that is partially donated a portion of its value
  - Easements with certain levels of protection and appraisal methods
  - Enforcement
  - Mechanism to cost share
    - Need a State Ag Preservation Board
    - Need a State Ag Preservation Fund
    - Need a State application procedure
    - Need a state scoring process

### **At the Local Level**

- Need to create a program first, then focus on the funding
- Need a local Preservation/PDR ordinance (best at county level)
  - w/ application process
  - scoring criteria
  - easement definition
  - appraisal mechanisms
  - enforcement
  - Sets up a County Ag Preservation Board

This is very difficult to do because most counties don't deal with a county-wide program that focuses on Agriculture. It's hard to understand. It involves money, which makes it political.

- Each town in the county must pass a resolution to allow their landowners to participate in the county program

- Towns must approve every application and make sure it is consistent with their local plan
- (County administered-Township controlled)

**Develop before you adopt the local ordinance:**

- Draft/Sample town resolution
- Selection/scoring process
- Complete easement (including what can/can't be done on the land once the development rights are sold)
- Appraisal methods
- Possible installment purchase option

**Keep in mind (Dos):**

- You will need to involve and educate widely
- Don't force the issue with the local board
- Don't discuss funding up front! ("We aren't proposing funding now, we want to establish the program first.")
- Involve younger farmers
- Concentrate on the fiscal and economic benefits that working ag land provides to the community
- Illustrate these programs with examples from other communities and states.

**Don'ts:**

- Develop a map identifying 'deserving' farms before you develop the program – may cause backlash
- Develop a program in order to protect a farm that is at risk from 'imminent' development.

**Needs**

State leadership

Local programs developed

**Sample Michigan PDR programs**

[http://www.accesskent.com/YourGovernment/BOC/PDR/history\\_of\\_kent\\_PDR.htm](http://www.accesskent.com/YourGovernment/BOC/PDR/history_of_kent_PDR.htm)

[http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/planning\\_environment/farmland/links.html](http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/planning_environment/farmland/links.html)

<http://www.isabellacounty.org/farmlandpres/index.html>