

Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) Programs

PACE Grant Eligibility and Ranking Criteria Maps.

Map FPP-12 shows landholdings ranked by selected Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection PACE grant criteria* (http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/workinglands/pace_application.jsp).

** Note: does not include qualitative, site-specific or other criteria that cannot be generally mapped.*

The Dane County Department of Planning and Development maintains this map, and updates it on an annual basis. Current Wisconsin ranking information will be available online through DCiMap, Dane County's online geographic information system (<http://dcimap.co.dane.wi.us/dcimap/>).

Mapping and Technical Assistance.

For town, city or village governments, or qualified non-profit conservation organizations under state and federal PACE programs seeking to purchase conservation easements on agricultural lands in Dane County, the Dane County Department of Planning and Development will provide, free of charge:

- Density Study Reports to determine development potential under the Dane County Comprehensive Plan, and;
- A map of the target property showing soils (including percentage of prime and state-significant soils), any specialty crops and any state-qualified unique farmland to meet grant application requirements of the State of Wisconsin or the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Transaction Assistance Grants.

Dane County should consider developing a supplemental grant program to assist successful PACE grant applicants with transaction costs (such as surveys, appraisals or legal work) not covered by state, federal or other PACE grant funds.

Conservation Compliance Certification.

Wisconsin PACE grant eligibility standards require that target properties have a qualified farm conservation plan in effect, and that all county, state and federal soil and water conservation standards are met. Conservation certification applications, including appropriate inspection and review fees should be received by the Land Conservation Division of the Dane County Land & Water Resources Department no later than 60 days in advance of the grant application deadline. Further details are available from the Land Conservation Division.

County Board Resolutions of Support.

The Dane County Board of Supervisors will consider resolutions in support of PACE grant applications by town, city or village governments or by qualified non-profit conservation organizations under state or federal PACE

programs, provided target lands are shown in an Farmland Preservation Area in the Farmland Preservation Plan Map (Map FPP-10) of the Dane County Farmland Preservation Plan. Send requests for consideration to the Dane County Department of Planning and Development no later than 60 days from the grant application deadline, to allow time for county review and approval.

County Acquisition Programs.

As funding permits, Dane County may work directly with willing sellers to purchase agricultural conservation easements on agricultural lands within Farmland Preservation Areas. In areas not already mapped and identified as project areas in the Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan, or in other county, town, or extraterritorial cooperative plans adopted as part of the Dane County Comprehensive Plan, Dane County will provide for timely, general notification to local governments regarding easement purchases that would affect nonfarm development potential within that jurisdiction. Dane County will work on its own or with project partners, and will seek to match its own acquisition funds with local, state and federal grant programs as much as possible. County-funded Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement projects should include lands that meet at least one of the criteria below.

1. Target lands fall within the boundaries or buffer areas for projects identified in the Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan.
2. Projects include lands targeted for wetland restoration or streambank easements identified as critical to the protection and enhancement of water quality as part of the Land and Water Legacy Fund.
3. Projects include lands within designated Agricultural Enterprise Areas.
4. Projects are in areas where landowners have demonstrated a commitment to long-term or permanent agricultural use.
5. Maintenance of project lands in permanent agricultural or open space use would:
 - minimize boundary conflicts between agriculture and incompatible uses;
 - result in substantial benefits to ground or surface water quality;
 - protect significant natural hydrologic functions
 - prevent productive agricultural lands from irreversible conversion out of agriculture or agriculture-related uses, or;
 - protect agricultural infrastructure, soil and water conservation practices or other significant public or private investments in agriculture or agriculture-related uses.

County Matching Grant Program

- Matching grant program to support town, village, city or extraterritorial PACE programs
- County will provide 25% match of appraised cost of easement.
- NRCS / other programs typically fund 50% of appraised cost
- Local / nonprofit / landowner donations to fund remaining 25% of cost
- County technical assistance for determination of development value, mapping, easement monitoring.
- Properties must be within a Farmland Preservation Area
- Properties must comply with county conservation standards
- Annual county capital funding: \$250,000 - \$300,000, with rollover of unused funds
- Who should award grants? LCC? EANR? ZLR?