

## **Land Resources Goals & Objectives:**

### *Goals:*

1. Develop and promote a county-wide system of open space corridors as a framework to protect the natural environment and scenic values, provide outdoor recreation opportunities and preserve for posterity the nature and diversity of our natural heritage.

### **Supporting objectives:**

- a. Establish a countywide transfer of development rights (TDR) framework for towns, villages and cities that wish to join.
  - b. Minimize adverse impacts of necessary encroachment of utilities and transportation facilities on land and water resources in Dane County.
  - c. Environmental corridors which are identified in a plan adopted by the county and town boards and which are part of an operating farm should be zoned either for agriculture or conservancy use.
  - d. Seek to incorporate adopted regional trails within future utility and transportation corridors.
2. Provide sufficient parks and outdoor recreation areas to meet the needs of the residents of Dane County.

### **Supporting objectives:**

- a. Fully implement the recreational elements of the *Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan*.
  - b. Conduct regular surveys of Dane County residents on a periodic basis to find out if all recreational needs are met.
3. Use open space to achieve recreational connections, separation of communities and help guide urban growth.

### **Supporting objectives:**

- a. Cooperate with other units of government in establishing a permanent network of open spaces and resource corridors, linked where possible, adjacent to all parts of the central urban area of the county.
4. Protect and maximize public enjoyment of the scenic qualities of Dane County by preserving views of landmarks, including high promontories or viewpoints, mitigating the visual impact of proposed developments and facilities, and improving public access to scenic areas and views.

### **Supporting objectives:**

- a. Maintenance of native vegetation along local roadsides should be encouraged when practical.
- b. Define and map viewsheds and watersheds that might impact Recreation Parks, Natural Resource Sites, Historic Sites, Regional Trails, and Scenic Driving Corridors as identified within the Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan.
- c. Develop a scheme to work with willing landowners to protect mapped viewsheds and watersheds.

5. Preserve, restore and sustain Dane County natural communities and resources, including grasslands, wetlands, woodlands and soils, to protect their benefits for:
  - economic land use;
  - wildlife habitat;
  - erosion control;
  - preservation of natural beauty;
  - groundwater recharge;
  - water quality protection;
  - flood prevention, and
  - ecosystem health.
  - a. Fully implement the natural resource protection elements of the *Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan*.
  - b. Complete the 10-year Conservation Fund acquisition program described in the *Parks & Open Space Plan* by year 8.
  - c. Renew the Conservation Fund for 10 years by 2008.
  - d. Identify, map and prioritize key natural resources, including those outside the scope of the *Parks & Open Space Plan*, prior or concurrently to renewal of another 10 year Conservation Fund program.
  
6. Promote a holistic, ecosystem-based approach to natural resource protection.
  - a. Recognize the inter-relationship of adjacent landscape types, and avoid dividing natural units or breaking important linkages.
  - b. Protect the scenic values of the Dane County landscape by preserving and enhancing vegetative cover, particularly on steep, wooded slopes and stream and lake shorelands
  - c. Plan and implement the restoration and management of prairies, woodlands and wetlands on public lands and with willing private property owners.
  - d. Increase opportunities for public/private partnerships for protecting natural areas in Dane County.

**Land Resources Policies & Programs:**

- 1. Adopt a permanent, county-wide Transfer of Development Rights program that meets the following criteria:**
  - a. Supports and complements any existing or future Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE,) Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) or transfer of development (TDR) programs developed by the county, local, state or federal governments;
  - b. Provides for voluntary participation and flexibility for town, city and village government and individual landowners.
  - c. Provides planning assistance for towns that want to create sending or receiving areas.
  - d. Encourages inclusion of working farmlands, large woodlands and natural resource areas under conservation easement;
  - e. Includes a countywide TDR ordinance that would:
    - i. set minimum standards;
    - ii. provide a framework to support existing or future town, village, city and cooperative TDR programs, and;
    - iii. provide for consistency with other county and other municipal zoning requirements.
  - f. Includes model TDR ordinance and plan language which could be adopted voluntarily by local governments;
  - g. Does not have a long-term negative impacts on villages and cities by preventing logical growth and encouraging sprawl.
  - h. Focuses agricultural easement purchases to areas planned and viable for long-term or permanent agricultural use
  - i. Makes sure that all land protection through TDR is in permanent agreements and conservation easements have secondary easements holders so that the permanence of these protections balance with the performance of development in developed areas and so the trade value spent provides lasting public benefit
  
- 2. Develop a permanent, county-wide Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program that meets the following criteria:**
  - a. Supports and complements any existing or future PDR Purchase of Agricultural Easements (PACE,) or transfer of development (TDR) programs developed by the county, local, state or federal governments;
  - b. Encourages inclusion of natural resource lands, working farmlands, and large woodlands under conservation easement;
  - c. Focuses on voluntary participation on lands where private landowners can continue to manage their property and public access is not required. Use fee-title acquisition for some lands where visitor use is high and public management is more effective.
  - d. Uses the current Highway 12 program as a model, with modified PDR ranking criteria to suit needs of a county-wide program.
  - e. Establishes a dedicated PDR fund and identifies a minimum permanent base level of county funding needed to meet program goals.
  - f. Maximizes the county's ability to receive additional funding, such as the Federal Farmland Protection Program, Wisconsin Stewardship Fund, local or municipal revenues, into the dedicated PDR fund.
  - g. Does not have a long-term negative impacts on villages and cities by preventing logical growth and encouraging sprawl.
  - h. Focuses easement purchases to areas planned and viable for long-term or permanent agricultural use
  - i. Makes sure that all land protection through PACE is in permanent agreements and conservation easements have secondary easements holders so that the permanence of these protections balance with the performance of development in developed areas and so the public value spent provides lasting public benefit.

**3. Accelerate implementation and enhance the recommendations of the current *Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan*.**

- a. Identify lead agencies, local units of government, and non-profits responsible for implementing the natural resource protection and recreation elements, including those outside the scope of the POSP.
- b. Increase all park fees to fund full implementation of recreation recommendations.
- c. Explore the use of lake and water recreation fees to fund public water access improvements.
- d. Budget sufficient resources in the County Conservation Fund on an annual basis to accelerate purchasing program of the current Parks & Open Space Plan to complete by 2008.
- e. Continue to fully fund and complete project planning, recreational facility development, implementation, trail development, land management and ecological restoration activities.
- f. Continue to develop and provide access to water-based recreation trails for canoes, kayaks and similar watercraft. Improve separate canoe/kayak access to navigate waterways at all county properties and encourage townships and municipalities to do the same by seeking partnership funding and developing a countywide plan for this access.
- g. Explore incentives for landowners to allow public access to their land (beyond OHWM), e.g., right of way easements, including tax breaks or other compensation.
- h. Continue to fully fund and implement the Dane County Conservation Fund Grant Program.
- i. Begin planning to get a new countywide advisory referendum on the ballot by no later than April, 2007 to authorize a new 10-year Conservation Fund from 2008-2018.
- j. Make it a policy to spend the balance of the money as soon as possible.
- k. Increase Dane County Park's capacity to implement master plans for parks & resources areas in order to bring the public & community into conservation projects.

**4. Expand the scope and purpose of the *County Parks & Open Space Plan* in future updates to adequately meet the natural resource protection and recreation needs of Dane County.**

- a. Expand the range of tools used to protect identified natural resource areas.
- b. Incorporate regular, periodic surveys on use of parks and recreational facilities in countywide mailings, such as tax bills.
- c. Include archaeological, historic and cultural significance among the criteria for acquiring and managing lands under all county real estate acquisition programs.
- d. Identify, map and prioritize key natural resources, including those outside the scope of the Parks & Open Space Plan, prior or concurrently to renewal of another 10 year Conservation Fund program, for possible inclusion in future updates of the plan.
- e. Identify water bodies with insufficient public access and target lands for acquisition related to public water access in future updates of the Parks & Open Space Plan.
- f. Develop criteria for and designate a system of water trails connecting streams and lakes, e.g., consider locations for limited or unimproved access, quiet areas or times of day, the quality of viewshed, habitat protection, public ownership & access, and public safety.
- g. Use computer modeling, site visits, consultations with other partners, including foresters, conservationists, landscape architects, planners and others, to define and map viewsheds, watersheds and buffer areas that might impact current or proposed Parks & Open Space Plan lands.
- h. Develop protection strategies for viewsheds, watershed, and other buffer areas. Strategies might include: creation of voluntary "friends" groups; inclusion in PDR and TDR programs; eligibility for Conservation Grant funding; site design regulations and others.
- i. Add to zoning ordinance an appropriate setback for any development approved adjacent to county, state or local parks, resource, wildlife & conservation areas. The idea is to provide a buffer between the public conservation / recreation land and any new buildings.
- j. Include comprehensive planning goals and objectives related to additional priority natural resource area, watersheds, viewsheds, and open space networks in the 2005-2010 update of the Parks & Open Space Plan.

- k. Zone all land identified in the Dane County Park & Open Space Plan as "conservancy" or "resource" land, whether they have been acquired yet or not. (The goal is not to substitute regulation for acquisition, but to protect the land for the conservation purpose until it can be acquired by a public agency or a qualified NGO.)
        - l. Adopt Parks & Open Space Plan and Water Quality Plans as ordinances.
5. **Assist towns to complete "blanket rezones" of mapped open space corridors to the CO-1 or A-1(ex) zoning district, where appropriate.**
6. **Create ordinances that require communities to work together on land use, comprehensive and parks and open space plans to encourage:**
  - a. Interconnection of all planned trails and paths, with no dead ends;
  - b. Intergovernmental notification, cooperation and discussion related to proposed plan amendments;
7. **Develop and implement guidelines for vegetation, maintenance and management of county rights-of-way, roadways, utility corridors and grounds to protect scenic, ecological and natural characteristics of county-owned land.**
  - a. Work with other jurisdictions to develop similar standards.
  - b. Develop an education program for highway and town road workers to identify and encourage native plants and to identify and eradicate noxious, invasive species.
8. **Fully implement and enhance programs identified in the *Land & Water Resources Plan*.**
  - a. Create a central database for all existing cost-sharing and payment programs (such as CRP, CREP, WRP, nutrient management, rain gardens, conservation easements, etc.) available to all landowners.
  - b. Create financial incentives for private owners of woodlands, grasslands, wetlands and other native communities to improve the ecological health and habitat by removing invasives, planting desirable species, and harvesting or managing as appropriate.
  - c. Continue to expand information and education efforts directed at agricultural nonpoint source control. Additional emphasis should be placed on fertilizer management and use, integrated pest management and minimization of pesticide use, and safe handling of pesticides and other hazardous farm materials.
  - d. Expand inventory efforts and develop animal waste management plans for farms where over 25 animal units are kept near water bodies, or where significant pollution potential exists.
  - e. Obtain conservation easements and installing fencing, livestock crossings, and other improvements needed to protect stream corridors and reduce streambank erosion.
9. **Amend county zoning, shoreland zoning, land division and other ordinances to minimize impacts to, and promote restoration of, native ecological communities.**
  - a. Develop tree preservation and canopy cover ordinance. New developments or subdivision platting must involve one or more certified arborists to consult on the best layout to preserve existing stands of high quality trees where such stands are extant.
  - b. Amend county shoreland zoning ordinance to require preservation or restoration of natural vegetative buffers near waterways and wetlands. Develop standards for agricultural areas that are compatible with USDA technical and cost-share guidelines.
  - c. Require mitigation of potential adverse impacts of proposed developments on adjacent woodlands, grasslands and wetlands.
  - d. Develop contingency plan and ordinance authority to use public resources to contain or eradicate severe tree insect infestations or disease outbreaks. Define conditions under which plan would be implemented.
10. **Expand and enhance educational programs to promote sound environmental stewardship practices among private landowners.**
  - a. Hold shoreland restoration demonstrations on public properties.

- b. Produce & distribute educational materials and websites related to native landscaping, tree care and maintenance and insect/disease control.
- c. Encourage Cities, Villages & Towns to achieve Tree City USA status.
- d. Show parks trails – natural area preserving woodlands on all county maps for public distribution.
- e. Develop and install interpretive signs, develop school tours to publicize examples of good stewardship.