

Dexter Township Open Space and Land Preservation Committee

Dexter Township proposal FAQs

How much funding would Dexter Township's land preservation millage produce?

It is estimated that \$220,000 would be produced in the first year.

What is the millage rate and how long would the millage run?

The millage would be 0.5 mills, for ten years. If your property's taxable value is \$100,000, the cost would be \$50/year.

What would the funds be used for?

To purchase conservation easements on private land and support the outright purchase of land by partner agencies such as Washtenaw County Parks which owns and manages the West Lake Preserve on Waterloo Rd.

What is a conservation easement?

A conservation easement is a permanent deed restriction on a private property which allows for agriculture, woodlot management and hunting but prohibits housing developments, gravel pits and clearcutting. Land with a conservation easement remains in private ownership and on the tax rolls. Conserving land allows for farming to continue, protects wildlife habitat and water quality, maintains scenic views. . Land preservation provides many other benefits including groundwater and surface water protection, wildlife habitat, carbon storage, scenic views.

Have other communities passed similar land preservation millages?

Yes! Locally Ann Arbor Township (2003 for 20 years), Scio Township (2004 for 10 years, renewed for a second ten) and Webster Township (2005 for five years, renewed twice) all have funded programs and have collectively permanently protected over 5,000 acres of farmland and natural areas.

Are there matching fund sources for Dexter Township's millage?

Yes. Washtenaw County Parks' Natural Area Preservation Program is funded through a dedicated millage with funds available for farmland and natural area properties. The State of Michigan has an Agricultural Preservation Fund and the U.S. Department of Agriculture has a program to provide funds for conservation easement purchases. Neighboring townships have received funds from all of these programs; Webster has matched \$1 of their funds with \$5 of outside funds. In addition, landowners often agree to sell for less than the appraised value.

Which properties would be eligible for Dexter Township's land preservation program?

Anyone would be able to submit a voluntary application to have their land evaluated. There is no cost or obligation to apply.

How is it determined where millage funds will be spent?

The Dexter Township Board of Trustees has adopted a purchase of development rights ordinance

(#37, available on this website) that directs how the program would operate including scoring systems for nominated agricultural and open space properties. A seven member Farmland and Open Space Preservation Board would be appointed by the Board of Trustees to manage the program and make recommendations on where to spend millage funds.

How are values for land and conservation easements determined?

An independent real estate appraiser is hired to determine those values based on the recent sales of nearby properties.

Isn't there already a lot of conserved land in Dexter Township?

We are indeed fortunate to have part of Pinckney State Recreation Area, Stinchfield Woods, part of Hudson Mills Metropark, part of Four Mile Lake State Game Area and West Lake County Preserve within our borders, amounting to around 25% of the total land area. But that means 75% of Dexter Township's land is not protected including none of our farmland. There are over 5,000 acres of farmland and natural areas in private ownership worthy of conservation. If we don't protect those areas, they'll get developed and we will keep having more traffic and more taxes to support development at the loss of those things we treasure about our community.

How do I learn more?

Visit our Dexter Township website:

<https://www.dextertownship.org/open-space-and-land-preservation-committee/>

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