

Information from Dexter Township Land Preservation and Open Space Committee

Dexter Township Land Preservation and Open Space Committee is a group of Dexter residents appointed by the Board of Trustees to educate the community of Dexter Township about farmland, natural area, and lake land preservation, and pursue conservation initiatives.

Those of us who have lived in Dexter Township for any amount of time know it is a special place. Whether it's the abundance of recreation lands, lakes and woods, or the sweeping agricultural landscapes that provide farm fresh produce, or the dark skies and quiet nights, our township is truly "a community for all seasons."

Residential development pressure is a constant. Those same lands and landscapes that we treasure are also prime targets for new subdivisions. Landowners are frequently contacted about selling their property. Without options, at some point, they may be forced to sell to big developers.

But there is an alternative. Neighboring townships (Webster, Ann Arbor and Scio) have had Land Preservation millages in place since the early 2000s and have collectively permanently protected over 5,000 acres. Those programs have leveraged tens of millions of dollars from other sources (county, State, federal and private) so their funds are stretched. Webster's millage generates \$190,000/year and has attracted \$5 from outside sources for every \$1 it spends while protecting over 2,300 acres. Landowners in those communities know there is a viable option; many have already chosen it, while others fend off developers aware they can pursue conservation because there is a competing funded program available.

The Dexter Township Board of Trustees is putting a millage proposal for land preservation on the ballot for November. If approved by voters, the Dexter Township Land Preservation millage would generate about \$220,000 in its first year of levy. It is a ten-year millage. If your property's taxable value is \$100,000, the cost would be \$50/year.

Funds from Dexter Township's Land Preservation millage will primarily be used to purchase conservation easements on private lands. These easements are a permanent restriction on use of the property, preventing subdivisions, clearcuts and gravel pits while allowing for farming, restoration and hunting. Easement lands remain on the tax rolls and cost less for public services (police, fire, schools) than they pay in taxes. The saying is, cows don't go to school and cornfields (or woodlots!) don't call 911. Funds could also be used to support the purchase of land by a public entity like Washtenaw County Parks.

There are over 5,000 acres of high-quality farmland and natural areas remaining in Dexter Township. To learn more about the millage initiative – Proposal A – you can visit Dexter Township Open Space and Land Preservation website.

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