



# Ozaukee County: What will we look like in 30 years? Preserving Ozaukee's Rural Character— Is it too late?

## Population Growth:

From 1940 to 2000, Ozaukee County's population has increased 334%, which was significantly greater than the population growth of the Southeastern Wisconsin (81%), the State of Wisconsin (71%) and the United States (113%) during the same time period. It is anticipated that Ozaukee County will add approximately 20,000 more people by 2035. This is greater than the current population of the City of Port Washington and the Village of Saukville combined!

## Rural Character:

In March 2005, a telephone survey was conducted of Ozaukee County residents to obtain their opinion on land use related issues in Ozaukee County. A predominant theme in the survey results relates to the preservation or improvement of the natural environment and to preserve the small town character of Ozaukee County.

As part of the Ozaukee County Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Planning process, about 75 residents participated in identifying the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of Ozaukee County. These residents identified the rural character of Ozaukee County as a strength and the loss of agricultural land and natural resources as a threat to the county.

## Agriculture Land:

In 2000, about 54% of the land in Ozaukee County was in agriculture use. In 2002, there were 533 farms in the County with an average size of 142 acres. From 1976 to 2002, Ozaukee lost 31,000 acres of farmland, which is the about the equivalent of roughly 20% of Ozaukee County's total land acreage.

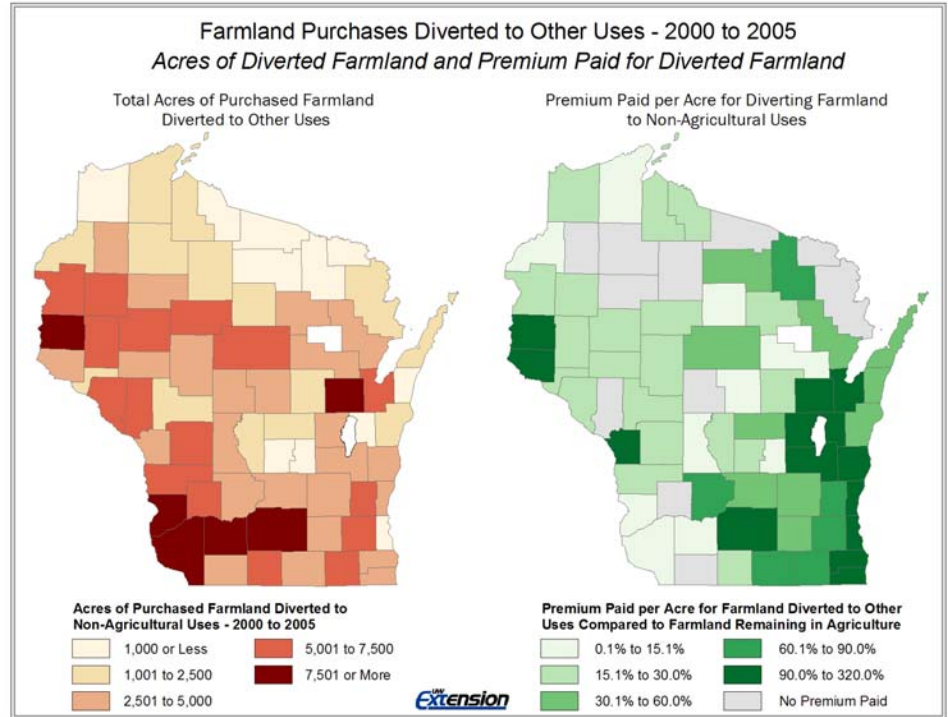
## Agriculture Economy:

According to a 2004 study conducted by UW-Extension, in 2000;

- ◆ Agriculture provides jobs for 2,410 Ozaukee County residents.
- ◆ Agriculture accounts for \$297.6 million in economic activity.
- ◆ Agriculture contributes \$100.5 million to the county's total income.
- ◆ Agriculture pays \$10.5 million in taxes.
- ◆ This figure does not include all property taxes paid to local schools.

## Policy Issues:

Please see the reverse side for tools that could assist Ozaukee County in maintaining its rural character.



## Acres of Diverted Agriculture Land:

Almost 276,000 acres of Wisconsin's agriculture lands were purchased and diverted to other uses between 2000 and 2005. Approximately 28,000 of these diverted acres were in the Southeastern Wisconsin counties of Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha. Fueled by the demand for residential and commercial development, Southeastern Wisconsin, the Capital Region, the Fox River Valley and the region adjacent to the Twin Cities metro area had the highest sales premiums.

In Ozaukee County, agriculture land transactions diverted to other uses sold for \$17,753 per acre, or 204% higher than the \$5,840 per acre price for land remaining in agriculture. These price differences show the financial dilemma facing many agricultural land owners over the last five years.

# Preserving Ozaukee's Rural Character

## *Preservation Tools from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection*

- ◆ **Agricultural Districts-** State land areas designated for agricultural activity. Specific “agricultural friendly” provisions apply within the area, such as limits on annexation of ag land, limits on construction of sewers and roads through ag lands, use value assessment or property tax credits, “right to farm” laws.
- ◆ **Comprehensive Planning-** Outlines policies, objectives, and guidelines for land use. May identify specific areas for development, for conservation, etc. Should be the underlying foundation for subsequent actions such as zoning and ordinances, incentive programs, infrastructure development, etc.
- ◆ **Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)-** Allow landowners to transfer the right to develop one parcel of land to a different parcel of land. The land that receives the right to develop benefits in some way, for example, by being able to develop at a higher density than would be allowed in the area that received the development right.
- ◆ **Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)-** Programs that pay landowners for “development rights” that are valued as the difference between the value of the land for development purposes versus the value of the land for agricultural use. These types of programs provide more permanent protection and provide substantial equity to the owner.
- ◆ **Right-To-Farm Laws-** Laws designed to protect farmers from nuisance lawsuits.
- ◆ **Mitigation Programs-** Require compensation or other mitigation actions when farmland is developed. For example, requiring developers of farmland to pay the costs to permanently protect one acre of farmland for each acre they develop.
- ◆ **Tax Relief Programs-** Programs that reduce the cost of owning agricultural land by either providing tax credits for owners of agricultural land or by providing differential assessment of the value of agricultural land for tax purposes (“use value” or “farm value” assessment.)
- ◆ **Conservation Easements-** Voluntary legal agreements that limit land to specific uses in order to protect it from development.
- ◆ **Agricultural Economic Development-** Programs that enhance the profitability / viability of agriculture to keep land in farming. Examples include grant programs to enable farmers to develop and implement farm business and marketing plans, develop additional value within their farming operation, enact conservation practices on their land, and so forth.

[http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/workinglands/pdf/sept7/Farmland\\_Preservation\\_Tools\\_2.pdf](http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/workinglands/pdf/sept7/Farmland_Preservation_Tools_2.pdf)



### ***Buy Food that is Locally Grown***

Purchase items at a local farmer's market! Markets are located in Cedarburg (Fridays), Grafton (Thursdays), Port Washington (Saturdays) and Thiensville (Tuesdays). Additionally, there are multiple farm stands located throughout Southeastern Wisconsin and can be located at [www.farmfreshatlas.org](http://www.farmfreshatlas.org)

These purchases;

- ◆ Contribute to your local economy
- ◆ Are fresher and more flavorful
- ◆ Reduces dependencies on non-renewable resources (the average distance that fresh food travels from production to final destination is 1,500 miles).
- ◆ Reconnect you with where your food is grown
- ◆ Preserves local farmland

### **Sources:**

- ◆ Countywide Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey of Ozaukee County Residents, June 2005 (406 responses with a theoretical sampling margin of error of  $\pm 4.83$  percent at the 95% confidence level.)
- ◆ Farm Fresh Atlas of Southeastern Wisconsin- [www.farmfreshatlas.org](http://www.farmfreshatlas.org)
- ◆ Kures, Matt– UW-Extension Center for Community and Economic Development, GIS Maps of Farmland Purchases Diverted to Other Uses 2000-2005
- ◆ Ozaukee County Agriculture: Value and Economic Impact, UW-Extension, 2004
- ◆ Ozaukee County Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan: 2035 [www.co.ozaukee.wi.us/smartgrowth](http://www.co.ozaukee.wi.us/smartgrowth)
- ◆ Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

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