

Excerpts from 2022 Dane County Farmland Preservation Plan

Zoning Ordinance Review and Administration

Continue to examine zoning processes, existing and proposed local codes, administration and procedural requirements to:

1. Minimize negative impacts on agriculture, and promote a diversity of agricultural, agriculture accessory and agriculture related uses that are both economically productive and compatible with rural areas.
2. Ordinances and regulations restricting noise, odors, keeping of animals or other activities that could inhibit typical farm operations, will not apply in Farmland Preservation Areas.
3. Consider whether any new county regulations would put Dane County farmers at a competitive disadvantage to farmers elsewhere in the state.
4. Amend farmland preservation and other county zoning districts to establish siting, operational and decommissioning/reclamation criteria for renewable energy facilities. Criteria should:
 - Seek to minimize conflicts with neighboring farming and other rural uses;
 - Promote multiple use installations that allow for renewable energy, agricultural, soil and water conservation and/or wildlife habitat uses to coexist;
 - Provide for financial instruments for reclamation of decommissioned sites, and;
 - Allow for both distributed and utility-scale installations.

Policies for Renewable Energy Facilities in Farmland Preservation Areas (could also be adopted as part of town/county comprehensive plans)

1. To minimize the need for new electrical transmission lines, locate new renewable energy installations as close as possible to existing transmission facilities.
2. Where practical, manage density and size of utility-scale installations to minimize impacts to adjoining agricultural land uses and rural character.
3. Except where required for aviation or other safety concerns, encourage setbacks, vegetative screening, berms, or other practices to minimize visual impact.
4. Encourage multiple- or dual-use facilities that allow for agricultural, natural resource, habitat and/or soil and water conservation uses to coexist with energy generation.
5. Arrange energy infrastructure, fencing and berms to allow for equipment movement, habitat, wildlife corridors and pervious cover to minimize runoff.
6. Make sure all installations comply with county erosion control and stormwater standards during construction, operational, maintenance and decommissioning phases.
7. Encourage adaptive reuse of operating or closed mineral extraction or other rural industrial sites for renewable energy use.
8. To the extent possible, follow the siting criteria for this plan, to avoid productive farm soils.
9. Make sure landscaping and other vegetation is maintained to continue to serve its intended purpose and does not create sources for invasive species.
10. Require decommissioning plans for all renewable energy facilities, with financial instruments sufficient to cover the cost of equipment removal and reclamation. Lands should be reclaimed to agricultural or natural resource use.