

Foreword

Winnebago County adopted a farmland preservation plan in 1982 under the state requirements for farmland preservation in effect at the time. As a result of the statewide Working Lands Initiative, the Wisconsin Legislature passed a new farmland preservation law in 2009 (2009 Wisconsin Act 28), which made significant changes to the state's program and established a timetable for when counties must adopt a new farmland preservation plan. To help with that planning effort, Winnebago County established a steering committee consisting of local representatives to guide the preparation review, and adoption of this plan.

This plan was adopted in 2012 as a part of the county's comprehensive plan, which now consists of three separate documents. This plan is based on data and information that is contained in the other two documents. When appropriate, additional data or more up to date data is provided in this plan.

This plan includes four chapters and a map series. The first chapter provides an overview of the project and describes the farmland preservation the county first adopted in 1982 and the requirements of the Working Lands Initiative. A description is also included to document the process used in the preparation, review, and adoption of the plan. The second chapter presents background information about Winnebago County including population characteristics, land use patterns and trends, and intergovernmental agreements. Chapter 3 identifies those tools that are being used or that could be used to protect farmland in the county. In Chapter 4, goals, objectives, and policies are identified that are intended to guide local government activities and short- and long-term implementation strategies. Supplemental maps are included in the final section of the plan.

Data and trends specifically related to agriculture are discussed in Chapter 5 of Volume 1 (Background Document). Chapter 6 of Volume 1 (Background Document) looks at the local food system with special emphasis on the demand side of agriculture.

This plan is intended to guide local efforts related to farmland protection and the promotion of the agricultural sector in Winnebago County. It is anticipated that the county will revise this plan as needed to address new issues and opportunities that will likely arise in the future.