

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR), Town of Dunn, Wisconsin

The Town of Dunn is located directly south of the City of Madison, Wisconsin. Over 8,650 acres of the Town are dedicated to agriculture, while an additional 2,600 acres are open space (wetlands, forests, etc.) Town leaders and local residents realized that the comprehensive plan, by itself, was not enough to preserve farmland and open spaces. In 1993, a voluntary Ad Hoc Committee, made up of local residents and members of the Plan Commission, was formed to explore further options for protecting open space and farmland. Rather than imposing additional land restrictions and regulation on landowners, the Committee decided that the best alternative was to purchase development rights to land from willing landowners. On September 10, 1996, Town residents approved a property tax increase to fund a PDR Program in the Town of Dunn. The tax increase raised the mill rate by \$.50, which increased the tax on a \$100,000 home by \$50. This tax increase raised roughly \$150,000 a year for the Town's PDR Program. Using those tax dollars, the Town of Dunn was able to apply for State and Federal funds which raised additional dollars for the Town's PDR Program. In 2000, the Town procured a \$2.4 million bond over a 20-year period, to secure easements through the purchase of development rights. Property tax money collected for the PDR Program is used to make annual payments on the bond. The average cost of buying development rights is \$1,831 per acre, with the highest easement costing \$7,000 per acre. Currently the Town of Dunn has \$1.7 million in its PDR Program.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR), Peninsula Township, Michigan

The Township concluded that the 1974 Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act, the Historic and Conservation Easement Act, and Township zoning and subdivision control ordinances were, by themselves, not effective in providing sufficient protection for farmland, shoreline, and open space lands under the pressure of increasing development. On August 2, 1994, the Township passed a referendum to authorize cash purchase/installment purchase of interests in farmland and open space lands. This ordinance allowed the Township Board to

expend tax revenues, either in cash purchase or installment purchases, accept donations, and apply for additional grant funding. The acquisition process was a joint effort with a recognized and legally established non-profit land conservancy. Since the inception of the ordinance, the Peninsula Township's PDR Program has preserved approximately 4,500 acres of farmland using the money generated from the millage, donated matching funds, and donation from conservancy groups. The funds from the 1994 millage are spent or committed through 2008. In August 2002, the Township conducted another public hearing to seek approval for a millage increase and time extension by a referendum. The referendum passed and the millage increased from 1.25 mills to 2 mills. The term of the program will extend until 2023. Nearly \$10 million has been raised for PDR from property taxes, state grants, and private initiatives coordinated by the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy and the American Farmland Trust. In all, 4,500 acres of Peninsula's agricultural land already are set to remain in production.