The current Farmland Preservation Plan (FPP) for Washington County was developed under the old state farmland preservation program and was adopted in 1981 (very outdated).

The purpose of the program was to encourage farmland preservation by providing tax credits to eligible farmland owners.

To be eligible to enroll in the program, farmland must have been designated as such in the County Farmland Preservation Plan, must be a minimum of 35 contiguous acres, and must have produced a minimum of $6,000 in gross farm receipts in the previous year or $18,000 in the previous three years.

Agreements varied from 10 - 25 year terms.

Old program involved a complicated formula for computing tax credits based on landowner’s household income and excessive property taxes accrued. The schedule of credit amount increased with property taxes accrued and decreased with household income up to a maximum of $4,200 a year.

Farmland owners may have participated in one of two ways:

1) Exclusive agricultural zoning
   - Participation in exclusive ag zoning may have occurred only when the local jurisdiction having zoning authority (city, village, town, or county) had a certified zoning ordinance that is certified by the LWCB as having met the standards of Chapter 91 of the Statutes.
   - The only uses permitted in exclusive agricultural zoning districts were agricultural uses and uses consistent with agricultural use, which are specified in the Statutes.
   - The Towns of Barton, Hartford, Kewaskum, Richfield, and Trenton and the Village of Germantown have zoning ordinances that have been certified by the LWCB.
   - In 2005, there were 89 participating landowners, with about 11,878 acres of farmland enrolled in the farmland preservation program, in these local governments.

2) Farmland Preservation Agreements
   - In jurisdictions where the County farmland preservation plan designated land as farmland but the LWCB had not certified the local zoning ordinance, a landowner may have participated in the program through a Farmland Preservation Agreement with DATCP. Contracts were for 10- or 25-year periods.
   - In 2005, there were 17 Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Agreements encompassing 1,717 acres of farmland in the Towns of Addison, Erin, Farmington, Jackson, Polk, and Wayne.