DRAFT
16-Oct-09

Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) Program

CRITERIA TO RANK PROPOSED EASEMENTS FOR PACE GRANTS

Section 1. AGRICULTURAL CAPACITY AND PRODUCTIVITY

A. Soil classification of the property

Proposed measure: % prime, unique and important soils

B. Property Size:

Proposed measure: ratio of total acres of land in parcel to be protected to the average farm size in the county

C. Percentage of workland (cropland, pasture, grassland) on the property

Proposed measure: % of workland as defined by FSA farm tract maps (above the 50% requirement)

D Proximity to already protected land

Proposed measure: acres of land within one mile of property that is under a permanent agriculture or conservation easement, public land (such as a park or wildlife area), or land owned by a non-profit organization for conservation purposes

E. Adjacency to protected land

Proposed measure: immediate adjacency to protected land as defined in 1D

Number of points from Section 1: [ ]

Section 2. CONSISTENCY WITH PLANNING AND ZONING

Proposed measures: consistency with comp plan, rationale for preserving farmland in the plan narrative, location of parcel within a planned area or zoning district, inclusion of parcel within a designated Agricultural Enterprise Area, consistency with cooperative boundary agreement

Number of points from Section 2: [ ]

Section 3. COMMUNITY SUPPPORT

Proposed measures: whether or not the local government has adopted a PACE program or ordinance; town, county, city or village has passed a resolution or submitted a letter in support of the easement acquisition; the easement is consistent with a cooperative boundary agreement; other letters of support

Number of points from Section 3: [ ]

Section 4. DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE

A. Retirement of Development Potential

Proposed measure: number of buildable sites (aka development rights, splits) that would be restricted or permanently removed from the parcel

B. Conversion of land out of agriculture in County/Township

Proposed measure: data from the last two USDA Censuses of Agriculture on decrease in farmland in the county where parcel is located

C. Population Growth in County/Township

Proposed measure: data from DATCP on changes in population density between 2000 and 2007

D. Proximity to Existing and Planned Development

Proposed measure: distance from an Urban Service or Sewer Service Area
(note: we can use this criteria both ways; i.e. we can consider negative points for a parcel that is too close to an USA or SSA or in the logical path of development)

Number of points from Section 4: [ ]

Section 5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Proposed measure: % below 50% that applicant is seeking in cost-share from the state

Number of points from Section 5: [ ]

Section 6. LOCAL CAPACITY TO MONITOR AND ENFORCE EASEMENT

Proposed measures: applicant has system in place and dedicated staff for monitoring and enforcing easements, already holds a certain number of easements, is partnering with an organization with easement expertise, a land trust or local government will co-hold the easement and has the capacity to monitor and enforce easement

Number of points from Section 6: [ ]

Section 7. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A. Environmental Considerations

Proposed measures: whether or not the property is in a recharge area, a Surface Water Quality Management Area, contains a natural or restored wetland, is enrolled in a buffer program; other?

B. Conservation, Historic, Archaeological and Scenic Values

Proposed measures: whether or not the property provides habitat for threatened or endangered species (state or federal); is targeted for conservation in a federal, state, regional or local conservation or openspace plan; is adjacent to a rustic road; is a century farm; has been designated a state or local landmark, historic or archeaological site; other?

Number of points from Section 7: [ ]

Total Number of points: [ ]