

CARROLL COUNTY LAND EVALUATION AND SITE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) is a numeric rating system created by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to evaluate the relative agricultural importance of a parcel of land. In 1983, the first National Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Handbook was produced and distributed by the NRCS. Designed as a model to be customized by counties to address issues that are unique to them, the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment System is recognized nationally as an impartial system that helps determine the value of land for agriculture. Farmland is a finite resource that is needed to provide food for a hungry world. Using an established point system provides a consistent, objective determination of the site's agricultural suitability. LESA has been designed to make decision-making easier and more equitable for local hearing bodies and elected officials.

Carroll County's LESA System will be used whenever a zoning change (amendment) is requested for a parcel of land currently zoned as AG-1, Agriculture OR whenever a new residential use is proposed within the Agricultural District. Users of the system should remember that this is a tool to assist in making wise land use decisions. It will be used in conjunction with the Carroll County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, its Zoning Ordinance, and the County's Subdivision Ordinance.

There are two parts to the LESA system. Land Evaluation rates the soils of a specific parcel of land and provides an average point value for its soils. The soils information is derived from USDA NRCS soil survey information. If the land in question is highly productive or located in a prime agricultural area, the resulting soil score will be high. Alternatively, if the soils are less productive or the site is located in an area less impacted by agricultural uses, the soil score will be lower.

Site Assessment examines factors other than soils that could affect the suitability of a site for a proposed use that would be something other than agriculture. Less conflict occurs when similar land uses are grouped together. Site Assessment factors consider available services and compatibility with other uses adjacent to the area proposed for development. Several such examples include impacts on roads, school districts and police/fire/ems protection districts.

If the combined soil and site assessment scores are low, or sometimes moderate, the land should be considered a good candidate for development. The higher the total points that accumulate from the land evaluation and the site assessment, the more viable the site is for agriculture and therefore the more important to protect it from development. When calculating both the land evaluation and the site assessment scores, a total of 300 points is possible. Carroll County has established the following point breaks for its LESA System.

0 – 200 = Low rating for protection
201 – 220 = Moderate rating for protection
221 – 300 = High rating for protection

In most cases, the site should be protected for agriculture uses when the point total exceeds 221. If the site falls in the 201 – 220 range, more information may be sought to further evaluate the site. The 200 and below category is considered acceptable for conversion from agricultural use to another use.

CARROLL COUNTY ZONING APPLICATION LESA

Carroll County Zoning, PO Box 227, Mt Carroll, IL 61053

Phone: 815-244-0254 Email: mapping@carroll-county.net

PROPERTY OWNER NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER AND/OR EMAIL: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

DOCUMENTATION TO BE FILED WITH APPLICATION

_____ PROPERTY LOCATION _____

_____ PROPOSED USE: ZONING AMENDMENT OR NEW RESIDENCE IN AG-1 DISTRICT

_____ PERMIT APPLICATION FEE: \$ 75.00 CHECK NUMBER: _____ CASH

(fee and all information must be received before permit will be processed)

OFFICE USE ONLY

COUNTY PIN: _____

DATE FEE PAID: _____

DATE COMPLETED: _____

LAND EVALUATION SCORE: _____

LAND EVALUATION NOTES: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____