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Federal funds to preserve farm in South Toledo

A family farm in South Toledo that could have become another strip mall can be preserved using more than \$3 million in federal funds, officials announced yesterday.

The Keil Family Farm, 154 acres of row crops, greenhouses, and outbuildings at Reynolds Road and Hill Avenue that represents one of the last operating farms within city limits, had been put up for sale by the family.

With the intention of saving the farmland from the likely fate of being developed into a strip mall, U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D, Toledo) and Toledo Area Metroparks Director Jim Spengler said yesterday the Trust for Public Land has obtained an option to buy the Keil farm using federal funds.

The Trust for Public Land is a national nonprofit conservation organization that often serves as an intermediary for communities looking to buy properties for preservation.

"I thought that Toledo has plenty of empty strip malls, and what we have the opportunity to do now is to preserve something precious," Miss Kaptur said.

Preserving the Keil farm will bolster efforts to make Toledo a leader in the industries of floriculture, greenhouses, and urban agriculture, she said.

Plans call for buying the land in two phases. The first phase involves buying 40 acres of the northern portion of the farm using \$1.1 million in federal Economic Development Initiative Funds as well as \$514,000 in federal Community Development funds, according to Miss Kaptur's office.

When the first phase is complete, the farm's remaining 110 acres would be bought with \$1.4 million Miss Kaptur has secured through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The Trust has a one-year option to buy that acreage.