



Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan

**Vernon Township
Sussex County, New Jersey**

March 2023



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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jessica Caldwell', is written over a horizontal line.

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INTRODUCTION

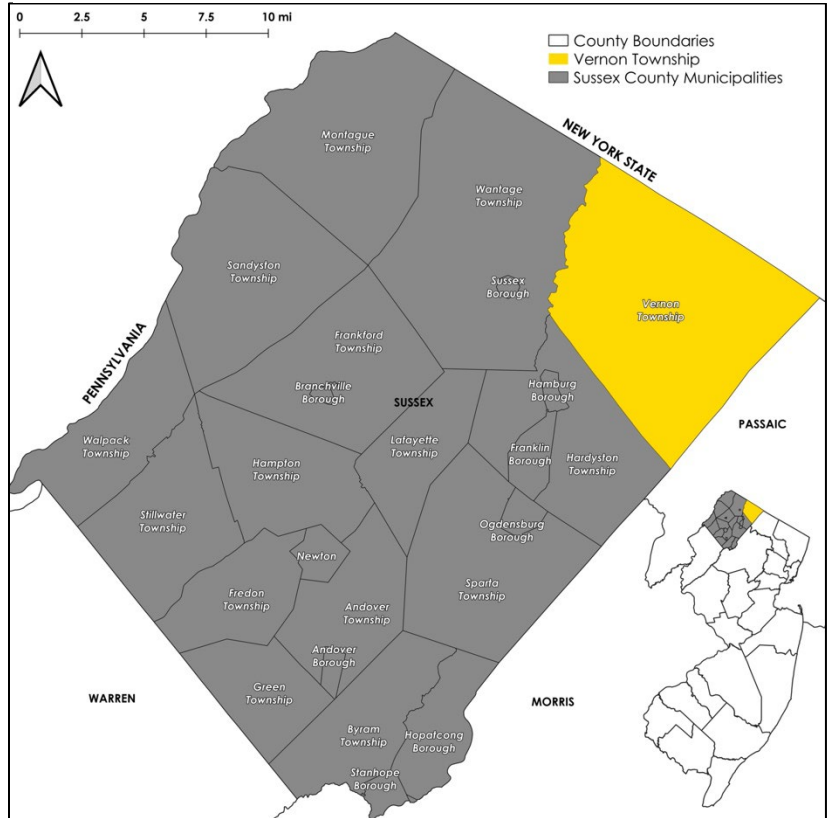
Overview

Vernon Township, shown in yellow on Figure 1, is in the northeastern corner of Sussex County and covers approximately 70 square miles. To the north, Vernon is bordered by Orange County, New York. In New Jersey, Hardyston Township borders Vernon to the south, Wantage Township to the west, and West Milford in Passaic County borders Vernon to the east. The Wallkill River forms the western border of the Township.

Vernon Township was founded in April 1793 through a separation from Hardyston Township. Development in the Township formed through the growth of smaller villages centered around farming and mining operations. Adapting to a rapid increase in tourism demand in the 1930s, resort villages began to appear around Vernon’s lakes and wilderness areas. The 1950s brought suburban residential growth to the Township. Over the next 50 years, the population grew 17 times larger. With a population of 22,3581 Vernon is the largest municipality in the county by both population and size.

After the passage of the Highlands Act in 2004, approximately two-thirds of the Township were placed in the Highlands Preservation Area (29,305 acres) and the remaining one-third is in the Planning Area (15,464 acres).

Figure 1. Vernon Township Context Map



¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). *2020 Census Redistricting Data Summary File*.

Vision for Farmland Preservation

Vernon Township's vision for farmland preservation is to:

1. Secure the agricultural land base through farmland preservation with a focus on retaining significant masses of agricultural land in agricultural production;
2. Bolster the industry of agriculture including agritourism which will contribute to the economic viability of the agricultural industry;
3. Proactively curtail conflicts with non-agricultural neighbors;
4. Ensure adequate water for all land uses while protecting critical groundwater recharge areas;
5. Prevent sprawl-type development in the Township through proactive planning;
6. Provide consumers with access to locally grown sources of horticultural and fresh food products; and
7. Maintain the small-town, rural lifestyle that characterizes the farms in Vernon Township.

Goals and Objectives

As noted in the 2010 Master Plan, which was reaffirmed by the Township's 2022 Master Plan Reexamination Report, the Township has the following Farmland Preservation goals and objectives:

1. To update the comprehensive farmland preservation plan to ensure that farmland is identified and prioritized for preservation using county and state programs and available funding sources to purchase easements.
2. To identify opportunities to support farming as a viable industry in the Township.

In addition, the following statements are noted in the 2010 Master Plan with regards to farmland preservation

1. Participate in state and county open space and farmland preservation programs in order to preserve lands within the Township.
2. Identify and prioritize open space and farmland for preservation efforts. Encourage clustering techniques for developments in order to preserve open space and farmland.
3. The purchase of farmland preservation easements should be actively sought to provide landowner equity in the Highlands Preservation Area.

I. VERNON TOWNSHIP’S AGRICULTURAL LAND BASE

Location and Size of Agricultural Land Base

Vernon Township is located within the Highlands physiographic province². This province is primarily mountainous with rugged topography. Bedrock within the Highlands is primarily metamorphosed igneous and sedimentary rocks which are approximately 1.2 billion to 900 million years old. Smaller clusters of metasedimentary rocks and diabase dikes are also spread throughout this region. Sandstone and quartzite form some of the ridges in the Highlands, and the border along the Piedmont Province contains contact between crystalline rocks and significantly younger sedimentary and igneous rocks.

Agricultural practices have been present in the Township since its inception, with most development centering around farming and mining operations. Though most communities settled around rich mineral deposits in the Township, there are multiple farms with deep roots in the Township because of its accessibility to water. Dairy farming was historically a very important industry in the area.

The Division of Taxation in the New Jersey Department of Treasury releases an annual Farmland Assessment Survey. According to this report, Vernon had 6,246 acres of land devoted to agricultural or horticultural use, an increase of approximately 12 percent.

Table 1. Annual Municipal Summary of Data from FA-1 Forms.

Annual Municipal Summary of data from FA-1 Forms										
Tax Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total acres devoted to agricultural or horticultural use	5,556	6,112	5,806	5,679	5,576	6,117	5,753	6,046	6,146	6,246
Percent of Acres in Vernon devoted to agricultural or horticultural use	12.41	13.65	12.97	12.68	12.45	13.66	12.85	13.50	13.73	13.95

Source: Ficara, J. J., Acting Director, NJ Division of Taxation. Data from FA-1 Forms, 2011-2020.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Land Use / Land Cover datasets illustrate trends in land use in Vernon. There is a discrepancy between the Township’s farmland assessed property acreage and the NJDEP’s Land Use / Land Cover agricultural acres, but this can be attributed to the fact that not all land that is used for agricultural purposes is farmland assessed and that wooded lots that are farmland assessed do not appear as agricultural uses in the NJDEP data.

² NJDEP, NJGS. *Information circular: Physiographic Provinces of New Jersey.*

Figure 2. Preserved and Assessed Farmland in Vernon Township

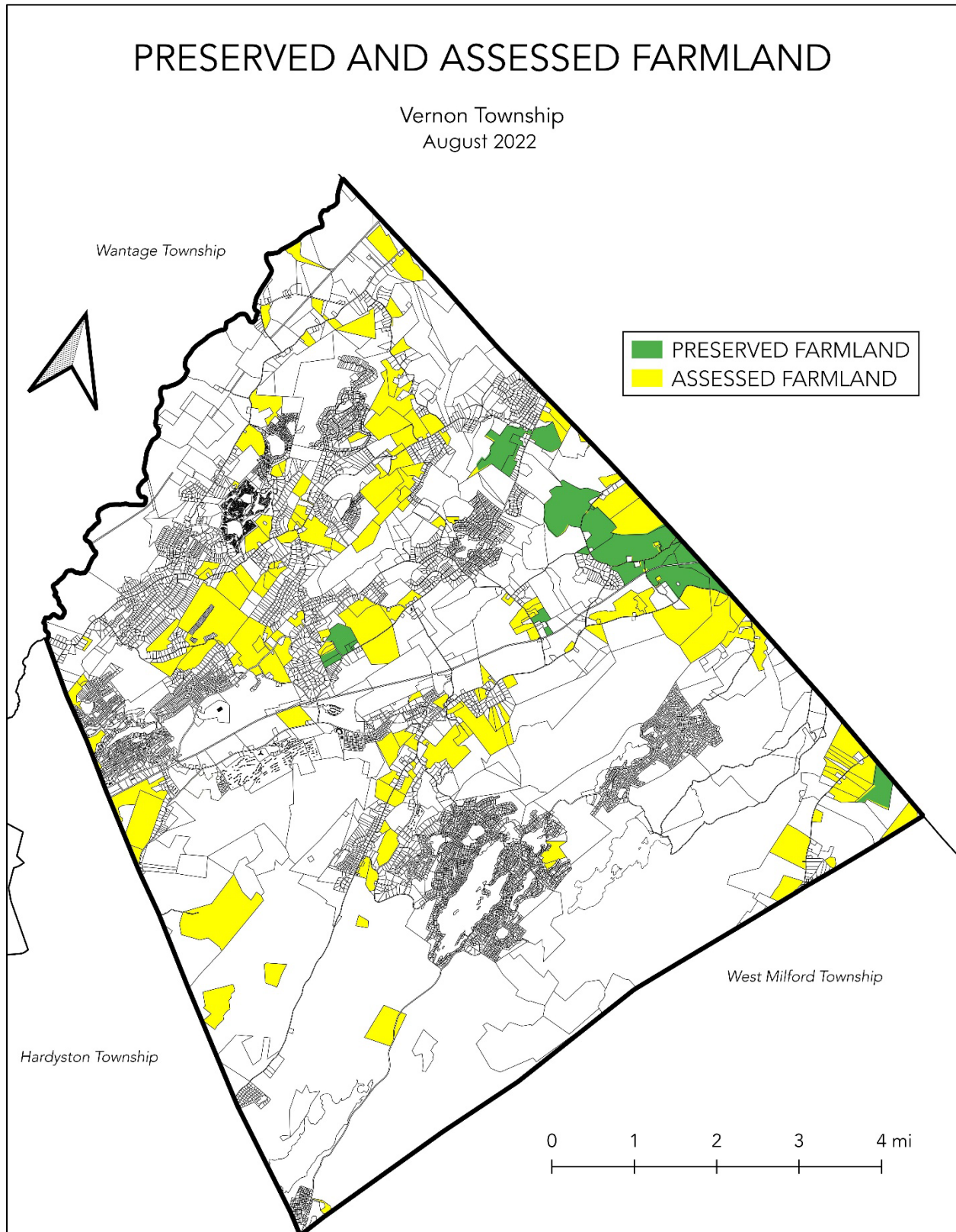


Table 2. Land Use / Cover Change (1986 - 2015)

Vernon Township Land Use / Cover Change (1986 - 2015)												
Land Use Type	Acreage											
	1986	%	1995 / 1997	%	2002	%	2007	%	2012	%	2015	%
Urban	6,082.80	9.3	6,647.60	5.8	7,035.66	9.5	7,702.62	2.2	7,873.36	1.3	7,975.52	14.1
Agriculture	4,419.68	-47.2	2,333.39	-12.1	2,051.54	-15.1	1,741.99	1.2	1,763.06	-1.8	1,731.71	3.1
Forest	31,815.29	23.8	39,383.64	-2.5	38,395.45	-5.7	36,199.02	0.1	36,218.49	0.4	36,362.26	64.4
Water	1,881.00	1.3	1,905.86	5.1	2,003.46	1.6	2,035.17	3.4	2,104.34	-1.4	2,074.86	3.7
Wetlands	7,086.18	19.7	8,485.70	-2.2	8,296.96	-0.6	8,246.64	-0.2	8,231.19	0.1	8,240.41	14.6
Barren Land	318.57	-62.4	119.76	-14.0	103.05	-30.6	71.50	52.9	109.32	-26.9	79.93	0.1
Total	51,603.52	14.1	58,875.95	-1.7	57,886.12	-3.3	55,996.94	0.5	56,299.76	0.3	56,464.69	100.0

Agricultural Use / Cover Only											
	Acreage										
	1986	%	1995 / 1997	%	2002	%	2007	%	2012	%	2015
Agriculture	4,419.68	-47.2	2,333.39	-12.1	2,051.54	-15.1	1,741.99	1.2	1,763.06	-1.8	1,731.71
Ag. Wetlands	1,203.96	-1.6	1,184.58	-12.1	1,041.33	-9.1	947.06	-19.8	759.35	-0.6	754.51
Total	5,623.64	-37.4	3,517.97	-12.1	3,092.87	-13.1	2,689.05	-6.2	2,522.41	-1.4	2,486.22

NJDEP Land Use / Land Cover Dataset, 1986 – 2015.

By acreage, Vernon Township is primarily forested land (comprising approximately 64% of the Township’s total acreage as of 2015). Wetlands, including agricultural wetlands, comprise the next largest portion of the Township’s acreage as of 2015 (8,240 acres, or 15%). Urban uses comprise 14% of the Township’s land. Water and agricultural land comprise approximately the same amount of land, taking up 3.5% and 3%, respectively. Since 1986, all categories but agricultural and barren land have increased in the total amount of acreage occupied according to NJDEP data.

Soil Types and Characteristics

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides data and information on soil types and their agricultural capabilities, resulting in a list of Prime Farmland Soils and Soils of Statewide Importance to Agriculture. The State and County’s past and future farmland preservation efforts consider soils of prime and statewide importance the greatest priority for permanent protection. Vernon Township contains prime and unique agricultural soils, but no soils of statewide importance.

The NJDA's NRCS describes "prime agricultural soils" as:

"...land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses. It could be cultivated land, pastureland, forestland, or other land, but it is not urban or built-up land or water areas. The soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply are those needed for the soil to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when proper management, including water management, and acceptable farming methods are applied. In general, prime farmland has an adequate and dependable supply of moisture from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, and few or no rocks. The water supply is dependable and of adequate quality. Prime farmland is permeable to water and air. It is not excessively erodible or saturated with water for long periods, and it either is not frequently flooded during the growing season or is protected from flooding. Slope ranges mainly from 0 to 6 percent."

The NJDA's NRCS describes "unique agricultural soils" as:

"...land other than prime farmland that is used for the production of specific high-value food and fiber crops, such as citrus, tree nuts, olives, cranberries, and other fruits and vegetables. It has the special combination of soil quality, growing season, moisture supply, temperature, humidity, air, drainage, elevation, and aspects needed for the soil to economically produce sustainable high yields of these crops when properly managed. The water supply is dependable and of adequate quality. Nearness to markets is an additional consideration. Unique farmland is not based on national criteria."

According to Sussex County's 2008 Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan Update, more than 100 individual types of soil are present in the County. The table below lists the soils present that are classified as Prime, Statewide, or Unique agricultural soils and present within Sussex County. There are four different classes of prime agricultural soil and one class of unique agricultural soil present within the Township. As depicted in the table and map below, Vernon contains approximately 4,833 acres of prime or unique agricultural soils. This is approximately 9% of the Township's total acreage.

Most prime agricultural soils in the Township are Catden Mucky Peat, which comprise 2,258 acres of the Township's unique agricultural soils. These soils are often associated with important natural areas within or adjacent to submerged lands and consequently are poorly drained. Other significant soils in the Township are of the Hazen-Hoosic Complex, which originated from glacial outwash of slate, shale, and sandstone materials, and are generally very deep and well drained soils that formed in stratified gravelly or cobbly glacial deposits. They exhibit moderate permeability and fertility, and as a result, the dry season can significantly impact crop yields, and thus requires extensive irrigation. These soils are best suited for small grains, pastures, and woodlands. Soils of the Pompton and Scio Series are also located within the Township, and these soils tend to be primarily forest-covered.

Figure 3. USGS Topographic Map

U.S.G.S. Topographic Map

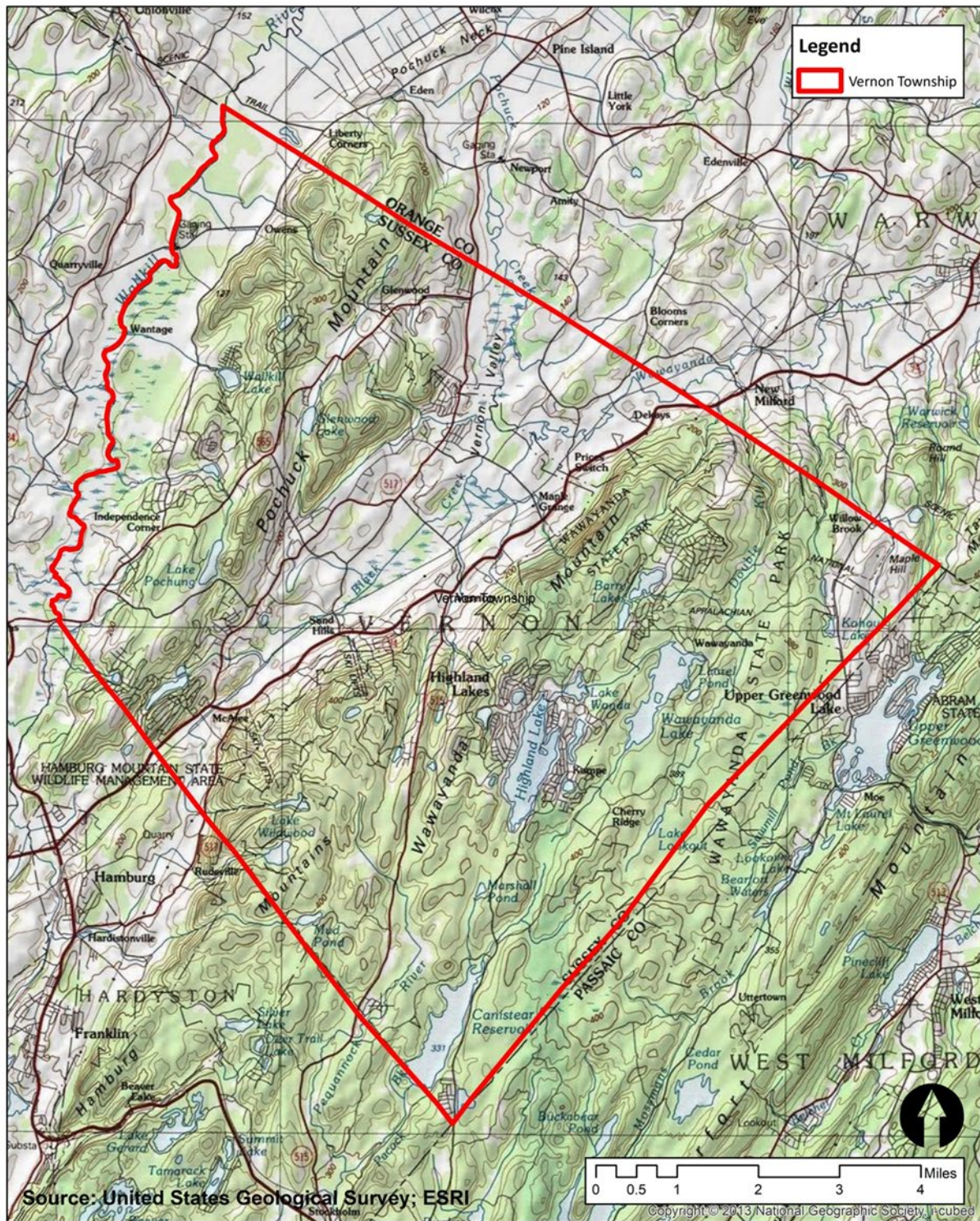
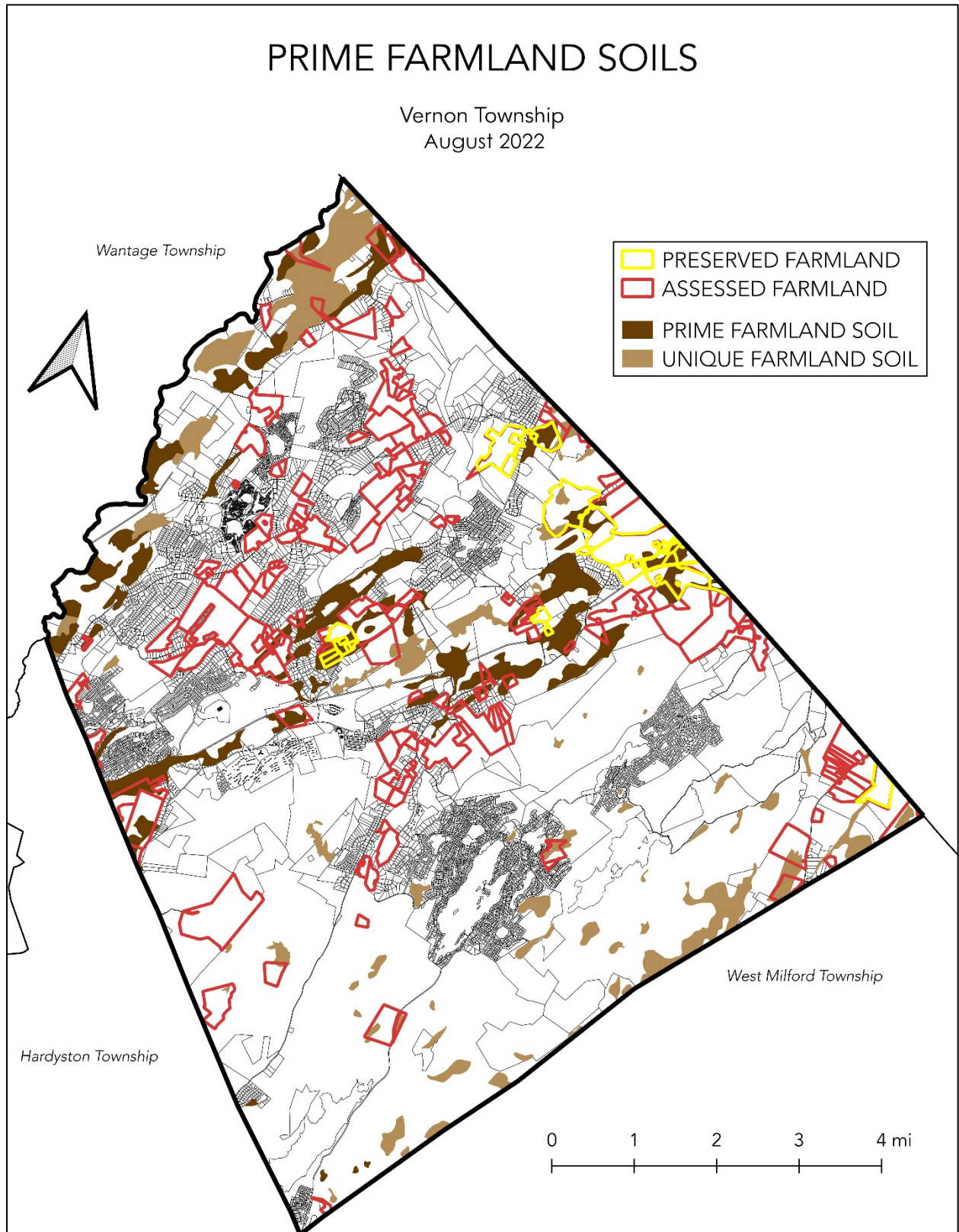


Table 3. Sussex County Soils

Sussex County Soil					
				Sussex County	Vernon Township
<i>Abbr</i>	<i>Soil Description</i>	<i>Quality</i>	<i>Erodibility</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acres</i>
DefAr	Delaware fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 % slopes, rarely flooded	Prime	Potentially	401	-
DefBr	Delaware fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 % slopes, rarely flooded	Prime	Potentially	616	-
HdxAb	Hazen-Hoosic complex, 0 to 3 % slopes, rarely flooded	Prime	Not high	8,150	468
HdxBb	Hazen-Hoosic complex, 3 to 8 % slopes, rarely flooded	Prime	Potentially	22,394	2,076
LorB	Lordstown-Wallpack Complex, 0 to 8 % slopes, forest & recreation	Prime	Potentially	55	-
PohA	Pompton sandy loam, 0 to 3 % slopes	Prime	Not high	555	17
RkrB	Riverhead sandy loam, 3 to 8 % slopes	Prime	Potentially	774	-
ScoA	Scio silt loam, 0 to 3 % slopes	Prime	Not high	154	14
UnfA	Unadilla silt loam, 0 to 3 % slopes	Prime	Potentially	73	-
WabBb	Wallpack fine sandy loam, aeolian mantle, 0 to 8 % slopes, very stony	Prime	Potentially	63	-
WacB	Wallpack silt loam, 3 to 8 % slopes	Prime	Potentially	97	-
CorA	Colonie loamy fine sand, 0 to 3 % slopes	Statewide	Potentially	42	-
CorB	Colonie loamy fine sand, 3 to 8 % slopes	Statewide	Potentially	742	-
HonCb	Hoosic-Hazen complex, 8 to 15 % slopes	Statewide	Potentially	1,575	-
LorC	Lordstown-Wallpack Complex, 8 to 15 % slopes	Statewide	High	1,052	-
UnfB	Unadilla silt loam, 3 to 8 % slopes	Statewide	Potentially	365	-
WabCb	Wallpack fine sandy loam, aeolian mantle, 8 to 15 % slopes, very stony	Statewide	High	776	-
WacC	Wallpack silt loam, 8 to 15 % slopes	Statewide	High	1,331	-
CatbA	Catden mucky peat, 0 to 2 % slopes	Unique	Not high	9,226	2,258
				48,441	4,833

Source: NJDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Soil Survey

Figure 4. Prime Farmland Soils



Water Resources and Irrigated Areas

A report titled, “Geology and Ground Water Resources of Sussex County and Warren County Portion of the Tocks Island Impact Area” was published by the State of New Jersey DEP, Division of Water Resources, Bureau of Geology and Topography in January 1974. The report reviewed the geology and set forth recommended minimum lot sizes in areas based upon water bearing characteristics of the various formations. Information concerning the average water availability, the probable percolation rate for each geologic formation, the overlying soil, and the cumulative effect of development was provided. The report discussed the rainfall hydrologic cycle evapotranspiration, runoff, and recharge.

“Evapotranspiration” is a term that refers to both the evaporation and transpiration of water loss from plants. The percentage of precipitation lost to evapotranspiration ranges from 30 to 60 percent (Special Report#24). Variables include the season or time of the year, temperature, humidity, wind velocity, amount and kind of vegetation, and height of the water table. The amount of runoff is also subject to variable factors. These include the rate of rainfall (a short summer cloudburst and prolonged moderate rainfall may each produce a similar amount of rain but more runoff will occur from the cloudburst), type of rain, type of vegetation, slope of the land, weather conditions, impervious coverage, and soil moisture content.

Ground water is stored in cracks and small interconnections and voids between individual grains in the rocks. If spaces between individual grains of porous rock are interconnected and water can travel more or less freely from opening to opening, then the rock is said to be permeable.

Groundwater withdrawals are primarily for residential drinking water supply, farm uses such as livestock watering, small garden watering, institutional uses (schools, churches), small commercial uses, and irrigation for sod farms, landscaping, and greenhouse farming. The physical infrastructure defines the limits for water delivery that are inherent to the water supply systems in the Township. NJDEP water allocation permits and associated limitations in water availability define the limits for water supply in the Township from a permit perspective.

According to the Census of Agriculture, there was a 34.2 percent increase in the acres irrigated in Sussex County between 2012 and 2017 and a 10.6 percent increase in the number of irrigated farms. There was a substantial decrease in the acres irrigated between 2007 and 2012 of 69.4 percent and farms which had a 37.3 percent decrease. Overall, between 2002 and 2017, there has been a 36.6 percent decrease in irrigated acres and a 29.0 percent decrease in the number of irrigated farms. Data of farmland irrigation is only available on a county level.

Table 4. Irrigated Land

Sussex County	2017	2012	2007	2002	% Change 2002 – 2017
Irrigated Land	407	268	454	642	-36.6%
Number of Farms	66	59	81	93	-29.0%

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture: 2017, 2012, 2007

Farmland Assessment and Census of Agriculture Statistics and Trends

NUMBER OF FARMS AND FARMS BY SIZE IN VERNON TOWNSHIP

As of tax year 2021, Vernon Township had a total of 214 farm-assessed parcels with a total of 6,338 acres devoted to agriculture. The chart below illustrates the general trend in Sussex County, which has fluctuated unevenly since 1982.

Table 5. Sussex County Farms (1982 - 2017)

Number of Sussex County Farms: 1982 – 2017									
Year	1982	1987	1992	1997	2002	2007	2012	2017	
Number of Farms	613	776	791	827	1,029	1,060	885	1,008	

Source: USDA/NASS Census of Agriculture

The list of all farm-assessed properties in the Township is provided in Appendix A: New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program Summary of Preserved Farmland. The appendix provides an inventory of all farm-assessed properties and their sizes.

The Township is made up of predominantly small to mid-sized farms. The average size of a farm, as of September 2021 is 29.61 acres. However, as shown below, there are a number of adjacent properties under same ownership therefore creating larger tracts of farmland under the same family or property owners. The following list includes assessed farmland properties with a total of 40 acres or more.

Table 6. Vernon Township Farm-Assessed Properties

Block	Lot	Owner	Address	Acres
482	1	BEGRAFT, DONALD F & DONALD F INC	OFF BREAKNECK RD	46.73
265	8	COSH, ANNALIES L	114-134 LK WALLKILL RD	45.64
58	2	FARM 94, LLC	RT 94	66.02
228	8	FARM 94, LLC/WILLIAM BROWN MEMBER	435 RT 94 & 114-134 M G R	4.00
				70.02
543	1	GLUCK, STEVEN M & COLLEEN M	94-114 LK POCHUNG RD	50.79
607	16	HELEN LYONS LIMITED LIABILITY CO	MC AFEE	114.45
153	43	HIGHLANDS MANAGEMENT, LLC	GLENWOOD	79.99
167	11	HIGHLANDS MANAGEMENT, LLC	92-106 GLENWOOD MTN RD	28.25
168	2	HIGHLANDS MANAGEMENT, LLC	GLENWOOD	60.61
				168.85
23	1	HOFFMANN, MICHAEL E	525-539 RT 94	40.40
23	11	HOFFMANN, MICHAEL E	NY STATE LINE	30.25
26	3	HOFFMANN, MICHAEL E	552 RT 94	25.11
				95.76
19	2	HUME R STEYER C/O CH COSTER GERARD	41 MEADOWBURN RD	175.80
20	2	HUME R STEYER C/O CH COSTER GERARD	2 MEADOWBURN RD	42.88
21	1	HUME R STEYER C/O CH COSTER GERARD	MEADOWBURN RD	31.00
21	2	HUME R STEYER C/O CH COSTER GERARD	MEADOWBURN RD	11.18
22	1	HUME R STEYER C/O CH COSTER GERARD	NY STATE LINE	3.49
23	4	HUME R STEYER C/O CH COSTER GERARD	RT 94	102.49
19	3	HUME R STEYER, TRUSTEE % A D GERARD	47 MEADOWBURN ROAD	2.76
				369.60
153	39	JOHN C JUNEK REV TST	24 JONAS EVANS LN	74.34
525	17	KELLEY, DALE TST/KLEESCHULTE, D TST	169 RT 94	42.92
416	1	KNOERZER, NANCY TST/GLICKSON, C S	437-455 RT 515	25.57
450	2	KNOERZER, NANCY TST/GLICKSON, C S	440-456 RT 515	21.73
				47.30
542	32	KOSCO, DONNA	5 EL'S WAY	41.83
146	6	LADORES, EMMA A LIVING TST	849 WARWICK TNPK	53.24
518	1	LAKE POCHUNG O/A C/O C SHOTMEYER	1636-1638 RT 565	62.78
518	3	LAKE POCHUNG O/A C/O C SHOTMEYER	LK POCHUNG	220.95
518	25	LAKE POCHUNG O/A C/O C SHOTMEYER	LK POCHUNG	0.47
518	26	LAKE POCHUNG O/A C/O C SHOTMEYER	LK POCHUNG	0.45
518	32	LAKE POCHUNG O/A C/O C SHOTMEYER	LK POCHUNG	0.40
518	35	LAKE POCHUNG O/A C/O C SHOTMEYER	LK POCHUNG	0.36

518	37	LAKE POCHUNG O/A C/O C SHOTMEYER	LK POCHUNG	0.35
544	4	LAKE POCHUNG O/A C/O C SHOTMEYER	LK POCHUNG	0.47
544	5	LAKE POCHUNG O/A C/O C SHOTMEYER	LK POCHUNG	0.43
544	6	LAKE POCHUNG O/A C/O C SHOTMEYER	LK POCHUNG	0.43
545	2	LAKE POCHUNG O/A C/O C SHOTMEYER	121 LK POCHUNG RD	0.72
				287.81
412	2	MAC PEEK, HAROLD A & REBA	10 ALBERTA DR	100.37
26	1	MARTIN IRREVOCABLE TST % K A MARTIN	540 RT 94	7.21
26	2	MARTIN, F T & A F TRUST	540-544 RT 94	164.51
				171.72
520	5	METROS FARMS, LLC	1 MAC PEEK RD	48.35
521	4	METROS FARMS, LLC	2-8 MAC PEEK ROAD	5.95
				54.30
609	3	MORFORD CONSERVATION C/O MEEKER, EL	SAND POND	224.18
611	5	MUD POND FARM LLC	1 MUD POND RD	70.79
18	5	NEWPORT BLOOM, LLC	90 PRICES SWITCH RD	88.59
18	7	NEWPORT BLOOM, LLC	90 PRICES SWITCH RD	79.67
18	9	NEWPORT BLOOM, LLC	AMITY RD	114.62
52	6	NEWPORT BLOOM, LLC	77 PRICES SWITCH RD	172.79
54	1	NEWPORT BLOOM, LLC	55 PRICES SWITCH RD	6.03
59	1	NEWPORT BLOOM, LLC	5 POND EDDY RD	8.06
59	3	NEWPORT BLOOM, LLC	344 RT 94	111.16
59	5	NEWPORT BLOOM, LLC	BREAKNECK MT	13.95
				594.88
2	13	PREDMORE, LARRY L & BRENDA ET AL	315-323 LK WALLKILL RD	53.03
3	14	PREDMORE, LARRY L & BRENDA ET AL	OWENS	54.73
				107.76
299	1	RANNOU, ANTHONY J & AMANDA T	7 DREW RD	49.99
57	2	RED WINE PROPERTY, LLC	455-481 RT 94	88.00
57	4	RED WINE PROPERTY, LLC	455 RT 94	2.00
				90.00
612	1	ROUND LK REALTY C/O SECRETARY	10 LAUREL LAKE	54.30
632	4	ROUND LK REALTY C/O SECRETARY	CANISTEAR ROAD	9.70
				64.00
634	3	ROUTE 94 FTT, LLC	139 RT 94	53.68
141	2	SACKLOW, JANET L	WARWICK TPKE	95.08
281	8	SHEPARD, CHRISTINE & LETO, JOHN	16 TUDOR HILL DR	58.84
233	2	SMITH, MICHELE A	160 LK WALLKILL RD	51.26

176	1	SPEIDEL, SEAN	56 LOUNSBERRY HOLLOW RD	10.42
176	2	SPEIDEL, SEAN	58 LOUNSBERRY HOLLOW RD	5.00
248	6	SPEIDEL, SEAN	GLENWOOD	55.93
300	10	SPEIDEL, SEAN	GLENWOOD	45.84
				117.18
369	4	STEPHENS, KIRK R JR	DREW RD	4.03
369	5	STEPHENS, KIRK R JR	DREW RD	3.03
369	6	STEPHENS, KIRK R JR	139 DREW RD	48.37
370	16	STEPHENS, KIRK R JR	136 DREW RD	10.39
370	17	STEPHENS, KIRK R JR	140 DREW RD	11.14
				76.97
36	3	SUTERA, PATRICIA & SALLEROLI, N&M	46 MELINDA LN	47.28
24	2	TOURINA, LLC	524 RT 94	56.88
416	9	TUBMAN, ROBERT L SR & JANET	2 MACINTOSH DR	40.16
46	10	VANCE BARBARA & VANCE R	RT 517	30.37
15	7	VANCE, BARBARA	GLENWOOD	51.92
46	4	VANCE, BARBARA F	GLENWOOD	98.88
				181.17
34	14	VERA CORP	947 WARWICK TPKE	60.25
35	7	VERA CORP	946 WARWICK TPKE	39.20
				99.46
362	2	VERNON VALLEY RESERVE LLC	24 EDSALL DR	9.27
519	6	VERNON VALLEY RESERVE, LLC	19 EDSALL DR	106.64
519	7	VERNON VALLEY RESERVE, LLC	11 EDSALL DR	3.50
				119.41
309	4	WALKER, A & MARY ELIZABETH	99 SAND HILL RD	109.58
310	1	WALKER, A & MARY ELIZABETH	78-110 SAND HILL RD	83.26
				192.84
631	19	WANG, DONNA	4 NORTH LAKE DR	7.09
28	2	WAWAYANDA TREE FARM, LLC	BARRETT RD	39.83
36	1	WEISS, DONALD A & LINDA E	2 FARM LN	70.53
1	1	WESBOYS, LLC	OWENS STATION ROAD	25.28
40	3	WESBOYS, LLC	INLAND LK WALLKILL RD	57.81
150	3	WESBOYS, LLC	249 LWRD/142-148 OSRD	15.33
150	6	WESBOYS, LLC	265 LK WALLKILL RD	21.06
151	20	WESBOYS, LLC	246-252 LK WALLKILL RD	11.13
				130.61
241	8	YOUNG, JOAN A & WILLIAM	GLENWOOD	80.15

The development within the Township over the past 20 years has led to the fractionalization of a number of larger farms. This trend can be expected to continue in the future at a slower pace as fewer remaining large farms are entering preservation programs.

SUSSEX COUNTY FARM SIZE

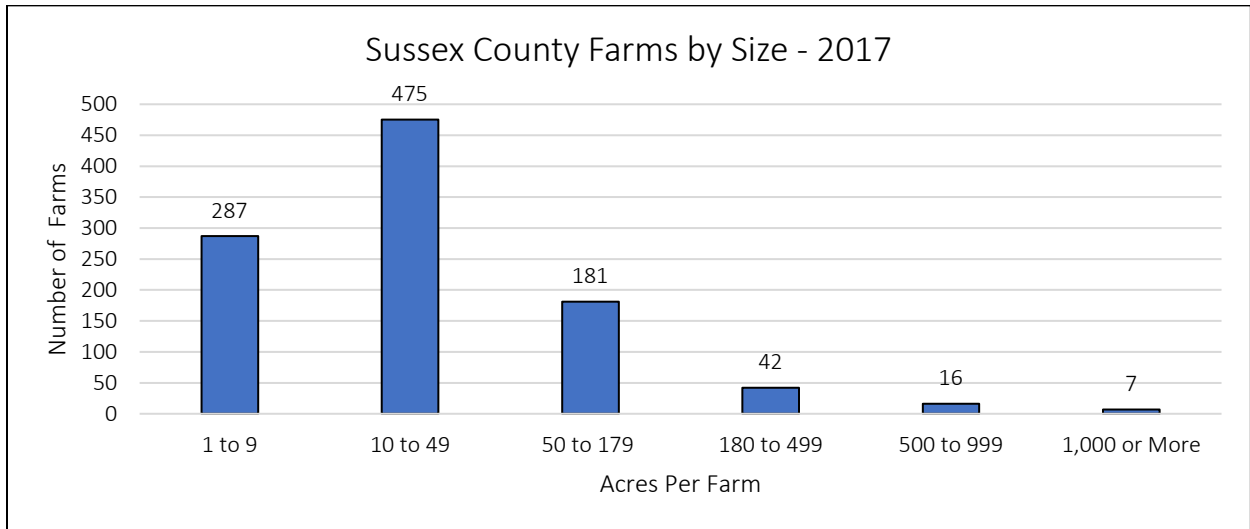
According to the 2008 Sussex County Farmland Plan, the size of the agricultural land base in Sussex County has remained relatively constant between the years 1982 and 2002. Although the number of farms has grown from 613 Farms in 1982 to 1,029 Farms in 2002, the total acreage has only increased from 73,161 acres to 75,496 acres. The average farm size in 2002 was 73 Acres, and the median farm size was 27 acres. The County Farmland Plan acknowledges that the agricultural diversity in the County continues to be reliant on small to moderately sized farms, which is a result of large residential properties becoming eligible for farmland assessment status when landowners produce sufficient amount of agriculture. This trend is different than the national trend of larger, consolidated farms and is indicative of a growing trend in New Jersey, as a whole toward smaller, more intensive farms and farms operated by part-time farmers.

1. According to the NJ Census of Agriculture in 2017, Sussex County had 59,766 acres of farmland. The average sized farm was 59 acres, and median size was 18 acres. The decreasing average farm size is due to the loss of large farms and the significant increase in smaller and "part-time" farms.

The typical farm size range for Sussex County was as follows:

1. 287 farms between 1 - 9 acres;
2. 475 farms between 10 - 49 acres;
3. 181 farms between 50 - 179 acres;
4. 42 farms between 180 - 499 acres;
5. 16 farms between 500 - 999 acres, and
6. 7 farms of 1,000 or more acres.

Table 7. Sussex County Farms by Size (2017)



Source: NJ Census of Agriculture

CROPLAND HARVESTED, PASTURE, WOODLAND, EQUINE, AND AGRICULTURAL USE

“Active agriculture” is a farmland assessment term meaning those acres of cropland harvested, cropland, pastureland, and permanent pastureland. As indicated on the following table, the total land area within Vernon devoted to all agricultural uses, according to the N.J. Treasury Farmland Data Report as of 2020, was 6,246 acres, or 13% of the total landmass and has been gradually trending upward. The 2020 Farmland Data Report showed that cropland harvested accounted for 17.71% of all agricultural land while pastureland accounted for 3.73%, woodlands accounted for 64.68% and equine accounted for 0.30% of all agricultural land in Vernon Township.

Table 8. Cropland Harvested, Woodland, Equine, and Agricultural Use

Type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Change	%
Number of 3B Items	197	199	198	204	218	218	207	10	5.1%
Cropland Harvested (ac)	1,038	1,050	1,094	980	1,125	1,035	1,106	68	6.6%
Cropland Pastured (ac)	318	193	279	247	269	394	233	-85	-26.7%
Total Woodland Wetland (ac)	3,638	3,690	4,147	3,891	3,942	3,889	4,040	402	11.1%
Boarding, Rehab & Training (ac)	35	21	16	51	38	14	19	-16	-45.7%
Total (ac) - Vernon Township	5,679	5,576	6,117	5,753	6,046	6,146	6,246	567	10.0%
Total (ac) – Sussex County	104,393	103,394	103,410	101,107	102,092	101,634	101,311	-3,082	-3.0%

Source: 2014 – 2020 Farmland Data Reports –<https://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/lpt/farmland.shtml>

Overall, Vernon Township increased about 10.0% of its agricultural lands between 2014 and 2020, according to the Division of Taxation and Farmland Data Reports. This represents a gain of 567 acres. While there was a 26.7 percent reduction in pastured cropland, the harvested cropland increased by 6.6 percent in Vernon Township between 2014 and 2020.

II. VERNON TOWNSHIP AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

Sussex County Crop Production

Agriculture in Vernon Township, like Sussex County, has traditionally been diverse. The types of agriculture vary from hay production, feed corn, horses, and cattle, to sheep, nurseries, grapes, and specialty crops and animals. This mixture of types of farming is perhaps due to the above-average soils present in the County that accommodate a variety of agricultural uses, the relatively good climate, the differing sizes of farms, and the combination of part-time and full-time farms. Below is a chart displaying the different types of agriculture, the number of farms participating, and the value of the products, according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture. This data is only available on a county basis.

Table 9. Sussex County Crop Production (2017)

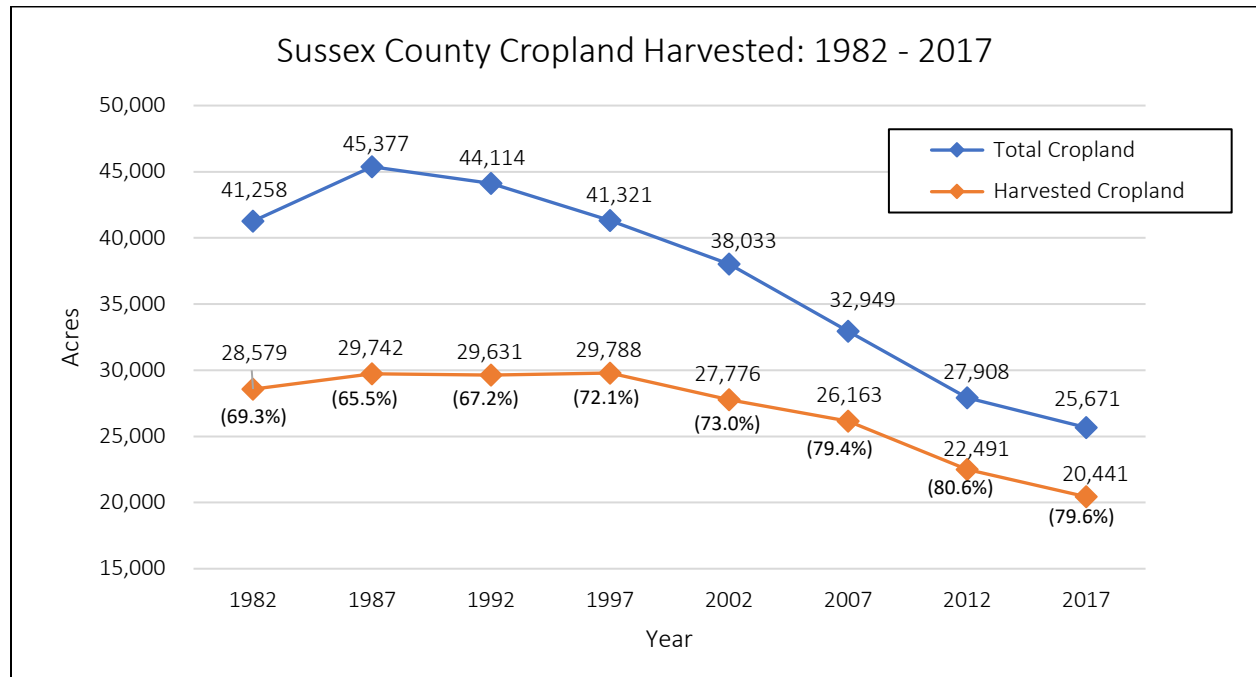
Sussex County Crop Production (2017)		
Product	Farms	Value (\$)
Crops (including nursery and greenhouse)	627	10,831,000
Grains, oil seeds, dry beans and peas	61	1,893,000
Corn	52	1,616,000
Wheat	5	15,800
Soybeans	10	232,000
Barley	1	3,200
Other Grains	7	26,000
Vegetables, Melons, Potatoes and Sweet Potatoes	104	1,877,000
Fruit, tree nuts and berries	88	1,545,000
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture and sod	44	1,960,000
Cut Christmas Trees and short rotation woods	55	266,000
Other Crops and Hay	474	3,290,000
Maple Syrup	29	56,000
Livestock, poultry and their products	468	7,395,000
Poultry and eggs	222	451,000
Cattle and Calves	157	1,197,000
Milk from cows	12	4,413,000
Hogs and Pigs	66	169,000
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair and milk	108	201,000
Horses, ponies, mules, burros and donkeys	63	560,000
Other animals	64	404,000
Total Sales	1,008	18,226,000
Average Per Farm (Dollars)	-	18,081

Source: USDA/NASS Census of Agriculture

Trends in Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold

The size of the agricultural land base in Sussex County has remained relatively constant in recent years, with a steady downward trend. Notably, according to the USDA Census of Agriculture, though the total amount of cropland in the County was declining steadily, the percentage of that land only varied between 65.5 percent and 80.6 percent. Harvesting activities were remaining relatively constant regardless of the amount of total cropland.

Figure 5. Sussex County Cropland Harvested (1982 - 2017)

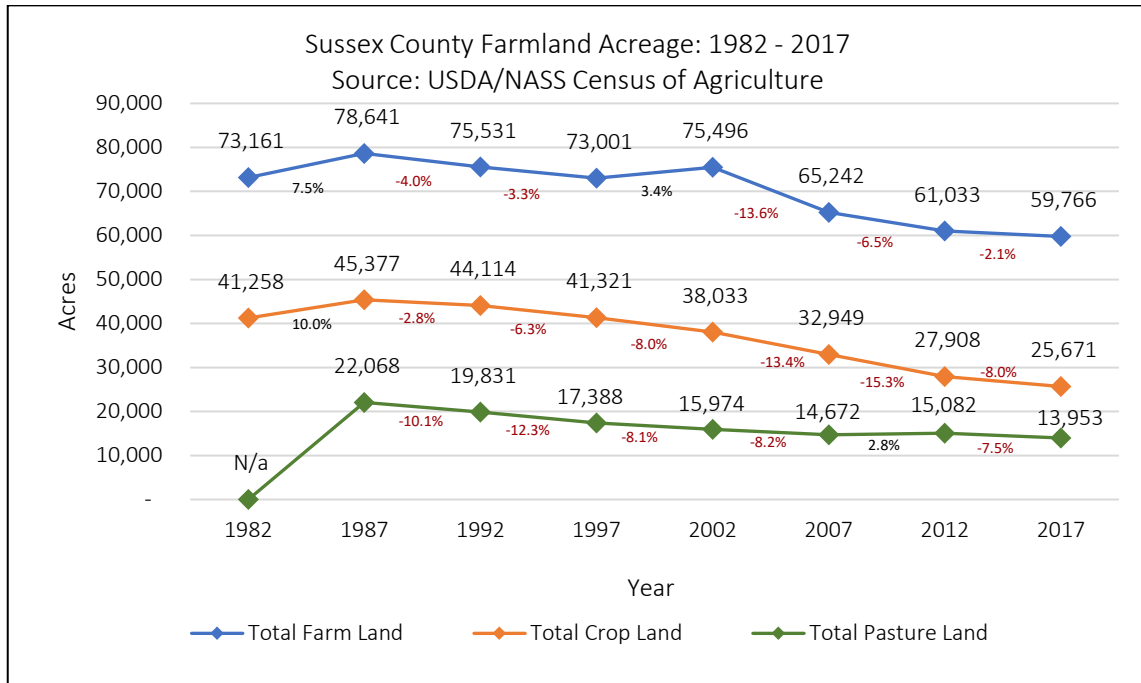


The 2008 Sussex County Farmland Preservation Plan offers the following explanation:

Many of the farmland losses associated with development of farmland are offset when natural land in other parts of the County is cleared and tilled for agricultural use. Additionally, large residential properties often become eligible for farmland assessment status when landowners produce sufficient amounts of agricultural products. This trend has increased the number of individual farms in Sussex County (see chart below) and resulted in a corresponding decrease in the average farm size. Consequently, changes to the overall area of farmland in Sussex County have been small in recent years.

The table below provides additional context regarding the decline of specific types of land, breaking down County-level trends into farmland, cropland, and pastureland.

Figure 6. Sussex County Farmland Acreage (1982 - 2017)



III. LAND USE PLANNING CONTEXT

The purpose of this section of the Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan is to ensure coordinated planning within all levels of government and to avoid conflicting land use and preservation goals. It is the intent that the Vernon Township Mayor and Council, Environmental Commission, Greenway Committee and Land Use Board will work in coordination with the Sussex County Agricultural Development Board and the Sussex County Planning Board to ensure that local, state, and regional planning efforts and the Township's Farmland Preservation Plan are compatible. As part of the Highlands Region, the Township and County also coordinate with the Highlands Council to implement the goals and objectives of the Highlands Regional Master Plan. Additionally, both the Township and the County coordinate with the State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC) and work in concert with the goals of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

State Development and Redevelopment Plan

In March of 2001, the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) was adopted, which amended the previous plan adopted in 1992. The following SDRP goals are consistent with the Farmland Preservation Plan:

- Goal #2: Conserve the State's Natural Resources and Systems.
- Goal #3: Promote Beneficial Economic Growth, Development and Renewal for All Residents of New Jersey.
- Goal #4: Protect the Environment, Prevent and Clean Up Pollution.
- Goal #7: Preserve and Enhance Areas with Historic, Cultural, Scenic, Open Space and Recreational Value.
- Goal #8: Ensure Sound and Integrated Planning and Implementation Statewide.

Highlands Regional Master Plan

The Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP) was adopted by the New Jersey Highlands Council in 2008 to implement the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (Highlands Act, P.L. 2004, c. 120), enacted on August 10, 2004 to govern land use in the Highlands Region of New Jersey. The Highlands Region covers an area of 859,358 acres located in the northwest part of the State including all of Vernon Township. The Highlands Region includes 88 municipalities and parts of seven Highlands counties – Bergen, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, and Warren. Vernon Township is 66 percent Preservation Area and 34 percent Planning Area. Agriculture is noted in the RMP as a vital component of the Highlands Region's culture, landscape and economy. The RMP details the important economic benefits that agriculture provides to the Highlands Region in the form of agricultural production and agri-tourism. The RMP notes that farmland preservation meets two

essential objectives of the Highlands Act; the preservation of agricultural land and preserving the viability of the agricultural industry. The New Jersey Legislature declared that the agricultural lands in active production in the Highlands Region are important resources to the State that should be preserved, and that the agricultural industry in the Highlands Region is a vital component of the economy, welfare, and culture of State as a whole. The following Goals and Policies from the RMP are consistent with this Plan:

GOAL 3A: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES AND THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY IN THE HIGHLANDS REGION.

Policy 3A1: To create and maintain an inventory of preserved farms, farmland assessed lands, other lands in agricultural use, and undeveloped vacant lands which contain soils which are highly suitable for agricultural use in the Highlands Region.

Policy 3A2: To consider Prime, Statewide Importance, Unique, and Locally Important soils as Important Farmland Soils which are critical agricultural resources of the Highlands Region.

Policy 3A3: To delineate Agricultural Resource Areas in the Highlands Region as those areas of contiguous and the most concentrated agricultural uses, using Important Farmland Soils as a critical factor.

Policy 3A4: To promote farmland preservation and limit non-agricultural uses within the ARAs and accord priority to the preservation of agricultural lands within Agricultural Priority Areas, through fee simple acquisition, easement acquisition, TDR, and other agricultural land conservation techniques. Objective 3A4a: Create and maintain a confidential inventory of agricultural lands in the ARAs, in coordination with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) and the SADC, to prioritize the preservation of farmland.

GOAL 3B: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY AND VIABILITY OF THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY WITHIN THE HIGHLANDS REGION.

Policy 3B1: To encourage private and public owners of lands within an ARA to lease open lands to farmers and/or to manage open space lands in a manner which is compatible with adjoining agricultural uses.

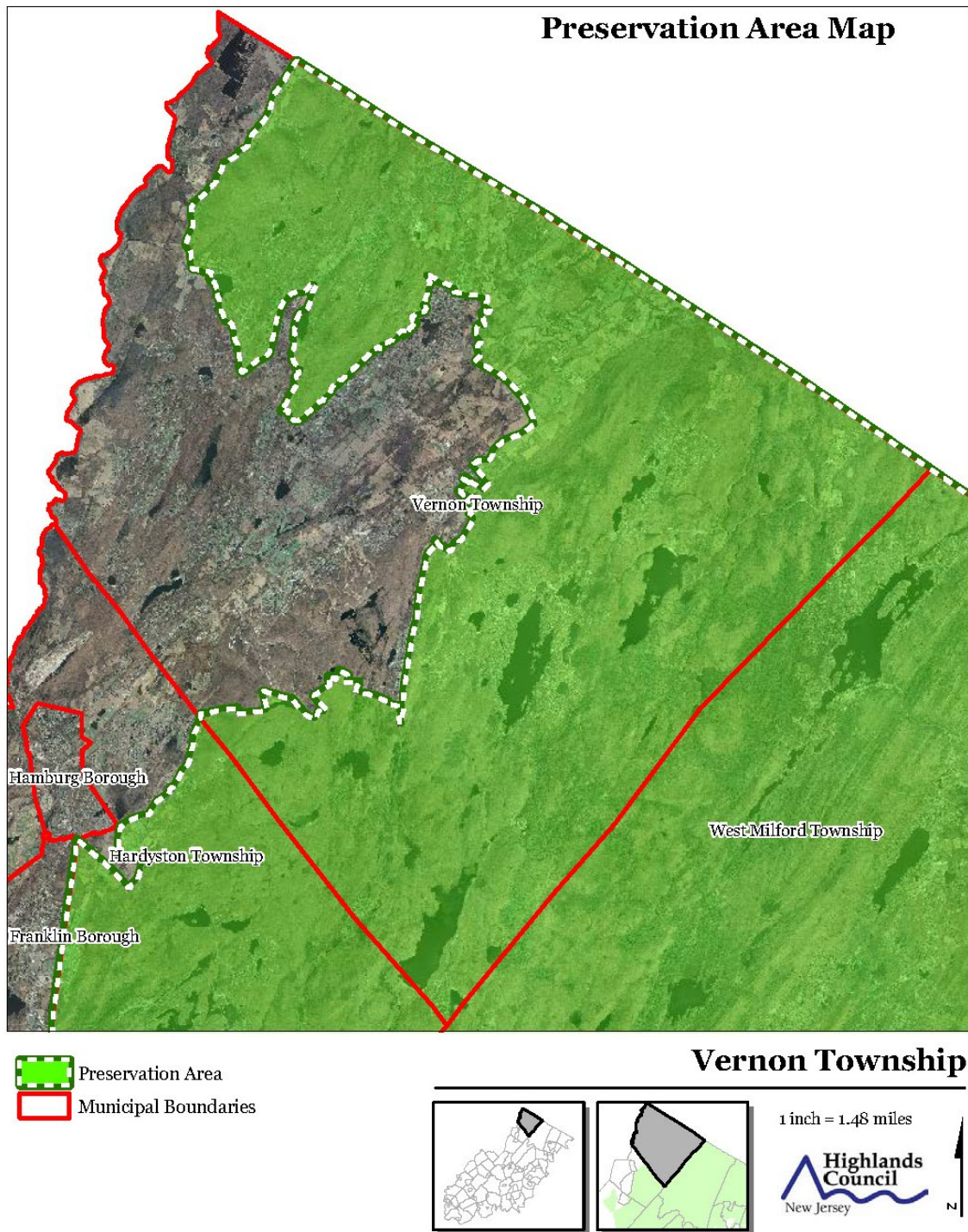
Policy 3B2: To promote research and study, and support proposals to enhance the long-term viability of the agricultural industry in the Highlands Region through innovative programs including, but not limited to, health care, banking practices, housing, food distribution, education, energy, and labor.

Policy 3B3: To seek additional funding from any and all state and federal funding programs to maintain and enhance sustainability and continued viability of the agricultural industry within the Highlands Region.

Policy 3B4: To support incentives and funding opportunities for the control of invasive species, white-tailed deer reduction programs, and the water value of well-managed agricultural lands.

Policy 3B5: To promote and enhance innovative agricultural practices and programs that promote long-term viability of the agricultural industry including, but not limited to, direct marketing, organic farming, agri-tourism such as farmers markets and road side stands, niche markets, and community supported agriculture.

Figure 7. Highlands Preservation Area Map



Vernon’s Master Plan and Development Regulations

One of the main goals of the 2010 Vernon Master Plan is to achieve a balance between continued development and the preservation of the extensive natural resources of the community. One objective of that goal is to participate in State and County open space and farmland preservation programs in order to preserve lands within the Township.

The Township of Vernon covers 70 square miles and has a population of 22,358 people, according to the 2020 Census. In 2020, Sussex County had a population of 144,221. See the table below for population trends in the Township, and County.

Table 10. 2020 Population

Population of Vernon Township and Sussex County		
Year	Vernon	Sussex
2000	24,686	144,166
2010	23,943	149,265
2020	22,358	144,221
Percent Change	-9.43%	0.04%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census

In addition to the change in development patterns, there has been a significant change in the regulatory environment of the Township and the State. New stormwater management regulations have significantly changed the way both residential and nonresidential development occurs. The Township Land Use Board is developing a new Stormwater Management Plan. The Township adopted its first Stormwater Control Ordinance in 2006 and in order to implement the most recent NJDEP regulations, an updated Stormwater Control Ordinance was adopted in February 2021.

Current Land Use and Trends

Vernon Township has a strong farming history; however, farming in the Township has been traditionally intertwined with a variety of other land uses including tourism, commercial uses and suburban style residential development. Historically, settlements in Vernon began as small villages, including McAfee, Glenwood, and the Village of Vernon, which grew primarily surrounding farming communities and mining operations. In the 1930s, resort communities began to develop around the lakes as summer bungalow communities. From the 1950s on, suburban residential growth began, much as it did across the United States. Suburbanization spawned fairly rapid population growth as the population in Vernon grew 17 times larger during the period from 1950 to 2000.

Resort development began in the 1970s, with the development of Vernon Valley, Great Gorge North, and Hidden Valley ski resorts. Growth and development have been balanced with the preservation of open space in the Township, with over half of the Township preserved as open space. With the passage of the Highlands Act in 2004, approximately two-thirds of the Township was placed in the Highlands Preservation Area, which

strictly limits development. As a result, the remaining one-third of the Township, which is designated as Highlands Planning Area, will need to accommodate nearly all the Township’s future growth.

This trend of decreased development can be seen today with a drastic reduction in the number of residential units, and office and commercial space that received building permits as shown in Table 10 below. Residential building permits peaked at 223 units in 2003, falling to a low of one unit in 2012. The Township has not issued 10 or more building permits since 2008. Approvals for office space and retail space have been inconsistent, leaning towards stagnant, since 2000 with a peak for office space construction in 2008 of 46,212 square feet and for retail space in 2002 with 52,785 square feet. Several years saw no increases in retail and office space approvals.

Table 11. Vernon Township Building Permits (2000 - 2020)

Year	Housing Units	Office Space (SF)	Retail Space (SF)
2000	52	9,830	23
2001	154	204	52,785
2002	56	2,128	0
2003	223	0	3,904
2004	39	14,484	0
2005	64	245	574
2006	32	162	0
2007	24	2,400	0
2008	10	46,212	3,582
2009	7	420	80
2010	5	1,493	0
2011	4	3,100	0
2012	1	9,275	11,665
2013	2	444	0
2014	2	1,121	0
2015	5	12,500	0
2016	3	0	0
2017	5	0	0
2018	5	1,920	0
2019	2	0	0
2020	4	0	0

Source: http://www.state.nj.us/dca/divisions/codes/reporter/building_permits.html#1

Land use trends in terms of acres devoted to various land use types is available from NJDEP. The following table shows Land Use Trends in Vernon Township dating back to 1995.

Table 12. Vernon Township Land Use Change (1995 - 2015)

Vernon Township Land Use Type (By Acres)	1995	2002	2007	2012	2015	Percent Change
Urban	6,364	6,811	7,342	7,402	7,457	17.17%
Agriculture	2,314	2,031	1,738	1,759	1,727	-25.37%
Forest	26,007	25,934	25,743	25,657	25,659	-1.34%
Water	1,884	1,914	1,940	2,007	1,979	5.04%
Wetlands	8,008	7,937	7,896	7,844	7,845	-2.04%
Barren Lands	151	100	68	100	60	-60.26%
Total	44,727	44,727	44,727	44,727	44,727	0.0%

Source: NJDEP Land Use / Land Cover Datasets (1995 – 2015)

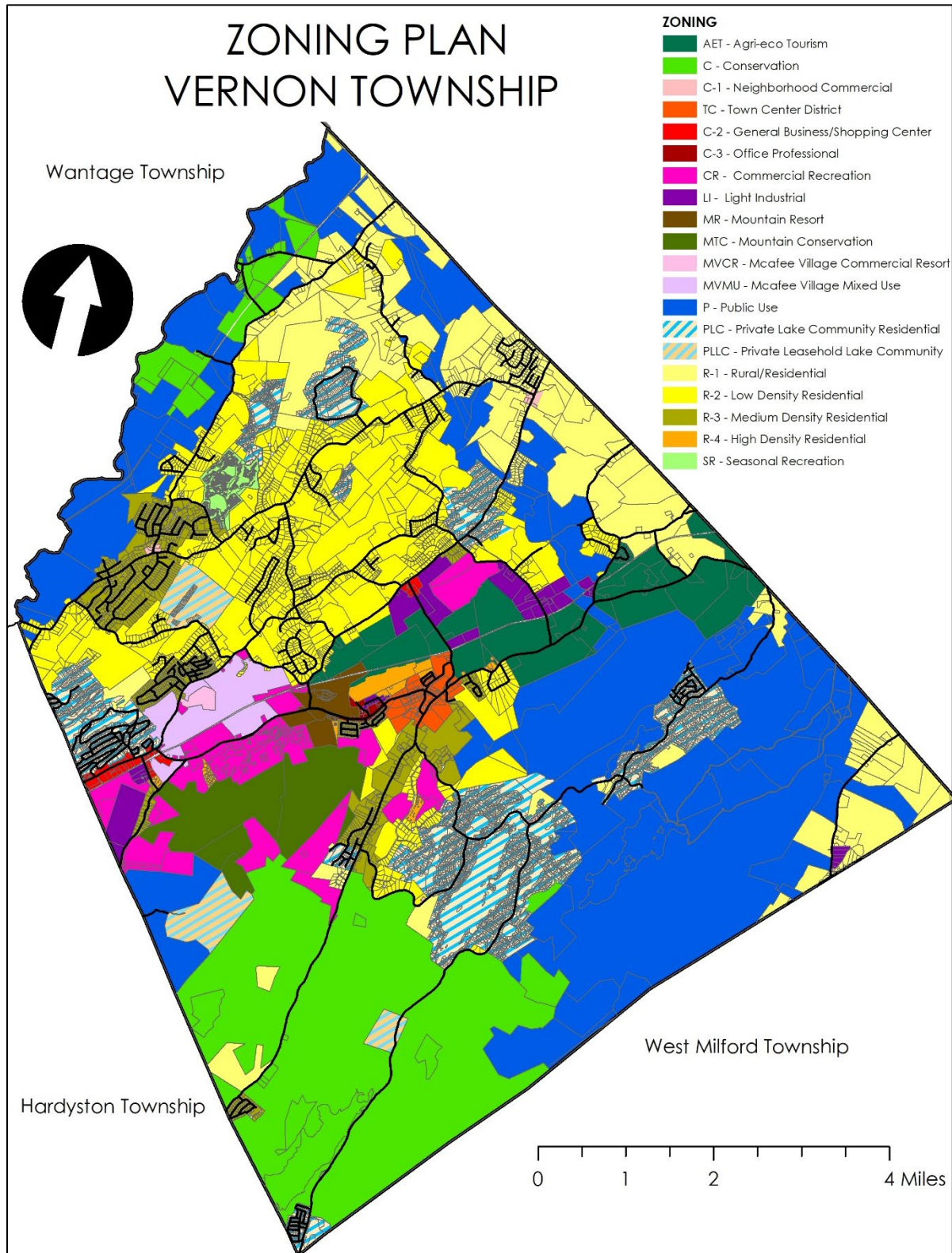
Between 1995 and 2015, NJDEP’s Land Use/Land Cover dataset, Vernon Township was reported to have gained urban land coverage while losing agricultural land uses. The “Urban” series saw a 17.17 percent (1,093-acres) increase while the “Agriculture” series saw a loss of 25.37 percent (587-acres) of its land cover. The Barren Land series declined from 151-acres in 1995 to 60 acres in 2015, a 60.26 percent loss. The Forest series saw a loss of 348-acres or 1.34 percent. Due to changes in mapping standards over the years, the data indicates that wetlands declined by 2.04 percent (163-acres), while the water series increased by 5.04 percent (95 acres). Areas that are now classified as artificial water bodies were previously included in the wetlands category.

Development Regulations

The Township is primarily zoned for residential uses or open space for existing preserved areas. Of the 44,727-acres in the Township, approximately 17,500 acres are residentially zoned, and 20,660 acres are institutionally zoned (public preserved property). The Township’s residential zoning generally varies from 15-acre single family zoning.

The following land use map indicates the distribution of land uses throughout the Township. Generally, non-residential development is concentrated in the Vernon Town Center area, and along State Route 94, County Route 517, and County Route 644. The higher density residential areas are situated near the lake residential areas in the eastern portion of the Township and in pockets northwest of State Route 94. The remaining lower density residential areas are in the outer lying areas of the Township. Remaining farming activity corresponds to these residential areas. Farming is a permitted use in all of these residential zones.

Figure 8. Zoning Map



Description of Planning Techniques

Agriculture-friendly zoning and planning techniques helps to maintain the success of the industry by allowing for flexibility. Agriculture-adjacent businesses, such as seed, fertilizer, and equipment suppliers) should be considered when reviewing zoning ordinances.

CLUSTER ZONING

The Township permits cluster zoning in the R-1, R-2, and R-3 zones whenever a subdivision is larger than 20 acres. Clustering is the most effective option the Township has in preserving farmland and providing buffering to farmland. While this can act as an effective buffer between residential and agricultural uses, the Township may consider encouraging small-scale agricultural practices (such as beekeeping) on residential lots. The Township Planning Board has strongly supported the use of clustering. The recent master plan amendments related to cluster zones have moved to encourage clustering to help develop greenways and preserve farmland and open space. This trend can be expected to continue where conditions permit.

NON-CONTIGUOUS CLUSTER ZONING

Non-contiguous cluster zoning is similar to cluster zoning, however, the open space is provided off site or on an adjacent property. This can be effective in cases where a full-scale Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program cannot be implemented. Ultimately, the master plan supported the future use of noncontiguous cluster zoning where conditions warrant.

LOT SIZE AVERAGING

Lot size averaging is similar to cluster zoning, however, the open space is generally split up onto private lots. Lot size averaging allows the size of individual lots within a development to vary from the zoned maximum density, provided that the average lot size in the development meets that maximum. Housing can then be developed on lots smaller than otherwise permitted in a zone, allowing for greater densities in some areas and less density in others resulting in more diversity throughout the development.

The flexibility granted to the landowner through lot size averaging can help ensure that individual subdivision layouts achieve many goals of the local community. These include:

- Conservation of forest, agricultural land, scenic resources, wildlife habitat
- Provision of a range of building lot prices
- Layout of subdivisions in a manner which is conducive to neighborhood dynamics
- Walkability, linkage between areas
- Reduction in the cost of roads and utilities to the developer and to the community

Lot size averaging is permitted in the Township. Clustering is the preferred option, as it allows greater protection of any environmental or buffer areas that would be available through private ownership.

TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is a land use planning tool that shifts development from one location to another, allowing preservation in certain areas and designating other areas for growth and the receipt of additional development potential. Development should be transferred to areas that a community or communities determine to be optimal growth areas where infrastructure can be provided while simultaneously preserving open space or farmland elsewhere. TDR has resulted in tens of thousands of acres of preserved land in various areas of the country. Municipalities can transfer development from one area to another; alternatively, they can send development to other communities through mutually agreed upon arrangements. In 2016, The Township reviewed the feasibility of a local TDR program. Given the complexity of such a program when compared to the amount of vacant land that could use such a program, there was not enough benefit to justify the cost. The other zoning alternatives, specifically on-site and off-site clustering, were pursued instead. However, a regional alternative may be possible if receiving areas could be found. Given property tax limitations however, it may be difficult to find receiving areas in the region of Vernon Township. The Township will continue to be open about a TDR program and will review any alternatives that are presented.

Municipal and Regional TDR Opportunities

HIGHLANDS DEVELOPMENT CREDITS (TDR PROGRAM)

The Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act charged the Highlands Council with developing a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program for the Highlands Region. The Highlands Council adopted the TDR Program as part of the Highlands Region Master Plan and established the Highlands Development Credit Bank (HDC Bank) in June 2008 in support of the TDR Program. This program serves as one mechanism to address some of the equity concerns of property owners in the Preservation Area that have been affected by implementation of the Highlands Act.

The Highlands TDR Program allocates TDR credits called Highlands Development Credits, or HDCs, to sending zone property owners. HDCs may be sold to developers for use in appropriate voluntary receiving zones. Use of HDCs by developers in established receiving zones will permit developers to increase the density or intensity of proposed projects in those zones. Under the Highlands Act, participation as a receiving zone is voluntary.

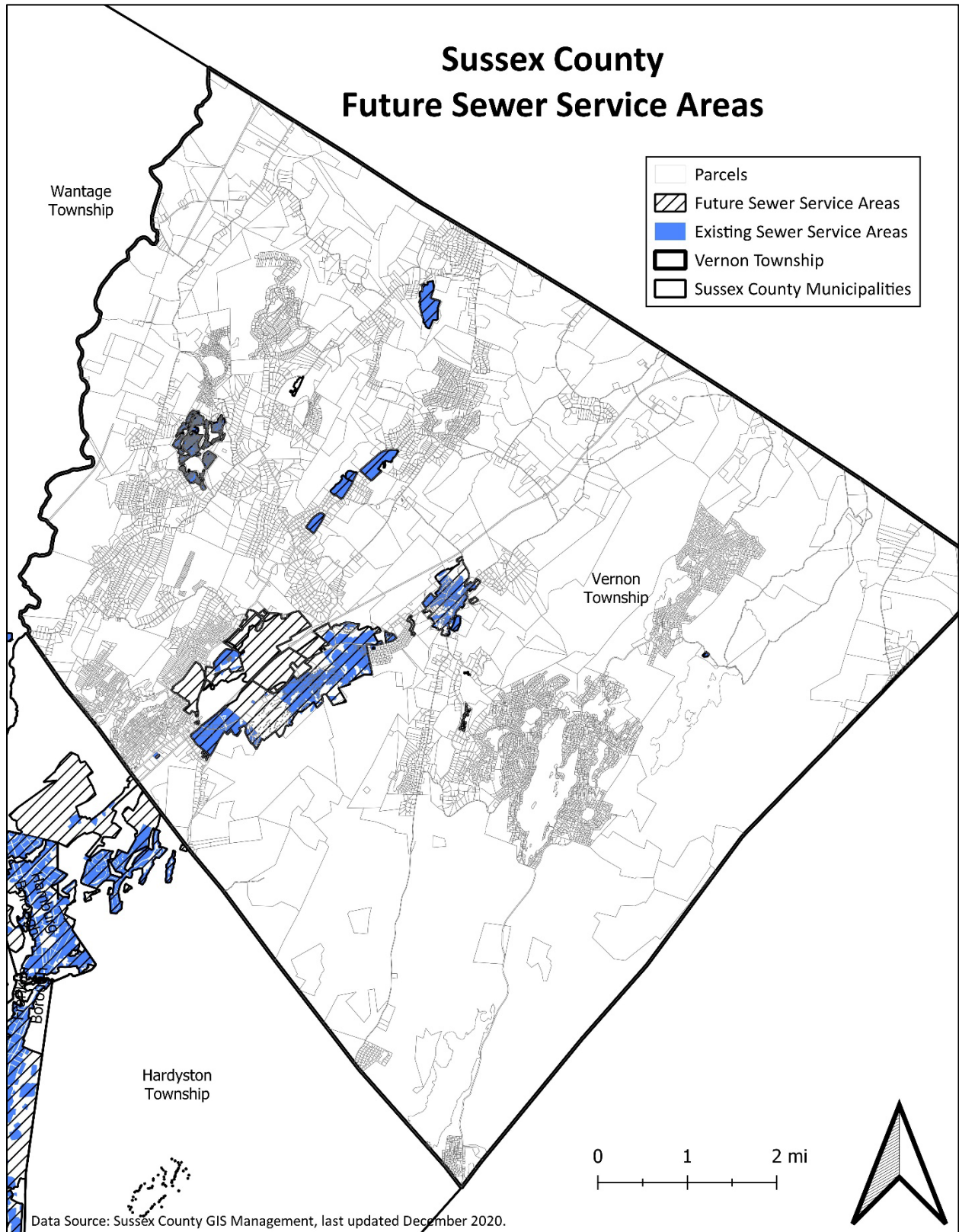
BUFFER REQUIREMENTS

The Township's ordinances require substantial buffers between differing land uses. In particular, the Township recognized the impacts that new residential housing can have on preexisting agricultural uses, and the negative impacts such as odor and noise that agricultural uses can impart on surrounding non-agricultural uses. The Township has specifically adopted buffering requirements to reduce these impacts. The Township's proposed and existing agricultural and residential zones require mandatory buffering covered by conservation easements between proposed residential development and existing farmland. Furthermore, clustering requirements allow the placement of structures and lot lines in relation to preexisting agricultural uses to minimize the negative impacts on both land uses. One other technique that the Township may consider includes neighbor disclosure statements, where a potential home-buyer must sign a statement acknowledging any nearby agricultural uses.

Sewer Service Area/Public Water Service Areas

Vernon Township has a very limited public water and public sanitary sewer area, which is focused in the Town Center and Mountain Creek Resort sections of State Route 94. The Township's most recent master plan recognizes this infrastructure limitation and the bulk of new development is proposed in this area of the Township. As a result, most areas outside of the public water and sewer service areas will have limited development potential.

Figure 9. Future Wastewater Service Area Map



IV. VERNON TOWNSHIP'S FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Sussex County Agricultural Development Areas

Since the implementation of New Jersey's Farmland Preservation Program, Sussex County has permanently preserved 18,636 acres of farmland on more than 180 farms. Vernon Township has had approximately 1,428.44 acres of land across 34 properties preserved.

Land is eligible for the Farmland Preservation Program if it meets the Sussex County Agriculture Development Board (SCADB) minimum eligibility criteria, qualifies for farmland tax assessment, and is part of an agricultural development area ("ADA"). An ADA is an area where the County Agriculture Development Board has determined that farming is viable over the long term. County Agriculture Development Boards are responsible for identifying the ADA pursuant to NJSA 4:1C-18:

- a. The board may, after public hearing, identify and recommend an area as an agricultural development area, which recommendation shall be forwarded to the county planning board. The board shall document where agriculture shall be the preferred, but not necessarily the exclusive, use of land if that area:
 - i. Encompasses productive agricultural lands which are currently in production or have a strong potential for future production in agriculture and in which agriculture is permitted as a non-conforming use;
 - ii. Is reasonably free of suburban and conflicting commercial development;
 - iii. Comprises not greater than 90 percent of the agricultural land mass of the county;
 - iv. Incorporates any other characteristics deemed appropriate by the board.

Other criteria for designation of ADA's are identified in the SADC's regulations 2:76-1.4:

1. Soils;
2. Current and anticipated local land use plans and regulations;
3. Farmland assessment status;
4. Anticipated approvals for non-agricultural development;
5. Accessibility to publicly funded water and sewer systems;
6. Compatibility with comprehensive and special purpose county and State plans;
7. Proximity and accessibility to major highways and interchanges;
8. Minimum size of an ADA;

9. Landowner sign-up;
10. Land within boroughs, towns or cities;
11. Inclusion of entire or partial lots and blocks;
12. Land ownership;
13. Natural and special features;
14. Type and distribution of agriculture.

The Sussex County ADA was approved by the Sussex CADB at its February 2007 meeting and was approved by the SADC at their July 2007 meeting. The Sussex County ADA excludes town centers as designated and/or proposed by the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. The ADA also excludes those sites with proposed and/or existing sewer service areas. Thus, the County's small towns and boroughs are outside of the designated ADA due to their proximity and suitability for development. The Sussex CADB focused the ADA on the most agriculturally productive land in the County.

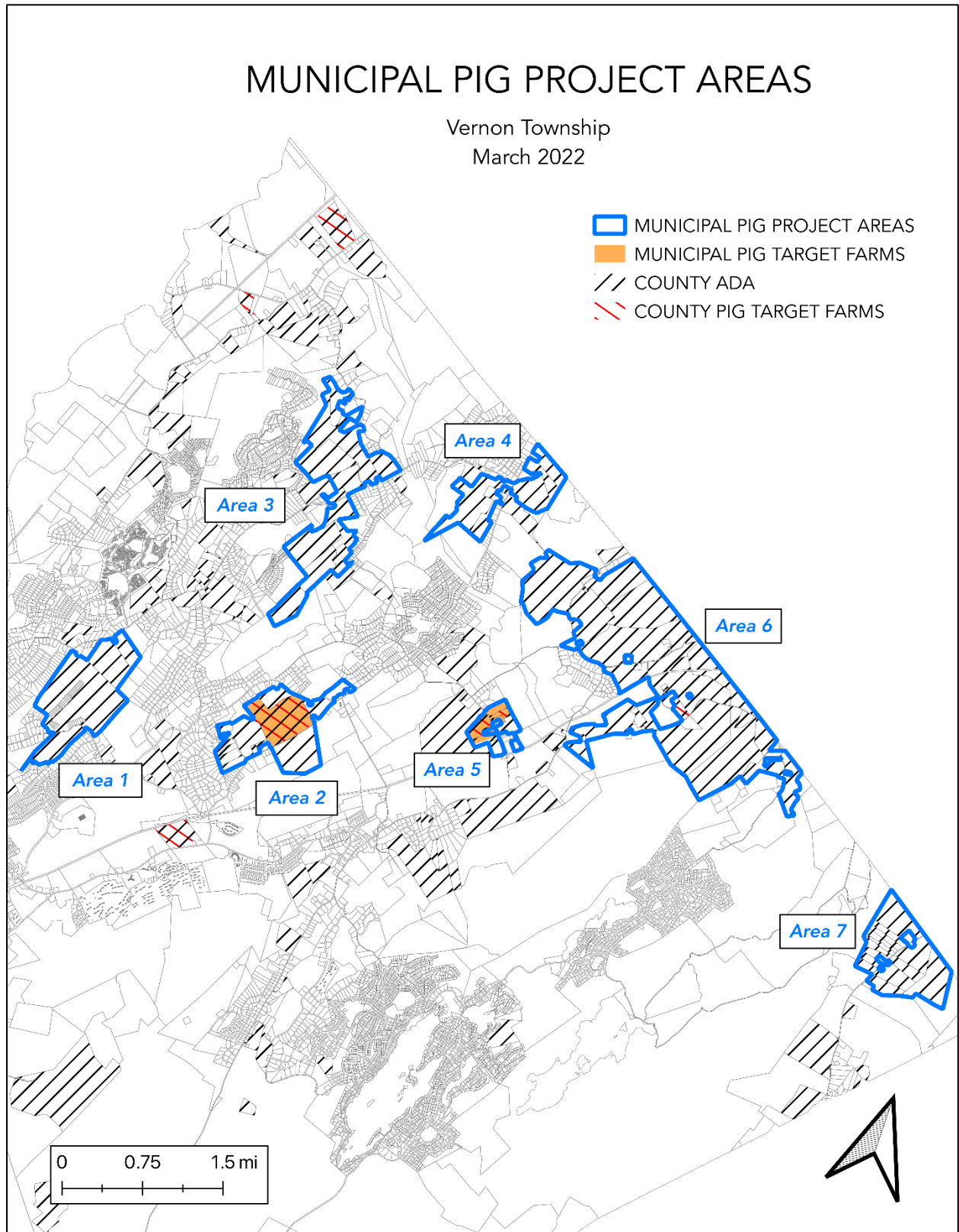
In 2007, the Sussex CADB identified and recommended areas in the County as part of the ADA. Prior to this, the County had designated ADAs on a voluntary, case-by-case basis for farmland assessed properties or those properties eligible for farmland assessment. Currently, all farm-assessed property in Andover, Frankford, Fredon, Green, Hampton, Hardyston, Lafayette, Montague, Sandyston, Sparta, Stillwater, Vernon, and Wantage Townships as cited by tax assessments as of July 2006 are eligible for the Farmland Preservation Plan. Additionally, land that is currently in or has strong potential for agricultural production or is farm-assessed through a woodland management plan is eligible.

Vernon Township's Municipal Planning Incentive Grant (PIG) Project Areas

The following summarizes Vernon Township's Planning Incentive Grant (PIG) Project Areas. A complete list of parcels by target area begins on page 40.

1. **Area 1.** The gross land cover of Area 1 is approximately 298.74 acres over four (4) parcels. All parcels in this area are designated ADAs, but none have been permanently preserved thus far. All four parcels meet the minimum SADC criteria for wetlands and slopes, but not tillable soil or important farming soils.
2. **Area 2.** The gross land cover of Area 2 is approximately 352.34 acres over 13 parcels. All parcels in this area are designated ADAs. Two (2) parcels have been permanently preserved, and one (1) parcel is both a County- and Municipally-targeted parcel. Three (3) parcels meet all of the SADC minimum eligibility criteria, and the remaining parcels meet at least two (2) of the other criteria.
3. **Area 3.** The gross land cover of Area 3 is approximately 522.30 acres over 12 parcels. All parcels in this area are designated ADAs, but none have been permanently preserved thus far. All parcels meet the minimum eligibility criteria for wetlands and slopes, and one (1) also meets the criteria for tillable soil.
4. **Area 4.** The gross land cover of Area 4 is approximately 233.79 acres over five (5) parcels. All parcels in this area are designated ADAs and three (3) parcels have been permanently preserved. Two (2) parcels meet all four minimum eligibility criteria, two (2) parcels meet at 3 of the 4 criteria, and the remaining parcel meets the criteria for wetlands and slopes.
5. **Area 5.** The gross land cover of Area 5 is approximately 283.27 acres across seven (7) parcels. One (1) parcel has been permanently preserved and five (5) parcels are both County and Municipally targeted parcels. All parcels in this area are designated ADAs and three (3) parcels meet at least three (3) of the minimum eligibility criteria.
6. **Area 6.** The gross land cover of Area 6 is approximately 1,465.29 acres over 23 parcels. 11 parcels have been permanently preserved and one (1) parcel is both a County and Municipally-targeted parcel. All parcels are designated ADAs. 12 parcels in this Area meet at least three (3) of the minimum eligibility criteria.
7. **Area 7.** The gross land cover of Area 7 is approximately 314.12 acres over 14 parcels. One (1) parcel has been permanently preserved and there are no County or Municipal target parcels in this area. All parcels are designated ADAs, and all meet the minimum eligibility criteria for wetlands and slopes.

Figure 10. Municipal PIG Project Areas



March 2023

	Owner	Address	Farm Status	Block	Lot	Acres	ADA	Municipal Target	County Target
Area 1	Idjadi, Farhad & Marguerite & Joshua	1644 Rt. 565	Assessed	344	2	24.33	Yes	No	No
	Lake Pochung O/A C/O C Shotmeyer	1636-1638 Rt 565	Assessed	518	1	62.77	Yes	No	No
	Lake Pochung O/A C/O C Shotmeyer	Lk Pochung	Assessed	518	3	160.86	Yes	No	No
	Gluck, Steven M & Colleen M	94-114 Lk Pochung Rd	Assessed	543	1	50.78	Yes	No	No
						298.74			
Area 2	Baldwin, Warren & Connie	695 Rt. 517	Assessed	257	25	15.76	Yes	No	No
	Decker, Brian & Barbara	660 Rt. 517	Assessed	307	2	23.5	Yes	No	No
	Baldwin, Warren R Jr & Carol A	694 Rt. 517	Assessed	309	2	19.49	Yes	No	No
	Walker, A & Mary Elizabeth	99 Sand Hill Rd	Preserved	309	4	109.58	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Walker, A & Mary Elizabeth	78-110 Sand Hill Rd	Assessed	310	1	83.26	Yes	No	No
	Shortway, Harry J & Cheryl	121 Drew Rd	Assessed	368	2	7.25	Yes	No	No
	Stephens, Kirk R Jr	Drew Rd	Preserved	369	4	4.03	Yes	No	No
	Stephens, Kirk R Jr	Drew Rd	Preserved	369	5	3.03	Yes	No	No
	Stephens, Kirk R Jr	139 Drew Rd	Preserved	369	6	48.37	Yes	No	No
	Iulo, Dennis J	134 Drew Rd	Assessed	370	14	9.03	Yes	No	No
	Iulo, Dennis J	132 Drew Rd	Assessed	370	15	5.9	Yes	No	No
	Stephens, Kirk R Jr	136 Drew Rd	Preserved	370	16	12	Yes	No	No
	Stephens, Kirk R Jr	140 Drew Rd	Preserved	370	17	11.14	Yes	No	No
						352.34			
Area 3	Books & Records, LLC	58 Glenwood Mtn Rd	Assessed	153	27	28.2	Yes	No	No
	John C Junek Rev TST	24 Jonas Evans Ln	Assessed	153	39	74.34	Yes	No	No
	Highlands Management, LLC	Glenwood	Assessed	153	43	79.09	Yes	No	No
	Highlands Management, LLC	92-106 Glenwood Mtn Rd	Assessed	167	11	30.18	Yes	No	No
	Highlands Management, LLC	Glenwood	Assessed	168	2	60.34	Yes	No	No
	Speidel, Sean	56 Lounsbury Hollow Rd	Assessed	176	1	10.42	Yes	No	No
	Caiafa, John	1761-1775 Rt. 565	Assessed	238	1	9.02	Yes	No	No
	Barnabic, Paul	1768-1776 Rt. 565	Assessed	241	7	30.68	Yes	No	No
	Young, Joan A & William	Glenwood	Assessed	241	8	79.57	Yes	No	No
	Neillands, Elizabeth A	46 Lounsbury Hollow Rd	Assessed	244	4	18.58	Yes	No	No
Speidel, Sean	Glenwood	Assessed	248	6	55.94	Yes	No	No	
Speidel, Sean	Glenwood	Assessed	300	10	45.94	Yes	No	No	
						522.3			
Area 4	Vance, Barbara	Glenwood	Preserved	15	7	51.92	Yes	No	No

	Owner	Address	Farm Status	Block	Lot	Acres	ADA	Municipal Target	County Target
		Paneque Farm, LLC	Glenwood	Assessed	15	10	23.39	Yes	No
	Gertsen, Ronald H	994 Rt. 517	Assessed	15	12	29.23	Yes	No	No
	Vance, Barbara F	Glenwood	Preserved	46	4	98.88	Yes	No	No
	Vance Barbara & Vance R	Rt. 517	Preserved	46	10	30.37	Yes	No	No
						233.79			
Area 5	Rosemark Farms, LLC	Maple Grange Rd	Preserved	226	10	21.06	Yes	No	No
	Dayon, John & Timothy	83 Maple Grange Rd	Assessed	226	12	3.38	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Dayon, John & Timothy	81 Maple Grange Rd	Assessed	226	13	18.62	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Borisuk, Andrew Jr & Sheila G	76-86 Maple Grange Rd	Assessed	227	1	17.54	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Borisuk, Andrew Jr & Sheila G	88 Maple Grange Rd	Assessed	227	2	205	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Dayon, John & Eileen B	Maple Grange Rd	Assessed	227	4	6.67	Yes	No	No
	Scenic Hills Farm LLC	104 Maple Grange Rd	Assessed	227	5	11.00	Yes	No	No
						283.27			
Area 6	Newport Bloom, LLC	90 Prices Switch Rd	Preserved	18	5	87.39	Yes	No	No
	Newport Bloom, LLC	90 Prices Switch Rd	Assessed	18	7	78.38	Yes	No	No
	Newport Bloom, LLC	Amity Rd	Assessed	18	9	117	Yes	No	No
	Hume R Steyer C/O CH Coster Gerard	41 Meadowburn Rd	Preserved	19	2	181.8	Yes	No	No
	Hume R Steyer C/O CH Coster Gerard	2 Meadowburn Rd	Preserved	20	2	40.87	Yes	No	No
	Hume R Steyer C/O CH Coster Gerard	Meadowburn Rd	Preserved	21	1	32	Yes	No	No
	Hume R Steyer C/O CH Coster Gerard	Meadowburn Rd	Preserved	21	2	10.6	Yes	No	No
	Hume R Steyer C/O CH Coster Gerard	NY State Line	Preserved	22	1	3.54	Yes	No	No
	Hoffman, Michael E	525-539 Rt. 94	Preserved	23	1	33.9	Yes	No	No
	Hume R Steyer C/O CH Coster Gerard	Rt. 94	Preserved	23	4	102.5	Yes	No	No
	Wiley, Edwin O & Sally C	12 De Kay Rd	Assessed	23	6	10.02	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Hoffman, Michael E	NY State Line	Preserved	23	11	29.86	Yes	No	No
	Tourina, LLC	524 Rt. 94	Assessed	24	2	184.69	Yes	No	No
	Martin Irrevocable Tst % K A Martin	540 Rt. 94	Assessed	26	1	7.66	Yes	No	No
	Martin, F T & A F Trust	540-544 Rt. 94	Assessed	26	2	164.5	Yes	No	No
	Hoffman, Michael E	552 Rt. 94	Assessed	26	3	26.09	Yes	No	No
	Ritzer, William	223-229 Barry Dr. N.	Assessed	26	6	34.00	Yes	No	No
	Wawayanda Tree Farm, LLC	Barrett Rd	Assessed	28	2	41.43	Yes	No	No
	Newport Bloom, LLC	77 Prices Switch Rd	Preserved	52	6	172.52	Yes	No	No
	Newport Bloom, LLC	91 Prices Switch Rd	Preserved	54	1	6.54	Yes	No	No
Theobald, Martin	55 Prices Switch Rd	Assessed	57	1	10	Yes	No	No	

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	Owner	Address	Farm Status	Block	Lot	Acres	ADA	Municipal Target	County Target
		Red Wine Property, LLC	479 Rt. 94	Assessed	57	2	88	Yes	No
	Red Wine Property, LLC	455-481 Rt. 94	Assessed	57	4	2	Yes	No	No
						1,465.29			
Area 7	Fallat, George J & Kelly, J & D	917 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	34	1	9.93	Yes	No	No
	Olson, William E & D'Angio-Olson, N	921 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	34	2	7.45	Yes	No	No
	Gannon, Grant E & Patricia A	927 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	34	4	7.02	Yes	No	No
	De Franco, Frances & Yvonne D	Warwick Tpke	Assessed	34	5	7.26	Yes	No	No
	Goldman, Craig	931 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	34	6	6.00	Yes	No	No
	Hossfield, William	933 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	34	7	9.91	Yes	No	No
	Hossfield, William	935 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	34	8	12.07	Yes	No	No
	Lawrence, Douglas & Beth	Warwick Tpke	Assessed	34	10	10.87	Yes	No	No
	Vera Corp	947 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	34	14	60.80	Yes	No	No
	Vera Corp	946 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	35	7	43.30	Yes	No	No
	Meyer, Douglas & Marlene	930 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	35	6	20.00	Yes	No	No
	Calkin, Beverly	924 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	35	3	33.00	Yes	No	No
	Clauss, Linda J	Warwick Tpke	Assessed	35	2	24.91	Yes	No	No
	Weiss, Donald A & Linda E	2 Farm Ln	Preserved	36	1	70.53	Yes	No	No
						314.12			

Types of Farmland Preservation Programs

COUNTY EASEMENT PURCHASE PROGRAM

County Easement Purchases involve the sale of farmland development rights to the County by the landowner. By selling their development rights to the County, the landowner agrees to restrict their land to agricultural use. To be eligible for the County Easement Purchase program, a landowner must complete an application. These applications are distributed once a year. Following review of the application and a site visit by the Sussex CADB are two independent appraisals, which determine the land's fair market value and its agricultural value. The difference between these two is the price of the farms' "development rights," also known as the easement value. This is the price that the State offers to the landowner, and if this price is accepted, the County has title work and a survey done for farms receiving final State, County and Municipal approvals, and then schedules a closing. The landowner still retains ownership of his or her farm and can sell it on the open market at any time, but the land is deed-restricted, in perpetuity, for agricultural use.

COUNTY PLANNING INCENTIVE GRANTS

The goal of County Planning Incentive Grants (PIGs) is to protect and preserve large pieces of contiguous farmland through the purchase of development easements. To qualify for PIGs, an agricultural advisory committee, as which the County Agricultural Development Board (CADB) functions for the county, is necessary. Additionally, the county must maintain a dedicated source of funding or alternative means for funding farmland preservation. Both county and municipal applications should correlate with county comprehensive farmland preservation plans.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING INCENTIVE GRANTS

Municipal Planning Incentive Grants (PIGs) are very similar to the County PIGs in their goals, requirements, and implementation. Like the County PIGs, Municipal PIGs require a local financial commitment for preserving farmland. Upon the completion of a municipal Farmland Preservation Plan and application to the SADC, grants are provided by the SADC to purchase development easements. The Farmland Preservation Plan Element describes the farms and programs that are the focus of the Municipal PIG. To qualify for this program, the municipality must have an agricultural advisory committee, a source of funding for farmland preservation, and a municipally approved Right to Farm ordinance. The Sussex CADB promotes the County Easement Purchase program for farmland preservation as the most effective and direct tool in Sussex County for farmland preservation. The Township does not currently have an Open Space Trust Fund or municipal funding source for a Municipal PIG program but has prepared a list of Target Areas should the Trust Fund or funding source be reinstated in the future. The Municipal Target Areas are consistent with County PIG Target Areas.

SADC DIRECT EASEMENT PURCHASE PROGRAM

Also important to Sussex County farmers is the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC). The SADC is the lead program in administering the state's Farmland Preservation Program. The SADC:

- Provides cost share funding for purchase of development easements.

- Directly purchases farms and development easements from landowners;
- Administers grants to landowners in the Farmland Preservation Program to fund up to 50 % of soil and water conservation projects;
- Administers the Right to Farm Program;
- Administers the Transfer of Development Rights Bank; and,
- Operates the Farm Link Program, which helps connect farm owners with potential tenant farmers.

The SADC Direct Easement Purchase is a program that allows a landowner to apply directly to the SADC for the sale of development rights. Landowners do not have to be within an ADA if they are making an application directly to the state, although this is not encouraged it is strongly recommended that the farm be located within the ADA. In most cases, the state will pay up to 100% of the certified appraised easement value in the direct easement purchase program. By participating in this program, the landowner still retains ownership of their land, but agrees to restrict land use to agricultural purposes. The Direct Easement Program does not receive monetary contributions from the County. In Sussex County, one farm in Fredon Township was preserved using SADC Direct Easement Purchase. The farm was 166 acres and was preserved at a cost of \$630,469 or \$3,800 per acre. The state covered 100% of the cost of preserving this farm.

SADC FEE SIMPLE PROGRAM

A fee simple acquisition involves an entire property being purchased directly by the state. The SADC pays the survey and title costs, the landowner is exempt from paying rollback taxes for farmland assessment and the transaction can be completed in a matter of months. The SADC negotiates a purchase price subject to recommendations of two independent appraisers and review by a state review appraiser. The land becomes restricted so that it becomes permanently preserved for agriculture. In this type of acquisition, the landowner does not retain any rights. The property is then resold at an auction and the SADC does not retain ownership. To qualify to participate in this program, the farmland must be within an ADA and be eligible for Farmland Assessment.

NON-PROFIT GRANT PROGRAM

Grants are provided to nonprofit organizations by the State Agricultural Development Committee. These grants fund up to 50% of the fee simple or development easement values on farms. These grants help to preserve farmland throughout the county, and generally these transactions involve properties with both agricultural and environmental significance. These grants are obtained through an application process, in which the land is evaluated by independent appraisers.

Two farms were preserved in 2001 and 2002, using the nonprofit grant program, one in Fredon and one in both Andover Township and Fredon. Both were completed by The Nature Conservancy. Farmland acres preserved through the nonprofit program totals to 330 acres for a cost of \$4,250,000, 50% of which was covered by the State. The average total cost per acre was \$12,880.

In 2015 the Land Conservancy of New Jersey established their Farmland Preservation Fund, which aids in the Conservancy's goal to preserve farmland. Since 1997, the Conservancy has completed more than 400 preservation transactions and has permanently protected more than 29,000 acres. The Land Conservancy states that they, "specialize in complex projects involving multiple partners and funding sources".³ The Land Conservancy offers a variety of technical support and services to municipalities which include mapping, grant writing, and facilitation of public meetings.

TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

Transfer of Development Rights can be used in conjunction with the traditional Purchase of Development Rights program and other preservation tools that are available to the Sussex CADB.

OTHER PROGRAMS

The Township continues to examine new methods for preserving and protecting farmland, such as donated and State-maintained lands.

Consistency with SADC Strategic Targeting Project

The purpose of the SADC Strategic Targeting Project is to prioritize farmland to be preserved by targeting farms for preservation based on specific criteria, including the prioritization of prime and statewide soils in agricultural production outside sewer service areas. According to the SADC, the Strategic Targeting Project has three primary goals. These are as follows:

- The coordination of farmland preservation and retention of agricultural practices "with proactive planning initiatives;"
- To update and create maps which serve as a tool for more accurate preservation targets; and
- To coordinate different preservation efforts, such as open space, with farmland preservation Through the use of the Strategic Targeting Program, the SADC hopes to more efficiently target and designate farmland for preservation and, by doing so, boost the State's agricultural industry.

The Township of Vernon, through the completion of this Farmland Preservation Plan, meets each of the goals as outlined in the Strategic Targeting Project.

Eight-Year Programs

The 8-Year Farmland Preservation Program is a cost sharing program for soil and water conservation projects implemented by the Sussex County Agricultural Development Board (SCADB), in which the farmer receives cost sharing for these projects. The farmer also receives protection against emergency energy and water restrictions and eminent domain. In return, the farmer signs an agreement that restricts the land to agricultural

³ The Land Conservancy of New Jersey. "Municipal Services." <https://www.tlc-nj.org/municipal-services>.

use for eight years. For entrance into these programs and to qualify for benefits, a farm must be located within an ADA. Technical assistance for the soil and water practices comes through the Natural Resource Conservation Service. The cost share is based on the number of acres enrolled. Farmland owners agree to voluntarily restrict non-agricultural development for a period of eight years in exchange for certain benefits. Landowners apply to SCADB for approval. Land must be located in an Agricultural Development Area, be eligible for Farmland Assessment and meet county program criteria. Landowners enrolled in approved programs receive no direct compensation for participating, but are eligible to apply to the SADC for grants that fund up to 50 percent of the costs of approved soil and water conservation projects up to a maximum amount during the eight-year period. An eight-year agreement is recorded with the county clerk in the same manner as a deed. Land may be withdrawn prior to expiration of the eight-year period only in cases of death or incapacitating illness of the owner or other serious hardship or bankruptcy. An owner who wants to sell the farm while enrolled in an eight-year program must provide the SADC with an executed contract of sale for the property. The SADC then has the first right and option to match the conditions of that contract and purchase the property. If an owner re-enrolls in the program for another eight years, the availability of funding is reinstated under a new cap.

V. VERNON TOWNSHIP FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Preservation Goals

Vernon Township has set a realistic goal to preserve an additional 400 acres of farmland within the next ten years. The Township anticipates preserving 50 acres within one year and 200 acres within five years. The overall goal is based on available funding and the number of landowners willing to enter the program. In general, Vernon Township seeks to promote farmland preservation via Sussex County Farmland Preservation Program and the SADC programs. Farms that are important locally are evaluated based on contiguity with other preserved farms and open space. The Township will seek to coordinate with the County and State to maximize funding. In addition, the Township seeks to utilize Federal Funding scenarios to help maximize cost sharing.

One Year: + 100 Acres

Five Years: + 200 Acres

Ten Years: + 400 Acres

Farmland Preservation Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility criteria is based on the County and State programs and includes whether the farm is in a municipal PIG Project Areas. The farm is then ranked considering all the following factors: proximity to other preserved farms and open space, size of property, percentage of property actively farmed, stewardship (e.g. existing Farm Conservation Plan, enrollment in the 8-year program, etc.), boundaries and buffers, soils, tillable acres, distance to conflicting uses, and development potential. Other factors the County or State may consider are landowner's willingness to "bargain sale", accept Installment Purchase Agreements (IPA) or other creative

finance, willingness to sell an easement for a trail, estate, foreclosure, willingness and ability of County and State to cost share, and expected cost. A complete list of the qualified farmlands in the Township is in Appendix B. The NJ SADC Policy on Prioritization of Project Areas and Individual Applications is included in Appendix D for reference.

Vernon Township Funding Sources

Vernon Township seeks to optimize available county and state funding sources to promote the preservation of farmland within the Township.

County Funding Sources

The Agriculture Retention and Development Act of 1983 established New Jersey's Farmland Preservation Program. The Sussex County Board of Chosen Freeholders created the Sussex County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) in 1983, the same year that the New Jersey State Legislature adopted the State Agriculture Retention and Development Act and created the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC), which provides funding for farmland preservation programs, establishes farmland preservation policy statewide, and oversees program administration.

The SCADB made their first purchase of development rights on a 47-acre farm in Andover Township in 1990. Since the program has been preserving farmland across Sussex County on an annual basis. As of 2021, the SCADB has preserved 18,636 acres of farmland in the County. Vernon Township has had 1,428.44 acres of farmland across 34 properties preserved.

State and Federal Funding Sources

STATE FUNDING

The New Jersey State Farmland Preservation Program is administered by the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC), which coordinates with County Agriculture Development Boards, municipal governments, nonprofit organizations, and landowners in the development of plans that best meet the needs of individual landowners.

Land is eligible for the Farmland Preservation Program if it meets the SADC's minimum eligibility criteria, qualifies for farmland tax assessment, and is part of an agricultural development area, an area where the County Agriculture Development Board has determined that farming is viable over the long term.

County Agriculture Development Boards are responsible for approving most applications to the Farmland Preservation Program. Therefore, they are the starting point for most interested landowners. County Agriculture Development Boards review and approve applications, and then forward them to SADC, coordinating with the State and local municipalities throughout the process.

The State dedicates a portion of Corporate Business Tax revenues for open space, farmland, and historic preservation. A “Ballot Question” presented to, and approved by, the voters of the State on November 4, 2014, amended the New Jersey Constitution to dedicate four percent of Corporate Business Tax revenues for open space, farmland, and historic preservation, water programs, public and private site remediation, and underground storage tank programs.

With regard to open space, farmland, and historic preservation, the State Constitution dedicates annually 71% (78% in FY 2020) for: (1) providing funding of lands for recreation and conservation purposes, including lands that protect water supplies and lands that have incurred flood or storm damage or are likely to do so; (2) providing funding including loans or grants, for the preservation and stewardship of land for agricultural or horticultural use and production (i.e., farmland preservation); (3) providing funding, for historic preservation; and (4) paying administrative costs associated with each of those efforts.

The State Constitution also dedicates money received from leases and conveyances of State open-space lands. A portion of this revenue goes toward farmland preservation.

The estimated fiscal year 2021 revenue from these sources to be dedicated to farmland preservation is nearly \$80 million.

FEDERAL FUNDING

The Agricultural Act of 2014 established the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program and repealed the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP). The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands, and wetlands and their related benefits. Under the Agricultural Land Easements component, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture helps American Indian tribes, state and local governments, and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land.

NRCS provides financial assistance to eligible partners for purchasing Agricultural Land Easements that protect the agricultural use and conservation values of eligible land. In the case of working farms, the program helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture. The program also protects grazing uses and related conservation values by conserving grassland, including rangeland, pastureland, and shrub land. Eligible partners include American Indian tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations that have farmland, rangeland, or grassland protection programs.

Under the Agricultural Land component, NRCS may contribute up to 50 percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land easement. Where NRCS determines that grasslands of special environmental significance will be protected, NRCS may contribute up to 75 percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land easement.

Policies Related to Farmland Preservation Applications

HOUSING

Residential opportunities on permanently preserved farmland are severely limited because the development rights on the farm have been purchased. However, there are special situations where a new residence may be warranted given the size of the farm and the nature of the operation. For these reasons, the CADB and the SADC permit housing on preserved farmland provided they meet the stringent criteria for “residential dwelling site opportunities,” agricultural labor housing, or are located on exception areas.

SADC regulations permit dwelling opportunities at a density of one dwelling per one hundred acres of vacant farmland (1 du/100 ac), including existing dwellings, referred to as a Residual Dwelling Site Opportunity (RDSO). The allocation of an RDSO must be approved by the CADB and the SADC. At the time of closing, the value of the RDSO is deducted from the total purchase price of the easement. (The value of the RDSO is four multiplied by the per acre easement price.) After the farm is preserved, the landowner may apply to exercise the RDSO. For RDSO approval, CADB and SADC criteria must be satisfied which generally requires that the RDSO has a minimal impact on the existing agricultural operation.

AGRICULTURAL LABOR HOUSING

The requirements for constructing agricultural labor housing are much less stringent than RDSOs, provided the house is for non-family related farm labor. Agricultural labor housing must be approved by both the CADB and SADC. Any number of agricultural units may be constructed on permanently preserved farmland provided at least one tenant/resident actively works on the farm and there are no blood relatives to the landowner residing in the house. Any existing agricultural labor housing that is destroyed may be reconstructed. Once an agricultural labor unit is no longer inhabited by an agricultural laborer, the unit must be vacated. This policy prevents abuse of the program where the units could be rented out to non-farm related tenants. When agriculture labor housing issues are brought up before the CADB, the board is extremely scrutinizing of the application because of the high potential for abuse.

EXCEPTIONS

An exception allows a landowner to remove a portion of the farm from the deed restrictions prior to closing. There are severable and non-severable exceptions. An example of a non-severable exception is when a landowner prefers to remove the land immediately under the existing house so that there is no confusion in the future about possible additions or permitted uses in the house. These requests are considered on a case-by-case basis. Another type of non-severable exception is the proposed location for a future house. The CADB typically approves this type of non-severable exception when a farm is vacant and is less than 100 acres (and therefore not eligible for an RDSO). This reflects the CADB’s belief that a farm with a residence will be better managed than a vacant farm parcel. In both cases, the excepted land cannot be severed or subdivided from the farm.

FUNDING

Funding for preservation comes from several sources including various state and federal funding programs including the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) and Green Acres, Sussex County, and non-profit organizations.

SADC Cost Share

The SADC provides between 60% and 80% of the funds to acquire a development easement on a farm. The percent of the SADC cost share follows the sliding scale formula found in NJAC2:76- 6.11 as follows:

Landowner Asking Price \$ SADC % Cost Share

- 0-1,000 80%
- 1,000-3,000 $\$800 + 70\% > \$1,000$
- 3,000-5,000 $\$2,200 + 60\% > \$3,000$
- 5,000-9,000 $\$3,400 + 50\% > \$5,000$
- 9,000-50,000 60%
- 50,000-75,000 $\$30,000 + 55\% > \$50,000$
- 75,000-85,000 $\$43,750 + 50\% > \$75,000$
- 85,000-95,000 $\$48,750 + 40\% > \$85,000$
- 95,000-105,000 $\$52,750 + 30\% > \$95,000$
- 105,000-115,000 $\$55,750 + 20\% > \$105,00$
- 115,000+ $\$57,750 + 10\% > 115,000$

COST PROJECTIONS

Sussex County has a relatively high per-acre land value. When farms of significant size with these land values are proposed, the County and State have limitations on the number of projects it can enter in. Furthermore, these land values make it difficult for the County and State to react to immediate preservation projects that may come up. Zoning changes and reductions in land values are being seen due to the reduced housing demand. However, these land value reductions will be short term. While land values may not increase as dramatically as they did in the past, the County and State can expect a return to previous levels. Long term planning is necessary for the County and State to allocate financial resources farmland preservation.

Factors Limiting Farmland Preservation Implementation

Challenges to the farmland preservation program include the available supply of farmland, the cost of purchasing that land, the potential limitations of the preservation program once the land is preserved, and the infrastructure to support farming operations into the future. Flexibility in funding and preservation programs has continued to enhance and sustain the farmland preservation program in Vernon Township.

While landowner interest has reduced over the past several years, there is still interest in the farmland programs and applications continue to be submitted to the County and State. One of the main focuses of the Township is to identify previously unidentified properties and encourage landowners to enter farmland preservation programs.

Although availability of land is one issue, the major item limiting farmland preservation is funding and cost. Land values have decreased, and the Township finds that the appraisal values, which must fall under the State guidelines, are more comparable to developer's values than in the past. If this is true, without an increase in funding or a stable source of funding, the number of applicants interested in preservation programs will exceed the funds available for preservation at the county level.

VI. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Agricultural Industry Retention / Expansion / Recruitment Strategies

Major efforts by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) are directed at increasing the demand for New Jersey grown produce through branding, agritourism, farm direct sales programs, and farm markets. The NJDA Economic Development Strategies for 2011 include each of these activities. The NJDA is committed to promoting agritourism through the New Jersey Office of Travel and Tourism, the Jersey Fresh website, the distribution of printed materials, and other forms of advertisement. Vernon Township farms with appropriate activities, as well as Township farmers markets and 'u-pick' farms, benefit from this promotion.

NJDA's *Jersey Fresh* labels program is continuing to evolve and is one of the country's leading state agricultural promotion programs. The NJDA works to reinforce the marketing of Jersey Fresh produce to the hotel, restaurant, education, and institutional food service industries. The program strongly promotes the use of the Jersey Fresh brand to supermarket chains and other retailers. The Department also promotes New Jersey grown organic products as distinct from, and of higher value, than competing products by recently establishing the Jersey Organic brand.

Using recommendations outlined in the 2011 "Economics Development Strategies" report, as well as Sussex County's 2008 Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan, Vernon Township can build upon its existing agricultural base and continue to promote Township programs that ensure sustainable agriculture practices and profitability. The following is a discussion of potential strategies, as well as each of the subsets of Township's agriculture industry as they relate to the 2011 "Economics Development Strategies" report and Sussex County's Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan.

REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY

Regulations at the local level are key to the success of the agriculture industry. Vernon Township’s Right to Farm ordinance is in Appendix C. The NJDA indicates that counties and its farmers should continually seek new local, state, and interstate markets to strengthen market share.

FARMERS SUPPORT

Promotion of Products and Activities

The Township should continue to support and promote the farms located within its borders, ensuring that local farmers are aware of, and have access to, the latest information and resources available through the NJDA SADC. The Township should maintain an updated list of agriculture resources and news on the Township website.

NJDA Economic Development Strategies

Produce Strategies

Produce (grains, vegetables, oilseeds, dry beans, and fruits) is the dominant agricultural product in Vernon. According to the USDA’s NASS CropScape tool, corn production comprises 111.4 acres of farmland in the Township. Alfalfa (94.1 acres), soybeans (89.8 acres) and oats (10.7 acres) are also prominent within the Township. Other notable crops produced in the Township include winter wheat (6.2 acres), rye (4 acres), blueberries (2.9 acres) and sorghum (1.3 acres). Though they do not comprise a significant portion of the Township’s farmland, there are a range of other crops produced within its bounds, including, but not limited to: apples, Christmas trees, pumpkins, barley, onions, and peppers. The following are strategies that can help promote economic development within this sector of agriculture.

- Promote the *Jersey Fresh* Program;
- Improve retailer and processor coordination;
- Promote agricultural education efforts – both for consumers and farmers;
- Explore “contract growing,” the growing of produce for specific customers on a contract basis;
- Promote farm markets and pick your own operations.

Ornamental Horticulture Strategies

Ornamental horticulture, including Christmas trees, greenhouses, sod, nurseries, and floriculture operations are an important aspect of agriculture in Vernon Township. The following are recommended strategies the Township could employ:

- Support efforts by NJDA to ensure plant health and disease-free material;
- Increase awareness of the *Jersey Grown* brand;

- Promote “drive-up” operations, where consumers buying directly from the nursery or greenhouse.

Dairy Industry Strategies

Historically, dairy has been the dominant agricultural sector in Sussex County. In 2017, Countywide dairy generated revenue was \$4,413,000 across 12 dairy farms, two of which were in Vernon Township. The following are recommended strategies the Township could employ to strengthen this sector of agriculture:

- Promote *Jersey Fresh* dairy products locally;
- Explore various additional products and markets for dairy;
- Work to ensure the health of the dairy industry, and the quality of processed milk;
- Work to lower high-input costs such as taxes on dairy farms;
- Assist entrepreneurs in the pursuit of innovative milk processing and marketing approaches that capitalize on the strength of purchasing milk from New Jersey producers, thereby establishing a premium price for New Jersey-produced milk and ensuring a stable market and price for those producers.

Field and Forage Crops Strategies

Grass/pasture (1,393.5 acres) and other hay/non-alfalfa (123.4 acres) are important field crops present in Vernon Township. The following are recommended strategies the Township could employ to strengthen this sector of agriculture:

- Explore Specialty Crop Block Grants;
- Ensure plant health;
- Explore new markets and ways to expand existing markets.

Livestock and Poultry Strategies

In 2017, livestock, poultry, and their products comprised \$7,395,000 of crop sales in Sussex County. The following are recommended strategies the Township could employ to strengthen this sector of agriculture:

- Ensure animal health;
- Assist farms with farming techniques, regulatory requirements, and the latest research for livestock and poultry by collaborating with the Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Sussex County, NJDA, and NRCS).
- Support youth programs;
- Promote the industry;
- Promote the *Jersey Bred* logo.

AGRITOURISM STRATEGIES

Agritourism is critical for a sustainable agricultural industry. Vernon Township draws thousands of visitors every year for fall festivals, pumpkin picking, apple picking, corn mazes and other agritourism events including new farm to table dinners and events. The Township should continue to expand upon its efforts to promote agritourism using the following strategies:

Consumer Promotion

Distribute an inexpensive agritourism brochure to local organizations and businesses with industry websites and contact information. This brochure would promote seasonal events, special attractions, and direct farm marketing opportunities. Create and disseminate regular press releases promoting the agritourism industry and related websites and resources.

The following organizations support the agricultural community:

- Township Environmental Commission
- Township Greenway Committee
- Sussex County Chamber of Commerce
- Sussex County Agriculture Development Board (CADB)
- Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension Service
- Soil Conservation Districts

Anticipated Agricultural Trends

Vernon's history, in respect to resorts and recreation, may indicate a trend towards more agritourism opportunities, many of which are already in place in the Township's farms. These opportunities are discussed in further detail, below.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA) PROGRAMS

Conceptualized in Japan in the 1960s, there are now more than 2,500 CSA programs in the United States⁴. CSA programs traditionally consist of members buying a share of the farm's production before each growing season, either by paying in one lump sum. or over the course of a subscription-type recurring payment, and in turn receiving regular distributions of the farm's produce throughout the season. However, many farms have adapted this model to meet their own unique needs. Current CSA programs can include multi-farm system commerce, and health and wellness programs. Heaven Hill Farm in Vernon offers a CSA program.

⁴ Roos, D. 2021. N.C. Cooperative Extension, Chatham County Center.

FARM TO TABLE RESTAURANTS AND EVENTS

Farm-to-table restaurants, which prioritize food that is grown locally, are becoming increasingly popular. The Farm at Glenwood Mountain, for example, hosts farm to table dinners right on property where visitors are served fresh and local meats, fruits, and vegetables.

SEASONAL EVENTS

Multiple farms in Vernon hold seasonal events including pick-your-own fruits and Christmas trees, and autumn festivals with outdoor activities.

WINE AND BEER TASTING

Wine and beer tasting continue to be increasingly desired destinations for tourists and residents alike. They offer a unique experience that supports local farms

VII. NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION

Conserving natural resources is one of the most important aspects of maintaining a sustainable farmland preservation program. To protect the natural resources in the Township of Vernon, the municipality should engage with the agencies listed below to promote the goals and objectives of this Plan.

Natural Resource Protection Agencies

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) offers multiple means of assistance for preserving natural resources and farmland. The 2018 Farm Bill was enacted on December 20, 2018, and expands upon the flexibility of various NRCS conservation programs. The NRCS offers financial and technical assistance through conservation practices, activities, and enhancements to help agricultural producers in their businesses. The NRCS also maintains a list of up-to-date funding opportunities⁵.

UPPER DELAWARE SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Upper Delaware Soil Conservation District, formerly Sussex County Soil Conservation District, in the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources, is another important agency in terms of the conservation of agricultural resources. The Upper Delaware SCD is charged with implementing natural resource conservation programs administered by the State Soil Conservation Committee. Farmers in Vernon Township may approach the local SCD office in Blairstown, New Jersey with a Request for Assistance (RFA), to apply for funds from natural resource conservation grant programs such as WHIP and EQIP. If approved, the RFA is forwarded to the local NRCS office in Hackettstown for processing. The administration of the RFA includes preparation of a Conservation Plan and grant program contract, as previously described. The Upper Delaware SCD is involved in review of Conservation Plans and grant program contracts and must give

⁵ https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/nj/programs/financial/?cid=nrcs141p2_018783

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final approval to both. Sandra Myers is the District Manager of the Upper Delaware SCD and Jeff Eckert is the SESC Inspector for Sussex County.

RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF SUSSEX COUNTY

This cooperative extension administers multiple programs to assist in agricultural and horticultural activities, including the Rutgers Master Gardeners of Sussex County, which is a horticultural education, outreach, and service organization. Program delivery methods include classes and conferences, telephone and in-person consultations, replies to emailed questions, newspaper columns, radio and television programs, bus trips, fairs and clubs, field meetings and demonstrations, computerized diet and financial analyses, videos, newsletters, fact sheets, speaking engagements for organizations and work sites, exhibits and displays, and web sites. The Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station is in Newton and can be contacted by e-mail at rcesc@njaes.rutgers.edu.

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP), Division of Parks and Forestry, oversees the "Private Lands Management Program". The aim of this program is to foster wise stewardship and management of the state's 270,000 acres of private woodlands currently under Farmland Assessment. These woodland tracts, which must be utilized by the farmer as a sustainable "product", require Woodland Management Plans (WMPs) to receive reduced local property taxes accorded properties in the farmland tax assessment program. The NJDEP's Division of Parks and Forestry, Bureau of Forest Management (BFM), reviews applications for WMPs, which are prepared for farmers by private consultants. Once a WMP is in place, a "Woodland Data Form" must be submitted yearly to certify that the WMP is being complied with. However, the NJDEP, BFM, also inspects each site once every three years to verify compliance with WMP conditions. Since reduced local property taxes are often critical in keeping active agricultural lands economically viable, the NJDEP is an important partner for Sussex County's farmland preservation efforts.

Resource Protection Programs and Funding

2018 FARM BILL

The 2018 Farm Bill was enacted on December 20, 2018. The Farm Bill continues its strong support for conservation efforts of America's farmers and ranchers through reauthorization and expanded flexibility of NRCS conservation programs. Programs under this legislation include the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA), Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP), and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The 2018 Farm Bill also authorized hemp producers to grow and sell hemp for commercial purposes.

CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP) AND CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program is a State-Federal program designed to address environmental impacts related to agricultural practices. The NJDA and NJDEP are co-sponsors for this voluntary

program that offers financial incentives to encourage farmers to create stream buffers on existing farmland. The Program objectives are to maintain and improve water quality by reducing agricultural pollutants into streams, to enhance farm viability and to contribute to the State's open space goals.

Farmland enrolled in this program is under rental contract for 10-15 years or placed into both a permanent easement contract and a 10–15-year contract agreement in order to reduce non-point source impairment through the preservation of stream buffers and implementation of conservation practices on existing farmland.

CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANT PROGRAM (CIG)

Conservation Innovation Grants through the NRCS are intended to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies. Applicants for these grants demonstrate the use of innovative technologies and/or approaches to address at least one of the following four topics: Urban Agriculture, Soil Health, Forest Health, and Hydroponics.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EQIP)

Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP), administered through the NRCS, is a voluntary conservation program open to all eligible agricultural producers including livestock, forestry, and organic production. The EQIP program provides payments for implementing conservation practices that have a positive environmental impact, while protecting long-term agricultural production and sustainability. There are a range of opportunities and initiatives⁶ within EQIP.

GRASSLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (GRP)

This NRCS-administered conservation program assists landowners in protecting grazing uses by conserving grassland, rangeland, pastureland, shrub land, and other landscapes. GRP provides support for working grazing operations, enhancement of plant and animal biodiversity, and protection of grassland under threat of conversion to other uses⁷.

WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) provides financial and/or technical assistance in return for restoring wetland functions and values. Contact can be made to the Sussex County local USDA Service Center in Hackettstown.

WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVES PROGRAM (WHIP)

The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife utilizes this federal program, administered by NRCS. NRCS provides free technical assistance to implement wildlife habitat improvement practices to approved applications, and project costs can be reimbursed up to 75%.

⁶ <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/nj/programs/financial/eqip/>

⁷ <https://www.ducks.org/conservation/public-policy/farm-bill/grassland-reserve-program-grp#:~:text=The%20GRP%20is%20a%20voluntary,shrub%20land%2C%20and%20other%20landscapes.>

Water Resources

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WATER RESOURCE

The public water supply utilities serving Vernon Township are the Suez Water and United Water-Vernon Valley. Farmland is critical, as open space, to provide aquifer water recharge. According to the Sussex County Farmland Preservation Plan, ensuring clean water can be accomplished at the local level through the following:

- Minimizing use of synthetic chemicals such as fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, and fungicides, so as to lessen impacts to groundwater;
- Providing riparian buffers along watercourses, so as to protect streams from the aforementioned synthetic chemicals;
- When possible, practicing organic farming methods;
- Practicing appropriate timing of chemical application, so as to minimize its use; and
- Practicing water conservation techniques, such as drip irrigation and water reuse for certain types of farming where feasible, such as smaller scale vegetable and fruit operations.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program Summary of Preserved Farmland.

Appendix B. Vernon Township Right-To-Farm Ordinance.

Appendix C. Existing Farmland Compared to SADC Minimum Eligibility Criteria.

Appendix D. SADC Policy P-14-E: Prioritization of Project Areas and Individual Applications.

APPENDIX A: NEW JERSEY FARMLAND PRESERVATION
PROGRAM SUMMARY OF PRESERVED FARMLAND

New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program Summary of Preserved Farmland

Participating County	Number of Farms	Number of Municipalities	Acres	Average Farm Size	Total Cost	Per Acre Total Cost	State Cost	State Cost Share Percent	County Municipality Federal Cost Share
Atlantic	48	8	5,105	106	17,577,982	3,443	13,423,506	76.37%	4,154,476
Bergen	8	5	335	42	19,752,944	58,927	10,866,840	55.01%	8,886,103
Burlington	235	21	28,940	123	158,788,028	5,487	95,933,193	60.42%	62,854,835
Camden	14	3	1,011	72	13,732,709	13,579	6,149,953	44.78%	7,582,756
Cape May	50	6	2,785	56	18,153,977	6,518	11,062,041	60.93%	7,091,936
Cumberland	223	11	21,259	95	63,175,550	2,972	45,829,228	72.54%	17,346,322
Gloucester	221	14	16,062	73	124,266,407	7,737	79,469,000	63.95%	44,797,407
Hunterdon	451	17	34,979	78	295,208,852	8,440	205,778,665	69.71%	89,430,187
Mercer	115	8	8,375	73	102,280,963	12,212	60,170,123	58.83%	42,110,839
Middlesex	55	7	4,880	89	62,554,302	12,818	40,967,538	65.49%	21,586,764
Monmouth	211	11	15,538	74	243,186,860	15,651	150,811,974	62.01%	92,374,886
Morris	116	12	7,344	63	149,099,326	20,303	82,943,523	55.63%	66,155,803
Ocean	48	5	3,249	68	26,641,541	8,200	18,104,071	67.95%	8,537,470
Passaic	2	2	56	28	3,553,345	63,399	1,539,426	43.32%	2,013,919
Salem	375	12	41,095	110	179,722,302	4,373	137,289,016	76.39%	42,433,286
Somerset	110	7	8,210	75	140,128,743	17,068	80,836,466	57.69%	59,292,276
Sussex	152	14	16,169	106	54,819,360	3,390	37,233,169	67.92%	17,586,192
Warren	295	19	26,278	89	134,355,500	5,113	85,884,960	63.92%	48,470,541
All Counties	2,729	182	241,672	89	1,806,998,691	7,477	1,164,292,693	64.43%	642,705,998

APPENDIX B: VERNON TOWNSHIP'S RIGHT-TO-FARM
ORDINANCE

§ 240-1 Recognition of right to farm.

The pursuit of horticultural, agricultural and animal husbandry are farming activities which are hereby recognized as a natural right which is entitled to be protected and entitled to be conducted and/or established as permitted by the terms of Chapter 330, Land Development, and these pursuits also include the following activities under the general heading of "Right to Farm."

§ 240-2 Farming activities.

The right to farm includes:

- A. The producing, from the land, agricultural products such as, but not limited to, vegetables, greens, hay, fruit, fibers, wood, plants, shrubs, flowers and seeds.
- B. The use of land for grazing by animals.
- C. The use of irrigation pumps and equipment. A priority water use for agricultural, second only to human consumption and household needs, is hereby recognized.
- D. The clearing of woodlands to expand production, the alteration of vegetation and terrain, the installation of physical facilities for soil and water conservation and the harvesting of timber.
- E. The right and ability to market a particular farm's output on site, including the construction of buildings and parking areas for farm markets and U-pick marketing and sales.
- F. The on-site handling and disposal of organic wastes and materials in accordance with acceptable management practices and the ability to replenish soil nutrients as recommended by the New Jersey Agricultural Experimental Station.
- G. The ability to use federally approved products, in accordance with the labeled instructions, as recommended by the New Jersey Agricultural Experimental Station, the US Environmental Protection Agency, for the control of pests and diseases affecting plants and livestock and for the control of weed infestation and the aerial and ground seeding and spraying on farms in accordance with generally accepted agricultural practices.
- H. The right and ability to conduct farming activities on holidays, Sundays and weekdays, in the evening and during the day, notwithstanding the production thereby of normal noise, dust, odors and fumes that are caused by such necessary activities when conducted in accordance with generally accepted agricultural practices.

§ 240-3 Restrictions imposed by other regulations and agencies.

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The foregoing rights are subject to restrictions and regulations of state and Township health and sanitary codes and, in addition thereto, the restrictions and regulations of the State Department of Environmental Protection and the Federal Environmental Protection Agency.

APPENDIX C: EXISTING FARMLAND COMPARED TO SADC MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The table of farm properties was developed utilizing the tillable acreage determined from the N.J. Department of Environmental Protection Land Use/Land Cover mapping for agricultural lands and soil acreage determined using the Soil Survey as prepared by the Natural Resource Conservation Service for prime farmland soils, soils of statewide importance and soils of unique importance, farm parcels were sorted on size based upon the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) Minimum Eligibility Criteria for tillable land and agricultural soils.

	Owner	Address	Farm Status	Block	Lot	Acres	ADA	Municipal Target	County Target
AREA 1	Idjadi, Farhad & Marguerite & Joshua	1644 Rt. 565	Assessed	344	2	24.33	Yes	No	No
	Lake Pochung O/A C/O C Shotmeyer	1636-1638 Rt 565	Assessed	518	1	62.77	Yes	No	No
	Lake Pochung O/A C/O C Shotmeyer	Lk Pochung	Assessed	518	3	160.86	Yes	No	No
	Gluck, Steven M & Colleen M	94-114 Lk Pochung Rd	Assessed	543	1	50.78	Yes	No	No
						298.74			
Area 2	Baldwin, Warren & Connie	695 Rt. 517	Assessed	257	25	15.76	Yes	No	No
	Decker, Brian & Barbara	660 Rt. 517	Assessed	307	2	23.5	Yes	No	No
	Baldwin, Warren R Jr & Carol A	694 Rt. 517	Assessed	309	2	19.49	Yes	No	No
	Walker, A & Mary Elizabeth	99 Sand Hill Rd	Preserved	309	4	109.58	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Walker, A & Mary Elizabeth	78-110 Sand Hill Rd	Assessed	310	1	83.26	Yes	No	No
	Shortway, Harry J & Cheryl	121 Drew Rd	Assessed	368	2	7.25	Yes	No	No
	Stephens, Kirk R Jr	Drew Rd	Preserved	369	4	4.03	Yes	No	No
	Stephens, Kirk R Jr	Drew Rd	Preserved	369	5	3.03	Yes	No	No
	Stephens, Kirk R Jr	139 Drew Rd	Preserved	369	6	48.37	Yes	No	No
	Iulo, Dennis J	134 Drew Rd	Assessed	370	14	9.03	Yes	No	No
	Iulo, Dennis J	132 Drew Rd	Assessed	370	15	5.9	Yes	No	No
	Stephens, Kirk R Jr	136 Drew Rd	Preserved	370	16	12	Yes	No	No
	Stephens, Kirk R Jr	140 Drew Rd	Preserved	370	17	11.14	Yes	No	No
						352.34			
Area 3	Books & Records, LLC	58 Glenwood Mtn Rd	Assessed	153	27	28.2	Yes	No	No
	John C Junek Rev TST	24 Jonas Evans Ln	Assessed	153	39	74.34	Yes	No	No
	Highlands Management, LLC	Glenwood	Assessed	153	43	79.09	Yes	No	No
	Highlands Management, LLC	92-106 Glenwood Mtn Rd	Assessed	167	11	30.18	Yes	No	No
	Highlands Management, LLC	Glenwood	Assessed	168	2	60.34	Yes	No	No
	Speidel, Sean	56 Lounsberry Hollow Rd	Assessed	176	1	10.42	Yes	No	No
	Caiafa, John	1761-1775 Rt. 565	Assessed	238	1	9.02	Yes	No	No
	Barnabic, Paul	1768-1776 Rt. 565	Assessed	241	7	30.68	Yes	No	No
	Young, Joan A & William	Glenwood	Assessed	241	8	79.57	Yes	No	No
	Neillands, Elizabeth A	46 Lounsberry Hollow Rd	Assessed	244	4	18.58	Yes	No	No
	Speidel, Sean	Glenwood	Assessed	248	6	55.94	Yes	No	No
	Speidel, Sean	Glenwood	Assessed	300	10	45.94	Yes	No	No
						522.3			
Area 4	Vance, Barbara	Glenwood	Preserved	15	7	51.92	Yes	No	No
	Paneque Farm, LLC	Glenwood	Assessed	15	10	23.39	Yes	No	No
	Gertsen, Ronald H	994 Rt. 517	Assessed	15	12	29.23	Yes	No	No

	Owner	Address	Farm Status	Block	Lot	Acres	ADA	Municipal Target	County Target
	Vance, Barbara F	Glenwood	Preserved	46	4	98.88	Yes	No	No
	Vance Barbara & Vance R	Rt. 517	Preserved	46	10	30.37	Yes	No	No
						233.79			
Area 5	Rosemark Farms, LLC	Maple Grange Rd	Preserved	226	10	21.06	Yes	No	No
	Dayon, John & Timothy	83 Maple Grange Rd	Assessed	226	12	3.38	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Dayon, John & Timothy	81 Maple Grange Rd	Assessed	226	13	18.62	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Borisuk, Andrew Jr & Sheila G	76-86 Maple Grange Rd	Assessed	227	1	17.54	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Borisuk, Andrew Jr & Sheila G	88 Maple Grange Rd	Assessed	227	2	205	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Dayon, John & Eileen B	Maple Grange Rd	Assessed	227	4	6.67	Yes	No	No
	Scenic Hills Farm LLC	104 Maple Grange Rd	Assessed	227	5	11.00	Yes	No	No
						283.27			
Area 6	Newport Bloom, LLC	90 Prices Switch Rd	Preserved	18	5	87.39	Yes	No	No
	Newport Bloom, LLC	90 Prices Switch Rd	Assessed	18	7	78.38	Yes	No	No
	Newport Bloom, LLC	Amity Rd	Assessed	18	9	117	Yes	No	No
	Hume R Steyer C/O CH Coster Gerard	41 Meadowburn Rd	Preserved	19	2	181.8	Yes	No	No
	Hume R Steyer C/O CH Coster Gerard	2 Meadowburn Rd	Preserved	20	2	40.87	Yes	No	No
	Hume R Steyer C/O CH Coster Gerard	Meadowburn Rd	Preserved	21	1	32	Yes	No	No
	Hume R Steyer C/O CH Coster Gerard	Meadowburn Rd	Preserved	21	2	10.6	Yes	No	No
	Hume R Steyer C/O CH Coster Gerard	NY State Line	Preserved	22	1	3.54	Yes	No	No
	Hoffman, Michael E	525-539 Rt. 94	Preserved	23	1	33.9	Yes	No	No
	Hume R Steyer C/O CH Coster Gerard	Rt. 94	Preserved	23	4	102.5	Yes	No	No
	Wiley, Edwin O & Sally C	12 De Kay Rd	Assessed	23	6	10.02	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Hoffman, Michael E	NY State Line	Preserved	23	11	29.86	Yes	No	No
	Tourina, LLC	524 Rt. 94	Assessed	24	2	184.69	Yes	No	No
	Martin Irrevocable Tst % K A Martin	540 Rt. 94	Assessed	26	1	7.66	Yes	No	No
	Martin, F T & A F Trust	540-544 Rt. 94	Assessed	26	2	164.5	Yes	No	No
	Hoffman, Michael E	552 Rt. 94	Assessed	26	3	26.09	Yes	No	No
	Ritzer, William	223-229 Barry Dr. N.	Assessed	26	6	34.00	Yes	No	No
	Wawayanda Tree Farm, LLC	Barrett Rd	Assessed	28	2	41.43	Yes	No	No
	Newport Bloom, LLC	77 Prices Switch Rd	Preserved	52	6	172.52	Yes	No	No
	Newport Bloom, LLC	91 Prices Switch Rd	Preserved	54	1	6.54	Yes	No	No
	Theobald, Martin	55 Prices Switch Rd	Assessed	57	1	10	Yes	No	No
Red Wine Property, LLC	479 Rt. 94	Assessed	57	2	88	Yes	No	No	
Red Wine Property, LLC	455-481 Rt. 94	Assessed	57	4	2	Yes	No	No	
						1,465.29			

	Owner	Address	Farm Status	Block	Lot	Acres	ADA	Municipal Target	County Target
Area 7	Fallat, George J & Kelly, J & D	917 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	34	1	9.93	Yes	No	No
	Olson, William E & D'Angio-Olson, N	921 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	34	2	7.45	Yes	No	No
	Gannon, Grant E & Patricia A	927 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	34	4	7.02	Yes	No	No
	De Franco, Frances & Yvonne D	Warwick Tpke	Assessed	34	5	7.26	Yes	No	No
	Goldman, Craig	931 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	34	6	6.00	Yes	No	No
	Hossfield, William	933 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	34	7	9.91	Yes	No	No
	Hossfield, William	935 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	34	8	12.07	Yes	No	No
	Lawrence, Douglas & Beth	Warwick Tpke	Assessed	34	10	10.87	Yes	No	No
	Vera Corp	947 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	34	14	60.80	Yes	No	No
	Vera Corp	946 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	35	7	43.30	Yes	No	No
	Meyer, Douglas & Marlene	930 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	35	6	20.00	Yes	No	No
	Calkin, Beverly	924 Warwick Tpke	Assessed	35	3	33.00	Yes	No	No
	Clauss, Linda J	Warwick Tpke	Assessed	35	2	24.91	Yes	No	No
	Weiss, Donald A & Linda E	2 Farm Ln	Preserved	36	1	70.53	Yes	No	No
							314.12		

APPENDIX D: SADC POLICY-14-E: PRIORITIZATION OF PROJECT
AREAS AND INDIVIDUAL APPLICATIONS

STATE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

POLICY

PRIORITIZATION OF PROJECT AREAS AND INDIVIDUAL APPLICATIONS

I. Purpose

To establish a priority ranking of individual applications to direct the expenditure of farmland preservation bond funds dedicated for the purchase of development easements.

II. Authority

N.J.A.C. 2:76-6
N.J.S.A. 4:1C-31

III. Supersedes

Policy: P-14-A dated 12/15/88
Policy: P-14-A dated 9/21/89
Policy: P-14-A dated 1/18/90
Policy: P-14-B dated 3/25/93
Policy: P-14-C dated 9/28/95
Policy: P-14-D dated 12/19/96

IV. Definition

As used in this Policy, the following words and terms shall have the following meanings.

“Agricultural Development Area, hereafter referred to as ADA, means an area identified by a board pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 4:1C-18 and certified by the State Agriculture Development Committee.

“Exceptions”, means portions of the applicant’s land holdings which are not to be encumbered by the deed restriction contained in N.J.A.C. 2:76-6.15.

“Project area” means an area identified by a board or the Committee which is located within an ADA and is comprised of one or more development easement purchase applications approved by the board and received by the Committee, lands where development easements have already been purchased, other permanently deed restricted farmlands, farmland preservation programs and municipally approved farmland preservation programs.

“The degree to which the purchase would encourage the survivability of the municipally approved program in productive agriculture” means the degree to which the purchase of a development easement on the farm would encourage the survivability of the project area in productive agriculture.

V. Summary Policy for Ranking Individual applications and Project Areas

Utilizing the criteria in N.J.A.C. 2:76-6.16 individual applications will be ranked in order of highest to lowest statewide by the State Agriculture Development Committee. This ranking will be based on a numeric score, hereafter referred to as the “**quality score**” which evaluates the degree to which the purchase would encourage the survivability of the municipally approved program in productive agriculture and the degree of imminence of change of the land from productive agriculture to a nonagricultural use. The Relative Best Buy criterion will also be used as a factor to determine which applications will receive a higher funding priority. Although this policy contains the procedure for ranking project areas, the Committee will only utilize the criteria that pertains to ranking “individual” applications to determine the applicant’s quality score.

The factors used to determine the degree to which the purchase would encourage the “survivability of the municipally approved program, in productive agriculture” and “degree of imminence of change of the land from productive agriculture to a nonagricultural use,” will be evaluated at least 30 days prior to the Committee’s certification of a development easement value.

The “relative best buy formula” to determine the applicant’s formula index will be calculated at the time of the Committee’s final review. The formula index will be factored with the applicant’s quality score to establish the applicant’s final score. The application will be ranked by the Committee from the highest to lowest to determine a funding priority subject to available funds.

The general philosophy will be to acquire development easements on “key” farms which result in a stabilization of agriculture in that project area or act as a catalyst to encourage future program participation in the project area.

The Prioritization Policy is organized in accordance with statutory requirements identified in the Agricultural Retention and Development Act N.J.S.A. 41C-11 et seq. and criteria described in N.J.A.C. 2:76-6.16. Listed below is a summary of the major criteria with their relative weights.

A. FACTORS WHICH DETERMINE THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE PURCHASE WOULD ENCOURAGE THE SURVIVABILITY OF THE MUNICIPALLY APPROVED PROGRAM IN PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURE (N.J.S.A. 4:1C-31b. (2))

1.0	SOILS	Weight15
1.1	TILLABLE ACRES	Weight15
2.0	BOUNDARIES AND BUFFERS	Weight20
3.0	LOCAL COMMITMENT	Weight20
4.0	SIZE AND DENSITY	Weight20
5.0	CADB PRIORITIZATION (HIGHEST RANKED APPLICATION)	Weight10

B. DEGREE OF IMMINENCE OF CHANGE OF THE LAND FROM PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURE TO NONAGRICULTURAL USE (N.J.S.A. 4:1C-31b. (3) Weight10

C. RELATIVE BEST BUY (N.J.S.A. 4:1c-31b. (1))

VI. Specific Methodology for Ranking Project Areas and Individual Applications.

A. FACTORS WHICH DETERMINE THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE PURCHASE WOULD ENCOURAGE THE SURVIVABILITY OF THE MUNICIPALLY APPROVED PROGRAM IN PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURE.

1.0 SOILS Weight 15

The New Jersey Important Farmlands Inventory prepared in 1990, by the U.S.D.A., Natural Resource Conservation Service is used as the reference to identify soil quality -Prime, Statewide, Unique or Locally Important. A percentage figure for each of these four soil categories is calculated for both the individual application and the project area.

The acreage of each Important Farmland Classification shall be to the rounded to the nearest whole number.

Formula:

% Prime soils x 15= _____
% Statewide soils x 10= _____
% Unique soils x (0 or 12.5*) = _____
% Local soils x 5 = _____

Total weight = the sum of the categories.

* If a designated “unique” soil is not being used for its unique purpose, no points will be assigned. If points are to be awarded for unique soils, the county must provide justification.

1.1 TILLABLE ACRES Weight 15

The Committee shall evaluate tillable acres which emphasize the importance of land use and productivity. Priority will be given to the proportion of land deemed tillable. Factor to consider will be lands devoted to cropland, harvested, cropland pasture and permanent pasture. The following weights have been allocated in the land use classifications below.

Formula:

% Cropland Harvested x 15 = _____
% Cropland Pastured x 15 = _____
% Permanent Pasture x 2 = _____

The following definitions shall be used for evaluating tillable acres.

“Cropland harvested” means land from which a crop was harvested in the current year. Cropland harvested shall include the land under structures utilized for agricultural or horticultural production.

“Cropland pastured” means land which can be and often is used to produce crops, but its maximum income may not be realized in a particular year. This includes land that is fallow or in cover crops as part of a rotational program.

“Permanent pasture” means land that is not cultivated because its maximum

economic potential is realized from grazing or as part of erosion control programs. Animals may or may not be part of the farm operation.

2.0 BOUNDARIES AND BUFFERS: Weight 20

The weights reflect differences in both permanence and the buffers' effectiveness in reducing the negative impacts of nonagricultural development.

The following weights have been assigned:

Deed restricted farmland (permanent)	20
Deed restricted wildlife areas, municipal county or state owned parcels	18
Eight year programs and EP applications	13
Farmland (unrestricted)	6
Streams (perennial) and wetlands	18
Parks (limited public access)	14
Parks (high use)	5
Cemeteries	16
Golf course (public)	14
Military installations	14
Highways (limited access), Railroads	10
Residential Development	0
Other: (landfills, private golf courses)	*

* Value to be determined on a case by case basis at the time of review.

Formula:

$$\text{Weight of buffer} \times \frac{\% \text{ perimeter of project area affected by buffer}}{100} = \text{Total Weight per buffer}$$

Total of all the individual buffer scores = Total boundary and buffers score.

2.1 Negative Consideration:

EXCEPTIONS Weight (Up to -10)

The Committee shall evaluate all exceptions. Factors for determining if there is an adverse effect to the applicant's agricultural operation are as follows:

- * Severability potential from the Premises
- * Number requested
- * Size
- * Percent of Premises
- * Right to Farm language
- * Location and use (negative impact)

NOTE: Each county is responsible for future monitoring of each exception for ensuring compliance with restrictions placed upon the exception.

No negative points are assessed if one or both of the following pertain to the application.

1. The exception is for county and/or municipal farmland preservation and/or open space purposes.
2. The exception cannot be severed from the restricted premises unless associated with an agriculturally viable parcel pursuant to the terms of the Deed of Easement.

If one (1) or two (2) above do not apply, proceed with the following:

A. Number Requested:

For each exception requested: **(-2 points)**

B. Size:

The size of the individual exception exceeds local zoning requirements to construct one single family residential dwelling.

For each building lot, or portion thereof, in excess of the local zoning requirements: **(-1 point)**

Note: **If the exception exceeds the local zoning requirement but the landowner agrees to restrict the exception to permit only one residential dwelling, then no negative points shall be assigned.**

C. Percent of Premises:

The total acreage of the exception(s) exceeds 10% of the total acreage. **(-1 point)**

D. Right to Farm Provisions:

Approved Right to Farm language will be incorporated in the deed of the exception. **(1 point)**

E. Location and Use:

The location and/or use of the exception has a significant negative impact on the premises. **(Max. - 10 points)**

NOTE: Each county is responsible for ensuring compliance with restrictions placed upon exceptions.

3.0 LOCAL COMMITMENT: Weight 20 Max.

Priority will be given where municipal, county, regional, and state policies support the long term viability of the agricultural industry. Factors indicating support:

- 3.1** Zoning requiring an average minimum lot of at least three acres with clustering and/or mandatory buffering to provide separation between development and existing agricultural operations and/or use of other measures such as transfer of development credits, sliding scale, very low density zoning and/or any other equivalent measures which discourage conflicting nonagricultural development.

5 points

- 3.2** There is sewer or other growth leading infrastructure serving the premises or within hook-up distance.

Yes ___ 0 points

No ___ 3 points

- 3.3** The purchase of a development easement is consistent with municipal, county, and state plans.

Yes ___ 2 points

No ___ 0 points

3.4 Municipal commitment to actively participate in the Agriculture Retention and Development Program;

- A. Active Municipal Liaison with CADB
- B. Planning board actions regarding nonagricultural development support farmland preservation. (Ex. Planning board requests CADB review of applications for subdivision approval within ADAs.)
- C. Municipal governing body actions regarding nonagricultural development support farmland preservation.
- D. Municipality has previously approved eight year programs.
- E. Development easements have already been purchased in the community.

1 point each

3.5 Right to Farm ordinances

- A. A township that has a “Right to Farm” ordinance.

4 points

- B. The Right to Farm ordinance requires a developer and/or landowner who plans to build or sell a dwelling in an agricultural area to inform through their agent, prospective purchasers of the existence of the Right to Farm ordinance and the protection it grants to agricultural operations. This notification is included in the deed and recorded.

1 point

3.6 Community financial support for the project area/individual application.

Financial support is construed as strong local commitment. Generally, if municipal/private dollars are invested in a project, there is greater care taken by the community to protect the area from the negative effects resulting from the nonagricultural development. The method to compare the many diverse municipalities with respect to their direct financial support for farmland preservation is to measure their total dollar contribution per thousand dollars of current equalized (100%) assessed value for the municipality.

The local contributions include the total of all passed municipal bond referenda and/or allocations from the budget, private or corporate contributions, and funding from any other sources since January 1, 1980 with the exception of landowner donations, county, state, and federal contributions. Landowner donations will be considered under the Relative

Best Buy criterion.

The current Equalized Assessed Value for the municipality will be the one in effect on January 1 of the current year expressed in thousands of dollars.

The assessment of points will be based on an index derived from the following ratio:

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total locally committed dollars since Jan. 1980}}{(\text{State Equalized valuation}/\$1,000)} = \text{Index}$$

* for the specific municipality

This Equalized valuation figure is listed in the most recent Annual Report of the Division of Local Government Services, prepared by the Department of Community Affairs or may be obtained by contacting the local tax office.

Example 1.

Benefit Township has committed \$1.8 million toward Farmland within the past five years. The State equalized valuation figure divided by 1,000 is 80,120.

The index is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\$1,800,000}{\$ 80,120} = 22.47$$

Based on the scale, listed below an index of 22.4 is awarded 5 points.

Example 2.

In Harrow Township \$150,000 has been set aside for Farmland Preservation. The state equalized valuation figure divided by 1,000 is \$1,290,839.

The index is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\$150,000}{\$1,290,939} = .12$$

Based on the scale listed below, an index of .12 is awarded 1 point.

Points will be allocated based on the following scale:

Index of greater than 10	5 points
Index between 7 and 10	4 points
Index between 5 and 7	3 points
Index between 2 and 5	2 points
Index greater than 0 but less than 2	1 point

Discretion may be used in the assignment of points, based on whether or not actual funds have been expended for farmland preservation.

4.0 SIZE AND DENSITY Weight 20 Max.

4.1 Individual Applications:

Individual applications will be scored on both size and density with a maximum of 10 points awarded for density for a maximum total combined score of 20.

4.1(2) Size (Max. 10 points)

Points are based on the size of each individual application relative to average farm size in the respective county according to the latest U.S. Census of Agriculture. Points will be awarded for size up to a maximum of 10 as follows:

$$\text{Points Awarded} = \frac{\text{Size of Individual application}}{10 \times (2 \times \text{county average farm size})}$$

The factor 2 encourages counties to enroll farms above average in size.

4.1 (3) Density (Max. 10 points)

The density score will be awarded based on the following:

An application which is not reasonably contiguous (within one-half mile linear distance) with another development easement purchase application approved by the board and received by the Committee, lands where development easements have already been purchased, other permanently deed restricted farmlands, farmland preservation programs and municipally approved farmland preservation programs in the project area will receive (0) points. One (1) point will be allocated for each reasonably contiguous (within one-half mile linear distance) farmland preservation program or municipally approved farmland preservation program. Two (2) points will be allocated for each of the other above noted lands in the project area which are determined to be reasonably contiguous (within one-half mile linear distance)

with the subject application and each other not to exceed a maximum score of (10 points).

Example 1: Receives (0) points
Example 2: Receives (5) points
Example 3: Receives (10) points

SP = Subject Property
8YR = 8-Year Program
Blank Space = Easement Purchase Application or
Previously Deed Restricted

5.0 **CADB PRIORITIZATION**

Consideration will be given to the board's highest ranked application to recognize local factors which encourage the survivability of the municipally approved program in productive agriculture and degree of imminence of change of the land from productive agriculture to a nonagricultural use. The CADB's highest ranked application will receive 10 points.

B. **DEGREE OF IMMINENCE OF CHANGE OF THE LAND FROM PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURE TO NONAGRICULTURAL USE**

Weight (Max of 10)

use An application can receive up to (10) points where the Committee determines that the imminent conversion of the farm (application) from an agricultural to a nonagricultural use would negatively impact the survivability of the project area in productive agriculture.

There are two aspects which shall be considered when evaluating the imminence of change: 1) factors which measure the degree of imminence of change of farmland to a nonagricultural use and 2) factors that evaluate the impact of the farmland conversion.

I. Factors considered for evaluating the Degree of Imminence of Farmland Conversion

County Comparisons (relative indices):

1. Avg. certified county easement value for previous round:
(1 point max.)
2. County Single Family Unit Permits (3 years): (1 pt. max)
3. County Farmland Assessed cropland acre loss for 10 years:
(1 point max.)
4. County Farmland Assessed cropland percent loss for 10 years:
(1 point max.)

Township Comparisons (relative indices):

1. Township Single Family Unit Permits for 3 years:
(1 pt. max.)
2. Township Farmland Assessed cropland acre loss for 10 years:
(1 pt. max.)
3. Township Farmland Assessed cropland percent loss for 10 years:
(1 pt. max.)

Farm-specific indicators:

1. Subdivision approval (final): 2 pts.
2. Estate situation: 2 pts.
3. Bankruptcy/Foreclosure: 2 pts.

II. Factors considered for evaluation the impact of the farmland Conversion

State Comparisons (relative indice):

1. Combined SADC Quality Scores for size, boundaries, and buffers and density: (0.5 pt. max.)

County Comparisons (relative indice):

1. Combined SADC Quality Scores for size, boundaries and buffers and density: (0.5 pt. max.)

MAXIMUM FOR CATEGORY: (10 POINTS)

The above indices will be updated annually and provided to CADB Staff.

C. **RELATIVE BEST BUY (STATUTORY FORMULA)**

This criterion will only be evaluated at the time of final Committee review.

$$\frac{\text{Nonagricultural development value} - \text{agricultural nonagricultural development value}}{\text{agricultural landowner asking price} - \text{agricultural value}} = \text{formula index}$$

“Landowner Asking Price” means the applicant’s per acre confidential offer for the sale of a development easement.

D. FUNDING PRIORITY

1. The Committee's funding priority will be given to those applications which have a higher numeric values obtained by the application of the following formula:

applicant's
quality score + (formula index x 200) = final score

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