

## **Agriculture Master Plan Chapter**

### **Introduction**

Consistent with the Vision of North Hampton, the Town promotes agricultural activities and supports both current and future farming as well as protects prime farmland soil for future use.

### **History of Agriculture in North Hampton**

Agriculture was the lifeblood of North Hampton in the 1700s and 1800s. Residents grew crops to provide food for their families and animals, and the Town developed into a center of food production.

Hay and potatoes were sold in Portsmouth. Milk was one of the premiere products produced in North Hampton. From a large dairy farm located at the site of Sagamore Golf Course, milk was shipped by train to Boston by John F. French, and Gov. Alvan T. Fuller sold milk from his Guernsey cows to local families and restaurants including the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Boston.

Apples, cider, eggs and butter were also major products shipped to buyers outside North Hampton. Lumber was used to make ship masts, and cattle, hogs, sheep and horses were also at the center of the Town's agri-business.\*

From its earliest settlement, North Hampton's agricultural influence remains today as a valued cornerstone of the Town's heritage.

### **The Importance of Agriculture in North Hampton**

In multiple town surveys, North Hampton residents have expressed a strong desire to preserve the rural New England seacoast character and heritage of our town - composed of forested areas, open fields, pastures and meadows as well as working farms. Despite past residential development and decreased agricultural activity, there is an increasing interest in growing food locally.

1. Rural character of the town is preserved and quality of life improved with clean air, fresh food, water storage/flood control, wildlife habitat, and the potential for recreation (nature walk on Town Forest trails) and educational opportunities (to learn how food is grown and/or livestock managed).
2. Local food requires minimal transportation, is fresher, offers better nutrition, reduces our carbon footprint, is safer, and leads to long term sustainability.
3. The sense of community is strengthened through interaction with local producers, including the school greenhouse and square foot gardens as well as the community garden. (Square foot gardening involves dividing the growing area into small square sections (12" square) to intensely plant a vegetable garden.)
4. Scenic barns and farms are a reminder of our town history and heritage and add to the rural quality of life residents desire.
5. Agricultural activity results in related businesses locating in town and contributing to a vibrant business community.
6. Agricultural uses generally generate more revenue than they require in public service expenditures, resulting in a net positive benefit because of the large, less densely populated land which would not require the same amount of fire, police, school, and road maintenance services as a small subdivision on the same land.

### **Types of Agriculture in North Hampton**

As of December 2018, the North Hampton Agricultural Commission identified more than 30 active agricultural properties in town. North Hampton products include seasonal vegetables and fruit, honey, eggs, chicken, beef and hay as well as perennial and annual plants, trees and shrubs. Agricultural activity ranges from businesses to backyard gardens for fresh family meals. The North Hampton School uses its greenhouse to grow vegetable seedlings started in the classrooms as well as annual flowers for their plant

sale fundraiser. They have square foot gardens for the students to grow additional plants. The community garden has 52 single plots that local gardeners use to grow vegetables and flowers. Bees to pollinate vegetables and flowers and produce honey are kept at 5 locations or more in town including the community garden, Governor Dale Farm, Throwback Brewery and two Agricultural Commission members' back yards. Many residents keep a few chickens in their yards for eggs and/or meat. Horses, cows, sheep and even a few pigs are kept for companionship, meat, milk and wool.

Some of the types of agriculture in North Hampton include businesses that either sell products used in agricultural activities such as tractors, loam and mulch; provide a service for trimming, pruning or removing trees; or use products grown on the property to sell or use in food or beverages sold. There is a demand for more local produce by restaurants in town but not enough supply at this time.

### **Businesses**

1. Batchelder Sales Inc./Route One Tractor Sales, 57 Lafayette Road - farm tractors
2. Fuller Gardens, 10 Willow Ave. - perennial and rose gardens, tours of gardens, Mother's Day plant sale.
3. Knowles Tree Service, 8 Birch Road - tree removal, trimming and pruning, mow and mulch, wood chips.
4. North Hill Nursery, 206 Lafayette Road - loam, mulch, compost and plants
5. Throwback Brewery, 7 Hobbs Road - hops, fruit trees, bees/honey, donkeys, vegetables for restaurant.

There is agricultural activity in all areas of our town as shown below.

### **Residential by Street**

Atlantic Avenue - pumpkins, school greenhouse and square foot gardens, pigs, chickens, horses and sheep  
Beau Monde Drive - cows, chickens, goats, farm tours, bees/honey, maple syrup, and mushrooms  
Cedar Road - ducks, chickens, and seasonal vegetables  
Chapel Road - donkeys  
Cherry Road - horses  
Exeter Road - chickens, horses, turkeys, goats, pigs, herbs, plants, trees, shrubs, community garden, bees/honey, hay, farm stand (seasonal fruits and vegetables, Christmas trees, annual plants), and Town Forest  
Lovering Road - chickens, horses, pigs, and bees/honey  
Mill Road - horses  
Post Road - greenhouse with annual/perennial plant sales, chickens, eggs, beef cows, hay, bees/honey, and horses  
Walnut Avenue - cows, milk, chickens, geese, eggs, seasonal fruits and vegetables  
Winnicut Road - horse and donkey

### **Connections to Other Master Plan Chapters**

Agriculture is referenced in many of the Master Plan chapters including Future Land Use, Recreation, Environmental Conservation and Preservation, Water Resource Management and Protection Plan and Existing Land Use. For specific references, please see the attached Appendix. The Vision statement of the Master Plan Principle 1) Maintain and protect rural New England seacoast character, heritage and natural resources and the strategies to accomplish this principle clearly support agriculture.

### **Town Support for Agriculture**

North Hampton residents have shown support for Agricultural Resources by voting to form an Agricultural Commission in March of 2009.

"The purpose of this Section 508 Agriculture of the North Hampton Zoning Ordinance is to promote agricultural activities in Town, while ensuring that these activities are suitable for the context in which they occur."

**Ag Goal 1: Create a farm-friendly environment for evolving agricultural activities.**

- 1.1. Continue involvement with the Planning Board to facilitate agricultural activities including the adoption of Zoning Ordinances and Building Codes which are compatible with agricultural needs and interests. Continue to attend the annual meeting of the Town's five Land Use Boards.
- 1.2. Support the use of economic incentives, such as discretionary preservation easements (RSA 79-D), to encourage maintenance of historic barns and agricultural buildings. RSA 79-D is discussed with barn owners during barn surveys. Reach out to barn owners to participate in this program with the goal of adding 5 more properties by 2023.
- 1.3. Promote the converted use of historic barns and agricultural structures which are no longer used for agriculture so that they may continue to have value and be maintained and preserved. Potential options for converting use are discussed with owners during barn surveys. Provide a program, meeting or speaker to exchange ideas for re-use by 2025.
- 1.4. Encourage Best Management Practices for agricultural activities through community newsletter article and Agricultural Commission brochures. Request additional funding to send out mailings to interested residents by 2023.

**Ag Goal 2: Encourage more locally grown food production in North Hampton to increase food independence, consumption of healthier food, and long-term sustainability through reduced energy consumption.**

- 2.1. Partner with the Conservation Commission and Town to plant edible landscaping (fruit trees and bushes) on town properties and conservation land. To be completed by 2025.
- 2.2. Support agriculture related education programs and events such as the school greenhouse program. An Agricultural Commission member is currently on the school greenhouse committee. Develop farm and/or community garden tour programs by school children to show where their food comes from and how it is grown and harvested. To be completed by 2025.
- 2.3. Support the formation of a Farmers' Market in North Hampton by working with potential landowners to find a site and help develop a program and vendors. To be completed by 2025.

**Ag Goal 3: Identify productive agricultural lands and historic barns in North Hampton.**

- 3.1. Partner with the Conservation Commission to educate residents about the availability of the Current Use program and its benefits using speakers, publicity, mailings and/or a community meeting. To be completed by 2023.
- 3.2. Promote the use of the Farmland Soils map to identify prime farmland and farmland of statewide and local importance prior to development. Request Planning Board require site plan applications and/or subdivision applications must include the presence of such soil on their applications. To be completed by 2025.
- 3.3. Complete project of documenting historic barns with the goal of including 40 of the more than 100 plus privately-owned barns. Expected completion date of October 2019, but the project will remain open for future inclusions.

**Ag Goal 4: Develop a public program with the library to promote composting for soil improvement and recycling food and farm waste.**

- 4.1. Present talks/speakers, handouts and/or articles in the community newsletter to educate children and adults. To be completed by 2021.
- 4.2. Arrange school field trip to community garden to demonstrate both composting and recycling food and farm waste. To be completed by 2021.

**Ag Goal 5: Educate residents of the value of agriculture to our local economy and quality of life.**

5.1. Produce annual brochure listing benefits of agriculture and the types of agricultural products available locally. Develop better distribution to interested residents, leave copies at agriculture related town businesses and/or include in the community newsletter.

5.2. Participate in at least two Town activities by 2021.

\*Historical information taken from "The Way It Was in North Hampton," by Stillman Moulton Hobbs and Helen Davis Hobbs.

Appendices

1. maps - farmland soils (2015)
2. historical land use spreadsheet (2015)
3. Connections to Other Master Plan Chapters

<b>Master Plan Vision Principle(s) and Strategy(ies) that support the Goal</b>	Principal 1) Maintain and protect rural New England seacoast character, heritage, and natural resources. Strategies 1.A) Protect natural resources 1.B) Maintain and restore historic barns						
<b>Agricultural Commission Chapter TOPIC GOAL 1</b>	To create a farm-friendly environment for evolving agricultural activities.						
	Timeframe	2025	Expected Outcome	The ability for residents to easily conduct farming activities, and maintain barns and agricultural buildings.			
	Measure	% of residents conducting farming activities					
			Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost (if known)	Funding Source	Task Progress, Year: 2019
Task 1.1	Work with Planning Board to facilitate adoption of Zoning Ordinances and Building Codes compatible with agriculture.		Agricultural Commission in conjunction with Planning Board	Ongoing	None	N/A	Participated in Land Use Summit
Task 1.2	Increase number of historic barns under preservation easements by 5.		Agricultural Commission	2023	None	N/A	Explained RSA 79-D to barn owners during surveys
Task 1.3	Educate residents on re-use of barn and agricultural structures to ensure preservation.		Agricultural Commission	2025	None	N/A	Potential options for converting use are discussed with owners during barn surveys.
Task 1.4	Educate residents regarding Best Management Practices for agriculture through community newsletter and Agricultural Commission brochure.		Agricultural Commission	2023	Unknown	Increase to Agricultural Commission Budget	None to date

<b>Master Plan Vision Principle(s) and Strategy(ies) that support the Goal</b>	Principal 3) Strengthen sense of community Strategy 3.E) Encourage locally owned small businesses 3.G) Provide recreational features and activities for all age groups						
<b>Agricultural Commission Chapter TOPIC GOAL 2</b>	To encourage more locally grown food production to increase food independence, consumption of healthier food, and long-term sustainability through reduced energy consumption.						
	Timeframe	2025	Expected Outcome	Increased access to locally grown food			
	Measure	% of residents consuming locally grown food					
			Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost (if known)	Funding Source	Task Progress, Year: 2019
Task 2.1	Plant edible landscaping on town property and conservation land		Agricultural Commission in conjunction with Conservation Commission and Select Board	2025	Unknown	Agricultural Commission Budget	Blueberry bushes planted at Dearborn Park
Task 2.2	Support agriculture related education programs		Agricultural Commission in conjunction with Town Library and School	2025	Unknown	Agricultural Commission Budget	Agricultural Commission member sits on School Greenhouse Group. Raising Backyard Chickens Talk provided at Library
Task 2.3	Support formation of Farmers' Market		Agricultural Commission in conjunction with private land owner or Select Board for public land	2025	None	N/A	Opened talks with 1 land owner

<b>Master Plan Vision Principle(s) and Strategy(ies) that support the Goal</b>	Principal 1) Maintain and protect rural New England seacoast character, heritage, and natural resources. Strategies 1.A) Protect natural resources 1.B) Maintain and restore historic barns 1.C) Use conservation subdivisions to protect undeveloped land						
<b>Agricultural Commission Chapter TOPIC GOAL 3</b>	To identify productive agricultural lands and historic barns in North Hampton.						
	Timeframe	2025	Expected Outcome	Awareness and desire to protect productive agricultural land and historic barns			
	Measure	% increase in land under Current Use					
			Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost (if known)	Funding Source	Task Progress, Year: 2019
Task 3.1	Educate residents about Current Use Program		Agricultural Commission in conjunction with Conservation Commission	2023	Unknown	To be determined	Attended Conservation Commission meeting to introduce topic
Task 3.2	Add prime farmland soil identification requirement to site plan applications and/or subdivision applications		Planning Board in conjunction with Agricultural Commission	2025	None	N/A	
Task 3.3	Document 40 of the more than 100 privately-owned barns		Agricultural Commission	2020	Unknown (printing)	Agricultural Commission budget	40 barns are in process of being completed.

Master Plan Vision Principle(s) and Strategy(ies) that support the Goal	Principal 3) Strengthen sense of community Strategy 3.A) Continue effective and broad communication						
Agricultural Commission Chapter TOPIC GOAL 4	To promote composting for soil improvement and recycling of food and farm waste.						
	Timeframe	2025	Expected Outcome	Widespread composting throughout the town, including the school.			
	Measure	% of residents and the school engaged in composting					
			Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost (if known)	Funding Source	Task Progress, Year: 2019
Task 4.1	Present talks/speakers, handouts and/or articles to educate children and adults		Agricultural Commission in conjunction with School and Library	2021	Unknown	Agricultural Commission budget	Composting in place at Community Garden. School has begun investigating composting (not in conjunction with Agricultural Commission)
Task 4.2	Arrange school field trip to Community Garden to demonstrate composting and recycling		Agricultural Commission in conjunction with School	2020	Unknown	School to cover transportation of students	Not started



<b>Master Plan Vision Principle(s) and Strategy(ies) that support the Goal</b>	Principal 1) Maintain and protect rural New England seacoast character, heritage, and natural resources. Strategies 1.A) Protect natural resources						
<b>Agricultural Commission Chapter TOPIC GOAL 5</b>	To educate residents of the value of agriculture to our local economy and quality of life.						
	Timeframe	Ongoing	Expected Outcome	Widespread appreciation and participation in local agricultural activities			
	Measure	% of residents aware of importance of agriculture					
			Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost (if known)	Funding Source	Task Progress, Year: 2019
Task 5.1	Produce brochure listing benefits of agriculture and products available locally		Agricultural Commission	Annual	Minimal	Agricultural Commission budget	Currently produced annually
Task 5.2	Showcase agricultural activities in at least 2 Town activities		Agricultural Commission	2021	Unknown	Agricultural Commission budget	Participated in 2019 Land Use Boards Summit



● Farmers' Market Locations (2014)

Farmland Soils

- All areas are prime farmland
- Farmland of statewide importance
- Farmland of local importance

RPC Standard Legend

- Town Boundaries
- Water Feature
- Tidal Feature
- Shoreline; Stream
- Apparent Wetland Limit
- Intermittent Stream
- Other Surface Water Feature
- Interstate
- US Route
- State Route
- Local

**Prime Farmland**  
In general, prime farmlands have an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, acceptable salt content, and few or no rocks. They are permeable to water and air. Prime farmlands are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time, and they either do not flood frequently or are protected from flooding.

**Farmland of Statewide Importance**  
This is land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands, that is of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage and oilseed crops. Criteria for defining and delineating this land are to be determined by the appropriate State agency or agencies. Generally, additional farmlands of statewide importance include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some may produce as high a yield as prime farmlands if conditions are favorable.

**Farmland of Local Importance**  
In some local areas there is concern for certain additional farmlands for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops, even though these lands are not identified as having national or statewide importance.

RPC extends every effort to ensure map data is current and complete, however, errors do happen. Please let us know if you spot errors or omissions.

**Base Features** (transportation, political and hydrographic) were automated from the USGS Digital Line Graph data, 1:24,000, as archived in the GRANIT database at Complex Systems Research Center, Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans and Space, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH; 1992-2012. The roads within the Rockingham Planning Region have been updated by NH Department of Transportation through local input by the RPC where available.

Although these data have been processed successfully on a computer system at the Rockingham Planning Commission, no warranty expressed or implied is made regarding the accuracy or utility of the data on any other system or for general or scientific purposes, nor shall the act of distribution constitute any such warranty. It is also strongly recommended that careful attention be paid to the contents of the metadata file associated with these data to evaluate data set limitations, restrictions or intended use. Rockingham Planning Commission shall not be held liable for improper or incorrect use of the data described and/or contained herein.

This mapset was funded with grants from the NH Office of Energy and Planning and the RPC's UPWP grant.





## Town of North Hampton Historical Land Use (Acres)

<i>Land Use Type</i>	<i>1962</i>	<i>1974</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2010 to 2015 Change in Acreage</i>	<i>2010 to 2015 Percent Change</i>
<b>Active Agricultural</b>	1,324	798	401	237	234	240	6	2.56%
<b>Aux Transportation</b>				59	59	58	-1	-1.69%
<b>Farmsteads</b>	19	18	5	7	12	9	-3	-25.00%
<b>Forested</b>	5,591	5,540	5,438	3,032	3,010	2,964	-46	-1.53%
<b>Industrial/Commercial</b>	83	160	252	281	282	289	7	2.48%
<b>Mixed Urban</b>	114	150	201	14	14	14	0	0.00%
<b>Open Wetlands</b>	435	433	543	2,487	2,486	2,485	-1	-0.04%
<b>Other/Idle</b>	506	757	465	652	646	619	-27	-4.18%
<b>Playing Fields/Recreation</b>				194	190	183	-7	-3.68%
<b>Railroad</b>				9	9	9	0	0.00%
<b>Residential</b>	676	865	1,388	1,582	1,612	1,666	54	3.35%
<b>Transportation</b>	142	161	179	240	240	257	17	7.08%
<b>Utilities</b>				75	75	75	0	0.00%
<b>Water</b>	34	42	51	56	56	56	0	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,923</b>							

Note: Years 1962, 1974, and 1998 were compiled with a slightly different methodology than 2005, 2010, and 2015. Aux Transportation, Playing Fields and Utilities are categories only broken out in 2005, 2010, and 2015. Classification of Open Wetlands improved between 1998 and 2005 due to higher quality aerial photos. Many Open Wetlands had previously been classified as Forested. Classification of Playing Fields/Recreation improved in 2015 to ensure that those in proximity to a school were classified as Education.

## Land Use Definitions

**Active Agricultural:** This category includes fields, pastures, row crops, orchards, etc. It does not include farm buildings.

**Aux Transportation:** This category includes parking structures/lots, designated park & ride lots, margins along roadways, and medians.

**Farmsteads:** This category includes farm buildings.

**Forested:** This category includes forests.

**Industrial/Commercial:** This category includes commercial, services, government, educational, indoor cultural/public assembly, industrial, office parks, and shopping malls.

**Mixed Urban:** This category includes mixed residential-commercial, outdoor cultural/public assembly, and cemeteries.

**Open Wetlands:** This category includes all visible wetlands (recognizing that some forested wetlands will be indistinguishable).

**Other/Idle:** This category includes mining areas, vacant developed land, brush or transitional between open and forested, salt flats, beaches and river banks, sandy areas (non-beaches), bare/exposed rock, strip mine/quarry or gravel pit, and disturbed land (for example, construction).

**Playing Fields/Recreation:** This category includes outdoor recreation not associated with a school.

**Railroad:** This category includes railroad transportation.

**Residential:** This category includes multi-family, single family, mobile home parks, and group/transient quarters.

**Transportation:** This category includes air transportation, water transportation, limited and controlled highway rights-of-way, and road rights-of-way.

**Utilities:** This category includes communication, electric, gas, water, wastewater, and solid waste utilities.

**Water:** This category includes all surface water features (not including wetlands).

*For more detailed descriptions, please contact [rpruyne@rpc-nh.org](mailto:rpruyne@rpc-nh.org).*

## **Connections to Other Master Plan Chapters**

### **Vision**

1) Maintain & protect rural New England seacoast character, heritage & natural resources; The means to accomplish this principle include protecting natural resources - water, forests, pastures, wildlife and their habitats; maintaining and restoring historic public buildings, antique houses and barns & stone walls; and using conservation subdivisions to protect undeveloped land and natural resources all support agriculture-related activities.

### **Community Goals**

CG-2 "2. Open Space Planning - The Planning Board encourages the establishment of conservation areas and the protection of open space and natural resources (ponds, wetlands, woodlands, prime agricultural land and unique and fragile areas)."

### **Recreation**

pg. P-4 "Marston Farm (Town Farm) - The community garden formation is described.

### **Environmental Conservation and Preservation**

pg. ECP-8 "Farmland - "...approximately one fifth of the town contains very good agricultural soil."

"As with forest land, North Hampton is experiencing a loss in agricultural land. With only a few sites containing very good agricultural soil, and even fewer farms still active, North Hampton will continue to encourage the preservation of these areas. The North Hampton Forever Program acquired rights to approximately 200 acres of farmland and, therefore, made a significant contribution to the Town's efforts to preserve this valuable resource."

### **Water Resource Management and Protection Plan**

pg. WRM-22 - III Identification of Potential Threats to Water Resources - Table 4 Nonpoint Pollutant Sources and Remedies - Source: agricultural runoff - Remedy - Best Management Practices (BMP), e.g., concrete manure pits, no winter manure spreading, etc.

pg. WRM-42 Recommendations

"11. Encourage farms to employ BMPs as prescribed by the Soil Conservation Service.

### **Existing Land Use**

pg. ELU-3 - North Hampton Land Use Trends - chart - active agriculture acres down, farmsteads down, forested areas down, residential areas up

Land Use Trends ' "...one particular trend is highly evident: the relationship of agricultural land with residential land. ...the shift of the dominant land use in North Hampton from agriculture to residential. The shift occurred during the latter half of the 1900s, but the divide continues albeit at a much slower rate. Efforts to maintain the Town's rural and agricultural character are pressured by the continuing demand for residential development."

ELU Map 1a 1962 Land Use and 1e 2010 Land Use support the figures above.

### **Future Land Use**

FLU-1 "A review of this Master Plan, the previous Master Plan, associated surveys and the Town's land-use regulations, collectively illustrate North Hampton's desire to remain a rural-residential community, which cares for and protects its natural resources."

FLU-6 "A second objective is the realistic application of concerns expressed by the citizens as to the retention of rural characteristics and community atmosphere existing in North Hampton today."

FLU-7 Recommendation - "2. The Town should encourage, and where necessary purchase, conservation and agricultural easements, in order to preserve its agricultural heritage."

**Growth Management in North Hampton (7/16/13)**

GM-1 "North Hampton is a rural community along New Hampshire's coast that has historically had a relatively stable population. However during the period from 1970 to 2000 the town experienced rapid population growth of approximately 25 percent. This lead to concerns about impacts on traffic, town services and tax rates, school enrollment, and North Hampton's ability to accommodate new residents while maintaining its rural characteristics."