

APPENDIX A - TOWN AGRICULTURAL PROFILES

Source:

Ontario County Agricultural Enhancement Plan Update – 2018
Ontario County Planning Department
20 Ontario St.
Canandaigua, NY 14424

4.1 Town Agricultural Profiles

Statistical profiles for each town include data on acres of:

- Land in agriculture and parcel size;
- Soils of Agricultural Importance; and
- Ownership (land owned by a farmer vs. land leased from non-farmer)

Real Property Tax data for parcels receiving the Agricultural Exemption is the only consistent data for land in agricultural use. Landowners must apply for the exemption each year and the information is standardized by NYS regulation and is the criteria used as “Land in Agriculture” for this analysis.

Summary statistics for each town were created from the Ontario County Soils Survey prepared by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to profile the quality and quantity of land for agriculture. There are three classifications of “Important Agricultural Soils”: Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Prime Farmland, if Drained.

The percentage of leased land statistic is derived from agricultural exemption data indicating that a parcel is leased. While some of the leased land is a farmer to farmer arrangement, generally leased land is not owned by active farmers. The extent to which a farmer is dependent on leased land is an indicator of longer term viability of the operation. Long term capital investment in land improvements or equipment is harder for farmers to make when the more they are dependent on leased land.

Information regarding agricultural issues, opportunities and threats came from local farmland protection plans or comprehensive plans that had in depth analysis of agricultural issues and/or analysis done for this plan. Where priority lands have been identified by towns, these are shown below; otherwise, properties enrolled in the NYS agricultural exemption program are shown as default local priority areas.

A. Northwestern Ontario County

This region is shaped by geology and glaciation creates a distinct landscape through the northwestern Ontario County towns with their soils and landscapes shaped by the Honeoye Creek, Irondequoit Creek, and Canandaigua Outlet watersheds. Generally north of the Thruway, are the drumlins, which are long hills ranging from 20ft. to 100ft. in height and are primarily oriented north-south, interspersed with wetlands. South of the Thruway, the landscape is typically gently rolling. The Town of Canandaigua, generally south of Rt. 5 & 20, is in the Canandaigua Lake watershed and has landscapes typical of the Bristol Hills. As shown in **Figure 17**, important farm soils characterize 75% of this region. **Figure 18** provides further detail on the number and size of agricultural properties within each town.

A core network of major state and federal highways – I-90/I-490/SR 96/SR 332/SR 65/SR 64/SR 5 & 20 provide easy access to southeastern Monroe County and Rochester. The transportation infrastructure includes four interchanges on the Thruway (I-490 East, SR 332, SR 21 and SR 14) that provide major north-south access to the Finger Lakes and Rt. 96 paralleling the Thruway. Proximity to Rochester and eastern Monroe County has made this area the focus of some of the most intense development pressure in Ontario County.

Maintaining viable agricultural operations is particularly challenging in the face of suburbanization and escalating land values. Overall, whole parcel farmland conversion is limited to areas with public water and sewer service. A less visible but greater challenge is fragmentation of farmland due to subdivision of a road frontage residential parcel from a larger agricultural parcel creating potential for landowner conflicts and increasing the operational costs of the farmland remaining on the original parcel. None of the towns have addressed this zoning issue thus far.

Figure 17: Northwestern Ontario County overview

Town	Soils (acres)				Total area	% Important Soils	Land in Ag. use (2016)	
	Prime	Statewide Importance	Prime if drained	Total Important Soils			Total (ac.)	%
Canandaigua	13,015	8,846	8,371	30,231	39,962	76%	17,126	43%
E. Bloomfield	9,857	4,658	2,720	17,236	20,446	84%	12,988	64%
Farmington	11,953	3,247	4,405	19,605	25,259	78%	12,099	48%
Victor	8,491	4,465	1,208	14,164	22,174	64%	5,005	23%
W. Bloomfield	7,648	2,816	1,384	11,848	16,240	73%	9,105	56%
<i>Total</i>	<i>50,964</i>	<i>24,032</i>	<i>18,088</i>	<i>93,083</i>	<i>124,081</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>56,323</i>	<i>45%</i>

Figure 18: Summary of Northwestern Ontario County farm properties

Town	# tax parcels in Ag. use	% of farmland leased	Parcel size	
			Average	Median
Canandaigua	271	38%	63	54
E. Bloomfield	278	No data	47	53
Farmington	205	54%	59	53
Victor	81	69%	62	54
W. Bloomfield	140	No data	65	53
<i>Total</i>	<i>975</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>

Town of Canandaigua

Route 5 & 20 east-west corridor generally divides the Town’s two distinct landscapes. The sharp relief of the Bristol Hills, areas of prime farm soils, and the Canandaigua Lake shoreline characterize the southern half of the town and is similar to the southwestern Ontario County towns. The northern half of Canandaigua has a gently rolling landscape with a larger concentration of prime farm soils and historically larger farming operations.

The northern half of the Town surrounds the City of Canandaigua and contains State Route 332 connecting Canandaigua, (I-90-New York State Thruway and Rt. 96 -- the heart of the northwest Ontario County development corridor) and eastern Monroe County. It is also the location of the Canandaigua Airport and Finger Lakes Railway. The presence of transportation infrastructure is expected to significantly influence

future land use patterns throughout the town.

The southern half of Town with the SR 21 corridor and the west shore of Canandaigua Lake has long been the location of vacation homes and lake cottages. Over the past 20 + years, there has been a trend towards converting seasonal residences to year round homes along with a general increase in larger scale residential developments where sewer service is available.

The dominant agricultural land use is related to row and cash crops (corn, wheat, soybeans, oats, and hay) though there is a great diversity of smaller scale uses such as specialty crops, grapes, fruits and vegetables, and livestock.

- **Opportunities**

The Town's Plan identifies opportunities areas that build off the strengths of existing agricultural operations or are created by the Town's locational advantage. They include: Large-scale processing, meat processing, diversity of crops to meet expanding markets, organic produce, hops and malting, barley, straw, direct-to-consumer sales, agritourism, direct sales to restaurants, institutional purchases of local farm products, on-farm value-added processing, and infrastructure and utilities.

- **Threats to Agriculture**

The Town of Canandaigua's 2016 Agricultural Enhancement Plan (Town Plan) assesses the development pressure as follows:

- Development in the Town of Canandaigua is concentrated in areas surrounding the City of Canandaigua, along the Route 332 corridor north of the City and along the shores of Canandaigua Lake. During the past 20 years, residential subdivisions have been developed in the northern area of the Town near Farmington Town Line Road and in the area east of NYS Route 21 South.
- Based on past trends, the Town can expect demand for approximately 100 new dwelling units per year, of which 70 are expected to be single family dwellings. This assumes that the high number of new apartments, townhouses and other high density development will not continue at the current pace. Even if current demand for multi-family and compact housing types continues, these developments will be located within existing sewer service areas and will likely have minimal impact on Canandaigua farms.
- A large proportion of the future residential development is expected to occur in areas that are already served by public sewers or in areas currently planned for sewer extension in accordance with the Town's Sewer Master Plan.
- Of more concern from the standpoint of farmland protection is the development of single-family subdivisions and large lot "estate" type plots in agricultural areas.

- **Priority Farmland Protection Areas**

The Town of Canandaigua adopted a Strategic Farmland Protection Area in its 2016 Agricultural Enhancement Plan. It also adopted the Padelford Brook Greenway which is a plan for a portion of the Strategic Farmland Protection Area in the northern third of the Town. In addition to making recommendations for farmland protection priority areas it also identifies development nodes and associated zoning recommendations. These areas are depicted in **Figure 23** (see page 73).

Town of East Bloomfield (Village of Bloomfield)

Rolling countryside with extensive areas of prime farm soils and larger scale agricultural operations characterize East Bloomfield. Major state travel corridors including SR 64 and 444 as well as Rt. 5 and 20 and county roads are direct links to the areas of greater residential and commercial development in Victor, Canandaigua, Farmington and southeast Monroe County suburbs of Mendon and Pittsford. It is also a gateway to the Bristol Hills and the Finger Lakes region.

- **Opportunities**

The proximity to markets and predominance of high quality farm soils are important assets. The Town has a draft Comprehensive Plan that acknowledges the importance of agriculture, stating, “It is the goal of the Town and Village to facilitate opportunities within the business of agriculture that contribute to our local economy and help maintain our rural character. The community values its agricultural heritage and will support regulations and activities that foster farming and the protection of prime soils from residential and commercial encroachment.” The comprehensive plan also has a list of action items to address those goals.

- **Threats to Agriculture**

Lacking public sewers, the town does not face pressure for large scale residential development. A greater threat however is posed by development pressure from large lot residential development. This pattern fragments farm land and creates the environment for conflicts between farmers and homeowners not accustomed to the noises, smells, etc. associated with agricultural operations. Residual agricultural land left when a residential parcel is split off, is operationally more expensive to keep in production and may be left fallow.

Compared to other neighboring towns, the average size of an agricultural parcel is smaller than the median size. This pattern emerges over time as larger farms transition over passing generations by subdividing lots to family members. As a consequence, farmers must own or lease a larger number of smaller parcels that are more vulnerable to the consequences of large lot residential subdivision.

- **Priority Farmland Protection Areas**

The town has not delineated any farmland protection areas. Properties enrolled in the NYS agricultural exemption program are depicted in **Figure 23**.

Town of Farmington

Farmington’s transportation infrastructure and its proximity to Victor have made it the object of significant residential and commercial development --particularly in the southwest quadrant. Significant regional transportation include the Rt. 332 corridor which links Canandaigua to Farmington and the Thruway, and Rt. 96 linking Farmington to Victor. County Road 41 and Collett Road are major light industrial/commercial development corridors. The areas north of the Thruway are in close proximity to Monroe County and Wayne County, which are experiencing development pressure from the Rochester region. Like Victor, Farmington continues to be the focus of significant residential, commercial and light industrial development. The Town

is served by the Ontario Central Railway Railroad operated by Finger Lakes Railway.

Farmington's landscape is shaped by the drumlin areas and wetlands north of the Thruway and gently rolling topography, typical of northern Canandaigua to the south. Agricultural operations in Farmington are largely comprised of field crops, livestock, equine operations, and dairy with a diversity of smaller scale operations and specialty crops.

- **Opportunities**

Farmington's proximity to markets, concentrations of high quality agricultural soils and diversity of farm operations are important assets and provide continued opportunities for maintaining viable agriculture. The 2016 Town of Farmington Farmland Protection Plan states, "it highly values agricultural soils, agribusinesses and farming operations as an integral part of the local economy, environment and quality of life. The Town desires to maintain and improve a natural resource base that provides for locally grown food and essential agricultural products. Consequently, the Town aspires to achieve an economic, social and physical balance for continued use of agricultural land resource and to promote the benefits therefrom."

- **Threats to Agriculture**

The 2016 Town of Farmington Farmland Protection Plan identified a number of threats to agriculture including federal and state labor policy, regulation and programs, federal immigration policies impacting labor, lack of farm representation in local government, environmental regulations and minimal government cost sharing to meet regulations, volatile energy and commodity prices, public perception of animal welfare, increase in traffic and trucks on local roads, nuisance suits involving noise, dust and odors, public concern over agricultural practices and lack of improved field access onto roads.

- **Priority Farmland Protection Areas**

The Farmington Farmland Protection Plan delineated *Strategic Agricultural Lands Protection Areas*. These areas are depicted in **Figure 23**.

Town of Victor (Village of Victor)

Located in the northwest corner of the County, immediately adjacent to the fast growing suburbs of southeast Monroe County, Victor continues to be the a focus of intense residential and commercial/light industrial development. A major regional retail center as well as a high-technology and manufacturing area has made Victor one of the fastest growing towns in the Rochester metropolitan region. It has significant transportation infrastructure -- I-90/I-490 interchange, SR 251, and the SR 96 regional corridor with links to Farmington and Finger Lakes region via SR 444. The Town is served by the Ontario Central Railway Railroad operated by Finger Lakes Railway.

The northwest portion of Victor lies in the Irondequoit Creek watershed giving it a distinctive landscape pattern of kames (irregularly shaped sand and gravel hills) that yields smaller tracts of high quality farmland interspersed amongst the hills. In contrast, the eastern and southern portions located in the Canandaigua Outlet watershed are characterized by larger contiguous areas of high quality agricultural soils.

- **Opportunities**

Victor's fertile soil may become more desirable and primed for growth as droughts in other parts of the country and dependence upon irrigation cause food growers to reevaluate this area as preferable.

Growing demand for local and organic produce and proximity to the Rochester markets has generated opportunities for smaller scale operations that can produce a diversity of crops (fruits, vegetables, maple syrup, grapes, etc.) on smaller parcels. These smaller scale operations are minimally impacted by traffic and can be more compatible with neighboring residences.

In 2015 the Town adopted its Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan which is integrated into the Comprehensive Plan. It contains specific goals and actions necessary for the long term protection and enhancement of viable agriculture.

- **Threats to Agriculture**

The Town of Victor prepared a Farmland Protection Plan in 2015 which was also incorporated into its 2015 Comprehensive Plan. The following issues and threats include those noted in the Farmland Protection plan:

- There is an ongoing general decline in the number of dairy farms and traditional cropping activities focused upon corn, small grains and legumes.
- Traffic makes movement of farm equipment hazardous.
- Residential subdivisions in proximity to larger scale operations that generate odors, dust, etc. that can generate landowner conflicts.
- Paramount among the significant deterrents encountered by young and/or beginning farmers otherwise interested in establishing farms in Victor is the high cost of land in the community.
- Current land use regulations do not generally integrate 'farm friendly' principles.

- **Priority Farmland Protection Areas**

The Town has not delineated priority farmland protection areas as part of their plan. Properties enrolled in the NYS agricultural exemption program are depicted in **Figure 23**.

Town of West Bloomfield

West Bloomfield has gently rolling agricultural landscapes with a predominance of prime agricultural soils. The Town is located in the Honeoye Creek/Genesee River Watershed except for a portion in the northwest that drains to Irondequoit Creek and Mud Creek. Proximity to Monroe County's southeastern suburbs and good transportation access make the town desirable for both residential and non-residential development. SR 65/CR 37 provides easy commuting access to the Village of Honeoye Falls, Mendon and Pittsford and the I-390/Avon interchange at Rt. 5&20 is only nine miles from the Rt. 65/Rt. 5&20 intersection. The northern portions of the Town, in particular, have seen some development of large lot, larger-scale homes, typical of patterns in Mendon.

- **Opportunities**

The presence of high quality farm soils, proximity to markets and diversity of farm operations provide the necessary base for continuing economically viable agricultural operations. The 2012 Town Comprehensive Plan Update has a stated goal to “Maintain the rural character of the Town of West Bloomfield” and has a policy to encourage preservation of agricultural land.

The Town has been proactive in adopting subdivision regulations that required mapping of agricultural infrastructure (lane ways, surface and subsurface agricultural drainage systems, equipment access points, etc.) so potential non-agricultural development will not adversely impact agricultural operations. It also allowed the planning board to require submission of a ‘cluster’ subdivision plan that would facilitate siting a building or residence in a manner that did not adversely impact agricultural operations on the balance of the parent parcel or adjoining farmland.

- **Threats to Agriculture**

West Bloomfield faces similar threats as East Bloomfield. Lacking, public sewers, fragmentation of farmland is occurring due to large lot residential development and subdivision of frontage lots. This creates potential for land owner conflicts, etc. as described for East Bloomfield. The subdivision provisions enacted by the Town are a positive step but do not provide the protection that other agricultural zoning tools would provide.

- **Priority Farmland Protection Areas**

The Town has not delineated priority farmland protection areas as part of their comprehensive plan. Properties enrolled in the NYS agricultural exemption program are depicted in **Figure 23**.

B. Southwestern Ontario County

In other parts of the County, the glaciers left vast stretches of gently rolling prime farmland. In southwestern Ontario County, the glaciers left a more rugged and diverse landscape defined by the Bristol Hills and four Finger Lakes -- Hemlock, Canadice, Honeoye and Canandaigua interspersed with productive agricultural lands. The southern half of Naples forms the beginning of the Allegheny plateau with rolling hills covered in woodlands broken up by farm fields.

Farmlands and soils within this part of the county are summarized in **Figures 19 and 20**. While the majority of the soils in the area are classified as “Important”, most are classified as of “Statewide Importance” reflecting the areas geology and a diverse mix of agricultural operations. Unique soil types and microclimates created by proximity to Canandaigua Lake create excellent grape growing conditions. Other areas are particularly well suited for hay production and pasturing animals, row crops (corn, wheat, oats, soy beans, etc.) and dairy, as well as maple sugar, Christmas trees, mushrooms and small fruits.

Within an hour’s drive of Rochester, the Bristol Hills and Naples have long been a tourist destination and practically pioneered the concept of ‘agritourism’. Visitors have been attracted to the beautiful landscapes with vineyards, woodlands, open fields and lake views. Jerome’s U-Pick is one of the oldest ‘agritourism’ destinations in the state providing the public with that ‘hands on’ experience.

Proximity to southeastern Monroe County has always made the area a desirable, for vacation homes, conversion of existing second homes to year round residences, and new home development.

Figure 19: Southwestern Ontario County overview

Town	Soils (acres)				Total area	% Important Soils	Land in Ag. use (2016)	
	Prime	Statewide Importance	Prime if drained	Total Important Soils			Total (ac.)	%
Bristol	2,717	8,215	2,971	13,903	20,560	68%	3,880	17%
Canadice	695	8,429	1,572	10,696	23,457	46%	1,122	5%
Naples	2,897	6,617	626	10,141	24,785	41%	4,408	18%
Richmond	7,721	7,930	3,302	18,953	28,362	67%	7,931	28%
South Bristol	1,767	8,986	688	11,441	26,979	42%	1,518	6%
<i>Total</i>	<i>15,797</i>	<i>40,177</i>	<i>9,159</i>	<i>65,133</i>	<i>124,143</i>	<i>52%</i>	<i>18,858</i>	<i>15%</i>

Figure 20: Summary of Southwestern Ontario County farm properties

Town	# tax parcels in Ag. use	% of farmland leased	Parcel size	
			Average	Median
Bristol	72	54%	54	51
Canadice	19	48%	59	60
Naples	85	56%	52	55

Town	# tax parcels in Ag. use	% of farmland leased	Parcel size	
			Average	Median
Richmond	97	24%	82	54
South Bristol	42	26%	36	52
<i>Total</i>	315	-	-	-

Town of Bristol

The forested Bristol Hills and narrow valleys interspersed with areas of prime farm soils leads to a pattern of smaller farming operations. It is located primarily in the Honeoye Lake/Creek and Mud Creek watersheds. The largest concentration of prime farm soils and active agricultural operations are in the north and northeastern portions of the Town. Agriculture in Bristol is largely comprised of field crops, dairy, and cattle.

- **Opportunities**

Bristol has a significant land base with “Important” agricultural soils and is in close proximity to markets.

- **Threats to Agriculture**

Due to the geology and landscape, Bristol does not have large areas with contiguous blocks of agricultural land. This makes the cost of working parcels dispersed across the landscape inefficient and not cost effective. The scenic landscape and proximity to Monroe County makes it attractive for subdivision of large residential lots from agricultural parcels. This introduces potential for landowner conflicts, fragments remaining, farmland increasing operational costs.

- **Priority Farmland Protection Areas**

The Town has not identified any priority areas. Properties enrolled in the NYS agricultural exemption program are depicted in **Figure 23**.

Town of Canadice

With steep, wooded hillsides flanking Honeoye, Canadice and Hemlock Lakes and fragmented areas of important farm soils, only 5% of the Town is in agriculture. Since both Canadice and Hemlock Lakes are water supply lakes for the City of Rochester, cottage and second home development is currently limited to Honeoye Lake. However, Canadice’ natural beauty and 30 to 45 minute commute to the Rochester area is desirable for rural, single lot residential development.

- **Opportunities**

Despite the topographic limitations, 46% of the town is comprised of important agricultural soil, though a substantial portion is on state-owned land that has reverted to forest. There are still contiguous blocks of farmland in the northern portion of the town involved with row crops and hay. Smaller parcels present opportunities for specialty crops or niche type operations not dependent on a large land base

- **Threats to Agriculture**

Given the topographic and soil limitations in much of the town, good agricultural soils are also the most desirable land for development. There has been minimal large lot residential subdivision in the areas with larger blocks of farmland. If this begins to occur, fragmentation of remaining farmland and potential landowner conflicts could jeopardize the economic viability of the remaining farmland.

- **Priority Farmland Protection Areas**

The Town has not delineated priority farmland protection areas. Properties enrolled in the NYS agricultural exemption program are depicted in **Figure 23**.

Town of Naples (Village of Naples)

The glacial history of Naples left it with broad deltas forming the headwaters of Canandaigua Lake as well as rounded forested hills and small valleys. Though primarily in the Canandaigua Lake watershed, portions in the northwest drain to Honeoye Lake and Cohocton River in the southwest.

Historically, the soils and terrain have made Naples a regional center for viticulture and large-scale wine production. Changes in the grape and viticulture industry have resulted in the loss of these large viticulture operations. Smaller wineries and vineyards have developed in the area. Other agricultural operations in the area include dairy, livestock, and small fruits and specialty crops. Acreage in field crops is still the largest agricultural land use.

The Village of Naples is the southern terminus of the scenic Rt. 21 corridor that follows the western ridges of Canandaigua Lake. Wineries and grapes have been a major tourism draw flourishing around a number of grape-related festivals and special events. Naples is still generally considered too far from the Rochester area to feel significant residential development pressure.

- **Opportunities**

Though limited by topography, 41% of its land base is classified as important agricultural soils. Though larger scale operations such as dairy are present, smaller operations and specialty farms can find opportunities in Naples.

- **Threats**

Fragmentation of farmland resulting from subdivision of residential road frontage poses a long term threat creating potential for landowner conflicts and residual land that is not economically viable to cultivate.

- **Priority Farmland Protection Areas**

The Town has not delineated priority farmland protection areas. Properties enrolled in the NYS agricultural exemption program are depicted in **Figure 23**.

Town of Richmond

Honeoye Lake and its watershed dominates Richmond's landscape south of Rt.20A and has long been a location of cottages and second home development. Wooded hillsides are interspersed with farm fields that slope westward toward the lake. The largest concentration of important farm soils and larger blocks of agricultural are north of Rt. 20A.

Richmond also has good transportation access to southern Monroe County and the Rochester area. Served by CR 37, which becomes Rt. 65 in West Bloomfield at Rt. 5&20, Richmond is an appealing residential location for commuters. Conversion of seasonal to year round homes has been taking place. The hamlet of Honeoye is about a 20 minute drive to the I-390 interchange at Avon.

- **Opportunities**

Northern Richmond has retained large blocks of contiguous farmland with relatively few intrusions of residential development. Richmond is unique in this area of the county in that it retains many large parcels of agricultural land with an average parcel size of 80 acres with the median acreage being 54 acres. It also has proximity to markets and 68% of soils classified as important with the largest concentration of prime soils in the area.

- **Threats**

Fragmentation of farmland from subdivision of residential frontage lots poses a significant threat leaving residual farmland with high operational costs and vulnerable to landowner conflicts.

- **Priority Farmland Protection Areas**

The Town has not delineated priority farmland protection areas. Properties enrolled in the NYS agricultural exemption program are depicted in **Figure 23**.

Town of South Bristol

South Bristol is dominated by the Bristol Hills and the Canandaigua lakeshore. The central and western portions of the town are in the Mud Creek and Honeoye Lake and Honeoye Creek watersheds. The Only 6% of the town is in agriculture though 42% of soils are classified as important. Scattered areas of prime farm soils are located throughout other parts of town. The largest concentration of farmland is located in the eastern part of town in the Canandaigua Lake watershed.

Agriculture is largely comprised of vineyards with areas of row crops and specialty crops. South Bristol's SR 21 and CR 12 corridors with landscapes of vineyards and farm fields combined with rolling hills, lake views and wineries make it a desirable tourism destination and for large lot residential development.

- **Opportunities**

Favorable soils and microclimates make the area along Canandaigua Lake valuable for viticulture. Opportunities exist for development of maple syrup production in the extensive woodland areas of the Town.

- **Threats to Agriculture**

The lake views and scenic landscapes make farmland very attractive for high value large lot residential subdivision.

- **Priority Farmland Protection Areas**

The Town has not delineated farmland protection areas. Properties enrolled in the NYS agricultural exemption program are depicted in **Figure 23**.

C. Eastern Ontario County

Due to geology and glaciation, the towns of eastern Ontario County contain the largest concentration of prime soils and consequently have some of the most productive land in the county and the state. Eighty-five (85%) percent of the towns’ soils are classified as Important. Of all Important soils, 86% classified as Prime, or Prime if Drained (see **Figure 21**). It also has the largest concentrations of land in agricultural use (see **Figure 22**).

Generally, south of the NYS Thruway, the landscape is relatively level to gently rolling while north, drumlins interspersed with wetlands predominate.

The transportation infrastructure includes two interchanges on the NYS Thruway at SR 21 and SR 14, SR 96 paralleling the Thruway providing easy access to Monroe County and Rt. 5 & 20, a major east-west travel regional corridor. It is also served by Finger Lakes Railway a freight rail short line that carries bulk agricultural commodities and connects to the main rail lines outside of Syracuse

Many critical businesses that support agriculture are located in this area including equipment dealers, bean mills, a livestock auction house, and farm suppliers. These businesses not only serve farmers in Ontario County but the entire Finger Lakes region and are critical for maintaining viable agricultural operations.

Figure 21: Eastern Ontario County overview

Town	Soils (acres)				Total area	% Important Soils	Land in Ag. use (2016)	
	Prime	Statewide Importance	Prime if drained	Total Important Soils			Total (ac.)	%
Geneva	8,136	1,267	1,910	11,313	12,358	92%	6,756	55%
Gorham	15,223	3,007	9,582	27,812	33,873	82%	21,815	64%
Hopewell	12,347	2,978	5,809	21,135	22,866	92%	15,477	68%
Manchester	11,418	3,368	1,844	16,630	22,500	74%	13,333	59%
Phelps	23,689	6,995	2,625	33,309	40,555	82%	25,051	62%
Seneca	22,336	1,582	5,113	29,031	32,149	90%	26,302	82%
<i>Total</i>	<i>93,149</i>	<i>19,197</i>	<i>26,883</i>	<i>139,230</i>	<i>164,301</i>	<i>85%</i>	<i>108,734</i>	<i>66%</i>

Figure 22: Summary of Eastern Ontario County farm properties

Town	# tax parcels in Ag. use	% of farmland leased	Parcel size	
			Average	Median
Geneva	88	42%	77	55
Gorham	304	23%	72	57
Hopewell	242	43%	64	56
Manchester	213	47%	63	54
Phelps	425	34%	59	50
Seneca	370	26%	71	63
<i>Total</i>	1,642	-	-	-

Town of Geneva

Geneva’s gently rolling countryside slopes to the east where it meets the Seneca Lake shoreline. Ninety percent of its soils are classified as Important with 66% being classified as Prime.

Though primarily agricultural, Geneva has experienced suburb-style growth patterns as development from the City of Geneva moved to the west along the Rt. 5&20 corridor and north on CR 6. A major retail complex is located along the Rt. 5&20 corridor. Residential development has also occurred to the west and north of the City. Typical lakeshore development is found along SR 14. Mennonite farmers are an increasing presence in the town and are diversifying the agricultural base adding small dairy operations to the mix of row crops, fruit and nursery, and vineyards.

- **Opportunities**

The Town of Geneva completed an update of its farmland protection plan in 2017. It identified as assets:

- The Town of Geneva’s agricultural land base remains concentrated and generally has not been fragmented by low density residential development or larger scale subdivisions.
- The predominance of prime farm soils.
- The contribution that agricultural land plays in the scenic landscapes that are important for tourism.
- The Town’s disciplined approach to extending water and sewer infrastructure into agricultural areas.
- Presence of agricultural support services.
- Intellectual capital – experienced farmers, Agricultural Experiment Station, Hobart and William Smith College’s Fribolin Farm, etc.
- Good highway and freight rail transportation infrastructure

- **Threats to Agriculture**

The town’s 2017 plan update identified as threats:

- Lack of water supply in agricultural areas that creates the need for extension of public water service.
- There is suburban type pressure for residential development both larger tract type and large

lots that would fragment farmland and create user conflicts.

- Existing residential zoning encourages fragmentation of farmland.

- **Priority Farmland Protection Areas**

The Town has delineated farmland protection areas and is revising the zoning code to incorporate “ag-friendly” zoning provisions that reduce fragmentation from current traditional large lot zoning in the farmland protection areas. These areas are depicted in **Figure 23**.

Town of Gorham (Village of Rushville)

The Town of Gorham is characterized by gently rolling rural landscape and scenic views of Canandaigua Lake and its watershed. The eastern portion of the town is in tributaries in the Canandaigua Outlet watershed. Eighty-two percent of its soils are classified as Important.

Dairy operations and field crops are the predominant land use with some vegetable and livestock operations. Contrary to a general trend of farm consolidation and larger farm operations, small farms (50-100 acres) are being sustained by an influx of Mennonite farmers who provide a stabilizing influence over potential conversions to non-farm use. Gorham has a relatively high percentage (77%) of farmer-owned farmland.

- **Opportunities**

The Town included as part of its comprehensive plan an Agriculture and Open Space Section that serves as its agricultural and farmland protection plan. It identifies the following assets:

- The Town has retained large blocks of contiguous, high quality agricultural land with minimal intrusion of residential frontage lots.
- Agricultural support services are available.
- Mennonite farmers have a stabilizing impact on the agricultural land base.

- **Threats to Agriculture**

As stated in its comprehensive plan, the Town’s area of greatest development pressure is along the lake but the Town’s closeness to Canandaigua and the NYS Route 332 commuting corridor into Rochester has created demand for residential lots throughout much of the Town. In many areas, the subdivision of residential lots has followed the extension of water and sewer lines into rural areas.

- **Priority Farmland Protection Areas**

The Town has delineated farmland protection areas and has adopted agricultural friendly zoning that reduces fragmentation of farmland that was the consequence of previous “agricultural” – large lot residential zoning. These areas are depicted in **Figure 23**.

Town of Hopewell

Like northern Canandaigua, and Seneca and Phelps to its west, the Hopewell landscape is relatively level or gently rolling except for the southwest portion located in the Canandaigua Lake watershed with areas of steeper slope. Most of the town is in the Canandaigua Outlet watershed.

Agriculture clearly dominates the Hopewell landscape. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of Hopewell is in agricultural land use with 92% of its soils classified as “Important” and 53% as “Prime.” Dairy operations and row crops are the predominant agriculture land use.

Transportation infrastructure includes SR 21, a north-south corridor that provides access to the NYS Thruway in Manchester to the north and to Canandaigua to the south, SR 488, an east-west link to SR 96, and Rt. 5 & 20, a major east-west regional corridor and connecting network of county and town roads. It is also served by Finger Lakes Railway.

- **Opportunities**

The Town of Hopewell, in its 2013 comprehensive plan update, states its commitment to maintaining economically viable agriculture stating, “Town must make every effort to encourage and demand in so much as possible the conservation and preservation of viable agricultural uses and most importantly the soils necessary for sustaining such uses in addition to maintaining natural resources, scenic views and open space vital to maintaining a rural environment.”

The Town focuses its commercial and light industrial development primarily along the highway corridors. It incorporated into its zoning code a Prime Farmland Overlay District that identifies prime agricultural soil resources that are a priority for protection from non-agricultural development. It also establishes percentages of prime soils that can be developed on a parcel or as part of a subdivision and allows the planning board to require submission of a cluster subdivision under Sec. 278 of NYS Town Law to minimize impact on agricultural soils and operations.

- **Threats to Agriculture**

The transportation infrastructure and relatively easy commute to Monroe County or employment centers in Ontario County makes Hopewell desirable for fragmented rural residential development. The Town’s zoning code is intended to minimize that development.

- **Priority Farmland Protection Areas**

The Town established the Prime Farmland Overlay District in 2013. These areas are depicted in **Figure 23**.

Town of Manchester (Villages of Shortsville, Manchester and part of Clifton Springs)

Manchester’s landscape is similar to Farmington to its west and Phelps to its east. North of the New York State Thruway, the area is characterized by drumlins and wetlands interspersed with farmland. South of the Thruway, the landscape is gently rolling with prime farm soils.

Fifty-nine percent (59%) of the town is in agricultural land use with 74% of its soils classified as “Important” and 70% as “Prime.” Large dairy operations and row crops are the predominant agriculture land use. The Town contains the Villages of Manchester, Shortsville, and a portion of Clifton Springs.

Manchester has significant transportation infrastructure assets include a NYS Thruway interchange at SR 21, the SR 96 corridor that links it to Victor and Farmington, and the north-south SR 21 corridor providing access to Canandaigua and the Finger Lakes to the south and Wayne County to the north. The interchange is located in close proximity to the Villages of Manchester and Shortsville but has not generated substantial development pressure thus far. It is served by seven miles of the Finger Lakes Railway

Some areas are seeing building of individual homes as farmland landowners subdivide individual lots. Given that Manchester is a relatively easy commute to the Rochester area and if the eastward development trend continues, pressure on farmland owners to convert their land to other uses could significantly increase.

- **Opportunities**

The predominance of high quality agricultural soils and proximity to markets is a major asset. The Town has been proactive in planning for growth targeted away from prime agricultural areas. It completed a joint comprehensive plan with the Villages of Manchester, Shortsville and Clifton Springs in 2016 that promotes commercial, residential and light industrial growth in the areas served by water and sewer infrastructure in or in proximity to the Villages and along existing commercial corridors on SR 96 and SR 21.

The Town and Villages partnered with the County to develop a Freight Rail Corridor Plan that identified locations along the corridor as prime development opportunity areas. The Plan highlighted food production, value-added services, and packaging local and regional agricultural commodities as having strong potential for development that can take advantage of multi-modal transportation infrastructure.

- **Threats to Agriculture**

Current zoning allows large lot rural residential subdivisions. Fragmentation of farmland due to subdivision of individual residential lots poses a significant long term threat to agricultural operations creating potential landowner conflicts and leaving residual farmland that is not operationally cost effective.

- **Priority Farmland Protection Areas**

The Comprehensive Plan addresses the importance of agriculture to the Town and recommends preparation of a town farmland protection plan. It does not identify specific farmland protection areas. Properties enrolled in the NYS agricultural exemption program are depicted in **Figure 23**.

Town of Phelps (Villages of Phelps and part of Clifton Springs)

Phelps is located in the northeast corner of the County. The town shares landscape characteristics with Manchester with the area north of the Thruway characterized by drumlins and wetlands interspersed with prime farm soils and extensive areas of prime farm soils with a relatively level to gently rolling terrain to the south. It is located within the Canandaigua Outlet watershed.

It is the largest town in Ontario County with 62% of its land in agriculture. Eighty-two (82%) of its soils classified as “Important” and 71% as “Prime.” Large dairy operations, row crops and vegetables, cabbage in particular, are the predominant agriculture land uses.

Phelps’ transportation infrastructure includes a NYS Thruway interchange at SR 14 which is a major corridor and link to the City of Geneva and gateway to the Finger Lakes, SR 96 that links to SR 318 and the major retail outlet center in Seneca County, and SR 488 that links SR 96 to SR 21. The Villages of Phelps and Clifton Springs are along the SR 96 corridor and are focal points for commercial and light industrial development as well as the SR 14 corridor. It is also served by Finger Lakes Railway.

- **Opportunities**

The predominance of agriculture as a land use, high quality agricultural soils and diversity of agricultural activities is an important asset to maintaining a long term economically viable agricultural land base. The Joint Town and Village of Phelps’ 2007 comprehensive plan includes the stated goal, “(the) Long term protection of agricultural lands and related resources to ensure that the business and culture of agriculture remain a cornerstone of the communities.”

- **Threats to Agriculture**

Fragmentation of farmland with large single lot residential subdivision is allowed under current zoning leading to potential landowner conflicts and leaving residual farmland that is undesirable and not operationally cost effective to work.

- **Priority Farmland Protection Areas**

The Town has not identified any priority farmland protection areas. Properties enrolled in the NYS agricultural exemption program are depicted in **Figure 23**.

Town of Seneca

Like its neighboring towns in eastern Ontario County, Seneca has a predominance of land, 82%, in agricultural land use—the highest on Ontario County. Ninety percent (90%) of its soils are classified as “Important” with 78% classified as “Prime.” Its landscape is relatively level to gently rolling with areas of muckland and wetlands and supports a diversity of agricultural activities including, large dairies, row crops, livestock, specialty crops and vegetables. Seventy-four percent (74%) of farmland is farmer owned. The town is divided between the Seneca Lake and Canandaigua Outlet watersheds.

Rt. 5&20 is the major transportation corridor in Seneca and the focus of its commercial development. SR 14A links the southern part of the town at Lake to Lake Rd. to SR 14 in the Town of Geneva.

- **Opportunities**

The high quality soils and significant agricultural land base is a major asset. The Town has taken protecting that asset very seriously by being the first town in the county to adopt a comprehensive plan in 2002 that called for establishment of agriculture as a priority land use.

The Town implemented that recommendation and updated its zoning code in 2008 to establish the AG Zoning District which states, “The creation of the Agricultural Zoning District illustrates the Town’s commitment to farming and agricultural uses as a preferred use in these districts and shall protect existing agricultural areas from suburban and urban development, encourage the continuation of agriculture, reduce land conflicts and preserve open space and natural resources.”

A key feature of the zoning was to reduce fragmentation by substantially reducing the number of residential units allowed and decoupling residential parcel size from calculating the number of allowed units per parcel. It also enacted subdivision measures that allowed the planning board to require a ‘cluster subdivision plan’ that would allow flexibility of siting a building or residence to minimize impact on agricultural operations and prime farmland.

- **Threats**

The Town has enacted zoning and subdivision regulations that provide a solid regulatory framework for protection of agricultural land use. Its success will depend on the commitment of the town and agricultural land owners to implement those regulations and keep the commitment to farming as the ‘preferred land use’ as economically attractive alternatives arise.

- **Priority Farmland Protection Areas**

The AG Zoning District is the Town’s priority farmland protection area. These areas are depicted in **Figure 23**.