

ADDITION OF VIABLE AGRICULTURAL LANDS
NEW YORK STATE CERTIFIED AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS
ONONDAGA COUNTY

Onondaga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board

March 2018

ONONDAGA COUNTY
AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD
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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of the Onondaga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board's 2018 review for the addition of viable agricultural land to agricultural districts in Onondaga County. The Onondaga County Legislature formally designated by Resolution 71 on April 5, 2004 an annual 30-day period in January when landowners can request that their land be added to an agricultural district.

Viable agricultural land, as defined in NYS Agriculture and Markets Law, Article 25-AA, Section 301, sub.7, is "...land highly suitable for a farm operation..." and a farm operation as defined in sub.11 is "...the land and on-farm buildings, equipment, manure processing and handling facilities, and practices which contribute to the production, preparation and marketing of crops, livestock and livestock products as a commercial enterprise... Such farm operation may consist of one or more parcels of owned or rented land, which parcels may be contiguous or noncontiguous to each other."

The requested additions were, therefore, examined primarily for the presence and characteristics of onsite and adjacent agricultural operations, agricultural production opportunities, location relative to existing agricultural districts, nearby development trends, and natural features.

LANDOWNER REQUESTS

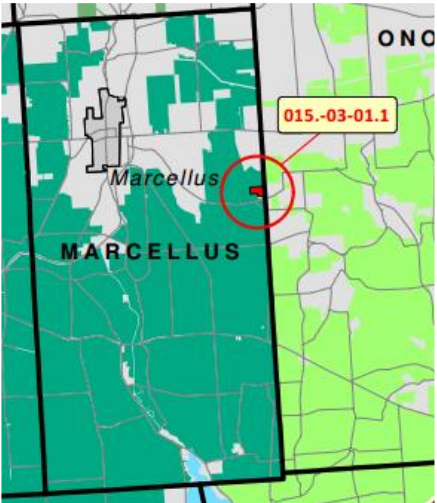
Landowners have requested that the following parcels be added to agricultural districts within Onondaga County. (Note, this report does not include parcels requested for addition which have been found to be currently enrolled in a certified agricultural district.)

2018 REQUESTED ADDITIONS				
DISTRICT	TOWN	OWNER	PARCEL	ACRES*
2	MARCELLUS	RAYMOND & TONI HEER	015.-03-01.1	23.07
2	SPAFFORD	PAUL & MELISSA KOWALEWSKI	027.-04-06.1	48.04
District 2 Total				71.11
3	ELBRIDGE	KIM D RINALDO	040.-03-25.0	127.01
3	CLAY	NOAL & PATRICIA WHITE	013.-01-49.1	48.37
District 3 Total				175.38
4	POMPEY	ROBERT & LISA BERSON	024.-02-12.0	19.84
4	POMPEY	PATRICIA CHAVARRIA & ANDREW BROOKS	024.-03-15.0	4.64
4	LAFAYETTE	KENNETH & DENISE JOHNSON	012.-05-03.0	3.49
4	LAFAYETTE	KENNETH & DENISE JOHNSON	012.-05-29.3	69.66
4	LAFAYETTE	KENNETH & DENISE JOHNSON	012.-05-29.6	15.13
District 4 Total				112.76
GRAND TOTAL				359.25
* Calculated using a Geographic Information System, not Real Property Services (RPS) data.				

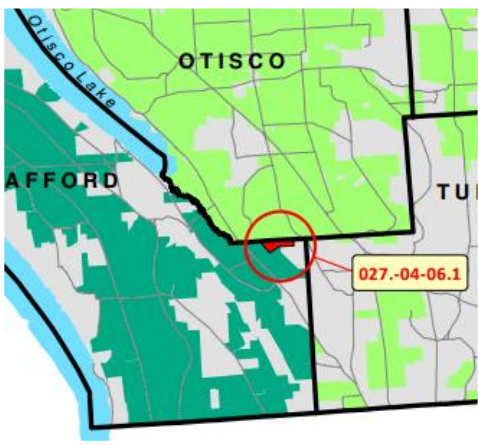
The following is a description of each of the properties requested to be added to Agricultural Districts 2, 3 and 4, including aerial photography showing the proposed property, existing enrolled Agricultural District properties (shaded green), and area context.

DISTRICT 2 REQUESTED ADDITIONS

MARCELLUS (HEER): One parcel in the Town of Marcellus is proposed for addition, located along Pleasant Valley Road, approximately 3 mile southeast of the Village of Marcellus. The 23.07 acre parcel contains tilled land and woods on a sloping hillside. Agricultural uses are listed as hay, soybean, corn and wheat production. The parcel is connected to other farmed parcels, and lands enrolled in Agricultural District 2. The owner of the property also owns over 250 additional acres in the Town of Marcellus enrolled in the district, and is proposing addition of 37 acres in the Town of Onondaga, as part of the concurrent Agricultural District 1 renewal process.



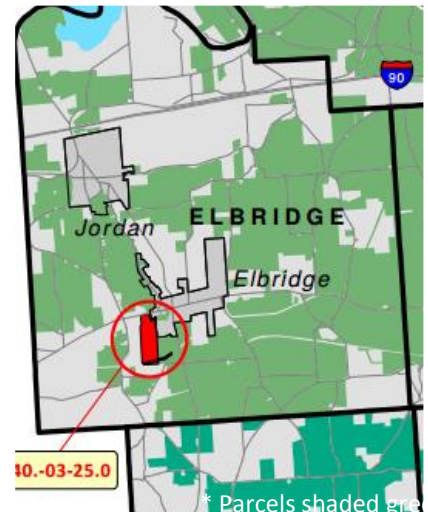
SPAFFORD (KOWALEWSKI): The subject 48.04 acre parcel lies at the eastern edge of the Town of Spafford, at the border with the Towns of Otisco and Tully. The parcel is located in a largely rural and agricultural area, and is a landlocked parcel. The land includes approximately 13 acres of farm fields, with agricultural uses noted as u-pick berries, poultry and pumpkins. The remainder of the land is wooded and steeply sloped with a grade change of approximately 450 feet along what is referred to as Vesper Hill.





DISTRICT 3 REQUESTED ADDITIONS

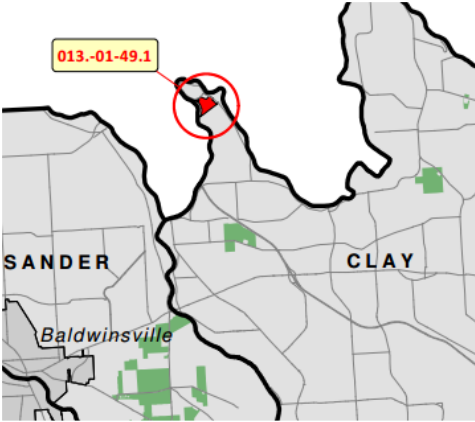
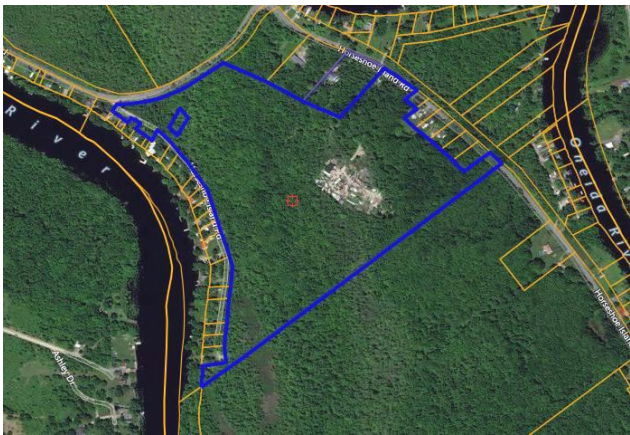
ELBRIDGE (RINALDO): The landowner is proposing addition of a 127.01 acre parcel to Agricultural District 3, with frontage on NYS Route 5 and located just west of the Village of Elbridge. Per the request form, the land has been used for field crops and has been in family ownership for over 100 years. The parcel is bisected by Skaneateles Creek, an important stream corridor, at its north end, and bisected at the southern end of the parcel by a linear National Grid electric transmission parcel. Despite its proximity to the Village, lands to the north, west and south remain primarily agricultural in nature and land use.



CLAY (WHITE): A 48.37 acre parcel of land located in the northernmost portion of the Town of Clay in an area known as Horseshoe Island is proposed for addition to Agricultural District 3. The Horseshoe Island area is characterized by its configuration in the shape of a narrow “horseshoe” shaped land mass created by the meandering Oneida River, and at its south end, a man-made portion of the NYS Barge Canal that creates a shorter path for boaters. Lands on Horseshoe Island include mostly seasonal residences along the river edge, and vacant wooded land. No agricultural activities appear to occur on Horseshoe Island, and the nearest enrolled Agricultural District parcel is over 2 miles from the site. Over 50 existing residential parcels lie adjacent to or across from the subject site.

Significant portions of the land, including the subject parcel, are poorly drained and contain vast areas of FEMA floodplains and floodways, and both state and federal wetland areas. A stream channel runs through the subject parcel, the entirety of the subject parcel is located in the flood plain and approximately 14 of 48 acres are within the more restrictive floodway. State and Federal wetlands also occur on portions of the site.

The submitted addition form noted the land is currently being used for agricultural production, with selective timber harvesting, raising chickens for eggs, and bee keeping occurring on site. Per aerial photography, the subject parcel contains mostly wooded land, a single-family house at its frontage, and near the center of the site, an area has been cleared which contains garage structures and numerous vehicles, boats, tractor trailers, tires and other materials. According to the Town of Clay, the property has been the subject of numerous code violations, and is currently in litigation with the Town regarding violations. Questionable activities noted by the town include illegal filling of floodplains/floodways and wetlands without permits, large scale dumping and storage of materials including approximately 1,000 tires on site, and potential contamination of soils from motor oil leakage. No agricultural activities, including timber harvesting chicken or beekeeping, have been observed by Code Enforcement officials. The only tree clearing appeared to be part of roadway establishment.





Yellow - State Wetlands, Blue – Federal Wetlands



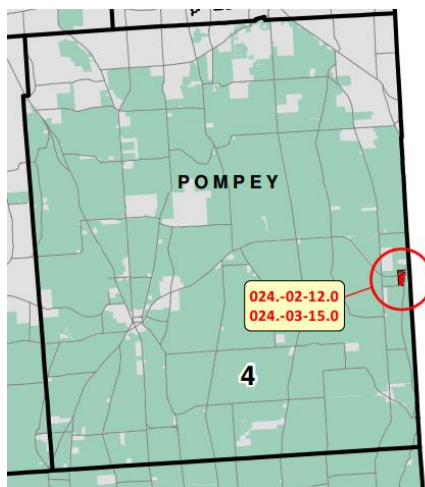
Pale Pink – Flood Plain, Bright Pink - Floodway

DISTRICT 4 REQUESTED ADDITIONS

Two adjacent parcels are proposed for addition to District 4, from separate owners:

POMPEY (BERSON): A 19.84 acre parcel on the south side of NYS Route 20 at the eastern edge of the Town of Pompey is proposed for addition to Agricultural District 4. The parcel contains a house, garage, barn, farm fields, and vegetated lands buffering and along Limestone Creek, a NYSDEC Class C stream, which meanders through the center of the parcel. The landowner notes agricultural production on the lands as livestock (beef) production along with hay harvesting and pasture. Almost all lands in this eastern portion of the Town of Pompey, and adjacent Madison County lands are rural and agriculture in nature and enrolled in the NYS Agricultural District.

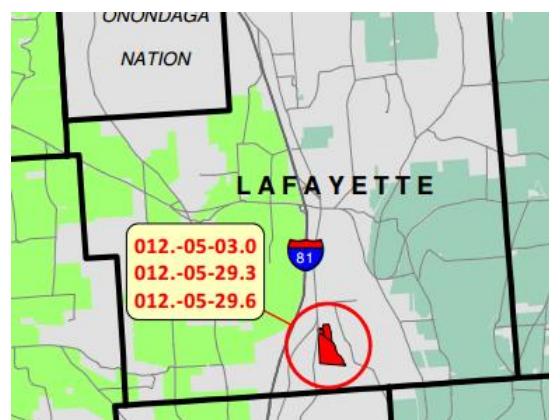
POMPEY (CHAVARRIA / BROOKS): On the north side of NYS Route 20, directly north of the proposed Berson land to be added, is a 4.64 acre triangular parcel of land also proposed for inclusion. The owners of the land purchased the property in recent years to own and operate a farm brewery on site. Plans include growing ingredients on the property for beer production, and providing the spent grain from brewing to the neighboring beef farm. The owner notes they intend to use local sourced ingredients when possible. The parcel contains vacant land, a small stretch of Limestone Creek, and abuts an active farm field.





LAFAYETTE (JOHNSON): The landowner is proposing addition of three contiguous parcels totaling 88.28 acres in the Town of LaFayette. The farm is located on North Road, which runs north/south between the Hamlet of LaFayette and Village of Tully. Parcel 012.-05-03.0 (3.49 acres) contains a house, barns and storage. Parcel 012.-05-29.3 (69.66 acres) and Parcel 012.-05-29.6 (15.13 acres) contain tilled cropland and deciduous forested areas, primarily at parcel edges and along Rainbow Creek, a feeder to Onondaga Creek that runs across the site.

While there are no nearby parcels currently enrolled in the agricultural district, the corridor remains largely rural and vegetated, and contains a significant amount of farmed parcels and open land to support farming activity in this location. The owner cites the nature of agricultural production on site as corn, hay and alfalfa cropland, leased to farmers. The site and its surroundings contain steeply sloped lands, part of the drumlins topography south of the City of Syracuse.





RECOMMENDATIONS

The farm sector in Onondaga County is strong and stable and the Onondaga County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, Onondaga County 2010 Development Guide and municipal planning documents identify protection of agriculture and farmland as an important goal for preserving the character of rural areas.

As mentioned in the Introduction to this report, the requested additions were examined primarily for the presence and characteristics of onsite and adjacent agricultural operations, agricultural production opportunities, location relative to existing agricultural districts, nearby development trends, and natural features.

The requested tax parcel 013.-01-49.1 in the Town of Clay does not exhibit existing or potential onsite and/or adjacent agricultural operations. The site is not proximate to enrolled District parcels. While development in the area is limited, over 50 existing residential parcels lie adjacent to or across from the subject site. And natural features including groundwater inundation and flooding threatens the viability of farming on site. As such, this parcel is not recommended to the County Legislature for addition to the NYS Agricultural District 3.

The Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board recommends adding the remaining 8 of the 9 requested parcels to Agricultural Districts 2, 3 and 4, as they have demonstrated all or most of the abovementioned desired characteristics. The total acreage being recommended for addition is 310.88.

The Board notes its recommendations to the Onondaga County Legislature in the following table:

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DISTRICT	TOWN	OWNER	PARCEL	ACRES*
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District 3 Total				127.01
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District 4 Total				112.76
GRAND TOTAL				310.88
One requested parcel was not recommended for addition in 2018. (Clay, 013.-01-49.1)				
* Calculated using a Geographic Information System, not Real Property Services (RPS) data.				

APPENDICES

Resolution - Annual 30-Day

Media - News Release

Form - Annual Additions Request

Resolution - Public Hearing Notice

Notice - Public Hearing Notice

Letter - Public Hearing Landowner

Minutes - Public Hearing

Resolution - Approval

Map – Annual Additions Map

SEQRA - Environmental Assessment Form

Onondaga County Agricultural Districts 2018 Annual Additions

