

REPORT TO THE ONONDAGA COUNTY LEGISLATURE

2020 EIGHT YEAR REVIEW

NYS AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT 2

TOWNS OF MARCELLUS, SKANEATELES, AND SPAFFORD

MARCH 2020

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 (AFPB) 2020 eight-year review and final recommendations to the County Legislature for Agricultural District 1 in the Onondaga County towns of Marcellus, Skaneateles and Spafford.

Article 25-AA of the NYS Agriculture and Markets Law was enacted in 1971 to help keep farmland in agricultural production through a combination of landowner incentives and protections that discourage the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses, including:

- providing reduced property tax bills for agricultural lands (agricultural landowners must apply to the local tax assessor for an annual agricultural assessment);
- providing the framework to limit unreasonable local regulation on accepted agricultural practices;
- providing Right to Farm provisions that protect accepted agricultural practices from private nuisance suits;
- modifying state agency administrative regulations and procedures to encourage the continuation of agricultural businesses;
- modifying the ability to advance public funds to construct facilities that encourage development;
- preventing benefit assessments, special ad valorem levies, or other rates and fees on farmland for the finance of improvements such as water, sewer or nonfarm drainage; and
- modifying the ability of public agencies to acquire farmland through eminent domain.

Agricultural districts primarily benefit owners of land that is farmed. Being an existing part of an agricultural district does not require that the land be used for agriculture and it does not directly affect tax assessments (agricultural landowners must apply to the local tax assessor for an annual NYS agricultural assessment).

Agricultural districts are reviewed by the Onondaga County Legislature and recertified by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Commissioner every eight years. During the review landowners can decide if they want their property to remain in the district, or be removed or added. The review is announced through public notices and announcements, a municipal notice letter, and a mailing to all landowners within the district, which includes a property owner notice letter, a removal and addition request form, and a farm survey.

Article 25-AA of the NYS Agriculture and Markets Law requires the AFPB to consider the following factors when creating and reviewing an agricultural district:

- the viability of active farming within and adjacent to the district;
- the presence of viable inactive farm lands within and adjacent to the district;
- the nature and extent of land uses other than active farming within and adjacent to the district;
- county developmental patterns and needs; and
- any other relevant matters.

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... In judging viability, Article 25-AA of the NYS Agriculture and Markets Law requires the AFPB to consider:

- natural factors including soil, climate, topography;
- markets for farm products;
- the extent and nature of farm improvements;
- the present status of farming;
- anticipated trends in agricultural economic conditions and technology; and
- any other relevant factors.

NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets provides guidance in how it defines farm operations and thresholds in determining farm activities to constitute a commercial enterprise, to include factors such as types of products, acreage in production, gross sales and capital investment, experience and commitment. Requested additions are, therefore, examined primarily for the presence and characteristics of onsite and related commercial farm operations and production opportunities, highly suitable land, location relative to existing agricultural districts, nearby development and natural features.

Agricultural District 2 was last reviewed and recertified in 2012. Following the 2012 review and recertification, District 2 encompassed approximately 47,230 acres. Since 2012, property owners have had the option to request to enroll viable agricultural land into the district on an annual basis. As a result, 401.55 acres have been added to District 2 since the last review in 2012.

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT 2 ANNUAL ADDITIONS SINCE 2012			
YEAR	TOWN	TAX ID	ACRES*
2014	MARCELLUS	012.-01-81.1	115.16
2016	MARCELLUS	012.-01-79.0	134.67
2016	SKANEATELES	025.-01-16.0	46.61
2016	SPAFFORD	015.-01-2.6	34.00
2018	MARCELLUS	015.-03-01.1	23.07
2018	SPAFFORD	027.-04-06.1	48.04
TOTAL			401.55

*None added in 2013, 2015 and 2017

*Calculated using a Geographic Information System, not Real Property Services (RPS) data.

DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

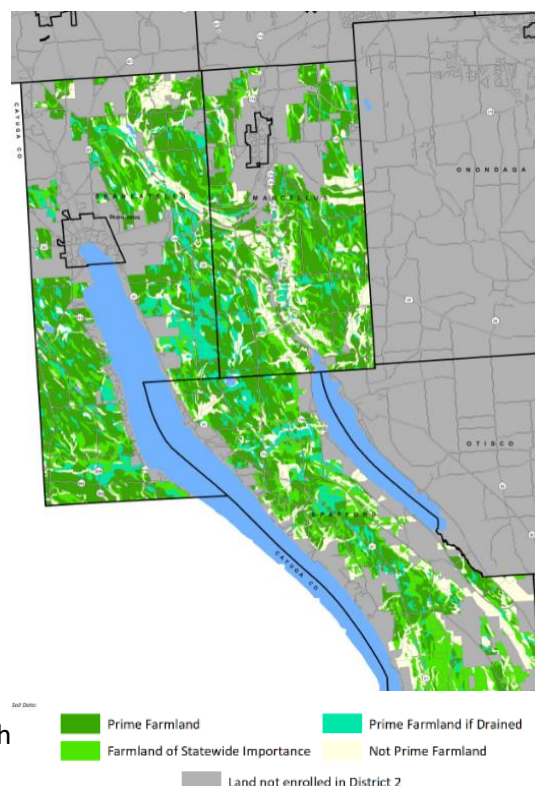
Agricultural District 2 is located on the Alleghany Plateau and extends from the Onondaga Escarpment on the northern boundaries of the Towns of Skaneateles and Marcellus to the southern highlands along the boundary of the Town of Spafford and Cortland County. Elevation within the district ranges from 500 to 600 feet in the northern-most areas near the Onondaga Escarpment to 1,986 feet on Ripley Hill in the southern highlands in the Town of Spafford.

Most of the land in the district can be described as rolling hills and large steep-sided glacial outwash valleys (Skaneateles and Otisco Lakes) that are characteristic of the Alleghany Plateau. Soils in this area consist primarily of deep to moderately deep soils that formed in glacial till in upland areas.

Approximately 80% of the District is composed of high quality farm lands: 46% are Prime Farm Land, 22% are of Statewide Importance, and 12 % are Prime if Drained. Relatively high in calcium as a result of the area's limestone bedrock, much of the soil requires minimal soil amendments to modify pH.

The majority of the area is within the head waters of the Seneca-Oneida-Oswego River Basin and includes Carpenter's Brook, Nine Mile Creek, and Skaneateles Creek, and the Skaneateles Lake and Otisco Lake watersheds and their numerous tributaries in steep, forested ravines, all of which are within the larger Onondaga Lake basin.

FARMLAND SOILS IN DISTRICT 2



Skaneateles Lake is a water supply for the City of Syracuse, the Village of Skaneateles, and areas in the Towns of Skaneateles and Elbridge. Otisco Lake is a public water supply for the Onondaga County Water Authority. A small area incorporating the Cold Brook watershed in southern Spafford is in the Susquehanna River Basin.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USE

At the start of the review, there were approximately 1,800 land owners who owned 2,606 enrolled parcels totaling 47,637 acres within District 2, according to Onondaga County's geographic information system (GIS). Each of the three towns includes a similar amount of enrolled acreage, ranging from 14,500-18,000 acres. Average parcel sizes were also comparable, ranging from 15-21 acres on average.

EXISTING AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT PARCELS AND ACREAGES BY TOWN				
	MARCELLUS	SKANEATELES	SPAFFORD	TOTALS
NUMBER OF ENROLLED PARCELS	988	865	753	2,606
ACRES* ENROLLED	15,041	18,094	14,502	47,637
AVERAGE PARCEL SIZE (in acres)	15	21	19	18

*Calculated using a Geographic Information System, not Real Property Services (RPS) data.

Two villages occur in Agricultural District 2, and serve as primary commercial and population centers in the area. Approximately 15,000 people live in the three Towns in the district, with 4,300 residents living within the villages. In the Towns of Skaneateles and Spafford, both year-round and seasonal shoreline housing along the two Finger Lakes (Skaneateles and Otisco Lakes) is prevalent. The Finger Lakes Region has grown in popularity in recent years as a tourism destination.

POPULATION IN AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT 2	
MARCELLUS TOWN	6,117
MARCELLUS VILLAGE	1,893
SKANEATELES TOWN	7,198
SKANEATELES VILLAGE	2,411
SPAFFORD TOWN	1,675
TOTAL POPULATION	14,990

*Source 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates

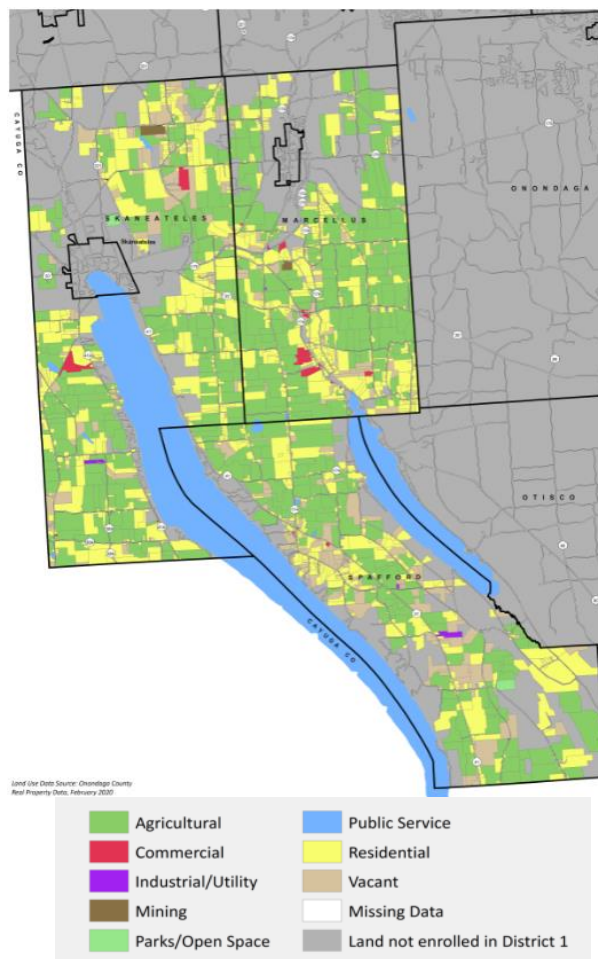
Beyond the shoreline and village centers and a few isolated commercial nodes, land use transitions quickly to agriculture, open wooded lands, and large lot residential. Limits on public sewer infrastructure, travel times to the urban area, and topography tend to limit urban expansion much outside the Villages in this portion of the County, all elements which aide in the preservation of farmland in Agricultural District 2.

LAND USE IN DISTRICT 2

A map of land uses occurring in the district shows the concentration of parcels within the district, as well as the primarily agricultural and large-lot residential land uses in the district.

According to Real Property GIS data, the primary land use classifications for enrolled parcels in Agricultural District 2 are residential (1,516 parcels), vacant lands (518 parcels) and agricultural (500 parcels). In terms of acreage, over half of the total enrolled acres (25,853 acres) are classified as agricultural, with 15,605 as residential, and another 5,462 acres classified as vacant lands.

Minimal commercial, industrial or other areas make up the district enrollment. While residential lots appear to make up a large percentage of the enrolled number of parcels, very few subdivision-type developments are located in the district, give limits on sewer and water infrastructure. Most residential is found on large lots, where agriculture may remain as a viable secondary use.



ENROLLED PARCELS - BY LAND USE, ACREAGE AND TOWN								
	MARCELLUS		SKANEATELES		SPAFFORD		TOTAL # OF PARCELS	TOTAL # OF ACRES
	PARCELS	ACRES	PARCELS	ACRES	PARCELS	ACRES		
AGRICULTURAL	172	9,450	196	9,068	132	7,335	500	25,853
COMMERCIAL	19	168	5	171	4	9	28	348
INDUSTRIAL/UTILITY	6	10	3	28	5	52	14	90
MINING	1	29	1	74	0	0	2	103
PARKS/OPEN SPACE	0	0	2	57	2	67	4	124
PUBLIC SERVICE	6	10	4	12	13	30	23	52
RESIDENTIAL	638	4,540	495	6,757	383	4,308	1,516	15,605
VACANT	146	834	159	1,927	213	2,701	518	5,462
WATER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MISSING DATA	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
TOTAL PARCELS	988	15,041	865	18,094	753	14,502	2,606	47,637

*Calculated using a Geographic Information System, not Real Property Services (RPS) data.

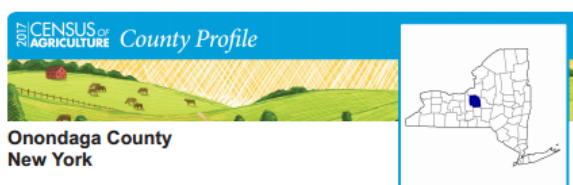
AGRICULTURAL CENSUS

The 2017 US Census of Agriculture indicates a relatively stable farmland community within Onondaga County. Total farmland acreage has remained stable for the past two decades, a result of good soils, market forces, savvy farm operators, a trained labor force, and opportunities for nearby, off-farm employment in a metropolitan area.

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, total farm sales in Onondaga County were a record breaking \$178,409,000, up from \$152,050,000 in 2012. And land in farms increased from 150,269 acres in 2012 to 160,717 acres. And the 2017 Census cites 252 new and beginning farmers were added in the 5-year period.

However, the number of part- and full-time farm businesses decreased by 8% percent over this time period, and 10% since 2007, more than the state average. Farms in Onondaga County with more than \$10,000 gross farm sales also decreased from 342 in 2012 to 305 farms in 2017, a 10% change. And the number of farm operators decreased from 1,075 operators in 2012 to 1,068 operators in 2017.

Top crops (in acres) include forage (34,950 acres), corn for silage and greenchop (18,422 acres), corn for grain (18,107 acres), soybeans (8,908 acres) and wheat for grain (5,290 acres). Livestock inventory includes over 47,000 cattle and calves, over 700,000 layers, 230,000 pullets, and 1,244 horses and ponies. Onondaga County ranks in the top 10 in the State for total value of agricultural products sold, (10th), livestock, poultry and products categories (6th), poultry and eggs (3rd), and milk from cows (9th).



Total and Per Farm Overview, 2017 and change since 2012

	2017	% change since 2012
Number of farms	623	-9
Land in farms (acres)	160,717	+7
Average size of farm (acres)	258	+17
Total	(\$)	
Market value of products sold	178,409,000	+17
Government payments	1,815,000	+8
Farm-related income	8,613,000	+43
Total farm production expenses	142,236,000	+7
Net cash farm income	46,610,000	+70
Per farm average	(\$)	
Market value of products sold	286,371	+28
Government payments (average per farm receiving)	11,273	+48
Farm-related income	33,512	+49
Total farm production expenses	228,293	+17
Net cash farm income	74,816	+86

3 Percent of state agriculture sales

Share of Sales by Type (%)	
Crops	22
Livestock, poultry, and products	78

Land in Farms by Use (%) *

Cropland	70
Pastureland	6
Woodland	11
Other	12

Acres irrigated: 1,330
1% of land in farms

Land Use Practices (% of farms)

No till	13
Reduced till	14
Intensive till	26
Cover crop	18

Farms by Value of Sales

Number	Percent of Total *
Less than \$2,500	226
\$2,500 to \$4,999	42
\$5,000 to \$9,999	50
\$10,000 to \$24,999	100
\$25,000 to \$49,999	40
\$50,000 to \$99,999	36
\$100,000 or more	130

Farms by Size

Number	Percent of Total *
1 to 9 acres	106
10 to 49 acres	172
50 to 179 acres	194
180 to 499 acres	90
500 to 999 acres	29
1,000 + acres	32

Onondaga County
New York, 2017
Page 2

2017 CENSUS of AGRICULTURE County Profile

Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold

	Sales (\$1,000)	Rank in State *	Counties Producing Item	Rank in U.S. *	Counties Producing Item
Total	178,409	10	61	620	3,077
Crops	39,678	20	61	1,249	3,073
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, dry peas	17,296	12	55	1,201	2,916
Tobacco	-	-	-	-	323
Cotton and cottonseed	-	-	-	-	647
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, sweet potatoes	7,742	16	60	254	2,821
Fruits, tree nuts, berries	4,665	13	60	213	2,748
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, sod	3,728	16	60	441	2,601
Cultivated Christmas trees, short rotation woody crops	276	11	53	138	1,384
Other crops and hay	5,970	27	55	422	3,040
Livestock, poultry, and products	138,731	6	58	340	3,073
Poultry and eggs	21,432	3	57	418	3,007
Cattle and calves	9,710	16	55	1,277	3,055
Milk from cows	106,816	9	51	76	1,892
Hogs and pigs	(D)	43	55	1,222	2,856
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, milk	282	18	54	580	2,984
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, donkeys	100	47	55	1,441	2,970
Aquaculture	(D)	31	34	(D)	1,251
Other animals and animal products	356	14	58	376	2,878

Total Producers *

Sex	1,068
Male	680
Female	388
Age	57
35 - 54	669
65 and older	351

Race

American Indian/Alaska Native	-
Black or African American	-
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	-
White	1,066
More than one race	2

Other characteristics

Hispanic, Latino, Spanish origin	5
With military service	70
New and beginning farmers	252

Percent of farms that:

Have internet access

86

Farm organically

3

Sell directly to consumers

21

Hire farm labor

29

Are family farms

96

Top Crops in Acres *

Forage (hay/haylage), all	34,950
Corn for silage or greenchop	18,422
Corn for grain	18,107
Soybeans for beans	8,908
Wheat for grain, all	5,290

Livestock Inventory (Dec 31, 2017)

Broilers and other meat-type chickens	751
Cattle and calves	47,544
Goats	746
Hogs and pigs	83
Horses and ponies	1,244
Layers	703,150
Pullets	230,149
Sheep and lambs	415
Turkeys	(D)

See 2017 Census of Agriculture, U.S. Summary and State Data, for complete footnotes, explanations, definitions, commodity descriptions, and methodology.

*May not add to 100% due to rounding. *Among counties whose rank can be displayed. *Data collected for a maximum of four producers per farm. *Crop commodity names may be shortened; see full names at www.nass.usda.gov/geography/names.pdf. *Position below the line does not indicate rank. (D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations. (NA) Not available. (C) Less than half of the unit shown. (3) Represents zero.



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus

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DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL TRENDS

The Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) reports the following trends within Agricultural District 2:

Agriculture has survived the low milk and commodity prices over this multi-year slump in their economy. The number of farms is declining but the land base in agriculture production is staying the same. We continue to hear and see that in order for farms to survive into the future, they will have to continue to increase in size and absorb other smaller farms that are struggling to stay in business.

In excess of 1,000 acres of cover crops have been planted annually on corn silage ground to keep the nutrients in the soil and the soil on the land.

Farms that are regulated by the NYS DEC CAFO program have been required to implement manure storage practices in recent years due to changes in the CAFO regulations. The work to implement manure storages to help farms comply with the new regulatory requirements has been steady. Manure storages help farms store manure nutrients during inclement weather patterns such as heavy rains during the growing season and during the winter when the ground is frozen, snow covered, or saturated.

The support by the City of Syracuse's Skaneateles Lake Watershed Agricultural Program (SLWAP) on Skaneateles Lake, the Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District (District) and County Agricultural Council for remaining land in the County, and the Onondaga County Water Authority (OCWA) for agricultural programming in the Otisco Lake Watershed has been strong and consistent! The SLWAP and the District have been able to secure in excess of a million dollars of grant funding per year to plan and implement many BMPs on farms. It has been unfortunate that some of the farms have not been able to afford their share of the expense to implement these projects, due to their economy.

The area is hyper-sensitive regarding Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB) events as the City's Skaneateles Lake and OCWA's Otisco Lake are drinking water sources for many municipalities. There are many local efforts underway in attempt to address the HAB issue. Researchers are trying to understand the impact of 20,000 to 30,000 Quagga and Zebra mussels per square meter in neighboring Owasco Lake. The mussels are even down a couple feet into the sediment. Mussels have been found in Skaneateles and Otisco Lakes. There is concern that the mussels are converting Phosphorous in the legacy sediments. The mussels appear to be preferentially feeding on "good" bacteria and algae while not consuming the Cyanobacteria. It is possible that the Cyanobacteria, which cause HAB events, have substantially increased in numbers. With the pulse of sediment that was released during the summer storms of July of 2017 into the lakes. It was the "Perfect Storm" and likely inspired the significant HAB event on Skaneateles Lake. It is important to note that the farmers are reporting that they do not have HAB events in their livestock irrigation ponds. This could likely be because they do not have mussels in the water. More research is required to help all managers of the land and water systems to understand and address this issue! In the meantime, the farms will continue planning and implementing best management practices (BMPs) on the land to help protect water quality.

FARM SURVEY RESULTS

District review notices, removal and addition request forms, and farm surveys were mailed to all land owners with land currently enrolled in the District. Six percent, or 107 of the 1,795 farm surveys mailed to all landowners with land currently enrolled in the district were completed and returned. Fifty-three respondents (50 percent) stated that they owned an agricultural operation for a total of 15,590 acres of which 12,816 acres are productive. 67 respondents (63% percent) stated that they rented a total of 4,143 acres to agricultural operations of which 2,575 acres are in production. Another 18 farm owner respondents noted they also lease lands totaling 5,595 acres from others in District 2.

As shown in the tables below, the most prevalent farm enterprises in Agricultural District 1 include grain cash crops (24), beef/sheep/goats/hogs/alpaca (15 operators), and dairy (12). The greatest sales amounts are, not surprisingly, the large grain and dairy enterprises. Capital investments, similar to gross sales data, were also highest for the large grain and dairy enterprises.

FARM ENTERPRISES *		GROSS SALES *		TOTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT OVER PAST SEVEN YEARS *	
Grain Cash Crop / Hay	24	Below \$10,000	11	Below \$10,000	5
Beef, Sheef, Goats, Hogs, Alpaca Dairy	15	\$10,000 to \$39,999	21	\$10,000 to \$39,999	7
Dairy	12	\$40,000 to \$99,999	2	\$40,000 to \$99,999	3
Vegetable Cash Crop	7	\$100,000 to \$199,999	11	\$100,000 to \$499,999	2
Agri-Tourism	3	\$200,000 to \$499,999	0	\$500,000 to \$999,999	1
Christmas Trees	3	\$500,000 to \$999,999	3	\$1,000,000 to \$1,999,999	0
Agro-Forestry	2	\$1,000,000 to \$1,999,999	0	\$2,000,000 to \$4,999,999	1
Commercial Horticulture	2	\$2,000,000 to \$4,999,999	2	Over \$5,000,000	1
Maple/Sugar bush	3	Over \$5,000,000	4	* Agricultural operators only.	
Poultry	3	* Agricultural operators only.			
Berries	1				
Commercial Horse / Equine	1				
Flowers	1				
Hops	1				
Orchard	1				
*Farms can have more than one enterprise.					

Respondents were asked to identify agricultural changes over the past eight years. The largest reported agricultural change by 39 respondents was that larger farms are replacing smaller farms. 30 respondents also noted that there are fewer farms overall. Several respondents commented on the dynamic of larger farms and CAFOs dominating the landscape, squeezing out smaller farm owners.

REPORTED AGRICULTURAL CHANGES			
Change	Respondents	Change	Respondents
Stayed the same	7	More houses	25
Fewer farms overall	30	More traffic	22
More farms overall	0	More abandoned farmland	3
Larger farms replacing smaller farms	39		

When asked about the impact that residential development has had on agricultural operations, 29 respondents stated that there has been no impact, 20 respondents stated there has been a negative impact, and 1 respondent noted a positive impact. Several general comments received with the survey focused on the negative effects of lost land to housing developments, neighbor complaints, and less of an understanding or respect for agriculture.

Only 9 respondents noted that they have sold or subdivided land within the last 8 years, citing transfer of ownership to family as the most common reason. Eighteen respondents indicated they plan to sell or transfer ownership of their land or farm within the coming 8 years, with 8 owners citing transfer to the next generation farmers as the reason and 8 citing a need for money from the sale as the reason.

When asked who owners view as the next generation owner of their farm or leased farm property, 93 respondents answered with an intention to keep the land in farming, with the land either with family members as an active farm business, family leasing to other farm operators, or selling to another farm operator. Twenty-one indicated the next owner would likely be a non-farmer, speculator or developer.

Respondents were also asked what types of assistance or support would benefit their land base or farm operation, with the following results:

INTEREST IN TYPES OF SUPPORT / ASSISTANCE			
	Respondents		Respondents
Farm Planning		Implementation	
Conservation BMPs	54	Survey, design, construction of BMPs	32
Soil nutrition/health	47	Cost share assistance for BMPs	41
Crop rotation/cover crops	45	Permit application assistance	13
Rotational grazing	15	Stream bed/bank stabilization	25
Manure management	26		
New crop transition/experimentation	18	Estate Planning	
Change in type of production	1	Next generation of family members	31
		Financial management planning	13
Ag. Conservation Easement Programs		Taxation management	23
Purchase of Development Rights	23	Investment planning	15
Donation of Development Rights	6	Increase size of operation (incur debt)	11

Planning agency staff will share this information with the local Soil & Water Conservation District and others who may be able to do outreach and assist individuals with the above items. This information is also useful in guiding the activities of the Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board.

POLICY CONSISTENCY AND COORDINATION

COUNTY POLICIES

ONONDAGA COUNTY AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

The Onondaga County Legislature approved the *Onondaga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan* in April 1997, which was subsequently endorsed by the NYS Department of Agriculture and

Markets. The Plan contains a series of goals and objectives for the protection of agricultural land in Onondaga County and proposes a number of recommendations and strategies for attaining the goals. Onondaga County has just received funding from New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets to cost share in the development of an updated Onondaga County Farmland Protection Plan.

The Onondaga County AFPB has been very active in implementing one of the plan's elements, the purchase or donation of development rights on prime farmland, funded by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Farmland Protection Implementation Grants (FPIG) program and other federal and local funders. Since 1998, approximately 30 farm easement projects have been or are in the process of being completed, with over 10,000 acres of farmland protected by the state FPIG, federal and local programs in Onondaga County.

ONONDAGA COUNTY AGRICULTURE COUNCIL

In 2012, the Onondaga County Agriculture Council was formed to help ensure that county government is working to promote and preserve the County's strong farming community. The Council works to develop strategies and programs to promote local food regionally and strengthen and enhance connections between the County's urban core to rural, agricultural areas and to review, improve, and develop pro-agriculture/farming friendly policies and regulations that promote urban agriculture and make it easier for local farms to open and stay in business in Onondaga County.

ONONDAGA COUNTY 2010 DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

First adopted in 1991, the "2010 Plan" was updated in 1998 and consists of two documents. The *Onondaga County 2010 Development Guide* provides policies that guide County and municipal officials who are making land use and economic development decisions that ultimately affect the community-at-large. It is based on the *Framework for Growth in Onondaga County*, a report that examines County-wide conditions and trends.

The *2010 Development Guide* emphasizes the following goals and strategies, which are based on the principals of sustainability and Smart Growth: conduct coordinated project reviews; consider natural resources environmental constraints and infrastructure costs; reinvest in existing communities; redevelop obsolete and vacant sites; protect and maintain existing infrastructure; create urban and suburban settlement patterns and densities; preserve transportation assets; expand infrastructure for job creation; protect the rural economy, agriculture, and access to natural resources; and promote sustainable land development practices.

The County recently received a grant from New York State to prepare an updated County Comprehensive Plan, which will include a focus on rural communities and strengthening agriculture, and complement the new Farmland Protection Plan.

ONONDAGA COUNTY SETTLEMENT PLAN

The Onondaga County Settlement Plan was completed in 2001 to demonstrate how communities can implement Smart Growth principles by replacing suburban-based zoning codes with Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) form-based codes that preserves open space, creates natural resource corridors, and generates high quality places and walkable neighborhoods that have a continuous street network with small blocks and a well designed public realm (streets, buildings, and parks), and provides a diversity of building types, uses, density, and housing within a 10-minute pedestrian shed (walkable area).

LOCAL POLICIES

The *Onondaga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan* and the *Onondaga County 2010 Plan* all encourage municipalities to implement and update plans and adopt codes that incorporate measures for protecting agricultural land. Onondaga County will be working directly with all three towns of Marcellus, Skaneateles and Spafford in the next two years, through a county-funded planning initiative, to complete hamlet and comprehensive planning work which will complement county land use and agricultural protection planning.

Most towns in Onondaga County have some form of comprehensive plan, which typically recognize the value of agricultural lands and the desire to protect them. However, there are few methods that ultimately implement this goal. Many towns typically use large lot zoning, generally two or more acres, to reduce density and thereby protect open areas. However, these requirements create the unintentional consequences of large lots strung along rural roads and large-lot subdivisions, excessive consumption of farmland and open space, more farmer/neighbor conflicts, and more traffic on farm roads.

Towns are also starting to recognize and implement clustering as permitted in NYS Town Law, a potentially beneficial technique for protecting community character, open space, scenic resources, and environmental features, but not necessarily considered effective at protecting farmland.

Implementing settlement patterns other than the dominant suburban pattern, like traditional neighborhoods demonstrated in the *Onondaga County Settlement Plan*, and adopting new density average/fixed ratio zoning techniques, like those recommended by the American Farmland Trust, are ultimately needed to protect agricultural lands. There is also a need to adopt integrated County and local farmland protection plans that explore and implement a full-range of agricultural protection tools that are summarized and promoted by the American Farmland Trust. The County Planning Agency received NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets funding in late 2019 to prepare an updated Onondaga County Farmland Protection Plan.

ACHIEVEMENT OF DISTRICT OBJECTIVES

Production agriculture in District 2 remains viable and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Soils, climate, topography, transportation, relatively nearby agri-service and suppliers, and product markets provide the elements necessary for a successful agricultural economy. Farms are making significant investments into their operations and are increasing in size, and most farmers envision the land staying in agricultural production within the foreseeable future. Currently requested additions to Agricultural District 2 total 130 acres.

Ongoing issues revolve around both the larger agricultural economy, for example, increasing farm sizes and more stringent regulatory requirements, as well as local conditions including increasing rural residential development and neighbor conflicts, increased local government service demands and higher taxes, recent local climatic conditions, and, in particular, the ongoing loss of affordable land, owned and rented, that is crucial to agricultural production. NYS Right to Farm law protections have proven contentious some towns in Onondaga County, revolving around use and storage of liquid manure.

REQUESTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The AFPB mailed a notice of the eight-year review of Agricultural District 2 and a removal and addition request form to landowners with property currently enrolled in District 2 and municipalities within the District. The tables below reflect the requests for additions and removals that were submitted by landowners.

ADDITION REQUESTS

The following property owners requested that their land be added to the district, totaling 130 acres. All lands involved have been reviewed to verify the presence and characteristics of land highly suitable for a farm operation, viability as a commercial enterprise, location relative to existing agricultural districts, nearby development and natural features.

SUMMARY OF REQUESTED ADDITIONS				
TOWN	OWNER	TAX ID	AG ACTIVITY	ACRES*
MARCELLUS	SANDY P / JUDITH G BATTAGLIA	013.-02-44.0	HARVESTED WOODLAND	48.01
MARCELLUS Total				48.01
SKANEATELES	TIMOTHY A POSECZNICK	020.-02-02.0	CORN, MAPLE, TIMBER	9.73
SKANEATELES	TIMOTHY A POSECZNICK	020.-02-04.1	CORN, MAPLE, TIMBER	34.71
SKANEATELES	TIMOTHY A POSECZNICK	020.-02-30.0	CORN, MAPLE, TIMBER	16.57
SKANEATELES	TIMOTHY A POSECZNICK	020.-02-39.0	CORN, MAPLE, TIMBER	3.30
SKANEATELES	NORMAN CAY HOLDINGS LLC	047.-01-36.0	GREENHOUSES ; NURSERY	6.88
SKANEATELES	KIMBALL T KRAUS	051.-02-04.1	BARN; FIELD; ALFALFA	11.07
SKANEATELES Total				82.26
GRAND TOTAL				130.27

*Calculated using a Geographic Information System, not Real Property Services (RPS) data.

REMOVAL REQUESTS

The following property owners requested that their land be removed from the District.

SUMMARY OF REQUESTED REMOVALS			
TOWN	OWNER	TAX ID	ACRES*
MARCELLUS	BUETTGENS IRREVOCABLE TRUST A	025.-01-27.1	0.54
MARCELLUS	ROBERT G & SANDRA E DUDDEN	017.-08-15.0	0.84
MARCELLUS	CATHLEEN M & GEORGE A MASON	010.-01-10.0	0.91
MARCELLUS	EILEEN SEARLE & JOHNNY O DEZENIO	016.-03-14.2	0.73
MARCELLUS	NATALIYA OROSZ	023.-01-22.2	7.27
MARCELLUS Total			10.29
SKANEATELES	STONECIPHER IRREVOCABLE TRUST	035.-03-7.1	1.35
SKANEATELES	DAVID S & DEBORAH J CUTTEN	061.-01-02.1	2.00
SKANEATELES	MARILYN P SKIFF & DAVID J SODERBERG	051.-01-18.5	2.06
SKANEATELES	BRIDGETT M & DWIGHT W WINKLEMAN	051.-01-24.0	4.47
SKANEATELES	JOHN G LAUZON & LUCILLE M LANDRY	019.-02-11.1	5.01
SKANEATELES Total			14.89
SPAFFORD	DONALD W JR & MARY PAT OSBOURNE	014.-02-10.0	0.51
SPAFFORD	JOEL F DELMONICO	001.-01-05.0	4.77
SPAFFORD	HOWARD F & JUDY W HALL	032.-02-01.0	3.42
SPAFFORD Total			8.70
GRAND TOTAL			33.88

*Calculated using a Geographic Information System, not Real Property Services (RPS) data.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The farm sector in Onondaga County is robust and stable and the agricultural economy in Agricultural District 2 continues to be strong and diverse. As a result, the AFPB recommends continuing Agricultural District 2 with the modifications requested by landowners.

FINAL ACREAGE

District 2 was last recertified in 2012 and encompassed 47,230 acres. Through subsequent annual addition processes, 401.55 acres were added to the District. An additional adjustment of 5.45 acres was made to reflect modifications resulting from parcel splits or combinations, or redrafting of the parcel data used in the GIS. As a result, the district acreage prior to the 2020 review was adjusted to 47,637 acres.

The AFPB recommends that 130.27 acres be added and 33.88 acres be removed per landowner requests, for a final Agricultural District 2 total of 47,733 acres, a net increase of 96 acres in the district.

RECOMMENDED AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT 2 FINAL ACREAGE	
	GIS ACRES
ACREAGE AFTER 2012 RENEWAL	47,230
ANNUAL ADDITIONS 2013-2019	401.55
CHANGES RESULTING FROM PARCEL MODIFICATIONS*	5.45
ACREAGE PRIOR TO 2020 RENEWAL	47,637
2020 RENEWAL ADDITIONS	130.27
2020 RENEWAL REMOVALS	-33.88
ACREAGE AFTER 2020 RENEWAL	47,733
NET ACREAGE CHANGE RESULTING FROM 2020 RENEWAL	96
* An additional adjustment of 5.45 acres was made to reflect modifications since 2012 resulting from parcel splits or combinations, or redrafting of the parcel data used in the GIS.	

*Calculated using a Geographic Information System, not Real Property Services (RPS) data.

APPENDICES

Resolution - Notice of Review

Notice - Notice of Review

Map - Review

Letter - Municipal

Letter - Property Owner

Form - Property Owner Removal and Addition Request (Sample)

Form - Blank Removal and Addition Request

Form - Farm Survey

Resolution - Public Hearing

Notice - Public Hearing

Letter - Property Owner Public Hearing

Minutes - Public Hearing

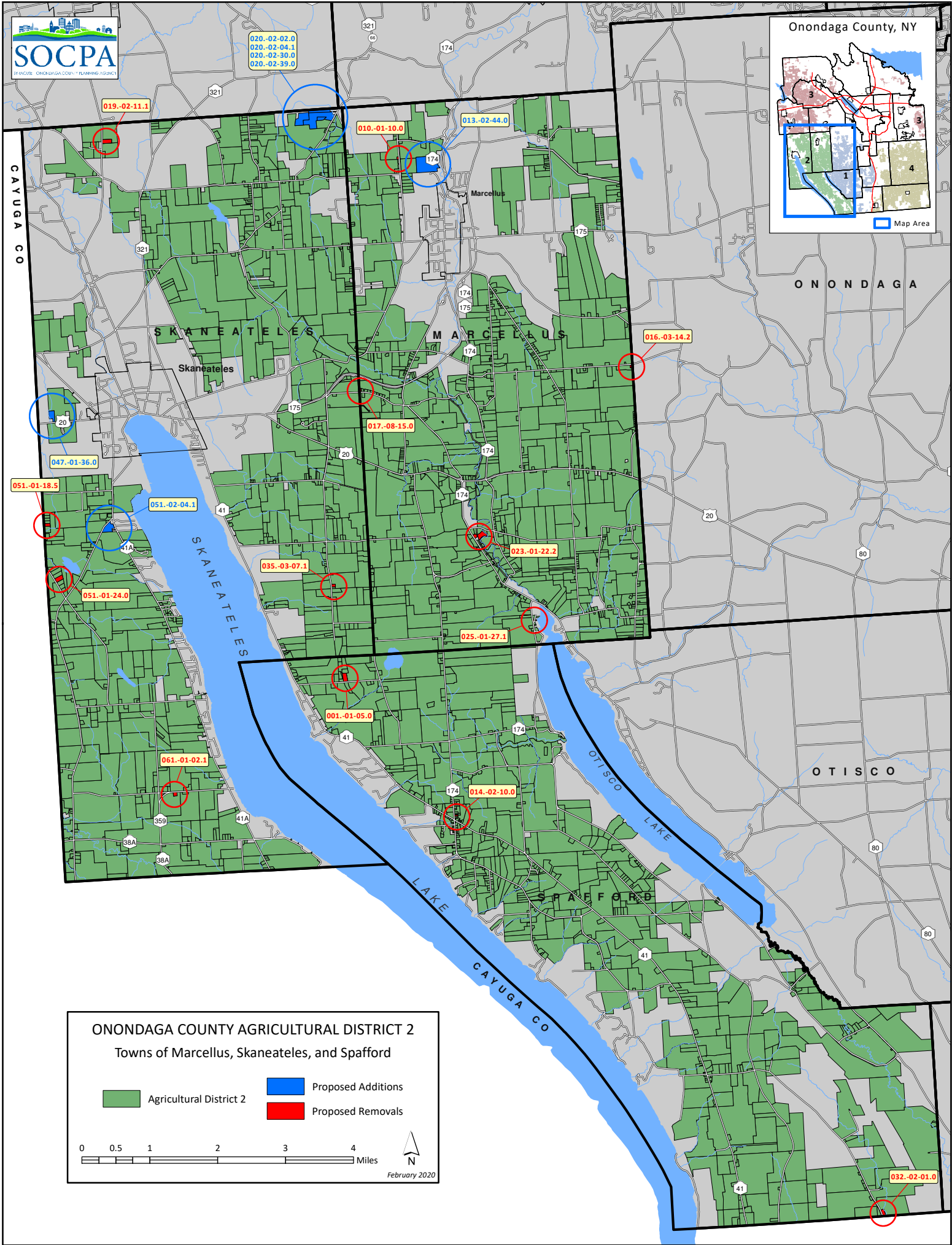
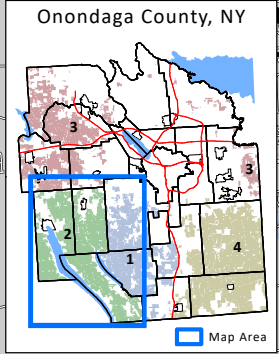
Resolution - Approval

SEQR - Environmental Assessment Form

List - District Parcel Final

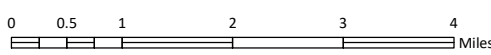
Map - Final

020-02-02.0
 020-02-04.1
 020-02-30.0
 020-02-39.0



ONONDAGA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT 2
 Towns of Marcellus, Skaneateles, and Spafford

- Agricultural District 2
- Proposed Additions
- Proposed Removals



February 2020

032-02-01.0