Town of Parma

Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan

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- Tim Harner
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- Tim Thomas

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Town of Parma Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan

A. Introduction and Methodology

The Town of Parma created the Farmland and Open Space Protection Committee in 2007. One of the Committee's first actions was to undertake a resident survey, which was conducted in July 2007. In 2008, the Town of Parma received a $25,000 grant from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to prepare an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. In 2008, the Town of Parma retained the consulting firm of Stuart I. Brown Associates to assist in the preparation of the Plan.

The following members of the Committee participated in the preparation of the Plan:

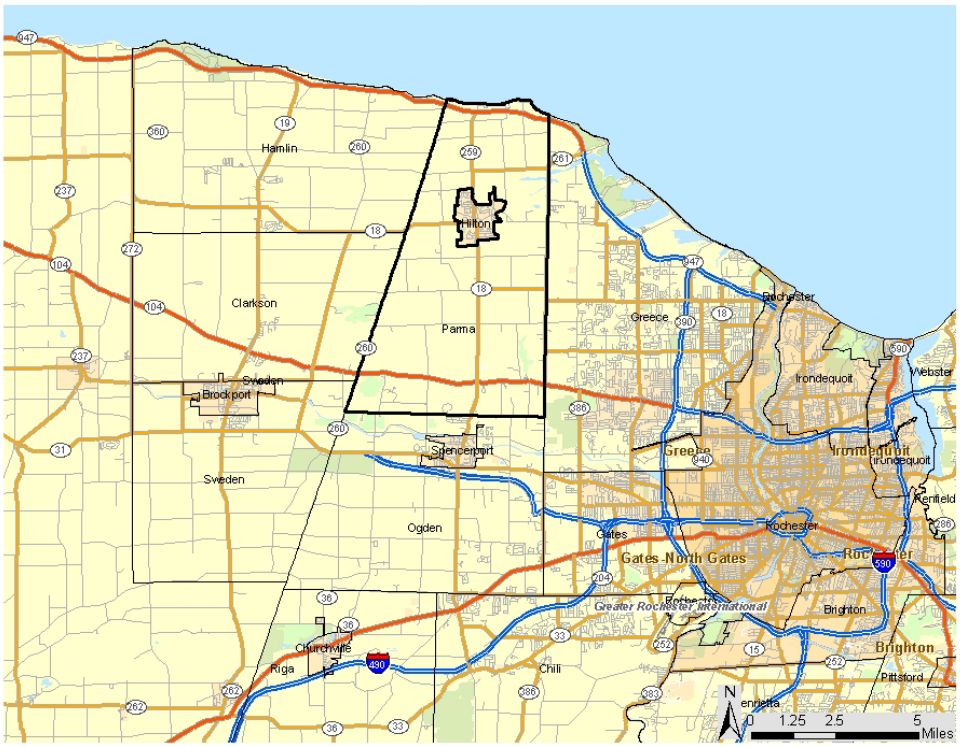
Scott Copey (Chair)	Tim Harner
Pat Buskey	Rick Holdon
Marilyn DeMeyer	Tim Thomas
Don Green	

B. Farmland and Agricultural Resources

Overview of existing farms and farmland

Parma is primarily a rural and agricultural town situated northwest of the city of Rochester, NY.

Regional Setting



Agriculture is the town's leading industry and most prominent land use.

Topography and Soils

Gentle topography and a tempered lakeside climate combined with prime soils create an ideal environment for cultivation of high quality farm products. Elevations range from 249' above sea level at the Lake Ontario shoreline to 550' in the southern part of town. Large areas of the town are generally level, with gently rolling terrain to provide adequate drainage. Few steep slopes (15% or more) exist in the town, and are generally associated with stream banks.

Class 1 and 2 prime agricultural soils make up roughly 80% of Parma's total land area, with another 16% considered to be soils of statewide significance. (See Figure 1: Prime Agricultural Soils.)

Active farms

The Farm Service Agency reported in 2007 that approximately 8,235 acres in the Town of Parma acres are actively farmed by commercial farmers. This figure is consistent with the estimate of 8,188 acres of active farmland and other open land that may be available for agricultural production which was calculated from aerial photographs and is depicted in Figure 2: Active Farmland. Active farmland occupies approximately 33% of the total land area of the Town.

A full 28% of the town's total land area is identified with an agricultural real property classification code (100-series) as defined by the NYS Office of Real Property Services. Roughly half of this farmland is classified as field crops and truck crops and 20% is classified for dairy or livestock. (See Figure 3: Agricultural Parcels.) Numerous other parcels are farmed that have non-agricultural classifications.

Types of farms

According to information provided by the USDA Farm Service Agency in 2007, there are approximately 18 large-scale farm operations in the town. The large-scale commercial farms that are active in the town include dairy and livestock, hay, grain, vegetable, and fruit. Fruit orchards, predominantly apples, pears, and peaches, have historically been a part of Parma's landscape and economy.

In addition to large-scale farm operations, a significant amount of land is occupied by small or part-time farming operations – typically defined as generating less than $50,000/ year in sales. Several small farms in Parma raise horses, alpacas, llamas, or goats or cultivate specialty crops. These small farms contribute to the agricultural character of the town and support the agricultural economy through the purchase of supplies and services, and by running farm stands. Roadside stands generate and retain local dollars.

Statistics for the Hilton and Spencerport zip codes (See tables and graphs on the following page), which cover land in the Town of Parma, indicate that farms in the Parma area produce grains, vegetables, fruits and berries, and nursery crops.

Economic contributions of Parma farms to local and regional economy

Farms in and around the Town of Parma generate millions of dollars in sales each year through the production and sales of farm products. As documented in the 2002 Census of Agriculture, there were nine farms in the Parma area (Hilton and Spencerport zip codes) with more than $250,000 in sales, 18 with sales of $50-249,000 and 104 with sales of up to $50,000. The graphs on the following page summarize agricultural statistics from the 2002 Census of Agriculture. Based on these figures, it is estimated that Parma farms generate more than $7 million annually.

Agriculture also generates economic impacts from businesses that provide services or goods to farmers and from businesses that process, transport or resell farm products. These include: retail businesses that sell equipment, fertilizer, seeds and other inputs; providers of financial, technical, and engineering services; construction contractors; trucking companies; processing plants; and retail sales of farm products.

Agricultural operations in Parma contribute jobs to the local economy. The Census of Agriculture reports that approximately 75 farmers in the Parma area (Hilton and Spencerport zip codes) earn their principal income from farming. The 2000 Census estimated that 91 Parma residents were employed in agriculture or forestry in 1999. A total of 63 residents were reported to be farmers or farm managers and 28 were employed in support occupations. These figures do not include the seasonal labor that is employed by most farms to assist with harvesting.

The Monroe County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, which was completed in 1999, estimated that the economic multiplier for agricultural sales is between 3 and 11. It estimated the total economic value created from agricultural wages and expenditures on supplies and services, in addition to the value of the agricultural products, at more than $20 million.

Several farm operations have diversified their operations to offer agricultural-related entertainment. Kelly's Farm Market is the largest, with an apple-oriented theme. Zarpentines operates an annual corn maze, hay wagon rides, and pancake breakfast. Such diversification helps farm families supplement their income from agricultural production.

Several other farms have seasonal stands that offer fresh produce to residents and visitors. The 2002 Census of Agriculture reported that 24 farms in the Parma area offered direct market sales.

Several local businesses provide products and services that support agricultural operations. These include Napa Auto Parts, Country Max, Hilton Hardware and others. Agriculture contributes significantly to the success of these businesses.

Statistics from the 2002 Census of Agriculture

C. Value of Farmland to Community

The Residents' Survey, conducted in 2007, demonstrates strong community support for efforts to protect farmland. Of the 30% of residents who responded to the survey, a total of 94.4% agreed that "it is important to preserve farmland and open space in Parma." Similarly, 94.0% stated that they "support the town in efforts to preserve farmland and open space." A copy of the survey report is included in Appendix A.

D. Extent of development pressure on farmland

Population Trends

Parma currently has around 15,000 residents, of which roughly 6,000 live in the Village of Hilton. The Town of Parma, outside the Village of Hilton, experienced its largest growth period during the 1960s. Since 1970, the population has increased at a moderate pace, with the largest increase occurring between 1990 and 2000, when the population increased by 3.6% (see Table 1).

Population projections prepared by the Genesee/ Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council anticipate the Town's population to increase by 3.2% during the 2000s and by 2.5% between 2010 and 2020. Future population will depend on the housing market, the availability of land for development, and land use regulations of the Town of Parma.

Table 1
Historic and Projected Population
Town of Parma (Outside the Village of Hilton)
1960-2040

	Historical					Projected			
Year	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040
Total Population	4,943	8,308	8,434	8,657	8,966	9,257	9,488	9,681	9,838
Percent Change		68.1%	1.5%	2.6%	3.6%	3.2%	2.5%	2.0%	1.6%

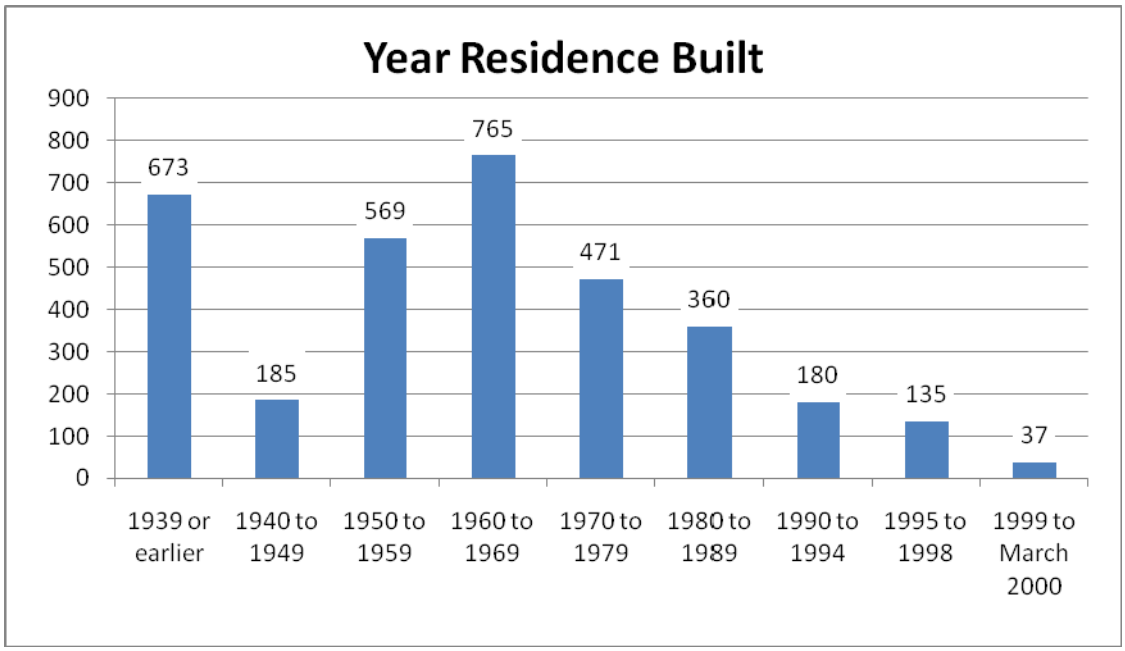
Source: Genesee/ Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council, 2003

Some of the Town's population growth is related to the rapid growth of Parma's immediate neighbor to the east, the Town of Greece, which has doubled in population since the 1960 Census to nearly 100,000. As formerly rural areas in Greece were developed, many Greece residents and would-be Greece residents moved to Parma to escape or avoid suburban sprawl. With this trend came a demand for new residential development in Parma, and the subsequent pressure to develop Parma's farmland.

Parma is considered an "outer ring suburb" because of its location between the heavily populated and urbanized Greece and the rural and agricultural communities of Hamlin, Clarkson, and Sweden. This is a key position in the countywide land use pattern with respect to containing suburban sprawl and protecting farmland in northwestern Monroe County.

Housing Trends

According to the 2000 Census, more than one-half of all housing units in the Town of Parma were constructed in the 1960s or later. Fewer than 20% were constructed before 1939. Nearly 90% of all housing units are single family dwellings.



SOURCE: 2000 Census of Population & Housing, U.S. Census Bureau

New housing development has occurred throughout the Town. Most residential development has occurred along existing roads; however, several residential subdivisions have been developed, primarily in areas that have access to public sewers. Figure 4 illustrates the residential development patterns that have occurred during the past few decades.

Sewer and Water

The availability of sanitary sewers and water service has made Parma's farmland more prone to development. A sanitary sewer trunk main was constructed through the Village of Hilton in the early 1970s. The sewer was constructed to serve Hilton and other towns to the west and transports sewage to Monroe County Pure Waters' Northwest Quadrant Treatment Plant in neighboring Greece. Figure 5 depicts the location of the interceptor sewer.

Through the 1980s and 1990s more than 600 building lots were approved (Village excluded) in the sewer's immediate service area. Figure 6 illustrates that dwellings with access to public sewer service are located near the sanitary sewer lines in the Village of Hilton and the Hilton-Brockport Interceptor line.

An additional 500 dwelling units are proposed to be constructed in the southern part of town, contingent upon the extension of a separate sewer coming in from neighboring Greece. There is potential for sewer service near West Ridge Road.

Public water service is widely available in the town from the Monroe County Water Authority. Figure 5: Sewer and Water Lines depicts the size and location of existing lines.

The locations of dwellings in Parma that have access to public water are depicted in Figure 6. Roads that do not have public water include portions of Manitou Road, Bennett Road, Curtis Road, Moul Road, Hill Road, Spencer Road, Trimmer Road, Draffin Road and Ogden Parma Town Line Road. The availability of public water makes land more attractive for development.

Zoning

The Town of Parma zoning regulations permit single family residences, among other uses, in the Agricultural Conservation, Rural Residential, Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential, Waterfront and Townhouse Residential districts. Permitted densities range from one house per 12,000 sq. ft. in the High Density Residential district to one house per 2 acres in the RR zone and one house per 3 acres in the Agricultural Conservation district. Existing zoning district boundaries are depicted in Figure 7.

E. Overview of existing plans, programs and regulations

Several existing plans, programs and regulations provide the context for this Town of Parma Agricultural Preservation Plan. The Monroe County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan, completed in 1999, recommended a series of actions to be undertaken by municipalities to address land protection, economic viability of agriculture and public education. A summary of these recommendations are included in Appendix B.

The Town's 1989 Master Plan included several recommendations intended to support the continued viability of agriculture. A summary of these provisions are included in Appendix C.

A review of the Town's zoning regulations revealed that several provisions are inconsistent with guidelines established by the NYS Agricultural District program. Specific recommendations for zoning changes are included in Appendix D.

Numerous other programs administered by State, Federal and private entities address environmental protection, economic development, tax relief, the promotion of locally-grown products and other issues that affect farming and agriculture in Parma. Descriptions of these programs and the agencies that work with farmers in Parma are included in Appendix E.

F. Issues and Opportunities

SWOT Analysis/ Summary

An analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) relating to agriculture was conducted in cooperation with the Farmland and Open Space Committee and public meetings. "Strengths" and "weaknesses" are generally intrinsic to the community; "opportunities" and "threats" come from outside the community.

The following table summarizes the SWOT analysis.

Strengths • High quality agricultural soils • Agricultural heritage (orchards) • Public support for agriculture • Farm markets and roadside stands • Economic value (value-added, jobs) • Proximity to markets, especially for fresh products (fruits, vegetables) • Proximity to processing plants • Availability of fresh water	**Weaknesses** • Cost/ availability of leasing land for agricultural production • Residential development in close proximity to working farms
Opportunities • Increased interest in "buying local" may expand market opportunities • Town and State funding for purchase of development rights	**Threats** • Development pressure increases cost of land, reduces availability of land for agricultural production • Extension of public sewers would significantly increase development pressure • Market for residential development leads to speculative holding of land • Regional processors and distributors may cease operations

Analysis of Issues and Opportunities

The following narrative presents an analysis of the issues and potential opportunities that were identified during the planning process. This narrative briefly describes alternative approaches that may be available to address the issues or take advantage of the opportunities; these are described in more detail in Part G. The strategies identified in Part H of this Plan are designed to address the issues and take advantages of the opportunities identified below.

1. Residents support long-term protection of agricultural industry

The results of the Residents' Survey conducted by the Town of Parma in 2007 confirm that residents strongly support Town efforts to retain farmland for continued agricultural use. The extent of community support represents an opportunity for the Town to undertake initiatives that would support agriculture and result in permanent protection of farmland. However, it will be continue to be important for the Town Board to inform and involve the public in the consideration of specific proposals.

2. Limited availability and high cost of land make it difficult for farmers to find sufficient land to lease for agricultural production

During the course of the study, several farmers seeking to expand their operations have indicated that it has been difficult to find land at an acceptable cost to lease for agricultural production. Some land is being held by development companies which have plans to construct residential development. Farmers may count on selling land for development to finance their retirement.

The availability of land protected by conservation easements would enable farmers to purchase or lease land at an affordable price.

3. Competition for land affects farmers' long-term planning

Although the housing market slowed in 2008, land in Parma remains attractive for residential development. A significant portion of the land used for agricultural production in Parma is not owned by the farmer who works it. Farmers who lease land that is being held for future development find it difficult to plan for crop rotations, as the land may not be available on a long term basis.

The Town needs to identify its long-term objectives and identify those areas that should be targeted for growth and conservation. Techniques that may be applied include revising zoning district boundaries and regulations and limiting hookups to water and sewer lines.

4. Residences in close proximity to farm operations lead to neighbor conflicts

Residences located near farm operations are sometimes affected by noise, dust and odors associated with standard agricultural practices. Tensions may build between farmers and their non-farming neighbors, making farming more difficult. Even though most farming practices are

protected by Agricultural District regulations, and although people who purchase land in Agricultural Districts are notified that there may be noise, dust and odors associated with living in the vicinity of active farmland, neighbor conflicts can inhibit farming practices.

Improving public awareness of farm practices the importance of agriculture to the community may help promote understanding among non-farm neighbors. Farmers may also be encouraged to communicate more effectively with their neighbors about the need for certain practices and to be flexible when possible (such as avoiding spreading manure during certain weekends.)

If disputes continue, a local grievance committee may be able to diffuse the situation before it becomes necessary to bring in mediators from outside. Many local right-to-farm laws include provisions to establish such a committee to review and mediate disputes. The committee would need to be comprised of both farmers and non-farming residents and should receive training in dispute resolution.

5. Nearby population centers represent market for agricultural products

Farmers in Parma benefit in several ways from their proximity to the regional population center of the City of Rochester and its suburbs. This advantage has increased in recent years as a result of recent trends toward more eating locally-grown foods. High fuel costs combined with consumer demand for locally-grown products have encouraged retailers to purchase more products from local farms.

Parma farmers currently take advantage of their proximity to consumers. Fruit and vegetable farmers in Parma market their seasonal farm-fresh produce directly to consumers from roadside farm stands and farm markets. Zarpentines and Kelly's Farm Market offer recreational activities to encourage visitors. Zarpentines and Schuttzie's Tree Farm participate in the "Grow Monroe" program which promotes local agriculture.

6. Proximity to processing markets benefits cash crop and dairy producers

Several major processors and distributors purchase products from farms in Monroe and neighboring counties. Despite some prominent recent plant closings, the regional agricultural economy continues to support a variety of regional processors and distributors. Rising fuel costs provide an advantage to producers located close to processors.

7. Certain zoning provisions may unreasonably restrict farm operations

The NYS Agricultural District law (NYS Agriculture & Markets Law, Article 25AA, Section 305-a) states that local governments "shall not unreasonably restrict or regulate farm operations within agricultural districts in contravention of the purposes of this article unless it can be shown that the public health or safety is threatened." Several provisions of the Town of Parma's zoning regulations have been identified as unreasonably restrictive as they may be applied to specific farms located within Agricultural Districts. These provisions address minimum lot sizes and setbacks for farms and farm buildings, maximum size of farm buildings, commercial horse boarding operations and farm labor housing. A detailed review of the agricultural provisions of

the Town's zoning regulations, as well as specific recommendations for changes, is included in Appendix D.

Certain uses, such as recreational activities or retail sales, may be characterized as permitted accessory uses to farm operations. Unless there are health and safety requirements, zoning regulations may not unreasonably restrict such operations on farms within a designated Agricultural District.

8. Availability of public sewers and water service increase pressure to develop farmland for non-agricultural uses

The availability of public water service, and especially public sewer service, make land more attractive to develop for residential and other non-agricultural purposes. Lands located near such infrastructure can be developed at higher densities, which results in higher land values and less likelihood that the land will be available on a long-term basis for agricultural use.

9. Subdivision design can minimize conflicts and preserve farmland

The subdivision of farmland into residential lots can impact the agricultural land that is being subdivided as well as adjoining farmland. Thoughtful design of the subdivision can help to reduce future conflicts between farmers and non-farm neighbors and may be able to incorporate the preservation of land as part of the subdivision review process. Effective buffers between the residential lots and adjoining farms can help to avoid neighbor conflicts. "Density averaging" or "conservation subdivisions," as described in H.3.b, "density averaging" can result in permanent protection of farmland at no cost to the Town.

The Town of Parma Subdivision Regulations (Chapter 130 of the Town Code) currently empowers the Planning Board to require density averaging, in accordance with NYS Town Law Section 278, to preserve natural and scenic resources. The Planning Board should also have this authority in cases where the subdivision adjoins or involves prime agricultural soils or an active farm.

10. Residential development may require more in services than it raises in property taxes

Several studies of municipalities throughout the northeastern United States have concluded that residential development generally increases the need for government services and that the increased property taxes associated with such development do not cover the cost of such increased services. Many of these studies estimated that a new house would need to be assessed at $250,000 or higher in order to "pay its own way."

Increased costs of services associated with residential development are predominantly due to the cost of educating school children. Other costs that tend to rise with increased population are associated with public safety and the maintenance of infrastructure.

G. Farmland proposed for protection

1. Establish target number of acres that would comprise "critical mass" of farmland

The Town has developed a rating system to be used to evaluate farm parcels that may be considered for permanent protection. The rating system utilizes the following criteria:

1) Viability for agricultural production (Soil suitability; Location within County Agricultural District)

2) Development pressure (Availability of public water and/or sewer; location near Village of Hilton or Town of Greece)

3) Buffers environmental resources (contains or adjoins Class 1, 2, or 3 wetlands; within the Salmon Creek watershed; contains federally designated wetlands; within designated flood hazard zone)

A set of three maps characterizes each parcel with more than 20 acres based on its score; a fourth map combines all three ratings. (See Figure 8) The criteria and methodology used to develop these maps are summarized on the following two pages.

A total of 95 parcels received the highest rating for agricultural viability, based on the presence of prime and important agricultural soils and location within an Agricultural District. These parcels comprise a total of 6,094 acres and are owned by 78 different owners. The total assessed value of the land in these parcels (excluding the buildings) is $8,793,150.

2. Impact on Town if these lands were developed

Assuming full build out at the densities permitted by current zoning, a total of 5,481 houses could be built on the 6,094 acres of farmland that received the highest rating for agricultural value.

Zoning District	Acres of Priority Farmland	Dwelling Units Permitted Per Acre	Projected Build-Out
HD	355	3.5	1,242
MD	1,243	2.0	2,486
RR	902	0.5	451
AC	3,948	0.33	1,302
Total:	6,448		5,481

Figure 9 depicts the location of highly rated agricultural parcels in relation to existing zoning districts.

GIS Parcel Ranking Criteria

A. GIS data: Provided by Monroe County Department of Environmental Services, GIS Division.

B. GIS software: ESRI's ArcGIS Desktop, version 8.3

C. General Methodology: GIS software and data were used to perform a series of analyses against tax parcels in the town. The base tax parcel data used was provided by Monroe County Department of Environmental Services, GIS Division and contained attributes from the Monroe County Department of Real Property Services.

The analysis was separated into 3 general categories; Agricultural Value, Development Pressure, and Environmental Features. A fourth and final ranking was compiled by combining the results of the first 3 analyses. This combined ranking represents the town's target areas for farmland preservation.

D. Assumptions:

1. Parcels under 20 acres in size were not considered.
2. Attributes, or GIS layers, were selected based on availability of data.
3. For each attribute considered, a score was assigned based on whether or not a particular parcel met the criteria.
4. Scores were decided by the Committee based on their collective perception of the importance of the individual attributes.

E. Agricultural Value Ranking

1. Purpose: Identify and prioritize prime farmland based on known characteristics.
2. Attributes and Methodology:
   a) Monroe County Agricultural District boundaries: parcels identified as being in the district were assigned 6 points.
   b) Adjacency to Monroe County Agricultural District: parcels within 2000 feet of the district were assigned 8 points. Parcels adjacent to the district were given a higher score based on the Committee's opinion that they may be more susceptible to development pressure, and because they represent an opportunity to expand the district in a contiguous or nearly contiguous way.
   c) Agricultural Conservation (AC) zoning district boundaries: parcels within this zoning district were assigned 7 points. It was the Committee's opinion that this zoning district represents the town's 1989 Master Plan's intention to maintain agricultural use in these areas.
   d) Prime Farmland Soils:
      (i) Parcels containing only Class 2 soils were assigned 2 points.
      (ii) Parcels containing Class 1 soils were assigned 5 points.
      (iii)Parcels containing no Class 1 or Class 2 soils were given 0 points.
   e) Soils of Statewide Significance: Parcels containing Soils of Statewide Significance were assigned 10 points.

GIS Parcel Ranking Criteria (cont'd)

F. Development Pressure Ranking

1. Purpose: Identify and prioritize parcels that are under development pressure.

2. Attributes and Methodology:

   a) Parma Zoning District Boundaries: based on the Committee's opinion that these areas of town are more likely to be susceptible to development pressure due to a higher expected return-on-investment for developers.

      (i) Parcels in the Medium Density (MD) were assigned 3 points.

      (ii) Parcels in the High Density (HD) residential zoning districts were assigned 5 points.

   b) Adjacency to Village of Hilton: parcels within ¼ mile of the Village of Hilton/Town of Parma municipal boundary were assigned 3 points based on the Committee's opinion and observations of development pattern in the town. The Committee also placed value on maintaining a defined boundary between town and village, in the interest of community character.

   c) Adjacency to Town of Greece; parcels within 1 mile of the Town of Parma/Town of Greece municipal boundary were assigned 5 points based on the Committee's opinion and observations of increased development, and development pressure in this area.

   d) Public water service: parcels within 1000 feet of a Monroe County Water Authority water main were assigned 3 points based on the Committee's opinion that public water service makes a property easier and more likely to be developed. At the same time, the score assigned recognizes that water service is widely available in the town.

   e) Sanitary sewer availability: parcels within 1000 feet of a public sewer were assigned 10 points based on the Committee's opinion that public sewer service makes a property easier and more likely to be developed.

G. Environmental Features Ranking

1. Purpose: Identify and prioritize parcels based on the existence of key environmental features.

2. Attributes and Methodology:

   a) Adjacency to public land: parcels adjacent to public land were assigned 5 points

   b) Waterfront access: parcels adjacent to Lake Ontario, Salmon/West Creeks were assigned 10 points. Parcels within the New York State Department of State's LWRP or coastal boundary were assigned 5 points.

   c) Water quality:

      (i) Parcels containing recognized streams and tributaries were assigned 3 points.

      (ii) Parcels located with in the Salmon Creek watershed were assigned 7 points.

      (iii)Parcels containing wetlands identified in the National Wetlands Inventory were assigned 2 points.

      (iv)Parcels containing Class 1, 2, and 3 wetlands regulated by the State of New York were assigned 3, 2, and 1 points respectively.

   d) Drainage and flooding: parcels containing 100-year floodplains, as identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency were assigned 2 points.

   e) Habitat: parcels located within 1 mile of the Lake Ontario shoreline were assigned 5 points. The area within 1 mile of the Lake Ontario shoreline has been identified by the Rochester Birding Association and the Genesee Land Trust as having significant value to migration song birds.

3. Delineate both "conservation" and "development" areas in the Town

Land located in the Town's existing HD High Density zoning district has the greatest potential for development that is served by public sewers. The Town should designate these areas for high density residential use and focus efforts for preservation in other areas.

Some of the priority farmland is located in the MD Medium Density zoning district. The boundaries of this district should be altered to include land along the south side of Curtis Road in the AC district.

Most of the highly rated agricultural parcels are located in the Agricultural Conservation District, which designates agriculture as a priority use. However, high quality farmland, as well as land within the County Agricultural District, is located in the MD Medium Density zoning district along the south side of Curtis Road and Consider rezoning the following areas:

- south of Curtis Road, west of North Ave to the Town line
- the area bounded by Manitou, Curtis, Moul and Lighthouse Roads
- the area bounded by Manitou, Parma Center, Burritt and Butcher Roads

H. Evaluation of potential agricultural preservation techniques available to local governments

Several tools and techniques are available to local governments, individual landowners and private organizations to help meet the goal of retaining farmland and encouraging the continued viability of agriculture.

1. Local "Right to Farm" Law

The Town of Parma currently implements "right to farm" provisions included in New York State Agricultural District Law, which require purchasers of land within Agricultural Districts to be notified that noise and odors may be associated with standard agricultural practices. However, the Town of Parma has not adopted a local "right to farm" law.

Local "right to farm" laws typically clearly state the town's policy in support of farming, define "generally accepted agricultural practices," and affirm a farmer's right to employ such practices. The laws also include a statement that farm practices may include odors, noise and other activities.

Such a law often establishes a local "grievance" procedure to resolve complaints between farmers and non-farm neighbors. A local committee consisting of local farmers as well as non-

farming residents, may be formed to hear and resolve complaints. Such a committee includes. Municipalities may appoint an existing committee, such as the Farmland Protection Board, to act as the Grievance Committee.

Local examples of "right to farm" laws include the Town of Sweden, which states the Town policy and requires notations on subdivision plats consistent with NYS Agriculture District Law, and the Town of Eden, which establishes an informal grievance committee to provide advisory opinions to parties when there are conflicts between farmers and non-farm neighbors. Copies of these local laws, as well as a model prepared for Yates County, are provided in Appendix F.

2. Conservation Easements/ Purchase of Development Rights

Private, voluntary conservation easements

Landowners may place farmland under a permanent conservation easement to be held and monitored either by the Town of Parma or by a private land trust or other non-profit organization. The donation of easements may be helpful to some families in estate planning, as the value of the donated easement can be claimed as a tax deduction. Donation of easements provides permanent protection of farmland and open space at no cost to the town. Landowners would decide voluntarily to donate.

The Genesee Land Trust, based in Rochester, is a private, non-profit land trust that accepts donations of property or development rights and works with individual landowners and community leaders to protect land resources. The Genesee Land Trust has been working with the Town of Parma to provide information to landowners about the option of donating conservation easements.

Public purchase of development rights

Purchase of Development Rights is a public program which purchases the development rights from willing landowners and results in a conservation easement being placed on the land that prohibits future development. The value of development rights is calculated as the difference between the value of the land for agricultural purposes and its value for development. A permanent conservation easement typically restricts future development on the parcel to agricultural buildings only.[1] Ownership of the parcel does not change. The easement holder, which is either the Town or a private land trust, is responsible for ensuring that the property is not developed. The owner may continue to farm the parcel, and/or sell it.

When development of a property is limited due to a permanent conservation easement, the assessment on the property must take into consideration the impact of the easement on the value of the property. This may result in reduced property taxes for the owner. However, in practice, properties that are receiving an agricultural use value assessment would continue to be assessed based on the agricultural value rather than the market value of the property.

[1] A copy of the current easement used by New York State in its PDR program is provided in Appendix F.4.

PDR programs are regarded as fair to landowners, who receive fair market value for the development rights. The property remains privately owned and is assessed at a value that reflects its limited use. Such programs achieve permanent protection of farmland and open space.

Some municipalities have established Town purchase of development rights programs that are funded by bond issues. State and federal grant funding is also available to support the purchase of development rights to farmland.

State funding for PDR presents an opportunity for municipalities to partner with landowners to obtain up to 75% of the cost of purchasing development rights. Either the Town or the landowner may provide the matching funds. Some landowners agree to sell their development rights for less than the appraised amount (known as a "bargain sale"), thereby donating the difference and often claiming a tax deduction for the amount donated.

In order to allocate these funds in a manner that is fair to all interested landowners and focused on the priorities of the Town, the Town needs to establish a process to solicit, review and evaluate potential projects.

In addition, the Town needs to determine how much it is prepared to contribute toward the matching funds required for purchase of development rights and to establish a fund. Assuming per acre costs between $1,000 and $2,000, the Town would need to expend between $250,000 and $625,000 to permanently preserve 1,000 acres of farmland in the Town if NYS grant funds are obtained, or up to $2.5 million if no grant funds are obtained. The projected cost per acre incorporates miscellaneous costs such as surveys, appraisals, easement preparation, and enforcement fees.

Potential Cost for Purchase of Development Rights

Acres preserved	Cost per acre	Total Cost	Cost to Town with NYS providing 75%
1000	$ 1,000	$ 1,000,000	$ 250,000
	1,200	1,200,000	300,000
	1,500	1,500,000	375,000
	1,800	1,800,000	450,000
	2,000	2,000,000	500,000
	2,500	2,500,000	625,000
1500	$ 1,000	$ 1,500,000	$ 375,000
	1,200	1,800,000	450,000
	1,500	2,250,000	562,500
	1,800	2,700,000	675,000
	2,000	3,000,000	750,000
	2,500	3,750,000	937,500
2000	$ 1,000	$ 2,000,000	$ 500,000
	1,200	2,400,000	600,000
	1,500	3,000,000	750,000
	1,800	3,600,000	900,000
	2,000	4,000,000	1,000,000
	2,500	5,000,000	1,250,000

As the NYS grant program historically has funded only one-third of the applications it has received, the Town should be prepared to purchase development rights in some cases without the benefit of NYS funding.

3. Zoning Techniques

a. Zoning Districts

Two alternative zoning approaches are to 1) establish a new agricultural protection zoning district that designates farming as the primary, preferred land use and that limits non-agricultural development and 2) to establish an overlay zoning district that would apply additional requirements or eases certain restrictions that would otherwise apply to the base, or underlying, zoning district or districts.

The boundaries of a standard agricultural protection zoning district should encompass large contiguous areas of active farms and prime agricultural soils. The boundaries of an overlay district may be referenced to parcels included in the County Agricultural District or they may be determined by other criteria identified by the Town.

An agricultural protection district – either an overlay or a standard zoning district – would incorporate regulations to support farm operations and encourage the continued viability of farming. Such regulations may allow smaller setbacks for agricultural buildings or fewer restrictions on horse boarding operations than would apply in the AC or other zoning district. They may also allow for a range of businesses to be established in conjunction with a farm operation. The minimum lot size may be based on the size of the smallest viable farm unit -- such as 25 to 40 acres. Regulations may require density averaging or use a “sliding scale” to limit the number of dwellings permitted. The regulations may also specify maximum (as well as minimum) lot sizes for non-farm development. Such a district may allow farm-related businesses and home-based businesses.

Agricultural protection zoning designates certain areas of the Town as priority locations for farming. Such a designation may also be used to support the purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights or incentive zoning.

b. Density Averaging/ Conservation Subdivisions

Density averaging, also known as clustering or conservation subdivisions, allows residences to be built on smaller lot sizes than typically permitted by zoning, provided that the average density of the original parcel is not increased. For example, if zoning requires a maximum density of 1 dwelling per 10 acres, a farm of 100 acres would be entitled to develop up to 10 dwelling units. If the 10 dwellings were built on a total of 20 acres of the parcel (with an average lot size of 2 acres), 80 acres would remain open (see diagram on the right, below.) The smaller lots should be sited in locations that are least suitable for farming, and that offer the most appealing views of open space and natural resources. Design of the subdivision should include buffers between the new residential development and the remaining farmland. A conservation easement would be placed on the remaining 80 acres to prevent future development.

c. Incentive zoning

Incentive zoning may be used to encourage the private acquisition of agricultural conservation easements or to collect money toward a public fund to purchase such easements (development rights). Municipalities must designate an area or areas in which higher densities or more intensive uses may be permitted, provided that the applicant offers certain amenities that would meet specified community needs. Acceptable amenities may include the private purchase of conservation easements on farmland or cash to be used in a purchase of development rights program.

Incentive zoning is fair to the owners of land to be preserved, as a developer must purchase the development rights at fair market value in order to obtain a density incentive. The technique does not diminish the development potential of land to be developed.

The technique is fairly easy for the Town to administer, as the developer and the owner of the farmland or open space arrange the transaction privately. Once the developer demonstrates that land will be preserved, he is entitled to the density bonus on the property to be developed.

This technique has virtually no cost to the Town, and would result in the permanent protection of farmland or open space through a conservation easement. However, the designation of areas suitable for higher density needs to be balanced with an analysis of the carrying capacity of local infrastructure. Infrastructure analysis needs to be required at an early stage in the development review process to identify any constraints to the utilization of incentives.

In addition, a specific formula is needed. For example, if a developer purchases the development rights to a 90-acre parcel in the Agricultural Conservation zoning district, where zoning requires 3 acres per dwelling, the developer would be entitled to a bonus of up to 30 dwelling units. If the bonus density were applied to a 90-acre parcel in the MD District, where 20,000 sq. ft. per dwelling unit is required, the maximum number of units permitted would be approximately 210 instead of 180. The actual number of additional units permitted would need to be determined based on the actual number of lots that could be accommodated on the parcel in the AC district. This number would be determined upon review of a conceptual lot layout that shows proposed streets and excludes any undevelopable land.

4. Infrastructure Management

Tools available to municipalities to minimize the impacts of sewer and water line extensions on agricultural land include the use of Agricultural Data Statements and lateral restrictions.

<u>Notice of Intent Process</u>

Section 305 of the Agricultural Districts law requires local governments, before extending a water or sewer line that would serve non-farm structures within an Agricultural District, to file a

preliminary and a final Notice of Intent with the NYS Department of Agriculture and the County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Board. The law states:

> Any … local government … which intends to construct, or advance a grant, loan, interest subsidy or other funds within a district to construct, … water or sewer facilities to serve non-farm structures, shall use all practicable means in undertaking such action to realize the policy and goals set forth in this article, and shall act and choose alternatives which, consistent with social, economic and other essential considerations, to the maximum extent practicable minimize or avoid adverse impacts on agriculture in order to sustain a viable farm enterprise or enterprises within the district.

The Notice of Intent (NOI) must set forth:

- A description of the proposed action and its agricultural setting
- The agricultural impact of the proposed action, including short-term and long-term effects
- Any adverse impacts on agriculture that cannot be avoided
- Alternatives to the proposed action
- Any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of agricultural resources which would be involved in the proposed action
- Mitigation measures proposed to minimize the adverse impact of the proposed action on the continuing viability of farms within the district
- Any aspects of the proposed action which would encourage non-farm development

A preliminary notice must be filed before the municipality issues a determination of significance pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). The final notice must be filed at least 65 days prior to the construction or advancement of public funds. The commissioner has 45 days from receipt of the final notice to determine whether the action may have an unreasonably adverse effect on farm viability, and may take an additional 60 days to review the proposed action and issue findings.

The commissioner of agriculture may propose reasonable or practical alternative actions that would minimize or avoid the adverse impact of the proposed action on agriculture. The municipality or funding agency may either accept the proposed alternative or certify that other actions have been taken to minimize impacts on agricultural operations.

<u>Lateral Restrictions</u>

Often, as an outcome of the Notice of Intent process, a municipality will adopt a resolution that restricts hookups for non-farm structures to a new water or sewer line that extends into an Agricultural District. Typical language for such a resolution is:

LATERAL RESTRICTIONS RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the [municipality] has created the [name of water district] pursuant to Town Law for the express purpose of providing public water supply to residents [geographic extent of water district]; and

WHEREAS, as part of the land area within the [name of water district] is also within the [name of Agricultural District]; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board has filed a Notice of Intent to Undertake an Action Within an Agricultural District to evaluate the impact of providing a source of public water supply within this area on lands within the [name of Agricultural District]; and

WHEREAS, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets has expressed concern about the potential adverse impact that said public water supply is likely to have on agriculture within the Agricultural Districts,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board, in recognition of the concerns that have been raised, hereby resolves to limit connections to the public water supply only to existing non-farm uses and to farm related uses within that portion of [name of water district] which is also within the limits of the [name of Agricultural District].

The restriction on hookups would apply to non-agricultural structures for as long as the property is located within an Agricultural District.

5. Promotion and Public Information

Several State and regional programs have been established to promote local products and raise public awareness of the contributions of the agricultural industry. These programs include:

- "Grow Monroe" and "Pride of New York", administered by Monroe County and NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, respectively. These programs offer labeling and promotional materials to participating farmers and encourage consumers to purchase locally grown products.

- Farm to School program, administered by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. This program connects farmers who are interested in selling products to schools with schools who are interested in purchasing local products. The program also encourages schools to integrate food system concepts into the curricula and supports the development and marketing of healthy products targeted for children.

Information on these programs is included in Appendix F-6.

I. Strategies and Recommendations

This section identifies the strategies and recommended actions that should be carried out by the Town to implement the Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan. The tables that accompany each recommended action identify the time frame for completion, the entity with primary responsibility for carrying out the action, the anticipated cost and potential funding sources.

1. Re-establish and repurpose the Farmland and Open Space Committee to empower it to implement the recommendations of this Plan

Time Frame:	Immediate (within one year)
Responsible Agency:	Town Board
Estimated Cost:	Minimal
Potential Funding Sources:	Not applicable

2. Enact zoning revisions that would remove provisions that hinder standard agricultural practices that are protected by the NYS Agricultural Districts Law and would allow for a variety of agricultural practices and related business.

a. Establish an Agricultural Protection Overlay District that encompasses land located in County Agricultural Districts as well as land with prime agricultural soils. The regulations for this district should incorporate the following provisions:

- A statement of purpose that expresses the Town's policy to encourage agriculture and related businesses
- Setback and minimum lot size requirements for farms that are consistent with those for other uses.
- No restrictions on the maximum size of new agricultural buildings
- An exception to the restrictions on horse boarding for "commercial horse boarding operations," as defined in NYS Agriculture & Markets Law
- Provisions for permanent farm worker housing
- Provisions to accommodate non-traditional agricultural operations, such as hydroponic techniques, as well as farm-related businesses such as food service and entertainment.

- A requirement that density averaging be used in conjunction with residential subdivisions when it would effectively retain farmland for continued agricultural use.

b. Clarify the distinction between "keeping or boarding of horses" and "animal boarding."

Time Frame:	Immediate (within one year)
Responsible Agency:	Town Board
Estimated Cost:	$2,000 - $5,000 for zoning revisions
Potential Funding Sources:	Town budget

3. Consider rezoning additional land to AC Agricultural Conservation

a. south of Curtis Road, west of North Ave to the Town line (currently zoned MD)

b. the area bounded by Manitou, Curtis, Moul and Lighthouse Roads (currently zoned RR)

c. the area bounded by Manitou, Parma Center, Burritt and Butcher Roads (currently zoned RR)

Time Frame:	Immediate (within one year)
Responsible Agency:	Town Board
Estimated Cost:	$2,000 - $5,000 for zoning revisions
Potential Funding Sources:	Town budget

4. Establish a clearer and stronger mechanism in the Town's incentive zoning provisions to encourage the private purchase of conservation easements to productive agricultural land in exchange for the right to build at a higher density elsewhere in the Town.

a. Identify areas in the Town that could accommodate additional density that may be transferred from agricultural land. For example, designate areas within the HD High Density zoning district that have access to public sewer service as "receiving areas."

b. Specify how many acres of farmland must be permanently protected through private conservation easement per additional dwelling unit allowed. For example, to permit an additional 30 dwelling units in a development in the HD High Density zoning district, the developer would be required to purchase the development rights to a 90-

acre parcel in the Agricultural Conservation District that could accommodate 30 houses.

Time Frame:	Immediate (within one year)
Responsible Agency:	Town Board
Estimated Cost:	$1,600 - $3,000
Potential Funding Sources:	Town budget

5. Establish a public education program to publicize the value of farming to the community and improve public understanding of farm practices.

a. Publish regular advertisements in the PennySaver and/or newspaper

b. Issue press releases to publicize accomplishments of area farms

c. Organize tours of farm operations

d. Set up farm displays and education booths at all Parma functions, including the Town of Parma Summer and Winter Days, Hilton Fireman's weekend, Apple fest weekend and others

e. Partner with the Parma Recreation Dept. to start courses through their Community Classes. Some ideas here would be classes about PDR, something from County Soil & Water, a course from AFT, FDA or other agencies to get those agencies info out to the public on a constant basis.

f. Work with Hilton Central schools to begin educational classes within the school district. Such programs would increase awareness of how food is produced and how farms operate, and would encourage children to consider agriculture as a career.

g. Set up a promotional NW Farmer's Market during major events, such as the Hilton Apple Fest, the fireman's parade, Spencerport Canal Days or Hamlin's Wheel fest. Publicize produce as well as livestock of different farms in the area. Aim for a County or State fair atmosphere.

h. Encourage farms in Parma to participate in the "Grow Monroe" program.

Time Frame:	Immediate (within one year); Ongoing
Responsible Agency:	Farmland Protection Committee, in cooperation with Cornell Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau and other agencies
Estimated Cost:	Varies
Potential Funding Sources:	Town budget

6. Establish a mechanism to mediate disputes between farmers and non-farming neighbors

a. Enact a local Right to Farm law which establishes a Committee empowered to mediate disputes

b. Appoint a liaison to the Town Board (possibly a member of the Committee) who would meet with farmers and landowners, coordinate public education efforts, and facilitate other farmland protection programs and initiatives

Time Frame:	Immediate (within one year); Ongoing
Responsible Agency:	Town Board
Estimated Cost:	To be determined (Attorney's costs)
Potential Funding Sources:	Town budget

7. Utilize the subdivision review process to ensure that the design of the residential development in proximity to active farmland minimizes the long-term impact on agricultural operations.

a. As part of subdivision review, require effective buffers to minimize conflicts between new residential development and farm operations.

b. Work with farmland owners who intend to subdivide a portion of their property to plan for the entire parcel. Encourage the use of "density averaging" and the creation of "conservation subdivision" to locate house lots in areas that would least impact current and future farm operations. (See Conservation Subdivision example in Appendix E.)

c. Encourage the Planning Board to require density averaging when it would result in the protection of a significant amount of viable farmland.

Time Frame:	Immediate (within one year); Ongoing
Responsible Agency:	Planning Board; training, consultation and farmer liaison from Farmland Protection Committee
Estimated Cost:	None
Potential Funding Sources:	Not applicable

8. Provide information to farmers and landowners regarding existing tax relief programs and private techniques to keep land in agriculture.

a. Provide information to farmers and landowners regarding tax relief programs that are available to landowners.

b. Maintain copies of brochures and other information in the Town Hall on estate planning, land trusts, and other programs.

c. Ensure that the Town Assessor and other officials who work regularly with farmers and farmland owners have up-to-date information about the availability of tax relief programs for farmer and farmland owners and options for private land conservation.

Time Frame:	Immediate (within one year); Ongoing
Responsible Agency:	Town Assessor; Farmland Protection Committee
Estimated Cost:	None
Potential Funding Sources:	Not applicable

9. Manage water and sewer extensions and hook-ups to reduce development pressure on farmland

a. When water and sewer lines are extended through farmland, the Town Board should adopt a resolution that restricts hookups on farmland that is within the County Agricultural District and that has been receiving an agricultural use exemption. The restriction would be in effect for as long as the land is located within an Agricultural District. Water and sewer hookups for agricultural purposes would be permitted.

Time Frame:	Ongoing
Responsible Agency:	Town Board; Farmland Protection Committee
Estimated Cost:	None
Potential Funding Sources:	Not applicable

b. Limit the size of sewer mains extended from the main trunk to the minimum needed to serve existing business and high density residential (MD, HD, PD-SR, Townhouse) zoning districts.

Time Frame:	Immediate (within one year); Ongoing
Responsible Agency:	Town Board; Planning Board; Farmland Protection Committee (advisory role)
Estimated Cost:	None
Potential Funding Sources:	Not applicable

10. Establish a dedicated fund for the purchase of land and/or easements (development rights).

Establish a dedicated fund for the purchase of land and/or easements (development rights). Estimate an appropriate amount to dedicate to such a fund. Recommend a mechanism for financing such purchases. The amount of the fund should be directly related to the number of acres targeted for protection.

Time Frame:	Immediate (within one year); Ongoing
Responsible Agency:	Farmland Protection Committee (outreach, education, applications); Town Board (dedicated fund)
Estimated Cost:	To be determined
Potential Funding Sources:	County, State grants; Bonds

11. Establish criteria and procedures and apply for funding from NYS for Purchase of Development Rights (PDR).

a. Establish the criteria that the Committee will use to evaluate landowner proposals for potential PDR applications. Criteria should include:

- Competitiveness under the NYS rating system
- Willingness of owner to accept “bargain sale” as all or part of the local cost
- Consistency with Town preservation priorities, based in part on the parcel rating system created by the Committee.

b. Contact all farmland owners to provide general information about Purchase of Development Rights program and the Town’s interest in sponsoring a grant application to the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets. This may be done

through a direct mailing and supplemented with a public forum. Indicate that there is funding available in the Town budget to match State funds and explain the Town's criteria for selecting proposals to sponsor. As the State's grant applications have typically been due in September, the outreach to landowners should occur early in 2009.

c. Provide more specific information about PDR's to landowners and farm families who express interest in the program. Involve representatives from a land trust or other organization with expertise in these programs.

d. Work with the landowner(s) who best meet the criteria to prepare and submit applications for funding to NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets for Purchase of Development Rights.

Time Frame:	Immediate (within one year); Ongoing
Responsible Agency:	Farmland Protection Committee (outreach, education, applications); Town Board (dedicated fund)
Estimated Cost:	To be determined
Potential Funding Sources:	County, State grants; Bonds

12. Support programs and initiatives of other agencies and organizations that encourage conservation practices and the retention of land for agriculture.

Assist the Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) and other agencies to publicize conservation and other programs. Maintain brochures and other information at the Town Hall.

For example, the Monroe County SWCD is encouraging landowners within the Parma Beach and Braddock Bay watersheds to participate in its Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program. The Town can help encourage participation by publicizing the program.

Time Frame:	Ongoing
Responsible Agency:	Farmland Protection Committee
Estimated Cost:	None
Potential Funding Sources:	Not applicable

J. Implementation Strategy

Administrative Framework

The Town Board should empower the Farmland Protection Committee to implement those recommendations of this Plan that are not assigned to another entity.

One or more members of the Farmland Protection Committee should be designated to act as a "farmer liaison". This person/group would cultivate one-on-one contacts with the farming community and governing bodies and would be able to answer questions and identify sources of assistance. Duties would include the following:

- Maintain communications with the farming community asking them their needs.
- Advise other boards regarding farming needs and concerns. Refer these boards to appropriate sources for information and advice.
- Act as point of contact and mediator for neighbor/farming concerns. As Parma does not having a record of bad relations between farmers and neighbors, most issues are likely to be resolved here.
- Work with local retailers, restaurants and institutions as well as farmers to help bring local crops to local markets.
- Educate the public regarding local farming issues.
- Attend town, planning and zoning board meetings to monitor actions that may affect farmers; respond on behalf of farmers when needed at meetings.
- Understand these documents to assist farmers with answers and solutions.
- Coordinate the recommended public education activities. This would be a constant, ongoing, process after the plan is adopted.
- Nurture relationships among farmers and between farmers and Town officials and between the Town and various federal, state and county agencies that are involved in agricultural support activities.
- Act as the conservation easement/ PDR consultant for the town. Coordinate from public education, assist farmers with in depth questions, set up meetings, refer farmers to the appropriate experts as needed to explore the PDR process and prepare.

Funding Sources

This section provides guidance to the Town Board regarding the various funding sources available to implement the Plan.

Capital Reserve Fund

A Town may create a Capital Reserve Fund that is dedicated to the purchase of land and/or conservation easements (development rights.) A Capital Reserve Fund is authorized by GML Article 11, Section 6-c and allows a municipality to accumulate funds for major purposes over a period of more than one year. If the fund specifies the parcels or interest in parcels to be acquired, a permissive referendum is required to create the fund. If the fund is created for purchase of properties or development rights in general, no permissive referendum is required to create the fund but a permissive referendum will be required before utilizing the funds for a specific purchase. The fund may be financed through annual appropriations.

Bonds

The Town may issue bonds to finance the acquisition of land and/or development rights. Bonds may be used to finance the establishment of a fund for the purchase of land and/or development rights. If the bond will be financed over a period of more than five years, a permissive referendum is required.

Public hearing required

Before using public funds, whether from a Reserve Fund or Bond, to purchase a particular property or development rights, the Town must publicize and hold a public hearing.

Subdivision Fees

The Town is authorized to collect cash in lieu of parkland as part of the approval for a land subdivision. However, such funds must be deposited into a fund to be used exclusively for park, playground or other recreational purposes. While the funds may be used for the acquisition of property, the property needs to serve public recreation purposes.

Private Donations

The Town may accept donations of land or easements, or money to be used to purchase land or easements.

Grants

Federal, State or County grants may be used to purchase farmland or development rights.

- The Town of Parma has received an allocation of $250,000 from Monroe County to be used for the protection of open space.

- New York State's Farmland Protection Implementation Grant Program provides up to 75% of the cost of purchasing development rights to farmland. Funds are awarded to municipalities on a competitive basis. Between the program's inception in 1996 through 2007, New York allocated more than $144.5 million from the Environmental Protection Fund for farmland protection projects, assisting local governments and their project partners in 28 counties to help protect 63,700 acres on 276 farms. Application forms and other materials relating to this grant program are included in Appendix F.4

- The Federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program provides matching grants for the purchase of development rights. While these funds were not eligible to be used as part of the match for a New York State grant, it is expected that changes in the program resulting from the passage of the 2008 Farm Bill will reestablish the opportunity to use Federal funds as a match.

Next Steps

In accordance with the requirements its contract with the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, plan must be referred to the Monroe County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board and the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets for approval. The Parma Town Board must hold a public hearing on the proposed plan and formally approve the plan before it will receive final reimbursement from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets.