

# Southampton Farmland Resources Assessment Project (FRAP)

A report by Kestrel Land Trust and the Forever Farmland Initiative (a Regional Conservation Partnership), facilitated by Lee Halasz, MassLIFT-AmeriCorps Regional Conservation Coordinator (supervised by Mark Wamsley – Land Conservation Manager at Kestrel, and Coordinator of the Forever Farmland Initiative).

**FRAP:** Farmland Resources Assessment Project – Kestrel Land Trust is seeking greater knowledge about the farmland resources of the towns in Kestrel’s area of operation, and wishes to engage with agricultural commissions and other relevant town boards on a town-by-town basis. The intent is to combine available GIS data with local knowledge to reveal farmland resources, ownership and distribution details, and identify unconserved farmland parcels with conservation potential. It is hoped that this engagement with towns will encourage successful future collaborations with willing, conservation-minded landowners and municipalities looking to maintain their agricultural resources and heritage.

**Purpose:** Kestrel seeks to learn about Southampton’s farmland resources, and to identify unconserved farmland parcels with likely conservation potential. There are several existing Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs) and Conservation Restrictions (CRs) in Southampton, but most farmland (approximately 80%) is currently not permanently protected. By identifying selected farmland parcels and making this information available, those who affect farmland conservation will have a greater understanding of a town’s agricultural land resources, and their risks and opportunities related to conservation. APRs are one valuable mechanism to protect farmland, but that program was not the sole consideration in highlighting farmland parcels. Other conservation programs and funding sources exist and could arise, and may be relevant to some of these parcels, should an APR not be feasible.

**Southampton:** Southampton is a community in Hampshire County, Massachusetts of approximately 6,000 people and around 18,500 acres. The town is roughly 6 miles across in any direction, and is located on the western uplands of the Pioneer Valley, in the multi-state Connecticut River Valley. The Manhan River flows through Southampton, and has been dammed to form the Tighe Carmody Reservoir. Route 10 (the main road in town) roughly tracks much of the Manhan. The Barnes Aquifer provides drinking water for the town and neighboring communities, and parts of the eastern section of town help recharge this critical water resource. The vast majority of Southampton is in the Connecticut River catchment, though small parts along the southern border are in the Westfield River catchment. The elevation rises markedly from east to west, with Pomeroy Mountain being the most prominent landmark. Traditionally a farming town, Southampton is now best described as a rural residential bedroom community. The town represents a transition between more urban centers such as Northampton, Holyoke and Westfield, and the more sparsely populated Hilltowns.

Around three-quarters of Southampton is currently forested, though this hasn't always been the case. Native American people are believed to have managed some areas with fire to create more open, grassy habitats suitable for harvesting game species. During the 1700's and 1800's European settlers cleared much of Southampton's remaining forest for agricultural pursuits. Agriculture dominated the economy and landscape of Southampton for well over a century, but due to changing national agricultural economics, forests began to reclaim abandoned agricultural land in the 1900's. People began seeking employment in surrounding areas, though typically continued to reside in Southampton.

Over the last 50 years the population of Southampton has approximately doubled, and the town is one of the fastest growing communities in Western Massachusetts. This has significantly increased demand for land to build new houses, and former farmland has often been converted to housing. This pattern continues today, but can diminish other important values.

Southampton's open space contributes much to the town and the greater area by providing economic industries (farm and forest products), watershed protection, recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, and scenic values and rural character. While farming currently plays a much reduced role in Southampton compared to what it once did, it is critical to identify the town's remaining farmland resources, which will provide opportunities for their conservation and allow for agriculture to be maintained or expanded in the community as future conditions arise.

The town has a current (2012) Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) and Goal 2 is "Protect Southampton's remaining agricultural lands, promote local farming, and create opportunities for residents to become involved in local agriculture". The goal has several strategies including conducting a farmland inventory, which this report goes some way to addressing. The 2013 Draft Southampton Master Plan presents a similar goal and associated strategies. The OSRP highlights two Agricultural Protection Areas, one on Glendale Road and one on Middle Road. Through the OSRP, the community has expressed the desire to "be more proactive in acquiring private properties to preserve open space, agricultural land and vistas". Further, "residents like Southampton's rural feel" and wish to "preserve its historic, cultural and rural character".

Southampton has adopted the Community Preservation Act, which can help to fund land conservation projects. The full local financial match required for an APR project is 20% (state and federal funding covers 80%), but given Southampton has an Agricultural Commission and recently voted to become a Right to Farm community, the required local match is reduced to 10% (5% less for each), with the State making up the difference. If Southampton adopted a development proposal tracking system to ensure that the APR status of parcels is highlighted, the local match could be reduced to just 5%.

**Data:** Most of the GIS data used in this project was sourced from MassGIS, though Chapter 61A data was obtained from the Town of Southampton. Some MassGIS layers were several years old and there are likely to have been changes since those layers were developed, especially the L3 (tax parcel) layer (dated June 2015) and the aerial photography (2013-2014). There was no newer available source for L3 data,

but Google Earth (photography dated early 2016) was cross-referenced to check for any particularly obvious recent land use changes.

**Process:** The MassGIS Land Use layer (2005) and current Chapter 61A data (Fiscal Year 2017) were used to begin the process of identifying farmland parcels with conservation potential, though both required significant vetting. Further parcels were identified visually via the aerial photography layer, and through conversations with the Southampton farming community. A variety of factors were considered when assessing parcels, some being more objective than others. These factors included: parcel acreage, the percentage of farmland soils, the percentage of forest (visual estimate from aerial photography), whether actively farmed, owner information (owner type, number of adjacent parcels under similar ownership, potential succession issues), proximity to protected land, any perceived iconic/historic/significant/scenic values, and economic importance.

**Outcome:** A selection of 71 farmland parcels of interest are included in a table at the end of this report. These parcels all appear to have values suitable for farmland conservation. It should not necessarily be considered 'the best 71 parcels', but rather a selection of parcels that, balancing a variety of factors, have values that are more likely to represent a viable conservation project, should the landowner be interested. There are few parcels less than 20 acres, though several smaller parcels are included as they are adjacent to selected parcels under similar ownership.

**Maps:** The map on page 6 shows the 71 selected farmland parcels, currently preserved farmland, and the distribution of farmland soils in Southampton. Twelve more details maps have been prepared that zoom into clusters of parcels and present greater detail and information, but are not included here.

**Statistics:** The following statistics relate to Southampton, and the 71 selected farmland parcels:

- Southampton covers 18,526 acres.
- 39% (7,296 acres) of Southampton is productive farmland soils (prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance).
- There are approximately 2,193 acres of farmland in Southampton (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Community Profile 2012), 12% of Southampton's total area.
- There are 27 protected parcels (mostly Agricultural Preservation Restrictions) containing farmland in Southampton, totaling 1,028 acres. These represent 20% of Southampton's farmland, and 6% of Southampton's total area.
- 80% of current Southampton farmland is not permanently protected.
- The 71 selected farmland parcels total 2,415 acres, contain 59% of Southampton's farmland, and represent 13% of Southampton's total area.
- The average size of the 71 selected farmland parcels is 34 acres, with 26 parcels larger than the average, 8 parcels over 70 acres, and 3 parcels over 100 acres.
- Of the 71 selected farmland parcels, on average a parcel is 53% open (non-forested), and is 67% productive farmland soils.

- The 71 selected parcels are held by 41 different landowners. While 26 landowners hold just one selected parcel, the other 15 landowners hold 45 (63%) of the selected parcels, with eleven of these landowners holding two selected parcels, and four landowners holding three or more selected parcels.
- Most of the 71 selected parcels (68%) are enrolled in Chapter 61A.
- More generally, 21% of Southampton (3,885 acres) is protected in perpetuity for conservation purposes (MassAudubon Losing Ground 5<sup>th</sup> Edition).

**Discussion:** Southampton farmland soils and farmland parcels are almost exclusively in the lower elevation eastern part of town, within a mile or so of the Manhan River, which loosely corresponds with Route 10, the main road in Southampton. The vast majority of farmland is in private ownership.

There are several clusters of selected parcels with the same (or similar) ownership, and while some of these parcels might not represent prime stand-alone candidates for conservation, when considered with the adjacent parcels of the same ownership, could make attractive conservation projects. Potential multi-parcel projects can be readily identified in the below table.

The owners of some of the selected parcels have considered conservation in the past, and will hopefully consider it again in the future. Some parcels are adjacent to existing conservation areas, which is likely to increase their attractiveness for conservation. This latter information is included in the table.

Most of the town of Southampton and most of the selected farmland parcels lie in a Rural Residential Zoning District. In the southern part of town there is an area of Residential – Neighborhood Zoning District which encompasses many selected parcels. A few selected parcels also occur in the Residential – Village, and Industrial Park Zoning Districts. None of these zoning districts offers any particular protection for farmland. One parcel (1841) is included in the Midtown Targeted Future Growth Area, as outlined in the 2012 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP).

There are four particularly prominent areas of selected parcels (listed north to south):

1. Glendale Road area (Map 2): seven large adjacent parcels abutting an existing APR. This area incorporates one of the two Agricultural Protection Areas identified in the OSRP.
2. Lower Pleasant Street (Maps 11 and 12): approximately 20 largely adjacent parcels, many of which are part of Rolling Acres (Bashista) Farm.
3. Whiteloaf Mountain area (Maps 9 and 10): eight mostly large parcels on the northern and western slopes of Whiteloaf Mountain, along Middle and East Roads, including Bashista Orchard. Middle Road was identified as one of two Agricultural Protection Areas in the OSRP.
4. Swanson Corner area (Map 7): thirteen adjacent parcels at the lower end of Route 10, south of Valley Road, largely owned by two families.

The Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program places considerable emphasis on the percentage of a parcel that has (a) farmland soils and (b) is actively used for agricultural purposes. Information relating to both is included in the table. Other conservation funding opportunities will have

their own criteria, and there should be sufficient information in this report to highlight parcels worthy of a fuller, current investigation should a conservation opportunity arise.

Development threat can be a motivating factor for those wishing to conserve land, and can influence programs that help fund land conservation. Recent years have seen several *cul-de-sac* developments, and some townsfolk anticipate more such developments in the next decade. Current town bylaws require that developments of more than nine houses include low incoming housing. A possible outcome is that many subdivisions will be of up to nine houses. More generally, farmland with road frontage and without wetland issues may be readily developable into housing lots, and farmland with frontage on Route 10 has the potential for commercial retail development. There is at least one planned solar installation on a selected farmland parcel, and it seems that solar companies regularly contact farmland owners to promote the installation of solar arrays.

The Town of Southampton can exercise the Right of First Refusal on any parcel of land offered for sale that is taxed under the Chapter 61A program. The below table identifies those selected parcels that are enrolled in that program, and should any of these parcels be made available for sale, the Town has 120 days to exercise or assign the right to purchase the land. This may be a mechanism for these parcels to become conserved in the future, perhaps using Community Preservation Act funds. The OSRP identifies the need to prioritize Chapter land for conservation, should the Right of First Refusal become available. This report provides a resource for undertaking that prioritization.

One important value of farmland to the community is its scenic value and contribution to rural character. The Scenic Viewsheds and Scenic Roads listed in the OSRP are largely attributable to the presence of farmland, and while these values can be difficult to quantify and specifically attribute to a given parcel, many of the selected farmland parcels make a contribution to the locations described.

Most Southampton farmland produces field crops (especially hay) or is pasture grazed by horses and beef cattle. There are also several orchards and vegetable fields.

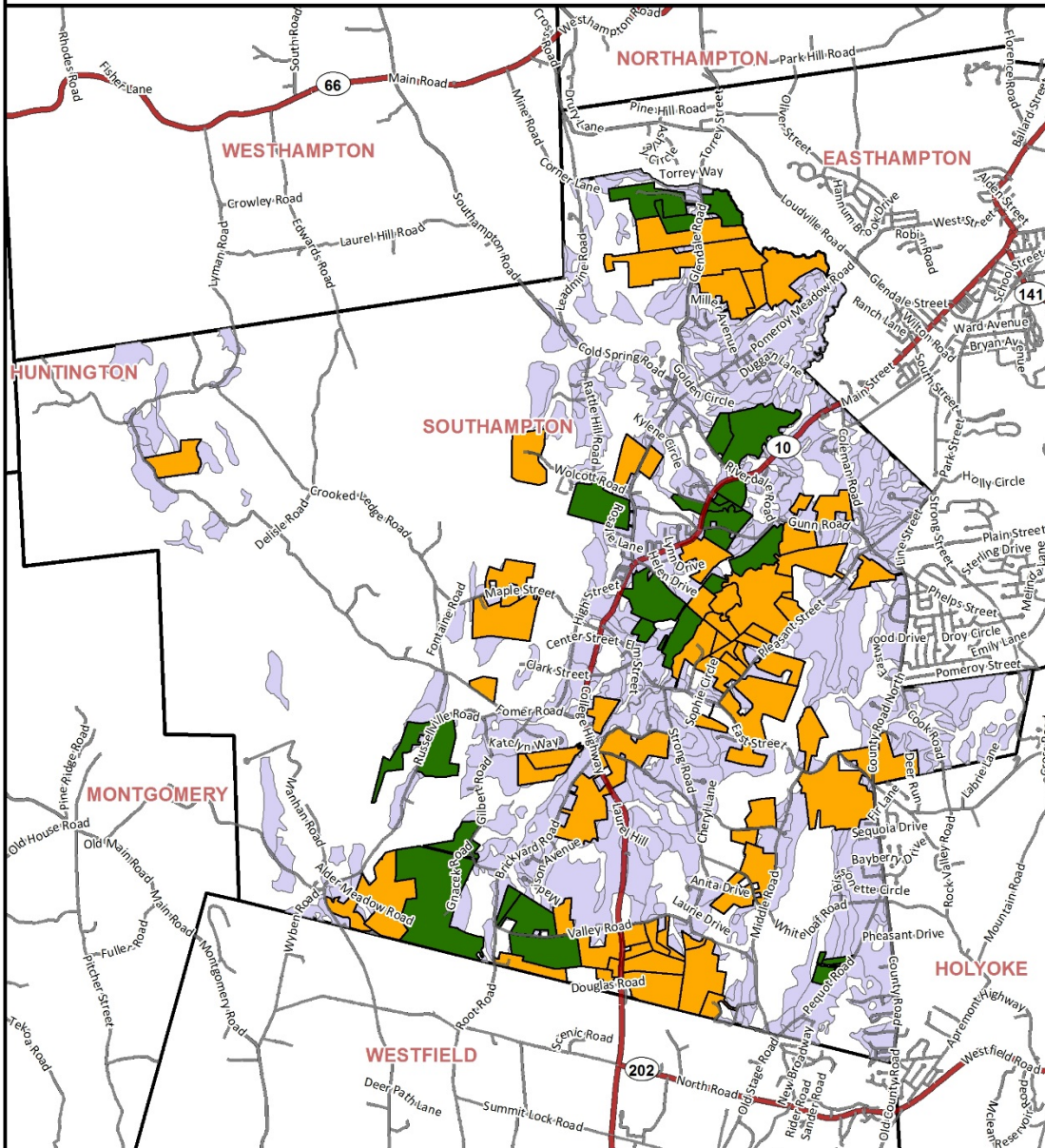
**Future:** It is hoped that various organizations and individuals find this report illuminating and that it increases awareness about unconserved Southampton farmland parcels. Preserved farmland provides a wide range of benefits including ensuring local food production, maintaining open space, providing ecological benefits and supporting an agricultural economy.

**People:** Special thanks to Marla Hanc, Bob and Cheryl Fletcher, Charlie Kaniecki and Art Lawrence, for providing information that informed this report.



**Southampton Farmland Resources Assessment Project (FRAP)**  
**71 Selected Parcels**

Southampton, MA  
 Date Created: 18 May 2017



- Selected Farmland Parcels
- Preserved Farmland Parcels
- Farmland Soils

0 2,700 5,400 Feet

*Data provided by MassGIS and/or local municipalities. Data are approximate and provided without warranty or liability. This map is not a survey.*



Owner	Address	FRAP Map #	Parcel #	FY 2017 Chapter 61A details	Acres	% Open	% Farmland soils	Parcel ID	Adjacent to conservation
Bashista, Stephen	0 Pleasant St	11	1285	field crops	8	10	44	24_29	no
Bashista, Stephen	0 Pleasant St Rear	11	1435	field crops	16	40	62	24_29_B	yes
Bashista, Stephen	39 Pleasant St	11	1196	field crops	9	90	95	24_23_A	no
Bashista, Stephen	43 Pleasant St	11	1535	field crops	11	100	73	24_23_B	no
Bashista, Stephen	53 Pleasant St	11	2179	field crops	108	80	55	25_20	no
Bashista, Stephen	61 Pleasant St	11	1426	field crops	18	80	62	25_17	no
Bashista, Stephen	Pleasant St Rear	11	1427	field crops	5	40	82	25_76	no
Bashista, Stephen	Pleasant St Rear	11	1473	uncertain	6	50	52	24_54	no
Bashista, Stephen	Pleasant St Rear	11	1465	field crops	25	90	57	24_22	yes
Borucki, Chester	County Rd	10	595	uncertain	50	70	90	30_15	no
Borucki, Chester	132 County Rd	10	968	field crops	18	70	90	30_26	no
Canton, Kristine	0 East St Rear	11	1660	field crops	13	90	86	29_45	yes
Canton, Kristine	East St	11	622	field crops	20	20	86	29_55	no
Courtney, Dennis & John	235 Pomeroy Meadow Rd	2	2488	not Chapter 61A	117	20	89	8_1	no
Cross, Thomas	College Hwy Rear	11	1501	not Chapter 61A	20	50	66	24_21_A	yes
Daniel, Lee Dawn	69 1/2 East St	11	1172	field crops	35	80	39	24_30	yes
Ellis, Peter	98 Moosebrook Rd	9	748	field crops	12	50	47	35_36	no
Ellis, Peter	Moosebrook Rd	9	832	field crops	24	30	42	35_23	no
Girouard, Ann	34 Pleasant St	11	1521	field crops	31	60	54	24_26	no
Goral, Charles	299 College Hwy	6	1017	field crops	6	100	89	28_25	no
Goral, Charles	Moosebrook Rd	6	797	field crops	20	80	92	28_26	no
Goral, Edwin	7 Moosebrook Rd	6	593	pasture	66	40	79	29_46	yes
Gorton, Harry	275 College Hwy	6	1616	not Chapter 61A	23	70	100	28_18_B	yes
Hamel, Edward	155 Glendale Rd	2	2761	field crops	44	30	36	2_9	yes
Hamel, Edward	156 Glendale Rd	2	2472	field crops	35	60	64	2_8	yes
Howland, Anne	College Hwy Rear	6	631	not Chapter 61A	25	10	64	28_93_B	no
Huntley, David	East St	10	1561	field crops	34	30	43	30_45	no
Kellogg, Chester	Pleasant St	12	1855	field crops	52	10	55	25_94	yes
Kellogg, Chester	96 Pleasant St	12	2365	field crops	27	80	69	20_55	yes
Kemp, Randall	64 Fomer Rd	4	1675	field crops	22	100	0	28_28	no
Konopka, Stanley	59 Pomeroy Meadow Rd	3	2164	not Chapter 61A	30	60	20	13_81	no
Konopka, Stanley	68 Pomeroy Meadow Rd	3	2148	not Chapter 61A	15	10	91	13_82	no
Labrie, Eugene	229 Brickyard Rd	8	39	not Chapter 61A	32	40	43	39_27_A	yes
Labrie, Eugene & James	399 College Hwy	7	14	not Chapter 61A	17	100	65	40_42	no
Labrie, Eugene & James	399 College Hwy	7	20	not Chapter 61A	39	50	51	39_26	yes

Owner	Address	FRAP Map #	Parcel #	FY 2017 Chapter 61A details	Acres	% Open	% Farmland soils	Parcel ID	Adjacent to conservation
Labrie, James	75 Valley Rd	7	280	not Chapter 61A	11	40	84	40_108	no
Labrie, James	81 Valley Rd	7	442	not Chapter 61A	13	50	95	40_43	no
Labrie, James	62 Gunn Rd	12	2005	not Chapter 61A	28	10	78	20_119	yes
Labrie, Kevin	Valley Rd	7	305	not Chapter 61A	7	90	84	40_50	no
Labrie, Monica	0 Old County Rd	7	480	field crops	14	50	55	43_18	no
Labrie, Monica	41 Valley Rd	7	27	field crops	78	50	66	40_101	no
Lobudek, John & Barbara Trust	Whiteloaf Rd	9	775	uncertain	30	40	21	40_10_B	no
Lobudek, John & Barbara Trust	Whiteloaf Rd/Middle Rd	9	868	field crops	47	80	57	40_13_B	no
Lohr, Richard	66 Wolcott Rd	3	1821	not Chapter 61A	65	30	26	12_17	yes
Marchesi, Matthew	1 Russellville Rd	5	230	not Chapter 61A	24	40	96	38_13	no
McNamara, Susan	268 Fomer Rd	1	2042	uncertain	45	20	42	9_4	yes
Mitchel, Linda	71 Gunn Rd	12	2074	not Chapter 61A	30	20	96	20_20	no
O'Connor, Charles Trust	0 Pleasant St	11	1674	field crops	113	50	55	29_12	no
O'Connor Land & Timber LLC	Brickyard Rd	6	949	not Chapter 61A	79	10	75	34_148	yes
O'Connor, Timothy	0 Pleasant St	11	1733	field crops	8	100	95	24_28_A	no
O'Connor, Timothy	0 Pleasant St	11	1571	field crops	12	100	100	29_11	no
O'Leary, John	0 Miller Ave	2	2644	field crops	52	60	75	7_9_A	no
Parent, Marie	125 Russellville Rd	5	879	not Chapter 61A	70	10	24	33_32	yes
Pipiras, John	55 Gunn Rd	12	2316	orchard	9	70	90	20_22_D	no
Pomeroy, Lewis & Seth	491 Russellville Rd Rear	5	282	field crops	21	30	63	38_15	yes
Raymond, Mark	0 Glendale Rd	2	2838	field crops	63	80	77	7_4	no
Raymond, Mark	0 Glendale Rd Rear	2	2839	field crops	20	40	85	7_10_B	no
Raymond, Mark	145 Glendale Rd	2	2746	field crops	84	20	38	7_1	no
St Martin, Alan	13 Pleasant St	11	1542	not Chapter 61A	27	50	76	29_59_A	no
TCB Fruits LLC	160 East St	10	818	field crops	94	40	35	36_1	no
Wayne, Christopher	0 College Hwy	11	1841	not Chapter 61A	42	30	61	19_141	yes
Weingart, Joel & Davis, Rebecca	423 College Hwy	7	478	field crops	59	70	64	43_1	no
Whiteley, Thomas	Maple St	4	1740	not Chapter 61A	7	20	100	23_26	no
Whiteley, Thomas	48 Maple St	4	2331	field crops	35	20	53	23_2	no
Wing, Timothy	0 Douglas Rd	7	38	field crops	9	80	60	42_1_A	no
Wing, Timothy	415 College Hwy	7	137	field crops	35	90	83	40_69	no
Wing, Timothy	College Hwy	7	517	field crops	7	90	90	39_28	no
Wing, Timothy	College Hwy	7	420	field crops	12	100	85	40_69_A	no
Wing, Timothy	Valley Rd	8	374	uncertain	14	80	80	39_17	yes
York-Whiteley, Cheri	69 Maple St	4	1626	not Chapter 61A	81	10	47	23_27	no
Zedonis, Alice	114R Brickyard Rd	6	945	not Chapter 61A	40	20	75	28_93_A	no