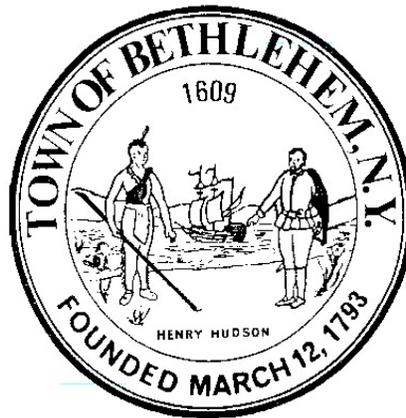


New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

Municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan
2007 Grant Application



Town of Bethlehem
Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan

Town of Bethlehem
Albany County
New York

Prepared By:
Department of Economic Development & Planning

December 2007

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

Albany County - New York

OFFICE OF THE SUPERVISOR

445 DELAWARE AVENUE
DELMAR, NEW YORK 12054

(518) 439-4955 x1164

Fax: (518) 439-1699

Email: JCunningham@townofbethlehem.org



John H. Cunningham
Town Supervisor

December 12, 2007

Lucy Roberson, Director
Division of Fiscal Management
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
10B Airline Drive
Albany, NY 12235

RE: Municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Grant Program

Dear Ms. Roberson:

Thank you for your recent solicitation for proposals regarding the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets 2007 Municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Grant Program.

The Town of Bethlehem is pleased to submit an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan grant application. The Town recognizes that as it continues to grow, its agricultural lands and natural resources face increasing conversion pressure. In 2005, the Town adopted its first ever Comprehensive Plan that recommended the creation of a Farmland and Open Space Protection Program. Currently, the Town is in the process of soliciting interest from consultants to assist the Town in the development of a Farmland and Open Space Protection Plan. Your grant funding assistance would support the Town's efforts to recognize agricultural lands of willing landowners and establish goals and strategies that can result in their enhancement, management, and continued viability in the Town of Bethlehem.

I look forward to your consideration of this application. If you have any questions, please contact Robert Leslie, AICP, Senior Planner, at 439-4955, ext. 1157.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John H. Cunningham".

John H. Cunningham
Supervisor

Enclosure

cc: G. Leveille
R. Leslie

New York Department of Agriculture and Markets
Application for State Assistance Payments for
Municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan
Development

APPLICATION FORM A

Instructions: Please complete this page and attach it as the first page of the work plan. Fill in all information requested. Failure to provide all requested information may result in approval delay. Since priority of funding is determined by the date an application is deemed complete, this may result in a delay in funding. Submit four (4) copies of this application and work plan.

Municipality: Town of Bethlehem

Address: 445 Delaware Avenue, Delmar, NY 12205

Supervisor: John H. Cunningham

Applicant Principal Contact:

Name: Robert Leslie, AICP

Address: 445 Delaware Avenue, Delmar, NY 12205

Phone/Fax: 518-439-4955 ext.1157 E-Mail: rleslie@townofbethlehem.org

Name and address of the County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board Chairperson Howard Zimmer, 112 State Street, Room 720, Albany, NY 12207 (518) 447-5660

Amount of State funding requested: \$25,000

Anticipated time frame for completing all tasks resulting in the preparation of or revision to a municipal agricultural and farmland protection plan: 18-24 months

1. Project Narrative: Use this form to address the following:

a) Please briefly summarize the municipality's overall goal and anticipated outcome for this proposed agricultural and farmland protection planning project.

The Town of Bethlehem's 2005 Comprehensive Plan vision statement describes the Town as a community with productive rural lands. The Town recognizes that as it continues to grow, its agricultural lands and natural resources face increasing conversion pressure. In order to achieve its vision, a recommendation of the Comprehensive Plan is for the Town to consider the creation of a farmland and open space protection program for the protection of its high quality farmland and significant open space resources. The proposed Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan will recognize agricultural lands of willing landowners and establish goals and strategies that can result in their enhancement, management, and continued viability in the Town of Bethlehem. (See Attachment #1 for location and land use map.)

Application Form A – item #1 Project Narrative

b) Identify opportunity for collaboration with other agencies or groups. Please list organizations committed to assisting the municipality in developing the plan.

Potential opportunities for collaboration with other agencies or groups include the following: Town of Bethlehem Citizens Advisory Committee on Conservation (CACC), Albany County Planning Department, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County, and American Farmland Trust.

c) Summarize the trends and economic conditions in the municipality that reflect the importance of agriculture to the municipality and which warrant agricultural and farmland protection measures.

In August 2007, the Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee (CPOC) conducted a review of residential and commercial development activity and building trends in the Town since 2000. CPOC's review demonstrated fairly consistent commercial development activity and a dramatic downward trend in one and two-family housing activity. Although these trends are consistent with the growth policies established in the Comprehensive Plan, the decrease is somewhat influenced by external factors such as a general downturn in the housing market.

Recent development projects submitted to the Town are likely to develop approximately 300 acres of land currently located in areas containing prime farmland soils and soils of statewide importance within Agricultural District #3. The loss of the 300 acres to the Agricultural District will result in the addition of approximately 385 dwelling units to the Town and the loss of these lands that contain valuable agricultural soil. As such, the Town feels that this is a good period to develop an agricultural and farmland protection plan so as to be prepared for future development pressure on its existing working landscape.

d) Provide a brief description of the agricultural setting in the municipality along with the approximate number and type of farms within the land area, which is the subject of the plan.

In 2004, a Farms and Rural Lands survey, as part of the Comprehensive Plan public outreach process, was mailed to approximately 330 farmers and large property owners who own seven acres or more to more clearly understand the future of the rural agricultural and farmland areas in Bethlehem. (See Attachment #2 for survey analysis.) The survey revealed that landowners were engaged in the production of hay and other crops, utilized their land for pasture and livestock, managed their property for timber, and were engaged in the following agricultural practices: horse boarding/stables, horticulture/nursery, dairy, poultry, and Christmas tree farms.

Within the Town of Bethlehem there are over 4,680 acres enrolled in the Albany County Agricultural District #3. This represents approximately 15% of the Town's land area. Landowners participating in the Agricultural District program are located in District #3. These lands are somewhat dispersed throughout the town. Based on the New York State Office of Real Property Service land use classification codes (100-199), approximately 6,790 acres (115 parcels), are listed in the agricultural category.

Town of Bethlehem
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
Municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Grant

e) Summarize the present and future prospects for farm viability in the municipality.

As part of the 2004 Farms and Rural Lands survey participants provided information regarding activities that would be beneficial to the agricultural and rural properties of the Town. The responses to the survey indicate that there remain present and future prospects for farm viability in the Town. An overwhelming majority agreed that there is currently a potential in Bethlehem to supply local restaurants, grocers, schools, and institutions with locally grown produce; thereby supporting and promoting local businesses.

Landowners believed that future activities of farm stands and farm markets, horse stables and riding, bed and breakfast, and privately owned/operated recreational facilities would be beneficial to agricultural and rural properties of Bethlehem. Woodworking shops, timber harvesting, sawmills, welding and machine shops, independent truckers, a slaughterhouse, and mining were also mentioned. Overall, allowing for and maintaining a diversity of uses is favorable.

f) Provide a summary of other indications of the economic conditions and importance of agriculture to the municipality.

As part of the 2004 Farm and Rural Landowners survey, participants were asked to indicate their development plans over the next ten years. From the responses, it appears that less than half are looking to develop their land over the next ten years, which consists of either selling their land or subdividing their property for future development. Other landowners have a desire to continue their active agricultural practices. They anticipate that they will still be farming, sell or rent land for someone else to farm, have a member of the family continue farming, or sell development rights and continue farming. Those interested in selling development rights expressed a need for increased education about available conservation options.

g) Key project personnel

The Town has solicited qualifications from consultants to assist the Town in the development of an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, as a component of its Farmland and Open Space Protection Plan. The consultants and associated key personnel that are being considered include the following:

Behan Planning Associates, LLC

Key Personnel

Education

John Behan, AICP

Master of Regional Planning – 1983

Bachelor of Arts, Environmental Science – 1979

Melissa Barry

Master of Environmental Planning – 2001

Bachelor of Science, Biology – 1996

Town of Bethlehem
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
Municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Grant

- Town of Guilderland, NY – Rural Guilderland: Open Space and Farmland Protection Plan, Design Guidelines, & Zoning Amendments (2005)
- Town of Malta, NY – Rural Character Element of the GEIS(2005)
- Town of Henrietta, NY – Rural Design Guidelines
- Lewis County, NY – Lewis County Agricultural Enhancement Plan (2004)
- Town of Clifton Park, NY – Rural Design Guidelines, New Zoning Districts, and Conservation Incentive Zoning for the Western Clifton Park GEIS (2004)

American Farmland Trust

Key Personnel

Education

David Haight Master of Science, Natural Resource Planning – 2000
Bachelor of Arts, Environmental Studies and Political Science – 1995

Liz Brock Master of Science, Soil Science – 2005
Bachelor of Science, Animal Science – 2001

- Cattaraugus County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (2006)
- Livingston County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (2006)
- Wyoming County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (2004)
- Orange County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Strategy (2004)
- Brant, Evans and North Collins Farmland Protection Plan (2001)
- Rensselaer County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (2002)
- New York State Farmland Protection Program

The Chazen Companies

Key Personnel

Education

Christopher Round, AICP Bachelor of Science, Environmental Studies – 1984

Michael Welti, AICP Master of Regional Planning – 1996
Master of Arts, Social Studies – 1991
Bachelor of Arts, Political Science – 1989

Paul Cummings Master of Urban and Regional Planning – 2007
Bachelor of Arts, Political Science – 2001
European Politics and British Law – 2000

Carol Connolly Master of Science, Geology – 1990
Bachelor of Science, Applied Earth Sciences – 1990

Ellen Jouret-Epstein, RLA Masters of Landscape Architecture
Bachelor of Arts, Art History

Susan Boyer Bachelor in Landscape Architecture – 1999

- Saratoga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan
- Town of Gorham Open Space, Farmland, and Resource Conservation Program
- Town of Canandaigua Farmland and Open Space Conservation Program
- Town of Red Hook Open Space Plan

Town of Bethlehem
 NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
 Municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Grant

Kaaterskill Associates

Key Personnel

Edward F. Kleinke III, RLA

Education

Bachelor of Science Landscape Architecture – 1972

Lewis N. Kremer, AIA

Bachelor of Arts, Sociology and Philosophy
 Master of Architecture – 1961

Michael P. Bliss

Bachelor of Architecture – 1981

Ewald F. Schwarzenegger, PE

Bachelor of Science Mechanical Engineering – 1983

Clark Patterson Lee

Key Personnel

Richard B. Henry III, P.E.

Education

Bachelor of Science, Civil Engineering – 1990

Dale E. Conklin, RLA

Master of Science in Urban Environmental Planning -
 1982
 Bachelor of Landscape Architecture – 1974
 Bachelor of Science in Environmental Influences – 1973

Robert C. Corby

Bachelor of Architecture – 1987

Kerry A. Pizzi, AICP

Master of Science, Public Policy Analysis – 1996
 Bachelor of Arts Communication/Journalism – 1994

Timothy Moot, CPG

Bachelor of Science, Geology – 1992

W. Joseph Teliska, PE

Thomas L. Daniels

Ph.D in Agricultural and Resource Economics – 1984
 Master of Science in Agriculture and Resource
 Economics – 1977
 Bachelor of Arts, Economics – 1976

- Town of Pavilion Comprehensive Plan
- Jerusalem Comprehensive Plan
- Town of Pembroke and Village of Corfu Comprehensive Plan
- Town of Conesus Comprehensive Plan
- Town of Ogden Comprehensive Master Plan
- Town of Dix Comprehensive Plan
- Town of Fleming Comprehensive Plan
- Transfer of Development Rights Ordinance for St. Lucie County, FL
- Transfer of Development Rights Report for Hillsborough County, FL
- Dakota County MN, Farmland and Natural Area Preservation Program Guidelines
- Purchase of Development Rights Feasibility Study for Tompkins County, NY
- Points-Based Appraisal Systems to Estimate the Value of Development Rights or Farm Properties in Lancaster County, PA
- Agricultural Zoning Ordinance for Mclean County, IL

Form A –item #2 Scope of Work/Work Plan

1. Inventory

- a. Compile pre-existing maps of agricultural lands
- b. Develop a rating system for agricultural lands based on quality, location, total acreage, and any other values as assigned by the Study Advisory Committee
- c. Identify economic impact of agriculture in the Town and biggest issues currently facing farmers.

Responsible parties: Study Advisory Committee, American Farmland Trust, Town Planning Department

Methodology:

1. Compile maps of agricultural lands in the town
2. Work with Study Advisory Committee and Town Planning Department to identify rating system to be used to rank agricultural protection priorities

Products: Maps and rating system for agricultural properties in Town

2. Vision/Goals/Objectives

- a. Develop agricultural goals and objectives for the Town, including identification and characterization of farmland the Town wants to protect
- b. Develop shared vision for the future of agriculture in the Town

Responsible parties: American Farmland Trust, Study Advisory Committee, Town Planning Department

Methodology:

1. Work with advisory committee to develop goals for the Farmland Protection Plan;
2. Interviews with 10-15 farmers, local officials and others engaged in farmland protection issues to gather interest and need;
3. Facilitate two public hearings on farmland protection in the town; distribute public opinion survey to community members about farmland protection goals
4. Compile results of Study Advisory Committee and public opinion research into draft vision for agriculture in the Town

Products: Vision statement for the future of agriculture in the Town; agriculture and farmland protection goals and objectives.

3. Policy Recommendations/Strategies

- a. Evaluate current local farm policy and land use planning documents for inconsistencies with new vision, goals and objectives of the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan
- b. Discuss alternative protection strategies, including changes to land use policies, local Right to Farm law, agricultural advisory committee, and purchase of development rights program

Town of Bethlehem
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
Municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Grant

- c. Select and develop local protection strategies, which may include revised language for agricultural components of Town's zoning, subdivision and comprehensive planning documents

Responsible parties: American Farmland Trust, Study Advisory Committee, Town Planning Department

Methodology:

1. Work with Study Advisory committee and Town Planning Department to design land use planning documents consistent with vision and public opinion research

Products: Local agriculture and farmland protection strategies and policies that support the Plan's vision, goals and objectives

4. Develop Municipal Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

- a. Compile strategy recommendations, public opinion input and agricultural identification into one coherent and strategic plan for the Town for Agriculture and Farmland Protection

Responsible Parties: American Farmland Trust, Study Advisory Committee, Town Planning Department

Methodology:

1. Develop draft municipal agriculture and farmland protection plan
2. Present findings to Town Board and revise as recommended

Products: Final municipal agriculture and farmland protection plan to be submitted to the Department of Agriculture and Markets for approval by Commissioner of Agriculture.

5. Implementation Plan

- a. Develop Plan Implementation Matrix to include recommended strategies, actions, involved parties, timeframe, resources needed, and availability of resources
- b. Further landowner education about voluntary land protection opportunities.

Responsible Parties: American Farmland Trust

Methodology:

1. Work with town board and advisory committee to develop matrix
2. Hold one landowner outreach workshop on voluntary farmland protection opportunities and funding streams available.

Products: Implementation matrix; ballot language for plan adoption

Note that since the Town is currently receiving responses to a Request for Qualifications for its Farmland and Open Space Protection Plan, of which this Plan is a component, minor changes to the Scope of Work are anticipated once a consultant is selected. However, the general planning process as outlined in the Scope of Work would continue to be followed.

FORM B-1

**MUNICIPAL AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION STATE
 ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
 Proposed Project Budget**

Project Title: Town of Bethlehem Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan

Project Applicant: Town of Bethlehem

Expenditure Category	Grant Funds	Applicant Match		Total
		Cash	In-Kind	
Salaries and Wages (Personal Services)		\$1,667	\$4,166	\$5,833
Fringe Benefits				
Consultant Services	\$23,200			\$23,200
*Travel (at state rate)	\$1,000			\$1,000
Public Hearings			\$1,500	\$1,500
Supplies and Materials	\$200		\$500	\$700
Communications	\$100			\$100
Printing	\$500		\$500	\$1,000
Other (Specify)				
Total	\$25,000	\$1,667	\$6,666	\$25,000

Application Budget Form B-2 Budget Summary

Total State Funds Requested: \$25,000
 a.) applicant cash match: \$ 1,667
 b.) applicant in-kind match: \$ 6,666
 Total Cost of Project: \$33,333

Please provide a brief description of in-kind services to be used for up to 80% of the required match:

Town staff consisting of the Town Planner, Senior Planner, GIS Specialist, GIS Technician, and Assistant to the Director will be assigned to work on the Plan. Services will include maintaining the Study Advisory Committee, technical assistance and review products, providing Plan materials and updates on the Town’s website, prepare mapping resources, and attend and organize (consisting of providing printing resources, supplies and materials, displays) public workshops and public meetings.

List Sources (name and sector) and Amount of Applicant Match: Town of Bethlehem Department of Economic Development and Planning 2008 Budget.

(Some applicants may have obtained match funds from outside sources: if so, fill in below)

Source of Match	Sector (circle one)		Amount
<u>N/A</u>	Public	Private	\$ <u>N/A</u>
<u>N/A</u>	Public	Private	\$ <u>N/A</u>

Please attach documentation such as resolution or letter from an authorized municipal official obligating the cash match.

See Attachment #3 for Town Board Resolution.

Checklist for Application Completeness

MUNICIPALITY Town of Bethlehem

APPLICATION

- (X) Proposal submitted by eligible applicant, as described in the “Applicant Eligibility” section on page 2 of the RFA.
- (X) Four (4) paper copies of proposal submitted.
- (X) All information requested on the first page of Application Form A is provided.
- (X) Name and address of municipality applying.
- (X) Name of the Town Supervisor.
- (X) Identification of the County AFPB Chair (name, address, and telephone number).
- (X) Identification of an individual to be contacted concerning information contained in the application.
- (X) Amount of the state funding request.
- (X) Estimate of the time frame for completing the plan.
- 1. Project Narrative
 - (X) a. Summary of the overall goal and anticipated project outcome.
 - (X) b. List of organization committed to assist in developing the plan.
 - (X) c. Summary statement of the economic trends and conditions in the municipality that warrant agricultural and farmland protection measures.
 - (X) d. Description of the agricultural setting in the municipality along with the approximate number of farms and type of farms within the land area which is the subject of the plan.
 - (X) e. Summary of the present and future prospects for farm viability in the municipality.
 - (X) f. Summary of other indications of the economic conditions and importance of agriculture to the municipality.
 - (X) g. List of key personnel including experience in developing agricultural sections of municipal comprehensive plans and land use regulations.
- 2. Scope of work/ work plan.
 - (X) Scope of work/work plan that reflects the required plan elements as outlined in Circular 1500 section 324-a.
 - (X) a. The required public hearing is included within the scope of work.

Town of Bethlehem
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
Municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Grant

(X) b. The application includes an authorizing resolution which includes the signature of the chair of the municipal legislative body. (See Attachment #3 for Town Board resolution.)

BUDGET AND COSTS

- (X) Budget (Budget Form B-1 & Budget Form B-2) is complete.
- (X) Proposal does not request more than \$25,000 in state funding.
- (X) Evidence of availability of cash match.
- (X) Matching funds or in-kind services for project equals or exceeds twenty-five percent (25%) of the TOTAL project costs and at least twenty percent (20%) of that match is cash.
- (X) Description of in-kind services to be used for up to eighty percent (80%) match.
- (X) Funding request is for eligible costs only, as described on pages 2 and 3 of the RFA.
- (X) Matching project expenses do not include work performed prior to announcement of awarded projects.
- (X) New York State funds not used for any of the match.
- (X) Indirect and overhead costs are not used for matching in-kind.

REMINDERS:

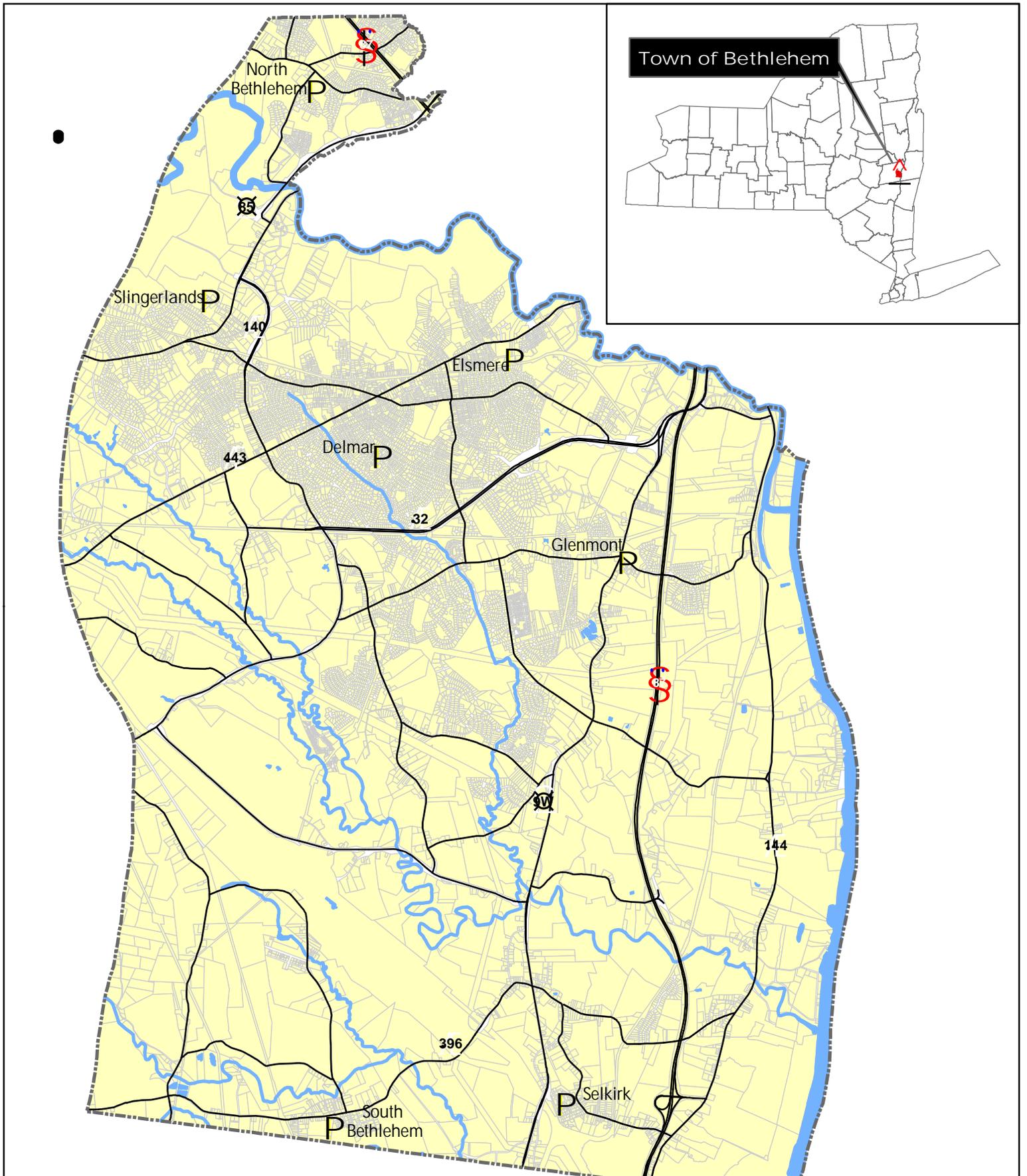
- (X) Application is for agricultural and farmland protection planning activities that will result in the preparation of a municipal agricultural and farmland protection plan.
- (X) Planning activities resulting in the preparation of a municipal agricultural and farmland protection plan are to be completed within the twenty-four (24) months comprising the contract period.

Signature of principal contact_____ Date_____

Attachment # 1

Location Map

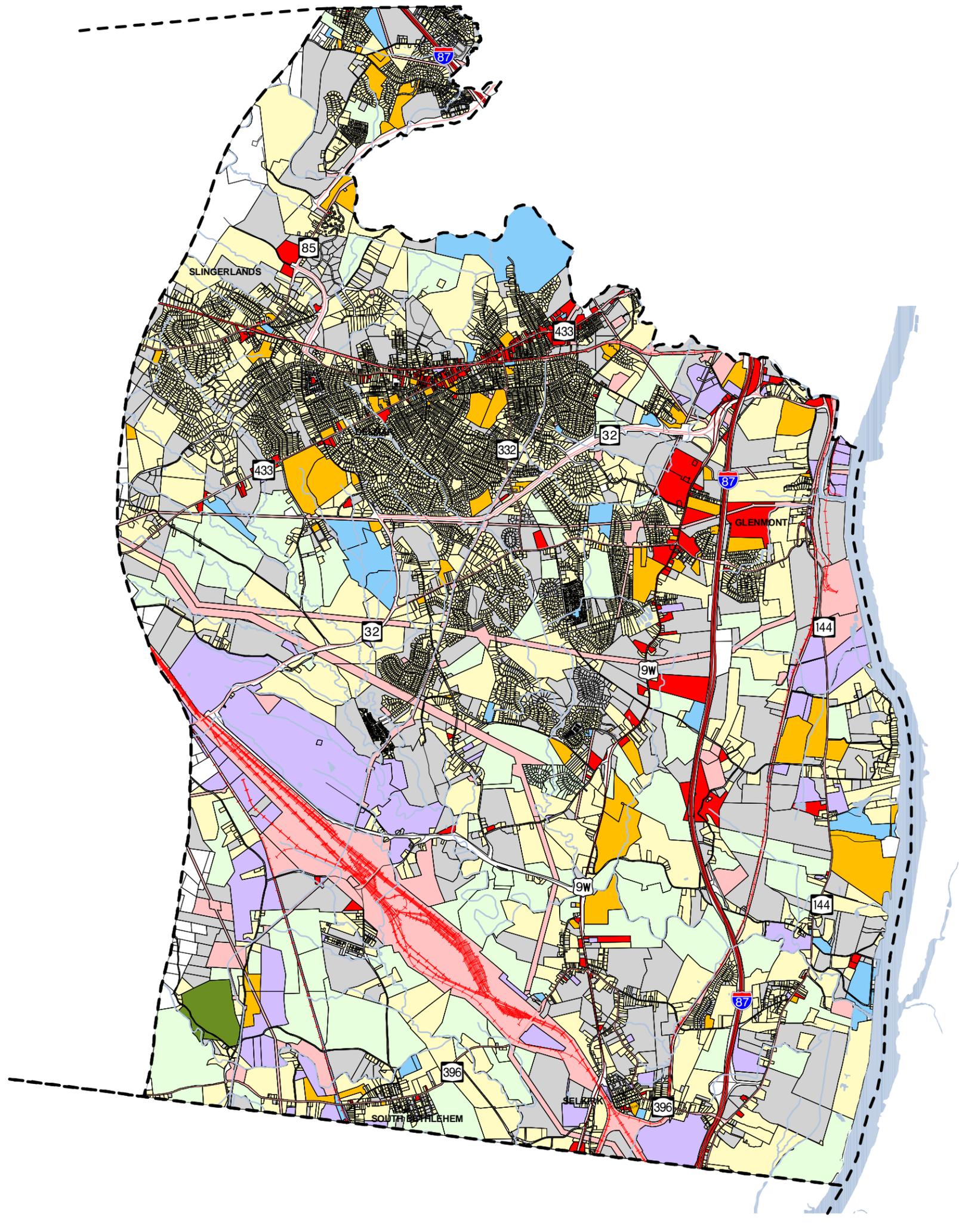
Land Use Map



Town of Bethlehem
 Municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan
 Grant Application
 Location Map

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



LAND USE

LEGEND:

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------|--|----------------------------|
| | Town Boundary | | Agricultural |
| | Tributary | | Residential |
| | Right-of-way | | Vacant |
| | Interstate | | Commercial |
| | State Roads | | Recreation & Entertainment |
| | US & Federal Roads | | Community Services |
| | Local Road | | Public Services |
| | Railroad | | Industrial |
| | Water | | Forested |
| | Parcel Boundary | | No Data |

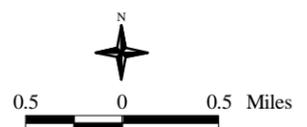


February 2005

THE SARATOGA ASSOCIATES

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS, ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS & PLANNERS, P.C.
NEW YORK SARATOGA SPRINGS BOSTON

This map is computer generated using data acquired by The Saratoga Associates from various sources and is intended only for reference, conceptual planning and presentation purposes. This map is not intended for and should not be used to establish boundaries, property lines, location of objects or to provide any other information typically needed for construction or any other purpose when engineered plans or land surveys are required.



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Attachment # 2

Comprehensive Plan

Farm and Rural Lands Survey Analysis

November 30, 2004

Town of Bethlehem, New York Comprehensive Plan

Farm and Rural Lands Survey Analysis November 30, 2004

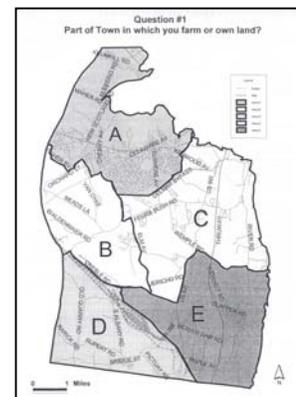
In early November 2004, survey questionnaires were mailed to approximately 330 farmers and large property owners in the Town as part of the comprehensive planning process. Farms with seven or more acres and property owners with twenty or more acres received questionnaires. Approximately 1% of the Town's population received this survey. Despite representing a small portion of the Town's population, farms and large rural properties contribute a great deal to the community in terms of character, land management, tax base and more. Therefore, the Comprehensive Plan Committee felt it was very important to hear from this segment of the community.

The purpose of this survey was to more clearly understand the future of the rural areas in Bethlehem. Approximately 151 completed survey questionnaires were returned to Town Hall and tabulated by Town staff. The response rate was excellent with over 45% of surveys returned.

Question #1: Identify the part of Town in which you farm or own land.

Nearly 29% of respondents indicated they farm or own land in the Selkirk/Cedar Hill area or Area E (as shown on the map). The next largest group, approximately 24.7%, of respondents own or farm land in the Greater Glenmont area or Area C. The South Albany/South Bethlehem area or Area D was the identified by 14.3% as the area in which they farm or own land.

Based on these figures, the majority of farmers and large landowners that responded to the survey are focused in the eastern and southern portion of the Town.



Question #2: How many acres do you own?

Nearly 37% of respondents indicated that they own less than 20 acres. Over 26% stated they own 60 acres or more, while 23% own 20 –39.9 acres. The remaining respondents own 40 – 59.9 acres. As expected, those respondents with property in the Delmar, Slingerlands and North Bethlehem area typically had less than 20 acres, while those with property in the South Albany and South Bethlehem area had more than 60 acres. This is consistent with general population patterns in the Town. The Delmar and Slingerlands area is much more populated than the South Albany and South Bethlehem area, indicating fewer large tracks of open and undeveloped land.

Question #3: How do you use your land?

In answering this question, 23% of respondents stated that their land is kept open and undeveloped, but is not managed to produce income. Eighteen percent indicated that their land was formerly farmed, but is no longer farmed. Together, over 41% of respondents stated that their land is open, undeveloped and not currently in production. These trends are consistent with farming and rural lands trends in Albany County and New York State. Land in farms, average size of farms and the number of farms in Albany County has been decreasing in recent decades.

Thirty-five percent of respondents also indicated that their property is farmed; managed for timber, mining, fish or wildlife habitat; or is rented for farming purposes. Another 5% of respondents rent additional land to farm. This working landscape is a significant factor contributing to the long-term management of such resources and to the rural character of the Town.

Question #4: If you are engaged in an agricultural business, what types of agriculture do you practice?

Over 40% of respondents engaged in the production of hay and other crops. Nearly 18% use their land for pasture, while 14% have livestock. Nearly 10% managed their property for timber. The remaining respondents are engaged in the following agricultural practices: horse boarding/stables, horticulture/nursery, dairy, poultry, and Christmas tree farms.

The Town of Bethlehem trend toward the production of hay and other crops is similar to that of Albany County farms. According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, the top crop commodity in the County was hay.

Question #5: Is farming the primary source of your household's income?

Over 97% stated that farming is not their household's primary source of income. This is a familiar trend in farming today, especially for family farms. Economic pressures, development pressures, and rising health care costs make it increasingly difficult for farms to stay profitable. Often, one or more members of the farm household must seek employment outside of the farm.

Question #6: Which of the following do you believe are, or would be, beneficial to the agricultural and rural properties of the Town?

Of those responding, 30% believed that farm stands and farm markets would be beneficial to agricultural and rural properties of Bethlehem. This supports a desire for increased opportunities to purchase locally grown produce and reinforces what has been vocalized throughout the public participation process.

Nearly 12% felt that horse stables and riding would be beneficial, 10 % believed that a bed and breakfast would be beneficial, and 9% agreed that privately owned/operated recreational facilities would be beneficial. Woodworking shops, timber harvesting, sawmills, welding and machine shops, independent truckers, a slaughterhouse, and mining were also mentioned. Overall, allowing for and maintaining a diversity of uses is favorable.

Question #7: Do you believe there is potential in Town for agriculture that could supply local restaurants, grocers, schools and institutions?

An overwhelming 83% agreed that there is potential in Bethlehem to supply local restaurants, grocers, schools, and institutions with locally grown produce. This is yet another manner in which to support local businesses. The remaining 17% did not believe there is potential for these types of partnerships in the community.

Question #8: Would you consider an arrangement to sell the development rights to your property?

While 44% of respondents indicated they would not considering selling development rights to their property, 31% stated they would consider it. In addition, a quarter of all respondents suggested they would like more information regarding the sale of development rights. All together, 56% of respondents expressed an interest in either selling their development rights or learning more about the possibility. The response to this question suggests a need for increased education about the options available to property owners.

Question #9: Would you consider an arrangement in which you would place your land under a temporary conservation easement in exchange for a reduction in local property taxes?

Showing close similarities to Question #8, 40% of respondents to this particular question stated they would not consider a temporary conservation easement in exchange for a reduction in local property taxes. However, 31% indicated they would consider such an arrangement and 29% expressed an interest in finding out more information about temporary easements. In total, 60% would like additional information about or would consider a temporary conservation easement. Again, additional information and education about the opportunities available to property owners would be beneficial in the Town.

Question #10: Would favor the Town investing in programs such as the ones described in #8 and #9 above?

Fifty-one percent of respondents stated they would favor the Town investing in such programs, whether or not they as landowners would participate. Approximately 37% indicated a need for more information, while a quarter of respondents said they would not participate. General responses by those that would not consider such investment by the Town included concerns over higher taxes, Town ownership of land, and restrictions placed on the use of the land.

Question #11: Over the next 10 years, I expect that I will?

Several options were listed for this question. It seems that over 21% hope to keep their land open/undeveloped, but not manage to produce income over the next 10 years. Thirteen percent will still be managing their land as woodlands, for mining, or as fish/wildlife habitat. Managing the land for its natural resources is another way to keep the land open and undeveloped.

Thirteen percent plan to sell all of their land for development and nearly 12% plan to subdivide their property and sell several building lots. This equates into approximately 25% looking to develop their land over the next 10 years.

The next 12% selected the “other” category. Written comments in the other category included those that hoped to preserve their land, give building lots to family members, and those that were unsure of the future of their land.

The remaining responses are related to a continuation of active agricultural practices. Nearly 29% percent anticipate that they will still be farming, sell or rent land for someone else to farm, have a member of the family continue farming, or sell development rights and continue farming.

Question #12: What else should the Town of Bethlehem local government do to promote local agriculture?

Many respondents wrote comments in answer to this question. The comments were reviewed and consolidated into major themes that include lower taxes for farms and tax incentives to keep land open and in production; encourage alternative farming and locally grown produce; raise awareness of agriculture and increase educational opportunities; limit or slow growth, development and sprawl; permit flexibility in zoning; protect agricultural land, open space and natural resources; and the government should not be involved. These comments indicated that there are many ways in which the Town can help in promoting agriculture that range from relatively quick inexpensive items such as encouraging farm stands and raising awareness to programs that would require more substantial investments of time and financial resources.

Attachment # 3

Town Board Resolution

**TOWN BOARD
TOWN OF BETHLEHEM**

**RESOLUTION
AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN GRANT APPLICATION
New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets**

WHEREAS, the Department of Economic Development and Planning requests for the Town to submit to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets a grant application to secure funding for a Municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (Plan);

WHEREAS, a resolution by the Town in support of the application is required by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets;

WHEREAS, the Town of Bethlehem recognizes that as it continues to grow, its agricultural lands and natural resources face increasing conversion pressure;

WHEREAS, the Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan recognizes the Town's working landscape as a significant factor contributing to the long-term management of natural resources and to the rural character of the Town;

WHEREAS, the Town of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town create a Farm and Open Space Protection Program;

WHEREAS, the requested grant application consists of securing \$25,000 of State funds to hire a consultant to assist the Town in preparing an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, as a component of the Farm and Open Space Protection Program;

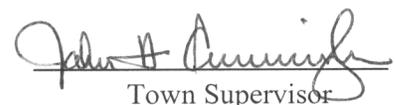
WHEREAS, the town is committed to fund the cash match portion of the grant application for a total required match of \$1,667.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,

that the Town Board hereby determines that submittal of the grant application to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets will execute the recommendation of the Comprehensive Plan;

that the Town Board authorizes the Department of Economic Development and Planning to submit the grant application to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

On a motion by Mrs. Dawson , seconded by Mr. Messina, and by a vote of 5 for, 0 against and 0 absent, this RESOLUTION was adopted on December 12, 2007.


Town Supervisor