

VI

Strengthen and protect farm and forest enterprises, minimizing conflicts between them and other development.

Vermont’s farm and forest enterprises are critical components of the state’s economy, and create the working landscape that is central to Vermont’s cultural identity. Protecting and promoting the long-term viability of these enterprises not only helps the local economy, but also reinforces the development pattern of compact town centers. Identifying existing farm and forestland, developing working lands zoning districts with low density and heightened standards of review, and dedicating funding for the purchase of conservation easements and/or prime agricultural land are all steps that can be taken to support your town’s farm and forest enterprises.

TIPS FOR ACCURATE SCORING:

- Review town plan, zoning, subdivision regulations
- Review parcel maps
- Contact local, regional, or statewide land trust
- Consult town clerk on tax questions
- Talk with local farmers and foresters
- Review Current Use enrollment

A. Does your town plan have strategies for keeping farm and forestland in productive use (i.e., agriculture and/or forestry districts, town conservation fund, map of prime agricultural soils)?

- Yes, we have a set of strategies and policies that address land use and economic development as they relate to agriculture and forestry..... 3
- We have some specific strategies..... 2
- We have no strategies, or vague strategies 1

B. How do your town’s regulations ensure that farm and forest land is kept in productive use?

- We have zoning districts promoting agriculture and forestry uses. The districts have low densities, new residences are either not permitted or are a conditional use that must meet strict standards, and there are incentives or different standards of review for subdivisions and other development 3
- We have special districts that promote agriculture and forestry by regulating density and making housing a conditional use, but no special subdivision or development review standards..... 2
- We do not have special agriculture or forest districts, or do not have zoning 1

C. What densities of development does your zoning allow on farm and forestland?

- Low average densities (1 unit/25 acres or less), with provisions or requirements for small lots (as in clustering or conservation zoning), to protect farmland or forestland 3
- Low densities, but without provisions for small lots; or high densities 2
- High densities, with no provisions to protect farmland or forestland..... 1





“From a farming perspective resilience is about getting crops planted, tended, and properly stored in the face of whatever weather extremes come our way, while improving soil conditions and the future productive capacity of the land. It’s not about producing food when it’s convenient, but in being a completely reliable, diversified source of local food, year-round.”

- *Pete Johnson, Pete’s Greens*

D. How does the town enable and support the production, processing, and sale of local foods?

- Our zoning permits “agripreneurial” activities (farmers markets, farm stands, farm cafés, pick-your-own operations and/or value-added processing) 3
- Our zoning does not address these issues..... 2
- We prohibit some or all of these uses, or do not have zoning 1

E. Is there local support for farming and/or forestry through tax abatements and encouragement of Current Use?

- Yes, we offer tax abatements and/or a dedicated fund, and promote Current Use..... 3
- We have, or are working on, a plan to offer tax abatements and promote Current Use..... 2
- No, we do not pursue these approaches..... 1

F. Is your town supporting conservation and/or land trust activity through a dedicated town fund to help purchase or protect prime working land?

- Yes, we have a line item for conservation in the town budget 3
- We do not have a regular town funding source, but encourage land trust activity and have town plan language about the value of conservation.... 2
- No, we discourage conservation/land trust activity, or are silent on the issue..... 1

Score: _____

Scoring	Suggested Steps for Building Resilience
15-18 Resilient Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zone for forest practices by allowing sawmills, access to parcels, landing/turnaround areas, etc. • Support working lands with a town fund, tax abatements, or conservation easements.
9-14 In Transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement density and clustering provisions so that surrounding land can still be worked after development. • Develop conservation and forest zoning districts
Needs Your Attention! 7-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map the land to understand and plan for existing farm and forest resources • Educate landowners about Use Value Appraisal (Current Use).