

Farmland Protection Plan Town of Charlton, New York

Agriculture is a vital part of the Town of Charlton. The rural landscapes of the town are appreciated by residents and visitors alike, and make Charlton a desirable place to live. Ironically, as people move to “the country” the rural character that drew them in is in danger of being lost. New development threatens the agricultural landscape as lots get subdivided into smaller pieces, unusable for agriculture. New homes may encroach on existing farm operations causing conflicts and eventual abandoning of the farm operations. As more farm land is lost it gets more difficult for the remaining farmers to maintain a critical mass of land and resources to support profitable operations. This is a situation that has been seen time and time again in other areas, and one that Charlton hopes to avoid through the implementation of their farmland protection plan.

The goals of the plan were to create a detailed inventory of the town’s agricultural resources, devise a set of tools and strategies for maintaining agriculture in the town, establish a way to evaluate farms for future protection, and provide agricultural-friendly zoning recommendations. Behan Planning and Design met with the town’s Agricultural Task Force Committee throughout the planning process, conducted two focus group meetings and one public meeting, and completed an agricultural landowner survey to obtain input on the plan. The plan was adopted by the Town Board in February 2010.

The farmland protection plan can be viewed as a road map to preserve as much productive farmland as possible through a combination of voluntary and regulatory tools. By implementing several of the approaches set forth in the plan, Charlton should remain an agricultural community for future generations. Grant funding for this project was obtained by Behan Planning and Design from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

