

# Agriculture and Open Space Project

**Durham Valley, Greene County, New York**

The Agriculture and Open Space Project will result in a strategic plan to implement the agricultural and open space goals set forth in the Town of Durham's comprehensive plan. The Town of Durham has been a farming community for more than 200 years. The agricultural landscape is a critical component of the Town of Durham's unequalled natural and scenic resources. Farming is key to maintaining community character and the local economic base. The Town of Durham, as stated in its comprehensive plan, is committed to remaining a farming community and preserving its open space. The Town of Durham recognizes the critical importance of farming, not just farmland preservation, to the quality of life for all the residents of the Town of Durham. The Town of Durham's Agriculture and Open Space Strategic Plan will highlight actions to improve the economic viability of agriculture and preserve open space.

The Town of Durham is an agricultural community whose very identity is threatened by the loss of economic viability of agriculture and development pressures. The Town of Durham is in the final stages of editing and adopting a comprehensive plan. The results of the planning survey distributed to the Towns of Durham's residents and information gathered from town meetings documented general agreement on the critical importance of agriculture and natural resources to the future of the Town of Durham and the well being of its residents. As a result, the Town of Durham's comprehensive plan sets forth the goals of increasing the economic viability of farming and preserving the Town of Durham's natural resources and open space. Opportunities exist to adopt innovative agricultural, market, and land use strategies to create a sustainable and vigorous farming economy in the Town of Durham. Keeping farmland productive will help maintain open space and preserve the pastoral nature of the community. Linking agricultural economic development and open space preservation will decrease the overall cost of open space preservation. Maintaining a broad base of community involvement and support is essential to the success of this program.

Key goals of the Agriculture and Open Space Strategic Plan are to—

- Maintain community support and involvement
- Create a sustainable and vigorous farming economy in the Town of Durham
- Protect, conserve, and enhance the open space, scenic, natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources of the Town of Durham
- Develop collaborative strategies with neighboring communities and regional organizations
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of economic development in the agricultural sector as a cost-effective means to preserve and protect open space

