

# Town of Pomfret Conservation Commission

## CONSERVATION PLAN

June 2001 Revised July 2008

### 2008 Members

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### MISSION STATEMENT

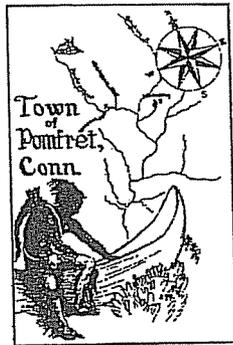
*"The mission of the Pomfret Conservation Commission is to inventory and conserve Pomfret's natural resources and open spaces and to serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of Selectmen and other municipal agencies."*

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“Seen separately, no one feature is particularly impressive. The charm lies rather in the harmony and completeness of the ensemble.”

1896 article “Picturesque Pomfret”  
appearing in the Connecticut Quarterly



“Pomfret was an agricultural town. Yes, agriculture has been forced out of this area due to financial reasons regionally. But Pomfret is still made up of agricultural minded people. We try to live in peace with and off the land. We enjoy farm animals. We enjoy wild animals. Though we may not be able to milk cows for a living or grow cash crops, the rural way of life is bred into many of us true locals...” 2007 Land Use Survey Respondent

## PURPOSE OF PLAN

The Conservation Commission was created in January 1999. The purpose of the Conservation Commission is to:

*Inventory and conserve Pomfret's natural resources and open spaces, and to serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of Selectmen and other municipal agencies.*

We are reviewing and updating our original Conservation Plan to reflect the current community vision of how Pomfret should grow in the future. In April 2007 the Conservation Commission sent out a land use survey, which indicated that a high percentage of respondents value rural, country living and wide-open spaces. They showed a strong desire to use open space for hiking, biking, and horseback riding. Many showed a desire to protect wildlife corridors, historic sites, and abandoned cemeteries. They valued stone walls, undisturbed ridgelines, tree canopies over roads, large forest blocks, farms and agriculture, and streams and lakes. They particularly wanted to preserve scenic views in Pomfret such as Amaral Farm, the Quinebaug River, Mashamoquet Brook, Young's Road, Hamlet Hill, Tyrone Road, Tyott Road, the Townsend/Abbott area, and scenic highways. They also showed interest in protecting historic sites in town and the aquifer on the Murdock property. The survey showed that the overwhelming number of respondents wants to keep Pomfret rural and agricultural (85%). As one person commented on the survey, "There aren't many Pomfrets left." Our purpose is to make recommendations for accommodating future change that will be in harmony with the established goal of preserving our agricultural and rural heritage.

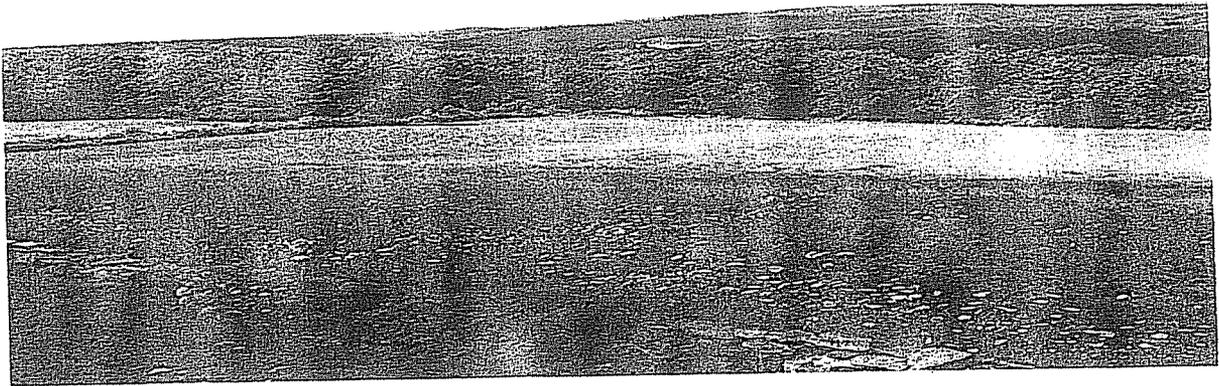
Pomfret can be a town known for consistently wise land-use decisions made with a deeper understanding of our natural environment. The ultimate goal is for Pomfret to be a successful community which finds the right balance among economic development, environmental protection and the quality of life.

## ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF CONSERVATION PLANNING

It is important to understand that there are many economic as well as environmental benefits to a sound conservation and open space plan.

- Numerous studies have shown that farm, forest and open space lands typically provide a town more money in tax dollars than they require in service expenditures. The ratios of town expenditures to revenues for the defined land use classes indicate that the revenues generated

from residential properties are less than the cost of services that those parcels require. Specifically, for every dollar of revenue raised by residential property, the Town of Pomfret must expend \$1.11 on services such as police, fire, public works and education. Alternatively, farm/forest/open land cost the town only \$.15 per dollar. (Working Land Alliance 2005)



Wrights Crossing Road overlooking Wyndham Land Trust

- Communities with sound conservation plans have been shown to actually improve their bond ratings. These ratings have begun to reflect the fact that unlimited and/or mismanaged growth can make a community extremely expensive to manage and threaten its fiscal health. Good conservation and land-use planning, on the other hand, promotes cost-effective development, helps ensure that the quality of life remains desirable and avoids the need for disastrously expensive environmental clean-ups that result from poor land-use decisions. (See State of Connecticut Plan of Conservation and Development, 2005-2010.)
- Conserving land wisely allows nature to continue re-charging our groundwater, cleansing our drinking water, preventing soil erosion, absorbing flood waters and doing many things we take for granted, but which are tremendously expensive for us to do in their absence.
- Studies have shown that private residential properties adjacent or close to permanently protected open space increase in value faster than similar properties elsewhere. This benefits not only the individual homeowners, but the entire town in

the form of an increased grand list. (See State of Connecticut Plan of Conservation and Development, 2005-2010.)

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The following statement of purpose for the natural resources inventory was adopted: To identify and evaluate the quality, quantity and distribution of Pomfret's land, water and biotic resources so that:

1. Land-use decisions made by the town commissions, town officials and individual landowners are made with full understanding of their environmental impacts;
2. Open space priorities and protection strategies are developed which create an optimum balance between continued economic growth and the protection of Pomfret's environment and quality of life;
3. Regulatory procedures may be recommended to the town agencies and commissions for the protection of natural and cultural resources;
4. The information compiled will be shared with other local, regional, and state organizations so that they may be aware of community protection goals;
5. Strategies for the protection and preservation of existing open spaces must be developed and strategies for the acquisition of new open spaces must be formulated.

## **RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION AND MAPPING**

We have included 18 resource maps, including paper and accompanying transparent overlays. See Appendix A.

## **CONSERVATION PLAN**

For planning purposes, the Commission grouped the inventory data into four main categories:

- Wetland and water resources
- Agricultural resources
- Forest and wildlife resources
- Recreational, aesthetic and historic resources.

Recommendations were then developed for each category. The Commission recognizes that all of the natural resource features mapped cannot be permanently protected in their entirety. Our goals were to:

- *Utilize sound, research based information to develop minimum protection standards for each category, and;*
- *Identify and recommend protection strategies which are cost-effective, which can be implemented without unrealistic expense, and which do not result in undue infringement on private property rights.*

## WETLAND AND WATER RESOURCES

The primary source of drinking water in Pomfret is individual private wells. Pomfret contains several additional groundwater areas which are currently untapped but which have the potential to support future public wells (Maps 15 & 16). Avoidance of potentially polluting land uses over these high water yield areas is essential to assuring their future ability to provide clean drinking water.

Surface water quality and protection of streams and wetlands is a difficult topic to address in general terms. These resources are vast and distributed throughout our town. These resources are also the spine of our biotic community and their protection is crucial to the overall quality of our environment:

*Wetlands and watercourses in their natural state have an innate ecological value, providing: 1) fish and wildlife habitat; 2) environmental quality; and 3) socio-economic benefits. (Callahan et al., 1992.)*

The threat to surface water quality in Pomfret includes industrial and commercial pollutants, as well as “non-point” pollution sources. These include effluent from septic systems and contaminated storm water runoff carrying such pollutants as fertilizers, pesticides and petroleum products. Research has shown that “riparian zones” (the vegetative strips of land along stream and pond edges) are critically important in mitigating and controlling pollution from non-point sources (Callahan et al., 1992).

Several of Pomfret’s perennial streams {a stream that maintains a constant perceptible flow of water within its channel throughout the year, (Murphy, B., 1991)} support both stocked and native fish populations. These populations are particularly sensitive to pollutants as well as

to increases in stream temperature which result from removal of riparian vegetation that shades the stream (Map 13).

Surface water quality and groundwater quality are interdependent, and proper management of both is critical. Proper management includes appropriate protection of wetlands, protection of riparian zones, avoidance of potentially polluting land uses over high yield groundwater areas, and avoidance of inappropriate land uses in flood management areas. These regulations have been upgraded by the recent Pomfret Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations (2007).

The goal is the protection of ground and surface water quality for drinking and other domestic uses, for swimming and other recreational use, and for fish and wildlife habitat. The entire biotic community is dependent upon clean water, and its protection is crucial to the current and future health of our environment.

#### **A. Groundwater**

The Conservation Commission recommends that groundwater resources with the potential to serve as public water supply aquifers (Map 16) must be protected from potentially polluting land uses and other possible contamination. Land uses such as auto repair businesses, dry cleaners, printing or machine shops that could permanently and negatively impact future drinking water supplies should continue to be excluded.

#### **B. Surface Waters**

1. The Conservation Commission further recommends that the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission fully and routinely integrate the use of Inventory Maps 1-18 into its deliberation process when considering future permit applications. These maps can provide tremendous guidance in identifying areas which provide critically important and/or multiple functions (i.e. high water quality, high water yield, high value fishery, unique plant communities and/or habitats, etc.). Such areas should be considered especially worthy of careful consideration and protection when permit applications are presented.
2. The Conservation Commission strongly supports the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission's policy of providing buffer zones and easements to protect the town's wetlands and watercourses. Donations of protective

easements should be encouraged which include these protection zones (See update in Town of Pomfret Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations. August 2007, Pages 11, 19, 50)

## AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Pomfret has several active farming operations in town, and several landowners who maintain agricultural fields for lease to farmers. In addition to their farm crops and products, these farms add immeasurably to the aesthetic beauty and rural character of Pomfret which is so often cited as one of its great assets. Farmland also provides excellent wildlife habitat for many species and in some cases recreational opportunities such as hunting, walking and bird watching for town residents. Further, as the previously mentioned Working Land Alliance study and others have shown, farmland provides more tax dollars to the town than they require in-service expenditures. The majority of farm acreage is devoted to pasture for dairy and beef cattle and horses, silage corn, hay, Christmas tree farming, vineyards, maple sugaring and orchards. As Map 9 shows, Pomfret contains considerable acreage of prime and important farm soils. These are soils which the State Department of Agriculture has identified as particularly productive and valuable for farming, and therefore, especially important to maintain in agriculture.

For several reasons, farmland in Pomfret is probably more threatened by loss to development than any other resource identified for special consideration. First, farmland use is not restricted by state laws or regulation as are wetland areas, and most of Pomfret's farmland is quite suitable to residential development. Second, many of our active farms and prime farm soils are adjacent to or within Pomfret's most rapidly developing neighborhoods. Third, commercial farm owners have been caught in an increasingly difficult squeeze. While the cost of doing business rises, the market prices for farm products have held steady or declined. Finally, these farms are family businesses, and the land often represents their greatest asset. For these reasons, developing and implementing a farm land preservation plan presents perhaps the town's greatest long-term conservation challenge. In the last decade 1500+ acres of farmland has been lost. At this rate, Pomfret's farmland will disappear by mid-century.

Therefore, our town goal is to preserve important farmland and enhance commercially viable agricultural operations in Pomfret. This will preserve the rural character of the town and, in addition, the residents will have the opportunity to use locally produced products.

The Town of Pomfret must clearly establish itself as a town that welcomes and encourages commercial agriculture. A formal town policy of protecting and promoting farming must be developed and reflected in town regulations and ordinances. Specifically, Pomfret should:

**1. Reflect This Position in Planning Policies**

Planning and Zoning Regulations must continue to allow farm stands to encourage promotion of locally grown products.

**2. Encourage Protective Buffers on Land Adjacent to Existing Farmland**

A vegetative buffer of some optimum width along property lines would limit the effects of dust, and noise that new homeowners experience, often unexpectedly, when houses are built next to a farming operation. A buffer would be established by the developer on the developer's land at the time of subdivision. This buffer would help mitigate the effects of two disparate communities in close proximity. As Robert Frost said, "Good fences make good neighbors". The buffer would have to be maintained only when the adjacent property is farmland or if it will be permanently protected as farmland. The Conservation Commission hopes this will help farmers and further the Commission's mission of supporting agricultural uses.

**3. Promote Farm Profitability**

Pomfret should continue the ordinance to abate 50% of the annual property taxes on dairy farms, providing they stay in farming for at least ten years. The law recognizes the extraordinarily difficult financial times dairy farmers have recently experienced and are expected to continue to experience.

**4. Acquire Development Rights on Key Parcels**

Utilizing the State Department of Agriculture's Purchase of Development Rights Program, and supplemental funding from a town open space fund, Pomfret should work with willing farmland owners to permanently protect the most valuable and strategic farm parcels from development while keeping them in private ownership.

The Conservation Commission further recommends that the Board of Selectmen and the Planning and Zoning Commission research the potential value of adopting a transfer of development rights program in Pomfret as a tool for protecting the valuable open space in a comprehensive, well planned manner, including the protection of key farmland such as Amaral Farm, Murdock Farm, Carter Farm, Rich Farm, Lapsley Orchard and Sharpe Hill Vineyard (Map 12 overlay).

#### **5. Utilize the Conservation Commission as a Resource for Farmers**

The Conservation Commission will continually speak out in support of Pomfret farmers to encourage both open space protection and farming as a way of life. The Commission will work to support legislation and other state and regional initiatives of value to agriculture. The Commission will also seek to establish an agricultural advisory committee consisting of farmers, Conservation Commission members and other interested citizens to provide guidance on farming related issues.

Further, the town Planning and Zoning Commission should continue to provide site planning assistance to landowners who seek alternative revenue opportunities from the land without limiting the ability to farm. A careful site plan can be essential to protect long-term agricultural benefits. Attention should be paid to the significance of existing agricultural building and promote their adaptive use.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENT**

### **The Conservation Commission supported the adoption of a Right to Farm Ordinance**

Such an ordinance clearly sets forth Pomfret's position in support of commercial agriculture and farmland protection. The language from Section 19a-341 of the Connecticut General Statutes, which declares that proper and accepted agricultural practices shall not constitute a nuisance, is included in the Right to Farm Ordinance as adopted by the Town of Pomfret.

## **NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Forests are the natural vegetative cover in Connecticut, and they provide many critical benefits which we often take for granted. They remove carbon dioxide and pollutants from the

air and produce the oxygen we breathe. They cleanse and moderate the flow of our water supply. They provide the habitat for virtually all of Pomfret's native wildlife species. They provide countless recreational and educational benefits for our townspeople. Forest based industries, such as sawmills and maple sugaring, contribute to our local economy without changing Pomfret's rural character. Currently, quality timber from Pomfret's forests is made into products which are sold literally all over the world. The primary threat to the forests' continued ability to provide these benefits is random development and fragmentation. Over 1,785 acres of Pomfret's forest land is privately owned by individuals and families. As time goes on and long-term development pressures increase, the forest continues to "fragment" into smaller and smaller individual parcels interspersed with housing. In some cases, these forest fragments become isolated islands which are completely surrounded by residential and/or commercial development.

Research has clearly shown that one large, contiguous tract of forest which is diverse biologically provides far greater habitat, recreation and other resource benefits than many small tracts adding up to the same acreage. Further, by connecting such larger tracts to one another with vegetative "corridors," wildlife populations can intermingle and avoid the devastating effects of genetic inbreeding. There was support for preserving large forest tracts from many respondents of the land use survey.

The Conservation Commission's objective is to conserve productive forests in a way that:

1. protects the health and diversity of our native wildlife populations;
2. allows local forest-based industries to continue to exist;
3. maintains and enhances Pomfret's rural character;
4. provides for ongoing forest-based recreational and educational opportunities;
5. is compatible with desirable economic development.

The Conservation Commission recommends:

1. Minimizing fragmentation in the Productive Wildlife Habitat areas as identified in Map 12 should be made a land use priority. These areas, along with the important farmland areas discussed in Agricultural Resources (see pp. 8-10), should be given priority in implementing the open space protection methods discussed in Priorities for Protection of Open Space (p 14-18). Particular attention should be given to protection of undeveloped parcels

adjacent to existing committed open space within these Productive Wildlife Habitat areas to increase the contiguous sizes of protected parcels.

2. Protecting the continuity of the Habitat Corridors as defined in Map 12 should also become a land use priority. Since most of these corridors are along streambelts, their protection will logically fall to the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission and will overlap with the previously recommended riparian corridor protection zones.

Land use changes which interrupt a corridor's continuity should be avoided.

When no feasible alternatives exist, allowances should be made in the project designs which enable the largest wildlife species that may use the corridor to continue to do so. Mitigating measures may include increasing the culvert size in wetland crossings and bridging for stream corridor crossings.

3. All Pomfret landowners, and particularly those within the Protective Wildlife Habitat and Habitat Corridor areas, should be encouraged to implement sound forest and wildlife conservation practices. Several state and federal agencies provide no-cost (cost borne by taxpayers) assistance and in many cases cost-sharing incentives to landowners interested in improving their land for wildlife and other forest benefits. The Conservation Commission should assist in keeping landowners informed about such programs and encouraging their participation.

The Connecticut Forest Practices Act, (P.A. 91-335) requires registration of loggers and professional foresters and regulates forest management practices.

The Conservation Commission strongly recommends that good forestry management practices as outlined in *Best Management Practices, Connecticut Field Guide 2007* be followed. Web Site: [www.ctgov/dep](http://www.ctgov/dep)

4. The Conservation Commission recommends that the Planning and Zoning Commission take into consideration forest and wildlife resources when deliberating land use policies, particularly where open space set-asides are involved.

## RECREATIONAL, AESTHETIC AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Pomfret abounds with remarkable scenic vistas, historic and even prehistoric sites, and other priceless cultural resources that distinguish it from other communities in the region. An understanding of the need to protect and conserve these resources can only come with an appreciation of them. The uniqueness of our town fosters community pride and a sense of place. A long-standing tradition of volunteerism resulting from this pride and appreciation is one of the things that make Pomfret a special place to live.

In 1995, the General Assembly under PA 95-335 established the Greenways Council. The DEP has also established a Greenways Assistance Center to provide assistance and guidance in the development of local greenways plans which incorporate the protection of natural resources, preserve scenic landscapes and historical resources and offer opportunities for recreation or non-motorized transportation. These greenways connect to existing protected areas and provide access to the outdoors and are located along a defining natural feature to preserve scenic vistas and greenspace along our highways and around villages. The results of the land use survey indicate a strong support for such protected areas.

In spite of Pomfret's seemingly comfortable margin of open space, the Commission strongly support increased land preservation for the following reasons:

- When land is saved, the environment improves. More open land means better air and water quality, more wildlife, more recreation, and less pollution and noise. It means a better quality of life all around.
- Saving land saves money. American Farmland Trust Cost of Community Services studies consistently show that "Communities pay a high price for unplanned growth. Scattered development frequently causes traffic congestion, air and water pollution, loss of open space, and increased demand for costly public services." Since the 1980's, the Trust has studied "at least" 102 communities. "In every community studied, farmland has generated a fiscal surplus to help offset the shortfall created by residential demand for public services." ([www.Americanfarmlandtrust.com](http://www.Americanfarmlandtrust.com)) See Appendix B.

In consort with the Council, the Pomfret Conservation Commission believes:  
“Despite past successes in restoring water, air and wildlife, Connecticut residents will fail to achieve their environmental goals unless there is greater and more sustained effort.”

([www.ct.gov/ceq](http://www.ct.gov/ceq)) See Appendix C.

The Conservation Commission’s objective is to bring attention to, and assure the preservation and protection of Pomfret’s recreational, aesthetic and historic resources so that future generations may appreciate its Heritage and maintain the identity that distinguishes Pomfret from other communities in the region.



Tyrone Farm

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The town should strive to protect greenways along the Quinebaug River, Mashamoquet Brook, Lyon Brook, Airline Trail and other sites as may be identified on Map 13.
2. Plans should be developed for a town-wide greenway system so that residents can enjoy the scenic, natural and historic beauty of our community. Such a system could be used by all community members for walking, hiking, bicycling and horseback riding. Implementation of the system, once designed, would logically be accomplished through combined Conservation and Planning Commission efforts,

utilizing donated or purchased recreational easements and other appropriate tools. Plans should be shared with adjacent towns and regional organizations to encourage linkages beyond Pomfret.

3. Scenic road ordinances exist to protect scenic vistas and other important natural features visible from town roads which add to the beauty of the town. Pomfret currently has scenic Routes 169, 97 and 244 which have received state designation. Town designated scenic roads are: Old King's Highway, Day Road, Needles Eye Road, Cotton Road, Duffy Road, Wright's Crossing Road, and River Road (Map 14 overlay). Although not designated as scenic, we support preservation of the town's present dirt roads because of their rural nature.
4. Ridgelines and abandoned cemeteries should be added to the Planning and Zoning regulation that protects Pomfret's best scenic vistas, unique stone walls, ruins and unique natural areas on Map 2.
5. The Conservation Commission discourages the use of ridgelines for cell towers. Instead cell towers should be encouraged to be located on existing buildings and be camouflaged. The new shorter towers should be used along with up-dated technology.
6. Plan to extend the existing town trail system and where possible connect to the trails of the Connecticut Audubon Society, Wyndham Land Trust, State Park and Airline Trail.



New England Forestry Land – Kimball Preserve

7. Connect the forests to allow:

- Wildlife to migrate
- A town-wide trail system
- Varied recreation to avoid conflict with hunting
- Sustainable forest-based industries
- Protection of vernal pools

## **PRIORITIES FOR PROTECTION OF OPEN SPACE**

It is the Conservation Commission's position that the highest priority for Pomfret's protection strategy should be given to:

1. Prime farmlands with particular attention to those currently in agricultural use which comprise one of the most at-risk categories of land;
2. Productive habitat areas and habitat corridors, particularly larger waterways;
3. Properties adjacent to existing permanently committed open space such as the Wyndham Land Trust and Connecticut Audubon Society's greenway on the east side of town and the farmland greenway extending from Woodstock to Brooklyn on the west side of town;
4. Properties abutting scenic roads;
5. Properties linking dirt roads and existing trail systems, most notably the Airline Trail.

The implementation of this greenway plan would ensure that every resident of Pomfret would live within convenient access to a wildlife corridor or hiking trail, which in turn would lead to other available natural areas.

The objectives of this plan can not likely be realized without cost, but can be realized with minimal financial impact to the town. There are many options for protecting open space, at least some of which must be utilized if the recommendations in this plan are to become reality. Some require financial investment by the town and some do not. Some involve public acquisition of property that is currently privately owned. Others involve leaving property in private ownership, while removing certain rights from the property through purchase from or donation by the owner. Each resource and situation must be examined independently and the most viable option chosen.

The Conservation Commission recommends the following open space protection measures as tools for the implementation of this plan:

**A. Strengthen Town Open Space Fund**

Some occasions are certain to arise where the judicious use of municipal funds to protect open space will prove to be a wise long-term investment. Once missed, such opportunities often can not be regained, and often quick action is required. The existence of a town open space fund enables Pomfret to act quickly when the appropriate need arises.

There are numerous ways to generate funds for such an account, including:

- Municipal bonding: this is a very commonly used tool which has the advantage of generating a significant sum in a short time, whereas the other alternatives take considerably longer to accumulate a usable amount of money. The townspeople approved a \$4 million bond in a referendum in 2007.
- Fees in lieu of open space: Connecticut's subdivision enabling statutes allow municipalities to request fees in lieu of open space. This gives the Planning and Zoning Commission the option of requesting fees from individual subdivisions, rather than requiring small isolated open space parcels to be set aside in each case. The Planning and Zoning Commission is currently using this option. The fees can be used for future, more valuable open space acquisition. Since 2005 over \$56,047.50 has been deposited into the fee-in-lieu of fund. \$14,300 of this fund has been spent to help purchase open space land.
- Budget incorporation: Another option is for the town to dedicate a percentage of the annual budget to accumulate funds in this protected open space fund, and/or to target unspent funds previously allocated to certain accounts to roll into the fund.
- Private contributions: Some citizens may be willing to contribute to an open space fund as an expression of their personal, community and conservation ethic. The town can offer to match private contributions as a giving incentive.

- The Conservation Commission will continue joint collaboration with Land Trusts, State and Federal Agencies in funding the purchase of land and development rights.
- The Conservation Commission will continue to work with the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen to determine the best, most feasible combination of these and other options.

**B. Encourage Town Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)**

PDR is one use of funds in the open space account. In many cases protection pools that keep the land in private ownership, but preserve the natural resources, make more sense than public acquisition. The land remains on the tax roles, and the town incurs no long-term maintenance expense. Two examples are the purchase of development rights on working farmland, and the purchase of recreational use easements along streams or rivers. The town should purchase development rights and in some cases recreational use rights from willing landowners in critical areas which are most threatened by development. The development and/or recreational use rights are sold but the landowners still retain title (and all other rights) to the property.

Importantly, the Open Space Fund can act as a supplemental fund to the state Purchased Development Rights program for agricultural land. The town is actively pursuing this alternative.

**C. Assist Private Landowners Interested in Voluntary Protection Measures**

Research has shown that many Connecticut landowners have developed a strong attachment to their land and have a personal desire to see that some or all of it is permanently protected from development. Some are willing to forego monetary value in order to realize this desire. Landowners who have such an interest should be made aware that assistance is available to help them design the best protection plan. There are significant income and estate tax benefits available to landowners who donate (or sell at a bargain price) conservation easements or land to the town or to qualifying nonprofit organizations.

#### **D. Consider Adopting a Transfer of Development Rights Program**

This type of town wide program has been shown to successfully protect open space while allowing economic growth to continue. It appears best suited for rapidly urbanizing areas such as northeastern Connecticut.

In a transfer of development rights program, areas which have been previously designated as significant and worthy of protection are designated as "Sending Areas". Designated "Receiving Areas" are those most suitable to more intense developments due to factors such as proximity to transportation corridors and public utilities. Developers negotiate directly with willing landowners in the Sending Areas to purchase their development rights at a mutually agreed upon price. The developer can then use the purchased development rights as credits which allow for increased development density on properties in the Receiving Area.

The Conservation Commission would like to jointly explore the feasibility of adopting such a program in Pomfret with the Selectmen, the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission.

#### **E. Enable the Use of Creative Development Techniques**

Regulatory mechanisms should be adopted which will encourage natural resources and open space protection rather than discourage it and still protect the individual landowner. A primary tool in this category is the open space subdivision. Under this option, developers are allowed the same number of units as they would under traditional subdivision, but the orientation of the development sets aside more open land. Houses or commercial buildings are allowed to be "clustered" together on smaller individual lots so that large tracts of open land can be maintained. The Planning and Zoning Commission should review this option and consider mandatory clustering for residential subdivisions containing large areas designated as worthy of protection.

## CONCLUSION

The 2008 Plan of Conservation is based on the ideas and recommendations of Pomfret residents. The results of the land use survey strongly influenced the Commission members as they reviewed and revised their plan. Preservation of natural resources has become a priority. Farmland is disappearing faster in Connecticut than any other state (“A Call to Farms,” Working Lands Alliance, 2005), and nowhere is this more apparent than Northeastern Connecticut. Relatively inexpensive land prices, failing farms, and availability of developable land have combined to attract subdivisions, shopping malls, and increased traffic. From 1995 to 2005, Pomfret lost 1,500 acres of open space, a rate of 150 acres per year. The rural character of Pomfret is being threatened. The urgency of maintaining our countryside has given Pomfret renewed impetus to conserve. We believe through the implementation of this plan, Pomfret will continue to be a desirable community in which to live. We encourage the Board of Selectmen, our fellow town commissions, and the citizens of Pomfret to work with us to realize this goal.

“You must to Pomfret”

Earl of Northumberland  
in King Richard II  
Act V Scene I



Overlooking Amaral Farm

APPENDIX A  
MAP GUIDE

- MAP 1: Town Parcel Overlay (2007)
- MAP 2: Archeological Sites, Rocky Outcrops, Vernal Pools & Cemeteries (2008)  
Vernal pools as identified through the Citizens Science program at Connecticut Audubon Society of Pomfret. These will be continually updated as new pools are identified.
- Cemeteries currently in use and abandoned is also continually updated.
- Prehistoric Native American Sites were identified by Nicholas Bellantoni, Connecticut State Archeologist, based on known locations of sites compiled from various state records. New sites will be added as discovered.
- MAP 3: Committed Open Space (2007)  
This is color coded and indicates parcel by owner or agency. This will continue to be updated.
- MAP 4: Pomfret Roads Overlay (2007)  
Indicates principal state roads in the town.
- MAP 5: Historical Sites (2008)  
Abington Historic Village, Pomfret Historic District and Wolf Den
- MAP 6: Drainage Basins (2007)  
This map divides the entire town into drainage areas and identifies the direction of water flow out of each area. The edges of drainage basins are along ridge tops and other high elevation areas, from which surface water flows downhill until it encounters a brook or watercourse which eventually outlets at the lowest point in the basin. This map portrays the potential effect on the delicate ecosystem if any of these waterways are contaminated.
- MAP 7: Natural Diversity Data Base Overlay (2007)  
This information, provided by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, is particularly useful for the Planning and Zoning Commission in the review of subdivision applications.
- MAP 8: Wetlands Soils (2007)  
Portrays various wetland soils in Pomfret.
- MAP 9: Important Agricultural Land (2007)

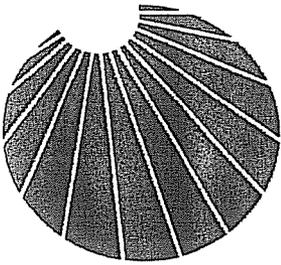
Prime farmland soils and farmland soils of additional statewide importance are identified by the United States Department of Agriculture and Soil Conservation Commission. These areas are most suitable for farming operations.

- MAP 10: Zoning Districts (2007)  
Subject to amendment by Planning and Zoning.
- MAP 11: Conservation Easements (2007)  
Indicates a variety of conservation easements. This map is incomplete and subject to change. Easements on private property are not open to the public.
- MAP 12: Greenways for Priority Protection (2007)  
Contiguous to other properties in town already protected. These will allow wildlife corridors and recreational use.
- MAP 13: Quinebaug Buffer – 500 Feet. Brooks and Streams with buffers of 300 Feet (2007)  
Illustrates buffers surrounding town streams, brooks and the Quinebaug River. The buffers provide conservation protection for the water courses.
- MAP 14: Scenic Roads (2007)  
Includes state and town scenic roads. The scenic town roads were created by ordinance in 1988. Route 169 was granted scenic status by the State of Connecticut in 1991. Under the auspices of the Conservation Commission a portion of Route 97 was granted state status in 2001 and a portion of Route 244 in 2003. Planning and Zoning considers scenic road designation when ruling on applications.
- MAP 15: Water Quality (2007)  
This map depicts the water quality in Pomfret's surface and ground-water as designated by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection standards.
- MAP 16: Groundwater Aquifers (2007)  
This map depicts saturated stratified drift aquifers which may be suitable for public water supply wells due to their extremely high water yield.
- Currently, a majority of the town's drinking water supply is provided from private wells. These untapped high yields areas could be of critical future importance if population growth or contamination of existing wells creates the need for additional public water supplies.
- MAP 17: Canoe Launch (2006)  
Sponsored by the Conservation Commission of the Town of Pomfret, Northeast Utilities and the Quinebaug Shetucket Heritage Corridor, the canoe launch was opened June 5, 2005. Kiosk maps of the river were completed in conjunction with

the town of Killingly and the Brooklyn Conservation Commission. Photos were by Scott Downer. Maps are available to the public at the kiosk.

MAP 18: Pomfret Recreation Park Trail System (2006)

Trails were established by the Conservation Commission in 2005. Maps are available at trail head kiosk at the recreation field parking area. Trails to be expanded in the future.



## FARMLAND INFORMATION CENTER

# FACT SHEET

## COST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES STUDIES



FARMLAND INFORMATION CENTER  
One Short Street, Suite 2  
Northampton, MA 01060  
(800) 370-4879  
[www.farmlandinfo.org](http://www.farmlandinfo.org)

NATIONAL OFFICE  
1200 18th Street, NW, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 331-7300  
[www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org)

### DESCRIPTION

Cost of Community Services (COCS) studies are a case study approach used to determine the fiscal contribution of existing local land uses. A subset of the much larger field of fiscal analysis, COCS studies have emerged as an inexpensive and reliable tool to measure direct fiscal relationships. Their particular niche is to evaluate working and open lands on equal ground with residential, commercial and industrial land uses.

COCS studies are a snapshot in time of costs versus revenues for each type of land use. They do not predict future costs or revenues or the impact of future growth. They do provide a baseline of current information to help local officials and citizens make informed land use and policy decisions.

### METHODOLOGY

In a COCS study, researchers organize financial records to assign the cost of municipal services to working and open lands, as well as to residential, commercial and industrial development. Researchers meet with local sponsors to define the scope of the project and identify land use categories to study. For example, working lands may include farm, forest and/or ranch lands. Residential development includes all housing, including rentals, but if there is a migrant agricultural work force, temporary housing for these workers would be considered part of agricultural land use. Often in rural communities, commercial and industrial land uses are combined. COCS studies findings are displayed as a set of ratios that compare annual revenues to annual expenditures for a community's unique mix of land uses.

COCS studies involve three basic steps:

1. Collect data on local revenues and expenditures.
2. Group revenues and expenditures and allocate them to the community's major land use categories.
3. Analyze the data and calculate revenue-to-expenditure ratios for each land use category.

The process is straightforward, but ensuring reliable figures requires local oversight. The most complicated task is interpreting existing records to reflect COCS land use categories. Allocating revenues and expenses requires a significant amount of research, including extensive interviews with financial officers and public administrators.

### HISTORY

Communities often evaluate the impact of growth on local budgets by conducting or commissioning fiscal impact analyses. Fiscal impact studies project public costs and revenues from different land development patterns. They generally show that residential development is a net fiscal loss for communities and recommend commercial and industrial development as a strategy to balance local budgets.

Rural towns and counties that would benefit from fiscal impact analysis may not have the expertise or resources to conduct a study. Also, fiscal impact analyses rarely consider the contribution of working and other open lands uses, which are very important to rural economies.

American Farmland Trust (AFT) developed COCS studies in the mid-1980s to provide communities with a straightforward and inexpensive way to measure the contribution of agricultural lands to the local tax base. Since then, COCS studies have been conducted in at least 102 communities in the United States.

### FUNCTIONS & PURPOSES

Communities pay a high price for unplanned growth. Scattered development frequently causes traffic congestion, air and water pollution, loss of open space and increased demand for costly public services. This is why it is important for citizens and local leaders to understand the relationships between residential and commercial growth, agricultural land use, conservation and their community's bottom line.

# COST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES STUDIES

COCS studies help address three claims that are commonly made in rural or suburban communities facing growth pressures:

1. Open lands—including productive farms and forests—are an interim land use that should be developed to their “highest and best use.”
2. Agricultural land gets an unfair tax break when it is assessed at its current use value for farming or ranching instead of at its potential use value for residential or commercial development.
3. Residential development will lower property taxes by increasing the tax base.

While it is true that an acre of land with a new house generates more total revenue than an acre of hay or corn, this tells us little about a community’s bottom line. In areas where agriculture or forestry are major industries, it is especially important to consider the real property tax contribution of privately owned working lands. Working and other open lands may generate less revenue than residential, commercial or industrial properties, but they require little public infrastructure and few services.

COCS studies conducted over the last 20 years show working lands generate more public revenues than they receive back in public services. Their impact on community coffers is similar to

that of other commercial and industrial land uses. On average, because residential land uses do not cover their costs, they must be subsidized by other community land uses. Converting agricultural land to residential land use should not be seen as a way to balance local budgets.

The findings of COCS studies are consistent with those of conventional fiscal impact analyses, which document the high cost of residential development and recommend commercial and industrial development to help balance local budgets. What is unique about COCS studies is that they show that agricultural land is similar to other commercial and industrial uses. In every community studied, farmland has generated a fiscal surplus to help offset the shortfall created by residential demand for public services. This is true even when the land is assessed at its current, agricultural use.

Communities need reliable information to help them see the full picture of their land uses. COCS studies are an inexpensive way to evaluate the net contribution of working and open lands. They can help local leaders discard the notion that natural resources must be converted to other uses to ensure fiscal stability. They also dispel the myths that residential development leads to lower taxes, that differential assessment programs give landowners an “unfair” tax break and that farmland is an interim land use just waiting around for development.

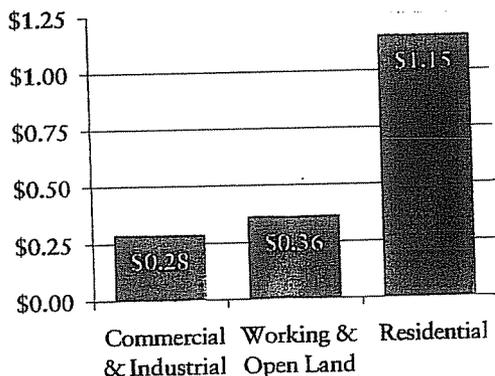
One type of land use is not intrinsically better than another, and COCS studies are not meant to judge the overall public good or long-term merits of any land use or taxing structure. It is up to communities to balance goals such as maintaining affordable housing, creating jobs and conserving land. With good planning, these goals can complement rather than compete with each other. COCS studies give communities another tool to make decisions about their futures.

For additional information on farmland protection and stewardship contact the Farmland Information Center. The FIC offers a staffed answer service, online library, program monitoring, fact sheets and other educational materials.

[www.farmlandinfo.org](http://www.farmlandinfo.org)

(800) 370-4879

Median COCS Results



*Median cost—per dollar of revenue raised—to provide public services to different land uses.*

## SUMMARY OF COST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES STUDIES, REVENUE-TO-EXPENDITURE RATIOS IN DOLLARS

Community	Residential including farm houses	Commercial & Industrial	Working & Open Land	Source
<b>Colorado</b>				
Custer County	1 : 1.16	1 : 0.71	1 : 0.54	Haggerty, 2000
Saguache County	1 : 1.17	1 : 0.53	1 : 0.35	Dirt, Inc., 2001
<b>Connecticut</b>				
Bolton	1 : 1.05	1 : 0.23	1 : 0.50	Geisler, 1998
Durham	1 : 1.07	1 : 0.27	1 : 0.23	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
Farmington	1 : 1.33	1 : 0.32	1 : 0.31	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
Hebron	1 : 1.06	1 : 0.47	1 : 0.43	American Farmland Trust, 1986
Litchfield	1 : 1.11	1 : 0.34	1 : 0.34	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
Pomfret	1 : 1.06	1 : 0.27	1 : 0.86	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
<b>Georgia</b>				
Carroll County	1 : 1.29	1 : 0.37	1 : 0.55	Dorfman and Black, 2002
Grady County	1 : 1.72	1 : 0.10	1 : 0.38	Dorfman, 2003
Thomas County	1 : 1.64	1 : 0.38	1 : 0.66	Dorfman, 2003
<b>Idaho</b>				
Canyon County	1 : 1.08	1 : 0.79	1 : 0.54	Hartmans and Meyer, 1997
Cassia County	1 : 1.19	1 : 0.87	1 : 0.41	Hartmans and Meyer, 1997
<b>Kentucky</b>				
Lexington-Fayette	1 : 1.64	1 : 0.22	1 : 0.93	American Farmland Trust, 1999
Oldham County	1 : 1.05	1 : 0.29	1 : 0.44	American Farmland Trust, 2003
<b>Maine</b>				
Bethel	1 : 1.29	1 : 0.59	1 : 0.06	Good, 1994
<b>Maryland</b>				
Carroll County	1 : 1.15	1 : 0.48	1 : 0.45	Carroll County Dept. of Management & Budget, 1994
Cecil County	1 : 1.17	1 : 0.34	1 : 0.66	American Farmland Trust, 2001
Cecil County	1 : 1.12	1 : 0.28	1 : 0.37	Cecil County Office of Economic Development, 1994
Frederick County	1 : 1.14	1 : 0.50	1 : 0.53	American Farmland Trust, 1997
Harford County	1 : 1.11	1 : 0.40	1 : 0.91	American Farmland Trust, 2003
Kent County	1 : 1.05	1 : 0.64	1 : 0.42	American Farmland Trust, 2002
Wicomico County	1 : 1.21	1 : 0.33	1 : 0.96	American Farmland Trust, 2001
<b>Massachusetts</b>				
Agawam	1 : 1.05	1 : 0.44	1 : 0.31	American Farmland Trust, 1992
Becket	1 : 1.02	1 : 0.83	1 : 0.72	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
Deerfield	1 : 1.16	1 : 0.38	1 : 0.29	American Farmland Trust, 1992
Franklin	1 : 1.02	1 : 0.58	1 : 0.40	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
Gill	1 : 1.15	1 : 0.43	1 : 0.38	American Farmland Trust, 1992
Leverett	1 : 1.15	1 : 0.29	1 : 0.25	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
Middleboro	1 : 1.08	1 : 0.47	1 : 0.70	American Farmland Trust, 2001
Southborough	1 : 1.03	1 : 0.26	1 : 0.45	Adams and Hines, 1997
Westford	1 : 1.15	1 : 0.53	1 : 0.39	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
Williamstown	1 : 1.11	1 : 0.34	1 : 0.40	Hazler et al., 1992
<b>Michigan</b>				
Marshall Twp., Calhoun Cty.	1 : 1.47	1 : 0.20	1 : 0.27	American Farmland Trust, 2001
Newton Twp., Calhoun Cty.	1 : 1.20	1 : 0.25	1 : 0.24	American Farmland Trust, 2001
Scio Township	1 : 1.40	1 : 0.28	1 : 0.62	University of Michigan, 1994

## SUMMARY OF COST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES STUDIES, REVENUE-TO-EXPENDITURE RATIOS IN DOLLARS

Community	Residential including farm houses	Commercial & Industrial	Working & Open Land	Source
<b>Minnesota</b>				
Farmington	1 : 1.02	1 : 0.79	1 : 0.77	American Farmland Trust, 1994
Lake Elmo	1 : 1.07	1 : 0.20	1 : 0.27	American Farmland Trust, 1994
Independence	1 : 1.03	1 : 0.19	1 : 0.47	American Farmland Trust, 1994
<b>Montana</b>				
Carbon County	1 : 1.60	1 : 0.21	1 : 0.34	Prinzing, 1999
Gallatin County	1 : 1.45	1 : 0.16	1 : 0.25	Haggerty, 1996
Flathead County	1 : 1.23	1 : 0.26	1 : 0.34	Citizens for a Better Flathead, 1999
<b>New Hampshire</b>				
Deerfield	1 : 1.15	1 : 0.22	1 : 0.35	Anger, 1994
Dover	1 : 1.15	1 : 0.63	1 : 0.94	Kingsley et al., 1993
Exeter	1 : 1.07	1 : 0.40	1 : 0.82	Niebling, 1997
Fremont	1 : 1.04	1 : 0.94	1 : 0.36	Anger, 1994
Groton	1 : 1.01	1 : 0.12	1 : 0.88	New Hampshire Wildlife Federation, 2001
Stratham	1 : 1.15	1 : 0.19	1 : 0.40	Anger, 1994
Lyme	1 : 1.05	1 : 0.28	1 : 0.23	Pickard, 2000
<b>New Jersey</b>				
Freehold Township	1 : 1.51	1 : 0.17	1 : 0.33	American Farmland Trust, 1998
Holmdel Township	1 : 1.38	1 : 0.21	1 : 0.66	American Farmland Trust, 1998
Middletown Township	1 : 1.14	1 : 0.34	1 : 0.36	American Farmland Trust, 1998
Upper Freehold Township	1 : 1.18	1 : 0.20	1 : 0.35	American Farmland Trust, 1998
Wall Township	1 : 1.28	1 : 0.30	1 : 0.54	American Farmland Trust, 1998
<b>New York</b>				
Amenia	1 : 1.23	1 : 0.25	1 : 0.17	Bucknall, 1989
Beekman	1 : 1.12	1 : 0.18	1 : 0.48	American Farmland Trust, 1989
Dix	1 : 1.51	1 : 0.27	1 : 0.31	Schuyler County League of Women Voters, 1993
Farmington	1 : 1.22	1 : 0.27	1 : 0.72	Kinsman et al., 1991
Fishkill	1 : 1.23	1 : 0.31	1 : 0.74	Bucknall, 1989
Hector	1 : 1.30	1 : 0.15	1 : 0.28	Schuyler County League of Women Voters, 1993
Kinderhook	1 : 1.05	1 : 0.21	1 : 0.17	Concerned Citizens of Kinderhook, 1996
Montour	1 : 1.50	1 : 0.28	1 : 0.29	Schuyler County League of Women Voters, 1992
Northeast	1 : 1.36	1 : 0.29	1 : 0.21	American Farmland Trust, 1989
Reading	1 : 1.88	1 : 0.26	1 : 0.32	Schuyler County League of Women Voters, 1992
Red Hook	1 : 1.11	1 : 0.20	1 : 0.22	Bucknall, 1989
<b>Ohio</b>				
Clark County	1 : 1.11	1 : 0.38	1 : 0.30	American Farmland Trust, 2003
Knox County	1 : 1.05	1 : 0.38	1 : 0.29	American Farmland Trust, 2003
Madison Village	1 : 1.67	1 : 0.20	1 : 0.38	American Farmland Trust, 1993
Madison Township	1 : 1.40	1 : 0.25	1 : 0.30	American Farmland Trust, 1993
Shalersville Township	1 : 1.58	1 : 0.17	1 : 0.31	Portage County Regional Planning Commission, 1997

SUMMARY OF COST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES STUDIES, REVENUE-TO-EXPENDITURE RATIOS IN DOLLARS

Community	Residential including farm houses	Commercial & Industrial	Working & Open Land	Source
<b>Pennsylvania</b>				
Allegheny Township	1 : 1.06	1 : 0.14	1 : 0.13	Kelsey, 1997
Bedminster Township	1 : 1.12	1 : 0.05	1 : 0.04	Kelsey, 1997
Bethel Township	1 : 1.08	1 : 0.17	1 : 0.06	Kelsey, 1992
Bingham Township	1 : 1.56	1 : 0.16	1 : 0.15	Kelsey, 1994
Buckingham Township	1 : 1.04	1 : 0.15	1 : 0.08	Kelsey, 1996
Carroll Township	1 : 1.03	1 : 0.06	1 : 0.02	Kelsey, 1992
Hopewell Township	1 : 1.27	1 : 0.32	1 : 0.59	The South Central Assembly for Effective Governance, 2002
Maiden Creek Township	1 : 1.28	1 : 0.11	1 : 0.06	Kelsey, 1998
Richmond Township	1 : 1.24	1 : 0.09	1 : 0.04	Kelsey, 1998
Shrewsbury Township	1 : 1.22	1 : 0.15	1 : 0.17	The South Central Assembly for Effective Governance, 2002
Stewardson Township	1 : 2.11	1 : 0.23	1 : 0.31	Kelsey, 1994
Straban Township	1 : 1.10	1 : 0.16	1 : 0.06	Kelsey, 1992
Sweden Township	1 : 1.38	1 : 0.07	1 : 0.08	Kelsey, 1994
<b>Rhode Island</b>				
Hopkinton	1 : 1.08	1 : 0.31	1 : 0.31	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
Little Compton	1 : 1.05	1 : 0.56	1 : 0.37	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
Portsmouth	1 : 1.16	1 : 0.27	1 : 0.39	Johnston, 1997
West Greenwich	1 : 1.46	1 : 0.40	1 : 0.46	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
<b>Texas</b>				
Bandera County	1 : 1.10	1 : 0.26	1 : 0.26	American Farmland Trust, 2002
Bexar County	1 : 1.15	1 : 0.20	1 : 0.18	American Farmland Trust, 2004
Hays County	1 : 1.26	1 : 0.30	1 : 0.33	American Farmland Trust, 2000
<b>Utah</b>				
Cache County	1 : 1.27	1 : 0.25	1 : 0.57	Snyder and Ferguson, 1994
Sevier County	1 : 1.11	1 : 0.31	1 : 0.99	Snyder and Ferguson, 1994
Utah County	1 : 1.23	1 : 0.26	1 : 0.82	Snyder and Ferguson, 1994
<b>Virginia</b>				
Augusta County	1 : 1.22	1 : 0.20	1 : 0.80	Valley Conservation Council, 1997
Clarke County	1 : 1.26	1 : 0.21	1 : 0.15	Piedmont Environmental Council, 1994
Culpeper County	1 : 1.22	1 : 0.41	1 : 0.32	American Farmland Trust, 2003
Frederick County	1 : 1.19	1 : 0.23	1 : 0.33	American Farmland Trust, 2003
Northampton County	1 : 1.13	1 : 0.97	1 : 0.23	American Farmland Trust, 1999
<b>Washington</b>				
Skagit County	1 : 1.25	1 : 0.30	1 : 0.51	American Farmland Trust, 1999
<b>Wisconsin</b>				
Dunn	1 : 1.06	1 : 0.29	1 : 0.18	Town of Dunn, 1994
Dunn	1 : 1.02	1 : 0.55	1 : 0.15	Wisconsin Land Use Research Program, 1999
Perry	1 : 1.20	1 : 1.04	1 : 0.41	Wisconsin Land Use Research Program, 1999
Westport	1 : 1.11	1 : 0.31	1 : 0.13	Wisconsin Land Use Research Program, 1999

American Farmland Trust's Farmland Information Center acts as a clearinghouse for information about Cost of Community Services studies. Inclusion in this table does not necessarily signify review or endorsement by American Farmland Trust.

## APPENDIX C

### OPEN SPACE STATISTICS

**Permanently protected open space is defined as land for which the development rights have been removed i.e. Purchased Development Rights, or protected by a land preservation organization.**

**Conservation easements:** The total protected land is actually greater as a result of preservation/conservation easements currently being placed on land as part of planning efforts during development proposal reviews. They can be held by many different organizations/individuals. There are numerous existing easements for various conservation purposes that are in addition to land we've identified as protected, but they are not quantifiable at this time.

**Total protected open space (including town) = 6,442 acres out of 25,989 total acres in Pomfret (24%)**

#### **Within that total:**

#### **Protected and accessible (but some not permanently protected, i.e. town,)**

State & Airline Trail = 2,258 acres

#### Land trusts

Wyndham Land Trust = 858 acres

Connecticut Audubon Society = 781 acres

Nature Conservancy = 452

New England Forestry = 165 acres

Total Land Trusts = 2256 acres

Town = 911 acres

#### **Protected but not accessible**

Purchased Development Rights = 1,018 acres

Conservation Easements (not presently determined)

Sources: GIS Committed Open Space Map and Tax Assessor

## SUMMARY

- According to the GIS Committed Open Space Map, Pomfret has permanently preserved 6,442 acres or 24% of its total acreage of 25, 989.
- The goal established for the State of Connecticut by The Council of Environmental Quality and The Office of Policy and Management is 21% or 673,210 acres by 2023. As of 2006 (the latest figures available as of June 2, 2008), the total preserved by nonprofits, municipalities, state and federal governments, and water utilities was 490,799 acres or 182,411 acres less than State's 2003 goal..
- The Council points out that in order to achieve that goal **“Connecticut must secure more than 10,000 acres per year,” up from 6,000 preserved in 2005 and again in 2006**, by the **“combined efforts of cities, towns, nonprofit land conservation organizations and the state.”** The Council also states that **“Farmland preservation has been so slow that, if current trends continue, the farms actually will be gone before the money becomes available to preserve the land, and the goal will never be reached.”**
- According to the USDA Census of Agriculture, **“Connecticut lost 12.1 percent of its farmland (357,154 acres) from 1997 to 2002, the largest percentage of any state.”** (as quoted by the Office of Policy and Management, Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut 2005-2010)
- According to the Connecticut State Office of Policy and Management, **“Farmland has contracted from 80% to 12% of the area of the state during the past one hundred years.”**

While it appears that Pomfret has exceeded the state goal of 21% by 2023, a closer look at the types of land preserved in Pomfret reveals concerns.

Of the 6,442 acres “permanently preserved,”

- **911 acres owned by the Town of Pomfret has not been designated for open space.**
- **1080 acres of Purchased Development Rights farmland is not accessible by the public.**
- **Much of our open space is fragmented. Connecting open tracts would improve wildlife corridors and enable a town-wide trail system.**
- **Of the 14,640 acres – Public Act 490, most of the 13,915 acres are not accessible by the public.**

**SIMPLY STATED, 8,349 ACRES OR 32% OF THE REMAINING OPEN LAND IN TOWN REMAINS VULNERABLE TO DEVELOPMENT.**

## APPENDIX D

### A BRIEF HISTORY ABOUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The Conservation Commission is preparing to work on their up-dated Conservation Plan. The Planning and Zoning Commission is up-dating their regulations. We decided to send a questionnaire to all the citizens in the Town of Pomfret for their input. We have several issues town-wide to discuss to be able to move forward.

We received 256 responses to the questionnaire –  
120 on-line responses and 136 written responses - WOW.

THE RESPONSE WAS GRATIFYING AND THE CITIZENS OF POMFRET  
WELCOMED THE OPPORTUNITY TO STATE THEIR FEELINGS FOR THE  
COMMISSIONS.

You can visit the survey results on-line at our website: [pomfretct.org](http://pomfretct.org) and find written survey results at the Town Hall, PCS, Libraries, Putnam Savings Bank and the Post Offices.

# #1. What do you like best about living in Pomfret?

Rural, country living, wide open spaces	105	
Schools	5	
Low Property Taxes	2	
People	11	
The location, easy access to many places	10	
Historic Character	3	
Voice in Town Government	1	
Do what I want with my property	1	
Low Crime	4	
Less traffic	4	
Hiking	1	
Lack of services	1	
Lack of people	1	
Born here	2	
The Questionnaire, so I can tell you what I really think	1	
Access to Natchaug	1	
Farming and Agriculture	4	
Retail Shops	1	

## #2. What do you like least about living in Pomfret?

Overdeveloping	21		
Overcrowded Schools	1		
High Property Taxes	13		
No shoulders on roads for bikes	1		
Motorcycles in Spring and Summer	5		
Dog kennels, barking dogs	3		
Trash along road	1		
Trash on property	5		
Guns being fired close to house	1		
New People wanting changes	1		
Wetness of Land	1		
Rucki's Corner properties	1		
Light Pollution	1		
Isolation	3		
Lack of services, restaurants, retail stores	22		
Becoming a Suburb	7		
Commercial Farming and Agriculture	2		
Zoning regulations	4		
Speeding on Main Roads and Back Roads	15		
No public transportation	2		
No recycling program	3		
No town park with jungle gym	3		
Lack of Transfer station	2		
Slowness of action from town hall	10		
Non-consistent rulings from P & Z and We	2		
Lack of Strong Enforcement	1		
Money to purchase property	2		
Noisy Neighbors	1		

<b>#3. How Important to you is each of the following aspects of the Town of Pomfret?</b>				
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	No Opinion
Beauty of the environment	146	14	1	0
Schools	97	46	29	3
Property Taxes	101	66	9	2
People and Community Spirit	87	77	19	1
Town Facilities and services	67	97	29	1
Historic Character	93	60	19	2
Job Opportunities	31	59	73	4
Other	7		3	3
<b>#4. What do you think are the biggest problems or challenges that Pomfret will face in the next decade?</b>				
Planned development and management of open space			57	
Building Schools			24	
Keeping Property Taxes Down			30	
Poverty, Foreclosures			2	
Cost of Town Facilities and services			9	
Growing Senior Population			1	
Recreational Facilities			1	
No regulations			3	
Population growth and unfunded educational mandates			40	
Threat of Business Development			14	
Need for Small business			4	
Protecting Aquifer			1	
Loss of Farms			4	
Need for regulations			5	
Quality of life			1	
High Cost of living			3	

#5 How important are these Pomfret Features to you?			
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	No Opinion
Night sky (absence of light pollution)	119	45	6
Stone Walls	94	46	8
Open Fields, grasslands, meadows	117	31	3
Undisturbed ridge lines	101	48	16
Tree canopies over roads	100	55	30
Old barns and houses	106	60	10
Ancient Trees	111	43	21
Large forest blocks	131	36	12
Streams and lakes	141	32	2
Wetlands	105	55	15
Wildlife Corridors	119	51	11
Rocky Outcrops	76	59	34
Farms/Agriculture	117	35	7
Other Features			
#6. What scenic views would you want protected?			
Amaral Farm	35		
All Farms	6		
Quinnebaug River	1		
View from Youngs Road	1		
Murdock Property	1		
Hamlet Hill view	3		
Tyrone Road view	4		
Tyott Road view	1		
Pomfret School/Rectory/Churches	4		
Townsend/Abbott area	2		
Trowbridge House	1		
Scenic Highways	Many		

#7. What historic sites would you like to see protected?			
Lost Village	10		
Audubon	3		
Mashamoquet Farm	2		
Cemeteries	7		
Haskel Stand	1		
White Gate Farm	1		
Abington Section of town (Library, burial grounds)	7		
Pomfret Hill	4		
Wolf Den Park with house	13		
Town Hall/Town House	12		
Gristmill	5		
Airline Trail	6		
Elsinore House	1		

#8 Pomfret should encourage the following sources of tax revenues:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Retail shops/offices	49	40	27	33	8
Corporate campus	17	38	34	31	14
Hotels/motels	8	16	74	65	13
Industry	17	31	47	55	13
Environmentally friendly industry	64	77	26	10	6
Food stores	17	51	54	29	15
Restaurants	32	70	29	16	9
Shopping Centers	6	9	49	81	7
Horse Stables	57	77	7	8	15
Eco-tourism	63	68	11	4	13
Golf Courses	29	66	27	16	17
Agriculture	84	46	3	2	8
Other Fast Food	13	13	30	76	3

#9 Are you in favor of tax incentives to help businesses locate in Pomfret?			
Yes	63	No	83
No Opinion	24		
#10 If additional commercial/industrial areas are needed, where should they be located?			
Route 101	53		
Route 169	23		
Route 44	33		
Murdock Property	7		
Not Here	25		
Anywhere	1		
Searles Road	2		
Industrial Park	1		
#11 Pomfret Should encourage the following housing types:			
	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Disagree
	63	57	37
	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion
	38	21	9
Multi-family dwellings	10	37	57
Single-family attached	14	54	38
Single-family detached	43	74	21
Mobil Homes	9	17	41
Affordable Housing	16	56	28
Senior Housing	37	78	17
Housing integrated with activities	14	41	38
Cluster housing (shared development)	32	45	27
Other			49

#12 To promote environmentally friendly housing, should Pomfret restrict the Square foot size of housing?		
Yes	No	
63	103	
#13 What should be the maximum size of a house be in square feet?		
0-1000	3	
1001-2000	6	
2001-3000	24	
3001-4000	12	
4001-5000	5	Other 13

#14 Pomfret Should do the following:					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Protect the Aquifer at Murdock Property	105	42	2	4	18
Adopt regulations to protect the Town's Aquifer	90	49	9	2	16
Initiate a public education effort to encourage voluntary protection of the aquifer	75	65	8	3	12
Protect the Mashamoquet Brook and Quinnebaug River	123	44	1	2	4

#15 Pomfret Should do the following:					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Preserve Ridgelines	72	50	13	9	19
Create a greenway connecting existing protected areas	70	50	15	7	14
Preserve important views	87	52	9	3	4
Create wildlife corridors, sanctuaries and natural areas	97	41	12	4	10
Provide hiking, fishing and other similar outdoor activities	62	57	9	6	10
Create wildlife protection areas	97	42	9	6	9
Protect Historic sites and abandoned cemeteries	98	51	8	2	10
Preserve large forest blocks	97	42	8	3	10
Preserve open fields, meadows & grass lands	102	49	3	0	8

#16 Pomfret Should encourage the preservation of open space land by:		Checked
continuing to require developers to set aside a certain amount of land and fee-in-lieu-of		118
using its bonding authority to raise money to purchase land with town funds		119
buying development rights with town funds		114
supporting private funds and gifts of land		147

<b>#17 Pomfret should establish or improve the following:</b>					Strongly Disagree	No Opinion			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion				
Libraries	56	59	22	15	15				
New Elementary School	30	17	52	43	17				
New Middle School	27	19	52	52	20				
New High School	9	5	60	61	20				
Community Center	24	55	36	20	26				
Senior Center	19	69	29	19	22				
Road Conditions	34	69	28	10	27				
Ambulance Service	22	65	30	12	33				
Fire Services	21	55	37	11	30				
Senior Services	21	62	36	13	34				
Youth Services	20	63	29	9	37				
Health Services	15	49	46	10	44				
Social Services	18	39	48	21	41				
Police Services	20	44	43	25	37				
Other	5	2	0	0	2				
<b>#18 It would be best if future Pomfret Facilities could be consolidated at a central location in order to promote community activities?</b>									
Strongly Agree	36	Agree	59	Disagree	37	Strongly Disagree	31	No Opinion	15





## #23 What additional questions should this questionnaire have asked?

Some questions should have had write in areas to answers are not misinterpreted. Can't think of any. Great job on the Questionnaire. Some questions were unexpected.

Fuller discussion of development rights issue. Zoning education.

I believe some of these questions address services appropriate to communities that are larger than Pomfret. This was a poorly created questionnaire. I would question any results based on it. I would support Pomfret working cooperatives with other towns to provide some of the above services and goals.

What is your vision of Pomfret in 10 years?

What is your personal "best experience" in Pomfret in the past 12 months?

Do you want your children to live in Pomfret? If not, why not?

Do you want big box stores in Pomfret? Malls? Gambling Casinos, Strip Center?

What to you defines Rural life?

What could be done to improve safety?

What town resources does your family currently use/appreciate?

Are you willing to approve increased taxes to establish/improve town resources? 2

The value of promoting Agriculture as a means of preservation of open space?

Do you think local regulations are infringing on people's rights?

Should all major decisions regarding expenditures, new regulations, etc. be voted by ballot?

How to promote eco-tourism and new business? Create a modest convention center

What types of industry would be acceptable?

Can you afford to stay in Pomfret?

Form of Government?

Tell us what you are going to do with zoning? Do you Support Zoning?

Do you think town government too big?

Just Right? Too small?

Minimum size of lots, minimum size of home, and what should be done with dilapidated homes the regress the value of well kept homes? 2

Should there be a freeze on property taxes? Yes 1

What areas should be zoned differently?

How to establish commercial businesses and where?

How large should the size of your house lot be?

These were other comments made by the people who answered our questionnaire - Pomfret was an Agricultural town. Yes, agriculture has been forced out of this area due to financial reasons regionally. But Pomfret is still made up of Agricultural minded people. We try to live in peace with and off the land. We enjoy farm animals, we enjoy wild animals. Thou we may not be able to milk cows for a living or grow cash crops, the rural way of life is bred into may of us true locals. We've had to evolve into gentleman farmers, construction workers, truck drivers, equipment operators, loggers, heavy equipment mechanics, carpenters, etc. It truly bothers me and greatly concerns me what Pomfret's future will become. It really does appear that any changes in town have been in favor of urbanizing. Zoning regulation appears to not want "rural folks" in town. The future of Pomfret citizen will live on 2 buildable acres. Work out of town if not out of state. Maybe be allowed to have a shed for a lawn mower. And probably need "political" permission to put in a vegetable garden. Farm animals or farm machinery will be seen only at Harvest Fairs or annual parades. I truly hope I am wrong and decisions start being made for the "country folk". Not the urban "converts" that feel 2 acres with a bird feeder IS country. Unfortunately, I believe many younger Pomfret raised country folks looking to buy real estate will be forced to buy out of town to live the way they have all along.

We know many people come from areas not as contry as Pomfret, yet they build and build to ruin the countryside. I won't be around much longer but growing up here I can appreciate Pomfret for what it is. I would like to see others enjoy it also. There aren't many Pomfrets left. Thank you for allowing input from Pomfret citizens.

This questionnaire has very little to do with zoning! We have been led to believe that our zoning was to be a broad-based agricultural/residential approach. It seems to have turned into a ffascal of its present leadership! Embarrassing!

Special note of dangerous intersection. Over and over again myself and neighbors witness speeders who refuse to obey speed limit. There have been several very serious car accidents on the curve which is posted 25 MPH. It is the S intersection going on Route 169 heading to the community school, where at the intersection you can turn right heading towards Putnam Savings Bank plaza. Keeing in mind this comes into a school zone, speed limit is 25 MPH and so many speed through this area. Trucks come through just making the curve. Many cars do not even stop coming out of Averil Road. Which is so dangerous, attempting to shoot out onto Route 169. It has been an issue for a long while. Some say a flashing caution light should be put in. I feel that a regular traffic light should be considered, where on the red light traffic must stop thus slowing traffic to a stop. Less speeding and safer for cars turning onto Route 169 from Averil Road. Again the warmer weather is here and motorcycle riders coming through will increase. Also they drive much faster than the posted speed limit making it difficult for cars to see them coming around the bend up to Averil Road. This needs to be addressed.

Address zoning issues so that property values are retained without text changes and the general dumming down of our existing regulations. Wetland protection is also vital to this town's current and future needs. There is an effort by our Town leadership to dum down these protections as well.

2

More feelings on the traffic through town, slowing down the traffic.

The planning and zoning commision should be making decisions based on the open space plan. I would like to see developers required to replace what they destroy, such as trees.

More detailed questions regarding ammenities and cultural activities.

Set new regulations regarding billboards and signs, no unregistered vehicles on property,

Set standards for property that exhibits clutter.

If people are happy with the current plan of open space and how it is being used?

Are you in favor of developing the Murdock Property seeing it's our only large aquifer?

Use of centralized septic, community wells, noise and ATVs?

Zoning Issues?

2

What is wrong with this town?

What other concerns do we have?

Ask the taxpayers and people who actually own land and businesses about what they think about the taxes and conservation, no the people whose kids go to school here.

many of the out of state plates that are here often and those people should have no say on how our town is run, do they pay taxes here?

One school or two? Does elementary include K-8?

If interested in neighborhood crime watch, street lights, ordinance on dog's barking for more than five minutes and at certain times of the day? Enforce leash law? Noise ordinance and enforce clean up of property?

2

Should Zoning be repealed?

What improvements can be made without over spending which could lead to rising taxes?

More support for Pomfret Public Library?

What should the overall strategy be concerning zoning?

How come Pomfret encourages huge homes to be built in Longmeadow, but when a lifelong resident wants to build a four room home on his onw 10 acres, why does the P & Z discourage use of the remaining acreage?