

# Economic Benefits of Whately's Farms



All **27**  
farms in  
Whately  
are vital to the  
Town's tax base

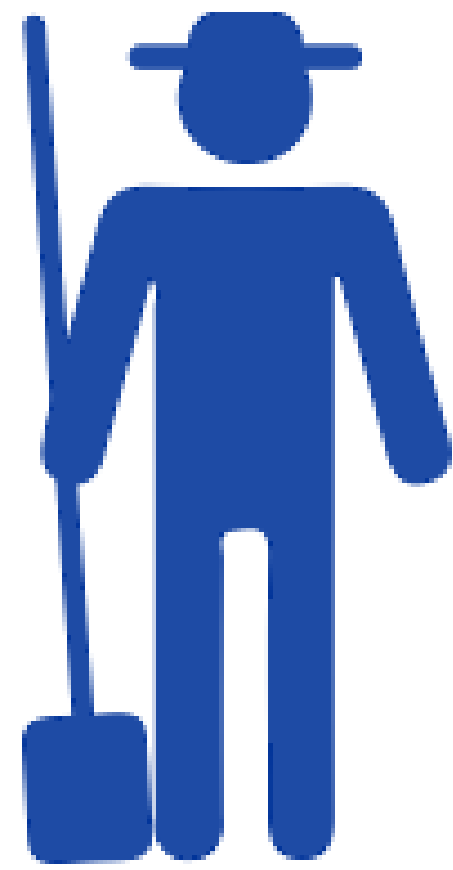
*Based on a 2014 farmer survey*

**\$20** million  
in revenues are  
grossed by  
these farms  
annually



*or about \$4,706/acre*

**425** workers  
are employed  
annually by  
Whately farms



*Includes full time, part time  
and seasonal workers*

Whately farms create **\$32**  
million in economic impact  
annually

For every dollar created by local  
farms, another **60¢** is reinvested  
in the local economy

*Based on multiplier effects documented  
by American Farmland Trust, and others*

Whately farm businesses  
sell a variety of products:



*Includes wholesale and retail items*

Whately farmers help the  
economy by selling to:

- ✓ regional distributors
- ✓ stores, restaurants
- ✓ export markets
- ✓ processors

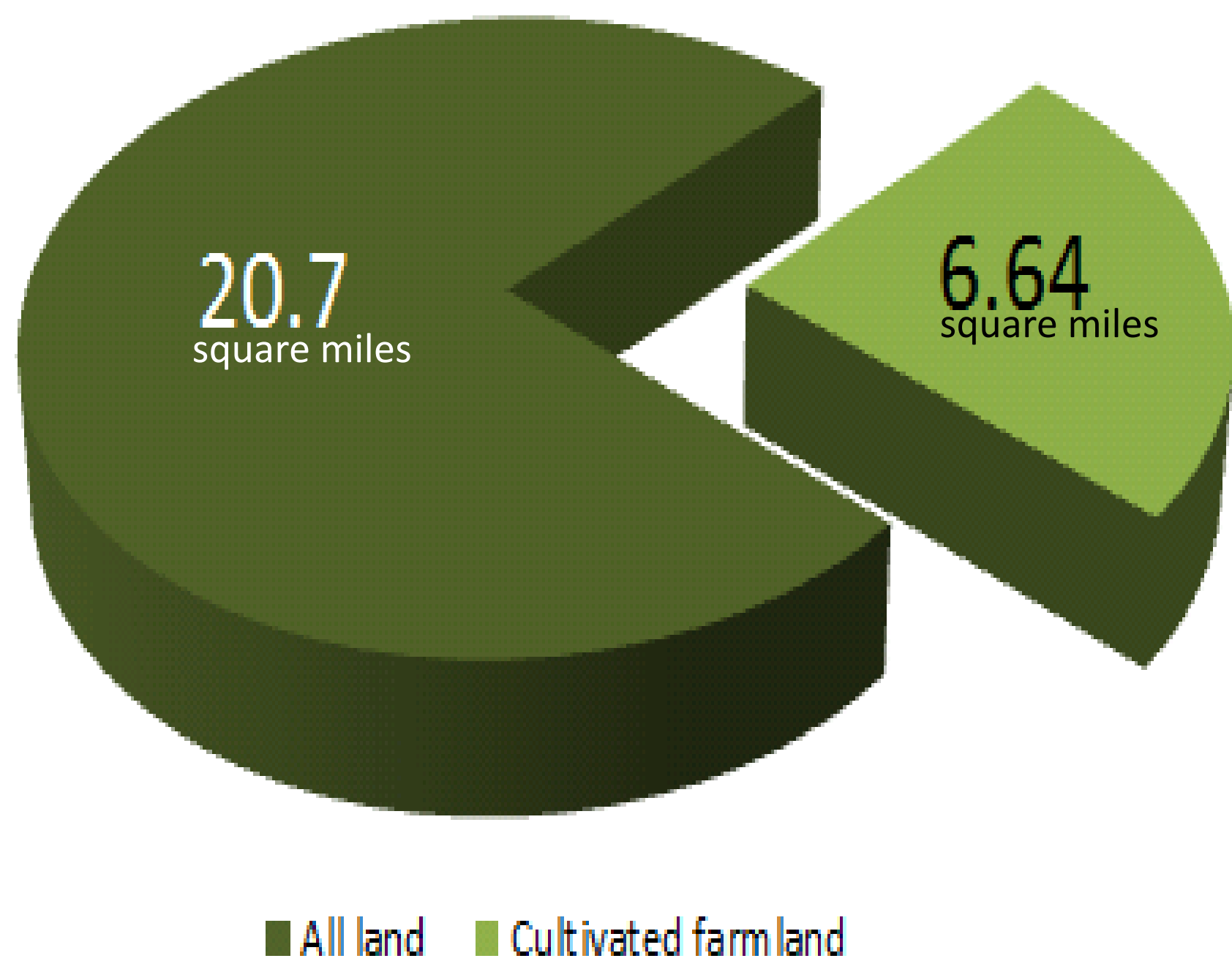


*Prepared for the Town of Whately and  
the Whately Agricultural Commission  
December 2015*



# Other Benefits of Farmland to Whately

About **1/3** of Whately's land is made up of cultivated farmland



*And farmland is a primary element of Whately's rural working landscape*

*Based on producer-reported acreage to USDA ; includes cropland, hay fields, fallow land and forest*

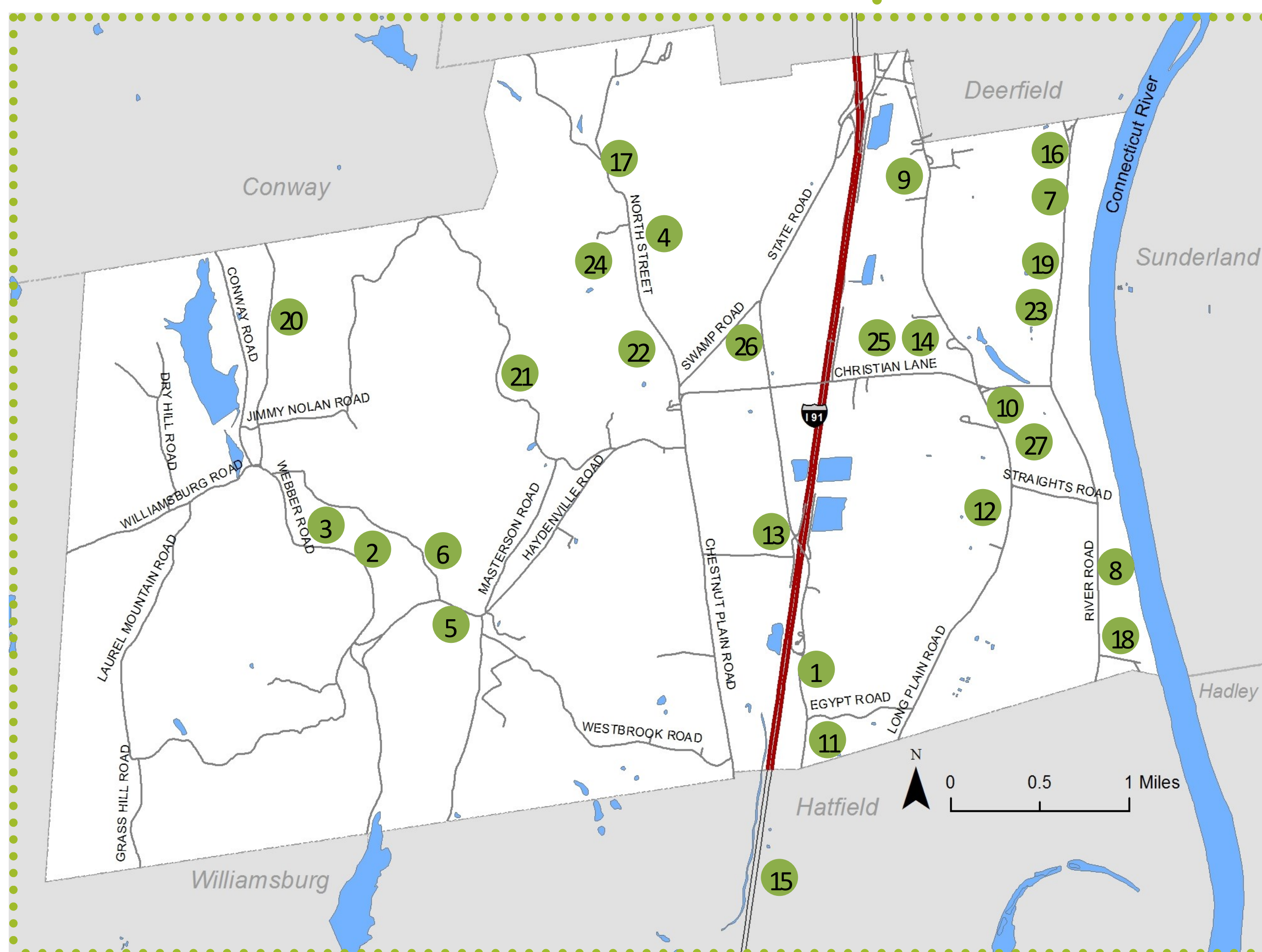
## What do residents say?

- 80% chose **rural character** as one of the best things about living in Town, followed by **scenic landscapes & open space**
- Nearly 80% said the Town should make **farmland a priority** to permanently protect
- Most significant challenges facing Whately are **preserving farmland** and maintaining rural character, while generating tax revenues and increasing development .

*2011 Whately Master Plan survey*



Whately has some of the most productive farmland soils of North America.



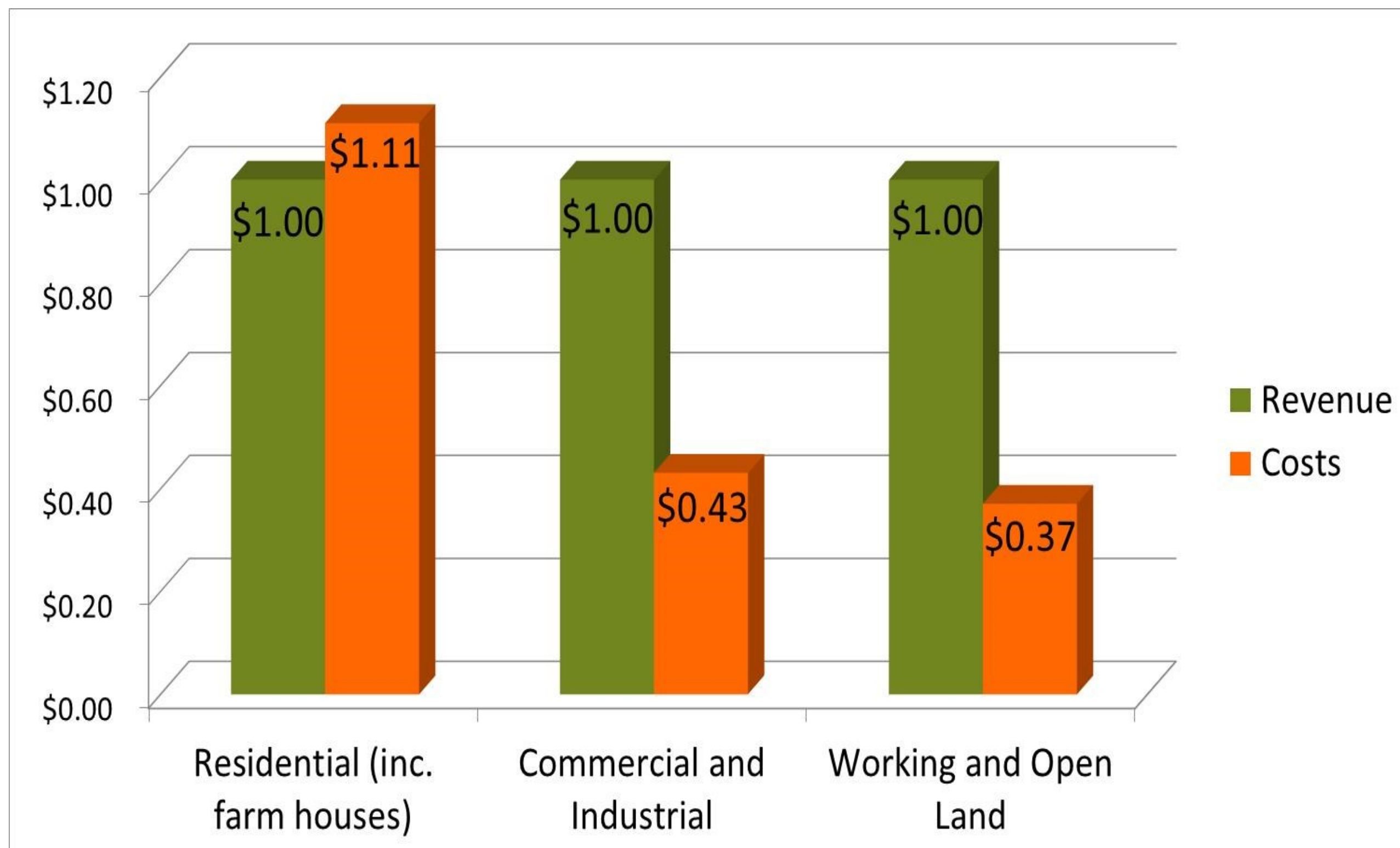
## Farmers steward much of Whately's land

- |                             |                                 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Baystate Perennial Farm   | 15 Malinowski Farms             |
| 2 Bean's Maple Distillery   | 16 Manheim Farms                |
| 3 Bear Path Farm            | 17 Nasami Farm                  |
| 4 Belder Farm               | 18 Nourse Farms, Inc            |
| 5 Brookledge Sugarhouse     | 19 J.M. Pasiecznik Farms        |
| 6 Chamutka Farm             | 20 Poplar Hill Farm             |
| 7 Chang Farm, Inc.          | 21 Potash Hill Farm             |
| 8 Enterprise Farm           | 22 Quonquot Farm                |
| 9 Fairview Farms, Inc.      | 23 Sobieski's River Valley Farm |
| 10 Full Bloom Market Garden | 24 Scott Farm                   |
| 11 Golonka Farm             | 25 Tall Grass Farm              |
| 12 Harvest Farm             | 26 Teddy C. Smiarowski Farms    |
| 13 LaSalle Florists         | 27 W & W Farm                   |
| 14 Long Plain Farm          |                                 |



# Cost of Community Services in Whately

Land in residential development is almost **3 times** more costly to the Town in services provided (such as fire, police, & schools) than land used for farms



For every **\$1** the Town gets in taxes from farms, the Town spends only about **37¢** on services to these properties

*Based on American Farmland Trust's average Cost of Community Services for MA towns*

The Town of Whately has challenging circumstances that complicate the Cost of Community Services picture. Whately has excess capacity in its schools and other services, and the Town does not have a very diverse tax base to help defray the costs of these services. A study is needed to help understand the impact new households might have in defraying the cost of Whately's community services and how new households might impact farmland and farming in Whately.



Studies show permanently protected farmland can increase the property value of neighboring homes—and that people are willing to pay more to purchase homes near protected land.

*And farmers in Whately, like all residents, pay property and excise taxes.*



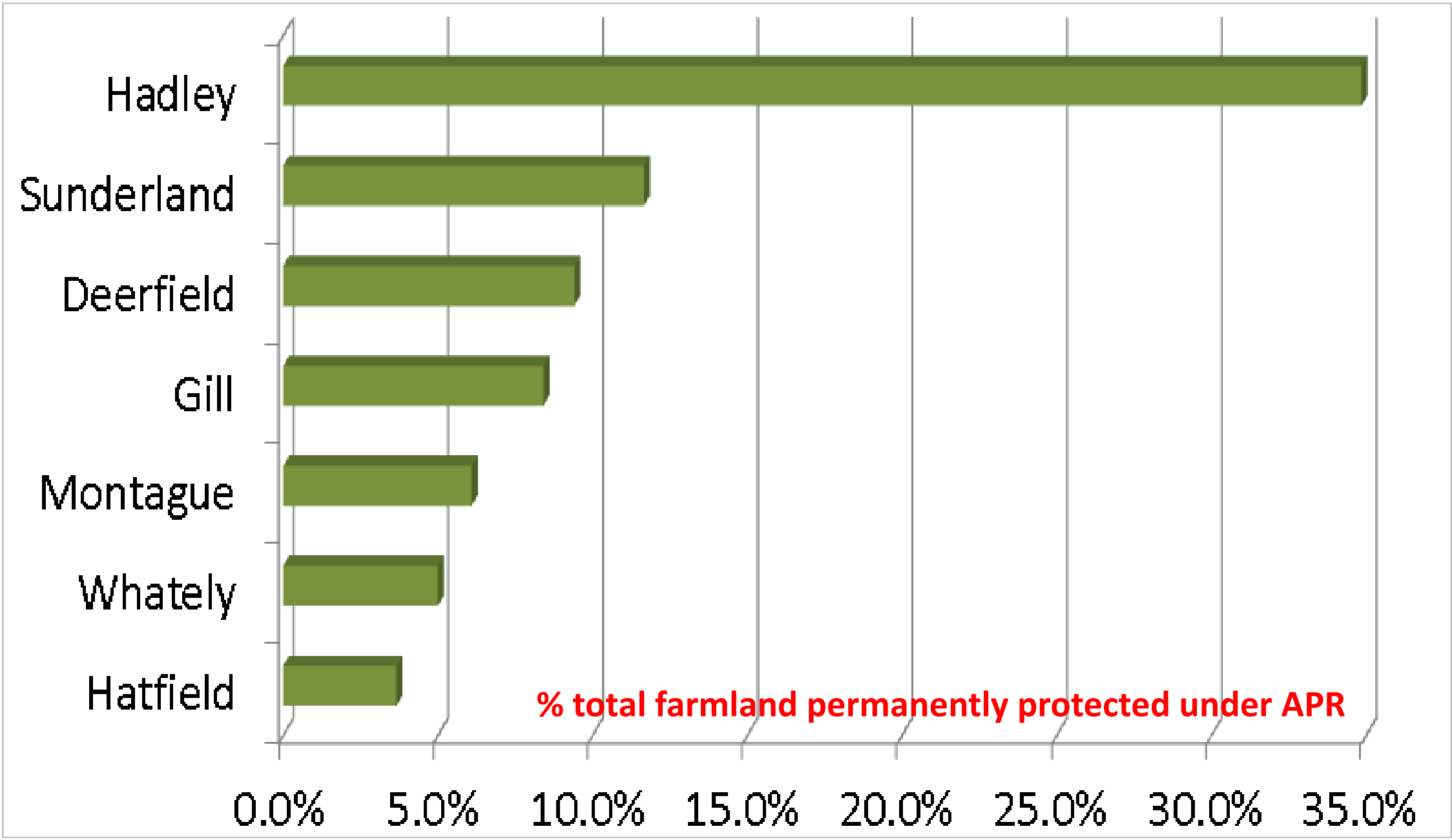
# Preserved Farmland in Whately

Just less than **5%** of all of Whately's land is permanently protected farmland

Type of Permanent Protection	# of acres	% of town
Agricultural Preservation Restriction	646	4.9%
Conservation Restriction	784	5.9%
State Owned	1,157	8.7%
Cemeteries	17	0.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,604</b>	<b>19.7%</b>

Source: CPC Master Plan

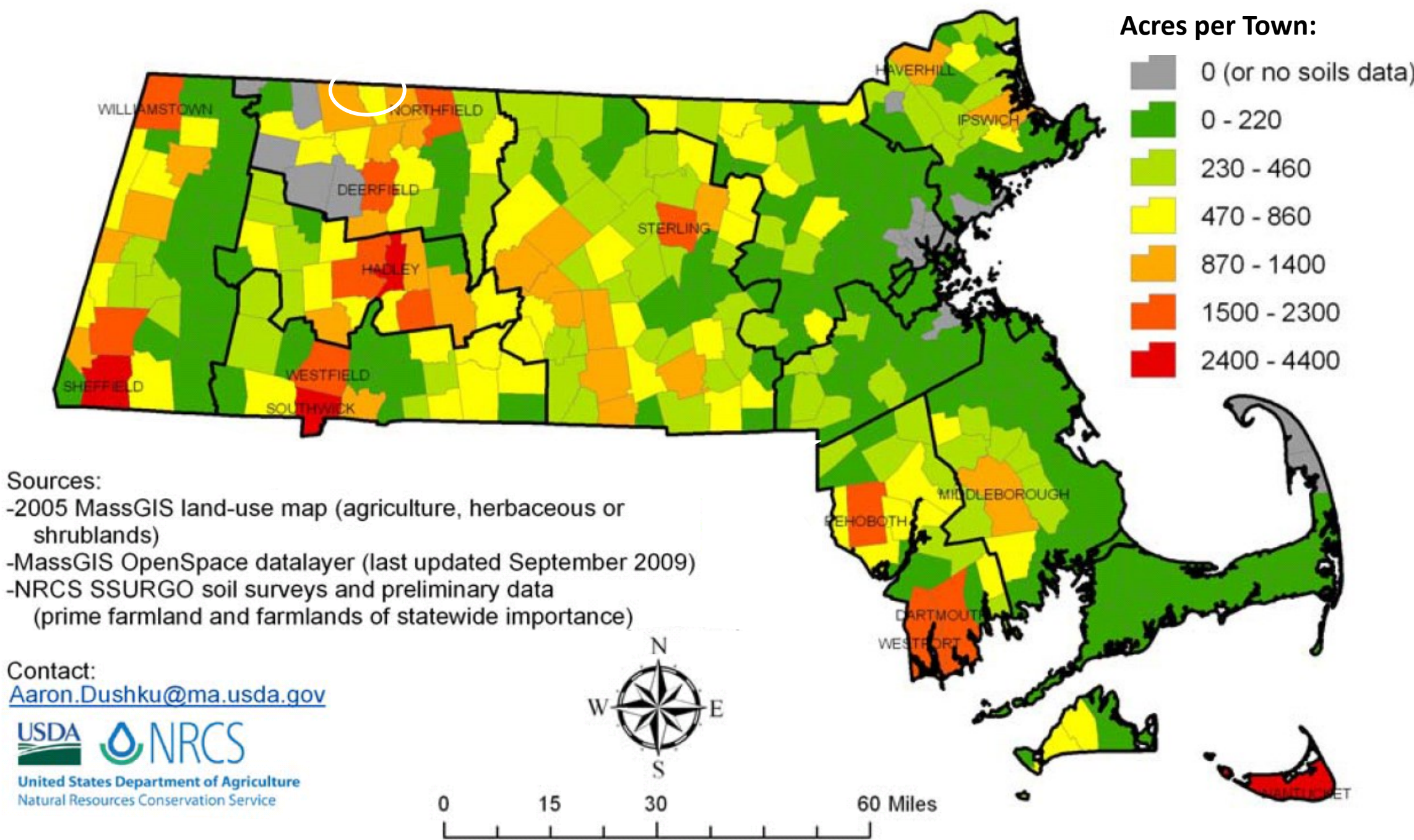
*And about 20% of all of Whately's land is permanently protected*



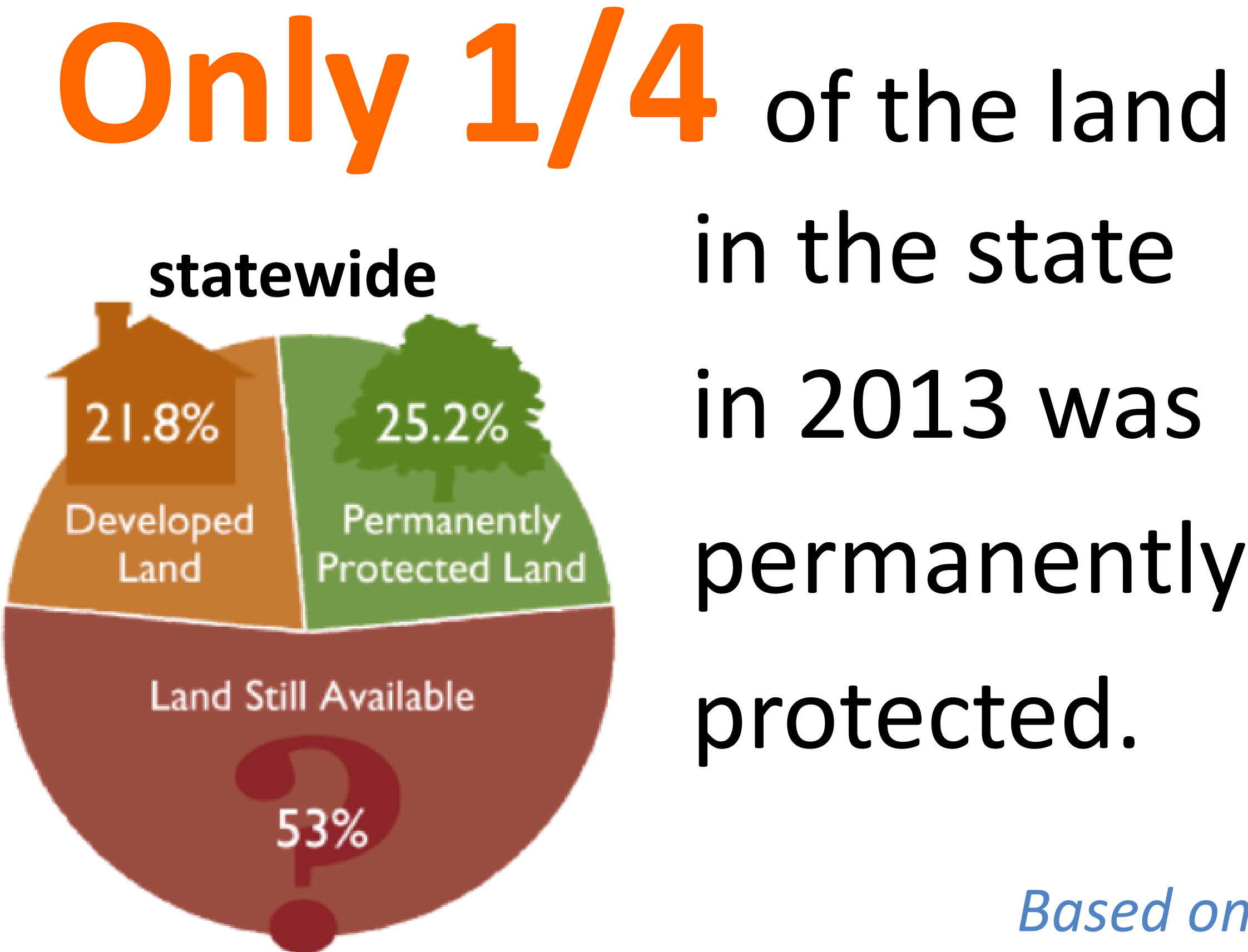
*Whately ranks low in farmland protection compared to several nearby towns*

## Hot-spots for farmland preservation in Massachusetts

Unprotected farmland on prime farmland soils



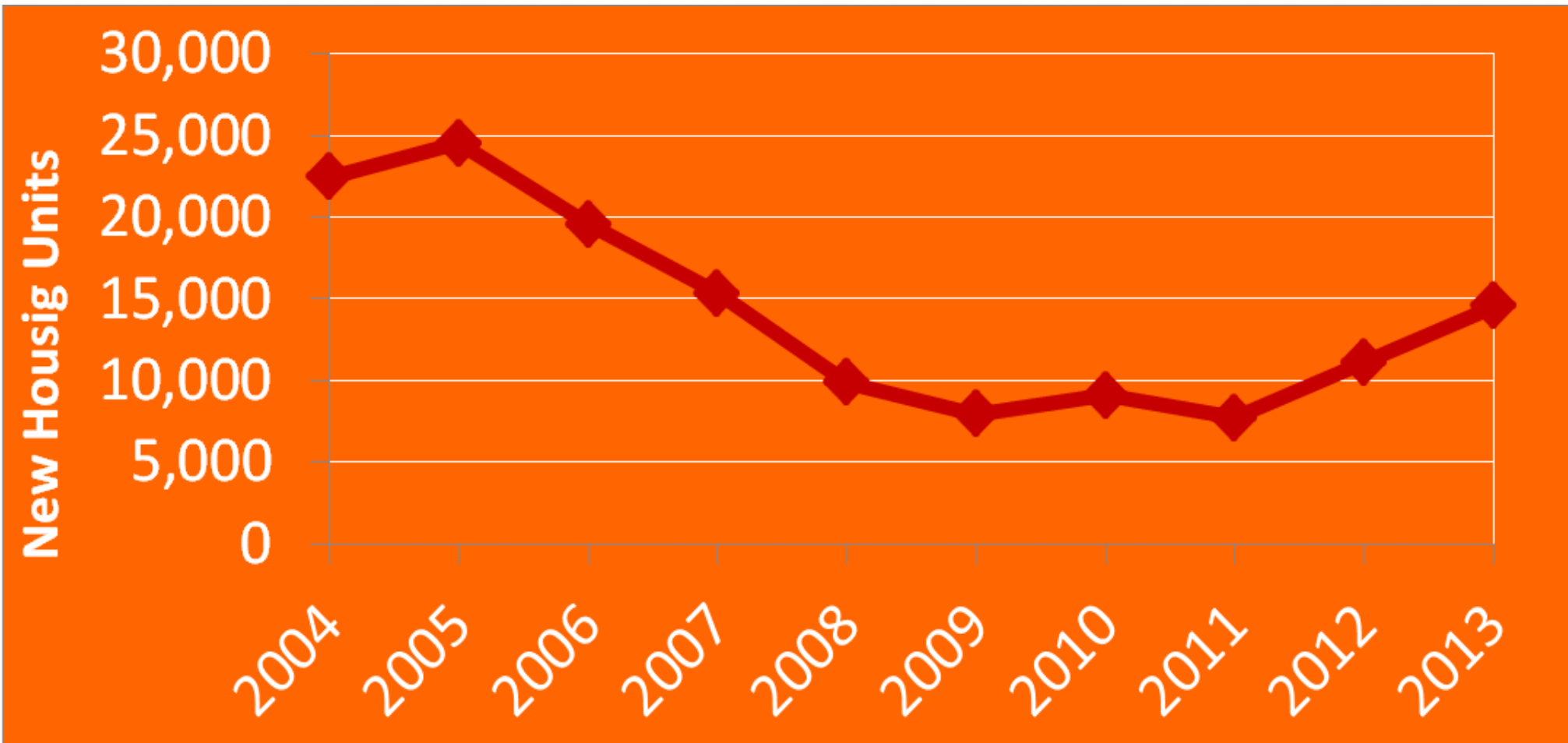
Whately falls into the category of towns statewide with the **3rd highest** acreage of unprotected farmland



*Based on Losing Ground, Fifth Edition*



Statewide housing starts have begun to increase since their recent lows in 2008—2011



*and Whately's highly developable land & its location near I-91 make its farmland very vulnerable to development*



# Preserving More Farmland in Whately w/ CPA

Category of Completed Project	# of Completed Projects	Amount Spent	% of Total Spent
Open Space	6	\$107,410	42%
Historic Preservation	9	\$145,773	57%
Community Housing	0	\$0	0%
Recreation	1	\$4,593	2%
Total Allocated		\$257,776	100%

Additionally, there are 6 in process projects (1 Open Space for \$23,600; 4 Historic Preservation for \$66,400 total; 1 Recreation for \$18,000) .  
Source: CPC as of November 2015

Over **40%** of funds for completed CPA projects have been used for open space conservation

*And all the open space projects to date have been for agricultural preservation!*

## Strategies to Increase the Use of CPA Funds for Farmland Protection

**COMMIT:** Whately could commit CPA funds for the future and/or for multiple years through a bond **for a specific parcel of land**

**TRANSFER:** Whately could apply to the CPC to transfer funds to Whately’s Conservation Fund. This could allow the Conservation Commission to release the funds (with input from the Ag Commission) for a farmland preservation project without awaiting Town meeting vote

**ALLOCATE:** The CPC could recommend that it allocate more than the required minimum 10% to the Open Space fund **without specifying a project**

**ACT:** The town and CPC could create a mechanism where the CPC could act in the interim between Town Meetings on allocating money up to a certain amount for farmland preservation projects

## How are Town funds used to help preserve farmland with APRs?

**Typical Equation:** 80% state \$\$ + 20% town \$\$ = Market value paid to land owner  
**BUT** a town can contribute as little as 5% if it meets certain requirements\*\*, however in this case landowners may have to cover the difference.

*\*\*if town has an ag commission = 5% off  
if town has Right to Farm Bylaw = 5% off  
if town has a formal process in place for right-of-first refusal = 5% off*



# Other Strategies for Preserving More Farmland

**AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION TRUST FUND:** A town may establish an Agricultural Preservation Trust Fund for the purpose of preserving productive agricultural lands and supporting and revitalizing the agricultural industry of the town.

**RIGHT OF FIRST PURCHASE:** While towns have right of first refusal for land under Chapter 61, 61A or 61B, towns don't typically have the same for non-chapter lands. However, towns can utilize "purchase option" tools so they can sign a contract with owners of a priority agricultural land before the owner is ready to sell.

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION ACQUISITIONS:** Conservation Commissions have the most flexibility of any town board in acquiring land. Conservation Commissions can acquire land in different ways, including directly purchasing land using money in their Conservation Fund and accepting land donations.

**PARTNERSHIP WITH LAND TRUSTS:** A town may assign its option of first refusal for land under Chapter 61, 61a or 61b to a nonprofit conservation organization under the terms and conditions agreed upon by the select board.



## Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) to preserve farmland

### Maryland provides a model for TDRs

In Montgomery County's Rural Density Transfer zone, landowners can sell their land development rights to areas designated for growth elsewhere in the County. In this way, rural landowners can reap the equity in their land while preserving it for farming. As of 2010, almost 85% of the County's Agricultural Reserve was still being farmed, and of these lands, 90% are preserved under some type of agricultural land preservation easement.

Given that there is not an abundance of areas where development could be concentrated in Whately, a regional approach to TDRs might work best for the Town. Whately could work with a nearby urban municipality to establish a TDR or with a regional entity that could act as a receiver for TDRs, such as a land trust.

TDRs are a farmland protection strategy that have been recommended in the 2013 Sustainable Franklin County plan and the 2015 Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan.

**As of 2010, Montgomery County, Maryland had the highest percent of farmland under agricultural land preservation easements in the nation.**

In TDRs, owners of land in an area designated as a transfer zone (shown in green) can sell their development rights to someone in an area designated for growth.

### Montgomery County, MD



[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agsservices](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agsservices)