

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p><b>AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES:</b></p> <p>Agriculture and forestry were Winthrop's first forms of economic development and are still an important part of the town today for many reasons.</p> <p>Farming in Winthrop, and throughout the state, is evolving from a commodity-based market industry to locally based, smaller businesses that produce specialty products on smaller land parcels. Supporting and encouraging these types of small farms is a meaningful opportunity for the town.</p> <p>Forest management is supported by markets for wood products that are beyond local control, but since forest gains value from one year to the next, it can generally withstand temporary fluctuations.</p> <p><b>State Goal: To safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development which threatens those resources.</b></p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p>1. To safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.</p>	<p>1.1: Consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices as required by 12 M.R.S.A. §8869.</p> <p>1.2: Consult with Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices.</p> <p>1.3: Amend land use ordinances to require commercial or subdivision developments in critical rural areas, if applicable, maintain areas with prime farmland soils as open space to the greatest extent practicable.</p> <p>1.4: Limit non-residential development in critical rural areas (if the town designates critical rural areas) to natural resource-based businesses and services, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses, farmers' markets, and home occupations.</p>	<p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer, Town Council. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer. Mid-term.</p>

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
	<p>1.5: Consider adding a provision that requires soil test in areas where commercial solar farms have been proposed to determine whether the property has Prime Farmland Soils or Soils of Statewide Importance.</p> <p>1.6: Explore the usefulness and possibility of offering density bonuses for proposed developments in the designated growth area, in exchange for a fee or the protection of farmland in the rural areas.</p> <p>1.7: Consider making cluster subdivisions mandatory where applicable to preserve critical rural agricultural land.</p> <p>1.8: Investigate the enactment of open spaces or conservation subdivisions designed to protect agricultural land and support the continued agricultural use of land that is reserved through those developments.</p> <p>1.9: Explore additional ordinance standards to minimize impacts of solar development on important agricultural resources, such as soils, as well as farmers' ability to access the land base they need for their operations now and in the future.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Mid-term.</p>
<p>2. To support farming and forestry and encourage their economic viability.</p>	<p>2.1: Encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in the current use taxation programs.</p> <p>2.2: Permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, such as roadside stands, greenhouses, firewood</p>	<p>Town Manager, Assessor. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Planner, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p>

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
	<p>operations, sawmills, log buying yards, and pick-your-own operations.</p> <p>2.3: Include agriculture, commercial forestry operations, and land conservation that supports them in local or regional economic development plans.</p> <p>2.4: Catalogue whether the town owns any underutilized land that could be used for agricultural purposes. If so, work toward leasing town-owned agricultural land to farmers.</p> <p>2.5: In addition to cataloging any underutilized land, (Strategy 2.4) explore and establish community need and support. This might mean some form of public engagement to find out more about the land access needs of local farmers, and whether leasing town-owned land could be helpful.</p> <p>2.6: Consider conducting some form of public engagement (survey, public forum, series of interviews) with local farmers, specifically to hear directly about their needs and issues, and how the town could better support them. The information that is gathered could be used by the town to best support local agriculture.</p> <p>2.7: Included in the abovementioned public engagement could be a question if a Voluntary Municipal Farm Support Program (strategy 8.3) is something farmers would be interested in enrolling in, and that information could in turn help the town determine whether it is worth establishing that program.</p>	<p>Town Planner, Town Manager. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Long term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	2.8: When reviewing the Zoning Ordinance in the future, consider reviewing what the town charges for permit fees for agricultural structures to promote the economic viability of farming.	Town Planner, Planning Board, Town Council. Mid-term.
3. Investigate ways to encourage youth education, interest, and participation in agriculture, forestry, and farming.	<p>3.1: Explore options to engage farmers and schools to start an FFA chapter and agricultural education program centered around internships with local farms.</p> <p>3.2: Work with schools to encourage partnerships with local farms by procuring locally grown food.</p> <p>3.3: Engage sources to assist in the development of a forestry curriculum such as the Maine Tree Foundation, Project Learning Tree, Maine Audubon, the Kennebec Land Trust, and Professional loggers and contractors.</p>	<p>Town Council, School Superintendent, School Board. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, School Superintendent. Long term.</p> <p>School Superintendent, School Board. Long term.</p>
4. Expand, promote, encourage and increase local awareness of the importance and value of agriculture in Winthrop to increase the viability of farming and agriculture.	<p>4.1: Expand agriculture-oriented activities and events on the town calendar.</p> <p>4.2: Increase the public's awareness and knowledge of the programs and support provided through Maine Farmland Trust in efforts to aid working farms and protect important farmland.</p> <p>4.3: Consider the possibility of developing an Agricultural Committee to oversee all things related to agriculture, farming, and forestry in town.</p>	<p>Executive Assistant. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Planner, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Short Term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	4.4: If and when an Agricultural Committee is formed, one of its roles could be to support the implementation of strategies within the agriculture portion of the Comprehensive Plan, in collaboration with the stakeholders outlined here.	Town Manager, Town Council. Short Term.
5. Use the most current standards available for erosion and stormwater control, site reclamation and vegetative buffers in all agriculture and forestry practices.	5.1: Continue to review and update the Zoning Ordinance regularly to reflect most up to date requirements.  5.2: Promote the use of best management practices for timber harvesting and agricultural production.	Town Planner, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.  Town Manager, CEO, Town Planner, Planning Board. Ongoing.
6. Explore the options and work toward developing a farmers' market in Winthrop.	6.1: Consider assigning an existing committee or board to oversee the farmers market or develop a new committee or board for such purposes.  6.2: Involve the Maine Federation of Farmers' Markets in the development of Winthrop's farmers market, as necessary. ( <a href="https://mainefarmersmarkets.org/">https://mainefarmersmarkets.org/</a> )  6.3: When conducting public outreach to farmers, explore the topic of a need/desire to establish a local farmers' market or if it would be more beneficial for the town to collaborate with an existing, nearby market instead.	Town Manager, Town Council, Conservation Commission. Mid-term.  Town Manager, Executive Assistant, Town Council. Mid-term.  Town Manager, Town Council. Mid-Term.

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
<p>7. Review and amend the Zoning Ordinance as necessary to support, promote, and encourage appropriate agricultural practices in well-suited locations throughout town.</p>	<p>7.1: Allow market gardening (fruits and vegetables that are grown for the purpose of selling) in all districts so residents can grow their own food.</p> <p>7.2: Chickens, rabbits, and other forms of livestock that do not require the use of permanent land improvements should be regulated. Odor and insects can be controlled through proper manure handling. Noise, particularly that of poultry, can be minimized by limiting the number of poultry and allowing only hens in predetermined zoning districts.</p> <p>7.3: Consider setting parameters on the amount of acreage required for keeping non-commercial livestock such as horses (example: one horse requires one acre; two horses require one and a half acres).</p> <p>7.4: Explore current setback requirements for barns, animal shelters, and pens in zoning districts where animal keeping is permitted to reduce unnecessary restrictions.</p> <p>7.5: Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to support agritourism activities and make the approval process smoother for farms.</p> <p>7.6: Consider adding a definition for “Urban Agriculture” when revising and updating the Zoning Ordinance that permits gardening/some level of agriculture in most zoning districts.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Short term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
<p>8. Explore and consider adopting ordinances that support locally produced agriculture.</p>	<p>8.1: Consider adopting a Food Sovereignty ordinance that allows small-scale, backyard producers, homesteaders, hobbyists, etc. to produce foods without being a state-inspected and -licensed facility. This applies only when food is being sold directly to the consumer at the site of production.</p> <p>8.2: Investigate the need and support for the development of a “Right to Farm” ordinance (detailed in text of chapter).</p> <p>8.3: Explore the establishment of a Voluntary Municipal Support Program to develop a system of “farm support arrangements” with eligible farmland owners. (See Winslow as an example.)</p>	<p>Town Manager, Town Council, Planning Board, Town Planner, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council. Town Planner. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Town Council, Town Assessor, Town Planner. Mid-term.</p>