

**2026 REPORT ON THE INCLUSION OF VIABLE AGRICULTURAL LANDS
TO THE EXISTING NYS CERTIFIED AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS**

JEFFERSON COUNTY AGRICULTURAL & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

JULY 30, 2026

2026 Jefferson County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board

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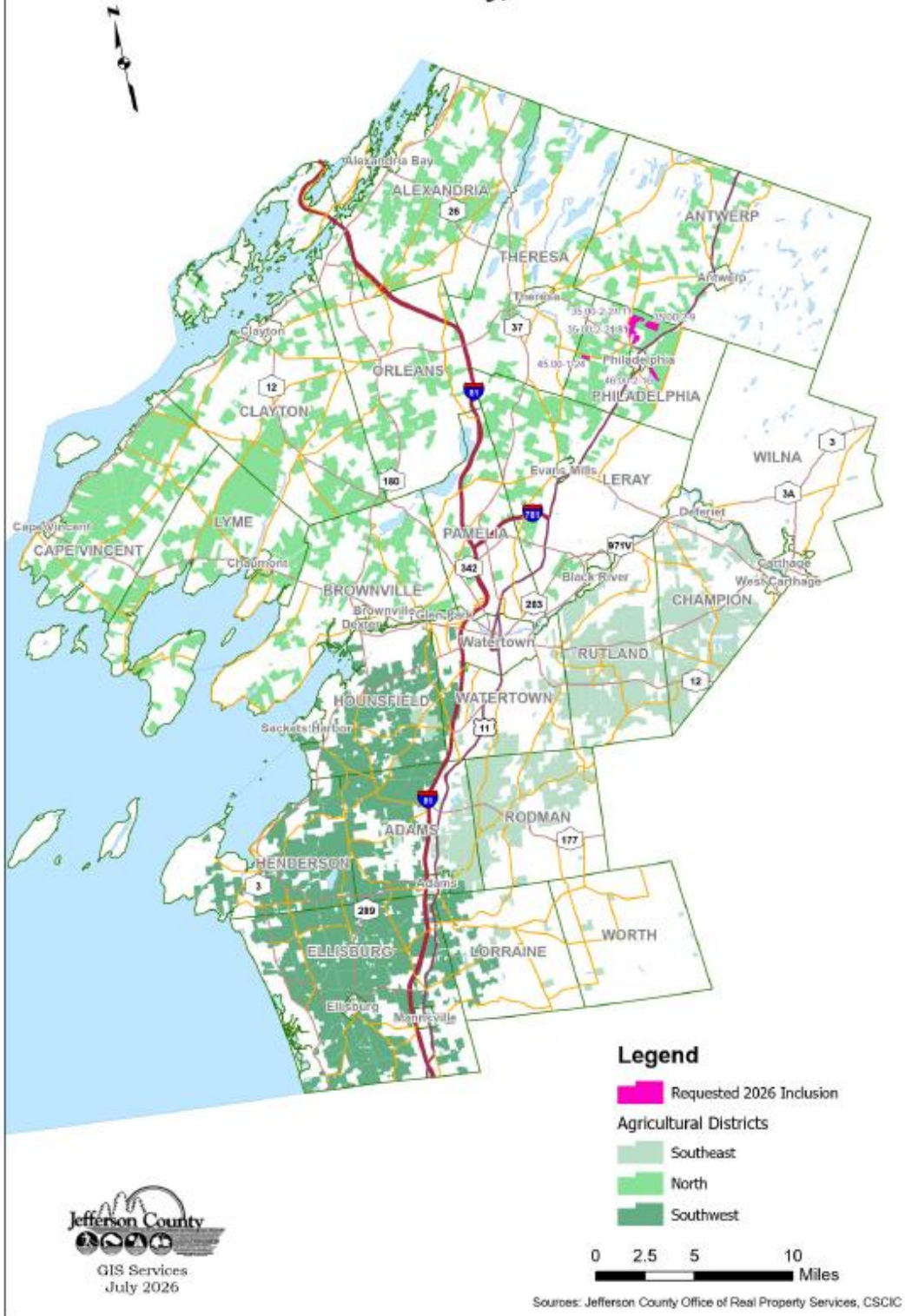
Dan McBride, Jefferson County Board of Legislators

Alex Marchenkoff, Real Property Director

Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer, Planning Department Director

Amanda Rae Root, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County

Proposed 2026 Agricultural District Inclusions Jefferson County, New York



INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This report presents the findings of the Jefferson County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board's (AFPB) review and recommendations to the County Legislature for the 2026 Agricultural District Inclusion Requests.

Article 25-AA of the NYS Agriculture and Markets Law was enacted in 1971 to help keep farmland in agricultural production through a combination of landowner incentives and protections that discourage the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses, including:

- providing reduced property tax bills for agricultural lands (agricultural landowners must apply to the local tax assessor for an annual agricultural assessment);
- providing the framework to limit unreasonable local regulation on accepted agricultural practices;
- providing Right to Farm provisions that protect accepted agricultural practices from private nuisance suits;
- modifying state agency administrative regulations and procedures to encourage the continuation of agricultural businesses;
- modifying the ability to advance public funds to construct facilities that encourage development;
- limiting the power to impose benefit assessments, special ad valorem levies, or other rates or fees in certain improvement districts or benefit areas such as water, sewer, or non-farm drainage; and
- reducing the ability of public agencies to acquire farmland through eminent domain.

Agricultural districts primarily benefit owners of land that is farmed. Being part of an agricultural district does not require that the land be used for agriculture, and it does not directly affect tax assessments (agricultural landowners must apply to the local tax assessor for an annual agricultural assessment).

There are two processes at the county level for the addition and review of these districts. Each Certified Agricultural District is required by New York State to undergo an Eight-Year Review to determine if the district still consists of predominantly viable agricultural land. There is also an annual individual inclusion process where agricultural land may be added to an existing certified agricultural district. There are three Agricultural Districts in Jefferson County comprising over **246,468.57 acres**.

The New York State Agricultural Districts Law requires counties to establish an annual 30-day period to allow parcels of predominantly viable agricultural land to be added to existing New York State Certified Agricultural Districts. The Jefferson County Board of Legislators has set **June 1st through June 30th** of each year for this purpose.

Viable agricultural land is land that is actively farmed as well as inactive and non-farm acreage which is highly suitable for agricultural production. A parcel of land is “predominantly” viable if a minimum of 51% of the parcel meets the above definition.

There are three NYS Certified Agricultural Districts in the County. The Southeast District #1, North District #2, and Southwest District #3.

Jefferson County NYS Certified Agricultural Districts in GIS Acres*

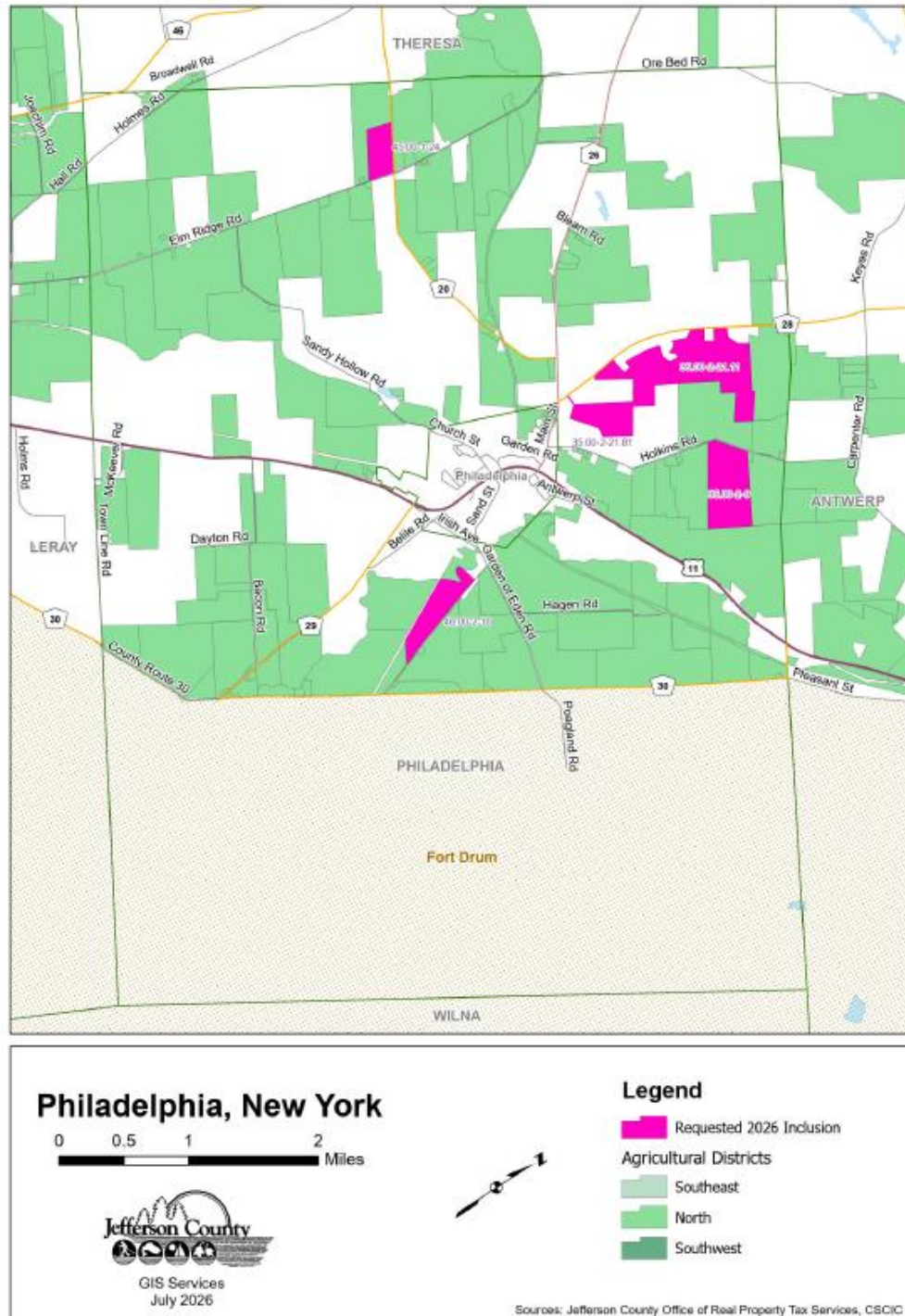
Southeast	#1	53,063.72
Towns of Wilna, Champion, Rutland, Rodman, Worth, and parts of Watertown, Adams, and Lorraine.		
North	#2	115,520.67
Towns of Brownville, Lyme, Cape Vincent, Clayton, Orleans, Pamelaia, Alexandria, Theresa, Antwerp, Philadelphia, and LeRay.		
Southwest	#3	77,884.18
Towns of Hounsfield, Henderson, Ellisburg, and parts of Watertown, Adams, and Lorraine.		
Total GIS acres in Districts		246,468.57

* Includes 2025 Annual Inclusions.

LANDOWNER REQUESTS

The County received requests from two landowners in the Town Philadelphia to consider the addition of five parcels consisting of a total of 575.09 GIS acres. Staff conducted a windshield survey of the requested parcels. Notes from that survey are included in this report.

Proposed 2026 Agricultural District Inclusions



1. Kenneth Trumble, Parcel 46.00-2-16, 32921 Child Rd

Parcel Number	Town	GIS Acres	District
46.00-2-16	Philadelphia	77.50	N: 2

The applicant is requesting to add one parcel to the North District. The applicant stated the land is approximately 77.5 acres of hay and farmland. Observation: Staff observed land that appears to be partly actively farmed for hay, and partly inactive land highly suitable for agricultural production.



2. Kenneth Trumble, Parcel 45.00-1-24, Whitney Cors Rd

Parcel Number	Town	GIS Acres	District
45.00-1-24	Philadelphia	47.60	N: 2

The applicant is requesting to add one parcel to the North District. The applicant stated the land is approximately 47.6 acres of hay farmland. Observation: Staff observed land that appears to be partly actively farmed for hay.



3. Kenneth Trumble, Parcel 35.00-2-9, 35216 Holkins Rd

Parcel Number	Town	GIS Acres	District
35.00-2-9	Philadelphia	130.09	N: 2

The applicant is requesting to add one parcel to the North District. The applicant stated the land is approximately 130.09 acres of hay farmland. Observation: Staff observed land that appears to be actively farmed for hay and grazing.



4. Kirby Klock, Parcel 35.00-2-21.11, County Route 28

Parcel Number	Town	GIS Acres	District
35.00-2-21.11	Philadelphia	171	N:2

The applicant is requesting to add one parcel to the North District. The applicant stated the land is approximately 171 acres of hay. Observation: Staff observed land that appears to be actively farmed for hay.



5. Kirby Klock, 35.00-2-21.81, County Route 28

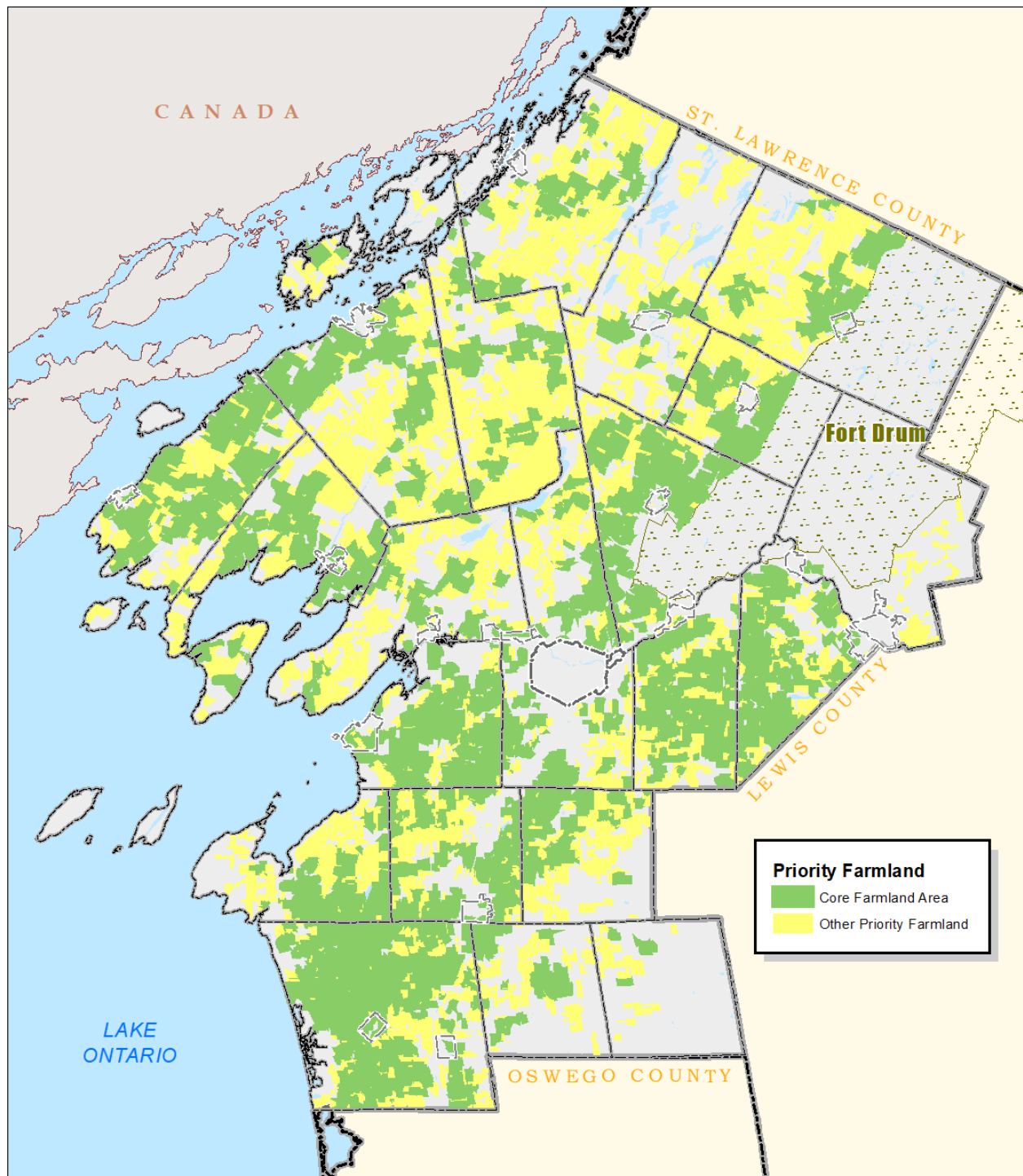
Parcel Number	Town	GIS Acres	District
35.00-2-21.81	Philadelphia	148.9	N: 2

The applicant is requesting to add one parcel to the North District. The applicant stated the land is approximately 149 acres of hay. Observation: Staff observed land that appears to be actively farmed for hay.



PRIORITY FARMLAND – JC Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, 2016

The adopted Jefferson County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan indicated priority farmland in the County. The map below identifies the areas. Most of the requested additions are within one of the areas or in close proximity.



PRIORITY AGRICULTURAL SOILS

While the identification of a specific soil type's location is not possible, this general soil map shows that all of the proposed additions contain one or more of the soils identified below.



Sources: U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Geological Survey National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, ESRI, Jefferson County Real Property Tax Services, Fort Drum Engineering

**Recommendation of the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
for the 2026 Agricultural District Inclusion Requests**

The Jefferson County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board recommends that the following parcels, totaling 575.09 GIS acres, be added to existing agricultural districts:

Recommendation		Parcel Number	Landowner	Town	GIS Acres	Ag. District
Approve	Disapprove					
x		46.00-2-16	Trumble	Philadelphia	77.50	N
x		45.00-1-24	Trumble	Philadelphia	47.60	N
x		35.00-2-9	Trumble	Philadelphia	130.09	N
x		35.00-2-21.11	Klock	Philadelphia	171.00	N
x		35.00-2-21.81	Klock	Philadelphia	148.90	N

Motion made by: Justin Bach, seconded by Daniel McBride.

All in favor: Doug Shelmindine; Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer; Theresa Marzano, Acting Real Property Director; Amanda Rae Root.

Opposed: N/A.

Absent: Jan Martusewicz, Al Gehrke, John Peck, Michael Kiechle

Motion carried.



Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer
Jefferson County Director of Planning & Community Development