

# Rural/Agricultural Heritage: Protect, Revitalize, Connect

## Scenario Vision & Support

This scenario proposes that Boxborough become a **regionally unique destination** by leveraging its agricultural, historic, and natural heritage and trail network to support **small-scale economic development**. Agriculture and open space related businesses and community spaces emerge through zoning overlays in select locations around town, creating destinations for travel on an **improved, connected, regionally attractive trail network**. Land protection focused in the northwest, along I-495, preserves the high ecological value, limits the need for municipal services in this area, and offers additional **opportunities for education and recreation**. Improving utility capacity and amending zoning where office park infrastructure already exists creates opportunities for new kinds of businesses to set up, including facilities that supports the regional food system.

### Meeting Master Plan Goals

- Protect heritage, character, land, water, habitat, agriculture, recreation, trails & wildlife (1.1 + 1.2 + 1.3)
- Concentrate growth in Business park and foster participation in regional agricultural economy (3.1 + 3.2)
- Enhance quality of life services and pursue regional approach to open space and recreation (3.3 + 7.3)

### 2019 Survey Responses

- #1 most mentioned response: Preservation of rural character
- #2 most desired business: Farm stand
- #3 most mentioned response: Only redevelopment, no new footprint



## Creating Destinations with Character

### Heritage

Location: throughout town



### Protect

Location: Beaver Brook



### Revitalize

Location: Office Park and Industrial Districts



### Connect

Location: throughout town



**Intent:** Celebrate rural heritage and create destinations that will support small scale economic development

#### Key Challenge:

- Regulations limit home businesses & agriculture accessory uses

#### Goals:

- Provide residents with quality of life amenities
- Preserve historic & cultural resources unique to Boxborough
- Create attractive regional destinations



**Intent:** Protect ecologically valuable lands

#### Key Challenge:

- Absence of contiguous open space in town

#### Goals:

- Align land protection efforts with regional vision
- Provide education and recreation for residents and the region
- Protect key aquifers and priority habitat for rare species



**Intent:** Revitalize the existing office park and encourage agricultural & cultural opportunities

#### Key Challenge:

- Tax base threatened by increasing vacancy and lack of diversity

#### Goals:

- Increase occupancy through relaxed regulations
- Encourage industry diversity by supporting regional agriculture and local agricultural entrepreneurs
- Utilize existing infrastructure through creative reuse



**Intent:** Create connections to destinations through a regional trail network

#### Key Challenge:

- Discontinuity in existing network & lack of accessibility

#### Goals:

- Continuous trail networks
- Access to destinations from trails
- Support diversity of users and enhance accessibility



## Implementation Process

### Short Term

- Municipal water feasibility study
- Additional accessory use in A/R
- Office Park rezone for additional uses & reduce lot restrictions
- Trail improvement coalition

### Medium Term

- Increase conservation spending for trail extension & improvements
- Context-sensitive design guidelines
- Participate in regional conservation efforts
- Regional Agricultural network

### Long Term

- Agricultural economic & feasibility study
- Parks & Recreation Department
- Public community spaces