

# Land Use Study

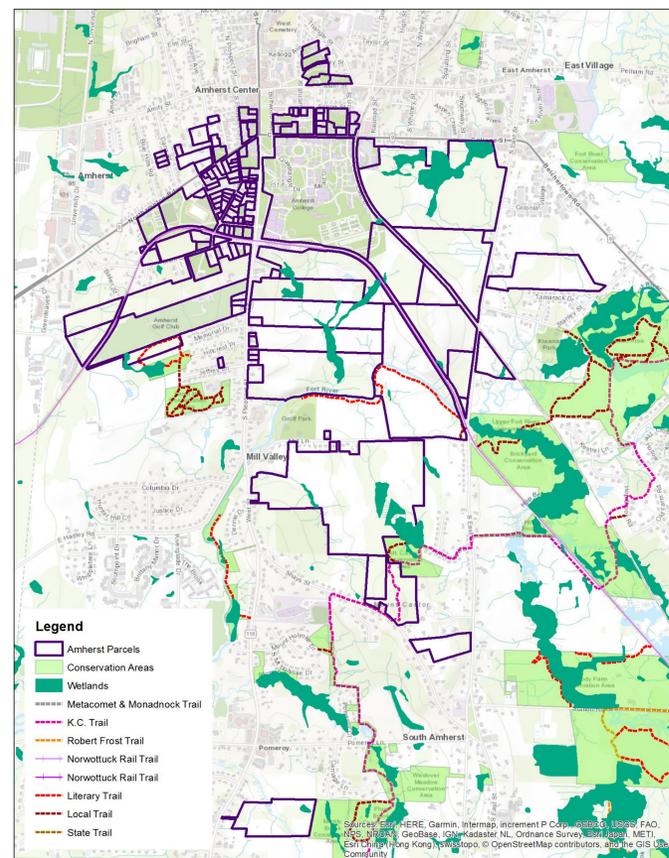


Amherst College Office of Environmental Sustainability

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## Objectives

- Identify and map college land parcels.
- Determine the natural resources and services they provide.
- Visualize this data with Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping.
- Find land use possibilities considering history & the existing Framework Plan.



## Local Parcel Map

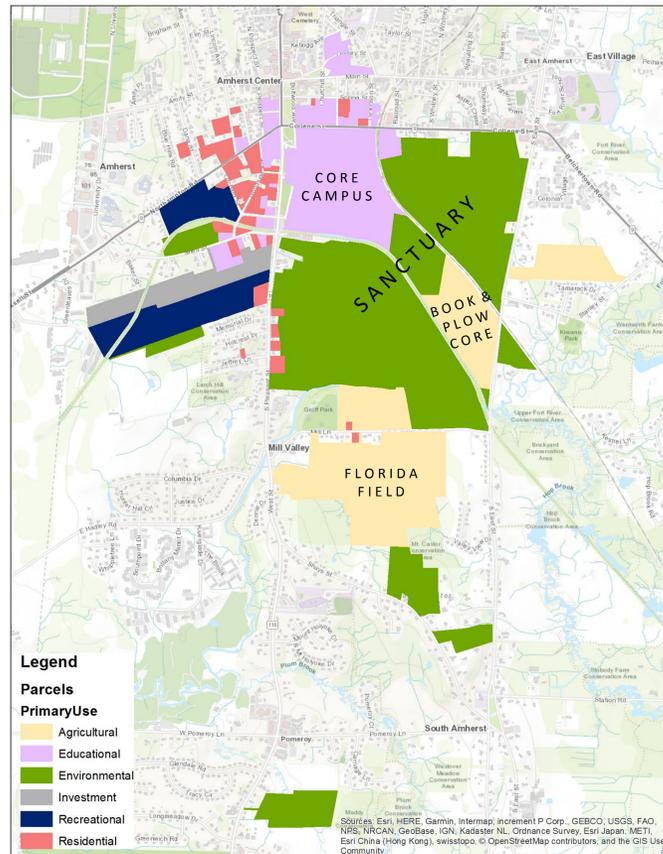
Amherst College land is outlined in purple. Each outline denotes a tax assessment parcel.

Map data was taken from publicly available sources published by local towns and the state of MA.

The college gradually acquired land near the core campus until the mid-1900s, when the failure of local farms allowed the school to expand its holdings and prevent development near campus.

## Land Service Map

This map provides a rough estimate of current primary land functions broken down to a tax parcel level.



## Land Services

- Educational
- Residential – faculty/staff housing
- Recreational – athletic fields
- Agricultural – Book & Plow + leased land
- Environmental – natural land
- Investment

## Priorities

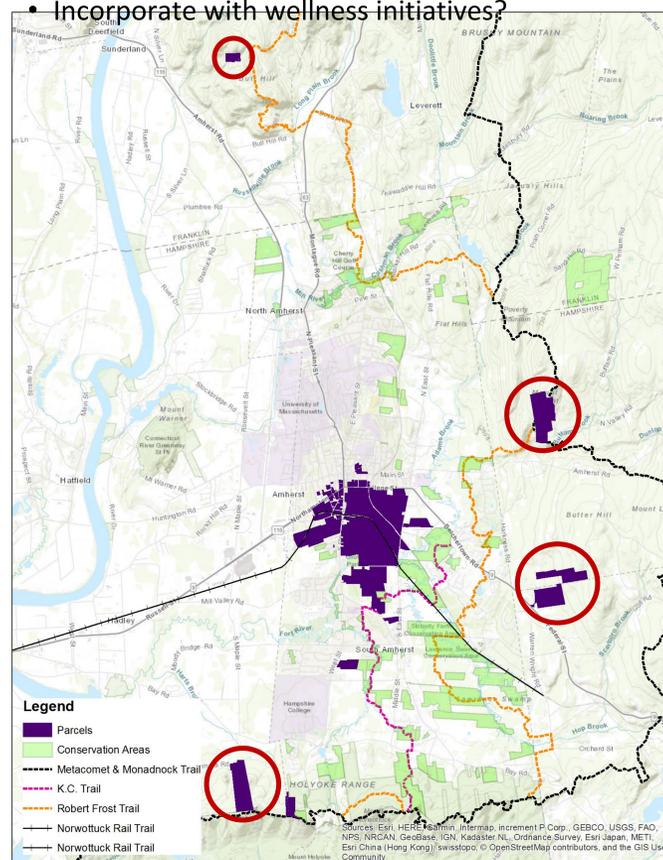
- Focus on improving existing services rather than radically changing land functions
- Retain compactness and walkability
- Preserve historic and natural land value

This project presents a number of relatively small-scale, near-term proposals for different types of college land.

## Sanctuary

Comprising about 500 acres of forested and open land to the south and east of campus, the sanctuary has been a home for local wildlife since its creation by student labor in the 1930s. It features an established trail network, wetlands, and a scattering of birdboxes.

- Improve trailhead visibility and display maps in high-traffic areas
- Conduct trail maintenance
- Update existing trail maps and feature more prominently online
- Consider modifying routes to encourage thru-traffic and connect to existing campus walkways
- Incorporate with wellness initiatives?



## Total Parcel Map

This map shows all Amherst College land holdings in the Pioneer Valley. The college owns well over 1,000 acres, with the core campus making up only a small fraction.

## Book & Plow Farm

Book & Plow is the college's wholly-owned, student-intensive farm. It produces fresh produce for Val and a community supported agriculture program. In addition to growing crops, B&P also leases land to local farmers for hay.

- Consider adding a small garden on core campus space (near Greenway?)
- Improve signage for farm path
- Focus on further integration with educational programs
- The most remote B&P property, Florida Field, has poor water access and rocky soil and could be considered for solar energy development



From left to right: Sanctuary Trail Map, Book & Plow Tomato Greenhouse, Mt. Toby Parcel

## Remote Parcels

These properties, circled in red, contain large swaths of undeveloped natural land far from core campus. Some feature existing trail networks or abut much larger conservation areas.

- Consider placing in permanent conservation with the assistance of a nonprofit like Kestrel Land Trust
- Hampshire College recently conserved adjacent parcels in the Holyoke Range

## Resources

*Framework Plan*, Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP, 2016.  
*Frost Library Archives, Buildings & Grounds Collection*.

Special thanks to Prof. Kate Sims, Maida Ives of Book & Plow, Chief of Campus Operations Jim Brassord, and Sustainability Director Laura Draucker for their help with this study.

For continued work on this project, please contact Laura Draucker in the Sustainability Office.