

Open Space Element

Readington Township Master Plan

Hunterdon County, NJ



Adopted | February 13, 2018

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Planning Board

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Introduction

This open space plan replaces the 2001 Parks Recreation and Open Space Plan Element, and amends the 1990 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Element of the Master Plan. This update continues to be inspired by the 1995 Greenways Plan and Environmental Commission documents produced in 2001, namely the *Readington Township Environmental Resource Inventory* and its amended reports; the *Water Quality Report* and those entitled *Critical Habitats and Flora and Fauna*, as well as the State of New Jersey's *Landscape Project*. These documents contain inventory, analyses and recommendations relating to open space and natural resources, providing direction for land use policies, and emphasizing the relationship between open space preservation and conservation objectives. Open Space Plans based on furthering these objectives have targeted specific geographic areas and tracts for open space preservation. Over these last several decades, the Township Committee has been actively working to implement these recommendations, including both acquisition and, more recently, the expansion of passive recreational opportunities. Fortunately, because of the slow pace of development over the last 16 years, natural resources existing in 2001 have not been appreciatively disturbed, so much open land still remains in Readington that if preserved would help the Township meet its conservation objectives.

Readington Township has long recognized that the preservation of open spaces provides essential benefits to its residents. Conservation of appropriate open spaces protects Readington's rural character and serves as an alternative to suburban sprawl. It helps to buffer the Township's historical, agricultural and environmental resources. It serves to protect the Township's water quality, including that of its streams and rivers and the ground water wells that residents depend on for their drinking water. Preservation of open spaces is vital to the protection of critical wildlife habitat, native plant species, mature woodlands, fertile farmlands, riparian areas and beautiful viewsheds. The preservation of Readington's open spaces provides recreational opportunities and enhances the Township's enviable quality of life. An inventory of preserved open space and recreational lands is provided in Appendix A. The "Existing Open Space" figure illustrates the geographic location of the existing preserved open space and recreational lands within Readington.

This Master Plan amendment contains an updated history of open space preservation efforts thus far and an updated inventory of open space and recreational lands. Recognizing that farmland is also a component of an open space network, an updated



inventory of preserved farmland is included. The inventory is followed by a series of open space preservation goals. Finally, specific parcels are identified for preservation in order to meet these goals.

The Open Space Plan includes the following components:

- History of Open Space and Farmland Preservation in Readington
- Evolution of Readington's Open Space Strategy
- Goals, Vision and Policies
- Preservation Priorities
- Implementation
- Policy Guidance Beyond Readington

Public Process

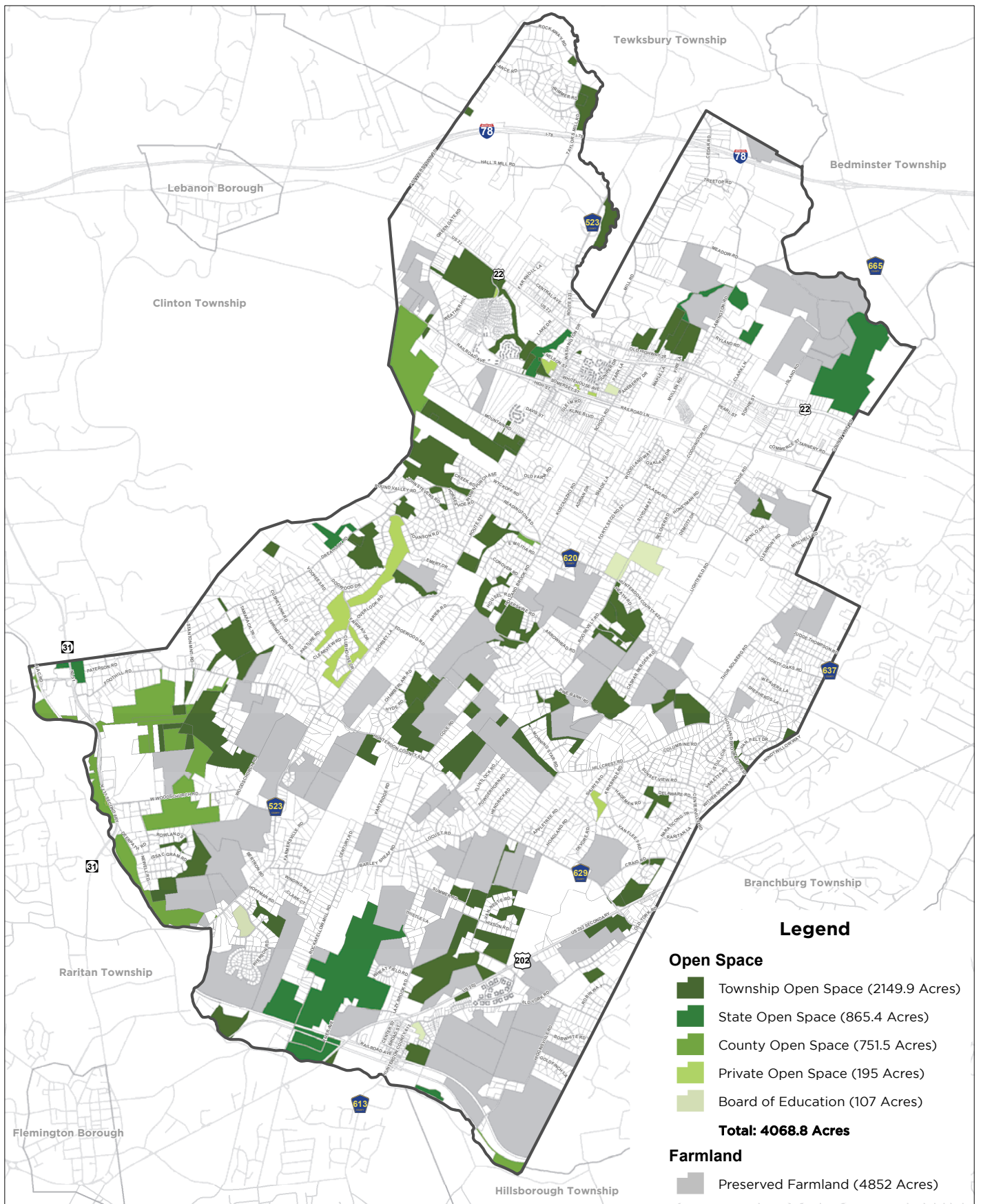
Pursuant to the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law, the Planning Board is responsible for the creation and adoption of the Master Plan, of which the Open Space Plan is a component. In preparing this Open Space Plan, the Planning Board relied on an advisory committee that was composed of members drawn from key boards and committees within Readington Township, including:

- Township Committee (governing body)
- Planning Board
- Open Space Advisory Committee
- Farmland Preservation Committee
- Historic Preservation Commission



This advisory committee served as a pivot point for collection and dissemination of information related to the development of the Open Space Plan, among their respective committees. Furthermore, this committee generated substantial content, including data, imagery, policy development and descriptions that, ultimately, was woven together in this 2018 Open Space Plan. The advisory committee held five (5) meetings, open to the public, over four (4) months to develop the Plan.

Additionally, the Planning Board held public hearings on the Open Space and Recreation Plan prior to adoption as a Master Plan element on December 19, 2017 and on February 13, 2018.



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Clarke Caton Hintz ● ● ■
Architecture
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Open Space

LOCATION:
Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

DATE:
December 2017

Sources:

Open Space and Preserved Farmland (2017)
Readington Township & Clarke Caton Hintz

Parcels of Hunterdon County, (2017)
Originator: Hunterdon County Division of GIS
Publication Date: 08/28/14

New Jersey Real Estate MOD-IV Tax List Search Plus Database, 2016
Originator: NJ Office of Information Technology (NJ OIT),
Office of Geographic Information Systems (OGIS)
Originator: NJ Department of the Treasury, Division of Taxation
Publication Date: 07/13/16

History of Open Space and Farmland Preservation in Readington



Efforts to preserve Readington's farmland and open space date back a full forty years, to the fall of 1977 and the beginning of a true "grassroots" movement. At that time in Readington Township, and in all of Hunterdon County, small historic villages predominated. They were connected by quiet country roads and surrounded by rolling hills of open land. There were many large dairy farms, pristine trout streams, and impressive hardwood forests on Cushetunk and Round mountains. New homes along some paved roadways accommodated new families "moving out" to enjoy the rural lifestyle of the countryside.

Suburban sprawl, characterized by large residential developments built on cul-de-sacs had effectively transformed vast areas of Somerset County and developers were starting to look towards Hunterdon for cheaper land. Aging farmers understood their "last crop" would be houses and even those not happy with the idea knew that this was the inevitable future for their farms. About this time, the Hunterdon County Democrat ran a story about a developer proposing a 99 lot subdivision on a 200-acre tract of land on Barley Sheaf Road. A handful of "newcomers" joined by some "old timers" came to Township Committee meetings asking what could be done to save the countryside. They predicted that if nothing is done, this entire 48 square mile township would be consumed by wall to wall development. In response, an Open Space Advisory Committee was appointed, and in November 1978, on the advice of this Committee, Readington Township held the State's first municipal Open Space Referendum. Voters were asked if they favored bonding for \$1,000,000 to preserve farmland and open space, and they overwhelmingly approved. The Open Space Committee went on to write an *Open Space Master Plan*, which advocated preserving open space and farmland to protect the historic, environmental and agricultural resources of the countryside, and stated that *"Traditional zoning and planning techniques in New Jersey result in complete development of all agricultural and open land...We, in Readington.... can commit ourselves to a more sensible alternative. The community has the opportunity to balance development with the preservation of appropriate open spaces..."* The plan, approved in 1979, included a report outlining strategies for preservation, which Readington went on to utilize, most notably, clustering of development, fee simple acquisitions, purchase of easements, and accepting donations.

Active Recreation

To accommodate a growing population, Readington's earliest priority was the acquisition of parkland suitable for active recreation. In the early 80's, Readington purchased land for Pickell Park and Hillcrest Park. Land for Summer Road Park was purchased in the mid 90's. The "Active Recreation" figure identifies all of the existing active recreational parks.



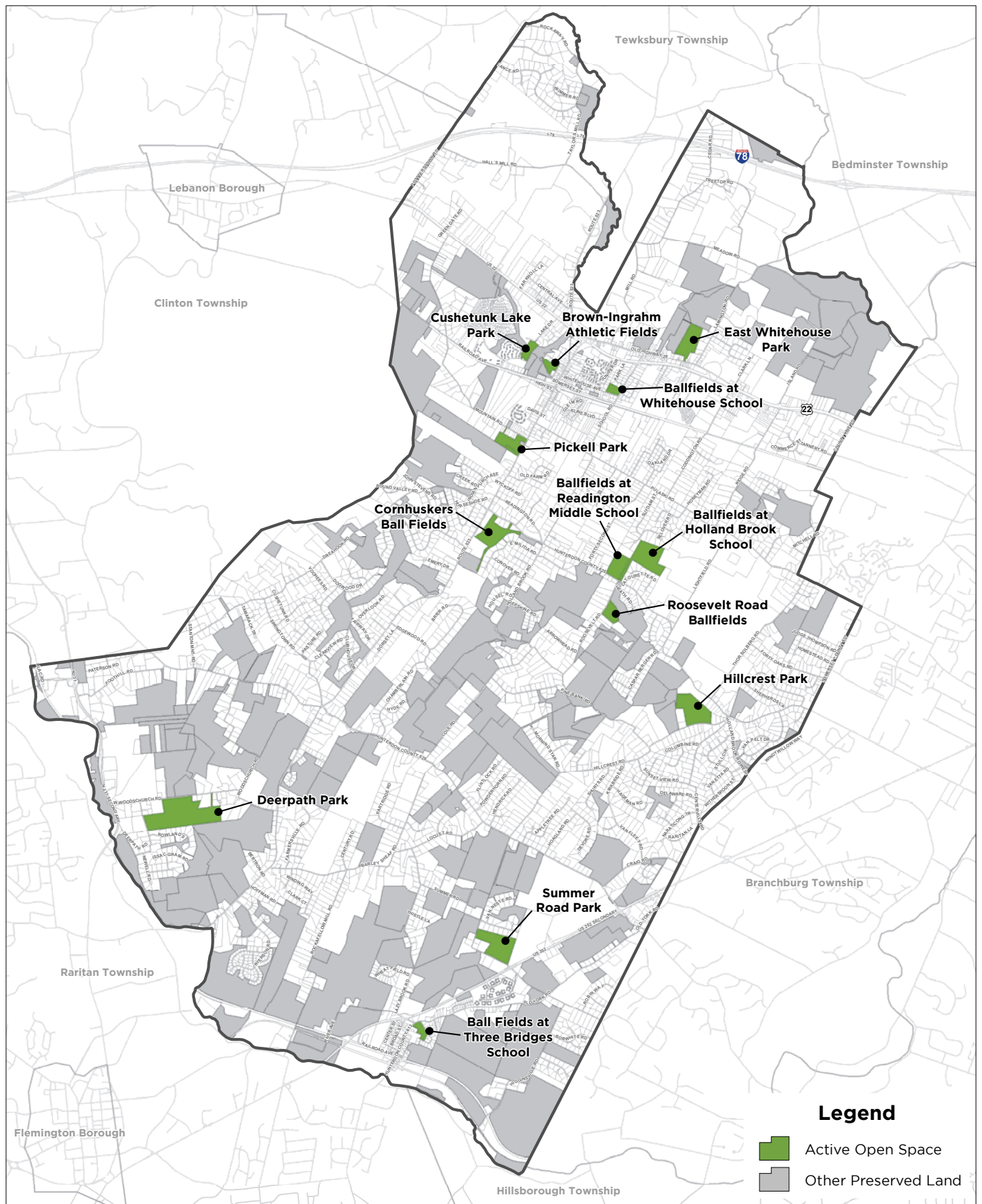
Active Recreation in Readington Township, December 2017			
Block	Lot	Name	Acres
13	54	East Whitehouse Park	31.33
21.12	94	Brown-Ingrahm Athletic Fields	8.45
21.13	2	Cushetunk Lake Park	9.58
25	35 & 35.01	Pickell Park	22.57
35	14	Ballfields at Whitehouse School	6.80
46	5.99	Cornhuskers Ball Fields	38.83
48	20	Ballfields at Readington Middle School	23.40
48	21.01	Ballfields at Holland Brook School	46.18
55	1.91	Roosevelt Road Ballfields	14.00
55	23.03	Hillcrest Park	51.52
72	31	Deerpath Park	104.23
75	18	Summer Road Park	48.46
93	61	Ballfields at Three Bridges School	8.50
Total			413.85

Farmland Preservation

The State Farmland Program began in the mid 80's, and Readington took full advantage. The Township preserved its first farm in 1987. By 2001, a little more than a decade later, Readington had preserved 30 farms, totaling 3,000 acres, with an additional 350 acres under contract. An inventory of preserved farmland is provided in Appendix B. The "Preserved Farmland" figure identifies all of the farms preserved to date within the Township.

Clustering to Preserve Open Space

Over a period of thirty years, Readington used cluster zoning as an effective tool that preserved large amounts of open space. During the 80's, with the construction of many large lot residential developments, the Township's three-acre rural zoning allowed clustering on two acre lots with one third of the tract reserved for open space. Developers were happy to use this option. In the decades to follow, a variety of cluster



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Active Open Space

LOCATION:
 Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

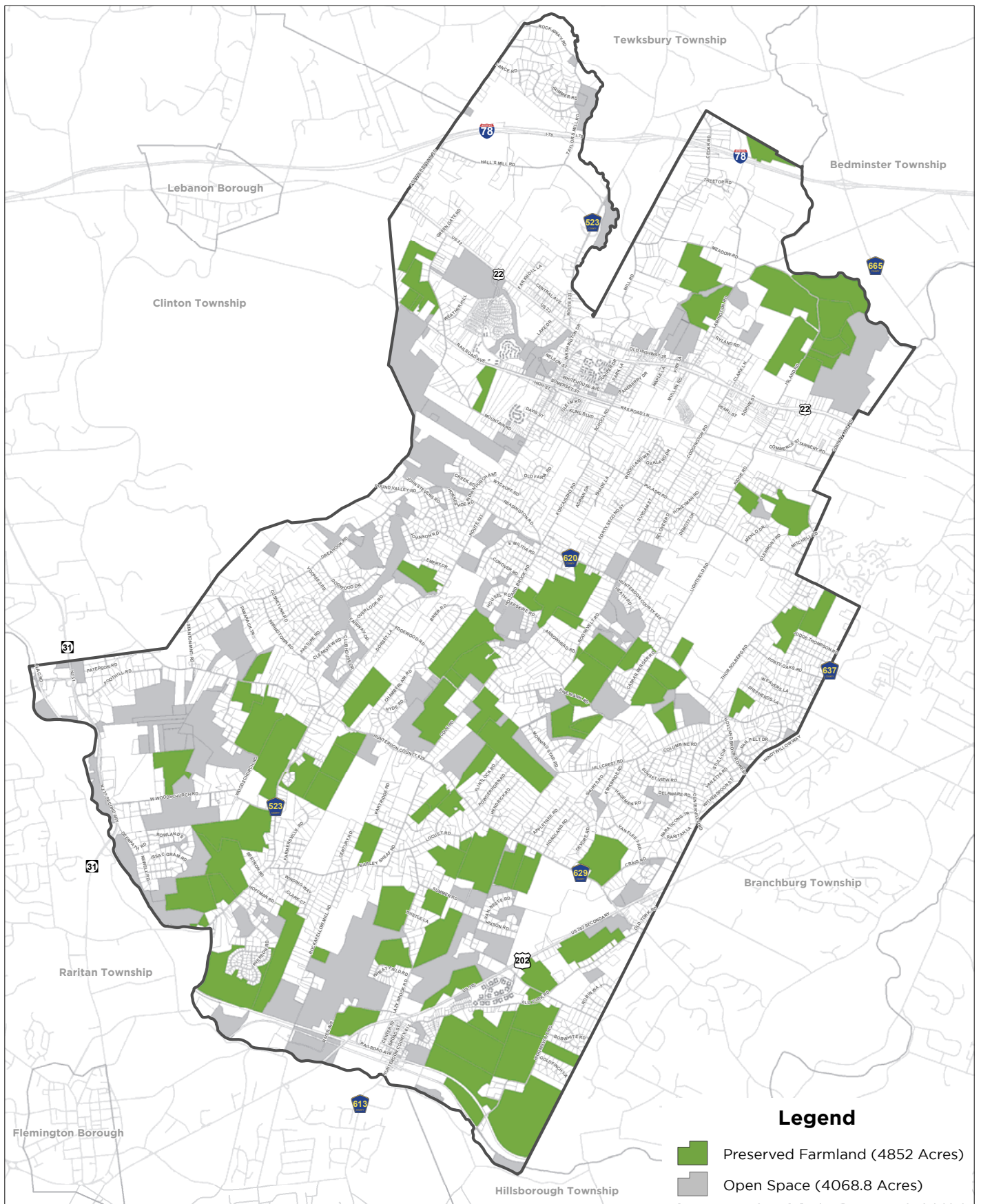
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 Originator: NJ Department of the Treasury, Division of Taxation
 Publication Date: 07/13/16



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Preserved Farmland

LOCATION:
Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

DATE:
December 2017

Sources:

Open Space and Preserved Farmland (2017)
Readington Township & Clarke Caton Hintz

Parcels of Hunterdon County, (2017)
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provisions resulted in the preservation of over 35 tracts of open space, with about 700 acres deeded to Readington Township and several hundred additional acres retained by homeowner's associations.

Clustering to Preserve Farmland

Cluster was also used to preserve agriculture. In the mid 80's, Readington allowed homes to be clustered on 20% of the tract, with 80% reserved as a privately owned preserved farm. In 1988, to stem the loss of prime farmland in the Township's designated Agricultural Development Area, this clustering provision became mandatory. In 1992, it was revised to mandate a 67% set aside for agriculture. Developments using these agricultural cluster provisions created 5 preserved farms totaling 385 acres.

Clustering to Protect Natural Resources

In 1998, Readington again revised its land use ordinances, lowering overall development density, and favoring open space preservation. A mandatory cluster required a 70% open space set aside in low density residential areas. Readington's final cluster revision, in 2009, focused on protecting the townships natural resources, particularly its water resources and critical habitats. With a lower overall density, the ordinance mandates an 80% conservation set aside in the Township's Special Resource and Agricultural Residential zones, and a 50% set aside in the rural and village residential areas.

Readington's Greenways Initiative

In 1992, the Readington Township Environmental Commission surveyed township resident's preferences for the preservation of open space and 83% of respondents gave high marks to strict open space protection and strong preservation actions. The Commission formed an ad-hoc group of interested citizens known as the Greenways Work Group, which concluded that the promotion of Greenways, made up of contiguous parcels of open space assembled to create corridors of undeveloped land, should be used to preserve the Township's natural resources and protect rural character in the context of new development. In November of 1994, Township voters passed a referendum that set aside \$0.02 of assessed valuation for the purchase of open space. The workgroup produced the *Readington Township Greenways Plan*, which was adopted by the Planning Board as an addendum to the Master Plan in 1995, along with The *Readington Township Open Space Inventory and Recommendations for Preservation*. The Plan, adopted as part of the 1996 Reexamination Report, set out Greenways goals that



would guide preservation efforts for next 20 years. Information pertaining to the Greenways Initiative is provided in Appendix C.

Green Acres Planning Incentive Program

The Greenways planning documents provided the basis for an application submitted in 1996 for a Green Trust Planning Incentive Project Grant. Readington learned in 1997 that it was awarded an initial \$3-million-dollar grant (25%) and low interest loan (75%), followed a year later with a \$2 million grant (50%) and low interest loan (50%). In subsequent years, the Program shifted its funding strategy to offer 50% grants, requiring a 50% local match. Grants are made available to municipalities on an annual basis to purchase conservation and recreational lands which implement their Plan. To maintain eligibility, the municipality must have an updated Open Space Plan which is being actively implemented. As of 2017, Readington has been participating in this Program for 2 decades. It has received 15 grant awards totaling \$7,525,000, and two low interest loans totaling \$3,250,000. Readington's local matching funds are listed as \$5,225,000. The local match for acquisitions has come either from the Readington Township Open Space Fund, from a Hunterdon County's Open Space Trust Fund grant, or from municipal bonding. Readington's current Green Trust Planning Incentive Project Grant status is included in Appendix D.



Preservation Partnerships

In the late 90's Readington benefited from a partnership with the private nonprofit conservation organization known as The Trust for Public Land (TPL). TPL was awarded a half million-dollar State Green Acres grant to assist with Readington's Greenways Project. These funds were applied to the purchase of conservation easements and land on three properties; the Renda Farm on the Rockaway Creek, the Knocke Farm on the Holland Brook and the Lane Farm on the Pleasant Run. Between 2001 and 2004, Readington received low interest loans from the NJ Environmental Infrastructure Trust for three additional Greenways projects, two along the Holland Brook and one along the Pleasant Run.

Fee Simple Purchase of Large Tracts

To facilitate preservation, Readington Township, on four separate occasions, purchased large tracts of open land, selling them, in turn, to the State DEP for conservation purposes. In each instance, Readington sold the land for the exact amount it paid. Two of the tracts make up the 500-acre South Branch Wildlife Management Area, and another 230-acre tract has become the Lamington Greenway Wildlife Management Area. An additional 31-acre tract on Cushetunk Mountain was purchased by DEP to buffer the State's Round Valley Recreation Area. On a number of projects, Readington moved quickly to purchase large tracts in fee, then divided the land, preserving a portion using Farmland Preservation Funds and preserving the balance using a combination of State Green Acres and local funding. Two notable examples of this type of project were the former 183 acre Romano property on Cole Road in 1999 and the 310-acre Toll Brothers/Daniels Tracts on Summer Road and Route 202 in 2009.

Acting on Opportunities

Throughout the previous decades, Readington has developed a very meaningful open space network. There is no question that Readington's success can be attributed to its willingness to act quickly when opportunities have presented themselves. To accomplish this, Readington utilized short term, low interest notes to raise money for municipal "pre-purchasing" of land and easements, cost effectively bridging the gap between acquisition and the receipt of state and county preservation funding. In the past, in order to help preservation projects succeed by enabling a quick closing, Readington Township has purchased a property or an easement using short term, low interest, municipal notes. These notes are then reimbursed using preservation funds or auction proceeds as they become available. Often, entire projects were completed without the use of long term municipal bonding and without the long-term expenditure of any municipal funds. Two examples follow:

- I. Forest Hill Preserve, 20 Acres on Case Boulevard in Three Bridges: Purchased by the Township for over \$500,000 but all funds were reimbursed by the State Green Acres Planning Incentive Grant Program, the County Municipal Grants

Fund Program, and the proceeds from auctioning a house divided from the property on a one-acre lot.

2. Lamington Greenway Wildlife Management Area– A parcel of 230 acres was purchased by Readington Township and was sold within one year to the State of New Jersey, Department of Environmental Protection, for use as a State Wildlife Management Area. Readington was reimbursed for 100% of the purchase price, and significant riparian habitats were preserved along the Rockaway Creek and the Lamington River.

The Garden State Preservation Trust

Readington took full advantage of New Jersey’s unprecedented funding for Open Space and Farmland preservation in the decade between 1999 and 2009. In 1999, then Governor Christie Whitman, a Hunterdon County resident, signed the Garden State Preservation Act, which established a stable source of preservation funding and authorized the expenditure of one billion dollars over ten years. The State’s goal was to preserve one million acres, and Readington became one of the leading municipalities to use local initiatives and take full advantage of generous State funding to further its Open Space and Farmland Preservation goals.

Shifting gears during the “Great Recession”

Beginning in 2009, the Readington Township Committee shifted its focus. Readington had borrowed money in order to take full advantage of State funding opportunities that required a local match during the previous 10 years. For the last nine years, now, the Township has been repaying this debt using all of the proceeds from Readington Township’s Open Space Tax, approximately one half million dollars annually, towards the payment of debt service. During this time, the Township has continued to pursue key parcels and smaller projects, helping to build on past initiatives, while using County Trust Fund grants to satisfy the requirement for a local match.

Trail Development

Over the last eight years, Readington’s nine-member Open Space Advisory Board has concentrated on stewardship of Open Spaces and the development of a Township wide trail network. The Board’s goal has been to make the Township’s Public Open Spaces more accessible to township residents. In a relatively short period of time, the Township has successfully developed over 20 miles of improved trails, serving all regions of this 48 square mile Township. Most impressively, this has been accomplished predominately using volunteer labor and funding from grants. Trail development used the



combined efforts of the Open Space Advisory Board members, local Boy Scout troops, dozens of Eagle Scout Candidates, local neighborhood volunteers, along with the support of the Readington Trail Association and the Township's Department of Public Works. Open Space Walks, scheduled for the third Sunday of each month have helped introduce residents to these new trails and to the Township's beautiful and interesting open spaces.

Where We Are Today

Readington's preservation efforts over the last 40 years have not, by any means, stopped development, but they have successfully balanced development with appropriate open spaces. Readington, through its land preservation efforts, has successfully preserved both its precious natural resources and its enviable quality of life. In 2017, Readington Township can and should reflect on its impressive accomplishments. Readington boasts approximately 4,000 acres of preserved Open Space and close to 5,000 acres of preserved farmland. Preserved land makes up 29% of the township's 30,000-acre land mass. Despite these successes, however, Readington's preservation goals have not yet been met. A review of Readington's newly updated plans reveal that continued efforts are needed to further implement Readington's long standing preservation goals.



Evolution of Readington's Open Space Strategy

Readington's earliest Master Plan documents spoke of protecting Readington's rural character and its natural resources. In the late 70's, seventy-five percent of Readington's land mass was either in agriculture or was undeveloped woodland. Planning documents written 40 years ago, however, assumed that a wave of suburban sprawl would inevitably bring wall to wall development to Readington Township, and the zoning ordinances at the time supported that prediction. Rapid growth had just consumed whole municipalities in Somerset County and was beginning to move into Readington, a 48 square mile township on the eastern edge of Hunterdon County. Readington simply planned for providing increased services and minimizing negative effects. A review of later planning documents reveals a shift in the Township's priorities, and an evolution of its goals and objectives. In the decades to follow, the preservation of open spaces and the protection of rural resources became *the highest priority*. Realistic strategies to accomplish these new goals and objectives were put forward, and subsequently utilized, to successfully contain growth and balance more moderate growth with preservation.



1979 Open Space Master Plan

Readington's first "Open Space Master Plan" put forward a new goal, which was to protect the special historic and environmental resources of the countryside through land preservation. The plan included three distinct elements that explained the advantages of preserving land for Agricultural, Environmental and Recreational purposes. It stated that open space preservation was a useful strategy in "shaping and containing development", thereby combating suburban sprawl, and was an important tool for stabilizing the tax base, alluding to the very real expense of providing infrastructure to accommodate rapid growth. It stated that open space preservation was a tool for buffering and protecting Readington's historic, natural and agricultural resources and protecting its scenic vistas. A report, attached to the plan, outlined various strategies to accomplish the preservation.

1981 Master Plan

Municipal objectives included: The "preservation of ...rural residential character "as well as the "Preservation of agricultural lands and protection of streams, woodlands, and environmentally sensitive areas." Clustering was recommended, and shortly thereafter, rural residential zoning density was revised, from one and three quarter

acre density to three-acre density with a cluster option allowing two acre lots and a 1/3 open space set aside.

1990 Master Plan

Goal: Preserve farmlands and encourage their continued use recognizing that farming is an important component of the economy...and that agricultural lands are an irreplaceable resource.

Policies: Coordinate local agricultural land use preservation guidelines with those of the State, County and adjoining municipalities. -Preserve large agricultural areas free from the intrusion of residential and other uses.

Goal: Protect environmentally sensitive areas, preserve the natural environment, and ensure a compatible balance between economic and environmental interests.

Polices: Conserve and protect as many environmentally sensitive areas as possible. - Encourage the development of a township-wide “greenbelt” system, incorporating natural areas, stream corridors, environmentally sensitive areas and areas of scenic beauty, in order to connect various parts of the township through an open space network. The township should sponsor studies to identify areas that should be preserved.

Greenways Plan of 1995

The Greenways Plan served as the foundation of the 1998 Parks, Recreation and Open Space element and has been used to guide the funding and acquisition of open space since it was adopted. In order to facilitate an understanding of the diverse characteristics and open space needs of the Township, the Greenways Plan divided the Township into a number of geographic regions, known as geographic sub areas. These regions were based on unique natural and cultural features. In addition to providing descriptions of these sub-areas, the plan contains several Open Space Goals formulated to guide open space preservation and stewardship of the sub-areas and natural resources. These continue to provide valid guidance to Readington’s open space planning and preservation efforts:



Greenways Goals

Maximize buffer areas along river and stream corridors, including the Lamington River, the Rockaway Creek, Chamber’s Brook, Holland’s Brook, the Pleasant Run, and the South Branch of the Raritan River.

Protect and preserve historic districts and villages in the Township, including East Whitehouse, Readington, Stanton, Three Bridges and the Pleasant Run Historic District. Ensure the integrity of these areas through greenbelting.

Protect and preserve remaining mature woodlands and steep slopes to augment protection of wetlands and floodplains in the Township.

Complement existing farmland preservation program, trying to link open areas and buffer agriculture from encroaching development.

Protect and preserve scenic vistas or other unique areas.

Create open space linkages between natural, cultural, and recreational resources and promote connections with other Township, county, and state open or preserved lands.

Provide opportunities for active and passive recreation where appropriate.

1998 Master Plan

Development continued at a swift pace through the 1990's, with the addition of 1,200 residential dwelling units, bringing the growth rate to 25% over the decade. Agricultural land under farmland assessment declined from 16,519 acres in 1982 to 14,442 in 1998. The township reacted with a concerted effort to preserve farmland and open space, and the 1998 Master Plan supported the creation of the Agricultural Residential land use category providing for larger minimum lot sizes and larger open space/agricultural set-asides. The township, which first required mandatory clustering in 1988 in the Township's Agricultural Development Area, continued this requirement with a 6-acre gross density and 70% set-aside for tracts over 40 acres. The 1998 changes were coincidental with the 1998 NJ Preservation Bond Act which increases funding for open space and farmland preservation considerably.

Environmental Resource Inventory, April 2001

This document is a comprehensive update to the 1974 Natural Resource Inventory, containing a series of maps with accompanying text. The Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) was commissioned in order to provide documentation of the significant natural resources within the Township and to serve as a tool with which to plan for the preservation and conservation of remaining resources. It contains a summary of current resource protection information, an inventory of resources and a resource protection plan. Findings regarding threats to resources are paired with recommendations to reduce threats. On April 23, 2001 the Planning Board adopted the ERI as a supplement to the Master Plan. It is incorporated by reference herein.

Findings (p. 6)

- Readington Township contains 3,888 acres of priority grassland habitat, 3,987 acres of priority forested habitat, and 818 acres of priority wetlands (NJDEP, Landscapes Program).

Guiding Principles & Primary Resource Preservation Goals (P. 7)

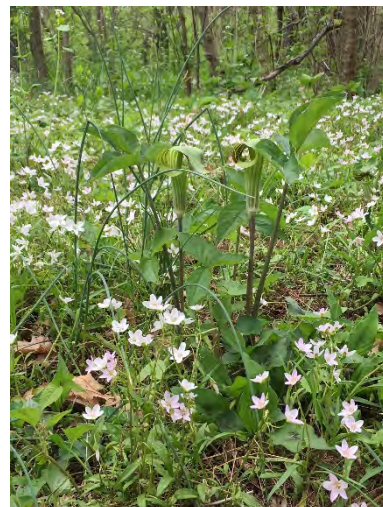
- Maintain large, intact patches of native vegetation and preventing fragmentation.
- Establish and implement priorities for species and habitat protection.
- Maintain connections among habitat by protecting corridors for movement.
- Maintain significant ecological processes in protected areas.
- Contribute to the regional persistence of rare species by protecting their habitat locally.

Primary Resource Protection Action Items (p.7)

- Develop riparian corridor greenways fostering conservation of riparian buffers and passive recreation and implementing programs recommended by the Readington Township Greenways Work Group.
- Utilize funding from governments and private foundations to continue preserving historic districts and villages in the Township,
- Continue to obtain additional funding to purchase and maintain open space areas identified as valuable habitat
- Opportunities to preserve diminishing farmland should continue to be actively pursued.
- Balance the opportunity for recreation by the public with the habitat needs of wildlife.
- To the extent possible, steeply sloping land should be left in its natural condition or maintained in grass or tree cover.
- Steps should be taken to ensure that development does not jeopardize the aquifer's ability to recharge and supply the Township with the necessary potable water.
- The township should consider additional development standards to restrict and eliminate disturbance in all critical/vulnerable areas.
- Additional open space set asides should be considered, particularly in vulnerable areas noted in the ERI.

Characteristic Flora and Fauna, April 2001

This report, prepared by the Readington Township Environmental Commission, contains an inventory of the wildlife species within Readington. It is organized according to habitats, containing a profile of the species that are associated with each habitat, including mature forest, agricultural landscapes, grasslands, wetlands, streams, rivers, and successional and suburban habitats. The Planning Board appended this report to the Master Plan on May 14, 2001, and it is incorporated by reference



herein. This inventory complements the report entitled *Critical Habitats of Readington Township*.

Critical Habitats of Readington Township, April 2001

This report, prepared by the Readington Township Environmental Commission, addresses the importance of the various of habitats within Readington and emphasizes the need to preserve those habitats in order to facilitate the conservation of wildlife species. It contains maps and photographs describing a range of critical habitats, including mature forest, agricultural landscapes, grasslands, wetlands, streams, rivers, and successional and suburban habitats. The Planning Board appended this report to the Master Plan on May 14, 2001, and it is incorporated by reference herein. Critical Habitats identifies threats to habitat and recommends strategies to reduce those threats. These are useful in formulating open space planning priorities and strategies, and are therefore incorporated within this plan element:

Habitats:

- Mature Forest
- Agricultural Landscape
- Grassland Habitat
- Lowland Habitats (wetlands, streams and rivers)
- Successional Vegetation
- Suburban Wildlife Habitat

Primary threat: Loss and fragmentation through development

Secondary threats:

- Agricultural practices unfavorable to habitat protection
- Degradation of surrounding habitats
- Physical disturbances

Possible solutions:

- Acquisition and proper management of high quality habitats
- Acquisition of large contiguous tracts of unique habitats
- Upland buffering lowland habitats
- Preserve remaining agricultural landscapes through Farmland Preservation
- Tighten zoning restrictions on land containing important habitat

2001 Master Plan Amendment

This Master Plan Amendment, adopted by the Planning Board in July of 2001, prioritized Environmental Protection, including the preservation of critical habitats, and added the following policies:

Policy: Actively conserve and protect critical wildlife habitats, such as mature woodlands, grasslands, wetlands and stream corridors, through various mechanisms of open space preservation, including land acquisition.

Policy: Lands identified as critical wildlife habitats and Natural Heritage Priority Sites should be considered the highest priority sites for preservation.

2009 Master Plan

This Master Plan update supported changes to the land use plan in light of new State regulations regarding water quality and wastewater management and the release of revised habitat data. This document took a fresh look at allowable densities because of the need to protect water resources, as well as the release of revised NJDEP Landscapes Project Habitat Data. It recommended density reductions in response to existing sewer capacity, the ability of unsewered areas to accommodate additional septic systems and still meet NJDEP nitrate dilution standards, the need to reduce storm water runoff, and a desire to protect critical habitat for threatened and endangered species. As a result of the Master Plan's recommendations, the SRR or Special Resource Residential zone was created and the AR or Agricultural zone was expanded. A mandatory 80% open space set-aside was required in both zones and gross development densities became 10 acres for the SRR zone and 8 acres for the AR zone. Figures included within the 2009 Master Plan are provided in Appendix E.



Goals, Vision and Policies

Readington Township's Open Space Advisory Board (OSAB) is actively working to maintain Readington's rural character and preserve appropriate open space aligned with County, State and Non-Profit Partners. The OSAB believes a 2050 goal of preserving 12,000 total acres of land will help accomplish this mission.

Given the expected build-out of Readington Township and New Jersey by 2050¹, it is critical that preservation opportunities be actively pursued whenever lands suitable for preservation, either for natural resource protection, recreation or farmland becomes available. The realization of a goal of 12,000 preserved acres by 2050 would ensure that 40% of the lands of Readington Township would be permanently preserved as Open Space and Farmland Preservation for the benefit of future generations.

To achieve this goal, an additional 3,000 acres must be preserved. Beginning in 2018 and continuing over the next 32 years, the goal would be to preserve an average of approximately 90-95 acres of land each year. Success would be dependent on the availability of Township, County, State and Non-Profit open space taxes and other funding sources as well as by opportunities provided by existing landowners willing to preserve their lands. A strategy that utilizes a variety of preservation techniques, including both fee simple and easement purchases, and a variety of funding sources for both conservation and recreation and farmland preservation purposes, would work best to successfully accomplish the Township's Goal.

Readington's open space plan is consistent with the goals and policies established in the 2001 Master Plan, the 2009 Goals and Policies Element and the 2009 Farmland Preservation Plan and are still relevant today, and should be pursued. These goals, specific to Readington Township, continue to provide relevant and substantive standards for Open Space Preservation.



¹ Nature Conservancy Director of Land Protection Jody Alessandrino. Sept 28, 2017 article

Preservation Priorities

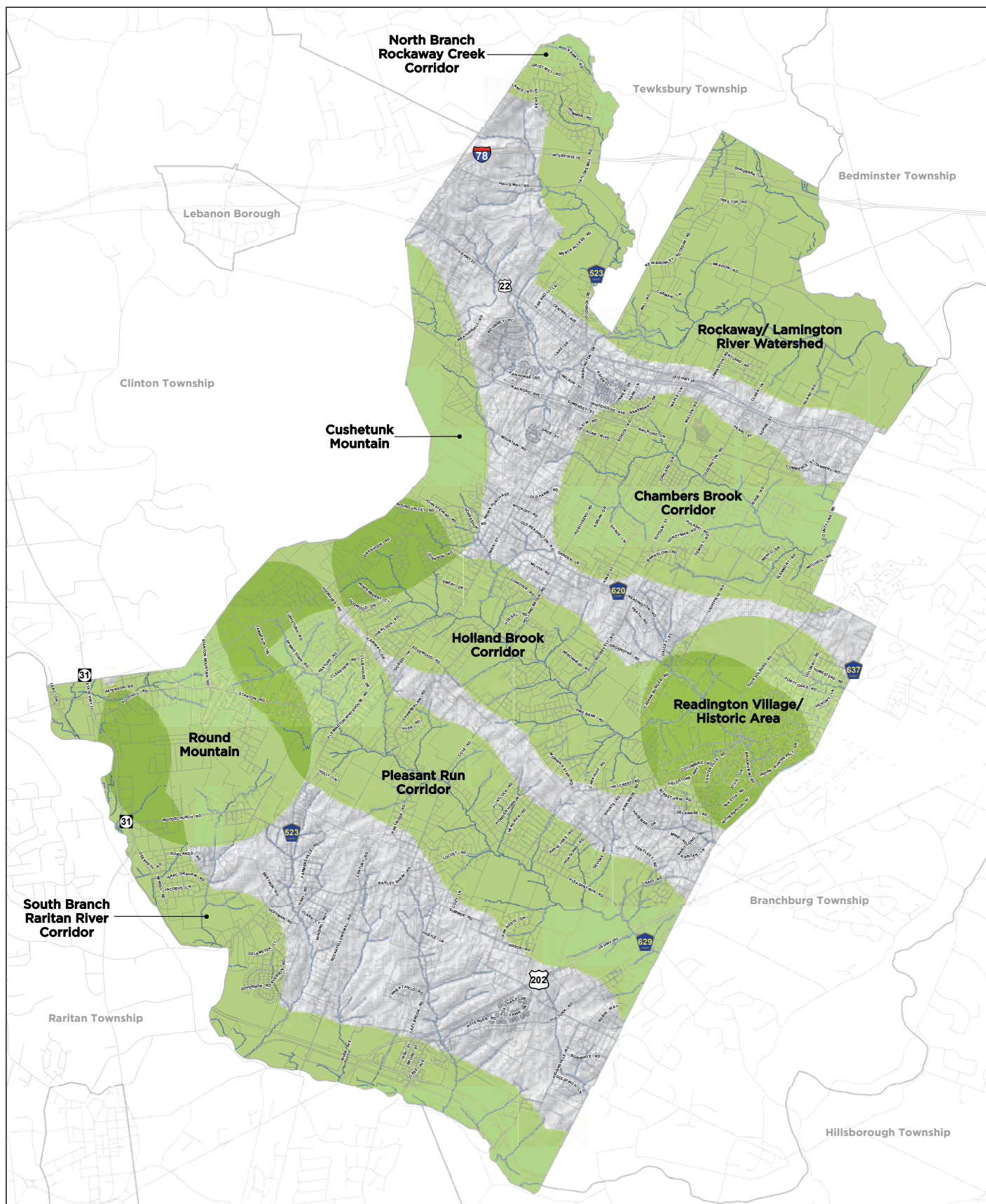
Considerable progress was made since 2001 in implementing the Township's Greenways Goals. The Greenways Plan of 1995 and the 2001 Parks Recreation and Open Space Element of the Readington Township Master Plan designated geographic sub-areas, containing lands that share common characteristics, to serve as the basis for Open Space Planning goals and actions. These geographic sub-areas are the basis for the Township's preservation priority areas (see the "Preservation Priorities Areas" figure). Special emphasis has been put on environmental resource conservation, wildlife habitat protection, and the protection of Readington's rural character. Emphasis has also been put on the acquisition of key parcels that improve the connectivity of our open spaces and the Township's trail system. These remain as valid themes with which to organize our future open space planning efforts. Readington's preservation priorities reflect a strong desire to protect the township's remaining agricultural, environmental, and recreational resources.



In 2017, the benefits of Readington's successful Open Space Preservation are very clear. Agriculture remains an important part of the community, thanks to the ongoing effort to preserve family farms and prime farmlands. Readington's water resources, including its drinking water, are being effectively protected. Critical wildlife habitats, requiring large contiguous blocks of open space, still remain intact, as do much of the townships' mature woodland areas. Public open spaces forming Greenways have expanded passive recreation opportunities. It makes good sense to continue these efforts. The "Unpreserved Farmland and Preserved Land" figure illustrates existing open space, preserved farmland, and farmland assessed properties that identifies the potential open space connections. The "Unpreserved Farmland and Wildlife Habitat" figure illustrates the Landscape Project habitat classifications and the assessed farmland properties within the Township to identify important resources and habitats for protection.

Cushetunk and Round Mountain

Round Mountain and Cushetunk Mountain are home to Readington's largest unbroken mature forests. On Round Mountain, Readington Township and Hunterdon County have preserved over 500 acres of mature forest habitat and a significant portion of this unique native woodland ecosystem. There are, however, key woodlots and two very large wooded tracts, a 124-acre inactive summer camp and a 72-acre tract fronting on West Woodschurch Road that remain important preservation priorities. On Cushetunk Mountain, the entire hardwood forest on the east side of the Mountain,



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Clarke Caton Hintz
 Architecture
 Planning
 Landscape Architecture

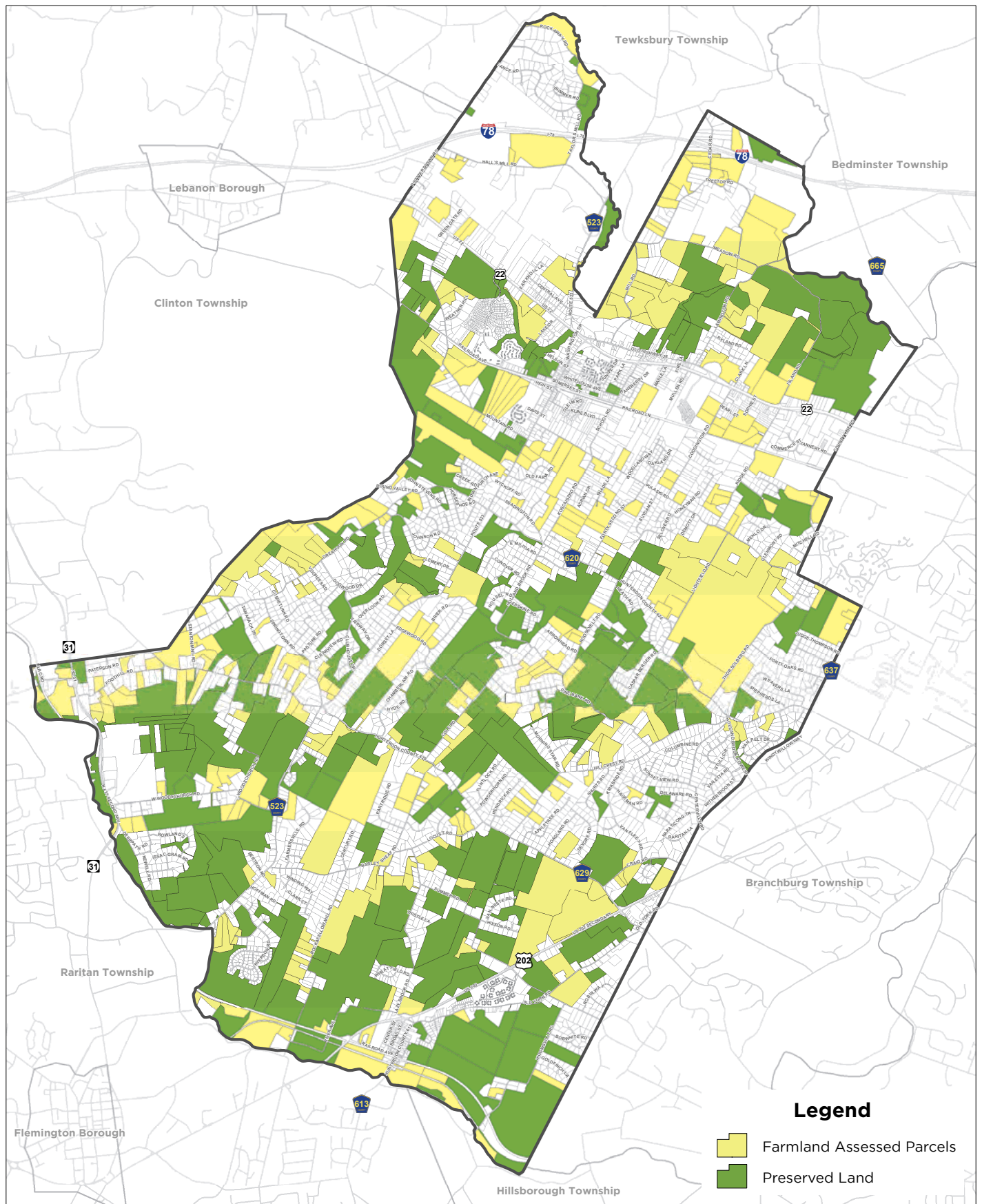


Open Space Preservation Priority Areas

LOCATION:
Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

DATE:
December 2017

Sources:
Parcels of Hunterdon County, (2017)
Originator: Hunterdon County Division of GIS
Publication Date: 08/28/14



Legend

- Farmland Assessed Parcels
- Preserved Land

Sources:

Open Space and Preserved Farmland (2017)
Readington Township & Clarke Caton Hintz

Parcels of Hunterdon County, (2017)
Originator: Hunterdon County Division of GIS
Publication Date: 08/28/14

New Jersey Real Estate MOD-IV Tax List Search Plus Database, 2016
Originator: NJ Office of Information Technology (NJ OIT),
Office of Geographic Information Systems (OGIS)
Originator: NJ Department of the Treasury, Division of Taxation
Publication Date: 07/13/16



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Clarke Caton Hintz



Architecture

Planning

Landscape Architecture

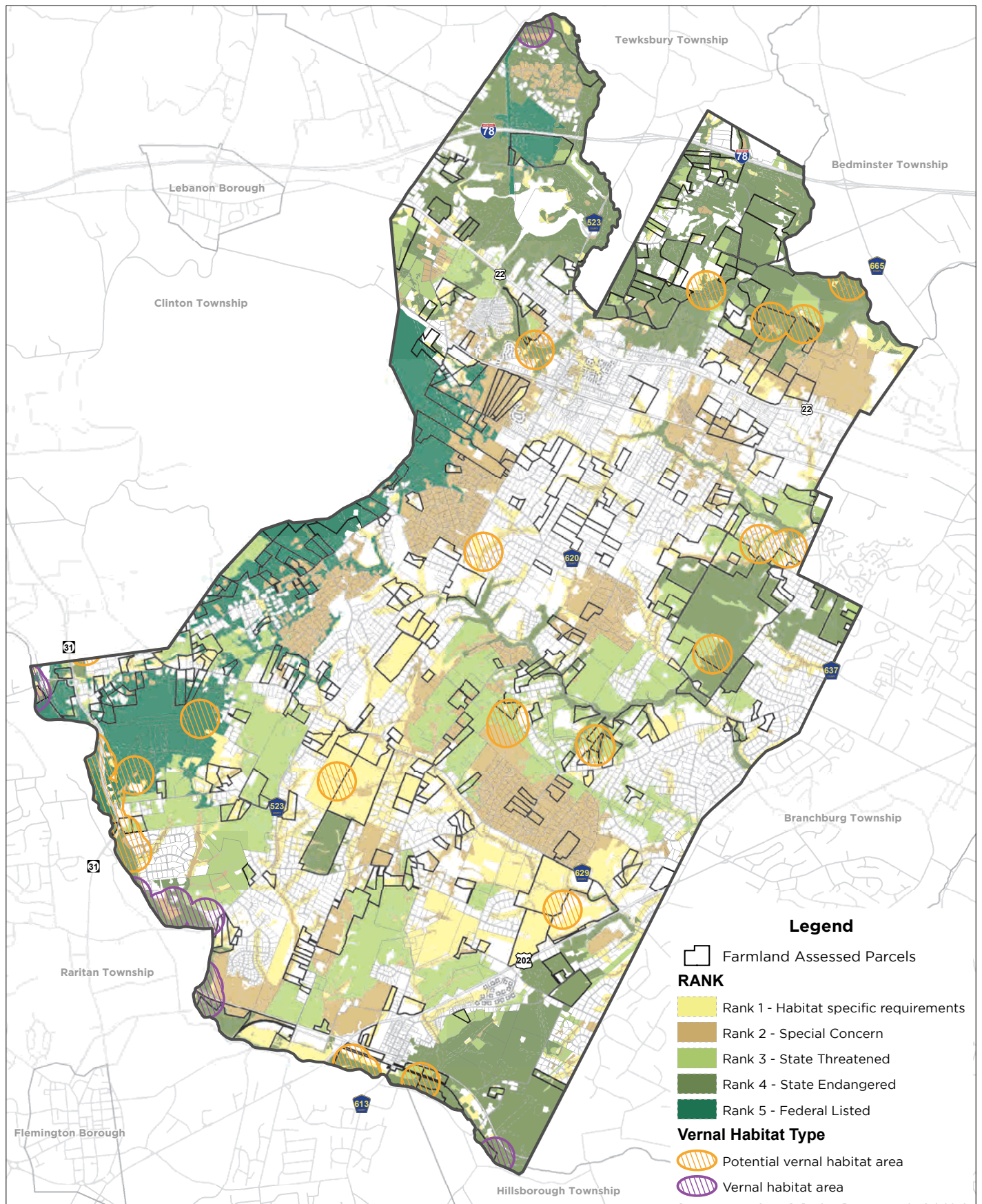
Unpreserved Farmland & Preserved Land

LOCATION:

Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

DATE:

December 2017



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Clarke Caton Hintz ● ● ■
 Architecture
 Planning
 Landscape Architecture

Unpreserved Farmland & Wildlife Habitat

LOCATION:
 Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

DATE:
 December 2017

Sources:

Open Space and Preserved Farmland (2017)
 Readington Township & Clarke Caton Hintz

NJDEP Species Based Habitat, Skylands Region, Version 3.3
 Originator: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP),
 Division of Fish Wildlife (DFW),
 Endangered Nongame Species Program (ENSP)
 Publication Date: 05/09/17

Parcels of Hunterdon County, (2017)
 Originator: Hunterdon County Division of GIS
 Publication Date: 08/28/14

New Jersey Real Estate MOD-IV Tax List Search Plus Database, 2016
 Originator: NJ Office of Information Technology (NJ OIT),
 Office of Geographic Information Systems (OGIS),
 Originator: NJ Department of the Treasury, Division of Taxation
 Publication Date: 07/13/16

stretching from Whitehouse Station south to the village of Stanton, is a very important priority for Readington Township. The north end of the mountain has benefited from Hunterdon County's and Readington's efforts but there are many undeveloped tracts, both large and small, that should be preserved. Efforts are currently underway to preserve one small undeveloped woodlot, as well as the 40 acre Lorenzen property on Dreahook Road. Because of the vulnerability of this critical habitat, and the benefits of protecting the contiguous woodlands from fragmentation, all undeveloped tracts of land, large and small, on Cushetunk and Round Mountains are a priority for preservation. The Office of Natural Lands Management (ONLM), which is a division of the NJDEP's Division of Parks and Forestry, identifies the majority of the Cushetunk Mountain lands as a *Natural Heritage Priority Site*.

Action:

- Preservation of the small key tracts on Stanton Road and Foothill Road.
- Preservation of a large farm fronting on West Woodschurch Road which includes significant mature woodland.
- Preservation of the 123-acre wooded tract fronting on Route 31 and owned by the Irvington Board of Education.
- Protection of all of the mature woodland on the northern end of Cushetunk Mountain is a high priority because of their potential for enhancing recreational opportunities near the population center of Whitehouse Station.
- Preserve several additional small open space tracts, improving the connection between the Hunterdon County Cushetunk Mountain Preserved and the Township's Cushetunk Nature Preserve.

Readington Village Historic Area

Readington Village is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Although it sits to the west and north of large blocks of totally developed land, it maintains its traditional historic and rural character. This is due, in part, because it is buffered by the open space along the Holland Brook and by the 700 acres of preserved open land currently owned by Solberg Aviation, which is, as of 2017, still serving as a greenbelt. The area, including the open space surrounding the historic Solberg Airport, is the largest remaining open space area in the Township. The ONLM previously designated this area as a *Natural Heritage Priority Site*² because it represents one of the best habitats for rare grassland bird species and exemplary natural communities in New Jersey. However, in 2007, ONLM revised the criteria to be designated as a *Natural Heritage Priority Site* to include only those sites with rare plant species occurrences. As such, this area is no longer designated as a *Natural Heritage Priority Site*. Instead, the area is included within a *Natural Heritage Grid Map*. A *Natural Heritage Grid Map* provides a general portrayal of the geographic locations of rare plant species and rare ecological communities for the entire state without providing sensitive detailed information. The *Natural Heritage Grid Map* areas should be considered as an open

² Thomas F. Breden, Supervisor, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Parks and Forestry, Office of Natural Lands Management. September 21, 2000. letter and attachments to Suzanne Forbes (Princeton Hydro, LLC).

space preservation priority. Additionally, the New Jersey MAP Conservation Blueprint designates the Solberg Airport as an area of highest importance for protection of ecological integrity.³ As such, this area is considered top priority for preservation of biological diversity.

The area is made up of land in four different Blocks on the Township's tax map. Four open lots are located Block 48, fronting along the west side of Lightfield Road. Negotiations are underway to preserve the 65-acre tract known as Wales property at the corner of Lightfield and Pulaski Roads. The large contiguous open area includes properties totaling approximately 600 acres within five large open tax lots in Block 56. The area in Block 56 includes the open lands providing buffering around the Solberg Airport. Although preservation efforts to preserve the open lands areas included in the 726 acres Solberg Aviation tract have not been successful to date, its preservation continues to be a priority. The 21 acre James Farm Block, known as 56 Lot 5, has joined the Farmland Preservation Program. This large contiguous open area also includes four properties in Block 57 and 67, to the east of Thor Solberg Road and the south of Harland School Road. Two of the four properties in these Blocks, namely Block 57 Lot 2, the 48 acre Sohl Farm, and Block 57 Lot 13.01, the 53 acre Staats Farm have been preserved.

Readington's decades long effort to preserve this area have not, for the most part, been successful. The preservation of the balance of the unpreserved lands in this large contiguous area of approximately 1,000 acres, would serve to protect this exceptional critical natural habitat, prime farmlands, an expansive viewshed and important water quality benefits of the area. Preservation would also serve to protect the historic integrity of the Solberg Airport and the Village of Readington. These characteristics, and most particularly the extensive grasslands of this area make it unique and a priority for preservation.

Action:

- Maintain as much remaining land around Readington Village as possible in order to maintain a greenbelt.
- Preserve the Solberg Aviation lands while continuing the airport use.

Rockaway/Lamington River Watershed Area

The watershed area for the Rockaway Creek and the Lamington River, located in the northeastern and northwestern area of the Township includes the Whitehouse Rockaway Creek Greenway, two golf courses and a large contiguous area of farmland and open space. Readington has made significant progress in the preservation of land in this area, but large tracts of land still remain unprotected from future development. A number of these properties, including a large tract fronting on Lamington and Meadow Roads, and along the Lamington River, are designated as priority for preservation particularly because they are threatened by development at this time.

³ The NJ Conservation Blueprint project team is comprised of The Nature Conservancy, New Jersey Conservation Foundation and Rowan University. The NJ Conservation Blueprint MAP is intended to serve municipal stakeholders involved in environmental, land use and sustainable decision making.

Smaller key parcels in the wooded area north of the village of East Whitehouse, which would help to complete the Greenway along the Rockaway Creek, are also a priority. A number of large family farms, listed as “targeted farms” under the Farmland Preservation Plan, and located on the Rockaway Creek also continue to be a priority for preservation.

The NJDEP has designated the North Branch Rockaway Creek, the South Branch Rockaway Creek, and the Lamington River as Category One (C1) waters. Pursuant to the NJDEP Surface Water Quality Standards, N.J.A.C. 7:9B-1.4, C1 waters are designated as such “for purposes of implementing the antidegradation policies set forth at N.J.A.C. 7:9B-1.5(d), for protection from measurable changes in water quality based on exceptional ecological significance, exceptional recreational significance, exceptional water supply significance, or exceptional fisheries resource(s) to protect the aesthetic value (color, clarity, scenic setting) and ecological integrity (habitat, water quality and biological functions).” A portion of the South Branch Rockaway Creek within Readington is classified as a FW2-TMCI stream; however, just upstream in Clinton Township, it is classified as a FW2-TPCI stream. A portion of the North Branch Rockaway Creek is classified as a FW2-TPCI stream. The North Branch Rockaway Creek also serves as the boundary between Readington and Tewksbury Township which is also the boundary of the Highlands Planning Area. A portion of the Lamington River is designated as a FW2-NTCI within Readington; however, upstream in Tewksbury it is classified as both a FW2-TMCI and FW2-TPCI stream. Due to these C1 designations, the Rockaway and Lamington River Watershed Areas are a priority for preservation.

This area continues to be rich with historic features. The Whitehouse Mechanicsville Historic District was recently listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Rolling farmland still dominates the landscape, intertwined with pristine stream and river corridors. The Township has now preserved an impressive number of farms and very significant tracts of open space in this area.

Despite the Township’s successes, there is still much to be done. The priorities are the completion

Surface Water Quality Standards Stream Classifications

- C1: Category One water
- FW2: Fresh waters that are not designated as FW1 or Pinelands
- NT: Nontrout waters which are generally not suitable for trout because of their physical, chemical or biological characteristics, but are suitable for a wide variety of other fish species
- TM: Trout maintenance waters that support trout throughout the year
- TP: Trout production waters that are used by trout for spawning or nursery purposes during their first summer



of the green belt to the north of the village of East Whitehouse, the preservation of land that helps to maintain the quality of the watersheds, and the preservation of the remaining large tracts open active farmland. Additionally, there is an increased priority today placed on acquiring small parcels that are important to improving the trail systems in the area.

Action:

- Preserve the Quarry lands along the Rockaway.
- Preserve of the last remaining targeted farms within the Whitehouse Greenway.
- Improve trail and foot path connections between the major population center of Whitehouse Station and the public open space on Cushetunk Mountain along the South Branch of the Rockaway.
- Acquire key properties that provide trail connections in the East Whitehouse/Rockaway Greenway.

Holland Brook, Chambers Brook and Pleasant Run Stream Corridors

The natural and historic character of the Pleasant Run, Chambers Brook and Holland Brook Corridors together make up a major area of the Township, and contribute to Readington’s “sense of place”. The Holland Brook Stream Corridor traverses the center of the Township beginning at the foothills of Cushetunk Mountain, running through the Village of Readington, and on to the Branchburg border to the east. The Pleasant Run stream corridor, like the Holland Brook, traverses the entire Township. From its headwaters west of Route 523, the Pleasant Run traverses the township flowing eastward, eventually crossing the township’s border into Branchburg.

Although, by 2017, a large number of the very significant properties have been preserved, there are still several notable properties in each of the corridors that should be preserved if the existing character is to be retained. Preservation of the remaining



significant properties along Pleasant Run Road, Chambers Brook, and Holland Brook are essential to maintaining the special character of these Corridors and are priorities for preservation. Three examples area:

Block 64, Lot 40, 150.48 acres. This property is unique because it is one of the largest remaining contiguous wooded parcels in the township and is located along Pleasant Run Road. It is equally as significant for habitat protection as it is for protection of the Pleasant Run stream corridor. It is contiguous to a preserved farm (to the west) and to Green Acres land. The preservation of this parcel would help secure a significant large block of open space and provide valuable protection to aid with control of storm water and water quality in Pleasant Run.

Block 75 Lot 30, 151.7 acres. This well managed organic farm located on Pleasant Run Road would score high in the State Farmland Preservation program and its preservation would serve to protect both an important agricultural operation and the major stream corridor. It is adjacent publicly owned Greenway properties.

Block 46 Lot 20, 103 acres. This family farm is listed as a “targeted farm” under the Farmland Preservation Program. It is located on Holland Brook Road and along the Holland Brook. Its preservation would not only further the goals of the Farmland Program, it would also further important water quality and habitat conservation goals.

Action:

- Preserve three farms with direct frontage on the Holland Brook that are on the Farmland Preservation list of Targeted Farms.
- Preserve several small, wooded open space parcels along the Holland Brook upstream of Readington Village that if preserved would enhance the integrity of the corridor.
- Protect the headwaters of the Chambers Brook through the preservation of the 65-acre Bruce Wales tract on Lightfield Road and three open lands tracts surrounding the Wales tract.
- Preserve environmentally sensitive parcels in the Chambers Brook watershed, including three wooded parcels south of the railroad tracks and one north of the Peters Farm.
- Preserve the 260-acre Lackland tract.
- Preserve the fully operational organic farm, known as Profeta Farms, located on 360-acres straddling the Pleasant Run and included on the Township’s Farmland Preservation list of Targeted Farms.

South Branch of the Raritan

The South Branch of the Raritan River forms the southern boundary of our Township and includes Three Bridges Village. Recent attention has been paid to the need to proceed with the historic effort to protect open lands directly contiguous to the South Branch of the Raritan. In recent years planning efforts on both sides of the River were discussed with Raritan Township, with the common goal of establishing an unbroken Greenway along the river frontage. The majority of the unprotected open land along the river is located downstream of the County Route 523 bridge, continuing down to

the Somerset County border. Preservation of lands along the river would provide both a water quality and ecological benefit and a passive recreational benefit, including improved public access to the river for fishing, and for a long planned hiking trail along the river. Such efforts are both a Hunterdon County priority and municipal priority.

Action:

- Preserve the lands along this major river corridor.
- Acquire additional public access to the river frontage, particularly near the village of Three Bridges.
- Extend the “Rail to Trail” westward connecting the trail to Main Street in Three Bridges.
- Preserve targeted farms and small key open space parcels in Three Bridges to assure the historic rural character of the village will be preserved.

The Village of Stanton

This village is virtually unspoiled and is surrounded on all sides by beautiful vistas. It is one of the most scenic villages in Hunterdon County and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It contains mature woodlands, historic homes, and open spaces. Thanks to the successful preservation accomplished over the last two decades, important progress toward the Greenways Goal of green belting Stanton has been made. The former Dobozyński, Ammerman, and Burgher farms were preserved, as were key tracts of open space including the Stickney and Bloys properties.

Action:

- Preserve the wooded tracts on the south side of Stanton Road.
- Preserve the 70-acre farm just to the west of the village and included on the Township’s Farmland Preservation list of Targeted Farms.



Implementation

While this Open Space Plan highlights a number of important priorities and identifies areas throughout the township suitable for preservation, the implementation of this plan should remain flexible. Readington's impressive success in preserving its open spaces over the last four decades can be attributed, in large measure, to its flexibility in the application of these priorities to reflect the opportunities for preservation as they arise. There is not a single formula that will work for all cases, but the methods described herein provide a suitable menu of different tools for achieving open space preservation goals.



Prospective Open Space

Readington has identified specific tracts that would facilitate implementation of the goals and objectives for open space preservation contained herein. It should be noted that this constellation of sites represents an ideal vision for open space preservation in Readington Township, and that it may be altered as situations evolve without amending this entire element.

Block	Lot	Location	Acres	Preservation Priority Area	Primary Habitat	Farmland Preservation
1	1	Rockaway Rd	40	NB Rockaway	Wetland/stream/wooded	
2	7	Halls Mill Road	189	NB Rockaway	Wooded/Agricultural	
3	1	Taylor's Mill Rd	15	NB Rockaway	Wetland/stream/wooded	
4	93	Rte. 523	33	NB Rockaway	Agricultural/stream	
9	23	Mill Rd	72	Rockaway	Agricultural/stream	Targeted
9	24	Mill Rd	19.57	Rockaway	Agricultural/stream	Targeted
10	16	Mill Road	29.7	Rockaway	Agricultural	Targeted
10	18	Landlocked	15	Rockaway	Wooded	
11	10	Meadow Rd	33	Rockaway	Wooded/Wetland	Targeted
12	16	Meadow Rd	100	Lamington Riv.	Agricultural	Targeted
12	16.01	Lamington Rd	4.93	Lamington Riv.	Wetland/river	
13	4	Mill Rd	56	Rockaway	Agricultural	Targeted
13	5	Mill Rd	24	Rockaway	Agricultural	Targeted
13	6	Mill Rd	9	Rockaway	Wetland/stream	
13	24	Old Hwy	7	Rockaway	Stream/wooded	
13	58	Mill Rd	27	Rockaway	stream	Targeted
13	59	Meadow Rd	26	Rockaway	Wetland/stream	
13	59.01	Lamington Rd	13	Rockaway	Wetland/stream	
13	60	Meadow Road	13.6	Rockaway	Wooded/stream	
14	2	Lamington Rd	22	Rockaway	Wetland/stream	

READINGTON TOWNSHIP

Block	Lot	Location	Acres	Preservation Priority Area	Primary Habitat	Farmland Preservation
14	3	Lamington Rd	19	Rockaway	Wetland/stream	Targeted
14	3.01	Lamington Rd	14	Rockaway	Agricultural	
14	3.02	Lamington Rd	9.7	Rockaway	Agricultural	Targeted
14	51	Lamington Rd	85.5	Rockaway	Agricultural	Targeted
15	1.01	Lamington Rd	15	Lamington Riv.	Wetland/stream	
15	6	Island Road	31.59	Rockaway	Agricultural	Targeted
20	1	Route 22	69	SB Rockaway	Agricultural/Wooded	
21	15	Mountain Rd	8	SB Rockaway	Wooded	
21	17	Railroad Ave	15.53	SB Rockaway	Wetland/stream	
21.13	12	Lake Drive	30	SB Rockaway	Wetland/stream	
22	1	Mountain Rd	19.6	SB Rockaway	Agricultural	
22	2	Mountain Rd	18.3	SB Rockaway	Agricultural	
22	3	Mountain Rd	25	SB Rockaway	Agricultural	
25	7	Mountain Rd	20	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
25	17	Mountain Rd	40	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
25	38	Creek Road	64.84	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded/agricultural	
25	59	Landlocked	4	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
25	50.01	Round Valley Rd	10	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
36	43	Landlocked	31	Chambers Brook	Wetland/stream	
38	38.01	Coddington Rd	28	Chambers Brook	Wooded/wetland	
39	10	Ridge Road	35.6	Chambers Brook	Wooded/wetland	
39	50	County Line Rd	22.23	Chambers Brook	Wooded/wetland	
42	23.01	Pulaski Rd	55.7	Chambers Brook	Agricultural	
42	24	Old Farm Rd	20	Chambers Brook	Agricultural/wooded	
44	4.01	Dreahook Rd	19	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
44	4.02	Dreahook Rd	49	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
44	5	Dreahook Rd	5	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
44	7	Landlocked	8	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
44	10	Dreahook Rd	60	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
44	10.01	Dreahook Rd	11.3	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
44	10.02	Dreahook Rd	12.24	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
44	14	Dreahook Rd	24	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
44	15	Landlocked	3	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
44	16	Landlocked	4	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
44	17	Landlocked	2	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
44	18	Landlocked	5.79	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
44	24	Landlocked	10.31	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
44	50	Landlocked	11.35	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
44	53	Dreahook Rd	9	Cushetunk Mt	Wooded	
44	54	Stanton Mt Rd	56.7	Cushetunk Mt	Agricultural/Wooded	Targeted
46	7	Rte 523	60	Holland Bk	Agricultural/stream	Targeted
46	20	Holland Bk Rd	103	Holland Bk	Agricultural/stream	Targeted
48	22.03	Lightfield	50	Chambers Brook	Agricultural	Targeted
48	23	Lightfield	72.6	Chambers Brook	Grasslands/stream	
48	24	Lightfield	65.66	Chambers Brook	Agricultural/wooded	Targeted

READINGTON TOWNSHIP

Block	Lot	Location	Acres	Preservation Priority Area	Primary Habitat	Farmland Preservation
48	25	Pulaski Road	10	Chambers Brook	Wooded	
49	2	Stanton Road	48	Stanton	Agricultural	Targeted
50	1	Dreahook Rd	19	Stanton	Agricultural	Targeted
50	16	Pleasant Run Rd	18	Pleasant Run	Agricultural	Targeted
50	17	Pleasant Run Rd	9	Pleasant Run	Wetland/stream	
50	31	Springtown Rd	19	Pleasant Run	Agricultural/stream	
52	24	Edgewood Rd	64.2	Holland Brook	Agricultural	Targeted
52.01	23	Edgewood Rd	5	Pleasant Run	Wooded	
55	10	Roosevelt Rd	12.41	Holland Bk	Agricultural/stream	
55	17.01	Pinebank Rd	16.6	Holland Bk	Wooded/stream	
55	21.01	Hillcrest Rd	37	Holland Bk	Agricultural	Targeted
55	33	Readington Rd	23.6	Holland Bk	Wetland/stream	
55	34	Readington Rd	5	Holland Bk	Wetland/stream	
56	1	Pulaski Rd	64.65	Chambers Brook	Grasslands	
56	3	Lightfield Rd	371	Airport	Grasslands	
56	6	Readington Rd	70.66	Airport/Holland Bk	Grasslands	
56	8	Thor Solberg Rd	29	Airport	Grasslands	
57	12	Readington Rd	62.6	Chambers Brook	Agricultural	Targeted
61	5	Route 31	37	SB Raritan River	Wooded/stream	
62	5	W. Woodschurch	34	Round Mt	Agricultural	Targeted
63	2	Foothill Rd	14.22	Round Mt.	Wooded	
63	6	State Hwy 31	117.74	Round Mt	Wooded	
63	9	W. Woodschurch	72	Round Mt	Wooded	
63	15	W. Woodschurch	17	Round Mt	Wooded	
63	19.01	W. Woodschurch	19.3	Round Mt	Wooded	
63	20	Landlocked	5.89	Round Mt	Wooded	
63	23	Landlocked	10	Round Mt	Wooded	
63	47	Stanton Rd	11	Round Mt	Wooded	
63	48	Stanton Rd	15.3	Round Mt	Wooded	
63	52	Pleasant Run Rd	20	Round Mt	Wooded	
64	26	Barley Sheaf	109	Pleasant Run	Agricultural/wooded	Targeted
64	31.03	Barley Sheaf	27.56	Pleasant Run	Agricultural	Targeted
64	40	Pleasant Run Rd	150.5	Pleasant Run	Agricultural/Wooded	Targeted
64	51	Pleasant Run Rd	21	Pleasant Run	Agricultural/stream	
65	7	Barley Sheaf	23	Pleasant Run	Agricultural/stream	Targeted
65	25.01	Pleasant Run Rd	2.81	Pleasant Run	Wetland/stream	
66	31	Hillcrest Road	29.27	Holland Brook	Agricultural	Targeted
66	42	Pinebank Rd	21	Holland Bk	Wooded/stream	
66	43	Landlocked	6	Trail Connection	Wooded	
66	46	Pinebank Rd	15.8	Holland Bk	Agricultural/stream	
66	61	Landlocked	1.3	Trail connection	Wooded	
67	2	Thor Solberg Rd	36.5	Airport/Holland Brook	Grasslands	
72	28	Landlocked	10	Deerpath Park	Wooded	
73	18	Landlocked	11.7	Raritan River	Wetland/Wooded	Targeted

READINGTON TOWNSHIP

Block	Lot	Location	Acres	Preservation Priority Area	Primary Habitat	Farmland Preservation
73	19	Landlocked	15	Raritan River	Wetland/stream	
73	21	Rockafellow Mill Rd	13.15	Raritan River	Wetland/river	
73	22	Landlocked	50.41	Raritan River	Wetland/river	Targeted
73	25	Rockafellow Mill Rd	10	Raritan River	Wetland/river	
74	4	Rockafellow Mill Rd	104	Raritan River	Agricultural	Targeted
74	37	Barley Sheaf Rd	19.29	Raritan River	Agricultural	
75	19	Route 202	81.28	Raritan River	Agricultural	Targeted
75	30	Pleasant Run Rd	152	Pleasant Run	Agricultural	Targeted
75	30.02	Pleasant Run Rd	110.7	Pleasant Run	Wetland/stream	Targeted
76	5	Route 202	21	Pleasant Run	Agricultural	
81	2	Route 202	9.3	Raritan River	Agricultural	
83	1	Main Street	14	Raritan River	Agricultural	Targeted
83	2	Main Street	50.12	Raritan River	Agricultural/river	Targeted
93	3	Main Street	26.4	Raritan River	Wetland/river	Targeted
93	5	Landlocked	12.35	Raritan River	Agricultural/river	Targeted
93	6	Landlocked	27.24	Raritan River	Agricultural/river	Targeted
93	10	Landlocked	1	Raritan River	Trail Connection	
93	11	Landlocked	1	Raritan River	Trail Connection	
93	200	Landlocked	7.9	Raritan River	Trail Connection	
93	202	Landlocked	0.66	Raritan River	Trail Connection	
93	203	Landlocked	0.895	Raritan River	Trail Connection	
94	7	River Road	22.59	Raritan River	Agricultural	
96	4	Old York Road	26.69	Raritan River	Agricultural	Targeted
97	1	Summer Road	49.31	Raritan River	Agricultural	Targeted
98	7	Higginsville Rd	13.65	Raritan River	Trail Connection/river	
98	9	Higginsville Rd	18.31	Raritan River	Trail Connection/river	
98	200	Landlocked	5.15	Raritan River	Trail Connection/river	
Total Acreage			4625.75			



Open Space Preservation Mechanisms

The following tools have been used in the designation of open space within Readington. It is recommended that the Township continue to employ these mechanisms as appropriate.

Active Recreation Purchases

Readington has made three land purchases without the benefit of Green Acres Funds. Since siting of active recreation can be difficult because of neighborhood concerns and the need for level land for playing fields, Readington reacted quickly when appropriate pieces became available at a reasonable price. Between 20 and 30 years ago, the



Township purchased three separate sites specifically for active recreation, the 20 acre Pickell Park, the 54-acre Hillcrest Park, and the 48-acre Summer Road Park.

Green Acres Grants

The State Green Acres Program, has for 60 years, been the primary source of funding for Open Space Preservation. The Program requires land be permanently set aside for recreational and conservation purposes and it must allow public access. Since 1997, Readington has been approved for the State Green Acres Green Trust Planning Incentive Project Program, available only to municipalities that have a dedicated open space tax and are actively pursuing implementation of an approved Open Space Plan. Readington has been an active participant now for 20 years. The township has received funding awards in 15 of those 20 years, and has used these funds, totaling \$10,275,000, to preserve 30 properties totaling approximately 1,000 acres. The Township has recently been approved for an additional \$500,000 for future, as yet undesignated, projects. The program funds eligible projects at 50% of certified value and the municipality is responsible for a 50% local match. At various times, Readington's Open Space Trust Fund, which is replenished each year by a dedicated Tax of 0.02/\$100 of assessed valuation, has provided this match, however for the last decade, Readington has been using all of the proceeds of its dedicated Open Space Tax to pay off accrued debt, including the balance of its low interest Green Trust Loans. Readington can use funds from the County's Open Space Trust Fund's Municipal Grants Program or Cooperative Program to satisfy the 50% local funding requirement or supplement its 50% share with municipal bonding.

Open Space Cluster Ordinance

Readington's various open space cluster ordinances have resulted in over 700 acres of land being donated to the Township, as part of the subdivision process. The majority of the land is being held for conservation and passive recreation purposes, with two

sites being used for active recreation. The cluster ordinance has been revised several times over the last three decades in many of the township's residential zones in order to improve its effectiveness in furthering the Township's goals of protecting rural character, conserving natural resources and providing recreational opportunities. The Cluster ordinances have been used to effectively preserve large tracts of land in areas designated as desirable by the open space plan.

Private Land Trusts

In the late 90's, the Trust for Public Lands received Green Acres grant approval for a project known as "Readington Greenways" which ultimately preserved significant lands along three major stream corridors. Readington funded 50% of the costs. This project demonstrated how Private Land Trusts can be very effective partners in preserving the township's Open Space. In recent years the Hunterdon Land Trust worked with Hunterdon County to preserve two key wooded parcels on Round Mountain. Readington has recently been communicating with both the NJ Conservation Foundation and the Hunterdon Land Trust to interest them in working jointly on new opportunities in Readington.

Outright Donations

Readington has accepted at least 6 outright donations of Open Space Land. Two of these are adjacent to the Raritan River and total 40 acres, one is a three-acre woodlot on Dreahook Road on the side of Cushetunk Mountain. The remaining three are along the North Branch of the Rockaway Creek, a six-acre lot on Taylors Mill Road, donated by the Renda Family, and two 38 acre tracts donated by Merck. Readington is presently in the process of accepting another donation of land, a 5-acre woodlot on the side of Cushetunk Mountain, from the Duke Foundation.

NJ Environmental Infrastructure Trust

Readington has received funding for land acquisition in the form of low interest 20 year loans from the NJ Environmental Infrastructure Trust, whose mission it is to protect our State's water quality. Three tracts of Open Space have been preserved since 2001, using these loans for funding. Two serve to protect the headwaters of the Holland Brook, a 55-acre property on Dreahook Road and the 20 acre woods divided from the Silver Bit and Spur Farm on Route 523. One 18 acre wooded parcel, divided from the D'Urso Farm on Pleasant Run Road, serves to protect the Pleasant Run stream corridor. Agriculture and active recreation are not allowed on these properties as they must be kept in their natural state.



Farmland Preservation Program

Where appropriate, farmland Preservation is an excellent method of contributing to open space preservation by preserving natural vistas and providing a buffer for other preserved areas. Farmland Preservation results in larger parcels of appropriate size, location, and soil quality being dedicated to agricultural use. Readington should continue to cooperate with the Hunterdon County Agricultural Development Board and the NJ State Agriculture Development Committee to reach out to farm owners and interest them in the Program. Readington presently has approximately 72 preserved farms totaling about 4,852 acres.

Purchase of Land in Fee

When a large tract of land comes up for sale at a reasonable price, Readington has, on at least five different occasions, acted quickly and purchased the tract outright, using low interest, short term borrowing. In the case of the 500 acre Illva Saranno Lands, Readington's reimbursement plan included auctioning 3 separate farms from the property, totaling approximately 150 acres, then being reimbursed for the easements through the farmland program. The balance of the property was sold to the State DEP for use as a Wildlife Management Area. In the case of both the 144 acre Fallone Tract and the 230 acre YES tract, both were sold entirely to the DEP for additions to existing Wildlife Management Areas, one on the South Branch and one on the Lamington Rivers. In 1999, Readington purchased the 183 acre Romano tract on Cole Road and created and auctioned a 110 acre preserved farm and a 73-acre conservation area, with the help of Farmland Preservation and Green Acres funding. In 2009, Readington purchased a 310-acre tract from Toll Brothers, divided off three preserved farms which were auctioned, and received both State Green Acres Funding and County Open Space Trust Funding to pay for the remaining 144 acres, kept open for passive recreation and conservation, an area now known as the Lazy Brook Greenway.

Purchase of a Conservation Easement

In some instances, the purchase of an easement on a small portion of a privately owned property in a key location is desirable, even though it would not be eligible for any type of outside funding. An instance where this may advisable would be when an area

would be critical to a Greenway, help to protect a stream or river corridor, or provide a key trail linkage.

Lease with Option to Buy

Readington is presently negotiating a lease agreement on open space lands owned by with Public Service Electric and Gas (PSE&G), a public utility that is not presently interested in an outright sale. Under the agreement, Readington will have the use of the property for conservation and passive recreational purposes, and will be given a right of first refusal, should PSE&G decide to sell the properties in the future. This proposal illustrates that lease agreements can provide a mechanism to protect open lands and expand passive recreational opportunities.

Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Features by Regulation

Sensitive features include steep slopes, flood plain, wetlands, and State Open Waters. Township Ordinances were reviewed in 2001 as part of the Environmental Resources Inventory (ERI) to determine if they were giving these environmentally sensitive features adequate protection. The 2009 Master Plan update stressed the need to protect both the surface water and the groundwater quality in the Township. Subsequently, Readington updated its zoning ordinances to assure adequate protection. Where possible, environmentally sensitive lands should be subject to a conservation easement, either at the time they are included in an Open Space Acquisition or inclusive of a parcel undergoing major subdivision or site plan approval.



Policy Guidance Beyond Readington

A number of documents have been produced by the State of New Jersey and Hunterdon County that identify relevant policies related to open space and farmland preservation. Readington's open space plan is consistent with these guiding policies.



New Jersey's Open Space and Environmental Policies

Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2

The intents and purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law provides the basis for open space planning and preservation:

- c. To provide adequate light, air and open space;*
- e. To promote the establishment of appropriate population densities and concentrations that will contribute to the well-being of persons, neighborhoods, communities and regions and preservation of the environment;*
- g. To provide for sufficient space in appropriate locations for a variety of agricultural, residential, recreational, commercial and industrial uses and open space, both public and private, according to meet the needs of all New Jersey residents;*
- i. To promote a desirable visual environment through creative development techniques and good civic design and arrangements;*
- j. To promote conservation of historic sites and districts, open space, energy resources and valuable natural resources in the State and to prevent urban sprawl and degradation of the environment through improper use of land;*
- p. To enable municipalities the flexibility to offer alternatives to traditional development, through the use of equitable and effective planning tools including clustering, transferring development rights, and lot-size averaging in order to concentrate development in areas where growth can best be accommodated and maximized while preserving agricultural lands, open space, and historic sites;*

1998 Governor's Commission on New Jersey Outdoors

This report served as the basis for the statewide open space funding referendum in 1998. The referendum, which has begun the funding of approximately \$1.5 billion in open space acquisitions, passed by a two-thirds majority of New Jersey voters. The following findings and recommendations that were included in the report support open space preservation:

Open Space

People want to be able to visit beautiful, interesting, affordable, educational, and enjoyable parks and open spaces... all manner of outdoor recreation pursuits, by all manner of able and disabled persons, are in demand and the supply is inadequate.

The Governor's Council agrees that more recreational areas are needed in all areas of New Jersey and recommends preserving 200,000 acres of open space for outdoor recreation.

Greenways

Greenways, or connecting pathways and waterways between open spaces, gives the opportunity for people to travel longer distances among changing landscapes and habitat types... Wildlife need corridors too... It is not enough to preserve isolated parcels of unconnected open spaces. New Jersey's open spaces should be woven together to preserve the natural links upon which both plant and animal species rely.

The Council recommends that 200,000 acres of greenway linkages be created through preservation of open space or purchase of easements and rights-of-way throughout the state.

State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan or SDRP)

In 1986, the New Jersey Legislature passed the New Jersey State Planning Act, which created the State Planning Commission and required the preparation and adoption of the SDRP. The first SDRP, adopted in 1992, was the product of a statewide planning process, which involved counties and municipalities, which formulated a series of policies intended on shaping growth within New Jersey. The first major update and revision of the 1992 SDRP was initiated in 1997 and culminated in the adoption of the second SDRP on March 1, 2001. The policies and objectives set forth in the SDRP include recommendations regarding environmental protection, rural areas, open space and farmland preservation. Readington's open space plan is consistent with the vision, goals, policies and strategies of the 1986 State Planning Act and the SDRP.

SDRP Statewide Goals

1. Revitalize the State's Cities and Towns
2. Conserve the State's Natural Resources and Systems
3. Promote Beneficial Economic Growth, Development and Renewal for All Residents of NJ
4. Protect the Environment, Prevent and Clean Up Pollution
5. Provide Adequate Public Facilities and Services at Reasonable Cost
6. Provide Adequate Housing at a Reasonable Cost
7. Preserve and Enhance Areas with Historic, Cultural, Scenic, Open Space and Recreational Value
8. Ensure Sound and Integrated Planning and Implementation Statewide

Statewide Policies of the State Plan: Open Space & Farmland Preservation

Goal #7: Preserve and Enhance Areas with Historic, Cultural, Scenic, Open Space and Recreational Value.

Strategy:

“Enhance, preserve and use historic, cultural, scenic, open space and recreational assets by collaborative planning, design, investment and management techniques. Locate and design development and redevelopment and supporting infrastructure to improve access to and protect these sites. Support the important role of the arts in contributing to community life and civic beauty.”⁴

As part of the discussion of this statewide goal and strategy, the State Plan articulates a statewide vision of open space and scenic resources for the year 2020:

Vision of New Jersey in the Year 2020 - Scenic, Open Space and Recreational Resources:

“Children in all the state’s cities and older towns can walk to playgrounds in their neighborhoods. The goal, established by Governor Whitman and the Legislature and affirmed by the voters in 1998, has been achieved. Nearly two million acres of open space and farmland has been preserved. State, local and private funding has helped build a multi-purpose regional system of facilities integrating recreation and open space planning with land use and other infrastructure planning. Like the trail system, development of new open space and recreation facilities is planned to reinforce other goals, especially urban revitalization and beneficial economic growth.

The value that New Jersey places on everyday vistas can be seen from roads and sidewalks all over the state. Billboards have been controlled, wildflowers have replaced grasses, and the jumble of signs, entrances and parking lots along the state’s highways have been redesigned to become more attractive, as well as safer, for motorists and businesses.”⁵

In order to achieve the vision of New Jersey in the year 2020, the State Plan contains the following statewide policies pertinent to open space and farmland preservation:

SDRP Statewide Policy Categories

1. Equity
2. Comprehensive Planning
3. Public Investment Priorities
4. Infrastructure Investments
5. Economic Development
6. Urban Revitalization
7. Housing
8. Transportation
9. Historic, Cultural and Scenic Resources
10. Air Resources
11. Water Resources
12. Open Lands and Natural Systems
13. Energy Resources
14. Waste Management, Recycling and Brownfields
15. Agriculture
16. Coastal Resources
17. Planning Regions Established by Statute
18. Special Resource Areas
19. Design

⁴ “The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan”, New Jersey State Planning Commission, March 1, 2001, pp. 87.

⁵ Ibid, pp. 88.

Statewide Policy #12 Open Lands and Natural Systems

The State Plan has identified priorities for the acquisition of open space. These include critical environmental lands, greenways, land containing areas of significant agricultural value, recreational value, scenic value or with environmentally sensitive features and land in agricultural production that achieves other open space goals. Readington's open space plan is consistent with the acquisition priorities of the State Plan, as excerpted below:

■ Policy 1: Open Space Acquisition Priorities

Funds for the acquisition of open space and farmland retention, should be used for the following features (not listed in order of priority):

- ◆ Critical Environmental Sites;
- ◆ greenbelts that define Centers;
- ◆ greenways;
- ◆ land containing areas of significant agricultural value, recreational value, scenic value or with environmentally sensitive features;
- ◆ land in agricultural production that achieves other open space goals;
- ◆ land needed to meet existing and future needs for active recreation; and
- ◆ parks, plazas and public spaces in urban areas that enhance community character and support redevelopment efforts. P. 152

Statewide Policy #15 Agriculture

Preservation of farmland contributes to the creation of large contiguous open lands, thereby supporting the preservation of scenic corridors, greenways and wildlife habitat. Readington's open space plan is consistent with the State Plan statewide policies regarding agriculture, as excerpted below:

■ Policy 1: Agricultural Land Retention Program Priorities

Funds for farmland retention should be given priority in the following order, unless a county or municipal farmland preservation plan has been prepared and approved by the State Agriculture Development Committee (in which case, priority shall be based on said plan):

- (1) Rural Planning Area;
- (2) Fringe and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas;
- (3) Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas. P. 160

■ Policy 2: Preservation of the Agricultural Land Base

Consider the expenditure of public funds for preservation of farmland as an investment in public infrastructure and thereby emphasize the public's interest in maintaining long-term agricultural viability. P. 160

■ Policy 3: Coordinated Planning

Coordinate planning efforts of all levels of government to ensure that policies and programs promote agriculture. P. 160

■ Policy 4: New Development

Plan and locate new development to avoid negative impacts on agriculture. P. 160

■ Policy 5: Creative Planning and Design Techniques

Encourage creative land planning and design through tools such as clustering, phasing and density transfers, purchase and donation of development rights, agricultural enterprise zones and districts and the provision of self-contained community wastewater treatment systems to serve Centers, to accommodate future growth in ways that maintain the viability of agriculture as an industry, while avoiding conflict with agricultural uses. P. 160

Statewide Policies of the State Plan: Natural Resource Protection

Goal #2: Conserve the State's Natural Resources and Systems

Strategy:

Conserve the State's natural systems and resources as capital assets of the public by promoting ecologically sound development and redevelopment in the Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas, accommodating environmentally designed development in Centers in the Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas, and by restoring the integrity of natural systems in areas where they have been degraded or damaged. Plan, design, invest in and manage the development of Centers and the use of land, water, soil, plant and animal resources to maintain biodiversity and the viability of ecological systems. Maximize the ability of natural systems to control runoff and flooding, and to improve air and water quality and supply. p. 36

Goal #4: Protect the Environment, Prevent and Clean Up Pollution

Strategy:

Develop standards of performance and create incentives to prevent and reduce pollution and toxic emissions at the source, in order to conserve resources and protect public health. Promote the development of businesses that provide goods and services that eliminate pollution and toxic emissions or reduce resource depletion. Actively pursue public/private partnerships, the latest technology and strict enforcement to prevent toxic emissions and clean up polluted air, land and water without shifting pollutants from one medium to another, from one geographic location to another, or from one generation to another. Promote ecologically designed development and redevelopment in the Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas and accommodate ecologically designed development in Centers in the Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas, to reduce automobile usage, land, water and energy consumption, and to minimize impacts on public health and biological systems, water and air quality. Plant and maintain trees and native vegetation. Reduce waste and reuse and recycle materials through demanufacturing and remanufacturing. p.62

The State Plan contains the following statewide policies pertinent to natural resource protection:

Statewide Policy #11 Water Resources

Protect and enhance water resources through coordinated planning efforts aimed at reducing sources of pollution and other adverse effects of development, encouraging designs in hazard-free areas that will protect the natural function of stream and wetland systems, and optimizing sustainable resource use. p. 147

■ Policy 18: Stream Corridor Protection and Management

Protect, establish and maintain appropriately vegetated buffers along streams, rivers, wetlands, reservoirs and scenic waterways to protect the natural functions and quality of surface water resources. p.150

Environs

The Environs are the preferred areas for the protection of large contiguous areas, including the preservation of farmland, open space and large forest tracts. The Policy Objectives for the Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas specifically call for protection of the Environs from development. Strategies for preserving the Environs include density transfers into Centers, purchasing or donating easements, restricting the extension of capital facilities and adopting ordinances that limit development. p. 253

■ Linkages Within the Environs

Greenways — regionwide linear corridors of permanently preserved public or private land linking New Jersey's urban, suburban and rural areas — can be an important part of the Environs. p. 253

Strategies for capital facilities and services in the Environs should follow the Planning Area Policy Objectives to ensure beneficial growth in Centers and the protection of the Environs. p. 253

New development that cannot be transferred to Centers should be sensitive to the prevailing local conditions and should not compromise local character. p. 253

Design and planning techniques should be used to ensure that any new development enhances the character of the area by preserving open space, retaining scenic vistas, and maintaining natural systems. p. 253

Statewide Policies of the State Plan: Habitat Preservation

Open space planning is intertwined with the goals of habitat preservation. Coordination of open space policies with habitat preservation strategies can advance the maintenance of biodiversity, preservation of critical habitats and wildlife corridors. The State Plan indicates specific policies to effectuate the preservation of wildlife and their habitats that may also serve as a guide in open space planning.

Statewide Policy #12 Open Lands and Natural Systems - Biological Diversity

■ Policy 16: Contiguous Open Space

Preserve and restore the functional integrity of natural systems, including large contiguous tracts of forest, grasslands and other natural land, to protect biological diversity. P. 154

■ Policy 17: Corridors

Connect large contiguous tracts of forest, grasslands and other natural lands with stream and river corridors by corridors and greenways so as to enhance their functional integrity for biological diversity. P. 154

■ Policy 18: Critical Habitats⁶

Identify Critical Habitats during the preparation of municipal plans to ensure coordination of planning efforts and to support State and local resource-protection efforts. P. 154

■ Policy 19: Resident and Migratory Threatened and Endangered Species

Identify and protect the habitats of resident and migratory threatened and endangered species. Manage the character, location and magnitude of growth and development in and adjacent to such habitats to avoid direct or indirect negative impacts on threatened or endangered species or their habitat. P. 154

Statewide Policies of the State Plan: Scenic and Historic Resources

Statewide and design policies within the State Plan also support the preservation of scenic and historic resources, which may be accomplished through open space planning. Readington's open space plan incorporates these policies:

Statewide Policy #9 Historic, Cultural and Scenic Resources

Protect, enhance, and where appropriate rehabilitate historic, cultural and scenic resources by identifying, evaluating and registering significant historic, cultural and scenic landscapes, districts, structures, buildings, objects and sites, and ensuring that new growth and development is compatible with historic, cultural and scenic values. p.144

■ Policy 11: Development Patterns and Design to Support Scenic and Historic Values

Manage development and redevelopment to maintain, complement and enhance scenic and historic values within identified and delineated scenic and historic corridors. P. 145

■ Policy 12: Protection and Preservation of Scenic and Historic Corridors

Protect scenic and historic corridors by appropriate means and preserve them by using easement purchase, density transfers, fee simple purchase and other innovative and effective mechanisms. P. 145

Policy #19 Design

Mix uses and activities as closely and as thoroughly as possible; develop, adopt and implement design guidelines; create specifically defined, visually appealing and functionally efficient places in ways that establish an identity; design circulation systems to promote connectivity; maintain an appropriate scale in the built environment; and redesign areas of sprawl. p. 174

■ Policy 10: Respecting Local Context and its Vernacular

⁶ **Critical Habitat** means areas that are critical to maintaining New Jersey's **Biodiversity**, including those containing: (1) habitats of endangered or threatened plant or animal species, as determined by DEP and USEPA, (2) pristine waters designated by DEP as Category 1 waters and their watersheds within and above their pristine water segment, and trout production and trout maintenance waters and their watersheds, as designated by DEP (N.J.A.C. 7:9 et seq.), (3) coastal and freshwater wetlands as defined by DEP (N.J.A.C. 7:7A-1.4 and N.J.A.C. 7:7E-3.27) (4) prime forested areas, including mature stands of native species, (5) ridgelines, gorges and ravines, (6) grasslands, and (7) staging areas for migratory species., NJSDRP

Acknowledge and incorporate local history, climate, ecology, topography, building materials, building practices and local scale into the design of the built environment and the protection of the natural environment, where practicable and cost-effective. P. 178

■ Policy 17: Managing Corridors

Design corridors, including rivers, greenways, transit and roadways, to connect communities in ways that preserve rights of way, protect viewsheds, and encourage gateways and distinct transitions between communities. P. 179

State Plan PA-4 Rural Planning Area: Open Space & Farmland Preservation

The Rural Planning Area extends over 31% of Readington Township. Within the Rural Planning Area, the State Plan expresses a distinct preference for the retention of farmland and open space for the purpose of retaining rural character and promoting agriculture as a viable business:

In the Rural Planning Area, the State Plan's intention is to:

- *Maintain the Environs as large contiguous areas of farmland and other lands;*
- *Revitalize cities and towns;*
- *Accommodate growth in Centers;*
- *Promote a viable agricultural industry;*
- *Protect the character of existing, stable communities; and*
- *Confine programmed sewers and public water services to Centers. p.208*

The State Plan recommends protecting the rural character of the area by encouraging a pattern of development that promotes a stronger rural economy in the future while meeting the immediate needs of rural residents, and by identifying and preserving farmland and other open lands. p. 208

Specific policies recommended for the Rural Planning Area are intended to effectuate farmland and open space preservation:

*(1) **Land Use:** Enhance economic and agricultural viability and rural character by guiding development and redevelopment into Centers. In the Environs, maintain and enhance agricultural uses, and preserve agricultural and other lands to form large contiguous areas and greenbelts around Centers. Development and redevelopment should use creative land use and design techniques to ensure that it does not conflict with agricultural operations, does not exceed the capacity of natural and built systems and protects areas where public investments in farmland preservation have been made. Development in the Environs should maintain or enhance the character of the area. p. 209*

*(5) **Natural Resource Conservation:** Minimize potential conflicts between development, agricultural practices and sensitive environmental resources. Promote agricultural management practices and other agricultural conservation techniques to protect soil and water resources. Protect and preserve large, contiguous tracts and corridors of recreation, forest or other open space land that protect natural systems and natural resources. p.210*

*(6) **Agriculture and Farmland Preservation:** Guide development to ensure the viability of agriculture and the retention of farmland in agricultural areas. Encourage farmland retention and minimize conflicts between agricultural practices and the location of Centers. Ensure the availability of adequate water resources and large, contiguous tracts of land with minimal land use conflicts. Actively promote more intensive, new-crop agricultural enterprises and meet the needs of agricultural industry for intensive packaging, processing, value-added operations, marketing, exporting and other shipping through development and redevelopment. p. 210*

*(7) **Recreation:** Provide maximum active and passive recreational and tourism opportunities at the neighborhood and local levels by targeting the acquisition and development of neighborhood and municipal parkland within Centers. Provide regional recreation and tourism opportunities by targeting parkland acquisitions and improvements that enhance large contiguous open space systems and by facilitating alternative recreational and tourism uses of farmland. p. 210*

Implementation Strategy:

Maintaining and enhancing the rural character of Planning Area 4 will require considerable attention by all levels of government, as well as the private and non-profit sectors. With significant market pressures, the Rural Planning Area is often viewed as prime real estate for new development. p. 211

Even techniques like larger lot zoning and lot size averaging, while beneficial in some aspects, have the effect of destroying the large contiguous areas of farmland and habitat that are so vital to the sustainability of rural areas and may consume land at a faster rate. p. 211

Use investment tools, such as: a long-term capital plan; density transfer strategies including transfer of development rights where appropriate; public land banking to acquire sites for future growth and density transfers; acquisition of targeted farmland and other open spaces; agricultural enterprise districts, use assessment and inheritance and transfer tax relief; purchase of development rights programs; permanent and stable source of funding for land and capital assets on the municipal, county and State levels; privately coordinated multi-tract development; development rights bank; impact fees; rehabilitation or revitalization grants or loans; special improvement district; community wastewater utility and pre-approved designs for localized standalone wastewater treatment systems to bring down the cost and ensure a limited number of new hookups compatible with maintaining the rural character; and expanded, reactivated or new public transportation systems within and between Centers. p. 213

State Plan PA-3 Fringe Planning Area: Open Space & Farmland Preservation

Twenty-five percent (25%) of Readington Township lies within the Fringe Planning Area. The intents and policies of the Fringe Planning Area support open space and farmland preservation. This designation includes much of the environs around the existing villages of Whitehouse Station and Readington. Both are existing centers depicted on the State Plan Policy Map. Readington's open space plan is consistent with the policies of the Fringe Planning Area:

In the Fringe Planning Area, the State Plan's intention is to:

- *Accommodate growth in Centers;*
- *Protect the Environs as open lands;*
- *Revitalize cities and towns;*
- *Protect the character of existing stable communities;*
- *Protect natural resources;*
- *Provide a buffer between more developed Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas and less developed Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas; and*
- *Confine programmed sewers and public water services to Centers. p. 201*

In the Environs, [those areas outside of centers], the landscape should contain limited free-standing residential, commercial and industrial development, including activities that may be required to meet the needs of the region and which cannot meet acceptable performance standards for Centers. All such development should be designed to enhance the character of the area by preserving open land, retaining scenic vistas and maintaining natural systems. p. 202

In addition, uncontrolled development in these areas will exacerbate conflicts with agricultural and environmental resources. p. 202

Policy Objectives:

(1) **Land Use:** Focus development and redevelopment in appropriately located and designed Centers to accommodate growth that would otherwise occur in the Environs. Protect the Environs primarily as open lands. Development and redevelopment in the Environs should not exceed the carrying capacity of natural or built systems and should maintain or enhance the character of the Environs. p. 202

(5) **Natural Resource Conservation:** Strategically acquire open space to define Centers and to maintain contiguous open space corridors that link to other Planning Areas and Centers. p.203

(6) **Agriculture:** Guide development to ensure the viability of agriculture and the retention of productive farmland in strategically located agricultural areas and in other adjacent Planning Areas. Encourage farmland retention and minimize conflicts between agricultural practices and the location of Centers. Actively promote more intensive, new-crop agricultural enterprises and meet the needs of agricultural industry for intensive packaging, processing, value-added operations, marketing, exporting and other shipping through development and redevelopment. p.203

Implementing Strategy:

Prepare a targeted open space and/or farmland preservation program in cooperation with the county and/or county agricultural development board and the SADC and/or Green Acres. p.204

NJ Natural Heritage

Readington's Environmental Resource Inventory⁷ identifies several threatened and endangered species that have been sighted within the Township. These include birds, reptiles and plants. As of March 2007, the Office of Natural Lands Management (ONLM), within the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, has classified 343 sites in New Jersey that are critically important to the conservation of biological diversity within the State as a Natural Heritage Priority Site. The ONLM has specifically identified the Cushetunk Mountain as a priority site for conservation and protection of rare and endangered species and natural communities. The purpose of cataloguing these areas is to provide a resource for developers, local officials and conservation agencies to utilize in making decisions regarding such sites. *Natural Heritage Priority Sites* represent some of the best remaining habitat for rare plant species and exemplary natural habitats in the State. The ONLM expresses a clear policy recommendation for the disposition of Natural Heritage Priority Sites:

*These areas should be considered the top priorities for the preservation of biological diversity in New Jersey. If these sites become degraded or destroyed, we may lose some of the unique components of our natural heritage.*⁸

⁷ Readington Township Environmental Commission. 2001. *The Readington Township Natural Resource Inventory*. Princeton Hydro, LLC.

⁸ New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Parks and Forestry, Office of Natural Lands Management, *Frequently Asked Questions About Natural Heritage Priority Sites*, informational flyer, May 17, 2007.

The site of the Solberg Airport was formerly identified as a Natural Heritage Priority Site⁹. However, around 2007, ONLM revised the Natural Heritage Priority program to only designated sites with rare plant species as Natural Heritage Priority Sites.¹⁰ The majority of the lands associated with Solberg Airport (Block 56 Lots 1, 3 & 6 & Block 67 Lot 2) are now identified within a *Natural Heritage Grid Map*. A Natural Heritage Grid Map provides a general portrayal of the geographic locations of rare plant species and rare ecological communities for the entire state without providing sensitive detailed information. The *Natural Heritage Grid Map* areas should be considered as an open space preservation priority. Additionally, NJ MAP designates the Solberg Airport as an area of highest importance for protection of ecological integrity.¹¹

The Landscape Project

In 1994, the New Jersey Division of Fish, Game & Wildlife's (DFW) Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP) adopted a landscape level approach to endangered, threatened and special concern species conservation by developing the Landscape Project. The Landscape Project uses documented species location data and land-use/land cover as well as species life history information to produce maps that depict habitat for endangered, threatened and special concern wildlife species throughout the state. The goal of the project is:

"...to provide a tool that fosters protection of New Jersey's biological diversity by facilitating the recover and sustainability of endangered, threatened and special

Landscape Project v.3.3 Spatial Components

- **Species-based Habitat**
Identifies imperiled and special concern wildlife habitat, with the exception of freshwater mussels.
- **Freshwater Mussel Habitat**
Identifies those stretches of streams that serve as habitat for endangered, threatened and special concern freshwater mussel species.
- **Vernal Habitat**
Identifies vernal and potential vernal pools but also the surrounding habitat that allows for the successful breeding, dispersal, foraging, overwintering, and migration of species that use vernal pools.

⁹ Thomas F. Breden, Supervisor, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Parks and Forestry, Office of Natural Lands Management. September 21, 2000. letter and attachments to Suzanne Forbes (Princeton Hydro, LLC).

¹⁰ Prior to 2007, Natural Heritage Priority Sites were designated for sites that contained both rare plant and animal species or habitat. With the development of the Landscape Project data, ONLM removed those Natural Heritage Priority Sites so designated for rare animal species or habitat and only designated those sites with rare plant species as Natural Heritage Priority Sites. Instead, the NJDEP relies on Landscape Project mapping for rare animal species and habitat.

¹¹ NJ MAP was created by The Nature Conservancy, New Jersey Conservation Foundation and Rowan University with funding from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and the William Penn Foundation. NJ MAP is intended to serve municipal stakeholders involved in environmental, land use and sustainable decision making.

concern wildlife populations within healthy, functioning ecosystems.”¹²

The Landscape Project was designed to provide a sound basis for planning and land management at the State, County and local government levels.

In order to achieve this goal, the Landscape Project has focused on the larger “landscapes”, or unique ecoregions within the State (Readington lies within the “Skylands” landscape region). The delineation of the state into regions serves as a spatial framework for management and conservation of species and their habitats. Within each of these regions, ENSP has identified and mapped habitat for endangered, threatened and special concern wildlife utilizing an extensive database that combines species occurrence information with Land Use/Land Cover classification data and species habitat requirements. The resulting Landscape maps provide an accurate, reliable and scientifically sound basis for habitat projection within each region.



Areas of critical habitat are lands that support rare species in the State and that are adjacent to critical habitats that have already been preserved. Benefits that are anticipated to be realized through the preservation of such lands, according to the New Jersey DFW, include provision of habitat for the conservation of rare species, provision for more open space for outdoor recreation, reduction in the potential for flooding, biodegradation of contaminants and ground water recharge. Readington’s open space plan seeks to incorporate the information derived from the Landscape Project for open space planning and preservation.

Hunterdon County Open Space Preservation Policies

Hunterdon County Open Space, Farmland, and Historic Trust Fund Plan, 2015

The Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders adopted the Hunterdon County Open Space, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund Plan on March 15, 2016. The Open Space, Farmland, and Historic Preservation Trust Fund Plan permits the Freeholder Board to supplement existing resources, both from the County as well as

¹² New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife. 2017. New Jersey Landscape Project, Version 3.3. New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife, Endangered and Nongame Species Program. pp. 5.

from preservation partners, thereby leveraging funding for aggressive preservation campaigns.

*“Readington Township was the first community within Hunterdon County to hold an Open Space Referendum and has since lead the county in open space and farmland preservation. To accomplish this, the Township has utilized numerous techniques to preserve both farmland and open space through the State, Green Acres funding, partnerships with nonprofit organizations, and municipally-acquired easements.”*¹³ Readington continues to pursue partnerships with the State, County, and nonprofit organizations to leverage funding to preserve both farmland and open space.

Throughout Hunterdon County, governments and private entities are continuing to plan in earnest to achieve their respective land preservation goals. Goals include expansion of existing preserved areas, linkages between existing and future preserved areas, expansion of exemplary natural areas, active and passive recreation, and of course, farmland preservation. p. 33

Readington’s open space plan is consistent with the goals of the Hunterdon County Open Space, Farmland and Historic Trust Fund Plan:

Open Space Preservation

Goal: Strengthen open space and parks planning through interdepartmental coordination and shared services management.

Future open space and parks planning initiatives may benefit from increased coordination between the Planning Department, the Parks Division and the Division of GIS. p. 38

Recommendation: County departments responsible for County Open Space and Parks Programs should convene periodically to review program needs and issues, and to offer recommended changes to the Freeholder Board as necessary. Create and maintain systems for data sharing among all government and private entities engaged in open space and farmland preservation planning.



¹³ “Hunterdon County Open Space, Farmland, and Historic Trust Fund Plan”, Hunterdon County Planning Board, March 15, 2016, pp. 27.

Farmland Preservation

Goal: Continue to support the Farmland Preservation Program administrated by the County Agriculture Development Board.

The Farmland Preservation Program represents perhaps the most successful preservation program in Hunterdon County. Development rights, or easements, are far less costly than lands purchased in fee. Furthermore, local and County contributions are modest for the return for the return that the program is able to provide. The State absorbs the lion's share of the purchase price, which is indexed to easement values and averages about 60 percent per acquisition. p.34

Recommendation: Allocate the available funding to appropriate match the funding levels available from Preservation partners.

Strategies for Managing Growth

Goal: Support the County's economic growth through open space initiatives

Open space and recreational opportunities are essential parts of the overall economic health of the county. The Open Space Trust Fund can aid in funding open space purchases and improvement initiatives that will draw people to Hunterdon County to enjoy our open spaces for recreation or in choosing to make Hunterdon County their home. p. 37

Recommendation: Support the open space and recreation action items discussed and outlined in farmland, parks, and open space planning documents.

Goal: Determine the overall preservation goals of the County and develop a long-term strategy to address stewardship.

Since its inception, the County Open Space Trust Fund has been utilized solely for the preservation of open space, farmland and historic properties; however, as more properties and easements are acquired, stewardship responsibilities also increase. Just as future acquisitions should be planned for, so should the role of stewardship so that a proper balance between acquisition and stewardship is achieved. p. 39-40

Recommendation: Complete and adopt a Strategic Parks and Open Space Plan to solidify the County's direction in regard to total open space spending and to provide a structure for implementation.

Leveraging Funding

Goal: Support the continued expansion of the County Park System by seeking not only Green Acres funding, but also municipal contributions, nonprofit support and/ or other potential funding sources.

Some County parks have been acquired through a combination of funding sources, however County funds are also stretched much further as the County partners with municipalities and/or nonprofit organizations. p. 35

Recommendation: Allocation of available funding amongst the numerous recommended Open Space Trust Fund programs should be determined on an annual basis to meet the funding needs of each program and use.

Goal: Continue the support of no-profit organizations pursuing land preservation projects that are consistent with the County's park, open space, and farmland preservation goals.

Hunterdon County has entered into many successful partnership arrangements with non-profit land conservation organizations that have requested County support on specific land preservation projects. p. 36

The benefits of entering joint funding arrangements can be significant. Non-profit organizations typically secure funding from a variety of sources on a given project. This reduces the amount that any single participating partner must provide. p. 37

Recommendation: Continue to encourage non-profit open space preservation activity within the County as a way to leverage funds for the preservation of natural resources.

Hunterdon County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan, 2008

The Hunterdon County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan, adopted December 4, 2008, provides an overview of the County's farmland preservation program, offers recommendations for meeting future demands as well as improving the current program, and satisfies the State requirements for a county comprehensive farmland preservation plan.

Agricultural land uses stabilize property taxes because farms require less governmental services than residential developments and they maintain clean air by generating little traffic, provides fresh local produce, and offers attractive vistas. Farmland also provides groundwater recharge areas that allow rain water to filter back into the ground; thus contributing to the conservation of water.

The Township's open space plan is consistent with the following Hunterdon County Agricultural Board program objectives identified in the Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan:

- Create critical masses of preserved farmland
- Preserve farms characterized by soils of prime and statewide importance
- Promote agribusiness opportunities through education and advocacy

Growth Management Plan, 2007

On December 13, 2007, the Hunterdon County Planning Board adopted the 2007 Hunterdon County Growth Management Plan. This plan includes a vision for Hunterdon County that identifies the protection of the County's land and natural resources of prime importance to residents. This plan contains a number of policies, strategies and actions related to open space and farmland preservation programs that are particularly relevant to Readington, supporting the historic and present actions of

the Township in pursuing acquisition of private lands to ensure preservation of those lands in perpetuity.

Building Greener Communities – Planning for Woodland Conservation, 2003

Woodland conservation means the retention of priority woodland areas for the benefit of the community. Priority woodlands are those trees stands identified through a planning process to have special qualities warranting preservation. In the summer of 2000, the Hunterdon County Planning Board and North Jersey Resource Conservation and Development Council received a grant from the United States Forest Service to fund a two-year planning project, entitled “Addressing Sprawl – Innovative Community Forestry Strategies” that resulted in the publication of “Building Greener Communities – Planning for Woodland Conservation”.

This plan stresses the importance of prioritizing resources for protection within a conservation program. Regional greenway systems, open space connections, bikeways, trail systems, and other recreational opportunities should be considered as part of the process of developing priorities for conservation to connect to adjacent municipal greenways and corridors. Readington Township has included woodland protection within this open space plan to facilitate the preservation of trees, woodlands and forests.

Community Character in Hunterdon County¹⁴

In 1998 the Hunterdon County Planning Board held a design workshop to address many of the *quality of life* concerns of the residents that had surfaced during a process of gathering public input since 1992. The purpose of the workshop was to explore methods of incorporating community character protection into new residential and commercial development. The design handbook includes planning tools and techniques that were explored at the workshop.

While not all of the techniques discussed in the handbook are relevant to open space planning, the following objectives that do relate to open space support Readington’s open space plan:

1. ***Open space should be designed and located to protect the most important natural features of site identified in the municipal open space plan.*** *Open space preservation should protect the most critical natural features of a site. These may include prime agricultural soils, steep slopes, ridgelines, scenic vistas, stream corridors, woodlands, significant land forms (such as rock outcrops, limestone areas, etc.) and important habitats. P.38*
2. ***Large contiguous areas of open space should be preserved. Open space parcels less than three acres in size are discouraged unless they are designed specifically for recreational purposes or connect to other adjoining open spaces.*** *Large contiguous areas of open space provide multiple community and environmental benefits, including active recreational areas, important habitats, soil erosion control, and scenic views. Generally, isolated pockets of open space that are scattered randomly within a site have*

¹⁴ Hunterdon County Planning Board. 1999. Preserving Community Character in Hunterdon County: A Community Design Handbook

less ecological value, are more difficult to maintain manage, are inaccessible and fail to provide important linkages to other open space areas. Large areas of open space should be preserved. P.38

Relevant Literature

Habitat Protection

Current literature speaks to the interrelationship between habitat preservation and open space planning. For example, the methodologies advanced by the American Planning Association (APA) regarding maintenance of biodiversity are consistent with the approach of the Landscape Project and with the policies of the New Jersey State Plan. The APA has compiled a guidebook¹⁵ on the preservation of species habitat. This text includes a discussion of the benefits of habitat protection, identifies threats to habitat conservation and describes steps that public agencies may take to effectuate meaningful habitat protection. Included among the discussion is a list of principles for habitat protection at the landscape scale:

1. *Maintain large intact patches of native vegetation by preventing fragmentation of those patches by development.*
 2. *Establish priorities for species protection and protect habitats that constrain the distribution and abundance of those species.*
 3. *Protect rare landscape elements. Guide development toward areas of landscape containing “common” features.*
 4. *Maintain connections among wildlife habitats by identifying and protecting corridors for movement.*
 5. *Maintain significant ecological processes in protected areas.*
 6. *Contribute toward the regional persistence of rare species by protecting some of their habitat locally.*
 7. *Balance the opportunity for recreation by the public with the habitat needs of wildlife.*
- P.11

Readington’s Open Space plan incorporates these principles.

Greenways and Corridors

Randall Arendt, in Rural by Design, identifies the need for comprehensive planning of greenways and corridors within communities. Greenways are the visual screens between land uses or protective buffers along watercourses that can also be used to link open spaces together creating longer open space networks and trail systems and reducing habitat fragmentation.

It is important to prioritize greenways due to the amount of time it takes to implement a greenway network. Greenway planners have prioritized greenway preservation as follows:

¹⁵ American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service. 1997. Habitat Protection Planning: Where the Wild Things Are.

1. Areas most subject to change or development and/or critical linkages not easily replicated;
2. Areas that could be easily incorporated into the greenway network at a minimal cost or effort; and
3. Areas where development threat is the lowest or areas that would require extensive negotiations with the landowners.¹⁶

Readington's Open Space plan incorporates these principals as discussed in more detail in the next section.

¹⁶ Arendt, Randall. Rural by Design: Maintaining Small Town Character, American Planning Association, 1994, pp. 265.

APPENDIX A

Preserved Open Space Inventory

ROSI, Readington Land Held In Fee Simple for Recreation and Conservation Purposes, 2017

Block	Lot	Location	Name	Acreage	Preservation Priority Area
1.01	1.90	Taylors Mill Road	Taylors Mill	4.01	NB Rockaway
2	7.01	Potterstown Road	Twp. Museum	3.23	NB Rockaway
3	3	Taylors Mill Road	Merck Donation	38.17	NB Rockaway
3	3.01	Taylors Mill Road	Renda	6.42	NB Rockaway
9	1	Co. Rte. 523	Merck Donation	38.13	NB Rockaway
13	21	Old Route 28	Kolozynski,Rockaway Greenwy	19.71	Rockaway
13	31	Old Route 28	Maimone,Rockaway Greenway	26.66	Rockaway
13	34.01	Old Highway	Renda	19.09	Rockaway
13	54	Old Route 28	School, Rockaway Greenway	31.84	Rockaway
20	16.01	Railroad Avenue	DiGeronimo	2.23	SB Rockaway
21	30	Van Horne Road	P.Lomar	101.00	SB Rockaway
21.12	34	Van Horne Road	Senior Walkway	6.42	SB Rockaway
21.12	34.02	Railroad Avenue	Senior Walkway	5.00	SB Rockaway
21.12	45	Railroad Avenue	Open Space	0.60	SB Rockaway
21.13	2	Lake Cushetunk Park	Public Park Lake Cushetunk	9.58	SB Rockaway
22	19	4 Seasons Mountain Road	Open Space	1.70	SB Rockaway
25	3.02	Mountain Rd.-Backland	Open Space	3.00	Cushetunk Mt
25	19	Landlocked	Helen Vislocky	3.00	Cushetunk Mt
25	20	Next to Pickell Park	Helen Vislocky	79.00	Cushetunk Mt
25	35	Route 523	Pickel Mtn. Park/Mun.Bldg.	1.08	Public Park
25	35.01	Route 523	Pickel Mtn. Park/Mun.Bldg.	21.49	Public Park
25	36	Route 523	Ebersol Hall Museum	3.00	Public Park
25	50	Dreahook Road	Stanton Place	106.08	Cushetunk Mt
34	1	Main Street	Open Space	0.80	WHS woodland
39	14.02	Chambers Brook Road	Estate of Carol Sunderhoff	13.22	Chambers Brook
43	30	Shade Lane	Open Space	0.42	Chambers Brook
44	12	Dreahook Road backland	Woodlot, Open Space	14.30	Cushetunk Mt
44	39	Dreahook Road	Woodlot opposite Stickney	3.00	Cushetunk Mt
45	10.02	Route 523	Silver Bit and Spur	19.66	Holland Brook

Block	Lot	Location	Name	Acreage	Preservation Priority Area
45	26.06	Dreahook Road	Bertrand, open field	55.45	Holland Brook
45	26.07	Dreahook Road	Bertrand, family cemetery	7.00	Holland Brook
45.02	28.90	Dreahook Road	Open Space	7.57	Cushetunk Mt
45.03	28.90	Dreahook Road	Open Space	15.68	Cushetunk Mt
46	5.07	Route 523	Open Space, former dump	16.72	Holland Brook
46	5.99	East Dreahook Road	Cornhuskers ballfields	38.83	Active Recreation
46	10.99	Connover Drive	Open Space	35.84	Holland Brook
46	22.04	Cole Rd	Ann Reno, Open Space	10.38	Trail connection
46	24.9	Holland Brook Road	Open Space	12.04	Holland Brook
50	13	Stanton Road	Bloys	21.45	Pleasant Run
50	14.01	Pleasant Run Road	Burgher Farm, Open Space	4.02	Pleasant Run
50	32.01	Springtown Road	Open Space	0.50	Pleasant Run
50	41	Stanton Rd./Dreahook Rd.	Bouman-Stickney Museum	68.69	Stanton
52.01	13.9	Chamberlain Road	Open Space	33.32	Pleasant Run
52.01	14.06	Pleasant Run Road	Romano Tract	72.20	Pleasant Run
52.01	22	Edgewood Road	Berghold, Open Space	3.08	Cole Road
53	7.9	Holland Brook Road	Open Space	47.89	Holland Brook
55	1.90	Roosevelt & Readington	Open Space	1.56	Holland Brook
55	1.91	Roosevelt Road	Open Space	14.00	Ball Fields
55	1.92	Heath Road	Open Space	45.91	Holland Brook
55	7.09	Groendyke Road	Open Space	25.09	Holland Brook
55	13.51	Pine Bank Road	Lachenmayr Farm	50.55	Holland Brook
55	21.02	Hillcrest Road	Knocke, Open Space	15.00	Holland Brook
55	23.03	Hillcrest Road	Hillcrest Park	51.52	Holland Brook
63	19	Woodschurch Road	Dobozynski Farm	134.27	Round Mt
63	24	Landlocked	Woodlot	10.00	Round Mt
63	27	Landlocked	Woodlot	6.73	Round Mt
63	49.01	Woodschurch Road	Luckett	7.08	Round Mt
63	64	Landlocked	Dobozynski Farm	8.03	Round Mt
63	66	Landlocked	Yard woodlot	6.22	Round Mt
63	68	Landlocked	Yard woodlot	8.21	Round Mt
64	41	Pleasant Run Road	Lackland open Space	27.72	Pleasant Run

Block	Lot	Location	Name	Acreage	Preservation Priority Area
66	3	Cole Road	Vislocky	10.51	Pleasant Run
66	13	Pleasant Run Road	West Jersey Land	65.12	Pleasant Run
66	25.99	Hillcrest and Pinebank Roads	Open Space	63.55	Holland Brook
66	49.11	Pine Bank Road	Open Space	2.94	Holland Brook
66	53	Landlocked	Open Space	5.00	Holland Brook
68	3	Brookview Rd	Open Space	8.91	Holland Brook
68	4	landlocked	Open Space	6.37	Holland Brook
68	13.44	Brookview Rd	Open Space	2.83	Holland Brook
70	42.90	Delaware Rd	Open Space	20.13	Holland Brook
72	36.99	Rowlands Rd	Deer Path Park to Raritan River	69.32	Trail connection
72.01	34.9	Rowlands Rd	Open Space	7.73	Woodland
73	6.14	Ryerson Rd	Open Space	25.81	Woodland
73	20.01	Raritan river	Donated land	35.37	Raritan River
73	20.02	Raritan River	Open Space	0.45	Raritan River
75	15.01	Summer Road	Lipka, One Foster Drive	14.12	Pl. Run Greenway
75	16.02	Summer Road	Lipka, One Foster Drive	19.40	Pl. Run Greenway
75	17.9	Van Neste Rd	Stonebridge Crossing	35.22	Trail connection
75	18	Summer Road	Summer Road Park	48.46	Ballfields
75	29	Pleasant Run Rd	Open Space	0.25	Pleasant Run
75	32.03	Pleasant Run Rd	Lane Farm Trail Connection	5.01	Pleasant Run
76	3	Craig Road	Pleasant Run Road and Rte 202	34.18	Pleasant Run
76	3.01	Pleasant Run Road	Pleasant Run Road and Rte 202	6.26	Pleasant Run
76	3.14	Craig Road	Anderson Road set-aside	1.16	Pleasant Run
83	3	Hwy 202	Open Space	4.50	Raritan River
93	1	Amawalk	Three Bridges Park	23.26	Woodlot
94	8	Summer Road/Lazy Brook, Toll	Lazy Brook Greenway Summer R	143.66	Raritan River
95	18	Rt. 202	Wooded tract on Rte 202	4.84	Pleasant Run
96	18.03	D'Urso Old York Road	Wooded tract on Rte 202	30.62	Pleasant Run
97	2.03	Landlocked	Open Space	10.56	open land
2017 Total Open Space*				2,149.93	

*As of December 2017

State Owned Open Space

Block	Lot	Location	Name	Acreage
13	57.02	Lamington Rd	Rockaway Greenway	15.06
14	3.04	Lamington Rd	Rockaway Greenway	19.45
14	3.03	Landlocked	Rockaway Greenway	16.743
15	27	State Hwy 22	Lamington Greenway WMA	230.35
21.12	46.01	Route 22	Rockaway Greenway	38.22
44	6	Dreahook Rd	Cushetunk Mt	30.126
59	5	Route 31	Wetlands mitigation	4.83
60	1	Route 31	Wetlands mitigation	17.027
73	27	Rockafellows Mill	South Branch Raritan River WMA	64.62
74	7	Rockafellows Mill	South Branch Raritan River WMA	354.3
74	9	Rockafellows Mill	South Branch Raritan River WMA	7.51
79.01	11	River Ave.	South Branch Raritan River WMA	20.34
79	3	River Ave.	South Branch Raritan River WMA	36.34
93	7	Landlocked	Raritan River Greenway	10.45
2017 Total*				865.37

*As of September 2017

County Open Space Parcels

Block	Lot	Location	Name	Acreage	Fee/Easement	Developed
46	11.23	Readington Road	By Pass Buffer	11.23	Fee	
58	1	Landlocked	Raritan River Preserve	0.37	Fee	
58	4	Landlocked	Raritan River Preserve	2.48	Fee	
61	5.01	Landlocked	Raritan River Preserve	4.68	Fee	
61	11	Route 31	Raritan River Preserve	36.74	Fee	
61	102	Landlocked	Raritan River Preserve	1.36	Fee	
61	103	Landlocked	Raritan River Preserve	17.85	Fee	
72	2	Deerpath Road	Raritan River Preserve	88.13	Fee	
72	7	Route 523	Raritan River Preserve	0.38	Fee	
72	31	West Woodschurch	Deer Path Park	104.23	Fee	Ballfields
63	14	West Woodschurch	Round Mt Preserve	61.11	Fee	
63	21	Landlocked	Round Mt Preserve	11.45	Fee	
63	22	Landlocked	Round Mt Preserve	20.58	Fee	
63	25	Landlocked	Round Mt Preserve	26.94	Fee	
63	45	Stanton Road	Holman	4.81	Fee	
63	53	Foothill Rd	Round Mt Preserve	108.51	Fee	
63	65	Landlocked	Round Mt Preserve	3.5	Fee	
63	67	Landlocked	Round Mt Preserve	12.9	Fee	
25	2	Landlocked	Cushetunk Mt Preserve	200.78	Fee	
98	8	Landlocked	Raritan River Preserve	33.31	Fee	
2017 Total*				751.50		

*As of December 2017

Privately-owned Open Space

Block	Lot	Location	Name	Acreage
21	31	Van Horn Road	Lake Cushetunk Woods	
21.12	94	James Street	Whitehouse Athletic Assoc.	8.45
31	37.03	Whitehouse Ave.	Fallone	1.6
31	37.08	Whitehouse Ave.	Fallone	1.85
45	25.29	Clubhouse Drive	Stanton Ridge	78.12
45	25.59	Clubhouse Drive	Stanton Ridge	19.21
51	21.28	Clubhouse Drive	Stanton Ridge	46.81
51.03	17	Clubhouse Drive	Stanton Ridge	27.14
70	19.23	Dev. Setaside	Shurts Road	12
2017 Total*				195.00

*As of September 2017

Property owned by Readington Schools

Block	Lot	Location	Name	Acreage
35	14	Whitehouse Ave	Whitehouse School	6.8
48	20	Readington Road	Read. Middle School	22
48	21.01	Readington Road	Holland Brook School	46.186
73	9.01	Route 523	Future School Site	23.25
93	61	Main Street	Three Bridges School	8.5
2017 Total*				107.00

*As of September 2017

APPENDIX B

Preserved Farmland Inventory

Preserved Farmland Tracts

Block	Lot	Location	Name	Acreage	Easement	FP Funding Program	Easement Ownership	Fee Ownership Municipally Owned
12.01	15	Shagbark Lane	Emmet	34	Farmland	FP 2006	County	
13	57	Lamington Rd	Renda	69	Green Acres	Green Acres	State GA	
13	62	Meadow Road	Hamewith Farm	82	Farmland	FP PIG VIII	County	
14	1	Island Rd	E.Schley/John Schley	104	Farmland	Donation	County	
14	1.01	Island Road	John Schley	20	Farmland	FP 2015	County	
14	50	Island Rd	J. Schley	87	Farmland	FP 2001A	County	
15	1	Island Rd	Reeve Schley	100	Farmland	FP 2000	County	
15	1.02	Island Rd	Reeve Schley	61	Farmland	FP 2000	County	
15	3, 3.01,3.02	Island Rd	Reeve Schley	50	Farmland	Township	Township	
15	4	Island Rd	Arnaudy	26	Farmland	FP PIGVIII	County	
20	11	Mountain Rd	Csepi	25	Green Acres	Green Acres	Township	
20	16,22,23	Mountain Rd	DeGeronimo	68	Green Acres	Green Acres	Twp/county	
22	6	Mountain Rd	Jensen	25	Green Acres	Green Acres	Township	
39	14	Chambersbrook Rd.	Cuchiaro	25	Farmland	FP PIGVIII	County	
39	49	County Line Road	Peters	61	Farmland	FP PIG	County	
45	10	Route 523	Silver Bit and Spur	41	Farmland	FP 2003	County	
46	22.01	Cole Rd	P. Reno	70	Farmland	FP PIG 1	County	
50	14	Stanton Rd	Burgher/Garfield	21	Green Acres	Green Acres	Township GA	
52	10	Pleasant Run Rd	Hruebesh	79	Farmland	FP 1999	County	
52.01, 46	14, 21	Cole Rd	Romano/Jon Kowal	110	Farmland	FP 2000	County	
53	5.02	Holland Brook Rd	Holland Brook Realty	23	Farmland	FP PIG 2008	Township	
53	9	Roosevelt Rd	Dolan	21	Farmland	PIG II	County	
53	22	Readington Rd	Wade/Nicholson	131	Farmland	FP 1998	County	
55	21	Hillcrest Road	Knocke	22	Green Acres	Green Acres	Township GA	
55	8	Roosevelt Rd	Kappus	51	Farmland	FP 2004	County	
55, 66	12 & 9, 48	Pinebank Rd	Wallendjack	93	Farmland	FP 1987	County	
55	17	Readington Rd	Scanlon	41	Farmland	FP PIG 1	County	
55	17.02	Casper Berger Rd	Scanlon	44	Farmland	FP PIG 1	County	
55	13	Casper Berger Rd	Lachenmayr	32	Green Acres	Green Acres	Township GA	
56	5	Readington Rd	James	19	Farmland	FP PIG II	County	
57	2	Thor Solberg Rd	Pompliano/Schultz	48	Farmland	FP PIG 1	County	Municipal OS
57	13.01	Harlan School Rd	Staats	53	Farmland	FP PIG VIII	County	

Block	Lot	Location	Name	Acreage	Easement	FP Funding Program	Easement Ownership	Fee Ownership Municipally Owned
62	1	Pleasant Run Rd	Jackson	33	Farmland	FP PIG II	County	
62	4 & 7	Route 523/Woodschurch Rd	Dobozynski/Doyle	231	Farmland	State, Fee	State	
63	13	West Woodschurch	Accettola	64	Farmland	FP PIG II	County	
64	8.17	Spring Meadow	Rte 523	53	Farmland	Cluster	Township	
64	29	Barley Sheaf	Chesla	41	Farmland	FP 2008	County	
64	44,44.01,44.02	Pleasant Run Rd	Bauer-Cole	126	Farmland	FP 1994	County	
65	12, 12.01	Barley Sheaf	Little	32	Farmland	FP PIG VIII	Township	
65	23	Pleasant Run Road	Hanna	24	Farmland	FP PIG II	County	
66	2	Cole Rd	Ann Reno	52	Farmland	FP 2001A	County	Municipal OS
66	17	Pleasant Run Road	Dabrowski	36	Farmland	FP PIG II	County	
66	24	Hillcrest Road	Allen	125	Farmland	Direct EP	State	
66	45, 45.01	Pinebank Rd	Moore	68	Farmland	FP 1995	County	
67	12	Readington Road	Cole	24	Farmland	FP 2015	County	
70	38.5	Pleasant Run Rd. Craig Rd. Es	Estate of Stewart Keane	88	Farmland	FP 2005	County	
72	10.02	Route 523	Pagano	33	Farmland	FP PIG I	County	
72	11	Route 523	Schaefer C&C	90	Farmland	FP 1999	County	
72	23	Woodschurch Rd	Schaefer, William & Chris	128	Farmland	FP 1999	County	
72	5, 5.02	Route 523	Bartles	95	Farmland	FP 2001A	County	
73	17	Governor Rd	Vizzoni	124	Farmland	Cluster	Township	
73	26.01	Hoffman Lane	Hrynyk	121	Farmland	Cluster	Township	
74	5	Rockafellow Mill Rd	Illva Sarronno	12	Farmland	Township	Township	
74	26.01	Lazy Brook Rd	Lazy Brook Estates/Leach	51	Farmland	Cluster	Township	
74	27	Lazy Brook Rd	Kanach/Illva Sarronno	82	Green Acres	Green Acres	State GA	
75	19.01	Pleasant Run	Rica II	39	Farmland	FP PIG 1	County	Municipal OS
75	33	Pleasant Run Road	Hanna Saga	116	Farmland	FP PIG VIII	County	
75	35 & 40	Locust Rd	Jones	52	Farmland	FP PIG 1	County	
75	32	Pleasant Run Rd	Lane/Zweerink Farm	49	Green Acres	Green Acres	Township GA	
80	1	River Rd	Illva Sarronno	58	Farmland	FP PIG VIII	County	
93	12	Higginsville Rd	Miller	41	Farmland	FP PIG I	County	
93	13	Higginsville Rd	Burjan	105	Farmland	FP 1995	County	
93	18, 19, 20	Higginsville Rd/Old York Rd	Bill Mason	235	Farmland	FP 1998	County	
93	28	Old York Rd	Burjan	137	Farmland	FP 2001A	County	
94	11	Route 202	Daniel Brothers	53	Farmland	FP 2011	Township*	
94	17	Summer Road	Toll	29	Farmland	FP 2010/PIG	Township	
94	19	Lazy Brook Rd	Little Hills Farm	84	Farmland	FP 2011	Township*	

Block	Lot	Location	Name	Acreage	Easement	FP Funding Program	Easement Ownership	Fee Ownership Municipally Owned
96	2	Summer Road	Triple D LLC	45	Farmland	FP PIG VIII	County	
96	18	Route 202/Old York Rd	D'Urso	79	Farmland	PIG I	County	
98	3	Higginsville Rd	Sam Kanach/Pat Hilton	219	Farmland	State, Fee	State	
95	13	Higginsville Rd/Old York Rd	Bill Mason	12	Farmland	FP 1998	County	
98	2	Higginsville Rd	Padavanni	30	Farmland	PIG VIII	County	
2017 Total*				4852.00				

*As of September 2017

APPENDIX C

Green Trust Planning Incentive Project Grant Status

APPROVED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT: Readington Township

PROJECT NUMBER: 1022-96-066

TYPE OF PROJECT: X Acquisition Development

PROJECT TITLE: Greenway Initiative Acquisitions

APPROVED PROJECT SCOPE:

Acquisition of properties in support an execution of the Reading Township Master Plan Open Space Element and amendments thereto.

PROJECT LOCATION (a lot and block description of the premises to be acquired or developed):

Eligible properties throughout Readington Township

ALLOCATION OF PROJECT COST:

Funds directly from Local Government Unit	\$5,225,000.00	
LOCAL SHARE		\$5,225,000.00
State Loan	\$3,250,000.00	
State Grant	\$7,525,000.00	
STATE SHARE		\$10,775,000.00
OTHER SHARE		\$0
ESTIMATED TOTAL COST FOR APPROVED PROJECT		\$16,000,000.00

State Funds Governed under this Project Agreement:

Previous Project Agreement and Amendments:		Grant:	Loan:
P.L. 1995 C. 204	25% grant/75% loan	\$750,000.00	\$2,250,000.00
P.L. 1997 C. 166 (JBOC #18)	50% grant/50% loan	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,000,000.00
P.L. 2001 C. 59	50% matching grant	\$500,000.00	\$0
P.L. 2001 C. 172	50% matching grant	\$750,000.00	\$0
P.L. 2003 C. 86	50% matching grant	\$400,000.00	\$0
P.L. 2003 C. 240	50% matching grant	\$400,000.00	\$0
P.L. 2005 C. 9	50% matching grant	\$400,000.00	\$0
P.L. 2005 C. 185	50% matching grant	\$400,000.00	\$0
P.L. 2007 C. 28	50% matching grant	\$300,000.00	\$0
P.L. 2008 C. 76	50% matching grant	\$300,000.00	\$0
P.L. 2009 C. 98	50% matching grant	\$500,000.00	\$0
P.L. 2011 C. 90	50% matching grant	\$450,000.00	\$0
P.L. 2013 C. 8	50% matching grant	\$325,000.00	\$0
P.L. 2015 C. 105	50% matching grant	\$550,000.00	\$0
Current Project Agreement:		Grant:	Loan:
P.L. 2017 C. 146	50% matching grant	\$500,000.00	\$0
Total:		\$7,525,000.00	\$3,250,000.00

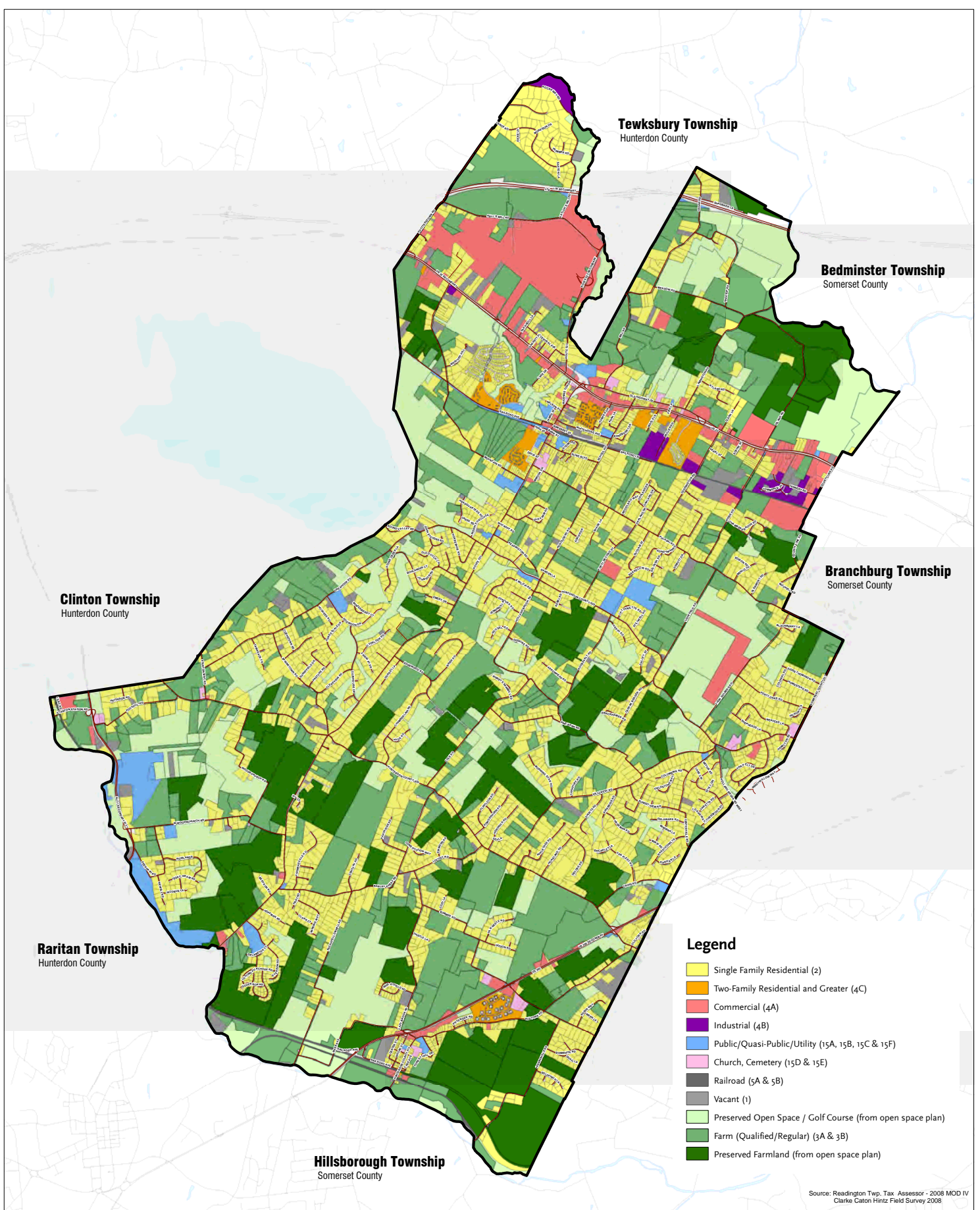
APPENDIX D
Status of Green Trust Loans, 2017

READINGTON
T SERVICE
/LOANS/
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		STATE OF NJ LOANS			
	ISSUE	DUE	PRINCIPAL	INTEREST	TOTAL
NJ DEP	12/97	4/6/17	5,161.53	103.75	5,265.28
ROCKAWAY CREEK		10/6/17	5,213.14	52.13	5,265.27
NJ DEP	10/2000	4/25/17	71,816.17	2,916.02	74,732.19
\$ 2,250,000 GREENWAY		10/25/17	72,534.33	2,197.86	74,732.19
SUMMER	12/01	4/16/17	14,073.41	1,472.39	15,545.80
RD PARK		10/16/17	14,214.14	1,331.66	15,545.80
					-
NJ ENVIRONMENTAL	10/15/01	2/1/17	3,562.70	6,265.37	9,828.07
INFRASTRUCTURE		8/1/17	69,443.91	6,436.25	75,880.16
TRUST					
NJDEP	2/4/02	5/7/17	29,983.70	2,484.35	32,468.05
\$1,000,000 INCENTIVE		11/7/17	30,283.54	2,184.51	32,468.05
					-
NJ ENV TRUST	10/15/03	2/1/17	1,340.08	836.61	2,176.69
		8/1/17	14,599.45	931.25	15,530.70
NJ ENV TRUST	11/4/04	2/1/17	3,852.93	2,153.69	6,006.62
		8/1/17	32,763.05	2,292.50	35,055.55
TOTAL LOANS			368,842.08	31,658.34	400,500.42

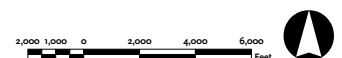
APPENDIX E

2009 Master Plan Figures



Existing Land Use by Property Class

Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ June 2009



Clarke Caton Hintz

Architecture

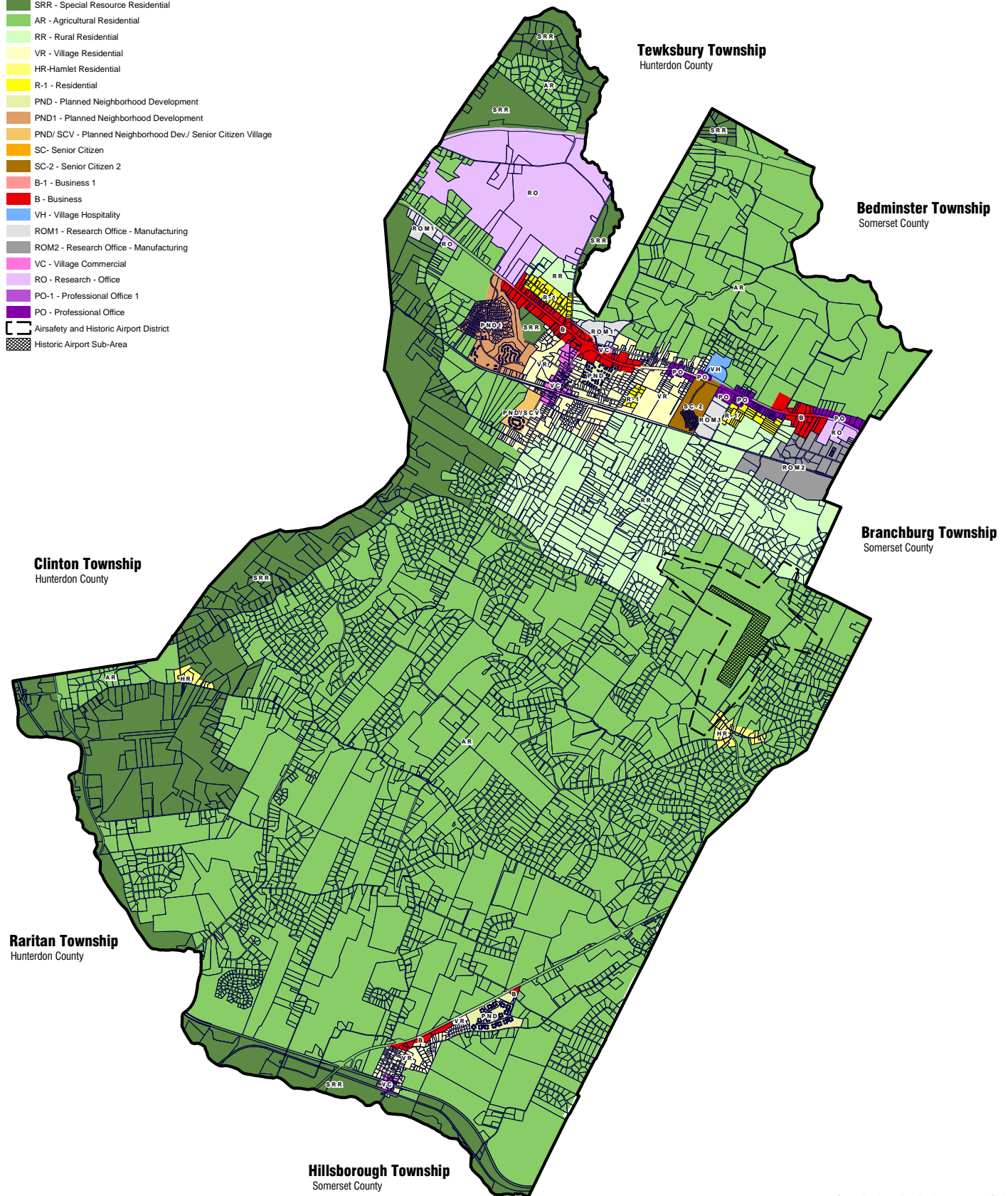
Planning

Landscape Architecture

Legend

Zone

- SRR - Special Resource Residential
- AR - Agricultural Residential
- RR - Rural Residential
- VR - Village Residential
- HR - Hamlet Residential
- R-1 - Residential
- PND - Planned Neighborhood Development
- PND1 - Planned Neighborhood Development
- PND/ SCV - Planned Neighborhood Dev./ Senior Citizen Village
- SC - Senior Citizen
- SC-2 - Senior Citizen 2
- B-1 - Business 1
- B - Business
- VH - Village Hospitality
- ROM1 - Research Office - Manufacturing
- ROM2 - Research Office - Manufacturing
- VC - Village Commercial
- RO - Research - Office
- PO-1 - Professional Office 1
- PO - Professional Office
- Airsafety and Historic Airport District
- Historic Airport Sub-Area



Source: Readington Twp. Tax Assessor - 2008 MOD IV
Clarke Caton Hintz Field Survey 2008
Proposed Land Use revised - May 5, 2009

2,000 1,000 0 2,000 4,000 6,000 Feet

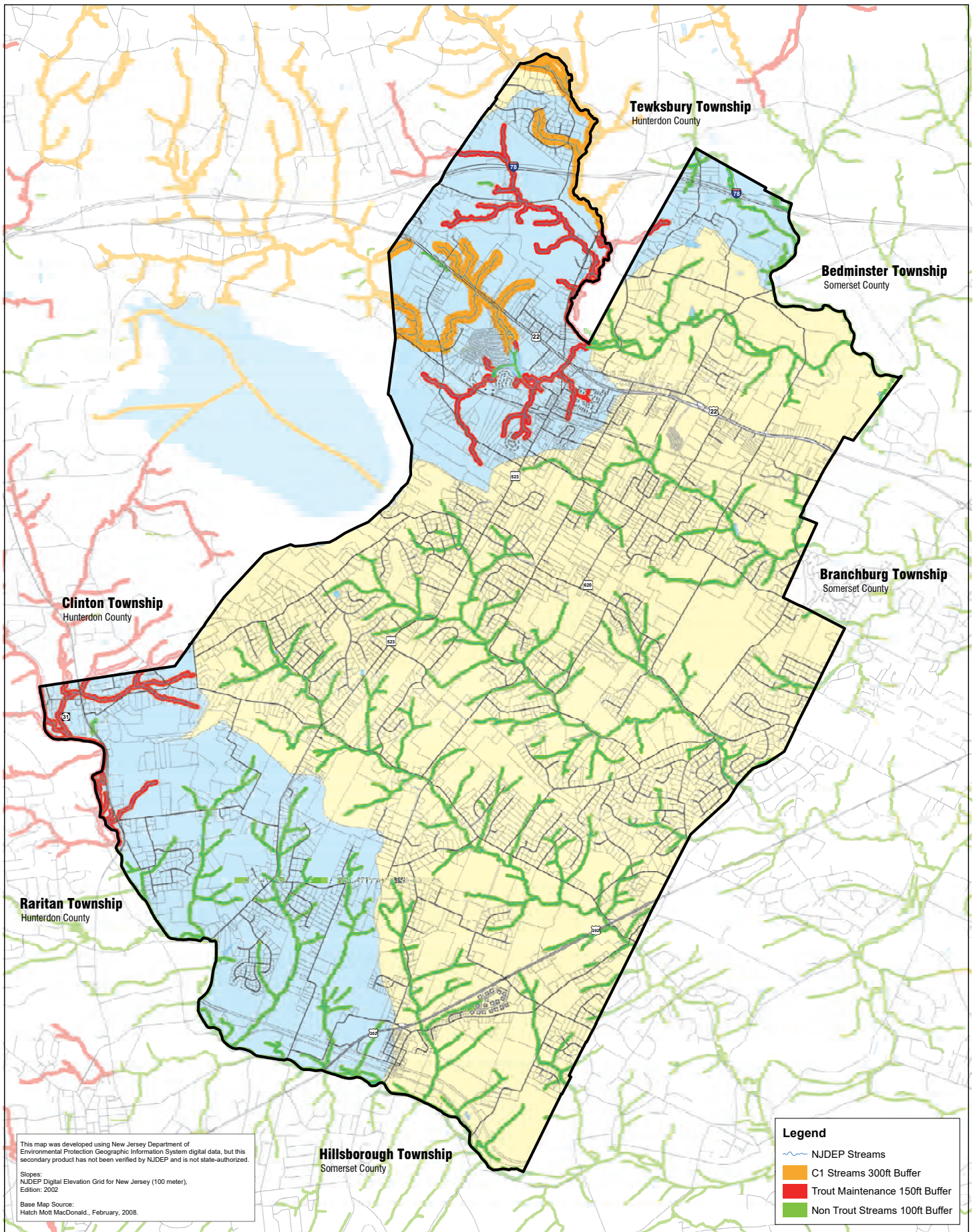


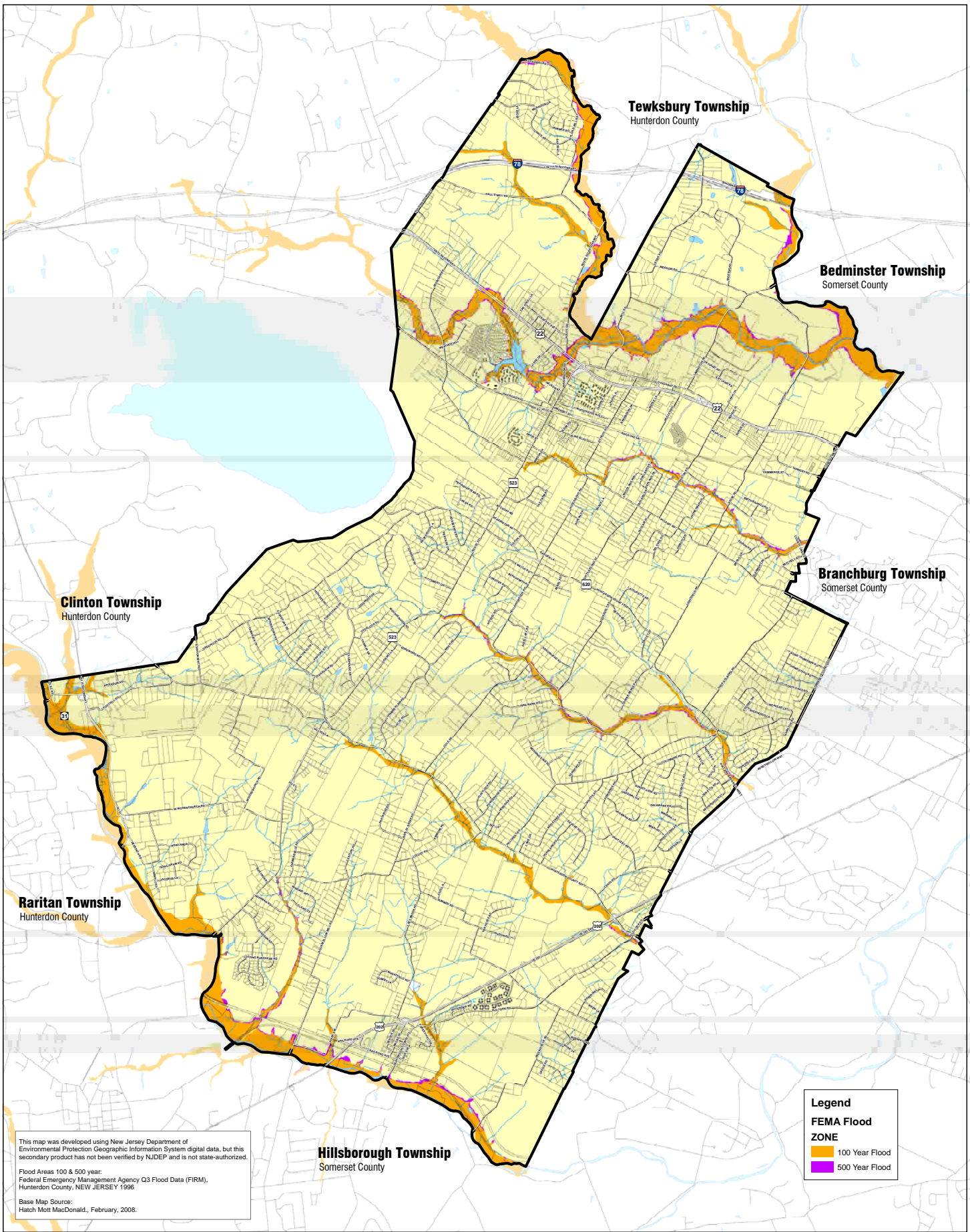
Land Use Plan

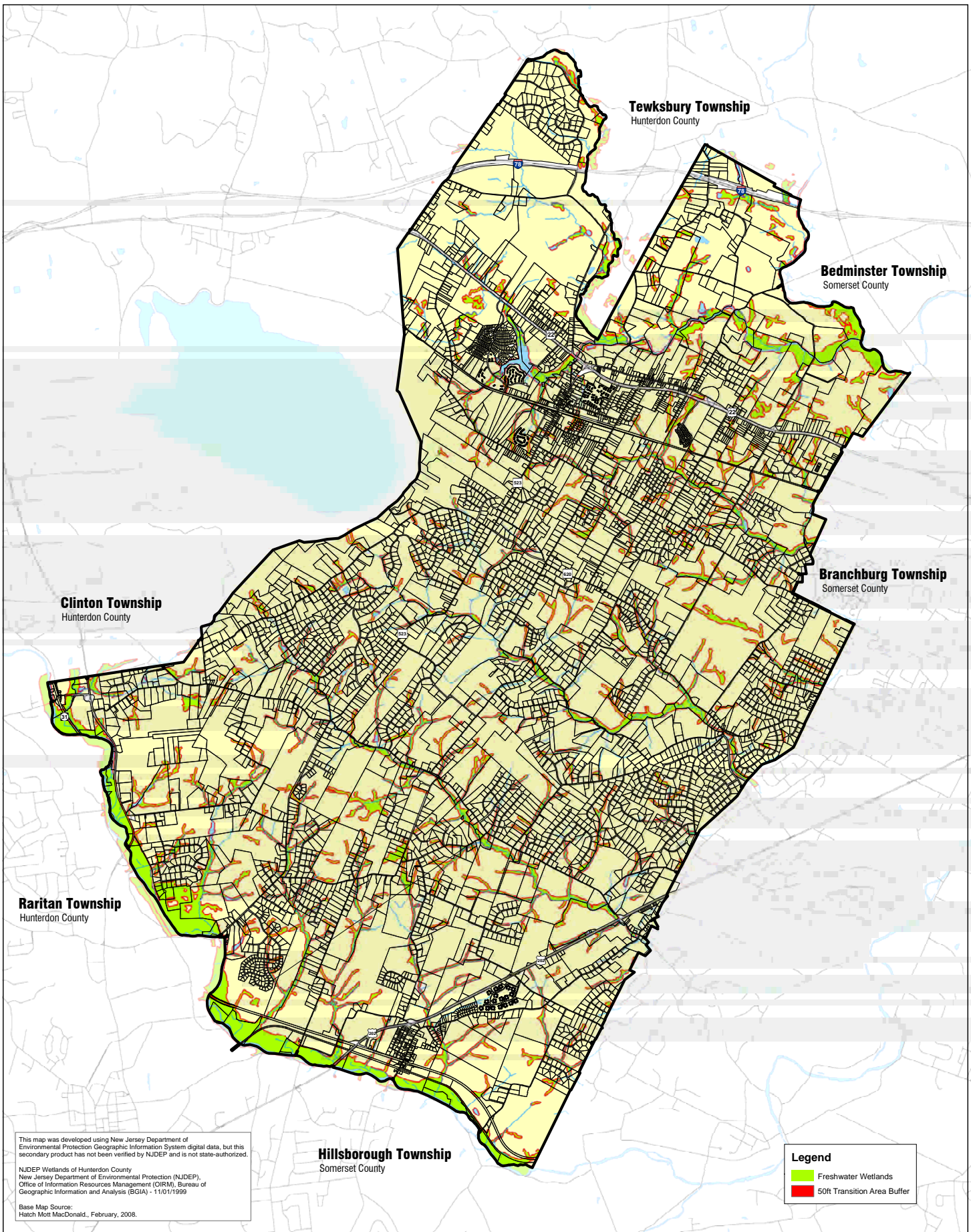
Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ June 2009

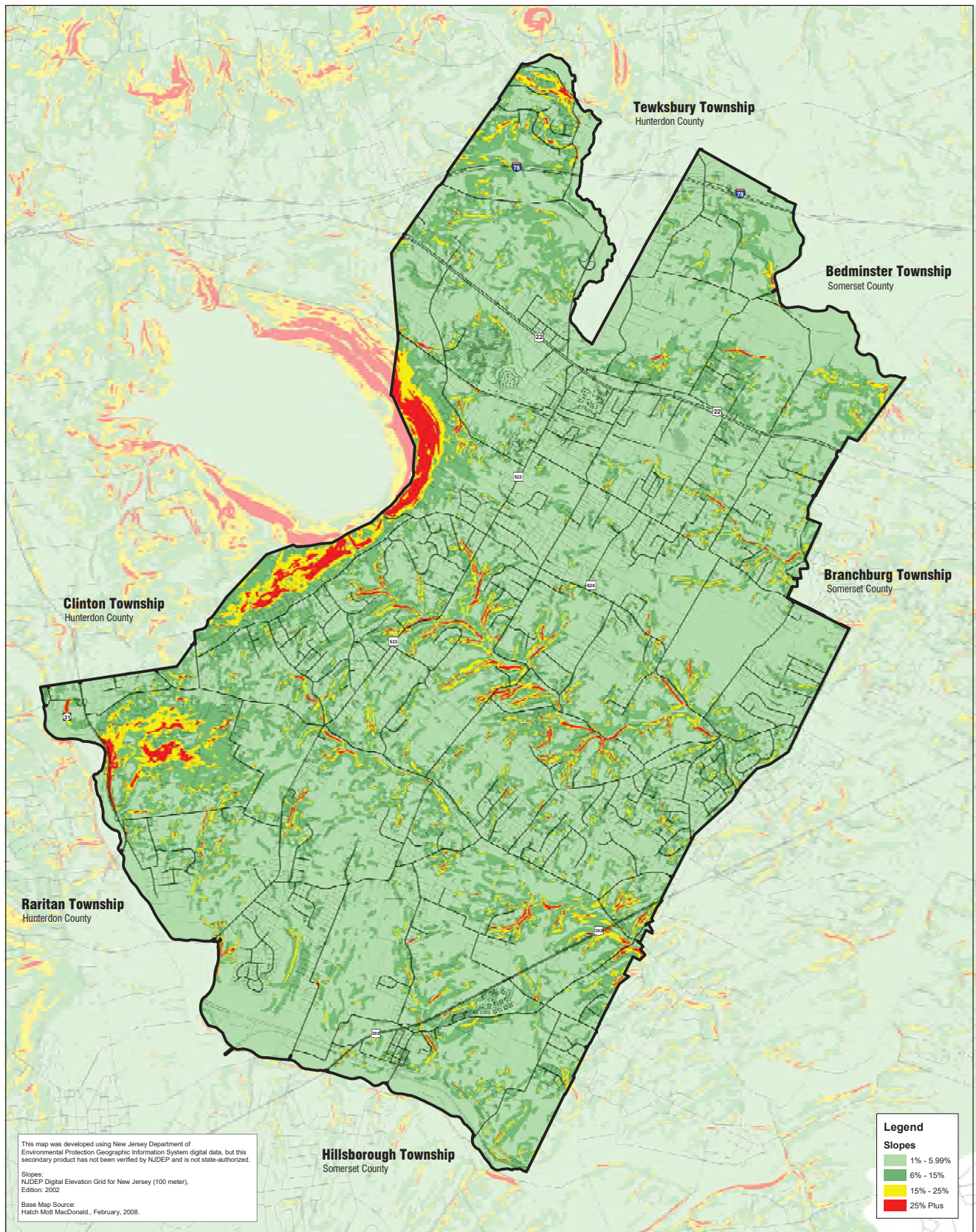
Clarke Caton Hintz

Architecture
Planning
Landscape Architecture









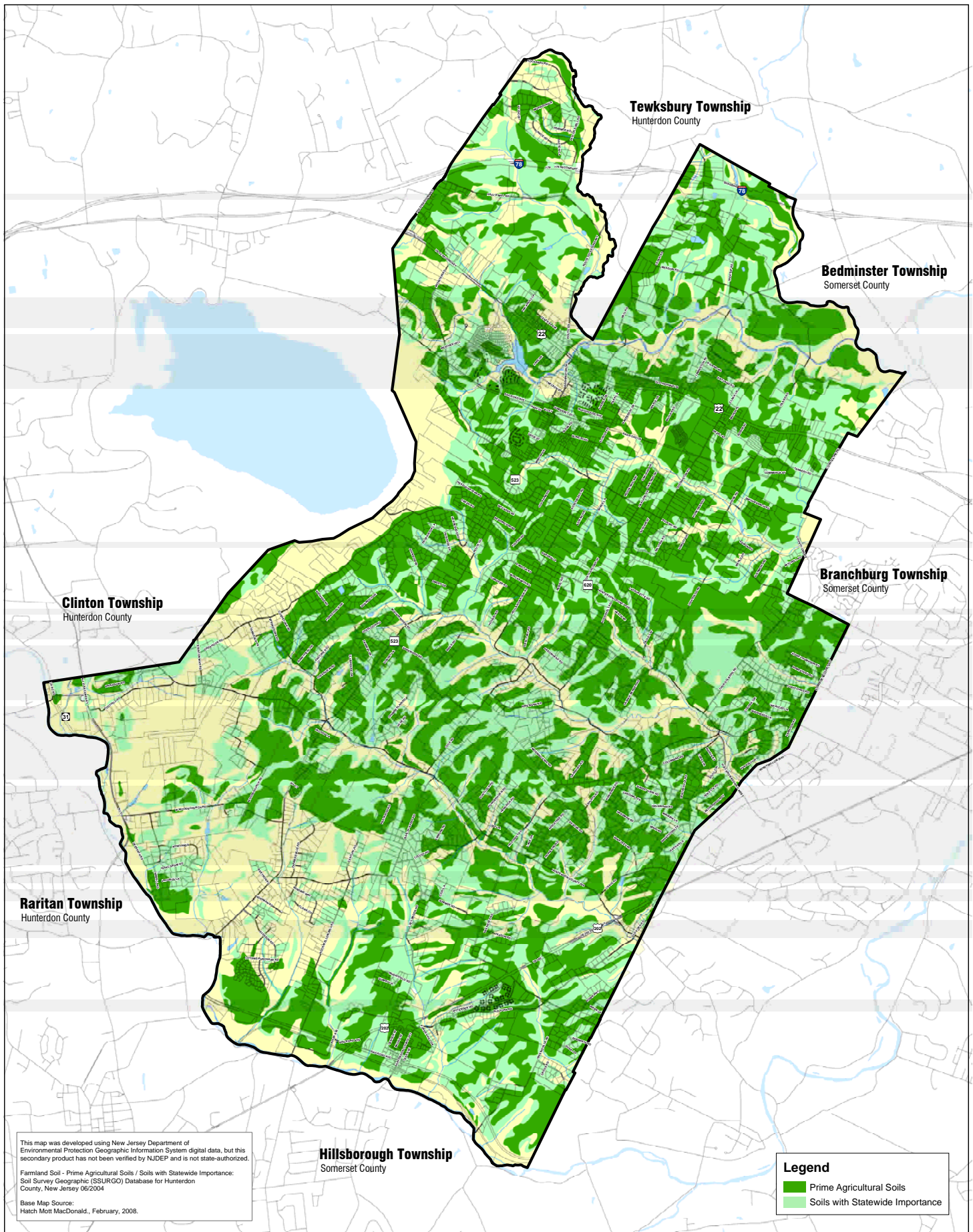
2009 CONSERVATION PLAN ELEMENT

Steep Slopes

Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ January 2009



Clarke Caton Hintz ● ● ●
Architecture
Planning
Landscape Architecture



Farmland Soils

Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ June 2009