

MASTER PLAN:  
OPEN SPACE AND  
RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP  
MERCER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



PLANNING BOARD  
TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE  
AUGUST 6, 2018

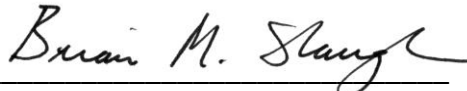
## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

### TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE COUNTY OF MERCER

ADOPTED  
AUGUST 6, 2018

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28b(7) and –(8)  
*An Element of the Master Plan*

*Prepared by:*



Brian M. Slauch, PP, AICP  
New Jersey Professional Planner License No. 3743



Andrea Malcolm, PP, AICP  
New Jersey Professional Planner License No. 5319

CLARKE CATON HINTZ, PC  
100 Barrack Street  
Trenton, New Jersey 08608  
(609) 883-8383

A signed and sealed original is on file with Municipal Clerk's office.

## Township Council

Christopher Bobbitt, AIA, Mayor  
James Kownacki, Council Member  
Cathleen Lewis, Council Member  
David Maffei, DC, Council Member  
Michael Powers, Esq., Council Member

Kevin P. Nerwinski, Esq., Township Manager  
Kathleen Norcia, RMC, Township Clerk  
David Roskos, Esq., Township Attorney

## Township Planning Board

Edward Wiznitzer, Chairman, Class IV  
Terrence O. Leggett, Vice-Chairman, Class IV  
Hon. Christopher Bobbitt, Class I  
Kevin Nerwinski, Esq., Class II  
Hon. James Kownacki, Class III  
Philip Duran, Class IV  
Ian Dember, Esq., Class IV  
Kim Y. Taylor Class IV  
Doris M. Weisberg, Class IV  
Maria Connolly, Alternate I  
Stephanie Pangaldi, Alternate 2

James Parvesse, PE, Municipal Engineer, Planning Board Secretary  
Edward Schmierer, Esq., Planning Board Attorney  
Philip B. Caton, PP, FAICP, Planning Board Consultant

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Page</u>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Goals and Objectives for Open Space</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Community Character.....	2
Land Use .....	2
Open Space .....	3
Conservation of Natural Features.....	3
Visual Character of Lawrence Township .....	4
Historic Preservation.....	4
Community Facilities and Municipal Services.....	4
Housing .....	4
Circulation .....	5
<b>Parks, Recreational Facilities, and Open Space Survey</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Municipal Open Space .....	5
Description of Municipal Facilities .....	5
Table 1. Municipally Owned Open Space and Recreation Facilities .....	6
Other Governmental, Private, Quasi-Public Open Space and Community Facilities .....	9
Table 2. Open Space Lands of Other Governmental, Private, Quasi-Public Entities.....	9
Description of Other Governmental, Private, Quasi-Public Entities .....	10
Development Restricted Properties/Preserved Farmland .....	10
<b>Green Acres Recreation and Open Space Inventory</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Table 3. Lawrence Township Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI).....	12
<b>Guidelines for the Adequacy of Open Space</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Balanced Land Use Concept .....	13
National Park and Recreation Association Guidelines .....	13
<b>Recreation Programs</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Active Recreation Needs</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Trails and Bikeways</b> .....	<b>15</b>

---

Johnson Trolley Line .....	15
Lawrence Hopewell Trail .....	16
Greenway Network Trails.....	16
<b>Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Open Space Needs.....</b>	<b>17</b>
Potential Open Space Acquisitions .....	18
Table 4. Sites Identified for Potential Open Space Acquisition. ....	18
Other Potential Open Space.....	20
Table 5. Other Potential Open Space Areas .....	20
<b>Conservation Techniques .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Purchase or Donation of Development Rights .....	21
Conservation Easements .....	22
Site Design .....	22
<b>Funding For Open Space Acquisition .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Action Plan for Open Space and Recreation .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Public Participation .....</b>	<b>24</b>
Map 1. Open Space and Recreation .....	26

# Open Space and Recreation Plan Element

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Open Space and Recreation Plan Element is a part of the municipal Master Plan for development and redevelopment. It combines a recreation plan element with the conservation of land for open space and farmland. Open space, consisting of parks and recreational areas, conservation land and greenways, as well as preserved farmland, is an important component of the quality of life in Lawrence Township.

Lawrence has a diverse mix of park and recreation facilities ranging from small neighborhood parks and playgrounds to large community athletic facilities and wooded nature preserves. The municipality has 1,075 acres of parks and conservation areas. In addition to these municipally owned facilities, the Lawrence Township Board of Education also provides fields, play areas and gymnasiums at its six schools, which encompass a total of 102.6 acres. County and State parks and open space in Lawrence total 970 acres. Preserved farmland and other development restricted properties in the Township total an additional 601 acres. With the addition of these non-municipally owned sites, a total of 2,748 acres of open space and farmland has been preserved in Lawrence Township.

The Township Recreation Department offers a very comprehensive program of indoor and outdoor recreational programs for Township residents. Traditional athletic leagues and sports instruction are offered for children between 5 and 16 years of age. The Recreation Department also coordinates adult leagues and recreational programs, summer camp programs, special events, academic/enrichment classes and free play opportunities for all ages. These programs are held at municipal and Board of Education facilities throughout the township.

Demand for additional sports fields is continually growing. Heavy use of sports fields has created problems with maintenance and the condition of the fields. Improvements to athletic fields including drainage and lighting improvements as well as enhancing parking and storage space for field areas may help maximize use of fields. However, designation of additional field areas and/or construction of a turf field will also need to be considered if demand continues.

The Planning Board recommends that additional parcels for open space be set aside. There are three sites targeted for potential open space preservation, including a portion of the Colonial Bowling site next to Colonial Lake, the former Pit Stop gas station on Lawrence Road, and the abandoned Saturn Chemical facility located along the D&R Canal at the southern end of the Township. The additional open space parcels are intended primarily for conservation purposes and in some limited locations, passive recreation.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Open Space and Recreation Plan Element is a part of the municipal Master Plan for development and redevelopment. Open space provides opportunities for recreation, land for the preservation of wildlife habitats and other natural environments, a gathering place for community events and visual relief from urbanization. Setting aside land for these purposes also supports property values.

Open space includes active recreation, passive recreation, and conservation lands. While preserved farmland may also be considered a form of open space, in this document the emphasis will be on the other three types. Active recreation consists of organized sports or leisure activities that usually require specialized fields or equipment and have a list of rules. Baseball, soccer and tennis are examples of active recreation. Passive recreation includes less formal activities, such as kite flying, bird watching and hiking. Conservation areas are intended to be left in their natural state for wildlife refuges, as buffers between developments or to protect environmentally sensitive land and water resources. Large parks usually encompass more than one type of open space. For instance, level areas may be used for ball fields, with steeper areas near streams retained for conservation purposes. Passive uses, such as hiking trails, complement the conservation land.

Preserved farmland may offer opportunities for passive recreation; however, active agricultural operations can also be intensive and not compatible with recreational uses. Its function as open space is primarily through visual relief from urbanization.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR OPEN SPACE**

The following goals and objectives pertaining to open space and recreation build on the 1995 Master Plan Statement of Goals and Objectives:

### **Community Character**

Provide for the continuation of high quality development and the retention of the remaining rural character in Lawrence by using the Master Plan as a guide and resource. Maintain the predominantly residential nature of the municipality.

### **Land Use**

Foster a well-balanced, diverse community with a mix of residential housing types, institutional, commercial, and limited industrial uses along with ample open space and public facilities.

## OBJECTIVES

- Preserve undeveloped open space, maintain agricultural activities and the rural landscape in appropriate locations, and promote the visual enjoyment of the land.
- Direct new development and redevelopment to places in relation to their transportation and environmental capacities.

## Open Space

Open space for conservation and recreational purposes should be enhanced through public and private efforts. Adequate active recreation facilities should be maintained through governmental action and citizen participation; new trends in sports and the evolving needs for recreation should be periodically reviewed.

## OBJECTIVES

- Establish a Greenway Network to connect existing and planned open space parcels, including development of trails along stream corridors.
- Actively pursue the protection of privately-owned environmentally sensitive land through fee simple acquisition, land trust dedication, conservation easement or other means during the development review process.

## Conservation of Natural Features

Critical natural features and resources of Lawrence such as woodlands, steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains and bodies of water are worthy of protection to provide natural ecological balance and as a counterpoint to the built environment.

## OBJECTIVES

- Utilize natural features to distinguish the permitted intensity of land development.
- Preserve and enhance stream corridors through the development of a Greenways Network incorporating pedestrian and bicycle linkages in appropriate locations and integrating existing or proposed open space land.
- Improve water quality of storm water runoff within the Township through application of stormwater management regulations.
- Establish controls on the permitted disturbance of natural features, including tree clearance, during land development.
- Restrict development on steep slopes so as to reduce any negative effects from the clearing of the vegetation on stream bank stability and the control of erosion.



### **Visual Character of Lawrence Township**

Establish policies governing the development or redevelopment of land which will promote the retention of rural character and historic streetscapes in the community. Establish design guidelines for the preservation of significant views from public rights-of-way.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- Use transfer of development credits for targeted areas to promote the retention of farmland and rural character.
- Use rural development design techniques and standards to promote and encourage appropriate low intensity development in identified areas.
- Identify and preserve scenic resources and enhance the visual attractiveness of all areas of the municipality, according to their individual characteristics

### **Historic Preservation**

Protect the integrity of the historic centers of Lawrenceville, Port Mercer, and the Delaware and Raritan Canal as well as local landmarks outside of these districts which contribute to the heritage and positive image of the municipality.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- Encourage tourism at the Township's historic parks and open space sites.
- Recognize and preserve historic places and events in conjunction with open space preservation.

### **Community Facilities and Municipal Services**

Establish and maintain a level of community facilities and public services sufficient to satisfy the needs of present residents and to allow for the well-planned expansion of facilities to meet future needs.

### **Housing**

Preserve the existing housing stock and provide the opportunity for the development of a wide variety of housing types to meet the needs of varied income and age levels, family compositions, and life styles.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- Encourage planned unit developments providing for an integrated residential and non-residential neighborhood to incorporate the best features of design, layout and materials in relationship to the natural environment.
- Promote the clustering of housing on sites with environmentally sensitive areas and on sites lacking public infrastructure to retain open space, farmland, and

the natural environment to the greatest extent feasible.

### **Circulation**

Provide for the efficient movement of people and goods within and through the Township in a manner compatible with the objectives of the land use element and retention of rural, suburban, and urban character in their respective places.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- Recognize and preserve the scenic characteristics of local roadways in order to promote a positive community identity.
- Discourage the widening of existing two lane arterial roads in rural areas.
- Designate bikeways in the Master Plan for development and construction.
- Implement the Township's Complete Streets Policy, which is intended to provide safe access for all users through design and operation of a comprehensive, integrated, connected multi-modal network of transportation options.

### **PARKS, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, AND OPEN SPACE SURVEY**

In this section of the Plan, an inventory of the various types of open is listed and a description of the available facilities.

#### **Municipal Open Space**

The Township currently owns just under 1,213 acres of open space that is intended for recreation and conservation purposes. Table 1, on the following page, lists these municipally owned sites and provides a general description of the recreational facilities or other uses present at the park. The locations of municipal open space sites are shown on the Open Space and Recreation Plan, found at the end of this document.

#### **Description of Municipal Facilities**

There are eight parks in Lawrence that are utilized primarily for active recreation. A brief description of these municipal parks is provided below. (The name of each park is followed by its map location number.)

VILLAGE PARK (8) – This park includes 62 acres that were purchased in 1970 and subsequently developed in 1992. There are three lighted soccer fields and facilities for tennis, basketball, softball, volleyball, bocce and horseshoes as well as playgrounds for young children, and a dog park. The park area also includes the adjacent Wilk property, which was recently acquired by the Lawrence Township Conservation Foundation and contains approximately 6 acres.

Table 1. Municipally Owned Open Space and Recreation Facilities

Map No.	Name of Site	Acres	Facilities/Character
5	Carson Woods	181.81	Passive Recreation/Conservation
6	Shipetaukin Woods	62.91	Passive Recreation/Conservation
8	Village Park/Wilk Park	68.23	3 soccer fields, 2 softball fields, 2 tennis courts, 2 basketball courts, tot lot, dog park, volleyball court
10	Fackler Park	9.78	Passive Recreation/Conservation
13	Joe Maher Eco Center (part)	7.00	Passive Recreation/Conservation
14	Maidenhead Meadows	344.38	Passive Recreation/Conservation
16	Loveless Nature Park	44.75	Passive Recreation/Conservation
17	Central Park	104.77	4 baseball fields, 1 softball field, 1 football field, 1 soccer field, 3 tennis courts, 1 basketball court, inclusionary playground
19	Battleground Park	4.59	Passive Recreation/Conservation
21	Turtleback Park	19.04	Passive Recreation/Conservation
23	Five Mile Run/Stonicker Pk.	24.05	Passive Recreation/Conservation
25	Gilpin Park (Craigie)	0.62	Playground
26	Bossio-Salt Preserve	11.99	Passive Recreation/Conservation
27	Eldridge Park	2.29	Playground
28	Veterans Park	17.11	3 tennis & 1 bocce court, playground
31	Texas Ave Park	0.34	Passive Recreation/Conservation
32	Glenn Ave Park	1.26	Passive Recreation
33	Meadowbrook Park	4.32	Passive Recreation/Conservation
34	Drexel Woods	37.99	Passive Recreation/Conservation
35	Rinck Park	9.81	Passive Recreation/Conservation, Nature Center
36	Murray Park	10.38	Passive Recreation/Conservation
37	Lawrence Shopping Center	0.34	Passive Recreation/Conservation
38	Shabakunk Park	13.77	Passive Recreation/Conservation
39	Tamanis Park	6.27	Passive Recreation/Conservation
40	Colonial Lake Park	37.02	3 tennis courts, playground
41	Eastern Park	6.87	Passive Recreation/Conservation
42	Tiffany Woods	11.99	Passive Recreation/Conservation
43	Helen Avenue Park	6.90	Passive Recreation/Conservation
44	Slackwood Park	4.86	Passive Recreation/Conservation
46	Hamnett Park	3.29	Playground
47	Johnson Trolley Line	15.83	Passive Recreation
<b>Total Municipal Open Space</b>		<b>1,074.56</b>	

CENTRAL PARK (17) – Just over 100 acres, Central Park is located on Eggerts Crossing Road and is the largest developed park in the Township. It features lighted tennis courts, soccer/lacrosse fields, baseball fields, and basketball courts. An inclusionary playground was added to the park in 2017. The park is also the home to the Elvin Bethea Field, a football field named after a National Football Hall of Fame inductee.

CHARLES GILPIN PARK (25) - This 0.62-acre park is located off of Craigie Avenue and serves the Eggert Crossing neighborhood. The park includes a small playground area.

ELDRIDGE PARK (27) - This park contains 2.3 acres and serves the Eldridge Park neighborhood. The park includes several playground structures.

VETERANS PARK (28) - Nearly 18 acres in size, Veterans Park is heavily wooded with several playground structures, three tennis courts, a lighted bocce court, a jogging path, and picnic tables. The park is also the site of a Lawrence Veterans Memorial. A small parking lot is located at the end of Oaklyn Terrace.

COLONIAL LAKE PARK (40) - Colonial Lake was created in 1924 when the Colonial Land Company built a dam on the Shabakunk Creek. Originally intended as a swimming area for the surrounding Colonial Lakelands development, it was eventually deeded to Lawrence Township. An 8-foot-wide paved path follows the shoreline of the 25-acre lake. Tennis courts and a playground area are located at the southwest end of the lake.

HAMNETT MEMORIAL PARK (46) - This park includes a small playground area and is located between Ohio and New York Avenues.

The eight active recreation sites described above total 228.23 acres. The remaining 846.33 acres of municipal open space consists of sites that are intended primarily for conservation with some passive recreation. Descriptions of the larger municipal conservation sites are provided below, followed by brief descriptions of the remaining categories of conservation sites.

CARSON WOODS (5) - This site was purchased and preserved in 2001 and is named for the road that borders it. There are miles of walking trails on the mowed grass margins of farm fields and hedgerows. The park has over 200 varieties of plants and trees and is a habitat for many species of birds, mammals and reptiles.

SHIPETAUKIN WOODS (6) - Formerly a farm, Shipetaukin Woods was purchased by the Lawrence Township Conservation Foundation in 1994 and deeded to the Township as permanently preserved open space in 2003. The entrance to the site is via a gravel driveway off of Carter Road. Trails through the woods connect to Terhune Orchards, which borders the site to the north.

MAIDENHEAD MEADOWS PARK (14) - Maidenhead Meadows Park, the largest of the Township's parks, includes Maidenhead Meadows, the Brearley House, Princessville Cemetery, the former tree nursery and open fields. These parcels, acquired over a period of 27 years, constitute over 300 contiguous acres directly abutting the D&R Canal State Park.

LOVELESS NATURE PRESERVE (16) - The Loveless Nature Preserve was purchased by the Township in 2007, is approximately 45 acres of forest, streams and old tree-farm fields. The preserve is directly adjacent to Central Park. The preserve is named after Nick Loveless, a former Lawrence Township police officer, who raised various species of evergreen trees on the property.

Several of the smaller conservation sites are located along stream corridors, such as Turtleback Park, Five Mile Run/Stonicker Park, Murray Park, Shabakunk Park, Tamaris Park, and Helen Avenue. Together, these sites create linear parks, or greenways, which help preserve natural and scenic resources, as well as providing opportunities for passive recreation. Battleground Park, which includes several wooded parcels along the north side of the Shabakunk Creek, serves as part of the Township's greenway network and is also a historic site where American troops fought British troops marching to Trenton during the Revolutionary War.

Woodland conservation sites include Drexel Woods, a 36-acre site that adjoins the Lawrence Nature Center and the adjacent 4.32-acre Meadowbrook Park site; Fackler Park, a 9.8-acre site located on the north side of Shipetaukin Creek, and the Bossio-Salt Preserve, a 12-acre site which was purchased from the Bossio and Salt families by the Lawrence Township Conservation Foundation and then deeded to the Township. In addition, Slackwood Park is a wooded site located on the south side of the Slackwood Elementary School, and a wooded portion of the Joe Mahar Ecological Center site is included in the Township's open space inventory.

Texas Avenue Park, Glenn Avenue Park, and Eastern Park are small open space parcels located within developed neighborhoods.

The Township owns the southern segment of the former Johnson Trolley line. The acreage of this linear park is included as municipally owned open space. The development of the trolley line as part of the Township's trail and bikeway network is discussed later in this document.

The total area of all municipally-owned open space, including both active recreation and conservation sites is 1,075 acres. The total area of Lawrence Township is 14,063 acres (10,917 acres of land, 3,146 acres of water). Consequently, the municipality's land for such uses equates to approximately 7.6% of the total municipal area.

**Other Governmental, Private, Quasi-Public Open Space and Community Facilities**

In addition to municipally-owned recreation and open space sites, three other levels of government as well as private and quasi-public entities have recreation and open space sites in Lawrence Township. Table 2 below provides a summary of these sites, including the name of the site, acreage, and the type of open space and recreational use provided at the site.

Table 2. Open Space Lands of Other Governmental, Private, Quasi-Public Entities

Owner-ship	Map No.	Name of Site	Acres	Facilities/Character
Board of Education Facilities	9	Lawrenceville Elementary School	8.42	Multipurpose room, playground
	18	Lawrence Intermediate School	13.97	Sports fields, gym, courts
	22	Ben Franklin Elementary School	12.46	Multipurpose room, playground
	29	Lawrence High School & Admin	55.86	Pool, sports fields, gym, courts
	30	Eldridge Elementary School	7.02	Multipurpose room, playground
	45	Slackwood Elementary School	4.34	Multipurpose room, playground
<b>Subtotal Acres</b>			<b>102.07</b>	
Mercer County	4	358 Cold Soil Road	16.27	Passive recreation/conservation
	7	Mercer Meadows/Rosedale Park	541.46	Trails; interpretative center
	12	Gatterdam Park	64.03	Passive recreation/conservation
	24	Mercer County Park	48.88	Ultimate Frisbee fields
<b>Subtotal Acres</b>			<b>670.64</b>	
State of NJ		D&R Canal State Park	299.59	Towpath, fishing, canoeing
<b>Subtotal Acres</b>			<b>299.59</b>	
Preserved Farmland	A	DiDonato-Mallard Farm	97.74	Preserved Farmland
	B	Chmiel Farm	18.54	Preserved Farmland
	C	DiDonato Farm	66.95	Preserved Farmland
	D	Mount Farm/Terhune Orchards	54.81	Preserved Farmland
	E	Mount Farm/Terhune Orchards	66.24	Preserved Farmland
	F	Hendrickson Farm	95.93	Preserved Farmland
<b>Subtotal Acres</b>			<b>400.21</b>	
Other Deed Restricted Land	1	Thompson	2.91	Delaware & Raritan Greenway Inc.
	2	Transco Easement	98.44	Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Corp
	3	Pyne/Deer	34.11	Delaware & Raritan Greenway Inc.
	11	Britton Farm/Walson Easement	15.37	Deed restricted
	20	Cobblestone Golf Course	49.87	Private golf course (deed restricted area only)
<b>Subtotal Acres</b>			<b>200.70</b>	
<b>Total Other Open Space (Acres)</b>			<b>1,673.21</b>	

---

## **Description of Other Governmental, Private, Quasi-Public Entities**

### **BOARD OF EDUCATION FACILITIES**

Table 2 includes six school sites in Lawrence that are maintained by the Board of Education and also provide recreational facilities for Lawrence residents. These sites total 102.07 acres and include both indoor and outdoor recreational space and facilities.

### **COUNTY AND STATE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE**

Lawrence Township includes portions of two Mercer County parks and part of the State's D&R Canal park, as described below. Table 2 lists these sites as well as several smaller County-owned open space parcels. A brief description of the County and State park sites in Lawrence is also provided below:

**MERCER MEADOWS COUNTY PARK** – This county park, formerly known as Rosedale Park, totals approximately 1,600 acres, and straddles the border between Lawrence and Hopewell Townships. The portion of the park located in Lawrence Township totals almost 542 acres and is within the Pole Farm District, one of five districts that make up the park. From 1929 – 1975, the Pole Farm District and much of the adjacent Farm History District belonged to American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T), and was the site of a large shortwave radio station used for international communications. This area of Mercer Meadows park features several trails and an interpretive center with a picnic area.

**MERCER COUNTY PARK** – A roughly 48-acre area of Mercer County Park is located at the southeast corner of the Township. This part of the park includes ultimate Frisbee fields and a parking area.

**DELAWARE & RARITAN CANAL STATE PARK** - The D&R Canal was built across central New Jersey in the 1830's to provide a link between Delaware River and the Raritan River so that boats could transport freight and coal between Philadelphia and New York without traversing the Atlantic Ocean. The canal and adjacent park land now provide a recreational corridor for canoeing, jogging, hiking, bicycling, fishing and horseback riding. The canal also supplies drinking water. The canal and the park are part of the National Recreation Trail System and are also a valuable wildlife corridor connecting fields and forests. The area of the park located in Lawrence is just under 300 acres and includes the Port Mercer House at the Township's northern border.

### **Development Restricted Properties/Preserved Farmland**

As indicated in Table 2, there are several private properties within the Township that are deed restricted from development.

Along Cold Soil Road, the Williams Company (Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Company) property has been mostly restricted from development for a 99-year period. The frontage of the land has been planted as an orchard. The D&R Greenway, a nonprofit conservation organization, owns the Thompson and Pyne/Deer sites which are permanently deed restricted from development.

Preserved farmland properties are located in the northern area of the Township and include the DiDonato-Mallard, Chmiel, DiDonato, Mount/Terhune Orchards and Hendrickson farms.

A 49.87-acre portion of the Cobblestone Creek golf course (formerly the Greenacres Country Club golf course) was required to be deed restricted in conjunction with a recent approval of residential development on a portion of the tract.

#### **GREEN ACRES RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE INVENTORY**

The Green Acres Program with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection has established rules and procedures for the designation of a recreation and open space inventory (ROSI). Once land has been included and certified as to its use for open space and recreation purposes, the ROSI becomes binding on the municipality and other levels of government. Any desire to remove the site from the ROSI requires an application to the NJ Statehouse Commission and typically requires strong public interest reasons as well as replacement with land and facilities of greater value in return. In Table 3 is the proposed Recreation and Open Space Inventory for Lawrence Township. Because the Township is not able to bind another government to the ROSI's listing, none of the property from Table 2 is included.



Table 3. Lawrence Township Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI)

Key	Open Space Name	Blocks	Lots	Acres	Interest	Ownership
MUNICIPAL						
5	Carson Woods	7501	13.02	181.81	Fee	Municipal
6	Shipetaukin Woods	7301/7402	4/18, 24	62.91	Fee	Municipal
8	Village Park/Wilk Park	6201	39	68.23	Fee	Municipal
10	Fackler Park	5801	19	9.78	Fee	Municipal
13	Joe Maher EcoCenter	5801	26 (part)	7.00	Fee	Municipal
14	Maidenhead Meadows	5101	8-11, 25, 26, 33, 34	344.38	Fee	Municipal
16	Loveless Nature Park	2701	7, 8, 10-12, 14-16, 28-31	44.75	Fee	Municipal
17	Central Park	2801/2701	51/9	104.77	Fee	Municipal
19	Battleground Park	2802/2803/ 2804/2805	1/1/1/1	4.59	Fee	Municipal
21	Turtleback Park	3004	30	19.04	Fee	Municipal
23	Five Mile Run/Stonicker	3507	27	24.05	Fee	Municipal
25	Charles Gilpin Park	2316	1	0.62	Fee	Municipal
26	Bossio-Salt Preserve	2312	100, 101	11.99	Fee	Municipal
27	Eldridge Park	1311	2	2.29	Fee	Municipal
28	Veterans Park	2402/2406	58/1, 22	17.11	Fee	Municipal
31	Texas Ave Park	2001	67	0.34	Fee	Municipal
32	Glenn Ave Park	2503	12 -17	1.26	Fee	Municipal
33	Meadowbrook Park	1301	40	4.32	Fee	Municipal
34	Drexel Woods	1301	13	37.99	Fee	Municipal
35	Rinck Park	1301	22, 36	9.81	Fee	Municipal
36	Murray Park	1401/1801	1/15	10.38	Fee	Municipal
37	Lawrence Shopping Center	2001	10	0.34	Fee	Municipal
38	Shabakunk Park	1502	3	13.77	Fee	Municipal
39	Tamanis Park	1502	2	6.27	Fee	Municipal
40	Colonial Lake Park	2101	6	37.02	Fee	Municipal
41	Eastern Park	2204	22	6.87	Fee	Municipal
42	Tiffany Woods	902	17	11.99	Fee	Municipal
43	Helen Avenue Park	902	11, 12, 18	6.9	Fee	Municipal
44	Slackwood Park	6201	39	4.86	Fee	Municipal
46	Hamnett Park	501	40	3.29	Fee	Municipal
47	Johnson Trolley Line	2301/2319 2701/4701/ 5703/570	29,30/47,47.01 4/3 20, 52, 110/19	15.83	Fee	Municipal
<b>TOTAL ROSI ACRES</b>				<b>1,074.56</b>		

---

## GUIDELINES FOR THE ADEQUACY OF OPEN SPACE

### Balanced Land Use Concept

The November 2013 Draft State Comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan (SCORP) discusses the Balanced Land Use Concept as a way to estimate open space needs in New Jersey. This approach targets a minimum of three percent of a municipality's developed and developable land for set aside as open space. Developable land excludes acreage of slopes greater than 12%, wetlands and preserved lands.

Lawrence Township has an estimated 9,002 acres of developed and developable areas.<sup>1</sup> This results in a need for 270 acres of publicly accessible recreational land. The Township has 1,075 acres of parks and open space, exceeding the minimum recommended under the Balanced Land Use Guideline by 805 acres. This calculation does not include open space sites within the Township as identified on Table 2 that are protected for environmental or agricultural purposes through conservation easements, land use regulation or other means that do not provide for direct public use. These sites are valuable for environmental and cultural protection, but are not considered part of the public recreation supply.

### National Park and Recreation Association Guidelines

The NRPA has published a number of standards for "developed" open space. While the organization has moved away from a gross acreage basis for determining recreational needs (preferring a survey of users, instead), a range of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed park land per 1,000 residents had been previously used by them in estimating the necessary land area. It should be noted that these standards are exclusive of recreational facilities provided by school districts or other governments. Based on the Township's estimated population of 33,223 persons in 2016, the amount of active recreation space should be a minimum of 208 to 349 acres of developed park land. The Town is within this range, with 228.23 acres<sup>2</sup>, or 6.87 acres per 1,000 people in active recreation space.

## RECREATION PROGRAMS

The Lawrence Township Recreation Department provides recreational and leisure throughout the year that are intended to meet the needs of residents of all ages. Traditional youth athletic leagues and sports instruction are offered in baseball/softball, basketball, field hockey, football, tennis, soccer, swimming and wrestling for children between 5 and 16 years of age. Adults ranging in age from 18 to 82 participate in basketball, bocce, golf, soccer, swimming, tennis, and volleyball leagues organized by the Department. The Recreation Department coordinates a number of summer camp programs for children in

---

<sup>1</sup> - 7,360 developed + 1,642.7 developable (vacant – wetlands & slopes) = 9,002 acres (CCH calculation)

<sup>2</sup> - Table 1 acreage minus open space for conservation purposes.

kindergarten to tenth grade that include travel camps, sport specific instruction, special needs and day camps.

There are also special events, academic or enrichment classes and free play opportunities for all ages. These programs are held at municipal and Board of Education facilities throughout the Township. Programming specifically for the senior citizen population is coordinated by the Office on Aging and includes social, recreational, health and educational activities. In general, these latter activities are offered at the Lawrence Senior Center on Darrah Lane.

In addition to recreational programs provided at the Township's parks and at Board of Education facilities, the Recreation Department also coordinates with the U.S. Dept. of Defense, who operates a National Guard armory located on Eggert Crossing Road, to provide space for soccer fields in the fall and spring seasons. The Twin Pines Airport Recreation Site in Hopewell Township, which is jointly owned and maintained by both Lawrence and Hopewell Townships, also provides fields for Lawrence soccer and lacrosse leagues. The Lawrenceville School permits the use of soccer fields, the swimming pool and the golf course, which enables the Township to conduct soccer leagues, offer a competitive municipal swim team and an adult golf league for the residents of Lawrence Township. Two acres of Lawrenceville School property on Rt. 206 are set aside for community gardening. Notre Dame High School, too, provides recreation resources for the youth football program.

Some recreational needs are supplied by private entities for a fee. In Lawrence there are three seasonal swim clubs, the Lawrenceville Swimming Association on Craven Lane, The Willows on Willow Road, and the Ben Franklin Swim Club on Lewis Road. Indoor field rental for soccer and lacrosse teams is available at Center Court Club on Spruce Street. Cobblestone Country Club offers golf, tennis and seasonal swimming to members.

### **ACTIVE RECREATION NEEDS**

To help identify recreational needs, the Recreation Department conducted an online survey of Township's youth athletic organizations in March 2018. Responses were received by individuals representing youth baseball/softball, soccer and lacrosse organizations. These organizations currently serve a total of 2,025 youth players with almost all of the participants (90% or more) living in Lawrence. Youth players on recreational and competitive soccer teams account for the majority of the players. All of the sports organizations anticipate increases in enrollment, ranging from 3% annual growth for baseball/softball player enrollment to between 6% - 26% annual growth for soccer player enrollments. The following improvements and facilities needs were identified by the surveyed organizations:

- Additional fields for soccer and lacrosse. Respondents also noted that providing more (artificial) turf fields would increase field availability, and that improving the grading/drainage at the Central Park fields on Eggerts Crossing Road would allow greater use of these fields. Village Park fields on Yeger Drive were also noted as having poor drainage. Locating new fields in the eastern area of the Township, such as at Maidenhead Meadows park, was also recommended.
- Lighted fields. Providing more lighted soccer/lacrosse fields was recommended, such as at the Central Park fields, or at the Twin Pines fields. Lighting for one additional baseball field (Carroll Field or Grant Field in Central Park) was also recommended.
- Parking. More parking for soccer at Central Park and Zimmer Fields was recommended, and it was noted that reconfiguration of existing parking might help reduce congestion.
- Facilities. Outdoor batting cages are needed at Central Park. Providing nets to separate lacrosse fields and soccer fields at Twin Pines, and safety nets for lacrosse fields at Village Park was recommend.

As demonstrated by the survey responses, the demand for athletic fields for youth sports leagues and programs continues to grow. While some sports can share fields because they are in different seasons, there is a trend towards year round or three seasons in a single sport. Proper maintenance also requires that fields periodically rest to aerate the soil and keep grass growing. Because of the pressure on field use, field resting rarely occurs and consequently field conditions become rough and maintenance costs rise. Improvements to athletic fields including drainage and lighting improvements as well as enhancing parking and storage space for field areas may help maximize the use of existing fields. However, designation of additional field areas and/or construction of (artificial) turf field(s) may also need to be considered.

#### **TRAILS AND BIKEWAYS**

Local and regional trails and bikeways provide opportunities for recreation in Lawrence and also help connect the Township's open space and recreational sites. These are as follows:

#### **Johnson Trolley Line**

This linear park follows the route of the former Johnson "Fast Line" trolley, of the Trenton-Princeton Traction Company which ran from Trenton to Princeton through the Main Street area of Lawrenceville. Some rails and spikes from the former trolley line are still visible in the ground, providing evidence of the route's history. The Township owns the southern segment, located between the Ewing Township border and Rider University, which features a paved and landscaped path to the south of Eggerts

Crossing Road. The northern portion of the Trolley Line is about a mile in length and is utilized as both a nature trail and urban path.

Through a grant from the Mercer County Greenlinks Project, the Township added a deck to the historic steel girder bridge that carried the trolley line over the Shabakunk Creek. The Township also received a National Recreational Trails grant, and a federal Recreational Trails Program Grant to fund improvements along the trolley line, including the construction of a stone pathway suitable for pedestrian and bicycle use.

Under a Recreational Trails grant from DVRPC as part of the Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI), a study was conducted regarding a possible linkage of the southern and northern segments of the Johnson Trolley Line over or under Interstate 95 (soon to be I-295) which currently bisects the trolley right-of-way. A completed study in 2014 identifies several options for providing this linkage with the construction of a dual use pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the interstate with a cost estimate range of \$6.6-8.1 million - a substantial capital project. Mercer County has taken the lead in making a request for federal funding for the project. Extending the trail would connect the north and south sides of the Interstate that bisects the municipality. Rt. 206, the present alternative, lacks bicycle and pedestrian facilities, most notably where this highway traverses the Interstate. *See also*, Circulation Plan Element.

### **Lawrence Hopewell Trail**

The Lawrence Hopewell Trail forms a loop through public and private lands in northern Lawrence and eastern Hopewell Township. A number of major segments of the trail are now complete. However, there are still several connecting segments which are to be completed within Lawrence, including the segment through Maidenhead Meadows Park, the segment along Pretty Brook Road, and the segment connecting the ETS corporate site to Province Line Road.

To support the development of the Lawrence Hopewell Trail, the non-profit Lawrence Hopewell Trail Corporation has been formed with the Bristol-Myers Squibb and ETS corporate sites serving as anchors. The continued development of the Lawrence Hopewell Trail will improve circulation and access and provide additional recreational opportunities within the Township.

### **Greenway Network Trails**

Trail development is an important component in establishing a greenway network as recommended in the Conservation Element of the Master Plan to preserve stream corridors and provide connected open space. Where possible, trails should be included through greenways. An environmental determination must be made to determine if the land can support the inclusion of a trail. Pedestrian paths in sensitive areas should be constructed of natural materials which have minimal impact on the environment. Hard surfaced bike paths are more suitable for upland areas.

Enhancing public access to the D&R Canal is one focal point of the Township's efforts to develop the greenway network. To help meet this goal, the Great Meadows Trail has been developed connecting the Lawrence Hopewell Trail with the D&R Canal towpath. Because this is an area that periodically floods, restoration and repair of the trail and adjacent areas should be evaluated. In the western area of the Township, the Johnson Trolley Line serves as a key link in the greenway network, and also provides a segment of the proposed five-mile loop trail that would connect Rider University in Lawrence with The College of New Jersey in Ewing, known as the Ewing Lawrence Greenway Loop. Future trail connections to enhance the greenway network have also been proposed along the stream corridor behind Notre Dame High School and at the recently approved Bridge Academy site, which includes an easement along Five Mile Run to provide access to Turtleback Park.

A January 2000 study by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission recommends establishment of a greenway along the Assunpink Creek, including the development of a trail along this stream corridor that would connect Mercer County Park and the D&R Canal. The proposed trail would also help to establish connections to the Trenton Assunpink Greenway, Delaware River Heritage Trail, Ewing-Lawrence Greenway, Camden-Amboy Rail-to-Trail, and the Revolutionary War Trail.

#### **BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES**

In 2009, a Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Assistance Study was completed by Michael Baker Jr., Inc., for the Township, funded by the NJDOT's Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs. The study included an Implementation Workbook identifying conceptual improvement to upgrade and enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Lawrence Township.

The Township also supports and participates in the Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association (GMTMA) Mercer County Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force. With the assistance of Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, the County has developed an interactive map which provides bicycle facility conditions throughout the County. GMTMA has recently announced a new planning study to support the development of trails in Mercer County, Montgomery and Plainsboro.

Implementation of improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Lawrence, together with education and enforcement activities, will help enhance access to parks and open space areas, and increase use of trails within and between open space sites.

#### **OPEN SPACE NEEDS**

Active recreation is only one component of a comprehensive open space plan. Non-active open space provides benefits for the ecology of the Township and region by supporting environmentally sensitive lands such as flood plains, freshwater wetlands,

aquifer recharge areas, and the biota that depends on these resources. Open space also creates scenic vistas, including views of natural resources as well as agricultural lands and historic properties. Maintaining and preserving open space in the face of development pressure is very difficult and the land remaining undeveloped in Lawrence is sought for many different and often competing purposes. The ability to acquire additional open space is limited and the opportunity to do so will recede over time. Investment in open space today will yield far reaching benefits for the future.

**Potential Open Space Acquisitions**

In Table 4, three sites have been identified for potential preservation as open space. A brief description of the sites follows the table.

Table 4. Sites Identified for Potential Open Space Acquisition.

Key	Name/Location	Blocks	Lots	Acres
A1	Colonial Bowling (part)	2101	39	± 5.5
A2	Pit Stop Service Center	1308	1, 2, 3, 4	0.43
A3	Saturn Chemical Facility	504	3	5.3
<b>TOTAL POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION</b>				<b>±11.23</b>

COLONIAL BOWLING (A1)

This site abuts Colonial Lake Park to the south and rear (east). The Colonial Bowling and Entertainment Facility is located along the Brunswick Pike, at the front of the site. Acquisition of the area outside of the bowling facility, including the wooded north side of the property and the floodplain around the rear perimeter of the site, would allow for expansion of the park around the entire lake. The land area of proposed open space acquisition has not been determined yet, but is estimated to comprise approximately 5 to 6 acres of the total 8.79 acre property. Acquisition of this portion of the site as open space would allow for completion of the last segment of the trail that encircles the lake, and establishment of a buffer, including reforestation plantings, along this side of lake that would help restore and protect natural and scenic resources. The acquisition of this site would also help protect woodland habitat for wildlife and enhance access to Colonial Lake Park’s recreational, social, and scenic resources for it provides the means to legally create a pathway around the entire lake.

PIT STOP/LAWRENCE ROAD SERVICE CENTER (A2)

This site includes the four lots (Lots 1 – 4 within Block 1308) located along the west side of Lawrence Road between Merilene and Altamawr Avenues. Lots 2-4 are in foreclosure, with the Township as the lien holder. These three lots were previously occupied by a gasoline and service station formerly known as the Pit Stop Service Center and later known as the Lawrence Road Service Center. Remediation by the

prior owner of Lots 2-4 has been required by environmental law due to past fuel spills and is largely complete. However, some soil remains affected by petroleum products at the site. The Township intends to seek a grant from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to complete a preliminary assessment, site investigation and remedial investigation to determine what improvements are required to obtain a letter of No Further Action (signifying unfettered reuse of the property) from NJDEP. Full remediation of the site will be necessary prior to any use for recreational purposes.

The site also includes Lot 1, which abuts Lots 2-4 to the north. Lot 1 is used for parking and is under the same private ownership as Block 1316, Lot 51, a property located directly across Altamawr Avenue that contains a chiropractor's office. On one side the office is attached to Bossio's deli (located on Lot 52). Lot 1 has been included as part of the site to encourage coordinated development of all or part of Lots 1 - 4 for passive recreational use. However, the need to provide parking on Lot 1 for the office and deli on Lots 51 and 52 is still important. A dual use parking lot for both the businesses and a new park would address this question. Because of the dual use, Lot 1 would most likely need to be purchased solely through municipal funds or leased from the existing lot owner.

The site has the potential to provide passive recreation opportunities and open space along this commercial corridor. Because of the limited amount of property, the most likely scenario is the creation of a pocket park. Park use would complement the open land owned by St. Ann's Church on the north side of Lawrence Avenue and the small garden in front of the fire house. Design elements of the park should go through a public process to decide what they should entail.

#### SATURN CHEMICAL FACILITY SITE (A3)

This abandoned industrial site represents an important parcel of open space along the D&R Canal in the southeastern end of the Township. The 5.3-acre parcel has about 1,500 feet of frontage along the canal from Cherry Tree Lane southward. The site is just north of Hamnett Park.

Issues of contamination and abandoned industrial structures have deterred the Township from foreclosing on the tax delinquent property. Utilizing grants from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, the Township had a Site Investigation and Remedial Investigation performed. These studies have defined the contamination issues. Remediation of the site awaits funding.

Acquisition of the Saturn site would allow a formal connection to be developed from Colonial Lake Park to Hamnett Park, via the site and the D&R Canal. The site itself has potential for development for both active and passive recreation in an area of the municipality that lacks these amenities. Alternatively, if redevelopment of the site for industrial or commercial use is feasible, there may be an opportunity to provide an access easement



and trail connection to the canal via this property. Full remediation of the site would be necessary prior to any use for recreational purposes.

**Other Potential Open Space**

In addition to the sites identified above for possible acquisition as open space, there are several areas in Lawrence that are largely in agricultural use and/or undeveloped, where the Township is encouraging property owners to continue the current use and to consider preserving the properties through farmland preservation programs, conservation easements, or other means. These other potential open space areas are listed in Table 5 below, with a brief description following after the table.

Table 5. Other Potential Open Space Areas

Key	Name/Location	Blocks	Lots	Acres
P1	Van Kirk Road	7301	6, 9	82.48
P2	Route 206/Princeton Pike	5801	Various	542.72
P3	Rte. 206, W. of Darrah Lane	2801	33-36, 42	11.10
P4	Bakers Basin/Lawrence Station Roads	3601, 3701, 4001	Various	129.76
P5	Spruce St. at Shabakunk Cr.	701	44, 4.34	4.27
<b>TOTAL OTHER POTENTIAL OPEN SPACE PARCELS</b>				<b>640.57</b>

VAN KIRK ROAD (P1)

This area includes an agricultural parcel and a woodland lot, and is part of the of the Shipetaukin Creek system. Continued use of the area for agriculture would complement the surrounding large block of preserved farmland.

ROUTE 206/PRINCETON PIKE (P2)

This agricultural area includes the Cherry Grove Farm, which had been enrolled in an eight-year agricultural preservation program. The Lawrenceville School is the owner of a major portion of the other parcels within the area. The land has been continuously farmed since Colonial times, and provides part of the “environs” around the Village of Lawrenceville, which historically served as the center of the surrounding farming community.

The Shipetaukin Creek passes through the area, and preserved open space including Maidenhead Meadows Park and the County’s Gatterdam Park, are in close proximity. The Township encourages continued agricultural use of these lands. The Township also supports the possible development of additional trail connections through the area that would help link the Village of Lawrenceville to the D&R Canal, and provide connections to the Township’s greenway network.

ROUTE 206, WEST OF DARRAH LANE INTERSECTION (P3)

These properties lie along Five Mile Run between Central Park and Turtleback Park. The proposed greenway hard path utilizes the edge of the Rider University property to the north, connecting to Turtleback Park via the PSE&G Company utility easement. Development of the properties is restricted due to their location in the stream buffer.

This area is of historical importance. It was here that Continental Army pickets under command of Colonel Edward Hand were confronted by the advancing British Army. Colonel Hand's orders were to slow the advance of the British to give General Washington time to ready the main army for what was to become the Second Battle of Trenton. This "delaying action" is celebrated every January by the Lawrence Township Cultural and Heritage Committee. They stage a five mile walk through Lawrence to Trenton along the path of Colonel Hand's movements.

BAKERS BASIN ROAD/LAWRENCE STATION ROAD (P4)

This grouping of properties is one of the Township's largest areas of open space in private ownership. Half of the lots border on the Assunpink or Shipetaukin Creeks, and much of the land is being farmed or is wooded. The Township encourages continued use of the area for agriculture or as open space. While development is restricted along stream corridors, the use of conservation easements should be considered to enhance protection of the stream buffer and to provide access for future trail connections to the local and regional greenway network.

SPRUCE STREET AT THE SHABAKUNK CREEK (P5)

This area runs parallel to the Shabakunk Creek. It is adjacent to the Township owned Tiffany Woods open space. Development of the properties is restricted due to their location in the stream buffer. The Township encourages the continued use of the properties as open space. The use of conservation easements is recommended to enhance protection of the stream buffer and to facilitate development of the Township's greenway network and trail system.

### **CONSERVATION TECHNIQUES**

There are a number of methods of preserving open space apart from direct purchase by government or by a private nonprofit conservation organization. Purchasing large tracts of land in fee simple is expensive and other avenues may be explored in order to fulfill the Township's open space goals. Techniques discussed here to conserve land include purchase or donation of development rights, conservation easements, and site design.

#### **Purchase or Donation of Development Rights**

Under the "bundle of rights" theory of property ownership, development rights are an additional right inherent in a property along with the better known air, water, and

mineral rights. Development rights may be separated from the property and sold or donated to governmental agencies or conservation organizations. The sale of development rights requires the landowner to pay federal capital gains taxes which may be offset depending on the individual landowner's tax situation. The donation of these rights, however, can be treated as a charitable contribution and provide the donor with a tax deduction. The sale of development rights also reduces the property assessment for tax purposes. Since development rights are less than fee simple ownership, their cost is substantially less.

### **Conservation Easements**

The dedication of easements is a technique sometimes used to preserve wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas. While retaining ownership in private hands, conservation easements effectively protect lands of ecological importance. Donation of an easement and donation of development rights have similar tax advantages. Donations may include other general benefits, such as public access. Private nonprofit conservation organizations in the state are substantially involved in identifying prospective properties and working with interested land owners in securing conservation easements.

### **Site Design**

Site design – the layout of buildings, circulation, and utilities – is the single largest factor in the preservation of environmentally sensitive lands. Restricting the use of environmentally sensitive lands, usually also protected by state environmental regulations, is a common condition of development approvals. To achieve the best results, design should be guided by a development suitability map that shows the environmental constraints of the land. From this starting point, a design sensitive to the preservation of natural and environmentally sensitive features may be produced.

### **FUNDING FOR OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION**

Purchasing the acreage necessary to establish additional parks and other open space is a significant financial cost to the Township (see preceding section for a discussion on other techniques for conservation protection). The traditional method of funding acquisitions is through the state Green Acres Program, that provides low cost loans. In 2014, voters earmarked 6% of corporate business tax revenues in a state-wide referendum that will help support the Green Acres Program for an additional 30 years. Voters in Lawrence Township have also approved an open space tax of 3 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation as a dedicated funding source.

### **ACTION PLAN FOR OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION**

The following actions are recommended to fulfill the goals and objectives for open space in Lawrence Township:

- 1) Participate in the Green Acres Planning Incentive Grant Program.
- 2) Seek to acquire open space for recreational and conservation purposes, including acquisition of identified “potential open space” parcels when possible.
- 3) Seek donations of land and funds for open space and recreation improvements.
- 4) Encourage owners of agricultural land to apply to sell their development rights through the New Jersey Farmland Preservation Plan.
- 5) Seek public and private partnerships for the acquisition of open space, including partnerships with the State of New Jersey, Mercer County, the Lawrence Township Conservation Foundation, and the Delaware & Raritan Greenway.
- 6) Continue to improve public access to the historic Johnson Trolley Line right-of-way. Seek federal funding for a bridge over I-95/I-295.
- 7) Continue improvements to the Lawrence Hopewell Trail.
- 8) Develop recreational bikeways and upgrade and enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities in coordination with public and private entities, including Mercer County and the Greater Mercer County Transportation Management Association (GMTMA).
- 9) Continue to develop the Township’s greenway network, including preserving open space along stream corridors, developing trails and linkages within and between greenways, creating linkages to the D&R Canal, and development/implementation of the Assunpink Greenway.
- 10) Encourage development practices and site design that maximize open space.
- 11) Continue to upgrade and maintain existing park facilities and to develop a capital improvements plan for improvements for drainage and field surfaces as feasible given the Township’s financial wherewithal.
- 12) Continue to support educational efforts to promote knowledge and appreciation of recreation and open space sites, facilities, programs and special events, including publication of the Recreation Department’s

Calendar of Events, support of community-wide trail rides and walks, and recognition of historic events at parks and open space sites.

- 13) Continue to support regional efforts to preserve open space and to provide recreational opportunities, including coordination with Mercer County and adjacent municipalities in implementing the Lawrence Ewing Greenway and Assunpink Greenway, coordination with Mercer County in development of County-owned parks within Lawrence including Gatterdam Park, and coordination with the Mercer County Agricultural Development Board in preserving farmland
- 14) Continue to support State-wide efforts to preserve open space and provide recreational opportunities, including coordination with the Green Acres Program, the Delaware & Raritan Canal Commission (both within the NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection), and the New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program (in the NJ Dept. of Agriculture).
- 15) Continue to support non-profits and other organizations that promote open space and recreation in the region, including the Lawrence Township Conservation Foundation, Friends of the Lawrence Greenway, the Lawrence Hopewell Trail Organization, the Delaware & Raritan Greenway, Inc., the Assunpink Watershed Association, the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, and the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association.

#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Open Space and Recreation Plan brings together and builds upon ongoing public open space and greenway planning efforts that were outlined in the Township's 1995 Master Plan and have been further advanced through collaboration of the Township staff with members of the Township's Planning Board, Greenway Committee, Open Space and Stewardship Advisory, and Environmental Committee. In addition, the Township has been well served by numerous local volunteers and members and staff of nonprofit conservation and recreation organizations, including the Lawrence Township Conservation Foundation, Friends of the Lawrence Greenway and the Lawrence Hopewell Trail Organization. The Township's Recreation Department also developed an online survey that was distributed to Lawrence's youth athletic organizations to solicit public input regarding recreation needs, the results of which have been incorporated in this document.

As required by the Green Acres program, two noticed public meetings were held on the Open Space and Recreation Plan, including the Planning Board's initial public information meeting on the draft plan on July 16, 2018, and its public hearing on

August 6, 2018 prior to adoption of the plan. The public hearings also address the State's Municipal Land Use Law requirements pertaining to adoption of the Open Space and Recreation Plan as an Element of the Township's Master Plan pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28b(7) and -(8)*.

W:\5000's\Lawrence\5111.409 Open Space\Lawrence OSRP- Final Adopted.docx

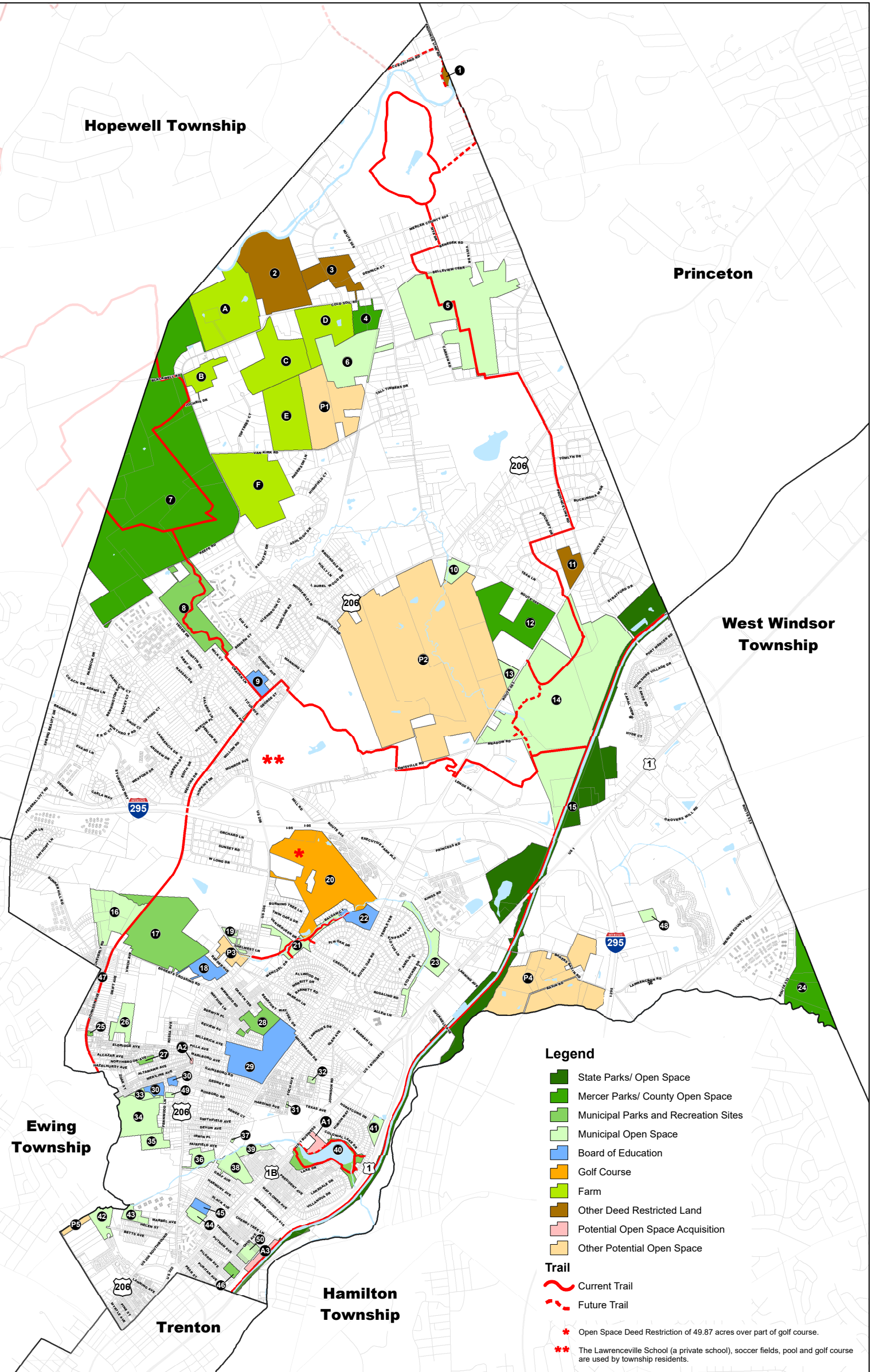


Municipally Owned Open Space and Recreation Facilities.	
Township Parks and Recreation Facilities	
Map No.	Name of Site
5	Carson Woods
6	Shipetaukin Woods
8	Village Park/Wilk Park
10	Fackler Park
13	Joe Maher Eco Center (part)
14	Maidenhead Meadows
16	Loveless Nature Park
17	Central Park
19	Battleground Park
21	Turtleback Park
23	Five Mile Run/Stonicker Pk.
25	Gilpin Park (Craigie)
26	Bossio-Salt Preserve
27	Eldridge Park
28	Veterans Park
31	Texas Ave Park
32	Glenn Ave Park
33	Meadowbrook Park
34	Drexel Woods
35	Rinck Park
36	Murray Park
37	Lawrence Shopping Center
38	Shabakunk Park
39	Tamanis Park
40	Colonial Lake Park
41	Eastern Park
42	Tiffany Woods
43	Helen Avenue Park
44	Slackwood Park
46	Hamnett Park
47	Johnson Trolley Line
48	Lawrence Station Road
49	Drexel Ave
50	John J. Nash Memorial Park

Open Space Lands of Other Governmental, Private, Quasi-Public Entities	
Board of Education Facilities	
Map No.	Name of Site
18	Lawrence Intermediate School
22	Ben Franklin Elementary School
29	Lawrence High School & Admin
30	Eldridge Elementary School
45	Slackwood Elementary School
Mercer County	
4	358 Cold Soil Road
7	Mercer Meadows/Rosedale Park
12	Gatterdam Park
24	Mercer County Park
State of NJ	
15	D&R Canal State Park
Preserved Farmland	
A	DiDonato-Mallard Farm
B	Chmiel Farm
C	DiDonato Farm
D	Mount Farm/Terhune Orchards
E	Mount Farm/Terhune Orchards
F	Hendrickson Farm
Other Deed Restricted Land	
1	Thompson
2	Transco Easement
3	Pyne/Deer
11	Britton Farm/Walson Easement
20	Cobblestone Golf Course

Sites Identified for Potential Open Space Acquisition	
Map No.	Name of Site
A1	Colonial Bowling (part)
A2	Pit Stop Service Center
A3	Satum Chemical Facility

Other Potential Open Space Areas	
Map No.	Name of Site
P1	Van Kirk Road
P2	Route 206/Princeton Pike
P3	Rte. 206, W. of Darrah Lane
P4	Bakers Basin/Lawrence Station Roads
P5	Spruce St. at Shabakunk Cr.



**Clarke Caton Hintz** ● ● ■  
 Architecture  
 Planning  
 Landscape Architecture

# Open Space and Recreation

LOCATION:  
Lawrence Township, Mercer County, NJ

DATE:  
July 2019