



State of New Jersey

Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council
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MEMORANDUM

To: Budget & Finance Committee
From: Benjamin L. Spinelli, Esq., Executive Director
Subject: Committee Meeting Minutes – April 4, 2023
Date: April 11, 2023

A Budget and Finance (B&F) Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, April 4, 2023, at 9:00am via Zoom.

Committee Chair Holtaway opened the meeting at 9:01am. Roll call was taken. The following participants were present:

Committee: Committee Chair Holtaway, Council Chair Richko, and Members James and Visioli.

Other attendee: Thomas Holl, Associate Counsel, Governor's Authorities Unit

Highlands Staff: Ben Spinelli, Gabrielle Gallagher, James Humphries, Maryjude Haddock-Weiler, Kelley Curran, Sarah Friend, Carole Ann Diction and Annette Tagliareni.

Highlands Council FY2023 Highlands Protection Fund Grant Requests

Committee Chair Holtaway announced that the committee will review/discuss three (3) grant requests for today's meeting.

Roxbury Township, Morris County: Lake Management Planning (\$113,650)

Kelley Curran, Science Manager, reported that Roxbury Township prepared a Scope of Work to complete a dredging project in the Landing Channel section of Lake Hopatcong. Landing Channel is located at the southern tip of Lake Hopatcong and was periodically dredged since its creation in the 1800s but ceased after 1990. A preliminary bathymetric survey conducted in 2015/2016 by Princeton Hydro estimated approximately 257,000 cubic yards of unconsolidated material was present. This study identified that dredging this area is a very high priority due to the amount accumulated unconsolidated sediment relative to existing water depths. These sediments contain a large amount of organic and inorganic phosphorus, contributing to Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs).

This project proposes to use the dredged material to rehabilitate an island, called “Floating Island,” as an aerial showed significant decrease in size for the past sixty years, losing important terrestrial, wetland, and littoral habitats. This is believed to be the first beneficial reuse project for a freshwater ecosystem in New Jersey.

The study is divided into two portions:

- Conducting ecological data collection (\$66,000);
- Conducting engineering data collection (\$47,500);
- The collected data will aid in the planning for the dredging and beneficial reuse of sediment in the Landing Channel Section of Lake Hopatcong (Total: \$113,650).

The ecological data collection involves wetland assessments, macroinvertebrate sampling, aquatic plant survey, fish survey and final ecological report. The engineering data collection and planning covers four tasks to meet the objectives of the study: an updated bathymetric assessment; sediment sampling plan and collection of samples; planning and logistics; and a planning project report. Ms. Curran noted that Highlands staff met with NJDEP regarding this project and that it will likely be permissible. This project meets **Policy 1L4** of the Regional Master Plan (RMP).

Committee Chair Holtaway asked for a motion to move the Roxbury Township grant to the full Council for consideration. Member Visioli made a motion and Council Chair Richko seconded it. All were in favor.

Montville Township, Morris County: Recreational Trail Planning (\$73,000)

Sarah Friend, Environmental Scientist, reported that Montville Township is seeking funding for the design and planning of a recreational walking and biking trail. The proposed route will connect South Abbott Road with the downtown region close to the Towaco Train Station and travel through preserved, municipal-owned land in their Highlands planning area. The Township proposes creating gravel parking lots at both ends of the trail. Ms. Friend noted that the trail is approximately 7,500 feet long and 6 feet wide. This project meets **Goal 8C** of the RMP.

At this time there was some discussion regarding the cost of the project. Ms. Friend noted that there are two stream crossings and wetlands areas along the proposed trail. Ms. Haddock-Weiler also noted that Highlands staff met with the Township regarding the design and the many challenges with the project. Montville Township was one of the first municipalities to adopt their Highlands Land Use Ordinance. Mr. Spinelli added that it is a multi-use trail with stream crossings and will require DEP permits. The committee agreed to provide committee members with maps for this project (attached to minutes). It was also noted that Montville representatives plan to attend the Council meeting.

Committee Chair Holtaway asked for a motion to move the Montville Township grant to the full Council for consideration. Council Chair Richko made a motion and Member Visioli seconded it. All were in favor.

Hunterdon County: GIS Parcel Update Project (\$70,000)

Maryjude Haddock-Weiler, Planning Manager, reported that Hunterdon County is seeking funding to update their existing parcel data for their constituent municipalities. County planning staff will provide digital subdivision/site plan information as the initial source of data for each parcel. A consultant will

conduct a thorough review of each Hunterdon municipal parcel data layer and cross reference to deeds and easements. The project will create an accurate base map reflecting parcel data throughout the county.

Mr. Spinelli added that this project feeds into our Interactive Map and will provide accuracy on the local level, as well as fill in data gaps for smaller towns.

Committee Chair Holtaway asked for a motion to move the Hunterdon County grant to the full Council for consideration. Council Chair Richko made a motion and Member Visioli seconded it. All were in favor.

RMP Implementation Fund

James Humphries, Director of Planning, Science & GIS, updated the committee on the RMP Implementation Fund. Mr. Humphries noted that the fund is a non-renewable fund held by the Council for direct implementation of the RMP. Unlike the Plan Conformance Grant Program, this fund is not restricted to only government entities.

Staff is proposing to use the RMP Fund for grants to nonprofit organizations that serve the region. Initially, this would include grants to groups that implement sustainable agriculture. Examples of these groups include but are not limited to the Foodshed Alliance and the North Jersey Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D). No action is required by the Committee at this time, however, the approval of grants will come before the Committee.

Committee Chair Holtaway noted that this will be a great resource for nonprofits and the Highlands.

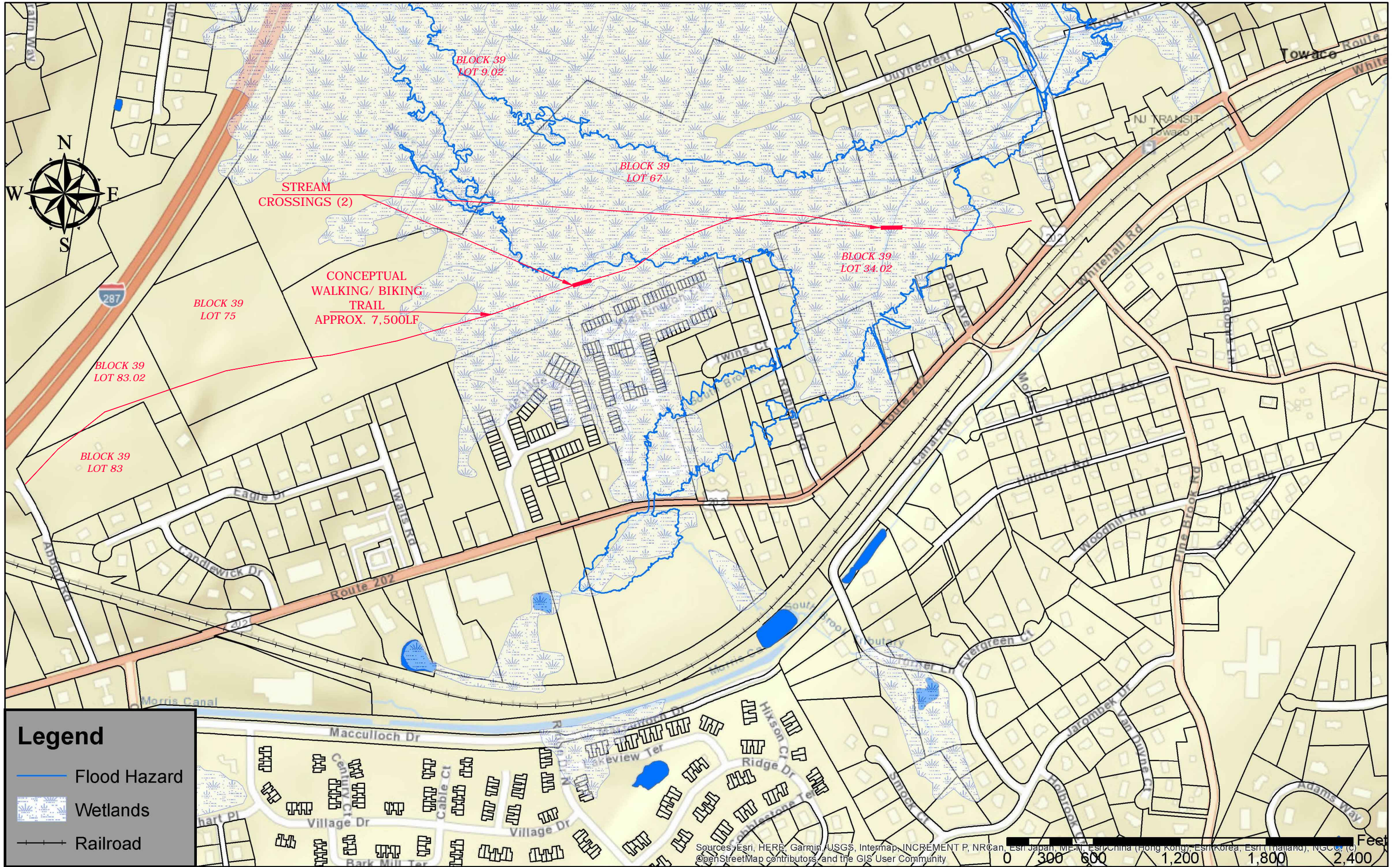
Affordable Housing RFQ

Mr. Humphries updated the committee on the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for assistance with Affordable Housing which closed on March 17th. Five (5) respondents were received. Staff reviewed the responses and have recommended that the Affordable Housing Committee interview 3 of the respondents. Interviews have been scheduled and the contract will be set at a not-to-exceed amount of \$100,000.

Report out – April 20th Council Meeting

Committee Chair Holtaway noted that he is unavailable for the April Council meeting so asked Member Visioli to report out at the meeting on the committee's activities.

The meeting adjourned at 9:29am.

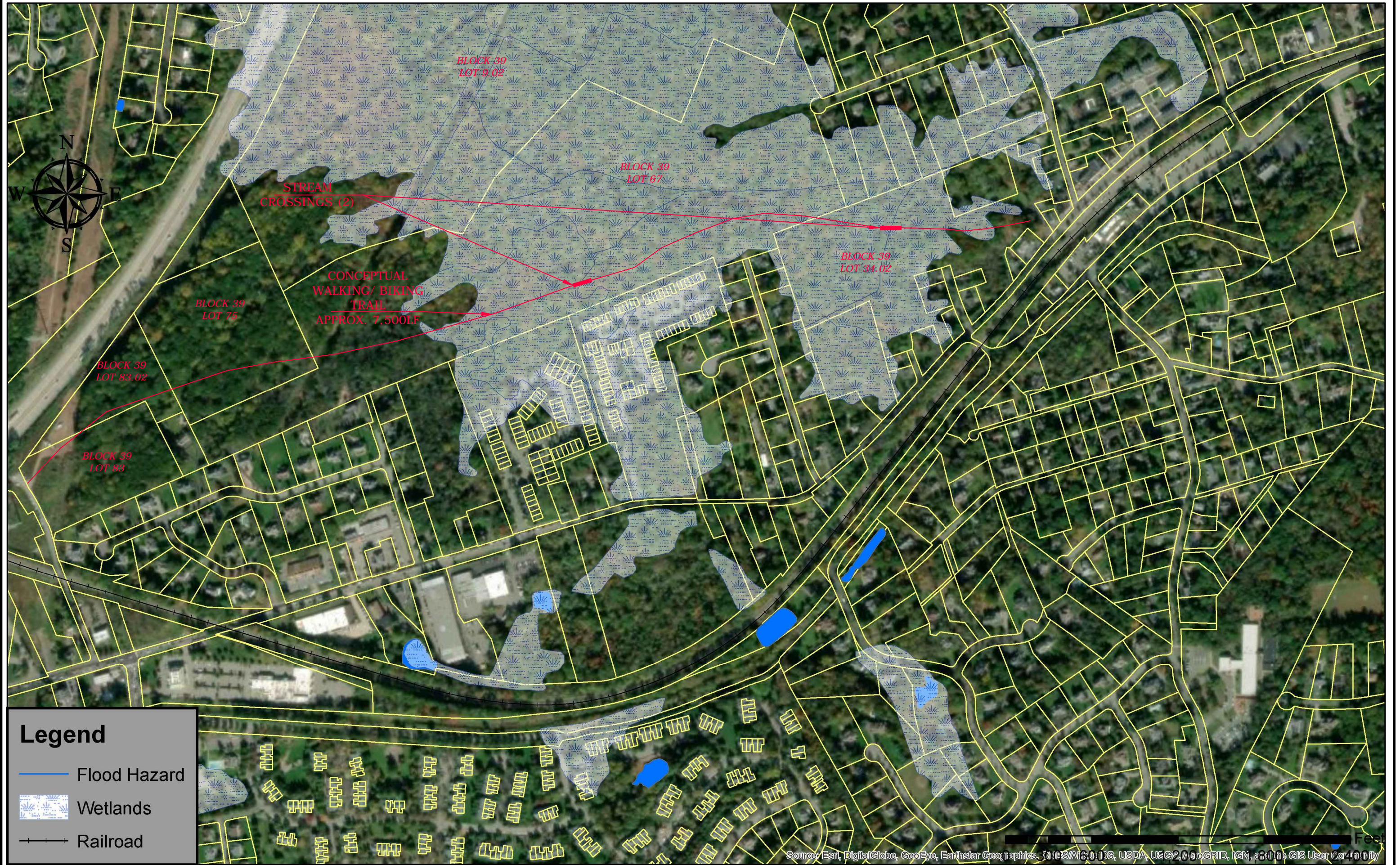


Legend

- Flood Hazard
- Wetlands
- Railroad

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, MEIT, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), NGCC, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

0 300 600 1,200 1,800 2,400 Feet



Legend

-  Flood Hazard
-  Wetlands
-  Railroad