



OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

Borough of High Bridge

March 2020

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Prepared by:



Darlene A. Green, P.P., AICP

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MC Project No. HIB-073

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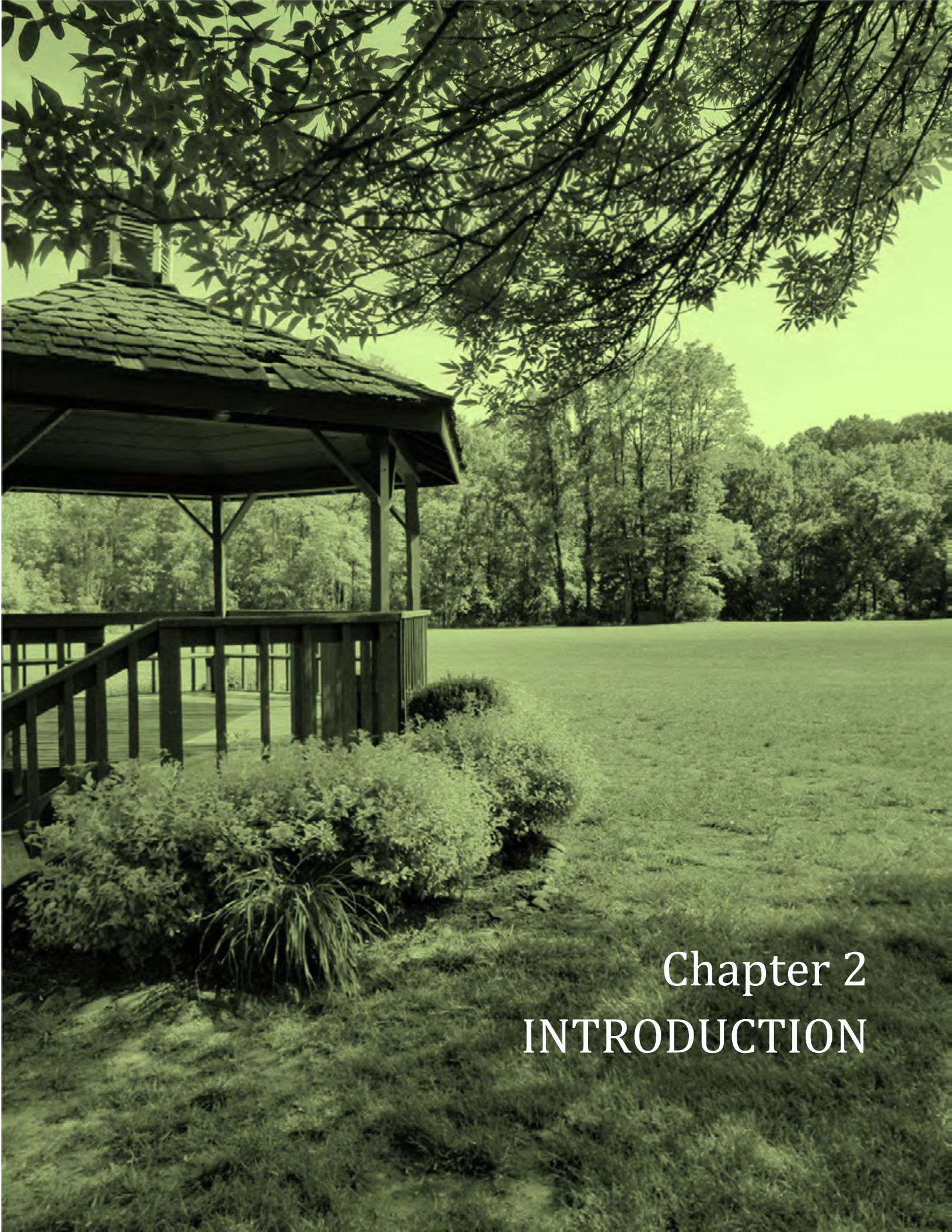
Chapter 1
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Open Space and Recreation Master Plan project would not have been possible without the financial support of the New Jersey Highlands Council, the support of the Mayor and Council, and the ongoing assistance of Borough staff.

We would also like to thank the Open Space Sub-committee members for their assistance and guidance:

- Coleen Conroy, Planning Board and Environmental Commission member
- Pablo Delgado, Planning Board and Economic Development Committee member
- Natalie Ferry, Council member and Liaison to the Cultural & Heritage Committee
- Matt Henderson, Recreation Committee member
- Lynn Hughes, Council member and Liaison to the Environmental Commission
- Rick Roll, DPW Supervisor
- Stephen Strange, Council member and Liaison to the Recreation Committee



Chapter 2
INTRODUCTION

2. INTRODUCTION

An Open Space and Recreation Plan is one of the optional Master Plan Elements that expresses the municipality's vision for open space and recreation. An Open Space and Recreation Plan provides a snapshot of existing conditions and identifies issues and opportunities for passive and active recreation. The purpose of this plan is to not only identify issues, but offer strategies and a framework to address them.

Providing open space is a major goal of the Municipal Land Use Law ("MLUL"), which regulates land use in the State. Three of the MLUL's purposes (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2) relate to open space. The MLUL directs communities to:

- Provide light, air and open space
- Provide 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 their respective environmental requirements in order to meet the needs of all New Jersey citizens
- Promote the conservation of historic sites and districts, open space, energy resources and valuable natural resources.....and to prevent urban sprawl and degradation of the environment through improper use of the land

Additionally, there are many benefits to open space, including, but not limited to:

- Increased property values for parcels next to or near open space
- Increased revenues from tourism
- Soil conservation
- Preservation of biological diversity
- Air purification
- Drainage and water management
- Health benefits including reduced stress levels, increased activity, etc.

HIGH BRIDGE

The Borough of High Bridge is located in the northern portion of Hunterdon County. A small downtown area is the focal point of this primarily residential community. The Borough is bordered by Lebanon Township to the north and Clinton Township to the east, south and west. The South Branch of the Raritan River flows northeast to southwest through the Borough. High Bridge has a land area of 2.4 square miles and an estimated 3,565 residents according to the five-year 2017 American Community Survey.¹

The Borough is traversed by County Road 513, which travels along Fairview Avenue, Church Street, Main Street, Bridge Street, and West Main Street. Access to State Route 31 is located to the southwest via West Main Street and west via Cregar Road. Interchange 17 (Clinton) and Interchange 18 (Annandale) along Interstate 78 are minutes away.

This is High Bridge's second Open Space and Recreation Plan. The first plan was completed in 2001. The Borough was awarded a grant from the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council ("Highlands Council") to prepare this Open Space and Recreation Plan on December 18, 2018. The Borough Council authorized the drafting of this Plan on December 21, 2018 to inventory and evaluate Borough-owned facilities and advance the Borough's goals of recreation tourism and economic development. The Borough owns a total of 286+ acres of preserved land, which represents 18.4% of High Bridge's land area.²

This document provides a comprehensive analysis of existing conditions within the Borough of High Bridge and sets forth goals and objectives regarding open space and recreation in the Borough. The remainder of the document is divided into eleven chapters covering the following topics:

- Inventory of existing open space and recreation facilities
- Recreation needs analysis
- Assessment of existing assets
- Public survey results
- Goals and objectives to guide future actions regarding open space and recreation
- Specific park recommendations
- Plan for acquiring any additional sites for passive or active recreation
- Park vision plan
- Action plan for next steps
- Public participation during the project
- Relationship to the County's recently adopted Park plan

2001 OPEN SPACE PLAN

In May of 2001, the Borough created their first Open Space Plan, which addressed one of the Goals of the 1991 Borough of High Bridge Master Plan update. The Plan was drafted to address population growth and the impacts on the Borough's infrastructure. It was noted that the Borough's sewer and water systems are near capacity and increasing development pressures in Hunterdon County put the Borough's infrastructure and natural resources at risk. The Plan analyzed existing open space lands and created an acquisition plan to prioritize future open space lands. The Open Space Plan indicated that the existing open space and recreation parcels do not meet the Borough's needs. Therefore, the Plan prioritized lands which would preserve natural and historic resources in addition to potential recreational parcels. Methods of acquisition were also provided in the Plan.

The 2001 Open Space Plan includes nine Goals to guide the Borough's use of existing facilities and acquisition of future lands:

1. Provide adequate active and passive recreation. The Master Plan calls for a more decentralized recreational system that would make recreational areas more accessible to all sections of the Borough.
2. Provide recreational and open space opportunities on an equal and accessible basis for all citizens.
3. Maintain water quality and groundwater recharge areas.
4. Protect sensitive environmental features.
5. Protect historic areas.
6. Maintain biodiversity.
7. Minimize erosion or damage from flooding.
8. Maintain rural character.
9. Coordinate programs with other local boards or surrounding communities.

The 2001 Plan also listed the Office of Green Acres preservation goals and included the guidelines to determine if a property is regionally significant as established in the 2000 Hunterdon County Open Space, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund Plan.

In 2001 the County owned approximately 13 acres of parkland and the State owned almost 34 acres of parkland within the Borough. High Bridge owned 19.5 acres of parkland and the golf course, which total approximately 90 acres.

At the time of the 2001 Plan's creation, there were three land acquisitions in progress:

- The Cassella Tract – Block 4.07, Lot 1; Block 37, Lot 1; and Block 40, Lots 211 and 111.01
 - Block 4.07, Lot is Lake Solitude. Block 37, Lot 1 is a portion of the Nassau track. Block 40, Lots 211 and 111.01 does not exist in the tax records but are likely the remaining lots within Nassau. The Borough owns Lake Solitude and Nassau.
- The Wetteland Property – Block 40, Lot 4
 - This is Springside Farm, which is currently owned by the Borough.
- The Fischell Tract – Block 30.02, Lots 1 and 5
 - These two lots are presently owned by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

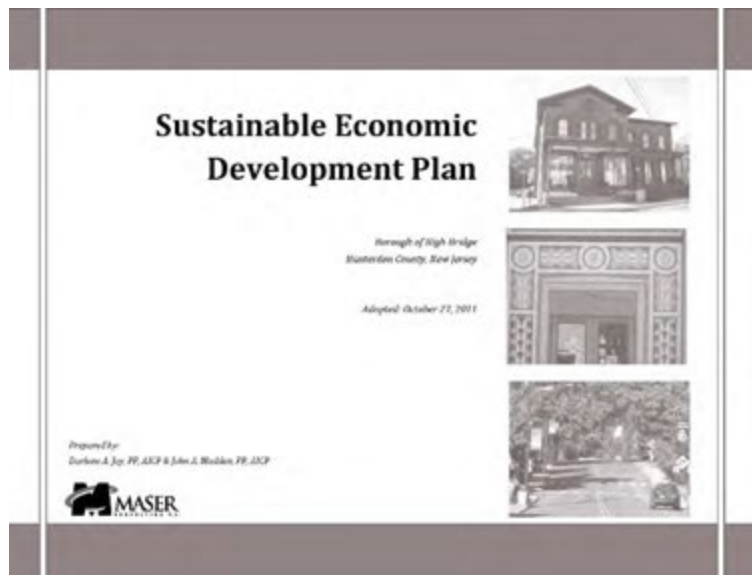
Finally, the 2001 Open Space Plan offered the following recommendations and five-year action plan:

- Completed update of the High Bridge Natural Resource Inventory (“NRI”) with special attention given to detail large parcel properties listed. (Amend the open space plan if necessary, to reflect proper priorities based on NRI results).
- Zoning and Ordinance recommendations to preserve natural resources, community character and historic sites and further the goals of the open space program.
- Begin program targeting some large parcels for donation and easement conservation.
- Maintenance and management of preserved open space.
- Work with “Friends” organizations and contract with non-profit organizations.
- Schedule and hold meetings with individual large parcel property owners for an annual site visit from an official.
- Preserve wellhead protection areas around our wells that are located in other towns.

2011 SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In 2011, the Borough adopted a Sustainable Economic Development Plan, which examined the Borough's existing economic assets and included a community profile of demographics, land use, and zoning conditions. The Plan recommended goals, strategies, and actions to improve High Bridge's economic health and stability. The following list details the two goals and associated action items of the Sustainable Economic Development Plan that will likely be advanced by this Plan:

- Goal 1: Accommodate economic growth in a sustainable manner, taking careful advantage of the unique historic and natural resources within High Bridge.
- Goal 4: Diversify High Bridge's economy by utilizing existing assets to transform the Borough into a destination for cultural/heritage tourism and outdoor recreation.
 - Install wayfinding signage.
 - Develop self-guided trail brochures.



- Install historic markers.
- Complete site feasibility studies for Solitude House & Annex, TISCO property, and Springside Farms.
- Prepare and implement development plans for the aforementioned properties based on site feasibility study results.
- Work with the County and Jersey Off-Road Bicycle Association to promote High Bridge's biking trails.
- Work with the NY-NJ Trail Conference, NJ Hiking, and NJ Trails groups to promote High Bridge's trails and market the Borough.
- Work with local angler clubs and State fishing organizations to promote the Borough's fishing opportunities.
- Link existing open spaces with a network of trails.
- Install interpretive signage along select trails.
- Evaluate the installation of a portable bathroom and refreshment cart at the Commons for trail users.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan seeks to advance the above goals and action items and reinforce the Borough's commitment to diversifying High Bridge's economy and providing a high quality of living for its residents by offering and maintaining a variety of open spaces and recreation areas.

NASSAU TRAIL



Chapter 3 INVENTORY

3. INVENTORY

COMMUNITY RESOURCES











The initial step in evaluating the open space and recreation needs of a community is the identification of existing open spaces and recreation facilities. Within High Bridge there are several entities that own open space and/or recreation facilities – the Borough, County, State, and non-profit entities. The table below provides an inventory of the name of the facility, block, lot, location, size, and usage (passive and/or active) for each facility owned by the Borough. The map on page 11 illustrates the location of the facilities outlined below and the map on page 12 shows the existing trail system within the Borough.

BOROUGH-OWNED OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION FACILITIES					
Facility	Block	Lot	Location	Acres	Usage
Arch Street Open Space (Wack Property)	29.03	1	Trenton Ave	1.60	Passive
The Commons*	201	8	Main St	0.97	Active and
	201	9	79 Main St	6.20	Passive
Dennis Avenue Preserve	20	50	Dennis Ave & Ridge Rd	3.03	Passive
Dewey Avenue (Catanzaetti)	31	14.02	Dewey Ave	20.61	Passive
Dewey Avenue (Catanzaetti)*	31	14.02	Dewey Ave	13.29	Passive
East Main Street Preserve (Open Space)	33	36	Dewey Ave	2.65	Passive
High Bridge Hills Golf Club*	20	1	Cregar Rd	20.10	Active
	20	1.01	Cregar Rd	73.67	
High Bridge Hollow (Pfauth Property)	19	68	Cregar Rd	44.46	Active and Passive
Jericho Baseball Complex	30.02	2	Old Jericho Rd	8.11	Active
Lake Solitude and Dam	4.07	1	7-9 River Rd	33.36	Passive
Mini Park	29.01	1	32 Main St	0.25	Passive
Nassau	37	1	Nassau Rd	53.35	Active and Passive
	40	2	Nassau Rd	26.96	
	40	11.01	Nassau Rd	9.76	
South Branch of the Raritan River	29.04	2	Arch St	0.50	Passive
Springside Farm	40	4	East Main St	37.18	Active and Passive
TISCO (Komline) Property	4.06	34	Washington Ave	26.96	Active and Passive
Union Forge Park	4.06	34.01	Washington Ave	7.15	Active and Passive
	29.02	15	20 Washington Ave	11.00	
ROSI TOTAL				286.93	
NON-ROSI TOTAL				114.23	
TOTAL				401.15	

*Property not included on the ROSI

Source: Online tax cards - <http://oprs.co.monmouth.nj.us/oprs>

Legend

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Municipal Boundary | <i>Parks and Open Spaces</i> |
|  Parcels |  Borough-owned ROSI Properties |
| <i>Park Usage</i> |  Borough-owned Non-ROSI Properties |
|  Active |  Township of Clinton |
|  Passive |  County of Hunterdon |
| |  State of New Jersey |
| |  Non-profit |

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




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 1 inch = 1,400 feet

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE
 BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
 HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



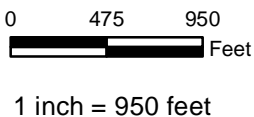
FEBRUARY 2020

Legend

-  Municipal Boundary
 -  Parcels
 - Parks and Open Spaces**
 -  ROSI Properties
 -  Non-ROSI Properties
 -  Historic Site
 -  Trail Parking
- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Trail Names |  Columbia Trail |
| |  Eagle Scout |
| |  Nassau |
| |  Steelworkers |
| |  High Bridge Hollow |



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**PARKS AND OPEN SPACE
TRAIL SYSTEM**
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



High Bridge encompasses roughly 1,555 acres. The State owns 151.55 acres, or 9.7%, of land within the Borough. The County owns the Columbia Trail and land along the South Branch of the Raritan River near Arch Street which comprise 12.94 acres. In 2010, the NJ Audubon Society purchased Block 30.02 Lot 6 (consisting of approximately 15 acres), but sold the lot in 2014 to two individuals. Therefore, the State and County own a total of 164.49 acres, or 10.5%, of the Borough's land area. The sections below briefly describe the State, County, and Municipal resources.

STATE

There are two State-owned open space and recreation facilities in High Bridge. The following sections describe each resource.

VOORHEES STATE PARK

Voorhees State Park is primarily located in Lebanon Township to the north. However, portions of the park extend into High Bridge. The Park offers multiple amenities including 14 hiking and biking trails, picnicking, fishing, hunting, restrooms, and a playground. The Park staff offers a variety of historical and nature programs. The Park has a campground which includes 47 tent and trailer sites, two group camp sites, and three cabin-like shelters. Restroom and shower facilities are located near the sites. The New Jersey Astronomical Association operates an observatory in the Park, which offers programs during the spring and summer months.³

According to the Voorhees State Park Map, the Vista Trail and Highlands Trail traverses the properties between Fine Road and Buffalo Hollow Road. Along the Vista trail are two scenic views and a point of interest named "George's Stones". Hunting is also permitted in this area. The specific properties within the Voorhees State Park boundary in the Borough are as follows:

- Block 1.01, Lot 1
- Block 2, Lots 2, 3.01, and 3.02
- Block 2.01, Lots 40, 41, and 42; and
- Block 3, Lot 1.

NJDEP

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection ("NJDEP") owns six properties in High Bridge comprising 107.5 acres, which equates to 6.9% of the Borough's land area. Two properties, identified as Block 1, Lots 1 and 3, are located in the northwestern corner of the Borough, between Cregar Road and the railroad right-of-way. The area of this tract of land totals 30.8 acres. The properties are primarily forested, however, a portion of a baseball outfield located in Lebanon Township is on Lot 1. Lot 1 has frontage on Cregar Road across from the High Bridge Hills Golf Club and between Block 1, Lots 1.07 and 1.08. Lot 3 does not have any frontage. A small parking area across from the Golf Club with a sign indicating "a portion of the property is permanently dedicated for open space purposes to help protect and maintain water quality" is located on Lot 1. The sign is endorsed by the NJDEP and the NJ Environmental Infrastructure Financing Program. The sign also states the parking area is for hunters.

Block 30.02, Lots 1, 2.01, and 5.01 comprise the second tract of land owned by the NJDEP, totaling 76.6 acres. This tract is located south of the Jericho Baseball Complex between Old Jericho Road and the railroad right-of-way. Lots 1 and 5.01 make up the frontage on the east side of Old Jericho Road south of the powerline right-of-way. According to aerial imagery,⁴ Lots 1 and 2.01 are wooded while Lot 5.01 contains forest area and a large field. A tributary of the South Branch of the Raritan River flows between Lots 2.01 and 5.01. Additionally, in the middle of Lot 5.01 is a single-family dwelling, which is located on Block 32.02, Lot 5.

Finally, Block 29.04, Lot 2.01 is a small 0.14 acre parcel located on the west side of Arch Street across from the Jericho Baseball Complex. This parcel is wooded and provides access to the South Branch of the Raritan River.

HUNTERDON COUNTY

There are two County-owned open space and recreation facilities within the Borough of High Bridge. See below for descriptions of each resource.

COLUMBIA TRAIL

The Columbia Trail is a former railroad right-of-way, which operated as a passenger and freight line between 1875 and 1976. The rail line ran from High Bridge to present day Wharton in Morris County. In the 1990s, the Columbia Gas Company of West Virginia constructed a gas line under approximately 15 miles of the rail bed. To compensate for the disturbance of public land, the Gas Company dedicated the surface rights to the Hunterdon County Division of Parks and Recreation and Morris County Park Commission and agreed to install a public use trail on the surface. The trail spans approximately seven miles in Hunterdon County and approximately 0.9 miles in High Bridge.^{5&6} (See the map on page 12 for the trail's location within the Borough.) The Columbia Trail provides connections to multiple Hunterdon County open space and recreation facilities including the Ken Lockwood Gorge Fish and Wildlife Management Area. The Ken Lockwood Gorge provides multiple recreational amenities including hiking, fishing, and hunting.

The Columbia Trail is located on the following properties in High Bridge: Block 4.06, Lots 7 and 30; Block 7, Lot 4; and Block 300, Lots 1 and 4.

The trailhead is at Main Street, across from the entrance to the Commons. Additionally, one can access the Taylor Steelworkers Historical Greenway ("Steelworkers Trail") from the Columbia Trail.

ARCHES SECTION OF THE SOUTH BRANCH OF THE RARITAN RIVER

Hunterdon County owns over 1,000 acres of land as part of the South Branch Reservation.⁷ The Arches Section is located in High Bridge on Block 29, Lot 1; Block 29.04, Lot 1; Block 30, Lot 18; and Block 30.01, Lot 1 and totals 3.6 acres. The property offers fishing and views of the Arches. According to the park map on the Hunterdon County website, the NJDEP property, Block 29.04, Lot 2.01, and the Borough-owned South Branch of the Raritan River property (Block 29.04, Lot 2) are within the park boundary.⁸

BOROUGH

There are 15 Borough-owned open space and recreation facilities in High Bridge. The following sections describe each asset.

ARCH STREET OPEN SPACE

Identified as Block 29.02, Lot 1, the Arch Street Open Space (formally known as the Wack Property) is located along Arch Street. The northern property line is adjacent to the South Branch of the Raritan River and Union Forge Park. The site is 1.6 acres and provides fishing opportunities. Additional information on the park can be found in Chapters 5 and 8.

THE COMMONS

The Commons is a 7.2-acre tract and is one of the Borough’s core recreational facilities. The park is located on Lots 8 and 9 in Block 201 at 79 Main Street. The properties were previously owned by the Central Railroad of New Jersey, later by NJ Transit, and used as a turn-around area for trains. The Borough purchased the properties in 1996 and subsequently removed the old rails and developed a common open space for residents and visitors.⁹ The Commons is directly adjacent to High Bridge Hollow and the Columbia Trail. However, the site is not listed on the Borough’s Recreation and Open Space Inventory (“ROSI”). The site’s absence from the listing is purposeful, as a portion of the tract is used for DPW purposes such as recycling. Additional information on the Commons can be found in Chapters 5 and 8.



Photo 1: Gazebo within The Commons

DENNIS AVENUE PRESERVE

This wooded parcel is located on the west side of Dennis Avenue. Formally known as Dennis Avenue Park, the Dennis Avenue Preserve comprises 3.03 acres and is approximately 825 feet deep. Additional information on this open space can be found in Chapters 5 and 8.

DEWEY AVENUE PROPERTY (CANTANZARETTI PROPERTY)

Located on the west side of Dewey Avenue, Block 31, Lot 14.02 is comprised of 33.19 acres and is known as the Dewey Avenue Property (formally known as the Cantanzaretti Property). A majority of the site is forested and contains steep slopes. Approximately 20.6 acres of the site is on the ROSI, 1 acre is within the road right-of-way, and 12.3 acres are not on the ROSI.¹⁰ Additional information on the park can be found in Chapters 5 and 8.

EAST MAIN STREET PRESERVE

Located along East Main Street, Block 33, Lot 36, is referred to as the East Main Street Preserve (formally known as Open Space). This site is divided by an unknown stream. The preserve encompasses approximately 2.6 acres and is forested. Additional information on the preserve can be found in Chapters 5 and 8.

HIGH BRIDGE HOLLOW (PFAUTH PROPERTY)

Located behind properties fronting on Cregar Road, Fairview Avenue, Main Street, and Woodland Terrace, Block 19, Lot 68 is known as High Bridge Hollow (formally known as the Pfauth Property). This 44.5-acre site offers two trail loops for hiking and biking. High Bridge Hollow is connected to many other Borough-owned recreational facilities via the Commons and Columbia Trail including, but not limited to, the TISCO Property, Union Forge Park, Lake Solitude and Dam. Additional information on the park can be found in Chapters 5 and 8.

JERICHO BASEBALL COMPLEX

Located at the intersection of Arch Street and Old Jericho Road, Block 30.03, Lot 2 is referred to as the Jericho Baseball Complex. This 8.11-acre site contains three baseball/softball fields and batting cage facilities. Storage bins and sheds for baseball equipment are also located on the site. Three parking areas serve the fields. Additional information on the complex can be found in Chapters 5 and 8.

LAKE SOLITUDE AND DAM

This 33.4-acre parcel offers multiple recreational activities. Located on Block 4.01, Lot 1 on the west side of River Road, Lake Solitude occupies most of the parcel and offers fishing, walking, hiking, biking, and passive recreation. The site is also home to historic Solitude House, the Annex Building, an old kitchen building, and a garage/carriage barn building, which can be toured by the public. The Taylor Steelworkers Historical Greenway Trail (“Steelworkers Trail”) traverses the property and provides connections to the Columbia Trail, the TISCO Property, Nassau, and Springside Farms. See the map on page 12 for details. Additional information on the site can be found in Chapters 5 and 8.



Photo 2: Dam at Lake Solitude

MINI PARK

Located at 32 Main Street on Block 29.01, Lot 1, this quarter-acre site is primarily a public parking lot. However, ornamental trees in planters are located along Main Street and McDonald Street. Murals are illustrated on the retaining wall adjacent to the parking lot. Additional information on the facility can be found in Chapters 5 and 8.

NASSAU

Totaling over 90 acres across three parcels, Block 37, Lot 1, and Block 40, Lots 2 and 11.02, is the Nassau property. Located along Nassau Road, the park provides an extensive network of trails for walking, hiking, and biking. These trails connect to the Steelworkers Trail. Two parking areas are located on Block 37, Lot 1, each of which provide an information board, picnic table, and bike rack. Additional information on the park can be found in Chapters 5 and 8.

SOUTH BRANCH OF THE RARITAN RIVER

This narrow strip of land encompassing 0.5 acres between the South Branch of the Raritan River and Arch Street provides passive recreation opportunities including fishing. A picnic table is located on the property to enjoy the scenic views of the river. Additional information on the park can be found in Chapters 5 and 8.

SPRINGSIDE FARM

Known as Block 40, Lot 4 on the Borough Tax Map, this 37.2-acre site is referred to as Springside Farm. The property is accessible via Springside Lane and a driveway located off of Nassau Road. The site contains five old structures in the southern portion of the site, a dwelling, three barns, and a detached accessory structure. The northern half of

the site contains a variety of trails, including the Steelworkers Trail, which connect to the trails on the Nassau properties. Additional information on the park can be found in Chapters 5 and 8.

TISCO PROPERTY (KOMLINE PROPERTY)

The TISCO Property (formally known as the Komline Property) is located on the east side of Washington Avenue, south of the Columbia Trail, and north of the Union Forge Park. The site is 27 acres and provides access to the Steelworkers Trail, which connects to the Columbia Trail, Lake Solitude and Dam, Nassau, and Springside Farm sites. Two historical structures, the TISCO office building and Shop E are located on the property. Additional information on the park can be found in Chapters 5 and 8.

UNION FORGE PARK

Comprising of two properties, Block 4.06, Lot 34.01 and Block 29.02, Lot 15, spanning 18.2 acres on either side of Washington Avenue, Union Forge Park provides the most recreational amenities out of all the Borough's facilities and is the central park of High Bridge. Block 4.06, Lot 34.01 contains three baseball/softball fields, batting cages, and a concession stand. A basketball court, a large field which is used as a soccer field, and a playground is located on Block 29.02, Lot 15. Both properties border the South Branch of the Raritan River to the southeast. Additional information on the park can be found in Chapters 5 and 8.

HIGH BRIDGE HILLS GOLF CLUB

The Borough owns an 18-hole golf course, which is open to the public, at 203 Cregar Road. Within the Borough, the High Bridge Hills Golf Club encompasses 93.8 acres and is identified as Block 20, Lots 1 and 1.01. It should be noted that while the Borough owns these parcels, this Open Space and Recreation Plan does not analyze or evaluate the property as it is not on the Borough's ROSI.



Photo 3: High Bridge Hills Golf Club

ADJACENT RESOURCES

While the above inventory specifically focuses on the parks and open spaces inside of High Bridge it is important to note the resources adjacent to the community.

(See the map on page 11.) As previously mentioned, portions of Voorhees State Park are located within the Borough. However, a majority of the recreational facilities offered by the State Park are located in Lebanon Township to the north. According to the park map², a portion of the Vista Trail, with two scenic views, and the Highlands Trail are located within the Borough. A hunting area is also located within High Bridge.

The Township of Clinton owns two open space properties, one to the east, adjacent to Springside Farm, and one to the south, adjacent to the NJDEP tract along Old Jericho Road. According to the Township's 2008 Natural Resource Inventory Update ("NRI Update")¹¹, the Township-owned open space to the east is known as Block 33, Lot 2 and comprises of 53.54 acres. The document indicates this site is referred to as Springside Woodlands. According to Google aerial imagery, the property is forested. The property to the south is referred to as the Clinton Township

Planning Incentive and is known as Block 63, Lot 2 on the Township Tax Map. According to the NRI Update, this site encompasses nearly 80 acres. Google aerial imagery shows forest, fields, and two structures on the property.

To the northeast are two additional adjacent resources. Camp Dill is an active camp operated by two Boy Scout Councils, the Raritan and Central New Jersey Councils.¹² According to Clinton Township tax records, Block 41, Lots 3.01 and 4 comprise the 9.1-acre camp. As previously mentioned, the Columbia Trail spans approximately seven miles in Hunterdon County. Along the Columbia Trail, just outside of High Bridge, is the Ken Lockwood Gorge Water Management Area which offers walking, hiking, and biking trails, fishing, and scenic views of the South Branch of the Raritan River. This is just one example of a recreational facility accessible from High Bridge via the Columbia Trail.

NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE COMMUNITY

The Borough prepared an Environmental Resource Inventory (“ERI”) in March of 2011. The 62-page document provides a variety of information and maps regarding the Borough’s natural resources. This section summarizes significant natural resources within the community.

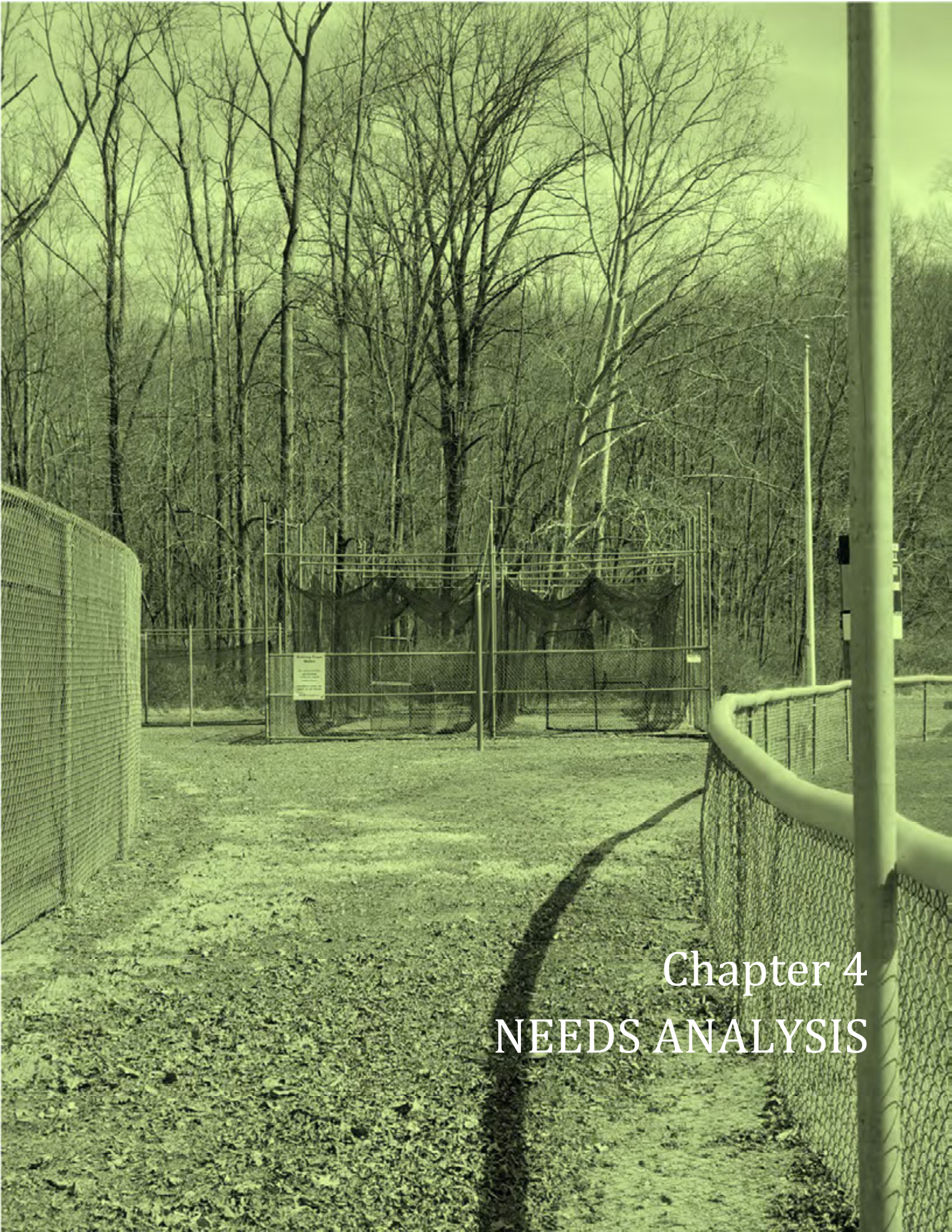
One of the primary natural resources in the Borough of High Bridge are open waters, which include rivers, streams, lakes and ponds, and wetlands. Open waters provide vital services such as flood and stormwater retention, filtration, water quality protections, and ecological habitats. The Highlands Regional Master Plan requires a 300-foot buffer of open waters, known as the Open Water Protection Area (“OWPA”). Similarly, Riparian Areas include open waters and their flood prone areas, riparian soils, wetlands, and wildlife habitats to protect important water resources and habitats. According to the Borough’s ERI, High Bridge contains eight miles of streams, 56 acres of wetlands, 29 acres of lakes and ponds, 627 acres of OWPA, and 672 acres of Riparian Areas.¹³ It should be noted that the OWPA and Riparian Area significantly overlap.

The Borough contains areas of Moderate Constrained Slopes and Severely Constrained Slopes. Moderate Constrained slopes include grades between 15% and 20%, while Severely Constrained Slopes include grades of 20% or greater and lands within Riparian Areas with slopes of 10% to 20%. The ERI reports that the Borough contains 58 acres of Moderate Constrained slopes and 590 acres of Severely Constrained slopes.¹⁴ This totals 648 acres of constrained slope areas or 41.6% of the Borough’s land.

High Bridge relies exclusively on ground water as the source of drinking water for residents.¹⁵ Therefore, it is of utmost importance to protect the Wellhead Protection Areas (“WHPA”) around Public Community Well systems to ensure safe, clean, and healthful drinking water. According to the ERI there are no public wells within the Borough. However, the Tier 1, 2, and 3 WHPAs of two public well systems in Clinton Township encompass the southwestern area of the Borough. Tier 1 WHPAs indicate a two-year travel time of bacterial and/or viral contamination movement while Tier 2 and Tier 3 WHPAs reflect a five- and 12-year travel time, respectively.¹⁶

Due to the community’s abundance of natural resources, High Bridge offers suitable habitats for both flora and fauna. Critical Wildlife Habitats suitable for the growth of populations of rare, threatened, and endangered species are present on 42.6% of the Borough’s land area. The ERI reports that the Borough contains lands which support the Barred Owl, Cooper’s Hawk, and Wood Turtle populations, which are State threatened species. Additionally, some of the Borough’s land is able to support the Bobcat population, which is on the State’s endangered species list.¹⁷ See the ERI for full details on all of the natural resources within the Borough of High Bridge:

https://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/hunterdon_county/high_bridge/municipal_adopted/Adopted_High_Lands_Environmental_Resource_Inventory.pdf



Chapter 4
NEEDS ANALYSIS

4. NEEDS ANALYSIS

Open Space and Recreation Plans typically include a needs analysis, which studies the adequacy of the current open space and recreation system to satisfy both present and future needs. The purpose of the analysis is to identify the gaps in the system. In addition to the standard numerical analysis, interviews were conducted with four community stakeholders to assess community needs.

NUMERICAL ANALYSIS

The need for recreation and open space areas can be determined by population and the recreational facilities available to that population. In order to conduct a needs assessment, the population for High Bridge was determined. According to the 2017 American Community Survey's five-year estimates, the Borough of High Bridge has 3,565 residents.¹⁸

There is no exact standard for determining the need for recreation and open space. However, the National Recreation and Park Association ("NRPA") compiled data from 925 park and recreation agencies across the country between 2014 and 2016 to create their 2017 NRPA Agency Performance Review. The report provides NRPA's Park Metrics, a comprehensive data tool that uses the trends of the recreation agencies to help guide their management and planning of recreation facilities.

The 2017 report found that a typical Park and Recreation Agency has 9.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents and one park for every 2,266 residents.¹⁹ Comparing this to the Borough of High Bridge, the Borough exceeds both of these benchmarks. The Borough owns 401.15 acres of parkland and open space as shown in the table on page 10. However, only 325.87 acres is actively used as parkland. Additionally, this includes 93.77 acres at the High Bridge Hills Golf Club and 7.1 acres at The Commons. Therefore, there is only 224.93 acres of true public parkland, which translates to 63.1 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents – over six times the standard found by NRPA. High Bridge's 225 acres of parkland comes from six parks, Jericho Baseball Complex, the TISCO Property, Nassau, the High Bridge Hollow, Springside Farm, and Union Forge Park. This equates to one park for every 595 residents.

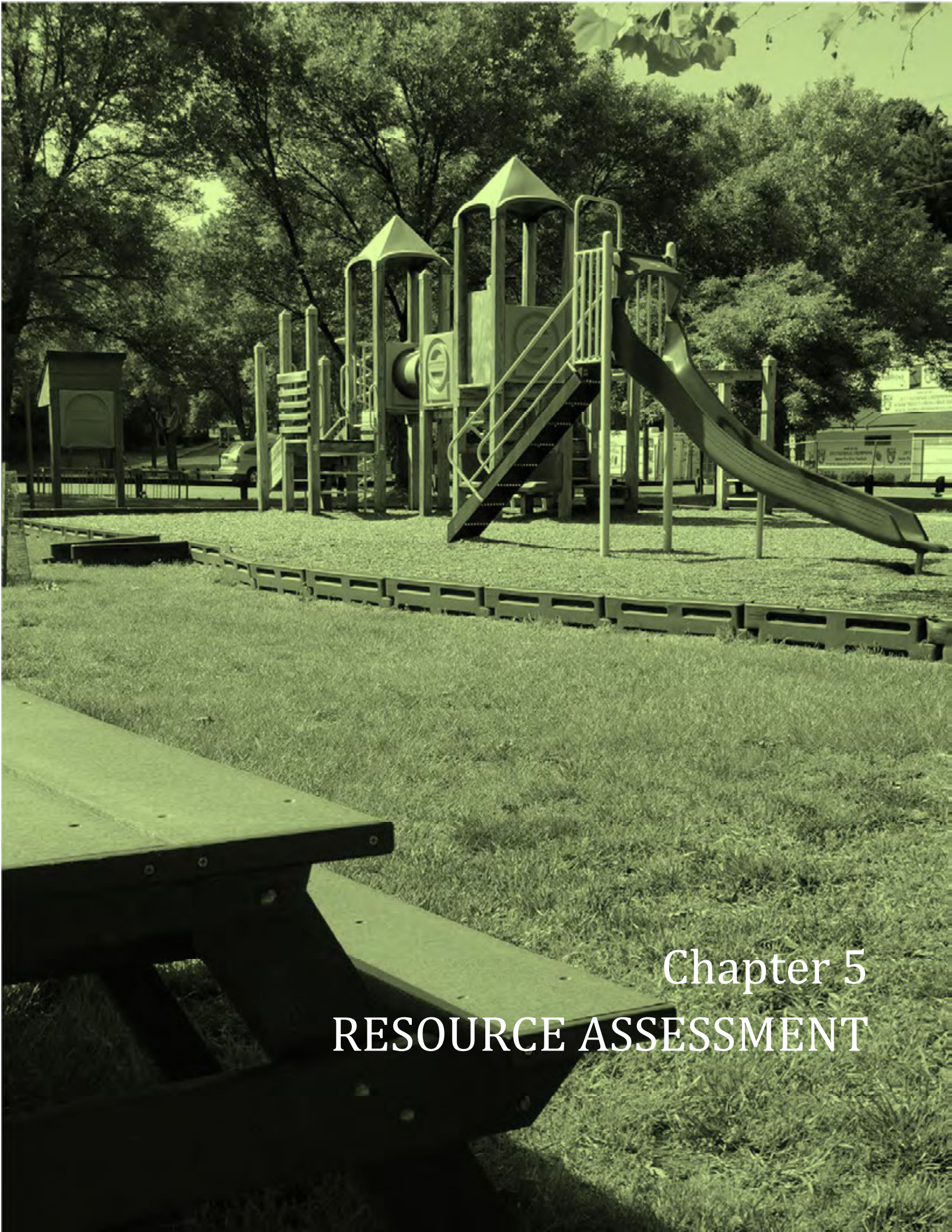
The 2017 report also provides the same data by jurisdictional type, such as county, regional, township, etc. A typical town agency is reported to have one park for every 1,915 residents and 8.3 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents.²⁰ High Bridge's parkland is well above these two standards at 63.1 acres of public parkland per 1,000 residents and one park for every 595 residents.

INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT

In addition to the numerical analysis, this office conducted four phone interviews with Stephen Strange, Councilman and Recreation Committee Member; Rick Roll, DPW Supervisor; Adam Young, Borough Clerk; and Carl Katzenberger, sports coach. These phone interviews were conducted on separate occasions. Key findings from the interviews are:

- Bow hunting is permitted on Naasau, Springside Farm, High Bridge Hollow, and the Dewey Avenue Property. Roughly one person a year registers to bow hunt.
- Residents can reserve any part of a Borough park for a party or event.
- Approximately 18 to 24 couples get married annually on Borough parkland. Lake Solitude is a popular location for this.
- Many years ago, Lake Solitude had a beach and a snack stand. The lake was used for swimming and boating. Today most parts of the Lake are only six inches to one foot deep. The Lake should be dredged, and benches should be added near the dam.

- Sports fields are reserved on a first come, first served basis. Field scheduling is not an issue within the Borough.
- Residents complain about field maintenance. The fields are uneven in their present state. The fields don't drain well and cannot be used after a rain event.
- Union Forge Park is used heavily. The playground equipment is old and needs new mulch.
- One interviewee opined that the playground at Union Forge is the most-used aspect, while another said the basketball court receives the most usage.
- The basketball court needs to be crack sealed and repainted and needs new nets. A second court is needed.
- The river access for fisherman needs to be fixed at Union Forge Park.
- Union Forge Park needs more trash cans and picnic benches. A cinder trail around the perimeter of the park would be a nice feature.
- Two of the interviewees suggested the addition of a pavilion at Union Forge Park. Apparently, there was a pavilion on the site along the river in the 1920's.
- One suggestion is to add a tennis court at Union Forge.
- Restrooms at Union Forge were brought up by three of the four interviewees. The first suggested adding compost bathrooms, the second indicated residents want real bathrooms. The third stakeholder indicated that there are restrooms in the food stand building, but the Huskies have sole use of them because they maintain them.
- Signage is needed along the Columbia Trail to identify where the Steelworkers Trail intersects. The junction of the two trails is easy to miss.
- Residents have requested more parking within the Commons and a dog park.
- Volunteers maintain the trails within Nassau and High Bridge Hollow.



Chapter 5
RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

5. RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the park classification system. The second section classifies each of the Borough's facilities. The third section provides an assessment sheet for each park and open space within the community.

PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The NRPA provides definitions for various park classifications. However, NRPA recognizes that their definitions are not one-size-fits all and that each community is unique in size and scale. Therefore, the definitions below utilized the NRPA definitions as a springboard and amended said definitions to meet the size and character of High Bridge.

The purpose of a classification system is to aid in making acquisition and design decisions for park facilities and the overall organization of recreation space within a community. However, it is important to note that a park and recreation system should provide a number of different parks. The facilities contained in each park site should be based on the geographic location, demographics, and available size. A single large park site does not satisfy the specific needs of the individual neighborhoods, although the acreage requirements may have been satisfied.

The following subsections define mini-park, neighborhood park, community park, natural resource area, and greenway.

MINI-PARK

A mini-park is a small recreation area designed to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs. The size devoted to a mini-park generally ranges from 2,500 to 10,000 square feet. Mini-parks are intended to service sub-neighborhood areas and therefore should be centrally located and within a quarter mile distance from those areas intended to be serviced. Mini-parks can be located as independent entities or as part of a larger park complex. If part of a larger park complex they should be situated near the park entrance, away from active game areas and near the restrooms (if applicable). The mini-park should be enclosed with a low, but open, fence for the protection of the users. Benches should be carefully placed for ease of supervision of the children. Separate playground equipment areas, geared to preschool children aged 2 to 5 and school-aged children aged 5 to 12, can be provided where sufficient space exists. Other uses include areas to sit and gather, public art installations, community gardens, and the like.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

The neighborhood park remains the basic unit of the park system that serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. The focus of the neighborhood park is on informal active and passive recreation. Designed primarily to serve children under 14 years of age, the neighborhood park should have additional features to interest teenagers and adults. The trend in recent years is for neighborhood parks to become the center of activity for the wide variety of needs expressed by all residents. The more diversified interest of today's recreation consumer challenges the facility planner to provide for a broader program, with more attention devoted to multiple uses by different age groups.

The neighborhood park has a minimum service radius that will seldom exceed one-half mile, with most of the users originating within a quarter mile distance. It should be located close to the center of the area to be served and away from heavily-traveled streets and other barriers and should be easily and safely accessible.

In order to have the desired features, the neighborhood park would normally require a minimum of five acres. The particular facilities required will depend on the nature of the neighborhood, with space being allocated according to needs.

Typically, neighborhood parks range in size from 5 to 10 acres and service a neighborhood within a radius of one-half mile. A park should be provided for each neighborhood and can be combined with a school site or a community park.

COMMUNITY PARK

Community parks serve a broader purpose than neighborhood park. The community park should meet the community-based recreational needs as well as preserve unique and valuable landscapes and open spaces. The community facility should incorporate a variety of active and passive recreation uses. Primary requisites are athletic fields and courts for organized sports in conjunction with indoor spaces for various sports, activities, and programs. The community park should be located with one-half to 3 miles of residents in its service area, depending upon population density and ease of access. Community parks usually service two or more neighborhoods. A community park and playground facility typically require between 30 and 50 acres. However, due to the small size of the Borough and its developed nature, a community park is between ten and 20 acres. At least two-thirds of the community park should be developed and allocated for active recreation purposes.

NATURAL RESOURCE AREA

Natural resource areas are lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering. These lands consist of either individual sites exhibiting natural resources or lands that are unsuitable for development but offer natural resource potential.

Resource availability and opportunity are the primary factors determining location and size. Resource quality is the primary determinant when it comes to selecting a site for preservation. The practical limit of acreage set aside under this classification lies in resource quality, availability, community development considerations, and acquisition costs.

GREENWAYS

Greenways serve a number of important functions. They tie park components together to form a cohesive park, recreation, and open space system. They emphasize harmony with the natural environment. Greenways allow for uninterrupted and safe pedestrian movement between parks throughout the community. They provide people with a resource-based outdoor recreational opportunity and experience.

In many aspects, greenways and natural resource areas have much in common. Both preserve natural resources and provide connections between larger habitat areas, open space, and corridors for wildlife. The primary distinction between the two is that greenways emphasize use (i.e. park trails) to a greater extent than natural resource areas. Land availability and opportunity are the primary factors determining location and width of the greenway corridor. "Natural" greenways generally follow suitable areas such as stream courses. "Man-made" greenways are corridors that are built as part of development projects or during renovation of old development areas. Frequently, abandoned railroad rights-of-way are converted to greenways. Although corridor width can be as little as 25 feet in a subdivision, 50 feet is usually considered the minimum.

CLASSIFICATION OF HIGH BRIDGE'S PARKS

The Borough's 14 parks and open spaces can be classified into one of the aforementioned categories. However, the acreage suggestions were ignored when classifying because of the developed nature and scale of High Bridge:

- Arch Street Open Space – Natural Resource Area
- Commons – Neighborhood Park
- Dennis Avenue Preserve – Natural Resource Area
- Dewey Avenue Property
 - ROSI Section - Natural Resource Area
 - Non-ROSI Section - Neighborhood Park (future classification, as park sits empty today)
- East Main Street Preserve – Natural Resource Area
- High Bridge Hollow – Natural Resource Area
- Jericho Baseball Complex – Neighborhood Park
- Lake Solitude and Dam – Natural Resource Area

- Mini Park – Mini Park
- Nassau – Natural Resource Area
- South Branch of the Raritan River – Natural Resource Area
- Springside Farm – Natural Resource Area
- TISCO Property – Natural Resource Area
- Union Forge Park – Community Park

PARK AND RECREATION SITE ASSESSMENT SHEETS

This office performed field inspections of the Borough's parks on March 27, 2019 and June 4, 2019. (Note, the photos found in this report were taken the same days and on November 5, 2019.) Based on the field inspections and the four phone interviews, assessment sheets were prepared for each park owned by the Borough (as the Borough only has control over the 14 sites it owns). The assessment sheets describe each park, their features, attributes, and conditions.

ARCH STREET OPEN SPACE

NEAREST INTERSECTION

Arch Street and Washington Avenue

AREA

1.6 acres

CLASSIFICATION

Natural Resource Area

NATURAL FEATURES

- Forest
- Wetlands
- Steep slopes
- Highlands Open Water Protection Area
- Highlands Riparian Area
- South Branch of the Raritan River

PRIMARY RECREATIONAL USES

- Fishing

USER GROUPS

- Primary and Middle School (5 – 12 years)
- Adolescents
- Adults

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES

- Provides access to the South Branch of the Raritan River

NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES

- No park identification signage
- No street or on-site parking

SITE UTILIZATION

- Fair utilization of space
- Could be enhanced with picnic tables and benches for passive activities

FACILITY QUALITY

- Park quality is good

MAINTENANCE/CONDITION

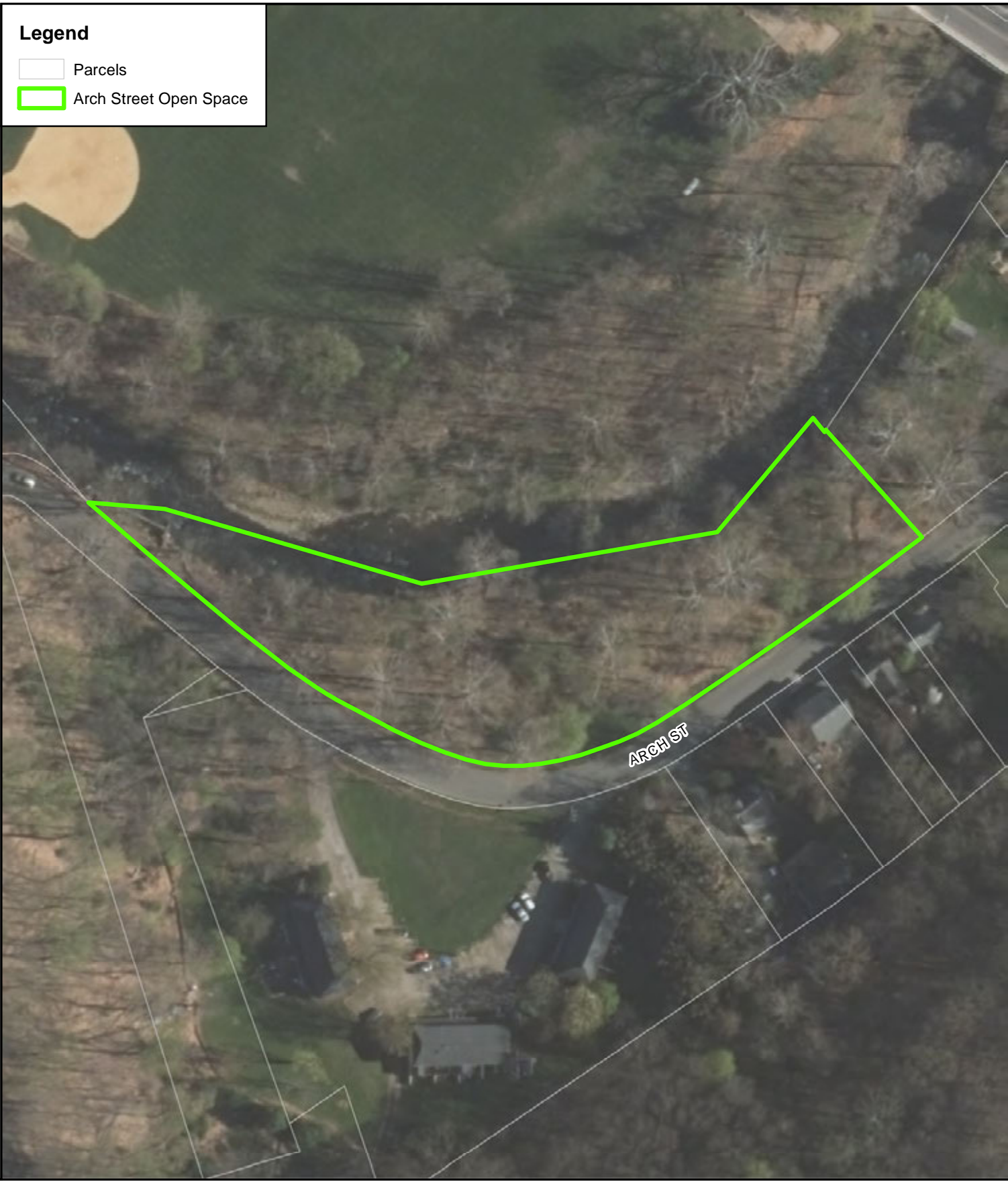
- The park is in good condition

ACCESSIBILITY

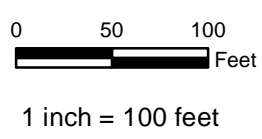
- Vehicular – no street or on-site parking is provided.
- Pedestrian – no sidewalk is provided along Arch Street.
- Bicyclist – no bike racks are provided.

Legend

- Parcels
- Arch Street Open Space



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ARCH STREET OPEN SPACE
BLOCK 29.03, LOT 1
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

MASER
CONSULTANTS AND ENGINEERS
JUNE 2019

COMMONS

NEAREST INTERSECTION

Main Street and Church Street

AREA

- 1 acre on Block 201 Lot 8
- 6 acres on Block 201, Lot 9

CLASSIFICATION

Community Park

NATURAL FEATURES

- Forest
- Steep slopes
- Wetlands
- Critical Wildlife Habitat
- Highlands Open Water Protection Area
- Highlands Riparian Area

PRIMARY RECREATIONAL USES

- Walking
- Biking
- Sitting / resting
- Picnicking

USER GROUPS

- Infants (0 – 2 years)
- Pre-School (2 – 5 years)
- Primary and Middle School (5 – 12 years)
- Adolescents
- Adults

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES

- Outdoor stage
- Columbia Trail trailhead can be accessed directly across Main Street from the Commons driveway
- Immediately adjacent to trails in High Bridge Hollow
- Gazebo
- Trash and recycling bins located throughout the park
- Clear park identification signage
- Two gravel parking areas

- Wood barrier delineates vehicle and pedestrian areas
- Benches provided throughout the park
- Portable restrooms are located in the eastern gravel parking area
- Bike pump track located in the western portion of the park

NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES

- Gravel parking areas do not delineate any parking spaces
- Large municipal yard occupies a majority of the western portion of the park and is adjacent to the bike pump track

SITE UTILIZATION

- Good utilization of space
- The site has additional space to add picnic tables, bike racks, etc.

FACILITY QUALITY

- Park quality is excellent

MAINTENANCE/CONDITION

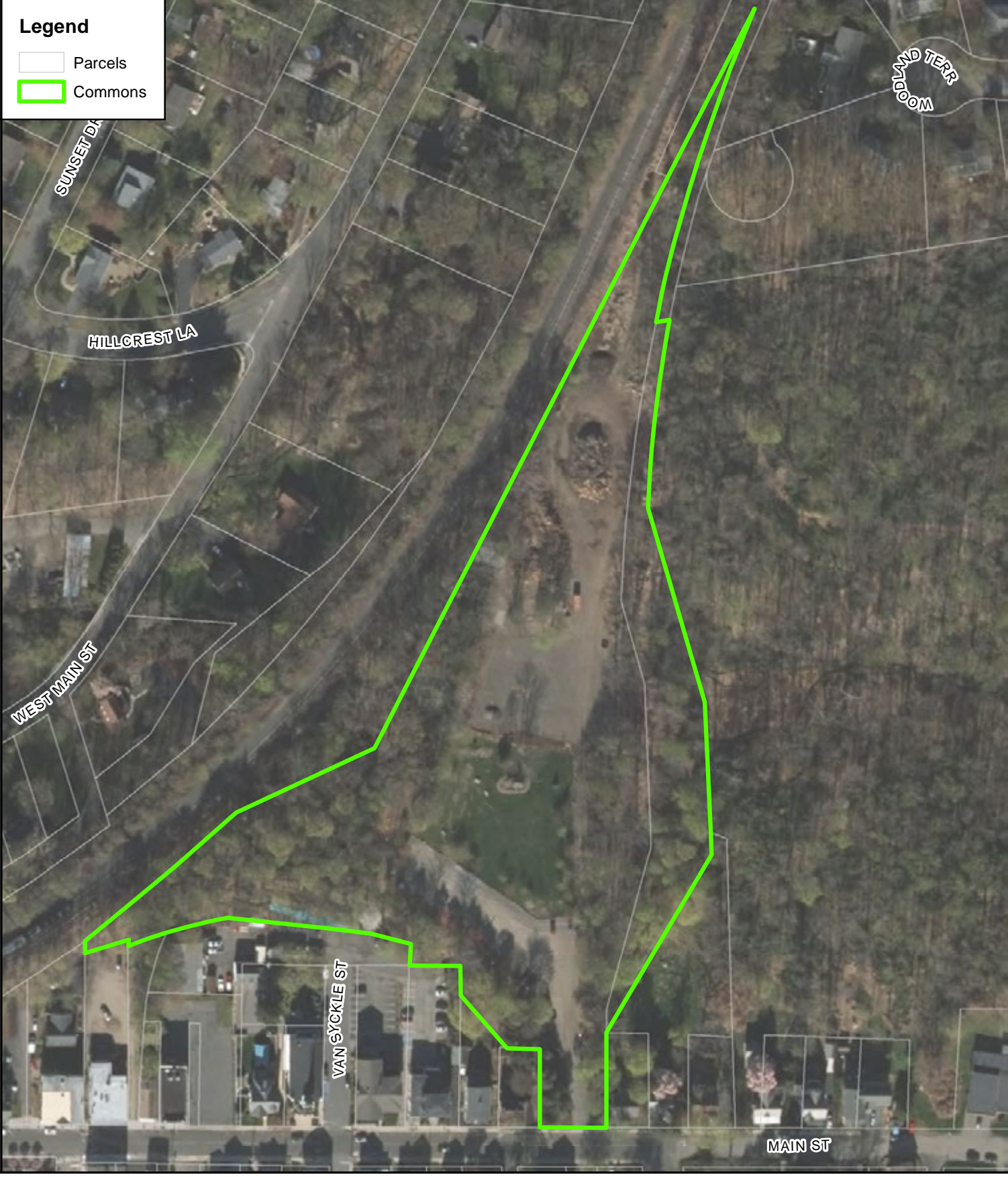
- The park is in great condition and appears well maintained

ACCESSIBILITY

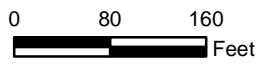
- Vehicular – two on-site gravel parking areas are provided.
- Pedestrian – a sidewalk is present along Main Street. Columbia Trail is directly across Main Street from the park.
- Bicyclist – no bike racks are provided. Bike racks should be installed to service bicyclists who visit the park via the Columbia Trail.

Legend

- Parcels
- Commons



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1 inch = 160 feet

COMMONS

BLOCK 201, LOTS 8 & 9
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



JUNE 2019

DENNIS AVENUE PRESERVE

NEAREST INTERSECTION

Dennis Avenue and West Main Street

AREA

3 acres

CLASSIFICATION

Natural Resource Area

NATURAL FEATURES

- Forest
- Critical Wildlife Habitat
- Wetlands
- Highland Open Water Protection Area
- Highlands Riparian Area
- Steep slopes

PRIMARY RECREATIONAL USES

- Walking / hiking

USER GROUPS

- Primary and Middle School (5 – 12 years)
- Adolescents
- Adults

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES

- Forested area to explore

NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES

- No official on-site parking area or street parking along Dennis Avenue
- No park identification signage

SITE UTILIZATION

- Depending on the vision for the site (passive versus active), the site is sufficient as is or park amenities could be added

FACILITY QUALITY

- Good, the park did not have any visible debris or trash

MAINTENANCE/CONDITION

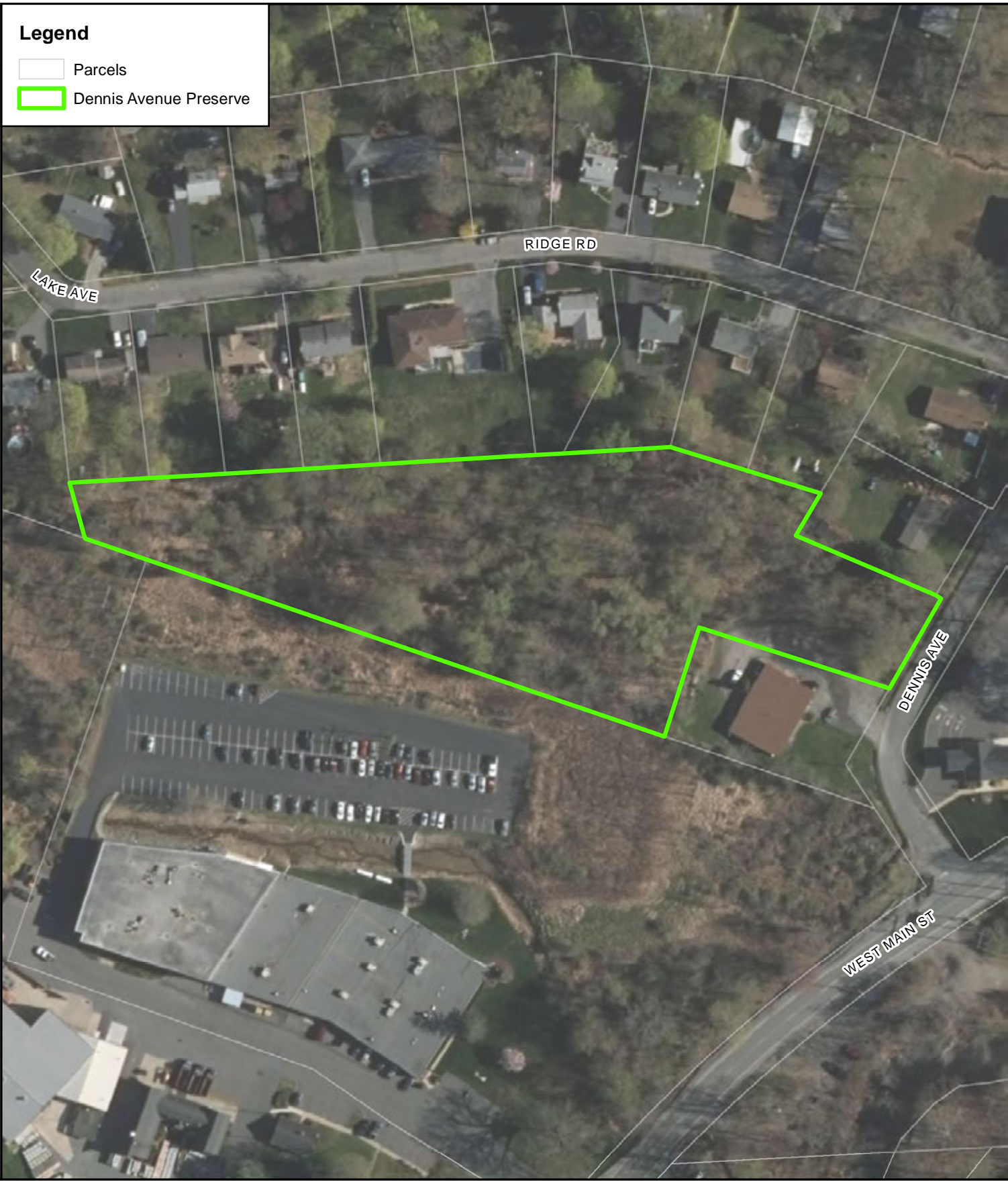
- Park appears to be well maintained

ACCESSIBILITY

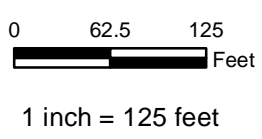
- Vehicular – no official on-site or street parking provided. However, the parking lot to the south appears to be encroaching into the site.
- Pedestrian – no sidewalk present.
- Bicyclist – no bike rack is provided.

Legend

- Parcels
- Dennis Avenue Preserve



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DENNIS AVENUE PRESERVE
BLOCK 20, LOT 50
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

MASER
CONSULTING, INC.
JUNE 2019

DEWEY AVENUE PROPERTY

NEAREST INTERSECTION

Dewey Avenue and Macarthur Street

AREA

21.97 acres included in the ROSI
11.22 acres not included in the ROSI

CLASSIFICATION

Natural Resource Area

NATURAL FEATURES

- Forest
- Highlands Open Water Protection Area
- Highlands Riparian Area
- Steep slopes

PRIMARY RECREATIONAL USES

- Walking / hiking

USER GROUPS

- Primary and Middle School (5 – 12 years)
- Adolescents
- Adults

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES

- Large forested area to explore
- Crosswalk across Dewey Avenue from Manning Court allows safe access for residents on east side of Dewey Avenue

NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES

- No on-site parking area or street parking along Dewey Avenue
- No park identification signage

SITE UTILIZATION

- Underutilized currently
- Potential for a trail system, picnic tables, benches, and other recreational uses
- Bow hunting permitted during certain times of the year

FACILITY QUALITY

- Good, no visible debris or trash

MAINTENANCE/CONDITION

- Park appears to be maintained

ACCESSIBILITY

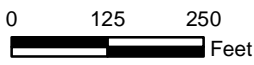
- Vehicular – no on-site parking available, no on-street parking on Dewey Avenue.
- Pedestrian – sidewalk located on east side of Dewey Avenue, which connects to the property via a crosswalk from Manning Court. Additional crosswalks should be added across Dewey Avenue from Macarthur Street and Patton Street.
- Bicyclist – no bike rack is provided.

Legend

- Parcels
- Dewey Avenue Property on the ROSI
- Dewey Avenue Property not on the ROSI



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1 inch = 250 feet

DEWEY AVENUE PROPERTY

BLOCK 31, LOT 14.02

BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE

HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



JANUARY 2020

EAST MAIN STREET PRESERVE

NEAREST INTERSECTION

East Main Street and Elm Street

AREA

2.6 acres

CLASSIFICATION

Natural Resource Area

NATURAL FEATURES

- Forest
- Steep slopes
- Critical Wildlife Habitat
- Highlands Open Water Protection Area
- Highlands Riparian Area
- South Branch of the Raritan River tributary

PRIMARY RECREATIONAL USES

- Hiking
- Fishing

USER GROUPS

- Primary and Middle School (5 – 12 years)
- Adolescents
- Adults

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES

- On-street parking is permitted on the west side of East Main Street

NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES

- No park identification signage
- No trail or park features are present

SITE UTILIZATION

- Site is in its natural state

FACILITY QUALITY

- Park quality is fair



MAINTENANCE/CONDITION

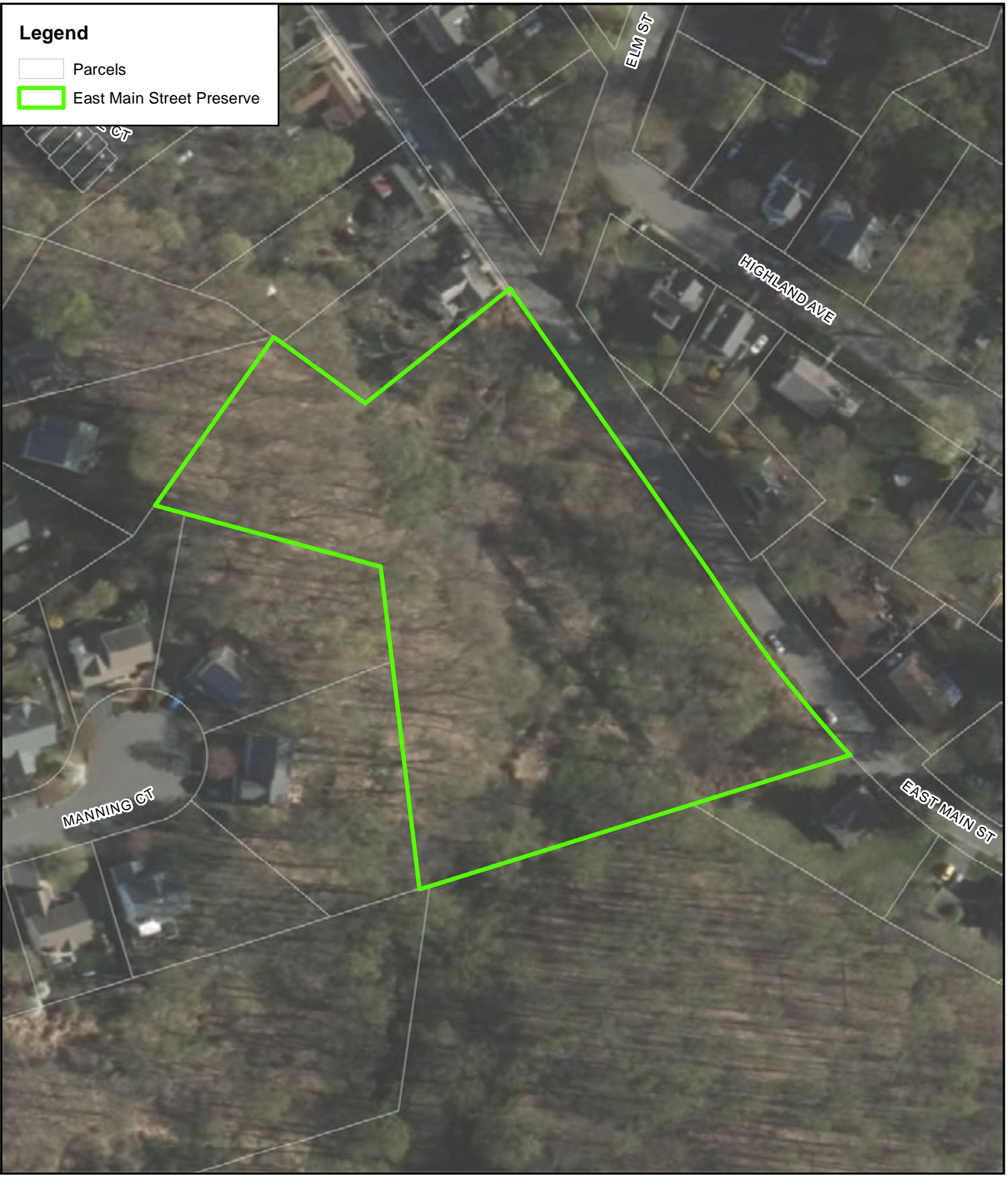
- The park does not appear to be consistently maintained. Some litter was found during the field visit on March 27, 2019.

ACCESSIBILITY

- Vehicular – on-street parking is provided on West Main Street.
- Pedestrian – no sidewalk is present.
- Bicyclist – no bike racks are provided.

Legend

-  Parcels
-  East Main Street Preserve



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0 50 100
Feet
1 inch = 100 feet

EAST MAIN STREET PRESERVE
BLOCK 33, LOT 36
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



HIGH BRIDGE HOLLOW

NEAREST INTERSECTION

Main Street and Church Street

AREA

44.5 acres

CLASSIFICATION

Natural Resource Area

NATURAL FEATURES

- Forest
- Steep slopes
- Wetlands
- Critical Wildlife Habitat
- Highlands Open Water Protection Area
- Highlands Riparian Area
- Unnamed tributary

PRIMARY RECREATIONAL USES

- Walking / hiking
- Biking
- Bird watching

USER GROUPS

- Primary and Middle School (5 – 12 years)
- Adolescents
- Adults

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES

- Two trail loops are located on the property
- Parking is provided in The Commons parking lot to the immediate south
- A trash bin is located at the trailhead of the western trail loop
- Access to the Columbia Trail trailhead is located across Main Street

NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES

- No signage for the trailheads is provided making trails difficult to identify

- No park identification signage (note that The Commons sign is located at the entrance on Main Street)
- The foot bridge at the trailhead of the eastern trail appears unstable

SITE UTILIZATION

- Good utilization of site with significant grade change
- Bow hunting permitted during certain times of the year

FACILITY QUALITY

- Park quality is good

MAINTENANCE/CONDITION

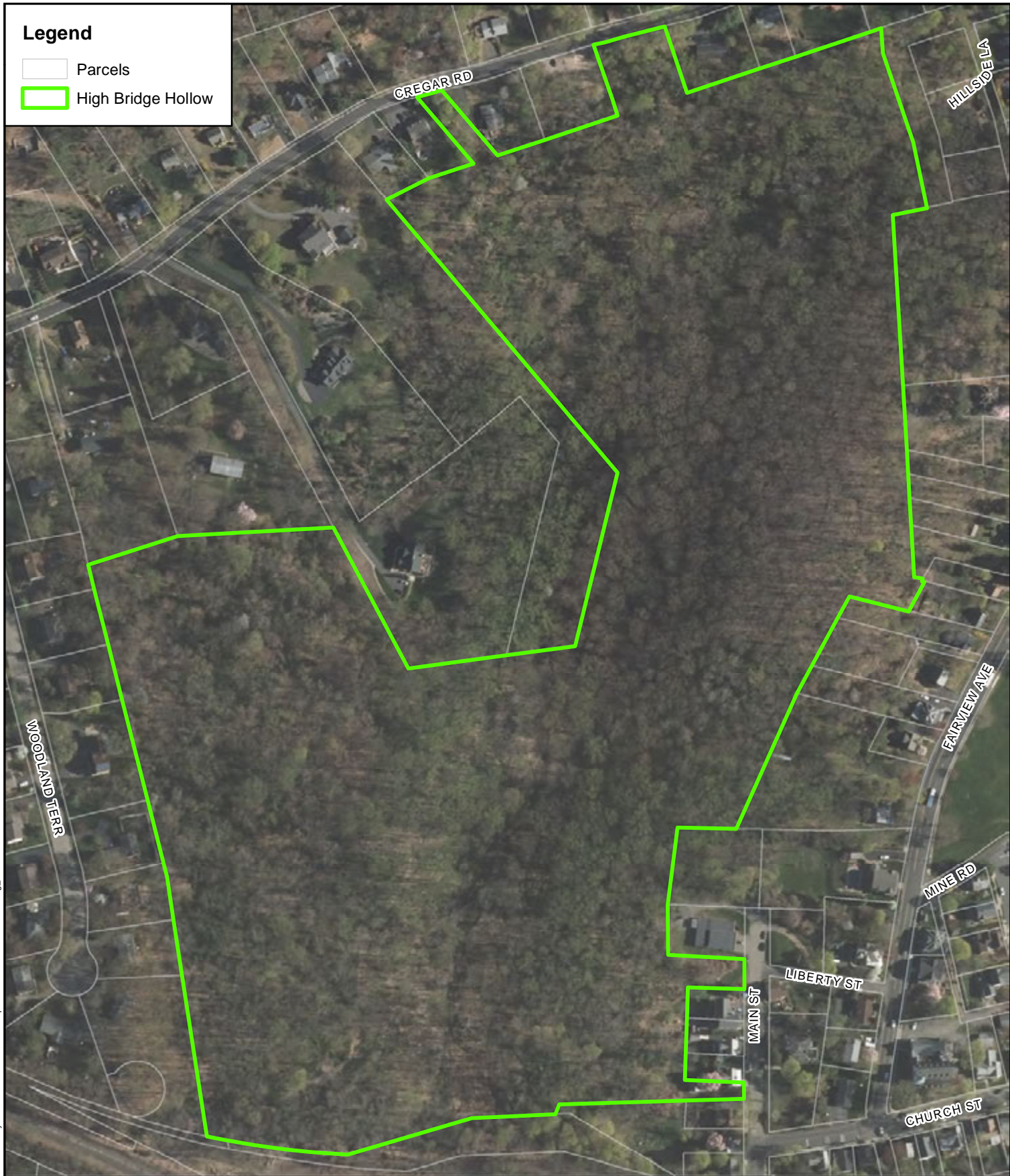
- The park is maintained in good condition

ACCESSIBILITY

- Vehicular – parking is provided on The Commons property immediately south of the site.
- Pedestrian – a sidewalk along Main Street provides pedestrian access.
- Bicyclist – bike racks are provided on The Commons property. The site has connectivity to the Columbia Trail.

Legend

- Parcels
- High Bridge Hollow



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0 125 250
Feet

1 inch = 250 feet

HIGH BRIDGE HOLLOW
BLOCK 19, LOT 68
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



JUNE 2019

JERICOH BASEBALL COMPLEX

NEAREST INTERSECTION

Arch Street and Old Jericho Road

AREA

8 acres

CLASSIFICATION

Community Park

NATURAL FEATURES

- Forest along the side and rear
- Wetlands
- Highlands Open Water Protection Area
- Highlands Riparian Area

PRIMARY RECREATIONAL USES

- Baseball / softball fields (3)
- Batting cages (5)

USER GROUPS

- Primary and Middle School (5 – 12 years)
- Adolescents
- Adults

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES

- Three on-site gravel parking areas
- Recently installed fields, dugouts, fencing, scoreboards, and batting cages
- Storage buildings for field maintenance equipment
- Bleachers
- Concession Stand
- Parking lots have lighting
- Each field has lighting
- Trash and recycling bins
- Restrooms (portable)

NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES

- Unmarked parking spaces
- Insufficient on-site parking

SITE UTILIZATION

- Excellent utilization of space

FACILITY QUALITY

- Park quality is excellent

MAINTENANCE/CONDITION

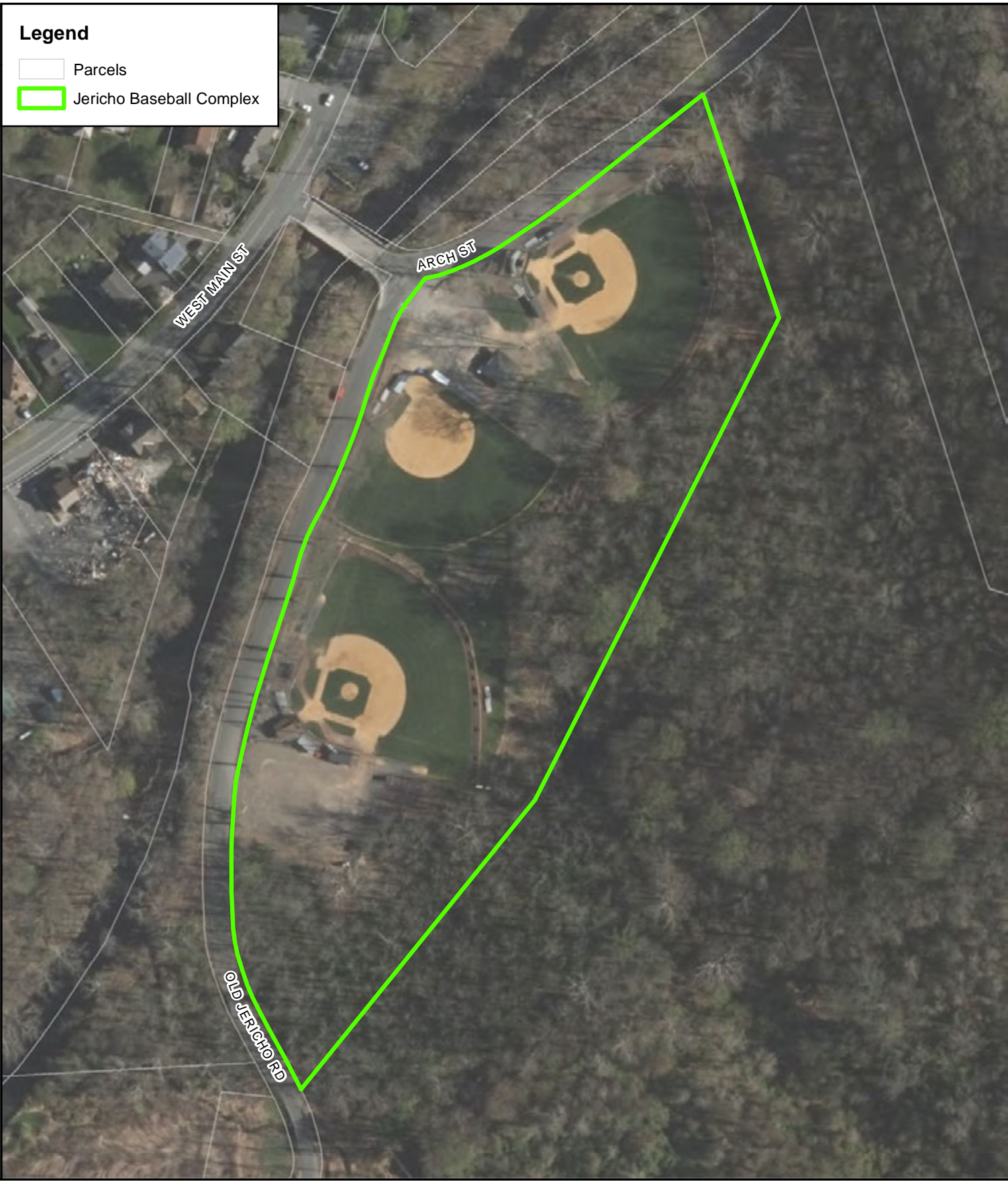
- Park maintained in good condition
- Parking lot surface is worn and uneven
- Baseball fields appear to be well maintained with recently installed fencing, lawns, dugouts and other features

ACCESSIBILITY

- Vehicular – three on-site gravel parking areas are provided, but parking spaces are not delineated. Overflow parking occurs along Jericho Road.
- Pedestrian – no sidewalks are present.
- Bicyclist – no bike racks are provided, should determine if there is a need for bike racks.

Legend

- Parcels
- Jericho Baseball Complex



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0 75 150
Feet

1 inch = 150 feet

JERICO BASEBALL COMPLEX

BLOCK 30.02, LOT 2
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



JUNE 2019

LAKE SOLITUDE AND DAM

NEAREST INTERSECTION

River Road and Watergate Drive

AREA

33 acres

CLASSIFICATION

Natural Resource Area

NATURAL FEATURES

- Forest
- Wetlands
- Steep Slopes
- Critical Wildlife Habitat
- Highlands Open Water Protection Area
- Highlands Riparian Area
- Highlands Lake Management Area
- Lake Solitude
- South Branch of the Raritan River

PRIMARY RECREATIONAL USES

- Passive recreation
- Fishing
- Walking / hiking
- Biking

USER GROUPS

- Pre-School (2 – 5 years)
- Primary and Middle School (5 – 12 years)
- Adolescents
- Adults

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES

- Lake Solitude, which encompasses approximately 20 acres
- Historic Solitude House, Annex Building, old kitchen building, and a garage/carriage barn building
- Taylor Steelworkers Historical Greenway Trail, which provides connections to the Columbia Trail, Nassau and Springside Farm trails, as well as the TISCO Property

- Recently reconstructed dam
- Fishing and sitting dock
- Gravel parking area
- Trash bins

NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES

- No park identification signage for the lake and dam area
- The Solitude House, garage/carriage barn and old kitchen building appear to be dilapidated, as is the driveway and retaining wall along the driveway
- Driveway into the site is narrow

SITE UTILIZATION

- Fair utilization of space
- Additional benches and seating areas should be considered near Lake Solitude
- Historically, the Lake was used for boating and swimming. Reinstating these uses should be a consideration.

FACILITY QUALITY

- Park quality is good

MAINTENANCE/CONDITION

- The Solitude House area, driveway and retaining wall are in need of repair
- The recently reconstructed dam is in excellent condition

ACCESSIBILITY

- Vehicular – on-site site parking is provided at Lake Solitude, parking spaces are not delineated. A second small gravel/paved parking area is located near Solitude House.
- Pedestrian – no sidewalk is present along River Road. The Taylor Steelworkers Historical Greenway Trail does provide pedestrian access to the TISCO Property, Nassau, and Springside Farm.

- Bicyclist – the Taylor Steelworkers Historical Greenway Trail traverses the property, providing access to additional trails. No bike racks are provided, an evaluation should be conducted to determine if any are needed.

Legend

 Municipal Boundary

 Parcels

 Lake Solitude and Dam

Clinton Township

RIVER RD

MINE RD

CHURCH ST

BARON CT

PLEASANT RD

MARK DR

WATERGATE DR

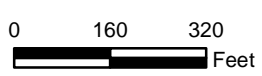
VILLAGE SQ

OVERLOOK DR

TIMBERCROFT RD

NORTHWOOD DR

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1 inch = 320 feet

LAKE SOLITUDE AND DAM

BLOCK 4.07, LOT 1

BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



JUNE 2019

MINI PARK

NEAREST INTERSECTION

Main Street and McDonald Street

AREA

0.25 acres

CLASSIFICATION

Mini Park

NATURAL FEATURES

- Trees and shrubs

PRIMARY RECREATIONAL USES

- Sitting / resting

USER GROUPS

- Infant (0 – 2 years)
- Pre-School (2 – 5 years)
- Primary and Middle School (5 – 12 years)
- Adolescents
- Adults

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES

- One bench and shade trees along Main Street
- One bench on McDonald Street
- Murals have been painted on the parking lot wall
- Paved and striped municipal parking lot

NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES

- The area lacks street lighting and parking lot lighting
- The parking lot occupies a majority of the parcel

SITE UTILIZATION

- Fair utilization of space
- Additional benches should be added along Main Street

FACILITY QUALITY

- Park quality is good, but the planters are starting to crumble


MAINTENANCE/CONDITION

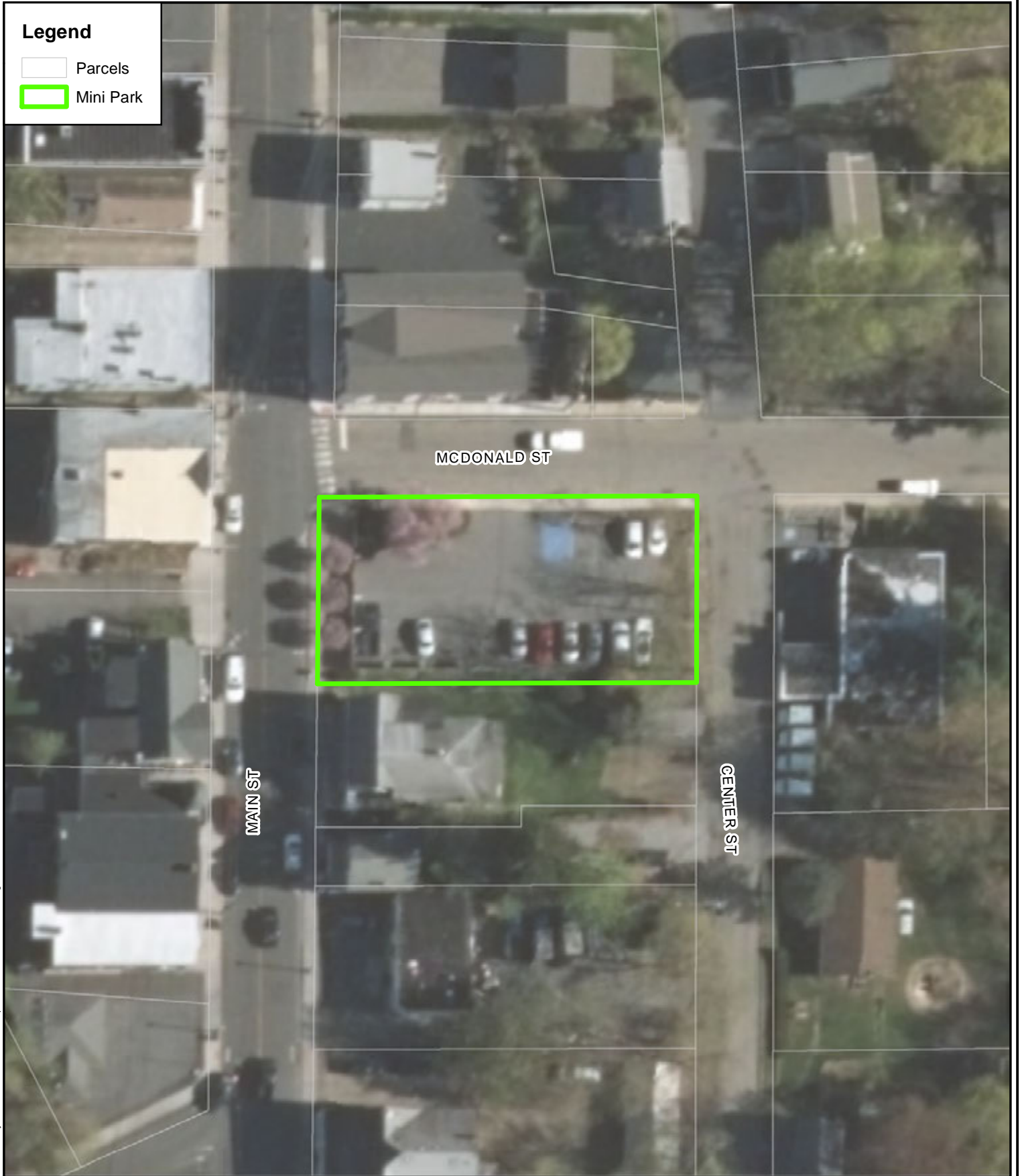
- Park maintained in fair condition
- Some litter, debris, and leaves around the perimeter of the parking area

ACCESSIBILITY

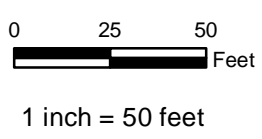
- Vehicular – 17 on-site parking spaces are provided.
- Pedestrian – a sidewalk is present with a crosswalk at the Main Street and McDonald Street intersection.
- Bicyclist – no bike racks are provided.

Legend

-  Parcels
-  Mini Park



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MINI PARK
BLOCK 29.01, LOT 1
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



NASSAU

NEAREST INTERSECTION

Nassau Road and Washington Avenue

AREA

- 53.3 acres on Block 37, Lot 1
- 27 acres on Block 40, Lot 2
- 9.8 acres on Block 40, Lot 11.01

CLASSIFICATION

Natural Resource Area

NATURAL FEATURES

- Forest
- Steep slopes
- Critical Wildlife Habitat
- Highlands Open Water Protection Area
- Highlands Riparian Area
- South Branch of the Raritan River tributary

PRIMARY RECREATIONAL USES

- Walking / hiking
- Biking
- Picnicking
- Sitting / resting
- Bird watching

USER GROUPS

- Infant (0 – 2 years)
- Pre-School (2 – 5 years)
- Primary and Middle School (5 – 12 years)
- Adolescents
- Adults

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES

- Two dirt parking areas are located on Block 37, Lot 1
- Bike racks are provided at each parking area
- A picnic table is provided at each parking area
- Trail head information booths are provided at each parking area

- Park identification signage at each trailhead on Block 37, Lot 1 and Block 40, Lot 2

NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES

- Unmarked, dirt parking areas
- No trail maps provided at the trailheads
- The trails on Block 37, Lot 1 are currently closed
- No trash or recycling bins are provided

SITE UTILIZATION

- Good utilization of space
- Bow hunting permitted during certain times of the year

FACILITY QUALITY

- Park quality is good




MAINTENANCE/CONDITION

- According to a sign posted at each trailhead on Block 37, Lot 1 (on March 27, 2019), the Nassau trails are closed until further notice. It is unclear what condition the trails are in.
- The dirt parking areas are maintained in good condition.

ACCESSIBILITY

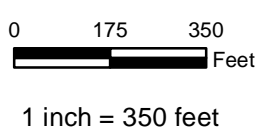
- Vehicular – two on-site dirt parking areas are provided. However, the spaces are unmarked.
- Pedestrian – no sidewalk is present along Nassau Road.
- Bicyclist – bike racks are provided at each trailhead on Block 37, Lot 1. The Taylor Steelworkers Historical Greenway Trail traverses through Block 37, Lot 1, which connects to the Columbia Trail, Lake Solitude and Dam, Springside Farm, and the TISCO Property.

Legend

-  Municipal Boundary
-  Parcels
-  Nassau



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NASSAU
BLOCK 37, LOT 1 &
BLOCK 40, LOTS 2 & 11.01
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



JUNE 2019

SOUTH BRANCH OF THE RARITAN RIVER

NEAREST INTERSECTION

Arch Street and Old Jericho Road

AREA

0.5 acres

CLASSIFICATION

Natural Resource Area

NATURAL FEATURES

- Forest
- Wetlands
- Highlands Open Water Protection Area
- Highlands Riparian Area
- Adjacent to the South Branch of the Raritan River

PRIMARY RECREATIONAL USES

- Fishing access
- Picnicking

USER GROUPS

- Pre-School (2 – 5 years)
- Primary and Middle School (5 – 12 years)
- Adolescents
- Adults

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES

- Access to the South Branch of the Raritan River
- Footpath leads to a single picnic table

NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES

- No park identification signage
- Footpath is not clearly marked

SITE UTILIZATION

- Site is in its natural state

FACILITY QUALITY

- Park quality is good

MAINTENANCE/CONDITION


- The park is in good condition

ACCESSIBILITY

- Vehicular – no on-site parking is provided. However, parking areas are available across the street at the Jericho Baseball Complex.
- Pedestrian – no sidewalk is present.
- Bicyclist – no bike racks are provided.

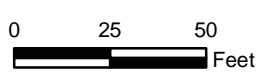
Legend

 Parcels

 South Branch of the Raritan River



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1 inch = 50 feet

**SOUTH BRANCH OF THE
RARITAN RIVER**
BLOCK 29.04, LOT 2
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



JUNE 2019

SPRINGSIDE FARM

NEAREST INTERSECTION

Springside Lane and East Main Street

AREA

37 acres

CLASSIFICATION

Natural Resource Area

NATURAL FEATURES

- Forest
- Steep slopes
- Critical Wildlife Habitat
- Highlands Open Water Protection Area
- Highlands Riparian Area

PRIMARY RECREATIONAL USES

- Walking / hiking
- Bird watching
- Biking

USER GROUPS

- Infants (0 – 2 years)
- Pre-School (2 – 5 years)
- Primary and Middle School (5 – 12 years)
- Adolescents
- Adults

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES

- Five structures are on the property, three barns, one dwelling, and a small building
- Large field area adjacent to Nassau Road, which is part of the Nassau Trail system
- Informational sign near the dwelling
- The Nassau trails traverse the site and connect the property to the Nassau Trail system, Solitude House, and the Columbia Trail. The Taylor Steelworkers Historical Greenway Trail traverses the site and connects it to other parks

NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES

- No park identification signage on Nassau Road or East Main Street
- “No trespassing” signs posted along Springside Lane
- No parking area is provided
- The gravel driveway from Springside Lane is in poor condition
- All five structures are dilapidated and pose a potential hazard to trespassers
- Access within the property from Springside Lane is blocked to vehicles near the house

SITE UTILIZATION

- Site is underutilized
- Additional amenities could be developed on the site
- If the structures can be salvaged, they could be repurposed
- Bow hunting permitted during certain times of the year

FACILITY QUALITY

- Park quality is in fair to poor condition




MAINTENANCE/CONDITION

- The park is in fair to poor condition

ACCESSIBILITY

- Vehicular – no parking area is provided.
- Pedestrian – no sidewalk is present along Nassau Road. However, the Taylor Steelworkers Historical Greenway Trail and Nassau trails provide pedestrian access.
- Bicyclist – no bike racks are present. The Taylor Steelworkers Historical Greenway Trail and Nassau trails provide access to bicyclists.

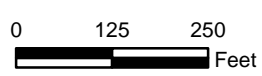
Legend

-  Municipal Boundary
-  Parcels
-  Springside Farm



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Clinton Township



1 inch = 250 feet

SPRINGSIDE FARM
BLOCK 40, LOT 4
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



JUNE 2019

TISCO PROPERTY

NEAREST INTERSECTION

Washington Avenue and McDonald Street

AREA

27 acres

CLASSIFICATION

Natural Resource Area

NATURAL FEATURES

- Forest
- Wetlands
- Steep slopes
- Critical Wildlife Habitat
- Highlands Open Water Protection Area
- Highlands Riparian Area
- Highlands Lake Management Area
- South Branch of the Raritan River

PRIMARY RECREATIONAL USES

- Walking/ Hiking
- Biking

USER GROUPS

- Pre-School (2 – 5 years)
- Primary and Middle School (5 – 12 years)
- Adolescents
- Adults

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES

- Taylor Steelworkers Historical Greenway Trail traverses the property, which connects to the Columbia Trail, Lake Solitude and Dam, Nassau, and Springside Farm trails
- Historic TISCO office building
- Historic Shop E
- Paved driveway from Washington Avenue
- Pedestrian bridge connects this property to the Lake Solitude and Dam property

- Provides additional parking for Union Forge Park

NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES

- No park identification signage
- No designated parking area or spaces
- Paved driveway is cracking and has multiple potholes
- The TISCO office building and Shop E appear to be dilapidated
- Taylor Steelworkers Historical Greenway Trail lacks identification sign where it intersects with the Columbia Trail

SITE UTILIZATION

- Site is underutilized
- Potential for additional recreational amenities

FACILITY QUALITY

- Park quality is fair

MAINTENANCE/CONDITION

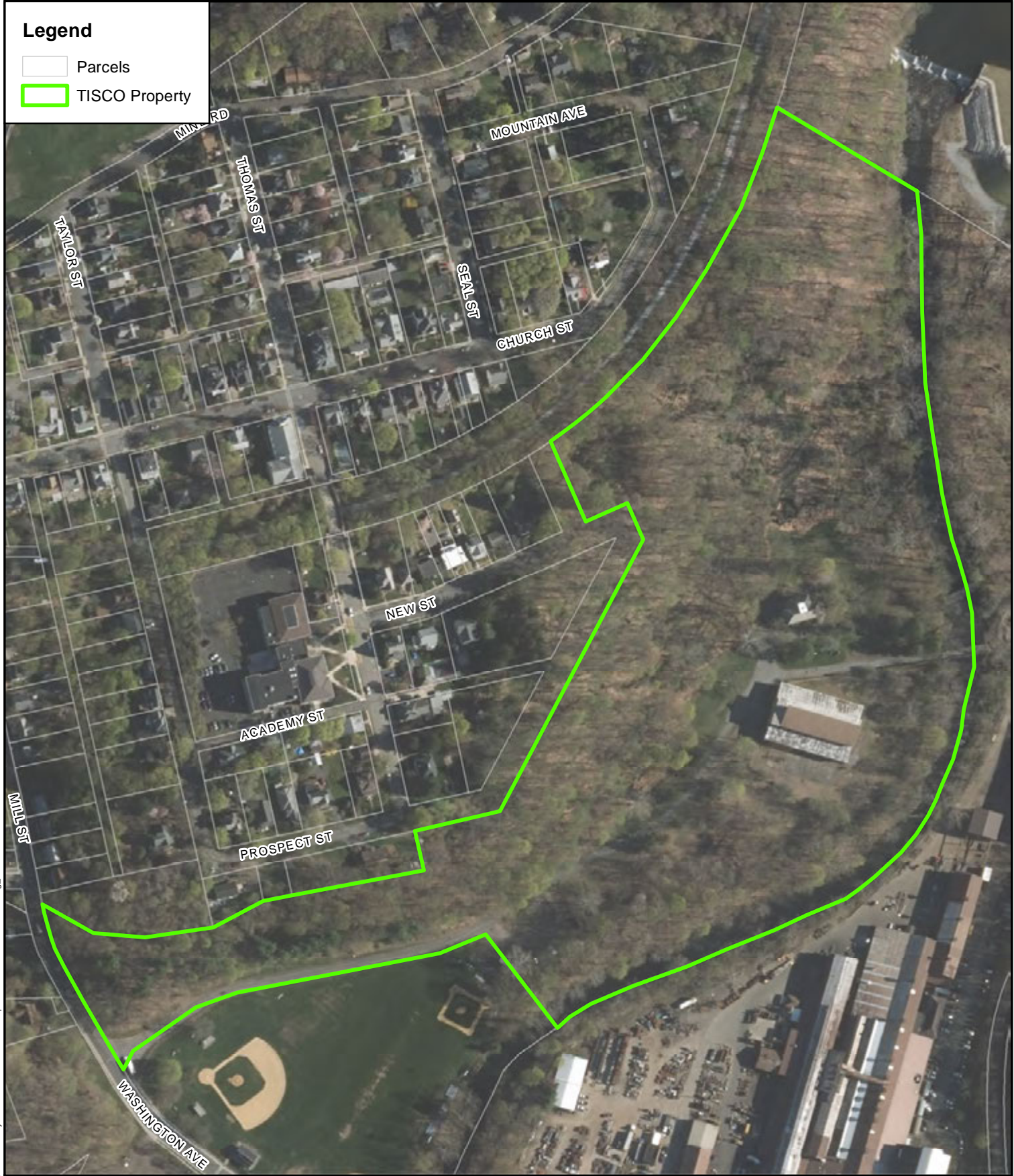
- Buildings in need of repair
- Driveway in need of repair

ACCESSIBILITY

- Vehicular – on-site parking is permitted. The parking area and parking spaces are not delineated.
- Pedestrian – a sidewalk exists both sides of Washington Avenue.
- Bicyclist – the Taylor Steelworkers Historical Greenway Trail traverses the property, which provides access to additional trails, all of which bicyclists can use. However, no bike racks are present on the site.

Legend

- Parcels
- TISCO Property



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0 125 250
Feet

1 inch = 250 feet

TISCO PROPERTY
BLOCK 4.06, LOT 34
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



JUNE 2019

UNION FORGE PARK

NEAREST INTERSECTION

Washington Avenue and Arch Street

AREA

- 7 acres on Block 4.06, Lot 34.01
- 11 acres on Block 29.02, Lot 15

CLASSIFICATION

Community Park

NATURAL FEATURES

- Forest
- Steep slopes
- Wetlands
- Critical Wildlife Habitat
- Highlands Open Water Protection Area
- Highlands Riparian Area
- South Branch of the Raritan River

PRIMARY RECREATIONAL USES

- Baseball / softball fields (4)
- Multi-purpose field (2)
- Basketball court (1)
- Fishing
- Playground
- Sitting / resting
- Picnicking

USER GROUPS

- Infants (0 – 2 years)
- Pre-School (2 – 5 years)
- Primary and Middle School (5 – 12 years)
- Adolescents
- Adults

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES

- A multitude of active and passive recreational activities are provided
- Recently installed small playset, balance beam and other playground equipment
- Concession stand
- Gazebo
- Trash and recycling bins located throughout the property

- Clear park identification signage
- Three gravel parking areas located on Block 29.02, Lot 15
- Parking lot is lit
- Benches provided around playground area
- Access to South Branch of the Raritan River
- Playground is separated from Washington Avenue with a barrier fence
- Several sets of bleachers are provided on Block 4.06, Lot 34.01
- Portable restrooms are located on Block 29.02, Lot 15
- Crosswalks on Washington Avenue were recently restriped

NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES

- The wood of the large playset appears to be dated and in need of repair
- The basketball court needs crack sealed and repainted
- Infields are uneven and have poor drainage

SITE UTILIZATION

- Good utilization of space
- The site has addition space to add a pavilion, picnic tables, walking path, etc.

FACILITY QUALITY

- Park quality is excellent



MAINTENANCE/CONDITION

- The park is in great condition and appears well maintained

ACCESSIBILITY

- Vehicular – on-site gravel parking is provided.
- Pedestrian – a sidewalk is present along both sides of Washington Avenue and both sides of the park are connected by a crosswalk.
- Bicyclist – one bike rack is provided on Block 29.02, Lot 15.

Legend

-  Parcels
-  Union Forge Park



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0 80 160
Feet
1 inch = 160 feet

UNION FORGE PARK
BLOCK 4.06, LOT 34.01 &
BLOCK 29.02, LOT 15
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



JUNE 2019



Chapter 6
PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

6. PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

The next step in the process was to solicit public input on the Borough's parks and open spaces. Two surveys were prepared. The first was a student-oriented survey distributed to High Bridge students ages 11 to 14. Sub-committee member Coleen Conroy kindly created the online student survey, which contained seven questions. A total of 155 responses were received.

The second survey was a general public survey. This thirteen-question online survey, hosted by surveymonkey.com, commenced on or about June 10, 2019. The survey was accessible via the Borough's website. Email blasts and internet posts were distributed, and announcements were made at the Council meeting regarding the online survey. Most of the responses were received within the first five days of the survey's release. The survey was then closed on or about July 25, 2019 after two weeks with no new responses.

STUDENT SURVEY RESPONSES

The student survey questions were as follows:

1. Which of the Borough's Parks do you visit most often?
2. On average how often do you visit the Borough's parks?
3. When you visit the parks how do you typically get there?
4. How would you rate the quality of Union Forge park?
5. If you could add new or additional facilities or activities at Union Forge what would they be?
6. What is your favorite part of the park?
7. Area of the park that needs the most improvement?

Students overwhelmingly responded that they visit Union Forge Park the most often (78%). The Columbia Trail (not owned by High Bridge) ranked second at 13%. Jericho Fields, Commons, and Lake Solitude were also listed as parks frequently visited by students. More than 32% of students indicated that they visit a Borough park daily, while over 20% said they visit a park once a week. Roughly 15% of students indicated they visit a park twice a month and 13% indicated they visit a park on a monthly basis.

The third question asked students how they travel to the parks. Most students walk to the park(s) (48%), that is closely followed by being driven to the park(s) (39%) and last is biking to the park(s) (12%). When asked to rate the quality of Union Forge Park, 38% of students responded that the park is in "fair" condition. Over 23% responded that the park is in "good" condition, but 17% of students indicated the park is in "poor" condition.

Question 5 asked students if they could add a new or additional facility to Union Forge, what would it be? The top five student responses were skate park (37), tennis courts (24), walking/running path (22), volleyball courts (20), and bbq area (19).

Question 6 asked students what their favorite part of Union Forge Park is and allowed them to provide multiple answers. These answered can be grouped into four main themes. The playground and/or swings received the most votes with 39% of the responses. Next was the basketball court with 30% of responses. The field area ranked third with 23% of responses. The fourth common theme was the river with 8% of responses.

Finally, students were asked what area of Union Forge Park needs the most improvement. This was an open-ended question and many students offered multiple responses. Five common themes can be found in the responses:

- Playground equipment condition and need for more (repeated comments specifically about the broken slide and merry-go-round) – 71 responses
- Basketball court condition and missing nets – 26 responses
- Field condition – 15 responses
- Water fountain (doesn't work) – 7 responses
- Restrooms – 6 responses

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

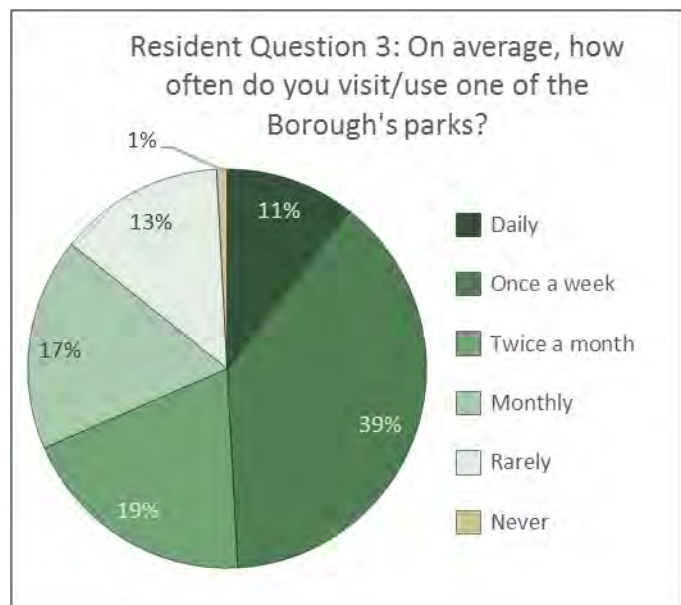
In all, 379 individuals accessed the public survey and 66% (250) completed each question of the survey. The typical time spent answering the thirteen questions was three minutes and 31 seconds.

The survey was a “branch” survey, such that once the first question was answered all questions after that were tallied separately. The Borough wanted the ability to understand what residents’ thoughts and ideas were versus non-residents’.

The questions were as follows:

1. Are you a resident of High Bridge?
2. Which of the Borough’s parks/open spaces do you visit most often?
3. On average, how often do you visit/use one of the Borough’s parks?
4. When you visit one of the Borough’s park, how do you typically get to/from the park?
5. How would you rate the quality of Union Forge Park?
6. What is your favorite part of Union Forge Park?
7. Is there any part of Union Forge Park that you see as problematic? If so, what?
8. If you could add new or additional facilities, fields, and/or activities to Union Forge Park, what would they be?
9. How would you rate the quality of the Commons?
10. What is your favorite part about the Commons?
11. Is there any part of the Commons that you see as problematic? If so, what?
12. If you could add one facility and/or activity to Commons, what would it be?
13. Are there improvements you would like to see in any of the Borough’s other parks? If so, what?

Of the 379 respondents, 359 or 95% identified as High Bridge residents. When asked which park residents visit most often, Union Forge Park ranked first with 49% of respondents and Lake Solitude and Dam ranked second with 35%. Over 38% of respondents indicated that they visit a Borough park/open space once a week. Just over 19% indicated they visit twice a month. Interestingly, over 10% of respondents indicated they visit a Borough-owned park/open space daily. Residents

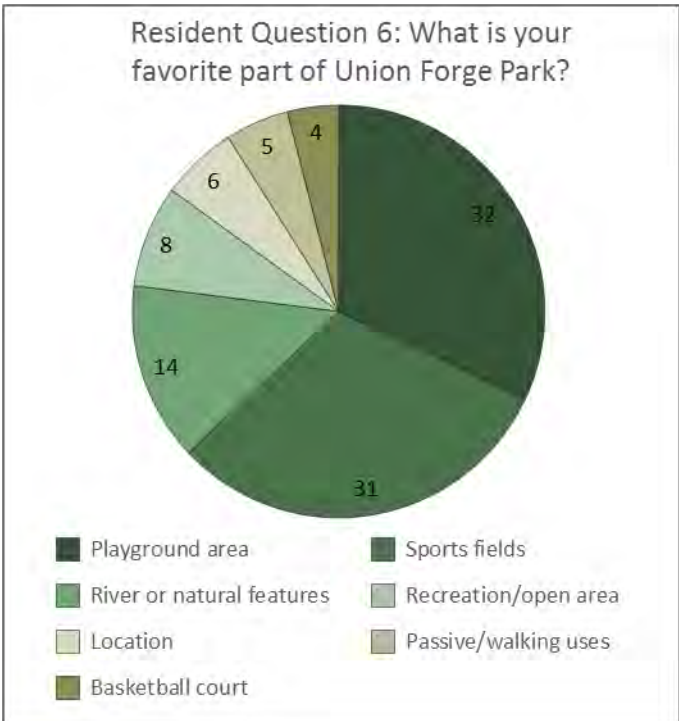
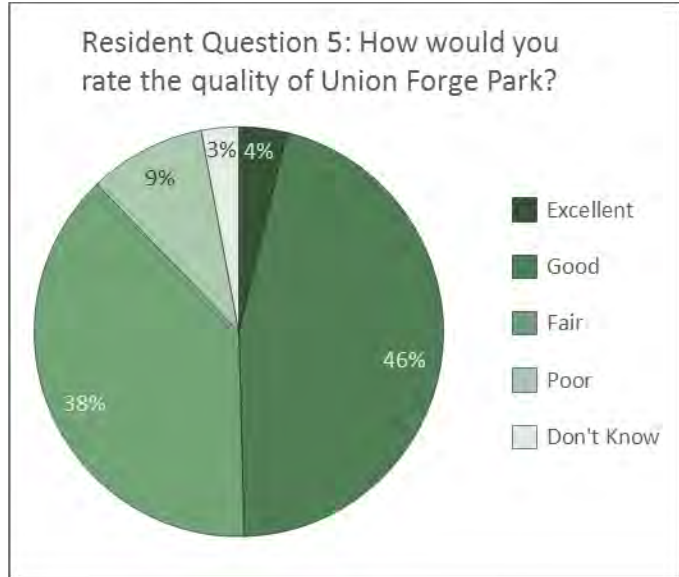


travel to the parks/open spaces by either driving (49%) or walking (41%). However, some respondents noted that they walk and/or drive.

The survey next focused on Union Forge Park and the Commons, the Borough's two largest active recreation spaces. Question 5 asked residents how they would rate the quality of Union Forge Park. As shown in the chart to the right, 46% rated the facility as "good" and 38% rated the facility as "fair". A total of 22 respondents indicated the facility is in "poor" condition. When asked what their favorite part of the park is, answers varied. The most common answer was the playground area (32), followed by the sports fields (31). Other comment themes in the responses included the river/natural features, recreation/open area, location, passive/walking use, and basketball court.

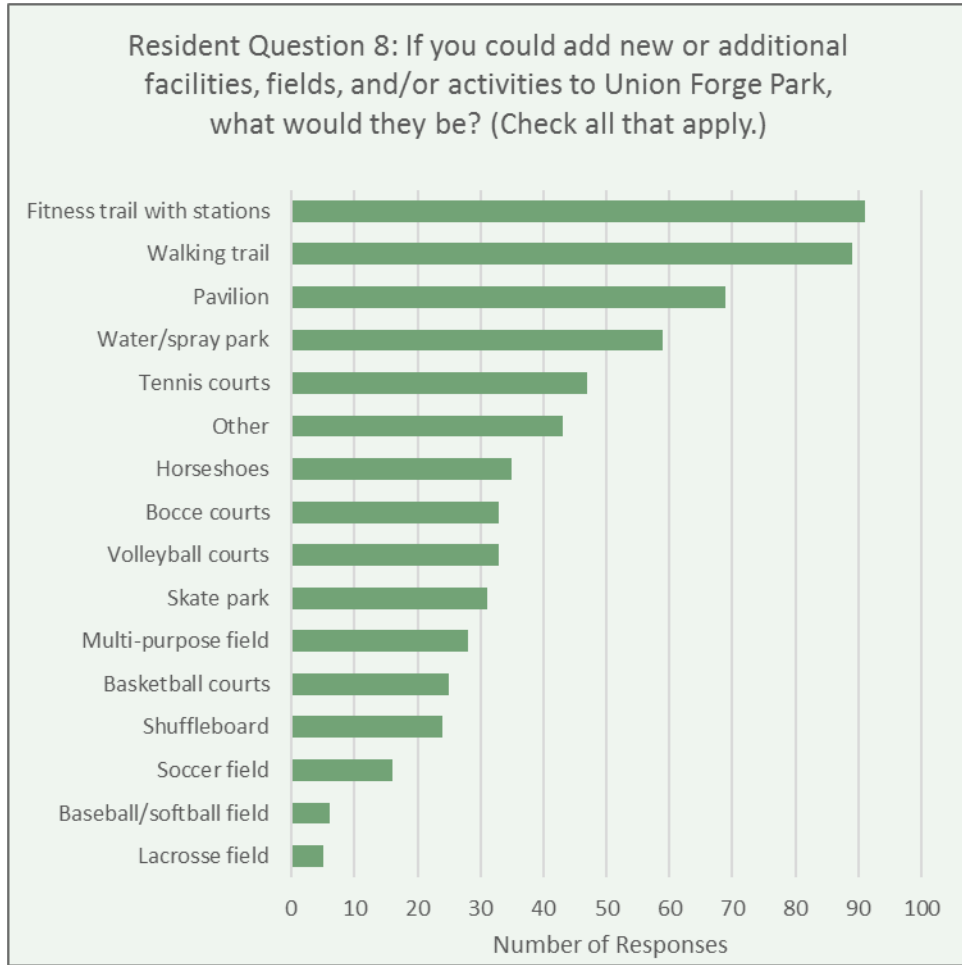
The next question regarding Union Forge Park asked residents if they see any part of the park as problematic, and if they do, what is it. Almost 27% of respondents said there are no problems. Nearly 26% answered "N/A". However, over 47% (113 of the 238 residents who answered the question) said "Other" and provided a description. These problems were grouped into themes for ease of evaluation and are summarized below with the number of associated responses:

- Outdated/broken playground equipment – 43
- Restroom access/cleanliness – 20
- Poor grass/field conditions – 12
- General park maintenance – 11
- Parking – 9
- Pests – 4
- Dog waste – 4
- Advertisements – 3
- Outdated gazebo – 2
- General cleanliness - 2



The final question regarding Union Forge Park asked residents if they could add a new facility or activity to the park, what would it be. This answer allowed respondents to select multiple choices. In all 238 individuals answered the question and made 634 selections. As shown in the graph on the following page, fitness trail with stations received the most responses, totaling over 14%. A walking trail ranked second with exactly 14%. A pavilion came in third

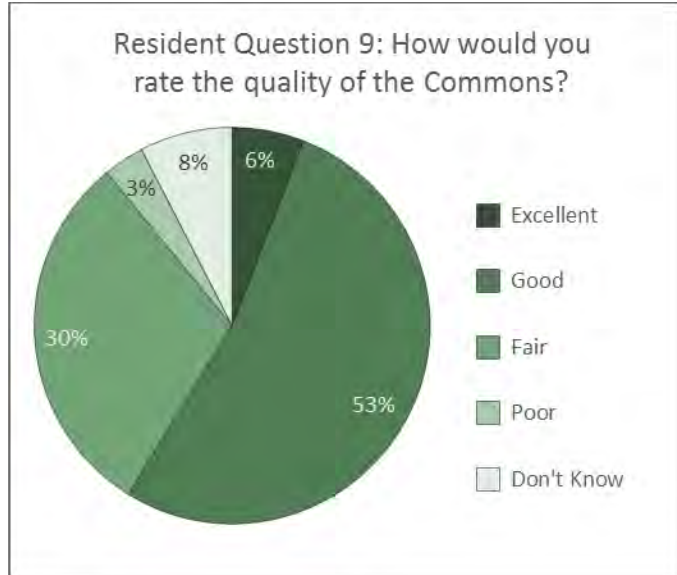
place with almost 11% of respondents. A water/spray park ranked fourth (over 9%) and tennis courts came in fifth place (over 7%).



In addition to the answers in the graph, survey participants were given the option of “Other” and able to provide additional responses. These 43 “Other” responses were grouped according to theme and are outlined below:

- Additional/cleaner bathrooms – 9
- Update playground equipment – 7
- Roller/ice hockey rink – 5
- Public pool – 2
- Trails – 3
- Community garden – 2
- Disc golf – 1
- Cornhole – 1
- Pickle ball – 1
- Running track – 1
- Community center – 1

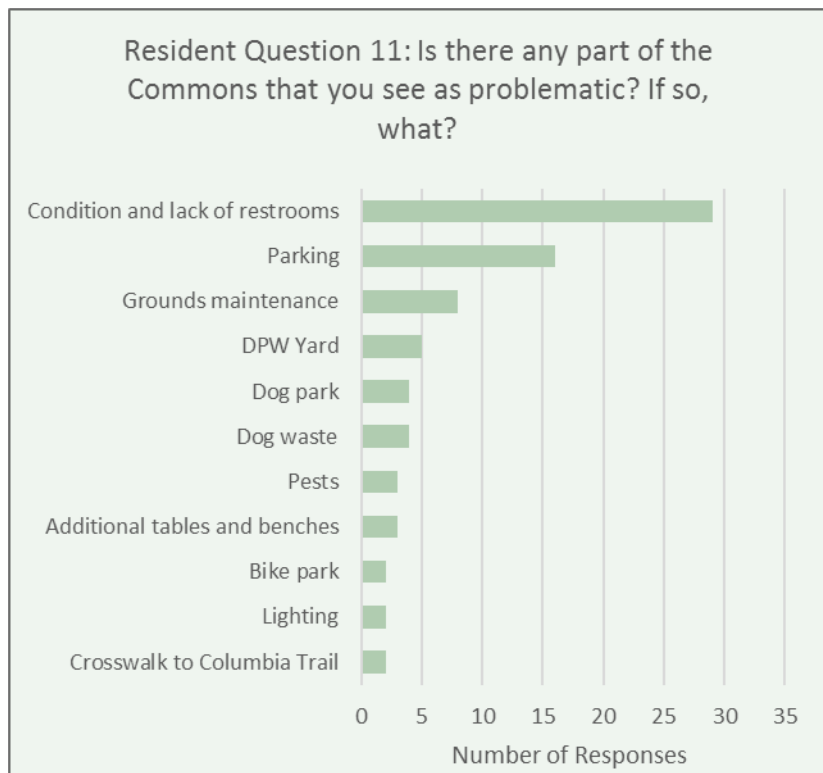
Next there were four questions about the Commons. The first question asked about the quality of the facility. As shown by the pie chart to the right, 53% of respondents indicated the park is in “good” condition. Just over 30% rated the park as “fair”.



Question 10 asked residents what their favorite part of the park is. This was an open-ended answer, so we have grouped the responses by theme. It should be noted that some residents provided multiple answers.

- Stage for concerts – 37
- Trail access – 13
- Parking – 12
- Community events – 7
- Pump track – 6
- Gazebo – 5
- Location – 4
- Movies – 4
- Dog park – 2

Residents were then asked if there is any part of the Commons that they see as problematic and if so, what it is. 31% of respondents indicated that there are no problems. Nearly 30% indicated “N/A”, however, 40% indicated there was an issue and provided, in some instances, more than one issue per respondent. These answers were grouped by theme and are illustrated in the table below. The most received response concerned the lack of restrooms and/or their cleanliness (29 respondents). The second highest response was parking (16 respondents), while the third highest response was ground maintenance (8 respondents).



The final question regarding the Commons asked residents if they could add a new facility or activity to the park, what would it be. The answers included “None” and “Please tell us”. If “Please tell us” was selected, respondents were able to provide commentary. Over 53% of respondents indicated “None”. Almost 47% provided an answer, which are grouped by theme below:

- Restrooms/permanent restrooms – 53
- Dog park – 15

- Additional seating/tables – 11
- Additional parking – 7
- Food options – 5

The final question of the survey asked if there are improvements one would like to see in any of the Borough's other parks and what those improvements are. This was an open-ended question that 134 resident respondents answered. The most common themes are summarized below:

- Maintenance of parks – 25
- Trail improvements (new trails, maps, markers, maintenance, etc.) – 17
- Restrooms - 12
- Parking improvements – 12
- Playground improvements – 11
- Park/trail signage – 10
- Dog park – 8
- Picnic areas/additional seating – 7
- Improve park access – 5
- Lake solitude dock improvements – 4
- Skating rink (ice and hockey) – 3
- Tennis courts – 2
- Public pool - 2

Within the 134 comments there are many comments worth repeating verbatim, so the Borough officials understand the thoughts and concerns of the residents.

- “dredge Lake Solitude (I know, millions) so the shallow lake water is not heated in the summer to the detriment of the trout downstream and to make the lake more usable”
- “Create a scenic overlook someplace”
- “The Nassau Trail is like a bowl of spaghetti with so many forks that it seems impossible to navigate”
- “a pavilion to rent out for parties”
- “improve the quality of the basketball court”
- “better access to Pfauth Property”
- “picnic area down by the waterfall area at Lake solitude”
- “better turf management”
- “enhancement around the dam”
- “I don't know what exists in the commons. People driving by should see attractive wayfinding (sign) showing all amenities”
- “upgrade the current playground”
- “I would like to see the dog park get built that I donated money for”
- “adding signs around town showing what we have and how to get to it on trails would be great”
- “fire rings/pavilions for youth groups to use”
- “more directional signs to parks and parking”
- “more parking at Jericho fields”
- “new equipment for children”
- “overall, I'm pleased with the outdoor options, variety, and maintenance”
- “find another location for an athletic field to take the pressure off the fields at Union Forge”



Chapter 7
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

7. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This chapter sets forth the following the goals and objectives, which serve as a guideline for the High Bridge Open Space and Recreation Plan. The goals were drawn from planning documents, site visits, public input, interviews with various Borough officials and volunteers, and meetings with the Sub-committee.

1. Diversify recreational opportunities within the Borough.
 - Analyze the public and student survey responses and determine additional active (e.g. volleyball, tennis) and passive (e.g. disc golf, community garden) uses that could be added to the park system.
2. Provide pedestrian and cyclist linkages between the various park and open space facilities within the Borough and to parks in adjacent communities.
 - Improve pedestrian street crossings near the most frequented parks/open spaces.
 - Identify breaks in the walking/biking system.
 - Analyze options to bridge the gaps in the sidewalk system and create bike lanes or shared lanes where safe.
3. Utilize the Borough's parks and open spaces to increase recreation and eco-tourism within High Bridge.
 - Continue to install additional signage to direct tourists to parking, parks, and trails.
 - Partner with regional tourism and recreation groups to promote the Borough's open space assets.
 - Develop self-guided trail brochures.
 - Work with biking and cycling organizations to promote High Bridge's trails.
 - Contact the NY-NJ Trail Conference, NJ Hiking, and other trail groups to promote High Bridge's trails.
 - Work with local angler clubs and State fishing organizations to promote the Borough's fishing opportunities.
4. Strategically improve and maintain the Borough's parks and open spaces.
 - Prepare detailed ten-year action plans for select park/open spaces (for example, Arch Street, Union Forge, Solitude, etc.) that outlines planned improvements (e.g. new amenities, upgrades to existing amenities, replacement plan, etc.)
 - Create weekly, monthly, and annual maintenance plans for each park.
5. Enhance and upgrade Union Forge Park.
 - Capitalize on the park's existing features, upgrade existing amenities, and install new amenities.
 - Replace outdated playground equipment and add more apparatus for all age groups.
 - Erect a pavilion near the river, which will act as a gathering space and event venue.
 - Add benches and picnic tables in strategic locations.
 - Delineate parking spaces to maximum parking capacity.
 - Repair existing basketball court and expand to proper size.
 - Add restrooms or enable all park users to use all existing restrooms.
 - Create a perimeter walking/running/fitness trail.
 - Improve field conditions.

6. Enhance and upgrade the Commons.
 - Move all DPW operations to another parcel to maximum park usage.
 - Delineate parking spaces to maximum parking capacity and implement a metered parking system.
 - Install permanent bathrooms and refreshment cart.
 - Finish the bike pump track and dog park.
 - Provide additional benches and/or picnic tables.
 - Install parking lot lighting.
 - Improve and upgrade the stage.
7. Reactivate Lake Solitude.
 - Conduct a study to determine the feasibility of dredging or hydro-raking Lake Solitude to increase its depth.
 - Add benches and/or picnic tables around the perimeter of the Lake and near the Dam.
 - Explore the installation of nano-hydro demonstration facility.
8. Install signage.
 - Seek funding from the County Economic Development Corporation.
 - Contact County to install County-wide way-finding signage system.
 - Install identification signage at each park entrance or along its street frontage.
 - Install interpretive signage along select trails.
9. Seek outside sources of funding and grants to upgrade and install new amenities within the Borough's parks.
 - Research potential local, State, and Federal opportunities.
 - Contact the County to determine if they have available funding.
 - Research potential grants or matching opportunities from playground manufacturers (<https://www.gametime.com/playground-grant>) or other sources (<https://apply.kaboom.org/>).

This report also reaffirms and incorporates two of the goals from the 2011 Sustainable Economic Development Plan:

1. Accommodate economic growth in a sustainable manner, taking careful advantage of the unique historic and natural resources within High Bridge.
2. Diversify High Bridge's economy by utilizing existing assets to transform the Borough into a destination for cultural/heritage tourism and outdoor recreation.



Chapter 8
RECOMMENDATIONS

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the Borough-owed sites, their existing conditions, and the recommended improvements and modifications for each park.

ARCH STREET OPEN SPACE

The Arch Street Open Space is a 1.6-acre parcel located on the north side of Arch Street, east of the Arches. The primary feature of this park is the South Branch of the Raritan River. The property is entirely wooded and as a result has been classified as a Natural Resource Area. Arch Street contains several Highlands resources including forest area, wetlands, OWPA, riparian area, and severely constrained slopes.²¹ The site does not provide any delineated area for parking. The property does not appear to be actively used or advertised as an open space area. The park does appear to be well maintained as no litter was observed on the property.



Photo 4: View of Arch Street Open Space

Arch Street Open Space is a virtually untouched area along the South Branch of the Raritan River. Since the March and June site visits, the Department of Public Works (“DPW”) has removed low-hanging tree branches and mulched to make a path to the river. We recommend this property remain in its natural state with some minor enhancements:

- Strategically remove trees to make a clearing to install picnic tables.
- Amend the Borough Code to permit parallel parking on Arch Street.
- Add a dirt shoulder along Arch Street to create parallel parking spaces.
- Install an identification sign.

THE COMMONS

Block 201, Lots 8 and 9 are collectively known as the Commons. This 7.2-acre tract was purchased by the Borough from NJ Transit in 1996, and subsequently improved to be utilized as a common gathering place for many activities. The park contains a large open grass area, picnic tables, benches, a gazebo, and portable restrooms. A natural recycling area for residents was created in the rear of the park to control illegal dumping issues.²² In 2017, the Borough commenced construction on a bike pump track adjacent to the natural recycling area. The pump track is being constructed by volunteers. The Borough also started construction on a dog park, said work is being performed by the High Bridge Business Association, who has also taken responsibility to maintain the facility. The Commons hosts many events and community activities such as summer concerts on the outdoor stage, movie nights, etc.

The Commons is directly south of High Bridge Hollow and west of the Columbia Trail trailhead. Both trailheads for the trails in High Bridge Hollow are in the Commons. Two large gravel parking areas are in the Commons.

The Commons contains several environmental features. There is a forest resources area, wetlands, OWPA, and a Highlands Riparian Area. The site contains moderately and severely constrained slopes.²³

Overall, the Commons appears to be in excellent condition. However, the public survey asked residents what they thought about the park and its quality. 53% of respondents indicated the Commons is in “good” condition, while over 30% said it is in “fair” condition. Residents were also asked to identify any areas of the park they see as problematic. Those responses were categorized into themes. The most received response concerned the lack of restrooms and/or their cleanliness. The second highest response was parking. The final questions regarding the Commons asked residents if they could add a new facility or activity to the park, what would it be. These answers were also grouped into themes. The top five answers were: restrooms/permanent restrooms, dog park, additional seating/tables, additional parking, and food options.



Photo 5: View of The Commons

Additionally, it should be noted that the Borough is budgeting \$30,000 to install lighting within the Commons in the Spring of 2020. As the park acts as the trailhead for the Columbia Trail, the Borough is also contemplating a request to the County to fund half of the cost to install bathrooms for trail users. Volunteers have offered to repair the roof of the gazebo and install lighting in it. This work is anticipated to be done in 2020.

Recommendations to improve the park are as follows based on the site assessment and public feedback:

- Move DPW operations to increase the space available for recreational activities.
- Delineate parking spaces to maximum parking capacity.
- Install permanent bathrooms and a refreshment cart.
- Finish the bike pump track and dog park.
- Provide additional benches and/or picnic tables.
- Clearly identify the pedestrian connection from the Commons to Main Street, which is located behind old Borough Hall.
- Installed information signage and a native plants rain garden.
- Refurbish the gazebo.
- Add additional trash and recycling trash cans.
- Improve and upgrade the stage by lowering the floor, expanding the size, and improving the electric or replace with appropriate alternative.
- Install site lighting.
- Repave the parking lot as a long-term goal.

DENNIS AVENUE PRESERVE

Known as Block 20, Lot 50, this three-acre property acts as a buffer between the residential uses along Ridge Road and the commercial uses to the south. Dennis Avenue Preserve contains 1.57 acres of wetlands and 0.33 acres of severely constrained slopes. The entire site is in a WHPA Tier 2 and in the Highland's OWPA. Roughly 90.8% of the site is a critical wildlife habitat for the barred owl, Eastern box turtle, and wood thrush.²⁴

The Dennis Avenue Preserve does not have any amenities and did not appear to be actively used during our site visit. The preserve is not identified and has no parking. However, it appears that the parking lot on the property to the south encroaches into the preserve. No trash or debris was visible during the site visit.

The recommendations for the Dennis Avenue Preserve are limited due to the presence of so many environmental features:

- Park identification signage should be installed.
- Research grant opportunities to install flora and fauna signage within the park.
- The Borough should contact the property owner to the south to arrange a shared parking agreement for the preserve or request the parking to be removed.

DEWEY AVENUE PROPERTY

The Dewey Avenue Property is located along Dewey Avenue and stretches south to Washington Avenue. The site is identified as Block 31, Lot 14.02 by the tax records. The site contains 33.19 acres, however, only 20.6 acres are on the Borough's ROSI. Over one acre of the site is within the road right-of-way and 12.3 acres are not on the ROSI. The map on page 33 illustrates the ROSI versus non-ROSI portion of the site. However, in October of 2019 the Borough became aware of a Deed of Conservation Restriction between the Borough and Hunterdon County, recorded in February of 2011, that restricts the use of the entire parcel to undeveloped parkland with passive recreation only, including public access for possible hiking and/or riding trails and that there will be no active recreation, such as ballfields on the property.²⁵ This restriction was in exchange for



Photo 6: Dennis Avenue Preserve



Photo 7: Dewey Avenue Property

funding to assist the Borough in purchasing the property. The Borough believes that the Deed is incorrect, and the restricted use should only apply to the ROSI portion of the property. High Bridge has reached out to the County to rectify this error.

The Dewey Avenue site exhibits extreme topographical change. At the southeast corner, along Dewey Avenue, the site is an elevation of 404 feet. The site slopes down to an elevation of 258 feet at Washington Avenue. Therefore, there is an elevation change of 146 feet across the site. Over 29 acres of the site is considered forest area by the Highlands. Almost two acres of the property are within an OWPA, while five acres is within a riparian area.²⁶

The portion of the property on the ROSI is densely wooded. The portion of the property excluded from the ROSI along the Dewey Road frontage has an open field (see Photo 7). This office did not observe any signs of active use of this park during our site visit. However, a curb cut across from Manning Court leads to a small gravel area and the open field. From Dewey Avenue, the property appeared to be well maintained and no debris or trash was found.

While it is clear that this preserved open space is underutilized, the site has many opportunities that would enable the site to become an actively used recreational area. However, due to the recently discovered Deed of Conservation Restriction, the Borough is presently unable to utilize the property for any activity except for hiking/riding trails. The site does present the opportunity to link the residential neighborhoods along Manning Court, MacArthur Street, Patton Street, and Wharton Way to the recreation hub at Union Forge Park. These residential neighborhoods sit roughly 150 feet above the fields at Union Forge Park and Dewey Avenue, which connects the two but is extremely steep. The Dewey Avenue property could be developed with low-impact switchback trails that could provide a safe, alternative route for residents and children to walk from their homes down to the park area. Recommendations for the Dewey Avenue Property include:

- Signage should be added to identify the property as part of the Borough's Parks and Open Space system.
- Develop a low-impact switchback trail that links the parking area across from Manning Court down to Washington Avenue.
- Analyze the park for future recreation, if the County deed restriction issue can be resolved.

EAST MAIN STREET PRESERVE

This 2.7-acre parcel is known as Block 33, Lot 36 on the Borough Tax Map. The property is located on the west side of East Main Street, adjacent to single-family dwellings. An unnamed tributary of the South Branch of the Raritan River traverses the property, dividing the land into two sections. The western portion of the property is encumbered by steep slopes where the elevation is approximately 50 feet greater than the east side. The east side, along East Main Street, is relatively flat with trees, shrubs, and grasses throughout.

East Main Street Preserve contains several Highlands environmental resources. Over 96% of the site is considered a critical wildlife habitat for Eastern box turtle and wood



Photo 8: East Main Street Preserve

thrush. The site also includes forest resource area, an OWPA, riparian area, and severely constrained slopes, which can be seen in Photo 8.²⁷

The property does not appear to be used or identified as open space. From East Main Street, the park appears to be well maintained.

Since the East Main Street Preserve property is divided by a stream and significantly encumbered by steep slopes, and designated as a critical wildlife habitat, we recommend the park remain in its natural state and act as a preserve. The only suggestion for this site is:

- Installation of an identification sign to recognize the property as part of the Borough's Parks and Open Space system.

HIGH BRIDGE HOLLOW

Known as Block 19, Lot 68 and comprising of 44.5 acres, High Bridge Hollow is large open space providing residents and visitors with trails for walking, hiking, and biking. The park is densely wooded and contains an unnamed tributary, which runs from Cregar Avenue to the southern property line.



Photo 9: High Bridge Hollow trail

High Bridge Hollow is rich with environmental resources. Over 97% of the park is considered a critical wildlife habitat for the barred owl. The site contains forest resource areas, wetlands, OWPA, riparian areas, and severely constrained slopes.²⁸

High Bridge Hollow is immediately north of the Commons property. Parking for this facility is provided at the Commons park. The park contains two trails to explore the property (see the map on page 12). The eastern trail begins in the Commons parking area and ends near Cregar Avenue. This trail is for walkers and hikers. The elevation change in the trail is approximately 150 feet from the Commons to Cregar Avenue. The western trail is a winding loop trail that begins on the west side of the property near the bike pump track in the Commons. The western trail is a multi-use trail.

During our site visit, we did not travel on the two trails within the park and therefore, cannot comment on the condition of the trails. However, it is unclear how a visitor to the site would know that the eastern trail is for walkers/hikers and not mountain bikers.

However, in the fall of 2019 the Jersey Office Road Bicycling Association ("JORBA") and Avid Trails were approved to reconfigure the western biking trail to create specific downhill interior directional bike trails and an exterior multi-user loop. The total cost for this project will be approximately \$30,000, which is being raised by JORBA. The work is anticipated to commence in October and be finished by the end of the year, weather permitting.

Recommendations for High Bridge Hollow include:

- Installation of signage for each trail head clearly identifying the types of permitted trail users. The signage should also indicate trail length and if it is a loop.
- Erect flora and fauna information signs along the eastern walking trail.
- Add benches along the eastern walking trail.

JERICHO BASEBALL COMPLEX

The Jericho Baseball Complex is located at the intersection of Old Jericho Road and Arch Street on Block 30.02, Lot 2. This 8.1-acre park contains three baseball/softball fields and three groups of batting cages. The fields are equipped with cameras, which are able to live stream games to friends and families of players. Bleachers are provided at each field for viewers. Portable restrooms are also provided on-site. The baseball leagues maintain the facility. In fact, in 2018 North Hunterdon Little League completed \$70,000 in improvements at the facility.

Overall, the three baseball fields and batting cage areas appear to be in excellent condition. However, the parking areas and perimeter of the site could use improvement. Finally, some residents commented in the survey that additional parking is needed. Recommendations for the Jericho Baseball Complex include:

- Delineate parking spaces to maximum parking capacity and create organized parking areas.

LAKE SOLITUDE AND DAM

Located at 7 River Road is the Lake Solitude and Dam park. Most of the park is Lake Solitude itself and the dam structure. (The Solitude property was privately owned until 2002 when the Borough acquired the 33+ acre site with the financial assistance of Green Acres and the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust.²⁹) The park is also home to the historic Solitude House, Annex Building, and a garage/carriage barn building. Historic tours and events are hosted at the park and offer a history of Solitude House, Lake Solitude, and the Taylor-Wharton Iron and Steel Company. In addition to tours and events, many couples choose to get married at Solitude Dam every year.

Solitude House has a Certificate of Eligibility (October 31, 2003) and is considered a significant historic asset for its role



Photo 10: Jericho Baseball Complex



Photo 11: Solitude House

in the American Revolution (where loyalists Benjamin Chew and John Penn were held under house arrest for almost a year)³⁰, as well as its association with five generations of the Taylor family, individuals who held various positions at the Taylor Iron Works, which later became Taylor Wharton Iron and Steel Company. In fact, Solitude House has been short-listed as one of approximately 100 sites to visit for the 250th anniversary of the Revolutionary War.³¹

Lake Solitude's Dam is a destination in and of itself as it is the last remaining example of a buttress dam in New Jersey. The Borough received a grant from the NJDEP to reconstruct the dam. The project was completed in early 2013. The Dam and Lake Solitude have a State Historic Preservation Office Opinion (September 8, 2004) and a Certificate of Eligibility (November 3, 2004), which is a designation of eligibility to the New Jersey Register of Historic Places.³²

The Lake Solitude site is not only a historic gem, but an environmental treasure chest. The South Branch of the Raritan River runs through Lake Solitude. Historically, Lake Solitude was used for boating and swimming. However, over time the lake has silted in and is only six inches to one foot deep currently (see Photo 12). The site has over ten acres of critical wildlife habitat for the Eastern box turtle, wood thrush, and wood turtle. There are over 33 acres of forest resource area. The site also contains wetlands, an OWPA, riparian areas, and steep slopes.³³ In fact, the site slopes from an elevation of 350 feet along the Columbia Trail down to 290 at the edge of the Lake.

A dock is located on the southwestern corner of the lake, which offers benches to take in the views of the lake and its ecosystem (see Photo 13). The Steelworkers Trail passes by the dam, Lake Solitude, and Solitude House campus. The Steelworkers Trail provides access to other Borough properties including the TISCO Property, Nassau, Springside Farm, and the Columbia Trail. There is also an Eagle Scout trail on the property, which branches off the Columbia Trail and offers views of the lake.

There is a small parking area at the end of the driveway to the Solitude House and a large parking area at the lake.



Photo 12: Lake Solitude

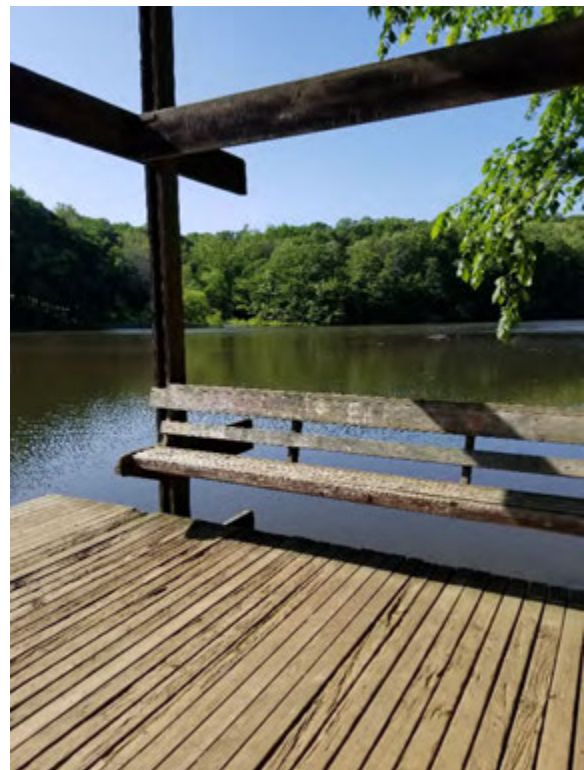


Photo 13: View of dock

The Lake Solitude and Dam park offers many passive activities for nearly everyone. The dam is in excellent condition as it was just renovated in 2013. The area surrounding Lake Solitude is well maintained and the dock's missing floor boards have been replaced and the benches repaired since the March/June site visit. One can bird watch on the property, canoe, kayak, or fish. The following action items for the Lake Solitude and Dam are recommended:

- Conduct a study to determine the feasibility of dredging or hydro-raking Lake Solitude to increase its depth.
- Add benches and/or picnic tables around the perimeter of the Lake and near the Dam.
- Create a trail or path to lead visitors to view the dam and waterfall.
- Install signage to identify the Steelworkers Trail and Eagle Scout Trail.
- Place an informational map in the parking lot illustrating where the visitor is in relationship to the Borough's other park spaces.
- Explore the installation of nano-hydro demonstration facility.
- Create a trail master plan/map of the entire Borough trail system.

MINI PARK

This small, quarter-acre park is located at 32 Main Street. A majority of the park is a municipal parking lot with 17 parking spaces, which is accessed from McDonald Street. However, the frontage along Main Street and a portion of McDonald Street provides an attractive streetscape with benches, trees, and flowers. The public area seems to be maintained, however, weeds have started to grow in the flower beds and through the cracks of the brick sidewalk. Finally, it should be noted that the Borough has received a grant to complete some street repairs within the McDonald Street right-of-way. These improvements include the repair of the sidewalk along McDonald.

Although most of the Mini Park is a parking area, the following recommendations would improve the park:

- Install lighting for the park and parking lot.
- The weeds should be removed from the planters and brick area. The trees should be trimmed to provide additional clearance for people to walk under.
- The circular planter should be repaired and replanted.
- Consider, as a long-term goal, redesigning the planters to create more usable space within the park.
- Install additional benches.
- The planting area along McDonald Street is covered with moss and leaves. A tree was once located next to the bench. Shrubs and trees should be planted in the landscape bed and site landscaping should be enhanced where possible.



Photo 14: Mini Park

NASSAU

Located along Nassau Road, this park consists of three parcels totaling roughly 90 acres. Block 37, Lot 1 is the largest of the three parcels and contains most of the Nassau trail system (see the map on page 12 for the various trails within Nassau). The Steelworkers Trail winds through this property, along with several other trails. Headed west, the Steelworkers Trail passes through Lake Solitude and Dam and the TISCO Property to the Columbia Trail. To the east, the Steelworkers Trail enters Springside Farm. The trails are open to walkers, hikers, and cyclists. The trails on the tract are maintained by volunteers, who also close the trails after rain events to avoid trail destabilization.

A parking area is provided at each trailhead of the Steelworkers Trail. An information board, picnic table, and bike rack are located in each parking area.

Nassau's classification as a natural resource area is the result of the abundance of environmental features on the site. The tract contains forest resource areas, steep slopes, critical wildlife habitat, OWPA, and riparian areas.³⁴ There is also a tributary to the South Branch of the Raritan River on site.

The parking areas appeared to be well maintained as no litter was present. Recommendations for the Nassau site include:

- A trail map or brochure detailing the various trails within the Nassau properties should be created to assist visitors.
- Place an informational map in the parking lot illustrating where the visitor is in relationship to the Borough's other park spaces.

SOUTH BRANCH OF THE RARITAN RIVER

This small, half-acre property is located between Arch Street and the Raritan River. Located on Block 29.04, Lot 2, this property offers views of the South Branch of the Raritan River and fishing access. During the year one can spot fishermen along this section of the River. A picnic table was visible from Arch Street (see Photo 16), however, no trash or recycling bin was observed. There is no parking onsite. However, one can park across the street at the Jericho Baseball Complex, or on the County's land on the north side of the River.



Photo 15: Trail head area at Nassau



Photo 16: View of River

Due to the site's proximity to the River, it is located in the OWPA and riparian area. The site also contains wetlands and forest resource area.³⁵

It should be noted that there is a question as to the lot's exact location as there appears to be a discrepancy between the GIS mapping and the tax maps.

This small property along the South Branch of the Raritan River should remain in its natural state. We do not have any recommendations for this site.

SPRINGSIDE FARM

This 37-acre park is located along Nassau Road on Block 40, Lot 4. Springside Farm was an active dairy farm until the 1950s. The site was owned by the Wetteland family, who sold the property to the Borough in 2002. The former farmstead is in the southwest corner of the property. There are five remaining structures, a dwelling, three barns and a small building, all of which are dilapidated. According to the tax records the house was built in 1803. Access to the farmstead area is provided by a driveway off Nassau Road. A majority of the property is wooded with the Steelworkers



Photo 17: View of structures on Springside Farm

Trail and other smaller trails traversing through the trees and field. (The Borough's DPW mows the field twice a year.) Similar to Nassau, the trails on Springside are maintained by volunteers. No on-site parking is provided, however, the parking area at Nassau can be used to access the Steelworkers Trail on Springside Farm.

Springside Farm contains many natural features. The site includes forest resource areas, steep slopes, critical wildlife habitat, OWPA, and riparian areas.³⁶

As this report details, the Borough of High Bridge owns a significant amount of land and with the various acquisitions of open space the Borough has inherited structures. As Borough resources are limited, Springside Farm has been shifted to the bottom of the priority list for several reasons:

- Finite funding;
- Remote location in southeast corner of the Borough;
- Access issues due to the condition of Nassau Road;
- Safety concerns within existing buildings.

For the above reasons and the fact that the Borough owns 286+ acres of ROSI-listed parks and open spaces, we offer only one recommendation for Springside Farm at this time, which is to eliminate the site safety hazards.

TISCO PROPERTY

Located off of Washington Avenue, between Union Forge Park and Lake Solitude is the TISCO Property. The TISCO ("Taylor Iron & Steel Company") building was part of the former Taylor-Wharton Company plant complex and earlier Union Forge. The TISCO building appears on many early maps as a store or office and is said to be from the 18th century.³⁷ Today, the TISCO building sits empty.

Known as Block 4.06, Lot 34, this 27-acre park provides visitors with a unique recreational experience. The Steelworkers Trail traverses the property and connects to Lake Solitude and Dam and Springside Farm. The Steelworkers trailhead is located in the northern part of the park off of the Columbia Trail. The Steelworkers Trail winds down the slope of the former railroad embankment before coming to the site of the historic TISCO building office (see Photo 18). The Trail then makes a left and crosses a bridge on adjacent privately-owned land. The Steelworks Trail continues east crossing the South Branch of the Raritan River and then turns north towards the Lake Solitude and Dam park. Access to the TISCO office building and Shop E is not currently permitted. Visitors can still explore the grounds and exterior building construction.

The TISCO property's eastern boundary is the southern bank of the South Branch of the Raritan River. Due to the river's presence, roughly 72% of the site is in an OWPA and over 62% is in a riparian area. Approximately 11 acres of the park contains severely constrained steep slopes. Finally, there are over seven acres of critical wildlife habitat for wood turtles on site.³⁸

Parking areas are provided on this site, which serve the adjacent fields at Union Forge Park.

The TISCO Property appears to be well maintained with no litter present. We offer the following recommendations for this park property:

- Delineate parking spaces to maximum parking capacity and create organized parking areas.
- Provide general park amenities such as bike racks, and benches, and/or picnic tables. There are sizeable trees between the TISCO Building and the pedestrian/bike bridge over the river that would provide shade and a nice view.
- Install signage to identify Shop E and the Steelworkers Trail that traverses the site.
- Consider erecting information boards near both historic buildings, to provide a history of the buildings and property.
- Connect the TISCO site to the High Bridge Middle School via a path on the vacant Board of Education property (Block 4.06, Lot 17) located at the corner of Taylor and Prospect Street.



Photo 18: TISCO office building

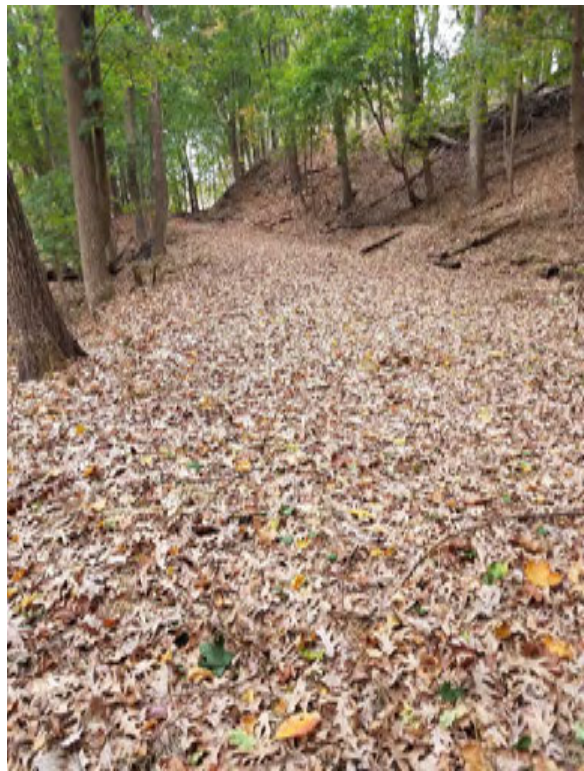


Photo 19: Former railroad bed

- North of the driveway to TISCO is an old railroad bed that parallels the driveway, which is located on the TISCO site (see Photo 19). That bed sits at an elevation of 280 to 290. As shown on the map on page 80, there is a plateau that sits roughly 40 feet above Washington Avenue. The Sub-committee suggests select trees be removed from this plateau and a scenic overlook area be created. This area could have benches or a gazebo for weddings or act as an outdoor classroom for the Middle School.
- Create a “Riverwalk” along the South Branch of the Raritan River that would start in Union Forge Park, run behind Shop E, cross the Steelworkers trail, and terminate near Lake Solitude Dam.

It should be noted that Chapter 10 is dedicated to a detailed vision plan for Union Forge Park and the TISCO Property.

UNION FORGE PARK

Located on either side of Washington Avenue, adjacent to the South Branch of the Raritan River is Union Forge Park. The park is located on two properties, Block 4.06, Lot 34.01 (“northern parcel”) and Block 29.02, Lot 15 (“southern parcel”). According to the tax records, Lot 34.01 was purchased by the Borough in 1944. Historically, both sites were part of the Taylor-Wharton Iron & Steel Company. In fact, the majority of the northern parcel was a foundry pond for Taylor Ironworks in 1873. The southern parcel contained a foundry, several buildings and water raceways in 1873.

Today, the northern parcel contains three baseball/softball fields, a concession stand, and a monument for the Taylor-Wharton Iron & Steel Company. The ball fields are used as High Bridge Middle School’s home fields and for the men’s baseball and women’s softball leagues. Additionally, the Hunterdon Huskies use the fields for their football games in the fall.³⁹

The southern parcel provides an additional baseball/softball field, a playground, basketball court, gazebo, picnic tables and benches, a large grass field (which is used for soccer, see Photo 23), river access, and parking areas. The playground contains various features including a jungle gym, monkey bars, a swing set, balance beam, slide, and a sand digging area.



Photo 20: View of playground at Union Forge



Photo 21: View of field at Union Forge

Union Forge Park contains many environmental resources. The site has forest resource areas, steep slopes, critical wildlife habitat, OWPA, riparian areas, and the South Branch of the Raritan River as its eastern boundary.⁴⁰

The student and public survey asked several questions regarding Union Forge Park because it is the main activity hub of the Borough's park system. However, the survey was issued prior to the Borough installing a new slide and toddler-oriented play structure. The students were asked if they could add a new or additional facility to Union Forge, what would it be? The top five responses were skate park, tennis courts, walking/running path, volleyball courts, and a bbq area. When asked what their favorite park of the park is students said the playground/swings, basketball court, and field area. Students were also asked what area of the park needs the most improvement. This was an open-ended question, but five common themes were found in the responses. The most received response was the playground equipment condition and the need for more pieces. The second highest response was the basketball court condition and missing nets (see Photo 22). The third highest response was the field condition.

The public survey offers interesting insight into residents' thoughts on Union Forge Park. Residents were asked if they see any part of the park as problematic and if so, what that issue is. The problems were grouped into themes. The top five responses were outdated/broken playground equipment, restroom access/cleanliness, poor grass/field condition, general park maintenance, and parking.

Lastly, residents were asked if they could add a new facility or activity to Union Forge Park, what would it be? Over 230 individuals answered the question with 634 responses. A fitness trail with stations received the most response (14%+), a walking trail ranked second (14%), a pavilion ranked third (11%), a water/spray park ranked fourth (9%) and tennis courts came in fifth (7%). There was also an "other" option with a blank for residents to fill in. The two highest answers here were additional/cleaner bathrooms and update playground equipment.

Since the survey was issued the soccer teams are now permitted to use the Huskies bathrooms. Additionally, Washington Street was recently repaved and the crosswalks between the northern and southern parcels were



Photo 22: Existing basketball court



Photo 23: View of the parking lot and soccer fields

restriped, increasing the visibility of the pedestrian crossing area (see Photo 24). Lastly, a new slide, toddler play structure, and musical sensory drum were installed.

Union Forge Park is recognized as recreational hub, offering a variety of amenities and activities. However, there is space on the property to add additional amenities and features. Based on the information received from the surveys, we recommend the following:

- Improve playground equipment condition, replace outdated pieces, and add more equipment for all age groups.
- Repair existing basketball court and expand to middle school court size, which is 42 feet wide by 74 feet long
- Add benches and picnic tables in strategic locations.
- Erect a pavilion.
- Delineate parking spaces to maximum parking capacity and create organized parking areas.
- Improve field conditions.
- Add a perimeter walking/running/fitness trail and a Riverwalk trail.
- Add restrooms or enable all park users to use all existing restrooms.
- Install additional bike racks on both parcels.
- Evaluate the installation of cameras and lighting.

It should be noted that Chapter 10 is dedicated to a detailed vision plan for Union Forge Park and the TISCO Property.



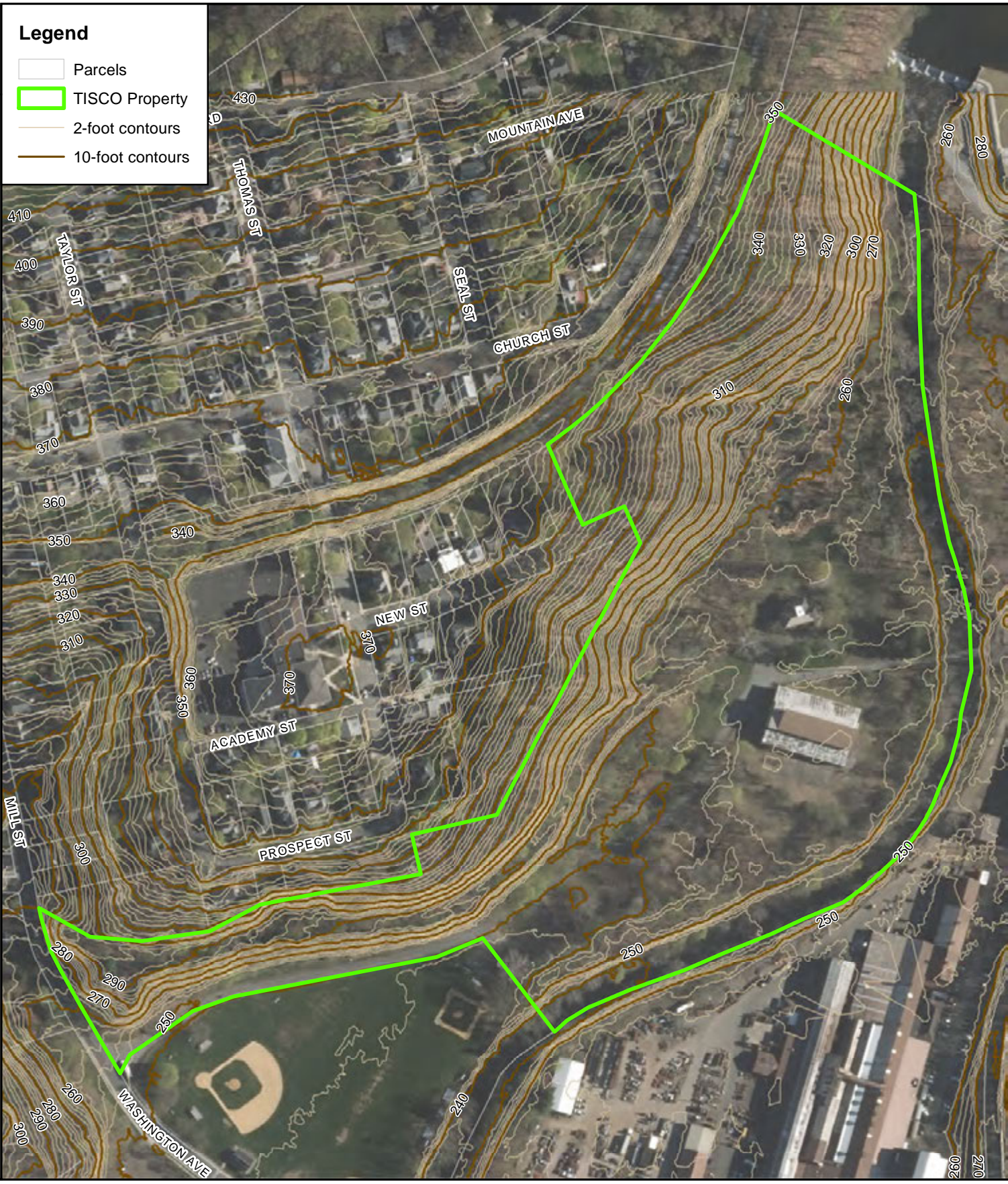
Photo 24: New crosswalks connecting the north and south parcels



Photo 25: New play structure

Legend

- Parcels
- TISCO Property
- 2-foot contours
- 10-foot contours



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0 125 250
Feet
1 inch = 250 feet

TISCO PROPERTY TOPOGRAPHY
BLOCK 4.06, LOT 34
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY





Chapter 9
ACQUISITION PLAN

9. ACQUISITION PLAN

The Borough has no intention of purchasing any more land for active or passive recreation. However, the Borough does wish to pursue easements on private property to create pedestrian and cyclist connections.



Chapter 10
PARK VISION PLAN

10. PARK VISION PLAN

After much discussion and debate, the Open Space and Recreation Plan Sub-committee decided to prepare a vision plan for the TISCO Property and Union Forge Park. As the two parks are immediately adjacent, one vision plan was prepared for the two facilities.

The vision for the combined park space is to enhance the existing facilities by expanding and improving existing park features. The park spaces will be connected to the Middle School with a new trail that utilizes the former railroad bed. A switchback connection will link the new trail down to the fields, which sit roughly 40 feet below the railroad bed. An overlook area will be created adjacent to the new trail that contains seating and provides the opportunity for a gathering area, event space, and/or outdoor classroom. Signage will be added to the park spaces to clearly identify existing and proposed trails and to highlight the history of the TISCO Office Building and Shop E. The field areas will be regraded to improve drainage and possibly reconfigured to create standard-sized fields. The playground will be expanded physically and with the addition of new equipment. The existing basketball court will be repaired and expanded to an official middle school court size. The parking areas will be reconfigured and delineated to increase capacity. Three new river access points will be created along with a picnic area and a pavilion. Both sites will be connected with a new, looped multi-purpose perimeter trail and a new Riverwalk that parallels the South Branch of the Raritan River.

The vision plan on page 85 graphically summarizes the vision for the combined park space. However, the following sections provided greater detail on specific focus areas within the park. Lastly, a cost estimate for the proposed recommendations and improvements has been provided.

FOCUS AREAS

To provide greater detail for the proposed vision for Union Forge Park and the TISCO Property, six focus areas have been created. These focus areas include the overlook and trail, playground, fields, pavilion and river access, Riverwalk, and picnic and river access. While not technically a focus area, the last section summarized other details for the park space.

OVERLOOK AND TRAIL

Along the northern edge of the TISCO Property is a former railroad bed. The bed is still intact with some overgrowth that has occurred over the years. The railroad bed rises from an elevation of roughly 250 feet near Shop E to approximately 290 feet near the proposed overlook area. As shown in Photo 26, there is a fantastic view from the proposed overlook area to Union Forge Park below and the river beyond.

A site visit on November 5, 2019 revealed that the former railroad bed is being used or visited as bottles and other trash can be found in the area. It is also clear from the



Photo 26: View from proposed overlook

UNION FORGE & TISCO PROPERTY VISION PLAN

BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE

HUNTERDON COUNTY NEW JERSEY

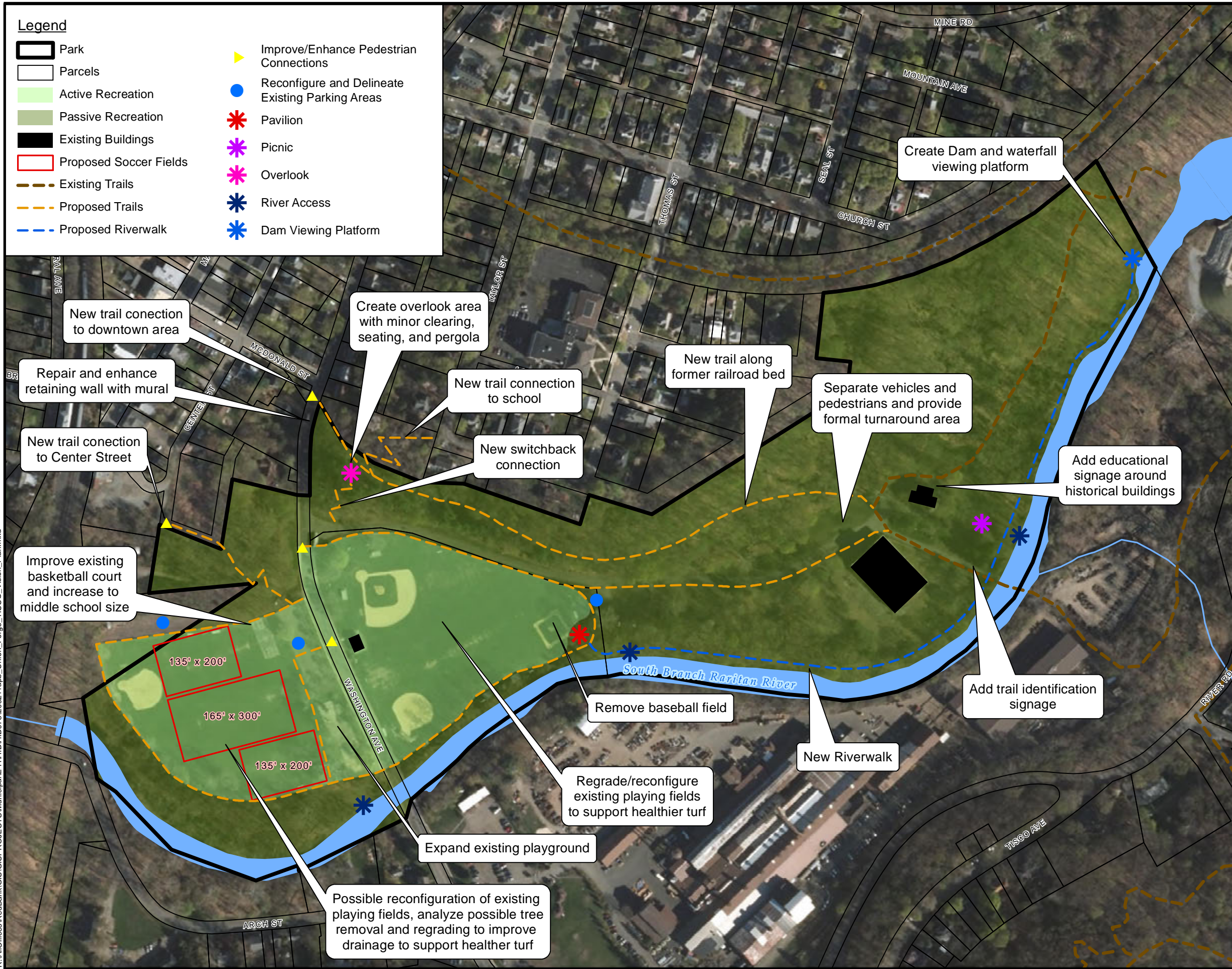


0 125 250 Feet
1 inch = 250 feet

This map was developed using NJDEP and Hunterdon County GIS digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not state-authorized.



February 2020



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footpaths that have been worn in certain areas that school students are coming down the hillside (a 50+/- foot grade change) to the railroad bed and then climbing down a second embankment (a 40+/- foot grade change) to travel to the fields. Navigating such a steep hillside is unsafe, so the creation of a switchback trail system is highly recommended.

The Borough should capitalize on the existing railroad bed and create a trail that follows the bed, which would connect Shop E and the TISCO Office Building. Furthermore, the existing topography lends itself to an overlook area, as the railroad bed plateaus and widens at the proposed overlook area comprising an area roughly 50 feet by 40 feet. As shown in Photo 26, with some select tree clearing, the view from the proposed overlook would be fantastic. This overlook area could have seating, a pergola or other structure that could be used for events, such as weddings or community gatherings, and provide the opportunity to be an outdoor classroom for the Middle School. Figure 1, below, provides a rendering of what the proposed overlook area could look like.



Figure 1: Rendering of proposed overlook

Then, to link the overlook area to the fields, which sit roughly 40 feet below it, a switchback trail could be created utilizing natural materials to form the connection. This construction would provide a better connection for students who have after-school sports events in the park. Figure 2 on page 87 provides a rendering of what the proposed switchback could look like.

The last recommendation for this focus area is the creation of a connection to the downtown. A westbound trail could connect the overlook area down to the southeast corner of the intersection of Washington Avenue and McDonald Street. A crosswalk could be installed to link the downtown area to this new feature. Additionally, there

is a wall (roughly eight feet high), just south of the intersection that retains the former railroad bed as it sits above Washington Avenue. The Borough should consider repairing the wall and soliciting an artist to paint a mural.



Figure 2: Rendering of proposed switchback

PLAYGROUND

The surveys reiterated the need to improve the playground area and add additional play structures. This is the only Borough-owned playground in the entire community. Therefore, it is imperative that it offers a variety of equipment for all age levels. The vision plan proposed to expand the playground area by 5,000 square feet from roughly 8,700 square feet to 13,700 square feet. The expansion would occur between the existing playground area and the proposed perimeter trail. The additional area would allow for new play structures to be added. This is especially important as the majority of the existing structures are for younger children.

This expanded space could allow for the addition of net structures (see Photo 27⁴¹), a climber (see Photo 28⁴²), balance beam, spinner (see Photo 29⁴³), zip line, seesaw, etc., which could server children ages 5 to 12.

FIELDS

The existing playing fields on both sides of Union Forge Park have grading and drainage issues. This has led to deteriorated field conditions. The vision plan recommends re-grading the fields to effectuate better drainage and improve turf conditions. Additionally, the vision plan calls for the possible reconfiguration of the soccer field layout. Currently, five soccer fields are squeezed on the southern field area. These fields do not appear to be standard sizes. The proposed vision plan provides a potential layout for three standardized fields, with roughly ten feet between each, which would require some tree removal along the southern edge of the tree line.



Photo 27: Example of net structure

PAVILION & RIVER ACCESS

Based on information from the public surveys and feedback from the Sub-committee, the desire for a pavilion and gathering space is evident. The Sub-committee indicated that the eastern-most baseball field is the least used and in the worst condition, so it could be removed to create an area for the installation of a pavilion. A pavilion has the ability to be used for summer recreation camp, by sports teams, for community events or rented by residents for parties and the like. The rendering (Figure 3) on page 89 illustrates what this area could look like. A structure within the larger park also creates an identifiable “place”. Adjacent to the proposed pavilion is space for a horseshoe pit and the edge of the football field could be repurposed for impromptu volleyball games.



Photo 28: Example of climber

Moreover, at the proposed pavilion location the South Branch of the Raritan River is just steps away. With some minor clearing of underbrush and low-hanging tree branches, a more formal or recognizable access point to the river could be created just northeast of the pavilion area.



Photo 29: Example of spinner



Figure 3: Rendering of proposed pavilion and river access area

PICNIC AREA & RIVER ACCESS

The Steelworkers Trail snakes down the hill from the Columbia Trail towards the rear of the TISCO Office Building. There is no signage presently to note the trail and during the November 2019 site inspection the trail was difficult to locate. Between the TISCO Office Building and the river is an open area with some trees. This space would make an excellent picnic area and second formal river access point. It would make a strategic stopping point for cyclists looking for a spot to rest before continuing the trail system.



Photo 30: Potential picnic area

With the addition of signage for both the Steelworkers Trail and the historic buildings the area would better serve visitors to the trail system and park space.

RIVERWALK

Trails and pathways adjacent to rivers and streams have become immensely popular over the past decade. Communities that had previously turned their back on waterways have created phenomenal linear parks along these bodies of water, which has generated increased tourism and other positive secondary impacts. The South Branch of the Raritan River parallels the eastern edge of both the TISCO Property and Union Forge Park. The Sub-committee wishes to capitalize on this asset and create a Riverwalk that would start at the new pavilion area, travel northeast

along the river, behind Shop E, cross the Steelworkers Trail, and terminate at the northern edge of the TISCO Property. At this terminus, there would be a platform to view the Lake Solitude Dam. This proposed Riverwalk would implement one of the recommendations in the 2018 County Park Plan (see Chapter 13).

OTHER DETAILS

There are a host of other details that round out the vision plan, which are important to note. They are as follows:

- Creation of a perimeter walking/running/fitness trail
- Addition of new restrooms or provision for all park users to utilize the existing restrooms
- Delineation of parking spaces to maximize capacity
- Addition of benches and picnic tables in strategic locations. For example, the addition of picnic tables around the playground and benches along the perimeter trail.
- Construction of a new, half-court basketball court and the repair of the existing court.
- Installation of signage to identify Shop E and information boards near both historic buildings to provide a history of the buildings and the property.
- Separation of vehicles and pedestrians along the gravel driveway on TISCO and the provision of a formal turnaround area.

COST ESTIMATE

To plan for the recommended enhancements and improvements for the TISCO property and Union Forge Park, the following rough cost estimate has been prepared. It should be noted that a range has been provided for each major line item as no survey or engineering has been prepared for any of the recommendations or improvements. The variation of the range is due in part to the options available to the Borough. For example, the Borough could opt to purchase a small, simple pavilion that costs \$5,000 or opt for a larger structure with more options and details that costs \$30,000. The rough costs for various improvements and enhancements are provided below:

- Creation of new overlook area: \$30,000 - \$70,000



Photo 31: Fields on the northern property



Photo 32: Existing restrooms on the southern property

- Creation of new trail along former railroad bed: \$30,000 - \$60,000
- Creation of new trail connecting to the downtown and the school: \$20,000 - \$40,000
- Creation of switchback to Union Forge Park: \$8,000 - \$10,000
- Repair and enhance railroad retaining wall on Washington Avenue: \$5,000 - \$7,500
- Improvement of existing basketball court and installation of new half court: \$30,000 - \$60,000
- Regrade and reconfigure Union Forge playing fields: \$140,000 - \$220,000
- Expand existing playground area with new equipment and safety surfacing: \$50,000 - \$90,000
- Install new ADA accessible walkway from restroom building to playground area: \$20,000 - \$25,000
- Create new pavilion and use area along the river: \$25,000 to \$65,000
- Install new walking trail around perimeter of Union Forge Park: \$75,000 - \$125,000
- Create turn around area adjacent to Shop E: \$40,000 - \$75,000
- Install signage for historic buildings and trails: \$8,000 - \$10,000



Photo 33: Sign on TISCO Property



Chapter 11
ACTION PLAN

11. ACTION PLAN

This chapter of the report is divided into two sections. The first section discusses park linkages and the second details the next steps to enact the recommendations contained in the report.

PARK LINKAGES

As detailed in the preceding chapters, High Bridge has a wealth of passive and active spaces. The student survey revealed that 48% of children walk to parks and 39% are driven. The resident survey showed that 41% of residents walk to parks. Therefore, it is important to ensure that there are safe pedestrian connections to parks and within the Borough's parks. Furthermore, as noted on page 63, a goal of this report is to provide pedestrian and cyclist linkages between the parks within the Borough and to parks adjacent to High Bridge. The top six recommendations are as follows:

- Connect Fine Road to Voorhees State Park.
 - At the junction of Block 2.01, Lots 25.01 and 61 (12 and 16 Fine Road) there is 26.19 feet between the edge of Fine Road and the edge of Voorhees State Park. The Borough seeks to obtain a five to ten-foot-wide easement from one of the property owners, which would then allow residents to walk to Voorhees State Park instead of having to drive to the park.
- Connect the northern edge of High Bridge Hollow via Cregar Avenue and Fine Road to Voorhees State Park.
 - The eastern trail within High Bridge Hollow terminates on Larrison Road, which connects to Cregar Avenue. A safe connection should be made along Cregar Avenue, along roughly 200 feet of Cregar Road and along Fine Road to the new connection point to Voorhees State Park. This would then connect the Columbia Trail, through The Commons and High Bridge Hollow to Voorhees State Park.
- Coordinate with the County to install a high visibility crossing on Main Street to emphasize the crossing between the end of the Columbia Trail and The Commons.
- Connect the Middle School to Union Forge Park.
 - Connect the Middle School via a new trail at the intersection of Prospect Street and Taylor Street. This would require an easement from the Board of Education, who owns Block 4.06, Lot 17, which is vacant.
 - The trail would switchback down the Board of Education property and connect to the proposed new trail on the former railroad bed. Students could then walk east on the new trail and then down a new switchback to navigate the 40-foot-tall embankment, which would connect to the fields on the northern parcel at Union Forge Park. See Figure 2 on page 87 for a rendering of the switchback.
- Connect the downtown area via McDonald and Washington Street to the new trail on TISCO.
 - This connection would require the installation of a crosswalk across Washington Street and access along the northwestern edge of the TISCO lot as shown by the map on page 95.
- Connect the downtown area via Center Street to Union Forge Park.
 - This connection would require an easement from Block 29.02, Lot 12 (known as 41 Center Street) to link the downtown and the train station to Union Forge Park.
- Create a Riverwalk.
 - The Riverwalk would parallel the South Branch of the Raritan River and commence at a platform with a view of Lake Solitude Dam. The trail would travel southwest, along the River, behind Shop E and terminate at the new pavilion in Union Forge.

- Connect Union Forge Park to Arch Street Open Space.
 - Provide a safe pedestrian pathway (or sidewalk) along the west side of Washington Street and north side of Arch Street that would link the two facilities.
- Connect the Borough to Clinton Township’s open space.
 - As described in Chapter 13, the 2018 County Park Plan recommends the creation of a Capoolong Trail that would begin at Lake Solitude and travel southwest through Union Forge Park, under the railroad tracks, and onto land owned by the State before exiting the Borough. The termination of the proposed trail would be in the Borough of Frenchtown. The proposed Riverwalk, fitness trail in Union Forge Park, and connection to Arch Street Open Space follow the proposed County route. From Arch Street Open Space, the trail would follow Arch Street, go under the railroad tracks, and follow Jericho Road. The trail would then continue onto land owned by the State of New Jersey and then connect to open space owned by the Township of Clinton.
- Connect Union Forge Park to Nassau.
 - Tisco Avenue is a residential street that connects to Washington Avenue, roughly 0.3 miles southeast of the entrance to Union Forge Park. Block 37, Lot 25 is owned by the Borough and wraps around the bend of Tisco Avenue. Between Lot 25 and Nassau is Block 37, Lots 18 and 28, which are independently owned and occupied with residential structures. Along the edge of Lot 28 there is 239.8 feet between Nassau and the Borough-owned lot. The Borough seeks to obtain a five- to ten-foot-wide easement from one of the property owners, which would then allow enable direct access between Union Forge Park and Nassau.

These recommendations are graphically illustrated on page 95.

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Feet

1 inch = 1,000 feet

**PROPOSED PARK
LINKAGES**
BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



FEBRUARY 2020

NEXT STEPS

Where does High Bridge go from here? Goals have been set and a list of recommendations and improvements have been described, but how does the Borough transform its parks and open spaces from their present condition to the desired vision? This section prioritizes the 70+ recommendations and improvements that have been outlined in the previous chapters to provide an organized framework for the Borough.

The Action Plan on pages 97 through 102 prioritizes the 70+ recommendations. The Action Plan provides a timeline for completion and lists the responsible entity to implement the task. Indicators are also provided to measure progress toward the recommendations and enable the Borough to track the progress. The Action Plan contains four timeframes:

			Short: 0 to 2 years
			Medium: 3 to 5 years
			Long: 6+ years
X	X	X	Ongoing

The Action Plan is roughly a ten-year timeline and should be updated to report on progress, make adjustments, and include any proposals for new actions. The Open Space and Recreation Plan is not a static document and can be amended at the discretion of the Planning Board.

Park	Action Item	Advisory Dept. / Committee	Time Frame			Responsible Entity	Indicator
			Short	Mid	Long		
Arch Street Open Space	Strategically remove trees to make a clearing to install picnic tables.	Environmental Comm.				DPW	Trees removed
	Install picnic tables.	Council				Council & DPW	Installed tables
	Amend the Borough Code to permit parallel parking on Arch Street.	Police Dept.				Council	New code
	Add dirt shoulder along Arch Street to create parallel parking spaces.	DPW				Council & DPW	Spaces created
	Install an identification sign.	Council & DPW				Council & DPW	Sign installed
The Commons	Move DPW operations to increase the available space.	Environmental Comm. & DPW				Council & DPW	Operations moved
	Delineate parking spaces to maximum parking capacity.	Council & DPW				Council	Delineated spaces
	Install permanent bathrooms and a refreshment cart.	Environmental Comm. & DPW				Council	Bathroom and cart installed
	Finish the bike pump track and dog park.	Recreation & HBBA				HBBA & volunteers	Work completed
	Provide additional benches and/or picnic tables.	Environmental Comm.				Council	Benches&tables installed
	Clearly identify the pedestrian connection from the Commons to Main Street.	Environmental Comm.				Council & DPW	New signage
	Install informational signage and a native plant rain garden.	Environmental Comm.				Enviro. Comm.	Work completed
	Refurbish the gazebo.	Environmental Comm. & DPW				Council	Work completed
	Add additional trash and recycling trash cans.	Environmental Comm. & Council				Council & DPW	New cans
	Improve and upgrade the stage by lowering the floor, expanding the size, and improving the electric.	Council				Council	Upgraded stage
	Install site lighting.	Council & Police Dept. & DPW				Council	Lighting installed
	Repave the parking lot.	Environmental Comm. & Council				Council	Paved lot

Park	Action Item	Advisory Dept. / Committee	Time Frame			Responsible Entity	Indicator
			Short	Mid	Long		
Dennis Avenue Preserve	Park identification signage should be installed.	EDC & DPW				Council & DPW	Sign installed
	Research grant applications to install flora and fauna signage.	Environmental Comm.				Enviro. Comm.	Grant awarded
	The Borough should contact the property owner to the south to arrange a shared parking agreement for the preserve or request the parking to be removed.	Council				Council	TBD
Dewey Avenue Property	Identification signage should be added.	EDC				Council & DPW	Sign installed
	Create switchback trail to link residential neighborhoods to Washington Avenue.	Recreation				Council	Trail completed
	Analyze the park for future recreation, if the County deed restriction issue can be resolved.	Council				Council	TBD
East Main Street Preserve	Install identification sign.	Environmental Comm.				Council & DPW	Sign installed
High Bridge Hollow	Install signage for each trail head clearly identifying the types of permitted trail users and trail length.	Recreation & Council				Council & DPW	Sign installed
	Erect flora and fauna informational signs along the eastern walking trail.	Environmental Comm.				Enviro. Comm.	Signs installed
	Add benches along the eastern walking trail.	Environmental Comm. & Council				Council	Benches installed
Jericho Baseball Complex	Delineate parking spaces to maximum parking capacity.	Council & Police Dept.				Council	Delineated spaces

Park	Action Item	Advisory Dept. / Committee	Time Frame			Responsible Entity	Indicator
			Short	Mid	Long		
Lake Solitude and Dam	Conduct a study to determine the feasibility of dredging or hydro-raking Lake Solitude to increase its depth.	Environmental Comm.				Council & Enviro. Comm.	Completed study
	Add benches and/or picnic tables around the perimeter of the Lake and near the Dam.	DPW				Council	Benches/tables installed
	Create a trail or path to lead visitors to view the dam and waterfall.	Council				Council	Trail/path installed
	Install signage to identify the Steelworkers Trail and Eagle Scout Trail.	Historical Comm. & Recreation				Council	Sign installed
	Place an informational map in the parking lot illustrating where the visitor is in relationship to the Borough's other park spaces.	Recreation				Council	Sign installed
	Explore the installation of nano-hydro demonstration facility.	Environmental Comm.				Council & Enviro. Comm.	TBD
	Create Borough Trail Master Plan/Map	Recreation & Council				Council	Plan/Map Created
Mini Park	Install lighting for the park and parking lot.	Environmental Comm. & DPW & Council				Council	Installed lighting
	Remove weeds and trim trees.	Environmental Comm. & DPW				DPW	Trees trimmed and weeds removed
	Redesign the planters to create more useable space within the park.	Environmental Comm. & DPW				Enviro. Comm.	Redesign space
	Repair and replant the circular planters.	Environmental Comm. & DPW & Council				DPW	Improvements completed
	Install additional benches.	Environmental Comm. & DPW				Council	Benches installed
	The planting area along McDonald Street is covered with moss and leaves. A tree was once located next to the bench. Shrubs and trees should be planted in the landscape bed and site landscaping should be enhanced where possible.	Environmental Comm.				DPW	Improvements completed

Park	Action Item	Advisory Dept. / Committee	Time Frame			Responsible Entity	Indicator
			Short	Mid	Long		
Nassau	Create a trail map or brochure detailing the various trails within the Nassau properties.	Recreation				Council	Map/brochure created
	Place an informational map in the parking lot illustrating where the visitor is in relationship to the Borough's other park spaces.	EDC				Council	Map installed
Springside Farm	Eliminate the site safety hazards.	Historical Comm.				Council	Hazards removed
TISCO Property	Delineate parking spaces to maximum parking capacity.	Police Dept. & DPW				Council	Delineated spaces
	Provide general park amenities such as bike racks, and benches, and/or picnic tables.	Recreation				Council	New amenities
	Create seating area between TISCO building and river.	Environmental Comm. & DPW				Council	Seating installed
	Install signage to identify Shop E and the Steelworkers Trail.	Historical Comm.				Council	Sign installed
	Consider erecting information boards near both historic buildings, to provide a history of the buildings and property.	Historical Comm.				Council	Info board installed
	Connect the TISCO site to the High Bridge Middle School via a path on the former railroad bed and on the vacant Board of Education property (Block 4.06, Lot 17).	DPW & Council				Council	Trail completed
	Create a scenic overlook area at trail plateau with benches, gazebo, etc.	DPW & Council				Council	Overlook completed
	Create "riverwalk" along the South Branch of the Raritan River.	Environmental Comm.				Council	Riverwalk completed

Park	Action Item	Advisory Dept. / Committee	Time Frame			Responsible Entity	Indicator
			Short	Mid	Long		
Union Forge Park	Improve playground equipment condition, replace outdated pieces, and add more equipment for all age groups.	Recreation & DPW				Council	Installation of new equipment
	Repair existing basketball court and expand to middle school size.	DPW & Council				Council	Repaired/expanded court
	Add benches and picnic tables in strategic locations.	DPW & Council				Council	Installed of benches/picnic tables
	Erect a pavilion and associated amenities.	Council				Council	Installed of pavilion
	Delineate parking spaces to maximum parking capacity and create organized parking areas.	Police Dept. & DPW				Council	Delineated spaces
	Improve field conditions and reconfigure fields.	Recreation & DPW				Council	Improvements completed
	Add a perimeter walking/running/fitness trail.	Environmental Comm.				Council	Improvements completed
	Create new river access points.	Environmental Comm.				DPW	Access points created
	Add restrooms or enable all park users to use all existing restrooms.	Council				Council	Restroom issue resolved
	Install additional bike racks.	Recreation				Council	Racks installed
	Evaluate the installation of cameras and lighting.	Environmental Comm. & DPW & Police Dept.				Council	Cameras and lights installed

Park	Action Item	Advisory Dept. / Committee	Time Frame			Responsible Entity	Indicator
			Short	Mid	Long		
Park Linkages	Connect Fine Road to Voorhees State Park.	Recreation & Environmental Comm.				Council	Easement recorded
	Connect the northern edge of High Bridge Hollow via Cregar Avenue and Fine Road to Voorhees State Park.	Recreation & Environmental Comm.				Council	Connection created
	Coordinate with the County to install a high visibility crossing on Main Street to emphasize the crossing between the end of the Columbia Trail and The Commons.	Police Dept. & Council				Council	Crosswalk installed
	Connect the Middle School to Union Forge Park.	Recreation & Environmental Comm.				Council	Connection created
	Connect the downtown area via McDonald and Washington Street to the new trail on TISCO.	Recreation & Environmental Comm.				Council	Connection created
	Connect the downtown and train station to Union Forge Park via Center Street.	Recreation & Environmental Comm.				Council	Connection created
	Connect Union Forge Park to Arch Street Open Space.	Recreation & Environmental Comm.				Council	Connection created
	Create a Riverwalk.	Recreation & Environmental Comm.				Council	Riverwalk completed
	Connect the Borough to Clinton Township's Open Space.	Recreation & Environmental Comm.				Council	Connection created
	Connect Union Forge Park to Nassau.	Recreation & Environmental Comm.				Council	Connection created

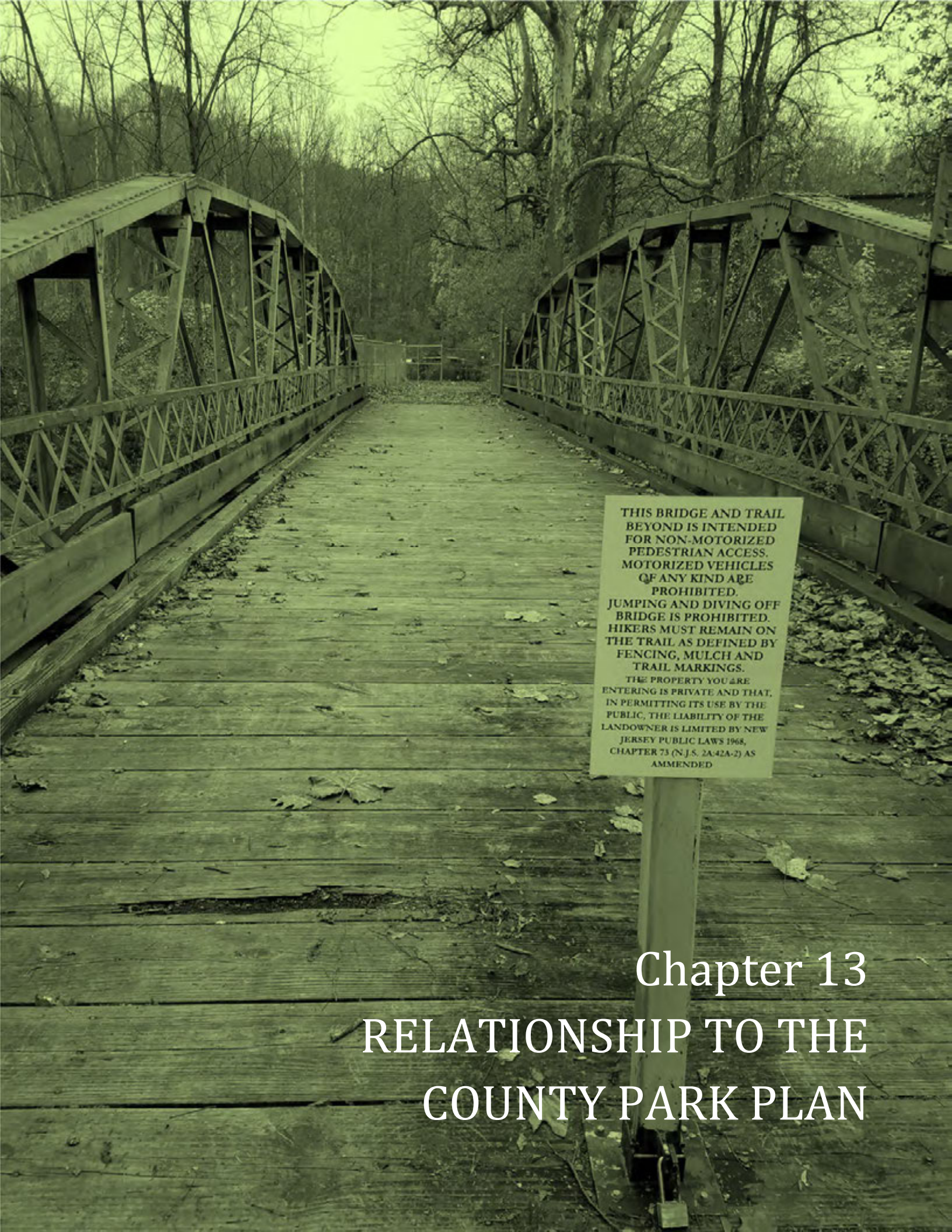


Chapter 12
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

12. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

During the course of the project, information and opinions were solicited from various sources. Also, meetings and/or interviews were held with both individuals and the public. Below is a summary of the public participation:

1. Kick-off meeting held on May 16, 2019 with the Open Space and Recreation Plan Sub-committee.
2. Phone interviews were conducted to gather information and opinions on the Borough's open space and recreation program – those interviewed included Borough employees, elected officials, volunteers and residents. These interviews occurred in May of 2019.
3. Student survey was issued in the spring of 2019 and 155 responses were received.
4. A public survey was available online from June to July of 2019 and 379 responses were received.
5. Sub-committee meeting to discuss the survey responses and the preliminary recommendations on October 7, 2019.
6. Sub-committee meeting to review the draft report on February 11, 2020.
7. Environmental Commission meeting on February 11, 2020.
8. Planning Board Hearing held on May 18, 2020.



THIS BRIDGE AND TRAIL
BEYOND IS INTENDED
FOR NON-MOTORIZED
PEDESTRIAN ACCESS.
MOTORIZED VEHICLES
OF ANY KIND ARE
PROHIBITED.
JUMPING AND DIVING OFF
BRIDGE IS PROHIBITED.
HIKERS MUST REMAIN ON
THE TRAIL AS DEFINED BY
FENCING, MULCH AND
TRAIL MARKINGS.
THE PROPERTY YOU ARE
ENTERING IS PRIVATE AND THAT,
IN PERMITTING ITS USE BY THE
PUBLIC, THE LIABILITY OF THE
LANDOWNER IS LIMITED BY NEW
JERSEY PUBLIC LAWS 1968,
CHAPTER 73 (N.J.S. 2A:42A-2) AS
AMMENDED

Chapter 13 RELATIONSHIP TO THE COUNTY PARK PLAN

13. RELATIONSHIP TO THE COUNTY PARK PLAN















On December 6, 2018 the Hunterdon County Planning Board adopted the Hunterdon County Strategic Park and Open Space Plan 2018. A review of the document reveals two references to High Bridge. The first is on page I-13, which notes that the Borough has 13.47 acres of County parkland.⁴⁴ This parkland is the Columbia Trail, which begins at Main Street. Columbia Trail is seven miles long between High Bridge and the border of Lebanon and Washington Township. At that point it continues for eight more miles. Columbia Trail connects to at least two other trails:

- Taylor-Wharton Steelworkers Historic Greenway
- New York-New Jersey Highlands Trail



The second reference is not a text reference, but a proposal to create two new County trails, which would traverse through High Bridge. Page III-44 of the document proposes a future 150-mile County Trail System. The two trails proposed to travel through High Bridge are called Capoolong Trail and Musconetcong Mountains Trail. (See the map on page 107 for the approximate location of these trails within the Borough.) The Musconetcong Mountains Trail would begin at Point Mountain and head south through Lebanon, Clinton Township and High Bridge, allowing a link to the Columbia Trail. The trail would connect to Columbia Trail north of High Bridge, go through Voorhees State Park and traverse the northwest corner of the Borough. The proposed trail would also facilitate a connection to both the Lansdown Trail, the South Branch River Trail and the Capoolong Trail.

The Capoolong Trail would commence near Lake Solitude, travel south through Union Forge Park, cross the railroad tracks, and cut through property owned by NJDEP before exiting the Borough. The Capoolong Trail would then head in a southwest direction through Clinton Township, Clinton Town, Franklin Township, Kingwood Township, and ultimately terminate in the Borough of Frenchtown. This trail would connect to the proposed Musconetcong Mountains Trail, the South Branch of the Raritan Trail, and the Delaware River Corridor Trail. Despite these proposed trails, the report proposes no specific open space acquisitions or easements to create these multi-purpose paths.

Legend

-  Municipal Boundary
-  Parcels
- Parks and Open Spaces**
-  Borough ROSI Properties
-  Borough Non-ROSI Properties
-  Township of Clinton
-  County of Hunterdon
-  State of New Jersey
-  Non-Profit
-  Historic Site
- Borough Trails**
-  Columbia Trail
-  Eagle Scout
-  Nassau
-  Steelworkers
-  High Bridge Hollow

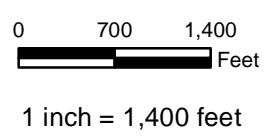
Hunterdon County - Proposed Trails

-  Capoolong Trail/Sky Manor Rd/Creek Rd Trail
-  Musconetcong Mountains Trail



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Clinton Township



PROPOSED COUNTY TRAILS
 BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE
 HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



¹ <https://factfinder.census.gov/>

² This total includes all Borough-owned properties listed on the Borough's Recreation and Open Space Inventory ("ROSI"). Note that only a 20.61-acre portion of the Dewey Avenue Property is on the ROSI.

³ <https://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/parks/voorhees.html>

⁴ <https://www.google.com/maps>

⁵ <http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/depts/parks/ParkAreas/ColumbiaTrail/brochure.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.morrisparks.net/index.php/parks/columbia-trail>

⁷ <http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/depts/parks/ParkAreas/Arches/brochure.pdf>, accessed October 24, 2019.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ <https://highbridge.org/about-high-bridge/open-space-and-outdoor-recreation/the-commons-on-the-wye-park/>

¹⁰ Property Survey for Green Acres Program DEP, prepared by Pamela Mathews of Hatch Mott McDonald, dated December 18, 2009 and revised through February 25, 2009.

¹¹ <http://www.clintontwpnj.com/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=507>

¹² <http://njism.squarespace.com/boy-scout-camps/>

¹³ Highlands Environmental Resource Inventory for High Bridge Borough, May 24, 2011, page 12.

¹⁴ Ibid, page 14.

¹⁵ Ibid, page 24.

¹⁶ Ibid, page 25.

¹⁷ Ibid, pages 15-16.

¹⁸ US Census Bureau American Fact Finder <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t>

¹⁹ <https://rrs.cnr.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/nrpa-agency-performance-review.pdf>

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ https://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/gis/interactive_map/, accessed September 25, 2019.

²² <https://highbridge.org/about-high-bridge/open-space-and-outdoor-recreation/the-commons-on-the-wye-park/>

²³ https://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/gis/interactive_map/

²⁴ https://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/gis/interactive_map/, accessed September 25, 2019.

²⁵ Deed of Conservation Restriction, recorded on February 15, 2011.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Preservation Plan Solitude House, prepared by Mark Alan Hewitt Architects and Maser Consulting P.A., dated October 2012, page 3.

³⁰ Historic Preservation Master Plan Element, November 2017, prepared by HMR Architects, P.A. and Maser Consulting P.A., page 6.

³¹ <https://revolutionarynj.org/250th-updates/>, accessed September 30, 2019.

³² Historic Preservation Master Plan Element, November 2017, prepared by HMR Architects, P.A. and Maser Consulting P.A., page 17.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ https://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/gis/interactive_map/, accessed September 25, 2019.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Preservation Plan Solitude House, prepared by Mark Alan Hewitt Architects and Maser Consulting P.A., dated October 2012, page 64.

³⁸ https://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/gis/interactive_map/, accessed September 25, 2019.

³⁹ <https://highbridge.org/about-high-bridge/open-space-and-outdoor-recreation/union-forge-park/>

⁴⁰ https://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/gis/interactive_map/, accessed September 25, 2019.

⁴¹ <https://www.gametime.com/products/spider-climber-small>, accessed January 31, 2020.

⁴² <https://www.gametime.com/projects/deer-park>, accessed January 31, 2020.

⁴³ <https://www.gametime.com/products/Tilted-Sky-Runner-6201>, accessed January 31, 2020.

⁴⁴ <http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/openspace/pdfs/StrategicPlan/StrategicParkOpenSpacePlan-FullDocument.pdf>, accessed October 24, 2019, page I-13.