



*recreation &  
open space element*

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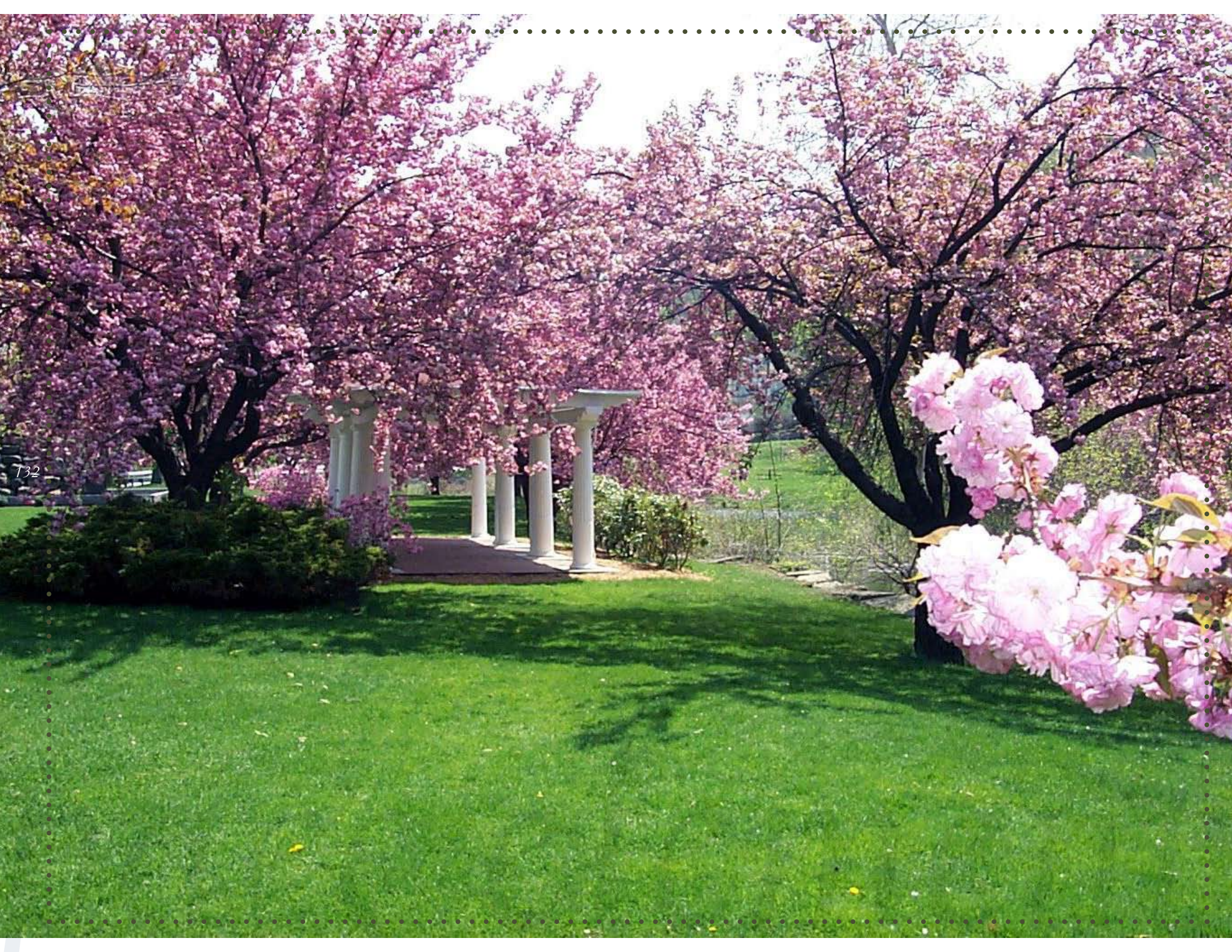
## **INTRODUCTION**

The Town of Dover recognizes the central role played by parks and recreation facilities in maintaining the Town's quality of life and the contribution that they make to its reputation as a desirable place to live and work. Such facilities are an essential counterbalance to the urban environment of fully developed towns such as Dover's. The "green" spaces provide residents with recreational opportunities, open space, social outlets and a refuge from the "hustle and bustle of life". When parks and recreation facilities are well designed, they also have the potential to function as a public common where residents from surrounding neighborhoods, and throughout the community, may gather for civic as well as recreational purposes. In recognition of their importance, the Town of Dover has made it a priority to preserve and upgrade existing parks and recreation facilities while providing for new facilities where appropriate and feasible given the lack of available undeveloped land.

The Town of Dover's character, relatively dense pattern of development and intense level of activity generate a significant need for, and place great demands upon, parks and recreation facilities. This is acknowledged in current planning efforts, which established a vision of the Town as a community of neighborhoods that support a high quality of life for its residents. This vision, from a parks and open space perspective, is to be achieved, in part, by increasing the availability of community resources for residents through an efficient system of shared Town-wide facilities and residential area-specific facilities. The resources contemplated include larger recreational facilities, riverfront amenities and community or pocket parks. They are intended to enhance the quality of life in the Town by increasing active and passive recreational opportunities, providing additional open space, and improving access to the Rockaway River waterfront. The ultimate goal is to develop a comprehensive parks and recreation system consisting of large, highly accessible facilities that serve the entire Town and small, community-oriented facilities that serve individual neighborhoods.









### **/Public Participation – Issues Identification/**

The Town of Dover’s existing parks and recreation facilities represent the foundation upon which the future system will be developed. The existing facilities provide a multitude of programs and amenities that work to meet the needs of residents. However, new facilities will be required to fulfill the Town’s overall vision for the future. It will also be necessary to improve existing facilities that are underdeveloped at present. As the Town’s system of parks and recreation facilities is improved and expanded, the following issues will be addressed:

- Preservation and improvement of existing parks and recreation facilities.
- Providing new parks and recreation facilities in underserved neighborhoods, where feasible.
- Include improved access, as well as new park space and recreation opportunities, through new development applications.
- Take advantage of natural and man-made resources by pursuing access, acquisition and partnerships.
- Enhancing access to, and linkages between, parks and recreation facilities.

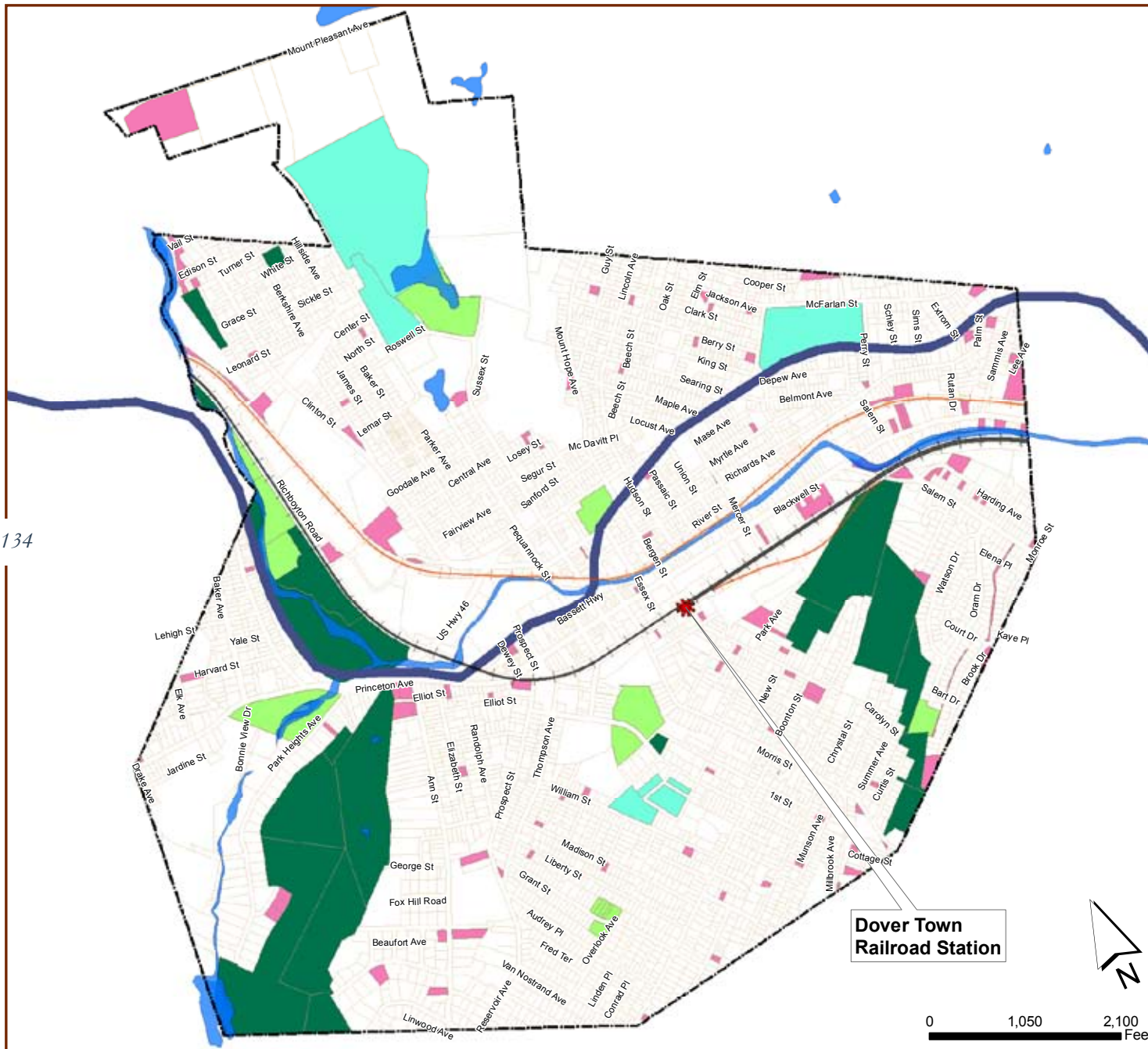
The following recreation and open space issues, concerns and suggestions were identified as part of the public outreach process.

- Work to ensure all parks are up to safety standards;
- Continue to make parks ADA accessible;
- There is a need for a Community Center and/or Senior Citizen Center with swimming facility;
- Coordinate planning efforts with “The Rockaway River and its Treasured Resource” and the “Dover Community Forestry Plan”;
- The Town needs more open space and active recreation facilities;
- Public use of school recreational facilities is limited to Town-run programs only;
- Waterworks Park needs rehabilitation and perhaps presents an expansion opportunity;
- School recreational facilities are in need of rehabilitation;
- Enhanced partnership opportunities exist with the school system;
- Need to provide more public gathering spaces in the downtown;
- Utilize Rockaway River network and abandoned rail ROW for passive recreation opportunities;
- Partner with County on programming and utilization/ expansion of Morris County Parks System;

- Town lacks activities for teenagers;
- Recreation programming has expansion needs- handball, multi-purpose training facility for soccer, football, track, etc.;
- Bowlby Pond, has the opportunity to be environmentally restored with walking trails, fishing, and can be utilized as an educational resource to the schools;
- National Guard / Dover Armory site is a potential community facility with additional recreation space;
- The town needs programming and an upgrade of facilities to address the growing number of special needs children that have evolved over the past several years;
- The need to merge arts, history and culture into Town fabric.

### **/Existing Conditions/**

The Town of Dover is served by a diverse system of available parks and recreational space. Seeing as though the Town is densely populated, they provide much needed recreational amenities and open space. The facilities vary in size and character from small neighborhood parks to a large county park. Some facilities are in need of a more efficient design and layout while others merely need to capitalize on the resources they hold. There are currently 13 municipal parks and 1 county park, as shown on Table OP-1, the Parks and Recreation Map.



## Parks and Open Space

### Legend

- Morris Canal
- Open Waters
- Public School Property & Playgrounds
- Vacant Private Property

### Green Acres

- Green Acre Open Space

### Preserved Open Space

- Preserved Open Space

Town of Dover Master Plan  
Morris County, NJ

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### *Inventory of Parks and Recreational Facilities*

The Town of Dover's parks and recreational facilities are located in neighborhoods throughout the Town. The facilities differ in size, function, and amenities offered. Altogether, these facilities provide residents with a broad range of recreational opportunities and open space. All open space and recreation facilities within Dover are listed in the table below.



**Table OP-1 Existing Parks and Recreational Facilities**

FACILITY	SIZE (ACRES)	AMENITIES
<b>Town of Dover</b>		
Bowlby Park & King Field	5.51 & 4.76	Soccer field, youth baseball fields
Bowlbyville Park	2.50	Open Space
Crescent Field & Second Street Playground	4.97 & 1.90	Basketball courts, exercise/ cross country course, soccer fields, volleyball courts. Playground, Baseball, Softball
Hooey Park	2.00	Basketball court
Hurd Park	9.12	Gazebo, picnic facilities
JFK Commons	2.75	Playground, gazebo
Mountain Park	20.46	Hiking Trails
Overlook Park	1.77	Basketball courts, open play fields
Randolph Park	1.10	Open Space
Turner Street Open Space	0.85	Open Space
Waterworks Park	3.15	Basketball courts, youth baseball fields, play area, picnic facilities
<b>Morris County</b>		
Hedden Park	63.6 (Hedden Park totals 380 acres in size, stretching into Randolph Township and Mine Hill Township)	Bike trails, boating, cross-country skiing, fishing, hiking trails, ice skating, lakes, picnic areas, play areas, restrooms

### *Municipal Parks and Recreational Facilities*

The Town of Dover's 13 parks and recreation facilities contain a variety of amenities such as ball fields, courts, and playgrounds as described in the previous table. The location, size, and mix of amenities determine how each park and recreation facility is used as well as the service area it covers. There are several larger parks, which serve the entire Town, such as Crescent Field, Kings, Hurd and Waterworks Park as well as smaller parks which primarily serve the neighborhoods in which they are located, such as Hooey, JFK Commons and Overlook. Although there are a variety of parks and open spaces within Dover, the municipal parks and recreation system is in need of improvement, including improved access between neighborhoods and facilities, revised configuration/utilization of space and additional pocket parks.

### *County Parks and Recreational Facilities*

The Town of Dover's system of parks and recreational facilities is supplemented by Hedden County Park, a 380-acre park operated by the Morris County Park Commission. Approximately 60 acres of Hedden County Park is within the Town of Dover located east of Park Heights Avenue; the remainder of Hedden Park is located within Randolph Township and Mine Hill Township. Included within the park are 2 ballfields, picnic sites, hiking trails and a group

picnic shelter. The centerpiece of the park is a 6-acre lake with fishing pier, boat rental, boathouse, outdoor fireplace for ice skaters, and a patio deck area. The park has 2 distinct sections: the lake section, accessible from Ford Street and Reservoir Avenue, and the Concord Road section which includes a multi-purpose field, picnic area, hiking trails, and a restroom facility. Trails along the Jackson and Wallace brooks, which are trout production streams, and view Indian Falls are popular with the hikers. There is an access road off of Park Heights Avenue from Dover, although it is fenced off from public use.

### *Other Parks and Recreational Facilities*

In addition to the facilities listed above, the Town of Dover also contains additional recreation facilities that are owned by the Board of Education. East Dover School, Academy Street School, and Dover High School contain a variety of active recreation amenities such as baseball/softball fields, basketball courts, soccer fields, tennis courts, open play areas, and a football field. This Plan recommends that the Town coordinate with the Board of Education to maximize the use of school recreational facilities for the public benefit. More discussion on the use of these school properties will follow.

### *Availability of Open Space*

The Town of Dover's park and open space resources consist of a variety of facilities containing a total area of approximately 145 acres.

**While Dover's system of parks and open spaces provides a wide array of options for its residents, it is also important to understand whether these facilities are adequate for both today's needs and future needs. It is important to consider both the amount and type of recreation demanded by the community. There are several standards that can be used to determine a community's park and open space needs. The two standards used in this plan (New Jersey Balanced Land Use and National Recreation and Park Association) are based on land area and benchmarked levels of population, respectively. It should be noted that, in the past, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Green Acres Program had its own standard, recommending 8-acres of parks and open space lands for every 1,000 residents. The Green Acres Program now, however, utilizes the Balanced Land Use method (3% of developed and developable land preserved for recreation) as its total acreage standard. Green Acres further recommends that the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards be used as a guide to determine specific community park, recreation and open space needs.**



### *~New Jersey Balanced Land Use Standards*

The New Jersey recreation. This calculation is based on total acreage within a municipality, excluding land impacted by steep slopes and wetlands. According to the NJ Balanced Land Use standard, North Brunswick has a 184-acre surplus of parks and open space (see Table OP-2).

### *~National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Standard*

The NRPA standards are more detailed than the New Jersey Balanced Land Use Standards. As such, NJDEP's Green Acres Program recommends using the NRPA standards in conjunction with NJ Balanced Land Use standards in order to develop an accurate assessment of a municipality's open space and recreation needs. The NRPA standard categorizes parks and establishes a standard need per 1,000 people for each park type (e.g. neighborhood park, community park, etc.) The NRPA suggests that a community's park system, at a minimum, be comprised of a "core" system of parklands with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres per 1,000 people. Some of the categories, such as special facilities and natural resource areas, do not have specific standards. The NRPA standards are meant as a guide for municipalities and should be utilized as such. The true determination of how a municipality's system functions are measured by the demand placed on it by its residents.<sup>1</sup> NRPA definitions of park types, as well as a breakdown of Dover's parks and open spaces using the park characterizations employed in the NRPA standard, can be found below.

<sup>1</sup> *Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*

#### **Mini-Park**

- **Use - Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population or specific group such as tots or senior citizens.**

- **Characteristics – Within neighborhoods and in close proximity to apartment complexes, townhouse development or housing for the elderly.**
- **Service Area – ¼ mile**

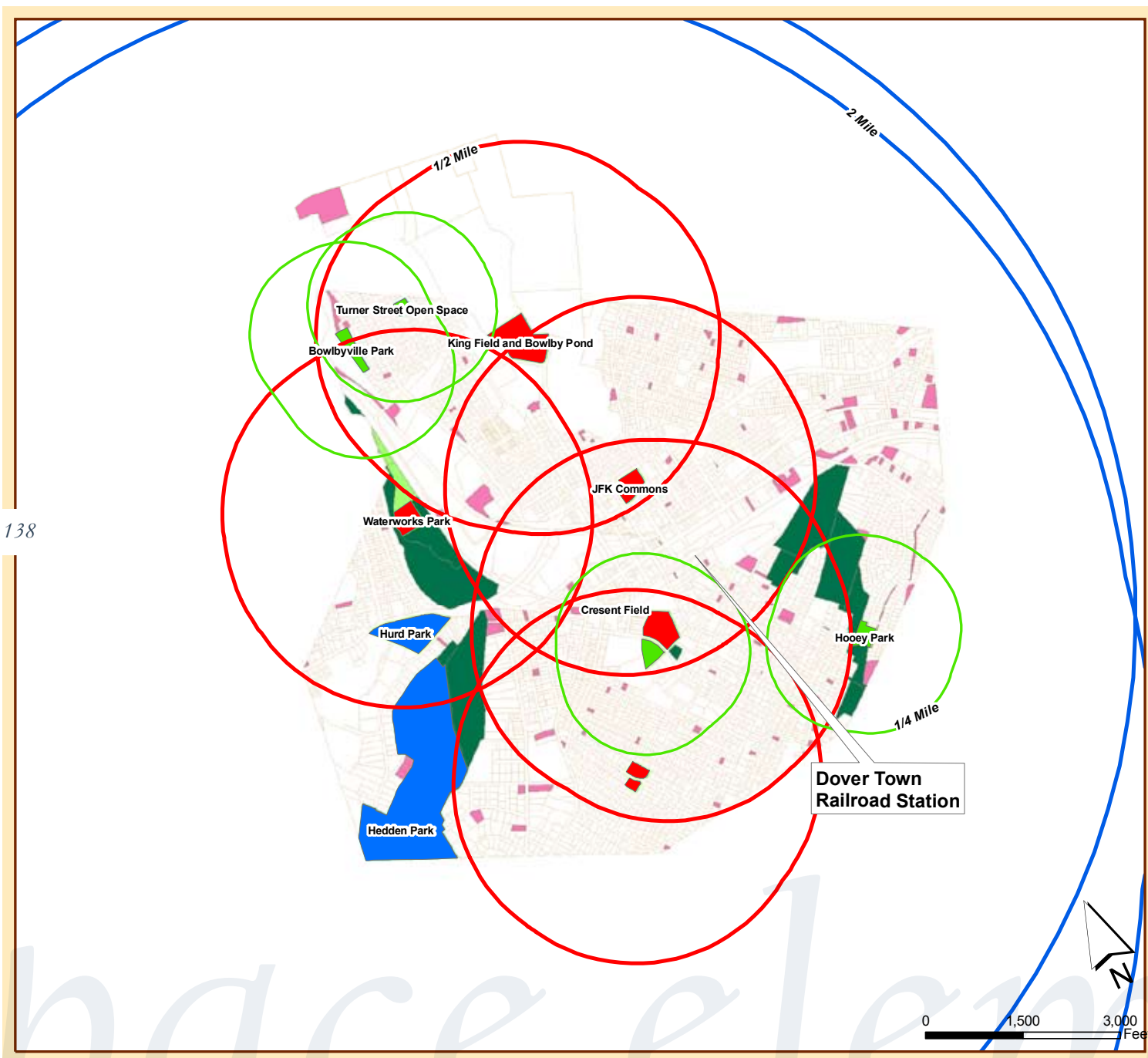
#### **Neighborhood Park/Playground**

- **Use – Area for intense recreational activities, such as field games, court games, crafts, playground apparatus area, skating, picnicking, wading pools, etc.**
- **Characteristics – Suited for intense development. Easily accessible to neighborhood population – geographically centered with safe walking and bike access. May be developed as a school-park facility.**
- **Service Area – ¼ to ½ mile**

#### **Community Park**

- **Use – Area of diverse environmental quality. May include areas suited for intense recreational facilities, such as athletic complexes and large swimming pools. May be an area of natural quality for outdoor recreation, such as walking, viewing, sitting and picnicking. May be any combination of the above, depending upon site suitability and community need.**
- **Characteristics – May include natural features, such as water bodies, and areas suited for intense development. Easily accessible to neighborhoods served.**
- **Service Area – 1 to 2 miles**





## Parks and Open Space

(Excludes school property and playgrounds)

- Vacant Private Property
- Preserved Open Space
- Green Acre Open Space
- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Residential Pocket Park
- Community Park Buffer (2-mile radius)
- Neighborhood Park Buffer (1/2-mile radius)
- Residential Pocket Park Buffer (1/4-mile radius)

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Within these park characterizations, the NRPA also recommends that the (3) three main parks categories are located within general distances to the residents of a community. As depicted in the NRPA Buffer Map, the location of these facilities is a function of access. When comparing these park locations to the remainder of the community, it is important to recognize that some parks in Dover may have multiple functions. For example, King’s Field will have equipment located within the park that is characteristic of pocket and neighborhood parks. Therefore, the service area could in fact become a function of two or more of the following recommended distances. The NRPA Buffer Map also contains such a hybrid classification for a graphic depiction of this discussion.

*~Additional NRPA Standards*  
 NRPA also recommends other, more regionally based standards. These standards are inappropriate for inclusion into the Dover system as the burden of creating such facilities belongs to a County rather than municipality.

DOVER PARK CLASSIFICATION <sup>1</sup>	
<b>Residential Pocket Parks</b> .25 to .5 acres/1,000	<b>Hooey Park</b> <b>Bowlbyville Park</b> <b>Turner Street Open Space</b> <b>Second Street Park</b>
<b>Neighborhood Park</b> 1 to 2 acres/1,000	<b>JFK Commons</b> <b>Waterworks Park</b> <b>Crescent Field</b> <b>King Field &amp; Bowlby Pond</b> <b>Overlook Park</b>
<b>Community Parks</b> 5.0 to 8 acres/1,000	<b>Randolph Park</b> <b>Hurd Park</b> <b>Hedden Park</b>
<b>Natural Resource Areas</b> No Recommended Size	<b>Mountain Park</b>

<sup>2</sup> Classifications based on the Township’s 2000 Municipal Open Space and Recreation Plan-Parks & Recreation Site Assessment.



~New Jersey Balanced Land Use Standards

The New Jersey Balanced Land Use Standards for Recreation is a method identified in the New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan or SCORP. This plan requires that 3% of developed and developable land within a municipality be preserved for recreation. This calculation is based on total acreage within the Town, excluding land impacted by steep slope and wetlands. Balanced Land Use Standards merely looks at “raw land”.

Dover is made up of 1,768.379 total acres. Excluding the land impacted by the wetlands or steep slopes, Dover would require 53 acres of open space. Using the Green Acres Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI), and data resources provided through the engineering department, Dover has 145 acres of open space, significantly exceeding this requirement.

The following table compares the amount of parks and open space in Dover to recognized planning standards.

AVAILABILITY OF MUNICIPAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACE, 2000 Town of Dover, N.J.				
Category	Municipal Parks Area Standard	Recommended Municipal Parks Area	Existing Town Parks Area	Park and Recreation Surplus/Deficit
N.J. Balanced Land Use	3% of developed/developable area	53 acres	145 acres	+92 acres
Mini Parks	0.5 acres/1,000 persons (.25-min)	9.1	7.25	- 1.85 acres
Neighborhood Parks	2 acres/1,000 persons (1-min)	36.4	22.91	- 13.49 acres
Community Parks	8.0 acres/1,000 persons (5-min)	145.5	73.82	-71.68 acres
Source: Open Space Guidelines, New York City Department of Town Planning; New Jersey Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Plan Summary – 1994 to 1999, Green Acres Program, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.				

When analyzing raw land standards, Dover has a good supply of open space, somewhat rare for a densely populated urban municipality. A closer look at the actual use and ability to use this acreage indicates that topography plays a large role and renders some land unusable for “open” public use. In addition, these facilities are fairly well distributed throughout the Town, although some neighborhoods are underserved by the system. Given a lack of pedestrian connections between facilities and neighborhoods, as well as between facilities themselves, there are opportunities to expand and improve existing facilities through improved access. As such, improvements to the recreation and open space network in Dover should be focused on the following:

- Providing enhanced connections between facilities, and between facilities and neighborhoods.
- Increasing the amount of pocket parks and playgrounds throughout the Town, particularly in areas without immediate access to existing facilities.
- Expanding/improving existing facilities and land, with an emphasis on tailoring the amenities within the facilities to better suit the needs of Dover's diverse population. In particular, given the amount of available open space for recreational purpose a reconfiguration of athletic facilities should be conducted and included into a Capital Improvement Plan for the entire parks system.

## *Availability of Recreational Facilities*

The National Recreation and Parks Association Standards for Recreation, Park and Open Space are the guidelines this plan has utilized while analyzing the access to parks and recreational opportunities. The plan points out that standards such as these may from time to time need adjustment because of social or cultural preferences as these standards represent "suggested" guidelines. For example, Dover has a high Hispanic and Latino population. This population is extremely interested and active in Soccer (fútbol) related activities. As such, true need for recreational facilities needs to be additionally analyzed by the Parks Department according to the programming needs of the Dover Community

The chart below describes where the Town of Dover stands according to the National Recreation and Park Association- Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guideline through information provided by the Town's Recreation Department. The Board of Education property is also factored into this chart, as without them, the picture would not be fully developed because Dover's recreational programs do utilize these spaces.



PARK NAME	OWNER-SHIP	BASEBALL/ SOFTBALL	LITTLE LEAGUE	BASKETBALL	FOOTBALL	SOCCER	TRACK	TENNIS	VOLLEYBALL	CROSS COUNTRY
Crescent Field	Town			4		2			2	1
Second Street	Town	1								
Waterworks	Town		1	1						
Hooey	Town			1						
Overlook	Town			1						
JFK	Town									
Hurd	Town									
Randolph	Town									
Mountain	Town									
King	Town									
Bowlbyville	Town		4			1				
Bowlby	Town									
Turner Street	Town									
East Dover	Board of Education	1			1	1	1			
North Dover	Board of Education									
Dover High	Board of Education	2		0				2		
Academy Street	Board of Education			1						
Dover Totals		4	5	8	1	4	1	2	2	1
National Standards*		7	3.5	3.5	1	2	1	9	3.5	--
Deficit / Surplus		-3	+1.5	+4.5	0	+2	0	-7	-1.5	

\*Some standards have been rounded to the nearest half number.

# Education & Open Space

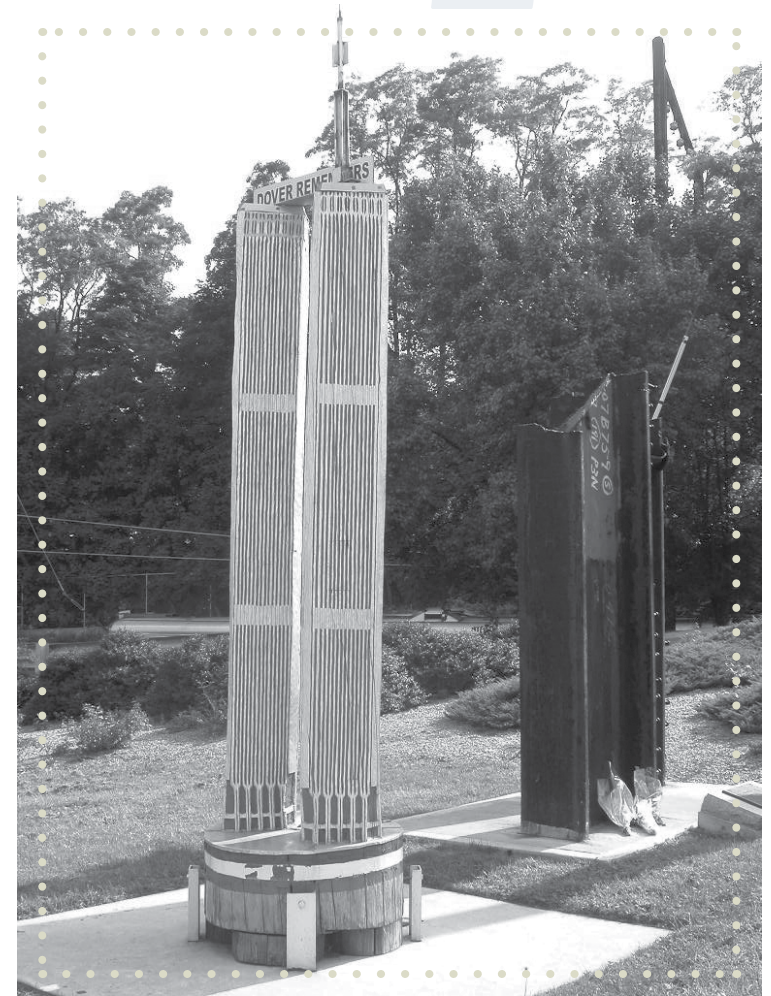
As derived from the chart, Dover is in a tough position when it comes to access to recreational facilities. Even with full access to the Board of Education facilities the Town fails to meet some of the facility standards. Furthermore, demand of certain facilities, particularly soccer, whose land area requires large parcels, is intense and maintenance becomes a critical issue. As such, it is critical for Dover to become lock step with the school system in its provision and maintenance of recreational facilities. Once this partnership has fully matured, a reconfiguration of all public land should be explored in order to meet Dover's needs. A "Master Parks Plan" would be the product of this partnership where new or reconfigured facilities are created, maintenance shared, access to grants open and the land fully coordinated.

The presence of other more passive type recreation facilities also exists in Dover. With a Category-1 NJDEP classification of the Rockaway River, as well as the presence of other water features, Dover does have opportunities, such as; fishing access points, ice skating and boating. There are three (3) potential public access points located at Waterworks Park, Hurd Park and Bowlbyville Park for fishing in the C-1 trout stocked streams. There are also several picnic facilities where families may go to enjoy the day near

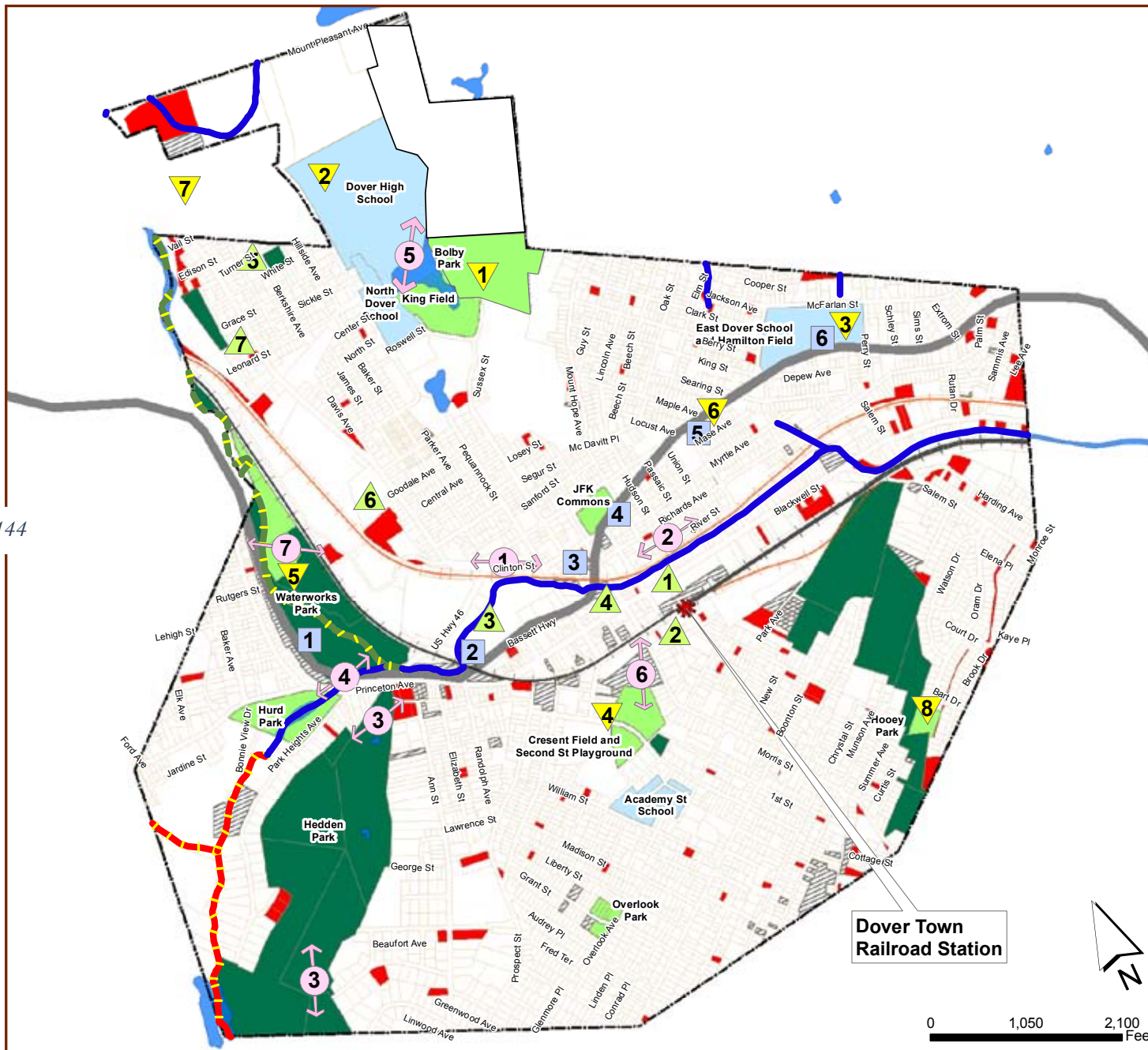
these features such as those located within Crescent Field, Waterworks Park, Hurd Park, and Hedden Park. Another park, Bowlby Park has the potential to further capitalize on the 6+/- acre pond area.

## *Parks & Open Space Opportunities - recommendations .*

Figure OP2 entitled New Open Space and Recreation Opportunities graphically depicts the following opportunities and plan recommendations.







## New Open Space and Recreational Opportunities

- 1** Potential Morris Canal Site Markers
- 1** Future Pedestrian Connections
- 1** Pocket Parks
- 1** Recreational Enhancements/ Expansions

### Legend

- Morris Canal
- Open Waters
- Public School Property & Playgrounds
- Green Acre Open Space
- Preserved Open Space
- Private Vacant Land
- Dover-owned Land

Town of Dover Master Plan  
Morris County, NJ

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Figure OP-2







## ~Impacts of New Development

The impacts of new development on an already strained system of parks and open space must be fully addressed up front. The Town's current planning efforts in the Downtown through redevelopment planning of the Basset Highway sites as well as the Transit- Oriented Development Plan will certainly require more of the system and its programming. Furthermore, passive park space is also in demand in Dover and new development should be able to implement some of this.

As new development is proposed, the provision of public parkland and open space needs to accompany it. As stated before, Basset Highway planning should include access to the Rockaway River and development of its piece of the "Greenway network". It should also be required to provide public parkland in the floodway of the river. While recreational space would be impractical, given the size of the site, passive space is not.

Development associated with the commuter parking sites along South Morris Avenue should also include public space that supplements Crescent Field. Such an addition could create public gathering space in an outdoor "venue", community center and picnic area. Figure OP 3 graphically depicts how this could look.

Figure OP-3



It is also a recommendation of this plan to explore evoking a fee for new development within redevelopment plan projects that would work to reduce the financial burden of creating new recreational facilities associated with an increase in population. Another consideration for Dover would be to introduce a referendum on the voting ballot that asks the voters of Dover their opinion of an open space and recreation tax.

## ~Shared Facilities

In a small municipality such as Dover, school facilities represent a significant portion of the Town's landmass for parks and open space. In order to provide additional recreation amenities to the public, this Plan recommends that the Town coordinate with the Board of Education (BOE) to maximize the use of BOE facilities for general public use as well as organized recreation programs/leagues including organized adult programs. This applies not only to the use of fields but also playgrounds, such as fenced-in playgrounds. Conversation with the Board of Education concluded that the importance of such a partnership is as important to the schools as it is the Town. Further, the BOE felt the since the school system was a "Walking Community" the partnership extends beyond parks and recreation to encompass redevelopment and circulation issues as well.

As part of the partnership, the Town would also share the use of its facilities with the BOE (e.g. use of Crescent Field by students at Academy Street School). Insurance liabilities would have to be researched and negotiated between the entities. This should occur by initiating contact with insurance providers to gain full understanding of all the associated issues and costs. Specific school property recreational recommendations are included in more detail to follow.

Another area where the Town should explore a shared facility is near Perry Street where Rockaway Township owns open space adjacent to land near the site. While the Town should also explore the possibility of creating pocket parks, passive public open space, and recreational facilities on BOE-owned land throughout Dover it should also look beyond Town borders. Another opportunity could exist at the National Guard site if the site becomes available. These inter-municipal partnerships begin to extend the local parks system while benefiting all communities involved.

### ~Pedestrian Connections

Although Dover is served by a number of park and recreation facilities, its connections between these facilities and surrounding neighborhoods, are lacking. In order to enhance pedestrian access to Dover's park and recreation facilities, this Plan recommends the following (See Opportunities Map for graphic display of the following):

- ➡ 1. Begin the process of creating a riverfront greenway plan along the length of the Rockaway River in Downtown Dover. Upon application, all new development must implement the planning including cross access easements and/or construction of its particular section.
- ➡ 2. Work with County on utilizing the Morristown and Erie right-of-way as a green pedestrian corridor that will assist connecting various neighborhoods and amenities in Dover, such as Waterworks Park, Hurd Park, Hedden Park, St. Clair's Hospital, Senior Citizen facilities to downtown Dover. A portion of the trail could be linked to a riverfront greenway network as well.
- ➡ 3. Partner with Morris County to provide enhanced pedestrian connections to Hedden County Park, especially from Park Heights Avenue and Edgewood Avenue immediately east of the park. This may include formal hiking and environmental education trails linking neighborhoods to Downtown and Hedden.
- ➡ 4. Provide pedestrian connections between Hurd Park and the Downtown, where feasible.
- ➡ 5. Work with the property owners of the sites in the Northern Redevelopment Area to utilize a portion of the property to create trails that circle Bowlby Pond and enable educational field projects for Dover High School and Middle School.
- ➡ 6. Improve access to Crescent Field through recommendations made in the Dover TOD plan.

By making these improvements, Town neighborhoods will become better linked to open space and recreational opportunities as well as the commercial activity in the Downtown. Therefore, connections will ultimately work to help spur enhanced economic development activity throughout Dover.

### ~A Dover Greenway Network

In May 1998, a plan was prepared entitled, "The Rockaway River & Its Treasured Resources – Visions & Strategies for Their Recovery". This comprehensive document offers detailed recommendations for every section of the river. Recommendations regarding the Rockaway River in Dover are summarized as follows:

- Creation of a greenway park and trail along the river through Dover, beginning at the Route 46 bridge over the river and extending downstream to the Lakeland Bus Station. (This would necessitate the abandonment or realignment of the Morristown & Erie Railway between Sussex Street and Mercer Street.)
- Redevelopment of the Bassett Highway site, including a riverfront park.
- Require major existing developments lacking storm water detention basins to retrofit their sites to adequately protect downstream property owners and the public at large.

- Aggressive environmental cleanup of the Dover Well #4 Superfund site to lower the public health risks to those using the Rockaway Valley Aquifer for water supply.

This Plan further recommends:

- Linking the River greenway within the Railway greenway at town hall according to the Dover TOD Plan.

The Town of Dover's system of parks and recreational facilities is further enhanced by the presence of the Rockaway River, which runs through the center of Town. The Rockaway River stretches for forty miles, from Sussex County to its confluence with the Passaic River in East Hanover and Pine Brook. The section of the Rockaway River in Dover is known as the Middle Rockaway River, which is the portion that stretches from Dover to Boonton Town. Although the river flows through downtown Dover, it is a hidden and underutilized resource. A majority of land along the river in Dover is privately owned, consisting of small businesses, parking lots, churches, industries, and residences. In addition, much of the river in Dover is contained by concrete and stone culverts that rise up to 10 feet from the water level to adjacent privately owned parcels.

On the north side of the river from Sussex Street to Salem Street, a freight railway, known

as the Morristown and Erie Railway, parallels the river for one-half mile. This rail is proposed to be abandoned and should be converted into a regional greenway once a bypass of the downtown is constructed for the freight line. Without this greenway, access to and visibility of the river is limited and opportunities are severely hampered. In order to truly capitalize on these resources, the Rockaway River and the rail ROW, must be developed as one system.

The rail right-of-way presents an excellent opportunity to provide much-needed pedestrian connections between neighborhoods and Downtown with parks in Dover. As mentioned in, the 1998 Rockaway River plan suggests that the rail right-of-way become part of a riverfront greenway park in Dover. This Plan recommends the abandonment of the Morristown & Erie Railway for use as a linear greenway to be coordinated with reclamation of the River. (Figure OP-4)



Figure OP-4

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Figure OP-5



Because of its presence in the Downtown, this linear Greenway also provides a unique opportunity to create public spaces where pedestrians may sit and enjoy the Rockaway River or have lunch. Coupled with the presence of commercial structures adjacent to it, an abandoned R.O.W. may also present "al fresco" dining opportunities such as those depicted in Figure OP5. This figure shows how the rail converted into a greenway would look as it passes the Laughing Lion Restaurant and the Christian Science Bookstore.

As the spur runs adjacent to the Richboydan Road Industrial Area, the rail will in all likelihood remain intact for use as a freight spur. With this in mind, the Rail Greenway would be directed at Warren Street into the Rockaway



River and the former Morris Canal ROW as the Greenway is fully developed. Land adjacent to the greenway that is underdeveloped should be identified as potential acquisitions. These areas include those along Richards Avenue in particular.

### ~The Morris Canal

The Morris Canal was the engineering marvel of its time and continues to be today. It connected the Eastern Seaboard with iron mines and forging industries and Dover was a vital link along its route. Long since removed, this historic canal route should be remembered and embraced as part of the Dover open space network.

The existing open space and recreation map (Figure OP1) depicts the former canal route as it made its way through town. As depicted, it connects several sites, the post office, JFK Park (the former canal boat basin), Town Hall and Kubert School of Cartooning to neighborhoods and Downtown businesses. While impractical to reestablish the actual canal, key areas can be identified and improved as historic sites through public space enhancements. These places are included in the Opportunities Map by number:

- 1- Utilize the archeological dig associated with Waterworks Park to uncover historic canal resources that can be converted into an extension of the Park while providing historical education. Where appropriate establish sections for inclusion into the greenway network.
- 2- Land along Basset Highway.
- 3- The Post Office at the Rockaway River, where the rail line met the canal and where "The Great Dover Train Wreck" occurred.
- 4- Provide place markers, "inlays" and remembrances of the canal's history along its historic alignment including imbedding such features in the road or sidewalks. The former canal basin, once located at JFK Park is one such area.
- 5- Merging history through the arts at the Kubert School of Cartooning.
- 6- Develop a monument at Hamilton Field

In order to implement these opportunities, the Town should work with the Canal Society of New Jersey and the Morris Land Conservancy for technical assistance and funding.

### ~Pocket Parks

In order to supplement Dover's larger parks, it is recommended that new pocket parks and playgrounds be created throughout Town, with

a goal of providing a park within a quarter mile of each neighborhood. Potential locations suitable for use as pocket parks/playground/plazas include:

1. A portion of the front yard of St. John's Episcopal Church on East Blackwell Street (near the NJ Transit Rail Station)
2. Dover Station area and restaurant dining area
3. Land adjacent to the Rockaway River
4. The Rockaway Rail R.O.W., Town Hall
5. Improvement to Turner Street Open Space.
6. Portions of the "Tubular Alloy" site
7. Hurd neighborhood park
8. Bowlbyville Park

Other vacant land owned by the Town of Dover should also be further explored as to the appropriateness of creating additional passive park areas.

### ~Bow

Bowlby Pond is a fantastic resource opportunity that can be better utilized for not only recreational purposes, but educational as well. The Pond lies adjacent to North Dover School and Dover High School, and as such, could be utilized as part of an environmental education program for the Dover school system. With King

Field athletic facility to the South and West as well as the Dover Recreation Department, the Pond could be easily accessible from different locations.

While a great opportunity exists within the Pond area, the plan does recognize the environmental constraints presented by the former landfill site to the North and East of this water feature. To coincide with the cleanup and capping of the landfill the Pond should be looked at and developed as an environmental resource for the entire community to share and learn from.

Configuration of adjacent property would need to be carefully thought-out but passive recreation opportunities could be realized in the form of hiking and walking trails. Upon cleanup, the Pond could possibly be dredged and stocked with fish. Boat access could also be provided and restoration of natural vegetation could be implemented to bring the Pond back to its former natural state.

#### *~Hamilton Field Reconfiguration (2, 3)*

Today's seemingly impossible tasks are tomorrow's necessities. As such, this Plan recommends that the existing high school football field be explored for possible future relocation to the High School grounds. Moving the field to the high school would make

sense logistically, and would possibly present opportunities for expanded parking during football games. It would also allow locker room facilities to be utilized during game time.

This plan points out that land at the High School is severely impacted by unique environmental features such as low-depth to ground water and challenging soil types. While these challenges may present major complications, the opportunities to solve multiple issues exists. Should a complete environmental analysis take place, that utilizes today's data as well, solutions to solve these drainages issues could reestablish the pond and stream that fed Bowlby Pond. Channeling the increased flows from Rockaway Township Mall run-off in a way that makes the school's existing facilities more useable and even creates the space needed for a Football facility or other type of field is a win environmentally and recreationally.

This plan also realizes that historic locations of community facilities, particularly a High School Football field, can have a strong community attachment to "tradition". Notwithstanding these issues the relocation of the football field presents a tremendous opportunity to create new traditions. The benefit of new facility configurations presents Dover with an opportunity to take better advantage of its

limited parks and open spaces. Having the field located there can also utilize the parking facilities that surround the school for game time parking needs. These parking lots are located at the High School and the Casio Site.

In addition, whether the football field is relocated or not, Hamilton Field should be reconfigured to contain a mix of athletic fields and passive recreation space in a way that utilizes the space to its maximum utility. In order to control maintenance costs, and in order to accommodate the heavy use the newly configured facility is likely to generate, it is recommended that the consideration of synthetic turf for the practice facility. By utilizing synthetic turf, many different sporting programs would be afforded practice time, such as for soccer, football, field hockey and lacrosse, (Site 3).

As part of the Hamilton Field reconfiguration the Town should look at the aforementioned opportunities that surround the field adjacent to Rockaway Township. The "Welco Gas Site" may present an opportunity to include in the planning for Hamilton Field for additional parking. Conversation with Rockaway Township may lead to other interesting shared facility possibilities.

## *~Crescent Field (4)*

Crescent Field is a heavily utilized facility. As such, the facility needs special consideration when discussing maintenance issues. Combined reconfiguration of Hamilton Field, possible creation of an Astro turf field, as well as a new field at Waterworks Park, may help alleviate maintenance issues thus allowing the natural-turf athletic fields valuable resting time. It may also be prudent to look to Crescent Field as an additional possible site for synthetic turf.

While maintenance is an issue, this park also presents opportunities for expansion. Accordingly, the plan recommends a detailed development plan to make better use of the area within the existing park boundary. Adjacent to the Town-owned parking facility along South Morris Street the park is also considered within the Transit Oriented Development Plan for Dover Station and the Downtown (TOD). The TOD plan recommends that any new development adjacent to Crescent Park shall include public space that works in conjunction with the existing park. This could include a community center and outdoor amphitheatre.

## *~Waterworks Park (5)*

This park has tremendous opportunity for improvement. While the Rockaway River is a Category 1 Stream, (designated by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection), new opportunities would have to consider the rules and regulations set forth by this State designation. However, the current grass area of the park could be improved as a soccer facility for the people in Town to utilize. Planned within the waterworks park's existing inventory of basketball court and picnic facility, an additional plying field will fit nicely for use by the Dover Recreation program. While the area may not present itself as a regulation size soccer facility the area could be utilized for practice or adult leagues where a reduced size is appropriate.

Fishing access points are also identified within the Opportunities Map for this park as well as historic delineations of the former Morris Canal. Seeing as though this park's true value lies within a natural state, the environment and historic cultural resources should be highlighted. The former canal R.O.W. can also provide the greenway link needed to connect the park, the neighborhood, and hospital area with the Downtown.

## *~Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art, Inc.*

This Plan recommends that the Town establish a working partnership with the world-renowned school of cartooning located in the former High School. In particular, the Town and the school should investigate opportunities to display public art produced by students at the Kubert School, either in the form of temporary or permanent installations in parks throughout Town.

## *~The Dover National Guard Site (6)*

The Dover National Guard consists of property that is located within Rockaway Township. Once part of the Town of Dover, the land was transferred to Rockaway as part of some political deal. As part of the transfer between the towns, the site could return to Dover if the property should become vacant by the National Guard. This would be a great opportunity for Dover and as such the Town needs to remain fully abreast of the conversations surrounding base closure. Notwithstanding site ownership, the tow (2) communities may seek to share the facility as well.

## *~ Additional Recommendations*

While some specific recommendations have been made in the Plan, the following recommendations should also be considered.



- Create a master development plan for all parks and recreational facilities; including school sites.
  - o Review the location of existing athletic fields and recreation facilities and compare these to future needs.
  - o Coordinate park and recreation plans with existing and planned Board of Education facilities.
  - o Develop a Capital Improvement Plan for this plan.
- Consider applying for all available funding for park development and open space preservation in coordination with the Capitol Improvement Plan.
- Ensure that the redevelopment of the Bassett Highway site features well-designed public open space along the riverfront.
- Ensure that the redevelopment of the sites south of the Morris & Essex Rail Line (Public Parking Lot B) features well-designed public open space adjacent to Crescent Field.
- All parks should work to be ADA and special needs accessible.
- Work with the County to determine designated bike routes within Dover, particularly along the waterfront and the soon to be abandoned rail line and access the Hedden Park.

- Implement the Town's 2005-2009 Community Forestry Management Plan and enhance all park space with shade and evergreen trees.
- An on-going review of existing parks and recreation facilities to ensure that they are keeping up with the needs of the Town's growing and diverse population particularly as major development projects are approved and built.

### *Implementation Plan*

#### **Short Term**

- Work to improve public pocket parks identified in this plan, particularly Dover Station and Town Hall
- Contact the Board of Education to discuss the implications of this plan as well as partnerships moving forward.
  - Explore liability issues associated with these plans
  - Establish the feasibility of relocating the football field to the High School
  - Develop a Master Plan for Hamilton Field once location of the football field is established
- Establish the feasibility and plan for the restoration of the Rockaway River and Morristown and Erie Rail Greenway
  - Continue discussion with Morris County on the abandonment of the rail line as well as enhanced connection to Hedden Park
  - Develop design documents for the greenway that includes the Rockaway River, Morristown and Erie Rail, and Morris Canal R.O.W. and simultaneously locate and secure funding

- Establish contact with surrounding municipalities regarding open space and recreational opportunities
- Develop a plan for Bowlby Pond area and work with the prospective redeveloper of the landfill site to allow access and perhaps improvement of the site
- Work to determine where artificial turf should be implemented, Crescent or Hamilton Field
- Ensure all parks are brought up to ADA and handicap accessibility
- Implement the Community Forestry Plan

## Long Term Goals

- Continue to evaluate the parks and open space system as it relates to meeting the needs of a growing and evolving population
- Continue pursuit of connections to and from the parks and open space system
- Work with Canal Society to place historic markers along the former Morris Canal R.O.W.
- Work to identify underdeveloped parcels along the future greenway in order to provide pedestrian connections to it
- As larger private site identified in this plan look to improve, steps should be taken acquire or partner with the owners to improve public spaces
- Should the Dover National Guard close the Town should work to take the property over
- Continue to apply for all available funds to improve and upgrade the parks system.

## Implementation Tools

The following is list of many programs available to Dover for assistance in parks improvement and acquisition. Some of these programs may not be as suitable as others but it is meant as a baseline of information by which the Town can seek funding assistance. As always, the Town should be working with corporate and non-profit sponsors to leverage their technical and financial assistance with the Town's efforts.

### NJDEP Green Acres Program Matching Grants Program

If a county has an approved source of open space funding and an approved Opens Space and Recreation Plan, the Green Acres program, administered by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, provides a larger match for land acquisition. The Planning Incentive Grant for counties with an Open Space levy and an approved Opens Space and Recreation Plan provides a 50% matching grant. Urban Aid municipalities can receive a 75% matching grant. The balance of the funds can be provided as a loan at 2% for 30 years. If a county does not have an Open Space levy or approved Opens Space and Recreation Plan, Green Acres only provides 25% of the acquisition cost.







*pace element*



**Funding Resource Matrix**

RESOURCES	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	ADMINISTERED BY	ELIGIBLE ENTITY
Aid for Urban Environmental Concerns	The grant is designed to provide funding for the State’s urban communities to enhance the environment in the urban settings.	DEP-Office of Business & External Affairs	Municipalities and Counties classified as Urban
Emergency Grant and Loan Fund	Provides emergency funding for capital preservation projects for historic properties	DCA-New Jersey Historic Trust	County, Municipal, Non-profit
Environmental Education Grants Program	Provides financial support for projects that design, demonstrate, or disseminate environmental education practices, methods or techniques.	USEPA-Office of Environmental Education	
Garden State Historic Preservation Trust	Provides two categories of matching grants to encourage the careful preservation, preservation and rehabilitation of historic properties.	DCA-New Jersey Historic Trust	County, Municipal, Non-profit
Green Communities Challenge Grants	To help local government agencies implement urban and community forestry projects; projects are provided under four themes: Development, implementation, tree maintenance, and research	DEP- Community Forestry Program	Municipal and county governments
Land and Water Conservation Fund	Funds are used for state planning and for state and local acquisition and development of state and local facilities that provide active and/or passive recreation opportunities	USDOJ-DOI/National Park Service	
Livable Communities	Creation of a strategic investment plan; Improvements that support transit or transit ridership for bus, train, light rail or ferry; Streetscapes, traffic calming and implementation of context sensitive design strategies; Bicycle or pedestrian facilities; Parking and circulation; Landscaping/Beautification of transportation related facilities; Minor resurfacing and pavement rehabilitation associated with other activities as listed above but not to exceed 25% of the project	Department of Transportation- Local Government Services	Municipalities, counties
Municipal Aid Program- Bicycle Projects	Municipal aid given to projects that result in either the creation of a new independent bicycle facility or in making an existing roadway bicycle compatible; competitive process; in four districts	Department of Transportation- Local Government Services	Municipalities

Municipal Aid Program- Pedestrian Projects	Municipal aid given in support of projects that will result in a safer environment for pedestrians	Department of Transportation- Local Government Services	Municipalities
National Recreation Trails Program	To provide financial assistance for developing and maintaining trails and trail facilities; trails can be for non-motorized, multi use and motorized purposes.	DEP- Natural Lands Management	Government and nonprofit land owners
New Jersey Tree Planting Grant	To positively impact local areas by planting trees on land owned or controlled by state, county or local governments by supporting and encouraging the development of Community Forestry Programs.	DEP-Community Forestry Program	
Open Space Trust	Long and short term open space acquisitions	Morris County	Municipalities
Park Improvement Trust Fund	Improvements to Park Facilities	Morris County Parks	
Partners for Parks	Facilitates Enhancement Projects to improve appearance and safety of parks	Morris Land Conservancy	Municipalities
Preservation Easement Program	Offers permanent legal protection to wide range of historic properties.	DCA-New Jersey Historic Trust	County, Municipal, Non-profit
Recreation and Park Departments Assistance	Assists community recreation and park departments with the initiation, development, administration and management of recreational sites, resources and programming	DCA-Housing and Community Development	Local government, recreation agency or citizen
Revolving Loan Fund	Provides financing for the preservation, improvement, restoration, rehabilitation and acquisition of historic properties and certain non-ancillary non-construction activities.	DCA-New Jersey Historic Trust	County, Municipal, Non-profit
Sustainable Development Challenge Grants	The USEPA solicits proposals for these grants that challenges communities to link environmental protection, economic prosperity, and community well-being;	USEPA- SDCG Program	Municipalities, non-profit organizations

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