

M E T U C H E N

M A S T E R P L A N

**METUCHEN PLANNING BOARD
BOROUGH OF METUCHEN**

MIDDLESEX COUNTY
METUCHEN, NEW JERSEY

March 9, 1959

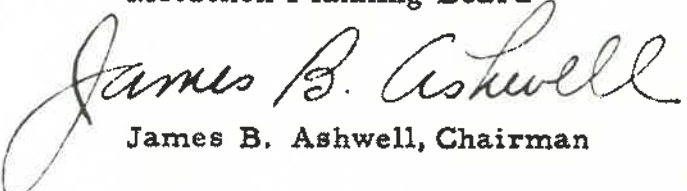
To the Citizens of the Borough of Metuchen

This Master Plan Report summarizes the research and studies of the consultant to the Planning Board, I. Candeub & Associates, over the past three years. It covers the historical background, present characteristics, and likely future needs of the Borough as regards population, land use, economic activity, the central business district, traffic, schools, community facilities, and financial requirements.

The basic purpose of this Master Plan Report has been to provide the public, the governing body, and public boards of Metuchen with a comprehensive plan for the future orderly development of the Borough. In the preparation of this report, cooperation has been extended the consultant by the Mayor and Council, the Borough Engineer, your Planning Board, the Parking Authority, the Board of Education, and other public boards and officials. The facts have been carefully checked. The recommendations are worthy of consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Metuchen Planning Board


James B. Ashwell, Chairman

MASTER PLAN

BOROUGH OF METUCHEN, NEW JERSEY

For the

Borough of Metuchen

Under a contract with the
Division of Planning and Development of the
Department of Conservation and Economic Development
of the State of New Jersey

Utilizing

Federal-State Urban Planning Assistance Program
Section 701, Title VII Federal Housing Act of 1954

Prepared by

Isadore Candeub and Associates,
32 Green Street
Newark 2, New Jersey

For

March 1959

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	i
SUMMARY OF MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	iii
POPULATION ANALYSIS	1
ECONOMIC ANALYSIS	11
LAND USE ANALYSIS	17
LAND USE PLAN	30
TRAFFIC CIRCULATION ANALYSIS AND PLAN	38
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PLAN	51
COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN	68
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM	92
ADOPTION OF THE MASTER PLAN	113

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1	Population of Metuchen	4
2	Comparison of Population Growth	5
3	Population Change by Age and Sex	6
4	Employment by Major Industrial Group	12
5	Occupations of Employed Workers by Percentages	13
6	Occupation of Employed Workers	14
7	Income of Total Families and Unrelated Individuals	15
8	Land Use	18
9	Zoning of Undeveloped Land	23

Table (cont'd.)Page

10	Assessed Valuations	24
11	Proposed Land Use	32
12	Right-of-Way Widths	42
13	Retail Stores	53
14	Types of Retail Stores	55
15	Retail Sales by Commodity	56
16	Market Size Indicator	59
17	Distribution of Resident Pupils	71
18	Estimated Public School Enrollments	73
19	Classroom Needs	74
20	Recreation Facilities	77
21	Net Taxable Assessed Valuation	93
22	Net Operating Costs and Per Capita Net Operating Expenditures	94
23	Payments to Service Existing Debt	96
24	Property Tax Levy	97
25	Tax Rate	98
26	Bonded Indebtedness (Present and Committed Bonds Only) and Estimated Statutory Debt Limit	100
27	Priority Listing of Capital Improvements Excluding Schools, and Estimated Costs	105
28	Schedule for Proposed Capital Improvements	107
29	Schedule for Proposed School Capital Improvements	111

LIST OF PLATES

Population Growth	3
Population Composition	7
Population Distribution	10
Land Use Map	19
Neighborhoods	26
Land Use Plan	31
Area Map	39
Traffic Volumes	41
Traffic Plan	45
Intersection Treatments	49
Existing Land Use - Central Business District	52
Metuchen Retail Trade Area	58
Land Use Plan - Central Business District	61
Existing Parking Facilities - Central Business District	64
Community Facilities Plan	75
Proposed Community Park	83
Municipal Bonded Indebtedness	108
Annual Debt Service	110
School Bonded Indebtedness	112

INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the century, commuters on the Pennsylvania Railroad began to move into the gently rolling countryside of Metuchen. These early suburbanites, largely from the professional and executive groups, took considerable interest in their community and created a desirable residential environment. The pattern which was originally established has continued to the present. The Borough is characterized by its many fine homes, tree lined streets and diversified civic interests.

Today Metuchen is largely developed. But, not content to sit on its laurels, the Borough has sought to develop a long-range plan which will maintain its residential character in the future. In 1956 Metuchen contracted for the preparation of a Master Plan to guide its over-all future development. The plan, which is summarized in this report, is thus the culmination of over two years' work by the Metuchen Planning Board and its consultants. As is true in all communities, extensive surveys, studies and planning analyses were necessary to arrive at the final product.

The major elements of the plan are as follows:

LAND USE PLAN -- a plan showing the amount and location of land needed for residential, commercial, industrial and public purposes.

TRAFFIC CIRCULATION PLAN -- a plan for the improvement of traffic circulation within the Borough related to regional as well as local needs.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PLAN -- a plan for the development of a shopping area with adequate access, sufficient parking and a wide variety of goods and services.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN -- a plan which analyzes the adequacy of existing schools, parks, playgrounds and public buildings and recommends a program for their improvement and expansion in the future.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM -- a financial program to effectuate needed public improvements to serve present and anticipated future growth.

The Master Plan sets the goals toward which the Borough can strive during the next twenty years.

It must be emphasized, however, that the completion of the Master Plan does not mean the end of the planning process. The Planning Board must be continually alert to changing conditions, which may present opportunities to carry out Master Plan proposals or which may indicate that certain parts of the Master Plan should be revised. In addition, it is necessary to review and revise the Master Plan probably not less than once every five to six years.

SUMMARY OF MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Land Use Plan

A. Residential Areas

Of the total Borough land area of 1,880 acres, approximately 869 acres are reserved for residential use. Three density ranges are proposed: (1) low-density single-family development, totalling 799 acres, with a maximum of 7.3 dwellings per acre; (2) medium-density garden apartments, totalling 44 acres, with a maximum of 17 dwelling units per acre; and (3) higher-density apartments with a maximum of 40 dwelling units per acre covering a total of 26 acres adjacent to the central shopping district.

Changes in zoning required to effectuate this plan would include conversion of several sections now in apartment or commercial zoning to single-family zoning; and establishment of a new higher-density apartment zone. No expansion in present garden apartment areas is proposed.

B. Commercial Areas

The Plan reserves 90 acres for commercial use. Of this total 70 acres are located in or adjacent to the central business district. Two neighborhood shopping areas are proposed.

C. Industrial Areas

A total of 144 acres are reserved for industrial use, primarily in the northwest and southwest sections of the Borough.

It is recommended that controls on noise, vibration, smoke, setbacks, etc. be added to the present industrial zoning regulations. This is to afford greater protection for residential areas and to encourage a higher standard of industrial development. To prevent undesirable highway commercial development, commercial uses in industrial zones should be restricted only to those necessary to support industrial uses.

Traffic Circulation Plan

It is recommended that four classifications be established for Metuchen's streets and that each street be improved to the appropriate standard for its classification. Specific proposals are as follows:

A. Arterial Thoroughfares

State Route 27 is the only street proposed for this classification. Improvement in alignment is recommended by using Middlesex Avenue as part of this route with a new underpass at the Pennsylvania Railroad.

B. Primary Streets

Extensions, widenings, or other improvements are proposed for Amboy Avenue, Central Avenue, Grove Avenue, and Main Street.

C. Secondary Streets

Extensions, realignments, paving, or widening are proposed for Cedar Street, Christol Street, Chestnut Street, Durham Avenue, Hillside Avenue, Oak Street, Prospect Street, and Whitman Avenue.

D. Local Streets

Widening is proposed for Highland Avenue. It is recommended that Clinton Place be extended across Main Street to Thomas Street.

In addition, traffic channelization is proposed at four intersections: the proposed Middlesex Avenue Underpass; Durham Avenue-Central Avenue; Plainfield Avenue-Clive Street; and Grove Avenue-Middlesex Avenue.

Central Business District Plan

The major need of Metuchen's shopping area is a large retail outlet to draw trade from the rapidly growing region outside the Borough. The Federally-aided urban renewal project on New Street and Lake Avenue now in planning will provide a desirable site for such a large retail store.

In regard to the existing shops, it is recommended that the retail merchants engage an architect to develop a coordinated plan for shopfront improvement.

A considerable expansion of municipal off-street parking facilities for shoppers is recommended, amounting to a total of 260 parking spaces in seven new parking lots. In addition, it is proposed that the Thomas Street commuter parking lot be expanded.

Community Facilities Plan

A. Schools

It is recommended that six classrooms and a kindergarten be added to the Campbell School. This will serve anticipated new residential development, most of which will take place north of Middlesex Avenue.

Multi-purpose rooms should be added to all elementary schools.

B. Parks and Playgrounds

A 45-acre community park is proposed in the southeastern section of the Borough, to fill major recreation needs.

New playgrounds are recommended on Hampton Street, Forrest and Aylin Streets, and Kentnor Street. A small neighborhood park is recommended on Centre Street.

Extensions are proposed for the Campbell, Franklin, Edgar and High School sites.

C. Public Buildings

It is recommended that the Borough Hall be expanded to include additional functions, and that Borough Park be developed according to an integrated civic center plan. Construction of a new Red Cross headquarters as part of the civic center is proposed.

Expansion of the public library is recommended to provide a wider range of facilities and ultimately greater shelf and storage space.

Relocation of the Borough Garage and use of the existing building by the Fire Department and Safety Council are recommended.

D. Public Utilities

An inspection of all structures in the Borough to locate illegal storm water connections to the sanitary sewers is recommended.

A feasibility study on the installation of storm sewers is proposed.

It is recommended that a request be made to the Middlesex Water Company to replace all lines of under 6-inch diameter with lines of at least this size.

Capital Improvements Program

A list of needed capital improvements is presented by cost and priority, arranged in a financially feasible 20-year schedule. A progressive decrease in bonded debt is contemplated after 1959 under this proposed program.

Adoption of the Master Plan

It is recommended that the Master Plan be adopted under the procedures set forth in the State Planning Enabling Act. This will result in wider community understanding and support and will establish a formal requirement for the referral of all public improvements to the Planning Board.

CHAPTER I. POPULATION ANALYSIS

Early Growth

Until the early 1800's the area around Metuchen consisted of sparsely developed farm land. There were no major roads and no point of focus for community functions. Metuchen was part of Woodbridge Township in this period.

A boom in the construction of turnpikes along the entire eastern seaboard soon after 1800 greatly influenced the development of Metuchen. In 1810 two turnpikes were completed which intersected in Metuchen. One, now known as Middlesex Avenue, ran from New York to Philadelphia. The other, now known as Amboy Avenue, extended from Perth Amboy to Bound Brook.

The junction of these two roads became the center of the first commercial activity in Metuchen, consisting of several taverns and a general store. Another tavern, known as Harriot's Inn, was located on the site of the present Borough Hall.

Although the turnpikes increased the rate of growth of the community, it was by no means rapid. In 1839, however, a second event occurred to hasten development in Metuchen. In that year Metuchen became a stop on the New Jersey Railroad (now the Pennsylvania Railroad) which had just been completed between Jersey City and Philadelphia.

By 1888 it is recorded that Metuchen was becoming the home of commuters who worked in Newark and New York. From this period on Metuchen began to experience a growth which was linked closely with the commuting service to the metropolitan centers. Maps of New Jersey dating from this period show that the early development of suburban communities largely followed the rail commuter lines.

By 1900 the influx of commuters had so changed the character of the community from the surrounding agricultural area that there was a desire to separate from Raritan Township, which had by that time broken away from Woodbridge Township. As a result, Metuchen became a separate borough in 1900. The first official census in the same year shows a population of 1,786 in the new municipality.

Between 1900 and 1910 Metuchen's population increased by 352 to 2,138. For this period Metuchen's rate of growth was below national, State and County rates.

The population of 3,334 in 1920 represented a 55.9 per cent increase over the preceding decade. This was twice the rate at which New Jersey was growing and greater than Middlesex County's rate of 42.1 per cent.

Metuchen's population growth shifted into high gear during the next decade with a 72.4 per cent increase to 5,748 between 1920 and 1930. It was during this period that most of New Jersey's commuting towns had their most rapid rates of growth. Metuchen had a 45.8 per cent increase, South Orange increased by 87.4 per cent, Summit's increase was 43.1 per cent, and Westfield grew by 74.2 per cent.

Recent Trends

The depression years -- between 1930 and 1940 -- saw Metuchen's rate of growth drop to 14.1 per cent. This rate of growth, however, was about twice the national average and five times the rate of the State and County.

The postwar years have set off a building boom in Metuchen which still continues. As contrasted to the earlier development of the Borough, much of the postwar growth has not been the result of an increase in the number of rail commuters. The industrialization of Middlesex County, in the vicinity of Metuchen, is considered to have been largely responsible for Metuchen's rapid growth from 6,557 in 1940 to 9,879 in 1950.

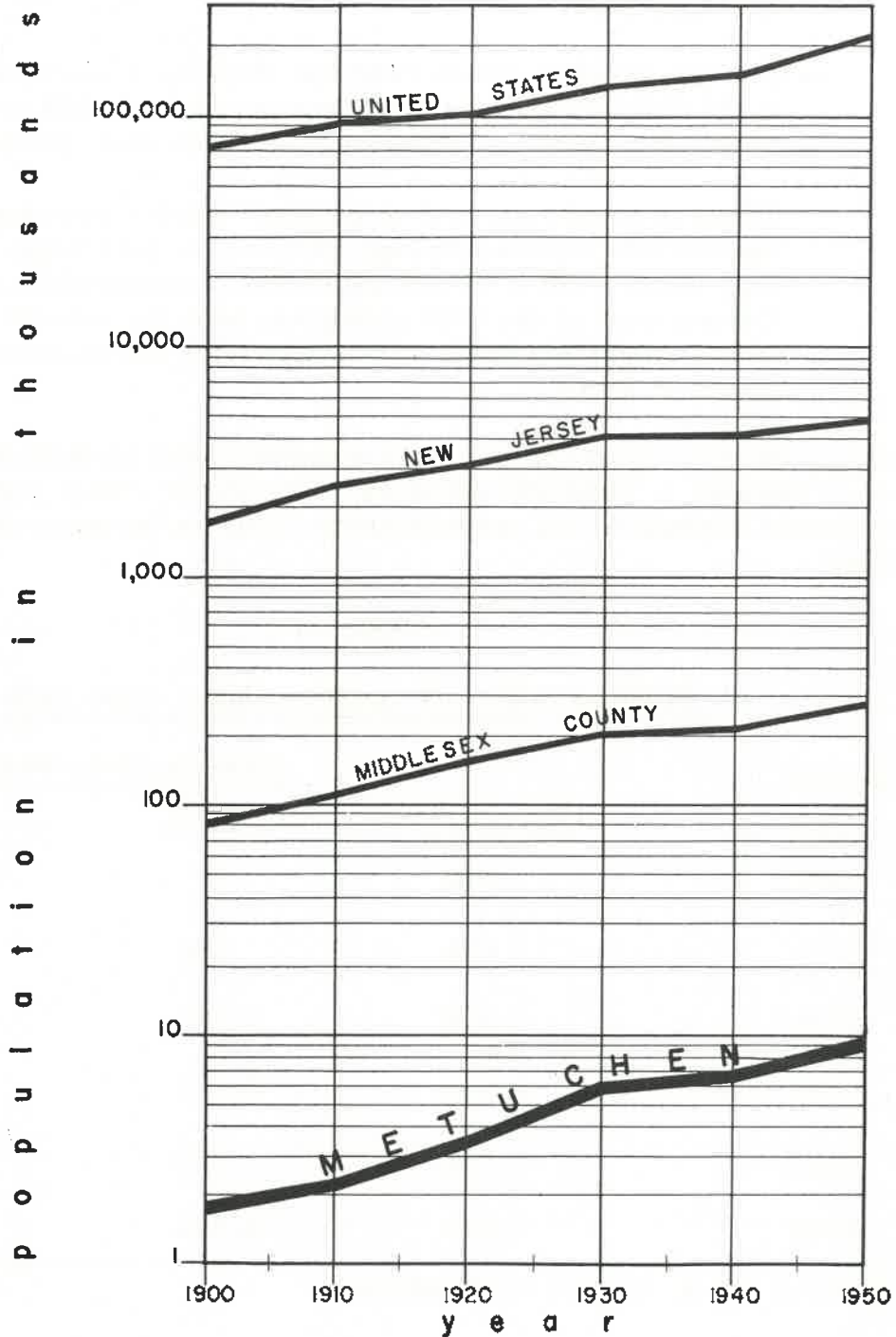
For the 1940-1950 decade, Metuchen's rate of growth -- 50.7 per cent -- was exceeded only by two other Middlesex municipalities. Spotswood Borough had a 93.6 per cent, and Middlesex Borough had an increase of 57.9 per cent.

Present Population

To arrive at an estimate of the present population of Metuchen, estimates were made with respect to family size and migration. Factors entering into these estimates are as follows:

POPULATION GROWTH

compared with other governmental units



- Between 1950 and 1958 approximately 1,008 new dwelling units were constructed in Metuchen.
- The average size of families moving into these homes is estimated at 3.0 persons. This amounts to an "in-migration" of 3,024 persons.
- For the period between 1950 and 1958 there were approximately 3,170 children born to Metuchen parents and 810 residents died. This left a "natural" population increase of 2,360 persons.
- There is always an "out-migration" from a community, for various reasons such as college attendance, marriage, employment, etc. Since 1950 it is estimated that out-migration amounted to 7.0 per cent of the 1950 population plus the natural increases and in-migration since 1950. The total out-migration is estimated at 1,068.

Based on these assumptions, it is estimated that Metuchen's population as of January 1, 1958 was about 14,100 persons. This represents an increase of about 4,200 persons since 1950, an increase of about 42 per cent.

Table 1

POPULATION OF METUCHEN, 1900-1950

<u>Census Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Increase Over Preceding Year</u>	
		<u>Number</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
1900	1,786	-	-
1910	2,138	352	19.7
1920	3,334	1,196	55.9
1930	5,748	2,414	72.4
1940	6,557	809	14.1
1950	9,879	3,322	50.7

Source: U. S. Census of Population.

Table 2

COMPARISON OF POPULATION GROWTH

<u>Governmental Unit</u>	<u>Percentage Increase</u>				
	<u>1900-1910</u>	<u>1910-1920</u>	<u>1920-1930</u>	<u>1930-1940</u>	<u>1940-1950</u>
United States	21.4	15.3	15.6	7.3	14.8
New Jersey	34.7	24.4	28.0	2.9	16.2
Middlesex County	42.5	42.1	30.9	2.4	22.1
Metuchen	19.7	55.9	72.4	14.1	50.7

Source: U. S. Census of Population.

Population Characteristics

The U. S. Census of Population for 1950 includes a variety of information on Metuchen's population which is relevant to the present study.

Sex Ratio. In 1950 there were 98 males for every 100 females in the population. This is well above the average of 92 males for every 100 females in the State of New Jersey and reflects the large number of young couples in the Borough.

Age and Sex Composition. This information is significant because of its influence upon types of community facilities to be furnished by the Borough.

1. Between 1940 and 1950 the number of children 5 years of age and under increased by 155 per cent. The ratio of this age group to the entire population increased from 6.7 per cent to 11.4 per cent.
2. The 5-14 age group increased by 45 per cent. The increase in this age group was below the total community growth largely because of the relatively low birth rate in the post-depression years.

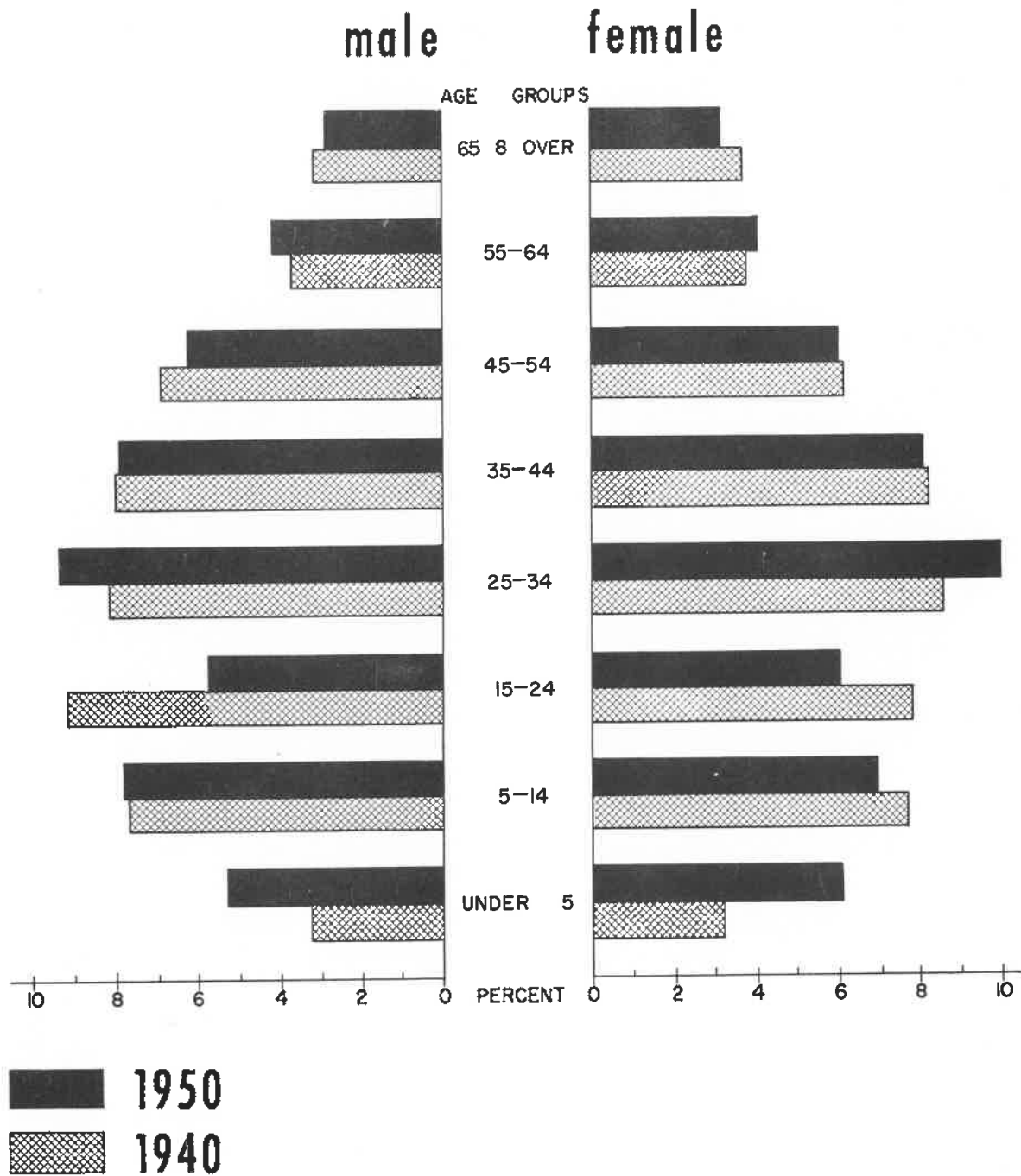
Table 3

POPULATION CHANGES, BY AGE AND SEX, IN METUCHEN, 1940-1950

<u>Age</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>Extent of Change</u>	
			<u>Number</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
<u>MALE POPULATION</u>				
Under 5	219	523	304	139
5 - 14	505	776	271	54
15 - 24	603	560	- 43	- 7
25 - 34	533	926	393	74
35 - 44	529	783	254	48
45 - 54	454	617	163	36
55 - 64	243	417	174	72
65 & Over	<u>210</u>	<u>284</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>35</u>
TOTAL	3, 296	4, 886	1, 590	48
<u>FEMALE POPULATION</u>				
Under 5	223	604	381	171
5 - 14	507	691	184	36
15 - 24	517	597	80	15
25 - 34	578	986	408	70
35 - 44	538	797	259	48
45 - 54	403	591	188	47
55 - 64	250	400	150	60
65 & Over	<u>245</u>	<u>327</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>33</u>
TOTAL	3, 261	4, 993	1, 732	53
<u>TOTAL POPULATION</u>				
Under 5	442	1, 127	685	155
5 - 14	1, 012	1, 467	455	45
15 - 24	1, 120	1, 157	37	3
25 - 34	1, 111	1, 912	801	72
35 - 44	1, 067	1, 580	513	48
45 - 54	857	1, 208	351	41
55 - 64	493	817	324	66
65 & Over	<u>455</u>	<u>611</u>	<u>156</u>	<u>34</u>
TOTAL	6, 557	9, 879	3, 322	51

Source: U. S. Census of Population.

POPULATION COMPOSITION



The accompanying map shows the present distribution of Metuchen's population. As expected in a community largely made up of single-family homes, there is almost a completely even population distribution over all areas developed for residential use. In several areas near the periphery of the community, there is a scattered population resulting from development on lots separated by undeveloped land. The two areas in which there is a higher concentration of population are the two garden apartment developments on High Street and on McCoy Avenue.

Estimated Future Population

All forecasts indicate that the population of the New York metropolitan region will continue to increase during the next twenty years. The New York Regional Plan Association estimates that the region will grow by 4,000,000 persons by 1975. This agency expects that about 85 per cent of this growth will take place in the metropolitan suburbs.

The Regional Plan Association has also estimated that Middlesex County's population will double to 700,000 by 1975.

The anticipated ultimate population of the Borough is based on anticipated residential development and residential densities as recommended in the Land Use Plan.

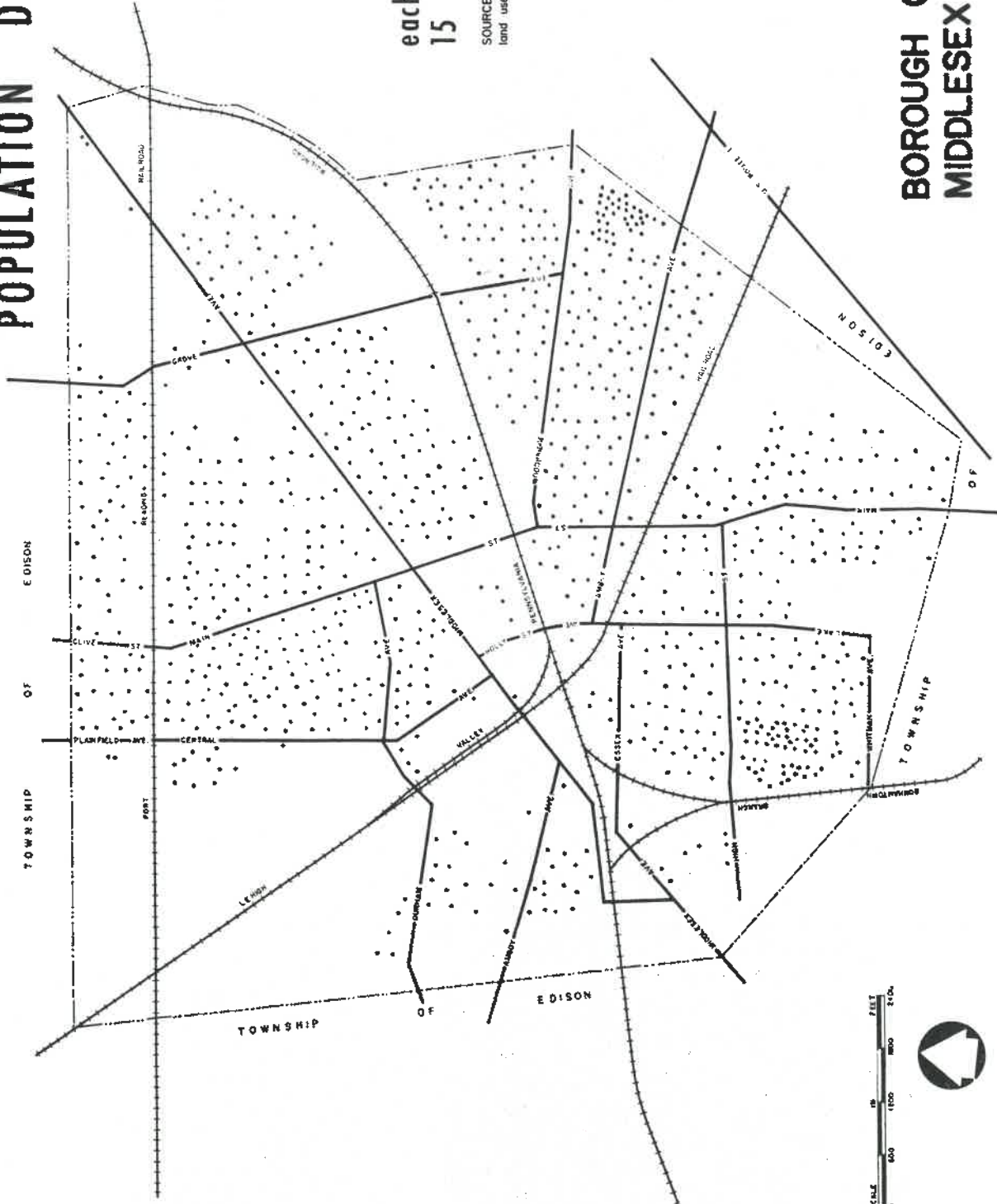
On this basis, it is estimated that Metuchen's population will gradually increase to about 18,000 by 1975.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

each dot represents
15 persons

SOURCE:
land use survey - 1956

**BOROUGH OF METUCHEN
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, N.J.**



MAP PREPARED BY F. CARLOR & ASSOCIATES AUGUST 1956

CHAPTER II. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Employment

In 1950 the U.S. Census reported that Metuchen had a total labor force of 3,922 persons of which 3,823 or approximately 97 per cent were employed.

The labor force comprised approximately 39 per cent of the population as of 1950. Assuming that the same ratio holds at present, the labor force is now estimated to number between 4,900 and 5,000 persons.

Manufacturing activities employed the largest proportion of Metuchen's workers -- 37.4 per cent -- as of 1950. Wholesale and retail activities employed 15.5 per cent; transportation, communication and public utilities employed 10.4 per cent; and professional and related services employed 10.3 per cent of Metuchen's labor force.

Occupations

Metuchen has 37.5 per cent of its population engaged in professional, technical, proprietary and managerial activities while the State and County have only 20.3 and 17.7 per cent respectively. Between 1940 and 1950 this occupation group increased from 29.6 per cent of the labor force to 37.5 per cent. For the same period, those employed in unskilled types of occupations have shown a decrease from 14.4 per cent to 9.2 per cent of the labor force.

Income

The relatively high economic standing of Metuchen's breadwinners is shown by the fact that in 1950 the Borough had the highest median income -- \$4,404 -- of any municipality in Middlesex County and ranked 13th in the State of New Jersey.

As of 1950, 39.3 per cent of Metuchen's families and unrelated individuals had an income of over \$5,000 per year, compared with 24.4 per cent and 23.8 per cent for the State and County respectively.

Table 4

EMPLOYMENT, BY MAJOR INDUSTRIAL GROUPS, IN METUCHEN, 1950

<u>Industrial Group</u>	<u>MALE</u>		<u>FEMALE</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>PerCent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>PerCent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>PerCent</u>
Construction	273	9.4	6	.6	279	7.4
Manufacturing	1,133	39.1	293	31.7	1,426	37.4
Trans., Comm. & Public Utilities	320	11.0	77	8.4	397	10.4
Wholesale & Retail	443	15.3	148	16.0	591	15.5
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	127	4.4	46	5.1	173	4.6
Business & Repair	75	2.6	8	.9	83	2.3
Personal Services	47	1.6	79	8.5	126	3.3
Professional & Related Services	211	7.3	184	19.9	395	10.3
Public Administration	212	7.3	41	4.4	253	6.7
All Others	58	2.0	42	4.5	100	2.1
TOTALS	2,899	100.0	924	100.0	3,823	100.0

Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1950.

Table 5

OCCUPATIONS OF EMPLOYED WORKERS, BY PERCENTAGES,
METUCHEN, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, 1950

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Metuchen</u>	<u>Middlesex County</u>	<u>New Jersey</u>
Professional & Technical	23.3	9.6	10.1
Proprietor & Manager	14.2	8.1	10.2
Clerical & Sales	22.6	17.6	21.8
Operatives	13.0	29.0	24.1
Craftsmen	16.3	18.0	15.8
Domestic Services	1.4	1.2	2.1
Service (other than domestic)	4.3	6.2	7.1
Laborers	3.2	7.4	5.5
Farm	.3	1.8	2.2
Not Reported	1.4	1.1	1.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1950.

Table 6

 OCCUPATION OF EMPLOYED WORKERS, METUCHEN, 1950 AND 1950

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>1 9 4 0</u>		<u>1 9 5 0</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Professional & Technical	387	16.8	890	23.3
Proprietor & Manager	293	12.8	542	14.2
Clerical & Sales	603	26.2	863	22.6
Operatives	350	15.2	496	13.0
Craftsmen	313	13.6	622	16.3
Domestic Services	92	3.9	57	1.4
Service (other than domestic)	94	4.1	163	4.3
Laborers	131	5.7	124	3.2
Farm	16	.7	10	.3
Not Reported	23	1.0	56	1.4
<hr/>				
TOTAL	2,302	100.0	3,823	100.0
<hr/>				

Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1940 and 1950.

Table 7

INCOME OF TOTAL FAMILIES AND UNRELATED INDIVIDUALS
BY PERCENTAGE, 1950

<u>Income Per Year</u>	<u>Metuchen</u>	<u>Middlesex County</u>	<u>New Jersey</u>
Less than \$1,500	12.5	19.4	20.3
\$1,500 - \$2,999	13.3	20.9	23.2
\$3,000 - \$3,999	17.0	21.7	19.6
\$4,000 - \$4,999	17.9	14.4	12.6
\$5,000 - \$6,999	20.2	14.7	14.2
\$7,000 - \$9,999	12.4	6.2	6.3
\$10,000 & Over	6.7	2.9	3.9
<hr/>			
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
<hr/>			
MEDIAN INCOME	\$4,404	\$3,383	\$3,285

Source: U.S. Census of Population, 1950.

Non-Local Employment

Non-local employment is estimated to total 3,400 persons or 70 per cent of the labor force. The sources of non-local employment are divided between New York City, northern New Jersey and Middlesex County.

The Pennsylvania Railroad reports that on an average day 1,100 commuters leave Metuchen for Newark and New York. During October, 1954, the railroad reported that there were 266 regular commuters to Newark and 804 to New York City. Commutation time is about 25 minutes to Newark and about 40 minutes to Pennsylvania Station, New York. It is estimated that about 880 or 80 per cent of the commuters using the Metuchen station reside in the Borough.

The automobile is the principal means of commuting for the 2,500 persons not using the train and not locally employed.

The influence of the automobile on the home location of workers in Middlesex County was studied by the Middlesex County Planning Board in 1952. One interesting result of this study was the fact that those employed in the older industrial areas such as Perth Amboy, tended to reside in Perth Amboy or in the immediate vicinity. Those employed in the Metuchen-Edison area, which is characterized by new industry, however, lived in widely scattered locations even outside Middlesex County.

Regional Sources of Employment

One of the most concentrated areas of industrial development in the United States is located within a 20-mile radius of Metuchen. Middlesex County and Union County, which fall within this arc, are two of the four fastest growing manufacturing counties in the New York metropolitan region.

Between 1941 and 1951 employment in Middlesex County increased by 26 per cent, from 77,700 persons to 97,800 persons. In manufacturing alone there were 63,900 jobs in Middlesex County in 1951. The New Jersey Department of Conservation and Economic Development reports that between 1948 and 1955 there were 238 new factories opened in Middlesex County employing approximately 7,200 persons.

The industry in the region provides widely diverse employment opportunities. Business Week magazine has reported, for example, that over 10 per cent of the nation's industrial research activities are located in north central New Jersey.

CHAPTER III. LAND USE ANALYSIS

Land Use Survey

A survey of the land use of every parcel of land in Metuchen was made during July 1956. The data from this survey are very largely applicable today. Changes between 1956 and 1958 have consisted of a relatively limited amount of added residential development.

Summary of Land Use Characteristics

Metuchen has a land area of 1,880.0 acres or about 2.9 square miles.

Approximately 58 per cent of this area was developed land other than streets, as of 1956; 20 per cent was in street area; and 20 per cent was vacant land.

Residential Uses

As of 1956, 65.8 per cent of the Borough's developed land area was used for residential purposes. Of the land devoted strictly to residential usage, 644.8 acres or 91.6 per cent were in single-family development, 18.2 acres or 2.6 per cent were in two-family usage, and 40.4 acres or 5.8 per cent were in multi-family development.

Commercial Uses

There were 48.3 acres of land devoted to commercial use in Metuchen in 1956. Of this acreage, it was found that 10 acres or 20.7 per cent were developed as off-street parking lots.

Metuchen is fortunate in having its commercial uses concentrated in one central area near the geographic center of the community. Strict enforcement of zoning measures has, to a large extent, prevented undesirable ribbon-type commercial development along the major streets.

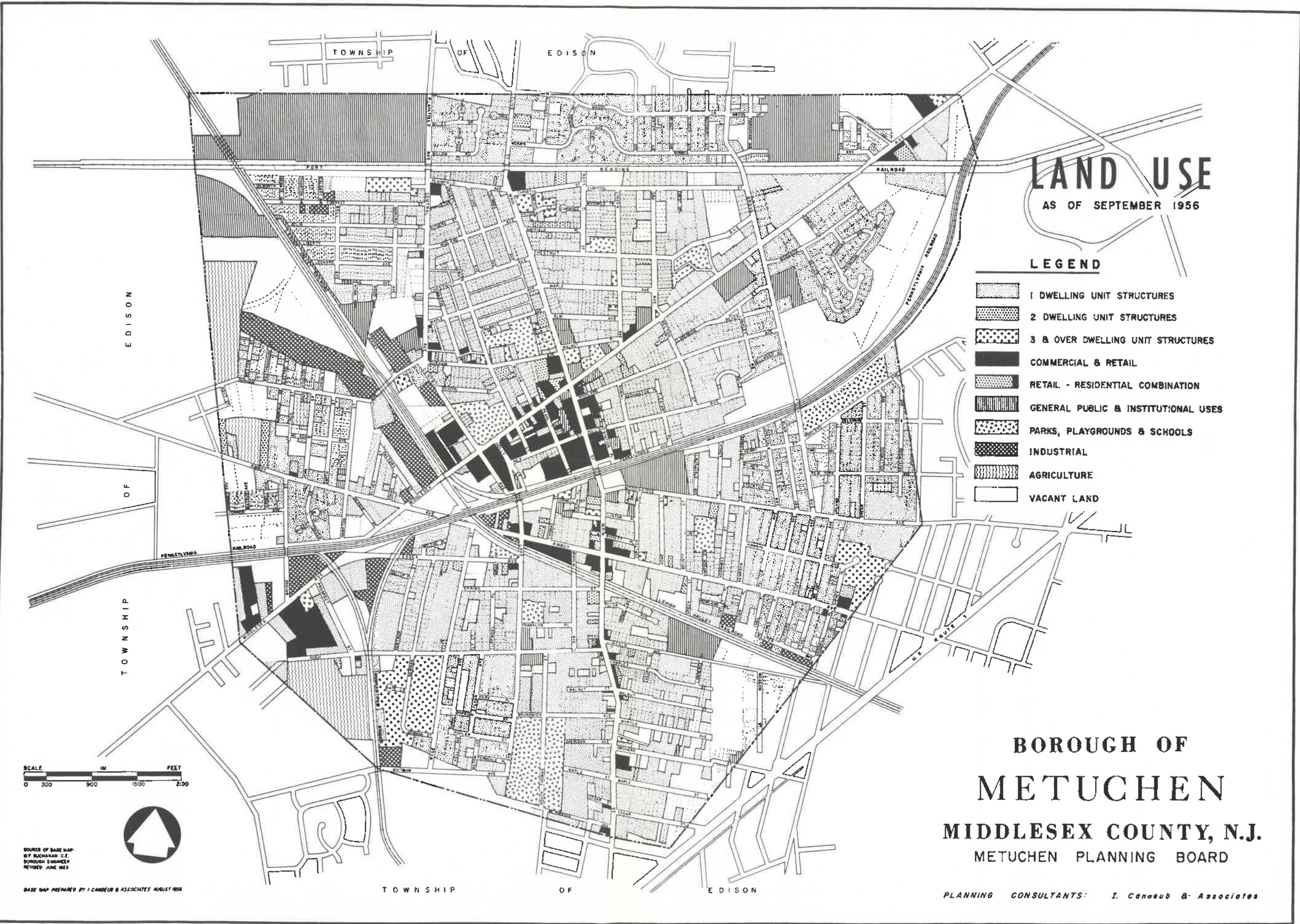
Table 8

LAND USE, METUCHEN, 1956

<u>Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Per Cent of Gross Area</u>	<u>Per Cent of Developed Area*</u>
Residential	703.4	37.5	65.8
One-Family	644.8	34.3	60.3
Two-Family	18.2	1.0	1.7
Multi-Family	40.4	2.2	3.8
Commercial	48.3	2.6	4.5
Parks & Playgrounds	65.4	3.5	6.1
Public	23.3	1.2	2.2
Institutional	89.6	4.8	8.4
Industrial	37.5	2.0	3.5
Railroads	102.1	5.4	9.5
Streets	386.9	20.5	--
Agriculture	45.1	2.4	--
Vacant	378.4	20.1	--
TOTAL	1,880.0	100.0	100.0

*Does not include streets, vacant land or agricultural land.

Source: Field Survey, Isadore Candeb & Associates, July 1956.



LAND USE

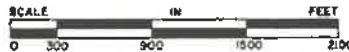
AS OF SEPTEMBER 1956

LEGEND

- 1 DWELLING UNIT STRUCTURES
- 2 DWELLING UNIT STRUCTURES
- 3 & OVER DWELLING UNIT STRUCTURES
- COMMERCIAL & RETAIL
- RETAIL - RESIDENTIAL COMBINATION
- GENERAL PUBLIC & INSTITUTIONAL USES
- PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS & SCHOOLS
- INDUSTRIAL
- AGRICULTURE
- VACANT LAND

**BOROUGH OF
METUCHEN
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, N.J.**
METUCHEN PLANNING BOARD

PLANNING CONSULTANTS: *I. Ceneub & Associates*



SOURCE OF BASE MAP:
E.F. BUCHANAN, C.E.
BOROUGH ENGINEER
REVISED - JUNE 1953

BASE MAP PREPARED BY I. CANDEUR & ASSOCIATES AUGUST 1954

There is, however, some scattered ribbon commercial development on Main Street southward from the center of the Borough and along portions of Amboy Avenue and Central Avenue.

Parks and Playgrounds

Metuchen had 65.4 acres developed in public parks, playgrounds and schools as of 1956. It had about one acre of parks and playgrounds per 200 persons at that time. In addition, Roosevelt Park, a County Park of about 200 acres, lies immediately to the east of the Borough.

Other Public Uses

Other public uses of land include all properties which are actively used for municipal purposes such as the Borough Hall, Borough Garage, Public Library, Sewage Disposal Plant, etc.

There were 23.3 acres in such other public use in Metuchen in 1956. This comprised 2.2 per cent of the total developed land area.

Institutional Uses

Institutional uses in Metuchen occupied 89.6 acres in 1956 and comprised 8.4 per cent of the developed land in the Borough. Included in the 89.6 acres of institutional uses are churches, parochial schools, lodges, cemeteries, etc. As institutional land is tax exempt, it can often be a severe handicap to municipal development. Fortunately, Metuchen's institutional uses are not unusually extensive in land area. The largest single institutional use of land is the Brothers of the Sacred Heart property which covers 53.4 acres in the northwest corner of the Borough. There are 15.1 acres in use for cemeteries.

Industrial Use

There were 37.5 acres of land used for industrial purposes in Metuchen in 1956. This land is predominantly located in the western portion of the Borough although there are several light industrial uses located to the east along the Lehigh Valley Railroad. Most of the industrial use fortunately is located in areas where there has been little or no residential development.

Railroads

One of the dominant features of Metuchen is the existence of four different railroad lines which divide the Borough into five sections. These railroad lines include the Pennsylvania Railroad's four-track main line, the Port Reading Railroad, the Lehigh Valley Railroad, and the Bonhamton Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

The railroad rights-of-way accounted for 102.1 acres or approximately 5.4 per cent of the total area of the Borough as of 1956. This is a somewhat higher proportion than in other similar communities.

Streets

Approximately 20 per cent of Metuchen's gross land was devoted to streets in 1956, or 386.9 acres. This includes all existing streets both paved and unpaved and all "paper" streets which have not as yet been developed. Compared with other similar communities for which statistics are available, Metuchen has a slightly lower percentage of its land in street area. The relatively large lot sizes in Metuchen account for this condition.

Vacant and Agricultural Land

There were 378.4 acres of vacant land in Metuchen as of 1956, or 20.1 per cent of the total area of the Borough. Agricultural lands, which are in a sense also undeveloped, comprised 45.1 acres or 2.4 per cent of the gross area.

The larger tracts of vacant land are found towards the periphery of the Borough, particularly in the area west of Central Avenue and north of Amboy Avenue. There are also a number of undeveloped residential lots scattered throughout the developed residential areas. These lots are, however, disappearing rapidly.

Development Factors

There are several favorable conditions which have had an important effect on Metuchen's development.

- The Borough has expanded very rapidly during the last two decades with remarkably little change in its basic character.
- The Borough is criss-crossed with railroads running through residential areas. However, instead of contributing to neighborhood blight they actually serve to stabilize residential areas by creating firm neighborhood boundary lines and eliminating unregulated through traffic.
- Metuchen's central shopping district was not located on a major through artery such as Middlesex Avenue or Amboy Avenue but on a small connecting link between them. As a consequence the present shopping center is not a disjointed linear development but a compact square in the heart of the Borough.
- Good residential development has been able to maintain itself on most of the major traffic routes going through Metuchen.
- Despite the vast growth of industrial development in the County, Metuchen has maintained its predominantly residential character.

These favorable conditions, which are in contrast with the situation found in many other communities, stem from two basic factors.

First, the Borough has a basic street plan which was extremely well designed to serve it in its formative years. During the decades of the nineteenth century when most urban areas were laid out on a rigid grid-iron pattern, Metuchen grew on a radial layout stemming from the intersection of Main Street with Middlesex Avenue, Woodbridge Avenue and Amboy Avenue. The alignments of the Lehigh Valley Railroad and the Pennsylvania Railroad further accentuated the radial character of the Borough.

Secondly, Metuchen was early able to attract high quality residential development and a large professional and executive commuter group. As a consequence, it made a special effort to maintain itself as a residential community even to the point of deliberately excluding industries.

This combination of favorable layout and deliberate purpose has permitted Metuchen to retain a remarkably high quality in its residential neighborhoods and to attract desirable new residential development.

Zoning and Existing Land Use

The eight zoning districts incorporated in the present Zoning Ordinance generally reflect the existing land use patterns in the Borough. Fortunately there are comparatively few nonconforming uses within the districts established by the Zoning Ordinance and Map. This condition indicates a strong effort on the part of the Board of Adjustment, Planning Board and Borough Council to deny use variances which would break down the effectiveness of the zoning plan. The few nonconforming uses which do exist consist primarily of small neighborhood retail stores located in residential zones.

Zoning of Undeveloped Land

Approximately 80 per cent of the total residentially zoned land is developed. About 55 per cent of the commercial zone is developed. Only 23 per cent of the industrially zoned land, however, has been developed.

Table 9

ZONING OF UNDEVELOPED LAND,* METUCHEN, 1956

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Per Cent of Total Zone Area</u>
Residential	229.9	20.7
Commercial	31.8	44.8
Industrial	161.8	76.9
<hr/>		
TOTAL ACRES	423.5	

*Undeveloped land is vacant or devoted to agricultural use.

The largest areas of vacant land in Metuchen are found in the western and southeastern portions of the Borough. Vacant land in the western section is generally low and crossed by railroads. By virtue of this fact, most of the land is unsuitable for residential or commercial development. South-

eastern Metuchen is developed with scattered residential uses. A large part of this area south of the Lehigh Valley Railroad and adjacent to Edison Township is Borough owned land and has been recommended for park development.

Land Use and the Tax Base

The cost of maintaining schools and other municipal facilities generally exceeds the taxes derived from residential uses alone. Since industry and business ordinarily require less in the way of services, their taxes are needed to supplement taxes from residential uses if the over-all tax rate is to be kept at a moderate level.

Table 10

ASSESSED VALUATIONS, BY LAND USE, METUCHEN, 1958

<u>Use</u>	<u>Assessed Valuation</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>	<u>Value per Acre</u>
Residential	\$10,351,946	88.3	\$14,720
Commercial	1,138,003	9.7	23,560
Industrial	239,579	2.0	6,390
TOTAL	\$11,729,528	100.0	

Residential properties provide 88.3 per cent of the tax revenues derived from real estate in the Borough. Commercial and industrial uses provide only 11.7 per cent of the real estate tax revenues in Metuchen.

It should be noted that assessed values per acre vary considerably for different types of use. The average assessed value per acre for commercial property in Metuchen is approximately \$23,560. Residential uses have an average assessed value per acre of \$14,720 and industrially developed land is assessed for an average of \$6,390 per acre.

Neighborhood Delineation

A sectional or "neighborhood" analysis provides a convenient technique for describing land use and development factors in Metuchen.

Outside of the central business district, which is roughly bounded by Main Street, Middlesex Avenue and the Pennsylvania Railroad, nine neighborhood units were set up for study purposes. Major streets, railroads and the Borough's boundary lines served, in most instances, as the boundaries of these units. Although some of these units could be readily identified by locally known names, in many cases the use of sectional names would lead to confusion. As a consequence, these units were identified by number on the accompanying map for the purposes of this study.

Neighborhood 1. This residential neighborhood is that area of Metuchen north of the Port Reading Railroad and west of the new high school site. The portion of this neighborhood west of Plainfield Avenue is devoted to the Brothers of the Sacred Heart School which covers 53.4 acres.

The residential area between Plainfield Avenue and Grove Avenue is almost completely developed with single-family homes on large sized lots. The street pattern is well designed to prevent through traffic. Most of the homes are less than six years old and in good condition. Grounds are well maintained and there are adequate sewage and drainage disposal facilities.

Neighborhood 2. This neighborhood includes a combination of both new and older housing. It is bounded by Middlesex Avenue, Main Street, the Port Reading Railroad and Grove Avenue.

Most of this neighborhood is developed with single-family homes. There is a small multi-family development off Victory Court. Along Mayfield Street there are a number of two-family homes. Although this neighborhood contains some of Metuchen's older homes and is well established, there are still some eleven acres of vacant land suitable for new single-family homes.

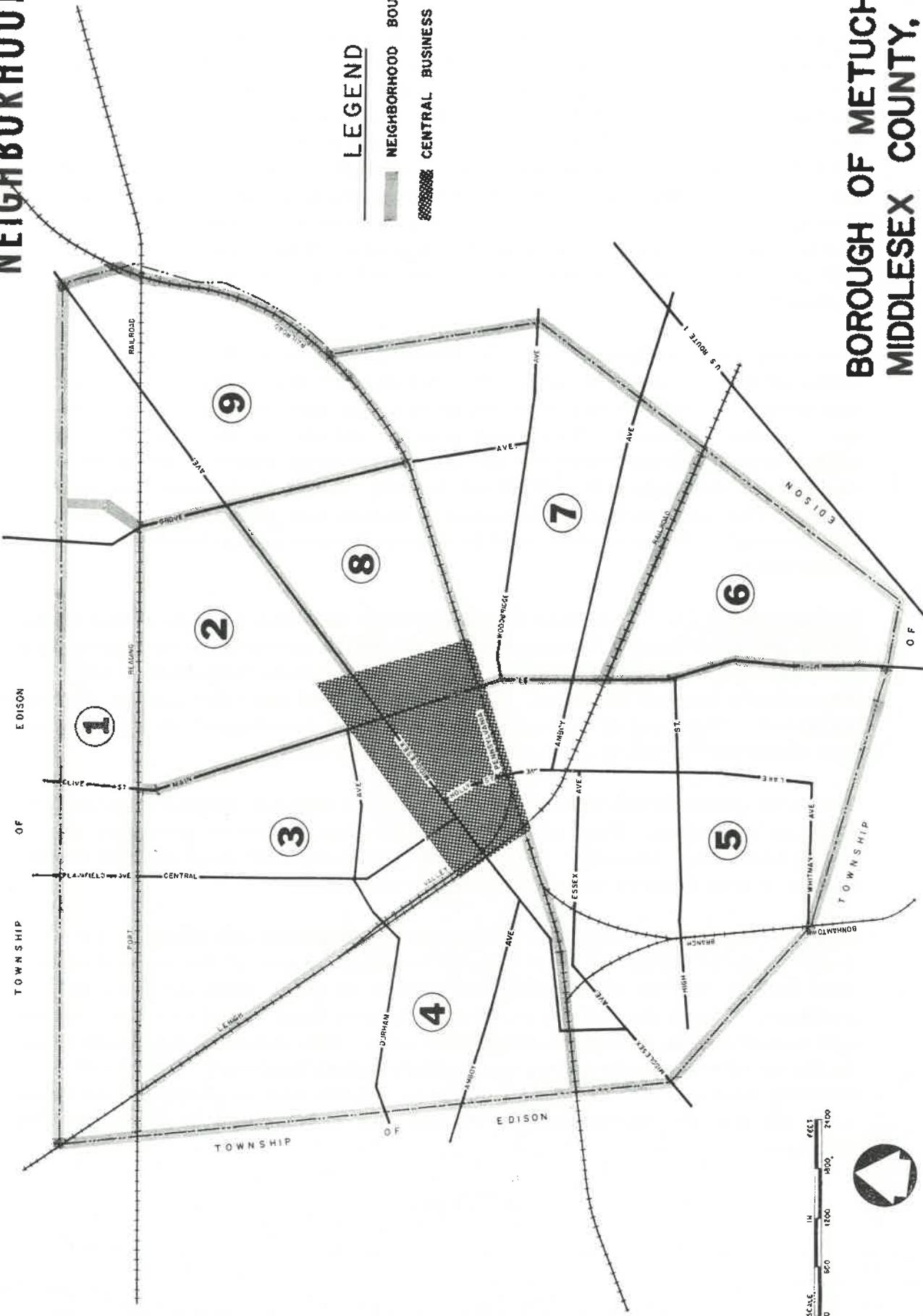
The greatest danger facing this neighborhood in the future is the fact that many of its homes are old and relatively large. Conversion of many of these older homes into several apartment units might have a depreciating effect on the entire neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOODS

LEGEND

- NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES
- ▨ CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

BOROUGH OF METUCHEN MIDDLESEX COUNTY, N.J.



BASE MAP PREPARED BY I. C. C. & ASSOCIATES AUGUST 1954

Neighborhood 3. Main Street, the northern boundary of the central business district, the Lehigh Valley Railroad and the Port Reading Railroad define this neighborhood. Central Avenue divides it into two sections. East of Central Avenue the existing development is largely single-family homes on small or moderate sized lots. The only commercial development is in the vicinity of Middlesex Avenue and on Main Street between Middlesex Avenue and Durham Avenue. This commercial development is actually part of the central business district and has a limited adverse effect on the nearby housing. The Campbell School and Playground provide recreational facilities for this portion of the neighborhood.

The area west of Central Avenue contains a mixture of residential, industrial and commercial use. The residential development is spread out along Central Avenue between vacant lots and industrial and commercial development. The housing in the vicinity of Forrest Street is affected by trucking bound for the industrial area which is being developed at the western end of Forrest Street. Much of the interior land towards the Lehigh Valley Railroad is vacant and presently owned by the Borough. Some of this land is relatively low and subject to swampy conditions.

Neighborhood 4. Located in the extreme western portion of the Borough, Neighborhood 4 is separated from other sections of the community by the Lehigh Valley Railroad and the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks. Metuchen's largest industry, Glenco, is located near the Lehigh Valley Railroad. The rest of this neighborhood is in residential or agricultural use separated in many cases by weed-strewn lots.

The area north of Durham Avenue shows the highest degree of deterioration in Metuchen. Part of this condition may be due to nearness of heavy industrial activity. The streets are generally unpaved and there are no storm sewers for surface water drainage.

South of Amboy Avenue the residential development off Michael Drive represents an island of good quality housing. Most of the undeveloped land throughout the entire neighborhood is in large plots or in farm acreage. There are 23 acres of undeveloped land zoned for residential use and 57 acres zoned for industrial use. The industrially zoned land in the northern corner along the Lehigh Valley Railroad is difficult to develop because of swampy conditions. There are no playgrounds in this area but the Borough presently owns a site which could be developed for this use.

Neighborhood 5. This is Metuchen's largest neighborhood in both area and population. The area is located generally south of the Pennsylvania Railroad and west of Main Street.

The largest section of the neighborhood is the residential area between the Bonhamtown Branch Railroad and the Lehigh Valley Railroad. Here there is a mixture of some of the old stately homes of earlier days and the newer single-family homes of this generation. The garden apartment development along High Street and Rose Street seems to have had no blighting influence on surrounding single-family development. The Edgar School Playground serves the play area needs of younger children and the small park at the corner of Franklin Street and Lake Avenue could be further developed as an area for passive recreation.

West of the Bonhamtown Railroad the existing residential development is subject to blight because of unpaved roads, lack of sewers and heavy traffic on Middlesex Avenue. Prospect Street homes are affected by the industrial storage yard across the street. Along Middlesex Avenue there is considerable commercial and industrial development. Almost all of this area is zoned for industrial use. Further residential development should be discouraged especially in light of the fact that the Middlesex Freeway may have an interchange with Middlesex Avenue near the Edison line.

A small section of this neighborhood is located between the Lehigh Valley Railroad, Main Street and the Pennsylvania Railroad. The residential development off Thomas Street is in a pocket surrounded by commercial uses.

Neighborhood 6. This neighborhood is bounded on the north by the Lehigh Valley Railroad, on the west by Main Street, on the east by the Edison Township line, and on the south by the Pennsylvania Railroad.

The backbone of this neighborhood is Main Street which has a mixed string-type commercial and residential development. There is a lack of physical unity to this neighborhood because circulation from one street to the next is only possible along Main Street. There are no recreation facilities to serve the neighborhood. The Borough, however, owns several large tracts of land which could be so developed. There are some signs of blight in this area. Maintenance on some homes is deficient. Maple Street and Cedar Street are unpaved and there is need for more adequate storm drainage facilities.

Neighborhood 7. This is a natural neighborhood unit between the south side of the Pennsylvania Railroad and the north side of the Lehigh Valley Railroad.

Most of the residential development is sound in this area. The Washington Elementary School and Playground is centrally located and there is a large tract of Borough-owned land along Oakland Avenue which has been partially developed as a Little League ball field.

A small industrial area along the Lehigh Valley Railroad must be reached by passing through residential streets. This is an unfortunate condition but should not have any marked influence on the affected streets because of the limited space for future industrial expansion.

Neighborhood 8. This neighborhood is bounded on the west by the central business district, on the north by Middlesex Avenue, on the east by Grove Avenue, and on the south by the Pennsylvania Railroad.

The residential development in this area is sound although the homes in the vicinity of Main Street suffer from the nuisances of traffic and parking. There are a number of large homes on Middlesex Avenue, and pressure may be expected in the future for their conversion to two and three-family dwelling units. The newest development in this area is located close to Grove Avenue. There is very little vacant land remaining in this neighborhood.

Neighborhood 9. Neighborhood 9 is east of Grove Avenue and north of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The lot sizes in this area are large and the homes are well maintained. There is no playground to serve this residential area. However, the High School field will help this deficiency as will the further development of an outdoor play area at the Jewish Community Center.

To the north of the Port Reading Railroad there is some mixed commercial and residential development along Middlesex Avenue.

CHAPTER IV. LAND USE PLAN

Until the advent of zoning there was little that a municipality could do to control the quantity and relationship of land uses. Zoning, however, has provided the basic tool for guiding land development. The zoning ordinance specifies the uses permitted and the zoning map shows the various land areas where the respective uses are allowed.

Zoning is an extension of the municipality's police power to protect the public health, safety and welfare. Its beginnings, over thirty years ago, were the result of several historic court cases which established the fact that certain non-residential uses such as brickyards and laundries were detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare when located in a residential neighborhood.

The first zoning ordinances and maps were crudely drawn without the benefit of comprehensive analysis or study. Today, however, a wealth of knowledge and experience has developed to guide the proper zoning of a community. More and more the courts are holding that zoning is only valid where it is based on a comprehensive analysis of existing and proposed land uses.

The Land Use Plan designates those areas of Metuchen which are most suitable and appropriate for various types of residential, commercial, industrial and public uses. The plan shows a general picture of how Metuchen's land area might be developed during the next twenty years.

The objectives of the Land Use Plan are as follows:

- The continued maintenance and development of desirable neighborhoods free of adverse environmental conditions and served by an adequate system of community facilities.
- The encouragement of a balance of residential, commercial and industrial development which will strengthen the Borough's tax base.
- The improvement of the central shopping area of the Borough.
- The preservation and improvement of the community's appearance.

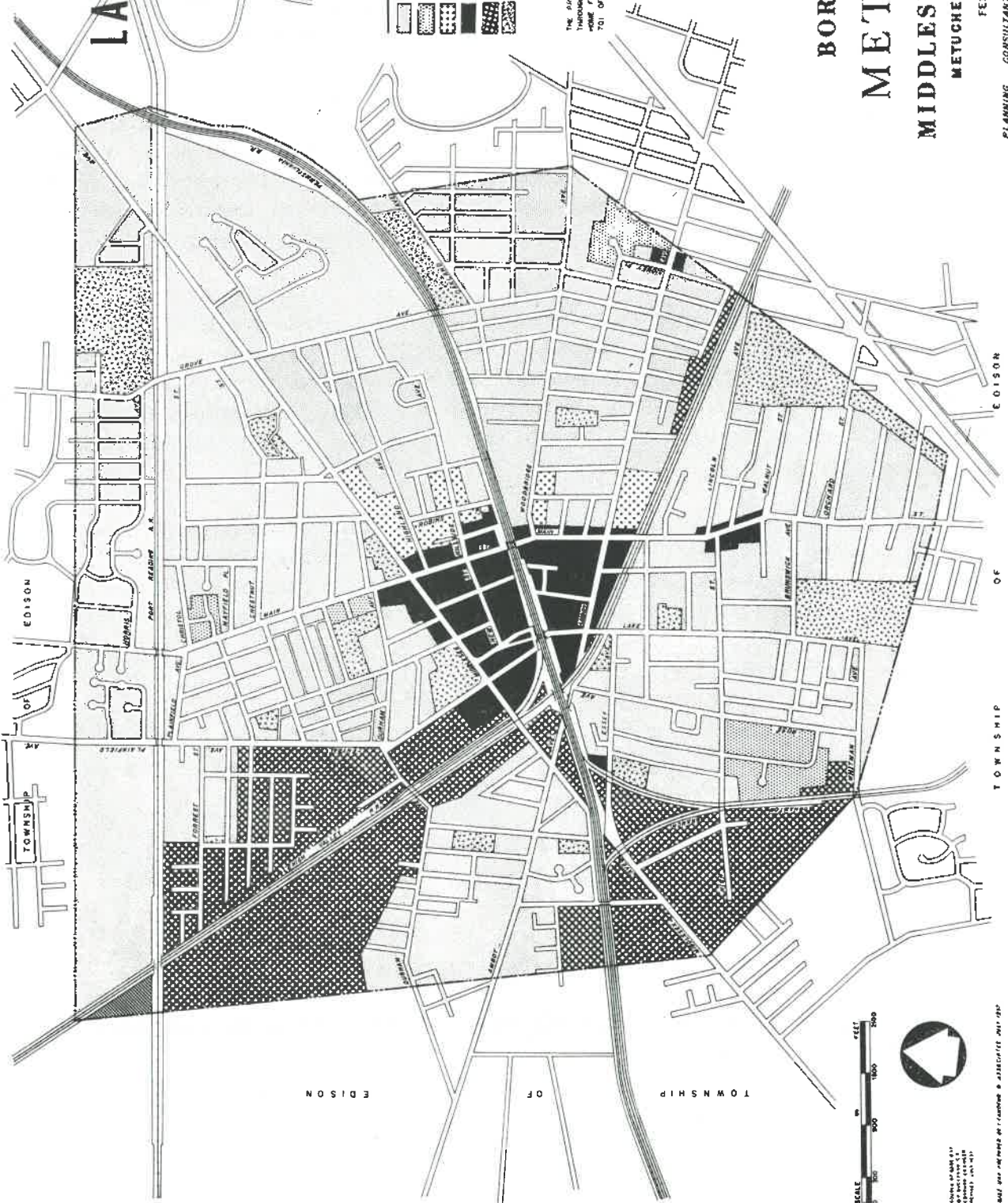
LAND USE PLAN

- LEGEND**
- LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
 - MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
 - HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
 - COMMERCIAL
 - GENERAL INDUSTRIAL
 - PUBLIC

THE PREPARATION OF THIS MAP WAS FINANCED IN PART THROUGH AN URBAN PLANNING GRANT FROM THE HOUSING & HOME FINANCING AGENCY, UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 701 OF THE HOUSING ACT OF 1954, AS AMENDED.

**BOROUGH OF
METUCHEN**
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, N.J.
METUCHEN PLANNING BOARD
FEBRUARY, 1955

PLANNING CONSULTANTS: I. Conrad & Associates



SCALE OF MAP IS AS SHOWN ON PLAN AND AS INDICATED BY THE NORTH ARROW.

MAP WAS DRAWN BY I. CONRAD & ASSOCIATES, INC. 1955

PROPOSED LAND USE

Approximately 869 acres, or 78.8 per cent of the net usable land area is proposed for residential use. About 145 acres are to be developed with industrial uses and 90 acres are recommended for commercial development.

Table 11

PROPOSED LAND USE, BY TYPE, METUCHEN

<u>Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Low Density Residential	799	72.4
Medium Density Residential	44	4.0
High Density Residential	26	2.4
Neighborhood Commercial	20	1.8
Downtown Commercial	70	6.3
Industrial	144	13.1
<hr/>		
TOTAL	1,103	100.0
Streets, Railroads, Tax Exempted Land & Land Not Suitable for De- velopment	<u>777</u>	
TOTAL ACRES	1,880	
<hr/>		

The plan provides for a considerable improvement in the Borough's tax base. Assuming complete development pursuant to the plan and maintenance of the present average assessed valuations per acre for the major categories of land use, Metuchen would derive approximately 80 per

cent of its real estate tax revenues from residential properties and 20 per cent from non-residential development. This would represent improvement over the present valuation ratio of 88 per cent from residential uses and 12 per cent from non-residential uses.

Residential Land Use Plan

A total of 869 acres is proposed for residential use in the Borough. This is approximately 166 acres more than the 703 acres found to be in residential use in 1956. The total area recommended for residential development is about the same as the area presently zoned for residential purposes.

Three density ranges are recommended, as follows:

Low Density Areas. Single-family residential development with a maximum net density of 7.3 dwellings per acre is recommended for 799 acres. In general the areas proposed for single-family use are presently located in either the R-1, R-2 or R-2A Zone. In several locations, however, areas which are presently in R-3 garden apartment zones are recommended for single-family development because lot sizes or the general character of the surrounding area is not conducive to apartment type development.

Upgrading and zone changes for several additional areas is proposed, as follows:

- In the vicinity of Forrest Street and Aylin Street where upgrading from the R-3 Zone to the R-2 Zone is recommended.
- On the north side of Christol Street and Mayfield Place, on the east side of McCoy Avenue and on the west side of Amboy Avenue and High Street where upgrading from the R-3 Zone to the R-2 Zone is recommended.
- Along Main Street south of the Lehigh Valley Railroad tracks where several blocks are proposed for R-2 instead of the present B-1 zoning. The B-1 Zone should be restricted to Main Street between Lincoln and Brunswick Avenues. The remainder of Main Street, south of the Lehigh Valley Railroad, is recommended for residential use.

- The northeast corner of Main Street and Christol Street is proposed for change from the B-1 Zone to the R-2 Zone.
- The northwest corner of Whitman Avenue and Rose Street is proposed for change from the M-2 Zone to the R-2 Zone.

Except as noted above, no other additions to the areas presently zoned for single-family residential use are recommended. The allowable net densities of 7.3 dwelling units per acre in the R-2 Zone, 5.5 dwelling units per acre in the R-2A Zone and 4.4 dwelling units per acre in the R-1 Zone should be continued as presently zoned.

Medium Density Areas. The Land Use Plan does not propose any expansion of the areas in which garden apartment type development is permitted. As noted above, several areas which are presently located in the R-3 garden apartment zone are now proposed for change to the R-2 Zone.

The areas presently used and zoned for garden apartments are located on Newman Street, Victory Court, Elm Court and Sidney Place. These areas comprise a total of 44 acres.

High Density Areas. High density residential development is designated for several areas covering a total of 26 acres adjacent to the central business area. A net density of 40 dwelling units per acre is proposed.

The maximum density now permitted by the zoning ordinance is 17 dwelling units per acre.

The following areas are proposed for multi-family use:

- Along the southerly side of Middlesex Avenue, east of Main Street, to Rector Street.
- Along Hillside Avenue, east of Inn Place, to Pleasant Place.
- Between Amboy Avenue and the Lehigh Valley Railroad, from Main Street to Home Street.
- Along the south side of Woodbridge Avenue between the post office and Home Street.

It is suggested that all high-density development be limited to a maximum height of 5 or 6 stories, and with a maximum density of 40 dwelling units per acre.

It is further suggested that all multi-family housing be required to provide 1.5 off-street parking spaces per dwelling unit as a minimum.

Controls of this type will protect adjoining single-family areas and will avoid the possibility of overloading adjoining streets with an overflow of parked cars.

Commercial Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan designates 90 acres for commercial use in Metuchen. Approximately 70 acres are located in or adjacent to the central business district and 20 acres are located in several neighborhood shopping areas.

It will be noted that the recommended commercial areas are concentrated in several well-defined locations. Experience has shown that the old concept of zoning either side of a principal street for business has produced a sporadic ribbon-type development which blights adjoining areas, becomes unsightly, is inconvenient for the shopper and creates traffic hazards.

Central Business District. The central business district includes the area defined generally by Middlesex Avenue, Main Street, the Lehigh Valley Railroad and Lake Avenue. A detailed plan for this area is presented in Chapter 6.

Neighborhood Shopping Areas. Two neighborhood shopping areas are shown on the Land Use Plan. One area is located on either side of Amboy Avenue between Sidney Place and the Edison boundary line, and the other is located on Main Street between Lincoln Avenue and Brunswick Avenue. A number of local retail shops are now located at both of these locations.

Additional neighborhood shopping facilities are not recommended for other areas due to the fact that virtually the entire municipal area lies within a mile of the central business district.

Industrial Land Use Plan

Metuchen is located in a section of Middlesex County which has undergone a tremendous industrial expansion during the past fifteen years. Metuchen itself has received only a minor share of this growth due to strict residential land use controls and lack of large vacant sites.

With the growing labor market in the area, the increased accessibility being created by the proposed East-West Freeway and the tendency for business offices and small industries to move out of the congested cities, however, there will be increasing demands for the smaller sites such as can be provided in Metuchen.

In seeking a site, industry looks for flat land, good drainage and subsoil conditions, adequate utilities, good access to major highways and railroads, ample site area for parking, loading, landscaping and plant expansion and adequate protection from inharmonious uses. Industry is interested in areas in which it is both economical to operate and where good living facilities are available for their employees. All of these conditions can be satisfied by areas proposed for industrial development in Metuchen.

Industrial Use. The areas proposed for general industrial use are located in the northwest and southwest sections of the Borough.

The proposed general industrial areas located south of Durham Avenue presently include a mixture of industrial, commercial and residential development. The construction of an interchange between the proposed Middlesex Freeway and Middlesex Avenue should accelerate the further intensive development of this area for industrial use.

The general industrial area west of Durham Avenue consists of relatively flat land which is largely undeveloped. A large tract of Borough owned land on the northeast side of the Lehigh Valley Railroad has recently been purchased for the development of a small industrial park. Several of the old platted streets are to be improved in order to provide access from Central Avenue and several streets will be vacated in order to create usable sites.

The area to the southwest of the Lehigh Valley Railroad is generally vacant except for one large industry on Durham Avenue. This area is very flat and somewhat swampy. It is probable, however, that this land

could be reclaimed for industrial development by providing adequate drainage, utilities and access. Improved access would be possible by constructing a new road which might run from Houston Street to the point where Forrest Street crosses the Lehigh Valley Railroad. If constructed, such a roadway should be approximately 400 feet from the Lehigh Valley Railroad tracks in order to provide both rail and auto access to the sites which would be created.

A small industrial area is now developing between Wester Avenue and the Lehigh Valley Railroad. This area is adjacent to a stable residential area and special regulations should be set up in the zoning ordinance to restrict the industrial uses in this area.

It is recommended that the present zoning ordinance requirements for all industrial districts be revised to require that all new industrial development must meet certain performance standards. Such standards would relate to such conditions as fire and explosion hazards, radio-activity or electrical disturbance, noise, vibration, glare, smoke and odor. It is further recommended that only those business uses which are generally associated with industrial development should be permitted in an industrial district. This will protect all industrial development from the blighting influences of marginal types of highway commercial use.

Public Land Use Plan

Areas proposed for municipal, school, park and playground use are discussed later, under Chapter 7.

CHAPTER V. TRAFFIC CIRCULATION ANALYSIS AND PLAN

Regional Factors

Metuchen is located in the center of that section of Middlesex County which lies to the north of the Raritan River. This is presently one of the fastest growing industrial and residential areas in the United States. Traffic problems in this section of the County are compounded by the fact that it lies astride the most heavily traveled traffic corridor in the world -- namely, between New York, the nation's largest city, and Philadelphia, the fourth largest.

One major highway now passes through the Borough and three others pass nearby. State Route 27 (Middlesex Avenue), which bisects Metuchen, is a major link between New York, Newark, New Brunswick, Trenton and Philadelphia. The Garden State Parkway passes about three miles to the east of Metuchen; and immediately to the south of the Borough are U. S. Route 1, a major truck route between New York and Philadelphia, and the New Jersey Turnpike which also connects the two metropolitan areas.

Plans are now being completed for the construction of the East-West Freeway which will skirt the southwestern boundary of the Borough. This is part of a loop road around the New York Metropolitan Region which will eventually extend from Long Island across the Narrows Bridge to Staten Island and Perth Amboy and then gradually turn to the north to connect with the New York Thruway in Rockland County.

Within its immediate environs Metuchen serves as an important road hub. Central Avenue, Main Street, Woodbridge Avenue and Amboy Avenue are radial routes emanating from the center of Metuchen and spreading into Edison Township. They serve as major links between Metuchen and Perth Amboy, Woodbridge, Plainfield and South Plainfield.





Land Use and Traffic

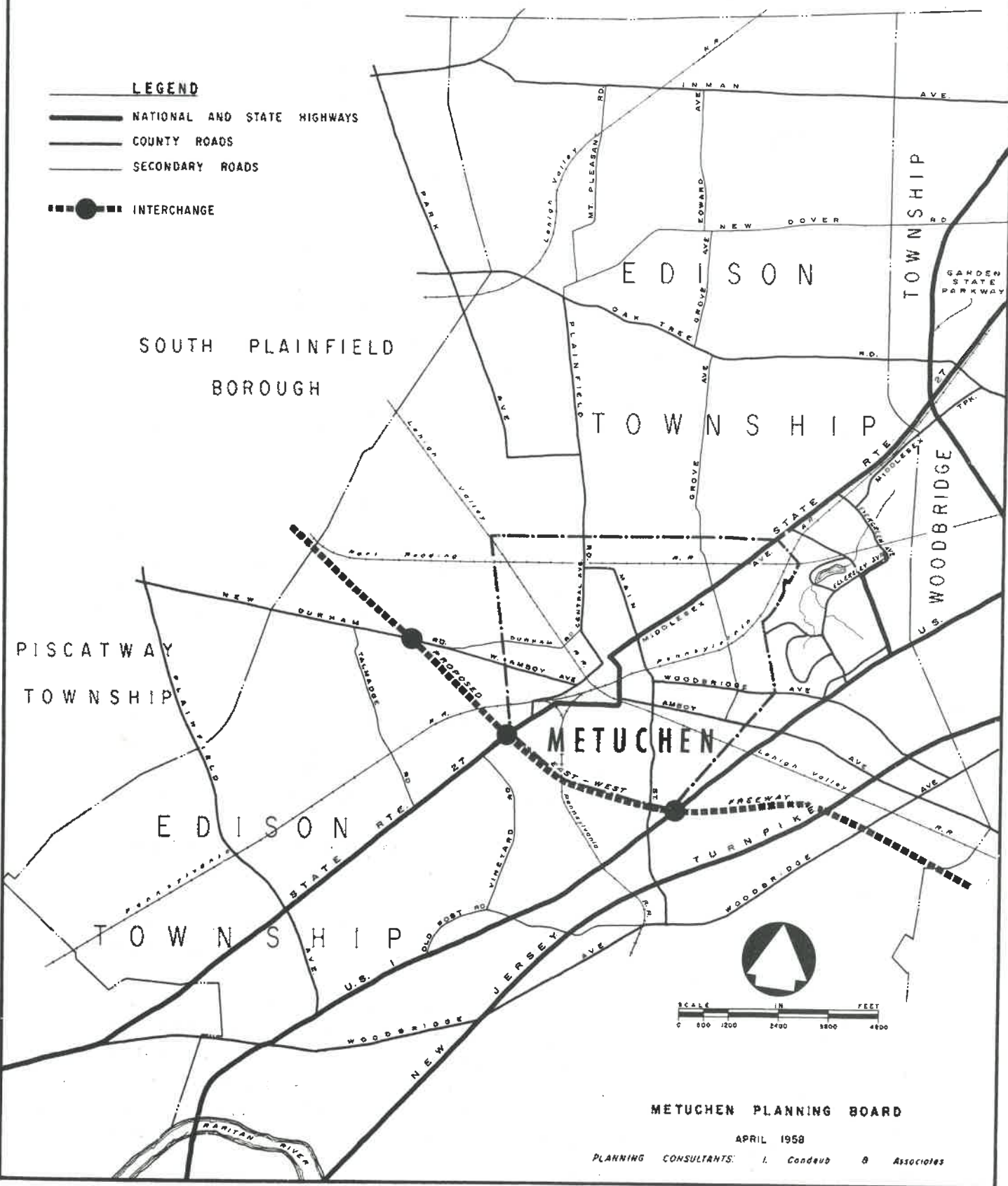
Concentrations of industrial and commercial land use are the principal traffic generators in the vicinity of Metuchen. The three major concentrations are described below:

AREA MAP - METUCHEN

UNION COUNTY

LEGEND

-  NATIONAL AND STATE HIGHWAYS
-  COUNTY ROADS
-  SECONDARY ROADS
-  INTERCHANGE



SCALE IN FEET
0 800 1200 1600 2000

METUCHEN PLANNING BOARD

APRIL 1958

PLANNING CONSULTANTS: I. Condeub & Associates

"Miracle Mile". Industrial firms along State Route 27 in Edison Township attract employees from Woodbridge, Plainfield, Perth Amboy, Staten Island and Union County. A large portion of this employee traffic now passes through Metuchen on State Route 27, Amboy Avenue and Central Avenue. The release of employees between 4:30 and 5:30 P. M. results in considerable traffic congestion on these streets.

Additional industrial development can be expected in the "Miracle Mile" section and other sections of Edison. This will mean an increasing flow of traffic through Metuchen to and from these new and enlarged plants.

Central Business District. Metuchen's central business district serves as the shopping center for a growing trade area now estimated at about 35,000 persons. As a result, heavy traffic concentrations result from shoppers moving to and from the central business district. This concentration can be expected to increase as the central business district expands to serve a larger trade area.

Pennsylvania Railroad Station. Metuchen is the commuter stop for about 1,200 persons working in Newark and New York. A large proportion of these commuters do not live within walking distance of the station. As a result, many commuters must park at the station or be brought to or from the train. Traffic is heaviest around 6:05 P. M. when the main commuter train arrives.



Traffic Volumes

As shown on the Traffic Volume Map, State Route 27 and Amboy Avenue are the most heavily traveled streets in the Borough. The former carried from 10,860 to 14,450 vehicles per day at various points along its length as of 1956, while the latter carried an average of 11,100 vehicles. About 10 per cent of the daily traffic flow occurs during one or two peak periods.

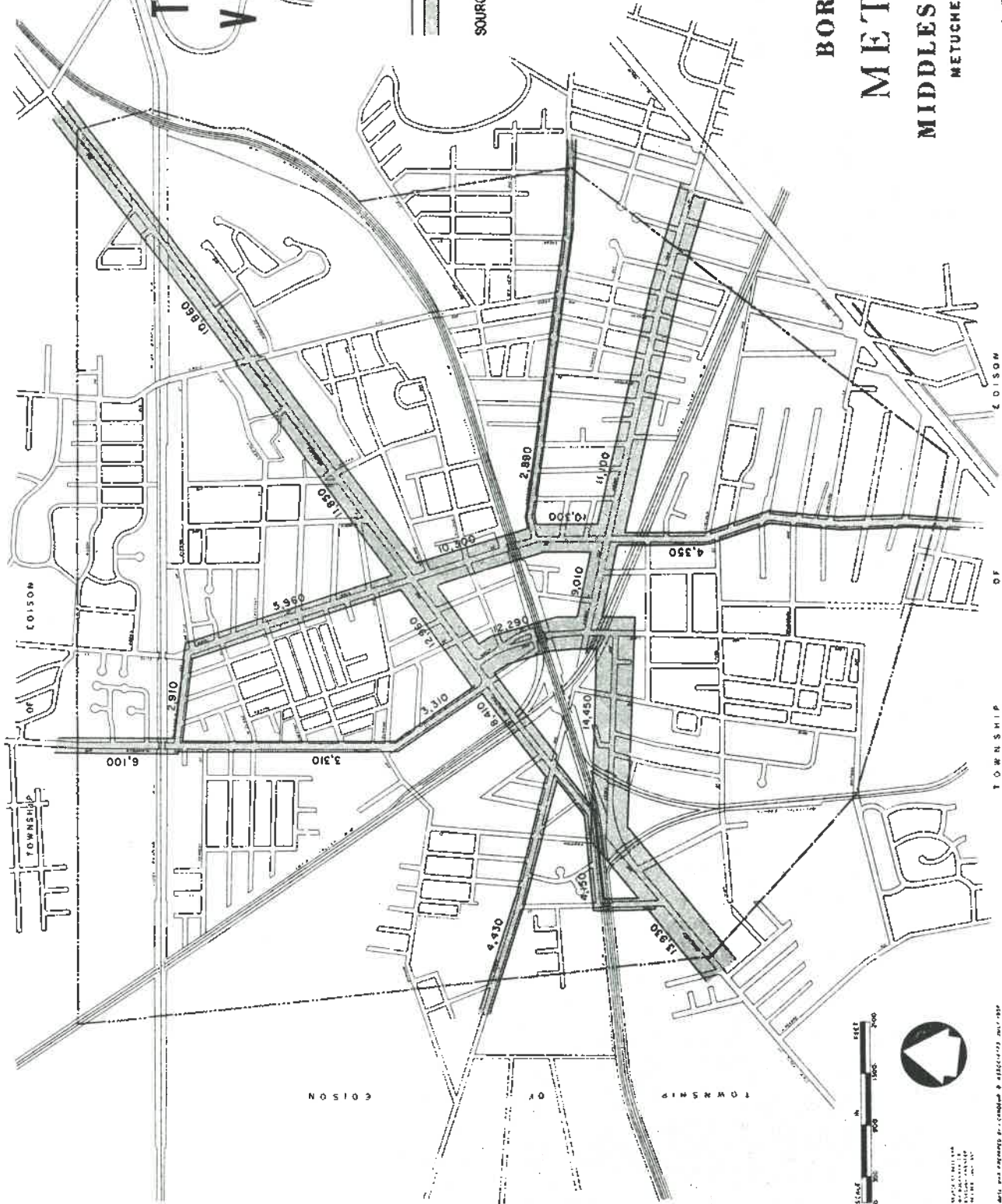
The impact of future traffic increases can be severe. According to the State Highway Department, traffic volumes are now increasing at the rate of 3.5 per cent per year. By 1975, traffic volume would be nearly doubled if this rate continues.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES

LEGEND

 ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC VOLUMES - 1956 (ADJUSTED)
 SOURCE: NEW JERSEY STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

BOROUGH OF METUCHEN
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Right-of-Way Width

The right-of-way is a measure of the potential carrying capacity of a street and a limiting factor on pavement widening. The right-of-way is measured from property line to property line and includes sidewalks and planting strips in addition to pavement.

Street rights-of-way in Metuchen are generally adequate. Approximately 90 per cent of all streets in the Borough have rights-of way of 50 feet or more.

Table 12

RIGHT-OF-WAY WIDTHS, METUCHEN, 1957

<u>Right - of - Way</u>	<u>Miles</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Less than 40'	0.8	2.0
40' - 49'	3.1	7.7
50' - 59'	21.3	53.2
60' - 65'	8.8	21.9
Over 65'	<u>6.1</u>	<u>15.2</u>
TOTAL	40.1	100.0

Street Classification

Every street in Metuchen serves the essential function of providing access to individual properties. Some streets also act as major collectors for local traffic moving to and from shopping, school, work, etc. Other streets must serve a triple function by also carrying through traffic which has no origin or destination in Metuchen. Still other streets adjacent to shopping and commercial areas have the additional function of providing extensively used curb parking facilities.

The following system of classification is recommended for Metuchen, based on an analysis of present and anticipated traffic conditions.

Arterial Thoroughfares

- Function - To carry the major flows of through and local traffic.
- Standards - Right-of-Way 70'; Pavement 44'.
- Streets - Middlesex Avenue.

Primary Streets

- Function - To serve as traffic connectors between Metuchen and surrounding areas.
- Standards - Right-of-Way 60'; Pavement 40' - 44'.
- Streets - Amboy Avenue, Central Avenue, Essex Avenue, Grove Avenue, Holly Street, Lake Avenue (between Essex Avenue and the Lehigh Valley Railroad), Main Street, Plainfield Avenue and Woodbridge Avenue.

Secondary Streets

- Function - To collect traffic moving between primary streets and local streets.
- Standards - Right-of-Way 60'; Pavement 36' - 40'.
- Streets - Chestnut Street, Christol Street, Clive Street, Durham Avenue, High Street, Hillside Avenue, Dellwood Avenue, Lake Avenue, New Street, Oak Avenue, Prospect Street and Whitman Avenue.

Local Streets

- Function - To provide access to individual properties.
- Standards - Right-of-Way 50'; Pavement 28'.
- Streets - All streets not designated as arterial thoroughfares, primary streets or secondary streets.

The above standards are recommended as guides to be used when improvements are made in Metuchen's street network. It must be

recognized that they are not necessarily rigid. In some cases it would be almost impossible to realize the recommended pavement and right-of-way widths because of the built-up nature of the adjoining properties. In other situations the recommended pavement standards might be inadequate because of the special nature of an intersection or adjoining land use.

Street Plan

The plan for improving Metuchen's street system is shown on the Traffic Plan map following this page. The objectives of this Plan are:

- To provide for through traffic flow with a minimum of interference with local traffic.
- To eliminate circuitous and dangerous street alignments.
- To keep residential neighborhoods as free as possible from excessive traffic flow.
- To improve dangerous street intersections.

The proposals of the Traffic Plan are discussed below for each of the four major street classifications.

Arterial Thoroughfare Proposals

State Route 27 is the only street designated as an arterial thoroughfare in Metuchen.

The circuitous portion of this route along Essex Avenue carries the highest traffic volumes in Metuchen. The two sharp turns and a narrow underpass at the Pennsylvania Railroad are major obstacles to free traffic flow.

To improve the alignment of Route 27, it is recommended that the section of Middlesex Avenue between Holly Street and Essex Avenue should be designated as a portion of the State Route. In conjunction

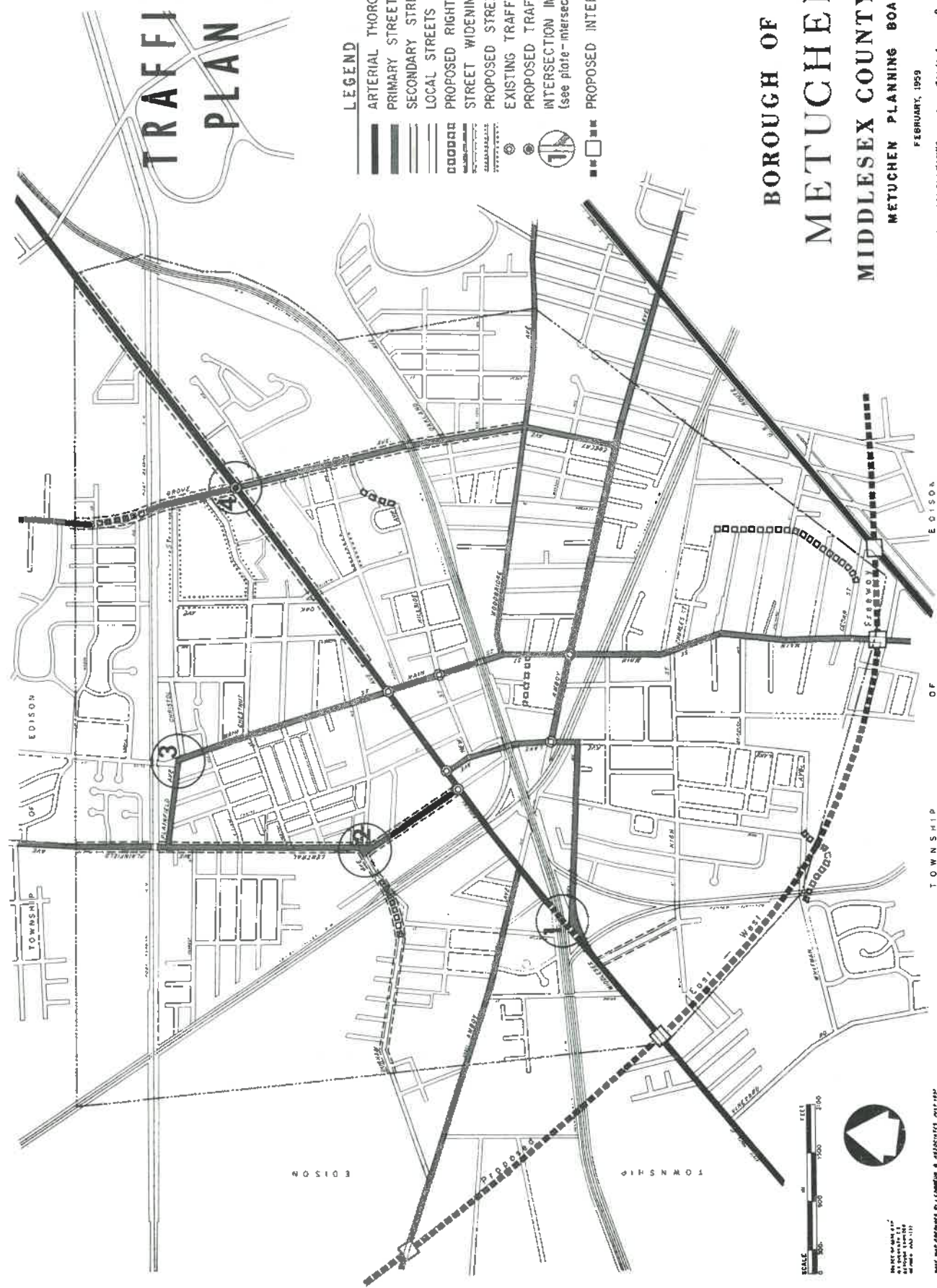
TRAFFIC PLAN

LEGEND

- ARTERIAL THOROUGHFARE
- PRIMARY STREET
- SECONDARY STREET
- LOCAL STREETS
- PROPOSED RIGHT - OF - WAY
- STREET WIDENING
- PROPOSED STREET PAVING
- EXISTING TRAFFIC LIGHT
- PROPOSED TRAFFIC LIGHT
- INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS (see plate - intersection treatments)
- PROPOSED INTERCHANGE

**BOROUGH OF
METUCHEN**
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, N.J.
METUCHEN PLANNING BOARD

PLANNING CONSULTANTS, I. Condees & Associates
FEBRUARY, 1959



NO. 100-10000-100
BY CONDEES & ASSOCIATES
METUCHEN, N.J.

Metuchen Planning Board & Associates

with this a new underpass should be constructed at the Pennsylvania Railroad so that Middlesex Avenue will provide a direct route for traffic passing through Metuchen.

The entire pavement along Middlesex Avenue should be widened to at least 44 feet. These improvements should be carried out by the State Highway Department. Changing traffic patterns resulting from the proposed interchange between Middlesex Avenue and the East-West Freeway may indicate that a wider pavement will be necessary west of Holly Street.

Primary Street Proposals

Amboy Avenue. Consideration should be given to the linking of East and West Amboy Avenues at the Lehigh Valley and Pennsylvania Railroads. However, the proposed East-West Freeway might conceivably divert a considerable amount of the present heavy traffic now using Amboy Avenue. It is therefore recommended that a final decision regarding this connection be deferred until plans for the freeway are definite.

Central Avenue. Construction of the East-West Freeway and the anticipated development of Edison Township will materially increase the traffic flow on this County road. It is recommended that the present 20-foot pavement be widened to 40 feet.

Grove Avenue. This street will soon become one of the major traffic carriers in Metuchen due to the new underpass now being constructed at the Pennsylvania Railroad, the new Metuchen High School, and the considerable residential development which will occur in Edison Township.

It is recommended that Grove Avenue be widened to a minimum pavement width of 40 feet. In anticipation of the increased importance of Grove Avenue as an inter-municipal road, Metuchen would be justified in requesting that the County assume responsibility for its maintenance and administration.

Main Street. Future widening of Main Street is made difficult by the built-up character of the area through which it passes. The present

pavement width is generally adequate. However, a drainage problem does exist at the underpass with the Pennsylvania Railroad. The sewer system becomes overloaded after heavy rains and traffic movement is restricted. It is recommended that steps be taken to relieve this drainage problem.

Secondary Street Proposals

Cedar Street. It is recommended that a new secondary street be constructed between Cedar Street and Charles Street. This street would form a loop road which would join Maple Street, Orchard Street, Myrtle Avenue and Walnut Street. Several very long dead end streets would be eliminated by this extension. It would also pave the way for the fuller development of the adjacent tract of Borough owned property.

Christol Street and Chestnut Street. Both of these streets are unimproved between Oak Avenue and Grove Avenue. It is anticipated that these streets will be utilized to some extent for east-west movements to and from the new high school. The present pavements of the improved portions of these streets are below the proposed street standards. However, it is not felt that widening is called for in the immediate future. It is recommended that the unimproved portions of these streets be paved to a width of 36 feet.

Durham Avenue. This street has a pavement width which varies from 20 to 26 feet and is in poor condition. The proposed interchange of the East-West Freeway at New Durham Road will increase the use of Durham Avenue. The existing pavement width is inadequate and should be widened to 40 feet in order to accommodate the increase in traffic. It is also recommended that Durham Avenue be realigned west of the Lehigh Valley Railroad in order to eliminate the sharp curve leading into the grade crossing.

Hillside Avenue. The increased use of Grove Avenue will encourage traffic bound for the central business district to use Hillside Avenue and Dellwood Road as short cuts. Neither of these streets is well adapted for increased traffic flow due to the sharp double right angle turn at the intersection of Huxley Avenue and Dellwood Road. It is recommended that the turn at Dellwood Road and Hillside Avenue be realigned to permit easier turning movements.

Oak Street. Oak Street between Chestnut and Christol Streets is presently unpaved. As this area develops, provision will have to be made for the paving of this portion of the street.

Prospect Street. This street presently has a narrow pavement which is in poor condition. In combination with High Street, Prospect Street acts as a secondary street which connects Main Street and Middlesex Avenue. The right-of-way on Prospect Street should be increased to 60 feet and the pavement widened to 36 feet.

Whitman Avenue. The proposed East-West Freeway will cut across Whitman Avenue where it enters Edison Township. An overpass is proposed at this point. This work would be the responsibility of the State Highway Department.

Local Street Proposals

Specific recommendations are made for two local streets:

Highland Avenue. This street is expected to receive additional traffic from Grove Avenue due to the underpass now under construction. It is therefore recommended that the pavement on Highland Avenue between Rector Street and Grove Avenue be widened.

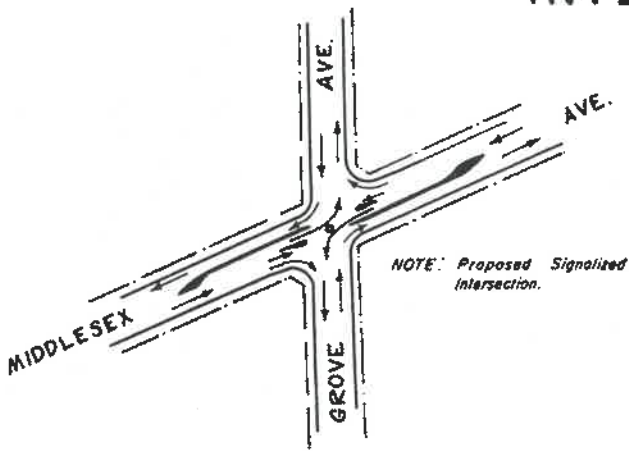
Clinton Place. It is recommended that Clinton Place be extended across Main Street to Thomas Street. Cornell Street would be vacated by this action and the existing commuter parking lot would be enlarged.

There are other streets which will require repaving and perhaps widening to an acceptable standard. Such improvements will be part of the regular street improvement and maintenance program carried on by the Borough.

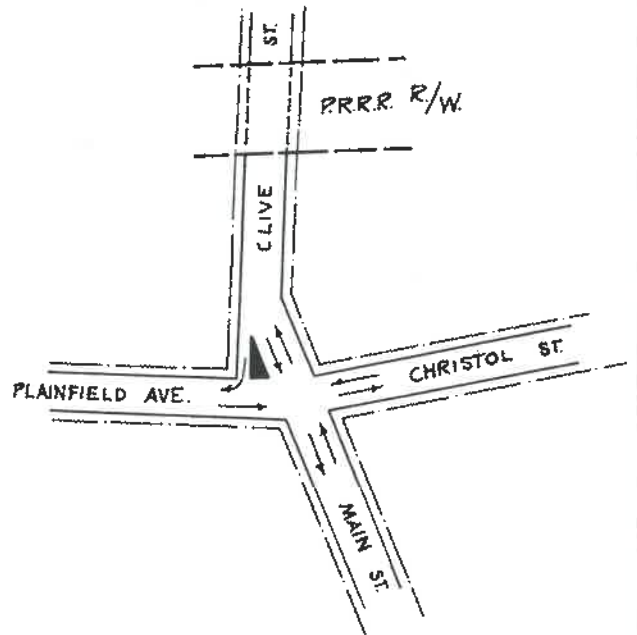
Intersection Controls

Traffic channelization is proposed at four intersections. Suggested designs for these improvements are shown on the accompanying map of Intersection Treatments. The proposals are as follows:

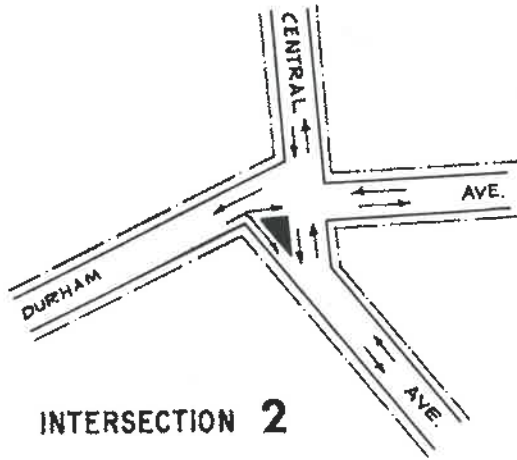
INTERSECTION TREATMENTS



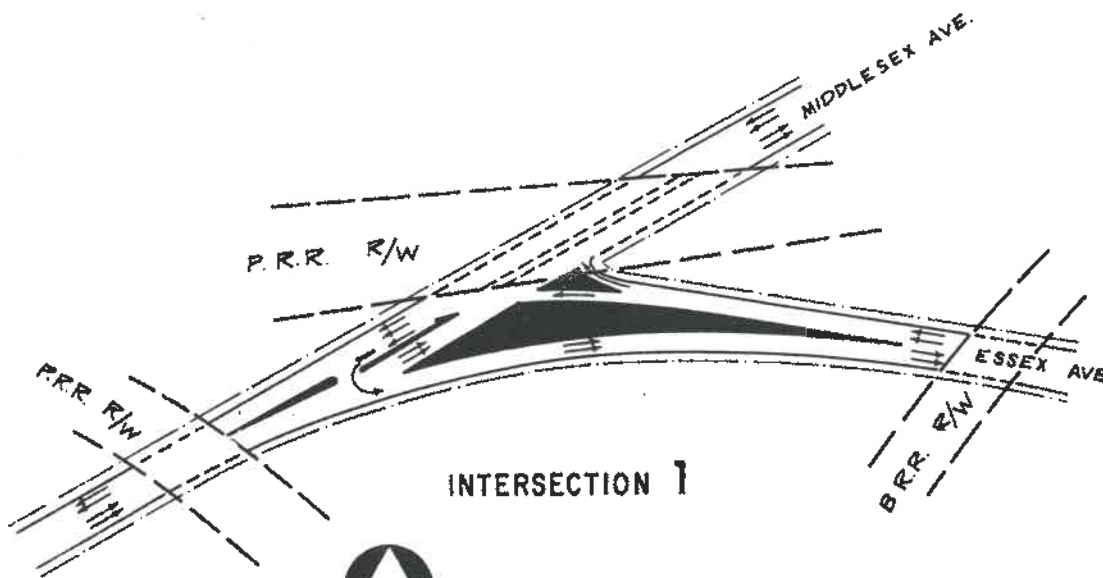
INTERSECTION 4



INTERSECTION 3



INTERSECTION 2



INTERSECTION 1



METUCHEN PLANNING BOARD

APRIL 1958

PLANNING CONSULTANTS: I. CARDEUS & ASSOCIATES

Middlesex Avenue Underpass. The interchange proposed where Middlesex Avenue passes under the Pennsylvania Railroad will require channelization to provide for turns to and from Essex Avenue. The essential feature of this treatment is the provision of cut-out lanes to prevent cars making a left turn from hampering the main stream of traffic. Concrete islands will probably be required for this channelization.

Durham Avenue - Central Avenue. This intersection can be improved by a traffic island which will divert traffic making a right turn onto Central Avenue. It will also tend to keep traffic moving southerly along Central Avenue out of the area where cars on Durham Avenue will be waiting to cross Central Avenue or make a right turn onto it. The "island" in this intersection and in the two referred to below could be created by lines painted on the pavement.

Plainfield Avenue - Clive Street. The expanse of pavement at this intersection allows the motorist to wander on a comparatively unrestricted area. This condition increases the possibility of collisions. The traffic island shown should remove this hazard.

Grove Avenue - Middlesex Avenue. The opening up of Grove Avenue by the railroad underpass now under construction will create a hazardous intersection at the corner of Middlesex Avenue and Grove Avenue. Traffic tends to move along Middlesex Avenue at a high speed because of the straight roadway between the Garden State Parkway and the center of Metuchen. Grove Street will become the first major cross street to interrupt this flow.

It is recommended that traffic lights be installed at this intersection, and that these should be provided by the time the underpass is completed in order to prevent a hazardous condition. In addition, traffic islands are recommended in the center of Middlesex Avenue to permit traffic making a left turn onto Grove Avenue to get out of the way of fast-moving through traffic. The southwest and northeast corners should be cut back to permit easier right turning movements from Middlesex Avenue onto Grove Avenue.

CHAPTER VI. CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PLAN

Description of Central Business District

Until fairly recently, Metuchen's central business district has consisted of the frontage on Main Street between the Pennsylvania Railroad and Middlesex Avenue. Newer commercial development has displaced much of the residential use to the west of this part of Main Street and has considerably increased the area of the central business district. For the purposes of this report, the district has been arbitrarily defined as the area bounded in general by the Pennsylvania Railroad on the south; Robins Place extended on the east; the rear of properties on Middlesex Avenue on the north; and the Lehigh Valley Railroad on the west.

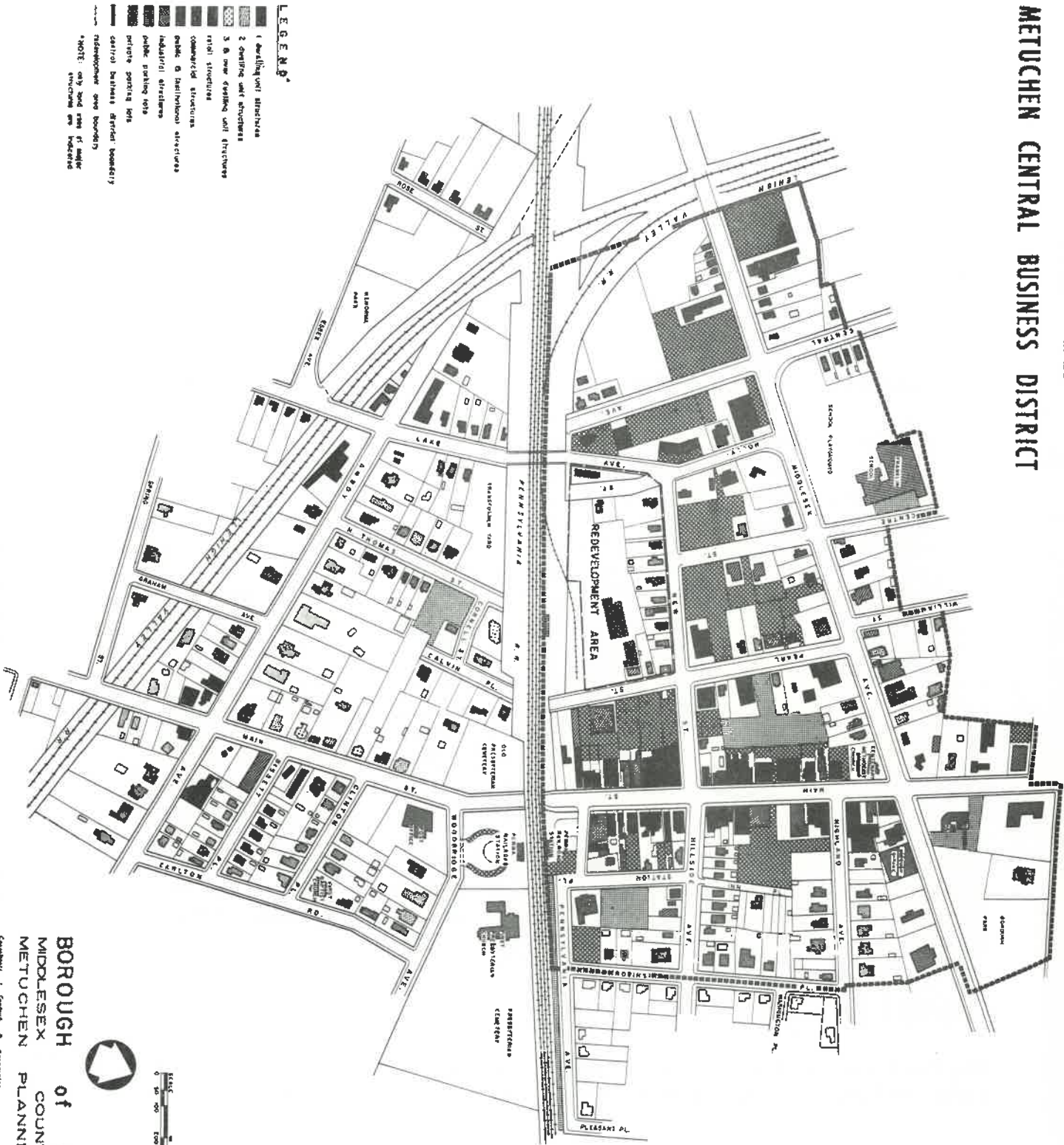
The business district as presently constituted is actually a group of four different units. The primary shopping section is Main Street between the railroad and Middlesex Avenue. A secondary shopping grouping of a more limited character has developed on the western side of Holly Street, centered about the parking area on the southern end of Central Avenue. A combination of general commercial uses, public uses, office uses, and automotive sales has clustered about Middlesex Avenue from Main Street through Holly Street.

The interior portion of the central business district is still without any specific character. Retail uses have now been extended along New Street from Main Street. Some commercial-office structures are now located on Pearl Street and Centre Street off Middlesex Avenue. Some residential and industrial uses are still located in the central area with no relation to the shopping and business uses surrounding them.

Extent of Shopping Facilities

There are 73 retail stores located in the central business district. Stores such as food, apparel, and eating and drinking establishments predominate. Major groupings include 16 apparel and accessory stores, 10 food stores, and 9 eating and drinking places.

EXISTING LAND USE METUCHEN CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT



- LEGEND**
- 1 dwelling unit structures
 - 2 existing unit structures
 - 3 & 4 new existing unit structures
 - retail structures
 - commercial structures
 - public & institutional structures
 - industrial structures
 - public parking lots
 - private parking lots
 - central business district boundary
 - redesignated zone boundary
- *NOTE: only land uses of major structures are indicated



BOROUGH of METUCHEN
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, N. J.
PLANNING BOARD
 1977

Table 13

RETAIL STORES,
METUCHEN CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, 1957

<u>Type of Store</u>	<u>Number</u>
Food	10
Drugs	3
Eating and Drinking	9
Apparel and Accessories	16
Furniture and Appliances	5
Automotive	5
Gas Stations	5
Hardware and Lumber	8
Miscellaneous	12
<hr/>	
TOTAL	73
<hr/>	

The total floor area devoted to retail uses is estimated to be 155,000 square feet. In addition, the numerous commercial offices either in separate structures or above retail stores contain an estimated additional 80,000 square feet.

MARKET ANALYSIS

Planning for commercial development must always be based on the potential volume of shopping that can be realized at a given location. This

requires an evaluation of the market area served by a center, previous trends in shopping in the area, and estimates of future growth.

Trends in Retail Sales

During recent years Metuchen has had a surprising growth in retail sales. In 1948, Metuchen ranked sixth among Middlesex County municipalities in total retail sales. By 1954 retail sales increased to such a degree that Metuchen has passed Carteret, Highland Park, and South River and now ranks third in the County, surpassed only by New Brunswick and Perth Amboy.

Total retail sales in Metuchen increased from \$7,265,000 in 1948 to \$21,380,000 in 1954 -- a gain of over \$14,000,000 or approximately 190 per cent.

Only a small part of this increase is due to the decrease in the value of the dollar since 1948. The National Industrial Conference Board reports this decrease to have been about 9.7 per cent between 1948 and 1954. Applying this reduction to 1954 retail sales gives retail sales of \$19,490,000 in terms of 1948 dollars, or an increase of 168 per cent.

Retail Stores

A count of retail stores in Metuchen made during December 1956 revealed that there were 150 stores throughout the Borough. This represents a 55 per cent increase over the 97 stores reported by the 1948 Census of Business. Approximately 50 per cent of Metuchen's retail stores are located within the central business district.

Stores outside the central business district are generally located along the major streets. A secondary shopping area exists at the intersection of Main Street and Amboy Avenue. There is also a small group of stores at Amboy Avenue and Sidney Place. The extent and type of retail stores in the central business district compared with those outside indicates conclusively that the major portion of general retail sales transacted in Metuchen take place in the central business district.

Table 14

TYPES OF RETAIL STORES, METUCHEN, N. J., 1948-1956

<u>Type of Store</u>	Number of Retail Stores	
	<u>1948</u>	<u>1956</u>
Food	26	20
Drugs	3	3
Eating and Drinking	13	16
Apparel and Accessories	5	23
Furniture and Appliances	5	12
Automotive	4	17
Gas Stations	11	21
Lumber and Hardware	8	15
All Others	22	23
<hr/>		
TOTALS	97	150
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Source: U. S. Census of Business - 1948
Field Survey - 1956

Apparel and accessory stores represent the largest group, with 23 stores in 1956 as compared with the 5 stores reported in 1948. There have also been increases in the number of eating and drinking, furniture and appliance, and automotive stores. Filling stations increased from 11 to 21 in number between 1948 and 1956.

Retail Sales by Commodity

A review of retail sales by commodity reveals that 74 per cent of Metuchen's retail sales increase in the years between 1948 and 1954 occurred in food and

automotive sales. Food sales increased from \$2, 565, 000 to \$7, 192, 000 for a 180.4 per cent increase. Automotive sales rose from \$1, 020, 000 in 1948 to \$6, 867, 000 in 1954 for a 573.2 per cent increase.

The retail sales in all other commodities showed varying rates of increase during this six-year period. Apparel sales increased by 638.1 per cent and have risen from the least important commodity to sixth in importance. Drug stores, eating and drinking places, and filling stations all showed substantial increases of over 150 per cent.

Sales for home furnishings, lumber and hardware and the "all others" category increased at a lower rate than the average 194.3 per cent increase for all sales.

Table 15

RETAIL SALES BY COMMODITY, METUCHEN, N. J., 1948-1954

<u>Commodity</u>	<u>RETAIL SALES</u>		<u>Increase</u>
	<u>1948</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Food	\$2, 565, 000	\$7, 192, 000	180.4
Drugs	136, 000	466, 000	242.6
Eating & Drinking	555, 000	1, 536, 000	176.8
Apparel	105, 000	775, 000	638.1
Home Furnishings	334, 000	411, 000	23.0
Automotive	1, 020, 000	6, 867, 000	573.2
Filling Stations	274, 000	984, 000	259.1
Lumber & Hardware	961, 000	1, 247, 000	29.8
All Others	1, 315, 000	1, 902, 000	44.6
TOTALS	\$7, 265, 000	\$21, 380, 000	194.3

Source: U. S. Census of Business - 1948, 1954

Retail Trading Area

In 1948, Metuchen's retail sales accounted for 3.1 per cent of Middlesex County's total retail sales. By 1954, Metuchen's retail sales accounted for 6.7 per cent of the County's sales although Metuchen's population represented only 3.5 per cent of the total population of Middlesex County.

The stores of Metuchen are, therefore, serving a retail market which extends beyond the municipal boundaries. To determine the extent of the Metuchen trading area, it is necessary to give attention to the nature and "pull" of other competing regional shopping centers.

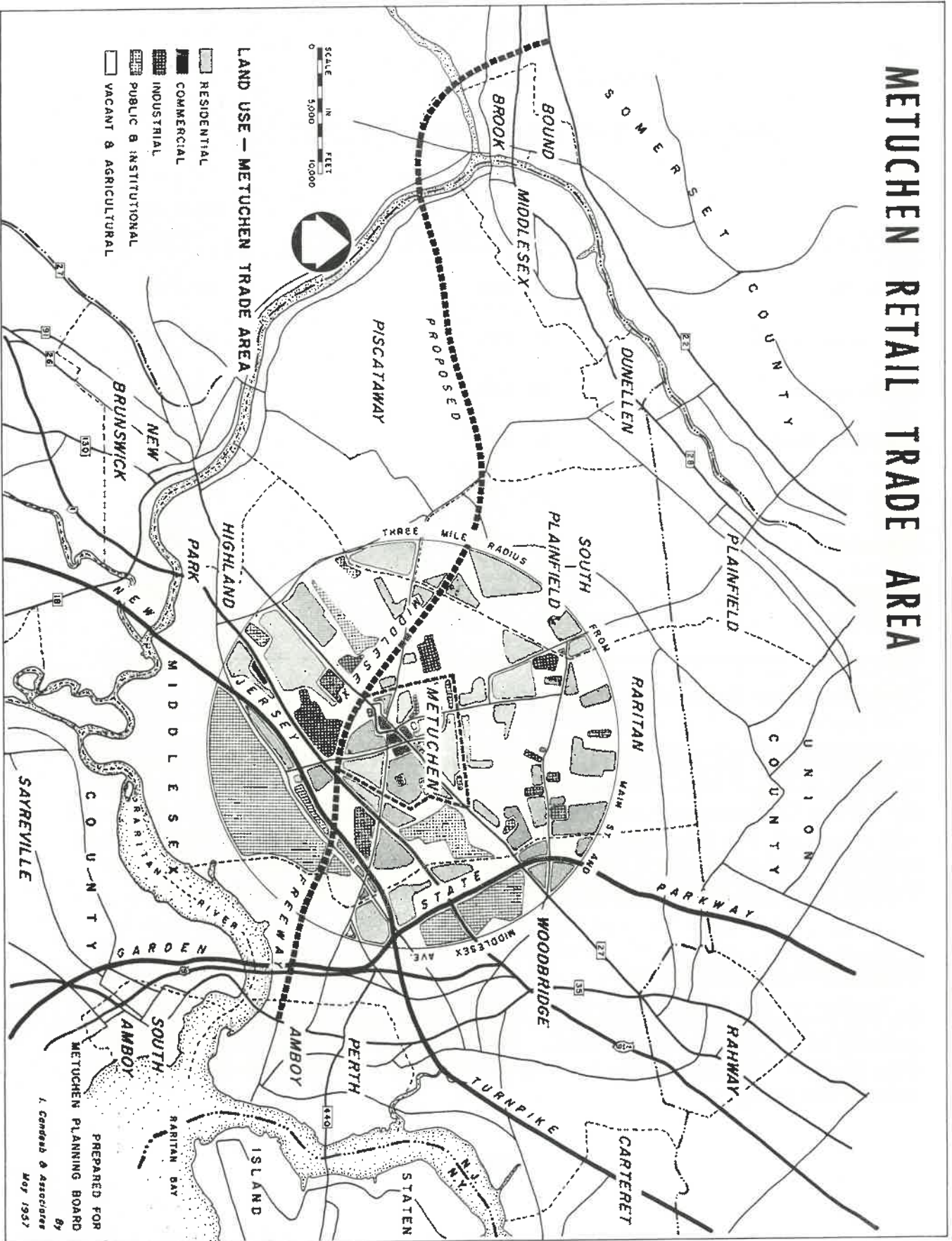
One method of determining the "pull" of a shopping area is the Market Size Indicator. The Market Size Indicator for Metuchen is computed by dividing the average per capita retail sales for the County into the total retail sales of the Borough. The result gives a rough determination of the population served by the shopping facilities in Metuchen.

Metuchen's Market Size Indicator suggests that a population of about 20,600 is served by Metuchen's shopping facilities. Refining the Market Size Indicator to a finer degree would probably reveal a total trading area population of over 25,000 because all of the potential retail expenditures of Metuchen residents do not take place in Metuchen.

The only other regional shopping centers in the vicinity of Metuchen which have a trade area about double their own population are New Brunswick and Plainfield. Perth Amboy serves a trade area about one and one-half times its population as does Highland Park. Rahway appears to draw very little regional trade and South Plainfield's shopping center is very weak.

By studying existing roads and the comparative strength of other competing shopping centers, it is estimated that Metuchen's trading area is located within a three-mile radius of Main and Middlesex Avenue, as shown on the accompanying Retail Trade Area Map. Within this area there was an estimated population of about 35,000 as of January 1, 1956. Most of the population within this radius lives in Metuchen or Edison Township which has no central shopping area. There are also portions of Woodbridge and South Plainfield which are served by Metuchen stores.

METUCHEN RETAIL TRADE AREA



PREPARED FOR
 METUCHEN PLANNING BOARD
 By
 I. Gendrab & Associates
 May 1967

Table 16

MARKET SIZE INDICATOR

METUCHEN AND SELECTED COMMUNITIES

<u>Community</u>	<u>1954 Population*</u>	<u>Market Size Indicator</u>
Metuchen	11,000	20,500
New Brunswick	39,300	81,100
Perth Amboy	40,600	65,500
Highland Park	11,400	15,346
South Plainfield	12,700	4,524
Plainfield	43,000	80,700
Rahway	23,900	28,500

*Regional Plan Association Estimates

As indicated on the Retail Trade Area Map, there are still large areas of undeveloped land within the three-mile market area surrounding Metuchen. By 1975 it is estimated that the population within the Metuchen market area will reach 60,000 persons. This estimate is substantiated by the expected industrial and residential trends which have been noted by the Middlesex County Planning Board and the New York Regional Plan Association.

Implication of Market Data

On the basis of the data presented above, it is apparent that Metuchen is located in a "boom" market area. The total dollar purchasing power will rise in pace with population increases, vastly expanding the potential volume of shopping.

It would be misleading to leave the inference that this will automatically operate to the exclusive or even primary advantage of Metuchen's business district. A large regional shopping center directly competitive with the centers of Perth Amboy, New Brunswick and Plainfield is now under construction in Menlo Park. Other smaller shopping units centered about food markets are under construction or in the planning stage. As new housing developments are constructed, it can be anticipated that additional small centers will be provided. These will absorb most of the added demand for the "convenience" items of food and drugs.

For the other types of shopping in Metuchen's center there are both prospects and problems. The center is very convenient to a sizable population in Metuchen and its immediate environs. Regardless of any new competing facilities, its locational advantages are such that it should remain in a strong competitive position.

Its primary problem is that it needs a greater diversity of stores to provide for more complete shopping facilities than it now has. It would also benefit if it could attract one or more large non-food chain stores.

General Conclusions

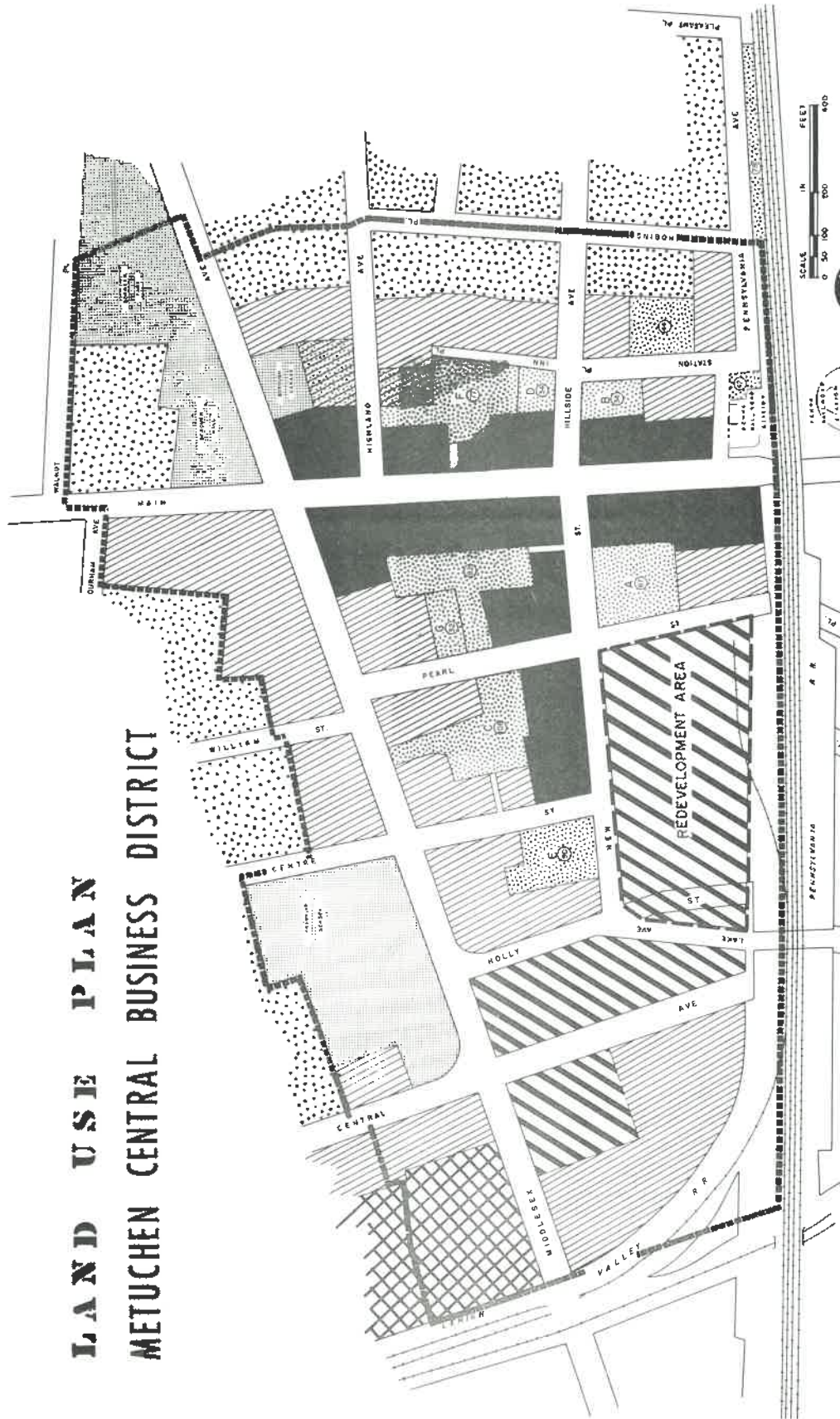
As we interpret the market data, Metuchen's Central Business District cannot greatly expand its present shopping volume within the limits of the goods it now has to offer. With a wider diversity of goods and with an improved shopping environment it has the opportunity to benefit further from the expanding market area around it. Its location at the hub of a number of roads going through Metuchen and Edison and into Woodbridge and South Plainfield give it unique advantages in this automotive age.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Land Use Proposals

The land use proposals shown on the accompanying Land Use Plan Map provide for the intensification and improved organization of commercial development within the central business district. The principal extension of retail use is proposed along New Street and Lake Avenue. This is to be carried out by means of the Federally-aided urban renewal project now entering the planning stage.

LAND USE PLAN METUCHEN CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT



- LEGEND**
- residential
 - retail
 - retail & private parking
 - general commercial
 - public parking
 - public parking
 - number of motorist spaces
 - proposed municipal lots
 - industrial
 - public
 - central business district boundary
 - redevelopment area boundary

BOROUGH of METUCHEN
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, N. J.
METUCHEN PLANNING BOARD

February, 1959

Consultants / Gardner & Associates

The one-block area involved in this project is especially strategic in that it is the one available site for a major independent retail store or chain outlet. As discussed above, the future expansion of Metuchen's shopping center must be in the direction of greater diversity through such a major retail store or stores.

The Federal Government has now approved a planning advance and reservation of grant funds for this project. Upon final approval of the project plans by the Borough and by the Government, the Metuchen Redevelopment Agency will be able to acquire and clear the existing structures and offer the land for resale at its fair value for the new uses proposed.

Shopfront Appearance

As a result of its somewhat haphazard development, Main Street today is a collection of stores with no central focal point, no recognizable pattern of store location, and a miscellany of architectural fronts. In recent years numerous individual attempts have been made to improve the appearance of the shopfronts on Main Street, and in some cases improvements have also been made on the rear of these properties where they open into parking lots. Unfortunately, few of these improvements were coordinated or developed about any unifying theme.

It is recommended that the retail merchants group of the Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with all of the owners of Main Street property, engage an architect to prepare recommendations for coordinated architectural treatment of Main Street structures that could be carried out on a stage basis. This need not result in a uniform type front for the entire center, but might be limited initially to certain structural dimensional standards, controls over sign dimensions and types, and a unifying treatment about a specific architectural style.

Consideration should also be given to proper architectural treatment of the rear sides of business properties. Shopping in the center should be made a pleasurable experience with the provision of the amenities that are now standard in all new shopping areas.

PARKING ANALYSIS

Metuchen has made significant progress in the provision of adequate parking facilities through the formation of a Parking Authority. The Authority now operates six municipal parking lots.

In order to arrive at an estimate of the need for further parking facilities in the central business district, a study was made of the type, location, usage and adequacy of the presently available parking facilities.

Existing Parking Facilities

There are 431 curb parking spaces and 1195 off-street parking spaces in the Metuchen Central Business District, as indicated by a May 1957 field count and a recent recheck.

Curb Parking. Of the 431 curb parking spaces, all but 47 are metered or restricted by posted time limits. There are 285 one-hour metered spaces, 57 one-hour posted spaces, and 42 two-hour posted spaces.

Municipal Off-Street Parking. There are four parking lots operated by the Metuchen Parking Authority in the central business district. Two of these lots, the Pennsylvania Railroad Plaza and Pennsylvania Avenue lots, with a total of 120 spaces, have 12-hour meters and are primarily used by all day parkers. The Pearl Street lot serving Main Street has 140 twelve-hour metered spaces and 42 two-hour metered spaces. The Station Place lot has 44, 1, 2 and 5 hour limit meters.

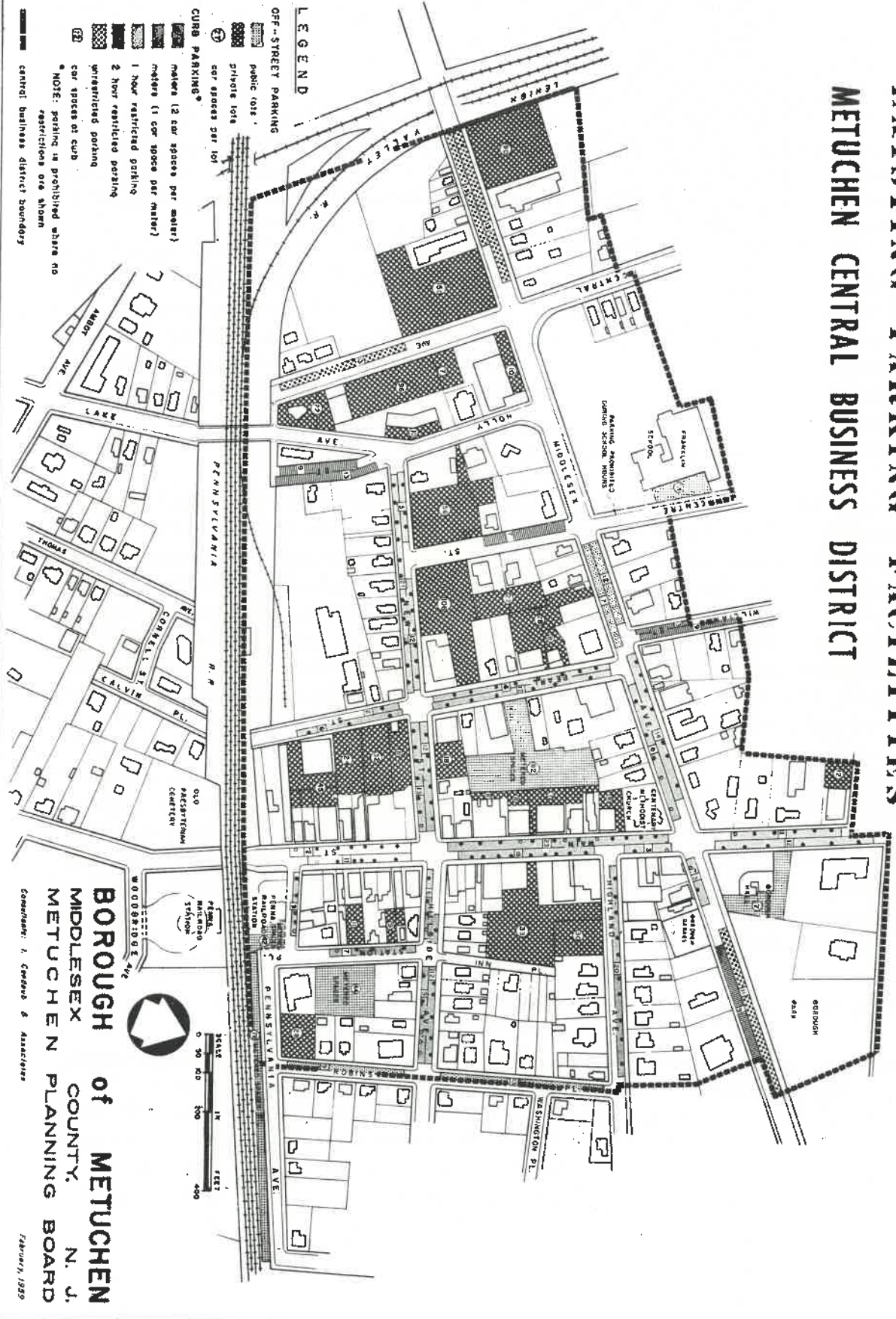
The Parking Authority also operates two parking lots in the area south of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Pennsylvania Railroad Plaza South has a capacity of 59 cars and the Thomas Street lot accommodates 124 cars. Both lots have only all-day meters and primarily serve commuters.

Private Off-Street Parking

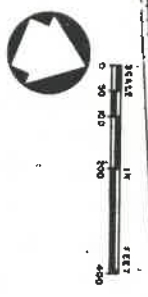
There are a total of 890 off-street parking spaces in privately owned parking lots. All of the private lots are free except for one 11-car lot on Station Place.

The general condition of the privately owned lots is only fair. Many of them are unpaved, poorly marked and as a result not always inviting for shoppers.

EXISTING PARKING FACILITIES METUCHEN CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT



BOROUGH of METUCHEN
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, N. J.
METUCHEN PLANNING BOARD
 Prepared by: A. Conway & Associates
 February, 1959



Parking Space Usage

The adequacy of parking facilities is indicated by the manner in which they are used. To determine this, field studies were made on several average weekdays in October, 1956 to determine the average peak demands for parking spaces and the length of time parked. Special counts were also taken on a shoppers' night to determine the maximum peak demand for parking.

Curb Parking - Accumulation. During the peak morning period on an average weekday, 9:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M., 101 curb spaces were observed to be in use at one time. During the peak afternoon period from 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M., 117 curb spaces were in use. This indicates that about 25 per cent of the 431 curb spaces were in use. On a shoppers' night, 164 or 38 per cent of the curb spaces were in use during the peak parking period.

Curb spaces are naturally in greatest demand along the retail shopping streets. Main Street, with retail development on both sides of the street between the Pennsylvania Railroad and Middlesex Avenue, was found to have the greatest curb parking accumulation. On Main Street use of curb parking increased from 62 per cent during the morning peak period to 68 per cent during the afternoon peak hours. On a shoppers' night 82 per cent of the curb spaces in Main Street were in use at one time, representing a capacity parking usage for high turnover curb parking.

Curb Parking - Duration. For the peak daily parking period - 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. - it was found that a total of 765 different cars were parked in the 431 available curb spaces. This is approximately 1.8 cars per curb space. On Main Street alone it was found that 322 cars parked in the 67 available parking spaces during the two-hour afternoon period. This is about 4.7 cars per curb space, indicating a high turnover of short-time parkers.

Municipal Off-Street Parking

During both the morning and afternoon peak hours the Pennsylvania Avenue parking lot was filled to capacity with all-day parkers. The Station Place lot was completely filled in the morning but had several vacancies in the afternoon. Of the 43 spaces in the Station Place lot, 37 were used by all-day parkers. This parking lot was recently changed to short-term use only, and additional all-day parking was

provided at the Pennsylvania Plaza lot.

The Pearl Street parking lot showed little evidence of being used for short-term parking. During the several days of the survey there were never more than 5 cars using the 59 two-hour metered spaces. However, 19 of the 24 all-day spaces were found to be in use.

Private Off-Street Parking

Privately owned parking lots were found to be filled to 52 per cent of capacity during both the morning and afternoon peak periods. Of the 452 parkers noted in these lots, 266 or 31 per cent of the 872 available spaces were used by all-day parkers. Utilization of private parking lots immediately behind the stores on Main Street was highest.

Metuchen's curb parking problem is limited to Main Street, where congestion is in evidence on a shoppers' night (82 per cent accumulation) and during peak afternoon periods (68 per cent accumulation). This condition indicates a need for additional short-term off-street parking.

At present the municipal and privately owned off-street parking lots are used primarily by all day parkers. There appears to be ample off-street parking for the parker who works in Metuchen but a definite deficiency in the spaces required by the Pennsylvania Railroad commuters.

PARKING RECOMMENDATIONS

A considerable expansion of municipal off-street parking facilities in the central business district is recommended. The areas proposed for taking are of three types:

- - Present small privately owned parking lots which can be consolidated into larger municipal lots.
- - Present large privately owned parking lots in danger of being taken out of parking use.
- - Areas not presently used for parking which are recommended as either new parking lots or extensions of existing ones.

These recommendations assume future expansion of retail uses in the central business district. Adequate parking will be a vital factor in making such expansion possible.

Municipal Parking Lots

Seven additional municipal off-street parking lots are proposed for the central business district, as shown on the Land Use Plan Map included earlier in this chapter. These lots will provide a net increase of 260 parking spaces.

The total cost of acquiring and developing these parking lots is estimated to be at an average cost per car space of \$820. At this figure, it is believed that it should be feasible to finance the acquisition and development of these lots through revenue bonds by the Parking Authority over a period of years. The rate of retail development and the availability of certain land will be major factors in determining how and when the plan is completed.

All Day Parking

Commuter parking problems will not be appreciably improved by the development of the recommended new parking lots. It may be necessary to meter portions of the proposed lots for all-day parkers, but ultimately these lots are expected to be necessary for shoppers' parking exclusively. It has been suggested that certain portions of Lot A should be reserved for employee parking. Portions of several other lots will possibly require employee parking areas. The need for such spaces can only be determined as the respective lots are developed.

It is recommended that the Thomas Street commuter parking lot should be enlarged by acquiring several additional adjacent properties. In connection with any enlargement of this lot it is suggested that consideration be given to providing a safe means of crossing Main Street from the Pennsylvania Railroad station to the Old Presbyterian Cemetery. Discussions should be conducted with the Pennsylvania Railroad to determine the feasibility of a pedestrian bridge adjacent to their railroad bridge.

CHAPTER VII. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Metuchen's school plant now consists of five schools. Three of the schools, Campbell, Edgar and Washington, are intended to house grades K-6. Franklin School serves grades 6-8 primarily, while the high school houses grades 9-12.

Campbell School. Campbell School is located on Durham Avenue between Main and Centre Streets. It is the newest of the school buildings now in operation and is in excellent condition. The original structure was completed in 1950 and in 1954 a 7-room addition was occupied. There is no gymnasium, cafeteria, multi-purpose room or auditorium.

Structure

Age	8 years
Fireproof	Yes
Stories	1
Classrooms	14 (does not include temporarily partitioned rooms)
Capacity (New Jersey standard)	460 pupils

Site Area

Acreage	3.75 acres
Ground Floor Building Area	19,050 sq. ft.

Edgar School. Edgar School is located on Brunswick Avenue adjacent to a large park. The original structure is 42 years old. In 1950, seven classrooms were added to the building. The school is in generally fair condition although a basement room which is used for the library is substandard due to poor lighting and inadequate ventilation. The school site covers seven acres which is large enough to accommodate expansion of facilities if conditions warrant.

Structure

Age	42 years
Fireproof	Semi-fireproof
Stories	2
Classrooms	14 (does not include library)
Capacity (New Jersey standard)	460 pupils

Site Area

Acreage	6.86 acres
Ground Floor Building Area	11,040 sq. ft.

Franklin School. Franklin School is the oldest of the Borough's schools. It was originally constructed in 1907 and has had three additions since then: five rooms in 1922, seven rooms in 1930, and nine rooms in 1939. Lighting and ventilation is generally poor in the older sections. It was used primarily as a senior high school before the completion of the new high school, and now houses grades 6-8. Franklin School now has a total of 23 classrooms including several special purpose rooms and an enlarged gymnasium, cafeteria and library.

Structure

Age	51 years
Fireproof	No
Stories	2
Classrooms	23
Capacity (New Jersey standard)	680 pupils

Site Area

Acreage	5.67 acres
Ground Floor Building Area	27,250 sq. ft.

Washington School. Washington School, located at Simpson Place, was built in 1927. The school is in fairly good condition. In 1953, a 7-room

wing was added to the original structure making a total of 16 rooms. A basement room with inadequate lighting and ventilation is used as a library and multi-purpose room. There is no gymnasium, cafeteria or auditorium.

Structure

Age	31 years
Fireproof	Semi-fireproof
Stories	2
Classrooms	16
Capacity (New Jersey standard)	500 pupils

Site Area

Acreage	2.94 acres
Ground Floor Building Area	9,995 sq. ft.

Metuchen High School. The new Metuchen High School has 23 regular classrooms and an additional 13 special purpose rooms including science rooms, a library, an auditorium, a cafeteria, and a gymnasium. It is a fireproof structure with a capacity of about 950 students, located on a site of 22 acres.

Enrollments

Total resident public school enrollments increased from 1,119 pupils in 1945 to 2,497 pupils in 1957, an average growth of about 115 students per year. The largest gains occurred in 1951 and 1952. Since then enrollment increases have tended to level off due to a decrease in the rate of new home construction, a drop in the birth rate and the elimination of ninth grade non-resident children.

The number of children entering kindergarten reached its peak in 1952 when the enrollment was 268 children. The influx of children entering kindergarten in the early 1950's was primarily due to the increased birth rate and the upsurge of post-war residential construction. Since then kindergarten enrollment has tended to decrease slightly.

Table 17

**DISTRIBUTION OF RESIDENT PUPILS BY GRADE,
METUCHEN, NEW JERSEY, OCTOBER 1945-1957**

<u>Year</u>	<u>K</u>	<u>1 - 6</u>	<u>7 - 8</u>	<u>9 - 12</u>	<u>K - 12</u>
1945	117	525	161	316	1,119
1946	96	564	148	321	1,129
1947	127	578	177	292	1,174
1948	145	635	181	290	1,251
1949	142	788	202	318	1,450
1950	163	865	200	308	1,536
1951	230	964	191	336	1,721
1952	268	1,044	260	352	1,924
1953	216	1,207	256	359	2,038
1954	231	1,212	295	411	2,149
1955	253	1,267	333	417	2,270
1956	267	1,332	326	477	2,402
1957	213	1,416	337	531	2,497

Source: Superintendent of Schools.

Grades 1-6 and 7-8 have shown similar trends with the largest increases in enrollments occurring in 1952 and 1953. However, the number of pupils in these grades have continued to increase although at a decreasing rate.

Grades 9-12 have increased steadily from 1945 to 1957 and are expected to continue increasing as the large elementary enrollments advance through the grades.

Resident and Non-Resident Enrollment. Although there are no non-residents attending Metuchen's grammar schools, the high school accepts non-resident students from Edison and Piscataway Townships. Between 1945 and 1956 non-resident enrollment, comprising about 40 per cent of the total grades 9-12 enrollment, increased at about the same rate as resident enrollment.

In 1957, non-residents were eliminated from the ninth grade and non-resident enrollment dropped to 206 students or 28 per cent of the total enrollment of 737 in grades 9-12. It is anticipated that by 1960 all non-residents will be withdrawn from the Metuchen public school system.

School Plan

Projection of Future Enrollments. The first step in planning for school needs is an estimate of future public school enrollments. In preparing these estimates, the following assumptions have been made:

- That there will be no non-resident enrollments after 1960.
- That Metuchen will reach a population of about 18,000 persons by 1975.
- That the number of public school children per occupied dwelling unit will continue to increase until the late 1960's and then decline to a point slightly lower than the current level by 1975.

Since 1950, the number of children attending grades K-12 has increased from .54 children per occupied dwelling unit to .67 children per occupied

dwelling unit in 1957. This trend is expected to continue increasing to .71 per dwelling unit in the late 1960's and then to decline to about .62 school children per occupied dwelling unit by 1975 due in large part to the anticipated decline in the birth rate and the development of apartments which will contain fewer children per dwelling unit. At this rate, it is anticipated that there will be approximately 3,110 children enrolled in grades K-12 in 1975.

Table 18

ESTIMATED PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS, METUCHEN, 1957

<u>Year</u>	<u>K</u>	<u>1 - 6</u>	<u>7 - 8</u>	<u>9 - 12</u>	<u>K - 12</u>
1950	163	865	200	308	1,536
1957	213	1,416	337	531	2,497
1975	280	1,350	540	940	3,110

The largest enrollment increases are expected to occur in the higher grades. By 1975, most of the Borough's available residential land will have been developed and the population will reach a more stable level. The pupil load should then be more evenly distributed through the grades and the current imbalance of grammar school children will probably be largely eliminated.

Peak Enrollment Period. A peak enrollment of about 3,250 pupils is anticipated between 1968 and 1970. Although this peak load will cause some overcrowding, double sessions will not be required; the average number of school children per classroom will be only slightly more than 30. The peak period should last no longer than three years, after which time enrollments will decline to a stable level by 1975 or shortly thereafter.

Future Classroom Requirements. There will be a deficit of 7 classrooms for grades K-6 by 1975 based on the present distribution of grades by school. For grades 7 through 12, the refurbishing of Franklin School and the new high school will provide adequate facilities for the anticipated enrollment increases in these grades.

Table 19

CLASSROOM NEEDS, METUCHEN, 1975

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Present Number of Classrooms</u>	<u>Classrooms Needed by 1975*</u>	<u>Deficit</u>
K	5	6	1
1 - 6	39	45	6
7 - 8	23	20	-
9 - 12	36	34	-

*Classroom needs were estimated on the basis of the following schedule of children per classroom, by grade:

Kindergarten - 50 students per classroom (25 during the morning session and 25 during the afternoon session).

Grades 1 - 6 - 30 students per classroom.

Grades 7 - 12 - 27 students per classroom.

Recommendations

It is recommended that six additional classrooms and a kindergarten be added to Campbell School. Development trends indicate that most of the new residential construction will be taking place north of Middlesex Avenue.

Multi-purpose rooms, large enough for active and passive recreation, should be provided for all elementary schools.

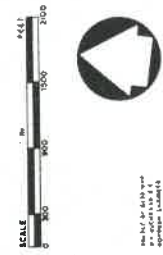
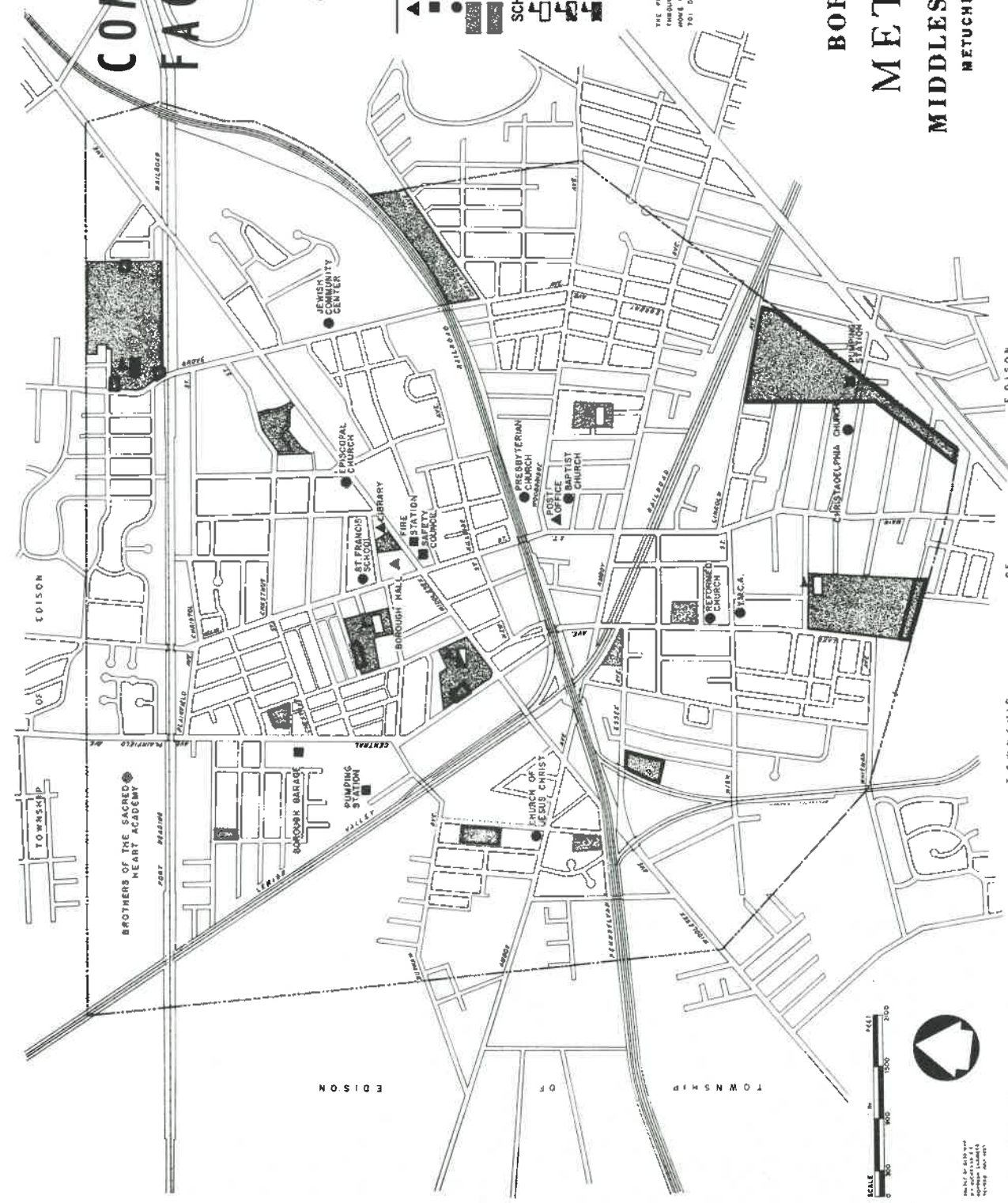
COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

- LEGEND**
- ▲ GOVERNMENT
 - PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY
 - INSTITUTIONAL
 - ▨ EXISTING PUBLIC RECREATION AREA
 - ▩ PROPOSED PUBLIC RECREATION AREA
 - SCHOOLS
 - GRADES, KINDERGARTEN-5
 - ▤ GRADES, 6-8
 - ▥ GRADES, 9-12

THE REVISIONS OF THIS MAP AND FINANCES TO BE MADE BY THE BOROUGH OF METUCHEN SHALL BE MADE ONLY FROM THE HOUSING & HOME FINANCE AGENCY, UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 701 OF THE HOUSING ACT OF 1954, AS AMENDED.

BOROUGH OF METUCHEN
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, N.J.
METUCHEN PLANNING BOARD
 FEBRUARY, 1959

PLANNING CONSULTANTS: I. Cornejo & Associates



THIS MAP WAS PREPARED BY I. CORNEJO & ASSOCIATES, INC., METUCHEN, N.J.

EDISON TOWNSHIP OF

PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

Several decades ago Metuchen was a low density residential community situated in a county which was largely undeveloped. Individual lots were large and there was ample vacant land in and around the Borough.

During the post World War II period this situation was changed radically. As a consequence of intensive population growth, the Borough has become predominantly built-up and the surrounding areas are now being rapidly urbanized. The Borough now finds itself in the position of having inadequate recreation areas for a population which is showing an increasing demand for these facilities due to the increase in leisure time and interest in organized recreation.

Unfortunately, the need to reserve areas for recreation purposes was not recognized at a time when land was available and inexpensive. Large tracts of vacant land available for such purposes has now virtually disappeared. This declining supply makes it all the more imperative to review existing needs and anticipated future requirements for parks, playgrounds and other recreation space.

Existing Facilities

Metuchen now has 12 recreational sites totaling approximately 60 acres, including school sites and areas which are not fully developed.

1. Playgrounds

Playgrounds provide active recreation facilities such as swings, slides, climbing bars and perhaps spray or wading pools for children between the ages of 5 - 15. The Borough's existing playgrounds and facilities consist of the following:

Campbell School Playground provides recreation equipment primarily for children between the ages of 5 - 15. Besides regular playground equipment, there is also a small softball field, two shuffleboard courts and an overhead shelter. Adjoining residential properties on Talmadge and Durham Avenues restrict the possibility of developing additional recreational facilities on this site.

Table 20

RECREATION FACILITIES, METUCHEN, NEW JERSEY, 1958

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	
Playgrounds		
Campbell School	3.0	
Edgar School	5.7	
Hampton Street	2.2	
Washington School	<u>2.0</u>	
		12.9
Playfields		
Franklin School	5.0	
Edgar Park	10.5	
Metuchen High School	16.0	
Oakland Avenue	<u>8.0</u>	
		39.5
Neighborhood Parks		
Borough Park	1.2	
Memorial Park	1.0	
Thomas' Pond	2.6	
Woodwild Park	<u>2.1</u>	
		<u>6.9</u>
TOTAL		59.3

Edgar School Playground is the largest of the playgrounds and totals 5.7 acres. Facilities include playground equipment, a basketball court and a softball field. Much of the area south of the playground is undeveloped at this time.

Hampton Street Playground is presently used as a temporary playground and is not fully developed. It serves a small residential area located between Amboy Avenue and the Pennsylvania Railroad. Toilet facilities and running water are lacking on the site.

Washington School Playground is the only public recreational facility serving the large residential area between Woodbridge Avenue and the Lehigh Valley Railroad. Besides regular playground equipment, there is also a small softball field.

2. Playfields

Playfields are generally larger than playgrounds and are intended for diversified, active recreation for young people and adults. They generally include space for major sport activities.

Franklin School Playfield. This playfield, a part of Franklin School, provides a large softball field for industrial league use. It also has a small softball field which is in need of repair. Four residential properties extend into the site from Central Avenue.

Oakland Avenue Playfield. Reserved exclusively for the Recreation Commission, the site includes a Little League ballfield, another softball field, a basketball court, two shuffleboard courts, an archery range and a playground. Toilet facilities are provided on the site.

Metuchen High School is to have outdoor facilities available for the summer of 1959. There will be a football field and track with permanent grandstand, a baseball field and several softball fields. In addition, a playground site will be made available for the Recreation Commission.

Edgar Park Playfield is located adjacent to Edgar School Playground. Facilities at Edgar Park include a football and baseball field with bleachers. All of the land south of the two fields is undeveloped at the present time.

3. Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are usually intended for passive recreation -- walking, sitting and picnicking. They should be attractively laid out with walks, benches and perhaps some small court or board games. Some neighborhood parks may be combined with a playground or play-field.

Borough Park is centrally located along Middlesex Avenue between the Borough Hall and public library. It is well maintained and serves as an attractive open area in the center of Metuchen.

Memorial Park is located at the intersection of Essex Avenue and Lake Avenue where State Route 27 makes a right angle turn. Benches are provided and the park is well maintained.

Thomas' Pond is a public park located along Lake Avenue. During the winter months, the low area is flooded to provide ice-skating.

Woodwild Park is under private ownership and is undeveloped at this time.

Recreation Facilities Outside the Borough

In addition to the foregoing Borough facilities, there are also several large parks located within a radius of six miles of Metuchen. These include Buccleugh Park in New Brunswick and four county parks -- Donaldson, Johnson, Merrill and Roosevelt.

Donaldson Park, located in Highland Park along the Raritan River, is about 70 acres. Facilities include baseball and softball fields, playgrounds, picnic areas and trap-shooting.

Johnson Park is located along the north side of the Raritan River in Highland Park and Piscataway. The park consists of about 170 acres and includes recreation for all age groups. Facilities include baseball and softball fields, camping, fishing for children under 14, a football field, playgrounds, ice-skating when the weather is cold enough, picnicking, tennis courts, trotting races, a wildlife area, golf driving range and archery.

Merrill Park is largely undeveloped. It is located along the South Branch of the Raritan River in Iselin. It is about 190 acres and facilities include a softball field and picnic area which should be completed in 1959.

Roosevelt Park is the largest of all the parks and the one most heavily used. It is about 200 acres and located just east of Metuchen in Edison. The park has a full range of recreation facilities which include baseball and softball fields, camping, fishing, a football field, playgrounds, horseback riding, ice-skating, picnicking, a wading pond, tennis courts, archery, shuffleboard and a cinder running track.

Bucclough Park is located in New Brunswick and owned by the City. It is about 80 acres and located along the Raritan River. Facilities include baseball and softball fields, an historical museum, soccer field, tennis courts, a cross-country racing course, a wading pool and a playground.

All of the parks are heavily used and are overcrowded on the weekends. When Merrill Park is developed, some of the pressures on Roosevelt Park should be relieved.

In addition to the parks indicated above, there are several public and private golf courses in the Metuchen area. These include Rutgers Golf Course, the West Nine Plainfield Country Club, Oak Ridge Golf Course and the Metuchen Country Club located just north of Metuchen in Edison.

Recreation Program

The Recreation Commission carries on an active supervised recreation program during the summer months for younger children at Campbell School, Edgar School, Hampton Street, Washington School and Oakland Avenue. Playground equipment is available at all these recreation areas.

Adequacy of Existing Facilities

Area Standard. A standard for the amount of land in parks and playgrounds for a given population has been developed over a period of years by the National Recreation Association. The Association recommends 6.25 acres per 1,000 population. The existing recreation space in

Metuchen in relation to its population averages out to only 4.6 acres per 1,000. Therefore, the current deficiency, according to this standard, is about 2.2 acres per 1,000 persons in the Borough or about 28 acres in total.

Location. Playgrounds are dispersed throughout the Borough and generally well located. There are, however, several residential districts which are deficient in playground facilities. These districts include the areas between Middlesex Avenue and the Pennsylvania Railroad, between Durham Avenue and Amboy Avenue and south of Essex Avenue. These areas are either beyond reasonable walking distance for young children to existing playgrounds or are separated from playgrounds by major streets.

Playfields are well located and serve the entire Borough adequately. There is no need for new playfield sites, although some of the existing playfields should be improved and more intensively developed.

Of the three neighborhood-type parks, only Thomas' Pond adequately serves a residential neighborhood. Memorial Park is separated from residential development by major streets on two sides and is bounded by the Lehigh Valley Railroad on the third. Borough Park is located along Middlesex Avenue and is part of a proposed civic center development.

The community also lacks a large park with a full range of facilities to serve the entire municipality. In the past the large parks outside the Borough have served as community recreation areas but these are now overcrowded.

Recreation Plan

The Recreation Plan recommends a system of parks, playgrounds and playfields designed to satisfy Metuchen's existing and future recreation needs. The Plan proposes the acquisition of five new recreation sites and the expansion of five existing recreation areas as follows:

New Sites:

--- A community park of about 45 acres is recommended in the southeastern section of Metuchen. It will extend generally south of Lincoln

Avenue and east of a proposed road from Cedar Street to Lincoln Avenue. All of this land is vacant and most of it is publicly owned. It will serve the entire community as a major recreation center. Part of the area should be maintained as a natural wooded park with walking trails and picnic grounds. Other areas of the park may be devoted to playfields, playgrounds, tennis courts, and a water area which can be used the year round. An illustrative site plan on the following page presents one scheme for the development of this park. The community park will also serve the purpose of acting as a buffer between residential areas in Metuchen and the commercial and industrial development along U. S. Route 1.

--- A site of approximately 1.8 acres along Hampton Street between Amboy Avenue and Durham Avenue is proposed for development as a playground. Most of this land is owned by the Borough and is reserved for the Recreation Commission, although there are several small, vacant, privately owned lots within the site. The surrounding area is not fully developed at the present time, but growth in the future is anticipated. McAdams Avenue between Hampton Street and Smith Street should be abandoned when this recreation area is developed.

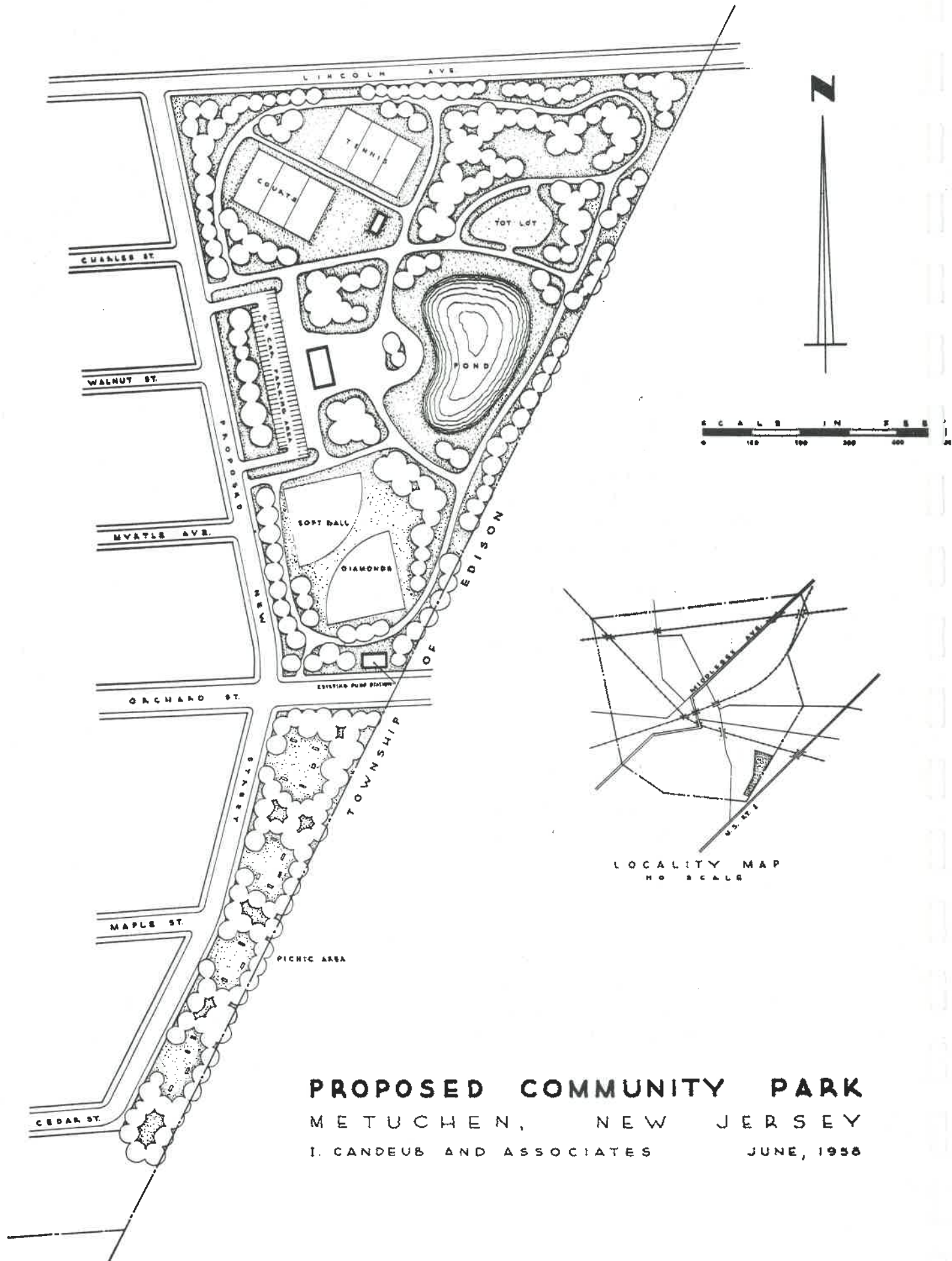
--- Centre Street Park located between Chestnut Avenue and Midland Avenue is a site of 1.3 acres. It is recommended that this site be developed for primarily passive recreation. The park is in one of the older residential areas of the Borough which is lacking in recreation facilities.

--- An 0.6-acre playground site is recommended along Forrest Street and Aylin Street to serve the area west of Central Avenue.

--- Development of a Borough-owned site for a new playground is recommended along Kentnor Street by Essex Avenue. The site will be about 2.6 acres. Gallup Street should be vacated in conjunction with the development of this area.

Existing Sites:

--- It is recommended that Campbell School, Franklin School and the Metuchen High School acquire adjoining properties as necessary to square out the schools' holdings. These properties should be acquired when they become available.



PROPOSED COMMUNITY PARK
 METUCHEN, NEW JERSEY
 I. CANDEUS AND ASSOCIATES JUNE, 1958

--- Edgar School and Edgar Park should be extended south to the Borough line.

--- The Borough Park will be reduced somewhat in size by the proposed civic center development. The park will, however, be incorporated into the development of the center, and will continue to provide a desirable green area in the center of the Borough.

--- Woodwild Park, presently privately owned, should be retained as a park. It is the only recreation facility in the area east of Main Street between Middlesex Avenue and the Port Reading Railroad.

--- The fountain at the intersection of Oak Street and Middlesex Avenue is a fine example of the civic use of a restricted piece of land. The fountain adds a desirable accent to Middlesex Avenue and should be maintained.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

The various Borough administrative functions and services are performed in a number of public buildings which consist of the Borough Hall, the Safety Council Building, the Municipal Garage and Fire Station, and the Public Library.

Borough Hall

The Borough Hall was originally constructed in 1925. It is well located in the center of Metuchen at the intersection of Middlesex Avenue and Main Street on a site of 2.2 acres. Part of this site is devoted to the Borough Park.

Most municipal functions are housed in the Borough Hall, and, although there have been two additions to the building since 1925, interior space is now inadequate. The extent of overcrowding is indicated by the fact that there is no office for the Mayor and several departments share offices, a situation which is not conducive to efficient operation. Also, the Council Chamber which is used for public hearings, council meetings and the municipal court, does not contain sufficient seating capacity.

Police Department. The Police Department, the largest single user of space in the Borough Hall, is located in the rear of the building. Rooms included in this section consist of the chief's office, a desk room, squad room, cell room, detention room, interrogation room, dark room and fingerprinting room.

On the whole, this space is inadequate: the fingerprinting and interrogation rooms are not separated, which makes the questioning of suspects difficult; the squad and detention rooms are too small for their respective purposes; and storage space is makeshift. Since there is no arsenal, policemen must store their weapons in their lockers and confiscated weapons are kept in several different places in the Department.

Aside from the need for expanding existing facilities, several new rooms should be added to enable the department to function more efficiently. These include a captain's room, a sergeant's room, a separate fingerprinting room, an arsenal and special storage facilities.

Red Cross. The present office of the Red Cross is located on the second floor of the Borough Hall. The office, which is only about 105 square feet, is inadequate for the storage and maintenance of equipment and records. Most of the emergency equipment including cots, bedding, splints, etc. are stored in private homes and garages throughout the Borough. Two station wagons used by the Red Cross are also stored in private garages.

Traffic to and from the Red Cross is limited. The station wagons go out on two to four calls a day, generally by appointment made in advance. Evening meetings are held about once a month with from 15 to 20 persons attending. There is no permanent meeting place for the members at the present time; meetings have been held in the Borough Hall, the Metuchen Fire Station, the Menlo Park Fire Station and private homes when public meeting places were unavailable.

Safety Council

The Safety Council is presently located on Middlesex Avenue opposite the Borough Hall. The 2-story building houses the Council's offices, its two ambulances and all its equipment. Storage space is insufficient for the various types of equipment owned by the Council, and off-street

parking for volunteer members is wholly inadequate. Although the Borough leased property to the Safety Council on Talmadge Avenue several years ago, use was not made of this site because of possible traffic dangers to pupils attending the adjacent public and parochial schools.

Municipal Garage and Fire Station

The Municipal Garage and Fire Station are located in a single structure on Middlesex Avenue adjacent to the Safety Council building. It is a 1-story structure with Garage and Fire Station divided by a wall. All of the Borough's rolling equipment is stored here. Three fire trucks are housed in the Fire Station. Both the Municipal Garage and Fire Station need additional space to store their equipment.

Public Library

The Metuchen Public Library is a one-story structure with a high-ceilinged basement, situated on a half-acre lot adjacent to the Borough Park and Borough Hall. The building is in fair condition and well located to serve the general population. Since 1936, the date of original construction, no new additions have been made, although the population of the Borough has more than doubled.

The first floor contains the main adult room and reference library, the children's room and librarian's office. There are also several rooms located in the basement including a book room, librarian's work room, magazine file room, rare books room, multi-purpose room and one lavatory. All basement rooms are locked and entrance can only be gained by permission of the librarian.

The Library now contains about 14,000 volumes, or only slightly more than half the number of books that it should have based on a standard of about two volumes per capita recommended by the American Library Association. This shortage is particularly acute since the population of the Borough has a high average education level. However, before additional books are purchased, more room for storage should be created since shelf space in both the main adult room and children's room is now inadequate.

Additional space is also required to provide for the following: (1) a separate room for teen-agers, whose needs differ from children and adults; (2) more display area for exhibits; and (3) expansion of some of the facilities now in the basement which are in rooms too small to permit browsing.

Public Buildings Plan

Proposed Civic Center. The Borough Hall should be expanded to include not only existing offices, but also new functions which properly belong in the municipal building. The Plan of the enlarged Borough Hall contemplates extending the building along Middlesex Avenue towards the Borough Park.

It is estimated that the total floor space required for the Borough Hall will be about 6,000 square feet. This is based primarily on the space requirements of the Council Chamber and Police Department, which are the two greatest space users, and on the need for a Mayor's office and facilities for the Borough Engineer.

The public library should be expanded to provide a more complete range of library facilities. Larger reading and reference rooms are recommended as well as a staff room, cataloging room, an additional lavatory and special rooms for particular collections or displays. In addition, consideration should be given to expansion of shelf and storage space to allow for a greater number of volumes.

It is also proposed that a portion of the Borough Park along Walnut Street be used for a new Red Cross headquarters. Preliminary plans for the building call for a 1-1/2-story structure of about 25 by 48 feet which will include garage facilities for two station wagons, an office and a storage room for equipment. Adequate off-street parking space for everyday use will be provided and curb parking will be available for regular meetings. The exterior design is planned to be similar in style to that of the Borough Hall and public library.

The Borough Park will be reduced in size due to the expansion of the Borough Hall and construction of a new Red Cross headquarters. However, the remaining area, if properly designed and integrated with the three surrounding structures, can serve a more useful function than the present park area.

Plans for Other Public Buildings. A new site for a municipal garage should be selected in order to eliminate some of the congestion on Middlesex Avenue caused by the movement of heavy, slow-moving Borough equipment. The new garage should be located somewhere along Central Avenue in the area now zoned for business uses and on a site large enough to store vehicles, equipment and supplies both under cover and outdoors.

With the relocation of the Borough Garage, the floor area of the existing building can be reorganized to provide more room for the Fire Department and the Safety Council. Approximately 3,500 square feet (35 feet of frontage) should be reserved adjacent to the Safety Council building for the storage of the Council's emergency truck, two ambulances and other equipment. The Safety Council's building could then be rehabilitated and architecturally integrated with the space now occupied by the Borough Garage. The remaining garage space should be reserved for the Fire Department which will then have a total of about 6,500 square feet or 1,500 square feet more than it now has.

Parking for both the Fire Department and Safety Council would be provided to the side and rear of the Borough Garage. About 5,000 square feet is available for parking to the east of the present garage and it is recommended that property be acquired behind the garage to provide additional parking facilities. Approximately 45 cars could then be accommodated in this area. Adequate parking is essential for public safety so that the men answering fire or ambulance calls will not be delayed by a search for a place to park.

UTILITIES

The Borough of Metuchen is now adequately served by all major utilities except storm sewers. Undeveloped land is scattered within the built-up areas and only minor changes and additions to the existing utility systems will be necessary to provide adequate service for the ultimate population.

Sanitary Sewerage System

Metuchen's sewerage system presently serves all the built-up sections of the Borough. New construction is now being completed to serve the newly developed areas.

Local sewers, 8 inches in diameter, connect to collector sewers, 10 to 18 inches in diameter, which carry the sewage to the Treatment Plant at the Lehigh Valley Railroad tracks in the northwest section of the Borough. Sewage from the southeast section of the Borough is pumped from the Orchard Street Station.

The present system has proved adequate except during and immediately after a rainfall when the amount of sewage handled at the Treatment Plant increases by considerably more than 200 per cent. This increase in flow is believed to be caused by the illegal connection of many basement sump pumps and roof leaders to the sanitary system. The average daily flow is normally about 1,500,000 gallons and almost 5,000,000 gallons per day during rainy periods.

A new pumping station at Jersey Avenue and a connection in conjunction with Edison Township to the Trunk Sewer of the Middlesex County Sewerage Authority has been completed. The pumping station and the connection to the Trunk Sewer will replace the existing Treatment Plant.

The Middlesex County Sewerage Authority, owner of the Trunk Sewer, has set the rates for participants. This charge would be materially increased by storm waters entering the system from individual structures. It is, therefore, recommended that the Borough undertake an inspection of all structures in the community to locate improper storm water connections to sanitary sewers. Where such connections are found property owners should be required to have them removed.

Storm Drainage System

The storm drainage system in Metuchen consists of only a few scattered lines throughout the Borough which now drain into open ditches. The ditches are located predominantly along the railroad tracks and in the vacant areas in the western section of the Borough. Although the few storm sewers that do exist are adequate for the needs of the immediate areas in which they are located, most of the Borough is now unserved. It is, therefore, recommended that an engineering survey be undertaken to determine the feasibility of covering the entire community with storm sewers. As a part of this survey the possibility of replacing the open ditches with storm culverts should also be studied, although the ditches along the railroad tracks may not necessarily require culverts.

Water System

Metuchen's water is provided by the Middlesex Water Company of Woodbridge. The company has well fields in South Plainfield from which water is pumped to Metuchen. The water enters the Borough in a 30-inch line along Central Avenue, Amboy Avenue and Woodbridge Avenue. Pressures of 55 to 60 pounds are maintained in the water system. The minimum standard set by the National Board of Fire Underwriters for a community like Metuchen is 50 pounds.

The National Board of Fire Underwriters also recommends a minimum diameter of 6 inches for water mains to provide adequate fire protection. The lines along some streets in Metuchen are of less than standard diameter. These streets are as follows:

- Woodbridge Avenue at Borough boundary
- McCoy Avenue
- Hampton Street, south of Durham Avenue
- Park Place
- Sylvan Avenue
- McPherson Avenue
- Brunswick Avenue
- New Street - Holly Street to Pearl Street
- Lincoln Avenue
- Middlesex Avenue - Borough boundary to Bridge Street.

It is recommended that Metuchen request that the Middlesex Water Company replace all lines of substandard diameter with 6-inch or larger mains.

The water now supplied to the Borough has a hardness range of 147 ppm and a pH range of 7.4 to 7.7. The U.S. Public Health Service classifies water with a hardness of 150 ppm as moderately soft, which is adequate for domestic and industrial use. Water over a pH factor of 7.0, however, tends to cause incrustation of pipes.

Other Utilities

Gas, electric and telephone service is adequately provided throughout the community. When needed, new service can be installed as extensions of existing facilities without major difficulties. Street lights are

installed and maintained by the electric company and Metuchen pays a yearly charge. As pointed out in Master Plan Report 3, Traffic Plan, several Borough streets require improved street lighting.

Government Aid

It is recommended that the Borough of Metuchen investigate the potentialities of Section 702 of the Housing Act of 1954, which enables communities to receive advances from the Federal Government for the purpose of financing the cost of architectural surveys, designs, specifications or other studies preliminary to and in preparation for the construction of public works. Repayment, which is without interest, becomes necessary only when construction of such works is started.

OFFICIAL MAP

The "Official Map and Building Permit" (N. J. S. A. 40:55-1. 30 to 1. 42) provides for the establishment of an official map showing the proposed location of parks and playgrounds, drainage rights-of-way and widths of streets.

The official map can be used in two ways:

- To stay the issuance of a building permit on the site of a proposed park or playground or in the bed of a proposed street, street re-alignment or drainage right-of-way for a period of one year. Within the year, the Borough must take action to acquire the right-of-way or the site or forfeit its rights in the area.
- To require that all yard areas adjoining streets shall be measured from official map lines where the official map shows a future widening or realignment of the existing street.

It is therefore recommended that Metuchen adopt an official map ordinance. A map showing the approximate locations of data to be shown on an official map has been submitted to the Planning Board. This map is to be used as a guide by the City Engineer in preparing an "Official Map" under his signature, showing detailed street widths and other information which might require engineering surveys.

CHAPTER VIII. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

Metuchen is fortunate in that its development is largely complete and its major community facilities already built. Analysis of the Borough's financial situation indicates that future needs in facilities requiring capital expenditures can be met without materially increasing the present level of bonded debt and debt service.

In order to program these needed expenditures efficiently, however, it is important to follow a formal procedure of capital budgeting. A capital budget consists of a list of capital improvements by cost and priority, planned on a fairly specific basis for a period of about five years in the future and on a more generalized basis for up to twenty years ahead. The budget is designed to avoid excessive variations in capital spending which could cause sharp increases in the tax rate and in the cost of issuing bonds. This procedure is similar to that followed by modern business corporations, which make no major capital investments without long-range analysis of their needs and resources.

PRESENT FINANCIAL STATUS

The Borough's finances are on a sound basis, but as is the case in many communities the general rise in costs and prices has led to gradual increases in taxes levied on real estate. It is anticipated that further tax increases will be necessary in the future, but that these will be moderate since expenditures for capital improvements are reaching a maximum.

Tax Base

Metuchen's tax base has been steadily increasing since 1940. The net taxable assessed valuation as of 1940 (based on an average of the net taxable assessed valuations of the three preceding years) was \$5,585,666. By 1958, this figure had risen to \$12,880,674, for an average increase of \$405,280 annually.

The Borough's tax base is expected to continue increasing but at a decreasing rate, due to the gradual depletion of vacant land and the decrease in new construction. It is estimated that by 1975, the net tax-

able assessed valuation of land and buildings in Metuchen will be approximately \$17,540,000. This is an average annual increase of about \$250,000 a year between 1958 and 1975 and is considered a conservative estimate.

Table 21

NET TAXABLE ASSESSED VALUATION, METUCHEN, 1940-1958

<u>Year</u>	<u>Net Taxable Assessed Valuation</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Net Taxable Assessed Valuation</u>
		1949	\$7,682,940
1958	\$12,880,674	1948	7,020,682
1957	12,430,863	1947	6,126,451
1956	11,906,000	1946	6,045,558
1955	11,402,416	1945	6,018,683
1954	10,745,908	1944	6,292,626
1953	10,041,506	1943	6,294,632
1952	9,686,046	1942	5,892,483
1951	9,271,759	1941	5,956,811
1950	8,364,054	1940	5,585,666

Expenditures

In 1957, municipal expenditures totaled \$644,631. Of this amount, \$460,424 was for net operating costs (operating costs and contingencies); \$76,306 was reserve for uncollected taxes; \$75,550 was for debt service; and the remaining \$32,351 was for miscellaneous items such as down payments on capital improvements, deferred charges, and

and statutory expenditures.

Net Operating Costs. Net operating costs consist primarily of general administration, protection services to persons and property, maintenance of streets and roads, sanitation services and contingencies. An analysis of past trends shows that net operating costs have been increasing and will probably continue to do so. This is due not only to the constant decrease in the value of the dollar but also to the additional services and facilities being demanded of the Borough government.

In 1955, net operating costs were \$392,917. These costs increased to \$424,577 in 1956 and \$460,424 in 1957. The 1958 budget estimates that net operating costs will increase still further to \$617,120, due largely to salary increases and a rise of slightly more than \$50,000 for Middlesex County Sewerage Authority service charges.

Table 22

NET OPERATING COSTS AND PER CAPITA

NET OPERATING EXPENDITURES, METUCHEN, 1955-1958

<u>Year</u>	<u>Net Operating Costs</u>	<u>Per Capita Net Operating Expenditures</u>
1958	\$617,120	\$41.45
1957	460,424	34.34
1956	424,577	32.91
1955	392,917	31.69

Per capita net operating expenditures have also been increasing; that is, net operating expenditures have been increasing at a greater rate than the population. In 1955, per capita net operating expenditures were \$31.69; in 1956 the figure had increased to \$32.91 and by 1957 to \$34.34. The 1958 budget estimates indicate that such costs will rise still further to \$41.45, for an average annual increase between the years 1955-1958 of \$3.25.

It is anticipated that net operating expenditures will continue to increase and that by 1975 such expenditures will total approximately \$825,000. This will mean a per capita net operating cost of \$50 and an average annual increase of about \$0.50 per year between 1958 and 1975.

Debt Service. Debt service consists of principal and interest payments on outstanding bonds. Municipal (excluding school) debt service payments have been relatively stable over the past five years and have accounted for a relatively minor share of the Borough's annual expenditures. However, an anticipated \$1,500,000 bond issue to finance a connection to the Middlesex County trunk sewer will increase future debt service payments considerably.

The 1958 budget appropriates \$87,750 for debt service payments; It is estimated that such payments will increase to approximately \$242,000 in 1960. After 1960, however, payments are expected to decrease to about \$95,000 by 1975, and the existing municipal debt will be fully retired by 1979.

Gross Operating Costs. Gross operating costs consist of net operating costs, debt service payments and miscellaneous costs such as deferred charges and reserve for uncollected taxes.

Between 1955 and 1957 gross operating expenditures increased from \$557,645 to \$644,631. In 1958, gross operating costs jumped to \$941,709, due to a large increase in net operating costs and an appropriation of \$105,000 to the capital improvements fund for down payment on several bond issues (required by New Jersey law).

It is anticipated that on the basis only of present bonded debt and debt for the County trunk sewer, gross operating expenditures will rise to \$1,180,000 by 1975. These expenditures are expected to rise rapidly in the next few years due to large increases in debt service payments and then tend to stabilize as decreases in debt service payments offset increases in other operating costs.

Table 23

PAYMENTS TO SERVICE EXISTING DEBT, METUCHEN, 1954-1979*

<u>Year</u>	<u>Debt Service</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Debt Service</u>
1954	\$ 82,331	1967	\$140,630
1955	82,008	1968	121,790
1956	74,625	1969	114,150
1957	75,550	1970	111,080
1958	87,751	1971	107,820
1959	101,210	1972	104,560
1960	242,160	1973	101,300
1961	238,760	1974	98,040
1962	207,650	1975	94,780
1963	195,150	1976	88,520
1964	165,510	1977	78,400
1965	161,140	1978	75,600
1966	154,820	1979	72,800

*Includes debt service payments on anticipated \$1,500,000 bond issue.

Revenues

The primary source of municipal revenue is derived from the property tax. Other important sources of revenue for Metuchen are the gross receipts tax and the franchise tax. The Borough also receives a limited

amount of revenue from State road aid, delinquent taxes, licenses, fees, permits and fines.

Revenues from sources other than the property tax have been increasing slightly over the past five years. However, as a percentage of total income, these revenues have been declining, indicating that the property levy is becoming even more important as a source of revenue to the Borough.

Between 1954 and 1957 miscellaneous revenues increased from \$168,873 to \$192,201. The 1958 budget anticipates a decrease in revenues from these sources to \$171,894. Nevertheless, the general trend of income from miscellaneous revenues is upward, and it is anticipated that by 1975 such revenues will total \$225,000.

Property Tax. Over the past five years property taxes have been increasing both absolutely and relatively. In 1954, property taxes accounted for 63.4 per cent of total revenues whereas the estimated 1958 yield will account for 70.6 per cent of total revenues.

Table 24

PROPERTY TAX LEVY, METUCHEN, 1954 - 1958

<u>Year</u>	<u>Property Tax Levy</u>	<u>Per Cent of Total Revenues</u>
1958	\$413,440	70.6
1957	401,402	67.6
1956	375,106	68.2
1955	376,092	69.6
1954	292,207	63.4

As there are no new sources of revenue imminent and miscellaneous revenues are expected to increase only slightly, any increase in expenditures will have to be supported by an increase in the tax base (net taxable assessed valuations) and/or by an increase in the tax rate.

Tax Rate. Although the Borough's tax ratables have been increasing over the years, the costs of running the Borough have been increasing at a somewhat greater rate necessitating higher tax rates.

The municipal tax rate in 1954 was \$3.13; by 1957, the tax rate had risen to \$3.34 -- an average annual increase of slightly more than \$0.08. The 1958 tax rate remained at \$3.34 through the utilization of cash surplus as has been done in previous years. In view of the necessary increase in operating costs the tax rate can be expected to rise in the future.

It is estimated that by 1970 the local tax rate will have increased to approximately \$4.70. It should be noted, however, that any increases in tax ratables beyond the conservative estimates presented above will reduce this estimate.

Table 25

TAX RATE, METUCHEN, 1954-1958

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tax Rate</u>
1958	\$3.34
1957	3.34
1956	3.22
1955	3.40
1954	3.13

Debt Structure

The Borough's outstanding bonded indebtedness is now below the statutory debt limit. However, a \$1,500,000 bond issue will probably be sold in 1959, raising the bonded indebtedness to \$1,919,000, which is well over the statutory debt limit.

Borrowing Capacity. Although State statutes restrict a municipality's bonded indebtedness to 7 per cent of its assessed valuation, the State has also recognized the need for flexibility in permitting municipalities to assume further debt. Paragraph 55:14B-4.1 of the Revised Statutes of New Jersey provides that municipalities which have exceeded their debt limit may issue redevelopment bonds providing prior approval is granted by the Division of Local Government.

Permission is also granted to exceed the debt limit under what is known as 16(d) of the Bond Law. The additional permissible debt under this provision is cumulative and is computed by a formula based upon the rate at which outstanding bonds are retired.

Conclusions

While the foregoing analysis indicates that Metuchen faces a problem of an increasing tax rate and of exceeding the State debt limit in bonded debt, it is considered that a conservative program of expenditures for needed capital improvements can be undertaken in the future without undue strain. This can be done by means of a planned budget program under which such expenditures are spaced so as not to create added burdens in critical years.

The following section presents such a budget program for the improvements recommended in this Master Plan. This is presented as a guide for more detailed programming and is subject to modification from year to year as conditions change. For the first five years, the program is fairly definite; for the projected 20-year period the program is more generalized.

In developing the proposed capital improvements program, an attempt was made to follow four basic principles:

- - Capital improvements should not be sacrificed to stabilize a tax rate which is rising due to inflationary trends.
- - The debt service payments should not be greater than 25 per cent of the total annual budget.
- - The debt service payments should be gradually reduced so that the Borough may eventually switch to a pay-as-you-go capital improvement program wherever feasible.
- - The bond retirement schedule should be no longer than the life of the improvement.

Table 26

BONDED INDEBTEDNESS (PRESENT AND COMMITTED BONDS
ONLY) AND ESTIMATED STATUTORY DEBT LIMIT,
METUCHEN, 1958-1987

<u>Year</u>	<u>Bonded Indebtedness*</u>	<u>Statutory Debt Limit**</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Bonded Indebtedness*</u>	<u>Statutory Debt Limit**</u>
1958	\$ 535,000	\$ 901,647	1973	\$ 447,000	\$1,212,000
1959	1,919,000	922,700	1974	367,000	1,233,400
1960	1,748,000	943,800	1975	287,000	1,257,800
1961	1,612,000	964,900	1976	210,000	1,257,800
1962	1,487,000	985,900	1977	140,000	1,257,800
1963	1,364,000	1,007,000	1978	70,000	1,257,800
1964	1,256,000	1,027,400	1979	--	1,257,800
1965	1,149,000	1,047,000	1980	--	1,257,800
1966	1,025,000	1,067,200	1981	--	1,257,800
1967	931,000	1,087,000	1982	--	1,257,800
1968	847,000	1,107,800	1983	--	1,257,800
1969	767,000	1,128,300	1984	--	1,257,800
1970	687,000	1,148,500	1985	--	1,257,800
1971	607,000	1,169,000	1986	--	1,257,800
1972	527,000	1,190,000	1987	--	1,257,800

*Includes \$1,500,000 bond issue anticipated in 1959.

** 7% of estimated assessed valuation.

PROPOSED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

The needed capital improvements included in the Master Plan for accomplishment over the next twenty years are listed below, together with a summary of the reasons for each proposal. The total cost of all the improvements listed is \$1,564,000. Of this total, the amount of \$505,000 is for school improvements and the remainder is for improvements financed by the municipal government.

New Street Urban Renewal Area

Redevelopment of the area bounded by New Street, Pearl Street, the Pennsylvania Railroad and Lake Avenue is a key proposal in the Central Business District Plan. The proposed redevelopment area is a site of approximately four acres, centrally located within the central business district. The site offers an excellent opportunity for the attraction of a major retail store with regional drawing power to Metuchen's shopping district.

The net project cost, as currently estimated, will be roughly \$315,000. The Federal Government will contribute two-thirds of this net cost. The local share would, therefore, be about \$105,000.

Traffic and Street Improvements

The following capital improvements for traffic and streets are recommended in the Traffic Plan, and are estimated to cost a total of \$367,500.

Centre Street Paving. Centre Street is a local road in the central business district linking New Street and Middlesex Avenue. The street is poorly paved and tends to restrict traffic circulation within the downtown area. The cost of paving this street is estimated at \$21,000.

Oak Street Paving. The portion of Oak Street between Chestnut and Christol Streets is presently unpaved. The cost of paving this street is estimated at \$28,500 (including a sewer on Christol Street). This project will probably be financed by a budget appropriation rather than a bond issue.

Christol Street Paving. This street is unpaved between Oak Street and Highland Avenue. Paving is recommended particularly in order to create more efficient east-west traffic movement north of Middlesex Avenue. The cost of paving is estimated at \$60,000.

Chestnut Street Paving. This street is unpaved between Oak Street and Grove Avenue. The cost of paving is estimated at \$45,000.

Prospect Street Widening. This street has a narrow pavement and is in poor condition. It is a secondary street and, in combination with High Street, connects Middlesex Avenue and Main Street. A pavement width of 36 feet is recommended and the cost of such improvement is estimated at \$32,000.

Construction of New Connection between Charles Street and Cedar Street. The proposed street is to connect Charles Street and Cedar Street in the southeastern section of the Borough. This will form a loop road which would join with Maple Street, Myrtle Avenue and Walnut Street, all presently long dead-end streets. This construction would also pave the way for development of a proposed 45-acre community park. The cost of this improvement is estimated at \$100,000.

Highland Avenue Widening. A 400 foot length of Highland Avenue east of Rector Street is poorly paved and narrow. Widening is needed especially due to the anticipated increase in traffic on Highland Avenue. The cost of the pavement widening is estimated at \$19,000.

Clinton Place Extension. The extension of Clinton Place across Main Street to North Thomas Street will aid in opening up the interior of the block bounded by the Pennsylvania Railroad, Main Street Amboy Avenue and North Thomas Street. This extension will permit the abandonment of Cornell Street and the expansion of the commuter lot. The estimated cost of development including acquisition and demolition of an existing structure is estimated at \$50,000.

Hillside Avenue - Dellwood Road Realignment. This is a sharp double right angle turn on Huxley Road. This offset intersection should be eliminated by realignment. The cost of this realignment is estimated at \$12,000.

Other recommendations incorporated in the Traffic Plan such as the construction of an underpass at Middlesex Avenue and the Pennsylvania Railroad, the widening of Durham Avenue, the construction of an over-

pass at Whitman Avenue and the proposed East-West Freeway would be undertaken by either the State or County government.

Parks and Playgrounds

Five new parks, totaling about 52 acres, are recommended in the Community Facilities Plan. The cost of developing these parks as described below is estimated at \$342,000.

Centre Street Park. This park is proposed for a 1.3 - acre site between Chestnut Avenue and Midland Avenue in one of the older residential areas of the Borough. The area is presently lacking in recreation facilities. The cost of developing Centre Street Park is estimated at \$14,000.

Hampton Street Park. A site of approximately 1.8 acres along Hampton Street is recommended for development as a playground. Most of the area is presently owned by the Borough and reserved for the Recreation Commission. The surrounding area is not fully developed at the present time, but residential growth is anticipated. The cost of developing this park is estimated at \$11,000.

Forrest Street Park. A 0.6-acre playground is recommended along Forrest Street on land that is presently publicly owned. There are no recreation facilities to serve this residential area at the present time. The cost of developing this site is estimated at \$5,000.

Kentnor Street Park. A 2.6-acre playground is recommended along Kentnor Street by Essex Avenue on Borough-owned land. The cost of developing this site is estimated at \$12,000.

Community Park. A community park consisting of about 45 acres is recommended in the southeastern section of the Borough on predominantly publicly-owned land. It would serve the entire community as a major recreation center and facilities would include walking trails, picnic areas, playfields and a water area for all-year use. The cost of developing the park is estimated at \$300,000. Development of this park could be spread over a period of years.

Public Buildings

The total estimated cost of capital expenditures for public buildings is \$143,000.

Borough Hall Expansion. It is recommended that the Borough Hall be expanded to provide additional office and meeting space. The plan of the enlarged Borough Hall contemplates extending the building along Middlesex Avenue into the Borough Park. The cost of such expansion is estimated at \$50,000.

New Municipal Garage. It is recommended that the present municipal garage be relocated along Central Avenue in order to provide more space for storage and parking and to eliminate some of the congestion on Middlesex Avenue caused by the movement of heavy, slow-moving Borough equipment. The cost of a new municipal garage is estimated at \$85,000.

Public Library Expansion. Additional facilities are recommended for the public library in order to provide a more complete range of library service. The cost of the needed improvements is estimated at \$23,000, not including major expansion of shelf and storage space.

Utilities

Christol Street Sewer. The cost of the Christol Street sewer has been included in the Oak Street paving. Installation will probably take place in 1959.

East Metuchen Storm Sewer. A new sewer to serve southeast Metuchen is recommended. The cost of this storm sewer is estimated to be \$115,000.

Schools

The total cost of school capital improvement is estimated at \$505,000.

New Rooms. It is recommended that six additional classrooms be added on to Campbell School. The cost of this addition is estimated at \$240,000. Seven additional classrooms including a kindergarten classroom are recommended for Campbell School and the addition of multi-purpose rooms are recommended for Washington School and Edgar School. The total cost of these additions is estimated at \$400,000.

Expansion of School Grounds. The following school grounds are proposed in order to provide more adequate outdoor play areas and to square off existing grounds: Campbell School, Franklin School, Edgar School and Metuchen High School. The cost of such expansion is estimated at \$105,000.

Table 27

PRIORITY LISTING OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS
EXCLUDING SCHOOLS AND ESTIMATED COSTS, METUCHEN

<u>Improvement</u>	<u>1959-64</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>		
		<u>1965-69</u>	<u>1970-74</u>	<u>1975-79</u>
East Metuchen Storm Sewer	\$115,000			
Oak Street Paving and Christol Street Sewer	(28,500)*			
New Street Urban Renewal Area	105,000			
Borough Hall Expansion	50,000			
Centre Street Paving	21,000			
Forrest Street Park		\$ 5,000		
Hillside Avenue-Dellwood Road Realignment		12,000		
Centre Street Park		14,000		
New Municipal Garage		85,000		
Public Library Expansion		23,000		
Christol Street Paving			\$ 60,000	
Highland Avenue Widening			19,000	
Kentnor Street Park			12,000	
Prospect Street Widening			32,000	
Hampton Street Park			11,000	
Clinton Place Extension				\$ 50,000
New Street Between Charles Street and Cedar Street				100,000
Community Park				300,000
Chestnut Street Extension				45,000
TOTAL	\$291,000	\$139,000	\$134,000	\$495,000

*Included as a budget item, not as a possible bond issue.

Municipal Capital Improvements Program

Table 27 lists all capital improvements excluding schools in order of priority with estimated costs. The priority listing is based both on need and the financial ability of the Borough to carry out the program. The program of improvements is scheduled for four time periods -- 1959-1964, 1965-1969, 1970-1974 and 1975-1979. Necessarily, beyond the first five-year period the projection is tentative and subject to change when the Master Plan is re-studied in future years.

During the first capital improvements planning period, three bond issues are recommended -- sewer bonds for the East Metuchen Storm Sewer, redevelopment bonds for the New Street Urban Renewal Area and general obligations bonds for the remaining projects.

As the capital improvements program is a flexible instrument and should be reviewed yearly no recommendations are being made at this time for the exact year of issuance of bonds during the latter three periods.

Municipal Borrowing Capacity (Excluding Schools). Although State statutes restrict a municipality's bonded indebtedness to 7 per cent of its assessed valuation, the State has also recognized the need for flexibility in permitting municipalities to incur further debt as follows:

Paragraph 55:14 B-4. 1 of the Revised Statutes permits the issuance of bonds for redevelopment purposes where a municipality has exceeded its debt limit. Permission for such an issue must first be authorized by the Division of Local Government.

Paragraph 40:1 - 1 6 (d) permits a municipality to incur additional debt based upon the rate at which outstanding bonds are retired and is cumulative.

Paragraph 40:1 - 1 6 (i) permits the issuance of bonds for public improvements necessary for health, safety, welfare, convenience or betterment of the inhabitants of a municipality which has exceeded its debt limit. These issues also require approval by the Division of Local Government.

Table 28

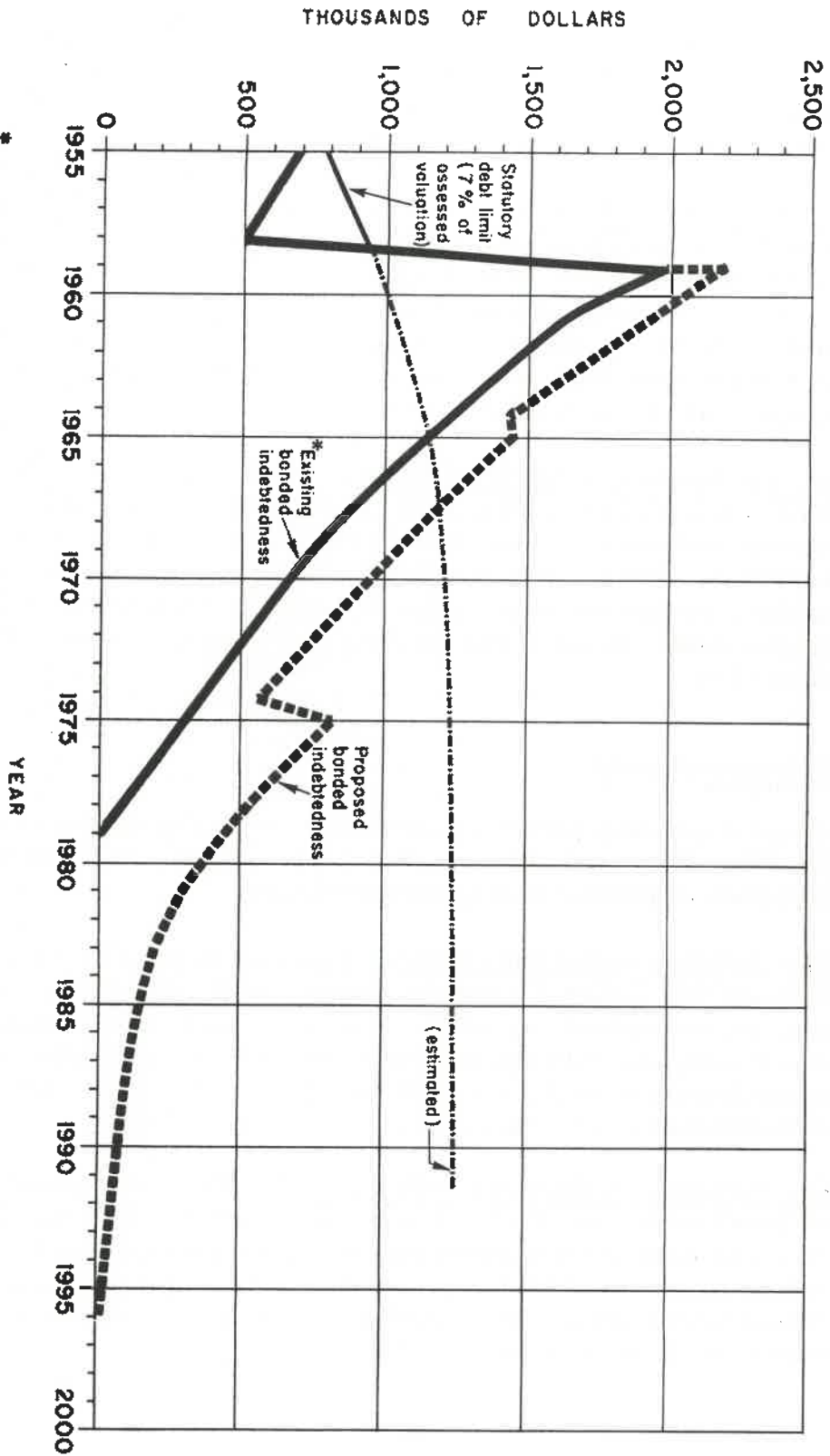
SCHEDULE FOR PROPOSED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS
METUCHEN, 1959 - 1988

Year	Existing Debt*		Proposed Debt		Total	
	Out-standing	Debt Service	Out-standing	Debt Service	Out-standing	Debt Service
1959	\$1,919,000	\$101,210	\$291,000		\$2,210,000	\$101,210
1960	1,748,000	242,160	265,000	\$36,910	2,013,000	279,070
1961	1,612,000	238,760	245,000	29,940	1,857,000	268,700
1962	1,487,000	207,650	225,000	29,198	1,712,000	236,840
1963	1,364,000	195,150	205,000	28,440	1,569,000	223,590
1964	1,256,000	165,510	185,000	27,690	1,441,000	193,200
1965	1,149,000	161,140	304,000	26,940	1,453,000	188,080
1966	1,025,000	154,820	260,000	55,400	1,285,000	210,220
1967	931,000	140,630	230,000	39,750	1,161,000	180,380
1968	847,000	121,790	205,000	33,630	1,052,000	155,420
1969	767,000	114,150	185,000	27,680	959,000	141,830
1970	687,000	111,080	299,000	26,940	986,000	138,020
1971	607,000	107,820	270,000	40,210	877,000	148,030
1972	527,000	104,560	245,000	35,120	772,000	139,680
1973	447,000	101,300	220,000	34,180	667,000	135,480
1974	367,000	98,040	195,000	33,250	562,000	131,290
1975	287,000	94,780	565,000	32,320	852,000	127,100
1976	210,000	88,520	515,000	71,190	725,000	159,710
1977	140,000	78,400	470,000	64,310	610,000	142,710
1978	70,000	75,600	425,000	62,630	535,000	138,230
1979	-	72,800	380,000	60,940	380,000	133,740
1980			345,000	49,240	345,000	49,240
1981			305,000	47,940	305,000	47,940
1982			275,000	46,630	275,000	46,630
1983			245,000	40,810	245,000	40,810
1984			215,000	39,180	215,000	39,180
1985			185,000	38,050	185,000	38,050
1986			160,000	31,940	160,000	31,940
1987			135,000	31,000	135,000	31,000
1988			110,000	30,060	110,000	30,060
1989			85,000	29,120	85,000	29,120
1990			60,000	28,180	60,000	28,180
1991			40,000	22,250	40,000	22,250
1992			30,000	11,500	30,000	11,500
1993			20,000	11,120	20,000	11,120
1994			10,000	10,750	10,000	10,750
1995				10,380	-	10,380
1996						

*Includes anticipated \$1,500,000 bond issue.

MUNICIPAL BONDED INDEBTEDNESS

METUCHEN, N. J.



* Includes anticipated \$1,500,000 bond issue.

I. CANDEUB & ASSOCIATES
FEBRUARY, 1959

THE PREPARATION OF THIS CHART WAS FINANCED IN PART THROUGH AN URBAN PLANNING GRANT FROM THE HOUSING & URBAN FINANCING ACT, AS AMENDED.

Municipal Debt Service Costs

Debt service costs are estimated on the basis of 20-year amortization periods and an annual interest rate of 3.75 per cent. Average annual debt service payments (including principal and interest) are estimated to average \$24,500 during 1961-1965 for proposed improvements.

Relation to Existing Bonded Indebtedness. The present debt retirement schedule has a peak bonded indebtedness of \$1,919,000 in 1959. The bonded indebtedness will then gradually decrease to complete retirement by 1979. In the proposed bonding schedule, retirement is to be moved to 1996 due to the sale of additional bond issues. The peak bonded indebtedness will still remain at \$1,919,000, but will decrease at a slower rate to retirement by 1996.

Relation to Existing Debt Service. The present annual debt service payments reach a peak of \$242,000 in 1960. Based upon the proposed debt service schedule, annual debt service payments will reach a peak of \$247,700 in 1961. After the peak is reached debt service payments will decline, except for slight upturns during 1963 and 1969 due to the sale of later bond issues. The existing and proposed debt will be fully retired in 1996.

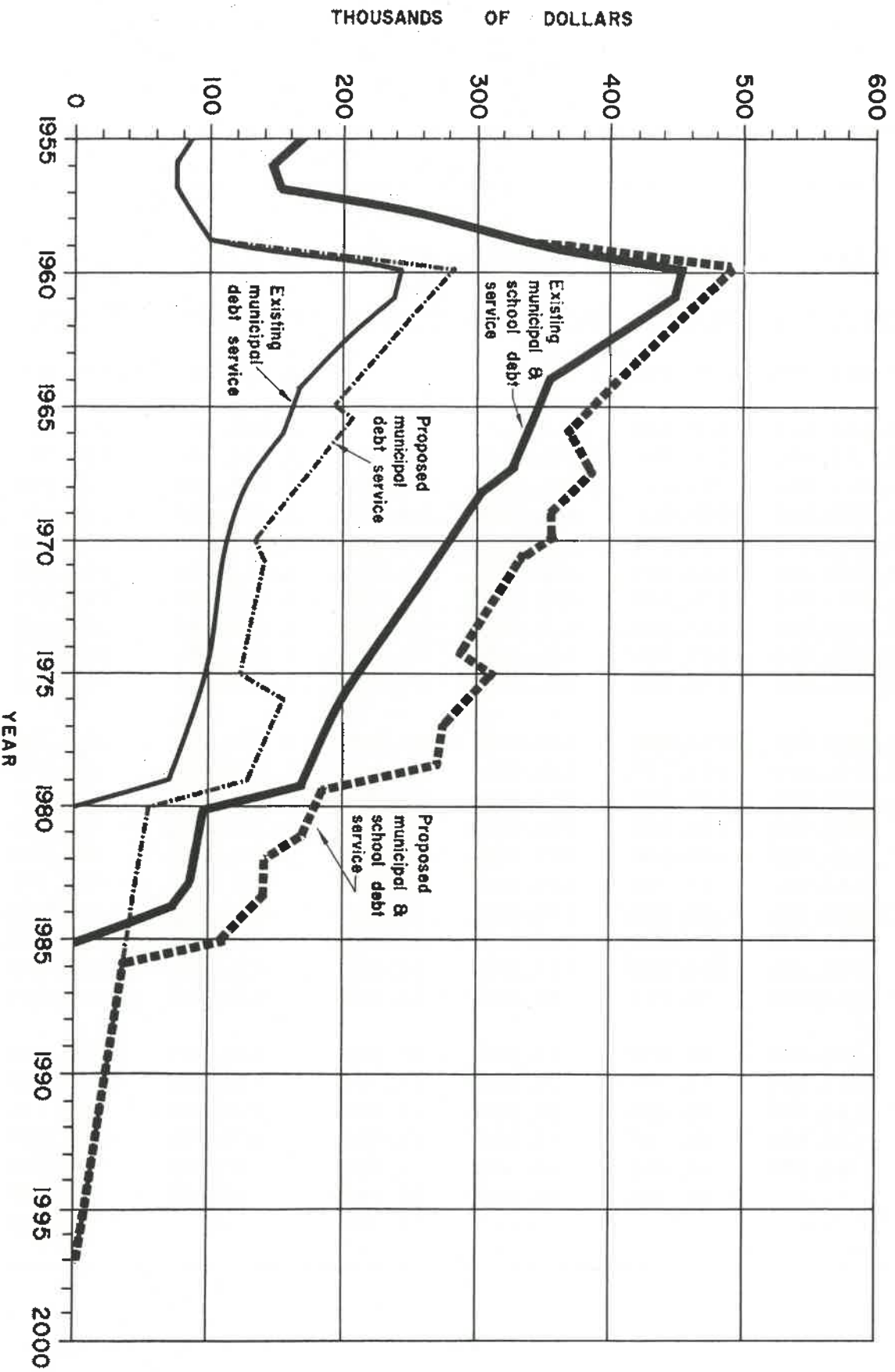
School Improvements

The cost of expanding school facilities as described above, is estimated at \$695,000. Two bond issues, each to be amortized in 20 years, are recommended to finance these improvements.

Schools: Relation to Existing Bonded Indebtedness. The present bonded indebtedness for schools reaches a peak of \$2,403,000 in 1959 and declines, to retirement, in 1985. The proposed improvements will increase the overall debt period, to 1986 and will increase the peak bonded indebtedness to \$2,415,000 in 1961. After 1961, however, bonded indebtedness will decline to retirement in 1986.

Schools: Relation to Existing Debt Service. The peak annual debt service payment for existing and anticipated bond issues will be \$236,666 in 1959. The debt service payments will then decline steadily except for a slight upturn in 1967 due to increased principal payments. Under the proposed debt service plan, the peak annual debt service payment will remain at \$236,666 and will be retired by 1986.

ANNUAL DEBT SERVICE METUCHEN, N.J.



L. CANDEUB & ASSOCIATES
FEBRUARY, 1959

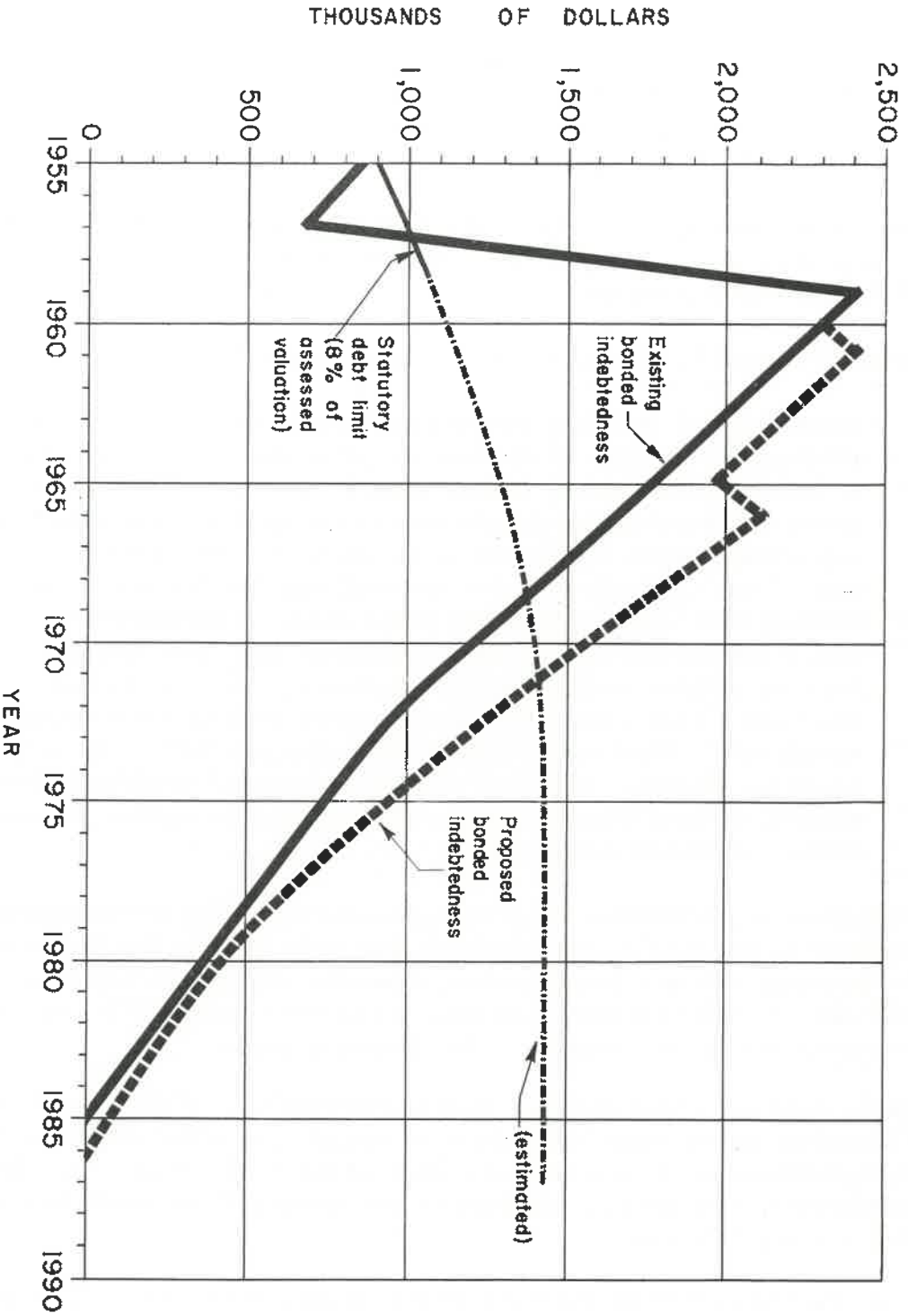
THE PREPARATION OF THIS CHART WAS FINANCED IN PART THROUGH AN URBAN PLANNING GRANT FROM THE HOUSING & HOME FINANCING AGENCY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AS AMENDED.

Table 29

SCHEDULE FOR PROPOSED SCHOOL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS,
METUCHEN, 1959-1985

Year	EXISTING DEBT		PROPOSED DEBT		T O T A L	
	Outstanding	Debt Service	Outstanding	Debt Service	Outstanding	Debt Service
1959	\$2,403,000	\$236,666			\$2,403,000	\$236,666
1960	2,288,000	212,820			2,288,000	212,820
1961	2,175,000	204,900	\$240,000		2,415,000	229,840
1962	2,071,000	195,050	228,000	\$21,000	2,299,000	216,050
1963	1,967,000	189,560	216,000	20,550	2,183,000	210,110
1964	1,863,000	186,080	204,000	20,100	2,067,000	206,180
1965	1,759,000	182,320	192,000	19,650	1,951,000	201,970
1966	1,657,000	176,560	445,000	19,200	2,102,000	195,760
1967	1,540,000	187,840	418,000	43,690	1,958,000	231,530
1968	1,423,000	183,430	391,000	42,680	1,814,000	226,110
1969	1,306,000	178,980	364,000	41,030	1,670,000	220,010
1970	1,190,000	173,600	337,000	40,650	1,527,000	214,250
1971	1,092,000	151,190	310,000	39,640	1,402,000	190,830
1972	995,000	146,200	283,000	38,620	1,278,000	184,820
1973	906,000	134,200	256,000	37,610	1,162,000	171,810
1974	821,000	126,430	229,000	36,600	1,051,000	163,030
1975	735,000	115,760	202,000	35,590	937,000	151,350
1976	660,000	109,180	175,000	34,580	835,000	143,760
1977	585,000	105,690	148,000	33,560	733,000	139,250
1978	510,000	102,200	121,000	32,550	631,000	134,750
1979	435,000	98,720	94,000	31,540	529,000	130,260
1980	360,000	95,230	72,000	25,520	432,000	120,750
1981	285,000	91,740	50,000	24,700	335,000	116,440
1982	210,000	88,250	40,000	11,880	250,000	100,130
1983	135,000	84,760	30,000	11,500	165,000	96,260
1984	60,000	81,280	20,000	11,120	80,000	92,400
1985	---	62,790	10,000	10,750	10,000	73,540
1986	---	---	---	10,380	---	10,380

SCHOOL BONDED INDEBTEDNESS METUCHEN, N. J.



I. CANDEUB & ASSOCIATES
FEBRUARY, 1959

THE PREPARATION OF THIS CHART WAS FINANCED IN PART THROUGH AN
URBAN PLANNING GRANT FROM THE HOUSING & HOME FINANCING AGENCY,
UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 701 OF THE HOUSING ACT OF 1954,
AS AMENDED.

CHAPTER IX. ADOPTION OF MASTER PLAN

New Jersey statutes provide for the adoption of all or part of the Master Plan by the Planning Board following a public hearing. The Master Plan can also be amended from time to time as the need arises, but, again, only after a public hearing.

It is recommended that the Metuchen Planning Board conduct the hearings necessary to adopt this Plan as it now stands or with the revisions which it may deem necessary.

The State statute (N. J. S. A. 40:55-1.13) provides that,

"Whenever the planning board after public hearing shall have adopted any portion of the master plan, the governing body or other public agency having jurisdiction over the subject matter, before taking action necessitating the expenditure of any public funds, incidental to the location, character or extent of one or more projects thereof, shall refer action involving such specific project or projects to the planning board for review and recommendation, and shall not act thereon without such recommendation or until forty-five days after such reference have elapsed without such recommendation. This requirement shall apply to action by a housing, parking, highway or other authority, redevelopment agency, school board or other similar public agency, federal, state, county or municipal."

The adoption of the Master Plan is important in giving formal status and recognition to the role of the Planning Board in guiding the development of the Borough. It is also important from the viewpoint of gaining widespread citizen understanding and support for the Master Plan as an explicit statement of the Borough's development goals.

Adoption does not automatically lead to effectuation of the Plan, however. The Planning Board must keep alert to changing conditions and to particular opportunities to carry out various parts of the Plan. In addition, comprehensive review and revision of the Master Plan itself will be necessary every few years.

This is what is meant by planning as a continuous process. The Master Plan is the starting point; accomplished physical development is the end result.

Previous Reports

1. Population, Land Use, Economic Base	October, 1956
2. Central Business District	May, 1957
3. Traffic Plan	May, 1958
4. Community Facilities Plan	June, 1958
5. Land Use Plan	November, 1958
6. Capital Improvements Program	December, 1958

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