

**Amendment to the
Metuchen Master Plan
Recreation/Open Space Plan
Element**



**Borough of Metuchen
Middlesex County, New Jersey**

**Prepared by:
James Constantine, PP
Borough Planner**

July 8, 2016

With Planning Board Revisions, Adopted July 21, 2016

Master Plan Element

Recreation/Open Space

Preface

This Master Plan Element is being drafted pursuant to the requirements of the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28-b.(7 & 8). The element concerns the provision for identification of existing and proposed sites for recreation activities and sites specifically designated for open space conservation. This element also recognizes the growing importance of walking, bicycling and linking existing facilities together for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially with the Borough's recent adoption of a Complete Streets policy in 2013. Open space and improvement of conditions for walking encourages exercise and an active community which promotes public health benefits which include, reducing disability, enhancing psychological wellbeing, improving physical functioning and reducing direct medical costs.

Introduction

For the past 25 years Metuchen has been both a statewide and county-wide leader in the planning and implementation of Smart Growth. The Town Center was approved by the New Jersey State Planning Commission, is designated as a Transit Village and has received numerous awards.

The Borough of Metuchen Master Plan lists among its goals and objectives the following:

- To preserve and enhance the residential character of the Borough.
- To maintain the Borough's physical and visual identity in the region.
- To provide a circulation system which brings into balance the needs of the **pedestrian** (emphasis added) and the needs of cars, trucks and buses.
- To preserve areas of environmental sensitivity, with additional planning of surrounding land uses to ensure the maximum public benefit from the resultant open space.

The goals and objectives of the Master Plan have been elaborated and characterized to be principally focused on preservation: preservation of the Borough's essentially residential character, maintaining the integrity of its neighborhoods, and ultimately, its desirability as a community in which to live. This desirability includes the need to provide a consistent level of service to the community while maintaining a property tax burden that is affordable to property owners.

The designation of sites in the Borough which either are currently utilized as, or proposed to be used as active and passive recreation and open space areas are consistent with the specific and the overall goals and objectives of the Borough Master Plan. The presence of adequate and

accessible parks and open space areas is often cited among the most desirable elements of a particular community. Real property values are enhanced by the presence and proximity of recreation and open space areas in a community. As such, it is in the interest of the Borough to have a clear plan relating to the open space and recreation needs of the community, including the provision for future acquisition of parcels as they may become available.

The Recreation/Open Space Element of the Borough Master Plan sets forth the goals and objectives for the Borough relative to recreation and open space, as well as specific policy recommendations necessary for implementation. The most significant new components of this Element involve the Plaza, a town square to be located in the heart of the downtown, and the Middlesex Greenway Extension linking downtown to the twelve hundred acres of the Dismal Swamp, including a kayak and canoe route.

History of Planning Efforts

The Borough of Metuchen has a long history of comprehensive planning. Addressing future needs in areas such as open space, transportation, housing, safety, and healthy environments has had a positive impact on the community. A review of the Borough's planning efforts to improve open space, recreation, and pedestrian and bicycle connectivity within the community are summarized below.

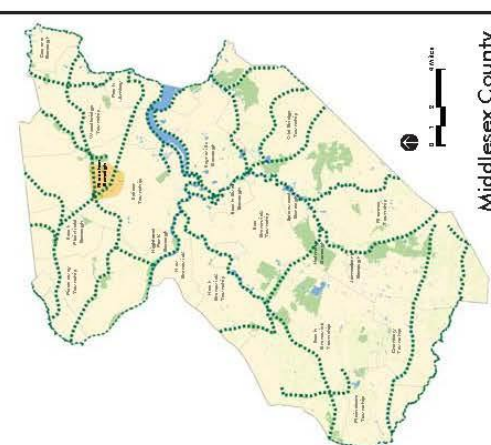
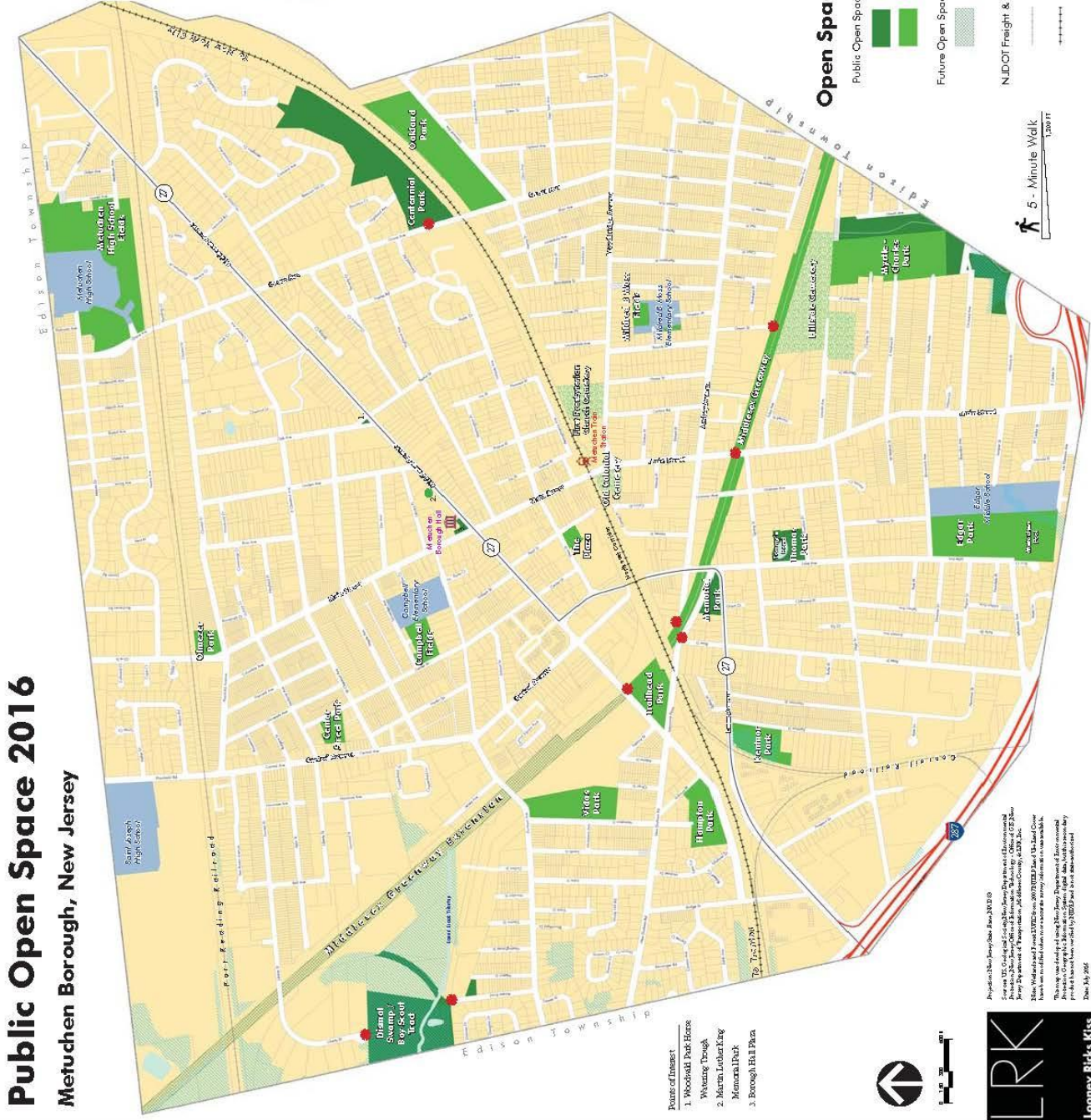
1983 Master Plan and the 1983 Housing Element

The 1983 Master Plan and the 1983 Housing Element were both prepared by Frost Associates. They were reviewed, in conjunction with the Environmental Resource Inventory, prepared by the Borough's Environmental Commission and issued in 1976, for relevant observations and recommendations relating to Recreation and Open Space needs in the Borough. The resources were compared with the 1988 Master Plan Re-examination Report and 1988 Housing Plan and Fair Share Element, both prepared by Hintz-Nelessen Associates, PC.

The prior plans refer to the need for neighborhood park areas to serve the immediate residents of a specific area. There are several neighborhoods in the Borough which are not served by neighborhood parks or playgrounds, or are isolated from adequate facilities by busy traffic streets. The neighborhoods include the area north of the Port Reading Railroad, the Hillside/Highland neighborhood, the northwest quadrant area north of New Durham Road and the Linden/Oak Avenue neighborhood.

Public Open Space 2016

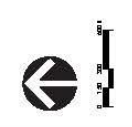
Metuchen Borough, New Jersey



Middlesex County

The following Middlesex County highlights in green include the Conceptual Stage System of greenway proposed in the 2010 Middlesex County Comprehensive Plan. These highlights are intended to provide information on the greenway system and its potential to provide a network of greenways and trails to meet the needs of the county.

- Points of Interest**
- 1. Woodwalk Park Hoop
 - Wyanoye Trough
 - 2. Meron Loebert Park
 - Memorial Park
 - 3. Borough Hall Plaza



Project: Metuchen Borough Open Space 2016

Source: GIS data provided by the Borough of Metuchen, New Jersey, and the Middlesex County GIS Department. The data was provided to LRK by the Borough of Metuchen, New Jersey, and the Middlesex County GIS Department. LRK has conducted field visits to various locations in the Borough of Metuchen, New Jersey, and the Middlesex County GIS Department. LRK has conducted field visits to various locations in the Borough of Metuchen, New Jersey, and the Middlesex County GIS Department. LRK has conducted field visits to various locations in the Borough of Metuchen, New Jersey, and the Middlesex County GIS Department.

Date: July 2016

Open Space & Recreation Areas Map, 2016

Public Open Space & Recreation

- Passive
- Active

Future Open Space & Recreation

- Middlesex Greenway Extension

NJDOT Freight & Passenger Rails

- Freight Rail
- Northeast Corridor Passenger Rail

Points of Interest

- Access Point to Open Space Trails
- School Site
- Cemetery
- Wetlands

5 - Minute Walk

1/2 mile

1988 Master Plan Re-examination Report

The need for natural open space areas as a habitat for indigenous vegetation and as wildlife corridors is demonstrated in the 1988 Master Plan Re-examination Report and Housing Element/Fair Share Plan. The areas in the northwest quadrant of the Borough and along the Lehigh Valley Railroad were shown to contain many instances of Red Maple and Ash specimen trees which are an indicator of the wet nature of the land in those areas. The trees are a unique natural resource necessary for the balance of ecology in the Borough. The Lehigh Valley Railroad supports a wide variety of tree, shrub and herb species, including red maple, pin oak, slippery elm, silky dogwood, bayberry, honeysuckle, pokeweed, goldenrod and watercress. The Lehigh Valley Railroad is uniquely suited as a connecting link to many diverse areas of the Borough, including parks and natural open space areas. The Lehigh Valley Railroad is also unique to itself through the diversity of habitats found along its length. This diversity may enable different portions of the parcel to be developed for different purposes, while in total, fulfilling the goals and objectives of the Master Plan and the Recreation/Open Space Element.

1992 Recreation/Open Space Plan Element

The 1992 Recreation/Open Space Plan Element is the most recent Open Space plan for the Borough. The goals of the 1992 Plan were largely updated to reflect the Clean Air Act of 1990. The Plan further identified 14 parcels of land, comprising approximately 70.0 acres, which were either municipally owned public park and open space lands, or privately owned, deed restricted, open space areas. The Plan also identified two properties for potential open space. They include the Lehigh Valley Railroad right-of-way from the southeastern boundary of the Borough to the northwestern boundary of the Borough and the northern portion of the Gulton Property, which is adjacent to the Boy Scout/Green Acres parcel. Recommendations of the 1992 Recreation/Open Space Plan included designating the Lehigh Valley Railroad as an open space corridor, actively pursuing parcels for acquisition, and seeking to improve existing open space.

1994 Master Plan Reexamination

The majority of the assumptions, policies, goals, and objectives, which formed the basis of the 1988 Re-examination Report, were deemed to still be valid to varying degrees in The 1994 Master Plan Re-examination. The Plan did, however, specifically identify fostering development of a greenway on the Lehigh Valley Railroad right-of-way wherever possible.

1995 Middlesex County Open Space and Recreation Master Plan

In 1995 Metuchen endorsed the Middlesex County Open Space and Recreation Master Plan which proposed a county greenway system. The Plan identified natural corridors and man-made

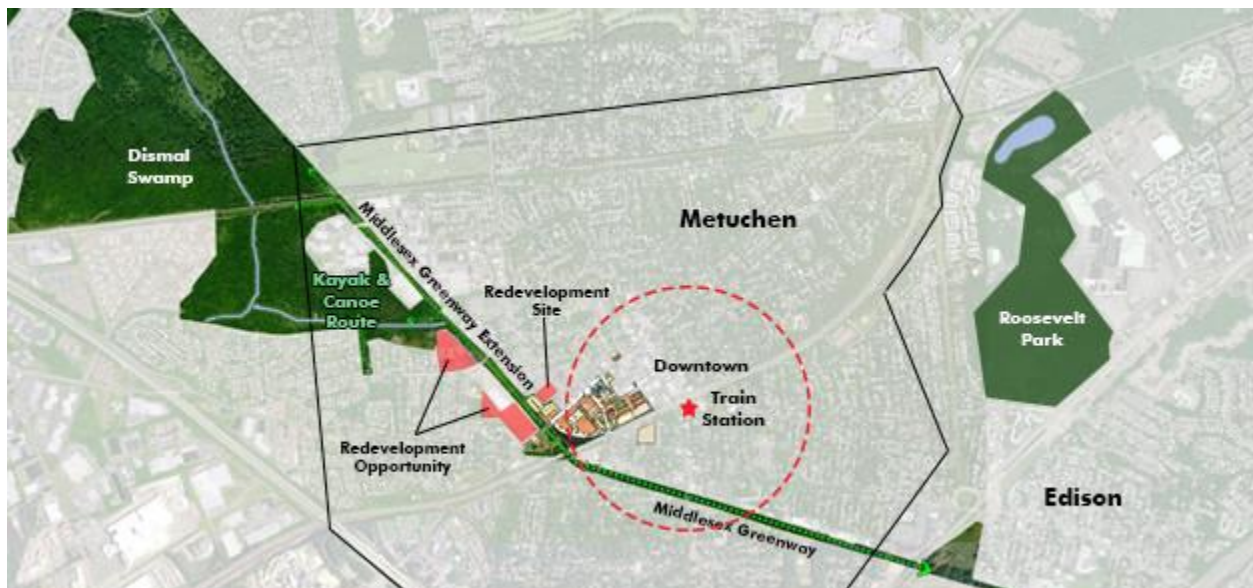
corridors that interconnect public open spaces and activity areas that contribute to conservation and public enjoyment. Preliminary Greenway Recommendations involving Metuchen included a Metuchen to Perth Amboy Greenway, South Plainfield to Metuchen Greenway and an Edison to Port Reading Greenway. Each of these greenways were proposed to utilize abandoned railroad rights-of-way.

2000 Master Plan Reexamination

The 2000 Master Plan Re-examination deemed the goals and objectives from the 1994 Master Plan Reexamination Report still valid and identified the Lehigh Valley Railroad right-of-way (Middlesex Greenway) as the most significant opportunity to increase Metuchen’s open space inventory.

2006 Master Plan Reexamination

The 2006 Master Plan Re-examination identified Metuchen as having approximately 5.5 acres of parks and open space per 1,000 residents. As of today, that figure is closer to 7.2 acres of parks and open space per 1,000 residents and includes the first leg of the Middlesex Greenway and public school recreational areas. The Lehigh Valley Railroad right-of-way (Middlesex Greenway) continued to present the most significant opportunity for Metuchen to increase its open space inventory. The southern portion of the Middlesex Greenway, north to the intersection with Middlesex Avenue was improved and Middlesex County acquired a parcel between the Northeast Corridor rail line and Middlesex Avenue to create a trail-head.



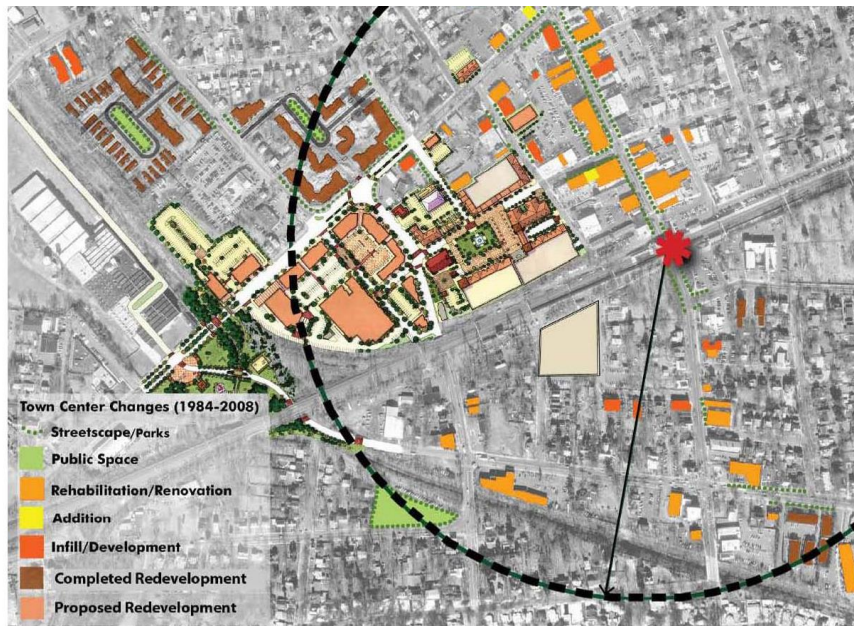
Proposed Middlesex Greenway Extension along the Lehigh Valley railroad right-of-way, which creates a pedestrian and bicycle connection between the Dismal Swamp and downtown redevelopment sites.

It was determined that once the entire Greenway is improved it would yield many benefits. It will increase the amount of open space within the Borough by 40%, provide a link to the Dismal Swamp in the Borough's northwest quadrant and the Metuchen SportsPlex, as well as furthering the Borough's stated goal of fostering bicycle and pedestrian mobility. The Greenway would connect to a national greenway system linking local greenways into a unified, 3,000-mile route from Canada to Key West, known as the East Coast Greenway.

The first improved three-mile leg of the Middlesex Greenway has been completed. This regional open space trail system passes near Metuchen's soon to be completed town square which is being referred to as the Plaza, providing an off-road pedestrian and bicycle linkage from Metuchen, Edison, Woodbridge and South Plainfield. The county-owned Trailhead Park is situated two blocks away at the edge of the downtown, and there are approved redevelopment plans to connect these two public spaces with pedestrian-friendly streetscapes along Middlesex Avenue and Lake Avenue.

Town Square - Plaza

The Borough had attempted redevelopment at the Pearl Street parking lot site several times over the years, including as recently as the late 1980's, but none of those earlier efforts included a significant public space. In 2007, during one of several community workshops convened to focus on downtown redevelopment, the concept of a town square took shape. Citizens were yearning for a high quality public gathering space and it became clear that by strategically locating the



A key component of the long-term planning for Metuchen's Town Center is to create a centrally located public space to act as a town square.

town square, it could act as an activity anchor for Main Street and a focal point linking downtown redevelopment to Main Street and the train station. The concept of a town square in the New Street corridor has been endorsed in numerous planning efforts including the requirement for such a space in the mixed-use zoning unanimously adopted for the Parking Authority's Pearl Street parking lot redevelopment.



View from the corner of New Street and Pearl Street.

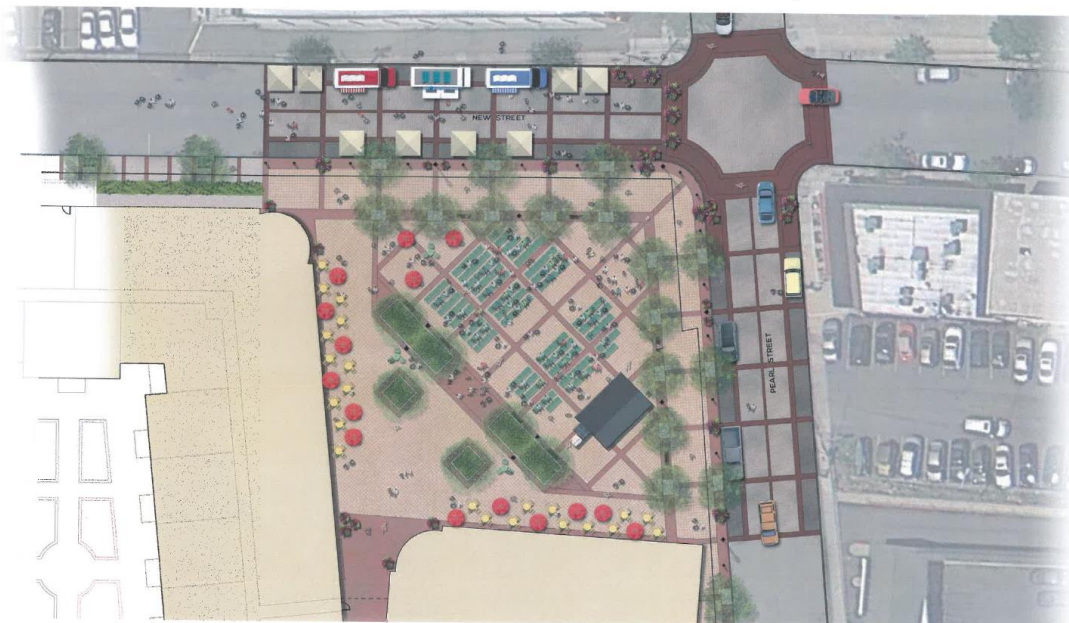
PIAZZA



The top image is Pearl Street parking lot as it exists today looking south from the corner of Center Street. The bottom image is a rendering of the proposed Plaza which is surrounded by textured paved streets and sidewalks designed as a “shared space.” The surrounding streets can be closed off to allow the space to expand for large public events.



LANDSCAPE / HARDSCAPE



LANDSCAPE / HARDSCAPE



The top image is a rendering of the proposed Plaza with the street closed off to allow for the expansion of public events, festivals and activities. This allows pedestrians, vendors and food trucks to take over the textured paved streets and to extend the public space. The bottom image is a proposed plan view of the Plaza surrounded by textured shared space paved streets and sidewalks that can serve as an ancillary expansion area for the Plaza with temporary rerouting of traffic as approved by the Metuchen Police Chief.

Designed as a classic town square, the Plaza features a tree lined plaza surrounded by specially designed streets. This public space is envisioned as a gathering place and location for special events that will attract residents from throughout the region. In an ideal manner, the location of the Plaza sits near the train station and is served by several bus routes, thus making it easily accessible by mass transit which allows it to have even greater availability to the public at large.



LANDSCAPE / HARDSCAPE



The centerpiece of the Plaza is intended to be flexible for public events and activities. It is surrounded by sidewalks lined with shade trees, benches and decorative lighting fixtures, textured paved streets and designed using principles of “shared space” edged by bollards in place of curbs. Complimentary colored and textured paving material will be utilized on both streets and sidewalks in order to create the sense of a larger square, particularly when the public space is expanded into the streets surrounding it for special events.

During non-peak periods, the surrounding textured paved streets will provide vehicular access and on-street parking. The streets and sidewalks are deliberately intended to function as a “shared space,” where pedestrians and bicycles have priority, vehicles are slowed and access is limited. Textured pavement will calm traffic and allow for safe pedestrian access between the Plaza and the adjacent buildings. The total public space comprising the Plaza, including the “shared space,” is over three-quarters (¾) of an acre.

At times when public events are being staged, one or more legs of the surrounding streets may be closed, thus allowing the square to expand into a larger space uninterrupted by vehicular traffic. This is critical in order to allow this space to accommodate thousands of people from the region who might attend a major special event hosted in the Plaza.



2002 Middlesex County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

The 2002 Middlesex County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan proposed comprehensive strategies and policy recommendations to provide safe and secure bicycle and pedestrian accommodations throughout the County. The four goals of the plan include:

- Establish a countywide bicycle and pedestrian network
- Develop policies, practices, and procedures that promote and generate actions to enhance bicycle and walking accommodations
- Facilitate the implementation of bicycle and pedestrian improvements
- Promote public awareness and acceptance of bicycling and walking

The County Plan identifies the proposed Middlesex Greenway and Middlesex Greenway Extension as being part of a comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle plan to promote the public health benefits of exercising in an active community environment. The 2002 Middlesex County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan specifically recognized the Borough of Metuchen as being a bicycle and pedestrian friendly community:

There are few safe or adequate routes linking these residential subdivisions, townhouse and apartment complexes, employment centers, transportation centers and commercial developments, municipal government and recreation facilities, schools and libraries, except in bicycle and pedestrian friendly down town municipalities such as Metuchen.



An innovative color coded system was established for walking tours of various lengths identifying local landmarks and important community resources. This sign is located in Oakland Park.

2010 Walk Metuchen

The Borough received a “healthy communities” pilot grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in 2004 to develop an innovative color coded system of walking tours of the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods, identifying routes of various lengths, along with local landmarks and important businesses and community resources. Municipal officials have led numerous walking tours with local citizens, thereby promoting walking around town as a form of active transportation benefitting public health and as a way of better becoming acquainted with one’s own community and its constituents.

2010 Middlesex Greenway Extension Plan

The 2010 Middlesex Greenway Extension Plan prepared through a public participatory process, examined a vision, concept plan, and implementation strategy to bring the Middlesex Greenway Extension to fruition. The community vision for the Middlesex Greenway Extension included:

- Gardens, wildflower and butterfly gardens, community-supported agriculture, and raised bed community gardens)
- Sustainable design, wetlands restoration, storm water treatment trains, rain gardens, and stream “daylighting”)
- Park spaces, quiet sitting areas, flower gardens and arboretums, sculpture gardens, and embankment planning and restoration
- Trails, paved multi-use paths, soft-paved trails, wooded mountain bike trails, and bridge elements

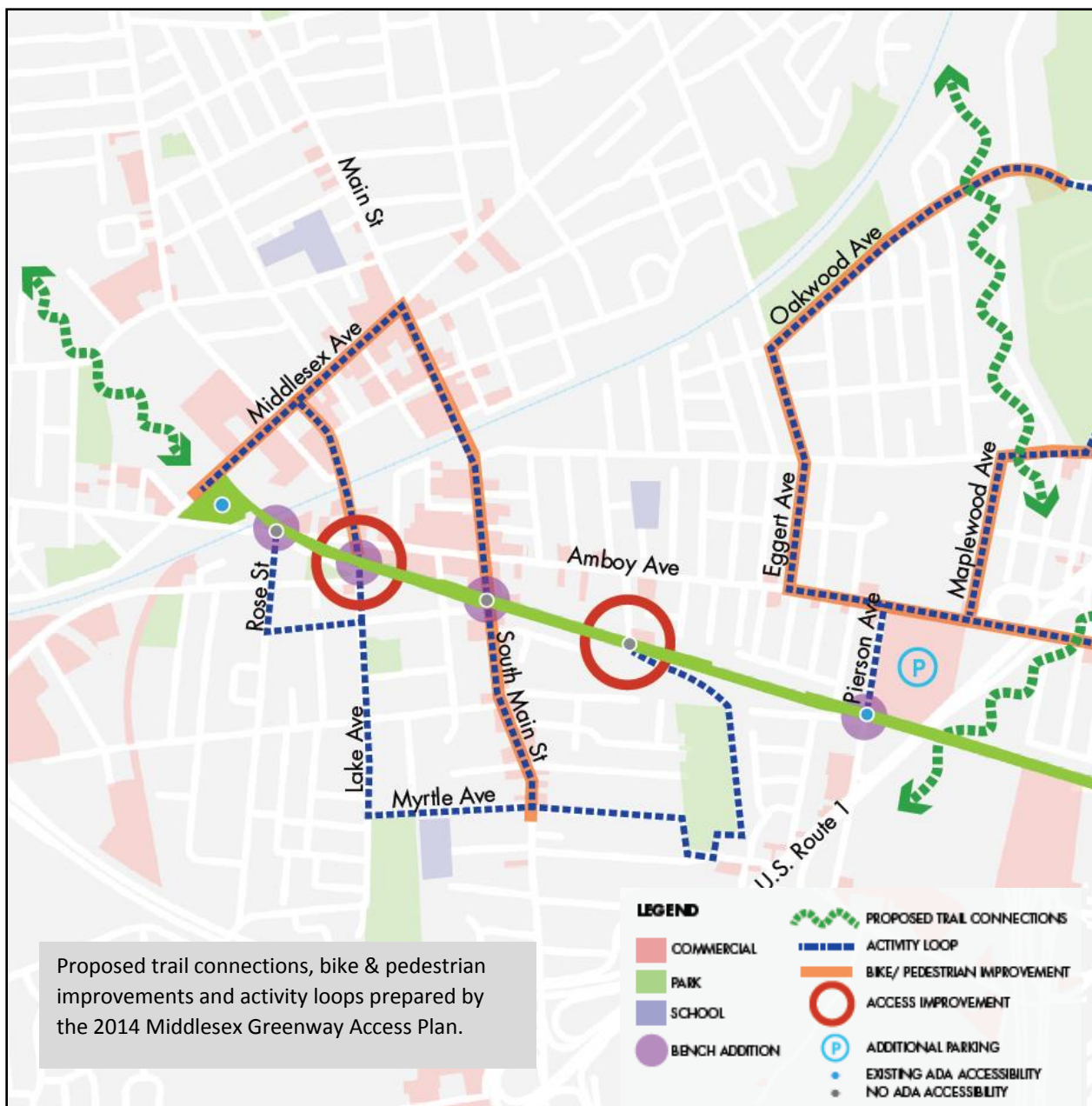


The Middlesex Greenway will provide a pedestrian and Bicycle connection throughout the Borough and the region.

The plan further identified an implementation agenda to build and construct community gardens, a pedestrian bridge over Middlesex Avenue, rename and program park space known as Trailhead Park, improve trails and improvements for ecological restoration for the greenway such as “daylighting” a portion of the Dismal Brook. Any improvements to the Middlesex Greenway would be subject to approval by the Middlesex County Freeholders. Opportunity sites for redevelopment adjacent to and along the Middlesex Greenway Extension were identified as part of this plan. One of these sites has already been redeveloped and the other two sites have since been deemed as areas in need of redevelopment by the Borough.

2014 Middlesex Greenway Access Plan and Health Impact Assessment

The 2014 Middlesex Greenway Access Plan and Health Impact Assessment prepared as a project for the Together North Jersey Local Demonstration Project Program created an access plan for the Middlesex Greenway through Metuchen, Edison and Woodbridge in Middlesex County. The Plan proposed enhanced use of the greenway by “promoting partnerships and enhancing links to nearby public transit stops, existing and proposed activity centers, parks and recreation, employers, and other community destinations.” The Plan also identified public health benefits of the greenway, economic development opportunities through tourism and promotion of the greenway itself.



2013 Complete Streets Policy

The following are recommendations from the 2014 Middlesex Greenway Access Plan:

- Accessible Greenway
 - Enhance physical access to the greenway through bike and pedestrian improvements
 - Enhance physical access to the greenway through expanded vehicle parking
 - Enhance signage and wayfinding through structural means
 - Enhance digital wayfinding and marketing of greenway
- Healthy Greenway
 - Enhance usability and expand physical fitness options
 - Increase use and benefit by vulnerable subpopulations including providing residents from the Metuchen Senior Citizens' units on Lincoln Avenue
 - Enhance trail cleanliness and maintenance
 - Minimize exposure to noxious weeds and animal and insect pests
- Safe Greenway
 - Improve feelings of security for greenway users with the possible addition of security cameras.
 - Minimize crashes and injuries for pedestrians and bicyclists accessing or using the greenway
- Smart Greenway
 - Support usage of the greenway by local educational institutions
 - Promote usage of the greenway by scouts
 - Promote usage of the greenway by environmental/other education groups
- Destination Greenway
 - Promote the greenway, nearby businesses and places as a local tourism destination
 - Leverage the greenway as an asset for economic development
 - Integrate art into the greenway
- Future Greenway Extension
 - Expand access to and extend the greenway
 - Develop connectors to local and regional parks, trails, open spaces and neighborhoods
 - Facilitate collaborative, regional partnerships to plan for the future use and stewardship of the greenway

Complete Streets Policy

The Borough also adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2013 to enable safe access so all pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across public streets. The benefits of the Policy were many and aligned with the goals of the Recreation and Open Space Master Plan Element. Some of these key benefits included: providing connections to bicycling and walking trip generators such as employment, education, residential, recreation, retail services and public facilities, thus promoting healthy lifestyles; and, improving safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, children, older citizens, non-drivers, the mobility challenged, those that cannot afford a car or individuals that choose to live car free. Moreover, the Borough's Complete Streets Policy further aligned with the goals of the 2013 Middlesex County Transportation Master Plan and the New Jersey Department of Transportation's Complete Streets Policy. This multi-jurisdictional alignment of complete street policies is critical to a municipality bisected by a New Jersey State highway. These goals included the promotion of an adequate and safe bicycle and pedestrian system that supports both mobility and recreation, the protection of the environment, and addressing energy conservation and climate change impacts on transportation.

Goals and Objectives

The overall philosophy of this Plan recognizes the growing importance of providing safe open space and recreational opportunities with walkable connections to existing facilities within the community. The recommended goals and objectives of the Recreation/Open Space Master Plan Element are as follows:

1. To provide adequate and accessible active and passive recreation areas for use by Borough residents and others throughout the region.
2. To provide for safe accessible neighborhood playgrounds for the youth of the Borough.
3. To increase the number, size, type and variety of open space and recreational opportunities for the residents of the Borough.
4. To provide additional open space parcels with appropriate vegetation necessary to reduce noise, traffic and air pollution.
5. To provide for the establishment of alternate transportation modes (bicycle /pedestrian) to reduce traffic, noise and air pollution.
6. To provide for pedestrian and bicycle connections between the various recreation and open space parcels in the Borough, thereby providing additional recreational opportunities to all residents.
7. To utilize the unique characteristics of all specific open space parcels to further the goals and objectives of the Borough Master Plan for environmental, land use and circulation issues.
8. To enable safe access so all pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across public streets which provide public access to open space and recreation.
9. Open space and improvement of conditions for walking encourages exercise and an active community which promotes public health benefits.
10. To complete the extension of the Middlesex Greenway to the Dismal Swamp which will significantly expand the quality and quantity of open space and water (Dismal Brook) accessible to the public.

Existing Open Space Parcels

The Borough of Metuchen contains approximately 124 acres of public open space and recreation areas, 64 acres privately owned open space and recreation areas, and 4 acres of privately owned open space & recreation areas that allow for public access. These calculations are based on GIS parcel information as obtained from the New Jersey Office of Information Technology – Office of GIS. This parcel data is a generalized representation of land ownership and, as such, is less precise than legal descriptions of land ownership. Area calculations from this data are for general planning purposes only. In some instances, open space occurs within only a portion of the parcel identified. As such, GIS acreage in the table below may be smaller than the lot size of the parcels identified. The parcels in the Open Space Inventory include the following:

| Block | Lot | Owner | Name | Ownership | Use | Type | GIS Acres |
|-------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|---|----------------|-----------|
| 2 | 1 | BROTHERS AT SACRED HEART | St Joseph High School fields | Private | Baseball, Track, Football, Soccer, Tennis | Active | 43 |
| 25.01 | 1 | METUCHEN BOARD OF EDUCATION | Metuchen High School Fields | Public | Football, Track, Baseball, Softball, Soccer | Active | 15 |
| 37 | 1.02 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Dismal Swamp - Boy Scout Green Acres | Public | Natural Open Space | Passive (ROSI) | 10 |
| 37 | 5.03 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Railway Spur | Public | Natural Open Space | Passive | 1 |
| 37 | 5.05, 5.12, 5.22, 13, 14, 15.01, 17.02, 17.01, 16.02, 16.03 | GULTON | Vacant, Constrained Portions of Lot | Private | Natural Open Space | Passive | 15.2 |
| 38 | 1 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Vacant Lot | Public | Natural Open Space | Passive | 0.2 |
| 43 | 4 | Middlesex County | Middlesex Greenway | Public | MIDDLESEX CO RAIL TO TRAIL | Active | 12.1 |
| 43 | 5 | Middlesex County | Middlesex Greenway | Public | MIDDLESEX CO RAIL TO TRAIL | Active | 1.5 |

| Block | Lot | Owner | Name | Ownership | Use | Type | GIS Acres |
|-------|----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|-----------|
| 43 | 7 | Middlesex County | Middlesex Greenway | Public | MIDDLESEX CO RAIL TO TRAIL | Active | 2.6 |
| 43 | 8 | Middlesex County | Middlesex Greenway | Public | MIDDLESEX CO RAIL TO TRAIL | Active | 6.7 |
| 51.04 | 27,27.01 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Centre Street Park | Public | Natural Open Space, playground | Active (ROSI) | 1.1 |
| 60 | 56,56.01 | METUCHEN BOARD OF EDUCATION | Campbell Elementary School Fields | Public | Playground, Softball, Basketball | Active | 1.8 |
| 69 | 125.07 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Vidas Park | Public | Softball, Soccer | Active | 5.0 |
| 78 | 13 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Hampton Park | Public | Softball | Active (ROSI) | 1.1 |
| 79 | 12 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Hampton Park | Public | Soccer | Active | 0.7 |
| 79 | 25.1 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Hampton Park | Public | Soccer, Basketball | Active | 1.6 |
| 92 | 32 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Olmezer Park | Public | Playground, Basketball | Active (ROSI) | 1.2 |
| 102 | 25 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Borough Hall Plaza | Public | Seating | Passive | 0.2 |
| 105 | 58 | WOODWILD PARK ASSOCIATION | Woodwild Park | Private with Public Access | Natural Open Space | Passive | 1.0 |
| 106 | 12 | WOODWILD PARK ASSOCIATION | Woodwild Park | Private with Public Access | Natural Open Space | Passive | 2.5 |
| 109 | 1 | Middlesex County | Trailhead Park | Public | Metuchen Greenway Trailhead | Passive | 2.7 |
| 115 | 36.03 | Borough of Metuchen | The Plaza | Private | Seating, Plaza | Passive | 0.46 |

| Block | Lot | Owner | Name | Ownership | Use | Type | GIS Acres |
|--------|---------------------|------------------------------------|---|-----------|--|----------------|-----------|
| 124.02 | 54 | Centenary United Methodist Church | Centenary UMC | Private | Open Space, Playground | Active | 4.3 |
| 126 | 130 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Centennial Park | Public | Natural Open Space | Passive (ROSI) | 13.4 |
| 133 | 59 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Memorial Park | Public | Seating, Memorial | Passive | 1.0 |
| 135 | 1-24 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Kentnor Park | Public | Natural Open Space | Passive (ROSI) | 1.4 |
| 136 | 1-32, 53.03 & 31.02 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Kentnor Park | Public | Natural Open Space | Passive (ROSI) | 1.5 |
| 149 | 15 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Thomas Park | Public | Pond | Passive (ROSI) | 1.9 |
| 155 | 1 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Edgar Park/ Metuchen Pool | Public | Pool | Active (ROSI) | 11 |
| 164 | 49 | FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH METUCHEN | First Presbyterian Church Fields | Private | Softball | Active | 1.2 |
| 175 | 1.01 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Oakland Park | Public | Tennis, Softball, Baseball, Basketball, Playground | Active (ROSI) | 10.9 |
| 185 | 69,70 | METUCHEN BOARD OF EDUCATION | Mildred B Moss Elementary School Fields | Public | Softball | Active | 0.7 |
| 213 | 1.01 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Myrtle Charles Park | Public | Soccer, Baseball, Basketball, Softball | Active (ROSI) | 15 |
| 216 | 62,126 | BOROUGH OF METUCHEN | Vacant Lot | Public | Natural Open Space | Passive | 2.5 |

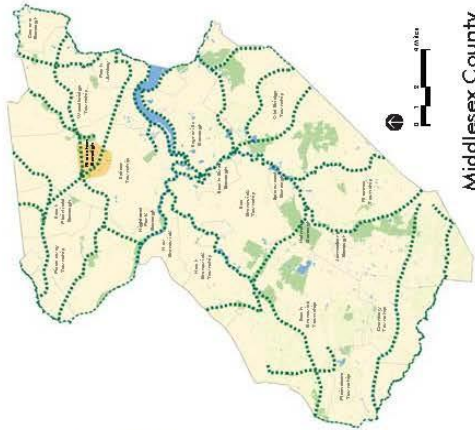
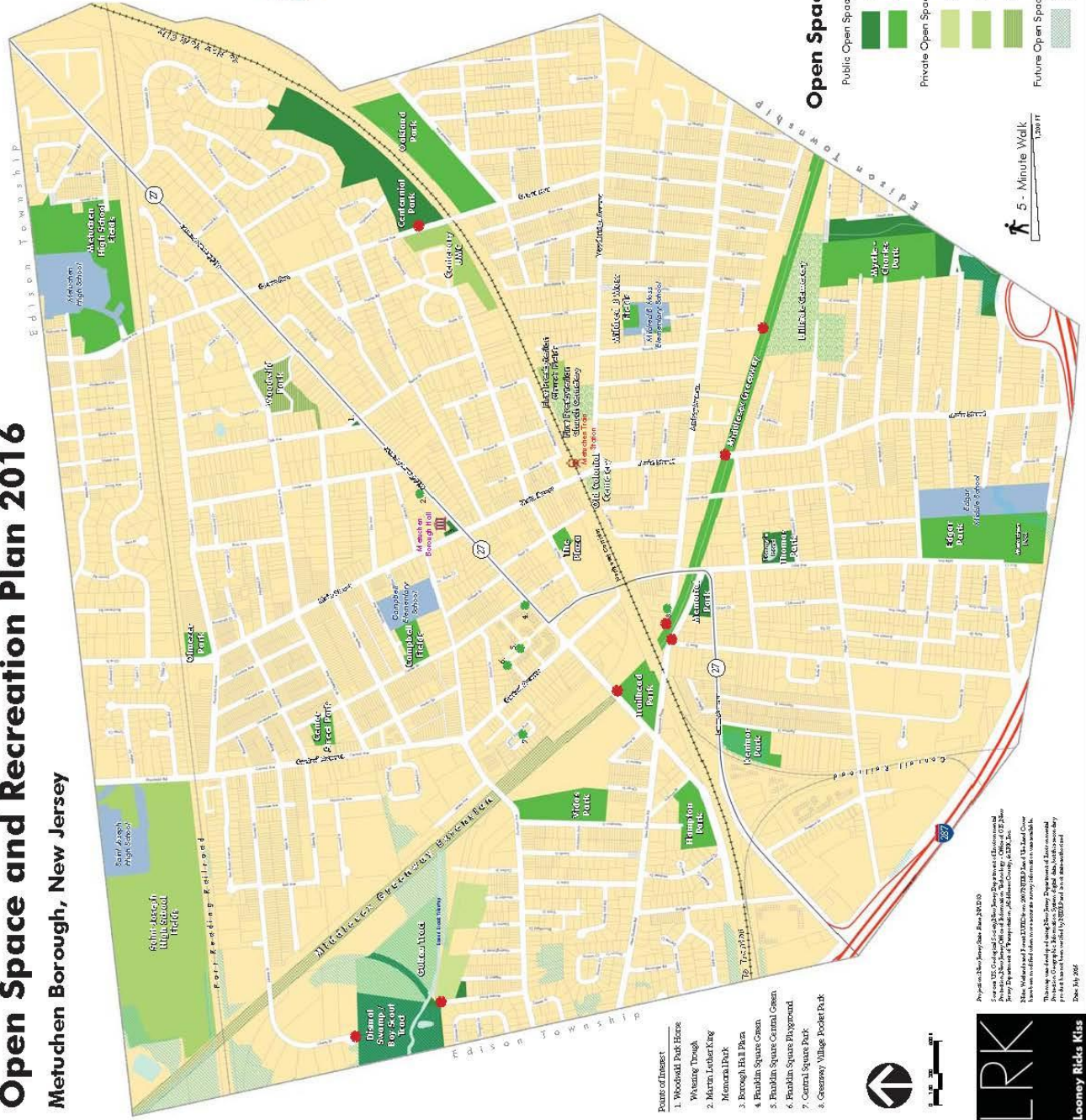
Potential Open Space Parcels

There are several parcels in the Borough which may become available for dedication or acquisition as open space areas for active and passive recreation. They include the Lehigh Valley Railroad right-of-way in the northwestern boundary of the Borough and the northern portion of the Gulton Property, which is adjacent to the Boy Scout/Green Acres parcel. The parcels are listed for informational purposes.

| Block | Lot | Owner | Name | Ownership | Proposed Use | Type | GIS Acres |
|-------|-----|--|------|-----------|------------------------------------|--------|-----------|
| 43 | 1-3 | Con Rail Corp. Norfolk Southern Corp. | LVRR | Private | Middlesex Greenway Extension | Active | 14 |

Open Space and Recreation Plan 2016

Metuchen Borough, New Jersey



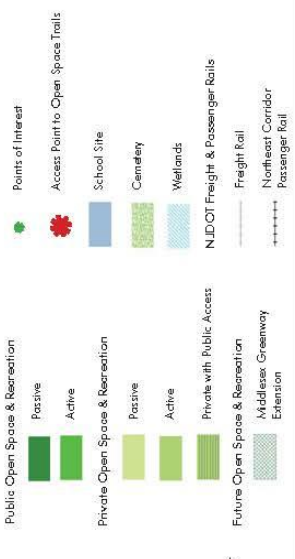
Middlesex County

This map of Middlesex County highlights in green the various Open Space and Recreation Plan areas for the year 2016. The map is intended to provide a general overview of the plan and is not intended to be used as a legal document. For more information, please contact the Middlesex County Office of Planning and Economic Development at 100 State Street, Suite 200, Trenton, NJ 08646. Phone: 609-981-2000. Fax: 609-981-2001. Email: oped@middlesexnj.gov



Total Open Space & Recreation Acres by Ownership

Open Space & Recreation Areas Map, 2016



123 North Street, Suite 200 • Princeton, NJ 08540 • 609-981-2000 • www.middlesexnj.gov • Middlesex County Office of Planning and Economic Development • 100 State Street, Suite 200, Trenton, NJ 08646 • 609-981-2000 • Fax: 609-981-2001 • Email: oped@middlesexnj.gov

Potential Open Space Parcels (continued)

The Middlesex Greenway Extension has been delineated on the Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2016 map. The delineated parcel has not seen active railroad use in many years. The significance of the designation of the Lehigh Valley Railroad as an open space parcel is vital with respect to several of the goals of the Master Plan.

The parcel would be a unique linear open space within the Borough, and serve as a potential pedestrian and bicycle connection between the various parks via seven identifiable access points. The Middlesex Greenway Extension would also provide additional safe access to parks and recreation areas and the Dismal Swamp for residents who do not have a neighborhood park near their home.

The northwestern portion of the Gulton parcel, which lies north and west of several railroad spurs contains a significant amount of freshwater wetland habitats and lies within the 100-year floodplain. Additionally, this parcel is part of the uplands to the Dismal Swamp, a unique wildlife ecosystem for the region. The preservation of additional open space in this area would serve to buffer environmentally sensitive areas, thus providing additional public benefit from existing and new open space parcels. It should also be noted that the developed portions of the Gulton Tract have been identified as an opportunity site for redevelopment in numerous Borough plans. Redevelopment of this previous industrial site would provide a greater public benefit with an enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connection to significant open space as well as water recreation acres to the Dismal Brook.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Master Plan would make the following recommendations to implement the goals and objectives of the element:

1. Continue to pursue the implementation strategies as identified in the 2010 Middlesex Greenway Extension Plan, which seek to expand the Middlesex Greenway providing a major addition to open space within the community and enhancing bicycle and pedestrian connectivity within the community and region.
2. Continue to examine the surrounding properties of the proposed Middlesex Greenway Extension, whether they are to be used, developed or redeveloped to ensure the implementation of the objectives of the plan.
3. Facilitate improvements to the Middlesex Greenway that enhance appropriate pedestrian and bicyclist access, safety, and wellbeing as recommended in the 2014 Middlesex Greenway Access Plan and Health Impact Assessment.

4. Reserve opportunities for water recreation acres to the Dismal Brook in the form of waterside trails, footbridge crossings and a kayak and canoe launch. The Environmental Commission has commenced clearance of the first leg of a kayak and canoe route.
5. Continue to actively pursue as parcels become available, acquiring easements, dedications and/or outright purchase of open space lands. This activity should be extended to seeking additional neighborhood parks to serve Borough residents.
6. Seek to improve existing open space parcels through buffer planting, acquisition of additional buffer areas, establishment of interconnections within the system and other proactive planning methods to ensure maximum public and environmental benefit.
7. Facilitate improvements to bicycle and pedestrian systems that support safe mobility and recreation, including providing adequate lighting along bike paths and walking trails and parks.
8. Promote inclusive designs for outdoor spaces like the creation of multigenerational playgrounds that offer physical and mental health benefits while nurturing opportunities for intergenerational socialization.
9. Establish a mechanism to fund the programming of regular activities and special events in the Plaza as well as ensuring a high standard of maintenance of this public space.