

Section VIII

**OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION
PLAN ELEMENT**

SECTION VIII - OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Township of West Windsor originally developed this element of the Master Plan as a separate Open Space and Recreation Plan. It is the intent of the Open Space and Recreation Plan to articulate the local government's vision of open space and recreation for the community. Without planning the appearance of a community, the quality of life of its residents and of its natural resources can be dramatically altered in a short period of time due to random changes in land use. No community would build a road without establishing the need for it and planning where it should go. The same is true for open space and recreation.

In 1998, Mayor Carole Carson established the Mayor's Open Space Task Force of West Windsor Township to:

Prepare a report identifying the projected needs for open space acquisition and use in West Windsor for the next five to ten years based on Sports Organizations', Senior Citizens', Environmental, School Board, and Recreation quality-of-life information estimates.

The Mayor's Open Space Task Force included members of the general public, recreation and sports organizations, Environmental Commission, Recreation Commission, Township Planning Board, local non-profit open space groups, and the Township Recreation Director.

The group researched the history of open space and recreation planning and development within the Township and solicited community input for the future needs and desire of the community, including numerous public meetings. The Task Force presented its report at public hearings of the Planning Board and Council in the summer of 1999.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan utilized the fine work of this task force to articulate West Windsor Township's vision for Open Space and Recreation, in the format established by the State. Much of the Open Space and Recreation Plan was directly abstracted from the Task Force Report, with some updates and minor modifications. The Township is indebted to the members of this Task Force for their efforts and commitment to the creation of quality open space for West Windsor Township.

West Windsor Township faces significant short and long term open space and recreation deficiencies. Based upon the State of NJ, SCORP, Balanced Land Use Guideline, the community should establish an additional 251 acres devoted to active recreation. This calculation is based upon Township parkland holdings at mid-year 2000. Many of the recreation groups and programs do not have sufficient facilities to meet the present demand for these activities.¹

In 1998 West Windsor Township Recreation conducted over 70 activities, clinics or programs drawing approximately 8,000 participants. In addition, the Township sponsors several popular events, including the Community Festival, fireworks, parades, summer concert series and drive in movie night. When coupled with the 4,000 persons participating in team sports, it is clear that Recreation activities and the Open Space areas that accommodate these activities play a significant role in the daily life of West Windsor Township residents.

Simultaneously, the vocation of farming, the associated rural character of the community and the natural environmental land resources are under the siege of land development pressure and may soon be lost forever.

¹ The recent open space acquisitions made by the Township have resulted in 421 acres of upland park land designated for development in active recreation. This exceeds the 371 acre Municipal Recreation Set Aside established by the Balanced Land Use Guidelines of the NJDEP SCORP report.

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To properly balance land development and growth within the Township with the needs and desire for open space and recreation the Township of West Windsor developed the Open Space and Recreation Plan and an Open Space Acquisition Plan. These plans were necessary for West Windsor Township to fully participate in the Green Trust Planning Incentive funding category of the State Green Acres Program. The acquisition plan evaluated the remaining open parcels within the community and designated 99 parcels of land consisting of 2,575 acres that should be sought for preservation and/or acquisition. In 1998 the Township Council and Planning Board adopted an Open Space Acquisition Plan to initiate the Township's participation in the Green Trust Incentive program, (Council resolution #98-R225). West Windsor has also adopted a Municipal Open Space Tax that presently allocates 7 cents per \$ 100 assessed value. The initial tax of 1 cent was adopted in 1993. It was increased to 2 cents in 1995 and then 7 cents in 1998, based upon the overwhelming support of votes on public referendum ballot questions. This tax provides a stable source of funding for Open Space and Recreation planning for acquisition, development, and maintenance of lands established for recreation, conservation, historic preservation and farmland preservation. The funds established by this tax can be combined with State, County, Private and Non-Profit programs to properly plan and implement the open space and recreation needs of the community in concert with other land development goals.

This element has once again reformatted the data and findings of the Task Force Report, the Open Space Acquisition Plan and the Open Space and Recreation Plan with updated goals, policies and information developed during the Planning Board Master Plan process.

GOALS / POLICY STATEMENT

A. Goal: Preserve adequate open space for the future.

Policies

1. Public acquisition of an additional 250 acres of significant recreational open space to meet the standards of the New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan's (SCORP) "Balanced Land Use Guideline", and the unique needs of West Windsor Township as articulated by observed and surveyed demand for recreation facilities.²
2. Acquire additional lands beyond the SCORP standards as required to satisfy open space goals beyond recreation and achieve community goals for environmental protection, farmland preservation and education.
3. Fully acquire control of West Windsor Township Greenbelt lands to prevent development of these environmentally valuable areas.
4. Acquire the majority of Open Space lands in the near future while they are still undeveloped.
5. Supplement West Windsor Township Municipal Open Space Tax funds with other funding sources such as State, County, and Non-Profit programs including but not limited to: State Green Acres Program; Green Trusts; Mercer County Trust Fund Tax Acquisitions; and the State Farmland Preservation Program.

² The recent open space acquisitions made by the Township have resulted in 421 acres of upland park land designated for development in active recreation. This exceeds the 371 acre Municipal Recreation Set Aside established by the Balanced Land Use Guidelines of the NJDEP SCORP report.

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6. Foster acquisition of open space by private donations.

B. Goal: Develop and maintain adequate open space & recreation facilities to meet the needs of West Windsor Township now and in the future.

Policies

1. Expand park lands with active recreation facilities to meet the present and future needs of West Windsor as articulated by various organized sports groups, Township Recreation Commission or Landscaping Subcommittee, and recreation standards. Investigate potential for second Community Park on northwest side of the Township. Develop linear linkages between parks and from residential neighborhoods that promote alternative transportation.

2. Adequately maintain existing facilities to provide for long term use of existing facilities.

3. Promote recreational activity with appropriate and adequate access by all age and user groups throughout the Township.

4. Foster continued cooperative use of facilities and open space with the West Windsor/Plainsboro Board of Education.

5. Foster continued and expanded cooperation with private commercial landowners and residential communities to utilize open space for shared recreation activities.

6. Periodically survey and update the recreation inventory and needs analysis to anticipate needs rather than react to deficiencies.

7. Explore modifications of the Township Greenbelt Plan to achieve a continuity with State, County and adjacent community greenway plans.

8. Explore the potential to join Township farmland with State and County preservation efforts.

C. Goal: Preserve and enhance the social and ecological environment for the inhabitants of West Windsor Township.

Policies

1. Preserve Township Greenbelt lands to maintain sustainable natural ecosystems and, counterbalance land development.

2. Establish an enclave or district(s) for the preservation of farmland and farm families.

3. Develop recreational facilities for both active and passive activities and all user age groups to maximize social interaction, community pride, and leisure activities.

4. Carefully consider the impacts of recreational development relative to natural ecosystems and the sustainability of these areas.

5. Design and construct all recreation development according to all required environmental regulations and practices appropriate to preserve environmentally sensitive areas and maintain or enhance environmental quality.

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6. Minimize the clearing of sustainable woodland and trees for recreation development by situating facilities in open areas.
7. Simplify and standardize Township Greenbelt mapping and terminology.
8. Promote respect and knowledge of the Greenbelt and its importance to the community.

D. Goal: Balance the provision of open space with other land uses.

Policies

1. Reinforce the planning efforts of Township, County, and State Master Plans.
2. Balance open space and recreation facilities throughout the Township relative to neighborhoods to provide adequate access and opportunity to all people of the Township, and enhance the welfare of residents.
3. Foster cooperative efforts to preserve regionally significant areas with the County and adjacent municipalities.
4. Explore the potential to enjoin Township farmland with State and County preservation efforts.
5. Promote continued development of mini-parks near village and multi-family neighborhoods.

E. Goal: Develop a means of supplemental funding for recreation development and maintenance.

Policies

1. Develop long term park maintenance program and budgets based upon the present inventory and anticipated growth of the park system.
2. Foster positive community input and support for recreation development near residential neighborhoods.
3. Develop a more symbiotic relationship between the Township and the organized sports groups to help plan and fund the future development and maintenance of recreation facilities.

OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

Significant areas of West Windsor Township have been established as parks, recreational facilities, farmlands, and nature preserves by State, County and Municipal Governments as well as schools and private organizations.

The Delaware and Raritan Canal is a State park establishing a linear greenway along the northwest bounds of West Windsor Township. This park is heavily used for recreation (walking, jogging, biking, canoeing and fishing) and provides a valuable corridor of wildlife habitat. In

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addition, the State has purchased a small parcel of land along the Millstone River near the Plainsboro border. This lot is part of a potential greenway along the banks of the Millstone River. This rivershed offers tremendous potential for recreation and environmental enhancement.

Two new state sponsored trails will travel through portions of West Windsor connecting and strengthening the impact our existing greenbelt/greenway corridors. The “Capital to Coast” statewide trail from Trenton to Manasquan will transverse the Assunpink Creek Trail through West Windsor and the “Crossroads of the Revolution” Trail will travel along the Millstone River as it runs from Monmouth Battlefield outside Freehold to the Princeton Battlefield, Washington Crossing and Washington's Headquarters in Morristown. The opportunity is present here to fully integrate these trails with the West Windsor Township Recreation Plan.

Mercer County has established Mercer County Park in the southwest corner of the Township in conjunction with the Mercer County Community College and Mercer County Vocational School. These lands include a large lake and numerous facilities for educational, cultural, social and recreational activity. Much of the land in this park is not developed and significant areas of environmental preservation are established.

Other County open space includes the Princeton Country Club that adjoins the Delaware and Raritan Canal along the northwest edge of the Township.

West Windsor Township currently offers recreation at six parks with numerous mini-parks and a few private or quasi-public sites. The majority of recreational activity is presently focused at the Community Park, which is located in the center of the Township along Route 571. The community pool, *Waterworks*, is located at the Community Park along with baseball, softball, soccer and multi-purpose fields, walking paths, tennis courts, and a picnic pavilion with a restroom, food service building and a small amphitheater.

Several soccer fields are provided at Zaitz Park on Southfield Road. Chamberlin Park provides a playground and auxiliary soccer and lacrosse fields. Van Nest Park offers fishing, boating and picnicking facilities on the Grovers Mill Pond, which is owned by the Township.

The Township leases land at the corner of Post and Conover Roads from the County. This land, commonly referred to as Conover or Post Road Fields has been used for football, soccer and baseball sporting activities.

Several tennis courts, a practice wall and a tot kit are provided on Hendrickson Drive. This area was formerly named the Coward Tract but was recently dedicated at the Ron Rogers Arboretum. A 25 acres arboretum shall be developed on this site to provide 12 acres of mature woodland with trails and 12 acres of passive park with paths, rolling lawn and trees.

In addition, the Township utilizes a portion of the Sarnoff Corporation property off Washington Road for auxiliary soccer fields. Several of the indoor and outdoor facilities of the Public Schools within the Township are available for limited use.

Private recreation in the Township includes several pools and tennis courts associated with residential communities as well as an indoor tennis facility along Washington Road. Some of the corporate campuses in the Township, most notably Carnegie Center, also provide active and passive recreation for their tenants and sometimes Township residents.

Finally, the West Windsor Township Little League operates Ward Fields located off Post Road.

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The following Tables provide a more detailed analysis of the present status of open space and recreation available in West Windsor Township.

**Table VIII-1
West Windsor Open Space & Recreation Inventory
Gross Acreage By Ownership & Use**

WEST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP TOTAL ACREAGE = **16,830**

Owner / Designation	Acreage	Percentage of Total
Land Resource		
a. State of New Jersey	62	.03 %
b. Mercer County	2,548	15.0 %
c. Township Parks (developed)	42.5	0.8 %
d. Township Conservation (Twp. Owned or Deed Restricted as Greenbelt, Farmland or Open Space)	1,599.5	9.5 %
e. Township Non-Park	44	.02%
f. Public Schools	419	.5 %
g. Private Recreation / Open Space (deed restricted)	565	3.3%
h. Undeveloped Farmland	3,520	21.0 %
i. Developed Land	7,930	47.0%

NEEDS ANALYSIS

At the present time, there is a lack of adequate open space and recreation for the rapidly expanding demand for these areas and facilities in the West Windsor community. As the Township continues to grow these deficiencies will continue to grow unless more open space and recreation facilities are added. The following analysis is largely based upon the findings of the 1999 Mayor's Open Space Task Force which solicited input from the West Windsor Recreation Commission and its Park Planning Subcommittee; Township Department of Recreation and Parks, Planning and Public Works Departments; and the numerous sports programs. This analysis has been updated for inclusion with this Master Plan based upon additional input for the above noted groups and organization.

Active Recreation

Active recreation comprises activities and games played in both team (e.g. football, soccer, lacrosse) and individual (e.g. tennis, golf, swimming) categories. For team sports alone, nearly 4,000 West Windsor youth took part during 1998. This number is anticipated to exceed 5,000 by the year 2003 and 6,000 by 2008. Even allowing for participation by some in more than one program during the year, it is clear that a substantial fraction of West Windsor's present total population of approximately 20,000 is involved. With this level of participation, it is obvious that West Windsor experiences a greater level of organized active recreation than normal. Therefore, typical standards for recreation facilities relative to population cannot be applied to this community and the high demand for the development and maintenance of adequate facilities is a major

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challenge.

In fact, this situation has been under discussion in the township for some time. The Park Planning Committee of the Recreation Commission has met with township sports organizations over the past two years to discuss present and future needs. To determine just what the anticipated future needs might be, a questionnaire was distributed to all the West Windsor youth sports organizations. The questionnaire asked for information on the number of youth served, the seasons of operation, current facilities being used, and a projection for use over the next five and ten years. Data from these questionnaires was then tabulated and presented to the Open Space Task Force. The facilities needs expressed in this plan reflect the findings of this committee and the surveys they have conducted, with updates provided by the Recreation Commission and individual organizations.

While there may seem to be a significant number of active recreation facilities currently in place in West Windsor many are strained to the limit and are rapidly deteriorating due to constant use. This prevents any type of natural rejuvenation as well as the development of a quality maintenance program. While a more comprehensive scheduling system could help to alleviate some of the use problems for indoor facilities, the outdoor playing surfaces have, in most cases, not been provided with features such as irrigation, under drainage or illumination to properly serve their current level of usage, let alone an increase.

The strain on these facilities is exacerbated by the fact that a high percentage of West Windsor residents work well outside the community, often commuting 1 to 2 hours on the train. Many of the league coaches have limited and simultaneous availability creating a high demand for practice and game play on illuminated fields. The private and school facilities that are heavily relied upon to meet present programs are only available on a limited basis. Long term use of shared private facilities cannot be assured. The opportunity exists to plan for the future lost use of these facilities and avoid inadequate or limited recreation programs in the future.

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**TABLE VIII-2
WEST WINDSOR OPEN SPACE & RECREATION INVENTORY
EXISTING TOWNSHIP PARK RECREATION FACILITIES**

<u>ACTIVITY/SPORT</u>	<u>PARK/PROPERTY</u>							TOTAL
	Chamberlin Park	Community Park	Conover Fields	Coward / Hendrickson	Van Nest Park	Zaitz Park	Twp. Mini-Parks	
ACTIVE RECREATION								
BR/AL Baseball – 90'		1						1
LL Baseball – 60'		1	6					7
T-Ball								
Softball		1						1
Soccer (Full Size)		2	2			2		6
Soccer (Small)			2			3		5
Tennis Courts		2		5				7
Tennis/Handball Walls				1				1
Basketball (outdoor)								0
Basketball (indoor)								0
Football			1					1
Field Hockey								0
Lacrosse	1							1
Swimming Pools		1						1
Golf Course (Full Size)								0
Golf Course (Par 3)								0
Golf Course Practice								0
Volleyball								0
Ice Hockey								0
Roller/Street Hockey								0
PASSIVE RECREATION								
Playground	1			1	1		5	8
Canoeing/Boating					1			1
Fishing (a.)					37			37
Jogging/Walking (Mi.)		0.5		0.2	0.1			0.8
Picnicing (sites)		2			1			3

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**TABLE VIII-3
WEST WINDSOR OPEN SPACE & RECREATION INVENTORY
COUNTY, STATE AND LOCAL SCHOOL RECREATION FACILITIES**

These Facilities are shared and therefore use for Township recreation may be limited.

<u>ACTIVITY/SPORT</u>	<u>SCHOOL</u>					<u>PARK</u>			
	Maurice Hawk	Grovers School	Village School	Dutch Neck School	W.W.P. High South	Princeton Country Club	Mercer Co. Park	D&R Canal (NJ)	TOTAL
ACTIVE RECREATION									
BR/AL Baseball – 90’	1				1		2		4
LL Baseball – 60’									0
T-Ball									0
Softball			1	1	2		11		15
Soccer (Full Size)					2		11		13
Soccer (Small)									0
Tennis Courts					6		26		32
Tennis/Handball Walls	2						1		3
Basketball (outdoor)	4		3	4	4		8		23
Basketball (indoor)	1		1	1	1				4
Football					1				1
Field Hockey					1				1
Lacrosse					1				1
Swimming Pools					1				1
Golf Course (Full Size)						1	1		2
Golf Course (Par 3)									0
Golf Course Practice							1		1
Volleyball									0
Ice Hockey							1		1
Roller/Street Hockey									0
PASSIVE RECREATION									
Playground	1		1	1			2		5
Canoeing/Boating							1	1	2
Fishing (ac.)							200+		200+
Jogging/Walking (Mi.)							3+	3	6+
Picnicing (sites)							3		3

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**TABLE VIII-4
WEST WINDSOR OPEN SPACE & RECREATION INVENTORY
EXISTING PRIVATE RECREATION FACILITIES**

These facilities may be limited to members or may not be available for future use is the properties are developed.

<u>ACTIVITY/SPORT</u>	<u>PARK/PROPERTY</u>									
	Sarnoff	Carnegie Ctr.	Princeton Tennis	Cranbury Golf Course	Fairway Greens (571)	L.L. Ward Fields	Private Comm. North	Private Comm. East	Private Comm. West	TOTAL
ACTIVE RECREATION										
BR/AL Baseball – 90'										0
LL Baseball – 60'						2				2
T-Ball	Y									Y
Softball		1				1				2
Soccer (Full Size)	2									2
Soccer (Small)	7									2
Tennis Courts			6				6	8	6	26
Tennis/Handball Walls										0
Basketball (outdoor)		1								1
Basketball (indoor)										0
Football										0
Field Hockey										0
Lacrosse										0
Swimming Pools							3	1	3	7
Golf Course (Full Size)				1						1
Golf Course (Par 3)										0
Golf Course Practice				1	1			1		3
Volleyball		1								1
Ice Hockey										0
Roller/Street Hockey										0
PASSIVE RECREATION										
Playground							4	3	3	10
Canoeing/Boating										0
Fishing										0
Jogging/Walking		Y								0
Picnicing (sites)										0

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**TABLE VIII-5
WEST WINDSOR OPEN SPACE & RECREATION INVENTORY
EXISTING RECREATION FACILITIES SUMMARY**

<u>ACTIVITY/SPORT</u>	<u>PARK/PROPERTY</u>					
	Township Parks	County Parks	State Parks	Public Schools	Private Facilities	TOTAL
ACTIVE RECREATION						
BR/AL Baseball – 90'	1	2		1		4
LL Baseball – 60'	7	0		1	2	10
T-Ball	0	0			Y	Y
Softball	1	11		4	2	18
Soccer (Full Size)	6	11		2	2	23
Soccer (Small)	5	0			7	12
Tennis Courts	7	26		6	26	65
Tennis/Handball Walls	1	1				2
Basketball (outdoor)	0	8		15	1	24
Basketball (indoor)	0	0		4		4
Football	1	0		1		2
Field Hockey	0	0		1		1
Lacrosse	2	0		1		3
Swimming Pools	1	0		1		9
Golf Course (Full Size)	0	2				3
Golf Course (Par 3)	0	0				
Golf Course Practice	0	1				3
Volleyball	0	0				1
Ice Hockey	0	1				1
Roller/Street Hockey	0	0				
PASSIVE RECREATION						
Playground	8	2		3	10	23
Canoeing/Boating	1	1	1			3
Fishing	37	200	1			237
Jogging/Walking	1	3+	3			7
Picnicing	4	3				7

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**TABLE VIII-6
WEST WINDSOR OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION INVENTORY/
PROJECTED RECREATION FACILITIES REQUIREMENTS**

ACTIVITY / SPORT	PARK / PROPERTY											
	W.W. L.L. Baseball	B.R. / A.L. Baseball	Wildcats Fast Softball	WW-P Teen Softball	Lightning Lacrosse	WW- P Soccer	Hoopsters Basketball	WW-P Junior Football	Adult Rec. Programs	Other	NRPA Standards	TOTAL
ACTIVE RECREATION												
BR/AL Baseball - 90'												
LL Baseball - 60'	10											10
T-Ball	y											y
Softball			5	2					2			9
Soccer (Full size)						4						4
Soccer (small)												
Tennis Courts												
Tennis/Handball Walls												
Basketball (outdoor)												
Basketball (indoor)												
Football								1				1
Field Hockey												
Lacrosse					10							10
Swimming Pools												
Golf Course (Full Size)												
Golf Course (Par 3)												
Golf Course Practice												
Volley Ball									1			1
Ice Hockey												
Roller/Street Hockey												
PASSIVE RECREATION												
Playground												
Canoeing/Boating												
Fishing												
Jogging / Walking												
Picnicing												

This table is subject to review and amendment by the Mayor's Open Space Utilization Task Force which is evaluating the potential uses of the Township's open space properties.

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The recreation survey data has revealed that there are some immediate needs for new playing fields to accommodate the phenomenal growth experienced in several of the sports.

All of active recreation organizations serving West Windsor, including Little League Baseball, Teen League Softball, Junior Football Club (Pop Warner Football), Soccer Association, Babe Ruth Baseball, and West Windsor Hoopsters, have expressed a strong desire for new or improved facilities to handle all of their participants. Many programs have been forced to limit the number of participants due to this lack of space, thereby curtailing the number of West Windsor youth that can be served.

Two of the fastest growing programs are the Lightning Lacrosse Association and the Wildcats Fastpitch Softball Program. Participation in both of these programs doubled from 1998 to 1999, presenting a tremendous need for adequate space to safely accommodate their practice and playing schedules. It should be noted that, even now, none of the fields utilized by the Lacrosse Association are of regulation size. The desired situation for both of these team sport programs, as well as others, would be a clustering of fields at one location. This type of complex would facilitate better scheduling of practices and games, and also allow for tournament play. Tournament play is often used as a means of fund raising to off-set costs associated with maintaining quality programs.

The W.W.P.S.A. (Soccer Association) is also growing at a fast pace. Illuminated fields are a high priority and the group would like to establish a separate complex to be developed and maintained by the association on Township park land. The Association estimates that approximately 12 acres of playing fields are needed. Thus a park of 20 to 25 acres would be appropriate for this purpose.

The continued use of playing fields and indoor gyms at the West Windsor-Plainsboro schools cannot be taken for granted. Current school district policies that provide for use of these facilities by township sports organizations are more favorable than in past years. However, future policies may change, resulting in more limited use.

In addition, the Recreation Commission has recommended that the Township should explore the potential of constructing a community center with indoor recreational facilities including an indoor pool in the near future.

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**Table VIII-7
West Windsor Open Space & Recreation
Inventory
Municipal Level Recreation / Open Space Needs**

Using the Balanced Land Use Guidelines* as provided in the NJDEP SCORP Report

Description	Acreage
A. Total Area of Township	16,830
B. Wetlands and Slopes over 12%	4,400
C. Federal and State Owned Open Space	62
D. Developed and Developable Lands (a-(b+c))	12,368
E. Municipal Recreation Land Set Aside	371
(Municipal Level is 3% of developed and developable area of Municipality)	
F. Present Municipal Recreation Lands (Developed)	142.5
G. Municipal Recreation Open Space Needed	228.53

*The Balanced Land Use Guidelines are a means of estimating the amount of recreation land that should be set aside by the various levels of government in New Jersey to provide recreation opportunities for the existing and future residents of the State. The figures produced represent only minimum goals for recreation and land acquisition programs. In order for public open space areas to be considered as supply toward meeting the Balanced Land Use goals, the areas must be environmentally suitable for the recreation activities generally provided by the particular level of government. Open space that is protected for environmental or agricultural purposes through conservation easements, land use regulation or other means that do not provide for public use is not considered as part of the public recreation land.

**The recent open space acquisitions made by the Township have resulted in 421 acres of upland park land designated for development in active recreation. This exceeds the 371 acre Municipal Recreation Set Aside established by the Balanced Land Use Guidelines of the NJDEP SCORP report.

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**Table VIII-8
West Windsor Open Space & Recreation Inventory
Municipal Level Recreation / Open Space Needs**

Using the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Minimum Guidelines for a “Core” System of Developed Open Space Relative to Population

West Windsor Twp. Population	Recommended Park Area*	Existing Twp. Park Land	Deficit
16,021 (1990 - Census)	100 to 165* acres	70 acres	30 to 95 acres
20,000 (2000-WW. Estimate)	125 to 205* acres	142.5 acres	0-62.5 acres
25,250 (2010-County Estimate)	158 to 259* acres	421** acres	0 acres
30,000 (Build-out-W.W. Estimate)	188 to 308* acres	421** acres	0 acres

*NRPA suggests that a park system, at a minimum, be composed of a “core” system of parklands with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population.

**Assumes full build out of all recreation lands presently owned by Township and presently readily available for development; Community Park Uplands(55 acres), Zaitz Park Uplands(6 acres), and Conover Road Fields (15 acres), Bear Creek Parks (80 acres), Parcel 35 (60 acres) Parcel 83 (78 acres) Parcel 84 (6 acres) by 2010.

Adult Active Recreation

Existing adult active recreation programs have been structured to meet the needs of the West Windsor community with regard to scheduling, type of activity, and accessibility. Programs currently included in this category are co-ed adult volleyball, tennis, golf, swimming, and softball. Survey suggestions for future expansion of facilities to meet the needs of these programs include but are not limited to: (1) a permanent sand volleyball court, (2) indoor tennis courts for public use, and (3) at least two lighted adult softball fields.

Passive Recreation

Passive recreation generally includes activities that do not require developed playing fields. Included in this category are bicycling, walking, jogging, hiking, picnicking, boating, fishing, hunting, kite flying, horseshoe throwing, informal boccie, and pass and catch activities with baseballs, dog run parks, Frisbees™, lacrosse sticks, footballs, and the like.

Many of these activities can be pursued at existing facilities, including those that are provided in County and State Parks in addition to the Township facilities. Walking-jogging paths, a picnic pavilion and open space exists for ball and Frisbee™ throwing, and kite flying at the West Windsor Community Park. The Townships Van Nest Park includes a picnic pavilion, an open field, as well as a canoe launch and boardwalk/dock along the Grovers Mill Pond. The Ron

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Rogers Arboretum will also include paths and open areas for informal recreation as well as woodland trails. These activities will coincide with the mission of this property to provide education and appreciation for the beauty and value of trees. The long-planned rehabilitation of Grovers Mill Pond will add a significant township-owned facility for all water-based passive recreational activities. Finally, Mercer County Park also offers extensive paths for bicycling, walking, and jogging. Mercer Lake within this park is available for boating.

An additional mile of path, exercise stations, a small amphitheater and multi-purpose open field area have recently been constructed at the Community Park.

Development of the Ron Rogers Arboretum will greatly enhance passive recreation in the Township and improvement of the Grovers Mill Pond and the creation of a pedestrian/ bicycle and greenway trail system.

Grovers Mill Pond

The water of the Grovers Mill Pond presently is in an eutrophic condition. That is, it is overly enriched by nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus that enter the pond in the runoff from its watershed. These nutrients, combined with the shallow depth that allows intense sunlight to reach the bottom, promote the growth of a wide variety of aquatic plants. These plants as they grow and decay are gradually choking and stagnating the pond and seriously degrading its ecological health and recreational value

In 1991 the Grover's Mill Pond Master Plan Task Force was established to develop a Master Plan for the restoration of the pond. The Task Force completed its work in December of 1992 submitting three major recommendations.

1. Repair and upgrade the dam-spillway system as required by federal regulations.
2. Rehabilitate Grover's Mill Pond, including deepening, removal of silt, and installation of a silt trap to facilitate periodic cleaning.
3. Renovate the waterfront facilities at Van Nest Park along a small portion of the ponds edge.

The task force provided detailed options to implement these recommendations. To date only renovation of Van Nest Park has been implemented. Restoration of the Grover's Mill Pond, the only significant recreation water body owned by the Township, should be a high priority.

Greenbelt and Greenways

Elements of the proposed Greenway and Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail System have been incorporated in the Circulation Plan Element based on many of the recommendations of the Township's Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan. One of the primary trails features is the PSEG R.O.W. that bisects the Township and connects several parks and numerous residential neighborhoods. It is currently in the implementation stage. It will provide an important link between regional greenways being planned by County and State agencies.

Greenbelt

In 1976, the West Windsor Environmental Commission developed a linear open space, or Greenbelt Plan. Under that plan, as conceptualized by the commission, seven stream corridors

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resident within, or bordering, the township formed the nucleus of a largely forested linear open space network. To the stream corridor network were added two overland connectors, one of which formed a link between the Big Bear Brook and Duck Pond Run corridors, while the second joined the Big Bear Brook and Bridegroom Run corridors. It was contemplated that all components of the greenbelt network that were devoid of tree cover would be reforested. The West Windsor Planning Board adopted the Greenbelt Plan in 1977 and implementation of the Greenbelt has been a key element of Township land planning over the past 22 years. At the present time only 560 acres of the 2,415 acres encompassed by the West Windsor Greenbelt have been placed under control.

The principal weakness in the Greenbelt Plan has been that its implementation has been solely contingent upon the ability of the Planning Board to negotiate with residential and commercial developers. Lands that were not environmentally constrained (flood hazard or wetland areas) have been difficult to preserve.

A prime example of this was the so-called "Rabbit Hill Woods," a high quality mature forest stand of beech and white oak, that was a critical component of the Big Bear Brook-Duck Pond Run connector. Owing to the absence of environmental constraints, this tract became subject to residential development, and, while it was possible to save most of the tree stand through conservation easements, the greenbelt corridor itself was greatly diminished. Full implementation of the Greenbelt Plan must be a priority of all open space acquisitions in the future.

Farmland Preservation

The value of farmland to the community at large can be categorized in three ways: environmental, economic, and aesthetic. Farmland reduces the storm water runoff associated with residential or commercial development, provides wildlife habitat, reduces traffic congestion, interrupts the monotony of urban sprawl, and typically returns more in tax revenue than the cost of services provided. The State of New Jersey has sponsored and funded a program of farmland preservation for several decades. This program has thus far succeeded in establishing a farmland base that constitutes roughly five percent of the State's present agricultural land. State purchase of development rights to farmland properties is expected to accelerate rapidly as a result of the open space referendum that was adopted in November 1998. By contrast, West Windsor has never developed, or pursued, a comprehensive program of farmland preservation. It is true that a certain amount of farmland acreage has been acquired or deed restricted, either through expenditure of moneys from the municipal open space trust (Blyman, Grover, Jany), or through donation from landowners (Zaitz, SGS Communities). These acquisitions, however, have been largely made in the context of preserving open space, not farming. Until recently, little emphasis has been placed on the preservation of agriculture as an economic pursuit. It is, of course, obvious that farming cannot be maintained without farmers, and that any community commitment to farmland preservation must take into account some of the factors that might enhance the attractiveness of agriculture, both as an economic pursuit and a career lifestyle.

There are, at the present time, no more than five or six full-time farmers resident in the community. Most of these individuals reside in the Windsor Road-Assunpink area, or on land south of Old Trenton Road opposite Mercer County Park. These two areas constitute the last two enclaves in the township that might be said to retain a largely rural ambiance. The findings of the Mayor's Open Space Task Force offered a high level of interest in preserving farmland and the rural character of these areas.

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RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

Although the Township of West Windsor has been fairly active in its efforts to preserve and develop open space or recreation the preceding inventory and needs analysis have articulated the significant deficiencies that presently exist. The following is a brief discussion of those public and private land and water resources that have potential for providing open space or recreation opportunities to address these deficiencies.

Active Recreation

There are a few active recreation sites, both public and private, currently available for development including approximately 30 to 50 acres at the Community Park and 15 acres at the Conover Road fields. However, the timetable for bringing them on line and the actual number of facilities that could be developed for these areas is clearly inadequate for the expected future growth in the West Windsor community and its related sports programs.

Many of the additional playing fields needed by the township sports organizations could be built on existing township-owned or leased open space or parkland. For example, the Conover Road complex has long been thought to be the best solution by all of the sport organizations that require outdoor playing fields. Expanding the present sites by using the additional acreage acquired through long-term lease with the Mercer County Park Commission appears to be the most logical and perhaps least costly option. A minimal amount of grading would be needed since the land is essentially flat. The soil is fertile to promote rapid and healthy growth of turf, and it is bordered on two sides by land that is not intended for housing development.

With the existing input from the sports organizations along with proper design and layout, playing fields could be developed there for multipurpose use, thereby enabling the maximum amount of usage and serving the greatest number of participants. As an alternative to the continued long-term lease, consideration should also be given to the possible purchase of land at the Conover Road location from the County.

Continued development of the existing Community Park, approximately 30 to 50 acres of planned active recreation remain, could also address the majority of present needs as expressed by the sports organizations.

Finally, completion of the Master Plan improvements at Zaitz Park, approximately 7 acres, would be appropriate to achieve adequate active recreation facilities based upon present needs.

Development of these parcels would leave Penn Lyle Park as the last undeveloped area owned by the Township that has been designated for active recreation. An effort should be made to develop a Master Plan for this park that is compatible with the residential neighborhood. The potential to purchase adjacent, large parcels of undeveloped land should be explored. The proximity of this park to the Little League Ward Fields would make it a perfect complement to the programs of the league.

The Township should also explore the possibility of fostering a working alliance with the sports organizations. This would be a partnership between the organizations and the Township to build new playing facilities. Several of the sports organizations have indicated a willingness to contribute funds and/or labor toward the building and maintaining of such fields.

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This partnership could enable the township to build more facilities at a lower cost and in more timely fashion to meet the immediate needs of the active sports community.

In a similar vein, it might be worthwhile to investigate the possible use of developed corporate land, where large expanses of lawn—while attractive—serve mainly aesthetic purposes. For example, the development of a few tennis courts on a remote corner of such a tract could be done on a shared use basis, with employees and nearby residents having access.

As the Open Space Acquisition Plan is implemented, additional lands will be available for recreation use.

Passive Recreation

The greatest potential resources for expanded and improved passive recreation in the Township are improvement of the Grovers Mill Pond, completion of the Ron Rogers Arboretum, and the possible future integration of local and regional Greenway and Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail systems.

Greenbelt and Greenways

There has been progress toward the creation of a Greenway and Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail System throughout the Township. Many of the recommendations of the Township's Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force have been incorporated into the Circulation Plan Element. Implementation has begun on the development of the trail system along the PSE&G R.O.W.

The potential to develop an equestrian trail from the private stables located on Windsor Road to the Mercer County Park, following the Bridegroom Run should be explored in concert with the proposed farmland preservation in West Windsor Township and Washington Township.

Finally, further development and expansion of bike routes along several major thoroughfares (Route 571, Village Road and Edinburg Road) should be explored to create a comprehensive system of trails for biking, jogging, walking and nature observation.

Greenbelt

The Township Greenbelt presents a tremendous opportunity to preserve the natural ecology of West Windsor Township in a manner that will enhance and protect the quality of life for residents. The Greenbelt has been included in the Township's Master Plan since 1977 and it has been the jewel of the Township's open space planning to date. Since the Greenbelt primarily encompasses stream corridors including wetlands, floodplains and woodlands these lands present tremendous opportunities to maintain clean water and air resources while providing protection from natural floods. Reforestation of the Township controlled portions of the Greenbelt currently lacking forest cover should be undertaken in the future for water quality purposes. The significant width and contiguous nature of these lands will afford protection of flora and fauna in a manner that enables sustainable growth. Finally, the Greenbelt woodlands maintain and create significant windbreaks and natural buffers between land uses. Major portions of the Greenbelt still remain unprotected from potential development and aggressive pursuit of present opportunities for preservation could reap tremendous value for future generations.

Primary efforts should be made toward the preservation of lands along the Duck Pond Run and Millstone River corridors of the Greenbelt. The Duck Pond Run section is largely unprotected and in addition to the natural resource conservation offered by preservation of this area, the

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potential for the development of a Greenway trail along this corridor would present recreational value. As previously mentioned, the Duck Pond Run/Big Bear Brook connector near Route 571 was one of the major defeats of historic Greenbelt preservation efforts. It must be re-established.

The lands along the West Windsor side of the Millstone River present some unique vistas and opportunities for wildlife observation. Several small bluffs and marshes are present along this corridor making this a rather unique landscape. The State and County have initiated land conservation efforts along the corridor and any Township expenditures piggybacked upon these efforts could quickly secure preservation of this corridor. Another valuable portion of the Greenbelt is the Assunpink corridor in the southern portion of the Township. Mercer County has targeted this area for Farmland Preservation. Township opportunities in this regard shall be discussed in the following paragraphs. Preservation of this corridor in conjunction with County efforts and the large expanse of open space preserved on both sides of this corridor in Mercer County Park present a great opportunity to combine public efforts to fully implement the Greenbelt.

Although the Greenbelt has been quite successful and visionary, it should also be noted that the plan does not require that public access be allowed to such areas, or that provision be made for limited passive recreational use. While the Greenbelt Plan does not itself prohibit such uses, there is a general “understanding” that they are prohibited, and, further, that no modification of any kind can be effected in the greenbelt area, e.g. removal of brush, introduction of trails, etc. All conservation easements are written in this fashion.

Both the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Mercer County Open Space Board consider this a negative aspect of the plan, and one that might adversely affect their commitment of financial resources. However, the Township feels quite strongly that the majority of these areas are truly set aside for the conservation of environmental quality and habitat. It is felt that these lands should not include programmed human activities.

Farmland Preservation

As previously stated at the present time approximately five full-time farmers reside in the community. Most of these individuals reside in the Windsor Road-Assunpink area or on land south of Old Trenton Road opposite Mercer County Park. These two areas constitute the last two enclaves in the township that might be said to retain potential for serious farmland preservation.

The Assunpink enclave (roughly the area bounded by Old Trenton Road, Village Road East, Washington Township, and Assunpink Creek) comprises approximately 900 acres of agricultural land, or some 30 percent of the remaining rural undeveloped land in the township. Approximately 26 percent (240 acres) of this total has so far been preserved as either open space or farmland: 100 acres through donation (SGS property), 90 acres via open space acquisition (Blyman and Blyman Enclave), and 50 acres through the state farmland preservation program (Jany). The Assunpink enclave is not a permanent farmland preserve. While it does contain some lands acquired or permanently deed restricted for farmland, most of the lands here were acquired with Green Acres funds making them eventually available for public use. The interim use is for farmland under terms and conditions arranged by Township Council.

The Old Trenton Road enclave (the area south of Old Trenton Road from the Assunpink Creek west toward the Hamilton Township border) comprises 11 properties totaling 418 acres, or 16 percent of the remaining township rural open land. None of this property has been preserved.

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The maintenance of the existing rural character in these two enclaves is essential to the retention of a substantial agricultural base in the township. The 1999 State Sustainable Project Report put it this way, “New development often changes the character of rural areas and threatens to drive them out of business.” This is another way of saying that agriculture and residential development are not compatible when closely intermixed, and that farming will become the eventual loser in the competition between the two uses. The Mayor’s Open Space Task Force was convinced that, over the longer term, farmland preservation is possible only if the township can establish largely homogeneous farmland preserves in the indicated areas. To assist in this effort, a Farmland Preservation Plan Element has been prepared as part of the Township’s comprehensive Master Plan Update.

OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION PLAN

The following map and table illustrates the 99 parcels of land established by the Open Space Acquisition plan for conservation and preservation. With this plan element these parcels are grouped into three categories of projected use or management. The categories are recreation, ecological conservation and farmland preservation.

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**TABLE VIII-9
Open Space Acquisition Plan**

OFFICIAL PARCEL NUMBER	FARM PRESERVATION	GREENBELT/ CONSERVATION	PARKS & RECREATION	LOCATION ◆ = Primary Use □ = Secondary or Alternate Use	BLOCK/LOT	TOTAL AC.
1		◆		966 Alexander Road	11.01/20, 15	8.85
2			◆	207 Princeton Hightstown Road	19/9	9.07
3	□	◆	□	229 Village Road East	33/2.01	104.98
4	□	◆	□	209 Village Road East	33/3	21.89
5	□	◆		172 South Lane	33/5	37.11
6	□	◆		130 South Lane	33/7	51
7	□	◆		1235 Windsor Road	33/8	28.23
8	□	◆		1247 Windsor Road	33/42	15
9	□	◆		1255 Windsor Road	33/38	74.17
10	□	◆		1771 Old Trenton Road	33/9	107.42
11	□	◆		Windsor Road	33/18.01,18.02	43.49
12	□	◆		1309 Windsor Road	33/24.02	28.11
13	◆			1201 Old Trenton Road	29/5	57.71
14	◆			Old Trenton Road	29/4.01	24.15
15	◆			Cubberly and Line Roads	29/3	47.05
16	◆			1393 Old Trenton Road	29/7 & 11	26.7
17	◆			37 Cubberly Road Rear	29/2.01	29.36
18	◆			1627 Old Trenton Road	30/4	54.162
19	◆			Cubberly Road	30/5	58.37
20	◆			1500 Old Trenton Road	23/42	26.22
21	◆			1550 Old Trenton Road	23/40, 57, 63	25.74
22	□	◆		Old Trenton & Robbinsville Road	30.03/3	37.4
23	◆			Robbinsville Road	30.03/2	31.91
24	□	◆		274 Robbinsville Road	32/8	96.22
25	□	◆		1300 Windsor Road Rear	32/18	8.8
26	□	◆		1300 Windsor Road	32/5	15.46
27	□	◆		1262 Windsor Road Rear	32/4.01	19.74
28	◆			1240 Windsor Road	32/23	14.31
29	◆			1220 Windsor Road	32/24	34.88
30	◆			1202 Windsor Road	32/1	15.5
31	□	◆		129 South Lane	34/5	18.34
32	□	□	◆	2018 Old Trenton Road	28/5	170
33		◆	□	112 Bear Brook Road	9/45	3.5
34		□	◆	227 Hightstown Road Rear	19/24	34.96
35			◆	458 Cranbury Road Rear	20/5, 6	68.52
36	□	◆	□	315 Cranbury Road	14/6	18.6
37	□	◆	□	247 Cranbury Road	14/5.02	31.24
38	□	◆	□	217 North Post Road	15/3	96.11
39		◆		113 North Post Road	15/47.03	27.46
40	□	◆	□	768 Village Road West	15.14/29	33.28
41	□	◆	□	794 Village Road West	15.14/28	21.43
42	□		◆	18 North Post Road	16.12/23	25.21
43	□		◆	19 North Post Road	15.03/46	14.1
44	◆		□	Conover Road	24.07/2.02	10.02
45		◆		Millstone Road	5/42, 55	18
46		◆		Millstone Road, rear	5/16	26.75
47		◆		Millstone Road, rear	5/15	22.02
48		□	◆	Penn Lyle Road, rear	16/24	22.4

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OFFICIAL PARCEL NUMBER	FARM PRESERVATION	GREENBELT / CONSERVATION	PARKS & RECREATION	LOCATION	BLOCK/LOT	TOTAL AC.
49		◆		794 Village Road West	15.14/52	17.3
50	□		◆	205 Southfield Road	20.07/12	26.08
51	□	◆	□	Meadow Road	10/23,24,31	27.01
52	□	◆	□	Meadow Road	8/15	20.03
53		◆		Bear Brook Road	9/9,43,10/36	49.2
54		◆	□	118 Bear Brook Road	9/29	7.67
55		◆		Mather Avenue	6/1.01	6.24
56		◆	□	Bear Brook Road	9/22	3.5
57		◆	□	110 Bear Brook Road	9/56	5.1
58		◆	□	106 Bear Brook Road	9/55	4.3
59		◆	□	102 Bear Brook Road	9/15	6.7
60		◆	□	98 Bear Brook Road	9/27	6.4
61		◆	□	96 Bear Brook Road	9/66	5.9
62		◆		163 Clarksville Road	10/16	8.7
63		◆		174 Clarksville Road	15/6	6.45
64		◆		180 Clarksville Road	15/5	28.9
65	□	◆	□	157 North Post Road	15/48	11.3
66		◆		Clarksville Road, Rear	15.11/35	12.1
67		◆		Village Road West	15.11/51	4.1
68		◆		112 North Post Road	16.11/10	15.03
69		◆		125 Penn Lyle Road	16.11/16	10.4
70		◆		119 Penn Lyle Road	16.11/15	8.8
71		◆		111 Penn Lyle Road	16.11/14	8.3
72		◆		64 Hightstown Road	6.20/p/o22	5
73		◆	□	213 Hightstown Road	19/51	13.1
74	□	◆		1260 Windsor Road	32/4.02	4.3
75	□	◆	□	1256 Windsor Road	32/3	5.7
76	□	◆		1252 Windsor Road	32/20	5.3
77	□	◆		1250 Windsor Road	32/10	5.5
78	□	◆		1203 Windsor Road	34/4	7.8
79	□	◆		143 South Lane	34/21	8.9
80	□	◆		South Lane	34/3	14.4
81		◆		100 Joanne Street	5/65, 69	8
82	□	◆		1760 Old Trenton Road	27/7	10.7
83		□	◆	Meadow Road	8/48, 22, 25	164.02
84		□	◆	Bear Brook Road	9/33	15.2
85		◆		Washington Road, Rear	5/79,22 p/o lots 8,9,71	
86		◆		498 Cranbury Road	20/46	8
87			◆	Washington Road	44/6	3.16
88		◆		Harrison Street	1/1	27
89			◆	353 Hightstown Road Rear	22/3	29.02
90		□	◆	Washington Road	44/16-24,26	3.98
91	□	◆	□	425 Clarksville Road	12/3	12.68
92	□	◆		Duck Pond Run	8/14	31.9
93		◆		South Lane	33/27	6.6

◆ = Primary Use
□ = Secondary or Alternate Use

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OFFICIAL PARCEL NUMBER	FARM PRESERVATION	GRENBELT / CONSERVATION	PARKS & RECREATION	LOCATION ◆ . = Primary Use □ . = Secondary or Alternate Use	BLOCK/LOT	TOTAL AC.
94		◆		Millstone River/ D&R Canal	14/1,15	21.78
95		◆		Rt 571/Big Bear Brook Road	21.31/31	13
96	□		◆	Censoni	15/1	16.9
97		◆		N.Post Rd. Woods	15/66	5.85
98		◆		Upper & Lower Branch Duck Pond Run	8/20	9.3
99		◆		North Post Rd.	11.06/20	4.47
Subtotal Acreage	456	1517	603			
TOTAL						2,576

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RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations represent the local government's preferences for addressing the Open Space and Recreation needs and goals based upon the opportunities presented and fiscal constraints. Many recommended actions may simply involve plan or policy modifications that will not incur significant costs relative to the typical costs of land acquisition or recreation development. Recommendations are divided into the general categories utilized throughout this element.

Active Recreation

1. Develop the existing 70+/- acres of presently available Township parkland with active and passive recreation facilities to meet the present deficits for these activities.
 2. Develop the remaining open lands within the West Windsor Community Park in accordance with the current Park Master Plan to meet the needs of sports groups.
 3. Develop a Park Master Plan for the remaining open lands of the Conover Road fields, and implement the proposed improvements. The development of this area should emphasize active recreation fields to meet the present needs of sports groups. A flexible multi-purpose design should be considered for this area. The concerns of local residents for buffering of lights and parking areas should be addressed with future development of the area.
 4. Develop a plan for future development of a Community Center with indoor recreation facilities including a pool.
 5. Explore alternatives for development of a Roller Hockey Court in Township parks or in County Parks.
 6. Complete development of the Zaitz Park soccer fields in accordance with the Park Master Plan to help meet the present needs of soccer and/or lacrosse sports groups. Additional parking on the north end of this park should also be considered.
1. Use the 250 additional acres of park land acquired for active recreation to meet the future needs of West Windsor Township in accordance with the "Balanced Land Use Guidelines" of the NJDEP SCORP report. Give high priority to lands adjacent to existing facilities that would provide for their expansion. Target property acquisitions in areas of the township that are now lacking in recreational and park facilities. Where possible, acquire open space that can be used to establish connectors among existing parks so as to establish a Greenway and Pedestrian/Bicycle trail system. Due to the present heavy pressure to develop land within the Township this action must be given a high priority. However, it is anticipated that it may take many years to fully implement all of this acreage.⁵
 2. Develop an additional large park to the north of the Amtrak line to meet the present and future needs of residents in this area. This area of the Township is zoned for a

⁵ The recent open space acquisitions made by the Township have resulted in 421 acres of upland park land designated for development in active recreation. This exceeds the 371 acre Municipal Recreation Set Aside established by the Balanced Land Use Guidelines of the NJDEP SCORP report.

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considerable level of residential and commercial development and population growth in this region will increase significantly. A park must be planned now to serve these future residents. This action should be given a high priority for the planning aspect, however, implementation should be monitored relative to the opportunities for acquisition and availability of funding for construction. The recently acquired Parcel #83 could serve this purpose.

3. Develop a Park Master Plan for the Penn Lyle Park property including consideration for the acquisition of additional lands near this property.
4. The Circulation Plan Element has incorporated pedestrian and bicycle trail proposals which will provide an alternative means of transportation between residences, business centers and parks. Utilization of utility right-of-way, sanitary sewer easements, Greenbelt or Greenway Corridors, Capital to Coast and Crossroads of the Revolution Statewide trails as well as street sidewalks or bike paths should be examined to create a comprehensive network of pedestrian and bike trails. The potential for a recreation equestrian trail should be explored in the future.
5. Develop Park Master Plans for each parcel of land set aside for recreation in present Township ownership or as acquired. These Park Master Plans should be developed to plan for the future development of recreation facilities to meet the goals and objectives of this plan including.
 - a. Promote recreation activity with appropriate and adequate access by all age and user groups throughout the Township.
 - b. Balance open space and recreation facilities throughout the Township relative to existing and projected land uses and the needs of the residents.
 - c. Provide a wide range of athletic facilities to meet the projected needs of Township sports groups.
 - d. Develop basic athletic fields that provide an efficient use of land and expenditures. The cost for supplemental elements such as illumination, irrigation, underdrainage, equipment storage etc. will require funding from the organizations that require these appurtenances.

Passive Recreation

1. Complete development of the Ron Rogers Arboretum.
2. Implement improvements to the Grovers Mill Pond. Restoration will offer water-based recreation and re-establish the pond's scenic presence.
3. Explore opportunities for passive open space in association with redevelopment of the Princeton Junction Village Center.
4. Explore appropriate alternatives for the location and development of a three to five acre dog run park as a passive recreation facility within the Township park system.

Greenbelt and Greenways

1. Pursue all opportunities to permanently set aside the remaining 1,800+ acres of greenbelt for conservation before land development pressure eliminates these valuable resources.

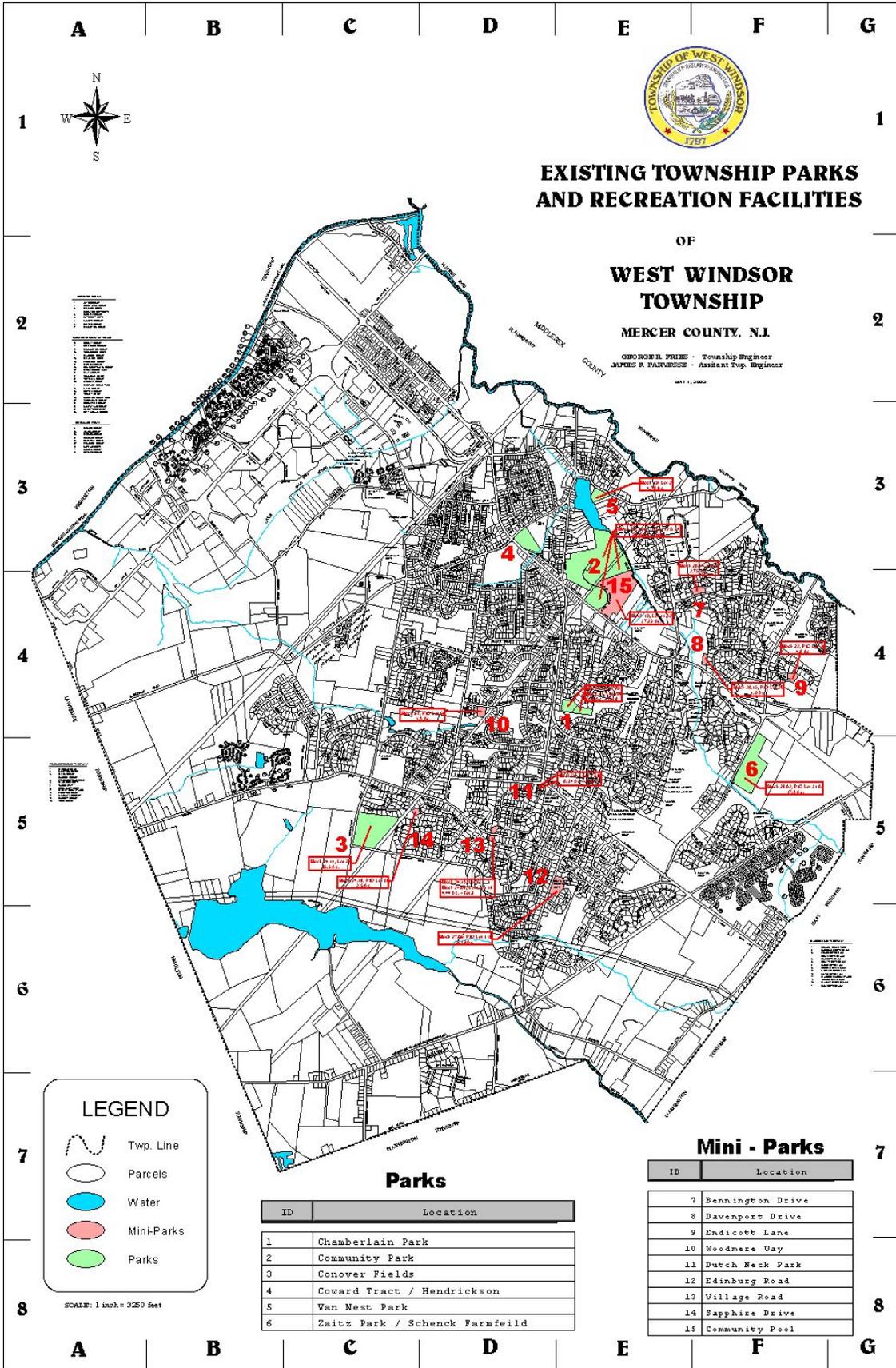
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2. Wherever possible, the township should take title to greenbelt areas, as opposed to deed restricting private property. An attempt should be made to persuade the owners of currently deed restricted properties to pass title to these lands to the municipality. These efforts should be coordinated through the Planning Board as well as non-profit open space groups.
3. The Big Bear-Duck Pond connector needs to be reestablished. As mentioned above, this connector was lost at the time the Rabbit Hill Woods property was residentially developed. This loss can be remedied through acquisition of property. Such an acquisition would also provide a useful extension to the Community Park. This action should be given a high priority due to current pressure to develop property.
4. The Greenbelt Plan should be examined with consideration given to a modification to provide for passive recreation enclaves. These would be classified as park or park-like intrusions into the greenbelt system. Such an enclave already exists along Duck Pond Run in the Lakeshore Drive area. Other likely enclave sites would be situated in the Community Park and on the Zaitz tract. The Environmental Commission should review this aspect of the plan.
5. Wherever practical "open space nodes" should be established in proximity to the greenbelt, and thus considered an integral component of the Greenway system. The Community Park is obviously such a node. Properties along the Duck Pond Run branch of the Greenbelt could also lend itself to this type of open space use, as would a number of the properties along the Millstone River.
6. The Greenbelt mapping system needs to be simplified and standardized. The present terminology and mapping is confusing and inconsistent. For example, we currently have terms such as "proposed greenbelt," "designated greenbelt," and "dedicated greenbelt." Further, the maps now in use reference the one contained in the Greenbelt document with which they no longer coincide. The Environmental Commission should be given the task of establishing a standard means of mapping and naming the Greenbelt and its aspects.

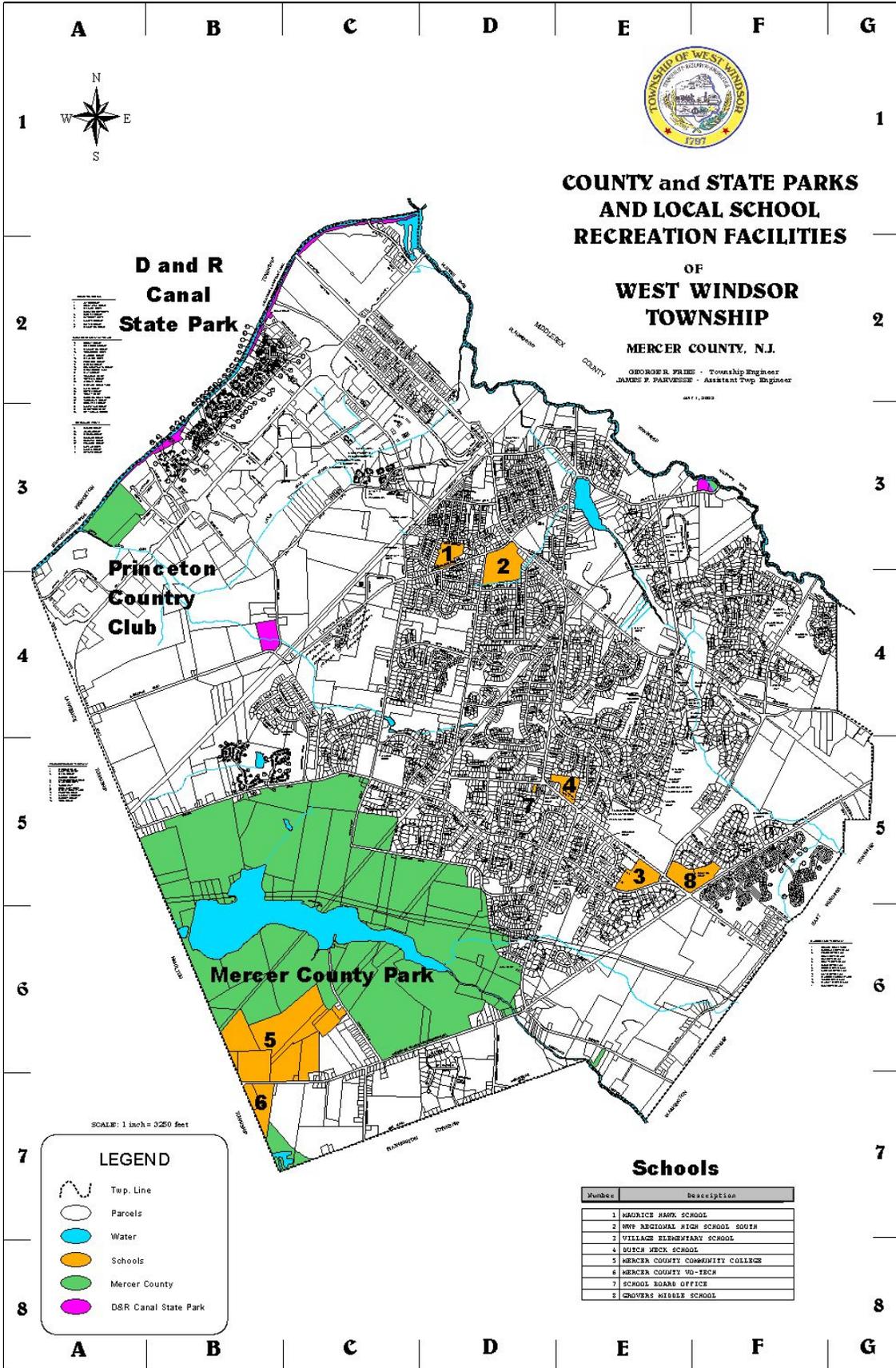
Farmland Preservation

1. A commitment should be made to acquire (or otherwise preserve) all of the land tracts within the farmland enclaves south of Old Trenton Road. This would establish a pre-serve of 975± acres of farmland and enable farmers to remain in the community, retaining the rural character and heritage of the area. This action should be given high priority due to pressure for land development. Many of these properties have now been preserved by recent Township acquisitions.
2. No active recreational facilities should be established within the farmland enclaves to maintain the rural agricultural character of these areas.
3. Efforts should be made to enlist Washington Township in a coordinated effort to extend the projected agricultural enclaves into contiguous portions of its community. The office of Community Development should lead the efforts in this regard.
4. Continue efforts to fund and preserve existing farmland to promote its continued use for agriculture. This issue is further addressed and supported in the Farmland Preservation Plan Element.

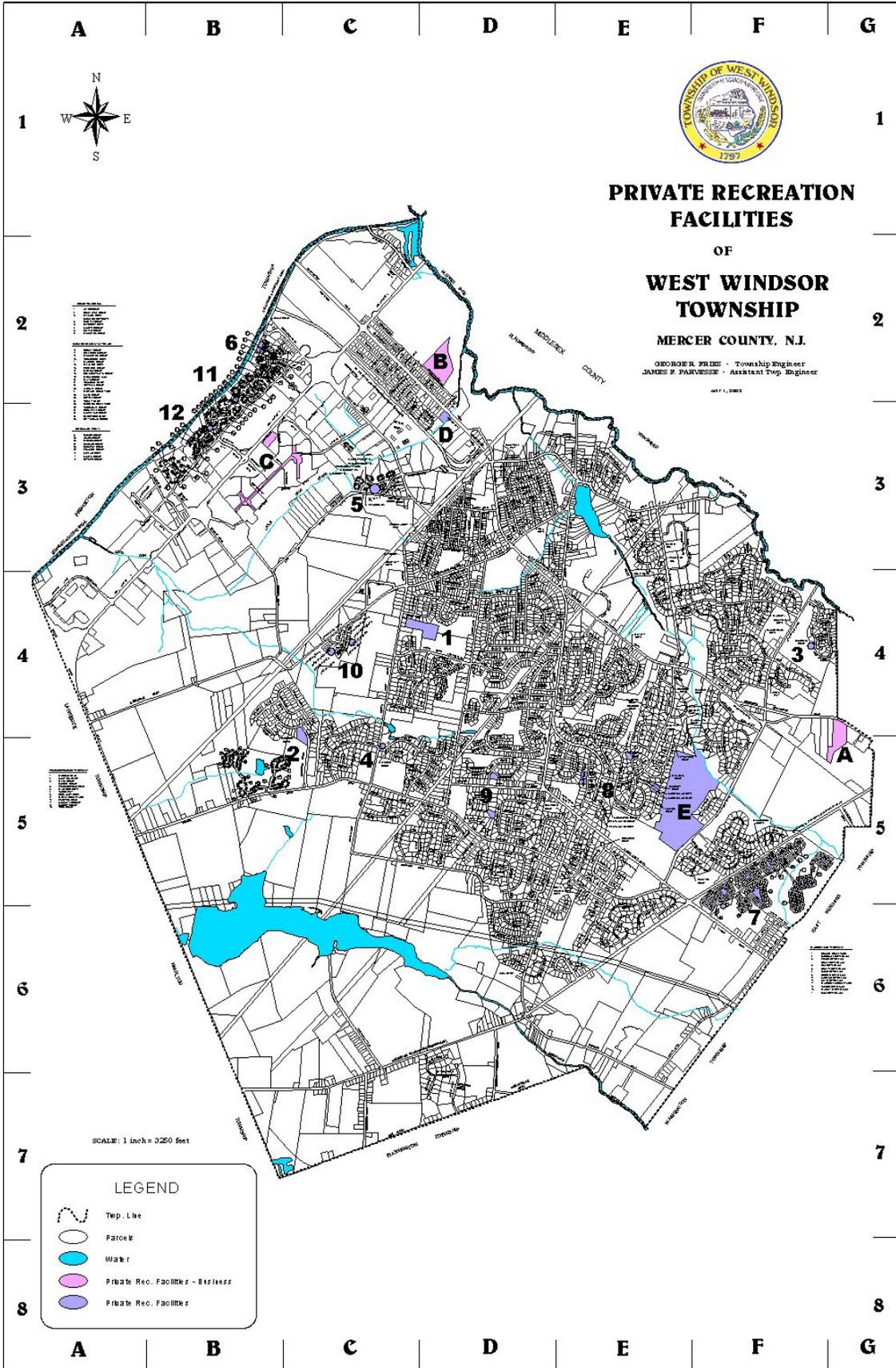
SECTION VIII - OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT



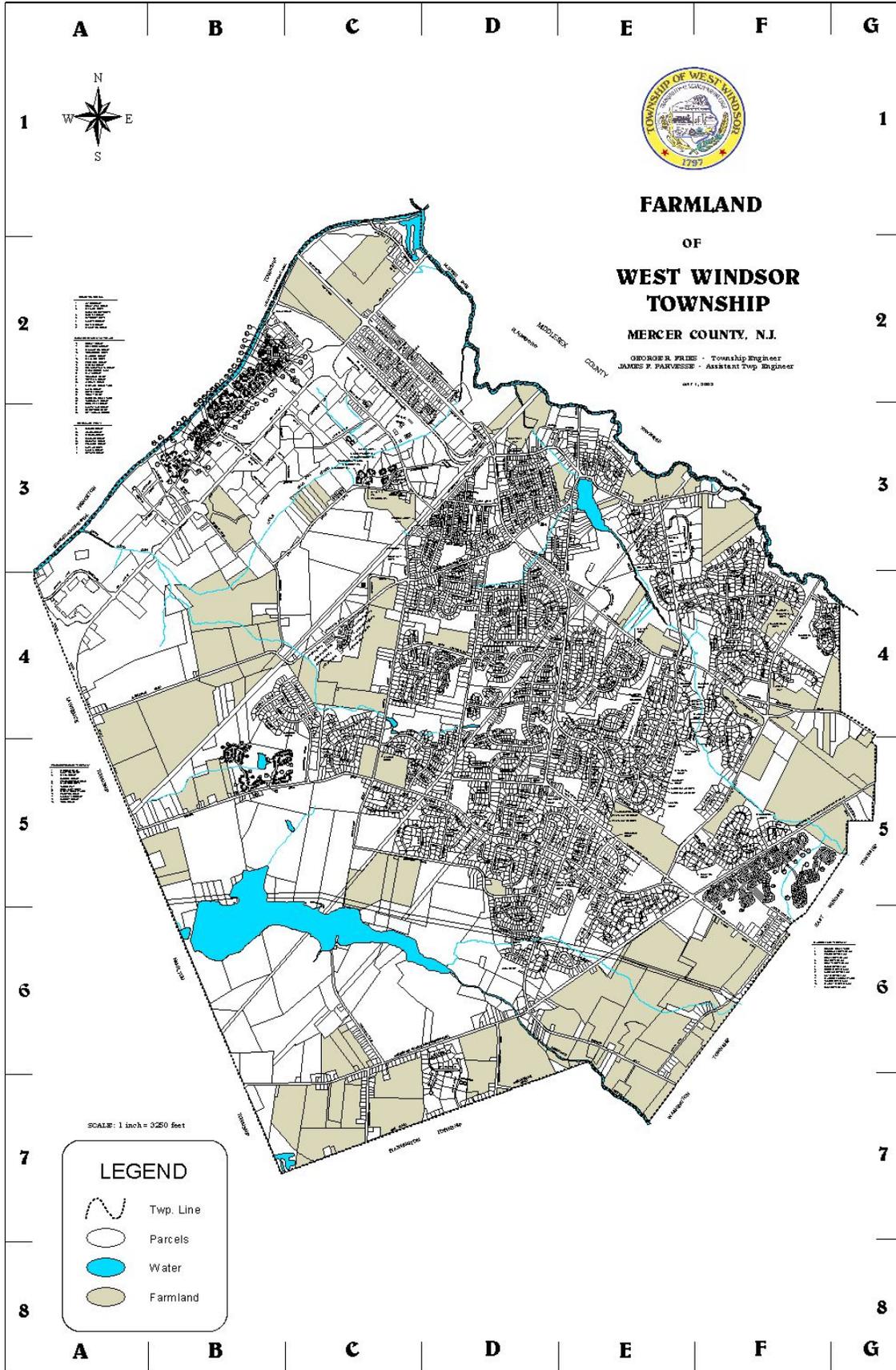
SECTION VIII - OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT



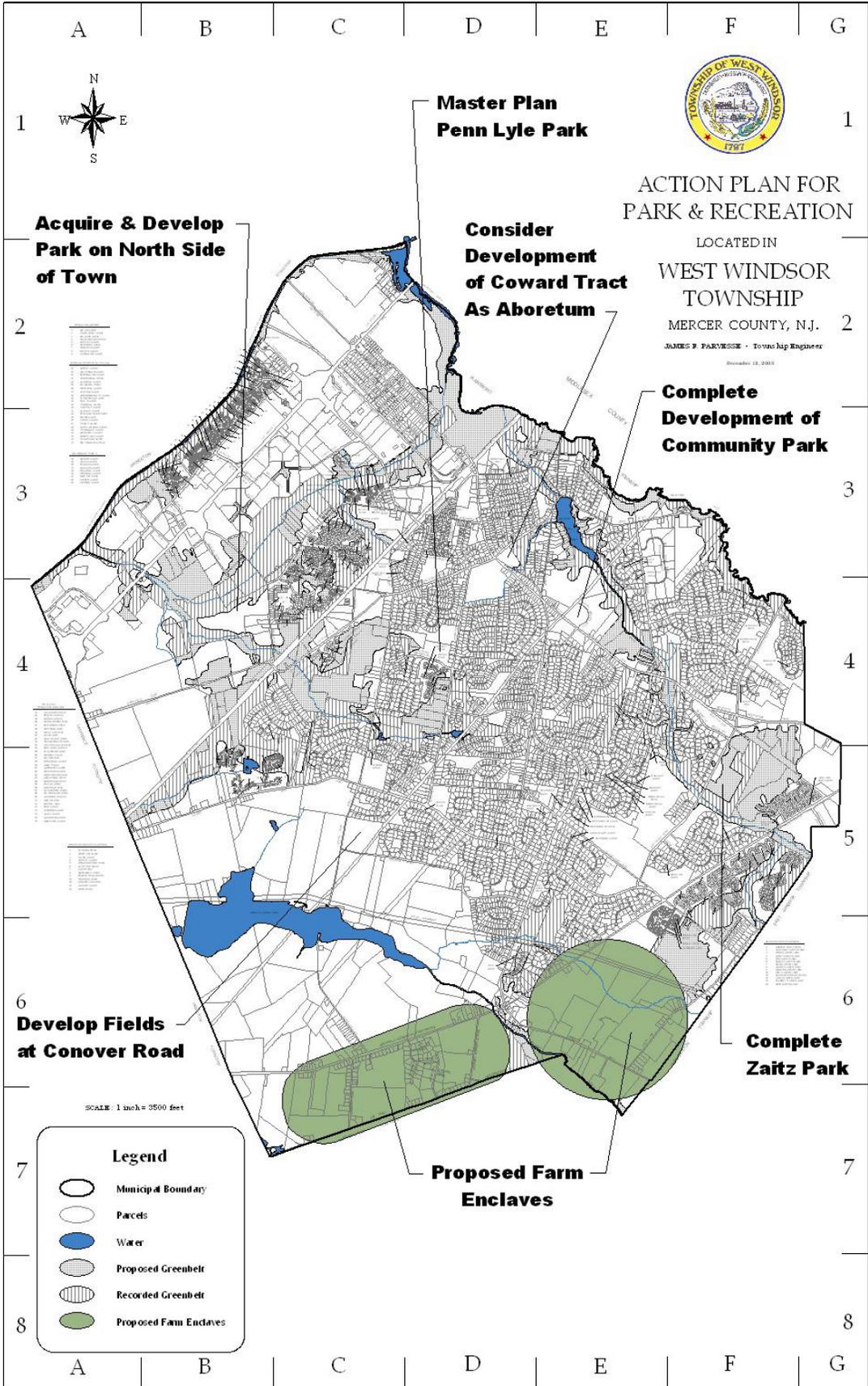
SECTION VIII - OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT



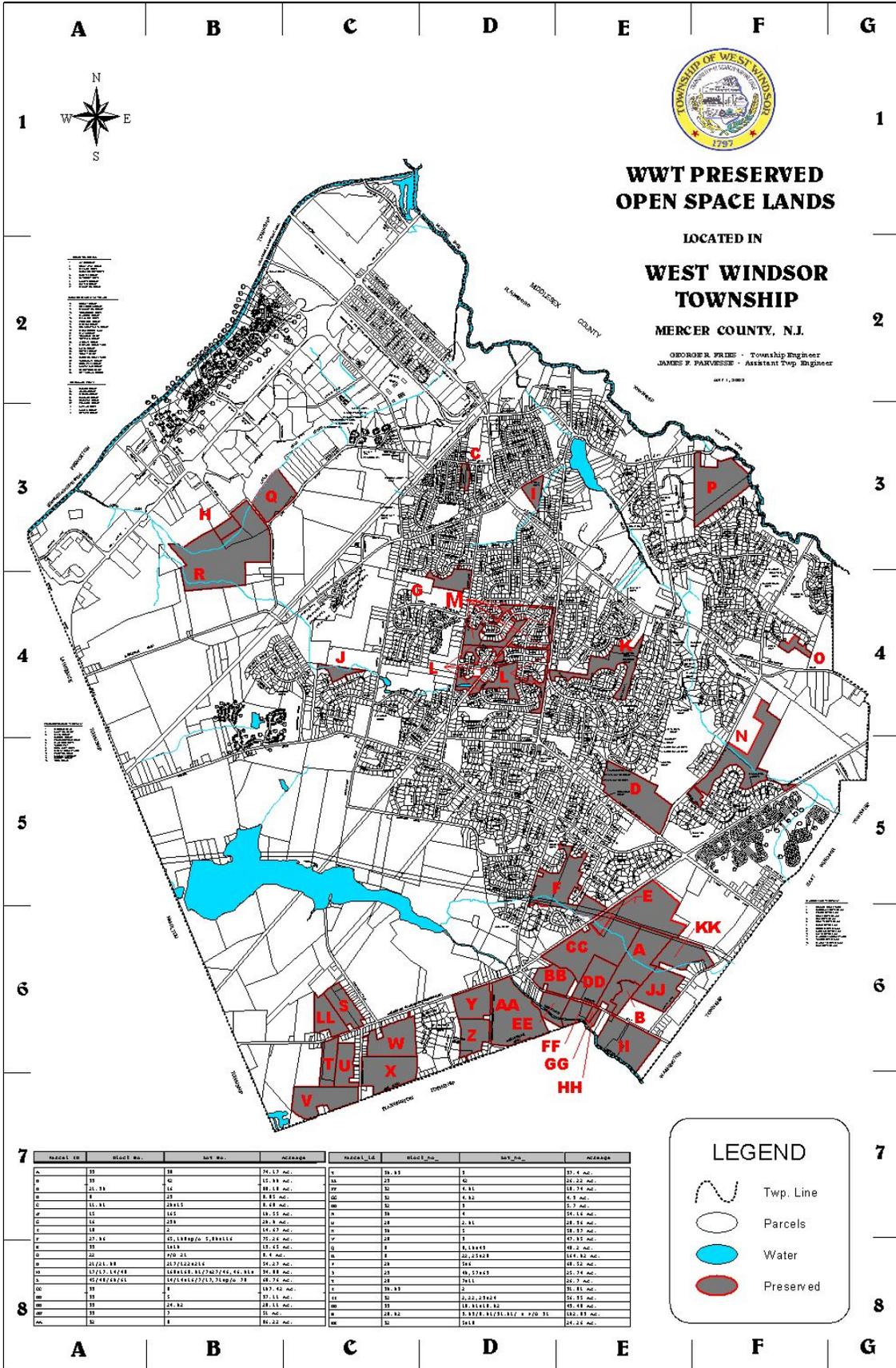
SECTION VIII - OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT



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Parcel ID	Block No.	Lot No.	Acres	Parcel ID	Block No.	Lot No.	Acres
A	22	28	24.17 Ac.	14	20, 23	1	27.4 Ac.
B	23	42	15.99 Ac.	15	25	42	22.22 Ac.
C	24, 25	16	88.18 Ac.	16	26	1	12.74 Ac.
D	8	28	8.87 Ac.	17	27	1	6.9 Ac.
E	11, 24	28A11	8.28 Ac.	18	28	1	1.7 Ac.
F	15	145	18.55 Ac.	19	29	1	24.14 Ac.
G	16	278	28.8 Ac.	20	30	1	16.76 Ac.
H	18	2	14.47 Ac.	21	31	1	18.57 Ac.
I	27, 28	45, 138 (p/c), 5, 8A11, 10	35.26 Ac.	22	32	1	87.85 Ac.
J	29	15A12	12.55 Ac.	23	33	1	88.3 Ac.
K	30	19D, 21	8.4 Ac.	24	34	1	20, 21A12
L	20, 21, 22, 23	21, 27, 122, 21A	54.27 Ac.	25	35	1	144.92 Ac.
M	12, 13, 14, 15, 16	14, 18A12, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 44, 45A	74.88 Ac.	26	36	1	48.52 Ac.
N	42, 43, 44, 45	14, 15A12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28	48.74 Ac.	27	37	1	25.74 Ac.
O	39	1	187.42 Ac.	28	38, 39	1	26.7 Ac.
P	39	1	32.14 Ac.	29	40	1	30.81 Ac.
Q	39	1	24.82 Ac.	30	41	1	16.15 Ac.
R	39	1	28.11 Ac.	31	42	1	48.48 Ac.
S	39	1	31 Ac.	32	43	1	182.87 Ac.
T	39	1	184.22 Ac.	33	44	1	24.24 Ac.

LEGEND

- Twp. Line
- Parcels
- Water
- Preserved

SECTION VIII - OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN ELEMENT

