

OPEN SPACE and RECREATION PLAN

Township of Voorhees
Camden County, New Jersey

For Participation in the
Green Trust Planning Incentive Program

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DRAFT



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I. Executive Summary

Open space is an important asset, performing a variety of functions essential to sustaining and enhancing a community as a desirable place to live and work. Open space protects the quality and quantity of surface and ground water resources, guides development and growth, preserves natural resources, shapes community character and provides land for outdoor recreation. However, with the notable exception of the approximately 210-acre North Branch Conservation Area (Beagle Club Woods), located on Kresson-Gibbsboro Road, much of the undeveloped open space in Voorhees Township consist of stormwater management facilities and buffers, typically occurring in isolated pockets throughout residential developments, and not as large, contiguous parcels.

Since development has already consumed much of the land within Voorhees Township, and with the pressures of continued development working against it, it is apparent that there is a critical window of opportunity in the next few years to preserve some of the remaining undeveloped land as open space.

To achieve the goal of preserving appropriate open space areas throughout Voorhees Township, the following objectives were established in the 1998 Master Plan update:

- Ensure that open space planning plays an important role in developing the character, location, magnitude and timing of growth and development of the Township.
- Give priority to preserving large contiguous tracts of forests and lands containing unique areas of environmental sensitivity.
- Identify and protect the habitats of threatened and endangered species of wildlife and vegetation. Control the character, location and magnitude of growth and development in and adjacent to such habitats to avoid direct or indirect impacts on threatened or endangered species.
- Promote and encourage the protection of privately owned tracts of open space, wetlands or forest lands through easement purchase, deed restrictions, and other appropriate planning techniques.
- Locate open space land as close as possible to the populations they serve, and encourage passive public recreational use of such lands, where appropriate.

There are two basic methods by which the accumulation of open space can be achieved. The first method involves the implementation of land use planning strategies that are authorized by the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL). The second method involves the acquisition of easements, development rights, or the outright fee simple purchase of lands.

The most effective method of preserving open space, both from a cost and planning perspective, is the use of creative land use strategies that result in the development of more compact communities. By implementing strategies such as clustering, the same

number of units can be built in less area. Consequently, the amount of open space land in the Township will increase at virtually no cost to the taxpayers. By working with developers of vacant lands, the Township can, in the process of land subdivision and site development planning and review, influence the size, shape and quality of open space that is set aside and preserved.

While the implementation of land use planning techniques is clearly the most cost effective means of providing for the preservation of open space, there are situations where acquisition is the only alternative of accumulating property for open space. Acquisition of property can take several forms, including conservation easements, purchase of development rights, private conservation organizations, as well as the fee simple purchase of lands.

In 1998, voters in Voorhees Township overwhelming approved a referendum that called for the establishment of a dedicated funding source for the preservation of open space. In response to the approval of this referendum, the Township Committee enacted a dedicated open space tax for the purpose of funding the acquisition of lands for recreation and conservation.

In 1999, the Voorhees Township Environmental Advisory Board (now the Voorhees Township Environmental Commission) was tasked by the Township Committee to prioritize various tracts of land within the Township for acquisition as open space. An open space ranking system was developed that evaluated criteria such as environmental factors, proximity to existing open space, development pressure, availability to Township, size, scenic value and historic value for the prioritization of open space.

Township tax information was reviewed to compile a list of 646 vacant parcels with Voorhees Township. These vacant parcels were evaluated with regards to location, size, adjacent land uses and proximity to existing open space. In general, a vacant parcel was considered a potential open space opportunity if it was located adjacent to existing open space; of sufficient size to warrant consideration; or if, when combined with adjacent properties, formed a tract of undeveloped land of sufficient size to warrant consideration. The goal was to avoid small, isolated parcels of vacant land that would have little value as open space. Based on this initial analysis, 55 sites were selected for further evaluation using the Voorhees Open Space Ranking System.

The Voorhees Township Committee is currently beginning preliminary discussions with some of the owners of properties that were ranked high by the ranking system; and is investigating various sources of funding to assist in the preservation of these properties.

II. Goals and Policies

In 1998, the Voorhees Township Planning Board undertook the task of updating the municipal master plan in order to specifically provide for urgent community needs. One of the needs identified was the need to preserve Township natural resources and appropriate remaining open space areas including wetlands, floodplains, aesthetic

vistas, forests, stream corridors, wildlife habitats, special soils, groundwater supplies and aquifer recharge areas.

The 1998 Voorhees Township Master Plan update supplements, and where appropriate, corrects or supersedes specific sections of the Township's 1995 Master Plan. The 1998 update focused on revisiting master plan goals and objectives, simplifying and consolidating proposed land uses and establishing a basis for updating the zoning ordinance, establishing a Conservation Plan complementary to open space preservation goals and objectives, and identifying passive open space preservation opportunities, techniques and funding sources.

To meet the need for additional open space within Voorhees Township, the 1998 Master Plan update included several open space and recreation related goals and objectives listed below. The identified goals are the long-term ideals or end results that are desired for the Township. The goals are an integral part of the planning process that directs the community's planning efforts and the allocation of Township resources. Objectives identified in the master plan are specific targets that are to be met as an intermediate step in achieving the Township's long-term goals.

A. Recreation

- Goal: To encourage the development of recreation facilities that meet the active and passive recreational needs of Voorhees Township citizens of all ages.
- Objective: To provide family oriented parks and green spaces throughout the Township.
- Objective: To keep current with active recreational trends and needs of Voorhees residents, and to meet those needs by providing ample amounts of active recreational opportunities.

B. Land Use and the Environment

- Goal: To preserve environmentally sensitive areas in their natural state and to protect natural resources and areas of conservation.
- Objective: To protect and maintain wetland and floodplain areas, to protect long term public water supplies, to reduce development pressure on aquifer recharge areas and to preserve wooded areas for wildlife habitat. The management of these and other natural constraints should meet or exceed statewide standards.
- Objective: To promote stormwater management practices which positively affect aquifer recharge areas and floodplains, waterways and properties abutting waterways.
- Objective: To provide significant natural space within and around existing development in order to lessen the impact of the built environment.

Objective: To seek appropriate locations for the establishment of greenways linking areas of environmental and recreational importance.

Objective: To promote wildlife preservation areas.

Objective: To promote lake management which encourages the maintenance of the aesthetic elements, environmental integrity and water quality of lakes as well as the financial benefit of increased realty value.

C. Open Space

Goal: To preserve appropriate remaining open space areas throughout the Township.

Objective: To ensure that open space planning plays an important role in developing the character, location, magnitude and timing of growth and development in the Township.

Objective: To give priority to preserving large contiguous tracts of forests and lands containing unique areas of environmental sensitivity.

Objective: To identify and protect the habitats of threatened and endangered species of wildlife and vegetation and to control the character, location and magnitude of growth and development in and adjacent to such habitats to avoid direct or indirect impacts on threatened or endangered species.

Objective: To promote and encourage the protection of privately owned tracts of open space, wetlands or forest lands through easement purchase, deed restrictions, and other appropriate planning techniques.

Objectives: To locate open space as close as possible to populations they serve, and encourage passive public recreational use of such lands, where appropriate.

III. Inventory

Public and private resources that provide existing recreation and open space opportunities for citizens of Voorhees Township are described below. The location of these facilities are shown on the enclosed map.

A. Municipally-Owned Resources

1. Round Hill Road Playground

Location: Round Hill Road

Facilities: 1 - Baseball Field

1 - Tennis Court

Playground Equipment

2. Kirkwood Park
 Location: Laurel Oak Road, Pine Avenue
 Facilities: 1 - Soccer Field (with baseball backstop)
 1 - Baseball Field (with lights)
 2 - Tennis Courts
 1 - Basketball Court
 Playground Equipment
 Walking Path

3. Willowbrook Way Playground
 Location: Willowbrook Way
 Facilities: Playground Equipment (intended use for 2-5 year olds)

4. Rabinowitz Field
 Location: Kresson Road
 Facilities: 6 - Baseball Fields (two with lights)
 Batting Cages
 Playground Equipment (intended use for 2-5 year olds)

5. Elliot Drive Playground
 Location: Elliot Drive
 Facilities: Playground Equipment

6. Lions Lake Park
 Location: Dutchtown Road
 Facilities: Lake/Pavilion
 Picnic Tables
 Playground Equipment
 2 - Volleyball Courts
 Walking Trail
 4 - Softball Fields (proposed)
 Batting Cages (proposed)
 Concession Stand (proposed)

7. Giangiulio Field
 Location: Victor Boulevard
 Facilities: 1 - Football Field (with lights)
 1 - Baseball Field (with lights)
 1 - Basketball Court
 Playground Equipment
 Concession Stand

B. Boards of Education-Owned Resources

1. Osage Elementary School (Voorhees Township Board of Education)
 Location: Somerdale Road
 Facilities: 2 - Baseball/Softball Fields
 Playground Equipment

2. Kresson Elementary School (Voorhees Township Board of Education)
Location: School Lane
Facilities: 3 - Baseball/Softball Field
2 - Basketball (½) Courts
Playground Equipment
3. Hamilton Elementary School (Voorhees Township Board of Education)
Location: Boundary Lane
Facilities: 1 - Multi-Purpose Field
1 - Baseball/Softball Field
2 - Basketball Courts
Playground Equipment
4. Signal Hill Elementary School (Voorhees Township Board of Education)
Location: Signal Hill Drive
Facilities: 1 - Baseball/Softball Field
Playground Equipment
5. Voorhees Middle School (Voorhees Township Board of Education)
Location: Holly Oak Drive
Facilities: 1 - Baseball Field
1 - Softball Field
1 - Soccer Field
1 - Field Hockey Field
1 - Running Track
3 - Tennis Courts (with lights)
6 - Basketball (½) Courts (with lights)
6. Maiaarota Field (Voorhees Township Board of Education)
Location: Echelon Road
Facilities: 4 - Soccer Fields (with lights)
2 - Tennis Courts
1 - Basketball Court
2 - Basketball (½) Courts
7. Eastern High School (Eastern Camden County Regional School District)
Location: Laurel Oak Road
Facilities: 1 - Football Field (with lights)
Track and Field Facilities (with lights)
2 - Baseball Fields (one with lights)
2 - Soccer Fields (one with lights)
1 - Softball Field
1 - Field Hockey Field
2 - Multi-Purpose Fields
10 - Tennis Courts
1 - Tennis Wall

C. Privately-Owned Resources

1. Main Street Playground (Brandywine Main Street, LLC)
Location: Main Street
Facilities: Playground Equipment
2. VFW Recreation Complex (VFW Post 10116)
Location: Sheppard Road
Facilities: 1 - Basketball Court
2 - Basketball (½) Courts
3. Sturbridge Lakes (Sturbridge Lakes Association)
Location: Chatham Drive, Brookview Drive, Battery Hill Drive
Facilities: Beaches (with life guards)
Playground Equipment
Volleyball Courts
Picnic Tables
4. Barclay Lane (Sturbridge Lakes Association)
Location: Barclay Lane
Facilities: 3 - Tennis Courts
1 - Baseball/Softball Field
5. Sturbridge Woods (Sturbridge Woods Association)
Location: Forest Hills Drive
Facilities: 4 - Tennis Courts
Swim Club
6. Kresson Golf Club (H. Robert and Mary Aducat)
Location: Kresson-Gibbsboro Road
Facilities: 18-Hole Golf Course
7. Voorhees Golf Farm (Voorhees Golf Farm, Inc.)
Location: Haddonfield-Berlin Road
Facilities: Driving Range
Golf Course Facilities

In addition to the above active recreation resources, undeveloped open space, owned by Voorhees Township, Camden County, and homeowners associations, are located throughout the Township (see enclosed map). However, with the notable exception of the approximately 210-acre municipally-owned North Branch Conservation Area (Beagle Club Woods) on Kresson-Gibbsboro Road, and the County-owned Kirkwood Lake, located off Kirkwood-Gibbsboro Road, much of the open space in the Township consist of stormwater management facilities and buffers. These open space areas typically occur in isolated pockets throughout residential developments, and not as large, contiguous parcels.

IV. Needs Analysis

The 1998 Master Plan update noted that the population of Voorhees Township has more than doubled since 1980. Directly related to this increase is the doubling of the number of housing units within the Township. The Master Plan update included a comparison of area municipalities, including the Townships of Voorhees, Cherry Hill, Evesham and Mount Laurel, to determine trends involving population, densities, housing densities, school age population densities and real property evaluation. This comparison found that the population density of Voorhees Township was 2,308 persons per square mile based on the 1994 population estimate prepared by the U.S. Census. This density is approaching population density figures for neighboring Cherry Hill Township, and significantly higher than Evesham and Mount Laurel Townships, two of the fastest growing municipalities in the State.

The comparison also found that the housing density for Voorhees Township is 855 dwelling units per square mile. This density of dwelling units is nearly double the housing density of Evesham Township and significantly higher than Mount Laurel Township. The housing density in Voorhees Township is approaching the housing density of Cherry Hill Township.

Since development has already consumed much of the land within Voorhees Township, and with the pressures of continued development working against it, it is important that action be taken to preserve some of the remaining undeveloped land as open space. This is especially important since much of the remaining undeveloped land within Voorhees Township contains environmentally sensitive resources, such as wetlands, floodplains, woodlands and aquifer recharge areas. These resources will be lost forever if the current pattern of development continues.

Accordingly, the goal of the Voorhees Township open space plan is to preserve the Township's critical environmental, cultural and scenic resources, while maximizing opportunities for low intensity passive recreational uses. Voorhees Township recognizes that open space is an important asset, performing a variety of functions essential to sustaining and enhancing the Township as a desirable place to live and work. Open space protects the quality and quantity of surface and ground water resources, guides development and growth, preserves natural resources, shapes community character and provides land for outdoor recreation. If Voorhees is to remain a desirable place in which to live and work, it is essential that an adequate amount of open space be permanently protected.

In addition to the need to preserve open space within Voorhees Township, there is also a need for additional active recreation facilities. The 1995 Master Plan update evaluated the sufficiency of active recreational facilities within the Township, by comparing facilities provided by the Township and Boards of Education to national standards (the 1998 Master Plan update did not evaluate active recreational facilities). This evaluation found that, while the active recreation facilities available at that time met most of the national standards, the consistently high participation rates in youth sports programs in Voorhees had placed a greater demand on the facilities, and there is increasing demand for those facilities.

More recently, youth sport organizations in Voorhees have continued to request additional facilities to keep up with the increased number of participants. For example, in a letter to the Mayor and Township Committee, dated August 11, 2000, the Voorhees Soccer Association noted that their organization has over 1,500 children participating in their soccer program, and that there was not sufficient field space to support the practice and game requirements of their program.

V. Resource Assessment

In 1999, the Voorhees Township Environmental Advisory Board (now the Voorhees Township Environmental Commission) was tasked by the Township Committee to prioritize various tracts of land within the Township for acquisition as open space. The Environmental Advisory Board invited the Voorhees Environmental Recreation Alliance (a local citizens group) and other interested residents of the Township to form an open space workgroup, with the goal of developing a ranking system for prioritizing the open space sites in order of preservation and acquisition preference.

In developing an open space ranking system, the open space workgroup reviewed several other New Jersey open space ranking systems. However, they found the other systems to rely heavily on subjectivity, which they considered undesirable when the ranking system results are subject to public scrutiny. Instead of the subjective grouping, the open space workgroup wanted a ranking system that used actual site values. To achieve its goal, the open space workgroup developed a ranking system using the multi-attribute utility theory (MAUT). The MAUT, which has an ability to combine both quantitative and qualitative measures into one ranking scale, is ideally suited for ranking open space sites with its varied parameters such as size, cost of the land and environmental factors.

The Voorhees Open Space Ranking System included the criteria listed below for the prioritization of open space. Each criterion was assigned a relative weight, and by using a ranking equation developed by the open space work group, sites were ranked for open space preservation.

1. Environmental Factors
 - a. Wetlands
 - b. Slopes
 - c. Floodplain
 - d. Endangered and threatened species
 - e. Unique habitat
 - f. Streams
 - g. Headwater
 - h. Aquifer recharge and wellhead protection
 - i. Contamination and previous usage of site
2. Proximity and linkage to existing open space
3. Development pressure
 - a. Status of development approvals
 - b. Ownership

- c. Availability of utilities
- d. Sales status
- 4. Availability to Township
- 5. Size
- 6. Scenic View
- 7. Historic Value

Township tax information was reviewed to compile a list of 646 vacant parcels with Voorhees Township. These vacant parcels were evaluated with regards to location, size, adjacent land uses and proximity to existing open space. In general, a vacant parcel was considered a potential open space opportunity if it was located adjacent to existing open space; of sufficient size to warrant consideration; or if, when combined with adjacent properties, formed a tract of undeveloped land of sufficient size to warrant consideration. The goal was to avoid small, isolated parcels of vacant land that would have little value as open space.

Based on this analysis, the 55 sites listed below were selected for evaluation using the Voorhees Open Space Ranking System. The location of sites evaluated are shown of the enclosed map.

Ranking	Site No.	Property Owner(s)	Score	Status - January 2003
1	Site 38	H. Robert & Mary Aducat	0.66	
2	Site 9	Stafford Farm, Inc.	0.50	Twp. Acquired 2003
3	Site 16	Lafferty & Sons, Inc.	0.48	Twp. Acquired 2001
4 (tie)	Site 15	Ronald & Kathleen Murphy	0.47	
4 (tie)	Site 31	PNP Associates / Pliner	0.47	Developed - 13 Units
6 (tie)	Site 54	Foursome Associates, LLC	0.45	Twp. Acquired 2001
6 (tie)	Site 39	Landvest Management Corp.	0.45	
8	Site 5	Water Sparks, et al	0.43	
9 (tie)	Site 28	Cooper Crossing Associates	0.42	
9 (tie)	Site 13	Voorhees Environmental Corp.	0.42	Developed - 401 Units
11 (tie)	Site 6	Enrico Spino	0.41	
11 (tie)	Site 2	Cigna	0.41	
11 (tie)	Site 40	Siegfried & Maryann Dahms	0.41	
14 (tie)	Site 53	Blue Foot Stables / Samost	0.40	Approved for Development (53 Units)
14 (tie)	Site 37	Edith C. Ranken	0.40	
16 (tie)	Site 26	United Savings Associates	0.40	Approved for Development (3 Units)
16 (tie)	Site 17	Brandywine Main Street, LLC	0.39	
18 (tie)	Site 27	Cohen Profit Sharing Plan	0.38	
18 (tie)	Site 48	Lin-Mor Properties	0.38	
18 (tie)	Site 14	Darby Investment Corp.	0.38	Part of Site 13
18 (tie)	Site 8	Voorhees Golf Farm	0.38	Approved for Development (318 Units)

18 (tie)	Site 20	Conwell Ltd. Partnership / Travel One	0.38	
23	Site 41	Dutchtown Road Associates	0.37	
24 (tie)	Site 33	Margaret Dwier	0.37	Twp. Acquired 2003
24 (tie)	Site 4	Thomas Hutchinson	0.36	
24 (tie)	Site 21	RCA GE CBS Tax Department	0.36	
27 (tie)	Site 32	H. Robert & Mary Aducat	0.35	
27 (tie)	Site 52	Binder Realty of Voorhees, Inc.	0.34	
27 (tie)	Site 34	Soo Young Lee	0.34	
27 (tie)	Site 25	Jerry O'Brien, et al	0.34	Approved for Development (3 Units)
27 (tie)	Site 19	New Jersey American Water Co.	0.34	
32 (tie)	Site 3	Cigna	0.33	Developed - Commercial
32 (tie)	Site 35	Norwood Venture Corp.	0.33	
34 (tie)	Site 22	Haddon Brook C. C. / Samost	0.31	
34 (tie)	Site 29	Cooper Crossing Associates	0.31	
34 (tie)	Site 44	Gerald Pliner, et al	0.31	
34 (tie)	Site 18	Farmers & Mechanics Bank	0.31	
34 (tie)	Site 55	Richard Mitchell, et al	0.31	Developed - 4 Units
39 (tie)	Site 45	Dutchtown Road Associates / Samost	0.30	
39 (tie)	Site 42	MMQ Associates	0.29	
39 (tie)	Site 36	Kevin McFadden	0.29	Developed - 1 Unit
42	Site 7	Lake Associates II, LLC	0.29	
43 (tie)	Site 50	John E. Alite	0.28	
43 (tie)	Site 49	Laurence & Jacqueline Lantry	0.25	
45	Site 43	Michaels Group	0.25	
46 (tie)	Site 10	Eva D. Gilmour	0.24	
46 (tie)	Site 1	Richard Mitchell	0.22	Developed - 5 Units
48	Site 30	Tri-Borough Sand & Stone	0.22	
49	Site 47	H. Robert & Mary Aducat	0.21	
50	Site 46	Angelo & Stella Lavdas	0.20	

VI. Action Plan

There are two basic methods by which the accumulation of open space can be achieved. The first method involves the implementation of land use planning strategies that are authorized by the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL). The second method involves the acquisition of easements, development rights, or the outright fee simple purchase of lands.

The most effective method of preserving open space, both from a cost and planning perspective, is the use of creative land use strategies that result in the development of more compact communities. By implementing strategies such as clustering, the same number of units can be built in less area. Consequently, the amount of open space land in the Township will increase at virtually no cost to the taxpayers.

Land use planning strategies can directly influence the intensity, extent and type of land use development in the Township. By working with developers of vacant lands, the Township can, in the process of land subdivision and site development planning

and review, influence the size, shape and quality of open space that is set aside and preserved.

Clearly, the implementation of creative land use planning techniques is the most cost effective and quickest means of providing for the preservation of open space. However, there are situations where acquisition is the only alternative of accumulating property for open space. Acquisition of property can take several forms, including conservation easements, purchase of development rights, private conservation organizations, as well as the fee simple purchase of lands.

A conservation easement is a legal tool that sets forth certain restrictions, or that grants certain rights on the use and development of property. Notice of the easement is recorded with the property deed, and may sometimes be referred to as a "deed restriction". Restrictions and rights granted by easements for open space preservation typically ensure that the open space area is not subdivided or developed in the future, access and use by the public will continue in perpetuity, and provisions will be made for the maintenance of the open space.

Easements may be purchased from the property owner or donated by the owner to an agency willing to hold them. Holding easements, particularly when an easement is donated, is a less expensive land protection tool than fee simple purchase of the land. The value of a conservation easement is generally calculated as the difference between the value of the land with no easement and the value of the land with the easement. Since the property that is subject to an easement is still owned by the landowner, the land is still subject to real estate taxes; however, property taxes may be reduced because the assessed value of the land may be lower because of the easement. When the property changes hands, the subsequent landowners continue to be bound by the easement.

The purchase of development rights is a form of conservation easement where the difference between the value of the highest and best use of the land and the value of the land after the creation of an easement restriction, is paid to the property owner. The New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program is a form of conservation easement where the development rights to a parcel area is purchased by the State, County and/or local government, and the property owner agrees to maintain the land in an agricultural use.

Private conservation organizations are non-profit corporations that acquire, hold and manage land for the preservation of natural diversity. New Jersey law allows these private organizations, also known as land trusts, to hold and manage land and easements without paying property taxes, provided public access is allowed. Generally, land trusts are interested in obtaining large areas of significant natural habitat, such as unusual ecosystems or threatened species, and representative ecosystems, such as wetlands, stream corridors and aquifer recharge areas.

With the completion of the 1998 Master Plan update, Voorhees Township has moved forward towards the preservation of open space through the use of the above land use planning techniques. The 1998 Master Plan update noted that conservation planning can be utilized as a tool to help preserve the remaining natural character of critical areas in Voorhees Township and protect necessary environmental areas. As such, the

Conservation Plan element of the 1998 Master Plan update contains the following recommendations related to the preservation of open space:

- Open Space/Greenways

Create a greenway/open space network by establishing and designating desired protection areas on a greenway map as part of the Natural Resource Inventory. Greenway/open space linkages may be established via stream corridors, flood hazard areas, wetlands, steep slope areas, wildlife corridors, existing public and private conservation easements and public uses including local and county parkland. Historic landmarks and districts, railroad and utility rights-of-way, farmlands, mature woodlands and trails may also be used. Greenway/open space designations should consider existing and potential linkages with similar efforts in neighboring municipalities, especially Evesham and Gibbsboro.

Greenways, open space areas, conservation areas and the linkage between them should be identified on effected site plan and subdivision applications, enabling the municipality to arrange for preservation of the reserved area, negotiate for a conservation easement, or preserved by using lot averaging or cluster techniques.

The Township could also pursue a greenways preservation program for the Rancocas Creek tributaries in cooperation with Evesham and Medford Townships and the Rancocas Conservancy.

- Conservation Easements

Initiate a practice of obtaining conservation easements along stream corridors, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas. Conservation easements/buffer areas to protect stream corridors should be required as a condition of all developments located adjacent to stream corridors.

Develop an easement tracking and mapping system. Catalogue and map all conservation easements, open space easements and/or land dedicated to the Township, NJDEP, homeowners associations or others for open space/parkland or greenway use.

Require identification on all subdivision and site plan applications of any such easement or dedicated land located within 200 feet of the subject property.

- Examine currently permitted residential and nonresidential densities in environmentally sensitive and open space areas. Densities should be lowered where the presence of environmental constraints makes current densities inappropriate.

Permit and encourage cluster development.

Consult the Residential Site Improvement Standards regarding excessive pavement, road widths or parking lot sizes that unnecessarily increase ground cover. This would include an examination of permitted impervious coverage in all nonresidential zones. In addition, common driveways and shared parking should be encouraged where possible. The current ordinance standards should be reviewed to determine where decreased coverage requirements can be established.

Require natural resource mapping and environmental impact assessment for all subdivisions and site plan approvals. Mapping should delineate all natural resources, environmentally critical areas and historic resources.

While the implementation of land use planning techniques is clearly the most cost effective means of providing for the preservation of open space, there are situations where the only the method of preserving land as open space is the outright purchase of the land. However, this method can be costly. A purchase price, based on an appraisal and establishment of a fair market value, is negotiated and agreed upon, and a transfer of full title of the property is made in exchange for the negotiated compensation. There are some variations, such as less than market value sale, where the property owner donates part of the sale price.

In developing the Voorhees Open Space Ranking System, the Environmental Advisory Board identified several steps necessary to move forward toward the acquisition of open space. These steps include, but may not be limited to the following:

- Step 1: Set broad open space goals as in the Master Plan.
- Step 2: Inventory/map existing and potential future open space.
- Step 3: Develop an open space decision support system (ranking system).
- Step 4: Collect site information/data to rank the open space.
- Step 5: Rank the open space parcels.
- Step 6: Start discussions with landowners to acquire open space.
- Step 7: Identify and select funding source.
- Step 8: Appraise land for acquisition.
- Step 9: Acquire Open Space.

Currently, steps one through five have been completed. The Township must now completed steps six and seven, prior to moving ahead with the acquisition of land for the preservation of open space.







The Voorhees Township Open Space and Recreation Plan was developed in consideration and consistent with the 1998 Master Plan update, the open space

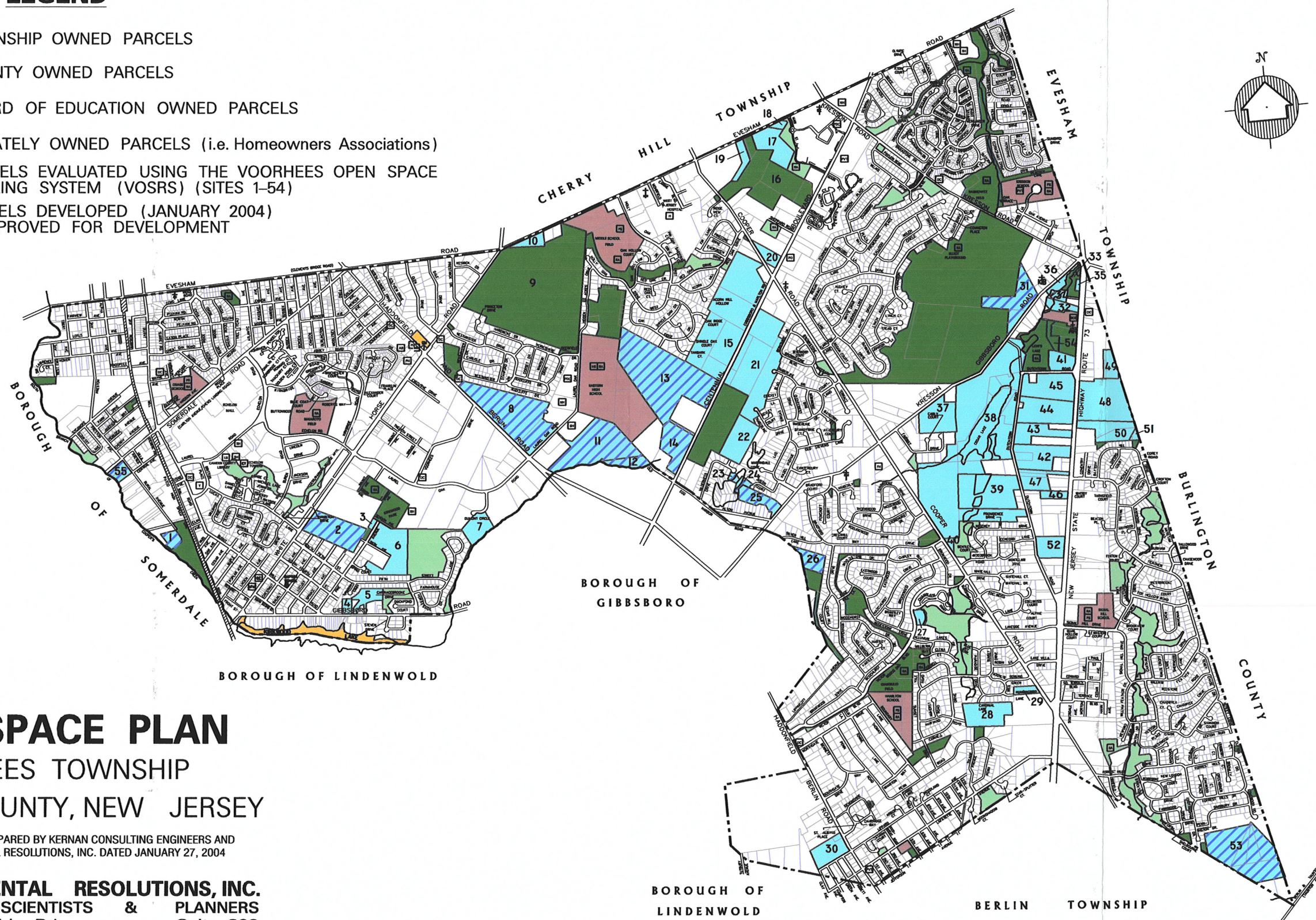
preservation efforts of Camden County, and the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan). The 1998 Master Plan update emphasized the preservation of passive open space and areas of critical environmental concern. Voorhees Township is not only looking to preserve current open space inventories, but has identified numerous vacant areas that should be considered for preservation.

The State Plan has designated most of Voorhees Township as a Suburban Planning Area; however, a portion of the township has been designated a Metropolitan Planning Area. The Suburban Planning Area is generally located adjacent to the more densely developed Metropolitan Planning Area, and can be distinguished from it by a lack of high intensity centers, as well as by the availability of vacant developable land. The Suburban Planning Area's current development pattern lacks the compact settlement pattern of the older suburbs in the Metropolitan Planning Area, and is almost entirely dependent on the private automobile for transportation, with few focal points for community interaction. Because the existing pattern of development is inefficient in terms of the cost of facilities and services, it pressures property taxes up to pay for inefficient services. The misalignment that this development pattern creates results in traffic congestion, unavailability of affordable housing, and the destruction of open space that defines community character and sense of place.

One of the planning goals and strategies of the State Plan is to preserve and enhance historic, cultural, open space and recreational lands and structures by identifying these resources and using public investment strategies, preservation, conservation and regulatory programs, and other techniques to guide growth in locations and patterns that protect them. The State Plan recognizes the adverse effect that unplanned growth has had on open space in the State.

LEGEND

-  - TOWNSHIP OWNED PARCELS
-  - COUNTY OWNED PARCELS
-  - BOARD OF EDUCATION OWNED PARCELS
-  - PRIVATELY OWNED PARCELS (i.e. Homeowners Associations)
-  - PARCELS EVALUATED USING THE VOORHEES OPEN SPACE RANKING SYSTEM (VOSRS) (SITES 1-54)
-  - PARCELS DEVELOPED (JANUARY 2004) or APPROVED FOR DEVELOPMENT



OPEN SPACE PLAN

VOORHEES TOWNSHIP

CAMDEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

SOURCE: ORIGINAL MAP PREPARED BY KERNAN CONSULTING ENGINEERS AND
REVISED BY ENVIRONMENTAL RESOLUTIONS, INC. DATED JANUARY 27, 2004



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